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PLEN1 Keynote Lecture – Vesna Leskošek

KL01 Communicating the welfare state through a discourse on welfare fraud

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Given the definition of social order, which is about how institutions, people and values work together to ensure the stability and functioning of society, we could say that the welfare state is the glue that binds everything together. The welfare state can be understood as the way the state functions, ensuring interconnectedness and interdependence by providing common good, such as social security, health care, and education. It also means that people are willing to give up part of their own well-being to share it with others who cannot provide for themselves. This primarily increases social capital, which contributes to general trust in the functioning of the state. However, over the last few decades, we have witnessed the more or less hidden disintegration of the welfare state, as the prevailing ideas are that it limits GDP growth, that it is too expensive, that it hinders globalisation and the free market, and that it hinders development by making people dependent on financial social benefits and incentives. This last idea will be the subject of my speech as it calls into question the foundations of the welfare state and contributes to social disorder as we are abandoning the welfare state and there are no new answers to the growing social inequalities. I will analyse the national campaigns against so-called benefit fraud, which appeared in the Great Britain and Ireland, and are present in other European countries, Slovenia being no exception. These campaigns are about how countries communicate social rights to the public, what they want to achieve and what the results are. Campaigns communicate alleged fraud by stigmatising the recipients of cash benefits, portraying them as social parasites and criminals. Another characteristic is that they are based mostly on very vague and unreliable data on the extent and nature of benefit fraud. Several studies show that the purpose behind has been to reduce the amount of cash benefits and to reduce the redistributive role of the state. However, the effects on social stability are much more dangerous, as these campaigns destabilise the general trust and interconnectedness that are essential for maintaining social order.The consequences of this destabilisation can be seen everywhere in Europe, notably in the rise of populist and far-right ideologies that offer many people a refuge from the risks posed by (among other reasons) the disappearance of the welfare state.

PLEN2 Keynote Lecture – Jelena Kleut

KL02 The interplay of uncertainties in transitional media systems

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The crisis of representative democracy, the rise of populism and far-right actors, prolonged wars, and health and environmental crises are increasingly addressed in communication and media scholarship through various "dises"—disinformation, distrust, disconnection. These symbolic and material disruptions contribute to a growing sense of uncertainty. I differentiate between top-down and bottom-up uncertainties, the first being addressed by, exacerbated or created by the institutional actors, global platforms and structural arrangements in the media, and the second as lived by, navigated around or co-produced by individuals and groups. Although globally shared, uncertainties are not equally distributed, especially when we look at the places in which resources to minimize (the impact of) uncertainties are scarce. Using the results of the vision building exercise conducted by students from six Western Balkan universities, I observe how uncertainties are structurally created and sustained. As they analysed trends and envisioned the future of media in 2040, students projected the framework of certainty for transitional media systems in which uncertainty is a long-lasting trait. To approach bottom-up uncertainties I turn to local news, journalists, and their audiences, examining the attitudes and practices adopted by individuals. Focus group interviews conducted in Serbian municipalities show how citizens navigate between information scarcity and abundance, and how they employ an attitude of uncertainty to assess news sources. By integrating these two perspectives together, I underscore the importance of resources in addressing uncertainties.

SPC02 Advancing the study of opinion expressions in digital media: The OPINION Network approach

SP 01 Studying opinion expression in a comparative cross-platform perspective: Conceptual and methodological challenges and strategies

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Social media platforms have become one of the main fields where people express their opinions on current events and various public issues. As an integral part of media studies focusing on the study of digital media, platform studies are a useful entry point to examine the construction and expression of opinion on social media platforms, along with the impact of platforms' modality on public discourse.

The socio-technical approach and focus on platform studies allows us to move beyond the tendency to treat all platforms under one "social media" framework and look into the modalities of various platforms as different channels for opinionated communication and their impact on users' communicating practices regarding specific issues. Conceptually, the ideas of platformativity and framing (grounded in Entman's approach) can be suitable for a comparative analysis of how people express opinions across different social media platforms.

The presentation looks at conceptual, methodological and analytical challenges and strategies when studying the expression of opinions across platforms in a comparative fashion, taking into account the specificities (technically as well as culturally) of different platforms. Specifically, it will focus on how to tackle challenges regarding (a) the development of a conceptual framework to account for a sociotechnical approach (b) data selection, collection and analysis, both computationally and qualitatively, and c) comparability of data, in terms of cross-platform and cross-country approach, reflecting specific attempts to overcome language and cultural differences in both sampling and interpretation of data. Empirically, the study focuses on the expression of opinions of members of the European Parliament and national parliaments across EU and EU candidate countries on the issue of migration. We focus on use of Facebook, Instagram and X (ex-Twitter) in ten countries – Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Croatia, Serbia, Portugal, Poland, Czech Republic, Albania and Lithuania. The study looks at how platforms' affordances allow, drive and constrain expression of political opinion, capturing not only how opinionated communication on specific issues across platforms and countries is framed and developed, but also how the modality of opinion expression is possibly conditioned by the sociotechnical parameters of digital platforms.

SPC02 Advancing the study of opinion expressions in digital media: The OPINION Network approach

SP 02 Opinionated comments on Ukrainian immigration to Poland on Reddit

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This presentation builds upon an ongoing study of comments expressed on the Polish subreddit related to the problem of immigration, specifically the Ukrainian immigrants to Poland as of the outburst of the war in February 2022. Investigating the over-time shifts in expressed evaluative tendencies, it critically discusses key theoretical and methodological challenges of studying opinionated comments posted on social media platforms.

The theoretical framework relies on three templates involving categories typical of media studies discourse analysis, a linguistic approach to incivility and social actors distinguished by Critical Discourse Analysis. Our understanding of opinionated texts relies on the concept of evaluativity, wherein opinions are seen as evaluations encoded by means of evaluative lexical items and, to a lesser extent, syntactic structures. The categories of description are predominantly oriented towards the recognition of offensive language: Given the generally negative sentiment in Europe, it was expected that the majority of comments would express voices discrediting immigrants relative to Poles or even disclosing hostility and/or hatred towards them more often than compassion and sympathy.

The data used in the study were automatically retrieved from Reddit, following a multi-step procedure. Out of ca. 70,000 comments originally retrieved, we composed a sample of about 2,000 documents, using automatic and manual sentiment analysis and manual relevance tagging. All comments are written in English, presumably by Polish Redditors. The analysis was preceded by a pilot study based on a sample of immigration discourse extracted from the Frenk corpus, which is a collection of Facebook comments. Initial results suggest that Redditors

active on the Polish subreddit express both positive and negative opinions to the problem of immigration, with positive evaluations becoming temporarily predominant in the early stages of the war, before a perceptible rise of compassion fatigue.

At the same time, the analysis reveals important theoretical and methodological challenges. Notably, the often fuzzy boundaries of theoretical categories propounded by linguistics and media studies recurrently invite divergent understandings and classifications of social media discourse. This challenge required a radical reduction of descriptive categories, as well as laborious efforts intended to construct discrete, mutually exclusive classification options, at the expense of much nuance in the analysis. For example, "hate speech" – a key category from a conceptual point of view – is regularly defined in conflicting ways, foregrounding different legal, linguistic, or other criteria. Offensive language, which encompasses the conceptually distinctive features of "insults", "slurs", and "slander", overlaps and relates to hate speech in ambiguous ways. Other challenging linguistic categories relate to the identification of various social actors, owing to definitional and operational overlaps that are responsible for coding discrepancies. While there are numerous valuable insights to be gleaned from linguistic research, its translation into effective operational classification strategies reveals numerous ambiguities. The current research is to resolve these problems by presenting non-overlapping categories and/or proposing some core ingredients of key concepts to achieve high inter-coder agreement in future endeavours focusing on mining opinions in social media discourse.

SPC02 Advancing the study of opinion expressions in digital media: The OPINION Network approach

SP 03 Everybody counts? Re-conceptualizing the aggregation of public opinion dynamics in digital spaces

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Digital media ecologies present numerous challenges to established conceptualizations and measures of public opinion: Unbounded publics, uneven participation rates, inauthentic contributions and various algorithmic distortions undermine most inferences regarding the distribution of opinions among discernible communities, and raise important concerns about the possible meanings of census-style big data analyses of digital contents. Moreover, the algorithmically structured, networked discursive spaces on digital media also erode existing notions of public opinion climates, which vary from platform to platform, or even from one user's perspective to another. While digital media constitute a key site where public opinion is formed and negotiated, theoretical conceptualizations remain too fragmentary to effectively guide empirical public opinion research relying on digital media contents.

In the present paper, we argue that there is a need for a comprehensive account of public opinion in digital media environments, which we conceptualize as an ongoing discursive process distributed over numerous digital media sites. Reconnecting to pre-digital theories of public opinion as the public negotiation of publicly acceptable stances, we discuss key implications of this process for the at-scale analysis of digital media in public opinion research. At the core of our argument, we conceptualize digital media discourse as a normative, dynamic and interactive process: By presenting opinion statements and claims in public, participating actors seek to advance, negotiate or challenge specific stances, while simultaneously positioning themselves and others as more or less legitimate, authoritative voices. Through ongoing interactions, which echo memetically across a wide range of sites and platforms, different stances emerge as dominant or marginal, consensual or contested, informing and positioning public perceptions of prevalent opinion climates, as well as any ensuing contributions to the debate. In this distributed debate, any contribution can be qualified in numerous ways – from its visibility and reach, resonance, endorsement and rejection among co-present audiences; to its distinctive positioning via known and observable qualities of its presentation, its author, the site, and other relevant factors.

Drawing upon recent theorizing on political talk in hybrid communication ecologies and memetic political expression in the digital age, we propose four key contingencies that must be considered in the study of public opinion in digital public spheres, namely 1) the discursive positioning of opinion expressions; 2) their socio-technical embedding into networked communication spaces and communication flows; 3) the discursive-interactive resonance of presented claims; and 4) the normative governance of public discourse within interconnected digital communication spaces. Owing to these contingencies, public opinion emerges not as the linear product or aggregation of included contents, but as the outcome of an ongoing dynamic process of the public presentation, endorsement and contestation, negotiation and propagation of opinionated discourse.

With our conceptualization, we identify avenues for empirically studying public opinion negotiation processes in digital media ecologies, both in detail and at scale, aiming to advance both theory and operational research into digital media as a key venue where public opinion is formed in contemporary hybrid communication spaces.

SPC05 IAMCR@ECREA – The future of communication: New and old actors

SP 04 Communicating in Robotic Times

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Our algorithmic steered futures may be uncertain but in all probability humans will continue to communicate with each other. A fascinating question is how human communication will develop in robotic times.

SPC05 IAMCR@ECREA – The future of communication: New and old actors

SP 05 Digital Sovereignty – the EU's search for a new imaginary of global digital connectivity

Julia Pohle[1]

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Over the last decade, "digital sovereignty" has become a key principle in European digital policy debates. In order to better understand the popularity of this concept, in this presentation I link the EU's digital sovereignty claims to different types of dependency that shape our digital world, and to particular shifts in the belief system that underlies our perception of global digital connectivity and data flows. Instead of characterising a politico-economic or geopolitical strategy, I argue that "digital sovereignty" represents a sociotechnical imaginary as it expresses a collective and institutionalised vision of a desirable future built on a particular socio-political and technological order. As such, it differs from the US-inspired liberal socio-technical imaginary of a free, open and decentralised global Internet. Although it is not (yet) formulated as such by European policy-makers, the digital sovereignty debate can hence be interpreted as the first stage in the search for an alternative imaginary of digital interconnectedness. This alternative vision accounts for a more prominent role of states and governments in shaping and steering digital communication, both nationally and on a global scale. But at least in its European variation, the digital sovereignty imaginary also encompasses the protection of human rights and democratic values. However, with the number of liberal democracies being on the decline worldwide, the EU faces a challenge when it seeks to build a normative vision for global digital interconnectedness on the concept of "sovereignty", which is generally associated with control and authority.

SPC05 IAMCR@ECREA – The future of communication: New and old actors

SP 06 Navigating the New Communication Landscape: AI Policy Disparities and the Role of Regional Actors

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Artificial intelligence promises to revolutionize communication globally. However, the "Future of Communication" faces a significant challenge: the emergence of a "Great Divide" in AI policy approaches driven by differing regional values. This study examines AI policies in the European Union, the United States, and China, focusing on how privacy norms, data governance models, and ethical standards shape communication landscapes. Beyond identifying these complexities, the study explores how these values translate into distinct policy directions. Such discrepancies risk fracturing information environments, restricting international data flow, and hindering AI-driven communication advancements. The research delves into the implications for global AI governance, considering issues like system compatibility, ethical consensus-building, and prospects for multilateral policy alignment. By highlighting the intricate relationship between cultural values and AI policymaking, this study underscores the urgency of cross-cultural dialogue and navigating collaborative action among new and old actors in the evolving communication landscape

SPC05 IAMCR@ECREA – The future of communication: New and old actors

SP 07 Imaginings of the Future of Conflict and Communication Technologies: A Map of Six Anxiety- and Hope-Driven Scenarios

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The paper presents an analysis of the construction of future scenarios in relation to conflict and communication technologies, on the basis of Delphi+ workshops and essay-writings sessions. Grounded in a theoretical reflection on the different forms of conflict—distinguishing between armed, grey zone and democratic conflict—in combination with theoretical reflections on the role of communication technologies in conflict, and the future imaginings

of (communication) technologies, the analysis discusses six future imaginaries. Four of these future scenarios are negative, namely a power take-over, the intensification of armed conflict, the intensification of democratic conflict, and the harm inflicted on the environment and society in general. The two positive scenarios are the protective role of supranational organizations and the cultural change. Together, these six scenarios form a map of how European experts are concerned about media/technology and military/technology assemblages, and how they place their hope in supranational political institutions and cultural change.

SPC05 IAMCR@ECREA – The future of communication: New and old actors

SP 08 Decolonial imaginations: Can we think of AI futures for the "common good"?

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Let's start imagining. The indigenous thinker Ailton Krenak (2020) shares a legend from the Yanomami people. The legend says that the sky is hanging above our heads, supported by rocks. Now, we are seeing signs that the sky might fall. The earth supports the rocks that support the sky. If the Earth is destroyed, the sky falls. Krenak (2020) says that our imagining and sharing stories are like the rocks holding up the sky. But why should we keep imagining? We talk a lot about the fast pace of technological transformations today. Present continuous – social media: clicking, liking, scrolling down; AI (artificial intelligence) doing our writing, doing our thinking, making our art. How about we pause and imagine? Focusing on social media, algorithms, data and AI, this paper prompts us to imagine futures for the common good. Tech giants often carry out programmes on "tech for social good" to contribute to their corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals. But to what extent is the idea of social good meaningful? Social good for whom? In this paper, we delve into the concept of tech for social good, addressing how it is useful and problematic. The paper asks: Is the notion of "the commons" more useful in helping us understand how we can create fairer and healthier digital ecosystems? To tackle these questions, the paper draws from perspectives on decolonial imagination, critical data studies and intersectional feminism. It establishes dialogues between Global North and South scholars, building upon notions such as empathy, the commons, and pluriversality, and applying them to tech scenarios. Further, the paper draws inspiration from the Latin American tradition of Participatory Action Research (PAR), engaging specifically with plural understandings of autonomy. Here, "autonomia", in its Spanish language form, emerges as "a struggle for liberation and a new type of society in harmony with other people and cultures" (Escobar, 2018). By embracing this conceptualisation, I argue that it is possible to comprehend autonomy less as an individualistic phenomenon and more as a collective struggle for fairer social realities and tech futures.

SPC07 Dialogue diversified: Contemporary insights of the early-career researchers in Slovene media and communication studies

SP 09 Social and political transformations in the age and context of polycrisis

Marko Ribać[1]

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Marko Ribać will share some important discussions and conclusions as well as address some dilemmas of the empirical research he participated in in the past few years. Those discussions, conclusions and dilemmas are placed at the crossroad of three wide-ranging social and political transformations in the age and context of polycrisis. Transformations encapsulate "affective turn" in politics and in populism, transformation of populism into authoritarianism and illiberalism, especially in Eastern and Central Europe, and the rise of solidaristic forms in various social movement fields. The context of polycrisis encapsulates a newly formed world conditioned by health(care) crisis, rise of armed conflicts, ecological devastation, heightened migratory flows and various local crises exacerbated by capitalist contradictions (housing, food, energy inflation etc.).

SPC07 Dialogue diversified: Contemporary insights of the early-career researchers in Slovene media and communication studies

SP 10 Local radio production practices in a hybrid media environment

Peter Čakš[1]

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Peter Čakš will focus on the journalists' production practices in local radio programs in the digital age. Technological convergence has not only brought new forms of media, but has also changed established work processes and the forms and methods of conveying media content. Radio is not immune to these changes, digitalization in production practices and the delivery of content on multiple channels at the same time has placed it in an environment of responsive, inclusive multimedia digital media products. These trends, new technologies, associated media changes,

and changed expectations of local communities are, to a certain extent, also transferred to the level of local radio programs.

SPC07 Dialogue diversified: Contemporary insights of the early-career researchers in Slovene media and communication studies

SP 11 Media and technology of young people in Slovenia

Katja Koren Ošljak[1]

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Katja Koren Ošljak will delve into the results of three recent studies that explore the interrelationships between media choices, technological preferences, media education, and the everyday life of young people. On the conceptual background of media repertoires as aggregates of media-related practices, she will present relations between family, school, and peer contexts that frame conditions within which elementary and high-school students are growing up and participating in media education. Then, the presentation will focus on the preliminary results of focus groups about young people's digital needs and compare them against popular digital/media literacy formation approaches

SPC07 Dialogue diversified: Contemporary insights of the early-career researchers in Slovene media and communication studies

SP 12 Navigating emotions: A comprehensive study of Zelensky's populist communication in wartime

Sofija Sionova[1]

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Sofia Sionova's presentation will elucidate findings from her master's thesis, delving into the mediatization of the Russo-Ukrainian War in 2022. The focal point of the study is to systematically examine populist communication during this conflict, focusing on selected speeches of Volodymyr Zelensky. Methodologically, the research employs Latent Dirichlet Allocation, an NRC lexicon, and critical discourse analysis to scrutinize the characteristics of populist communication and the mobilization of emotions. Particular attention is given to potential variations in Zelensky's communication when addressing the general Ukrainian populace versus political stakeholders. This study contributes to understanding the nuances of populist communication during wartime, showcasing Zelensky's communication style as a populist actor.

SPC07 Dialogue diversified: Contemporary insights of the early-career researchers in Slovene media and communication studies

SP 13 Technologically mediated dating practices on the mobile dating app Tinder

Anamarija Šiša[1]

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Anamarija Šiša will present the findings from her doctoral research that delves into technologically mediated dating practices on mobile dating app Tinder and its role in (trans)forming intimate relationships in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The study highlights three key dating practices on Tinder: swiping, mapping and ghosting. These practices modify the spatial and temporal dimensions of dating, reflecting a digital landscape of emotional engagement and disengagement. At the same time, the research conceptualizes dating apps as digital media technologies that redefine dating culture through uncertainty. This analysis contributes to understanding the complex, contingent, and transformative nature of digital communication technologies in intimate interactions.

SPC11 Contemporary issues of the Slovene media system: Problems and regulatory responses

SP 14 Unveiling homogenization trends in news production: A study of content repackaging and ownership structures in Slovenian journalism

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Journalism studies employing diverse theoretical frameworks and methodologies have consistently highlighted significant trends towards homogenization within news. These include the prevalent use of information subsidies, a shift towards desk-bound journalism, and a pronounced tendency towards news recycling. Across various traditions and organizational settings, investigations into news production have revealed a growing inclination towards standardized processes driven by editorial demands for immediacy and frequency, as well as managerial pressures to reduce production costs, reconfiguring social control in the newsroom, journalistic skills and news production

processes. This has resulted in the adoption of highly standardized news production and various forms of second-hand journalism. This study aims to assess the degree of homogenization by examining the interplay between the creation of original content and the repackaging of existing content, often termed "churnalism". By harvesting the daily textual content from approximately 200 Slovenian media outlets of all formats, encompassing websites, print, television, and radio programs, we conduct the analysis by identifying factually identical (or partially modified) news content among them. Furthermore, we explore the extent to which patterns of factual similarity align with the ownership structures of news media outlets that share identical content. Additionally, we also analyze the extent to which identified factual content is attributed to news media outsourcing, either by other news media entities such as news agencies, or by other sources which include boundary news actors, such as commercial, political, or civic entities, which presenting their content through "pseudo-events" in the form of press conferences or press releases.

SPC11 Contemporary issues of the Slovene media system: Problems and regulatory responses

SP 15 Structural transformations of the Slovene press market in the attention economy

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We examine the dynamics that are reshaping the Slovenian media landscape, driven by changes in the global media ecosystem. The integration of the internet into the processes of capital accumulation has redirected advertising revenues to digital platforms. This redirection has had a significant impact on the news media, which has seen a marked decline in revenue despite fewer cost-negative changes in news distribution. The newspaper industry is adapting through downsizing and cost-cutting measures. Despite modest increases in added value, profitability is maintained through pressure on wages.

These trends are also characteristic of the Slovenian newspaper industry, albeit with considerable differences. Revenue trends highlight significant differences between general dailies and more specialized niche publications, with the latter recording slight revenue growth while the circulation of the former continues to decline at an annual rate of about 10%.

Media companies are pursuing two main strategies to compensate for declining revenues in the print market: Diversification into the organization of events and closer cooperation with advertisers, which allows them to leverage their comparative advantages over digital platforms.

SPC11 Contemporary issues of the Slovene media system: Problems and regulatory responses

SP 16 Media law and regulation in a small state on the European periphery: Status quo amid a complex multiplicity of actors and interests

Jernej Kaluža[1], Jernej Amon Prodnik[2], Nina Žnidaršič[2], Nana Čemas[2]

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It is extremely difficult to change media legislation in Slovenia, as the experience of the last twenty years shows. Any such attempt is usually accompanied by criticism from various spectrums of civil society and political polarization, which results in proposals for new media laws not being implemented. Media law is also characterized by extraordinary complexity, as it is an area that touches on many other regulatory systems and legislations from the fields of the economy, public administration, digital transition, criminal law, etc. The same applies to the heterogeneity of the actors involved: representative associations of journalists, media owners, regulators, human rights organizations, media operators and distributors, local politicians, representatives of various citizens' initiatives, etc. In this paper, we present an ongoing work in which we analyze the process of law implementation and the perspectives of the different actors using the example of the current proposal for a new media law (ZMed-1) in Slovenia, which can also be seen in the context of the attempt to implement the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) into national legislation. The research is based on interviews with the relevant actors and on data analysis of documents (written responses produced during the public debate on the adoption of the law).

ARS01 Activist and protest audiences

PP 0054 Digital lives and identity perceptions of a minority under siege: Social media as routes of protests and activism

Anna Zsubori[1]

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This paper examines the significance of social media among Hungarian LGBTQ+ communities who have been exposed to increasing harassment and deterioration of civil rights for over a decade. Investigating such a topic in an anti-LGBTQ+ environment like Hungary is especially challenging, thus this study presents an insightful addition to the field of audience studies.

Although digital media's role among LGBTQ+ people received significant scholarly attention in recent years (Hatchel, Subrahmanyam, & Birkett, 2017), existing research is largely confined to established liberal democracies, and focuses on the way LGBTQ+ members use social media to their own benefit, as a means of coming out, activism, identity and community building (e.g., Ayoub & Garretson, 2017). Much less is known about the limitations and even threats associated with digital and social media use among LGBTQ+ members in authoritarian and 'illiberal' countries, such as Hungary, promoting both nationalistic and anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes (Hume, 2020; Presinkszky, 2021; Rédai, 2012). Also, the social and cultural aspects of the 'illiberal turn' (Štětka, Mihelj, & Tóth, 2020), including its impact on the LGBTQ minority and their everyday lives, have been mostly overlooked by scholars.

By employing a combination of digital ethnography (Hine, 2017) and life-course interviews (Heinz, 2003), this work-in-progress paper addresses this important gap. It focuses on the digital lives of both those Hungarian LGBTQ+ members who fled the country and moved to the West, and of activists who decided to stay in Hungary by examining LGBTQ people's perception of the 'illiberal turn' that took place in Hungary in 2010 and its impact on their social media use. Therefore, on the one hand, this paper reconstructs a Hungarian minority's lived experiences as well as their relationship towards their LGBTQ+ identity. On the other hand, through investigating the long-term societal implication of the current political climate on Hungarian LGBTQ+ communities' national and gender identities, this interdisciplinary study also seeks to deepen the connection between the practices of everyday audiences and macro processes. As a result, this research aims to offer original contributions to audience, communication, cultural, gender, LGBTQ+ and media studies, and to political science.

Keywords: Digital activism, Hungary, LGBTQ+, protest, social media

Short bio:

Dr Anna Zsubori received her PhD at the University of Leicester and currently is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at Loughborough University. Between 2016 and 2021 she was also a YECREA representative to the Audience and Reception Studies section of the European Communication Research and Education Association. Her research focuses on various audiences with projects examining Hungarian LGBTQ+ people use of social media and tweens' understanding of identity.

ARS01 Activist and protest audiences

PP 0055 The "better" influence? A comparison between regular and social activist influencers on Instagram

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Influencers have become an indispensable part of social media, especially in the lives of adolescents and young adults. These communicators use platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Tiktok to inform their followers about various topics and to promote products through partnerships with companies. Previous research on influencers has mainly been concerned with marketing and has occasionally examined the spread of problematic beauty ideals. However, over the last couple of years, a new trend in the direction of social activism in influencer communication can be observed, with more and more influencers focusing on political and socially relevant topics such as gender equality, climate justice, and sustainable lifestyles. Although these influencers claim social activism and societal change as their primary motivation, they still finance themselves by advertising commercial products.

Our study set out to investigate how the content of such self-proclaimed social activist influencers differs from those of "regular" influencers. To this end, we first developed a theory-driven categorization of actors that can distinguish regular influencers from activist influencers, and activist influencers from activists. Second, we conducted a quantitative content analysis to compare the Instagram profiles of regular and activist influencers. We coded the profiles, posts, and stories of 22 social media influencers (11 regulars, 11 social activists) regarding the topics they cover, promotions (products, initiatives/causes, individuals), and activation of followers, resulting in a total of 1,639 coded postings. A list of possible topics was generated using an existing list from prior research combined with the SDG list of the European Union, which resulted in a list of 11 socially relevant topics (e.g., sustainability/climate action, health & well-being, gender equality) and 11 other topics (e.g., beauty/lifestyle, food & drinks, travel/vacation).

Results reveal that while social activist influencers cover socially relevant topics significantly more often compared to regular influencers, only one-third of their postings are about such topics. In addition, social activist influencers engage less often in the promotion of commercial products and more often in the promotion of non-commercial causes (e.g., charities), and they more often advertise for small start-ups and less often for large companies in comparison to regular influencers. However, when advertising commercial products, only a minority of them are framed as sustainable.

Regarding follower activation, both influencer types mostly use polls to activate their followers, but the encouragement of political action/participation is seldom even amongst social activist influencers. The theoretical categorization and empirical results help to shed some light on this new influencer type but also show that the boundaries between influencer types and other actors are fluid. A critical discussion will be included in the presentation.

ARS01 Activist and protest audiences

PP 0056 Advancing the mobilization/reinforcement debate: The role of audience studies

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The democratic system is undergoing severe disruptions in many countries (Bennett et al., 2018). The economic and political crises put pressure on the social contract, decreasing electoral participation and satisfaction with democracy and opening the door to populism and illiberalism (International IDEA, 2022). Knowing that democracy cannot be taken for granted (Kaase & Newton, 1995), several researchers have tried to understand how digital media can re-engage citizens in politics, mainly focusing on the relationship between younger citizens and institutional political participation.

The literature is divided into two main fringes. The mobilization theory proposes that by significantly reducing participation costs and multiplying opportunities for information consumption, political expression, and interaction, digital media have the potential to mobilize groups traditionally excluded from politics, such as the youth (Norris, 2000). On the contrary, the reinforcement theory suggests that digital platforms struggle to mobilize politically disinterested individuals (Norris, 2001) and that the political use of these platforms is primarily undertaken by previously interested individuals, reinforcing patterns of inequality in political participation (Norris, 2000).

There is "overwhelming research evidence" for the mobilization effect (Matthes, 2022, p. 6), as demonstrated by various meta-analyses (Boulianne, 2009, 2015; Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2023; Skoric et al., 2016), and this effect is thought to be particularly pronounced in the case of youth (Boulianne, 2009; Boulianne & Theocharis, 2020). Even the only meta-analysis that clearly proposes a reinforcement effect acknowledges that the effect on young people may be the opposite (Oser & Boulianne, 2020). However, this poses a paradox: if digital media can mobilize young people politically and if youth are avid social media users, why has youth voter turnout not significantly increased in the last few years (Matthes, 2022)?

We argue that this debate is unresolved partly because it lacks theoretical development. Firstly, although the original formulation of these theories was based on research on media effects (mobilization) and selection effects (reinforcement) (Norris, 2000), few studies establish this connection (Boulianne, 2011; Kruikemeier & Shehata, 2017). Secondly, most studies assume a causal direction from digital media use to political involvement (Boulianne & Theocharis, 2020), although the literature highlights the increasing importance of selection effects in a multiple-choice media environment (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Prior, 2005), and where information personalization is powered by the algorithms (Lee & Xenos, 2022; Thorson et al., 2021). The relevance of motivations is even more critical if we consider that young people now view political participation as a personal choice rather than a duty (Boulianne & Shehata, 2022). Thirdly, studies need to consider that most media effects are indirect, acting on (political) behaviors through the influence of cognitive and emotional mediators (Valkenburg et al., 2016).

Based on a comprehensive literature review, we claim this debate will have to be recentered in the context of audience studies. Of particular importance are models that conceptualize media uses as mediators between preexisting orientations and outcome psychological orientations, such as the communication mediation model (Cho et al., 2009; Shah et al., 2007; Yamamoto & Morey, 2019).

ARS01 Activist and protest audiences

PP 0057 Investigating the dimensions of information-oriented media practices and their relation to societal ideals in Germany

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The question of how individuals experience society is closely tied to their mediated practices of public communication. These practices enable people to perceive, evaluate and participate in social and political realities and

processes (Hasebrink 2020). Even in egalitarian societies, media use is closely related to aspects of social class such as formal education, financial income or occupational status (Hovden 2023). According to Bourdieu's (1987) sociology of differences, media practices are linked to an individual's living conditions, which are deeply connected to a certain lifestyle and habitus (Lindell 2015). From this perspective, an individual's decision to use (or not use) certain media to get informed about and engage with the public should be understood in relation to their ideals and attitudes towards society as well as their socioeconomic position. The proposed paper is part of a PhD project which empirically investigates patterns of 1) information-oriented media use in combination with 2) perceptions and attitudes towards society in Germany, considering people's 3) economic and cultural resources. Following a Bourdieusian approach, this paper focuses on the first two aspects.

To identify patterns of media use and attitudes towards society as well as the underlying dimensions that constitute them, a representative population survey in Germany (N = 1.001; 2021) was conducted. Respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they consume various types of media for informational purposes, including public broadcasts, regional newspapers, tabloids, social media and more. To measure social media specific news practices, the participation in online discourses such as liking and commenting on news content as well as their preferences to follow social media accounts of e.g. politicians, influencers, news outlets, scientists were covered. Building on the concept of sociocultural cleavages (Lipset & Rokkan 1967), twelve items reflecting the level of agreement with different conceptions of an ideal social coexistence (e.g. 'Living together well means that everyone can live as they wish' or 'All people should share the same traditions') were included in the survey. Multiple correspondence analyses were applied to construct a two-dimensional space using the variables of information-oriented media use. Socioeconomic status and societal ideals were then projected onto this space. By this, correspondences between media practices and societal ideals could be analyzed based on their respective position within the two dimensions.

Preliminary results indicate that two main dimensions for information-oriented media practices can be identified: the level of engagement (frequency of media use and type of participation) and the preference for "traditional" vs. "new" forms of media (e.g. 'public broadcast' vs. 'social media'). Individuals who report lower levels of engagement tend to hold negative opinions towards inclusive societal conceptions, such as the idea that 'different opinions should be discussed to find compromises', and show greater approval towards authoritarian attitudes while having a lower level of formal education.

The findings reveal correlations between individuals' media engagement, media choices and societal ideals. Using multiple correspondence analysis contributes to understanding the multidimensional associations between media practices and broader societal perspectives regarding the overall social order.

ARS01 Activist and protest audiences

PP 0058 (Re)action videos? Exploring audience agency between spectatorship and interactivity

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The growing popularity of reaction videos (RVs) on digital media is an emerging and multifaceted phenomenon which has attracted the attention of communication professionals and researchers alike (Antonioni e Farci, 2018; Golding, 2019; McDaniel, 2020; Schankweiler, 2021; Heyne, 2022; Goddard, 2023). Starting from the success of RVs to the Brasialian porno-fetish film "Hungry Bitches", which released in 2007, social media platforms have seen the proliferation of channels and profiles that specialise in the production of various forms of RVs which receive millions of visualisations.

RVs are characterised by the intricate interplay between performance and spectatorship (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998). In fact, audience's reception as well as participatory aspects of RVs were frequently emphasised in literature (Weller & Holaschke, 2022; McDaniel, 2020). This includes definition of RVs as user generated content (Goddard, 2023) and the ability of RVs to form online communities based on shared interests and viewers engagement (Xu et. al., 2015). According to some, RVs can also be analysed as a phenomenon at the crossroads of remediation processes, as elucidated by Bolter and Grusin in 1999 (Golding, 2019; Bliss, 2023).

The relationship between users and reaction videos has thus been thematized as twofold. On the one hand, it has been addressed as active, and capable of activating social interactions. On the other hand, the archeological approach implied by the remediation perspective underlines the more immediate aspects of spectatorship, namely the passive and the individual.

To the best of our knowledge, no research was conducted interviewing users instead of the creators. Taking into account what has emerged from the literature, we then carried out a thematic analysis of the narratives produced in relation to the vision of RVs, in order to examine the understanding of RVs implied by the audience's interpretations, the reported modality of consumption of RVs and the relative motivations for consuming RVs. These narratives

were recorded during six focus group interviews, with a total of 36 participants, 18 self-identified females and 18 self-identified males, all aged between 25 and 60.

Participants expressed closeness or distance from reactors' reactions, which take the form of comment/criticism, and/or emotional manifestations.

These two attitudes proved to be particularly interesting in that they seemed to challenge the idea of digital media audiences as interactive and fully characterised by agency (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Additionally, participants' sensemaking practices related to RVs vision are not directed towards a community dimension, but towards an individual interpretative relationship with the creator.

Therefore, RVs offer an opportunity to rethink the complexity of the relations between spectatorship, and the interactivity of digital media. Indeed, the question remains whether the weak reference to community identity practices among the participants was a cause or an effect of their personal characteristics, as they did not explicitly identify themselves as members of an audience community.

ARS02 Audiences and the news

PP 0074 Finding local news where there is no local media

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In recent years, the concept of "news deserts" has aroused the curiosity of many scholars and regulators around the world, with the mapping of areas being the recent target of a call for proposals from the European Commission to support local media in communities lacking news. A news desert is defined as communities without a local newspaper or communities where residents face significantly reduced access to the news that feeds the local public sphere and democracy (Abernathy, 2018).

Pioneering in Europe, the "News Deserts Europe 2022: Portugal Report" reveals that 25% of the portuguese municipalities do not have media organizations based in the municipality about which they produce content or have infrequent or unsatisfactory news coverage, with more than half of the municipalities of the country being in a alert situation regarding local news (Jerónimo, Ramos & Torre, 2022). The phenomenon of news deserts is linked to more isolated communities, with less economic dynamism and smaller populations, and is more prevalent in the regions of Trás-os-Montes and Alentejo.

But individuals somehow obtain information in these territories. When there are no journalists reporting on reality, studies show that much of the local information in these territories is obtained through social media, such as Facebook pages and groups (Collier & Graham, 2022; Barclay et al., 2022), which can be a source of misinformation, leaving communities vulnerable (Ardia et al., 2020).

An exploratory case study focused on Manteigas, in the district of Guarda, a municipality in the news desert, confirms these other findings. In 2022, the city faced a major forest fire without any media outlets to provide local news coverage from the start of the incident. One of the main sources of information about this event was the mayor's Facebook page, highlighting the information gap that results from the lack of regional media.

Resourcing to focus groups as methodology, the study found that while information pretty much circulates within neighbors and family networks, with the centrality of Facebook and Whatsapp as main tools for citizens to get information about their local reality, in addition to face-to-face contacts and neighborhooding weekly or monthly newspapers. The city hall is also a power house in distributing useful information about their local reality. Information gaps, however, are felt by citizens, especially when it comes to sports, economics, obituary and independent political news.

Now, it is eager to understand: do these information consumption habits differ from those in small territories that are served with local media? This paper proposes to present the results of a survey applied in six different municipalities, 3 news deserts and 3 outside of the desert, that aims to assess which are these individuals' news consumption habits, the centrality of social media in their information gathering, the information gaps they feel and their relationship with local media and local journalists. The investigation also aims to understand the level of concern these inhabitants have about disinformation and how they build a relationship of trust with the information they consume.

Keywords: local journalism, audiences, news deserts, news consumption, information gaps

ARS02 Audiences and the news

PP 0075 It's not (only) what you use, but how you use it. Exploring strategies of media use across media, situations and social classes

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Typically, in the research field on media use and reception, questions of what people are using, how long and often, why or for what purpose, and with what effect or interpretation, are addressed. However, an important part of the media experience is not getting sufficient attention: *how* people use media (i.e., the formal patterns of practices, their relation to the social context, or the inner attitudes during reception). Concepts such as styles of media use, or singular constructs like "parasocial interaction" or "binge-watching", are tackling only specific parts of the aforementioned question. This results in a rather fragmented research field. Still, this "how" shapes the whole media experience and its outcomes and should be approached holistically.

The theoretical framework of strategies of media use by Krämer (2013) and this study, as part of a 3-year mixed-methods project, aim to fill this gap. The framework provides an integrative approach, conceptualizing the process of media use from the selection to the post-communicative phase, along ten dimensions. They include inner attitudes during reception (such as skeptical or distanced) and formal patterns of media use (such as the situational arrangement and styles of orientation and selection). Furthermore, the approach considers how practices are socially structured, by incorporating the socio-structural context, based on Bourdieu's concept of habitus and model of social space (1972).

In this study, the results of which we will present at ECREA 2024, we conduct around 30 qualitative, micro-phenomenological interviews (Petitmengin et al., 2019) in which people from diverse relevant social backgrounds are investigated about their use of traditional, online and social media. They are asked to place themselves as far as possible, at best almost physically, in a recently experienced usage situation and describe it in as much detail as possible, guided by questions on how they manage the situation of reception and on their inner attitudes toward the media content. This way, distorting generalizations and rationalization processes should be avoided. The sample is based on a six-fold class scheme (Bourdieu, 1972), combined with further categories such as gender and age.

Initial results reveal interesting patterns hinting to overall strategies and their practical sense. For example, a situational arrangement in which users are sitting straight up with a dimmed light is often part of a strategy of conscious instead of merely habitual media use that also implies high involvement. Or, for example, a high demand for reality, a modality of realistic representation, combined with a critical attitude during reception makes the use of a secondary source of information (in the form of follow-up communication or second screening) more likely.

Once data collection and initial interpretation in terms of elements of strategies have been completed, they will be placed in the context of the respondents' social background. Hence, we aim to contribute to a better understanding of what strategies of media use in different social groups look like, and thus how social inequality is reproduced by patterns of media use that go beyond channel and genre repertoires.

ARS02 Audiences and the news

PP 0076 From crowding-out to crowding-in: Willingness to pay and the use and support of public service news media in the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden and Norway

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In journalism studies, the term 'crowding-out' refers to the argument that strong public service news media are an economic threat to private commercial media, because they shrink the commercial audience.

While this alleged effect is raised in debates about public service news media, there is no scientific research so far to support the argument. On the contrary, research addressing the issue finds no negative effect, but instead suggest evidence of a modest *positive* effect. In this paper, we pursue further evidence of this possible positive effect in four countries with a strong tradition for both public service and private news media: The UK, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Based on media systems theory and economic theory we present the concept of 'crowding-in'. Unlike crowding-out, crowding-in is associated with Keynesian economic theory and suggests that government spending (also) can have positive effects on markets. By extension, the paper argues that you could think of a positive relation between public service news and private news media. Studies of the Nordic countries have suggested as much, since the willingness to pay is amongst the highest in the world, and at the same time public service news media play a significant part in the Nordic media systems.

Based on data from the 2023 Reuters Digital News Report we analyze the relationship between paying for news, personal importance of public service news media and weekly use news of public service news brands. Across all four countries, preliminary results suggest statically significant and positive crowding-in results. This means that people, who already pay for private news, also support public service news media and use public service news media *more* than people, *who do not pay for private news*. We also seek confirmation of previous findings from Denmark to the effect that news user who use public service news online are more likely to pay for commercial news online than those who do not. We end the paper by discussing 'the crowding in effect', and what it might mean for countries with strong public service news media.

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ARS02 Audiences and the news

PP 0077 "Being a journalist? It's very dangerous both there and here": How russian speaking migrants deploy authoritarian folk theories about news media literacy to make sense of democratic news environments

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Folk theories are the sets of ideas that people hold, which help them navigate the world and, within journalism, engage with news environments, irrespective of whether journalists and researchers consider those theories well-founded and well-informed (Palmer et al., 2020). The current study focuses on the folk theories related to news media literacy held by Russian speakers in Germany who have moved from a media environment dominated by the Russian authoritarian state media to a democratic media environment in Germany. Based on 42 semi-structured interviews, we find three main folk theories held by the participants, namely (1) "I think it is very dangerous both there and here", (2) "Journalism always belongs to someone", and (3) "I always try to find the middle ground".

We argue that participants often transfer their pre-existing folk theories, fostered by authoritarian media or their previous cultural experiences, to the democratic host society context and vice versa rather than separately assessing the two media environments. This might be problematic, as participants frequently treat news from authoritarian and democratic media environments equally, resulting in general cynism regarding journalists' work and prevailing disbelief in everything despite it being based on their old beliefs, not factual experiences.Namely, all three folk theories show that for the majority of respondents, the context of the difference between German, democratic and Russian media fields is not clear – the biggest difference the majority of participants saw was the 1) softer "approach" to censorship, but still "control" of the government and 2) that the journalists were not killed in Germany in contrast to Russia. The study's findings also suggest evidence that authoritarian states like Russia have their own frameworks of news literacy and attempt to promote them. While existing studies treat migrant populations as a "blank slate" in discussing the media literacy education of the former, we show that migrant populations already possess folk theories and ideas about news literacy from their homeland, which are apparently transferred to the host society. This paradox needs to be addressed in future news literacy education and research.

ARS02 Audiences and the news

PP 0078 Effects of news consumption on Instagram on knowledge about current affairs – A field experiment

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Instagram has become a relevant platform for news consumption, especially among young audiences (Reuters Digital News Report, 2023). News on Instagram are often distributed in the format of stories, an ephemeral format that persists for 24 hours and consists of images, text, and sometimes videos. Further, Instagram stories can contain interactive elements such as quizzes or polls. Given the growing relevance of this news format, the question arises as to what extent these short, and often entertaining, news items can contribute to knowledge about current affairs.

Vermeer & van den Heijkant (2023) found that exposure to Instagram news stories increased political interest among Dutch adolescents, but the presence of interactive elements in the stories did not increase learning about

political issues. The present study expands this research by investigating the effects of interactivity, narration, and dynamic elements in Instagram news stories on knowledge about news issues among Swiss adults who regularly use Instagram (n = 351) in a field experiment. Participants were recruited by a market research company and exposed to a manipulated Instagram news account for 5 days using their regular Instagram accounts. In a between-subjects design, the account either posted Instagram stories 1) with interactive polls and emoji sliders, 2) with a narrative structure and an exemplar, 3) with dynamic videos instead of static pictures, 4) with none of these additional elements, and 5) only filler stories that were not related to the target news items as a control. After 5 days, participants completed a knowledge test about the five news issues that they were exposed to (or not exposed to in the case of the control group).

The treatment check was successful, participants perceived the interactive stories as more interactive, the narrative stories as more narrative, and the dynamic stories as more dynamic than any other type of story. Overall, the manipulation had a small but significant effect on knowledge, $F(4,344) = 16.56$, $p > .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$. In line with the expectations, participants in the experimental groups had a higher knowledge about the news issues than those in the control group ($p > 0.02$ for all comparisons). Hence, Instagram news contribute to learning about current affairs. There was, however, no difference between the types of news stories (all comparisons *n.s.*). Interactivity, narration, and dynamic elements did thus neither distract from the content nor foster information processing in this context. Theoretical and practical Implications of these findings will be discussed in the presentation.

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ARS03 Information disorder from audience studies perspective

PP 0152 Buzz worded but not researched? A systematic literature review on media literacy and online hate

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Being online comes with a substantial risk of being confronted with some sort of hateful content. We define hateful online content as either offensive speech directed in an explicit and rude manner towards individuals, as well as hate speech targeted against individuals as members of a certain social group. When it comes to the question of how to deal with online hate, increasing online users' media literacy is a solution frequently mentioned by educators, government officials, and researchers. Although this idea of media literacy being an important resource against online hate was often proposed, a systematic literature review on the (empirical) state of scientific knowledge on this issue is still missing. With the present study, we address this gap by providing a systematic literature review taking up the question if there is a connection between media literacy and the chances of increasing awareness about online hate, diminishing the amount of this content and increasing social media users' actions against it. To this end, we ask which categories of online hate and media literacy were examined in the existing literature, which conceptualizations were followed, and whether an empirical investigation on the relationship of both constructs has actually been carried out, or whether media literacy was only posed in the discussion section as a solution without providing any empirical evidence.

We searched literature that has been published in scientific, peer-reviewed journals on media literacy and online hate until May 1st 2023. We conducted a Boolean keyword search that included terms related to media and digital literacy and to online hate. In total, the search resulted in 147 records. We then manually checked the records and only included texts that fulfilled the following criteria: 1) empirical studies 2), research published in English 3) title or abstract referred in some way to media or digital literacy in combination with online hate. In total, this resulted in the removal of 23 records. To screen the remaining 124 records concerning their relevance for the systematic literature review based on meta-data like title and abstract, we used the open source tool ASReview.

The final review included 35 empirical studies. The results indicate that the conceptualization of media literacy in extant research is often unclear and that in general there is hardly any empirical evidence on the relationship between media literacy efforts and online hate. In many studies, media literacy is only mentioned as a buzzword in the discussion section without actually examining the concept empirically. Furthermore, the conceptual framework for media literacy is often fuzzy and not specific on the examined elements. In addition, our review points to a lack of established measures of media literacy, a lack of study designs that establish a causal and objective relationship between media literacy and online hate, and a lack of focus on social media users outside of children and adolescents. Ultimately, the study underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of how media literacy can be implemented to effectively combat online hate.

ARS03 Information disorder from audience studies perspective

PP 0153 Understanding young adults' resilience to disinformation. A cross-national analysis of daily tactics and resources to navigate information

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Resilience is a popularly used but still underdeveloped concept in the emergent field of disinformation. Current definitions and studies mainly focus on intrapersonal factors and cognition to explain and explore resilience, leaving important questions regarding the role of daily practices and meso-social, economic, or cultural environments unanswered (Kont et al., forthcoming). Our cross-national, comparative study addresses this gap and asks:

Which tactics do German and Dutch young adults (18–32) apply for navigating disinformation in daily media practices and conversations?

How do economic, cultural, social, and personal resources shape this process and contribute to resilience to disinformation?

Applying a qualitative study design, we conducted 29 semi-structured interviews with young adults (18–32) in Germany (n = 15) and the Netherlands (n = 14) from November 2022 until April 2023. All interviews were transcribed, and data were analyzed using a grounded theory-based approach of line-by-line coding followed by axial coding.

Based on our results, we developed a taxonomy of tactics for navigating disinformation: (1) distinguishing deceptive strategies, (2) verifying, (3) seeking nuanced representation, (4) self-reflective thinking, (5) avoiding news, (6) avoiding 'risky' outlets, and (7) engaging in conversation. Our comparative analysis shows that the same tactics are applied in both countries despite different contexts and levels of digitalization, pointing to transnational mechanisms of how citizens deal with disinformation.

The results indicate that young adults' personal backgrounds and resources profoundly shape their approach to disinformation and (extent of) employed tactics. For example, social resources manifesting through personal networks prove vital for the participants' access to (high-quality or dis-) information. We also find patterns connecting socio-economic and cultural backgrounds to trust in political and journalistic institutions. Most concerningly, our data shows how structural inequalities resulting in fewer resources negatively impact the development of resilience to disinformation.

Our study provides a structural and contextual perspective to the over-individualized debate on resilience to disinformation, which mainly focuses on literacies and places responsibility on the individual. Through connecting daily practices with resources and lived experiences, we provide more nuanced explanations to common questions in the field, such as why (media literacy) tactics do not necessarily lead to resilience. Our shift in analytical perspective highlights underexplored issues, such as the role of structural inequalities, and provides a taxonomy that can be used for future, larger-scale quantitative research.

Keywords: Disinformation, resilience, tactics, taxonomy, resources

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ARS03 Information disorder from audience studies perspective

PP 0154 Assessing the reach and impact of disinformation narratives in Eastern European countries

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The study of the real impact of disinformation is a complex endeavour. Foreign-sponsored misleading content and anonymous bots and social media profiles mix with domestic actors and content creators (Almenar et al. 2022). Moreover, audiences, as "unwilling crowds" (Starbird et al. 2019) not just passively consume misleading content, but share it, reshape it into a different format, or comment on it, contributing to its dissemination. The goal of disinformation campaigns is precisely to move beyond like-minded audiences to reach broader publics, through multiple kinds of content and spreading strategies, continuously through time and aiming at social reproduction (Flore, 2020). Hence, as stated by Starbird et al. (2019:3) "evaluating disinformation is less about the truth value of one or more pieces of information and more about how those pieces fit together to serve a particular purpose".

We suggest assessing societal impact by researching the spread and truthfulness of disinformation narratives. To do so we conducted an analysis in 4 Eastern European countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Serbia and Kosovo) gathering daily information about fact checks and reported disinformation content, disregarding on/offline origin, during May/June 2023. Material was posteriorly analyzed to cluster similar content into disinformation narratives. A survey was conducted (N = 9.000) to test the impact, spreading patterns and effectiveness of clustered narratives in each country. Results show different levels of reach and impact in different countries, as well as spreading patterns, with a strong presence of Russian-sponsored disinformation content, especially in what regards the war in Ukraine. Also, those narratives more connected to ideological issues are more likely to be spread among the population. Moreover, in most analyzed narratives is observed the "received before effect": citizens are more likely to trust the narrative if they have been exposed to it, especially if this happened multiple times. The "received before" effect seems to have more relevance regarding trusting the narrative rather than ideological positioning of the receiver, although this greatly differs among the different narratives.

ARS03 Information disorder from audience studies perspective

PP 0155 Deepfakes in the context of AI inequality: Analyzing disparities in knowledge and perceptions of deepfakes

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Research on digital inequality builds on the assumption that socio-economic inequalities are manifested in unequal access to and participation in the digital world (Hargittai 2002). As technologies evolve, new manifestations of such inequalities emerge – such as the "AI divide" (Carter et al., 2020). While some users show a low affinity for new digital technology, and therefore might miss out on their affordances, others are eager to embrace them – sometimes with beneficial outcomes, but also more exposure to their specific risks (Kurpicz-Briki et al. 2023).

Recently, the AI-based deepfake technology has gained interest in research and practice. Deepfakes pose new challenges to Internet users – due to the high quality of their manipulations (Lee & Shin, 2022) and users' willingness to believe audio-visual content (Fehrensen & Täubner, 2019). While the technology behind deepfakes might also help democratize creativity in content creation and offers opportunities for new digital products and businesses (WDR, 2021), it might be used for fraud, identity theft and reputational damage (Citron & Chesney, 2018).

This study examines *to what extent knowledge of and attitudes towards deepfakes reflect characteristics of AI inequalities*. First, predictors of deepfake knowledge are analysed (sociodemographics, digital skills, internet and social media use) and second, the impact of deepfake knowledge on users' perceptions of dangers and potentials of deepfakes is examined. A survey among German Internet users was conducted in October 2022 (n = 1.421; quotas defined for gender, age, educational attainment). To assess deepfake knowledge, a quiz was developed providing 13 correct/incorrect statements about deepfakes. Additionally, participants were asked to rate their agreement with 22 statements on risks and opportunities of the technology (based a five-point Likert scale). Respondents also rated their overall perception of deepfakes on a scale from 0 (harmful) to 100 (beneficial). Finally, respondents could provide their thoughts on deepfakes in an open comment field. These remarks were subjected to a qualitative content analysis.

Our findings show that most respondents overall have little knowledge of deepfakes. Digital skills, frequent usage of multiple social media, age, male gender and high educational attainment predict deepfake knowledge. Furthermore, deepfake knowledge significantly predicts users' perceptions of the technology's dangers and potentials. While all respondents express high agreement with perceived risks of deepfakes, respondents with little deepfake knowledge perceive deepfakes as overall more dangerous. In addition, there are significant differences in the perception of their potentials: Respondents with high deepfake knowledge agree more with statements on the technology's advantages. Finally, qualitative data serve for further discussions on the respondents' fear of criminal and political deepfakes.

We argue that deepfakes can and should be examined in the context of AI inequalities, as sociodemographic factors and digital skills affect both users' knowledge of and attitudes towards this emerging technology. Furthermore, deepfake knowledge influences perceptions of the technology's risks and potentials, which is likely to affect behavioral choices. A differentiated understanding of deepfakes could increase the likelihood of achieving beneficial outcomes from using the technology, while understanding its dangers might bolster users' ability to ameliorate some of the technology's risks.

ARS03 Information disorder from audience studies perspective

PP 0156 Incidentally informed? Frequency and motives of news usage on Instagram

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Instagram has become a relevant platform for news consumption (Reuters Digital News Report, 2023). While researchers have started to investigate the nature and content of news on Instagram (e.g., Vázquez-Herrero et al. 2019, Hendrickx 2023), little is known about news consumption on Instagram. How often do Instagram users see news content, is news exposure on Instagram purposive or incidental, and what are motivations to actively engage with news content on Instagram?

We address these questions with an online survey (N = 511) of Swiss Instagram users. Participants were grouped into *infrequent* (n = 60), *moderate* (n = 121), and *frequent news consumers* (n = 313) based on their general (not Instagram related) news consumption habits. We examine i) how the news consumption on Instagram differs between Instagram users with different levels of general news consumption, ii) to what extent the news consumption on Instagram of these groups is deliberate or incidental, and iii) the motives for (not) using news on Instagram.

A significant proportion of Instagram users do not follow any news sites. However, this differs according to general news consumption. While around 60% of frequent and moderate news consumers follow at least one news site, only 37% of infrequent users do so. The difference in the number of news sites followed is significant ($t(332) = -2.35$, $p < .05$, $d = .35$) between infrequent ($M = .42$, $SD = .99$) and frequent users ($M = 1.04$, $SD = 1.88$). However, these groups do not differ in terms of incidental news exposure on Instagram. Both frequent ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 3.24$) and infrequent users ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 4.07$) incidentally see news content from more news outlets than they intentionally follow.

In decreasing order, participants indicate that they follow news sites on Instagram to be informed incidentally, because they like the content of the outlet, and out of habit. Purposive information and entertainment are less important motives for following. Infrequent and moderate news consumers are less motivated by habit, and both frequent and moderate users follow news sites more to be informed incidentally. The main reason for not following news sites on Instagram is that participants use the platform more for entertainment or social reasons. Only a minority of those who do not follow any outlets say that they do not like the content, are not interested or did not know such accounts existed. Frequent news users are however more interested in news content on Instagram than moderate or infrequent news users.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that news consumption on Instagram is often incidental, and that – other than on Facebook (e.g., Kümpel, 2020), news exposure on Instagram seems to be less dependent on users' interest in news. Future research should thus investigate the effects of incidental news exposure on Instagram on political knowledge or political interest.

ARS04 Algorithms and everyday life

PP 0177 How we navigate through Spotify and what algorithms have to do with it. An exploratory analysis of navigation styles when using algorithmically curated audiovisual content

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Algorithmically curated content permeates much of today's cultural consumption, including entertaining media use, to the point that authors have spoken of "algorithmic culture" (e.g. Striphas, 2015) or proposed that algorithms take on the functions of structuring cultural practices and reproducing social inequality formerly fulfilled by the human habitus (Airoldi, 2022). Nevertheless, entertainment platforms equipped with recommendation systems provide users with important choices in terms of navigation styles that may or may not rely heavily on algorithmic selections or recommendations. Users can choose traditional structures such as categories or search functions, approaching each with their individual style of navigation. Conversely, recipients have the option of counting on the algorithmic recommendations the platforms provide and engage with them in various ways (Kim, 2014). They might review them meticulously and exhaustively or opt to follow the first recommendation they find sufficiently good. Despite the much-discussed ubiquity of the use of algorithms in, for example, content production and distribution and its potential effects on users, how recipients potentially integrate them into their individual style of use recently received attention, and this research interest has often been overshadowed by studies on the role of algorithms in political media use. Therefore, an overview of navigation styles in algorithm-driven audio(-visual) media is the focus of this contribution. By using technical recordings and surveys, we aim to investigate the styles in a comprehensive and differentiated manner.

For an initial sub-study, we will recruit users of entertainment platforms with a recommendation system who consider the recommendations at least occasionally, using Spotify as an exemplary platform. Participants are tasked with selecting a piece of content (a song or album) on a stationary computer in a laboratory setting at our university and with creating a playlist suitable for a specific occasion such as a party or romantic dinner. The selection process, screen activities, and accompanying think-aloud comments will be recorded. Data will be coded based on theoretical assumptions on the dimensions of navigation styles and openly, developing new categories. Subsequently, participants will be asked to summarize aspects of navigation styles for each navigation process in a standardized questionnaire, enabling comparison and the validation of a resulting new scale for the measurement of navigation styles.

To further validate the scale and enrich the investigation with the highest possible external validity, a second substudy utilizes mobile experience sampling. Participants will use mobile technology to document Spotify usage episodes over several days, providing deeper insights into navigation styles and algorithm use on the platform. Both studies will be conducted during the next months, with initial findings to be presented at the conference. Results will then reveal how recipients navigate through Spotify, to what extent they may (habitually or deliberately) rely on the help of algorithms, and whether they are even aware of their role.

ARS04 Algorithms and everyday life

PP 0178 "The magical world of the algorithm". Imaginary, perception and interaction of TikTok users with their algorithm

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TikTok has become one of the main platforms through which young(er) generations see and understand the world; the number of people who use the platform to get their news has doubled since 2020 (Pew 2023[1]) and the way in which the platform delivers content to people has been the subject of debate because of the algorithmic curation of the for you page. This has lead academics (*Boeker, Urman 2022*) and organisations (*The Wall Street Journal 2021***[2]**) to carry out studies to try and understand how the platform algorithm works.

Because of the relevancy of the platform, as well as current debates on the effects of entirely algorithmic feeds on news acquisition[3] we decided to carry out in-depth interviews with TikTok users aged 18–34 to understand the ways in which they interact with the platform and content they find, as well as the understanding they have of platform affordances and algorithms. We opted for a grounded theory approach in order to let TikTok users guide us towards what was most relevant to them.

What emerged from the thematic analysis of 20 of these interviews is the extent to which users develop algorithmic imaginaries (*Bucher 2017*) and folk theories (*DeVito, Gergle e Birnholtz 2017*) in order to understand the platform, which leads them to interact with it in ways that they believe will guarantee a good experience. Moreover, the interviewees used a language that made the it apparent that not only they build a relationship with their algorithm, but they include an affective dimension in their domestication processes that leads them to interact with specific types of content to personalise their platform experience.

This confirms the fact that users are not only aware of the algorithm, but they see as an actor with whom to build a relationship and interact. The results of our analysis show that most of our interviewees care about their algorithm (*Siles, Meléndez-Moran 2021*) enough to engage with content in a way that – in their opinion – allows them to always have a positive experience on the platform. What also emerged is the way in which people react to the idea of having a datafied self, and the idea that a platform like TikTok is collecting information on them in order to provide positive platform experiences: this was not always seen as a negative, as interviewees seemed to be willing to share their data in exchange for good recommendations within the platform.

These results are presented within a folk theories and domestication processes framework, looking at the different ways in which users understand and interact with TikTok.

[1] https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/fact-sheet/social-media-and-news-fact-sheet/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email.

[2] https://www.wsj.com/video/series/inside-tiktoks-highly-secretive-algorithm/investigation-how-tiktok-algorithm-figures-out-your-deepest-desires/6C0C2040-FF25-4827-8528-2BD6612E3796.

[3] See current debates on how content surrounding the *TikTok Wars* is being delivered to people on the app https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/11/tiktok-social-media-young-people-moral-panic?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email.

ARS04 Algorithms and everyday life

PP 0179 How users enact algorithm skills to improve their online experiences

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Algorithms have become an increasingly important component of digital media, informing the user experience by ordering and filtering information and thus determining to what content users are most readily exposed (Latzer et al., 2016). Some literature has shown that people enact strategies based on their understanding of algorithmic output (Bucher, 2017), for various purposes such as increasing visibility (Cotter, 2018; Klawitter & Hargittai, 2018), shaping content output (Eslami et al., 2016; Kapsch, 2022), and resisting algorithmic control (Karizat et al., 2021). We refer to these practices as *enacted algorithm skills*, that is, the ability to act on one's understanding of algorithms to achieve a desired outcome in the realm of preferred online experiences. This study extends existing literature by interviewing a diverse group of adults from three countries concerning various usage domains, by asking: How do users engage with algorithmic systems to improve their online experiences?

We interviewed 32 adults in Kosovo (11), Switzerland (11), and the United States (10) in 2022 about their experiences using search engines, social media platforms, and YouTube. We recruited participants through our social networks and by posting calls on social media. Both during recruitment and the interviews, we intentionally refrained from using the term "algorithm" to prevent influencing how participants discussed their experiences. To analyze the data, the first author inductively developed a coding scheme from the interview material to identify expressions of enacted algorithms skills, which was regularly shared and discussed within the team.

Enacted algorithm skills manifested themselves as ways to optimize (e.g. liking, adding keywords, or providing more data) or avoid (e.g. blocking accounts) algorithmic output as well as nudging systems to share their content in preferred ways (e.g. adjusting settings). These actions were mostly based on users' experiences with the services, which is consistent with research on folk theories and the algorithmic imaginary (Bucher, 2017; DeVito et al., 2018). Thus, respondents did not necessarily have to know what algorithms are in technical terms to engage in actions intended to influence the selection process. This makes technology, and the information they make available, more accessible.

Moreover, participants' responses showed that context seemed to play a role in people's enacted algorithm skills. For instance, someone who might use social media because of their job or is interested in reaching a big audience might be more incentivized to make use of certain strategies compared to someone who uses the platforms mostly to consume other users' content and to keep in touch with friends.

In sum, although algorithms can have a large influence on people's online experiences, users are not necessarily left without any control over what content they see and hear. Our study shows that people with enacted algorithm skills can strategically make use of their understanding of how the platform's mechanisms work to make their use more efficient supporting their preferences. However, not everyone engages in enacted algorithm skills. People who lack such skills are left more susceptible to information readily presented by the algorithms, thus disadvantaging their uses.

ARS04 Algorithms and everyday life

PP 0180 Perspectives on how young audiences see and handle algorithms

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This proposal aims to reflect on how young people perceive algorithmic and filter bubble challenges in the digital era, particularly concerning how they define and deal with algorithms (Swart, 2021) and their implications for information selection processes in their daily lives. E-social contexts and diverse daily life constellations can have implications concerning information diversity, datafication and information disorder (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

To deepen this debate, as part of a funded project on young people, news and digital citizenship, we analysed 42 semi-structured and participatory interviews with young people aged between 15 and 24 (F = 21; M = 21) living in Portugal. Research questions: Q1 – What is their knowledge of algorithms and filter bubbles?, Q2 – How did they learn what they know about them? and Q3 – What implications do they have for diversity issues in everyday life?

The preliminary results indicate 4 distinct profiles of how they view algorithms: profile 1 highlights that "The algorithm is an ethereal entity, endowed with human faculties of action and decision". These participants describe the algorithm as an "acting agent" with decision skills. The familiar contexts found are prevalent in the context of forms of learning, as well as self-learning. This profile recognises that this superhuman image of the algorithm is not without its problems from the point of view of diversity. These participants also associate the algorithm with situations related

to fake news. Profile 2 (the dominant one in terms of the number of respondents) includes those who believe that "Algorithms are not easy to understand". These participants fell into two fundamental spheres. On the one hand, they showed and recognised basic knowledge acquired mainly from friends and individuals. On the other hand, they also included people who didn't know what an algorithm was at all. In the latter cases, the participants recognised that they had gained basic knowledge of what the algorithm is through the interview process. The third profile includes interviewees who believe that "The algorithm is essentially negative". They were particularly concerned about diversity matters, and they believe that the algorithm is targeted and ends up being "selfish" in the restrictions it imposes. These young people learnt about these matters at school, although also in family environments and on an individual basis. Finally, the fourth profile states: "There's no problem if the algorithm gives us what we want to see". This includes people who see advantages in the algorithm, who recognise the importance of diversity, but who demand the power of individual opinion (as Sofia, 18, studying International Relations, points out, "we are all free to have our own opinion"). In this case, it's more favourable for them to be able to have what they want tailored to them (particularly on social networks like TikTok). They have learnt individually and with friends.

These early-stage results pinpoint challenges that democratic societies face nowadays and evidence of self-centred forms of learning in the context of the digital society that prompts a disruptive style of understanding selfhood in the context of a globalized society.

ARS04 Algorithms and everyday life

PP 0181 Making the news your own: Exploring how young adults tailor their online information flows using social media data donations and in-depth interviews

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Young adults increasingly use news and encounter (political) information on social media like Instagram and TikTok, where both journalistic and non-journalistic 'news' curators intertwine (Newman et al., 2022). The entanglement of different information genres in media users' news feed raises important questions on both the credibility young adults assign to these curators and the development of (new) user tactics to navigate their news feeds. Not only have social media reshaped people's engagement with, and perception of 'news' and information, but it also empowered news users' 'do-it-yourself-expertise' and their **selection and curation of information** (Cotter & Thorson, 2022). Social media news users thus become "active architects of their own media worlds" (Thorson & Battocchio, 2023, p. 18), constantly organizing and altering (political) information flows on their social media platforms.

Therefore, the proposed study aims to understand when and **how social media users assign credibility** to both journalistic and non-journalistic accounts to make sense of and interpret information online. Additionally, we ask how and when they apply user tactics (liking, sharing, blocking, skipping, etc.) to 'regulate' their news feed. To capture both perceptions and user actions we combine two data-gathering methods. First, we apply a '**data donations' method** (Boeschoten, et al., 2020), where we invited 30 Belgian social media news users (age: 18–30) to request their data from social media platforms Instagram and TikTok. Using data mirroring techniques, we first quantitatively map the participants' "digital footprints" and engagement with political, activistic and news related social media accounts (Mathieu & Pruulmann, 2022). Subsequently, via in-depth interviews, the participants reflect on how they organize their social media news and information feed. Preliminary results suggest that popularity, emotion, and proximity play a key role in the way users assign credibility to non-journalistic curators to tailor the information flows to their mood, viewpoints, and interests.

We conclude by reflecting on the **new ethical and methodological challenges** that come with data donations, while also highlighting the unprecedented insights into news and media usage this method offers.

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ARS05 Young audiences as media users, target groups and creative partners

PN 046 Fangirls, Meme Lovers, Gym Bros and everything in between: A study of TikTok user characteristics

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This paper presents the findings of a qualitative study of the characteristics of young, Danish TikTok users based on data collected through the method of data donation (Ohme et al., 2021; Author, forthcoming a). The paper aims to investigate the differences and similarities between the users and create different characteristics and categories of TikTok users. Coding of the data is ongoing at the time of writing this abstract.The 24 users are studied through their data download packages (Boeschoten et al., 2020) from TikTok, which they have downloaded and donated to this study. More specifically, the data consists of a sample of 100 TikTok videos from each user (2400 videos in all) from their video browsing file, which shows the content they have been presented with on the app and when. The paper builds on a previous study of genres and characteristics of TikTok videos that is based on data from the same dataset (Author, forthcoming b).Firstly, the paper investigates the users on an individual level, e.g., the characteristics of the content they are presented with and how much they use TikTok in their daily lives. Secondly, the paper compares the characteristics of the users, e.g., the prominent genres of the content (ibid.), and to what extent the app's algorithm seems to personalize their For You Page . Lastly, the paper will discuss how the users can be divided into different categories of TikTok users.The preliminary findings show, e.g., that some of the users are being heavily presented with content relating to, what is assumed to be, a specific interest of theirs – so far, they have been named, e.g., the fangirl, the meme lover, and the gym bro. Other users are more similar and are presented with more of a mixture of the different genres of videos. Besides this, the ongoing coding also shows how videos relating to big news stories of the specific time, in this case, the Depp v. Heard trial in 2022, are present in almost every user's data. References Author (forthcoming a). "Exploring Data Donation: Methodological Insights into the Study of TikTok". In Mobile Media & Communication. Author (forthcoming b). "Decoding TikTok-ness: An Analysis of Short-Form Video Content Genres and Characteristics on TikTok". In Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies. Boeschoten, L., Ausloos, J., Moeller, J., Araujo, T., & Oberski, D. L. (2020). Digital trace data collection through data donation (arXiv:2011.09851). http://arxiv.org/abs/2011.09851 Miltsov, A. (2022). "Researching TikTok: Themes, Methods, and Future Directions". In A. Quan-Haase & L. Sloan, The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods (pp. 664–676). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529782943.n46 Ohme, J., Araujo, T., de Vreese, C. H., & Piotrowski, J. T. (2021). "Mobile data donations: Assessing self-report accuracy and sample biases with the iOS Screen Time function". Mobile Media & Communication, 9(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2050157920959106.

ARS05 Young audiences as media users, target groups and creative partners

PN 047 Kids, YouTubers and com(merch)ial confusion: Children's perspectives on sponsored content and merch

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The advertising practices of YouTubers and their impact on the views and comprehension of commercial content by young followers have garnered scholarly attention in recent years (Jakkola, 2022; De Veirman, et al, 2019). While existing studies offer nuanced insights primarily into children's advertising literacy, limitations in previous research emerge from a singular treatment of YouTubers' influencer marketing as a unified phenomenon (Van Dam & Van Reijmersdal, 2019). In contrast to prior work, we distinguish between sponsored content and advertising for merchandise among YouTubers, considering them as two distinct types of advertising. Merch advertising, in particular, is perceived to have a closer connection to the YouTuber as an individual than third-party sponsoring. Building upon this distinction, this study analyzes how children appropriate sponsored content and advertising for merchandise, recognizing them as two elements within the blurred context of the parasocial relationship between the child and the YouTuber. The study relies on group interviews with 19 Swedish children aged 10 to 13. Theoretical frameworks employed in the study encompass concepts of appropriation (du Gay, 2013), moral economy (Silverstone, 1994), and parasocial relations (Lou, 2022) to explore children's engagement with sponsored content and merch advertising. The results reveal differences in children's appropriation, with sponsored content deemed more problematic than advertising for merchandise due to its perceived greater interruptive, pervasive, and deceptive nature. Additionally, discussions on merch advertising center on merchandise as products, addressing both the relevance and problematic dimensions of merchandise in children's everyday lives. These findings underscore the theoretical significance of adopting a more nuanced understanding of YouTubers' advertising practices in research involving children, YouTubers, and advertising. Additionally, we anticipate implications for policy and encourage policymakers to incorporate the concept of a more fine-grained understanding of Youtubers' commercial content in their future

developments of advertising labeling (disclosure) and codes of ethics for influencer marketing (Ortová, Hejlová & Weiss, 2023)

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ARS05 Young audiences as media users, target groups and creative partners

PN 048 Viscerality, mood control, and media literacy: children's perceptions of quality in films and series

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This paper presents the methodology and findings of a mobile ethnographic study on how Danish 8–17-year-old children and adolescents perceive quality and relevance when it comes to their media use with a focus on series and films. Theoretically, our point of departure is that films and series have a 'cultural value' that is attributed by the beholder (Carnwath and Brown 2014), and these are the values we are interested in pinpointing, albeit from the perspectives of the children, and not from adult perspectives such as high and low culture, artistic quality, or good and bad taste (Drotner 1999). We collected the data using the method of mobile ethnography, in our case via a qualitative research tool app called Indeemo. Through this method we gave the informants various tasks relating to their media use – communicated via short online videos and text – that they in turn completed with a combination of 'selfie' videos, text and images gathered in the Indeemo app. The result of this was a rich, but still structured, qualitative data collection that took place in the comfort of their own home and, importantly, was removed from too much adult researcher interference. Hence, the method is different from traditional qualitative methods such as focus groups, observations, experimental settings, and in-depth interviews, in which the researcher is relatively conspicuous and – as previous research has established (Coulter 2021; Rooney 2017) – may therefore influence the children's behaviours and answers.The results show that the children's media diets and preferences – and media usage patterns in general – are extremely diverse. Although we see overarching tendencies, such as age and gender differences, a preference for US films and series, and a large consumption on global streaming platforms, preferences are extremely individualised among the children, even within the same families. Results also show that 'quality' is associated with content that is emotionally relatable and stimulates the senses, and the children often choose content for its 'visceral' – rather than cognitive and cinematic – qualities. They want to feel the films and series (through surprise, enjoyment, fear, disgust, sadness, etc.) rather than intellectually appreciate them. At the same time, they are highly reflective about what content they can use for achieving specific moods and feelings, as well as extremely media literate when they accurately talk about cinematic qualities (such as acting, budget, plot lines, special effects, etc.) of the films and series they watch. The children do not settle for series and films that in their opinion are second-rate, and from the age of 12, start orienting themselves toward content made for (young) adults and are thus no longer inclined to watch children's content. JD Carnwath & AS Brown (2014). Understanding the value and impacts of cultural experiences. Arts Council England.Coulter, N (2021), Child Studies Meet Digital Media: Rethinking the Paradigms, IN: The Routledge Companion to Digital Media and Children. Drotner K (1999). Dangerous Media? Discourses and Dilemmas of Modernity, Paedagogica Historica. Rooney, T (2017). Spy Kids Too: Encounters with surveillance through games and play, IN: (eds) Surveillance Futures.

ARS05 Young audiences as media users, target groups and creative partners

PN 049 Who knows the audience best: Scandinavian media institutions' production and use of audience data

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The 2010s have seen a growing ambition of connecting production and audience studies to investigate how specific meanings are embedded during the encoding stage of cultural production and how these meanings are

interpreted by audiences during the decoding stage (Hill 2018; Redvall 2020). This development has, amongst other things, been prompted by the media industries' increased focus on harnessing audience input to guide production (Redvall and Christensen 2021; Freudendal 2023).In this paper, I contribute to this connection by exploring the audience turn in screen production for young audiences from the outset of the Danish film and television industries. I focus on the encoding stage by presenting a typology of the multifaceted audience research methods used in these industries and the different types of data they yield.I draw on Ien Ang's seminal work (1991) by critically examining institutionally produced audience research as a tool for power and control. I aim to discuss if the increased focus on audience data allows the young audiences influence on audiovisual media made for them, or whether it is ultimately used to legitimize media institutions' relevance to the public.I pay particular attention to the difference between 'creation of data points' and 'capture of data traces' (Kammer 2023), and how small nation media industries primarily have access to the former, creating a power imbalance between small nation media ecologies and global platforms in the quest for audience insights. The methods used by the industry include qualitative mobile ethnography, quantitative semantic analysis based on AI-powered social media scraping, and various forms of tests, including biometric analysis.Methodologically, I draw on extensive fieldwork in the Danish film industry spanning empirical data from 10+ qualitative interviews with exclusive informants (Bruun 2016), and critical document analysis of audience reports and data commissioned by media institutions.Ang, I (1991). Desperately seeking the audience. Taylor & Francis.Bruun, H (2016). 'The qualitative interview in media production studies'. In: Advancing Media Production Research: Shifting Sites, Methods, and Politics, Palgrave.Freudendal, J (2023). "Listening to audiences to remain relevant: Audience research as a new production method for Scandinavian screen cultures in transition". Journal of Scandinavian Cinema.Hill, A (2018). Media Experiences: Engaging with Drama and Reality Television. Routledge.Kammer, A (2023). "Spaces for datafication: How datafication transforms media industries". In: Digital Disruption and Media Transformation: How Technological Innovation Shapes the Future of Communication, Springer.Ohmer, S (2006). George Gallup in Hollywood, Columbia University Press.Redvall, EN & KB Christensen (2021). "Co-creating content with children to avoid 'Uncle Swag': Strategies for producing public service television drama for tweens and teens at the Danish Children's channel DR Ultra". Critical Studies in Television, 16(2).Redvall, EN (2020). "Nordic production studies at the edge of the 2020s". Journal of Scandinavian Cinema, 10(2).

ARS05 Young audiences as media users, target groups and creative partners

PN 050 Reaching young audiences through engaging with influencers in public service TV fiction

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Making film and television for children and adolescents has always been defined by making content for a very particular audience segment (Potter and Steemers 2021). However, general industry notions have historically taken this audience somewhat for granted, based on the common-sensical idea that we have all been children once and thus have knowledge about what it means to be a child (Redvall 2023). While there have been various forms of audience research and reception studies among the youngest demographics over the years, the interest in acquiring detailed knowledge about not only the media use and preferences of young audiences, but also their life worlds and general interests, increased remarkably in the Scandinavian screen industries in the 2020s, e.g. through the emergence of still more segmentation and new audience reports (DFI 2023).Theoretically, the paper discusses this 'audience-centric approach' to making content as an example of bringing audience and production studies closer together (e.g. Hill 2019) and – in relation to this year's conference theme – discusses the wider implications of these attempts to base creative communication strategies targeting them on orderly data. The paper explores how this 'audience turn' has led to major changes in the approaches to screenwriting and production of live action television fiction targeting tweens and teens. Not only by involving ordinary children during writing and production (as explored in Redvall & Christensen 2021), but also by tapping into the popularity of famous children to use their followers to reach new audiences in the influencer industry (Hund 2023). Based on observations at industry events, qualitative interviews, and analysis of audience reports, the paper investigates how the popular DR series Klassen (The Class, running since 2016 and now in its 15th season) has worked with child content creator Naja Münster in various ways in the 2020s and mirrors this in other attempts to build fictional content around influencers, such as the series Helt ny ('Completely New'), set in an influencer agency, or Fodboldhaderne ('The Football Haters') with influencers who hate football, made as a lead-in to the series En for holdet ('One for the Team'). The paper ends by discussing the pros and cons of this strategy that has, for instance, the potential to reach young audiences on platforms where DR is not allowed to be present (like TikTok) but comes with many ethical strings attached.

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ARS06 Audiences and contexts of disconnection

PP 0271 Gendered differences in digital disconnection – A survey analysis

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Gendered differences in digital disconnection – A survey analysis

This survey-based study investigates the behaviors and attitudes of digital disconnection among 1142 respondents in everyday life in Norway. The primary research focus is to examine gender differences among the 552 women and 590 men who participated in the survey. [1]

In recent years, scholars have increasingly studied digital disconnection, focusing on different practices of voluntary media non-use (Lomborg & Ytre-Arne, 2021). This surge in interest stems from the growing effort among media users to strike a balance between the online and offline spheres in everyday life (Vanden Abeele, 2020). Their pursuits go beyond simply avoiding specific devices or platforms in the long term; they involve nuanced actions, like silencing phones or establishing guidelines for different situations, to navigate this complex dynamic (Nguyen & Hargittai, 2023).

Regarding the ECREA theme of communication and social (dis)order, it is important to note that individuals from diverse sociodemographic backgrounds have distinct ways of engaging in digital disconnection. This also extends to the impact of socially constructed gender norms. In essence, men, typically associated with independence, are presumed to have more leeway in diverging from established connectivity norms (Beattie, 2020; Portwood-Stacer, 2014). Conversely, societal expectations have expanded women's domestic roles to include online engagement in fostering relationships, resulting in heightened pressure for continual accessibility while avoiding excessive consumption (Fast, 2021). Nonetheless, empirical evidence supporting these conceptual contributions is limited, prompting the focus of this study.

The questionnaire gathered data on respondents' online time assessment and explored behaviors across diverse scenarios, including social settings with family and friends, as well as in spatial and temporal contexts like nature and holidays. It also probed perceptions of responsibility in digital disconnection.

The findings reveal distinct gender dynamics: women provide more critical assessments of screen time, frequently reporting that they spend too much time on smartphones and offering higher estimates of their online duration compared to men. Nevertheless, women exhibit a greater tendency to engage in digital disconnection within the listed settings than men. While men also report mindfulness about their behavior, they often exhibit a more relaxed approach, considering digital media use a personal matter and expressing more reluctance towards external interventions compared to women.[2]

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[1] The survey welcomed, but did not manage to engage non-binary respondents.
[2] Exact numbers will be presented at ECREA and are left out due to space considerations.

ARS06 Audiences and contexts of disconnection

PP 0272 Young adults' experiences and coping with digital violence

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The increased use of digital media and social platforms in society is multiplying the opportunities to commit digital violence. Around three-quarters of German internet users state that they have already observed hate online, and one in three has already experienced digital violence (Reset/Pollytix 2021). Young adults of Generation Z in particular are affected by digital violence, but according to the German NGO HateAid, they are also the group least likely to seek help from professional services. Based on the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (TMSC, Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), this project sheds light on this paradox by investigating a) how this age group experiences digital violence, b) how they appraise the threat of digital violence and their ability to cope, and c) which coping strategies they resort to in comparison to other generational cohorts.

We conducted a quota-based quantitative survey among German internet users (N = 3.367) via a professional survey institute. As adult Generation Z was the focus of our interest, we sampled n = 1.868 respondents aged 18 to 27 years. To gain insights into generational differences, we additionally recruited participants from the generational cohorts of adolescents of Generation Z (14 to 17, n = 501), Millennials (28 to 42, n = 498), and Generation X and older (43 or older, n = 500).

Confirming earlier findings, chi-square tests show that young adults of Generation Z are most likely to have seen digital violence (63.1%), followed by adolescents of Generation Z (54.5%), Millennials (46.8%), and Generation X and older (25.2%). Furthermore, they are significantly more likely to experience digital violence (29.6%) as compared to adolescent Generation Z (23.0%) and Generation X or older (9.2%), while showing similar levels to Millennials (26.3%).

A series of ANCOVA models revealed unique patterns in how adult Generation Z appraised digital violence. Specifically, they perceived higher levels of threat to their reputation and showed more self-blame when experiencing digital violence (threat appraisal) as compared to older generational cohorts. At the same time, they reported significantly lower levels of self-efficacy across a range of coping behaviors (coping appraisal).

Lastly, we assessed how often adult Generation Z used different coping strategies on a scale from 1 – *Never* to 4 – *Regularly*. Technical coping, such as blocking or reporting messages, emerged as the most common form of coping (M = 2.87, SD = 0.79), followed by seeking out support from friends and family (M = 2.45, SD = 0.97). Seeking help from helplines or the police ranked lowest (M = 1.51, SD = 0.70). We found no significant differences in coping behaviors between the generations.

Consequently, while adult Generation Z appears to be most affected by digital violence, they have not developed a more active coping repertoire. Based on the TMSC, threat and coping appraisals might explain this pattern: While adult Generation Z acknowledges the threat caused by digital violence, self-blame and low efficacy beliefs might hinder them from coping more actively with digital violence.

ARS06 Audiences and contexts of disconnection

PP 0273 Media-saturated teen lives: No space or time for non-media moments (and being bored)?

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For teens in the global north, the media-saturated reality – composed of smartphones, platforms, and legacy media – is by and large taken for granted. Digital disconnection may have surfaced as a countercultural response and a research field (Agai, 2022), but for most teens, media remain a ubiquitous element of daily life (Hasebrink & Paus-Hasebrink, 2022).

The present study picks up on a societal concern: that the media-saturated lives of teens leave little room for being bored as a meaningful and constructive state of being. The study elucidates the various functions of media, and if and how these functions tie in with (escaping) a state of boredom. I apply a regulatory theory of boredom, which understands the state of boredom as a functional emotion, equipped to inform us of an unpleasant situation and to push us to pursue and re-establish a meaningful or satisfactory situation (Elpidorou, 2018).

Empirically, I rely on qualitative interviews with 24 Norwegian adolescents (aged 15–19). Participants were asked about the platforms, media, and types of content they have habituated, and to reflect on their experiences of the roles and functions these played.

The analysis delineates the functions of media by identifying three types of media experiences, and how these relate to (escaping) boredom: (1) Ambient media experiences are characterised by the pervasive presence of media in daily life. This is exemplified by the recurring phrase, "I listen to music all the time" or by the practice of playing

YouTube-videos in the background while doing other activities. The opportunity to add media as a layer to everyday situations reflect how non-media moments per se indicate a state of boredom. (2) Atomized media experiences involve brief, disconnected bits of content (and sociability) suitable for filling in-between-moments. Scrolling social media feeds exemplify how these experiences consist of disparate short pieces, tailored to a wandering mind, often serving as a default escape from boredom. (3) Attentive media experiences demand a level of effort, attention, and immersion. They often – but not exclusively – connect to legacy media like books, films, and TV-series. Typically ritualized and highly valued for the flow-like states of being they activate; the function of these media experiences is not primarily to escape boredom, but some participants report feeling bored if the content is too demanding.

The findings portray how media always represent a potential way out of boredom. I conclude by discussing what they offer in terms of escape and argue that neither ambient, atomized nor attentive media experiences by default result in teens no longer being able of tolerating or reaping creative rewards of boredom.

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ARS06 Audiences and contexts of disconnection

PP 0274 Coping with news doubt. Exploring user-driven tactics to deal with uncertainty about the news

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Hate speech, disinformation, information overload… our networked news environment can feel increasingly overwhelming for news users. One element contributing to that feeling is uncertainty about the extent to which information is factually correct, objective or telling the whole story, which we have previously explored and labelled **news doubt** (Authors, in review). The research at hand seeks to explore **how news users deal with doubt in the news**. We seek to broaden the focus on verification, authentication and the efficacy of fact-checks often found in disinformation studies (Tandoc et al, 2018) by zooming in on the **coping tactics news users develop** themselves.

Existing studies have started to shed light on some of the tactics that users adopt to navigate the news landscape, such as **generally being sceptical** about online, algorithmically selected information (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2019) or **pragmatically trusting** certain sources of news (Schwarzenegger, 2020). Our study builds on these insights but seeks to focus more specifically on the critical moment of feeling uncertain about the factuality or neutrality of news stories.

Therefore, the article builds on a series of **31 in-depth interviews** conducted in two rounds between February and September 2023 in Belgium. In the first round, we selected people purposefully based on the extent to which they doubt about the news; in the second round, we selected only people aged 16 to 24. We also aimed for diversity of respondents in terms of political preferences.

The results suggest that news users adopt several **energy preservation tactics** to cope with doubt. Participants showed various paths of least resistance, be it by moving on and treating doubt as a passing feeling or by adopting doubt as a useful sentiment keeping them on their toes when using news. The tactics participants would adopt seemed mainly determined by their attachment to the topic. How they experienced feelings of doubt – as a positive, negative or neutral 'part of life' – was also a factor in which tactic they employed. Finally, we observed that some participants were quite open to verification tactics but were not sufficiently aware on how to find relevant ones when they were experiencing doubt towards a news item, or expected fact-checks to 'find them' in networked environments.

We conclude by reflecting on how insights in these coping tactics to deal with doubt can offer inspiration for **new forms of media literacy interventions** that are grafted on and aimed at strengthening bottom-up user tactics to navigate the news environment.

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ARS06 Audiences and contexts of disconnection

PP 0275 Audiences of alternative news sites in Germany – Patterns of overlap and fragmentation in comparative perspective

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The German media landscape has witnessed the rise of a variety of new media outlets online that establish themselves as "alternatives" to a media mainstream (Holt et al. 2019, Heft et al. 2020, Schwaiger 2022). Most pronounced is the emergence of sites with a right-wing ideological stance and sites focussing on conspiracy theories and esoteric topics. Alternative German online news sites with pronounced left-wing ideology are rather in decline. A fourth type refrains from displaying an explicit political stance but emerges as professional, topic-driven alternatives vis-à-vis commercialized mass media (Schwaiger 2022), while another type of alternative stands out by its pro-Russian stance. The new diversity of sources spurred concerns about audience fragmentation into homogeneous 'echo chambers' in which audiences are primarily exposed to content that conforms to their existing beliefs (Pariser 2011, Rau & Stier 2019). While research on general audience's media repertoires and overlaps has shown that they have a diverse repertoire and exhibit cross-partisan media exposure (Rau & Stier 2019, Dubois & Blank, 2018), research has scarcely focused on audiences of the variety of alternative news sites, which could form a particular segment of the population more likely to self-select into partisan communities (Dubois & Blank, 2018; Bruns, 2017). We argue that research on audience fragmentation and overlap patterns needs to consider the diversity of alternative news sources and their particular user communities. In addition, research has not accounted for the intensity of media usage. We address these gaps by a twofold comparative study across the users of different types of alternative media and frequent and occasional users. We ask to what extent users of different types of alternative media integrate legacy media sources into their media repertoire and how ideologically coherent the usage patterns are (RQ1). In addition, we scrutinize whether and how frequent and occasional users of alternative media differ in their patterns of usage fragmentation or overlap (RQ2).

We expect distinct patterns of audience overlap and fragmentation per alternative media types, given that audiences of left-wing and right-wing alternative media differ in their media trust and mainstream media cynicism (Jackob et al., 2019; Schindler et al., 2018; Cardenal et al. 2019). In addition, we expect differences in the patterns of centralization or fragmentation between frequent and occasional users of alternative news. We test these assumptions based on a novel online survey among over 2.000 alternative media users in Germany. Building on the network approach to study audience overlap (Webster & Ksiazek, 2012; Mukerjee et al., 2018), we compare degrees of audience fragmentation and ideological segregation versus overlap across 14 legacy newspapers and TV news shows and 32 popular alternative online media representing distinct alternative media types, which were used for political news. This methodology conceptualizes media outlets as nodes, with the co-occurrence of two outlets within a user's media repertoire forming a tie (Ksiazek, 2011). Centrality scores are subsequently employed to ascertain how much a media outlet shares its audience with other outlets (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2017; Mukerjee et al., 2018).

ARS07 Audiences and audiovisual identities

PP 0356 Cultural diversity and representation of film and audiovisual production from small European countries on the catalogues of major streaming platforms in Europe

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This paper departs from ongoing research in the scope of the HORIZON EU-funded project CresCine, which aims to study audiences' preferences in order to help increasing the competitiveness of the film and audiovisual industries from small European countries while ensuring cultural diversity and choice is protected across Europe as foreseen in all European treaties. Our research is focused on the degree of diversity depicted by the catalogues of major streaming platforms in Europe on what concerns the level of representation of production coming from the six small European countries studied in the project (Denmark, Portugal, Estonia, Lithuania, Croatia, Belgium). We regard these six countries as exemplary of the rich diversified European audiences and production landscape but also exemplary of the challenges the promotion of media diversity faces in a context where audiences are catered for by global platforms regardless of national borders, cultural or linguistic specificity and with little concern for the promotion of diversity. Our research design both covers the in depth of the catalogues from both major and minor OTT streaming platforms in six European countries, in order to assess to what extent these catalogues include contents from those nations and the qualitative collection of data amongst different audience segments across these countries in view

of assessing perceptions of diversity, actual integration of diversity in the catalogues and consequences of this for audiences perceptions of diversity in what concerns film and audiovisual content use and consumption in Europe. Systematic searches in these catalogues (which, although the provider may be international, differ from region to region or country to country) provide not only a means for assessing the presence of productions from small European nations, but also insight regarding issues such as discoverability, usefulness of the dedicated search engines of those platforms and taxonomy/categorisation of archiving. Contrasting this data with the actual perceptions of audiences gives us a better understanding, not only of the actual efficiency of different policies geared towards the protection of diversity in Europe, in particular the AVMSD – Audiovisual Media services Directive – but also how audiences perceptions and behaviors are molded by the curation strategies different platforms adopt in the design and maintenance of their catalogues. The presentation will make an overview of the state of affairs regarding the film and audiovisual market in Europe to then delve into the main research question. After describing the methodology of the searches we shall present the results and proceed to their subsequent discussion. The ultimate goal is to present original research and contribute to ongoing discussions about demand and supply in the film and audiovisual market, at a time when streaming services are changing the paradigm of consumption and the cultural and creative industries are undergoing deep transformations as a result of the convergence of the widespread of these novel technologies and long-lasting issues concerning financing, production, circulation and exhibition, not to mentioning the key role AI has in segmenting audiences and ensuring the curation of these catalogues.

ARS07 Audiences and audiovisual identities

PP 0357 Migrations, film and memory activism: Reception studies with youth students

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Memory cannot be conceived outside its socio-political context (Halbwachs,1994). Although migration is an international phenomenon, the situation for migrants varies from country to country according to specificities of legislation, attitudes, and media debates (Brunow, 2021). In the Portuguese context, conflicts related to the colonial past are unavoidable regarding current migration experiences. For a long time, the propagation of myths and stereotypes legitimized colonialism as a positive endeavor. These persistent discourses are still inscribed in the public arena, influencing the opportunities of migrants and minority groups (Cabecinhas, 2023; Macedo et al., 2023). Today, many people who occupy a place of otherness in Portuguese society are immigrants from the former colonies and their descendants, many of whom are Portuguese citizens who do not have their citizen status socially recognized and are the target of discrimination.

This paper aims to discuss the potential of films to memory activism through the process of reception. The strategic discussion of the past through images and narratives of otherness is a powerful way to combat the asymmetrical circulation of stories and the forgetting or erasure of some people from hegemonic media discourses (Gutman & Wüstenberg, 2023; Macedo et al., 2023). This research used the focus group as a data collection technique. This technique has great potential, especially in action research, since the participants not only present their discourse on a given topic but also interact and are confronted with the discourses of others. A total of 62 students participated in 10 focus groups. Most were Portuguese (90.3%), followed by Brazilian (4.8%). Ages ranged from 14 to 19 years (M = 16; SD = 1.0); the majority of participants, 40 (65.6%), identified themselves as female.

The students saw the film *Nha Shu* (José Magro, 2021), which portrays the daily life of Issa, a Bissau-Guinean footballer who plays in Portugal, exposing the voices and representation of the others behind the camera. It is a faux documentary that discusses the daily difficulties immigrants such as Issa, whose citizen status is not socially recognised, face in Portugal. The form it represents migrants is a metaphor for the stereotypical modes of representation we see in Portuguese society, and the narrative exacerbates it. After watching the film, the students were divided into subgroups with an average of six participants and discussed the film shown, film viewing habits, and the topics of migration and colonialism, among others.

When long-silenced stories of discriminated people and social groups, such as the story of Issa in *Nha Sunhu*, "come to light", cinema can be a space for memory activism. Focus groups enabled the debate on young students' perceptions about migrants and colonialism, showing how stereotypes persist in their discourses, but also the contestation to hegemonic narratives and deep-rooted prejudices, with moments of conflicting perceptions among them. The dialogues about the film contents can contribute to combatting the asymmetric circulation of stories and memories. Practices of remembering are the goal and means of memory activism. By engaging with other stories, young students can contribute to mnemonic change, transforming society.

ARS07 Audiences and audiovisual identities

PP 0358 RuPaul's Drag Race and everyday life in Europe

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RuPaul's Drag Race (RPDR) is a US competition reality TV show that has gained global popularity and spawned many franchises in Europe since 2009. The audience for RPDR consists mainly of cisgender gay men in their 20s to 40s and young cisgender women (Cracker, 2017). Scholarship on RPDR is dominated by textual and discourse analyses from an American perspective, with few audience studies and only one focusing on a European country (Chronaki 2017). This presentation reports on work in progress that examines cisgender female and cisgender gay male fans of RPDR living in Europe. It is part of a collaborative project that uses interviews in Finnish, English, Spanish, or French to explore the role and importance of RPDR in the everyday lives of fans in Europe, their show-related viewing and communication practices (including on social media), and their accounts of how their personal and collective identities have been influenced by their fandom.

This project follows Cavalcante, Press, and Sender (2023) who argue that in a "post-audience age" marked by the blurring of boundaries between public and private, production and consumption, and the work, leisure, and domestic spheres, reception scholarship should return to "everyday life as a privileged site of audience research" (5). Therefore, the semi-structured small group interviews conducted so far in Finland and Spain have been with naturally occurring dyads and triads, that is, couples or small groups of friends who identify as fans of RPDR and often watch the show together. This allows for a richer and more detailed exploration of the show's significance in the everyday lives of participants than would be possible using the more common strategy of convening focus groups with strangers. So far, 4 small group discussions have taken place with 9 participants. By the time of the ECREA conference, at least 8 more interviews (balanced between cisgender gay male fans and cisgender female fans) are expected to be completed.

The analysis so far suggests that the show plays different roles in the everyday lives of the two types of fans. The cisgender female participants expressed admiration for drag queens and a desire to perform femininities that would be seen as strange in their social contexts. The show appeals to them because it enables them to imagine taking liberties with gender expression that are not normally available to them. For cisgender gay male participants, RPDR fandom functions like what some of them called "gay soccer," a lingua franca of the gay social world that provides a common language and reference points across cultures. These initial findings point to some of the directions that further data collection will pursue until data saturation is reached.

The study depicts RPDR fandom in the everyday lives of cis gay men and young cis women in several European cities. In relation to the conference theme of social (dis)order, it will offer insight into cultural beliefs and values about gender and sexuality at a time when so-called "gender ideology" is under attack by far right politics in Europe (Kötting et al., 2017).

ARS07 Audiences and audiovisual identities

PP 0359 Trust in Czech public service television before and during the time of polycrisis

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In our study using data from three representative surveys of Czech adults conducted in 2019, 2020, and 2022, we focus on how the two recent major crises, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, affected the trust of the Czech audiences in the Czech public service television (CT).

Public service media (PSM) are seen as key high-quality news providers (Van Aelst et al., 2021) and integrative institutions (Donders, 2012; Holtz-Bacha, 2021), and these roles become even more important in crises. In Europe, PSM were essential by continuously reporting on both crises (EBU, 2020; Mihelj et al., 2022; Newman et al., 2022). However, the roles and functions of media, including PSM, depend on the audiences' trust (Fawzi et al., 2021; Strömbäck et al., 2020). According to existing evidence, trust in PSM in crisis may grow (de León et al., 2022; Newman et al., 2022) due to increased media dependency and the need for orientation or the "rally 'round the flag" effect. An increased trust may persist (Knudsen et al., 2023; Newman et al., 2022; Vozab et al., 2023) or decline (Adam et al., 2023; Newman et al., 2022), for example, due to crisis news fatigue and the media cooperative role. Yet, these conclusions do not tackle the situation of subsequent and overlapping crises. Therefore, we explore the evolvement of trust in CT and changes in its selected predictors from the pre-crisis period through the period of polycrisis. Since conditions taking part in shaping trust in media are complex and contextualized (see Fawzi et al., 2021; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014), the predictors we assess include audiences' socio-demographics, media consumption habits, media-related attitudes, political attitudes and social trusts.

Our findings may fruitfully contribute to the debate on the role of PSM (Donders, 2012, 2023). Firstly, in contrast to our expectations, our data show CT trust levels as stable in all three observed years, neither demonstrating increases due to the "rally 'round the flag" effect nor showing declines due to crisis news fatigue or overload. Secondly, CT maintained trust across socio-demographic groups and political attitudes. Thus, though CT played a cooperative role during the pandemic (Motal, 2022), it did not lose its general relevance or was not perceived as "part of the people's troubles" during the polycrisis, except for anti-system viewers. Thirdly, on the contrary, the data suggest that trust in CT acted as a substitute for declining interpersonal trust, which was particularly important for pandemic management (Stefaniak et al., 2022). Fourth, a nexus of trust (Hanitzsch et al., 2018) in other media entities (journalists, media in general, individually important media) implies that well-functioning PSM can act as so-called guardian of trust (Mehta, 2007) in entities in the media field and the field itself. Furthermore, fifthly, the independence of trust in CT from news consumption shows the vital importance of the educational and entertainment function for PSM's ability to maintain audiences' trust (Donders, 2012, 2023; Urbániková & Smejkal, 2023).

ARS07 Audiences and audiovisual identities

PP 0360 Nation-binding or nation-building? Evaluation of the public service mission of Basque public broadcasting over time (2009–2020)

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The role of public broadcasting is to provide quality information to citizens and to expose them to diversity, two functions that are not always fulfilled by media markets. Its mission is based on the principles of professional autonomy and political independence, although public broadcasters show different levels of politicisation (Brüggemann et al., 2014). In polarised pluralistic systems such as Spain's, public media are often politicised (Arriaza-Ibarra, 2013), and are perceived as such by the audience (Azurmendi et al., 2019). In addition to the national public broadcaster (RTVE), there are 13 regional public broadcasters in Spain, created as a result of decentralisation to reinforce regional identities and promote minority languages.

Studies show that consumption of Spanish national public television is driven by ideology and partisanship (Humanes, 2014; Humanes & Valera-Ordaz, 2023), and that Catalan public television is consumed much more significantly by Catalan independence supporters and those who declare a Catalan national identity (Valera-Ordaz, 2023), so that there is a clear national segmentation of news audiences. However, most regional public television channels have not yet been explored.

This paper fills this gap in the literature and analyses the factors that predict the consumption of Basque public television (EITB) over a period of 11 years (2009–2020), using four post-electoral studies related to the Basque elections of 2009, 2012, 2016 and 2020. Using multivariate analysis, we explore how national identity, voting for Basque nationalist parties and mother tongue influence EITB consumption, controlling for age, social class, gender, educational level and ideology on the left-right axis. The results show that voting for Basque nationalist parties and feeling exclusively Basque are the most important predictors of EITB consumption -above cultural traits such as the mother tongue-, so that cross-sectional exposure to EITB is significantly compromised. Finally, we discuss the normative implications of these results in light of public broadcasters' mission to promote both political diversity and regional identities.

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ARS08 The platformisation of everyday life

PP 0476 Rethinking Platform Studies: The ontological and epistemological challenges of researching platforms and the case for renewing ethnomethodology

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If media have traditionally been studied in three aspects, i.e. production, media text and reception, algorithms have now become the *de facto* equivalent of the media text in the age of mass automated personalization.

Ontologically, three features of algorithms complicate researching them:

1) *Hyper-modulation*: Unlike older objects of media studies such as films, news, songs, photographs, novels, TV shows, etc., algorithms do not have a fixed textuality. Thus, most empirical attempts at studying them face validity issues. For example, a film's audience may interpret it differently, but they all view the same film, even if at different time and space. But an Instagram feed is almost unique to each user at a specific time and space. No user or researcher can experience the same algorithmic flow twice.
2) *Invisibility*: Algorithms are infrastructural to platforms and thus invisible to users. E.g. people may be able to speak of their experiences with their toaster, television set, or hairdryer, but not of their underlying enabler, electricity. Even when it is disrupted, they may still talk about their frustrations with why they cannot use many of their electric devices rather than the electricity itself.
3) *Inextricability*: Algorithms are tightly interwoven with one another, with platforms' core codes, and with the user data; they cannot be experienced on their own. As an analogy, people watch films as a whole; they do not experience directing, script, cinematography, set and costume design, and acting separately. In a similar way, users experience platforms, not as the sum of isolated aspects of encryption, content servers, personalized feeds, graphical interface, etc.

Given the distinct and disruptive ontology of algorithms and the challenges of a presentative epistemology, this paper proposes a pragmatist epistemology and thereby a conceptual model which views platforms as social figurations with two embedded processes at its core: *datafication* and *personalization*.

Datafication consists of *surveillance* and *categorization* and it is oriented to the present time. Surveillance links human life to digits, resulting in an ever-modulating relation which can be called *life-digits* or data. Categorisation is linking these *life-digits*(data) to each other in the present time.

Personalization is oriented to the near future and consists of two sub-processes of *prediction* and *allocation*. *Prediction* is a re-categorization toward the future; it is a speculative reconfiguration of the links between life-digits, or data relations based on the existing categories. *Allocation*, on the other hand, is a future-oriented reversal of surveillance, a process in which predictions (which are themselves relations between data relations) are disentangled down toward life qualities and materialities.

This cyclic and processual model of platforms opens up possibilities for different research methods.Given how platforms have become infrastructures of sociality, the paper concludes with proposing a renewal of ethnomethodological breaching experiments (Garfinkel, 1967) which disrupt the platforms' personalized affordances in order to enrich user experiences of them and thereby the qualitative research methods.

ARS08 The platformisation of everyday life

PP 0477 Struggles over curation: A communication framework for analysing user-generated content on social media platforms

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This paper develops a communication framework to the analysis of user-generated content (UGC) on social media platforms. Taking the metaphor of "curation" as a starting point (Hogan, 2010), I suggest a framework that attends to the communication dynamics between three actors – service providers, account owners and followers – involved in a 'struggle to curate' UGC on social media platforms.

Understood as an emergent form of cultural expression on social media, curation is fundamentally different than forms of public communication that predate social media, such as deliberation. On social media, public communication should not be seen as a dialogue from which consensus emerge, as in the Habermasian public sphere (Habermas & Burger, 2008). Rather, communication on these platforms is a performance where actors are strategically trying to influence the line to be maintained (Goffman, 1982).

The framework emphasises the struggle between three actors – service providers, account owners and followers – in the maintenance of curated spaces. Inspired by Hall (1980), who conceived media consumption as a site of struggle over meaning between senders and audiences, we look at these actors and their struggle over curation in

a similar fashion. The framework proposes three dimensions by which the struggle over curation can be observed – platform curation, brand curation and social curation – and define actors' roles accordingly. 1) Platform curation is the realm of affordances, interface and roles (as defined by technology). 2) Brand curation concerns itself with the visibility and exposure of the actors. 3) Social curation pertains to the social, interactive and normative behaviors of the actors. These three dimensions allow the dynamic mapping of the socio-technical (i.e. symbolic-material) power for each actor in concrete situations of communication and are effectively sites of struggle over curation that can be studied empirically.

Regarding the materiality of curated spaces, with Facebook as an example, platform providers can censor or hierarchize UGC, giving them more or less visibility. Page owners can introduce UGC or hide them, while users can only respond or share. Symbolically, platform providers can provide terms of service to regulate UGC, page owners can encourage norms of conduct, while users can police other users, even page owners, for their inappropriate behavior on the curated space. Material and symbolic contestation or support constitute the main dynamics of curation. As such, curated spaces are either normative or contested spaces depending on how the performances of the three actors align or not with one another.

To understand communication on social media, and avoid considering UGC as decontextualized artifacts, we need to consider not only the medium and technology, but also pay attention to meanings and social uses, user expectations and mutual orientations, norms and conventions, that is, a host of dynamics that are too often excluded in the analysis of social media (Lomborg, 2011).

ARS08 The platformisation of everyday life

PP 0478 Vulnerability as a resource for tacit agency in datafied environments

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In this study, we aim to understand people's sense-making of their lived experiences in datafied environments as a combination of technological aspects of platformed media and varying modes of affective agency. Everyday datafication and how we live with data means living in a world of uncertainty, where vulnerability is taken for granted. Individuals try to cope in these environments and make the data "feel all right" (Pink et al. 2018). The prevalent narrative paradigm surrounding digital infrastructures suggests that the future they project through data is inevitable, and people feel locked into it. It seems that algorithmic operational environments cannot be resisted if one intends to remain on digital platforms (Markham 2020). Individuals make increasingly sense of the world through relations they live on digital platforms. But at the same time, this causes a constant balancing between invisibility/visibility, since datafied environments are based on the thrive for constant presence and visibility (Treré 2021). Environments are also hard to resist (since to log-out would mean risking one's presence – not only in platforms but through them also in digital (wellfare) society. Thus, people are aware of their vulnerable positions as they act and make sense of the world through and on digital platforms.

We draw from the literature review in which we mapped research literature on vulnerability, in the context of datafication from 2015 to 2020 (authors 2021). For the literature review, we searched the material from databases and digital libraries of social and communication sciences. Based on our literary review, we utilize the concept of vulnerability as a theoretical tool to analyze the possibilities and constraints caused by algorithmic power of social media platforms for modes of agency and relations between self and others. Our empirical dataset consists of diary-interview data, collected in Finland in 2020–21 among three different participant groups: unemployed persons, undocumented migrants, and professional actors. The total number of participants was 63. These groups vary in their levels of predetermined vulnerabilities and precarious positions, as well as their motivations for participating in digital environments. However, they all face a fundamental obligation to the digital presence, and their affective experiences have many similar features. We argue that vulnerability operates as a way of managing and enduring uncertain algorithmic conditions but simultaneously, it also may function as a basis for making decisions or doing ethical assessments.

Our data shows that presence and agency on social media platforms demand vulnerability, and at the same time vulnerability operates as an ethical resource for interpreting and justifying one's own and others' action. The imbalance between platform power and individual opportunities for the agency is striking, but still, individuals cope and make sense of their every day, in and through these uncertain and ambiguous environments. However, due to their vulnerabilities, our participants were able to take the position of tacit agency that may seem minor but entails continuous orientations and choices in one's daily life (Honkasalo 2018).

ARS08 The platformisation of everyday life

PP 0479 The platformization of attention

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The forthcoming paper explores how development in platform-based services and the mechanisms intrinsic to these services influence reading attention.

New modes of media consumption have emerged due to the fast and vast growth in digital content available through platform-based services. The changes following in the wake of digitalization and the implications to the media audiences are thoroughly explored and recognized in a range of works, each of them emphasizing different perspectives, such as the power structures emerging under *Platform Capitalism* (Srnicek, 2016), the societal order and temporality in *The Mediated Construction of Reality* (Couldry & Hepp, 2017), the mechanisms in *The Platform Society* (Dijck et al., 2018), and the care for a balanced media consumption through the emerging need of a *Digital Detox* (Syvertsen, 2020).

I seek to understand better how ubiquitous digital connectivity influences long-form reading – on the premise that long-form reading is an act of prolonged attention. My exploration of reading in the context of this paper relates to sustaining attention despite continuous digital connection. The aim is to identify some poignant traits in how the systematic, algorithm-based structures influence the daily practices of the reading audiences: the routines, the motivation, and the concentration necessary to perform long-form reading.

The empirical material demonstrates a pointed influence, especially from two types of competing media to the literary content: TV series and social media. In a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), I will apply the concepts of datafication, selection and commodification, recognized as driving forces in platform-based services (Dijck et al., 2018). Thus, in the analysis, I will follow up on perspectives like the nuances in impact, the meaning of physical surroundings, the consequences on reading concentration, and the precautions to go on reading.

For now, I state two key findings: To ensure limited periods of digital disconnection turns out essential to acquire sustained concentration. Thus, 'the disconnected presence' creates an advantage for keeping cognitive attention over time. Further, the readers' motivation and ability to stay focused seem deeply intertwined with grown habits and personal values. Hence, 'the habit of concentration' emerges as a striking advantage in matters that need prolonged attention.

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ARS08 The platformisation of everyday life

PP 0480 AI-generated pictures and their influence on epistemic emotions, perception and online engagement on X (Twitter)

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Since the large language model ChatGPT and generative AIs like Midjourney launched, concerns about the use of AI-generated content for political disinformation have risen. The easy accessibility of the software enables users to produce and spread false information on a large scale resulting in a threat for modern democracies. So far, there is little research investigating the effects of AI-generated political content on recipients. This includes the crucial role of emotions and in particular epistemic emotions. Epistemic emotions are related to knowledge and its acquisition, e.g. curiosity or confusion. They are most often evoked when new information contradicts one's existing knowledge. This could be the case particularly when confronted with AI-generated pictures due to the varying degrees of authenticity. The potential cognitive incongruity that could be caused by such pictures could lead to specific epistemic emotions which in turn could affect how political disinformation is perceived.

Therefore, we conducted an online experiment (N = 138) with four groups to test whether AI-generated pictures would affect the participants' epistemic emotions, perception, and online engagement. All participants were presented a fictitious X (fka. Twitter) post about activist Greta Thunberg traveling on a private jet. One group had a real picture of Thunberg attached to the tweet. Two groups saw an AI-generated picture showing Thunberg at an airport, where both AI-pictures varied in terms of authenticity. The low authenticity condition contained clear indications that the image was produced by AI, e.g., distorted angles and perspectives or a lack of sharp facial contours. The reference group didn't receive a picture. The variables queried were: the epistemic emotions curiosity, surprise and confusion, the perception of Thunberg, the likelihood of engaging with the post, the interest to seek further information and the perceived credibility of the post.

Results showed that epistemic emotions significantly increased the interest in further information seeking ($p < .001$, $R2 = 0.195$, $\beta = .441$), especially curiosity ($p < .001$, $M = 2.824$, $SD = 1.065$), whereas surprise mediated between the stimulus and interest [effect = .109, bootstrap SE = .063, 95% CI [0.1089, 0.2533]]. Nevertheless, there were no significant differences between the four group's perception of Thunberg, epistemic emotions, likelihood of engaging with the post, or perceived post credibility. These results indicate that participants did not notice that they were exposed to AI-generated pictures – even when exposed to a rather unauthentic picture that should be detected as a fake more easily.

The results highlight the potential danger of AI-usage for democratic processes due to their impact on the reception of political information. Participants showed no significant differences regarding their epistemic emotions as well as the perceived post credibility. This could be dangerous in that epistemic emotions did not act as an 'early warning system' alerting a person to possible inconsistencies and a lack of authenticity in social media content. Future research needs to study the potential influence of epistemic emotions in greater detail and explore their impact on the reception of political disinformation.

ARS09 Dimensions of news avoidance

PP 0588 Rethinking Informative Content and Journalistic Actors on visual Platforms: An Audience Perspective

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Among young adults, visual platforms are crucial for information dissemination (Newman et al., 2023). Consequently, TikTok, Instagram & YouTube have been declared as very large online platforms (VLOPs) by the European Commission, highlighting their significance in the European Union's information landscape (*DSA*, 2023). Understanding how news is disseminated and received on those platforms is essential. Information dynamics experience an ongoing disruption through (visual) social media platforms. To explore information dissemination on such platforms, researchers need to understand what and whom users perceive as news and information. Only then can one correctly assess the impact such information has on users through cognitive heuristics being triggered (e.g., trust).

Past work undermines that need, finding that for younger generations, news and informative content are defined by the content rather than its source and broadly defined than for older generations (Schneiders, 2023; Swart, 2021). Initial studies employed the 'news-ness' concept as a theoretical concept to explore news use and news content on social media (Anter & Kümpel, 2023; Vraga & Edgerly, 2023). Following this line of research, the current study aims to expand our knowledge of what actors and what content young adults perceive as informative on visual social media platforms. Such content and actor-focused perspective with an emphasis on visual social media is missing so far. We explore what role age, gender, level of education, and the platform play in the respective perceptions.

This paper employs the *news-ness* concept, focusing on audience definitions and viewing news-ness as a spectrum (Edgerly & Vraga, 2020). Like Anter & Kümpel (2023), we reinterpret *news-ness* as *informative-ness* to work with a concept that includes the multi-faceted idea of news but leaves space for participants to think beyond traditional and narrow news definitions.

We conducted eight focus groups, with each group consisting of six participants with equal gender distribution (N = 48) living in Germany. The groups composition controls for age and level of education. Each participant did at-home tasks beforehand, giving us an initial list of the actors participants perceive a) from the top of their heads, b) when scrolling through their feed, and c) when specifically thinking of informative actors. We asked the participants to order their collected actors regarding their *informative-ness*. Those answers were summarized in a figure – presenting group-specific actor groups ordered based on *informative-ness*. The figures served as a basis for discussion during the group discussion – to explore the reasoning behind participants' perceptions of what actors are informative. *The same procedure was conducted with content types.*

The analysis is a work in progress and is based on the initial homework answers, the discussion transcripts, and the final figures. It will result 1) in a taxonomy of informative content and actors and 2) explain how and why young

adults perceive and classify certain content and actors on visual platforms as informative. The project contributes novel insights to the audience perspective research, and the taxonomy can serve as the basis for subsequent quantitative work connected with digital trace data and supervised machine learning – making audience research scalable.

ARS09 Dimensions of news avoidance

PP 0589 Avoiding the news but still feeling connected? A typology of news users based on the role of news for their connection to different publics

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Democratic theory places the public sphere at the core of a functional democratic society (Dahlgren, 2009; Habermas, 1989 [1962]). While expectations about citizens' contributions to public spheres vary between theories, the shared ideal is that of an "informed" or "engaged" citizen using news for political learning and participation (Carpini & Keeter, 1996). However, the overwhelming amount of (mostly negative) information available can burden citizens. This is evident in the increasing number of news avoiders (Newman et al., 2023). Simultaneously, shifts in media production, distribution, and consumption enable citizens to connect to public spheres through communication practices beyond hard news consumption.

Facing these trends of news avoidance and the reconceptualization of "news-ness" (Edgerly & Vraga, 2020), our goal is to explore whether the consumption of journalistic news sources remains crucial for individuals to feel connected to various public spheres. This research is grounded in the concept of public connection repertoires, individuals' structured patterns of connection to different publics (Hasebrink, Merten, & Behre, 2023). Individuals may connect to the polity publics of their home country, and/or the more localized public of their hometown, an interest group dedicated to a specific topic, or a group of people sharing a particular aspect of identity (e.g., the Taylor Swift fan community). In this paper, we introduce a typology of news users based on the personal importance of news for their individual public connection.

Our typology stems from the analysis of 99 qualitative interviews with 59 participants (aged 18–90 years) in Germany from 2019 to 2022. The main recruiting approach aimed at maximum diversity to cover the full range of public connection practices. In a second recruiting step, we included participants who describe themselves as news avoiders or news omnivores. In the interviews, adopting an individual-centric perspective and starting from the general concept of public connection instead of news use, all communicative practices crucial for a person's public connection were considered, including non-media sources like interpersonal communication. Public connection was analyzed across affective (e.g., sense of belonging to a respective public), cognitive (e.g., perceived self-efficacy to participate in the public), motivational (e.g., interest in information about the public), and action-oriented (e.g., participation) dimensions.

The analysis is ongoing, but we can already identify news avoiders who, despite not relying on traditional journalistic sources, still rate highly in terms of their affective, motivational connection to public spheres and employ action-oriented media practices to connect to local or national publics. These results challenge the assumption that a broad and diverse news repertoire is a precondition for a strong sense of belonging to public spheres. Our typology considers different news consumption practices, incidental news exposure, news-finds-me perceptions, and trust when connecting to various publics, aiming to contribute to differentiating practices and effects of news consumption.

ARS09 Dimensions of news avoidance

PP 0590 Masculinization and urbanization of news avoidance: The case of young people in Portugal

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News consumption is shaped by the most profound ideals of democracy. Consuming news is linked to a deep sense of being informed and interested in the civic realm as well as to a sense of learning about public issues. However, citizens are increasingly feeling the need to break from news. Negative reasons to avoid or reject depressing news are often associated to a moment in life or to specific issues, such as violence or politics. People opt out from disturbing and disappointing news, even if they feel guilty about thinking in this way, since they have internalized that one must consume news to be a "good citizen". In addition, news consumption, and news about politics, has been traditionally more associated to men in urban contexts.

In turn, resistance studies, and the work developed by Louise Woodstock in particular, have been identifying news resistance as a form of political and civic action as well as an act of democratic engagement – proposing an alternative perspective to the normative news-democracy narrative.

Furthermore, news avoidance tends to be characterized as the opposite of news consumption – that is, this practice is predominantly conceptualized as a dichotomizing stance (i.e., consumption vs. avoidance). This paper aims to move beyond this approach, by looking at what we call facets of news avoidance: a behavior of limited use of news that integrates consumption and avoidance in a spectrum of daily life intermittencies. This approach points to multiple dimensions – such as social and technological contexts and generational influences – that make the news avoidance a prismatic and complex field that needs to go under further discussion both as a concept and as an act of citizenship.

With this in mind, we rely on a representative survey on news consumption and digital citizenship conducted in Portugal with 1300 young people (15–24 years), under a project on Youth, news and digital citizenship. This is still work in progress. However, early results point to two surprising results: contrary to what the literature has been saying for a long time, much more boys than girls actively avoid the news and don't find interest in such a content; and these avoiders are mainly residents in urban areas, mainly metropolitan Lisbon and Oporto. This group points to news avoiders that feel that they are well informed trough family and friends, with a special importance given to digital influencers and entertainment professionals in their non-conventional information habits. These findings raise relevant questions around new dynamics of information and politization of this group, which sets them apart from previous generations of News consumers. Together with such empirical interest, our findings also interrogate the literature in novel and defying ways.

ARS09 Dimensions of news avoidance

PP 0591 Incidental digital news consumption of young adults: A mixed methods approach with a representative online survey and focus groups

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Today's digital media ecosystem poses several questions to journalism that, despite not entirely unprecedented, have taken on new dimensions, including how people interact with information as a branch of media content (Murphy, 2023). An array of studies argues that there is an information disconnection between traditional news consumption and the younger generations, which shows reduced concerns in following and engaging with 'serious' societal and global issues (Johnson & Kaye, 2014; Silveira & Amaral, 2018). Another tackled aspect of news consumption by youth concerns the exposure to it being mainly done through social media in a frequently incidental way (Bergström & Jervelycke Belfrage, 2018; Boczkowski et al., 2018). It is mainly through those technologies that young adults get in contact with the news and even share their opinions regarding the covered issues (Ohme, 2020). Studies tend to focus on qualitative-based approaches, sometimes interlaced with quantitative studies, typically, without representative samples. Our study is focused on the following research question: how are young adults' information practices intricated with social media and news apps' usages? This work presents a mixed method strategy, intending to distinguish bigger behaviours with the quantitative method, while possibly identifying reasons that contextualise those behaviours with the qualitative approach. Firstly, an online survey was conducted, characterised by a representative sample of the Portuguese population (N = 1500) aged 18 to 30 years, and according to the country's distribution of diverse socio-demographic factors. Our sample is normally distributed (p-value = 0.95 on the Shapiro-Wilk test), with a margin of error of ±2.53% at the 95% confidence level. The survey was a structured one, had an estimated duration of 30 minutes, and data were analysed with the IBM SPSS software, focusing on descriptive and inferential (bivariate) statistical analysis. Secondly, regarding the qualitative method, a series of six remote focus groups were conducted online, fostering interaction, to a total convenience sample of 31 young adults. Quantitative results revealed that, when having to select their three most used app categories, social media was considered their most used – 1350 times (90.0%). Nonetheless, news apps were selected only 68 times (4.5%). Interestingly, when respondents were asked to rate the perceived importance of app categories on a Likert scale, social media (33.8%) and news apps (34.9%) showed similar percentages. They are two of the three categories with the highest rates of 'Agree' responses. Regarding the focus groups, young adults do not seem to have completely separated news consumption from TV consumption, especially because both are rooted in family interactions with established media patterns. However, most affirm consuming the majority of the news from their social media scrolls, in an incidental way, apart from a few that search for podcasts, when intending to get informed regarding a specific topic. While we encourage future work to deepen our findings, this mixed methods approach revealed that young adults are aware of the need to be informed, even if the consumption tends to be incidental in nature, and typically not based on news apps.

ARS09 Dimensions of news avoidance

PP 0592 The platformization of democracy: Unveiling Generation Z's news consumption in Switzerland

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Summary

This study explores Switzerland's Generation Z's digital news consumption habits, particularly their interaction with political information, trust in news sources, and the media's influence on their views. It examines the "news-finds-me" trend and the notion that Gen Z is "news-deprived." The research includes an app-based study and a three-wave survey during the Swiss national elections in 2023, with 475 participants. Findings indicate that Gen Z uses both traditional and social media, with preferences for YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, and favors concise, video-based political news. They often feel overwhelmed by the news volume and exhibit a gender difference in news quality assessment confidence. The study offers insights into Gen Z as digital natives in a platform-dominated era.

Introduction

Generation Z in Switzerland shows a "news-finds-me" attitude and diminishing news interest, an international trend noted by Reuters (Newman et al., 2022) and observations in Switzerland (foeg, 2023). The digital and platform-centric nature of information brings challenges like misinformation. This study aims to understand Gen Z's political information sources, trust in news, and media's impact on their political views.

State of Art

Young adults tend to avoid news and exhibit selective exposure, leading to "incidental consumption" and reliance on social media and influencers for news (Antunovic et al., 2018; Bergström & Belfrage, 2018; Boczkowski et al., 2018; Park & Kaye, 2020; Haim et al., 2021). This results in fragmented consumption and reduced trust in traditional media (Vogler et al., 2022; Russmann & Hess, 2015; Marquart et al., 2020; Sawalha & Karnowski, 2022).

Method

Our study employs an innovative method: An app-based study coupled with a three-wave survey before, during, and after the Swiss national election campaign. This approach captures comprehensive data on media consumption behavior from N = 475 (331 female, 144 male) participants born between 1996 and 2012, circumventing previous study limitations and focusing on emerging news consumption patterns.

Results

Gen Z engages with traditional and social media, strongly favoring platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and TikTok. They spend significant time on Instagram and TikTok, considering news following on these platforms as important as traditional newspapers. Gen Z values concise summaries and visual storytelling in political content and sources information from traditional news organizations, personal networks, and digital platforms. They incidentally encounter news but often feel overwhelmed by the quantity and complexity of political news. There is a gender gap in confidence in assessing news quality, with males expressing greater confidence than females.

Outlook

Understanding Gen Z's media consumption is crucial for comprehending their political opinions and engagement. The study sheds light on the platformization of news and its effects on Gen Z's media interaction, informing future research and policy on media literacy and democratic participation.

ARS10 Generations and famillies

PP 0682 Digital platforms and family life across generations: A literature review

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Data-driven digital platforms mark a major transformation over the last decade, with family practices seemingly characterised by diversity, choice and negotiation, with digital platforms becoming a vital route to entertainment, work, education and elder care (van Dijck, Poell, & De Waal, 2018). During present times of polarization within and between societies and communities there is a need to better understand how basic units in society such as the family changes over time due to transformations in digital mediation practices (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020).

This paper draws on an ongoing European project titled *'Platforming Families: Tracing digital transformations in everyday life across generations (PlatFAMs)'* (2022–2025) studying three generation families (children, parents, grandparents) in five European countries (Estonia, Norway, Romania, Spain, UK). In this paper we present results from a scoping review of two- and three-generation studies of how families are adjusting to the everyday use of

today's heavily commercialised and globally networked platforms (Plantin, Lagoze, Edwards & Sandvig, 2018). The main research question for this paper is: *In which ways can the existing literature and empirical studies on families, generations and digital technologies inform us about relational aspects of family life?*

Our 'relational lens' (Emirbayer, 1997) refers to the internal and external interpersonal dynamics through which families are constituted, together with the contexts within which they are simultaneously embedded and which they co-construct. This means looking beyond the generally well-researched focus on individual motivations, beliefs and activities to examine the variously collaborative or conflictual negotiation of relationships. Rather than focusing on (media) generations (Bolin, 2023) per se, the aim was to include articles on intergenerational relations with a broad scope of digital media and technologies. Following the screening, 53 studies were included in the final sample for analysis. These were analysed using a coding framework developed specifically for the study, including information about the multigenerational, relational and technological perspective, as well as basic information about the methods, sample and citation details.

While considerable research examines individual uses of social media, we apply a relational lens to reveal the reconfiguration of agency and autonomy within families. Some findings are:

- § Most studies have focused on parent–child relationships, with few studies of older people, or about the relations among the generations. So, we do not yet know much about how families use, imagine or talk about digital platforms.
- § Research does show ways in which family intimacy, belonging, care, conflict and power struggles are now negotiated through using digital platforms.
- § The platformisation of family life creates new opportunities for children and parents to 'do' family, but can create inequalities and also marginalise older people.

Regarding relationality, studies tend to concentrate on 'intimacy' – and how digital technologies reinforce rather than displace traditional forms of contact and care – or on domestic power struggles, increasingly triggered by digital practices. We discuss the potential for a wider research agenda for today's platform society.

ARS10 Generations and famillies

PP 0683 **Support and knowledge exchange between media generations in the appropriation of digital media: Warm expert relationships between older and younger family members**

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Older people in particular often find it difficult to keep up with the fast-paced media changes in a mediatized world (Hepp, Berg & Roitsch, 2017). Older media generations need help in adopting digital media and communication technologies and receive this support particularly within the family, as recent Scandinavian studies have shown (Taipale, 2019; Olsson & Viscovi, 2018). Theoretically, the domestication approach and especially the "warm expert"-concept regain relevance in this context: In the early 2000s, Bakardjieva (2005) found that helpers from close social circles played an important role in providing people with access to the internet. Our project analyzes how such warm expert relationships in families, especially between grandparents and grandchildren, present themselves today and to what extent they contribute to the participation of older people in the digital society.

Based on qualitative interviews with grandparents and grandchildren, we focused our research on the support systems that are practiced in families between the generations in the appropriation of digital media technologies. Each of the ten guided interviews was conducted simultaneously with a grandparent and a helping grandchild. This constellation allowed the warm expert relationship to emerge and be analyzed in the interview itself. (In contrast, most studies in the field interviewed only one generation). Furthermore, we deliberately included families of grandparents with migratory background: We suspected that cross-generational support would be particularly and urgently sought by these elders in order to communicate transnationally with family members abroad.

In the lecture, we present three areas based on our findings and case studies:

1. Support network: It is not just a single person who helps the elderly, but there is a whole network of helpers within the families consisting of children and grandchildren, i.e. 2nd and 3rd generation warm experts. These helpers practice a division of labor that corresponds to their particular media-generational experiences (e.g. grandchildren for smartphones and social media, children for PCs). In the migrant families, help is often seen exclusively as a family matter, while in the other families help is occasionally obtained from outside.

2. Family solidarity and media generations: Grandchildren show high levels of willingness to support their grandparents in media appropriation matters and grandparents gladly accept it. The younger generations emphasize that they want to reciprocate the care that they themselves experienced from their grandparents. While grandchildren patiently deal with their grandparents' need for help, they are far more critical approaching their parents' need for support: due to a media-generational positioning, they expect more media literacy from their parents, who belong to the second media generation, as from their analogue-socialized grandparents.

3. Migrant families: In families with a history of migration, the warm expert relationship is attributed an even higher and in some cases almost existential significance. The grandchildren see themselves as enablers, because it is (only) through their help that the grandparents are capable of maintaining closer communication with family abroad. They also explicitly see themselves as mediators between the grandparents and the (digital) world, enabling societal participation.

ARS10 Generations and famillies

PP 0684 Oscillating parenting in the digital age – The order and disorder of screen time negotiations in Swedish parents everyday life

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'Screen time' has become a catch-all concept for debates on people's dependence of digital devices in general, and children's use of media technology in particular, almost exclusively focusing on negative consequences. While children and young people more often than not are at the center of debates around screen time, parents and their everyday practices are held accountable for monitoring, regulating and controlling their children's screen use. Through 23 in-depth interviews with parents living in Sweden (in two separate rounds of field work during 2019/20 and 2023), this paper explores how parents understand and handle screen time in their daily life. In the empirical material, it quickly becomes apparent that screen time is a dense moral issue, in which parents navigate and negotiate both the values and their related practices in an everyday that is lived in, with and through media technology (in what Couldry and Hepp refer to as "deep mediatization" (2016)). The parents are forced to handle a constant oscillation between order and disorder, continuously assessing and reassessing what they imagine as right or wrong, good or bad. While these parents everyday stories differ in at times fundamental ways, their reference points of what screen time is and the related "best practices" uncover a "shared sense of legitimacy" (Taylor 2004). In many ways, the parents negotiations are situated in "grey areas", where recommendations of screen time and screen use (from, for example, the state, WHO and/or medical associations) come into conflict with the lived everyday. Understanding these grey areas become paramount in unpacking what kind of impact issues around screen time actually has on the social world. The concept of imaginaries (Taylor 2004; Dant 2012; Chambers 2016) is used as a framework to understand parents and their negotiations and practices, which brings light to the complex moral layers the parents describe.

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ARS10 Generations and famillies

PP 0685 Connected social media platforms as new generational (dis)orders: "Platform repertoires" among the Slovenian youth

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The media repertoire model, with its attention to everyday media use and social and communicative figurations, is valuable for understanding how biographical events might influence media use. Some of the more recent research on young audiences' media repertoires suggests that the technological specificity and uses of a medium are not as important for understanding young audiences as conceptualising digital media as an integrated communicative environment. 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 & Wurm, 2021). As young people begin to develop their media habits in early adolescence (Buckingham, 2000; Marchi, 2012; Russo & Stattin, 2017), understanding their media preferences at a broader level and within specific social contexts can also explain an anticipation of their future media habits (LaRose, 2010; Peil & Spaviero, 2017). 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, media repertoires as individually constructed media constellations are not fixed and unchangeable formations. But even within the generationally narrow younger media audiences, some young people manifest their own significant preferences in ways that may confirm the process of social ordering through the expressed media choices in the context of their everyday life.

With the above theoretical considerations in mind, the paper aims to critically examine how the diversity of young people's media choices, on the one hand, and specific communication, cultural and social choices, on the other, construct some new patterns of relatively stable and distinctive media repertoires among young people. In its search for answers, the paper refers to the results of an intensive quantitative study of media repertoires, based on a quantitative survey of a sample of more than 3000 young people aged 12 to 19, conducted in spring 2022. First, the five dominant categories of social media platform preferences are presented, which nicely confirm how some media platform uses go well together and exclude other forms of use: while some social media users are primarily viewers, others are heavy communicators, content creators or intensive players. At a descriptive level, such an analysis extracts the individual elements of media devices, communication patterns and also their content, as well as the contextual backgrounds of everyday circumstances through which such internal differences emerge between an otherwise fairly homogeneous group of young people and their 'social platform repertoires'.

According to our findings, gender, news media practices, attitudes towards books and reading, and active sports participation seem to be the most important differentiating factors that play a role in creating new social boundaries within the teenage groups. Such findings challenge the current understanding of social platforms as general social infrastructures (Bucher 2020) and also help to identify the dominant social and cultural factors that emerge as important generational differences beyond media repertoires as such.

ARS10 Generations and famillies

PP 0686 Media displacement among older internet users: A cross-national longitudinal study

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Numerous studies explored older internet users and various aspects of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) use in later life. Some of these studies suggested a gradual media displacement, in which the use of traditional media declines over time and is replaced by new media. Nonetheless, most previous research overlooked the parallel use of traditional and digital media, and none explored patterns of media displacement over time and in multiple national contexts. As a result, understanding the mechanism (displacement or complementation) of using the digital equivalents of traditional media among older audiences remained limited.

Using data from the three waves of the Ageing + Communication + Technologies (ACT) cross-national longitudinal study, the present research tracked trends in media displacement among 3,483 internet users aged 60 years and older from six countries (Austria, Canada, Israel, The Netherlands, Romania, and Spain) between 2016 and 2020. The data were analyzed using repeated measures ANOVA and linear regression models.

The analysis indicated relatively high levels of displacement in print media, especially newspapers and magazines, that significantly increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Traditional TV and radio displacement levels were low and did not change significantly over time. Being a man, younger age, higher education, and a greater variety of online activities were associated with higher levels of displacement. In addition, Spanish nationality was associated with more displacement, and Austrian nationality with less displacement.

These findings align with the results of previous studies underscoring the older adults' tendency to adhere to familiar media practices. In addition, they show that even the most common newspaper displacement is a relatively slow process and that older internet users replace the device they use to consume mass media content only when the new medium demonstrates a clear advantage over the traditional one. The findings also support previous notions of *selective media displacement* among older adults and reveal the existence of *responsive displacements*, wherein media habits change in response to external stimuli. In the current study, the catalyst was the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both phenomena seem universal and call for changing the prominent ageist view of older adults as conservative and technophobe media users to perceiving them as sophisticated consumers who can adjust their media habits when needed. Improving older adults' digital literacy may yield a higher level of media displacement and consequently impact the successful pursuit and maintenance of personal goals in later life.

ARS11 Invisible audiences

PP 0790 Shame 2.0: experiencing poverty-related shame on social media

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This paper asks the overarching questions: *How do poverty-inflicted people experience shame and stigmatization on social media? And how does shame and stigmatization further shape their use of social media?*

Feelings of shame and stigmatization are often part of the experience of living in conditions of poverty. What is more, shame and stigmatization have long been central issues in poverty research and policy development, due

to their debilitating effects of furthering social exclusion and withdrawal. While media have long been held as a central culprit in framing and communicating stigmatization towards people experiencing poverty, little effort has been made to investigate issues of poverty-related shame and stigmatization on social media. Thus, we have little knowledge about the role of everyday social media use in furthering or alleviating issues of poverty-related shame among social media users in this group. Building on a large-scale qualitative study, this paper explores how poverty-related shame and stigmatization is experienced on social media. The paper is based on two rounds of in-depth interviews with 40 informants living in conditions of poverty in Norway. The informants in this study were recruited from three different socio-demographic groups which are overrepresented in statistics of long-term poverty in Norway. These are social benefit recipients, single parents, and immigrants with non-Western backgrounds. The paper provides case examples of different ways poverty related shame are experienced through social media, how shame is overtly or tacitly expressed, and how shame shapes the use of social media among informants. Furthermore, the paper identifies significant variations in how shame is experienced between the different groups of informants. In this way, this study is important as it sheds light on two interrelated issues. First, it contributes new empirical insights into the processes where shame and stigmatization are encountered on social media. Second, this paper discusses how such encounters shape social media practices among people who experience poverty. In this way, the paper aims to contribute to theoretical discussions about online participation and inhibition within this demographic. Further, it also aims to provide impetus to discussions about the role of poverty-related shame in furthering inequalities of participation on social media, as well as other online spaces.

ARS11 Invisible audiences

PP 0791 Digital divides revisited: Homelessness, leisure and the framing of media research

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The digital divide concept has long been one of the few more concerted efforts in media and communication research to address social inequalities reflected in digital media use (with the knowledge gap hypotheses as a related concept or basis) (see, e.g., van Dijk, 2020; Katz & Rice, 2002). Originally used to describe differences in media use between what was then called the first and the third worlds, the digital divide concept pointed to the potential (negative) consequences of such differences and was later proclaimed to exist in each society. Research has since shown a shift from the access divide to a 'second-level' usage divide (e.g. van Deursen & van Dijk, 2014). Some major critiques have been about the concept's polysemia, its binary structure as well as the underlying technological determinism (e.g. Gunkel, 2003).

For research on the media use of people experiencing rooflessness, the digital divide is one of the few concepts that offers an acknowledgement of social injustice that often accompanies – or actually forms – their media use. We recently completed one such projected (see e.g. Klocke, Lowis & Hartmann, 2022) and have since been trying to make sense of the material gathered (drawn from a survey on media use of homeless people in Berlin, on ethnographic material gathered over three years and from a mobile phone hand-out and accompanying measures). The material offers problematic material with regard to the digital divide concept, especially in regard to potential policy work. This discrepancy is the basis of the discussion offered in this paper.

Our research has shown that media use in the context of homelessness is often characterized by leisure pursuits, which does not conform to the normative expectation of using media to better one's life (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2014). The gap that supposedly needs closing is caused by societal expectations concerning the 'right use' and ultimately 'the right life.' Here, we use Payal Arora's concept of the "leisure divide" (Arora, 2019) – the assumption that the 'third world' should not "come out to play" but come out to work (digitally) – since this concept is potentially equally applicable to precarious/homeless lives.

The paper will introduce the research project and talk more generally about work on homeless people's media use, before it uses the digital divide debate to ask about roofless people's agency and practices on the one hand and the normative expectations of life improvement on the other. It subsequently addresses yet another tension between the researchers' aims and the research outcomes, especially in policy relevant work.

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ARS11 Invisible audiences

PP 0792 Exploring the impact of mediated intergroup interaction quality and expectations on attitude change towards individuals with autism

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Individuals on the autism spectrum are generalized as outgroup members in the media, perpetuating stigmatizing attitudes (Kim, 2020). However, multi-faceted media portrayals of those individuals are also considered as an intervention strategy to combat stigma (Mittmann et al., 2023). Research shows that mediated contact to those "outgroup characters" (parasocial contact) but also identification with ingroup characters who are engaged in interactions with outgroup characters (vicarious contact) can decrease stigmatizing attitudes. Although the Integrated Mediated Intergroup Contact Model (IMIC) connects parasocial and vicarious contact within one model (Wong et al., 2022), it does not consider detailed quality conditions within the intergroup interaction dynamic.

Expanding the IMIC, we assume that identification with an ingroup member who interacts with an outgroup member increases the experienced quality of vicarious interaction (QoVI), subsequently leading to an increase in the parasocial relationship (PSR)**(H1).** Considering that expectations towards outgroup members are influenced by the quality of previous bonds, PSR should be considered as a mechanism, acting as an effective substitute for real-life friendships (Wong et al., 2022). Research also shows that the generalization of positive contact to outgroup attitudes is influenced by the expected quality of contact with outgroup members (QoEC) (Schäfer et al., 2021). Extending these results, we propose that QoVI increases QoEC, increasing positive attitudes **(H2)**. We assume PSR leads to an increase in QoEC **(H3)**. QoCE predicts increase in positive attitudes **(H4)**, suggesting QoEC as a mediator influencing positive attitudes **(H5)**. Based on prior longitudinal approaches, we propose changes in attitudes over time **(H6).**

We conducted a longitudinal online field study using a within-subject design to test the hypotheses. Using the third season of the Netflix-show *Atypical* as a stimulus, which depicted Sam with autism and his social environment. Participants (N = 136) completed a primary survey (t1) and post-viewing questionnaires (t2-t4). Autism attitudes, the PSR to Sam, ingroup identification, QoVI (e.g. Sam + "perceived ingroup character", and QoEC were assessed (α = .78 to α = .88). Results of path analyses show significant effect of identification through QoVI on PSR ($t(1)$ = 2.214, β = .06, p = .02), confirming H1. QoVI over QoEC increase attitudes ($t(1)$ = 4.325, β = .182, $p < .001$), supporting H2. Significant paths from PSR to QoEC ($t(1)$ = 6.859, β = .46, $p < .001$), QoEC to attitudes ($t(1)$ = 4.575, β = .40, $p < .001$) and a mediation from PSR through QoEC to attitudes ($t(1)$ = 3.900, β = .18, $p < .001$) confirm H3 to H5. Latent change modeling slope and the intercept become significant, $Z_i(1) = 79.77$, $p < .001$, $\beta_i = .67$; $Z_s(1) = 5.19$, $p < .001$, $\beta_i = .05$, supporting H6.

Longitudinal results reveal that "Atypical" supports ingroup identification, enhancing the perceived interaction quality and increasing the PSR to Sam. Moreover, our attitudes towards autism are influenced by the PSR with characters like Sam, the intergroup interactions, and expectations regarding future interactions with the "outgroup". This study supports that engaging with complex, long-term narratives about autism can be beneficial for educational purposes.

ARS11 Invisible audiences

PP 0793 Framing the narrative: How media reporting on intimate partner violence against women affects the understanding of the problem

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Globally intimate partner violence (i.e. violence perpetrated by current intimate partners or ex-partners, IPV) is one of the most pronounced forms of violence against women. Media reporting on IPV is criticized for often focusing on individual cases, neglecting structural problems such as the extent of violence against women and lack of places in support services (e.g., Sutherland et al. 2019). Such an individualistic perspective isolates single incidents from another, focusing on providing only the facts of the case and does not situate them in a larger, structural context (episodic framing). This way of reporting suggests that the violence occurred dependent on situational factors and the respective persons involved in it (Cullen et al., 2019). Consequently, violent acts are seen as singular events rather than as a part of larger patterns and structures. In contrast, thematic frames place issues into a broader societal context, focusing on gendered power relations in society and social tolerance toward violence against women (Karlsson et al. 2020). A second, frequently criticized point about reporting on violence against women is that it hardly ever refers to support services (e.g., Sutherland et al. 2019). This could also be recognized by readers as an indication of the size of the problem in society. To test the effect of framing of media reporting on IPV and the mention of support services, an experiment was conducted.

The experiment employed a 3 x 2 between-subjects design (N = 188), creating three fictional journalistic articles: a single case description (episodic framing), a purely thematic report based on real statistics (thematic framing), and a hybrid version. Each article version included a version with and without an infobox featuring references to real support services. Dependent variables included perception of the extent of violence against women, perception of the problem's urgency (Gracia, 2006), and attributions of responsibility using the Domestic Violence Blame Scale (DVBS), which distinguishes between four different blame factors. Sexism was included as a control (Rollero, Glick & Tartaglia, 2014).

Results indicate no effect of the stimuli on the estimated prevalence of IPV in society. In terms of perceived urgency of the problem, physical, psychological and sexual violence was perceived as most severe in the thematic version of the article, as opposed to the episodic or hybrid form. Against expectation, this specifically happened in the article version without support services. When looking at who is to blame for violence, a different pattern emerged: No differences between stimuli where found for societal blame, victim blame, or perpetrator blame for IPV. However, situational blame was perceived highest by participants who read the hybrid form of the article. The presence of support services showed no effect regarding blame. The presentation will address into both the intricacies of the methodological design and the implications of the findings for refining media reporting practices to address the understanding of the societal problem in the audience.

ARS11 Invisible audiences

PP 0794 Making sense of mortality. A qualitative analysis of media users' meaningful experiences with media portrayals of death and dying

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Terror management theory (TMT, Greenberg et al., 1986) assumes that humans avoid thinking or talking about death. However, media users willingly expose themselves to media content addressing the topic of death and mortality. A possible explanation for this paradox is that individuals might use media content as an opportunity to reflect on and make sense of death, rather than completely avoiding the topic. As Das (2022) has argued, eudaimonic media experiences (i.e., meaningful, moving and thought-provoking experiences) can help viewers to find meaning in mortality and to transcend their fear of death. Previous studies have found that meaningful movies can encourage viewers to reflect on death and emotionally process their fear (Wong, 2007; Khoo, 2018; Das & te Hennepe, 2022).

Our study aims to advance this line of research by analyzing the types of death-related media content associated with eudaimonic experiences as well as the content of reflective thoughts about the topic. We conducted a secondary analysis of 166 qualitative interviews about meaningful media experiences and coded all passages related to death and mortality. In these passages, participants discussed different content features (e.g. authenticity, realism, explicitness) and meaning contexts (e.g. death of a loved one, fatal illness) that can prompt reflective thoughts about media portrayals of death and mortality. In addition, participants described their meaningful, moving, and thought-provoking responses and the content of their thoughts – including factual and emotional learning experiences, gratitude for one's own life circumstances, values, virtues as well as social and cultural implications.

In conclusion, our study suggests that meaningful portrayals of mortality and death can be accompanied by eudaimonic entertainment experiences and that they can help individuals to make sense of mortality. Our findings provide initial evidence and a basis for further exploring the potential of media portrayals to reduce the taboo around death and dying.

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ARS12 The conceptual revival of audience research: Questions of affect, identity, media entanglement, semiotics and framing, journalists and their audiences

PN 124 Representation, affect, identity and the conceptual revival of audience research

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While audience research has been conducted for almost a century now, the extent to which it has a prominent place in communication and media studies has differed. Defining moments suggest that different planes of change (policy, political, economic, technological) have all had important implications for how we understand audiences and their relation to media, as well as how to research them. This paper will focus on (the tradition of) qualitative audience research and suggest a short conceptual history in which representation, affect and identity are central terms. Representation in many ways was qualitative audience research's answer to studies of media effects and impact. Its political load worked well with such notions as the 'active' audience and agency as the other side to structure. In today's world of platformized media and amateur content producers, representation has become an unwieldy term, best left to studies of well-defined media texts: movies, tv shows, games. How might we regain it as a powerful tool to speak to the different kinds of politics involved in the use and production of media and in the particular forms and shapes that media content takes? Affect, secondly, is a conceptual late-comer to audience research. The dominance of forms of critical discourse analysis from the late 1990s onwards in audience research worked against a non-psychological understanding of emotion, feeling and the energy and forces that beset our relationship with media. Of course, these are and always have been part of understanding processes of meaning-making. In today's world recouping 'affect' as a key term is all the more important given what can be summarized as polarization and hate speech. This leads immediately to the third key term in the history of qualitative audience research (when that history is tilted towards the last half century). Identity is the social sense of who we are (and who we are not), the ways in which we want to be part of some groups at some points in time and in specific places rather than others. It may well be the case that 'identity' has been overburdened when it comes to understanding investments, pleasures, uses, feelings to do with using and making media. While rituals of media use, the spending of empty time, posting something silly 'just for the lulz' are all part of the canon of audience research, they may be difficult to give their due. In a way, they undermine theorization and our pleasure as researchers in studying and working with audiences. Overall then, this paper's short history aims to argue in favour of a critically contextualized use of the best tools of the trade so that we can meet the challenges of understanding ever deeper mediatizated practices of everyday life. The question 'how media matter' after all is still an open one.

ARS12 The conceptual revival of audience research: Questions of affect, identity, media entanglement, semiotics and framing, journalists and their audiences

PN 125 Relationship status of journalists with their audiences on social media: it's complicated

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Audiences are central to journalism, but they have rarely had the opportunity to directly engage with journalists in their work. Throughout almost the entire history of journalism, journalists had no detailed insights into their audiences, so they imagined them. Journalists imagined their audiences' needs and interests when producing journalism in different formats. Audiences are also key to the financial viability of journalism. Therefore, for journalism to fulfil its purpose and to survive, "journalists have traditionally balanced providing what the public needs and what the audience wants" (Tandoc Jr. 2015, 782). Journalists have always had a special relationship with the audience – a status that could best be described by a phrase derived from social media: "it's complicated". If it was complicated before, what happened when social media entered the relationship between journalists and their audiences? Has this relationship ended, or does it make for a better relationship? This paper explores the potential of social media affordances to bring audiences closer to journalists, through a better understanding of the audience: who they are, what they want, and what their involvement is in the process of producing journalism. Centred on two case studies from Croatia and the United Kingdom, this paper explores how journalists imagine their audiences and the evolution of the journalist-audience relationship within the social media sphere. Social media platforms have positioned themselves as intermediaries between audiences and journalists, making the audience more visible. Yet social media form a somewhat unwelcome element that editors are compelled to factor into their decision-making, and journalists into their work. Journalists seek to retain their role as gatekeepers to command the news production process and to uphold the authority and integrity of their profession, despite social media platforms' potential to facilitate increased interactions between journalists and their audiences, and to enhance newsrooms'

comprehension of audience behaviours. The chapter explores the value and meanings of this unrealized potential to enable journalistic familiarisation and greater engagement with their audiences. With a focus on the conditions imposed by social media's architecture, the case studies reveal how journalists interact with audience members on Twitter and Facebook including the extent of this interaction. Addressing the ways in which journalists seek to lift or guard the boundaries of their professional and societal roles, the paper sheds light on journalists' audience imaginaries and the conditions for being a news audience on social media.

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PN 126 Slow Reality TV and Chinese Audiences

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The slow reality television show Back to the Field offers critical insights into effect and meaning making for Chinese audiences and their social environments. We use qualitative interviews with a selected sample of audiences who are the target market for the series, e.g., young urban millennials. This empirical material grounds our understanding of affect in audience research for non-Western contexts. We create dynamic connections between the cultural text of the reality genre and the text of our interviews in order to understand audience meaning making as a form of affect which is shaped in and through this slow reality show. Our Chinese audiences reflect on their affective relations with 'slow' representations in reality television and how this makes them feel in their social environment. We define the emergent concept of 'slow affect' as mood work which is dynamically connected to the situated and material conditions of audiences. In particular, we identify the affective energies of pressure and promise in audiences' critical reflections on the 'pressures' of urban living and stressful working conditions in their lives and the 'promise' of a slower rural lifestyle, as imagined in the series and slow lifestyle trends.

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PN 127 The felt experience of atmosphere: Implications for audience research

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This paper explores audience experience as the felt experience of atmospheres, drawing on the work of Gernot Böhme on architecture as felt spaces and Schmitz's phenomenology. The paper introduces ideas from the analysis of architectural spaces as atmospheres that are the product of spatial features of place and the experience of immersion. I review examples of the way that Böhme's work has been applied in the study of the production and experience of playing video games and film, followed by a reinterpretation of media analysis of media events, liveness and participation in audience discussions in the light of the relationship between experience and felt spaces. The paper finishes with some reflections on the implications for the phenomenological understanding audiences.

ARS12 The conceptual revival of audience research: Questions of affect, identity, media entanglement, semiotics and framing, journalists and their audiences

PP 0901 Imagining audiences, imagining work – What is imagined through Google Analytics audience data?

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Website analytics from Google and other platforms has become the key performance indicators for communication practitioners. The omnipresence of different metrics, mediated through data dashboards, has an important impact on the world of communication. However, little is known of the imaginaries inscribed in these platforms, yet these imaginaries also govern the understanding of digital communication as a professional activity. We work with the theoretical idea of sociotechnical imaginaries, that is, a set of visions sustained by infrastructures, practices, and more or less shared meanings of social life (Jasanoff & Kim, 2015). Similarly, the technical imaginaire (Flichy, 2007), algorithmic imaginaries (Bucher, 2017), and data imaginaries (Tupasela et al., 2020) are emerging as collectively held understandings of what technology, data and algorithms do.

In our paper, we discuss Google's switch from the analytics platform Universal Analytics to Google Analytics 4 (GA4). We conduct a semiotic analysis of the analytics dashboards and map the related environment of instructional pages, videos and tutorials to uncover the imaginaries. While the surface-level argument claims GA4 to be better, the discontinuation of third-party cookies and change of user-tracking possibilities means that Google will often have to operate with much less data about the audiences than in Universal Analytics. The related environment of

instructional pages, videos and tutorials demonstrates a diverse ecosystem of actors who are seeking to capitalise on Google's data collection interest and support the imaginary with their promotional materials directed towards communication practitioners.

The data dashboard is imagined as the one-stop site for an overview of the audiences, their interest and engagement; data is supposed to be precise, immediate, and actionable. However, there is also a clear link to imagining the work of the communication – success or failure in digital communication and reaching the audiences is imagined through the data on the dashboard. The role of AI and algorithms as supporting imaginaries related to audiences confirms the expectation of unlimited digital surveillance but also indicates the limitations of the data collection of the GA4. Communication practitioners in different fields rely on the data from Google and other platform players to help them understand the reach of their messages. But we find that in the ecology of complex relationships, messy data and diversity of actors looking to capitalise on the data provisions, the idea of the audiences is diluted and abstract. The research fills the gap in audience studies, demonstrating that despite the promises and fears Google Analytics is still supporting desperately seeking audiences (Ang, 1991).

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ARS13 Making sense of mediated citizenship

PP 0993 Journalism and young audiences in a hyper-digitalized and polarized society

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In this paper we aim to theoretically reflect upon the ever-difficult relationship between journalism and audiences, considering, among other aspects, the new challenges brought about by the current hyper-digitalized society. If, on the one hand, and historically, journalism keeps a distance from its audience, on the other hand, the transformations prompted by the digitalization processes confront it with challenges that entail paradigm shifts.

Taking as points of departure reflections based on the pluralization of the public sphere, the democratization of information, and the connection between journalism and audiences (in particular, younger generations), we explore the new dynamics arising from the digital and societal evolution that has been ongoing, especially in the last decade. The proliferation of new formats, platforms, devices, and sources arising from the digital era has stimulated, in parallel, the emergence of a new phase in journalism studies, less focused on producers and products of journalism and more focused on audiences and their experiences, until then merely a marginal object of study in this scientific field (Meijer & Kormelink, 2019; Meijer, 2020).

These transformations entail a new set of challenges for citizen participation, and for this reason, they have been gaining growing attention from research.Clark and Marchi (2017), as well as Meijer (2020), have underlined however a disruption between the needs of young news audiences and what journalism provides to them. Hence, recent studies emphasize the importance of considering young people's understandings of "news" and what they find relevant and informative, as these implicit and emotional factors can influence judgments about the accuracy and reliability of information (Swart & Broersma, 2023).

A multi-method study performed in three European countries (Finland, Czech Republic, and Belgium) revealed that most participants were aware of social media logics, but only to some extent (more technical than critical), presenting a vague understanding of algorithmic curation, recommendation, and personalisation for news (Vissenberg et al., 2022). Younger generations may consider that algorithms facilitate the search for information but there are concerns about their negative impacts on information access and pluralism (Brites et al., 2023).

The intersection between youth, news, and citizenship therefore represents a crucial domain that aims to delve into the ways in which young people engage with news media and how this engagement bolsters their active participation in democratic processes. We thus advocate the interconnection of traditional methods with a participatory approach through digital methods, tobetter capture the meanings of what the news is for young people and the democratic meaning it has in their lives.In the same line we also reflect on the need to better understand young news audiences in their participative approaches to the news (Clark and Marchi, 2017), even if they don't follow the

professional/traditional rules of journalism when they act as "journalists". These can positively contribute to engaging young audiences in processes of self-reflection and self-discovery about their place as young citizens and to capture their lives, experiences, and expectations towards media contexts, democratic polarization, and participation.

ARS13 Making sense of mediated citizenship

PP 0994 Beyond resigned bystanders? How people make sense of climate issues in the news: Background knowledge, moral compasses, and environmental values

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This paper analyses how people make sense of climate issues in the news, contributing to understand audience interpretations of mediated communication on important societal transformations. Climate change is a topic fraught with feelings of futility, and such sentiments are reflected in the ways people engage with news on the issue. Climate communication scholarship has underlined persistent problems regarding the perceived complexity and vast scope of the issue, also as a hindrance for individual and societal action (Moser 2010, Schafer 2017, Bushell 2017). Clearly, journalism on climate change faces a difficult challenge in engaging audiences.

Media psychologists approach this challenge as concerning psychological distance, while political scientists see the problem as low efficacy (Campbell et al., 1971), and have used quantitative survey or experiment data to test the effect of distinct components of media messaging. We approach the issue differently, with a focus on sense-making in everyday life. To understand what climate-related news people avoid or relate to, we dig into what audiences make of actual climate news they encounter, while maintaining an everyday life context. In our study, we therefore opt for a qualitative approach to explore connections between different characteristics of climate journalism, different climate-related issues, and audiences' sense-making. With this intent, our research question is: *How do people make sense of climate issues in the news?*

To answer this research question, we designed a three-step data collection process, based on a small panel of informants (N = 30) living in Norway. Lifeworld interviews (step 1) where followed up with a qualitative online survey (step 2) in which the informants commented on three different news stories from recent Norwegian media, followed by new interviews (step 3) with selected informants, to allow for elaboration on the chosen examples. Based on insights from previous research (Bødker & Morris, 2022; Jensen, 2017) , we chose news stories that differed concerning (1) spatial grounding from the local via the national to the global; (2) the extent to which the story concerned an issue with a clear solution; and (3) the extent to which the story presented political disagreement or controversy.

We did find lack of involvement, a bystander attitude, and resignation connected to media criticism. Beyond that, we show what resources people draw on when they actually grapple with the issues in the stories: We argue that although spatial grounding, solutions and political disagreement matters, the mobilization of *background knowledge*, a *moral compass*, and *environmental values* or prior climate engagement is crucial for when and how people make sense of climate issues in the news. In closing, we discuss the findings in light of theories of the post-political, and ask whether the sense-making found in our study can help improve efficacious climate communication, or rather demonstrates a fundamental crisis of democracy, where ecology is "the new opium for the masses" (Badiou in Swyngedouw 2010, 219), and politics is mere "simulation" (Blühdorn, 2007). As such, the paper addresses relations between mundane and everyday audience practices, and societal and global macro processes.

ARS13 Making sense of mediated citizenship

PP 0995 Navigating morality in mediated relationships: an exploration of viewers' expectations and character behavior in mediated settings

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Questions of morality are prevalent in media productions. The relationship between character morality and viewers' affinity has been analyzed in the realm of affective disposition research (Zillmann and Cantor, 1977). Fewer studies focused on the connection between characters' morality and viewers' more long-term oriented parasocial relationships. This study expands the literature by respecting viewers' *moral expectations*.

Viewers' *moral expectations* are crucial for viewers' evaluations of (im)moral behaviors. In interpersonal communication, expectancy violation theory explains how people respond to unexpected behaviors (Burgoon and Jones, 1976). Existing studies applying expectancy violation theory to the mediated setting show that viewers also hold moral expectations toward media characters. When characters violated the viewers' expectations, these *expectation violations* were shown to influence viewers' parasocial relationships with these characters differently,

depending on the type of media character (hero vs. villain) and the viewers' expectations (e.g., moral expectations vs. social) (Bonus et al., 2021; Cohen, 2010; Matthews and Bonus, 2021).

RQ1: How do moral, ambiguous, and immoral behaviors of a media character influence viewers' parasocial relationships, and what role do viewers' moral expectations play in this relationship?

Method

An experimental study was conducted with viewers of *The Umbrella Academy*. The popular TV show stars morally diverse media characters (Nielsen Panel, 2022). Participants indicated their moral expectations (Bonus et al., 2021) toward Klaus, one of the protagonists. They read a fictional story about Klaus acting a) morally, b) immorally, or c) morally ambiguously in all five moral domains. Afterward, they rated their perception of Klaus' behavior regarding the five moral domains (Matthews and Bonus, 2021) and their parasocial relationships (Tukachinsky, 2011).

Results

A regression model was calculated for each of the five moral domains with the experimental condition as independent, parasocial relationships as dependent, and viewers' moral expectations as moderator variables (Table 1).

For viewers with high moral expectations of care, fairness, and loyalty, the morality of a character's behavior increased viewers' parasocial relationships, which aligns with expectancy violation theory. When the expectation of moral behavior was confirmed, this positively affected the relationship between viewer and character. Regardless of viewers' moral expectations in relation to authority and purity, moral behavior increased viewers' parasocial relationships. This result suggests that violations of viewers' expectations of authority and purity do not negatively affect their relationships with the character, which contradicts expectancy violation theory (Burgoon, 2015).

Discussion

Overall, the results underline the importance of differentiating between the five moral domains also in the mediated setting, as differences emerge between care, fairness, and loyalty, and authority and purity. The assumptions of expectancy violation theory, grounded in interpersonal research, need to be retested for the relationship between viewers and media characters to confirm their validity in the mediated setting. In this study, with a character from the popular TV show The Umbrella Academy, only one specific character and viewers' relationship with him were tested. To expand the results, future studies need to include diverse media characters (e.g., very moral to very immoral characters), and different study settings (e.g., lab studies).

ARS13 Making sense of mediated citizenship

PP 0996 Social media and mass protests: Analyzing Twitter use during uprisings in Lebanon

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This study focuses on Twitter (currently branded as 'X') use in Lebanon for communicating about and organizing protests following increased political and economic instability in the country in recent years. The following question is posed:

RQ: How was Twitter used for protests in Lebanon around the Beirut blast?

The use of online platforms with regards to protests around the world has been analyzed through scholarly lens (Howard et al., 2011; Wang & Caskey, 2016) – their influence upon offline or real-world events, however, is debatable. Though experiencing varying degrees of social unrest in the past, protests across Lebanon picked pace in October 2019 as the government introduced new taxation measures. The demonstrations intensified further due to measures to counter COVID-19 and the explosion at the port of Beirut on August 04, 2020, badly damaging the capital city's infrastructure and resulting in over 200 casualties (Al Jazeera, 2023). To express their frustration over the country's state-of-affairs and the ruling elite's incompetencies, the Lebanese public took to the streets and used social media to communicate and organize (Cherici, 2020).

We used Twitter Academic Research API to gather tweets published six months before and after the explosion in Beirut. A total of 6.1 million tweets were gathered which were then analyzed through Guided Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling technique. Related seed words were provided to the algorithm to detect relevant themes or terms appearing in the corpus (Venugopalan & Gupta, 2022). The findings were contextualized by matching the results obtained with information provided about Lebanon for the study period on the Global Database of Events, Languages, and Tone (GDELT). Furthermore, to understand the tone of the tweets, a sentiment analysis of the Twitter data was also performed.

The findings indicate the dominance of overall negative sentiment in the Twitter data, including use of revolutionary hashtags around key national events. Terms such as 'revolution', 'martyr', 'force', 'security', 'lebanonprotests' etc., were extracted from the corpus through the Guided LDA. Examples of hashtags present in the tweets include: لبنان_ينهض

#(Lebanon rises), #لا_ثقة(No trust), and #لبنان_يثور (Lebanon revolts). Worsening economy resulted in further volatile online discourse, followed by calls for action against those behind the Beirut blast – the hashtags #كلن_يعني_كلن (All means all), #السبت_بكل_الساحات (Saturday in all squares), and #علقوا_المشانق_بالساحات (Hang the gallows in the squares) highlight the Lebanese public's anger and distrust over the ruling elite. The use of certain hashtags also served as a call to action to mobilize the public.

This research adds to the understanding of social media use for protests with a focus on a non-Western country that is engulfed by crises of various nature. Insights gained by the investigation of discourse of Lebanese users on Twitter can be supplemented by analyzing other popular online platforms, e.g., Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok. Moreover, the results can facilitate understanding social media use in the Middle East for expressing dissent and can be expanded to include other countries in the region confronting similar challenges.

ARS13 Making sense of mediated citizenship

PP 0997 What does the 'public' value? Exploring the societal value of social media for young audiences

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Social media is becoming increasingly relevant for news consumption and information seeking, especially among younger audiences (Newman et al., 2023). On social media, however, users not only have access to traditional legacy media, but also a broad range of other media and emergent communicating actors, such as social media influencers or content creators that – as current studies show – also provide content that fulfill the audience's informational needs (cf. Banjac & Hanusch, 2022; Tamboer et al., 2022; Wunderlich et al., 2022). This fundamental shift of the public sphere onto digital platforms has disrupted the traditional role of journalism and caused the emergence of novel news- and information-seeking practices. Research on younger audiences, for example, shows that their informational and news-related practices are less driven by a civic duty of staying informed, but rather related to everyday situations (Autenrieth et al., 2021), and increasingly encompass journalistic and non-journalistic sources (e.g., Wunderlich & Hölig, 2022). While research has advocated for a more audience-centric and holistic approach to explore the value of journalism in the contemporary, predominantly digital media landscape (cf. Broersma, 2019; Costera Meijer, 2013, 2022), our understanding as to the fundamental – both individual and societal – value of social media and content on social media for young audiences remains underdeveloped. Intertwining this scholarship with the more general concept of "public value" (Moore, 1995) and its adaptations to social media (see van Dijck, 2020; van Dijck et al., 2018) that address the fulfilment of public value on commercially-oriented platforms as well as the audience as an essential stakeholder both in its consumer- and citizen-based role in assessing the value of media products, this study takes a holistic, bottom-up approach and explores *young audiences' perceptions of communicative actors and content that provide societally valuable/ public value-oriented services on social media.*

This study conducted eight focus groups with young German social media users, stratified by age and formal education (N = 48). Utilizing an online platform, data was collected in two steps: Firstly, participants completed tasks regarding their perceived value of social media and social media news seeking and consumption practices on the platform. Based on the answers, we summarized the results and incorporated them into the respective focus group that followed afterwards. This step established a common ground of different individual values that social media provides for the participants and allowed during the focus groups for a more in-depth and concentrated discussion about which of these values can also be further perceived as a societal value/ public value of social media and which communicative actors and content participants perceive as fulfilling specific values. Currently, the focus group transcripts are undergoing qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014). The expected findings from the combination of the tasks and focus group discussions will provide a more nuanced understanding of young social media audiences' perceptions of communicative actors and content that provide societally valuable/ public value-oriented services on social media.

ARS14 Audivisualities and audiences

PP 1095 Between graphical 'excellence', literacy, and polysemy: A bi-national study of political visualization reception

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Visualizations, the output of visual encoding of information, are a ubiquitous digital political genre. Their design practices are deeply rooted in a cognitively-oriented model of information transfer wherein "graphical excellence" (Tufte, 2001) should result in a 'correct' reading (Kamat et al., 2014). However, visualizations' effectiveness is a fickle, culturally-constructed concept, as a semantically-fixed graph is an unattainable ideal (Kennedy et al., 2018; van Eijck et al., 2011). Studying visualizations as mere communicative vessels neglects audience-side considerations and decoding processes that resist determination (Hall, 1980). Furthermore, visualizations' best-practices may be

opposed to politicians' use of "strategic ambiguity" (Eisenberg, 1984) to increase appeal. Thus, in this paper, we explore the relationship between graphical excellence, audience's graphical literacy performances, and the ensuing polysemy in personal and group readings of digital political visualizations. We ask: *how do audiences decode political messages embedded in visualizations shared online.*

We convened 8 focus group sessions of 8–10 participants each (67 in total), in two age groups (20–35; 40–55), varied in educational, political, and socio-economic backgrounds, in Germany and Israel. We designed a protocol that combines individual reflections and group discussions, in which participants first utilized an individual decoding-sheet to record their reading, followed by a group discussion. We introduced four types of stimuli: a COVID-19 "flatten the curve" visualization (identical across all groups); an informationally- and graphically-complex visualization; an ostensibly persuasive, low-information visualization; a side-by-side comparison of two conflicting visualizations, based on the same data and visualization mode. This protocol was implemented in two contexts, a health crisis (COVID-19), and a locally polarizing topic (migration or judicial reform).

Following thematic coding of group discourse and individual decoding-sheets, we note that all visualizations, regardless of graphical excellence or topic, resulted in highly polysemic readings. Participants found the task of verbalizing their reading of graphs to be a challenging endeavor. They attributed this difficulty to pre-existing *graphical avoidance* tendencies or expressed varying degrees of willingness to commit to a singular reading. We find that participants approach visualizations with interpretive freedom: they may refuse to engage altogether or choose to evaluate their rhetorical and analytical components. Furthermore, participants often re-shifted their individual readings during group discussions, in which domain-literacy performances were used to assert dominance and indicate identity-alignment. We find that participants perceive graphical literacy as the ability to read *beyond the intended meaning* and to discern political strategies among the inevitable polysemy of visualizations. Graphical literacy, then, is not merely a set of skills and intellectual abilities, but is also imbricated with worldviews, normative assumptions, and is affected by group dynamics. It is from this amalgam that audiences come to engage with visualizations, as their 'reading' is equally an expression of political identity and prowess, as it is of their intellect. It is thus imperative to view political visualizations' role in the digital informational landscape with both strategic ambiguity *and* audience's interpretive freedom in mind, by making 'graphical excellence' a dual pursuit, in which both audiences and visualizers take on responsibility in the creation *and* interpretation of digital political visualizations.

ARS14 Audivisualities and audiences

PP 1096 What will we be streaming tonight? And why? An analysis of motivations for VOD consumption in Belgium

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Digitization and the rapid growth of different video-on-demand (VOD) streaming services have changed our habits of consuming content (Kenney & Zysman, 2016). Research has increasingly informed scholars on the adoption and uses of different kinds of on-demand and non-linear viewing. Research has convincingly showed the affordances of VOD and non-linear consumption over different media uses (Evens et al; 2023; Rigby, Brumby, Cox, et al., 2018; Rigby, Brumby, Gould, et al., 2018; Spilker et al., 2020). Little is known however about the motivations for choosing (i) specific (streaming) services, (ii) and particular types of content or titles in VOD catalogues. Additionally, research is limited on the extent to which motivations from users differ across multiple streaming services they consume. This is of particular importance for small legacy players, who are increasingly engaged in the deployment of their own subscription and advertisement-based VOD models, but lack the scale to compete with functionalities, content and curation strategies of global streamers (Raats & Evens, 2021; d'Arma et al. 2021).

This study specifically aims to investigate different motivations of viewers in choosing particular services and content. The research question is formulated as follows: "Within the daily viewing routines of Flemish viewers, what are the different motivations in choosing particular services, devices and content?" with the following sub questions: (i) what key differences can be identified between motivations for choosing (specific) Flemish players over global streamers and vice versa; (ii) and how different affordances related to device, content and context affect the decision-making process of Flemish viewers. The paper proposes an analytical framework that sets out from a threefold categorization of affordances: technological affordances (e.g. functionalities, recommender systems and personalization), context affordances (e.g. rituals and routines) and content affordances (e.g. genre, quality, localness, authenticity). This framework allows us to better grasp the interplay between findings from positioning, content and service branding with findings in consumption studies.

This paper presents the findings from a large-scale multifaceted audience study with VOD consumers in Flanders (Belgium).

The study employed a mixed method approach consisting of an exploratory survey (N = 83), a diary study (N = 65) and semi-structured face-to-face interviews (N = 60).

The findings highlighted in the paper, include, amongst others, the continued need of respondents for a sense of community and structure. An aspiration to stay up to date with specific TV shows and series reflects a need for a shared experience and a desire to engage in conversations. The need for more structure and shared experiences in entertainment consumption increases as audiences face difficulties of navigating through vast content libraries. This is demonstrated through the appreciation of audiences for notifications of new releases and the appreciation for a live button on VOD services of broadcasters.

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PP 1097 Everybody's watching their own stream – Using trained introspection and self-observation to explore strategies of media use

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Questions about "how much", "why" and "to what effect" audiences use "which" particular media have often been the focus of our research. Less attention has been paid to "how" – in which different ways – individuals approach, navigate, relate to, and interpret media in particular situations, and even less to how these elements are combined into comprehensive modes or strategies of media use. However, it can be assumed that such qualitatively different approaches to media use can shape the reception experience as well as its effects. The theoretical framework of strategies of media use (Krämer, 2013) understands media use as strategic practice linked to social position (following Bourdieu, 1972) and conceptualizes strategies of media use as combinations of elements on ten dimensions: Stakes, returns, costs, gratifications, spatial and social arrangements of media use, navigation and processing styles as well as the media repertoire of users can be empirically investigated with standard observational or self-report methods. However, these methods reach their limits when they are applied to how users position themselves towards media content during reception, i.e., to the attentional focus, modality judgment, and (phenomenological) attitude adopted towards the medium. In order to grasp these subtle but consequential states of mind and to qualitatively describe the broadest possible spectrum of different media usage strategies in as much detail as possible we applied recently revitalized systematic, trained introspection methods (cf. e.g. Burkart, 2018) in a media diary study. To this end, 20 participants (13 female, 1 diverse, 19–45 years) were prepared for differentiated introspective self-observation through reading, discussion and exercises. Each participant recorded around 9 media reception episodes over the course of three weeks Episodes were selected partly via random reminders transmitted by smartphone, partly via researcher instructions (e.g., to use content incongruent to one's own opinion), or based on the participants' own assessment as a noteworthy situation. A total of 156 reception episodes covering a wide range of devices and genres (e.g., video and music streaming, social media, podcasts, gaming), spatial (car, public places, private environments) and social (alone, couples, groups, strangers) contexts of media use were recorded. The protocols were analyzed and interpreted using a combined deductive and inductive coding strategy (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023) in MAXQDA, aiming at identifying, differentiating and conceptually defining a broad spectrum of strategy elements as well as identifying combinations of these elements (i.e., strategies of media use). Regarding the inner attitudes towards media content, our results show, for example, that perceptions of the ontological status of portrayed objects and events go far beyond the dichotomy of "reality" and "fiction": The participants differentiated various ways in which reality and fiction were mixed (from fictional portrayals with references to "real" persons and events to slightly exaggerated portrayals of reality) or nested (e.g., when a podcast discussed a real fiction book), but also various degrees of uncertainty and fluctuations in their realism judgments. Also, a multi-faceted picture of cognitive, emotional, and moral stances towards media content as well as various patterns of attention allocation emerged.

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PP 1098 Transmedial imaginaries at the Museum

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Cultural heritage is a significant and enduring source of inspiration in the contemporary mediascape, as evidenced by tv-series like *Vikings* or *Kingdom*, games like *Assassin's Creed*, comics like *Vinland Saga*, anime like *Blue Eye Samurai* or novels such as the *Kane Chronicles*. These works get repurposed in a global transmedial ecology, where content is remixed and circulated in social media, acquiring new meanings and becoming part of the modern vernacular of popular culture. Viking hairstyles and Japanese tattoos trend on Instagram, and ancient hieroglyphs become a template for viral meme production.

The heterogeneous imaginaries of popular culture shape the knowledge and expectations that audiences bring with them when visiting ethnographic and historical museums, defying historical facts and scientific evidence (Wintle 2017) and producing alternative epistemologies (Lewandosky et al. 2017). At the same time, curators are also media recipients, so contemporary exhibition design is often inspired by the themes and aesthetics of popular culture. This is not without controversy, as the outrage around Jim Lyngvild's *Vikings* exhibition perfectly illustrates (Sindbæk 2018).

Although the field of museum audience studies has paid attention to visitors' personal contexts in relation to motivation, learning and experience-preferences (i.e., Falk and Dierking 1992), it has not considered popular media culture specifically. There have been a few studies about the ways in which popular culture produces wrong beliefs, or "naive conceptions" in science museums (Macdonald 1992; Borun 1993) and also about how popular culture influences national identity building (Watson 2020).

This presentation will explore the reciprocal relationship between popular media products and cultural heritage illustrated by two specific cases of exhibition-making and reception at the National Museum of Copenhagen: the new "*Vølve*" viking exhibition and a renovation of the communication around the existing East Asian Collection. In our involvement with these two projects, we have proposed to work with the concept of shared *imaginaries*, or ideas and ethos that affect individual cognition (Gaonkar 2002: 4). Imaginaries have a framing power that defines the range of what makes sense in relation to a specific theme (Vogler 2002: 625). Popular culture imaginaries are alive and constantly in-the-making, fuelled by the powerful images offered by media (De Groot 2016). To investigate the emergence and composition of these imaginaries, we draw on the concept of transmediality (Tosca & Klastrup 2019), which integrates the experiential, aesthetic and media-affordance perspectives to investigate complex reception across platforms, and how it affects epistemic emotion (Morton 2010).

ARS14 Audivisualities and audiences

PP 1099 A laboratory experiment examining audience responses to touristic virtual reality videos

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Virtual Reality (VR) technology is more and more used in touristic contexts: According to recent representative data from Germany, "going on virtual vacation" is among the topmost popular forms of VR use (Bitkom, 2022). There are even channels on platforms like YouTube that have specialized in VR tourism, like VR Gorilla or Virtual Travel. They feature short 360° videos that can be viewed with a VR headset and show popular touristic locations, like Machu Picchu, or take the recipients on a virtual city tour.

Despite the growing popularity of VR tourism, empirical research on why such content is attractive and how it is experienced is still scarce. The current laboratory study aimed to fill this research gap. Following a 2x2 between-subjects design, we examined how content type (hedonic vs. eudaimonic) and the form of presentation (non-VR vs. VR) influence audience responses in terms of experiencing presence, enjoyment, appreciation, travel intentions, and video sharing intentions.

Content type was manipulated by showing the participants either a video of a more eudaimonic or a more hedonic focused touristic experience. This distinction is based on recent research (e.g., Lee & Jeong, 2021), describing hedonic tourist experiences as more focused on relaxation (e.g., beach holiday) and eudaimonic tourist experiences as more focused on gaining new insights (e.g., city tour). The videos we used as the stimuli were adopted from VR Gorilla and were selected based on a pre-test (N = 53). The form of presentation was manipulated by either using the original 360° videos viewed with a VR headset, or by viewing content-identical 2D videos on a flatscreen.

For the main study, 72 participants (45 females, 26 males, 1 unknown gender) were invited to the lab and were assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. After watching the stimulus, participants filled in a questionnaire measuring the different variables using established scales. Two-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to examine how audience responses differed between the experimental groups and whether there were significant interaction effects between content type and form of presentation. We found that viewing the VR versions led to stronger feelings of presence and enjoyment than viewing the classical videos. Further, the results indicated an increase in sharing and travel intentions in the VR condition. Interestingly, the type of content (hedonic or eudaimonic) had only minimal influence on enjoyment, appreciation, or travel and sharing intentions, which diverges from previous research (Oliver & Raney, 2011). There were no significant interaction effects.

Taken together, our results underline the usefulness of applying VR technology in tourism contexts. The VR versions of the stimuli were more effective in inducing positive feelings and also led to stronger behavior intentions than the 2D-videos and these effects were independent from the type of content. Our findings have several implications for media producers, advertisers, and researchers in media psychology and communication and may serve as a basis for future research on VR tourism, examining the complexities of VR technologies and content types in shaping user experiences and travel intentions in more depth.

CYM01 Social media and youth I

PP 0069 Cultural culinary crossroads: The impact of digital influencers on teenagers' food choices across cultures

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This study examines the impact of digital influencers on the dietary choices of teenagers in an era where digital platforms cut across national and cultural barriers, with a particular emphasis on the attractiveness of food across cultural divides. The research explores how influencers on digital platforms affect teenagers' appetites for different cultural foods, particularly TikTok and Douyin. With more explosion in global food culture, this study is crucial to understanding the shifting dynamics of teenage food preferences.

The theoretical framework of the research is based on social learning theory, which states that observational learning, imitation, and modeling significantly influence behavior. This theoretical perspective contributes to an understanding of how adolescents imitate the eating habits and choices displayed by digital influencers, potentially diversifying their culinary preferences.

The research employs a mixed methodology. A content analysis is performed on 200 selected videos from five well-known TikTok and Douyin influencers. The investigation attempts to identify the trends and strategies influencers use to promote a diverse food culture, along with how they resonate with teen audiences. Furthermore, the study aims to incorporate a survey component targeting adolescents. The primary objective of this survey is to gain direct insights into how exposure to digital influencers impacts their interest in and consumption of multicultural foods. By bridging the gap between online influence and real-life food choices, this survey aims to determine how much digital content influences dietary decisions.

This research will enhance the awareness of the complex interactions that exist between young people's food choices, cultural exposure, and digital media. By focusing on TikTok and Douyin, the study sheds light on the globalization of food preferences and the critical role of digital influencers in this sector. The findings are expected to contribute to dialogue about the role of digital media in defining young people's cultural and dietary boundaries, emphasizing the importance of ethical considerations and culturally sensitive approaches in digital food communication.

CYM01 Social media and youth I

PP 0070 Sing-alongs, dance battles, and self-harm: Exploring the spectrum of social media challenges on TikTok through manual content analysis

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A vast array of Social Media Challenges (SMCs) significantly influences the behavior of young users (Khasawneh et al., 2021). SMCs range from positive community-building exercises (e.g., crowdfunding or collecting trash) to neutral activities like singing or dancing, and extend to negative, potentially dangerous dares. This spectrum of outcomes has garnered the interest of media outlets and researchers (Khasawneh et al., 2021; Park et al., 2023), but current research predominantly focuses on the adverse aspects of SMCs, highlighting evidence that videos of dangerous SMCs are not only numerous but also reach a broad audience (BLINDED). This emphasis on negative aspects limits understanding of the potential benefits of SMCs, such as fostering social connectedness and belonging among youth (Astorri et al., 2023; Ortega-Baron et al., 2022). To bridge this gap, our study explores the full spectrum of SMCs on TikTok, currently the most influential social media platform among young individuals (Stahl & Literat, 2023).

Method

Using a keyword-based approach, we conducted a manual content analysis of N = 2,533 TikTok challenge videos in German and English. These videos, collected through scraping in October and November 2023, encompass a wide range of challenges characterized by unique identifiers such as challenge names, hashtags, and visual or auditory elements that promote recognition of the challenge. A team of 26 trained coders analyzed these videos after several rounds of pretesting to enhance intercoder reliability, focusing on their content characteristics and the nature of the challenges they portrayed.

Results

Our analysis reveals that a significant majority of challenge videos on TikTok depict neutral challenges, primarily centered around harmless activities like singing and dancing. Positive challenges, contributing to community building and personal development, constitute about 5% of all videos. Notably, around one-third of all challenge videos on TikTok are categorized as negative, potentially dangerous challenges. The most common content in this category involves depictions of pain occurring during challenge execution. Despite the presence of these negative challenges, videos focusing on neutral or positive challenges achieve notably higher reach and engagement rates. TikTok's content regulation strategies are evident, with the platform actively blocking very dangerous challenges

(approximately 29% of potentially harmful challenge videos being removed during the study period) and associated search terms, making it (almost) impossible to circumvent these with modified search terms. However, when regulation is not as stringent, challenges like the Hot Chip Challenge can quickly gain popularity and reach.

Conclusion and Discussion

Our study contributes to the understanding of SMCs on TikTok, emphasizing the importance of recognizing the positive and neutral aspects of these challenges alongside the negative ones. Our findings suggest that while potentially harmful challenges exist, they attract less attention; the platform is predominantly used for harmless entertainment and positive community engagement. TikTok's role in moderating content is crucial, but our results also indicate the necessity for continuous monitoring and adaptive strategies to ensure a safe online environment for young users.

CYM01 Social media and youth I

PP 0071 In their own words: How adolescents differ in their social media use and how it affects them

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Introduction

Despite extensive research, findings on the relationship between adolescents' social media use (SMU) and well-being are mixed, indicating the existence of both positive and negative associations with well-being. This underscores the need for more nuanced, idiographic approaches that acknowledge individual differences in the relationship between SMU and well-being. The two streams of existing idiographic studies, however, have limitations. The first stream of experience sampling studies often rely on narrow quantitative measures, focusing on time spent on social media and single well-being indicators. The second stream, which consists of a handful of qualitative studies, has primarily focused on the diversity of adolescents' *experiences*, neglecting how this heterogeneity may also be reflected in other parts of the media effects process as conceptualized in the differential susceptibility to media effects model.

Therefore, the first goal of this study is to qualitatively examine homogeneity (communalities) and heterogeneity (differences) in adolescents' motives and moods leading to SMU, the nature of this use, their affective responses, and perceived longer-term effects. Second, we investigate the existence of "within-person duality", where an individual experiences both positive and negative influences of SMU, both in immediate affective responses and longer-term consequences.

Method

Eight focus groups were held in Spring 2022. In total, 55 adolescents (52.7% girls) between 14 and 17 years old from diverse backgrounds participated (5 to 8 adolescents per group). Each focus group lasted 90 minutes and the conversations were videotaped and transcribed. Participants received monetary compensation.

Results

Transcriptions were analyzed using deductive thematic analysis. The analysis revealed large homogeneity in adolescents' motives for SMU and in the social media that are most used (i.e., Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok). But we found considerable heterogeneity in the moods that predict SMU, social media screentime, the platforms that are used beyond the three commonly used platforms, the affective responses to SMU, and the longer-term effects adolescents experienced due to their SMU. Additionally, our findings revealed within-person duality in affective responses and long-term effects of SMU. This duality, where the same individual is affected in both positive and negative ways by SMU, manifested concurrently, alternatingly, and sequentially, and in cognitive and affective dimensions of well-being.

Implications

Our findings have important implications. The large heterogeneity found in adolescents' SMU illustrates the need for future research to shift to an activity-based, cross-platform approach in studying adolescents' SMU and well-being. Furthermore, in doing so, future research should focus on measuring adolescents' subjective experiences associated with their social media activities, as this study showed that different adolescents have different or even opposite affective responses to the same social media activities. Finally, our findings regarding within-person duality – encompassing cognitive and affective dimensions and varying over time and situations – deepen our understanding of how social media can differentially impact adolescents' well-being. Future research needs to recognize and further explore how homogeneity, heterogeneity, and duality individually and collectively influence the relationship between adolescents' SMU and well-being.

CYM01 Social media and youth I

PP 0072 The signs of times: playing life on TikTok?

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This paper departs from longitudinal research with N = 18 families (2017–2022), with diverse ways of living and different demographics, touched by the effects of the life course (internal and external factors (Zaman et al., 2016) and globalization (Castro & Ponte, 2021). The families are based in Portugal (n = 16) and England (n = 2) and as expected they were not immune to the signs of these uncertain, and deeply mediatized (Hepp & Hasebrink, 2018) times, which prompted an unprecedented digital immersion of children's everyday lives with consequences on family dynamics and processes of digital mediation. A total of N = 33 children were considered (boys (n = 19); girls (n = 14)). In line with the theme of the conference, I depart from the questions – How do socially disordered events incite on one hand the parental mediation relief and on the other hand children's migration to TikTok? How TikTok's affordances are integrating into children's offline practices of play? An ethnographic research was conducted with the families in their households. Families' consent was requested and negotiated before each visit. The families' recruitment began with personal contacts and evolved into a snowball process. The main data collection procedures included observation, informed conversational interviews or situational conversations through which the researcher and participants' interactions evolve into natural and spontaneous conversations (Punch, 1998; Denzin, 1989). The conversations were audiotaped and parts of it were filmed, and pictures were taken. Ethical guidelines required anonymization of transcribed data, and pictures were taken respecting the image and privacy of the children. The analysis of the data was supported by Marsh et al. (2016) interdisciplinary framework (psychology, Sociology and education) of play with the added value of paying attention to digital technologies in the field of education. They found three characteristics of converged play: 'multi-modal', 'global-local', and 'traditional-digital' and adapted Hughes' (2002) taxonomy to children's play with digital technologies. They proposed 16 types of play for the digital age.

In the scope of this study, children themselves were the ones who brought TikTok from the online sphere (public) to the family sphere (private) – as digital brokers in control of this social media affordances (despite their age under 13), negotiating actively their digital autonomy and rights and how this circumstance raised in parents' the reflexive revision of digital mediation of their young ones.

This paper analyses the characteristics of converged play in the findings. In the families, 8 types of play were identified: symbolic, socio-dramatic, creative, communication, locomotor, fantasy, object and role play.Some topics will organize this paper around children in the short-video culture, namely, i) the display of "doing family" (Morgan, 2015) through carefully choreographed moments, ii) experimentation of different roles; iii) self-display; iv) the embodiment of TikTok body language in offline settings.

CYM01 Social media and youth I

PP 0073 What defines immoral behaviours on social media according to young people: A mixed methods approach

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Social media plays an important role and context for today's youth. However, little attention has been paid to the question of what is perceived as immoral in social media, especially by young people. Most research attention has been focused on specific immoral acts, e.g. cyberbullying or fake news. We argue that morality and immoral behaviour on social media is a broader, overarching concept that is worth exploring, especially as social media is an important developmental context for adolescents today. Our research was based on two studies that utilised a mixed methods approach and, more specifically, we used a sequential exploratory design. The first exploratory, qualitative study aimed to gain insights into young people's perceptions of what they consider to be immoral behaviour on social media and to develop a questionnaire based on this. The second, quantitative study aimed to test the psychometric properties of the new questionnaire on a convenience sample of adolescents and to gain insights into the prevalence of immoral behaviour on social media. The first study included 89 participants, all first-year students. An open-ended questionnaire was used and participants were asked to write down all immoral behaviours on social media. Their responses were analysed using thematic analysis. To categorise immoral behaviour, we rely on Moral foundation theory. A descriptive theory of human morality organises morality along five moral foundations: care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation. We identify immoral actions in direct as well as indirect interaction with others on social media, each with four more specific immoral behaviours, such as misrepresentation or sharing others' content without their permission. Based on the results, we designed two versions of questionnaires: one focusing on individuals' own moral behaviours and the other on their perceptions of immoral behaviours by others on social media. 341 adolescents participated in

the second study. We tested the psychometric properties of the developed questionnaires (reliability, construct and convergent validity). In general, the mean scores for observing others' immoral actions were higher than for their own immoral actions, with hateful and insulting comments being perceived most frequently. Our research broadens the scope of our understanding of morality in social media among young people. In conclusion, these findings not only contribute to the existing body of research but also highlight the need for nuanced considerations in the ongoing discourse on moral behaviour in digital spaces.

CYM02 Literacies & skills

PP 0172 Digital literacy: An analysis of teachers' perspectives in Portugal based on the ySKILLs conceptual framework

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There is a consensus that digital literacy and its various elements are essential components of training in the 21st century (Liu et al., 2020). Furthermore, there is a substantial investment in children and young people's access to information and communication technology in Europe (Livingstone, Mascheroni & Stoilova, 2021). Nevertheless, despite the growing academic and sociopolitical debate about the central role of education in preparing youth to act ethically, safely, and productively in digital environments, school curricula are still largely criticized for their narrow perspective, mainly based on technical skills (Falloon, 2020). A list of technical proficiencies and simplistic rules for safely engaging online dominates teaching, but to be "digitally literate" nowadays requires dealing with new challenges such as managing personal data and online presence safely, using ethics and judgment oriented to social justice, and building knowledge and collaborating in virtual contexts (Buchholz et al., 2020; Falloon, 2020).

Considering this increasingly complex digital environment, the EU Horizon 2020 ySKILLS Project draws on a recent literature review and empirical research to propose a holistic perspective of digital literacy, consisting of both skills and knowledge, based on four dimensions: (1) technical and operational; (2) information navigation and processing; (3) communication and interaction; and (4) content creation and production (Helsper et al., 2020; Leslie et al., 2020). Each dimension reflects functional (to understand and use technical functionalities) and critical (understanding how and why devices and content are produced in specific ways) aspects. All four are considered fundamental to full participation in digital societies.

To better know how ICT teachers face the challenge of promoting these multidimensional skills and knowledge, we conducted semi-directive interviews (Ghiglione and Matalon, 1997) with twenty teachers (ISCED 1–2) covering different regions of Portugal and diversity of gender, age, and professional experience. The goal is to understand teachers' perspectives on children's digital literacy. To this end, we defined three research questions: 1. What are digital skills for teachers, and which ySKILLs dimensions do they consider essential for children? 2. How do teachers evaluate the school's role and challenges in developing students' digital literacy? 3. Which digital skills do students master best and worst from teachers' perspective?

The findings of this study suggest that teachers have limited conceptions of digital literacy, as they define and value them mainly in terms of the functional aspects of two dimensions of the ySKILLS conceptual framework: technical and operational and information navigation and processing. Students are seen as skilled only in their entertainment and socialization interests. Moreover, their digital safety and training for future professional performance are central topics of concern. Nonetheless, teachers are very critical of their work conditions, for instance, the short class time, extensive curriculum, obsolete computers, and poor internet connection. Some stress that they need to be heard about public policies on digital education, particularly when it comes to public investment in notebooks for students (with flaws in the logistics for their maintenance) to the detriment of school computers.

CYM02 Literacies & skills

PP 0173 Theorising the role of digital literacy in children's wellbeing

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Digital literacy is widely seen as key to children's and young people's fruitful participation in digital societies. However, the definition and measurement of digital literacy has remained contested. Moreover, the role of digital literacy in promoting young people's wellbeing and social inclusion has been under-investigated and under-theorised. Therefore, we propose a conceptualisation of digital literacy as multidimensional, consisting of four dimensions (technical and operational, information navigation and processing, communication and interaction, and content creation and production) each with skills and knowledge components. This conceptualisation was supported by empirical work:

a three-wave longitudinal survey among 12-to-17-year-olds in six European countries and performance tests, three qualitative in-depth investigations and a systematic evidence review. Based on the empirical findings validating the conceptualisation of digital literacy, we developed a new theoretical model with digital literacy at the centre, mediating between antecedents and consequences. The model includes, and distinguishes between, individual and social factors as antecedents of digital literacy, digital engagement variables, and wellbeing outcomes.

Various theories have informed the model. First, the model builds on digital inequalities research, which looks at the links between digital and socioeconomic and sociocultural inequalities (Helsper, 2021). In our model, we have adapted the classification of the four domains of digital literacy from this research (Van Deursen, Helsper & Eynon, 2016) and refined the existing conceptualisations in this field by emphasising the need to distinguish functional skills and critical knowledge. The development of the model was also influenced by the DSMM model (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013), which identified three types of types of susceptibility to media effects: dispositional, developmental, and social. Additionally, our model was inspired by the iMEW model (Smahel et al, 2020) which differentiated various types of wellbeing as the outcome and proposed possible long-term and short-term effects. However, in contrast to the DSMM and iMEW models, our model focuses on understanding the role of digital skills in the relation to media effects. Finally, the model rests upon the EU Kids Online's (Livingstone, Mascheroni & Staksrud, 2018) holistic approach that integrates digital skills and literacy within the wider analysis of online opportunities and risks. However, while in the EU Kids Online model digital skills are seen as entwined with digital practices, our model distinguishes knowledge from practice, recognising that use may not always imply knowledge, and nor does knowledge determine use.

We illustrate the value of the new model through analyses of the longitudinal survey, against the backdrop of existing theories. The findings show that digital literacy can contribute to beneficial youth outcomes, including the key dimensions of wellbeing. Hence, policymakers, educators and even industry should act to enhance children's and young people's digital skills and knowledge and smooth the pathway from digital literacy to wellbeing. Recognising the complex relationships between the four dimensions of digital literacy and the different dimensions of wellbeing paves the way for future research and new questions, such as those around the relationship between digital literacy and children's rights.

CYM02 Literacies & skills

PP 0174 Social media literacy interventions among adolescents in schools: A cluster randomized controlled trial testing the Vibe Check program

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Due to the ubiquitous presence of social media in adolescents' daily lives, SML is needed to empower them in their social media interactions. In this respect, interventions have been set up that teach adolescents SML skills. Yet, these interventions all focused on transmitting cognitive SML (e.g., critical thinking about idealized and curated depictions of appearance and lifestyle). Recent research showed though that affective SML (e.g., being able to adaptively regulate negative emotions that result from exposure to idealized content) has more potential to mitigate the disruptive effects of social media on adolescents' lives. Therefore, this study designed a SML-intervention, called the Vibe Check, that focuses on affective SML in addition to cognitive SML and tested its effectiveness in increasing SML (cognitive and affective), offline well-being (body-esteem, FOMO, social well-being) and online well-being (digital flourishing).

The Vibe Check intervention theoretically draws on social-emotional development programs to help adolescents recognize and express the emotions they experience when interacting with social media, and it teaches them strategies to adaptively deal with these emotions. A cluster-randomized controlled trial was conducted. Schools were assigned to the intervention or the control condition. 636 adolescents (M_{age} = 13.78, SD = .66; 49.6% girls) completed assessments at baseline, one week post baseline which was immediately following-up the intervention and three weeks post baseline.

In R ("lme4" package), a first series of linear mixed-effects regressions compared baseline with immediate post-intervention between intervention and control group. Condition (0 = control, 1 = intervention,) time (0 = baseline, 1 = immediate post-intervention) and their interaction were independent variables. Demographics were included as covariates. Potential clustering effects within adolescents and schools were accounted for. REML was used. The second series of linear mixed-effects regression models only differed from the first in that it compared baseline with two-week post-intervention between intervention and control group.

In the first series, there were three significant interaction effects of condition with time, for social well-being, digital flourishing–control and cognitive SML. Their coefficients were unexpectedly negative, meaning that the intervention group decreased in social well-being, had less control over their digital media use and less cognitive SML from

baseline to the immediate follow-up, compared to the control group. In the second series, these interactions were not significant and a positive significant interaction effect of condition with time was found for digital flourishing–connection. This means that the intervention group improved in flourishing in their connections online from baseline to two-week follow-up compared to the control group.

The negative effects immediately following the intervention imply that the intervention may have installed in adolescents a highly reflective mindset about themselves and their social media interactions. Special attention to participants' overall well-being may thus be needed in SML interventions. A positive effect is found two weeks later, hinting at the potential of Vibe Check to increase digital flourishing over time. Yet, multiple sessions may be needed to really get the messages across. These results highlight the need to test the effectiveness of SML programs for adolescents, both at the short term and at a longer term.

CYM02 Literacies & skills

PP 0175 Digital Skills Formation in Peer Networks: Exploring advice giving and taking in Classrooms

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Developing digital skills is crucial for young people in contemporary societies, impacting well-being, educational achievement, and employment outcomes. Socioeconomic background and access to technology shape adolescents' digital skills, with recent research emphasizing the role of peer learning (Boomgaarden et al., 2023). This study delves into advice-seeking, advice-giving, and friendship networks within school classrooms and their interplay with students' digital skills. Adopting a socio-centric network approach, we explore these dynamics across classes, schools, and countries, recognizing the growing significance of digital proficiency.

Students' daily interactions with peers strongly shape their experiences, cognitions, emotions, and behaviors (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), making them an important, yet thus far understudied component for analyzing the development of digital skills. Classroom networks have primarily been researched in their relationship to academic or psychological well-being (Wang et al., 2020). We rely on the conceptualization and measurement of digital skills recently proposed by Helsper et al. (2021): technical and operational skills, information navigation and processing skills, communication/interaction skills, and content creation skills.

Using a novel dataset of social networks within classrooms, we surveyed students in 212 classes across 18 schools in Germany, Italy, and Portugal, to identify their three closest friends and to indicate the frequency with which they give or receive advice on digital skills. Exponential Random Graph Models were employed to analyze advice-giving, advice-seeking, and friendship networks, providing a robust statistical framework for understanding complex network structures.

In the context of advice-giving, our study proposes hypotheses on the influence of self-reported and perceived digital skills. Perceived skills are expected to be a stronger predictor than self-reported skills, with considerations for gender and age differences in self-assessment. Conversely, regarding advice-seeking networks, the study anticipates that self-reported digital skills have a more pronounced influence on digital skills. Additionally, the research posits that gender plays a more significant role in predicting friendship connections than either self-reported or perceived digital skills, emphasizing a homophily effect.

By examining the intricate interplay between students' digital skills and social networks in diverse classroom settings, this research aims to shed light on the nuanced dynamics shaping digital skills in academic environments in an increasingly digitalized world. Results may contribute to better awareness of educational institutions of alternative routes to digital skills training.

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CYM02 Literacies & skills

PP 0176 Digital flourishing in adolescence: A one-year trajectory study

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The ubiquitous presence of digital media has disrupted adolescents' daily lives. In this regard, research on how adolescents participate in today's digitalized society has often applied a destructive perspective and looked at the risks of adolescents' digital communication, while adolescents can also flourish online (Raney et al., 2021). Digital flourishing refers to the positive perceptions of an individual's experiences and behaviors in digital communication in five dimensions. Connectedness covers digital communication experiences of connection and support by one's online community. Positive social comparison occurs when feelings of inspiration are triggered after an adaptive social comparison occurs online. Authentic self-presentation relates to experiences in which the user presents oneself authentically online. Civil participation includes a user's considerate and reflected digital communication. Self-control refers to one's ability to control when to start and stop interacting online. The concept of digital flourishing is rooted in self-determination theory and has been associated with relatedness, competence, and autonomy need satisfaction among adults (Janicke-Bowles et al., 2023).

We lack knowledge of how digital flourishing occurs among adolescents and whether it changes over time. Such changes are plausible as adolescence is a developmental period with several changes (Eccles et al., 1993). Accordingly, we aimed to understand how the digital flourishing dimensions evolve in adolescence and whether there are potentially distinct trajectories over one year. Such knowledge can help us understand how digital flourishing evolves in a period in which digital communication is an ubiquitous part of daily life.

The literature (e.g., Scheerder et al., 2017) suggests that adolescents' developmental changes and digital inequalities determinants (i.e., parental education, ethnicity, parental mediation style, and parental digital skills) may play a role in digital flourishing fluctuations. Therefore, these factors were modelled to predict adolescents' belongingness to different trajectories of digital flourishing.

A three-wave panel study among 1,081 Slovenian adolescents (M_{age} = 15.34 years, 53.8% boys, 80.7% ethnic majority) was conducted in 2021–2022. Latent Class Growth Analysis identified two classes. Adolescents in class 1 (50.6%) reported high levels of digital flourishing, which remained stable over time. Adolescents in class 2 (49.4%) reported lower levels of digital flourishing with decreased self-control over time. Logistic regressions demonstrated that autonomy-supportive restrictive, autonomy-supportive active, and controlling active parental mediation styles, together with higher parental digital skills, predicted adolescents' belongingness to the (more digitally flourishing) first class. Age, parental education, ethnicity, parental controlling restrictive mediation style, and parental inconsistent restrictive mediation style did not predict belongingness.

This study found that some adolescents flourish digitally and keep flourishing over time, while others seem to flourish less digitally, and their self-control over digital communication decreases over time. While age and parental socio-demographics seem negligible in adolescents' perceived digital communication skills and related positive outcomes, parents can stimulate adolescents' digital flourishing by using autonomy-supportive and active mediation practices in guiding adolescents' digital communication and by modeling their digital skills. Interventions that aim to help all adolescents navigate the digital realm healthily and beneficially may focus on enabling such parental-child interactions.

CYM03 Social media and youth II

PP 0266 Navigating Friendships: Children's use of TikTok as a playground for social capital in the Digital Era

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In this paper, we ask how 8- to 12-year-old children navigate social relations and build social capital through the platform TikTok. Although children's media use and digital skills have been a popular area of research the past decades, how children in middle childhood use social media (Rozgonjuk et al. 2021), and how these practices may translate into social capital has been relatively under-researched (Leonard, 2005). This is striking, especially as children in this age group form an important audience for popular social media platforms (De Ley et al., 2021) and increasingly use social media to interact with peers (Nesi et al., 2018). Furthermore, successfully developing interpersonal relations at this age is important for their overall well-being and social capital (Ladd & Sechler, 2012; Rubin et al., 2011).

To understand how children navigate social relations using social media and how these interactions lead to social capital, we employ longitudinal participant observations and conversations with children aged 8–12 (n = 86) at

afterschool-care. In addition, we conducted semi-structured interviews with parents (n = 16) to understand how they support these processes by mediating social media use and social interactions with peers. We focus on children's peer interactions when using the platform TikTok. This short-video platform, whose creative affordances invite children to connect with each other online and engage in creative practices in on- and offline social contexts, is currently one of the most popular apps for children of this age. By considering TikTok as a context to understand how children navigate social relations, this paper answers calls for research into how children navigate social relationships through specific platforms in on- and offline social contexts (Dredge & Schreurs, 2020).

We show that children leverage their use of TikTok as 'techniques of inclusion' through which they try to establish and maintain friendships. In addition, we find that these practices often consist of offline playful interactions. Examples include referencing popular memes, showing off their knowledge of the platform, and engaging in creative trends. While these practices allow children to bond with their peers over shared activities, upholding these friendships is inherently precarious. This fragility arises from the ongoing necessity for constant effort, to not only foster connection but also to navigate the dynamic digital landscape, keep up with quickly evolving trends, and manage the expectations of their peers. To manage these expectations, children selectively share content they produce. While child-produced videos are mainly intended for close friends, children employ other social practices (e.g., watching together, creative play) to connect with peers they have no strong relationship with yet. Failing to manage keeping produced videos private from peers they are not close with leads to scrutinizing comments and feelings of shame. We argue that the precarious nature of children's efforts to employ techniques of inclusion makes it difficult to build bonding social capital using TikTok. Our nuanced exploration of these challenges underscores the need to support children in building digital literacies including social-emotional perspectives of digital media use to enhance children's well-being in a digital age.

CYM03 Social media and youth II

PP 0267 Distress at school between digital fears and coping strategies

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Today's adolescents are facing many challenges in the digital society: on the one hand, they are exposed to a massive amount of information and stimuli from social media that influence the school, affective and social areas; on the other hand, many opportunities are available to them, such as access to online know-how and resources, who can support them in growing and developing their skills. The present study explores the relationship between school distress, digital habits, FoMO, and coping strategies in Italian adolescents after the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants were 85 high school students aged between 16 and 18 years who answered an ad hoc questionnaire on behavioural and affective habits related to digital practice, the Discomfort and Early School Leaving Evaluation Test (TVD), the Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMO), and the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS). The results show a significant interdependence between distress at school, digital habits, and adolescents' coping strategies. Emotion-oriented coping appears positively correlated to school distress factors and Fear of Missing Out, weakening the ego in managing school challenges. Avoidant coping in terms of distraction allows one to maintain a better feeling towards the school institution. The more time youth spend online, the less they use task-centred coping strategies, diminishing the efforts in processing the problem and finding new solutions. Adolescents presenting school distress and relying on emotion-oriented coping strategies use social media as a tool to mitigate negative feelings (e.g. boredom, discomfort, sadness, loneliness) or to avoid confrontation and suspend the processing of problematic situations that directly involve them. Findings highlight the need to develop tailored interventions to reduce and prevent school discomfort and amplify healthy coping abilities, taking into account the affective dimension and the digital practices connected to it.

Keywords: *Adolescents coping strategies, distress at school, early school leaving, FoMO, social feelings.*

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CYM03 Social media and youth II

PP 0268 Authentic or filtered? Unraveling the impact of augmented reality filters on adolescents' self-image

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Social media platforms are relevant for adolescents' media diets when searching for entertainment and interaction with peers. Augmented reality (AR) filters are a popular tool for teenagers that enable users to apply visual effects to create and share visual content. AR filters and lenses are digitally based, responsive interactions that are applied to the user's face or surroundings to change or extend what is being seen in the actual environment. The frequent use of these lenses makes them a powerful communication and engagement tool.

While some studies prove a connection between adolescents' social media usage and psychological problems, or negative outcomes, other studies point out positive well-being outcomes in the form of the possibility to express emotions and get social support. Previous research focuses on the use of AR filters in general for marketing and advertising purposes and on the motivations for AR filter usage by adults via social media.

Based on the social comparison theory, the current study investigates adolescents' AR filter usage on Instagram and TikTok in relation to subjective well-being. Thus, it was explored how utilizing filters affected the well-being variables (satisfaction with life, self-esteem, and self-acceptance), which were mediated by social comparison. The method consists of an online survey that we applied to Romanian adolescents (N = 282; 65.1% female and 34.9% male respondents) from both urban (53.2%) and rural (46.8%) areas, aged between 14 and 18 years (M_{age} = 16.52, SD = 0.99) who frequently use social media.

Our findings show that adolescents are more likely to use AR filters for entertainment, fun, and creativity. By applying these filters, whimsical or humorous content that is appealing to both the creator and the viewer may be produced. Moreover, AR filters foster creativity by giving them a means of expressing their individuality and enabling them to experiment with different looks and styles. The use of filters has a significant impact on well-being variables; self-acceptance is positively impacted by AR filters, while life satisfaction and self-esteem are negatively impacted by these filters. The main mediator, upward social comparison, emphasizes the possible negative effects of filter use on people's well-being and mental health. The implication is that whereas AR filters can improve people's perceptions of their appearance, they could also make them feel inferior or less valuable in comparison to those who appear more successful or attractive.

CYM03 Social media and youth II

PP 0269 Social media use in adolescent clinical and non-clinical populations: A registered report

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There is much concern that adolescent mental health declines and concurrent increases in social media use are linked. To address this, previous research has mostly analysed school- or community-based adolescent samples (for comprehensive reviews, see Odgers & Jensen, 2020; Valkenburg et al., 2022). However, this approach has systematically overlooked individuals diagnosed with mental health conditions, constituting less than 10% of effect sizes in the literature (Fassi et al., 2023). Notably, these populations are particularly at risk and may exhibit distinct patterns of social media use. In this Registered Report, we address this oversight by analysing the Mental Health of Children and Young People survey (approx. N = 4057, 11–19 years old). In this survey, professional clinical rates collected standardised multi-informant diagnostic mental health assessments for both internalising (e.g., anxiety, depressive, obsessive-compulsive and eating disorders) and externalising (e.g., hyperactivity and conduct disorders) diagnoses in a nationally representative UK sample. To gain a comprehensive understanding of how social media use differs across clinical and non-clinical adolescent populations, we examine both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of social media use. Specifically, we investigate time spent on social media as well as dimensions of social media engagement that could incur mental health risks (i.e., online social comparison, monitoring and impact of online feedback, lack of control over time spent online) or benefits (i.e., online friendship, as well as opportunities for honest self-disclosure and authentic self-presentation). We apply regression models and equivalence testing to assess our hypotheses of differences in social media use in adolescents with vs without a mental health condition (Question 1), with an internalising or externalising condition vs without a condition (Question 2), and with an internalising vs externalising condition (Question 3). Altogether, this Registered Report aims to comprehensively map and compare the relationship between different dimensions of social media use and mental health in both clinical and non-clinical

adolescent populations. In doing so, it lays the foundation for future mechanistic and translational research studying which specific aspects of social media use relate to mental health in different adolescent groups. These insights will be crucial to inform clinical practice, policy, as well as the design of targeted interventions to improve children and adolescents' mental health. We note that the Registered Report has received in-principle acceptance at Stage 1, the Stage 2 results and discussion will therefore be included in the conference presentation.

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CYM03 Social media and youth II

PP 0270 Exploring health-related issues on social media among Italian teens'

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While social media are often deemed responsible for spreading health-related dis- and misinformation, they are also important arenas for users to access health information and share thoughts and concerns. This is especially true when it comes to young people and teenagers, whose social media usage rates are much higher than those of the general population (Istat, 2023). We thus focus on teenagers' appropriation of social media platforms for health-related issues and turn our attention to the Italian context, where the impact of social media on health communication is still understudied and there is an overall lack of research focusing on teenagers' understanding of health issues. Our paper presents preliminary results of a two-year interdisciplinary research project aiming to explore knowledge needs, social media use, and social representations of health and vaccine-related issues among Italian teenagers.

Our research methods combine traditional in-depth interviews with an adapted version of the 'cognitive walk-through' strategy (Comunello, Mulargia, Parisi, 2016). Such a strategy contributes to a better understanding of what participants consider an "appropriate way" of communicating health on social media, allowing to grasp the negotiations and sense-giving processes performed by teenagers with regard to health-related social media content. So far, we have carried out 25 interviews with 25 teens, aged 15 to 17, living in Rome (Italy) and are analyzing them through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Additional interviews are ongoing.

Preliminary results reveal that Italian teens predominantly use Instagram and Tiktok, with a preference for the latter when it comes to searching for new content rather than engaging with friends' accounts. The main health-related issues they mention and interact with are: dietary health/dietary disorders; physical activity and sport; mental health and psychological well-being. These topics are often associated and evoked in connection with each other (e.g. proper nutrition to improve physical/sports performance, eating disorders related to psychological disorders, etc.). Interestingly, the teens show an awareness of the platforms' algorithmic personalization. For example, some interviewees said that they have been targeted on social media with ads covering sensitive topics such as diet apps to lose weight after interacting with similar topics. Some girls even used these apps for some weeks before stopping because of the apps' rigid norms to pursue weight loss, which caused the teens to lose self confidence.

Our preliminary findings contribute to a better understanding of Italian teens' knowledge needs and priorities in relation to health-related issues and related criteria they use to assess the credibility of different sources of information. They also shed light on how affordances and constraints of social media platforms, related business models, and algorithmic logics, contribute to framing health related conversation about sensitive topics (e.g. dietary issues and mental health) among teens.

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CYM04 Media, mediation and families II

PP 0331 Voices of resignation. Explaining differences in families' smart speaker usage and privacy cynicism

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Siri, Alexa, and Google Assistant are making rapid in-roads into the life of many families, especially so in the form of smart speakers. In response to this trend, research has started to explore specific dispositional characteristics (i.e., trust, literacy) and contextual characteristics (i.e., what is reported in news media) as predictors for device ownership and use-motivations following ecological systems, media selection, and technology acceptance theory. Additionally, first studies have also begun to analyze concrete smart speaker use patterns of families based on donated log-data. Yet, no data donation study of this kind exists on a European and non-English speaking sample, like families in the Netherlands, nor do we know what role previously identified predictors play for their long-term usage of smart speakers.

What is furthermore interesting is that people's use-behavior does not always resemble their attitude towards smart speakers, as people have often been found to worry about their privacy and yet continue using smart speakers at home without taking further actions to protect it. This is a sign of digital resignation; it occurs when privacy is seen as increasingly challenging to protect, up to the point where one resigns to this reality to avoid missing out on the technology's advantages. Digital resignation can be inherently problematic, as it impedes users' personal autonomy, makes them vulnerable to exploitation in digital spaces, and increases likelihood for institutional distrust. A possible way to empirically capture this resigning privacy attitude is through 'privacy cynicism'; a cognitive coping mechanism with which users justify their continued technology usage all while having privacy concerns. In the context of smart speakers in families, knowing how cynical parents are can help us estimating the extent to which digital resignation may be at play. As this can have consequences for children's media upbringing, it is a crucial next step in research that supports the protection of children's right for privacy as young digital citizens. Thus far though, we lack quantitative evidence, especially with regards to who is more likely to show digital resignation.

Against this background, our study establishes the extent to which Dutch parents currently show signs of privacy cynicism and whether there are links to families' smart speaker use-practices, as well as to their dispositional and contextual characteristics. We ask: *To what extent do dispositional and contextual characteristics of families explain differences in how they use (behavior) and feel about using smart speaker (attitude) particularly when it comes to privacy, and to what extent is there a link between their use-behavior and privacy attitude?*

We employ a multi-method design by combining families' donations of longitudinal smart speaker data with cross-sectional self-reports of $N = 400$ Dutch parents with at least one child between 3–8 years. As such, insights of our study will meaningfully advance our scientific understanding of digital resignation in the context of smart speaker usage in families, and through that signal to actors in industry and policy where families might need additional support to help them gain back user agency.

CYM04 Media, mediation and families II

PP 0332 Parent-adolescent communication in a digital world: A 100-day diary study

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Digital technology enables parents and adolescents to communicate anywhere and anytime. Knowledge of parent-adolescent online communication, however, is mainly based on cross-sectional studies focusing on how often parent-adolescent communication occurs. Some qualitative studies indicated that online parent-adolescent communication mostly concerned managerial content (i.e., asking or answering questions) or emotional content. While this previous work has provided us with an overall insight into how the average adolescent recalls their online communication with parents, it did not yet provide knowledge on everyday experiences of this communication and how adolescents may differ in patterns of online communication with parents. Therefore, the current 100-day study aims to obtain ecologically valid insights into the frequency, duration, and topics of parent-adolescent online communication (i.e., chatting via WhatsApp, Snapchat, or Instagram).

In order to provide a more nuanced understanding of how much variation in parent-adolescent online communication exists between adolescents, we use both frequency and duration to identify distinct patterns of parent-adolescent online communication. This enables us to investigate whether certain adolescent characteristics relate to such different patterns. Guided by the Differential Susceptibility to Media Effects Model we will investigate the predictive role of two dispositional factors (i.e., gender and autonomy), one developmental factor (i.e., age), and one social-context factor (i.e., family living situation) of the distinct patterns of parent-adolescent online communication to facilitate the interpretation of these patterns.

A 100-day daily diary study among 479 adolescents (M_{age} = 15.98, *SD* = 1.15; 54.9% girls) was conducted from January to May 2023. At the end of each day, we asked adolescents, to indicate whether they had chatted with their parents that day (i.e., frequency – answered yes/no), how long they had chatted that day (i.e., duration – in minutes) and about what topics they had chatted (i.e., topics – a-priori categories were shown with an 'other' option). Across the 100 days, 82.8% of the sent daily diary questionnaires were completed (39,598 of 47,847).

Almost all adolescents (96.9%) communicated online with parents throughout the study period. On average, adolescents communicated online with their parents on 36% of days. The average person-mean duration of parent-adolescent online communication was 19.42 minutes (*SD* = 29.32). Adolescents communicated most with their parents online about the time they got somewhere, school, and whereabouts. Additional categories were found by coding adolescents' text answers such as monitoring and supporting parents. Latent profile analysis indicated a five-profile solution, the profiles were: infrequent short communication (55.4%), frequent short communication (33.4%), infrequent medium-long communication (8.4%), infrequent long communication (2.2%), infrequent very long communication (0.6%). Age and gender predicted profile membership, in that younger adolescents and boys communicated longer with parents online than older adolescents and girls.

Thus, almost all adolescents communicated online with their parents, albeit mostly short. Most parent-adolescent online communication concerned monitoring or managerial aspects. An unexpected phenomenon was found after categorizing adolescents' text answers on the 'other' option: Adolescents monitoring their parents in addition to the other way around.

CYM04 Media, mediation and families II

PP 0333 The establishment of children's privacy rules towards sharenting practice: Achieving relational agency and interpersonal privacy in China

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Sharenting has become a prevalent digital practice among Chinese parents, generating topics about children that often amass billions of views across various social media platforms. Both parents and children are incentivized by the benefits offered by these platforms to create more sharented content. While sharenting may expose or infringe upon children's privacy(Plunkett 2019), which is a significant concern in childhood studies interwoven with issues of agency, various studies have explored negotiated privacy management strategies between parents and adolescents under Communication Privacy Management (CPM) Theory(De Wolf 2020). However, there is a gap in the research regarding how children's privacy rules towards sharenting practices by their parents are formed and what social contexts can promote or hinder this formation, particularly in non-Western cultural contexts. Based on a relational understanding of agency and privacy(Esser, Baader et al. 2016), This paper addresses the issue of children's interpersonal privacy in Chinese culture, where generational hierarchy and collective order traditionally prevail, creating a distinct situation for privacy rules to form, differing from Western culture, especially within family communication.

Based on observations and semi-structured interviews with 30 preadolescents (10–14 years) and their parents from different socio-economic classes in southeast China, the paper investigates these areas by drawing on actor-network approaches. It focuses on how human and non-human actors can impact the agency of preadolescent children to understand, negotiate, intervene, or even change parental sharenting practices across various social media platforms through the lens of CPM theory. Actors of relational, socio-economic, technological and cultural dimensions are specifically explored to capture heterogeneous networks where children receive agentic position. As preadolescents become conscious of their online self-image and question authority figures such as their parents, this period becomes crucial for observing the process of forming children's privacy rules and relational agency in their everyday practices. Continuous contacts were maintained with children to gain a nuanced understanding.

Initial results culturally demonstrate that the establishment of privacy boundary rules concerning sharenting among Chinese preadolescents can be limited by the combination of filial duty and family loyalty. Though some children are dissatisfied with sharenting, they perceive their privacy not as something already own to them, akin to their belongings kept by parents temporarily. Further, the paper examines the interplay results of different actors and identifies the key (combined) actor(s) impacting the formation of children's privacy rules. Several contributions are expected: (1) the expansion of empirical research using relational approaches in childhood studies, eliminating the dichotomy of structure and agency; (2) the enrichment of CPM theory studies to include the formation process of privacy rules in specific sharenting practice, and (3) the consideration of Chinese culture, where Confucianism has a unique influence on privacy issues, exhibiting distinct characteristics in the outcome of children's privacy control. Insights to foster the development of healthy privacy rules for children is also offered.

CYM04 Media, mediation and families II

PP 0334 The reciprocal relationship between parental e-health literacy mediation and adolescents' e-health literacy: A three-wave longitudinal study

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The online environment offers a wealth of information, including content related to health, attracting adolescents as frequent users. This information becomes instrumental in shaping their health-related decisions. Beyond useful and accurate health information, however, adolescents may encounter false or even endangering information that may lead to disorderly consequences. To effectively navigate and evaluate such information, it is thus crucial to cultivate e-health literacy. However, our comprehension of the extent of e-health literacy among adolescents is lacking, with even less understanding of the contributions parents make to its development. Research indicates that parental involvement and guidance significantly shape children's media use and health-related behaviors (e.g., Donaldson et al., 2013; Gulec & Smahel, 2022). Nevertheless, there is a shortage of longitudinal studies verifying the actual impact of parental mediation, i.e., the parent–child interactions about media use and consumption, in this regard. Simultaneously, it is recognized that parent's literacy and education, particularly in the field of health, impact their ability to convey precise information (Porter et al., 2012); however, it remains unclear whether this principle extends to e-health literacy mediation. Moreover, the e-health literacy of adolescents may conversely impact parental e-health mediation. For instance, seeing the adolescent struggling with understanding or searching for quality health information online might prompt parents to increase their mediation. Addressing these knowledge gaps can significantly enhance our scientific comprehension of relationships between parental e-health mediation and the e-health literacy of adolescents.

The study newly explores the reciprocal relationship between parental e-health literacy mediation and adolescents' e-health literacy while considering the moderating role of parental education level. Using a longitudinal design, the study collected data from 2500 adolescent-parent dyads (adolescents' age in T1: 11–16, M = 13.4; SD = 1.7, 50% females) over three waves, employing a random intercept cross-lagged panel model (RI-CLPM). We assumed that the impact of e-health literacy mediation will be positively moderated by the educational level of a parent, meaning that higher-educated parents are expected to have greater influence.

Our study found no support for the hypothesized causal links between parental e-health literacy mediation and adolescents' e-health literacy. However, the age of the adolescent did emerge as a significant factor, positively affecting both e-health literacy and e-health literacy mediation. Additionally, a positive correlation between random intercepts was observed, indicating that adolescents with higher e-health literacy tended to experience higher parental e-health mediation. Notably, the study did not reveal any evidence supporting the notion that parents with a higher education level exerted a more substantial influence through e-health literacy mediation on their children compared to those with a lower education level.

The findings underscore the importance of adapting e-health literacy mediation strategies based on the child's age. This carries societal implications, impacting not only parents but also teachers and other stakeholders actively engaged in promoting the development of e-health literacy among young people. The study invites further exploration, specifically to investigate other factors that may influence adolescents' e-health literacy.

CYM04 Media, mediation and families II

PP 0335 The good child. Exploring children's perspectives on parental connectivity, the parental gaze, and contemporary childhood

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New media and data-driven technology allow end-users to watch and even monitor one another, including the surveying of (potential) romantic partners, strangers, friends, and children and teens. In intimate surveillance (Leaver, 2017), transcending parenting (Lim, 2020) and caring surveillance (Sukk & Siibak, 2021), monitoring children and teens could be equated with care and good parenthood – a supposedly "good parent" is then someone who closely watches, monitors and controls the practices of their children. Investigating intimate surveillance, scholars found how these practices come in varying degrees. Parents can read private emails of their children (Kennedy-Lightsey & Frisby, 2016), check up on them via the Internet or Internet based applications (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Vongkulluksn, 2016), look into their social media profiles or text messages, and install monitoring or tracking software (Modecki, 2022; Sukk & Siibak, 2021).

Although scholars have pled in favor of child-centric perspectives (Lupton and Williamson, 2017; De Wolf & Vanden Abeele, 2020; Sukk & Siibak, 2021; Özkul, 2022), it is noticeable that much emphasis is placed on good parenthood,

parental monitoring, and/or the characteristics of new technology that allow for intimate surveillance. In this contribution we argue for a child-centric perspective on intimate surveillance and put forward the following research questions:

RQ1. How do children feel about anyplace anytime parental connectivity?

RQ2. How and to what extent do children internalize the parental gaze?

RQ3. What is considered good childhood in terms of privacy and autonomy?

To answer these research questions we carried out an in-depth interview study with children (N = 32) between the age of 9 to 12 in [omitted for peer review]. The interviews lasted approximately 40–45 minutes and were carried out in school premises (e.g., during recess or lunch break). During the interview study we made use of eliciting techniques and thinking aloud protocols (Jørgensen, 2016). To illustrate, at the start of the interview, participants were prompted to sketch a timeline portraying a typical day, highlighting specific activities and locations. This exercise served to fuel discussions on parental engagement, connectivity, and monitoring.

In line with the findings of Sukk & Siibak (2021, 2022) and Özkul (2022) our participants expressed a need for a negotiation on how location tracking was used by their parents, found it rather normal that parents watch them in the public domain (not in their homes), and were encouraged to embrace anyplace anytime parental connectivity because it brought comfort and a sense of control to their parents, and not necessarily the children themselves. Moreover, the participants displayed anticipation regarding their forthcoming high school activities, perceiving it as an arena offering increased autonomy and privacy. They contemplated how the practice of intimate surveillance might assist in this transition, viewing it not as a symbol of distrust but as an extra resource, be it through smartphones, tracking applications, or other means.*

*Note: we are currently ending the data collection phase and in the process of analyzing the data. The above findings should therefore be treated as preliminary.

CYM05 Children, youth and AI

PP 0447 Opening children's experience with generative AI. An exploratory study ofRomanian secondary school children's engagement with and understanding of generative AI

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Children's wide and eager embrace of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) is one of the phenomena that has lately raised the most concerns in society, especially among educators who worry about presumably unethical use of it for school related tasks (Cao & Dede, 2023). Others worry that the "affective aesthetic style embedded in its whole conversational approach" decreases users' critical alertness needed to discern the truth of information provided this way and makes its use especially dangerous in educational context (Balmer, 2023). At the opposite end, some scholars are enthusiastic about the opportunities that GAI brings for children in an educational context, and talk about "(c)hildren as creators, thinkers and citizens in an AI-driven future"; this bright future does not occur spontaneously, but it is the result of a guided educational process, that aimed for a certain level of critical and creative AI competences among children (Ali et al., 2021).

What links together these concerns is the adult-centered perspective on how children would or should use GAI, with little interest in how, why and with what results children actually use GAI in various contexts. To fulfill this gap, I took a child-centered approach and explored, using a qualitative methodology, Romanian secondary school children's engagement with GAI tools for information seeking, self expression and communication. For this, I interviewed 15 secondary school children (11–14), varied in terms of gender, socioeconomic status, and online user profile; the interviews are thematically analyzed.

My objectives are to map the tools they prefer, to understand their practices as situated in a social context and to unveil their critical understanding of GAI and how they conceive their place in this "AI-driven future". While my conceptualization of children and their interaction with GAI is partially indebted to EU Kids Online theoretical model (Livingstone et al., 2015), I will discuss the results using the three-layer framework proposed by Davis (2023) reflecting on the fact that only starting from the feature layer of GAI and passing by its practice layer one can understand children's culture that emerge around GAI, with all its future implications (for ethics, politics, or even epistemology).

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CYM05 Children, youth and AI

PP 0448 Data literacy in Brussels: Learning about chatGPT in a DataBuzz workshop

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This study explores a workshop on ChatGPT within the DataBuzz project. The DataBuzz is a high-tech, mobile educational lab in a bus, promoting data literacy by visiting Dutch-speaking schools in Brussels. Through inclusive, interactive workshops, the DataBuzz raises awareness about the values, risks, and limitations of data and provides young people with a space to engage with real-world questions. The overarching goal of the project is to equip students with the necessary competences to be active and critical citizens in an increasingly datafied society. The project is further driven by the goal of ensuring equal educational opportunities, emphasising digital inclusion, and offering a professionalised learning environment with adaptive guidance.

The workshop is mapped on the Data Literacy Competence Model (DLCM), a high-level analytical framework, developed by the Knowledge Centre for Digital and Media Literacy Flanders-Belgium. This model defines two major competence clusters: *using data* and *understanding data*, each existing of four competences aimed at fostering a common understanding of data literacy, such as analysing data or reflecting on data. The ChatGPT workshop emphasises not only the practical aspects of using data but also the importance of critically understanding and navigating the broader societal implications of AI-tools.

Using a three-fold qualitative case study analysis, we delve deeper into how the workshop contributes to fostering data literacy among students (ages 10–14) in Brussels. Firstly, we do an in-depth interview with the educational representative of the DataBuzz, who also develops the workshops, and with the teachers who booked the workshop. Secondly, we observe at least 20 sessions, with every session having about eight participants. Thirdly, we organise focus groups with participants that followed the workshop.

While the study is currently in its developmental phase, the results will be available for presentation at the conference. This study explores how the workshop contributes to fostering data literate students that go beyond passive data consumption. Given the datafication of society, data literacy has become increasingly important. In social and educational sciences, the prevailing focus in the literature is on data usage skills rather than on fostering a deeper understanding of data. However, there is a noticeable trend towards critical data literacy, emphasising understanding data and critical thinking. Through mapping the workshop on the DLCM, we aim to comprehend how the workshop strives to promote critical thinking and data awareness. Our interviews with teachers and young people aim to gauge their grasp on data literacy and the competences they identify. The findings will further contribute to the ongoing discourse on the integration of AI and data in educational settings and offering guidance for educators, and policymakers seeking to instill data literacy in students.

CYM05 Children, youth and AI

PP 0449 Dealing with AI-generated media: Young people's media and information literacy regarding deepfake

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The advanced generative AI technology has led to a tremendous increase in the volume of media content, such as deepfake content, which has become more accessible to young people. In accordance with Vaccari & Chadwick (2020, p. 2), the so-called term "deepfake" is broadly used to describe hyper realistic media, driven by machine learning algorithms, where someone's facial expressions were pasted onto another person's face. Concerns towards how deepfakes might impact youths are rising. As young people are an extremely vulnerable group exposed to the undistinguishable information in these synthetic media (Vosloo, 2023), it is vital to comprehend the situation of encountering deepfakes in young people's everyday lives and the ways they process these media.

This study contributes to the knowledge area related to youths' media and information literacy practices in terms of deepfakes in everyday life. It aims to explore young people's practices of encountering deepfakes in their daily lives. The study particularly focuses on young people's knowledge and experiences with deepfakes, which reveals their competencies in dealing with AI-generated media in a daily setting.

The following research questions are addressed in this study:

RQ1: How do young participants understand deepfakes?

RQ2: In what ways do young participants deal with deepfakes?

In-depth interviews were applied in this study. Twenty-one 9th grade pupils, aged 14 to 15 years, were recruited from school B in Finland and involved in the interview sessions. After data collection, the empirical data of interviews were transcribed and coded through using the qualitative analysis software NVivo.

Based on analysis, two key findings were unfolded: (1) Young participants had shallow knowledge of deepfakes. Most of them could simply describe the features of deepfakes and point out the role AI played in these artifacts. (2) Regarding young people's experiences, all the participants encountered deepfakes by coming across them on social media platforms, such as YouTube and TikTok. However, most of the youths tried to avoid watching these videos since they considered these media as negative.

The findings reveal that young individuals possess fundamental media and information literacy, as well as AI literacy, when faced with deepfakes. Nonetheless, due to a restricted comprehension of AI-generated media among the youth, this study emphasizes the need for heightened awareness. This awareness, in turn, advocates for potential remedies through Media and Information Literacy education or policy initiatives, specifically designed to address the challenging implications posed by deepfakes.

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CYM05 Children, youth and AI

PP 0450 Associations between emerging adults' (motivations for) AI use and AI-related attitudes

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Artificial intelligence (AI) tools have entered crucial areas of young people's lives such as education (Baidoo-Anu & Owusu Ansah, 2023), social relationships (Brandtzaeg et al., 2022), and well-being (Inkster et al., 2018). However, research on emerging adults' motivations for using AI and their attitudes toward AI is still lacking, although constant rapid advancements in the field make understanding how young people use and perceive AI all the more important. Based on *Uses and Gratifications Theory* (Katz et al., 1974) and Venkatesh's (2022) *Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology*'s application to AI, we explore how individuals' use of different kinds of AI tools is driven by specific motivations, and, in turn, uniquely associated with their attitudes toward AI.

Method and Key Findings

After obtaining IRB approval, we conducted a cross-sectional survey among a quota-based sample of $N = 569$ emerging adults (49.6% female, 16–25 years) in Austria using existing scales where available (McDonald's $\omega \geq .77$). Our structural equation model revealed a good model fit (CFI = 0.98, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .03).

Using chatbots was associated with creativity motives ($b = .17$, $SE = .05$, b = .15, $p = .001$), image enhancement among peers ($b = .11$, $SE = .06$, b = .11, $p = .044$), rapid information presentation ($b = .15$, $SE = .05$, b = .13, $p = .005$), and obtaining information on intimate topics (e.g., sexual orientation, romantic relationships; $b = .15$, $SE = .05$, b = .14, $p = .004$). Making use of virtual assistants (e.g., Amazon's Alexa) was linked to entertainment reasons ($b = .14$, $SE = .06$, b = .11, $p = .016$), image enhancement ($b = .23$, $SE = .07$, b = .18, $p = .001$), and keeping up with new technology ($b = 19$, $SE = .05$, b = .15, $p = .001$). Finally, using AI-based apps for mental/physical health was related to always having someone to talk to ($b = .12$, $SE = .05$, b = .11, $p = .011$), image enhancement ($b = .20$, $SE = .06$, b = 17, $p < .000$), receiving emotional support ($b = .13$, $SE = .06$, b = .12, $p = .015$), getting suggestions for interpersonal relationships ($b = .13$, $SE = .06$, b = .12, $p = .013$) and informing oneself about intimate issues ($b = 10$, $SE = .05$, b = .09, $p = .046$). Regarding AI attitudes, participants who used chatbots ($b = .07$, $SE = .03$, b = .10, $p = .027$), virtual assistants ($b = .05$, $SE = .03$, b = .10, $p = .031$), or AI tools that support learning ($b = .09$, $SE = .03$, b = .15, $p = .003$) were more excited about integrating AI in their daily lives. However, attitudes related to societal or privacy concerns were unrelated to participants' AI use.

Implications

Our findings revealed that young people employ different kinds of AI tools to deal wih key issues of emerging adulthood (i.e., intimacy-related topics, social relationships, or needing emotional support). Importantly, existing research has pointed out issues of using AI to tackle such well-being-related issues due to safety reasons (Kurian, 2023). Our findings underline this need, as young people who use specific AI tools more intensely were more excited to integrate AI in their lives. Simultaneously, AI technology use was not associated with concerns about societal consequences or the safety of participants' data, suggesting that putting potential negative consequences of AI use more into focus might be important.

CYM05 Children, youth and AI

PP 0451 Like any other tool and completely different – University students' use of generative AI as media practices

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The widespread accessibility of AI tools has significantly impacted both the public and the academic discourse surrounding their integration into higher education, raising crucial questions about ethical considerations, academic integrity, and the evolving nature of teaching and learning. While the public debate has focused mainly on the written essay and the extent to which it can continue to be used as a form of examination, research on learning in higher education have also emphasized the student perspective and the potential benefits of generative AI tools in learning processes more generally (e.g. Chan & Hu 2023) as well as for specific disciplines such as media and journalism education (Pavlik 2023). Most of this research concerns the practical implementation of AI in teaching and learning rather than its position in a broader social context. Hence, this study wants to contribute to the area with perspectives from media studies that will help to unpack the complex interplay between technology, media representations, societal perceptions, and educational practices.

More concretely, we investigate how students at a middle-sized university in Sweden use and understand generative AI in relation to their views on higher education and Bildung. The empirical data for the study is collected through 1) a survey sent out to all students at the university about the extent to which they have used generative AI in their studies, for what purposes and their objectives for entering higher education, and 2) follow-up focus group interviews where they are given the opportunity to reflect upon the opportunities and challenges of this technology, both in their current educational process and and in their future professional and civic life. By analyzing this material from a media practice perspective (e.g. Couldry 2004), the study provides detailed insights into how students use chatbots for various tasks such as translation, summaries, and spell checking, rather than as a 'tool for cheating' as it is often pictured in the public debate. These insights are further related to the students' views on higher education and to shared social imaginaries about the transformative potential of artificial intelligence, revealing an ambiguous relation to generative AI in education and knowledge production among the students.

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CYM06 Children & youth participation

PP 0561 Participation of children and youth in digital landscapes: A qualitative study from Portugal

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In-depth and multi-dimensional studies focused on children, youth and the media has shown that the current online landscape poses specific challenges: privacy, identification and verification of false news and misinformation, exposure to cyberbulling and discrimination, among others. Early development of critical analysis skills are essential so that younger generations can have the necessary tools to navigate more safely and with agency through a virtual landscape that poses a multiplicity of risks of false, inaccurate, or misleading information circulating widely and at massive speed. By shifting the lens and focusing on the potential offered by the information environments and communication cultures available we can formulate new pedagogies for the digital age (Notley and Dezuanni, 2019). These new pedagogies can benefit from emphasizing inclusivenes and incorporating the voices of children and youth. Rethinking pedagogies can be expanded and combined to other instances of the lives of the younger generation.

The study being carried out in the research project "bYou – Study of the Experiences and Expressions of Children and Young People about the Media" in Portugal will serve as a basis for the presentation of this paper that will focus on how children think about opportunities to participate and express themselves on issues that concern them, and how they evaluate if their ideas are actually being heard. The analysis will present data obtained from 59 focus groups held with 390 children and young people aged between 11–18 yo, attending 6th, 9th and 12th grades.

As other recent sudies (Tandoc Jr. *et al.* 2020 and Ponte, 2019) that addresses perceptions, constraints and interests related to participation, our study highlighted that children and youth feel discouraged to manifest himself/herself feeling unmotived, intimidated and believing that their opinion will not promote change. Responses revealed that they feel demotivated since their ideas and opinions are rarely taken into consideration. To further our understanding

on the matter the paper intends to relate theoretical approaches on participation and interests with the perception expressed by children and young people about their own interests, concerns and opportunities for self-expression. Among the key questions we aim to analyse: What is perceived as having a voice and to participate offline and online? What are the constraints? How and why it is important to express one's idea?

These concepts are interlinked and involves the appreciation of multiple expressions of children and youth that can be the basis and inspiration for creative and inclusive solutions for participation in general, and equally in the digital landscape.

The bYou research project [PTDC/COM-OUT/3004/2020], that supports this paper, is being carried out at the University of Minho, Portugal, and it is funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology.

CYM06 Children & youth participation

PP 0562 Expressions of Portuguese children and young people about the media and other issues: Analysing participation in the "Express Yourself!" campaign

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"Shout out, speak out, do something, express yourself!" is a campaign launched in 2022 within the scope of the research project "bYou – Study of the experiences and expressions of children and young people about the media", funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (PTDC/COM-OUT/ 3004/2020). One of the main objectives of this project is to develop a participatory media tool to promote the expression and participation of children and young people until 19 years old. The participatory platform muralbyou.pt was therefore created, providing quizzes to test levels of media literacy and thematic cards to collect opinions on certain worldwide topics and others from the youngster's own worlds. But the main goal of this platform was to aggregate, organise and present the expressions collected between November 2022 and September 2024. In this paper we will analyse these expressions sent by children and young people themselves or by adults such as teachers or other responsible. This will be a qualitative content analysis based on thematic categories, with the aim of characterising the expressions in terms of formats, themes and content. Variables such as age, gender and geographical area will also be considered.

An initial analysis of the expressions submitted so far seems to confirm that drawing is the easiest mode of expression for the younger children, while text seems to be something that requires greater effort. Video, photography and sound, on the other hand, seem to be the least chosen formats, probably because they demand specific skills and access to recording devices and editing tools. It is also possible to observe a strong tendency to choose present-day themes such as the environment and issues of violence and peace, among other current world issues. This seems to be in line with the perception that children and young people are aware of and want to express themselves about the world around them, and only need the means and opportunities to do so.

The bYou project seems already to prove the importance of creating opportunities for children and young people to express themselves and participate in digital media. The opportunity for participation can also translate into an opportunity for collaborative learning. Involvement in moments of sharing and debate on social and political issues can encourage civic and democratic participation, contributing to more informed citizens who will be actively involved in the future of society. In fact, in an increasingly digital world, it's important to provide opportunities for participation from an early age, in order to prepare new generations to face the challenges, risks and opportunities of that world.

Recognising that proper monitoring and guidance in the process of learning to participate in digital media is fundamental to ensure children's safety online, promote responsible and ethical participation and help them to discern trustworthy content, several authors defend participation as a right. In fact, this right to participate is recognised in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, appearing at the same level as the rights to protection and provision.

CYM06 Children & youth participation

PP 0563 "We often say we lost our childhood, but activism gave us a lot more than it took away" – The lived experience of young climate activists in the digital world

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The latest Atlas of European Values (2022) shows disquieting results concerning willingness or actual engagement in various forms of activism in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region. On a scale from 0 to 4, in most of these countries, enthusiasm for activism is positioned between 0.5 and 1.4 – the lowest on the continent. Moreover, a recent study analysing the online public representations of politically active youth in Czechia and

Hungary showed that adults use a multitude of strategies to exclude young activists from the online public sphere (Vochocová et al., 2023).

Given these circumstances, we set out to understand the practices of everyday activism and how the use of social media is shaping the lives of young activists under 18 in this region. For this, we positioned in the centre of our analysis two Fridays for Future activists: Laura (FFF Hungary) and Engelbert (FFF Czechia). The analysis builds upon data collected through a larger year-long ethnographic study that included in-depth and focus group interviews, and participant observations of climate strikes, workshops and meetings. These were complemented by a digital ethnography phase, during which we observed our participants' social media activities on Instagram.

For analysing the data we relied on Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which allowed us to study how participants make sense of their (digital) activism (Smith and Osborn, 2003). By opting for this methodology, we gained a comprehensive insight into how young individuals perceive their daily activism, both in online and offline contexts. Our double hermeneutic analysis led to the development of the following themes: 1) activism as community; 2) activism and digital media; and 3) activism as everyday life. Our first theme included accounts of how participants make sense of and articulate the importance of the relationships and community formed through their (digital) activism. The second theme highlighted the complex relationship between digital media, technology and activism, such as the necessity of digital literacy skills or what it means to be an influencer. The participants confessed about their mixed and often contradictory feelings regarding the role of these technologies in their everyday activism, such as a feeling of empowerment, but also burnout and disillusionment. Finally, the third theme revealed a rich diversity of experiences, from the daily internal workings of the FFF to others' reactions to their activism. Most importantly, it provided an insight into our participants' relation to other social justice topics, both on social media and in everyday life.

Our analysis shows that while FFF had a crucial role in the development of a political and social-justice consciousness, for these young people fighting for different causes has become an essential part of their offline and online lives. We argue that despite recent social and political disruptions in the CEE region, these young activists challenge societal injustices through everyday (digital) actions not by concentrating on the single issue of climate change, but by adopting an intersectional and holistic approach that focuses on issues ranging from sexism to LGBTQ rights, and anti-war stands.

CYM06 Children & youth participation

PP 0564 Student Carnivale: Political humour and satire in Australia's School Strike for Climate Movement

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The engagement by large numbers of children and young people in climate politics is a striking feature of the contemporary political landscape. However, movements like the SchoolStrike4Climate face numerous obstacles. Those obstacles include the adultist prejudice that as 'defective adults' children and young people cannot, or should not take part in politics.

There is also a history of hostility by mainstream media to dissent, while even liberal-democratic governments are averse to large scale protest. In this paper we explore the creation and communication of satire and humor by school students as a political strategy adopted by the Australian School Strike 4 Climate movement. We ask:

- what do young people themselves say they are doing
- how do they articulate and communicate their politics, and
- why do they create and deploy humour and satire.

Amongst other things, this paper challenges conventional accounts of politics and dissent promoted by positivist social scientists which rely on assumptions that politics entails rational action, political efficacy and resource mobilization. This paper reports on findings from research carried out in Melbourne and Sydney and a number of regional centres since 2018. We draw on insights from the 'affective turn' in the social sciences which has seen increasing and welcome attention given to emotions in general and moral emotions in particular. The paper focuses on how humor and satire is created and used by students in contemporary climate change action. We have used a mixture of surveys, interviews and visual images carried out over a sequence of protest events. We show how humour and satire work in the visual images and placards, puppetry, costumes, theatrical pranks, and tactical 'clowning around' as well as in podcasts, on-line messaging, memes and satire. The paper argues that the use of satire and humour evokes the *carnivalesque* (Bakhtin 1984), which inverts normal hierarchies, provides comic relief from the frightening reality of climate change while offering glimpses of alternative social imaginaries.

CYM06 Children & youth participation

PP 0565 Youth and populism on social media – Epistemic crisis or polarization?

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This article discusses the results of interviews with young people about their perceptions of populism on social media. The background of this study is the research conducted at the Research Institute Social Cohesion (RISC) in Germany by the applicants.

Various aspects, such as media use, political opinion formation, socio-psychological factors, but also extremist recruitment attempts, point to the particular relevance of youth in the context of populism on social media.

Theoretically, this article is based on the phenomena of 'epistemic crisis', 'populism' and 'polarization'. The term 'epistemic crisis' refers to the change in knowledge due to digitalization. To this end, the terms populism, fake news, conspiracy narratives and alternative facts are differentiated from one another and the special role of social media in their development as a socio-technological information ecology is focused on. With polarization, a distinction must be made between different concepts of polarization. In the context of social media, ideological and affective polarization are of particular interest. Ideological polarization refers to the drifting apart of attitudes along certain factual issues (e.g. migration, climate change), while affective polarization refers to the increasing mutual rejection of certain groups. With regard to populism, Cas Mudde's definition has been widely used. Mudde defines populism as an "ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (2004, 543). Part of the adaptability of populism is that it is often defined as a "thin ideology", meaning that a further, often political ideology is required for populism to unfold.

The qualitative interviews with young people and their analysis provide an in-depth but only partial insight into how young people deal with populism and its polarization. The interviews were analyzed using theoretical coding according to Corbin and Strauss (2015). With this method, the material is broken down much more openly in order to emphasize general patterns and connections.

The analysis reveals four fundamental findings. Firstly, young people – regardless of educational endeavors – have differentiated knowledge about populism. Secondly, the young people do not show any confirmation of the so-called filter bubble in their routinised media behavior. Thirdly, the reason for the consensus-orientation of young people could lie in the thesis of social homophily, since the social network of young people is (also) fed online by people with whom there is a value consensus ('value homophily'). Fourthly, the results provide evidence of affective polarization. This refers to the rejection of political dissenters. Knowledge of populism and social homophily show that it seems important to young people not only to identify with the values in favor of something, but above all to know who they are not close to. Implications, such as a democratic and technological shift in the discourse of media literacy, will be discussed.

CYM07 Digital health, digital well-being and young people

PP 0667 Idyllic or Rollercoaster? – Digital media user profiles based on the digital wellbeing and online vulnerability of 12–14 years old children

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A comprehensive understanding of participation in the digital environment, online presence and identification of types of online risks is needed to protect children online (Livingstone, 2016).Identification of online risks (Aven and Renn, 2009; Livingstone and Stoilova, 2021) is merely the first step towards making individual online vulnerabilities identifiable and intervening. Online vulnerability can be defined as the perception of adverse effects on an individual's physical, psychological state as a result of online activities (Davidson and Martellozzo, 2013, Buglass 2017). However,exposure to online vulnerability does not automatically imply psychological vulnerability (Smith and Livingstone, 2017).

Risk exposure of young people in the online media environment is influenced by many factors. Assessing the subjective sense of digital wellbeing can contribute to understanding user's motivations and frustrations. The Basic Psychological Need mini-theory of Self-Determination Theory plays an important role in research on the uses and effects of interactive media (e.g.,Rigby and Ryan 2018). Stimuli of digital media can lead to both satisfaction and frustration of basic psychological needs (Schneider et al. 2022). The goal of this study was to examine possible relations between the factors of need satisfaction and frustration and online risk; also, to validate the Digital Wellbeing Scale.

In this research,the Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale (BPNDFS) (Vansteenkiste, Ryan, and Soenens 2020).. was translated and adapted to the digital environment, among other scales.

Using data from a cross-sectional survey of 300 Hungarian pupils (age 12–14), the theoretical model demonstrated adequate reliability and validity. Regarding the six different factors (autonomy satisfaction and frustration, competence satisfaction and frustration, relatedness satisfaction and frustration) five clusters were set up for digital wellbeing: "Idyllic", "Average", "Not interested", "Rollercoaster" and "Ambivalent". The results also show that the degree of satisfaction is mainly shaped by the feeling of competence, but frustration caused by the poor quality of connectedness. Connections can be explored between satisfaction/frustration and online risk exposures, such as overuse, online social anxiety, and body image concern. Also, some relevant differences between boys and girls appeared. This results highlight the importance of regarding individual factors of being online.

CYM07 Digital health, digital well-being and young people

PP 0668 Don't let the bed bugs bite you – Effects of young children's media use on sleep quality

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Media Educators across the world recommend as little digital media use for children under the age of three as possible. This recommendation stands in stark contrast to the experience of parents with young children and their livelihoods. Two- and three-year-old children do indeed use digital moving image content, primarily through the smartphone as ubiquitously available media. We wonder what effects smartphone use for moving images in early childhood may have and particularly we focus on effects on young children's sleep quality.

Research in developmental psychology has extensively studied the importance of sleep for child development. However, there is limited research on the impact of digital media on sleep quality in young children. This study focuses on the effect of moving image media on sleep quality in children aged 18 to 36 months. This age group is chosen due to their growing engagement with media and established bedtime routines. Our study is based on an adjusted version of Cain and Gradisar's (2010) model of media use and sleep. In brief, this model argues that sleep quality decreases through extended media use during the day and at night due to various processes such as heightened mental, physiological, or emotional arousal, effects of (blue) light on biorhythms or media use compensating sleep time. Extended media use is a consequence of social factors with limited media regulation of media use time among them. Based on this model, we propose the following working hypothesis:

H1: The longer the duration digital moving image media use before falling asleep, the lower the quality of sleep.

H2: The more frequently smartphones for media use are used before falling asleep the lower the quality of sleep.

H3: The greater the child's say in the decision about the duration of use, the lower the quality of sleep.

We tested our hypotheses in an online survey among N = 480 adults (95.8 % female; M_{age} = 32.1; SD = 4.40) who feel responsible for raising a child aged 18 to 36 months (Child Age M = 27.1 months, SD = 6.14) recruited through parenting forums, Instagram, nurseries and midwifery practices. Sleep quality was recorded using the short version of the Children's Sleep Habits Questionnaire (CSHQ). Media/ Smartphone use as well as child's co-determination in media use was measured through parental reports.

Our findings show that around 60% of children in our sample used digital moving image media (video clips, serie, movies). Based on linear regression models we could confirm H1 through H3. For the presentation, we will calculate more comprehensive multivariate analyses. Here, we will investigate interaction as well as moderation effects for our socio-demographic variables (age of the child/person responsible, education, gender). The current status of the analysis shows that the observed effects are consistent with the theoretical expectations but are weak to medium. Findings enhance our understanding of the effects of digital moving image media on young children's sleep quality and open the ground for an investigation of effects of digital media use on young children.

CYM07 Digital health, digital well-being and young people

PP 0669 Moving beyond screen time: Digital activities, affective and cognitive reactions and adolescent mental health

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Screen time is often blamed for the risk of mental health problems in youth, exacerbated by the pandemic. But while some studies report statistically significant associations between screen time and poor mental health, the results are mixed, and effect sizes are typically small. Importantly, the nature of adolescents' digital activities is obscured by the unitary construct of 'screen time', which lacks granularity about which aspects of digital engagement are harmful and which may support wellbeing digital activities. In this paper, we introduce a new self-report measure, the Digital

Activities and Feelings Inventory (DAFI) to address these limitations. The DAFI was co-designed with adolescents. It measures, first, the digital activities that adolescents engaged in over the past two weeks, and second, their cognitive and affective reactions to their digital activity.

To pilot test the DAFI, 192 UK adolescents aged 16–20 years completed the questionnaires online (mean = 18.2 years; SD = 1.2); 69% were female (31% male), 38% were from ethnic minorities, and 17% had received free school meals. Screen time was measured as hours online on an average weekday. Key outcome measures included the functional impact of digital activity on adolescents' daily lives (e.g., less sleep, conflict in relationships, difficulties at school), symptoms of depression and anxiety, and psychological wellbeing. To assess the reliability of outcome measures, adolescents were asked to nominate a proxy rater who knew them well (e.g., a friend, parent, etc.). Factor analysis found that the digital activity items resolved to four distinct though correlated factors: content risks (e.g., watched dark/negative content; saw gory/violent content), conduct risks (e.g., was treated in a hurtful/nasty way; chatted with a stranger), entertainment (e.g., played a game with others; did a hobby online) and social media activity (e.g., checked what others were doing; liked/shared others' content). The cognitive and affective items resolved to two factors – positive reactions (e.g., included; confident) and negative reactions (e.g., upset; ugly).

While screen time was weakly correlated with negative cognitive and affective reactions, depression, and functional impact, multiple regression analyses found screen time was not associated with depression and anxiety. However, content and conduct risks were associated with depression and anxiety. When negative cognitive and affective reactions were added to the model only the associations with conduct risks (and negative reactions) remained significant. In short, granular analysis of different types of digital activities and the cognitive and affective reactions they evoke provided a more powerful insight into mental health and wellbeing than screen time. Further, although positive digital activities (e.g., entertainment) and positive affective and cognitive reactions were more frequent than risky activities and negative reactions, their link to mental health and wellbeing was weaker. We conclude that negative cognitive and affective reactions drive the associations with depression and anxiety more so than digital risky activities. This suggest that the effects of digital activity are mediated by the reactions they evoke in individuals. The implications of research on digital engagement beyond screen time are discussed in relation to mental health research, policy and practice.

CYM07 Digital health, digital well-being and young people

PP 0670 The reciprocal associations between adolescents' mHealth app use, body dissatisfaction, and physical self-worth: A three-wave longitudinal study

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A growing emphasis on personal responsibility in managing one's health and modifiable lifestyle behaviors has garnered much attention in shaping the health discourse in today's societies (Lupton, 2013). Mobile health (mHealth) apps facilitate the self-tracking of personal health data and are commonly utilized by adolescents to monitor and modify lifestyle behaviors related to physical activity, diet, and weight management (Rideout et al., 2021). Previous research primarily focused on the role of mHealth apps in adolescents' health-related outcomes (e.g. Emberson et al., 2021). However, quantification of the body through sports activities engaged, weight gain/loss and calories consumed/burned may impact adolescents' body image perceptions by influencing both positive and negative attitudes toward their bodies. Likewise, adolescents might engage in mHealth apps as a result of how they feel and think about their bodies. Yet, little is known about the association between mHealth app use and attitudes toward one's body. This prospective study contributed by examining the longitudinal bi-directional associations between adolescents' mHealth app use, body dissatisfaction, and physical self-worth.

A nationally representative sample of adolescents (N =2,500; 50% girls; Mage = 13.43; SD = 1.69) participated in the study and provided data in three waves with six month intervals between 2021 and 2022. We focused on mHealth app usage related to calorie intake and expenditure, weight, and sports activity. We applied the RI-CLPM as an analytical approach to disentangle the within-person and between-person variance to determine the directionality of the associations and used a multigroup model to compare genders. This study provided the first comprehensive information for the longitudinal reciprocal associations between adolescents' attitudes toward their bodies and their mHealth app use in a nationally representative sample of adolescents using a within-person approach.

The results revealed a positive within-person effect of mHealth app use on girls' physical self-worth: increased mHealth app use led to higher physical self-worth six months later. However, this effect was not maintained at 12 months. There was no significant increase in physical self-worth at 12 months for the adolescent girls who used mHealth apps more frequently at six months. We found no significant within-person effect of mHealth app usage on body dissatisfaction. We also did not observe a significant effect from body dissatisfaction upon mHealth app use when we examined the reverse relationship. These findings suggest that mHealth apps are unlikely to harm adolescents' attitudes toward their body appearance and physical self-worth. Furthermore, the use of these apps may even contribute to enhancing physical self-worth among adolescent girls.

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CYM07 Digital health, digital well-being and young people

PP 0671 Social media and well-being in adolescents: A cross-sectional and longitudinal study

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Adolescents are among the most prolific users of social media. This has raised concerns about the negative effects that social media use (SMU) could have on their well-being. However, contrary to the popular assumption, this use could be beneficial, or at least not detrimental, for part of them. The relationship between SMU and well-being in adolescents has been widely researched, but most of the evidence is cross-sectional and it is not clear whether adolescents' well-being precede or follow from SMU. On the other hand, the underlying mechanisms by which social media influence well-being are still being investigated. Following previous studies, we expect that SMU could have a negative impact on well-being through online victimization and a positive impact through online social support.

Therefore, the current study aims to analyze the cross-sectional and longitudinal relationship between SMU and well-being using data from a two-wave panel study with a four-month interval. To do so, it considers two mechanisms by which social media could confer a negative (or positive) impact (i.e., online victimization and online social support) and the role of personality traits. A total of 800 adolescents (51.37% boys; M = 15.97; SD = 1.41) participated in the study at baseline. Among them, a total of 708 adolescents (51.70% boys; M = 16.13; SD = 1.46) completed the questionnaire in Wave 2. Results showed that there is an indirect relation between SMU and well-being through online social support and online victimization. This relationship is moderated by personality variables (i.e., extraversion). Moreover, passive SMU was also found to be related to lower well-being, even though the association was weak. Hence, the study only found significant cross-sectional relationships which show that SMU is indirectly associated with well-being through online social support and online victimization. Accordingly, online experiences would be more relevant for well-being than the type of use. However, and although the cross-sectional analyses found a significant relationship, the longitudinal analysis did not reveal any statistically significant associations over time. Consequently, and contrary to popular assumptions, this study does not support the idea that SMU has a negative impact on adolescents' well-being.

CYM08 (Digital) media, (in)visibilities and minorities

PP 0771 Protective and risk factors for disordered gaming in adolescents aged 15 to 18 years

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Internet gaming become attractive to young people worldwide. Although benefits of gaming can be observed (improvement of learning abilities, stress relief etc.) research and practice point to harmful, addictive effects. WHO included 'Gaming Disorder" (GD) in ICD-11 and American Psychiatric Association included "Internet Gaming Disorder" (IGD) in DSM-5. This disorder is not related with problematic internet use, online gambling, or social media usage. It is behavioral disorder, characterized with urge to play longer to get satisfaction, reflecting on negative daily routines. In the survey from which this paper arose, the IGD and GD were explored and named by superior category as disordered gaming (DG).

Survey in Macedonia was a part of international project coordinated by Palacký University. The main goal was to explain the risk, protective factors and impact that DG can have on adolescents' mental health. Of particular interest was: to understand the extent to which maternal control, support, and monitoring has influence on the DG; whether DG is associated with higher levels of internalizing (self-harm) and externalizing (deviance) problems; the role of perceived peer support and the effect of resilience on disordered gaming.

A carefully selected instruments with solid psychometric properties were administered. The following instruments were used (correspondingly for each instrument the Cronbach Alpha coefficient obtained for the Macedonian population is provided): Internet Gaming Disorder Scale (IGDS9-SF) (0.86), Gaming Disorder Test (GDT) (0.77), Adolescent Family Process Measure (SF) (maternal support = 0.81 and maternal monitoring = 0.74), Maternal psychological control (CRPBI) (0.77), Child and Adolescent classmates support-CASS (0.94) Child and Youth

Resilience Measure (CYRM-R) (0.85 for both subscales), Normative Deviance Scale, Short Form (NDS-SF10) (0.66), Physically self-harming (only one question).

The survey was conducted during 2022 in the high schools in Macedonia on Qualtrics platform. Respondents (544) aged from 15 to 18 years, 271 were male (49.8%) and 273 female (50.2%). As they are minor respondents, consent letter was signed by them and their parents. This survey was approved by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Research findings showed a high correlation ($r = .78$ $p < 0.01$) between the two scales (IGD) and (GD), justifying the use of the subordinated term disordered gaming (DG).

Resilience (personal and caregiver) have positive effects on DG prevention, as the resilience is more dominant the internet gaming (IGD) is reducing (for personal resilience $r = -.35$ $p<0.01$ and for caregiver $r = -.31$ $p<0.01$) as well as gaming disorder (GD) (personal resilience $r = -.31$ $p<0.01$ and caregiver $r = -26$, $p<0.01$). Peer support is another protective factor. When peer support is positive there is a decline of problematic gaming ($r = -.21$ for IGD and $r = -25$ for GD and for both $p<0.01$). And concerning adolescent's family process, with particular point on mother it can be said that maternal monitoring can be a protective factor against problematic gaming. Self-harm is positively corelated with DG ($r = .15$, $p<0.01$ for IGD and $r = .13$, for GD). The same direction was identified with deviant behavior (with IGD, $r = .28$ and with GD, $r = 29$ and for both $p<0.01$).

Key words: Internet Gaming Disorder, Gaming Disorder, risk factors, protective factors, adolescents

CYM08 (Digital) media, (in)visibilities and minorities

PP 0772 Adolescent cyberaggression: Unveiling the influence of anonymity and appetitive cybermotives on peers and celebrities

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Introduction

The primary objective of this preregistered study was to investigate the impact of anonymity and appetitive cybermotives on cyberaggression directed at peers and celebrities. The study further explores how cybermotives may serve as potential moderators, influencing the relationship between anonymity and aggressive behaviors.

Methods

Data from 500 Czech adolescents (Girls: 52.3%, $M_{age} = 15.42$, $SD_{age} = 1.70$) were collected online using a between-subject experimental design. The data collection took place through an agency in 2022. Participants, divided into anonymous and non-anonymous groups (Manipulated via instructions and group assignments), were involved in virtual tasks to gauge cyberaggression by endorsing (in the form of liking and sharing posts publicly) aggressive comments directed at peers and celebrities. Appetitive cybermotives were measured through Cyber-Aggression Typology Questionnaire (CATQ) (Runions et al., 2017). Besides, normative beliefs for cyberaggression, impulsivity social media activity, age, and gender were controlled. The study session lasted approximately 20 minutes.

Results

Results revealed a greater tendency for cyberaggression towards celebrities compared to peers in both the anonymous ($t(df) = -1.90$ (245), $p = 0.03$*, Cohen's $d = 1.94$) and non-anonymous groups ($t(df) = -1.90$ (243), $p = 0.03$*, Cohen's $d = 2.15$). Using Process Macro Model 2 (in SPSS 29), it was determined that neither anonymity nor appetitive cybermotives significantly influenced cyberaggression towards either group.

Discussion

The research underscores the importance of understanding the fundamental factors contributing to cyberaggression. Although anonymity and appetitive cybermotives may bear some relevance, their impact on cyberaggression towards peers or celebrities is limited among adolescents. Findings also suggest that individuals with celebrity status may experience increased levels of cyberaggression. In summary, this study offers valuable insights into the determinants of cyberaggression, emphasizing the necessity for additional research to devise effective strategies for preventing and addressing such behavior in online environments.

Keywords: anonymity, appetitive cybermotives, cyberaggression, experiment

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CYM08 (Digital) media, (in)visibilities and minorities

PP 0773 Exploring the unseen: A qualitative study to unravel the social dynamics underlying adolescents' use of closed SNS stories and the sharing of alcohol-related content therein

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With the rise of social networking sites (SNSs), adolescents' developmental tasks, such as forming an identity, fitting in with peer groups, and gaining autonomy from parents, have also shifted to online environments because adolescents can share posts expressing their identity and chat with important peer groups. Moreover, with the development of private SNS features, such as closed SNS stories on Instagram and Snapchat, these developmental tasks may have been further facilitated because adolescents can share ephemeral and often spontaneous content with a few close friends while keeping others (e.g., parents) at a distance.

However, at the same time, the private character of these features also seems to stimulate the sharing of more deviant content because research shows that adolescents frequently use closed stories to share transgressive alcohol-related content. This, in turn, is worrisome because proximal others, who are predominantly present in closed stories, are more influential in guiding individuals' behaviors, including drinking behaviors (see theories of social impact). The intermingling of private SNS environments and proximal peers, thus, appears concerning.

Still, little is known about the use of closed stories among adolescents because these are fairly invisible to researchers, thus often resulting in them making speculative observations. These observations may, however, misalign with adolescents' experiences since they are part of specific mobile youth cultures that may lead to different perceptions.

This study, therefore, contributes to the literature by conducting focus group interviews among adolescents who are part of the same closed story to 1) grasp which (underlying) social dynamics are present in closed stories (e.g., unwritten rules, expectations regarding peer interactions), and 2) unravel how more deviant behaviors are shared and perceived within these closed stories by taking alcohol-related posts as a case study.

Method

6 focus groups were conducted, resulting in a sample of 32 adolescents between the ages of 15 and 18 (Mage = 16.09, SDage = .86, 71.9% female). The focus groups were transcribed non-verbatim and the coding process followed a thematic analysis.

Results

Two important reflections can be made. First, adolescents used closed stories to share spontaneous content as well as more transgressive alcohol-related content with specific lists of best friends. These lists included peers with shared characteristics (e.g., interests, humor, and trust) and excluded peers diverging from these characteristics, hence aligning with social identity processes. Moreover, these lists enhanced adolescents' feelings of belonging to peer groups when being included but also feelings of exclusion when being excluded or temporarily swiped out. Second, based on shared characteristics, adolescents had different perceptions about the appropriateness of alcohol-related content in closed stories because people within the same group, or in this case story, were evaluated more positively, thereby pointing toward in-vs outgroup tendencies

Conclusion

This study sheds more light on how adolescents navigate their peer relationships within private SNS environments, i.e. closed stories, that are under the radar of adult supervision. These insights were revealed by relying on youth's perspectives, thus showcasing the need to actively involve youth in research to gain a profound understanding of how they adapt and experience digital innovations.

CYM08 (Digital) media, (in)visibilities and minorities

PP 0774 Exploring active bystander behaviors in the context of non-consensual forwarding of sexting messages among youth: Applying the theory of planned behavior

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Sexting, or the "online sending of sexually explicit texts, images and video's" (Mori et al., 2020) is increasingly common among adolescents and young adults. Although sexting usually occurs in the private context of a trusting relationship between two individuals, this sense of privacy can be violated when sexts are shared beyond the intended recipients. About 8.4% of adolescents (Madigan et al., 2018) and 7.6% of young adults (Mori et al., 2020) have experienced sexts of themselves being forwarded without their consent. Non-consensual forwarding of sexts (NCFS) is a form of sexual harassment and can be highly detrimental for the sender's social and emotional health (Wachs et al., 2021).

Prevention strategies aiming to reduce NCFS in youth typically apply a victim-focused approach and have been criticized for encouraging a victim blaming discourse (Naezer & van Oosterhout, 2021). An alternative approach could focus on third parties. When a third party receives a forwarded sext, they can support the victim and engage in active bystander behavior (Salmivalli et al., 1996). The latter active behavior is an important protection factor for victims experiencing sexual harassment and cyberbullying (e.g., Domínguez-Hernández et al., 2018) and seems pivotal to reduce NCFS and its harmful consequences. Yet, knowledge is missing regarding underlying mechanisms predicting youth's intentions to engage in active bystander behavior in the context of NCFS.

Accordingly, using cross-sectional data from 1337 Flemish adolescents and young adults (78.4% female; *M*age = 21.64 years, *SD* = 3.57 years), this study investigates the potential determinants of youth's intentions to engage in active bystander behavior in the context of NCFS as proposed by the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2011). More specifically, we measured youth's attitudes towards active bystander behavior in this context, injunctive and descriptive norms, and perceived behavioral control. Structural equation modeling showed that attitude, $p < .001$, injunctive, $p < .05$, and descriptive norms, $p < .001$, and perceived behavioral control, $p < .001$, were significantly related to intention to engage in active bystander behavior in the context of NCFS. In turn, intention related to self-reported engagement in active bystander behavior, $p < .001$.

These findings provide ground for the development of evidence-based sexting education resources that not only educate youth about the risks of sexting but also encourage active bystander behaviors. Within the context of NCFS, educational resources could focus on teaching adolescents how to recognize NCFS as an abusive behavior, and not as a joke or gossip, and offer guidelines on how to confront the perpetrators of NCFS effectively to maximize third parties' perceived control in these situations (e.g., by discussing the role of consent, discussing the responsibility of the perpetrator, and offering effective ways to tell them to stop). Further, prevention programs and educational curricula can benefit from adopting a norm-based approach and, thus, reframing youth's attitudes and norms surrounding active bystander behaviors in the context of NCFS. For instance, practitioners could highlight the benefits tied to intervening (e.g., reducing negative impacts on the victim), and communicate about peers' positive norms towards active bystander behaviors.

CYM08 (Digital) media, (in)visibilities and minorities

PP 0775 I don´t hide it on TikTok: Performances, self-representation, and dilemmas of early adolescent pregnancy

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Although teenage pregnancy is socially more accepted in the West, pregnant minors feel stigmatised and risk social isolation (SmithBattle, 2020). However, some girls have chosen not to hide their pregnancy, therefore transcending conventional interpersonal communication boundaries (Cino and Formenti, 2021). They show realities that do not appear in legacy media and generate high level of interest from the audience with more than 229M views on TikTok. This study is framed within the research on the dynamics of presentation of minors on TikTok (De Leyn et al., 2022) and on the Social Role Theory of Sex Differences (Eagly and Wood, 2016).

Through content analysis methodology, this research aims to contribute to current academic findings about Generation Alpha behaviour and gender inequalities. 240 videos of western minors aged between 12 and 14 years old with early pregnancies and who self-identify their age have been selected. The selection of videos was made using 6 hashtags in English and Spanish, between October and December 2023, considering those which would pop up on the "top" section. In addition to the analysis of the self-representational agency of these mothers, the research is complemented with the study of 2,000 comments from the conversation threads that the minors receive on their profiles, taking into consideration the terms, the topics, and the degree of polarisation that they generate in the audience.

The first results point to the worrying typification of minors in their pregnancies and the disconnection of fathers (men) in these practices of sharing performances. They proudly show their bellies without revealing, except on rare occasions, how it affects them in their daily lives, the vulnerabilities to which they are exposed, and the risks involving teenage pregnancy. The dilemma of presenting their pregnancies on social media is reinforced by the audience's collective praxis. As a result of the ambivalent nature of the comments, they receive support from other mothers, whilst also facing offensive and degrading messages. They lash out at their sexuality and question harshly their behaviour. This research aims to harmonise the study of these social practices of teenage mothers-to-be and the conversational output constructed in TikTok to explore the situations they face. From a communicational perspective, we delve into the culture of social media on the assessment of female bodies and question the prevalence of gender stereotyping that reproduces dominant ideologies.

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CYM09 Social media and youth III

PP 0810 Barometer of habits of use and consumption in tablets and smart-phones among children and adolescents from 7 to 15 years old in Spain, two wave data 2022 and 2023

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1. Introduction

There is a need to build methods and techniques for measuring, monitoring and evaluating the habits of use and consumption of children and youngsters in smart screens. There is a demand from the different suppliers of products and services, private or public institutions, to know, measure and evaluate usage and consumption habits with traditional indicators and new ones. We present results from a National Study survey Barometer of Habit of Use and Consumption in Tablets and Smart-phones in Spain, a two wave study with 2455 respondents. In our presentation-paper the research questions that will be answered and presented correspond to three age groups, 7 to 9 years, 10 to 12 years, and 13 to 15 years.

Q1 (Research question 1): What are the habits of use and consumption of children between 7 and 15 years old on tablets and smartphones? Media Consumption, Educational Consumption, Videogames Consumption, Consumption in Social Networks, Advertising Consumption, Consumption of other contents.

Q2: What are the levels of anxiety and stress perceived by the different age groups when they are using and not using their smartphone and/or table? – a anxiety scale is used and a cybervictimization scale.

Q3: What are the differences of gender and age in the patterns of use and consumption, children vs girls, ages and Autonomous Communities-CCAA, are there significant differences and correlations?

Q4: What are the interactions of socialization and communication carried out by children and youngsters with their peers and elders on their mobile devices?

Q5: What are the Opportunities, Threats, Strengths and Weaknesses that children and youngsters identify in their activity on smartphones and tablets when they entertain, study, communicate and socialize with their digital environment and their interaction with the physical environment?

Q6: What are the wishes and demands that children and youngsters have in the variables of entertainment, leisure, education, socialization that they would like to have available in their devices?

2. Background and innovation

This is a longitudinal research carried out in Spain for the three indicated age groups with funding from the Chair RTVE University of Salamanca in Children Youth and Media, with a representative sample in all the Autonomous Communities and in the defined research variables, with a verifiable scientific methodology, contributing to the construction of new, accessible and open data research, there will be a white paper and free access to the data matrix.

Research initiatives such as the EU & Global Kids Online project, the research of Common Sense Media-Research and the initiatives developed around ECREA, European Communication Research and Education Association, in its section of "Children, Youth and Media" shows the need and innovation at the EU to address complementary studies to these and explore new scenarios.

3. Methodology

Typology: Web Survey, will be carried out through the Qualtrics Platform with access to an online panel that will be rewarded for their participation, ethical supervision by the University Ethical Commission was implemented. We present the results of Barometer waves 2022 and 2023, with a total of 2455 valid respondents among both rounds.

CYM09 Social media and youth III

PP 0811 Daily excessive internet use symptoms in adolescents: Ecological momentary assessment study of symptoms' daily variability and their predictors

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Although the internet is a source of opportunities and challenges for adolescents, it can bring numerous risks, such as excessive internet use (EIU), often perceived as risky and disordered behaviour that can shape an individual's daily life. Previous research on adolescents' EIU mainly concentrated on the between-person perspective (comparing those who are more excessive users with those who are less), emphasising the perception of EIU as a stable trait.

Questioning this assumption, recent longitudinal studies examined EIU at the within-person level (comparing individuals with themselves in different time points), however, over months or years. Few studies suggested that the levels of EIU symptoms could vary on a daily basis, proposing that the EIU symptoms could be more context-dependent and transient. The current study examined whether daily variability in EIU symptoms could be observed.

However, factors that might influence the daily variability of the EIU symptoms were neglected by previous research. Based on the literature, we explored the effect of smartphone social media use, entertainment app use, or use of other electronic devices. In accordance with mood management theory and the compensatory internet use model, we also examined the influence of daily negative affectivity and daily stressors.

Participants (N = 114, M_{age} = 14.99, 54% of boys) were involved in the ecological momentary assessment. They installed a research app onto their mobile devices through which questionnaires were sent to them four times a day and which objectively measured time spent in different applications during the 14-day period. Data from 1,926 questionnaires aggregated into 570 daily observations entered the analysis.

We found that a substantial proportion of EIU variability was due to day-to-day changes within the individuals (*ICC* = .54). The multilevel zero-inflated Poisson regression model indicated that social media app use, daily negative affectivity and other media use predicted the EIU symptoms positively at the within-person level, whereas daily stressors did not. Entertainment app use predicted the EIU symptoms at both levels, however, while the relationship at the within-person level was negative, the direction of the between-person relationship was positive. Daily negative affectivity was also positively related to self-reported EIU symptoms at the between-person level. Nevertheless, no significant relationship at the between-person level was found for social media app use, other media use, daily stressors, gender, or age.

Our study newly showed that EIU symptoms can fluctuate from day to day, which challenges the prevailing perception of EIU as a stable trait in adolescent research and highlights the need to consider the within-person variability. We also contributed to the field by differentiating within-person and between-person levels when examining the influence of various factors on EIU symptoms. Moreover, we discovered that adolescents' use of specific smartphone apps, daily negative affectivity or usage of other devices may influence the daily level of the EIU symptoms. These findings also have important societal relevance. Understanding day-to-day fluctuations in these factors and their effect on the EIU symptoms may help us to formulate more precise recommendations for stakeholders, parents, or teachers.

CYM09 Social media and youth III

PP 0812 Idols within reach: Measuring the perceived attainability of media role models among youth

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Social comparison with media role models can have positive consequences for youth when idols are 'attainable' (Ivaldi & O'Neill, 2010; Politte-Corn & Fardouly, 2021), referring to exemplars who represent ostensibly realistic comparison targets for people (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). Nowadays, young people are increasingly exposed to counter-stereotypical and seemingly attainable success stories via social media (Webb et al., 2019), where many also follow social media influencers (SMIs), who may be seen as more 'within reach' than traditional celebrities due to their origin of fame (Khamis et al., 2017; Jin et al., 2019). Despite the relevance of the concept, particularly in today's digital environment, research lacks a comprehensive and validated scale to reliably assess perceptions of role model attainability.

Method

We addressed this lacuna by developing a novel scale to capture the perceived attainability of media role models, which was tested and validated among three independent youth samples (N_{Total} = 1043, ages 16–25). Following an extensive literature review to construct items, nine experts reviewed a translated version of the scale. We revised the

items before testing the scale using EFA (Study 1), validating it using CFA and correlated it with related constructs to establish construct validity (Study 2). Finally, we validated two short-form versions of the measure (Study 3). For further information see OSF (https://osf.io/7g693/?view_only=c5e57eb36bec43dfb3b87714bc4d5922).

Results

In Study 1, the EFA suggested that the measure was five-dimensional (i.e., attainability of skills, fame, values, person in general, and appearance), explaining 62% of the variance in the items. Following CFAs and tests for measurement invariance, we arrived at 23 items in Study 2 showing good model fit (χ^2/df = 1.61, CFI = .967, TLI = .963, RMSEA = .050 [.040, .059]). The scale was strongly correlated with—but also sufficiently distinct from—perceived similarity, $r(240) = .53$, $p < .001$, and attitude homophily, $r(240) = .57$, $p < .001$. Moreover, we found that young men (M= 4.07, SD = 1.26) perceived their role models as more attainable than young women (M = 3.68, SD = 1.35; $t(218.90) = 2.30$, $p = .022$), and that SMIs (M = 4.14, SD = 1.36) were perceived as more attainable than traditional celebrities (M = 3.69, SD = 1.29; $t(149.43) = -2.51$, $p = .013$). In Study 3, both short-form versions of the scale showed good model fit (10-item: χ^2/df = 1.64, CFI = .984, TLI = .976, RMSEA = .056 [.025, .083]; 5-item: χ^2/df = 1.97, CFI = .978, TLI = .956, RMSEA = .069 [.000, .132]) and internal consistency (10-item: α = .86; 5-item: α = .72).

Conclusion

To capture perceived role model attainability, we developed and validated a five-dimensional scale, as well as two short-form versions of the scale. Across three independent youth samples, our measure showed good psychometric properties and was related to relevant constructs like perceived similarity. As such, we close an important research gap with this work, which has persisted since the emergence of first studies on role model attainability (e.g., Lockwood & Kunda, 1997).

CYM09 Social media and youth III

PP 0813 Individual factors of expected and unexpected sexting and the subsequent feelings: A nationally representative study in adolescents

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Sexting, the practice of sending, receiving, or forwarding sexual content about oneself or others, is prevalent among adolescents, raising many parents' concerns who see it as disruptive and risky behavior that may be against what is considered "orderly." Its consensual and non-consensual forms may elicit pleasant and upsetting feelings; however, we lack an understanding of how adolescents feel after different sexting types and the psychosocial factors that may drive those feelings. Driven by the Integrative Model of ICT Effects on Adolescents' Well-being (iMEW) framework, the present study explores (1) the associations between depression, loneliness, self-esteem, happiness, sensation seeking, age, and gender, with the three types of sexting behavior (expected and unexpected receiving and sending of sexts); and (2) the role of individual factors in feeling happy and upset after different types of sexting, in a nationally representative sample of 2,500 Czech adolescents (11–16 years old, N = 2,500, 50% girls). Among Czech adolescents, 15.4% had an experience with receiving expected sexts, 18.4% with receiving unexpected sexts, and 10.9% with sending sexts in the preceding six months. Binomial logistic regression revealed a similar pattern of associations across the three sexting behaviors. When receiving sexual messages, adolescents felt more upset than happy. Among girls, 44.1% who received expected sexts felt upset at least monthly, compared to 23.3% of boys. After receiving unexpected messages, 53.2% of girls felt upset at least monthly, while only 35.5% of boys did. In both cases, boys felt significantly happier than girls, and girls felt significantly more upset than boys. Interestingly, regardless of consent, receiving sexts is upsetting for adolescents. After sending sexts, adolescents felt more happy than upset, and we found no gender differences. While we found a similar pattern of associations with all three types of sexting behavior, there was no pattern of associations regarding feelings after sexting. This is an important theoretical contribution, as we tested the assumption of the iMEW, which, in line with the Differential Susceptibility Media Effects Model (DSMM), posits that individual susceptibility variables predict not only ICT activities/media use but also the outcomes of ICT activities. Our results clearly show that this is not the case with sexting. Moreover, different sexting behaviors – and their outcomes – are often researched under one umbrella of "sexting," but our results clearly show that the three studied forms of sexting are distinct behaviors, including their outcomes, and should be studied as such. Our results are important for educators, parents, and policymakers: Girls are especially vulnerable to experiencing negative feelings compared to boys, regardless of the consent when receiving sexts. Importantly for healthcare workers, we found that depressed individuals are more likely to receive sexts, regardless of consent. Still, their mental health problems are not related to feeling upset after any type of sexting. Sex education should focus on the different situations under which adolescents might receive sexts and focus on consent navigation and coping strategies to help alleviate negative feelings.

CYM09 Social media and youth III

PP 0814 Personal and social norms of adolescents' visual self-presentation on Instagram and Snapchat

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Instagram and Snapchat are changing adolescents' identity development by offering numerous opportunities for visual self-presentation, i.e., presenting oneself to others through verbal, non-verbal, or visual means to convey a specific image of oneself (Grieve, 2017; Riesmeyer et al., 2021). Thereby, norms serve as rules for action (Yau & Reich, 2019). Personal norms reflect individual values and beliefs, while social norms represent socially negotiated, perceived, and context-dependent rules of action (Interis, 2011; Rimal & Lapinski, 2015). Proximal (e.g., peers, family) and distal (e.g., social media influencers) reference groups set social norms through their actions (descriptive) or formulate them as demands (injunctive). Personal and social norms are closely linked and shape visual self-presentation. Although there are research findings on adolescents' visual self-presentation, only a few examine the relationship between personal and social norms and compare distal and proximal reference groups. Therefore, we ask which *personal* (FF1) and *social norms of proximal and distal reference groups* (FF2) adolescents perceive for their visual self-presentation and how these norms are related (FF3).

We conducted in-depth interviews with 55 adolescents (12–16 years, 25 female, 30 male, medium to highly educated) from July 2022 to July 2023. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, anonymized, pseudonymized, and analyzed with MAXQDA using categories. We received a positive ethics vote from "###".

The results show that Instagram depicts special moments, while Snapchat is increasingly used for spontaneous depictions of everyday life. Adolescents' visual self-presentation is strongly based on their personal norms (FF1): The profile design and the feature choice (story/feed, single/round snap) are determined by personal norms of gaining a certain reach and protecting privacy. These personal norms often result from the social norms of others (FF2). Since *peers* also use Instagram and Snapchat and are therefore present (descriptive), they are the most crucial reference group with whom shared norms are also formulated as (mutual) calls to action (injunctive, e.g., veto rights and liking shared posts). Snapchat streaks are conspicuous as an expression of the relationship's strength, which entails adolescents' compulsion to present themselves, as the streaks are only maintained with daily contact. Depending on their media literacy, *parents* serve as (non-)role models for visual self-presentation (descriptive). They set injunctive norms, which are subject to sanctions (e.g., positive = like; negative = offline sanctions). *Teachers* rarely set descriptive (often no contact via social media) or injunctive norms (curriculum, engagement). *Social media influencers* are perceived as norm setters for descriptive and injunctive norms (e.g., purchase recommendations, body image). Social norms are first compared with personal norms before they are recognized as rules for action and incorporated (or not) into one's norm repertoire (FF3). The findings show the interaction between personal and social norms: While social norms can influence personal norms by serving as models of acceptable behavior, personal norms can, in turn, affect the perception and acceptance of social norms. We show the complex interrelationships of norm negotiation for visual self-presentation on social media, which, as a new branch for adolescents' identity development, enables numerous options for identity experimenting.

CYM10 Media, mediation and families I

PP 0877 (Dis)connected families: A dyadic perspective on the role of mobile technology devices within family interactions

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The characteristics of mobile technology devices have drastically transformed family life by allowing new ways of integrating technology in familial interactions. Mobile technology can disrupt social interactions (i.e., technoference) and lead to conflict, yet, these devices have also the capacity to foster connection when used in a family-oriented way. The role of mobile technology within family life depends on how family members make use of these devices, which can differ between parents and children following the uses and gratifications theory [1].

The current study aims to examine the evolving role of mobile technology in parent-child interactions, either as an interfering (technoference) or connecting (family-oriented use) factor. More specifically, using dyadic data, we will explore (1) differences in perspectives of technoference and family-oriented mobile technology use between parents and children, and examine (2) how these types of mobile technology use contribute to the quality of the parent-child relationship and (3) individual well-being.

Method

Parents and their children (8–14 years old) filled in a survey, resulting in a sample of 390 dyads ($M_{age\ parent}$ = 43.14; $M_{age\ preadolescent}$ = 11.54). We assessed the level of technoference, family-oriented mobile technology use including a differentiation between usage when physically together versus apart, parent-child conflict and closeness, and

parents' and children's individual well-being. After testing for measurement equivalence, a separate parent and child model were analyzed through structural equation modelling in R.

Results

Our findings reveal discrepancies in child technoference perceptions, more specifically, the level of child technoference is significantly lower when self-reported compared to the parent-reports ($t(768) = 11.99$, $p < .001$).

We also found varying relations between the different types of mobile technology use and the relationships and well-being between parents and children. In the child model, both parent ($b = .20$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$) and child technoference ($b = .18$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$) was negatively associated with the parent-child relationship but not the child's well-being. Family-oriented mobile technology use when being physically together was beneficial for the trust and spending fun time together in the parent-child relationship ($b = .12$, $SE = .04$, $p = .009$; $b = .13$, $SE = .05$, $p = .009$), and indirectly for the child's well-being ($b = .03$, $SE = .02$, $p = .03$; $b = .02$, $SE = .01$, $p = .03$). The parent model, on the contrary, only showed a negative relation between the child technoference and the parent-child relationship ($b = .29$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$) and indirectly on parent's well-being ($b = -.06$, $SE = .02$, $p = .06$).

Discussion

Thus, mobile technology use can be both detrimental and beneficial, however, the effects can differ depending on the family member. This could explain current literature's mixed findings and highlights the need to focus on specific technology usages and to take multiple perspectives into account.

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CYM10 Media, mediation and families I

PP 0878 Enhancing media awareness among parents within a Dutch rural child-rearing community by engaging professionals in maternity-care, daycare, and youth health care: Results of a participatory action research

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Introduction

Young children increasingly use digital screens[i], whereas parents increasingly rely on screens as a babysitter[ii]. These trends present challenges for professionals supporting young children and their families, especially those with lower socioeconomic status[iii]. This study focuses on how professionals can enhance the media awareness of these usually hard-to-reach parents with young children.

Method

We organized a chain-wide participatory project in a small rural village in the North East-region of The Netherlands. Five professionals working in maternity care, daycare, and youth health care together with a dozen parents of children aged -9 months to 4 years from a lower socioeconomic part of the community and three communication researchers explored challenges like managing young children's screentime and choosing suitable content and created opportunities to solve them.

The Design Thinking research methodology was applied, constituting a 'bottom-up' approach to narrow perspectives of different groups by making decisions that are informed and driven collectively by those who are affected by those decisions[iv]. The methodology of Design Thinking consists of the following 5 phases: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test.

Accordingly, focus group meetings were organized within the regular care system (e.g., coffee-mornings for parents, team-meetings for professionals) to gather experiences and needs of parents and professionals within the community. Their input was visualized by a digital designer into accessible talking boards with little text which lead to new in-depth focus group sessions to co-design methods to create tools to increase media awareness.

Results

Parents' needs mostly focused on practical support. Parents questioned how much screentime is allowed for their child(ren), how to set boundaries, how to be engaged in children's media use, and how to find age-appropriate content. The professionals acknowledged the importance of informing parents about media awareness, but lacked the time and knowledge to make this part of their daily practice.

Eventually, in the ideate en prototype phase, three 'tools' for increasing media awareness were co-designed by all participants: four awareness posters, six coasters with parental awareness recommendations and three information videos. The videos showed a conversations at the centers between a maternity nurse and a mother about the importance of eye-contact during feeding, between a youth care professional and a mother about screentime,

and between a toddler and a childcare worker about a request to use media. In 2024 the effectiveness will be tested and results presented at ECREA 2024.

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CYM10 Media, mediation and families I

PP 0879 Guardians of digital privacy: Unravelling children's perceptions beyond parental control

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When aiming to counteract privacy risks for children when on online and social media platforms, the solutions to which policy and scholarship gravitate concern largely the educational system and literacy as well as the role of parents as educators and supervisors. Although the place of media platforms themselves is an area that has attracted a lot of attention, as has media literacy, the role of parents when not related to literacy matters remains under/studied. Even more under researched is what children think themselves about the role of parents in navigating issues of privacy when online. This paper explores children's perceptions of privacy and the role of parents in developing those understandings and in negotiating privacy. Children's perceptions to the role of parents must be understood against the backdrop of an increasingly digitised world, where personal boundaries are continually evolving, and the resources utilised bz global platforms in shaping the conditions under which children's media use is technologically directed. By examining children's perspectives on privacy through focus group interviews, this research aims to contribute into the evolving landscape of privacy in the digital age and the intricate web of relationships that shape children's perceptions. The paper presents the limits and possibilities of education and media literacy and their practices within European and Austrian contexts. Parental involvement is discussed in relevance to mediation strategies and the important consequences of parents' own media literacy levels for their children's online privacy protection. The paper finds that the views of children about the role of their parents are complex and vary, but also there are commonalities such as: parents' expertise and relevance; issues of belonging to the social milieu of platforms; inconsistency and differing approaches of parents across families, hence children of the same age. Through this work, we draw upon elements of relevant policies that can improve and support the protection of children's online privacy and interrogate the extent to which the existing status quo reflects children's perceptions in fostering and enhancing parental media literacy in a common effort to proactively creating an environment, where online privacy is protected.

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CYM10 Media, mediation and families I

PP 0880 Balancing boundaries: Mapping parents' perceived concerns and opportunities of LGBTQ storylines in children's television

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In the evolving landscape of international media, the inclusion of LGBTQ narratives in children's television has reshaped the portrayal of different identities in media for young audiences. While these media representations

indicate growing attention to diversity on screen, they exist within global controversies regarding children and sexuality (e.g., the Don't Say Gay bill in the USA). Building upon the framework of 'bounded acceptance' (Huijnk et al., 2022), this study further explores the dynamic where support for LGBTQ individuals coexists with growing biases and reservation, particularly when the discussion involves children. Taking Flanders as a case study, a total of 53 Flemish parents with at least one child between 4 – 12 participated in qualitative interviews to examine their perceptions of LGBTQ characters in current media for children.

The empirical data first and foremost illustrates a complex relation between children, sexuality, and media representation. While many parents initially advocated for LGBTQ inclusion based on norms of equality, this initial positivity was often tempered by more conventional arguments that focus on safeguarding children. This interplay between support for inclusive media and subsequent reservation about its impact on young audiences, illustrates that acceptance remains rather bounded. It could moreover be described as a 'why not' vs. 'yes, but' dynamic, where perceived opportunities are acknowledged, whilst distinct boundaries are also established.

In terms of this initial positive reception, our findings reveal four opportunities associated with LGBTQ characters: (1) information, (2) socialization, (3) promoting prosocial behavior, (4) and facilitating identification. Parents recognize the educational potential of these narratives in inciting awareness of diversity and normalizing differences, especially given the dominance of heteronormative narratives on screen, and often limited encounters with the sexual and gender diversity in children's personal environments. Furthermore, it could prompt conversations between children and parents, and provide support for those in need of it.

Conversely, the interviews also indicated two clusters of concerns associated with LGBTQ characters. These concerns stem from (1) characteristics of the audience (children's age and gender) and (2) characteristics of the represented storylines (the quantity, quality, and depiction of physical affection). Parents expressed reservations about the age at which these characters are introduced to children, emphasizing the perceived cognitive maturity needed to fully understand what these representations are about. While references to non-heterosexuality generally seem to be more accepted, transgender or non-binary characters are met with more reservation. Furthermore, parents especially raised concerns about the current quantity of LGBTQ characters in contemporary media, fearing that it might shift the focus away from authentic representation to a mere act of 'political correctness', which was moreover described as 'confusing' to young children.

Hence, even within a country recognized for its legal protection of sexual and gender minorities, our findings uncover an atmosphere in Flanders where initial support for diversity yields to reservations regarding inclusive media, especially when children are involved. Accordingly, this research sheds light on the complex negotiation where endorsement of equality is met with certain boundaries, prompting critical reflection on societal norms and evolving children's media landscapes.

CYM10 Media, mediation and families I

PP 0881 Do restrictions work? Examination of the impact of parental restrictions on adolescents' online flirting with new people in 4-wave panel

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Parental restrictions are widely used to regulate children's usage of digital technologies (Beyens et al., 2022). However, previous findings about their effects on children's behavior are inconsistent–some studies show that increased restrictions are connected to lower online risks (e.g., Cabello-Hutt et al., 2018), whereas others report the opposite (e.g., Shin & Ismail, 2014). One reason could be the effects' bi-directional nature: restrictions can affect children's behavior, but their behavior can also determine whether parents set restrictions (Kuldas et al., 2021). Most of the existing parental mediation research was cross-sectional and not well suited to disentangle these effects.

In our study, we utilize longitudinal design, allowing examination of the effects over time. We are interested in adolescents' online flirting with people from the internet. This activity includes exchanging flirty or sexually loaded messages with people whom the adolescent met online. Online flirting is closely related to sexting, but it is not limited to exchanging sexually explicit messages (Dodaj & Sesar, 2020; Whitty, 2004). As a risky activity (Jiswal, 2021), sexting and interactions with unknown people online in general are often restricted by parents (Corcoran et al., 2022; Dedkova et al., 2022). Yet, so far, we lack a longitudinal examination of the restrictions' effects on this behavior.

Thus, in our study, we examine whether parental restrictions affect adolescents' engagement in active (sending) and passive (receiving) online flirting with unknown people. Because parental mediation tends to be less effective among older adolescents (Padilla-Walker et al., 2012) and because parental fears over contact risks online are gendered (Steinfeld, 2022), we further examine adolescents' age and gender as moderators. We utilized data from a 4-wave survey of 2,933 adolescents (age M = 13.44, SD = 1.74 in T1; 50% female). Quota sampling was used in T1 to gain a sample representative of the Czech population in basic socio-demographics. We analyzed the data using

a random intercept cross-lagged panel model, which separates between-person association and within-person effects (Hamaker & Kuiper, 2015).

Results show that higher restrictions were connected to lower active as well as passive online flirting on a between-person level. However, they were not connected on a within-person level, i.e., the person-specific changes in parental restrictions did not lead to changes in online flirting six months later (or vice-versa). While gender made no difference, the effects differed between younger (11–13) and older (14–16) adolescents. Among older ones, restrictions had no effect. Among younger adolescents, restrictions led to less active flirting, and further, engagement in active flirting resulted in decreased parental restrictions six months later.

Our results thus show that restrictions seem to have the desired impact among younger adolescents, but they cease to be effective among older ones. Further, the effect holds only for active flirting, i.e., the situation where adolescents themselves decide to send flirtatious messages. This is likely because passive flirting (receiving messages) may not be under adolescents' direct control, making it also less prone to be affected by any parental rules.

CYM11 Social media and youth IV

PP 0912 The role of visual informality in shaping news perception among young audiences

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This project explores the impact of informal visual communication on the reception of news content. More and more news media, especially those targeting the younger generation, are moving away from established forms and using expressive visual and linguistic devices that are more typical of informal communication. Knowing that Generation Z and other groups of young audiences most frequently get their news from social media, journalists simulate the organic materiality of news by presenting headlines resembling instant messaging apps or interfaces of social media platforms. Additional visual elements, such as emojis or irregular typefaces, can be perceived not only as a way of making the content more visually interesting and original but also as a way to close the perceived communication distance between the author and the recipient. Previous studies have shown a positive relation between the level of graphic design of news websites and their traffic, as well as the importance of interactive elements in contemporary news content. The effect of language or visual informality is, however, studied very rarely.

The method of this study is an experimental study of effects. The study presented young students with fictional news articles that vary in the use of informal visual elements. Participants were randomly assigned to different experimental conditions, and their evaluation of presented news items was measured using quantitative metrics. The study focused on perceived trustworthiness and authenticity. Furthermore, it examined whether the audience judges visually informal news as more prone to bias. Finally, the study tests how informal means of expression affect information retention in the young demographic.

Preliminary findings show that visual informality can be an effective tool to increase the relatability of news content, making it more accessible and relatable to a younger audience. In some cases, however, the informality trivialised serious news and decreased the perceived importance of said articles. Furthermore, the results suggest a noteworthy tendency among participants to associate visually informal news with a higher susceptibility to bias. These findings align with the broader discourse on the evolving landscape of news communication, raising questions about the delicate balance between new media forms, such as infotainment, and perceived credibility.

Recognising that trust and authenticity remain fundamental pillars in an increasingly visual news landscape, especially for the younger demographic, this study underscores the critical need to comprehend the impact of visual forms. This understanding not only brings the results of the evaluation processes but also holds the potential to guide effective strategies against misinterpretation and the potential abuse of deceptive practices within news media.

CYM11 Social media and youth IV

PP 0913 Tweens' perceptions of the opportunities and risks of their online world

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Tweens (i.e., 8 – 12 years old) are growing up in an interactive digital media society and are avid users of digital media. For tweens to thrive in an interactive digital media society, it is important for them to develop digital resilience. Digital resilience refers to a dynamic process in which digital media users adaptively use preventive and reactive strategies to mitigate digital media risks and benefit from digital media opportunities. To better understand tweens' digital resilience, it is vital to first explore tweens' online activities and their perceptions of its opportunities and risks. Although previous research provides some insight into this, there are two reasons why it is crucial to further expand and extend this research. First, previous research has predominantly used quantitative methods (e.g., surveys), while the use of qualitative methods can provide more in-depth insights in tweens' online world from

their perspective. Second, with the rapid development of digital media, tweens' engagement with digital media is constantly changing, as are the online risks and opportunities they face. Together, this calls for new qualitative research to gain a more timely and in-depth perspective of tweens' online world. Therefore, the current study aims to examine tweens' online activities and tweens' perceptions of the opportunities and risks of their online behaviors using a qualitative approach.

Tweens engaged in a participatory research project consisting of interactive activities (i.e., "mind mapping my online world" and "visualizing and evaluating the (dis)advantages of my online world") which enabled them to explore their online world as co-researchers. Discussions that took place within the research project were audio recorded and supplemented with tweens' creations (e.g., mind maps). Based on both the verbatim transcripts and tweens' written and visual creations, an inductive thematic analysis was conducted to explore how tweens articulate their perceptions of opportunities and risks of their online behaviors.

Results revealed that tweens engage in content consumption (e.g., watching videos, seeking information), participation (e.g., sharing videos, direct messaging), and production (e.g., creating and uploading videos) activities. In line with Uses and Gratifications Theory, results showed that tweens actively select and engage in these online activities to fulfil various motivations; it provides them opportunities to fulfill their cognitive (e.g., gaining information), affective (e.g., entertainment, emotion regulation), social integrative (e.g., maintaining and building relationships) and relaxation or escapism needs (e.g., passing time). Additionally, in line with Livingstone and Stoilova's 4Cs classification of online risk, tweens reported that their digital media use also comes with risks regarding content (e.g., encountering scary or sexual content), contact (e.g., receiving annoying or bothersome messages), conduct (e.g., cyberbullying), and contract (e.g., hacking).

In the presentation, we will delve deeper into the findings of this research and further reveal how teenagers articulate their perceptions of the opportunities and risks of their online activities. We will also discuss how these insights contribute to a better understanding of tweens' digital resilience and their empowerment as media users.

CYM11 Social media and youth IV

PP 0914 Is digital native journalism winning the hearts of young people? A Portuguese case study

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Constructing and controlling a narrative is part of young people's need to create meaningful frameworks for interaction today. Thus, young people want stories that can inspire them about the possibility of change (Galan, 2019). Legacy news is increasingly distant from young people (Madden et al., 2017), in contrast to a new paradigm, in which digital natives are involved, with a significant emotional dimension. Emotion drives not only more intimate relationships with technology, but also fuels engagement with news by inspiring connection (Beckett & Deuze, 2016), what Clark and Marchi (2021) refer to as connective journalism, in which young people share what seems relevant to them. These feelings are then deepened as they are shared through communication with others. In this sense, digital media, and social networks in particular, are environments where young people can express their identities, bond with their peers and learn about participatory culture (Boyd, 2014; Jenkins et al., 2016).

Current studies carried out with young people show that teenagers and young adults are receiving news not only from online organizations, but also from personalities, influencers and celebrities on social networks (Common Sense Media, 2020; Digital News Report, 2023) with a preference for the latter (Munslow, 2023), and a growing disinterest in the media. In Portugal, the 18–24 age group (the lowest age group studied by the report) had the lowest interest in news in 2023, with only 34.4% of them interested (Digital News Report, 2023).

The Wall Street Journal's senior platform editor, Julia Munslow, says that in 2024 the news that will appeal to young people will have to be "more personalized, shorter, more accessible and visually appealing" and that "young people are looking for information from people they feel like a family member or a close friend" (Munslow, 2023). In general, studies on audiences and emotions show that people are more likely to become emotionally involved, retain information and take action when they relate to the news (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2020).

This paper aims to identify which editorial approach is more effective and generates greater empathy and interest in news among young audiences. Three research questions are addressed: 1) Which are the main feelings shared by youngsters to describe the narrative of different news reports?; 2) What characteristics are highlighted by young audiences in the reports presented that arouse news interest?; 3) Which are the main differences in terms of position among media outlets towards mental health? To answer these questions, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with young people aged between 16 and 18, who were presented with two different articles on mental health from two Portuguese media outlets: one of them is a digital native, Fumaça, while the other one is a legacy media, Público. Preliminary results show that young people are more empathetic and consequently more interested in the editorial approach used by digital native Fumaça.

CYM11 Social media and youth IV

PP 0915 What's in your newsfeed? Analyzing the political information landscape of Austrian adolescents through experience sampling

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Research indicates that adolescents predominantly, and often exclusively, seek information online through social media, whereas older adults also rely on traditional news media outlets (Gadringer et al., 2021; Newman et al., 2022). In the current era of high-choice media and algorithmic curation, the individualization of news consumption practices has reached unprecedented levels, prompting scholars to question the existence of an overarching public sphere with a common set of politically salient questions and events—considered essential for participatory democracy (Praprotnik et al., 2019). Thus, this study poses the questions, (1) what types of news contents adolescents (aged 13–20) encounter in their daily media use? (2) To what extent do these consumed news contents overlap with traditional news media coverage? (3) What types of news contents are lacking in adolescents' news consumption?

Literature on the effects of social media news use on democracy, particularly on participation and potential filter bubble and fragmentation effects is expanding rapidly, yielding ambivalent empirical findings. Recent studies suggest emerging disparities in citizens' perception of news content based on their varied political information repertoires, whether more online or offline (Cardenal, Galais, and Majó-Vázquez, 2019). However, this line of inquiry has neglected adolescents, who exhibit distinct media diets compared to older cohorts and are in a formative stage of their political development. This highlights the relevance of the current research.

Empirically, this study addresses the understudied group of adolescents, aiming to provide insights into their practices of acquiring political information as a foundation for political participation, particularly within algorithmically curated media environments. The unique context of Austria, with its lower active voting age, adds further significance to the research, as it remains relatively unexplored. Insights into interests and needs of young citizens, their interpretations of political issues, and effective means of reaching them as an audience are valuable for political actors, media professionals, and educators alike.

In addressing these questions, a Mobile Experience Sampling Method (MESM) was employed, involving 184 adolescents surveyed randomly three times a day via WhatsApp during one week in June 2023. Participants reported if they had encountered any news content in the recent hour, specified the topic, and information source. Simultaneously, a media dataset documenting news media coverage of that period was constructed using the three largest outlets in print, TV, radio, and social media.

Preliminary results of the comparative analysis reveal a surprisingly limited set of topics consumed and sources used by adolescents. The dominance of local news, with direct geographical and personal connections (albeit less political relevance), contrasts with their interest in "big politics," such as international crises or scandals. The potential implications of this presumed political information base for adolescents' informed political participation are discussed.

CYM11 Social media and youth IV

PP 0916 'I heard about it in the podcast ...': Young Danes' (re)discovery of podcasts for coherent information

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This paper's objective is to investigate the potential qualities of young Danes' extensive uses of podcasts as supplements to other information sources, that is, a combination of strategic and erratic information facilitated through mobile technologies. The study behind this presentation investigates the research question of how young Danes integrate podcasts into their critical information and -debate repertoire and what the specific affordances of podcasts offer. A wider perspective regards the impact of transforming information patterns on young citizens' democratic citizenship and participation (Coleman & Blumler, 2009; Ohme et al., 2022; Stald, 2023).

The paper draws on three publicly available surveys on media use in Denmark (DR, 2023; Schrøder et al., 2021; The Ministry for Culture, 2022). The survey findings are contextualized by results from a case-study with 15–24-year-old Danes, conducted in 2021 in the project *Youth, Trust, Information, and Democracy* and on data from a pilot study conducted in 2023, on 15–24-year-olds' use and reflections of podcasts.

It is not a new phenomenon that young people get information in different formats in a hybrid media environment (Mascheroni & Murri, 2017; Stald, 2023; Wunderlich et al., 2022). It is, however, vital to understand the impact of the transformations of access platforms and the qualitative diversity of the content sources. A new direction in the information repertoire is the increasing use of podcasts among young Danes. Schrøder et al. (2021) found that 56%

of the 18–24-year-olds listened to a podcast during the past month. One of the informants from the 2021 study says: 'I listen to podcasts a lot. And social media, but I get more on international politics from them. … . And I catch up on stuff from my parents'. (4. Male. 16).

A need for meaningful activities triggered the re-discovery of podcasts during the Corona lockdown when many young people took up individual activities such as long walks or runs. Podcasts are listened to on-demand (Ohme et al., 2022), alone, and in a kind of dual mobility modus, on the smartphone, on the go, or in the immersed tranquility of a private setting (Lundström & Lundström, 2021). The podcast, however, also serves as a bridge that enables users to cross boundaries of knowledge and context (Swiatek, 2018).

While TikTok and similar services motivate fast, erratic surface orientation and flux between bits of content, professional podcasts invite immersion and in-depth consideration (Chan-Olmsted & Wang, 2022). Many podcasts, although varying in professional quality, offer coherent narratives and longer formats of in-depth topics that include research, agonistic positions, new insights, and pointers for debate. The topic and approach in podcasts are often popular and personal. However, some provide critical journalistic perspectives that potentially inspire reflexivity and discussion: 'Right now, I follow the news on the kids in those refugee camps because it came up in several media. Me and my parents talked about it, but I also heard about it in the podcast and my friends talk about it' (4. Male. 16).

CYM12 Media uses and effects on children and Youth

PP 0976 Longitudinal effect of early digital experiences on standardized learning outcomes during school career

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There is a heated debate both among scholars and in the media about early access to digital media by children and adolescents: parents and educators seem disoriented and ask if anticipating access to the Internet is a good or a bad thing (Livingstone&Blum-Ross 2020). In the meantime, early access to the Internet is more and more common: for example, the moment of arrival of smartphones is constantly anticipated among early adolescents, and the covid-19 pandemic has further accelerated this trend (Mascheroni & Siibak 2021).

Simultaneously, evidence is emerging that digital media practices during childhood and early adolescence constitute a new dimension of social inequality. Smartphones, video gaming consoles and other forms of autonomous access to the Internet seem to be anticipated – somehow paradoxically – especially among deprived families in terms of socio-economic background (Gui et al. 2020). Research is also highlighting that problematic digital media use is more likely to manifest in families where socio-economic conditions are more deprived (Gerosa et al. 2021). However, the empirical results obtained on the relationship between early digital media use wellbeing in the long-run are scarce (see Gerosa et al. 2024). In particular, the negative impact of early digital use on learning outcomes that have been highlighted are often reproached for not being solid from a methodological point of view, as they are based on correlational or short-term longitudinal data (Amez&Baert 2020). Also, there is a very urgent need to gather robust empirical evidence about why and how online problems can be largely predicted by young people's vulnerabilities offline (Odgers &Jensen 2022), that is how early access to permanent connection interacts with social inequality in the lives of youths.

To fill these gaps, we aim to provide the most rigorous estimation so far of the impact of an early autonomous access to smartphones, videogames and social media on the learning outcomes of high school students, and its interaction with gender, migratory background and parental education. This becomes possible as – for the first time since INVALSI (the Italian National Institute for the Assessment of the School and Training system) started to collect data on students' outcomes – it is possible to follow the entire school careers of current 10th and 11th graders. Exploiting this possibility, we merge an ad-hoc retrospective survey data about screen use during childhood and early adolescence with students' longitudinal learning outcomes at grades 2nd, 5th, 8th and 10th. A dataset with 5600 high school students in northern Italy, representative by school type, is analyzed to answer the questions above by means of longitudinal analysis. Preliminary results confirm that early digital use is more likely in socio-economically deprived families and that age of smartphone ownership has a negative impact on learning outcomes in low and high school for those with pre-existing habits of intensive media use during childhood. The paper discusses the implications of these findings for communication and education theory, in particular for what concerns digital inequality in technologically mature contexts.

CYM12 Media uses and effects on children and Youth

PP 0977 Social media, social norms, and health behaviour: How social media exposure affects adolescents' alcohol use and physical activity

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Introduction

With regard to health behaviour, adolescents constitute an exceptionally vulnerable demographic. The years of life between the ages 10 and 19 are an important phase for the development of (un)healthy habits such as regular consumption of alcohol (Frey & Friemel, 2021) or regular physical activity (Dumith et al., 2011). The formation of health habits during adolescence is influenced by a broad variety of factors (Wills, 2001), including the use of social media (Purba et al., 2021; Purba et al., 2023). Hereby, multiple pathways as well as various moderating and mediating variables are discussed (e.g., adolescents' personal identity (Geusens & Beullens, 2021) or social capital (Pouwels et al., 2021)). An increasing body of literature points to the decisive influence of social media use on perceived social norms (Davis et al., 2019; Vanherle et al., 2022). Beside a direct effect, this includes an indirect effect, as suggested by the influence of presumed media influence hypothesis (Gunther, 1998; Gunther et al., 2006). In the context of alcohol consumption and physical activity, past research supports the proposed direct effect of social media on norms (Boers et al., 2020) and the pathway via the influence of presumed media influence (Ho et al., 2016; Ho et al., 2014). However, social media use has often been measured only coarsely and both adolescents' media use and platform characteristics have drastically changed in recent years. We thus want to investigate the effect of exposure to today's social media content related to alcohol use and physical activity on *perceived social norms* towards these health behaviours (RQ1) and the extent to which this effect is mediated by the perception of a media influence on others (*RQ2*).

Method

To answer these questions, a three-wave longitudinal study is currently being conducted with students between the ages of 14 and 18 attending public schools in [COUNTRY]. To maximise representativeness, a random sample of schools was drawn from the national statistics of educational institutions and invited to participate. In total, 12 schools covering secondary, upper secondary, and vocational education have agreed to assist in the data collection. The participating schools were then visited by the research team at the start of the school year for the first wave of data collection, which was completed in October 2023 with 1'669 participants. The second wave of data collection is currently ongoing, and the third wave is planned shortly before summer break (June 2024).

The survey questionnaire is administered online and consists of sociodemographic questions, self-reported alcohol use and physical activity, self-reported social media use with frequency-intensity measures for the most common platforms, self-reported exposure to content referencing alcohol or physical activity, questions on perceived norms and presumed media influence and questions on attitudes towards alcohol use and physical activity. Individual responses are linked using a self-generated identification code (see Audette et al., 2020).

Once data collection is complete, latent growth curve analysis and advanced structural equation modelling will be employed to test the preregistered hypotheses. Additionally, insightful exploratory and descriptive results will be reported.

CYM12 Media uses and effects on children and Youth

PP 0978 Longitudinal associations between screen time, bedtime and daytime sleepiness among adolescents: A three-wave panel study

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Digital media use has been found to be a salient factor for worsened sleep outcomes and consequent impairment in daily functioning among adolescents. Prior evidence is largely cross-sectional. Despite the growing number of longitudinal research, it mainly focused on the effects of digital media use on sleep-related outcomes. Only a few studies considered the opposite direction of the association, yielding mixed findings (e.g., Mazzer et al., 2018). Trivariate analyses that also consider some subsequent sleep-related outcomes, such as daytime sleepiness, are even rarer (for meta-analysis, see Sagano et al., 2023). Moreover, many such studies relied on the cross-lagged panel model (CLPM), the statistic modelling strategy that conflates between- and within-person variance in observed variables and thus may lead to erroneous conclusions regarding causally dominant variables in the underlying causal pattern (Hamaker et al., 2015). Therefore, there is a lack of studies evaluating bi-directional longitudinal associations among digital media use, sleep, and sleep-related outcomes with a particular focus on distinguishing stable traits from individual change over time.

The current study is the first study to examine reciprocal associations between screen time, bedtime, and daytime sleepiness – the understudied (Sagano et al., 2023), yet potentially important mediator of various adverse effects of sleep impairment such as worsened performance in school (Dewald et al., 2012) or sedentary behaviour (Kim et al., 2020). The second aim is to examine the moderating effect of reducing screen time before bedtime – a common sleep-friendly recommendation (Hale et al., 2018). To achieve these aims, the current study utilizes the multiple group RI-CLPM and analyses data from a three-wave, one-year-long panel study based on the representative sample of Czech adolescents aged 11–16 (N = 2,500, M_{age} = 13.43, 50% girls at T1).

The preliminary analyses showed stable, trait-like differences between adolescents in all observed variables. Concerning the within-person effects, later bedtime at T2 was associated with higher screentime at T3. Carry-over autoregressive effects were found for all three variables but only between T2 and T3. Concerning the between-person effects, adolescents who typically spent more time with screens during the day went to bed later and reported higher daytime sleepiness. In addition, adolescents who typically went to bed later reported higher daytime sleepiness. The multiple group analysis did not find a moderating effect of reducing screen time before bedtime.

The current study's findings contribute to existing knowledge, showing that stable between-person differences in screen time, not within-person processes, explain the associations between digital media use, sleep, and associated sleep outcomes. These findings also have important societal implications: Because the analysis did not find statistically significant group differences between adolescents who reduce screen time before bedtime and those who do not, reducing the typical daily patterns in screen time seems to be a more effective sleep-friendly recommendation for adolescents.

CYM12 Media uses and effects on children and Youth

PP 0979 Adolescents' digital nightlife: The comparative effects of day- and nighttime smartphone use on sleep quality

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Sleep is essential for a healthy lifestyle. Although the basis for healthy sleep patterns is formed during adolescence, proper sleep is not self-evident for many adolescents. Research has suggested that smartphone use, especially at night, is an important factor that may impair adolescents' sleep quality. However, prior studies have provided limited insights into the daily causal relationship between smartphone use and sleep quality, and whether this effect depends on the time of day that the smartphone is used. Besides, there is a lack of objective measures of smartphone use as most existing studies have relied on self-report measures.

The current preregistered study differentiates between daytime, pre-bedtime, and post-bedtime usage in investigating the day-to-day effects of adolescents' smartphone use on their sleep quality. In line with the displacement, bright light, and cognitive arousal theory, we hypothesized that adolescents experience lower sleep quality during nights when they spent more time on their smartphone in the hour before bedtime (H1) and after bedtime (H2). In addition, we asked whether adolescents sleep worse during nights when they spent more time on their smartphone during the preceding day (RQ1), and whether smartphone use during these three timeslots may differentially impact their sleep quality (RQ2).

In total, we collected data from 155 adolescents across 21 days using smartphone tracking (758,558 app activities) in combination with experience sampling (1,950 sleep quality assessments). The continuously tracked smartphone app activities were divided into three timeframes (i.e., daytime, pre-bedtime, and post-bedtime smartphone use), based on participants' wake-up times and bedtimes. On average, participants spent 6 hr 25 min on their smartphone per day (*SD* = 3 hr 35 min), of which roughly 85% occurred during the daytime, 6% during the hour before bedtime, and about 10% after bedtime.

Our DSEM analyses revealed no significant within-person effects of daytime (RQ1) or pre-bedtime smartphone use on sleep quality (H1), and a medium but insignificant within-person effect of post-bedtime smartphone use on sleep quality (H2). These effects did not differ substantially from each other (RQ2). In addition, exploratory analyses showed that participants slept worse on nights when they had spent more time on social media apps in the hour before bedtime and, predominantly, when they spent more time playing games after bedtime. We found no evidence that watching videos on the smartphone during daytime, before bedtime, or after bedtime affected adolescents' sleep quality.

Taken together, the current longitudinal study found that adolescents' daytime use may, as suggested by previous studies, indeed not be harmful to their sleep quality. The impact of nighttime smartphone use, however, varies depending on the type of apps that are used: While using video player apps does not affect sleep quality, using social media apps in the hour before bedtime and predominantly gaming apps after bedtime can lead to diminished sleep quality. This leverages support for the cognitive arousal hypothesis. Therefore, this study sheds new light on the widely explored effects of smartphone use on sleep quality by showing that the effect is both time- and app-specific.

CYM12 Media uses and effects on children and Youth

PP 0980 The perfect li(f)e: A longitudinal study on positive social media content and European adolescents' perfectionism

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Over the last 30 years, youth perfectionism levels have increased up to 36%. Although empirical evidence on the causes of the latter finding is lacking, social media are often pointed out as contributors of this rise. Given the dominance of picture-perfect content on these platforms, adolescents might start to endorse this seemingly perfectness of others as a personal goal to strive for and accordingly develop perfectionistic traits on the long term. Following the disposition-content congruency hypothesis, perfectionistic adolescents might, reversely, especially seek out "perfect" content when using social media. By examining how exposure to positive social media content might increase adolescents' perfectionistic traits and vice versa, the current study thus aims to unravel whether the societal concerns regarding the disruptive role of ubiquitous social media use in the development of perfectionism can be supported or are rather a form of moral panic. Moreover, the potential mediating role of upward social comparison and the potential moderating role of adolescents' sociocultural context will be examined. This way, the study will investigate whether the hypothesized social media effects are rooted in a specific culture or not.

Method

To capture such personality development over time, a three-wave panel study was conducted. This design allows to distinguish between- from within-person variability in particular. The study was simultaneously conducted in three European countries which differ in their individualism levels (i.e., France, Belgium and Slovenia, ordered from more individualistic to less individualistic).

Results

The analytical sample existed out of 1743 adolescents with a mean age of 15.16 (SD = 1.77) and 58.2% were girls. Differing patterns were found on the between-person and the within-person level. On the between-person level, exposure to positive social media content was significantly and positively related to self- and socially oriented perfectionism. Social comparison appeared to be significantly and positively related to both exposure to positive social media content and socially oriented perfectionism, but not to self-oriented perfectionism.

On the within-person level, reciprocal significant and positive relationships were found between perfectionism (self- and socially oriented) and online social comparison. However, this relationship only held in one out of two time intervals, indicating a lack of consistency. Regarding the intercultural differences at the within-person level, an increase in exposure to positive social media content led to an increase in perfectionism among Slovenian adolescents in one time interval and this differed significantly from Belgian adolescents for whom this association did not occur. Also, a reverse association occurred in one time interval in that an increase in perfectionism led to a decrease, and not an increase in exposure to positive social media content among Slovenian adolescents. This was less strong for French adolescents but did not occur not among Belgian adolescents.

Conclusion

Altogether, our results show that exposure to positive social media content and perfectionism are significantly and positively related. Yet, at the within-person level, a more complex pattern emerges with different results for each country. These findings highlight, amongst others, the importance of investigating differential cultural practices in social media use and how it influences personality development.

CYM13 Adolescents and risky online behaviour

PP 1072 Breaking barriers in the study of the relationship between sexualities, adolescence, and media: Reflections on fieldwork, limitations, and contributions of an ethnographic research in Barcelona

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This article focuses on the methodological design of the project 'TRANSGELIT' on young people learning about gender and sexualities through media with the aim of creating educational resources. Initially, the project proposed a Participatory Action Research (Chevalier and Buckles, 2013) focused on Participatory Design and with an Ethnographic Approach. Participatory Action Research is a methodological strategy that serves for social action and transformation through research (Alvarado, 2008; Ander-Egg, 2003) and the team considered it was particularly suitable as the project aims not only to understand a social reality but also to create educational resources.

During the fieldwork, the team found that applying the principles of Participatory Action Research and a traditional Ethnographic Approach with adolescents discussing sexualities in educational settings was not effective. In

practice, the team encountered various barriers, and the application of these methods revealed shortcomings. First, difficulties were identified in entering and doing ethnographic research in an institutionalized space such as the school with the aim of exploring informal activities and practices (media and sexualities). In the second place, the dichotomy between action and research also proved complex, sparking a debate about the type of participatory action to be undertaken throughout the project. The dilemma was related to the team's intervention in the field within the framework of a research endeavor aimed at generating scientific production. All these debates and reflections led the team to refine the project's methodological approach.

Finally, the team proposed to focus on the ethnographic approach following the precepts of short-term ethnography (Pink & Morgan, 2013). It was especially appropriate for creating contexts in which researchers could go deeper into the study interests in a short period of time through the implementation of more interventional, participative and creative tools. The research ended up following 5 steps: a) Consent management; b) Participative and reflection workshops about gender and sexualities and about media uses, practices and perceptions; c) Co-viewing workshops to debate and reflect about specific media representations of gender and sexualities; d) Creative workshops for creating audiovisual content in which young people could explore specific topics about sexualities and gender that interested them; e) In-depth interviews to go deeper into the adolescents' discourses and understandings about the research topics.

This presentation aims to provide a methodological reflection on the research fieldwork process, highlighting the limitations and challenges encountered during the project and the ways in which they were addressed. It seeks to be useful for future research with adolescents and media aiming to undertake ethnographic approaches. The text is structured around limitations encountered and proposals to face them: 1) Reflection on how to investigate informal practices such as media use and adolescent sexualities in formal settings like school, with a special emphasis on entering the field, the researchers' position, and the reinvention of the occupied space; 2) The tension between research and action and the dilemmas this presents; 3) Proposal of research tools created throughout the research, such as the development of audiovisual materials (podcasts) and the co-watching practices.

CYM13 Adolescents and risky online behaviour

PP 1073 Children with disabilities on social media – Parent influencers between peer support and commercial opportunities

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Children are – for numerous reasons – good content on social media. Just as cute kittens and lovely food videos, social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok are packed with videos of children in funny positions, children saying funny stuff, and children generally behaving in appealing and childlike manners. The concept of sharenting has therefore become not only a matter of parents sharing photos and videos with friends and relatives; for some, sharing their everyday experiences as parents have become a professional practice, for some even a living. These parents have been described as *mommy bloggers* or *mommy influencers* (although we also find examples of fathers posting online about their children and family life). One particular sub-genre of child-related content on social media includes children with different kinds of diagnosis or disabilities. In this paper I want to discuss how parents of children with disabilities are using social media, with which intentions and outcome.

The paper is based on an ongoing interview study with Danish parents, who are explicit about their child(ren) and the challenges, they are experiencing, on their social media platforms. Some of them have given their profile a name related to their child like "Mum of XXX" where X refers to the child's name or diagnosis. They have different strategies when it comes to what and how they share, and they also differ when it comes to numbers of followers and whether they have sponsored and commercial content on their profile. Generally, the children of the parents which are participating in the study, are in the age group of 2–10 years and their diagnosis span a range of rare genetic syndromes, over cerebral palsy to down's syndrome, meaning that they are experiencing different physical as well as mental challenges.

The interviews will address how they decide on which content to post, how they relate to and describe their child's diagnosis, disability, and treatment, and how they experience their online presence. Further, the interviews will address how social media may enable parents in vulnerable situations to build relations and network with other parents as well as with fans and followers and how social media can be used to raise awareness about the life circumstances of children living under special conditions. Also, the interviews will focus on the balance between common, everyday experiences and specific circumstances and experiences as well as ethical issues related to the exposure of their child(ren) on social media.

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CYM13 Adolescents and risky online behaviour

PP 1074 An intersectional perspective for studying digital inequalities. An ethnographic study focusing on socio-digitally disadvantaged young people in Germany

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Ongoing research into digital inclusion and inequalities underscores the reproduction of existing social inequalities within digital spaces (Helsper & Livingstone, 2007; van Deursen and van Dijk, 2015), resulting in socio-digital inequalities (Helsper, 2021). Contrary to common assumptions, young individuals residing in larger Western cities aren't necessarily less affected by these socio-digital inequalities, which encompass issues of access, digital literacy, and varying outcomes in digital interactions (Helsper, 2021).

Focusing on young people attending a secondary school situated in a culturally diverse and socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhood in Bremen, Germany, this paper provides an in-depth understanding of their daily digital media experiences. The field research took place between January 2020 and April 2021 and discussions in this paper are based on participatory observations in the school context, focus group discussions with 47 students and 10 teacher interviews. The paper adopts a qualitative and intersectional approach to studying digital inequalities that the young participants are facing. Such an approach allows us to go beyond the class bias within the inequalities research and also the ethnicity bias in migration studies (Bilecen, 2021). It also enables a situational analysis of "inequalities [that] are constituted by particular situations and contexts" (Bilecen, 2021, p. 473).

Looking at the intersecting influences of gender, socio-economic background, and migration background, this study maps 5 patterns of socio-digital disadvantage that were identified in the analysis. These digital disadvantage patterns that limit the digital inclusion of the young research participants include 1) limited material access; 2) digital irritation (based on the concept of Ytre-Arne & Moe, 2021); 3) lack of support structures; 4) missing and/or unrecognized socio-digital skills; 5) experiences of discrimination online and offline. The paper will not only discuss these patterns concerning how they structurally limit the participants' engagement with digital environments but also their tactics for navigating digital environments despite these limitations. By developing the concept of patterns of socio-digital disadvantage, the paper aims to provide a contextualized understanding of how young people with different backgrounds experience limitations in their everyday engagements with digital media without making linear arguments about the effects of singular demographic factors. Furthermore, the proposed concept enables us to study the intersecting influences of different socio-cultural factors on media practices.

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CYM13 Adolescents and risky online behaviour

PP 1075 Assessing media influence and attitudes towards LGBTIQ+ rights among Barcelona teenagers: An ethnographic study

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The influence of media on perceptions of LGBTIQ+ rights and individuals is pivotal (Żerebecki et al., 2021), especially among younger, teenage citizens (e. g., Kosenko et al., 2018). In the Spanish context, prior research has investigated this phenomenon through two, main approaches: media analysis of LGBTIQ+ portrayals through quantitative and qualitative methods (e. g., González-de-Garay et al., 2022), and analysis of public perceptions of LGBTI+ issues through ethnographic approaches, interviews or surveys (e. g., Miravet et al., 2018).

However, there remains a gap in literature exploring the intersection of these approaches—that is, examining media engagement alongside attitudes towards LGBTIQ+ rights. This paper aims to fill this gap by assessing teenagers' perceptions of LGBTIQ+ rights, considering their usage of media and its influence, and within the Spanish context. This general objective is divided into three research questions: RQ1) What are the attitudes of Barcelona's teenagers towards LGBTIQ+ rights and LGBTIQ+ people?; RQ2) What role does the media play in shaping or altering these attitudes?; and 3) How do factors like gender, age, sexuality, and socio-economic background impact both attitudes and media influence?

To address these research questions, an ethnographic study was conducted as part of the 'Transmedia Gender & LGBTI+ Literacy' national R&D project. Following methods aligned with short-term ethnography (Pink & Morgan, 2013) from feminist perspectives, the study spanned from March 2022 to May 2023 across four educational institutions in the Barcelona metropolitan area. It involved 155 participants aged 14 to 23, encompassing diverse gender identities, economic backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and religious affiliations. Data collection methods included field journals, participant-generated written activities, podcast scripts and transcripts, and in-depth, semi-structured interviews (47 interviews). Data analysis employed ATLAS.ti software, following a mixed approach combining deductive and inductive logics.

While our findings are preliminary, they reveal key insights. These include discernible patterns of polarization in the acceptance of LGBTIQ+ rights, the persistence or reinforcement of traditional stereotypes (e. g., perceiving being LGBTIQ+ as a "trend"), the emergence of transphobic discourses, various forms of explicit or implicit allyship, and a perceived lack of sexual and gender education within institutional curricula. These preliminary results offer valuable insights for scholars, practitioners, and educators. They indicate potential areas for intervention in both academic research and teaching practices within educational institutions.

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CYM13 Adolescents and risky online behaviour

PP 1076 Children's futures amidst algorithms in the public domain: Parents' discourses about invisible and super-visible children

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Algorithms and data-driven technologies are increasingly being utilized in the public sphere, despite variations in public trust. Research on the impacts of automated decision-making emphasizes the need for an approach that prioritizes people (Lomborg et al, 2023). As more and more families and households become intertwined with data (Edwards & Ugwudike, 2023), this study, based on interviews with 30 parents in England, highlights

parents' concerns regarding the possibility of some children becoming invisible while others are overly visible due to data-driven decisions, especially within the public sector.

Understanding how parents make sense of algorithms in children's lives can be enriched by examining their discussions on datafication and data-driven childhoods (Mascheroni, 2020). Mascheroni et al. (2023) highlight the intertwining of caring dataveillance (Lupton, 2020), sharenting (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017), and the broader parent-child relationship. There is also useful precedent in media and communications of listening to parents' future discourses. Alper (2019) draws our attention to *future talk*, as do Livingstone & Blum-Ross (2020) on parenting for digital *futures*. In this paper, I suggest that we approach parents' discourses about inevitably algorithmic futures they see for their children, aren't future discourses, but rather reflect where parents are, here and now, in relation to real, present-day concerns. Pentzold et al (2020) speak of this as the future collapsing into an extended present. Matthews & Barnes (2016) remind us that questions of the past are also questions of the future, and Livingstone & Blum-Ross demonstrate how parents' own pasts shape their parenting presents and their future imaginaries (2020).

I draw upon think-aloud interviews, combined with fictional scenarios and vignettes, with 30 parents across rural and urban England to present my analysis. My findings demonstrate that parents' 'future talk' about algorithms (Alper, 2019) extend beyond initial discussions of inevitability (Markham, 2021). Instead, they articulate unmistakable expectations for institutions to take action, now. I begin by noting parents' individualised understandings of the risks of datafication and the increasing presence of algorithms in the public domains their children will grow up to live their lives in. In response to these worries, I note their overarching call for an "additional comments box" – a metaphor for human intervention, and what they perceive to be the complexity, warmth (Gillespie, 2014) and nuance of human presence, intervention and even error – in place of, or to balance the automated and algorithmically shaped futures they imagine. I note particularly that parents' discourses and feelings about algorithms (see here Ruckenstein, 2023) in the future are not future feelings but feelings in the here and the now and these feelings shape parents' attempts to learn about technology, to speak about technology to shape and mentor (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020) their children's interfaces with algorithms and technology more broadly. Indeed, in these agentic practices, we begin to spot glimpses of the collective amidst the individual, in parents' beliefs about algorithmic futures.

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CDE01 Disinformation in contemporary politics

PP 0079 Hijacking information flows through initiating topic drifts: Analyzing temporal patterns of how counterpublic actors shift discourses about climate protests by inserting disinformation narratives

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Climate change is currently one of the most significant existential challenges for our planet. Mitigating the destructive consequences of climate change by developing appropriate solutions requires global cooperation and climate activists are raising their voices worldwide to reinforce the demand for climate action. Meanwhile, the accompanying public discourse is highly emotionalized and politically polarized. This paves the way for counterpublic actors (Holt et al., 2019) to hijack the debate about climate protests by inserting disinformation narratives and conspiracy theories. While previous research has mainly focused on the hijacking of hashtags as piggybacking within existing discourse structures in a form of agenda surfing (Bradshaw, 2022), this study investigates how counterpublic actors try to influence the development of the debate about climate protests by initiating topic drifts.

To identify temporal patterns of topic drifts as a strategy to hijack information flows, we analyzed the discussion of climate protests within over 200 German counterpublic Telegram channels (N = 14K). Furthermore, we compared the identified topic structures with those in news coverage about climate protests (N = 32K) to gain further insights regarding the orientation or differentiation from journalistic coverage. To identify topic drifts within the topic structure over time, we applied structural topic modeling. Additionally, we conducted a named entity recognition followed by a co-occurrence analysis to inspect how (political) actors are instrumentalized within inserted disinformation narratives to drift a topic.

The results show that the discussion of climate protests within the Telegram counterpublic is dominated by topic drifts linked to disinformation narratives and conspiracy theories. The analysis of the debate over time shows that initially topic structures were adopted from news coverage especially along important (political) events, but then drifted through the framing of climate change as an example of government failure towards the denial of Covid, disinformation about the invasion of Ukraine and the Great Reset conspiracy theory. Paradoxically, the denial of climate change is accompanied by solidarity with climate activists whose actions are seen as criticism of political elites and oppositional stance against the government. The debate of climate protests is thus drifted to the topics of unmasking democracy as a dictatorship and the looming end of freedom of speech. Furthermore, the co-occurrence analysis shows that topic drifts are not driven suddenly but steadily, especially through a change in contextualization and the establishing of coherent disinformation narratives. Especially conservative and more right leaning news media outlets function as a bridge in the legitimization of the arguments and connect alternative arguments to the mainstream. Therefore, the results of our study show that initiating topic drifts can strategically influence the development of existing topic structures within the debate about climate protests and threat to distort and undermine the discourse by interspersing disinformation narratives.

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CDE01 Disinformation in contemporary politics

PP 0080 Features of disinformation: An interview study on disinformation perceptions with political, governmental, journalistic and economic decision-makers in Germany

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Disinformation challenges existing political and media systems by sowing doubt and attacking trust as an essential pillar of democratic discourse, which can lead to extremism and individual radicalization processes. With the aim of influencing public opinion and achieving (geo)political goals, especially the strategic use of disinformation campaigns is thus a significant threat to democratic societies (Bennett & Livingston, 2018). Due to the rapid spread of disinformation within online environments, societal decision-makers are currently working intensively on suitable solution strategies to protect societies from harmful effects. To efficiently curb disinformation, a comprehensive understanding of the various features of disinformation is necessary. In addition to a shared definition, these particularly relate to disinformation topics, actors, motives, and targets. Furthermore, the identification of disinformation publica as well as the typical characteristics of the temporal process of disinformation campaigns is important for developing adequate intervention strategies (Quandt, 2018). While there is a broad scientific consensus on disinformation

features due to a growing academic debate on the research topic in recent years, it is currently unclear how societal decision-makers that are responsible for the planning and implementation of counter strategies, perceive the different features of disinformation. To answer this question, we conducted a series of guided face-to-face interviews (N = 59) with German political, governmental, journalistic and economic decision-makers between September and December 2022. The interviews followed a semi-structured guide evaluated in a pretest.

Preliminary results show that respondents across all four sectors reported a generally high level of experience in being confronted with disinformation. The definition of disinformation also largely corresponds to the current scientific consensus; only interviewees from the business sector lack an overall societal view of disinformation. While there is broad agreement on specifying frequent disinformation topics, actors, narratives and motives, the approach of identifying disinformation differs widely. While extensive fact-checking is often part of the daily routine of politicians and journalists, an intuitive approach to handle disinformation based more on a gut feeling than on established routines can be seen in the administrative and business sectors. Overall, our study shows that decision-makers in politics, journalism, administration and the economy all have extensive experience with disinformation within their individual work structures. Nevertheless, there are clear differences in the way they deal with disinformation, which is primarily linked to the requirements within their professional field. Especially exposed persons have developed a competence based on their own experience by becoming a target of disinformation themselves.

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CDE01 Disinformation in contemporary politics

PP 0081 The model of Russian disinformation after the large-scale invasion of Ukraine: The case of 'Ukraine sells Western arms' narrative

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The topic of Russian propaganda and disinformation dissemination (Paul & Matthews, 2016; Allcot & Gentzkow, 2017) aimed at foreign audiences worldwide is well-researched with the identification of its pillars (GEC, 2020) and established infrastructure of RT and Sputnik (Kling et al., 2022; Deverell et al., 2020). However, Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine led to the widespread blocking of Russian media in multiple countries, undermining the regular communication patterns and schemes, and creating new objectives, like limiting foreign assistance to Ukraine. This situation forced Russia to change tactics and find alternative or more potent ways to reach foreign audiences outside their immediate reach, which are being studied concurrently with the ongoing war. The purpose of this study was to examine the patterns and present a model of Russian propaganda and disinformation dissemination abroad based on the multiple campaigns that focused on undermining the image of Ukraine, namely around the narrative that 'Ukraine sells Western-aided munition.' Based on the theories of framing (Chong & Druckman, 2007), agenda-setting (McCombs et al., 2014), using content analysis (Wilson & Starbird, 2020), the author analyzed four complex Russian disinformation campaigns related to the new disinformation topic of 'western weaponry trade.' The results determine a hypothetical recurring model of Russian disinformation dissemination and narrative injection, which serves as a blueprint for similar operations and will be demonstrated in detail during the research results presentation. Identified campaigns suggest a schematic approach Russian actors use to affect foreign public opinion and discourse, which might have dire consequences for the course of support. The study's results will be useful in the disinformation and propaganda studies of Russian campaigns. They will also be of interest to researchers of international relations and communication, as well as practitioners from counter-disinformation fields and governments.

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CDE01 Disinformation in contemporary politics

PP 0082 Media literacy and the age barrier: A peer-to-peer training project in the fight against disinformation

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Media literacy and the age barrier: a peer-to-peer training project in the fight against disinformation

Senior citizens are particularly vulnerable when it comes to disinformation strategies through digital networks whether we refer to financial fraud malpractice such as phishing or more sophisticated "fake news" techniques such as when misleading and often fraudulent stories are presented under the guise of serious news content. Increasing media literacy among the elderly both enables them to dispose of tools to combat disinformation and increases the quality of their participation in democratic decision-making processes (Brashier & Schacter, 2020; Guess et al., 2019; Valera-Ordaz, 2022).

Within this ever-expanding field (Sadaba et. al. 2023; Moore et. al. 2022) this paper proposes – and offers the first results of- a hands-on model applied to "third age" media literacy by offering a peer-to-peer training model according to which a 65+ cohort is targeted by the researchers for training in digital media literacy in order for themselves to take their acquired knowledge out into the field.

The training programme is to be carried out by the authors of this paper – both professors in Journalism at the Department of Communication Studies at the UPF in Barcelona – in conjunction with Barcelona's leading professional fact-checking platform known as Verificat. The pioneer counter-desinformation cohort has been drawn together from the community of students enrolled on the Senior Programme at the UPF. As well as the initial training course, a ten-episode series of 2-minute videocapsules is under preparation as is the construction of a whatsapp-based application to test whether progress has been made. All trial runs are to be carried out in the spring and initial results will be presented at ECREA 2024.

As for the structure of the paper itself, it will begin by examining the challenges of media literacy initiatives among senior citizens as well as offering a comparative analysis of similar projects at international level. The technical and methodological details of this project would then be presented before offering the reader the first results from the "train the trainers" initiative and contemplating the implications for such knowledge transference in order to combat disinformation in this often-overlooked sector of society.

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CDE01 Disinformation in contemporary politics

PP 0083 Political and economic determinants of disinformation in the COVID-19 pandemic situation. A comparative study of cases from Poland and Serbia

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The process of communication disorder was omnipresent in almost all countries over the world during the COVID-19 pandemic. This presentation focuses on two specific cases of communication disorder in the media systems of Poland and Serbia. Both countries are a good example of the process of "media capture" (e.g. Dragomir, 2019) by the political authorities, especially since the second decade of the 21st century. The main research question is: What determinants of the current media systems do media workers indicate as contributing to the issue of disinformation? In the analysis, I used 20 interviews with media professionals from the EnTrust project on media and disinformation from Poland and Serbia (10 interviews per country). The interviewees come from diverse occupational backgrounds in the media sector and are divided into 5 subgroups: public broadcasting, professional journalism, local and national government or EU projects, nonprofit and independent journalism projects, and civil society or non-government organisations. Additionally, I use the data from reports on media pluralism and media systems collected by international organisations (e.g. Reporters without Borders, Centre for Media Plurality and Freedom) to compare the overall conditions for journalism in both countries. To analyse the data, I apply the critical theory of communication (CTC; e.g. Fuchs & Mosco, 2016), especially the concept of informational capitalism (Fuchs, 2011). By doing so, I intend to explain not only the political, but also economic characteristics of both media systems contributing to communication disorder laying on the intersection of politics and capitalism: financial models of media functioning, commodification of information and attention, and eventually – deteriorating work conditions of journalists. The main contributions of this presentation is the approach to the subject of communication disorder from the critical perspective and its focus on the structural problems of the media systems rather than on the technical determinism present in the research on social media's role in disinformation.

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CDE02 Telegramming politics

PP 0099 Conspiracy narratives and content moderation: Insights from Telegram channels during COVID-19

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The Covid-19 pandemic has provided fertile ground for the spread of disinformation and conspiracy theories. In response, social media platforms have implemented stringent content moderation measures, including the deletion of problematic content and 'deplatforming' of offending accounts, compelling conspiracy theorists to migrate towards the messaging app Telegram (Rogers 2020). While previous studies explore how non-conspiracy users perceive content moderation (e.g., Myers West 2018), there is a lack of research on how conspiracy theorists interpret content moderation and how it fits into broader censorship narratives. Our study addresses this gap by investigating how conspiracy communities on Telegram discuss content moderation practices across platforms. We aim to uncover prevalent beliefs, proposed resistance strategies, and how these views intersect with overarching conspiratorial frameworks.

Our research methodology involves an in-depth examination and content analysis of Telegram messages utilizing a dataset comprising 87 channels in the German and Austrian corona skeptical "Querdenken" community over three time periods in 2021, 2022 and 2023. We analyzed references to content moderation to identify key themes and narratives. Using the three most mentioned platforms regarding content moderation – Telegram, Facebook and YouTube – we then developed comparative case studies on the discussion of these platforms. Overall, the case studies show how the content moderation measures identified by users are woven into conspiracy narratives and which actors are seen as central. At the same time, they reveal which platforms are considered alternative and free from censorship.

On each platform, there is a distinct discourse about how content moderation in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic is perceived. Conspiracy theorists often portray Telegram as a refuge for unfiltered communication, citing its encrypted nature and limited content moderation. Nevertheless, they consider Telegram to be under threat from

both government regulators and app store operators. Strategies to circumvent potential bans, such as VPN usage, are frequently discussed. Similarly, Facebook is criticized for alleged censorship disguised as fact-checking, especially in relation to Covid-19 vaccine-related content. Conspiracy theorists point to selective censorship practices and suggest that corporate influence, particularly from pharmaceutical companies, may play a role in content moderation decisions. On YouTube, criticism of the removal of content and accounts is directed at various tech companies that are perceived as representing the so-called elites. The regulatory interventions that prevent people from learning the "whole truth" are highlighted.

Our findings provide valuable insights into the emergence and spread of conspiracy theories in digital ecosystems, shedding light on the development of censorship narratives and circumvention strategies. This helps to illuminate how conspiracy theorists make sense of disruption and unpredictability in their social media communications and bring the new order of platform power into their understanding of the old order of conspiracy.

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CDE02 Telegramming politics

PP 0100 The communicative construction of ingroups and outgroups in Telegram counterpublics: The interplay of self-identification and othering between channels and users

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Since the COVID-19 pandemic Telegram has developed into a popular platform for exchange and mobilization of networked counterpublics. Mapping Telegram content, communication scholars have shown anti-state, anti-democratic and extremist stances of some of the channels and groups involved (Jost and Dogruel, 2023; Rothut, Schulze, Hohner, and Rieger, 2023; Zehring and Domahidi, 2023). However, little is yet known about Telegram users: their biographical backgrounds and their motivations to turn to the platform (Dogruel, Kruschinski, Jost, and Jürgens, 2023). Here we contribute to fill this gap by researching the communicative construction of ingroups and outgroups on Telegram in the interplay between channels and users. On the one hand, we ask how Telegram channels communicate self-identification and othering; on the other hand, how Telegram users perceive their ingroup and outgroups, and how their biographies factor into these perceptions.

First, we conducted a quantitative manual content analysis of 2,669 Telegram posts from 40 German-language Telegram channels with high audience reach (collected April to June 2023). Among topics and stylistic features, we studied ideological orientations as well as speech acts of self-identification and othering (Holsti = 0.85 – 0.99, Brennan & Prediger's κ = 0.70 – 0.99). Second, we conducted semi-structured interviews with fourteen German Telegram users (November and December 2023) from three Telegram-based counterpublics: (1) people gathering in pro-Russian groups, (2) supporters of esotericism and alternative healing methods, and (3) pressure groups of parents originally formed to oppose anti-covid measures in schools and kindergartens. We asked them about their identity, ingroups, and outgroups.

In our content analysis, we found that the COVID-19 pandemic and its social aftermath is still the one most shared topic among high-reach German Telegram channels. At the same time, most channels focus their attention on specific current topics such as Russia's war in Ukraine. This pattern resonates with our interview findings about users' Telegram adoption stories: The public discourse on the pandemic and vaccinations prompted many to join. This includes users who today turn to Telegram for mostly other topics.

We found only few channels to focus on one specific ideological background such as QAnon. Most channels serve a wide range of ideological orientations. All channels express a populist stance against elites.

The interviewees have in common that they distrust mainstream legacy media. They claim to have a high level of understanding, strong research skills, and news savviness. Self-attribution as "knowers" is also one of the most common identity markers we found in our content analysis, alongside self-references to the "real people" suffering from those in power. Many interviewees reported biographical transitions, often linked to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic. The experience of the upheaval of a societal system and its fundamental values seems to contribute to their susceptibility to conspiracy theories.

Linking a content analysis with interviews, this paper contributes to a better understanding of how identification and othering are co-created between Telegram messengers and users and hence the formation of networked counterpublics. Additionally, especially new insights from the interviews provide directions for future research.

CDE02 Telegramming politics

PP 0101 Clandestine, contested, crucial: The significance of Telegram as a site of discursive power struggles within contemporary media systems

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The messenger-turned social media platform Telegram has become one of the most prominent online platforms for the far right over the past years. In Germany in particular, the platform is popular among extremist actors due to its lax content moderation. Researchers have shown how Telegram facilitates the development of far- right "alternative" information and mobilisation networks, integrating previously related but disparate political movements – ranging from Russian disinformation channels, radicalised anti-lockdown groups to antisemitic conspiracy theorists (Schulze et al. 2022). In response, the German government has put pressure on Telegram to enforce existing hate speech regulation – albeit with limited success. Telegram is now key platform for far-right community-building and a central hub for its propaganda activities or, as argued in this paper, a key site for far-right "discursive power" (Jungherr et al., 2019).

While research on far-right activity on Telegram is growing, there is little discussion about the significance of Telegram as a contested political communication tool itself. The goal of this paper is therefore to understand how Telegram is framed by political actors in three different German-language media environments, namely German newspapers of record, far-right alternative media, and far-right Telegram channels. To this end, the study deploys a computational frame detection approach, combining the word embedding technique word2vec with more traditional dictionary-based approaches (Yu & Fliethmann, 2022) to identify commonalities and differences in how Telegram is characterised as a political communication tool across different German-language media environments.

Initial findings indicate that attempts to regulate Telegram, by first the German government and later the EU, are used by far-right actors to present themselves as victims of what they see as a repressive regime censoring political dissenters. Alternative media also portrays the anti-democratic mobilisation efforts by the far right on Telegram as in line with the anti-government protests of pro-democracy activists in Iran and Belarus, among whom the use of Telegram is also widespread. On the other hand, Telegram has become crucial for newspapers of record covering the Ukraine war, as the platform is used by Russian and Ukraine authorities for informational as well as propaganda purposes. As such, Telegram is a highly contested platform that is not just of significance to far-right political actors to enact "discursive power", but also exemplifies the complex relationship between emerging European digital regulation and global political communication practices.

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CDE02 Telegramming politics

PP 0102 Posting, sharing, channeling – Telegram media practices of the Identitarian Movement in Austria, Germany and Switzerland

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Far-right movements, populist collectives, and right-wing actors have long harnessed the mobilizing power of social media. In the case of the Capitol Hill riots in January of 2021, social media were key in organizing the massive protest. Similar scenes were previously seen in Germany, when a mob of far-right protesters sought to storm the Reichstag in August of 2020. Both cases demonstrate that extremists have become savvy in digital mobilization, using both commercial and fringe platforms to create ad hoc protests and spread far right ideology. The Identitarian Movement (Identitäre Bewegung) is a pan-European far-right collective that has been able to garner sizable support, in particular with younger voters. The IM originated as a Facebook group in October 2012 and was later deplatformed in May 2018 as the page was found to aggregate extremist messages and facilitate organized hate speech (Guenther et al., 2020).

The messaging application Telegram has since been used as a central communication platform for the IM in German-speaking countries (Schulze et al., 2022). Telegram's open-source architecture contradicts regulation and moderation and open spaces for extremist content and user radicalization (Urman, Ho & Katz, 2022). Instead of focusing on the content of posts such as frames or visuals, this paper investigates the professionalization of Telegram app use with a focus on how movement information is clustered and disseminated for users to increase app efficiency and usability for channel and group members. Theoretically, this study brings together organizational communication literature with social movement approaches in digital contexts.

To asses the IM's networking structures, organizational professionalization, and information circulation on Telegram, this study relies on a mixed-method approach using both textual and structural data. In assembling the data set, the IM Telegram channels for Germany (@IdentitaereDeutschland) and Austria (@IdentitaereOesterreich) were used as seed accounts for subsequent snowball sampling to identify the relevant public movement accounts across the German-speaking contexts. After filtering, *N = 12* channels were included in the final dataset. Using the Telegram API and the Telethon Python package, all messages were scraped from the public channels in the sample, totaling *N = 13.819* posts. Word frequency data mining was used as a first step to extract relevant posts, which were then imported into the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA. Two rounds of inductive coding enabled a first systemization of posting types and functions to address how movement actors employ the platform Telegram on an organizational level. This includes paying particular attention to networking structures, organizational professionalization, and information circulation in the larger far-right network.

The study finds three main themes: First, the functions of the post (branding, mobilization, "information" circulation, community-building); second, sharing practices (alternative news, key accounts); and channel roles (gatekeeper, representative liaision, broker, coordinator). In building this typology, this study moves us to understand how far-right movement actors employ Telegram on an organizational level, providing a template that can be used by further studies in the area to examine the uses of messaging applications in political organizing.

CDE02 Telegramming politics

PP 0103 Accessing online communication (dis)order: The COVID-19 protest Telegram dataset 2020–2022

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The hybrid messenger platform Telegram has a large global user base and is used for both private and public communication. The hybrid platform architecture, which combines features and affordances of instant messengers with those of social networking sites, enables various, multimodal communication modes (one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many; text, image, audio, video) and affords a high degree of anonymity rendering Telegram, a popular platform for extremist actors. In Germany, Telegram came to the general public's attention in the summer of 2020 at the latest, when news media reported that protesters primarily used COVID-19 measures to organize and exchange information via this platform without having to fear restrictions or account deletions by large platforms.

During the pandemic, but also during subsequent societal crises, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine or the energy price crisis, Telegram became an important platform for the dissemination of conspiracy theories, far-right narratives, and other forms of disinformation. While research into the mobilization and networking of protest actors on the platform is therefore moving closer to the focus of communication science interest, there are few comprehensive, comparative data on protest mobilizations on Telegram due to its novelty and dynamic ephemerality. However, such comparative data can be used to categorize future developments of narratives and actors and explore their continuities.

For this reason, we created a dataset that maps the German-language anti-COVID-19 measures protest mobilization from 2020 to 2022. It includes the public messages from 390 channels and discussion groups associated – by name – with the Querdenken movement, as well as 611 channels and groups affiliated with the COVID-19 protest movement in terms of content and organization, and individual organizers of the movement (N > 5.5 Mio. posts). In contrast to the few other available data sets of public Telegram communication, the channels and groups of the Querdenken Telegram dataset 2020–2022 are classified and processed manually so that this specific movement and its network can be mapped longitudinally. The data collection took place at different points in time during the observation period, which is why the loss of data due to deletions by the actors is low, increasing the historical value of the published data.

In addition to the extensive indexing and processing of the initially unorganized digital behavioral data, which were also documented in detail in a codebook and will therefore also be relevant for future Telegram research, the authors created additional variables (e.g., network data, geolocation) that can be used for further research purposes. To address data protection and ethical concerns, the authors consulted with data protection officers in advance

and received a positive evaluation from an ethics review board. The dataset will be published in consultation with a professional academic data archive (GESIS) to select an appropriate license and data access.

The aim of the presentation is to present the dataset but also to advertise and critically reflect on the hurdles of social media data publication, which is so far rarely done in communication science.

CDE03 Media discourses and radicalization

PP 0187 Mapping far right discourse and anti-systemic contestation in digital alternative news environments (2019–2022): Combining computational text analysis and network analytics

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Communication scholars observe how far right rhetoric's and discourse move from the fringes of political systems and public debates to the center (Brown et al., 2021; Katsambekis, 2023). These moves are entrenched in mainstreaming processes where discourses become normalized, which gradually shifts what is acceptable in public discourse and policy-making. The result is a change in what is deemed 'normal' or 'legitimate' as a 'new normal' threatening to distort digital information ecosystems and ultimately democratic societies.

Besides far right discourse, digital anti-systemic contestation has become a 'new normal' on digital platforms driven by conspiracy theory networks during COVID-19 and anti-democratic movements (e.g., Freedom Convoy or the Querdenken movement). These movements rely on alternative news media to legitimize their world views and demands. By combining a (quasi-)journalistic self-understanding with explicit anti-mainstream agendas, these media curate far right and anti-systemic information ecosystems by challenging mainstream media and political systems.

Although scholars disagree to which extent the far right is successful in using alternative news media and social media to transform the public discourse, empirical research suggests that far right discourses is mainstreamed through these media and platforms (Crawford et al., 2021; Zhang & Davis, 2022). What is less clear is how these mainstreaming processes emerge and materialize in contemporary digital information environments.

The aim of this paper is to provide a comprehensive empirical study to ground scholarly debates on mainstreaming of far right discourse and anti-systemic contestation in digital information environments. With alternative news environments as our empirical context, we investigate mainstreaming processes in Austria, Denmark, German and Sweden from 2019–2022. This study uses data collected from nine different social media platforms (X, Twitter, Telegram, TikTok, YouTube, VKontakte, Instagram, 4chan, and Gab) and more than 150,000,000 social media posts containing links to alternative news media sources and related content.

We construct a hyperlinking network that we are able to divide into left-wing, right-wing or anti-systemic communities using manual coding and a propagation algorithm. To specifically detect far right discourses and anti-systemic contestation, we use computational text analysis based on large language models to classify posts of social media profiles (~32,000 posts annotated) belonging to right-wing communities. These posts are classified into seven far right discourse dimensions (xenophobia, islamophobia, Anti-semitism, anti-progressive, authoritarian, white supremacist, and far right conspiracy theories) and three forms of anti-systemic contestation (anti-institutionalism, anti-globalism, and anti-mainstream news). Based on this classification, we use study how these dimensions evolve over time. This gives an impression of how COVID-19 transformed far right discourse:

RQ1 How does far right discourse and anti-systemic contestation evolve over time?

As our data provides a large network consisting of heterogenous types of actors (media, politicians, activists, public groups etc.), we are able to measure the distribution of far right discourse, but also the relations between far right actors and more mainstream actors:

RQ2 How widespread is far right discourse and anti-systemic contestation across the three countries?

RQ3 Which prominent communities drive the mainstreaming processes?

RQ4 How are network ties formed between far right, anti-systemic and mainstream political communities?

CDE03 Media discourses and radicalization

PP 0188 Alternative news use in a high-trust media context: Evidence on the association between alternative news use and topic – and outlet-specific trust in mainstream news in Denmark

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Alternative media have emerged online across European countries and positioned themselves as correctives of mainstream media (MSM) whose credibility they often blatantly attack (e.g. Figenschou & Ihlebæk 2019). While recent studies have shown that alternative news use is related to lower trust in MSM in general (e.g. Andersen et al. 2021), this study breaks new empirical ground by investigating the association between alternative news use and

trust in MSM coverage of news in general as well as trust in coverage of specific news topics (climate, immigration/integration, economy) and specific outlets. To the author's knowledge, this is the first study to investigate the relationship between alternative news use and MSM trust at this granular level. The study is set in Denmark, which is a particularly interesting case because the generally high levels of MSM trust and strong public service tradition (Schrøder et al. 2023) should make the mainstream media system robust to attacks on its credibility.

The study makes four novel contributions to the existing literature:

1) Findings show that alternative news use is associated with lower levels of trust in mainstream coverage of news in general and the three specific news topics. Alternative media users' lower trust is thus not confined to specific value-based topics as qualitative studies have indicated (e.g. Thorbjørnsrud & Figenschou 2020).
2) Unlike most previous studies, it distinguishes between use of left-wing and right-wing alternative media and finds that both are related to lower levels of mainstream media trust.
3) Yet, the associations are modest, and results show that Danish users of alternative media have relatively high levels of trust in mainstream news in international comparison.
4) Results suggest this is related to the strong Danish public service tradition as the users, surprisingly, have highest trust in public service media and lowest in tabloids.

Based on the findings, the study argues that the democratic implications of the spread and use of alternative media is context dependent. On the one hand, this means that there is reason to temper concerns over the spread and use of alternative media in high-trust contexts like the Danish. On the other hand, the association with lower trust in mainstream news can be expected to be stronger in dissimilar contexts characterized by lower mainstream media trust.

The study builds on original survey data from a nationally representative sample of the adult Danish population (n = 2455). Trust was measured at the brand and topical level (Strömbäck et al. 2020) and data analyzed using OLS regression.

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CDE03 Media discourses and radicalization

PP 0189 Geopolitical mythmaking: A narrative study of far-right media discourse on the Russian invasion of Ukraine

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The beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine was characterised by an information environment rife with conflicting narratives, disinformation and information uncertainty. As the crisis unfolded, German far-right media were quick to promote narratives closely aligning with Russian state media, yet further entwined their endorsements with narratives of Western decline and global corruption. This paper is an in-depth narrative analysis of far-right online media's coverage surrounding the Russian invasion of Ukraine in early 2022. The paper examines how far-right media utilise political myths to construct narratives which promote a deterministic view of history, often at odds with constructive democratic processes.

By analysing the structural elements, actor representations and temporal sequences of these narratives, the paper illustrates the capacity of storytelling to legitimise and constrain discourses. To do so, I began with a comprehensive web scraping of 1513 articles using BeautifulSoup to first understand all existing narratives on the invasion across six German far-right media outlets: Achse des Guten, Apolut, Compact, Junge Freiheit, PINews, and RT.de. Then, the set was narrowed down to 56 articles, on which I performed several rounds of an in-depth actor-centred narrative analysis, aided by concepts from discourse theory. This combined approach not only underlines the importance of narratives as crucial vessels for perceived social structures but also elucidates how political myths function within these narratives to legitimise far-right ideologies.

The study finds that media on the Far Right predominately linked the Russian invasion to geopolitical narratives and more broadly, the political myth of a 'Decline of the West' and the potential onset of a new political order. The crisis is portrayed as symptomatic of Western moral and geopolitical erosion, which challenges the liberal

hegemonic order. The article discusses how this narrative was constructed through selective re-contextualisations of history, dramatized actor portrayals, and connotations of heroic story tropes. The recurrent narrative arc of cyclical societal crises is a common theme in far-right discourse, finding a new expression in the invasion coverage. It follows a similar narrative trajectory as seen in their earlier coverage of significant immigration events, financial crises and the global pandemic. The study illustrates that mythmaking—or mythopoesis—remains a central narrative mechanism in far-right meaning-making, playing an important role in linking various geopolitical events and crises to far-right ideologies.

This study concludes by urging a deeper engagement with the narrative constructions of far-right media, which go beyond the misinformation perspective and instead problematises their effectiveness in crafting compelling grand narratives which normalise far-right ideologies under the guise of populist discontent.

CDE03 Media discourses and radicalization

PP 0190 Media use, cultural orientations and support for right-wing populist political parties: Comparing nine European countries

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In the past decades, right-wing populist political parties have become increasingly prominent in European politics. These parties often have political agendas which promote xenophobia, intolerance toward minority groups, anti-elitism, and even anti-democratic sentiments. The role of the media in explaining populist voting tendencies has been studied both from a message perspective (e.g. Hameleers et al., 2018) as well as from a media repertoire perspective (e.g. Doroshenko, 2018; Štětka et al., 2021). This paper follows the latter approach, and studies how media use and cultural orientations predict right-wing populist voting from a cross-national perspective.

By examining the populist party support in nine European countries we increase our insight in how contextual elements shape the impact of media. We advance on existing studies through a more fine-grained analysis of digital media by distinguishing between online news websites, social media and video platforms. Furthermore, taking a cue from political science work on cultural grievances (e.g. Castelli Gattinara et al., 2022), we compare various dimensions of culture that potentially predict right-wing populist voting (e.g. EU skepticism, conservative cultural values, dissatisfaction on societal changes, domestic cultural orientation). We employ survey data collected in 2021 as part of a large European research project in Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. These European countries differ, among other things, in terms of their media systems and dominant socio-cultural value orientations, yet in all countries populist parties are active. The survey asked for which political party the respondent would support, if there would be a General Election tomorrow, from a list of all parties represented in the national parliament of their country and recently established parties. All political parties were recoded into the European political parties and groups they are part of.

We conducted a multilevel analysis with right-wing populist party support as dependent variable. The (preliminary) results show differences between using public television broadcasters and press (less populist voting) and commercial television and online video platforms (more populist voting). We find also clear effects of cultural variables, both cultural values and cultural consumption. Here, we see strong predictive effects of EU skepticism, cultural conservative values and domestic cultural consumption. Being negative about societal changes also increases the chance of supporting populist parties. However, there are also cross-national differences in how right-wing populist voting can be explained by these factors. This implies that taking into specific country contexts remains important to understand right-wing populist tendencies.

CDE03 Media discourses and radicalization

PP 0191 Digital crossfire: Political polarization and harassment of journalists on social media during the Spanish General Elections

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In the rapidly evolving landscape of journalism, social media has become an indispensable tool for journalists, facilitating news tracking or communication with information sources (Weaver & Willnat, 2016; Neuberger et al., 2019). While this expansion fosters closer audience relationships and personal branding opportunities, it also intensifies workloads, hastens content creation, and amplifies journalists' exposure, blurring the boundary between professional and personal spheres.

The prevalence of online harassment poses significant challenges, manifesting in increased stress, psychological issues, and potential premature career termination. The impacts extend beyond individual well-being, influencing the quality and nature of stories shared on social media, thereby affecting public discourse. The consequences of

such harassment are profound, threatening not only the freedom of expression for journalists but also the foundation of democratic societies.

Social media amplifies the voices of aggressors, fostering a breeding ground for hate speech, misogyny, and sexism. Female journalists, in particular, face gender-specific online harassment, perpetuating societal inequalities (Possetti et al. 2020).

In this context, this study investigates the prevalence of online harassment and hate speech directed at journalists and media outlets in the context of the highly impactful Spanish general elections on June 23rd, 2023.

This research scrutinized 200 highly active and influential profiles in X/Twitter, split evenly between media outlets and individual journalists. Utilizing X/Twitter's Academic API, responses to posts in the days surrounding the elections (n = 60.684) were collected and subjected to machine learning analysis.

The results showed that 2.42% (n = 1,478) of these responses contained identifiable harassment or hate content. The attacks targeted a variety of entities, closely tied to political contexts. When considering responses exclusively or partially targeting journalists or media outlets, the majority of messages (46.69% and n = 494) exhibited a clear political bias, in line with the electoral period's nature. Descriptions such as 'fascist,' 'nazi,' 'communist,' or 'terrorist' dominated, reflecting a highly polarized and dualistic atmosphere. In contrast, content constituting hate speech—attacks based on specific group membership or identity attribution—had a considerably lower presence: discrimination or racial hatred elements were identified in 7.18% of analyzed messages (n = 76), while 5.77% (n = 61) included sexist or misogynistic epithets. Regarding account types, journalist accounts received twice as much harassment and hate as institutional accounts of the media outlets they represented. In addition to its evident political dimension, the data also suggests a gender dimension in harassment and hate speech against women journalists, especially from right-leaning positions.

The findings highlight that online hate speech and harassment against journalists, at least in its less extreme forms, are systemic on social media, particularly in highly polarized contexts such as electoral processes. The prevalence of political hatred against journalists indicates a notable "shoot the messenger" effect, and journalists become targets of attacks from both ends of the political spectrum.

The results also emphasize the personal dimension of online harassment, as individual journalist accounts receive more insults and hate than institutional media accounts. This raises questions about journalists' heightened exposure on social media and the inadequacy of codes of conduct regarding their use by media organizations (Holton et al., 2023).

CDE04 Automation and surveillance in governance

PP 0203 From decisions to data: Datafication and automation in the Swedish Public Employment Service

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Recently, there has been a surge of popular and scholarly interest in artificial intelligence, most notably with the introduction of 'Chat GPT' in late 2022. Yet, a perhaps more overlooked aspect is the increased development of automated systems in public organisations, e.g. the use of automated decision-making (ADM) when distributing welfare benefits or matching systems connecting jobseekers with job providers. In Sweden, governmental organisations are currently exploring how to intensify digitalisation and automation, often citing its promise for increased (cost)-efficiency (Agency for Digital Government, Digg, 2023).

Datafication and automation in the public services can be seen as a way to increase social order, for example by classifying citizens into neat data packets and increasing efficiency, but also with the underlying belief in the inherent objectivity of data and numbers ('dataism') (Van Dijck, 2014). However, previous research has found that datafication and ADM in the public services can exacerbate inequalities (Eubanks, 2018; Kaun & Dencik, 2020). It is therefore crucial to ask what happens to different social actors in light of increased datafication and automation in the public services.

This doctoral project started in the autumn of 2023 and aims to investigate how social actors with different roles and resources understand, negotiate and interact with digital and automated systems in the public services. The focus will be on the Swedish Public Employment Service (PES), since it is an organisation that has undergone larger structural changes, increased privatisation and cutbacks in recent years. Hence, the project will also examine potential tensions between increased faith and development of digital and automated systems—and political developments, such as activation policies promoting self-sufficiency and use of digital tools in gaining employment (Bengtsson, Jacobsson & Wallinder, 2024).

Furthermore, an overarching theme is centred on *inequalities* and relations between social actors. I conceptualise the different levels of actors as the *macro* level, consisting of decision-makers, the *meso* level, made up of developers and employees at the PES, since both are to execute decisions from the macro level. Lastly, the *micro* level consists

of jobseekers, being exposed to the rolled out systems. Since the focus is on inequalities and relations, the theoretical framework will mainly consist of Pierre Bourdieu's field theory. Although Bourdieu himself never investigated digital media, his framework has been used in research on digital inequalities and, more recently, AI (Ignatow & Robinson, 2017; Airoldi, 2022). Going in line with Bourdieu, the methodological aim is to first conduct a survey among the conceptual levels, in order to map their position in the field(s). Subsequently, qualitative interviews with actors and observations at the Swedish PES will examine perceptions and experiences of the technological systems.

Finally, the presentation of this project will be focused on research design, i.e. how Bourdieu can be applied to research on datafication and automation at the Swedish PES. It will also include a critical discussion on underlying assumptions of the possibilities of data to creating social order, as well as its connections to democratic ideals.

CDE04 Automation and surveillance in governance

PP 0204 Marginalizing machines: Sociotechnical imaginaries in Dutch E-governance policy

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This paper analyses how sociotechnical imaginaries have influenced the development of DigiD, the Dutch digital identity management system, over the past twenty years. Technologies are not neutral or innocent, but driven by 'sociotechnical imaginaries' (Jasanoff and Kim, 2009), shared ideas about the way in which our social order should exist, that have material consequences for those who use them. We argue that information and communication technologies, such as DigiD, enhance the socio-economic position of those who are privileged enough to leverage them, while others are increasingly marginalized. This paper coins and explores the concept of 'marginalizing machines' to understand the role of ICTs and their implications for digital inclusion and citizenship.

Governments across the globe are increasingly leveraging information and communication technologies to enhance the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the state. The Netherlands has been at the forefront of this global development (United Nations, 2022). Two key focus areas in Dutch e-governance include the development of online public services and identity verification (Digitale Overheid, 2020). Numerous digital platforms have emerged in the past two decades that citizens can employ to access a wide range of public services, including tax filings, social benefits applications, and business registrations. As the state is becoming digital-by-default, citizens are increasingly dependent on their own (digital) capabilities to access public services. Although the population of the Netherlands generally enjoys high digital literacy and internet penetration (CBS, 2020), a large subset of the population faces challenges in accessing and using online government services. Approximately 4.5 (out of 17.5) million Dutch individuals struggle to find information on the digital government and cannot use online public services effectively (Hoevenagel & Joossen, 2022). The use of DigiD, the Dutch digital identity management system, causes problems in particular, leading to become socially excluded and deprived of social benefits (De Vries, 2023).

Based on a historical-diachronic critical discourse analysis (Carvalho, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2001) of 363 policy documents published by the Dutch central government on DigiD from 2004 to 2023, this paper traces how changing 'sociotechnical imaginaries' (Jasanoff and Kim, 2009) have shaped e-governance policy in the Netherlands over time. Our results indicate that DigiD was initially adopted in Dutch governance in an effort to increase efficiency and reduce the administrative burden for vulnerable citizens, such as people with chronic illnesses and disabilities, and people who receive social benefits. As a result of the DigiNotar hack of 2011 (Kirk, 2011), the security and reliability of the platform became important issues. This resulted in a range of security measures that decreased the platforms accessibility. From 2018, the year when the Dutch childcare benefit scandal came to light (Trouw, 2018), there was an increased consideration for enhancing the accessibility of online government services. Despite these efforts, many people remain excluded from using these services today, restricting their citizenship. The results of this study contribute to a better understanding of the causes and consequences of e-governance policy for citizenship and inclusion in the digital age.

CDE04 Automation and surveillance in governance

PP 0205 Between two worlds: Practices and pitfalls of immigrant public connection

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This paper explores the social, habitual, and emergent aspects of how first-generation Turkish immigrants maintain and sustain a level of public connection in Norway. I argue that citizenship that is caught between a setting where the mass media is controlled, political fanaticism is encouraged, and electoral fraud is normalized (Irak, 2016) and one with free media, coalition governments and free elections introduces uncertainties to the repertoires of engaging with public issues (Moe, 2020). This necessitates exploring how these immigrants navigate civic life in new and different political settings, gauge what should be considered as important public issues and how this affects their willingness or efforts to partake in democratic processes.

In immigration studies limited attention has been paid to the political integration of immigrants (Dollmann, 2021). Studies on immigrant transnationalism, for instance, often focus on how immigrants keep up with news and perform their citizenship duties in their home countries (Boccagni, Lafleur, and Levitt, 2016) rather than how they engage with and navigate politics in their host countries beyond immigration issues. Whereas in media studies focus has been on digital diasporas that enable connections between immigrants and foster activism (Andersson, 2019) as well as the diasporic/ethnic media that champion immigrant voices and offer an accessible platform for public connection (Nguyen et al., 2023). This paper contributes to these fields both by delineating how immigrants build and maintain an orientation towards issues of public concern in their host countries as well as methodologically by combining insights from the mediated experiences and local diasporic connections of immigrants. This methodological approach is necessary as social and traditional media use and diasporic connections constitute the key venues of public connection for transnational citizens that are positioned in between two geographically and culturally distant settings.

This study will combine an autoethnography of my experiences as a Turkish immigrant in Norway, participant observation during local community events organized by Norwegian-Turkish Culture Association in Bergen and in-depth interviews with 15 Turkish immigrants who are members of this association. Autoethnography is used to foster openness and rapport with participants as mutual experiences become more readily identifiable (Berger, 2001), which will then be analyzed in combination with observation notes from social events. These observations will inform whether and how diasporic community settings can facilitate a space for discussion of public issues. Finally, through the interviews I aim to gain insights into the tactics and practices citizens employ to navigate news and information on public issues via social and mass media and the obstacles they face in terms of access, motivation, and relevance.

CDE05 Communal welfare: Reimagining automated welfare provision

PN 041 Communal Infrastructures of Welfare: public value, data extractivism and data justice

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Across Europe, the public sector is expanding its efforts to introduce data-driven decision-support and intelligent systems in the administration of welfare and city-based initiatives aiming to raise citizens' wellbeing. Our notion of 'infrastructures of welfare' suggests that the implementation of data-driven, automated systems is closely entangled with a transformation of the relationship between citizens and the state and of welfare more widely.The datafication of community resources that shall make human settlements more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (UN 2017, par. 9) has far reaching implications as regards equality, governance, and democracy. Numerous scholars have raised concerns that datafication as a social and political process has mainly catered to commercial and governance interests (Kitchin et al. 2017). With Couldry and Mejias (2018, p. 338) the purpose and extent of datafication of urban life can be seen as a mechanism that "produces the social for capital, that is, a form of the 'social' that is ready for appropriation and exploitation for value as data". Data extractivsm is "the ubiquity of mechanisms that turn citizens into datafied subjects" (Segura & Waisbord 2019, p. 413). Dencik (2022, p. 161) emphasizes that the "ideology of dataism and the political economy of technology posit values and operational logics that are markedly different from how the welfare state has previously been understood". When elaborating on possible alternatives to the current widespread notion of smart cities, the idea of commons and common data infrastructures emphasizes alternative data ownership regimes, open source, open standards, development of cooperative models of service provision, and digital sovereignty (Bria & Morozov, 2018; De Lange, 2019). Furthermore, the notion of data justice details that "[n]avigating the tension between having/using and not having/using certain types of data is crucial for more equitable, just, non-discriminatory futures" (Draude et al. 2022, p. 188).Conceptualizing the communal data infrastructures that are being built for welfare and wellbeing as digital public goods, we connect the concepts of public value and welfare for the flourishing of community/ies. Thus, we explore the entanglement of datafication with the sociomaterialities of public and urban life and citizens' exercise of different rights.References Couldry, N., Mejias, U. A. (2018). Data colonialism: Rethinking Big Data's relation to the contemporary subject. Television & New Media, 20, 1–14.Dencik, L. (2022). The datafied welfare state: A perspective from the UK. In New Perspectives in Critical Data Studies: The Ambivalences of Data Power, 145– 165.Draude, C., Hornung, G., Klumbytė, G. (2022). Mapping Data Justice as a Multidimensional Concept Through Feminist and Legal Perspectives. In New Perspectives in Critical Data Studies: The Ambivalences of Data Power, 187–216.Kitchin, R., Lauriault, T. P., McArdle, G. (2017). Data and the City. In Data and the City, 1–13.Segura, M. S., Waisbord, S. (2019). Between data capitalism and data citizenship. Television & New Media, 20(4), 412–419.United Nations (2017). New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256).

CDE05 Communal welfare: Reimagining automated welfare provision

PN 042 How to make smart place? Competitive space use, administrative overload, and holistic aspirations

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In our talk, we follow a public-private venture that seeks to develop a prominent square in the city centre of a major German city from of transit, traffic, and trouble into a social hub and space of civic encounters. This vision is driving the Smart Space Initiative and its three-year plan of holistic rejuvenation and smart urban management. Together with the population, the aim is to diversify the square's utility, foster civic-minded initiatives and their need for public space, promote public mobility, and help negotiating and solving these potentially conflicting and swiftly changing demands administratively. Unsurprisingly, there is a strong enthusiasm for technological solutions that are deemed to aim these ambitious goals and at the same time some concerns regarding the administration's readiness. The case study we present investigates how administration, business and science work together during the project's planning stage. A central part of the concept is to involve citizens and stakeholders in the process, and to enable and ensure their participation once the project will have been completed in 2025 with a – hopefully – running processes of managing the place the smart way (Halpern & Mitchell, 2023). That requires a digital tool involving automated steps of sorting requests and collecting necessary data so to bring together the various offers and interests. For example, spaces are envisioned to be booked by local associations, businesses or citizens via the tool so that the square follows their needs.In particular, we will discuss how software developers who are currently working on the tool are dealing with ensuing questions such as 'Who can use the space and for what purposes?', 'How should the tool decide whether a local association or a large corporation should be able to go through with their booking request in the event of simultaneous bookings?' By studying the planning and implementation of the tool and the overarching process, we are able to shed light on the ways, the requirements and demands on the space are being determined in order to design a suitable concept for flexible use and management (Zuzul, 2019). This means to align multiple and potentially competitive claims with administrative instances and their limited capacity. As the project is intended to serve as a model for other locations, the lessons we derive on mitigating this tension through the curtailing of options, the hierarchization of demands, and the tech-based formalization of procedures may apply to other communal welfare infrastructures as well. ReferencesHalpern O., & Mitchell, R. (2023). The Smartness Mandate. MIT Press.Zuzul, T. W. (2019). "Matter Battles": Cognitive Representations, Boundary Objects, and the Failure of Collaboration in Two Smart Cities. Academy of Management Journal, 62(3), 739–764. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2016.0625.

CDE05 Communal welfare: Reimagining automated welfare provision

PN 043 Sensing the city: Smart traffic AI as communal welfare infrastructures

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In recent years, the implementation of smart city applications in the form of AI-based systems has become ubiquitous, almost mundane. While not taking the coherence and "uncontroversial thingness of AI" for granted (Suchman, 2023), we propose to think of these systems as communal welfare infrastructures and accordingly position them in the broader field of welfare technologies. Doing so has both practical (who pays for and owns these infrastructures) and political (who and how are citizens implicated differently in these infrastructures) implications. Drawing on two case studies of smart traffic AI in Estonia and in Sweden we develop what it would mean to think of the technical implementations as fundamental infrastructures for communal welfare. The first case constitutes a smart pedestrian crossing application that has been implemented by several Estonian local governments to make pedestrian crossings safer not just for the humans but also in the future for the automated robot couriers. Several local governments have already implemented "SafeLight" system which is based on the thermal cameras equipped with special sensor-based systems, which based on the fixed temperature can detect living organisms near the pedestrian crossing. Pedestrian crossings will have specific LED lights and in the implementation the characteristics of the particular pedestrian crossing will be taken into account. In pedestrian crossings where this system is implemented, the driver will see LED lights turned on when the pedestrian is already on the crossroad or near the crossroad, which will give the driver enough time to stop or slow down. The second case is an AI based camera system detecting bicycle crossings on a local bridge in a Swedish municipality. The data on how many cyclists are crossing the bridge are accessible in real time both through an external app and the municipal AI chatbot. The aim with the sensing system is to produce real time data for better traffic planning and coordination of bridge openings. At the same, time it serves as test site for camera-based technologies that are GDPR conform and do not register personal data. Both cases are examples of current in-use AI traffic systems, however, they are justified and implemented differently depending on the specific contexts. The presentation will disentangle these contextual aspects to draw

conclusions about the character of communal welfare infrastructures and their geographical, political, and social boundedness. References Suchman, L. (2023). The uncontroversial 'thingness' of AI. Big Data & Society, 10(2). 20539517231206794.

CDE05 Communal welfare: Reimagining automated welfare provision

PN 044 Smart Waste Management Technology : A Medium of Communication and a Tool for Simulating Change

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In this paper, I propose a critical analysis of the role of technology in waste management within smart cities, with a specific focus on the Digital Urban Waste Tracking System (DUWTS). This system represents a novel form of digital communal welfare infrastructure, challenging traditional concepts within the smart city paradigm (Frang et al., 2023). In doing so, I utilize the perspective of Critical Theory of Technology (Feenberg, 1991) to illustrate how DUWTS, influenced by social and political forces, evolves from a neutral technological tool to an active agent in shaping societal narratives. My argument in this paper is that DUWTS, beyond being a mere technological innovation, serves as a significant communicative medium. It not only promotes a marketing narrative aligned with the recycling goals of the European Union but also reflects the technocentric belief in technology's effectiveness, which is often disconnected from its real-world efficiency. This analysis brings to light the impacts of smart city initiatives, particularly those fostered by alliances between governments and tech companies, and how they may perpetuate digital age injustices (Rosol & Blue, 2022). Furthermore, the paper examines the influence of global hegemonic neoliberalism on the concept of smart cities (Zapata & Fernando, 2021), urging a deeper contemplation of technology's role in contemporary urban development. In conclusion, the article critiques how DUWTS often serves more as a tool for simulating change than driving actual progress, thereby fostering an illusion of innovation while sidelining comprehensive solutions. It highlights the "information technology paradox" (Zimmerli, 1986), where an overabundance of information paradoxically leads to reduced control, a situation exacerbated by the unintended social consequences of DUWTS. The technology's influence in shifting recycling and waste management responsibilities from collective to individual levels is also scrutinized, indicating a rise in individual responsibility (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2001). Ultimately, DUWTS can be viewed as a "phantom" of technological advancement, giving a misleading sense of progress and efficiency in the smart city landscape.

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CDE06 Upholding democracy online

PP 0276 Online monitoring activism: Civic surveillance practices as a reaction to the rise of the far-right in the COVID-19 pandemic

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-government protests have resurged in Germany, most visible in movements contesting anti-pandemic measures and the institutional orders responsible for them (states, media, science). Simultaneously, the Telegram COVID-protest sphere has been under continuous surveillance by digital counter-activists sharing screenshots from protestors' Telegram channels and other platforms on X. It is this monitorial practice of counter-protest empowered by digital infrastructure, expected in monitory democracy and normalized by surveillance culture, that we focus on. Such practices could previously be observed, for instance, in organized counter-speech activism targeting incivility and hate or far-right extremism, but also from misogynist and counter-feminist activists. Still, it remains unclear what precisely monitoring activism entails besides the observable act of publishing content previously published elsewhere by the surveilled.

We conducted eight semi-structured in-depth interviews (average 74 min., Sept. 2023) with German monitoring activists who posted about far-right Corona-protest online activities on X. We were mainly driven by the research interest to understand *who* these online monitoring activists (OMA) are, *why* they are doing what they are doing and *how* they are doing it.

The interview data revealed a distinctive form of activist engagement characterized by high individualization, with activists demonstrating no direct affiliations with structured groups or organized movements. However, they all follow

the same core practice workflow of continued systematic collection, processing, and publishing of information on adversary observable others online (to inform a broader public about their actions and harm them specifically).

We identify four core themes of engaging in online monitoring activism:

In the activists' **ethical normative orientation**, the tensions of OMA grounded in surveillance culture and the normative strong demand of monitory democratic citizenship become most prevalent: The activists do collect data in abundance, and it is mainly at the publishing stage that they make (self-protective) decisions to withhold data from the public – yet some share it with law enforcement. The activists navigate these tensions by justifying surveillance with normative democratic necessity, stemming directly from the activists' **discontent** with the democratic normative orders' performance of scrutinizing far-right mobilization during the pandemic. In their practice, the activists show a considerable degree of **professionalization** observable in the stylistic coherence of their output and visible in their highly specialized and localized expertise. Finally, **knowledge-sharing practices,** always central to activists, also emerge as a critical compound of their relationship with other OM activists here. While they do not usually gather for coordinated efforts as other activists have previously done, they share information where needed within a loose network of like-minded without the formation of a collective activist identity.

In conclusion, our study conceptualized online monitoring activism as a specific form of individual digital activism. It is not directly affiliated with organized protest movements or social movements, yet supports their existence by furnishing essential information with a dual purpose of contributing to awareness-raising and consciousness-building efforts and informing organized activists' actions. This form of activism seeks to disrupt or hinder opposing social movements by strategically leveraging the influence of visibility and institutionalized power within a complex framework.

CDE06 Upholding democracy online

PP 0277 Fighting Hate Speech and Promoting Democracy Online: Actor constellation and communicative practices of Austria's No Hate Speech Committee

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The Council of Europe (CoE2022) launched 2013 a campaign "to combat hate speech by mobilising young people to speak up for human rights and democracy online". This No Hate Speech Movement (NHSM) is currently organized in 43 national committees. They bring together partners, coordinate campaigns, support young people in their school/work life including severe situations. This paper focusses the Austrian Committee (2022) launched in 2016 as agency to "raise awareness of hate online, counteract it and encourage and support campaigns against hate speech". In mediatized societies fighting hate speech is a major challenge (Rideout etal.2021; Williams2019; Hepp2020), especially since hate speech is also spread automatically through social media via algorithms, linking of accounts etc. (Bilewicz&Soral2022). The relevance is reflected in research: For 2014–2021, the CO:RE evidence base (Aroldi etal.2022) lists 301 publications and 118 studies on *hate speech*, *cyberhate* and *bullying* for Europe. One focus is media usage of hate speech recipients, their respective coping strategies, but also on bullies (Schmid etal.2022; Šori&Vehovar2022; Wachs etal.2022). Also affected companies such as Facebook, Twitter/X (Bilewicz&Soral2022) and regulations (Bromell2022; Kaye2022; ViejoOtero2022) have been researched. In contrast, organized actors working against hate speech and structural aspects (Dixon2022; López&López2022; Krause etal.2021; Pálmadottir&Kalenikova2018) have only been researched to a limited extent.

Against the backdrop of mediatization research, we study whether the institutional collaboration and professionalization has triggered a new wave of mediatization (Hepp etal.2015) among non-profit organizations aiming to encourage citizens and question the logics of algorithms. The online approach of NHSM in general and the intensive usage of digital media for diverse purposes among the Austrian committee and its members can be considered an indicator for processes of "deep mediatization" (Hepp2020) in civic and social engagement. This relates to research indicating that social domains, so-called "communicative figurations" (Hasebrink&Hepp2017, 363), do not rely on one tool to disseminate information or to communicate but rather apply a whole *media-ensemble* with various tools serving different purposes.

Our empirical work started with a quantitative structure-analysis as web screening (Plum, 2010), to capture the entire overarching *media ensemble* of all *actors*, including 44 semi-automated tools and all image, text, and video-based actions and campaigns of the committee and its members. To complement this, we conducted qualitative content-analysis (Welker etal.2015) of material chosen from members' media repertoires. We selected "*information-rich cases*" (Patton2002, 230) to deepen the research and to reveal the complex interrelation between structural conditions and actors' objectives.

With a view to diverse communication tools, methods, campaigns, and multimedia content it becomes clear why activism, citizenship, and civil engagement turn into mediated activism in times of "deep mediatization" (above)

and digital forms of activism, algorithmic, and data activism are becoming essential to combat hate speech and enable counter speech.

CDE06 Upholding democracy online

PP 0278 Watching over the watchers? Ethical dilemmas in qualitative studies of sousveillance on YouTube

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Watching over the watchers? Ethical dilemmas in qualitative studies of sousveillance on YouTube

The socio-technical affordances of online platforms like YouTube enable citizens to distribute sousveillance (or inverse surveillance) footage focusing attention on police brutality to a potential global audience. This undoubtedly creates new opportunities for qualitative researchers exploring the role of social media in contemporary protest and social movements, but it also presents a series of ethical dilemmas to be addressed. Most notably, scholars must consider the feasibility and desirability of seeking informed consent from those uploading and commenting on these videos. This necessitates some engagement with the merits and demerits of the so-called 'fair game' defence, namely that publicly available social media data can be used without ethical considerations due to the fact that users should be aware of such data collection courtesy of the terms of service of each platform. In this paper, I will explore these issues through case studies such as the 2010 'anti-Tesco' riot in Bristol and the 2012–13 union flag protests in Northern Ireland (Reilly, 2021; Reilly and Trevisan, 2016). These are incidents in which those posting online commentary were often subject to abuse and harassment; naming and shaming these commenters could not be justified on the grounds they were 'fair game'. Drawing on a feminist ethics of care (Luka and Milette, 2018), the latest iteration of the AoIR guidelines for ethical research (franzke et al, 2020), and privacy theories such as contextual integrity (Nissenbaum, 2019), I propose a new framework for qualitative online sousveillance research that balances the rights of unaware participants against those of researchers accessing these online spaces. I argue that paraphrasing YouTube comments rather repeating them verbatim is congruent with the 'do no harm' principle of qualitative research. Sousveillance researchers should focus on what is said online rather than who says it.

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CDE06 Upholding democracy online

PP 0279 Privacy expectations and norms: Perceptions of the Digital Activists in Turkey's Xsphere (Twittersphere)

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Over the last decade, researchers have conducted empirical investigations to discuss how different groups of digital users perceive privacy, its value, and how they address contextual concerns surrounding it (Paine et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, amidst these discussions, a recurring gap would persist. While the notion of privacy has been extensively framed and discussed, how evolving regulations and rapid platformization are interacted with by specific user groups, especially digital activists, warrants more discussion. For these activists, the stakes are higher; their informational privacy and security are perpetually under threat, underscoring the urgency of such inquiry (Sanfilippo & Strandburg, 2019). Furthermore, gaining a more contextual understanding of privacy perceptions and interactions with such technologies in non-Western contexts is essential, where perceptions of privacy and interactions with technology may differ.

This study seeks to examine (a) how perceptions and values regarding privacy are formed in conjunction with the daily interactions of digital activists in X (Twitter), (b) interspatial concerns of the activists attributed to their safety and other concerns in between the digital and physical worlds, and (c) how digital spaces themselves are perceived given their prospects and benefits for digital activism. By conducting semi-structured interviews in Turkey with eight

digital activists with different agendas, this study aims to provide a framework for future ethnographic research that goes beyond perceptions and problematizes the nature of interaction.

In this paper, we first delve into revisiting the concept of privacy, its different conceptions and values while emphasizing the significance of individual perceptions and the existing studies surveying them. Secondly, we take on the digital activist-privacy nexus while contextualizing such concerns in Turkey. Later, we set out our methodology and analysis, respectively emphasizing the contextual privacy norms and factors shaping identity-forming, activist pursuits and the informational flow of digital activists. Our normative discussion on privacy sets our framework to analyze the digital activists' perceptions towards privacy, its significance and function. Our analysis reveals an interplay between theoretical privacy constructs and digital activists' lived experiences. While the narratives align with established theories – such as control and restricted space and Floridi's (2005) ontological perspectives – they also present a nuanced understanding deeply embedded in the activists' roles and the socio-political landscape of Turkey.

Keywords: communication, digital activists, ethics, perception, privacy, Turkey, Twitter, X

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CDE06 Upholding democracy online

PP 0280 Identifying misinformation at scale – Studying the correlation between Facebook user reports and professional fact-checker ratings

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How can misinformation reliably be identified at scale? This question becomes increasingly important as advances in AI capabilities have made it easier than ever to produce large amounts of misinformation (Yang & Menczer, 2023). As part of their efforts to stop the spread of false information on Facebook, Meta employs professional third-party fact-checkers to identify misleading content and even though this has proved a valuable approach it is not fast enough to keep up with the pace of social media platforms, especially with the acceleration in content creation. As an alternative approach, a growing literature has proposed to place much greater emphasis on user reports, as laypeople have been show to reliably identify misinformation, even when presented with limited information in the form of a headline and lead paragraph (e.g., Allen et al., 2021; Martel et al., 2023). These studies have been conducted in laboratories or online settings on a smaller scale but claim to have found a scalable method of identifying misinformation, commonly referred to as the wisdom of crowds approach. To test the approach at scale, this study will utilize the unique Meta-created URL Shares dataset (Messing et al., 2020) and conduct a logistic regression of user reports (numerical) with professional fact-checkers' ratings (categorical). The dataset contains information from Facebook for 46 countries about every URL that was shared more than 100 times publicly, with logs of the number of interactions (clicks, likes, shares, etc.) for every month from January 2017 until November 2022 at the URL level. Furthermore, the dataset has information on the number of users who have reported each URL as *fake news*, *hate speech*, or *spam*, and which URLs were rated by fact-checkers along with their verdicts. Thus, the study will test the wisdom of crowds approach on real-world data, using professional fact-checkers verdicts to provide evidence at a hitherto unseen scale. Additionally, the study employs NLP methods to investigate content differences between the URLs rated as false by fact-checkers and the URLs reported by users to identify types of unwanted content that are currently not being investigated by fact-checkers.

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CDE07 Climate activism and protest

PP 0295 Between civil disobedience and democracy threat: Media portrayals of disruptive climate protest

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We currently witness an increasing amount of more extreme protest methods around the world. Some of them, however, claim to be civil disobedience: Morally motivated law-breaking acts that aim for political change and align with the criteria of civility (Berglund, 2023)[1]. Moreover, civil disobedience is understood as a stabilizing force for democracies as it aims for the just distribution of rights (Rawls, 1971)[2] or, following a radical democratic perspective, represents direct democratic participation (Celikates, 2016)[3]. Therefore, theorists argue that the label of civil disobedience provides inherent legitimacy (Delmas, 2021)[4]. However, perceptions of legitimacy depend on (re-)presentations (McLeod, 1995)[5], and research has shown that news coverage tends to delegitimize protests, especially those with more extreme protest methods (Boyle et al., 2012)[6]. This pattern, the so-called protest paradigm, thus leads to a theoretical discrepancy: While theorists argue that civil disobedience provides protests with legitimacy, its law-breaking nature should, according to the protest paradigm, trigger a rather delegitimizing portrayal. Therefore, I aim to uncover the interplay of claims of civil disobedience and the protest paradigm by analyzing protest coverage of the German environmental group Last Generation, which claims the label of civil disobedience and is currently highly discussed. Specifically, I asked (RQ1) how the news coverage of their protest actions (de-)legitimizes their protests and (RQ2) to what extent the coverage depicts a picture of the protests that aligns with the concept of civil disobedience. To address these research questions, I conducted a qualitative content analysis of online articles from two German news media, the Süddeutsche Zeitung and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, representing the German legacy media, politically opposite in slant on the left to right scale. I collected all articles related to seven attention-grabbing protest methods within seven days of their initial occurrence, resulting in a sample size of n = 100. For the codebook, I employed deductive categories derived from the characteristics of the protest paradigm and civil disobedience. The results show that the news coverage of the protests still delegitimizes the protests by applying various aspects of the protest paradigm, especially represented by a high disproportion of quotes. Throughout the sample, the normative evaluation of the protests is mostly left to politicians, the protests' target, while the protesters are barely quoted. As a consequence of the politicians' critical quotes, the protests are widely characterized as inefficient, inappropriate, radical, and undemocratic. The focus on the politicians' evaluations also influences the depiction of the protests as civil disobedience. The alignment of the protests with civil disobedience is barely discussed, and quotes claiming the protest to be undemocratic, unconstitutional, or violent depict a picture contrary to civil disobedience. Therefore, I conclude, that aligning and claiming the label of civil disobedience does not provide legitimacy to the protests as it does not overthrow the protest paradigm. Instead, the protest paradigm mostly prevents the label of civil disobedience and its democratic notion from occurring.

[1] https://doi.org/10.1177/02633957231176999
[2] https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674042605
[3] https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453716638562
[4] https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108775748.009
[5] https://doi.org/10.1080/08838159509364285
[6] https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161211433837

CDE07 Climate activism and protest

PP 0296 Climate protest – what is it good for (absolutely nothing)? Media influence on climate protest perception: A content analysis of news coverage and related reader comments

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Protest movements, like other non-media actors, rely on media attention to disseminate their messages to the public, achieve their goals and contribute to democratic opinion-forming (Strömbäck & Esser, 2017). Dramatic protest action can capture media attention. However, it also risks diverting focus from the actual cause, potentially leading to the delegitimization and demonization of the movement (McLeod, 2007). Therefore, a key challenge for protest movements consists of finding protest forms that meet journalistic criteria of newsworthiness without detracting from their core message (Goldenbaum & Thompson, 2020). This is crucial, as the public's perception and

evaluation of protest movements, their activities and messages, depend decisively on the media coverage they receive, ultimately influencing the movements' social impact. To analyze the implications of these dynamics, we will focus on climate protests as a case study.

In recent years, two influential players have shaped Germany's climate protest scene: 'Fridays for Future' (FFF) and 'Letzte Generation' (Last Generation, LG). Their differing protest strategies have led to comparisons, revealing notable distinctions. Despite having limited political impact beyond parties aligned with their views, FFF has gained widespread societal acceptance (Berker & Pollex, 2023; Rucht, 2023). LG, embracing civil disobedience and confrontation, faces social resistance, particularly in contrast to the peaceful and cheerful protests and school strikes of FFF (Rucht, 2023). Media reports frequently allege that the protest strategy of LG shifts the focus away from climate issues, causing defiance rather than solidarity towards the movement and discouraging public support for the climate cause (Kumkar, 2022; Rucht, 2023).

Considering that LG's dramatic protest actions, compared to FFF, align more with media preferences and likely result in a focus on these actions rather than other aspects, the following questions arise: How does the media craft narratives about the movements? And, more crucially, how do these narratives impact public discussions about the movements, their goals, actions, and the broader climate topic?

To explore these questions, we conduct a quantitative content analysis. We analyze 102 randomly selected news articles published online on three major German news sites between 2019 and 2023 along with 2040 corresponding reader comments. We maintain an equal sample for FFF and LG, coding relevant factors at both the article and comment level.

Preliminary multilevel logistic regressions show that articles about FFF are more likely than articles about LG to prompt discussions about the climate topic among commentators. However, the focus of the article is just as crucial. When the coverage centres solely on protest actions, commentators are less likely to discuss climate change compared to instances where the movement's goals or climate change in general are mentioned as well. If protest actions are not covered at all, the likelihood of a discussion about climate change is highest. This suggests that coverage focused on protest actions diverts attention away from the issue. The study thus indicates that different protest strategies and the associated forms of protest can indeed lead to different discourses due to variations in their media coverage.

CDE07 Climate activism and protest

PP 0297 A media ecology of ecological media? Conceptualizing environment-oriented communication in climate change activism

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Mainstream social media (i.e. Instagram, Facebook…) play a pivotal role in climate activism, serving as key platforms for sharing information, organizing protests, and mobilizing support. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that these platforms are not neutral; they carry environmental implications and governance challenges often overlooked in discussions about digital communication's relationship with environmental sustainability (Hogan & Vonderau, 2019; Lucivero, 2020).

Mainstream social media platforms also face scrutiny for their political economy, ethical governance, privacy policies, and data control (Kuntsman & Rattle, 2019). These concerns pose a stark contrast to the values of grassroots social movements and climate activists who utilize these platforms. While literature extensively covers activists' use of mainstream social media, less explored are their strategies regarding platform-sustainability (see Rone, 2022). This gap is particularly significant in climate activism, given that critics often target activists' use of social media.

Our research, centered on Fridays for Future (FFF) Rome, delves into how the activists navigate and negotiate their approach to social media and digital platforms for activism. We explore the criteria guiding the selection of various social media platforms when the imperative to combat climate change clashes with the need to reach a wider audience.

We adopt a media ecological perspective both in our methods and analysis (Treré, 2019). We operated a six-month participant observation of the group and digital ethnography of its Instagram page, followed up by 20 semi-structured interviews with FFF-Rome activists. These methods allowed us to account for online and offline activist practices across multiple media platforms, linking the communicative complexity of social media usage with the environmental impact of digital communication technologies. Through thematic analysis, our investigation reveals two fundamental conflicts in FFF-Rome's climate activism on social media: the tension between addressing the climate crisis via digital tools, which contribute to environmental harm, and advocating for systemic change rooted in anti-capitalism and anti-corporatism while utilizing platforms aligned with these models.

We argue that FFF-Rome's media ecology, encompassing both backstage and frontstage (Trerè, 2019), and mainstream and alternative social media (Gehl, 2015), manages these tensions by embracing an ecological understanding of digital technology's environmental footprint. FFF-Rome activists strategically transition between platforms, weighing the advantages and contradictions of utilizing different social media in their advocacy efforts.

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CDE07 Climate activism and protest

PP 0298 Against the mainstream but for what? – An automated content analysis of worldviews in alternative online communities towards climate change

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Climate change is an existential challenge for society. Even though its existence and the threat it poses have been the academic consensus for quite a while, public debates remain polarized and emotionalized (Cook, 2019). Positions range from outright denial of climate change over denying that it is caused by humans, up to discussions of the strength of impacts.

Media play a crucial role for such debates and therefore for the formation of worldviews and lifestyles. With changes in the media landscape, not the least by the internet and social media platforms (Neuberger et al., 2023), we also see the emergence of alternative media that see themselves as a corrective to a perceived mainstream (Holt et al. 2019).

While studies on alternative media and their positions on climate changes are abundant, it is not yet clear what lifestyles they and their audiences position as alternatives to mainstream ideas. To understand how societal negotiation processes on climate change mitigation strategies come to pass, we believe it necessary to understand how alternative publics that believe themselves to be unrecognized by public debates address such issues. We are interested in how worldviews and lifestyles towards climate change are formulated in alternative publics.

To answer this question, we collected 65 Telegram chats from various political and ideological directions like right-wing populists, conspiracy groups, the originally anti-covid measure Querdenken movement as well as religion or spirituality focussed groups. This messaging service is especially popular among alternative communities. We trained a BERTopic model on the ~120.000 messages that contain mentions of climate change to perform an automatic content analysis and applied close reading to explore lifestyle concepts communicated in the chats.

Preliminary results show two main argumentation structures: The first line of arguments rejects any restrictions by mainstream mitigation arguments, characterizing the whole debate as a lie or conspiracy by the mainstream. The other approach problematizes the turning away from a lifestyle that is seen as traditional or even primordial and that should be oriented towards nature and the family. This often includes the forsaking of modernity and democratic values.

It is apparent that rejecting official narratives is at the core of these groups, the suggested alternative lifestyles and worldviews differ however and could be an important building block to better understand alternative online publics and address climate change denialism.

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CDE07 Climate activism and protest

PP 0299 The construction of 'the local' and 'local voices' in locally-led climate adaptation in Kenya

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This paper explores the roles of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Kenya that are involved in articulating locally-owned climate action, through an internationally funded programme involving activism and collaboration with government. It zooms in on the ways in which Kenyan civil society organizations contribute to certain voices obtaining the status of 'the local', defining locally-led adaptation as ultimately legitimate solutions to climate change. The rationale for this study is that the meaning of local ownership and local voices in the context of climate deserve close attention, to develop our understandings of what 'local solutions' are in practice, through what dynamics they come about, and with what implications for the democratic quality of 'the local' and 'local voices' thus constructed. While efforts centre on local populations, CSOs involved need to engage with multiple legitimacy audiences, and work within specific political and policy contexts. At the same time, addressing climate issues, and identifying climate solutions that can address the needs of people effectively is a tremendous challenge, addressed while having to navigate the above conditions. The study is interpretive, identifying patterns across a range of Kenya-based CSOs that work on various subthemes and from varied approaches, capacities, understandings, and regional focus. The study is based on semi-structured interviews, participant observation and document analysis. Key findings of the study are that 'the local' and 'locally led solutions' are commonly approached in terms of facilitation and inclusion of understandings of climate problems and solutions as understood and identified by local communities that organizations work with, in ongoing climate policy processes. This implies placing responsibility for climate solutions with local communities, banking on local knowledge. CSOs also face important resource and expertise limits, and often avoid challenging questions addressing climate beyond the local, or difficult and politically sensitive aspects. The study thus points to the delimitations and implications of the way 'the local' and 'local voices' come about, and considers how CSOs and communities can be better supported in articulating and advancing local climate solutions.

CDE08 Voters and politicians in global elections

PP 0391 New divide – Changes in social media polarization during Finnish elections

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Modern democracy is often shaded by negativity and division instead of deliberative meetings of different ideas. Social media has been a factor in this polarization, and studies have revealed that affective polarization in social media is on the rise in societies not often characterized by division. Functioning democratic systems are built on discussions, and online polarization presents itself as a threat to having such discussions. This study examines the changes in affective social media polarization during Finnish parliamentary elections of 2019 and 2023. Finland hasn't typically had a very polarized democratic system, but the absence of studies about affective polarization in the Finnish context make this study an important look into social media politics.

The study analyzes data from both Facebook and Twitter, both of which are still widely used in Finnish politics. The data includes posts and tweets by party leaders that represent the elected parliamentary groups of the 2019–2023 term and the comments and replies from other users from up to a month before election day. The party leaders' posts and tweets along with the comments and replies from other users were analyzed for their polarizing content. The method used in the analysis phase consists of identifying the sentiments toward politicians and political groups.

Results indicate that affective polarization has gained traction between elections as a phenomenon in Finnish political social media. Politicians campaign with more vitriol towards other parties and their leaders, whereas comments and replies have seen an uptick in hostility towards opposing parties. This is especially seen on Twitter, which became a largely polarizing platform when compared to Facebook. "Ideological bubbling" does not seem to be a prevalent phenomenon during campaigning times: party leaders' posts contain commentary from all around the political spectrum. Further studies should focus on different platforms and the effects polarization has on politicians' social media use and on online democracy.

CDE08 Voters and politicians in global elections

PP 0392 Translating transparency – A study on project leaders responsible for counting and controlling votes in Swedish election administration

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This study explores how transparency is understood and practiced in election administration and engages with the issue of declining trust in democratic institutions in established democracies. Using translation theory and following project leaders in the Swedish elections of 2022 over a period of six months, the study informs the research on how trust and transparency is managed during different conditions in a public election context.

Recently there has been a growing awareness that trust in well-established democracies, as Sweden, can diminish – including trust in public elections. This decline is not necessarily related to how elections actually function but to how they are perceived to function, which spills over on the democratic system as a whole. Consequently, this puts civil servants and their efforts to maintain trust through managing perceptions, on stage.

Transparency is understood as an idea underpinning organizational communication activities, which can generate trust (Fredriksson & Edwards, 2019). The project leaders are understood as "translators" (Røvik, 2023) of this idea since they are key players in the process of counting and controlling the votes, which requires insight and openness as well as communication with the media and the public.

To capture the process, serial interviews have been applied. In total 30 interviews with five project leaders representing different regional agencies have been conducted during six months: before, during and after the elections of 2022. The data was analyzed through qualitative content analysis.

The preliminary results show that when the project leaders interact with the media and other stakeholder groups, they translate transparency differently, adapting either a modifying mode or a radical mode (Røvik, 2023). In relation to the media or management, the modifying mode can be understood as a careful act of balance between what to share and not, and when and how to do it. "Back stage" information is shared more freely, to "be on the same page" and appear as a "united front". The results also indicate that the "united-front-ideal" is difficult to uphold when media pressure augments. At the same time, some results point towards a more radical translation of transparency illustrated by the argument that it is more important to "tell it like it is", than to coordinate messages in detail.

The study contributes to translation theory, shedding light on how the same actors understand and practice transparency during different conditions. It also contributes with knowledge on how transparency is managed and negotiated by practitioners, adding to previous research by Fredriksson and Edwards (2019) and Ihlen et al. (2022), among others.

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CDE08 Voters and politicians in global elections

PP 0393 Unveiling disinformation: Mapping attacks on Brazil's Electoral System and the response of the Superior Electoral Court (2018–2023)

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Reasoning and study contextualization: Disinformation challenges democracies as it can undermine the legitimacy of electoral processes, creating confusion about voting procedures and inciting violence. Despite the global significance of researching disinformation, studies have predominantly focused on the Global North, especially the US and Europe, resulting in gaps in our understanding of this phenomenon (Bennett & Livingston, 2018; Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, 2021). Within this framework, this study investigates disinformation targeting the Brazilian electoral system from 2018–2023, spanning national, regional, and local elections. Against the backdrop of the intense proliferation of political disinformation in Brazil, partially driven by far-right populism actors, the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), the highest authority in Brazilian electoral justice, has partnered with fact-checking organizations to

expose falsehoods aimed at undermining the democratic electoral system. In 2018, TSE established the 'Fato ou Boato' (Fact or Rumor) website to debunk electoral disinformation. To our knowledge, this case represents a pioneering collaboration between an electoral superior court and fact-checking entities with the objective of countering disinformation directed at the electoral system.

Research questions and hypotheses: The study aims to address three primary research questions:

RQ1: What are the primary sources, geographical scope, and narratives of disinformation, and deception strategies targeting Brazilian electoral processes?

RQ2: What key commonalities and differences exist across elections?

RQ3: What strategies does the Brazilian Supreme Electoral Court employ to combat disinformation?

As this research is currently in the coding phase, scheduled for completion on January 31st, the following hypotheses remain to be verified: (a) the thematic narratives of electoral disinformation have evolved over time, with a notable rise in falsehoods surrounding the electronic voting system coinciding with the rhetoric of far-right populists in Brazil, and (b) selected justice officials, particularly Supreme Court Ministers, gradually became the primary targets of electoral disinformation.

Methods: To address RQ1 and RQ2, this study analyzes TSE's 'Fato ou Boato' platform by conducting a quantitative content analysis of 420 verification articles published between 2018 and 2023. Specifically, we examine the origins of disinformation claims, geographical reach, thematic narratives, and deceptive strategies employed. A comprehensive codebook containing category descriptions and Krippendorff's coefficient reliability for each category is available. Furthermore, to address RQ3, we combine quantitative data with semi-structured interviews of TSE public officers involved in the anti-disinformation program alongside qualitative analysis of official reports and promotional materials from electoral justice. This mixed-methods approach provides a comprehensive understanding of electoral disinformation in Brazil and the counteracting strategies developed.

Contribution to the field: This research aims to contribute to the disinformation literature, particularly within its context-bound components (Hameleers, 2023). This study also seeks to contribute to fact-checking studies as it dives into a pioneering collaboration between Brazilian electoral justice and fact-checkers. Furthermore, it addresses the scarcity of research surrounding the diverse forms of false information circulating in both the Global South and North (Schiffrin & Cunliffe-Jones, 2021), particularly those undermining the legitimacy of electoral systems. Lastly, our analysis offers a valuable longitudinal perspective, spanning three major Brazilian elections conducted amid the rise of far-right forces.

CDE08 Voters and politicians in global elections

PP 0394 The antecedents and electoral consequences of voters' preference for authentic politicians

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In light of the personalization of politics and the growing distrust towards political elites, the perception of politicians' authenticity is discussed as a decisive factor in voters' evaluations of candidates and in their voting decisions. Previous research underscores the significance of political authenticity in elections, revealing positive correlations between political authenticity and voting decisions (Kenny et al., 2021). When citizens perceive individual politicians as (more) authentic, it increases their likelihood of supporting them and their parties. Yet, one aspect that has received little attention in this relationship is the individual preferences for authenticity among citizens. The assumption that political authenticity is universally important for citizens is common but has rarely been tested empirically. This contrasts with the observation that citizens value different qualities in politicians (Laustsen & Bor, 2017).

Against this background, our study investigates the role of perceived authenticity in citizens' voting decisions and makes a threefold contribution. Firstly, we test the effect of perceived authenticity on voting intentions. We understand perceived political authenticity as a constituent of the candidate image and a subjective perception of the extent to which individual politicians appear true to themselves (Luebke & Engelmann, 2023). Secondly, we examine how the individual preference for authenticity influences the relationship between perceived authenticity and voting intention. The preference for authenticity describes the importance citizens attribute to authenticity perceptions in their candidate evaluations and voting behavior. Finally, we analyze factors contributing to variations in this preference for authenticity, such as citizens' media exposure.

To address these aspects, we conducted an online survey with a quota sample in Germany ($N = 1.485$). Participants were asked to evaluate the authenticity of two politicians using the three-dimensional P-PA Scale (Luebke & Engelmann, 2023). Their preference for authenticity was measured with a sum index of three items, with each item capturing the importance of one authenticity dimension (i.e., consistency, ordinariness, immediacy). Our findings reveal that perceived political authenticity influences citizens' voting intention even when we control for other image variables. We find the effect of perceived political authenticity on voting intentions for politicians to be moderated

by citizens' preference for authenticity. We further demonstrate that citizens differ in how much they value the authenticity of politicians. Despite a generally high preference in our sample, we observe differences among individuals. These differences are linked to socio-demographic factors (e.g., education) and political attitudes (e.g., political interest), but not to media exposure. The study sheds light on the electoral role and the consequences of political authenticity and identifies the segments of the population that consider authenticity particularly important.

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CDE08 Voters and politicians in global elections

PP 0929 Dissipation of "westernormativity" in late post-socialist condition: Unravelling Czech social media discourses on colonialism and racism

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With the upsurge of emancipatory discourses forming around the anti-racist movements such as "Black lives matter" or "Decolonize this place" and circulating through the globalized digital communication channels, diverse audiences around the world have been confronted with the task to revisit the history of European colonization with critical eye. In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, historically rendered subaltern within the world system of global hierarchies (Sušová-Salminen, 2012; Wolff, 1994), these discourses have been stirring a unique array of connotations, primarily within illiberal channels. We introduced the concept of "westernormativity" to address early post-1989 consensus on catching up with the West in the post-socialist region, which now seems to be dissipating. Principal research objective of our study is to elucidate how Czech Facebook users with illiberal views perceive and interpret the domestication of anti-colonialism and anti-racism in the Czech Republic.

Theoretical introduction of this study examines the post-socialist condition through the lenses of post-colonial theory (Hann et al., 2002; Půtová, 2016; Tlostanova, 2015). The illiberal reactions to the influx of Western influences (including emancipatory decolonial and antiracist movements) are often interpreted as a backlash against the early post-1989 hegemony of the West. This phenomenon is decomposed into two distinct levels in our analysis. The decline of liberal values is typically analyzed at the level of political systems, being interpreted either as the product of an unfinished liberalization (Mesežnikov and Gyárfášová, 2018), or, conversely, as a "liberalization overkill" (Holmes and Krastev, 2020). We explore the illiberal disconnection from the West also on the level of post-socialist subjectivities, examining it as a negotiation of the deficient post-socialist self and the phenomena of (self)orientalization (Bakić-Hayden, 1995; Todorova, 1997; Zarycki, 2014).

The qualitative research entails an analysis of extensive narrative interviews with 12 respondent-commenters, who were active in discussions on Facebook pages of Czech press outlets under articles shared on the topics of decolonization and antiracism.

In the analysis, we explore the sentiments of coloniality in its semantic multiplicity and situate them in the complex life stories of the individual respondents with respect to their diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. We focused notably on the interaction between the local and global, i.e. on propositions that classify the topics of decolonization and antiracism as foreign, domestically inauthentic discourses. These are perceived as imported from the West and are often intertwined with expressions of nationalist appeals and interpretations of the Socialist past.

The dismissive reactions to decolonization and antiracist movements reveal striking inconsistencies. For example, the frequent references to the Czech Republic as a contemporary colony "of the West" display a lack of critical reflection on the historical projects of European colonial expansion. Instead, they often reciprocate with orientalization and degradation, mirroring the experiences they claim to be enduring. These narratives simultaneously express a fear that the Western woke discourses are spreading in the form of a new communication order infringing upon the freedom of speech, a reaction contrasting with the often favourable attitude towards the former Czechoslovak authoritarian regime reported by the respondents.

CDE09 Perspectives on the reception of political information

PP 0409 In polls we trust? Investigating the credibility of political polls in Austrian news media: An online-experiment

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Several corruption scandals have recently shaken Austria's political and media landscape. Opinion polls and media have played central roles in subsequent debates and investigations. This may have also negatively impacted media trust in Austria, as the Digital News Report 2023 indicated.

However, there is a lack of research on the credibility of political opinion polls in news media. This gap is significant because political entities regard opinion polls as highly influential (Oleskog Tryggvason 2019), incorporating them into political decision-making processes. Notably, Oleskog Tryggvason & Strömbäck (2018) reveal that journalists often discuss poll changes inaccurately, attributing significance to shifts that fall within the margin of error – implying that sampling errors cannot be dismissed.

Only a few scholars have delved into examining poll credibility in journalistic articles. Notably, it has been demonstrated that, while source credibility does not significantly impact the perception of political polls in news media, motivated reasoning and personal political attitudes – where individuals tend to believe what aligns with their preferences – largely shape the reception of polls (Kuru et al. 2017; Tsfati 2001). Additionally, Stadtmüller et al. (2022) found that information on sample size, representativity, and margin errors influence trustworthiness.

This study seeks to contribute to the field by concentrating on a Central European perspective, asking the fundamental question: What factors determine the credibility of political opinion polls in Austrian news media outlets? To explore this, we employ a 3x2-between-subject-design online-experiment with a sample size of 1600 participants, representative of the Austrian population. The experimental design underwent a priori power analysis, unveiling a robust 95% power.

The study investigates the impact of a current political opinion poll (Austrian national election) presented by an Austrian media brand on the poll's credibility. After a pre-test, each participant was randomly assigned to one of six groups, employing a between-subject design. Each group member was exposed to one of six stimuli. The stimuli varied the media outlet (public service media/boulevard/no media brand) and the information provided on the respective poll (information given/information not given). Subsequently, the post-test phase commenced. Various variables were examined, including media trust, motivated political reasoning, warmth and competence perceptions of media brands, and belief in conspiracy theories.

The data for this experiment was gathered in December 2023 and is presently under examination. Preliminary evaluations indicate that the publishing medium has no influence on poll credibility. Conversely, political affinity and the availability of information about the survey (such as sample size, etc.) do exert influence. Particularly noteworthy are unexpected findings that respondents show significantly higher credibility in polls without detailed information than in surveys that provided such information. Additional evaluation procedures, including moderation analysis, mean value comparisons, regressions, and structural equation modeling (SEM), are currently underway.

CDE09 Perspectives on the reception of political information

PP 0410 Is it what you know or what you think you know? Understanding the roles of objective and subjective political knowledge in political discussion

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Political discussion is essential for a healthy democracy, but what motivates people to engage in it? Traditionally, objective political knowledge–holding factually correct beliefs about political actors, policies, institutions, etc. – has been considered a crucial prerequisite for political action, including political discussion. However, recent research challenges this conventional wisdom, arguing that subjective knowledge – individuals' metacognitive perceptions of their own knowledge – is a more accurate predictor of political engagement. Yet, whether this subjective knowledge facilitates political discussion remains a relatively unexplored question. The purpose of this study is to better understand how objective and subjective political knowledge relate to political discussion. In particular, we investigate the extent to which engaging in various forms of political discussion is driven by what people actually know or what they think they know about politics.

Political discussions can occur with different audiences; while people mostly engage in political discussions with close ties and those who share their political opinions (in-group), they sometimes discuss politics with weak ties and people with whom they disagree (out-group). Based on literature, we expect people's willingness to engage in

these different types of discussion will depend in part on their levels of objective and subjective political knowledge. As people are motivated to maintain a positive self-image during political discussions, those with higher subjective knowledge may have less concern about incurring reputational damage that may occur when talking about politics with weak ties and members of a political outgroup. Consequently, we expect subjective knowledge to be an important predictor of discussions with different audiences, relative to objective knowledge.

Data for this study were collected as part of a two-wave online survey (YouGov), fielded during the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Using a diverse sample of U.S. adults (W1 = 1800; W2 = 1265), we measured participants' objective and subjective knowledge, the frequency with which they discussed politics with members of the political in-group and out-group, as well as strong and weak ties (pre-registration: https://aspredicted.org/Y8V_GW1).

Results from multivariate regressions (with control variables) indicate that subjective knowledge is particularly important for political discussion. People who think they know a lot about politics were more willing to engage in all types of political discussion, including those with political out-group members and weak ties. In contrast, objective knowledge was only associated with political discussions with political in-group members and strong ties; knowing more about politics did not associate with out-group or weak tie discussions. Our findings suggest that both objective and subjective knowledge are important for politically homogenous discussions, while discussions with weak ties and the political outgroup depend more on what people think they know rather than what they actually know. Thus, discussions with the out-group and weak ties, may be motivated by a flawed perception of knowledge that is not supported by actual facts and information (illusion of knowledge). Overall, this study highlights the importance of subjective knowledge in political behaviors and suggests that those who think they know a lot may feel most prepared to engage in political discussions, regardless of their actual knowledge.

CDE09 Perspectives on the reception of political information

PP 0411 Imagining a common good: How news texts, audiences, and journalists construct – and differ about – the democratic value of news

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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). This paper sets out to study the extent to which, in current democracies, journalism fulfils the positive function that has been conventionally ascribed to it. Specifically, we are interested in news' democratic effect beyond the widespread reductionist model that sees news only in terms of its information pay-offs and as an instrument to hold the powerful to account.

Our paper draws, 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 than 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 (Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, 2010; Ohme et al., 2022).

Building on this research, our paper investigates empirically the democratic effects of news, using Covid as a case study. We designed our study as a pilot, using a mixed-method approach. We combine qualitative analysis of news-texts with audience focus groups and in-depth interviews with journalists in order to triangulate news content, news reception, and news production. Furthermore, we compare news content, reception and production in the UK and Germany to study news' democratic effect in two close but still different democracies (Henkel et al., 2019).

We collected the top four items from the homepages of twelve news websites in the UK and Germany on seven consecutive days each in spring 2020 and late winter 2021 as a proxy for what editors (or content management systems) at this time considered the most important stories (N = 672). We decided on 'elite' websites (such as *BBC News*, *The Times*, *Zeit Online*, and *Tagesschau)* because these are generally perceived as positive models for democratically valuable news (Cushion, 2022; Toff et al., 2021). 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, with a roughly equal gender distribution, an age range between people in their 20ies to 80ies, and from socially diverse backgrounds. We interviewed 16 journalists, eight each working for the UK and German news websites we included in our text corpus.

We find that all three actors (texts, audiences, journalists), emphasizing an ideal purpose of news, imagine its "common good". However, all actors differ on what constitutes this imagined "good", while audiences and journalists voice mistrust in each other.

CDE09 Perspectives on the reception of political information

PP 0412 Disrupting political self-observation: Algorithm-based dissemination, messenger services and the disappearance of public opinion

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The relationship between media, communication, and democracy has often been approached based on Habermas' notion of the public sphere and his seminal book on its structural change(s). The function of the public for the formal democratic process, institutionalized in the form of a party system and regular elections, tends to be downplayed in this tradition. However, Habermas himself later acknowledged a centre-periphery differentiation of democratic political systems, where parliament, public administration and the courts routinely prepare, implement and review political decisions. According to this view, the public sphere functions as a bridge between the political centre and civil society as the periphery. From a normative viewpoint, this links the legitimacy of political decisions to their being the result of communication flows from the periphery to the centre. Stripped of its normative claim, this view of democratic politics closely resembles the systems-theoretical understanding of the political system and its relation to a political public, proposed by Luhmann. It is a view that focuses on the function of the public sphere and public opinion for social order in the sense of the formal democratic process and its informal shadow.

In our paper we will use this Luhmann-based theoretical framework and draw on empirical data and case studies from the research literature to pinpoint how certain types of digital media disrupt established democratic processes due to their effects on dissemination and eventually the observation of public opinion. In a first step, we introduce the analytical distinction between three dissemination modes of mediated communication: asymmetrical broadcasting, network-based dissemination and algorithm-based dissemination. While the first two modes of dissemination already existed in the age of mass media, as highlighted by Paul Starr's notion of relational publics, the third mode is genuinely new.

In a second step, we analyse this new mode in greater detail. It challenges both Starr's notion of a relational public and Luhmann's notion of the public as the generalized environment of a social system. Algorithmic dissemination categorizes users as suitable consumers for a particular piece of content without any reference to their personal network connections. The more publicness and accessibility become a matter of algorithmic calculation, the more there is a disconnect between any kind of collective self-recognition that the producer of a piece of content may wish to evoke and the audience that actually sees that content. In systems-theoretical terms, this disconnect translates into problems for the political system with observing public opinion, despite the supposed insights provided by audience metrics.

In a third step, we further stress the challenges for political self-observation by focusing on messenger services a specific type of digital platform that combines the broadcasting and the network-based mode of dissemination. Their combination of communication based on closed groups and enormous potential reach further limits the political system's capacity to observe public opinion by isolating political centre and periphery from each other.

CDE10 Democracy and participation in public communication

PP 0506 Between autonomy and heteronomy: Toward a common conceptual framework for participation research

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The significance of participation has grown recently following political crises and aggravated social tension that are afflicting liberal democracies and against the backdrop of the new media environment. However, the widespread use of the concept in the absence of a basic agreement on its essence threatens to turn participation into an all-encompassing phenomenon up to the point of becoming a fluid signified (Allen et al., 2014). This theoretical paper examines the foundational assumptions behind four key conceptual approaches to participation present in academic literature: the political, the sociological-cultural, the political economy, and the science, technology, and society studies (S.T.S) (Carpentier, 2016; Chilvers & Kearnes, 2020; Fuchs, 2014; Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins & Carpentier, 2019; Literat, 2016). These approaches differentiate themselves in research tradition, in understanding the purpose, meaning, and scope of participation, and consequently in defining participation. Beyond recognizing media and communication as essential participation components, we explore the possibility of establishing a connecting bridge between them. Striving for common foundations is essential for conceptual clarity and developing a shared analytical framework. Our analysis looks first for common characteristics and points of (dis)agreement within these

approaches. Subsequently, we distinguish four conceptual aspects of the controversy: (a) the individual and society, (b) the political and the cultural, (c) ethics, and (d) power. Further systematic analysis reveals a reincarnation of long-standing disciplinary disagreements between media research traditions. By scrutinizing these aspects, we suggest that some of these differences can be theoretically reconciled, and points of disagreement can be demarcated. The paper's concluding section presents an alternative conceptualization based on power and institutionalization as its central foundations. Consequently, we construct a spatial typology of participation situated on axes of autonomy – a society that collectively and actively self-institutes its own social imaginary, and heteronomy – a society that is instituted and " implicitly governed by an elsewhere" (Castoriadis, 1987, p. 167). Such typology can serve as a unifying research framework and enhance participation's democratic essence.

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CDE10 Democracy and participation in public communication

PP 0507 Co-creating tomorrow: Participatory democracy and future scenario-building as catalysts for inclusive communication

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The evolution of democracy and communication demands enhanced and inclusive decision-making procedures that genuinely engage the public. Recognizing diverse perspectives and public dialogue is crucial for elevating communication standards. The European Commission advocates for member states to implement participatory initiatives led by citizens, endorsing individual and collective modes of participation like citizen panels and assemblies, aiming to fortify resilient democracies [1]. In the context of climate resilience, the focus on collective decision-making procedures becomes imperative to address the challenges posed by climate change. This emphasis aligns with the broader goal of fortifying resilient democracies by ensuring that diverse perspectives and public dialogue actively contribute to the development of effective strategies and policies in response to the pressing issue of climate change.

This study aims to co-create and analyze alternative visions of the future of climate resilience in societies with the ultimate goal of informing policy-making and social innovation. A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was used. We carried out participatory future scenario-building workshops, as a method from the innovative and transdisciplinary field of future studies. The utilization of future scenario-building, specifically through the future workshop method, enables organizers and facilitators to engage citizens and stakeholders in envisioning diverse futures for climate action, fostering ownership, engagement, and inclusive participation. To conduct workshops, we deliberately chose two Living Labs[2] (30 participants) through purposive sampling to guarantee gender equality and diversity. The future climate-resilient scenarios and their criteria were then generated, assessed and ranked by employing a survey and creating a multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) tool for prioritization. Through the application of MCDM to rank future scenarios according to the preferences of citizens and other stakeholders, we offer transparent decision support for making an informed choice regarding the preferred scenarios to achieve a climate-resilient society.

The main outcomes of this methodological study are (a) Developing a future scenario-building workshop methodology and supporting the organization of the workshops by providing clear and practical guidelines and

recommendations (b) developing a decision-making tool that supports citizens to create value-based scenarios, identifying key values, and prioritizing different choice alternatives systematically (c) Offering principles, guidance, and creating conducive conditions for policymakers to enhance citizen engagement and empowerment mechanisms during the preparation phase and agenda setting of climate assemblies.

Our work contributes to the existing literature by filling a crucial gap in the methodology of future scenario-building within the context of democracy and communication. While previous studies have explored participatory approaches, our research uniquely focuses on 'citizen-collaborative future scenario-building,' a method that integrates diverse voices in envisioning and planning for the future. Additionally, our research highlights the innovative aspect of building consensus through collective and systematic decision-making, contributing new insights to the field by emphasizing the importance of finding common ground and shared goals in the transformative process of communication and democracy.

[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202302836
[2] https://www.climas-project.eu/

Keywords: Participatory democracy, future scenario-building, inclusive communication, citizen engagement, co-creation

CDE10 Democracy and participation in public communication

PP 0508 Failed research for democratising power relations: Lessons from a study of social movement and corporate actors

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In this article we reflect on knowledge creation with research subjects. We draw on experiences from a study of social movements and multinational companies and their understandings of the role of social media in their relations. The Aristotelian concept of Phronesis has been invoked as an approach to create knowledge with research subjects in the social sciences. Putting the Aristotelian concept of phronesis in dialogue with Foucault , Flyvbjerg's (2001) phronetic approach becomes both an emergent and looping logic of inquiry, method, analysis and result towards democratic maintenance and/or change. This was our starting point in a research project on social media and climate crisis debates. Here, we brought together social movements and multinational companies in what we term multi-stakeholder integrity forums. More specifically, communications and digital media practitioners from NGOs, activist groups and multinational companies, all from groups and organizations based in Europe. The companies are all companies with a trajectory of being criticised for practices detrimental to the climate, representing energy, food, agricultural and construction industries. The social movement actors are from NGOs and activist groups that represent the climate movement, representing both reformist and anti-systemic orientations. We brought them together in multi-stakeholder integrity forums after we had interviewed them individually. Starting from Flyvbjerg's (2001) Aristotelian approach to phronetic social science research, our aim was to go beyond antagonism in unequal power relations. Rather than achieving this, our phronetic approach left most social movement participants feeling alienated. On the basis of this, this article reflects on what is it that Flyvbjerg's (2001) phronetic approach does not capture as well as our own blind spots in applying it. In doing so, we discuss feminist approaches to phronetic research as well as well as action research, and suggest attention points for research on and with societal actors in unequal power relations.

CDE10 Democracy and participation in public communication

PP 0509 Alternative Media and the fluid Dynamics of Trust and Distrust: Implications for social Cohesion and Democracy

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Social cohesion and the negotiation of shared social norms are intricately tied to questions of trust and distrust in media. The construction of societal reality as a mediatized process takes on a unique dimension when distrust in mainstream media prompts a departure from the public sphere, impacting social cohesion and democratic participation. (Couldry & Hepp, 2016; Kovach & Rosentiel, 2014; Patterson, 2013; Strömbäck et al, 2020). Our research focuses on system-critical alternative media (AM), which position themselves as counter-solutions beyond the distrusted "system media."

Studies have shown that distrust in media can lead individuals to turn to AM; however, trust and distrust in media are fluid, selective, and pragmatic categories. (Kyriakidou et al., 2022; Schwarzenegger, 2020) Our argument centres on the idea that trust and distrust in media are flexible, adaptive, situative, and interactive, with AM playing a distinctive role. Distrust in mainstream media may lead to the use of AM, but AM can also amplify and reinitiate distrust in the mainstream. This research explores the implications of these mediatized acts of trust and distrust, examining their consequences for democratic society, social cohesion, and social (dis)order.

Our empirical findings, drawn from a qualitative long-term panel study with three survey waves on the use of system-critical AM, shed light on how 33 users articulate trust and distrust toward media. We investigate the (re) configurations in their media repertoires associated with these articulations and explore how these decisions ultimately affect societal participation. Employing a methodological triangulation of media diaries, media repertoire cards, and qualitative online interviews, our study provides diverse insights into the negotiation of trust or distrust toward media as vital instances of (de)constructing our social (dis)order.

The research reveals that distrust in the perceived 'elitist mainstream media system' is multi-faceted, and trust/distrust in this "media system" is characterized by flexibility, adaptability, situational responsiveness, and interactivity. Users combine the use of AM and mainstream media in a continuous and evolving manner, adapting their media repertoire based on alignment with their worldview, responding to socio-political events, and influenced by peer interactions.

Considering this fluidity, AM assumes a crucial intermediary role: combining both distrust in media as a social condition and distrust by media as a social consequence. Distrust in the mainstream, when AM are exclusive sources, can be detrimental to social cohesion, fostering the formation of 'alternative realities.' Conversely, constructive distrust in the mainstream occurs when AM serve their democratizing potential as voices of marginalized communities.

In our presentation, we highlight the unique position of AM as discursive references of trust and distrust in media. We discuss the instability of trust and distrust and reflect on their implications for social cohesion and democracy. Understanding the dynamic interplay between trust, distrust, and alternative media is vital for comprehending the evolving landscape of media influence on societal structures and democratic processes.

CDE10 Democracy and participation in public communication

PP 0510 When new uses of media disrupt old forms of decision-making: Following youth advocacy in institutional politics

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Media scholars have long given extra attention to the media practices of young people for democratic and political participation. Ideas of citizenship are pluralized, with emphasis on the connectedness and fluctuation of participatory action stemming from the mediatization of society (see Bennett & Segerberg, 2013; Collin, 2015; Theocharis & van Deth, 2019). While the common focus tends to be on more or less innovative forms of youth participation outside of formal structures, this risks limiting our understanding of the full scope of how media shape contemporary practices for democratic participation. This study focuses on the young people who *do* turn to formal institutions to channel their activism, and how they use media to navigate their participation, role and mandate. Since young people are dramatically underrepresented in institutional politics, what happens when they enter these spaces?

This PhD project uses grounded theory to study how young people utilize media to navigate their participation and influence deliberative decision-making processes – and ultimately what they learn through their experiences about democratic participation. Data is gathered focused on the primary deliberation process for youth policy development in the EU, the EU Youth Dialogue, with its current cycle spanning from July 2023 to December 2024. Following youth delegates from 15 countries, this study can present early analysis and categories derived from data gathered during interviews and observations of the still ongoing dialogue process. Young people in these forums show a media-integrated approach to participating in formal settings, where media is given values through a vast variety of practices, as in preparation, information gathering, coordinating positions, advocating causes, and creating alternative paths for influencing the decision-making process. Additionally, discussing media use with this particular group of young people uncovers alternative ideas of what can be constituted as political success in formal participation processes, and adds to a complex web of motives for participating in formal democratic practices. The initial findings of this study show potential in unveiling new perspectives on medias role in young peoples' democratic participation in decision-making processes, and in extension how media potentially reshapes formal participation practices on a wider scale.

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CDE11 Pro-social digital campaigns

PP 0526 Citizen media vs. Traditional media: Strategies and synergies in digital campaigns

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In the midst of the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the intensive coverage of the Israeli-Hamas conflict, our study observes a growing polarisation in global societies, leading to Islamophobia, antisemitism, and divisive opinions in Western countries about response strategies. Our research focuses on how citizen journalists are leveraging digital campaigns like @Ceasefire_Track and hashtags such as #ceasefireNow to advocate for ceasefire and peace in Gaza, often appearing in opposition to mainstream, corporate media narratives. We aim to explore the role of citizen journalism in conflict zones, particularly examining its potential as a tool for transnational digital advocacy and as a form of resistance against the conventional media discourse, drawing upon theories of media influence and social movement activism (Bruns & Highfield, 2015). Building on recent literature, such as the work of Horoub (2023), our study explores the evolving role of citizen journalism in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, particularly in how citizen journalism has played a crucial role in revealing aspects of the Palestinian struggle that are often underrepresented or omitted in traditional media.

The study also delves into the strategic and methodological nuances of citizen journalism in conflict resolution, drawing on Wall's (2015) review of research on citizen journalists' strategies, tool-kits, and use of legacy media compared to other social media campaigns in conflict zones. This research analyses how citizen journalists curate mainstream media to support their efforts and what can be learned by studying the shelf-life of their campaigns. By leveraging hashtags like #ceasefireNow, citizen journalists try to actively shape the news agenda and contribute to discourse creation on conflict resolution. This aligns with Wall's insights into the role of citizen journalism in promoting accountability and civic engagement, especially in challenging environments like conflict zones.

Methodologically, the study employs a mixed-methods approach. Quantitatively, it analyses social media metrics such as reach, engagement rates, shares, and likes, to understand the scope and impact of these online campaigns. Qualitatively, it performs a content analysis of posts, hashtags, and user interactions to interpret the narratives and strategies used. This multifaceted approach allows for an in-depth exploration of digital activism dynamics.

Our study highlights social media's distinct role in conflict zones, contrasting with mainstream media narratives and underscoring its value in advocating for peace and social justice. These findings will be useful for media professionals, policymakers, and activists, illustrating the role of digital media campaigns and their connections to traditional media in the promotion of conflict resolution.

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CDE11 Pro-social digital campaigns

PP 0527 Social accountability dynamics in the memetic politics of Instagram

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Political humor is an umbrella term that refers to humorous communication and texts dealing with political people and issues (e.g. Young 2018). Over the last couple of decades, political humor has taken on new forms on the internet and social media platforms. Through memes, GIFs, and parody accounts, active citizens and other political actors engage in public debate and frame issues, often in ways that support their agenda (e.g., Phillips & Milner, 2018). Alt-right humor, which is often based on irony, outrage, and intertextuality, has been used by the far right (Hakoköngäs et al., 2020), but it is also used by progressive counter-forces (Laaksonen et al., 2021; Hatakka, 2020), including anti-populist and anti-far-right meme-makers active on Instagram and Twitter.

During the past years using humor in political contestation has become more mainstream and simultaneously it has also spread to new platforms. In particular, the previously lifestyle-oriented Instagram has also turned into a political space. Instagram was first adopted by social activists and politicians (Dumitrica & Hockin-Boyers, 2022; Ekman & Widholm, 2017), but later also emerged as a site for subversive political communication and resistance towards

those in power. In this study, we investigate how vernacular online humor is adapted as a tool for progressive and leftist political commentary by politically oriented pseudonymous accounts (n = 13) on Finnish Instagram. The studied accounts promote their viewpoints without a disclosed political affiliation or inclination yet clearly target their critique toward specific political actors.

We conceptualize these accounts' communication as a means to hold the political elite accountable. Social accountability means that the powerful are expected to justify and explain their decisions, are answerable for their conduct, and are held responsible for their failures and wrongdoings (Bovens, 2007). Social media technologies enable online citizens to voice their critiques and demands directly at public authorities and political actors (Chadwick, 2013; Ojala et al., 2019), thus fostering new kinds of accountability processes and dynamics. In the current media landscape accountability issues have become increasingly complex and subject to growing contestation (Djerf-Pierre et al., 2013). Accountability claims typically breed more controversies and discussion, sometimes leading to scandals with concrete consequences to the challenged institutions and elites (e.g. investigations, warnings, loss of position).

We used online observations and Instagram's recommendation system to select the accounts, and Crowdtangle to fetch historical post data from the years 2021–2023 (n = 3,155). Using multimodal qualitative analysis we explore how leftist counter-publics are formed in the Finnish memetic Instagram around accountability claims targeted towards the government's value statements and policy reforms. The multimodal genres and humor techniques of these accounts combine distinct memetic aesthetics, such as deliberately ugly and clumsy combinations of visuals and text, ironic emancipatory pathos, and self-reflective and critical political economy analysis with platform-specific communication styles. The analysis allows us to further theorize the dynamics of social media platforms and novel civic engagement practices in social accountability mechanisms Overall, our paper sheds light on how digital media technologies shape the interactions and power relations between citizens and the elites.

CDE11 Pro-social digital campaigns

PP 0528 The visual construction of the Woman, Life, Freedom protests: Instagram ecologies of protest communication

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Protest communication is a crucial mechanism for amplifying the cause, mobilizing fellow citizens, and legitimizing both the cause and the protesters as political actors. Political actors and society at large come to know about protests primarily via news coverage. News coverage, however, tends to zoom in on the spectacular aspects of protests, often at the expense of a serious engagement with the protest issue. The tendency to rely upon official source also works against protesters, foregrounding official narratives that de-legitimize protesters as trouble-makers and re-frame the protest issue (Smith et al., 2001). However, with the integration of social media into political life, new participants in the information eco-system (e.g., bloggers) are increasingly engaging with protest coverage, providing alternative (and less antagonistic) representations (Harlow & Johnson, 2011).

In this paper, we ask whether and how social media afford more diverse representations of protest, particularly against the protest paradigm literature. Zooming in on the Iranian "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement, we focus on how news organizations, non-governmental organizations, and activist influencers engage in protest representation and circulation on Instagram. With our focus on Instagram, we foreground the importance of visual representations in contemporary communication and in the social construction of protest as a political form of citizen intervention (Dumitrica & Schwinges, 2022).

We manually collected posts that a) referenced the Iranian protests; b) included at least one visual; c) were posted during the timeframe September 2022 (when the death of Mahsa Amini marks the beginning of this round of protests) and December 2022 (when large protests subside as death sentences for protesters are announced). We performed a qualitative content analysis guided by an inductive/deductive codebook theoretically-informed by the protest paradigm, visual semiotics, and Instagram platform vernaculars. In addition to capturing the visual representation of protesters, our analysis also asked who had produced the photo and which photos were re-used across different accounts. This allowed us to consider the role of Instagram in the production of iconicity.

We found that the visual representation of protesters on Instagram relies upon visual frames that are also present in news journalism (e.g., groups of people with protest signs, catchy slogans, national flags. Most images used by NGOs and activist influencers are taken from news journalism. Images are often re-used by the same account across multiple posts. Their framing, via text on slides and/ or captions, differs with the type of account. In our sample, the powerful female protester is a recurrent visual trope that challenges stereotypical representations of protesters as breaking the law or social order. However, most such visuals clearly displayed a Western gaze, for instance wearing Western clothes and accessories, or removing/ burning their hijab. By contrast, only a handful of visuals depicted female protesters donning the hijab or burqa. This Westernized perspective was also linked to

ambiguous protest locations, as the images in our sample were often taken from protests supporting the Iranian movement around Western Europe and the U.S.

CDE11 Pro-social digital campaigns

PP 0529 Act like a swarm: Civic cultures of Ukrainian online pirates

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Peer-to-peer (P2P) file-sharing (when files can be downloaded from other computers directly through a software called "torrent") has been in focus of many studies, often in the context of copyright and resistance to it. However, there is evidence that P2P file-sharing in certain contexts has much greater importance in encouraging civil activism, community building and identity formation than a narrow focus on copyright violation can show (Haigh 2007; Lindgren & Linde 2012; Mylonas 2012; Ashley 2015). Thus, this presentation highlights civic cultures of P2P file-sharing practices in Ukraine, in particular, how Ukrainian torrent-users relate their pirate practices to civic expression and activism.

The choice of the country is motivated by its specific features: the ubiquity of piracy (e.g. Ukraine has been on the US government copyright infringement watch list since 1998) and P2P file-sharing in particular; prolonged political and civic struggles between the Euro-Atlantic and pro-Russian vectors of development that are reflected in people's media consumption routines; the 2022 Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine serving as a turning point in nation-building as well as shifting society's attitudes towards the state.

While applying the concept of civic culture (Dahlgren 2000; 2003; 2005) the study explores the multidimensional complex of factors and everyday practices that enables political participation within the online piracy area. It approaches some of these practices as instances of subactivism (Bakardjieva 2009, 2012), "everyday practices of citizenship" (Bakardjieva 2012, p. 85) – individual actions within one's private sphere that may have political or ethical underpinning.

This research has an ethnographic approach and explores the empirical material accumulated from in-depth interviews with the torrent users and online observations of one of the biggest torrent-trackers in Ukraine before and after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. The tracker offers exclusively Ukrainian language content (original or translated) and is central for the accumulation of content in the Ukrainian language, in particular, pirated movies and TV-series dubbed into Ukrainian by underground studios.

Analysis shows that in the situation when the state fails to conduct effective cultural politics, dispersed amorphous online communities with a contested legal status can take over the initiative. Torrent-users adopt functions of the state in preserving cultural legacy and promoting the Ukrainian language by scanning and giving access to rare books in Ukrainian, establishing a collection of classic movies dubbed into Ukrainian, promoting Ukrainian through releasing trendy TV series dubbed into the national language earlier than the Russian-language releases. These efforts in the form of subactivist practices follow the technical logic of a swarm (when the users' computers join together in order to share content and dissolve when there is no need for it any longer). The members of the community organise quickly around urgent issues but disperse when the problem is solved or becomes irrelevant. On the individual level, these actions seem to be chaotic and unsystematic but, on the level of the collective, they acquire a certain vector.

CDE11 Pro-social digital campaigns

PP 0530 "And I also remember how people were tracked back then": Experiences and imaginaries of surveillance in a generational and cross-cultural perspective

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In datafied society, corporate surveillance by social and other online media for commercial purposes, and state surveillance for the purpose of crime prevention and national security are principally organised through the same technologies, often also involving the same technological platforms. Most previous studies on online surveillance are conducted in long-time liberal democracies with limited experiences of explicit and intrusive state surveillance. Given this background, an intriguing question is whether online media users make any connections between (historical) state surveillance and corporate dataveillance, and the related social orders. More specifically, we set the research question: What role does the historical legacy of totalitarianism or authoritarianism, embodied in generational experiences and values, play in the formation of attitudes and imaginaries regarding contemporary state and corporate surveillance? This paper will analyse results from an original study among two generations (born in 1946–1953, and in 1988–1995) in three European countries with different historical surveillance regimes – Estonia,

Portugal, and Sweden. The study combined a quantitative online survey (N = 3,221) with qualitative focus group and individual interviews (71 participants in total).

Our analysis revealed significant cross-cultural differences in the experiences of surveillance: the older generations in Estonia and Portugal reported more experiences of state surveillance in their social networks, compared to their younger compatriots and both generation groups in Sweden. Younger Swedes, however, reported higher levels of actual and mediated experiences of state surveillance, compared to their older compatriots. Tolerance towards online state surveillance was, in all countries, more characteristic of the older age group, and it was predicted by trustful, obedient, and less individualistic attitudes towards state authorities and other institutions. Tolerance towards corporate dataveillance was, in all countries, more characteristic of the younger age group, and it was predicted (besides tolerance towards online state surveillance) by active and self-confident (online) media use (functional diversity of internet use, trust in the media, and digital skills). Tolerance towards contemporary state or corporate surveillance was not predicted by individual-level experiences of state surveillance in any country.

Qualitative interviews revealed that participants, especially in the older group of Estonians, clearly distinguished between the historical totalitarian/authoritarian and contemporary "democratic" surveillance regimes, imagining the former as restrictive and dangerous, and the latter as loose and even partly beneficial (by increasing individual security and convenience of consumption practices).

Based on these findings, we can posit a theoretical hypothesis of the "surveillance survival paradox": personal experiences of the past (totalitarian/authoritarian) surveillance regime do not lead to a greater fear or criticism of the contemporary regime (when compared to the younger generation with no previous survival regime experiences); rather on the contrary. Perceptions of the past surveillance regime as more direct, dangerous, and terrible overshadow sensitivities towards more abstract and covert risks related to the contemporary datafied world. The findings, furthermore, suggest that global cultural and technological developments, forming generational values, mindsets and practices, and individual-level trade-offs are more powerful factors behind generation-specific attitudes than past experiences of authoritarianism and surveillance regimes.

Keywords: surveillance, dataveillance, authoritarianism, generations, cross-cultural analysis, Estonia, Sweden, Portugal

CDE12 Social movements and digital media

PP 0618 Biased and unrepresentative? A systematic review of Digital Activism Scholarship between 2011 and 2018

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Digital activism (DA) scholarship to date has been shaped by what Marres (2017) refers to as 'digital bias', issues of representativeness that emerge from research focussing almost exclusively on data collected from a small number of online spaces and the groups that coalesce within them. This often results in activism within the "Global South" and semi-periphery regions being less visible within this scholarship. While some researchers argue that a 'decolonial turn' in digital media research is occurring (see Couldry, & Mejias, 2021 for example), this trajectory seems less clear within the field of DA where software-based digital methods continue to grow in popularity.

In response to this issue, this paper provides a critical discussion of the application of regional representation in the field. We draw on data gathered from a systematic review of DA journal articles (N = 315) published between 2011 and 2018 (Özkula, Reilly, & Hayes, 2022). The corpus was coded on categories tied to region including case study location, author affiliation, and researched digital/ social media platform. We tested specifically whether empirical digital activism research 1) predominantly focuses on case studies from Global North contexts, 2) is less diverse in terms of geographical focus where it draws exclusively on traditional rather than digital data sources, and 3) is primarily published by lead authors based in Global North institutions.

Results indicate that single-platform studies, mainly focused on well-known sites like Twitter, dominated DA research published during this period. Most of these articles focused on case studies from countries identified as Global North/Global Majority, although a significant proportion explored the activism of social media movements and hashtag networks such as Black Lives Matter that were wider/global in nature. Similar distributions were found in authorship patterns, with the majority of lead authors based in institutions in Global Majority countries, and in particular the Anglosphere. These trends were particularly notable in the case of digital social research relying on software-based approaches. Overall, the study raised questions about whether activists and social movements in the Global South were adequately represented within the field of digital activism research.

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CDE12 Social movements and digital media

PP 0619 New platform, new me? Cross-platform variation and convergence of styles and functions of conspiracy-related communication

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Social media platforms and various digital communication venues are central infrastructures for distributing conspiracy-related content online. The narration of conspiracy theories on and across social media platforms has been highlighted by research studying conspiracy theory spread from an "infodemic" perspective, i.e., the diffusion of novel and emerging conspiracy narrations to places where they were not present before (Heft & Buehling, 2022). While Mahl et al. (2023) theorize in their framework of "platformed conspiracism" that a conspiracy theory's narration is shaped by the distinct characteristics of the platform it is uttered on, longitudinal analyses of platform-specific conspiracy narrations are scarce. Therefore, this study examines how the user cultures on different platforms shape the communication style of conspiracy-related content over time.

We define conspiracy-related communication as all public communication *on and about* (alleged) conspiracy theories with the function of either further contributing to a conspiracy theory's narration, engaging in counter-narration and debunking, or observing neutrally. Tailoring the communication style, in which the choice of words plays a crucial role, to the intended message can influence the recipient's interpretation and signal a group identity without altering a message's factual content (Blankenship & Craig, 2011; Khalid & Srinivasan, 2020).

Thus, the interplay of platform features and their appropriation within distinct user groups can be expected to shape the style and functions of conspiracy-related communication. Further, the actors involved in digital communication, either as authors or as (perceived) audiences, are expected to impact the conspiracy-related content characteristics.

To test our assumptions, we analyze users' word choice and communication function, focusing on two closely interlinked, salient, and transnationally persistent conspiracy theories: The narratives of the "New World Order" and the "Great Replacement/White Genocide". We evaluate adaptation to a given communication environment by comparing posts from three platforms which vary considerably in their governance, norms, use cultures, and characteristics of creators and audiences: 4chan, Twitter, and legacy media.

The English-language platform-specific text corpora analyzed span a time frame from 2011 to 2021. Employing computational text analysis, the most distinct and informative lexical items used to talk about the aforementioned conspiracy theories are compared and analyzed regarding their cross-platform and cross-time variation and convergence. Further, the direction of cross-platform diffusion of lexical change is measured using vector autoregressive models. The communicative functions of conspiracy-related content are classified in a manual content analysis.

The results suggest that the user cultures on different platforms heavily shape the language style in which conspiracy-related content is disseminated. Significant differences appear in word choice between all platforms when communicating about the same topic. Further, the results suggest some convergence of communication styles between platforms, especially between 4chan and Twitter and, to a lesser degree, between Twitter and legacy media. These insights are likely to inform the ongoing debate about the effectiveness of online governance in broader sociotechnical systems.

CDE12 Social movements and digital media

PP 0620 "Facebook is a bit like a lost cause": Social movement actors' perspectives on social media affordances

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Social movement actors working to hold businesses accountable for misconduct face challenges as they operate in the digital media environment characterised by unequal power relations. Previous work has provided insights into media practices and campaigning, but little is known about the underlying understandings social movement actors have of the platforms that enable much if not most of their work. It is also unclear how these understandings shape their activism. Filling this gap, this article takes its starting point in the interplay between technology and practices that make up affordances. It examines how social movement actors understand the affordances offered by the social media platforms they operate on. It also sheds light on differences between anti-systemic and reformist social movement actors' understandings of these affordances. Thus, it considers opportunities and challenges, and, ultimately, power, as the way social movement actors perceive affordances impacts how they strategically utilise them.

Theoretically, I draw on affordance theory and the notion of media ecologies. I suggest that to apply affordance theory to the study of social movements productively, we must use media ecologies as a starting point to avoid a too narrow lens of platform-specific affordance theory that encourages research on only one platform at the time. This theoretical approach helps highlight the distinctive particularities of the struggles faced by anti-systemic and reformist social movement actors despite them operating within similar political and cultural contexts. Empirically, I draw on interviews with communication experts from anti-systemic and reformist environmental organisations. 22 communication experts have participated in in-depth qualitative interviews from organisations such as: WWF, Greenpeace, Extinction Rebellion, and Danish Society for Nature Conservation.

The article finds differences in understandings of affordances between anti-systemic and reformist social movement actors. While both generally reject Facebook as a productive site for communication, anti-systemic actors tend to favour Twitter and Instagram and their possibilities to reach the wider public while reformist actors prefer taking advantage of the access to companies which LinkedIn offers. In addition to the environmental organisations' selection of these platforms marking a strategic communicative choice, this further signals an understanding and navigation of the wider power relations these commercial platforms are embedded within. Such a consideration of power further hints that while some platforms may die and others become popular, what remains is the profit-driven infrastructure. While different actors have different conditions and goals for successful communication, some actors will still find that some infrastructures limit them while others may not. This understanding raises the question what about media ecologies? It is widely accepted in social movement and media studies literature that no social movement operates on one platform in isolation. In answer, this research critically engages with the particularities of platforms while accounting for ecologies as well, thereby responding to an emerging point of view in this research.

CDE12 Social movements and digital media

PP 0621 Love and hate speech in activism: Interaction with online petitioners

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Petitions are one of the most used tools for political participation in most European countries right after voting (ESS 2023) and they are a common tool of activism. Digitalization has made it easier to sign petitions as well as to start and distribute them. Accordingly, petitions are not only used by social movement organizations but also by individuals and small ad-hoc groups. Therefore, petitions are one of the prime examples for individualized online activism (Margetts et al. 2016). For petitions to reach people, petitioners need to engage in public communication using a variety of channels. They thereby take part in public discourse on many different levels. In some cases, there are many negative reactions, including outright hate speech. But since petitions are by definition an instrument that collects approval, many positive reactions can be found as well, expressions of solidarity, we call love speech. We will investigate the conditions and effects of hate and love speech: What kind of reactions have petitioners experienced, how did they deal with them and what are the consequences for future political involvement?

The proposed paper presents findings from semi-structured interviews with

- three employees of two platforms available in Germany (innn.it, openPetition.de) which focused on the organizational approach towards managing comments, especially in regard to hate speech;
- ten petitioners whose different speaking positions in terms of gender, age and ethnicity might have had contributed to negative comments (eight women, two men, two with migration history). For our explorative approach, we interviewed petitioners suggested by platform employees. In addition to petitioners' ascribed identity, the petitions had to a) be successful regarding number of signatures, b) have received love or hate speech and c) address a diversity of topics, including controversial ones. The majority of the petitioners interviewed received negative comments, two received mainly positive and two received both positive and negative feedback according to platform employees. Recruiting male petitioners whose petitions provoked particularly strong reactions turned out to be difficult although the majority of German petitioners self-describe as male (Voss 2021).

As expected, petitioners get a variety of reactions via many different channels; different social media sites play the most important role for interaction. Communication on the petition platforms is at times filtered by the platform organizations in order to protect petitioners from vile comments. Our research also reveals how petitioners deal with hate speech. The employed strategies range from ignoring to seeking help to pressing charges. Some petitioners expect negative reactions from the beginning, and tailor their communication activities in a way to avoid getting hate speech altogether.

Surprisingly, the nature and extent of hate speech does not appear to have a negative impact on future engagement; on the contrary, the majority of interviewees feel empowered by the experience as petitioning enabled networking with like-minded people and provided unexpected opportunities. Despite at times extensive hate speech, support and solidarity often have a more profound impact and seem to encourage further activism.

CDE12 Social movements and digital media

PP 0622 Influ-activism and the shaping of civic engagement: Bridging digital activism and influencer culture

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In the landscape of contemporary communication and democracy, the emergence of 'influ-activism' represents a significant intersection between digital activism and influencer culture. This paper seeks to explore this intersection by examining the evolving roles of influencers in shaping public discourse and civic engagement, particularly in light of the themes of communication and social (dis)order.

In recent years, a shift in the dynamics of digital activism and influencer culture has been observed. Mainstream commercial influencers, previously focused on brand endorsements, have started engaging with socially sensitive issues. Chiara Ferragni's support for the LGBTQIA+ community exemplifies this trend. Simultaneously, a new wave of influencers has emerged, prioritizing contentious public issues as their primary focus, diverging from traditional consumer-centric content. This phenomenon, termed 'influ-activism', blends the realms of digital activism and social media influencing, creating a new paradigm in which public discourse and activism are redefined.

The paper aims to establish a theoretical framework for understanding influ-activism, drawing on key concepts from media and communication studies. Utilizing Fraser's notion of 'counter-publics' and Kavada and Poell's concept of 'contentious publicness', it explores how digital platforms facilitate the rise of influencers as agents of social change. The study examines how these influencers navigate the neoliberal dynamics of social media, balancing personal expression and collective mobilization.

In the context of connective action and personalization of protest, as discussed by Bennett and Segerberg, the paper investigates how influ-activism embodies a new form of political and social engagement. It scrutinizes the ways influencers leverage their platforms to promote diverse causes, from sustainability and social justice to minority representation. The focus is on how their influence extends beyond commercial interests, potentially reshaping public opinion and civic participation.

Additionally, the paper addresses potential critiques of influ-activism, such as the commodification of activism and the challenges of building stable political communities in a digital age dominated by fleeting, networked interactions. It questions whether influ-activism represents a genuine shift towards empowering counter-hegemonic narratives or if it is a manifestation of 'social washing' within the constraints of algorithmic social media environments.

By examining case studies across varied domains like fashion, beauty, healthcare, and sustainability, the paper provides a comprehensive analysis of influ-activism. It aims to contribute to the broader discourse on the role of media and communication in a globalized society, marked by social and political upheavals, and the ongoing reconfiguration of democracy and public engagement in the digital era.

CDE13 News in politics

PP 0637 Unexpected collaborations within local journalism and the return of Place

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Local journalism is currently facing significant challenges, which affect democratic processes. New forms of media, fewer users, implementation of savings measures, and new technology are examples of such challenges (Napoli et al. 2017; Nielsen 2015).

In this paper, we explore what happens when local newspapers in Sweden dare to think outside the box and try new and unexpected collaborations to meet their challenges, for example by collaborating with local libraries. Generally speaking, public libraries and local media are quite different, but at the same time, they share similarities when it comes to promoting local democratic processes. So, what happens when they collaborate with a common goal? Can new collaborations help local media counteract the current challenges and how does this relate to the scientific discussion about public space and place, participatory journalism, and civic engagement? These are some of the questions explored in this paper.

Our research draws theoretically on public discourse and the mediated public sphere, and empirically on workshops and semi-structured interviews with readers and Swedish journalists in two separate research projects. The results show an increased awareness about the importance of *place*, as local media companies discover how important *place* is for connecting with their readers. This is in line with previous research that shows that local media traditionally creates a feeling of fellowship and solidarity among different groups in one place (Coleman et al. 2016;

Hess & Waller 2017) and helps bring together a place by sharing references and creating a local identity (Nygren & Tenor 2021).

Furthermore, we draw the conclusion that local media need to take more space in the local community – to dare to step out of the comfort zone and arrange debates, hold politicians accountable and ask and discuss controversial questions. We also conclude that returning to *place* is of utmost importance for successful local journalism. Local media companies experience that ideas are born, and trust created, in the physical meeting between journalists and residents.

Local media companies could therefore investigate the road back to the local place-based public sphere that it once had, and thus gain a clearer place-identity. They could increase the amount of participatory journalism, which explores how media users can become more involved and socially responsible in the public debate. Consequently, Swedish media could continue to explore this particular road to increased relevance in order to enhance civic engagement.

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CDE13 News in politics

PP 0638 Shaping the Narrative: Analyzing the role of United Arab Emirates english-language newspapers on Instagram during the Israel-Palestine conflict

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In the complex world of international diplomacy, media plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and narratives. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), strategically positioned at the crossroads of Western and Eastern geopolitical interests, stands out, particularly as one of the few Arab countries to normalize relations with Israel in 2020 since the conflict's inception in 1948, presenting itself as a distinctive case for study. Against this backdrop, the role of English-language newspapers in the UAE offers a rich context for analysis, with the current study focusing on their Instagram accounts during the critical Israel-Palestine conflict period from October 2023 to January 2024. These newspapers, including The National, Gulf News, Khaleej Times, and The Gulf Today, have unique structures that may influence their editorial perspectives and coverage. The diversity in ownership and editorial direction is critical in understanding how these media outlets frame international issues, particularly on platforms like Instagram, where content is more accessible and widespread.

This research proposes analyzing the Instagram content of these prominent newspapers, a medium that has become increasingly central to disseminating news in the UAE, reflecting the global shift from traditional print to digital platforms. The study explores how these newspapers, each with their editorial perspectives, portray the Israel-Palestine conflict, offering insights into their narrative construction and public engagement strategies.

Key to this analysis is understanding the impact of the UAE's media regulations, especially Law No. 5 of 1980, which governs media content and imposes significant restrictions on the critique of the UAE's diplomatic allies, such as Palestine. This legal framework presents a challenging landscape for these newspapers in their Instagram coverage of the conflict, potentially influencing their portrayal of events and issues.

Employing a mixed-methods approach, this study combines qualitative and quantitative analyses of the UAE English newspapers' Instagram posts. The qualitative component will examine themes, linguistic framing, and narrative styles, focusing on how specific linguistic choices and thematic focuses contribute to the overall narrative around the Israel-Palestine conflict, aiming to uncover underlying biases and assumptions in portraying the conflict.

The quantitative aspect will measure post frequency, audience engagement, and representation of different viewpoints. This includes analyzing the volume of posts related to the conflict, the types of engagement they receive, and the diversity in perspectives offered. The statistical analysis will also categorize and code the posts to identify coverage patterns, revealing correlations between the conflict's portrayal and each newspaper's ownership and editorial stance.

This research intends to investigate the repercussions of the Israel-Palestine conflict on media coverage in the UAE, emphasizing the challenge newspapers face in maintaining editorial integrity amidst regulatory compliance. A significant observation from an initial analysis indicates that The National, a government-owned newspaper, publishes a higher frequency of conflict-related content on its Instagram in contrast to other local newspapers privately owned. These findings are essential for comprehending the media's intricate role in presenting complex diplomatic issues in a country-specific context like the UAE.

CDE13 News in politics

PP 0639 50 years of Magdalene laundry survivors in Irish news: Voice, recognition and a transformed status

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More than 10,000 women in Ireland were confined to Magdalene laundries between the 1920s-1990s, forced into unpaid labour and suffering psychological and physical mistreatment. For decades, these women were effectively silenced and shunned, by both society and the news media, reflecting a socially conservative culture in which the Catholic church was highly influential. However, previous work has documented how activists, since the mid-2000s, effectively mobilised and produced a campaign in which recognition of the women's experiences, coupled with exposing the state's compliance, led to an official apology in parliament in 2013. This apology acknowledged the State's role in these institutions, and a redress scheme was established for the women.

The research presented here documents that shift in status from the perspective of news reporting, centring the discussion on ideas around voice and sources, and who is granted "primary definer" status in a news story: ultimately, who is elevated as the expert to provide insight, within whose narrative others must respond. We document a shift towards the news media's use of the women themselves as the dominant narrators of the reality of Magdalene laundries. The study does this by analysing the appearance of Magdalene laundries and survivors in Irish news reporting between the 1970s-2020s, capturing not only a heightened presence in recent years, but a tone and underlying sense of esteem which was wholly absent in earlier decades.

The primarily qualitative work draws mainly on newspaper reports, alongside selected available radio and television clips, to document how the women's status in the news shifted. We identify five intertwining factors which facilitated this shift in status in the news: (i) Strategic communication efforts and media-friendly approaches from activists; (ii) The involvement of state actors and associated journalistic interest in reporting on state failings; (iii) A holistic recognition process as the basis for a social struggle, functioning as a central force behind societies' ethical development; (iv) Shifting audience and societal attitudes which had become more open to troubling narratives; and (v) Key moments – such as the state apology in 2013 – which further legitimised the women as credible, authentic sources, and provided clear newsworthy angles.

Ultimately, we argue that there was a shift in status from being silenced to being centred and elevated by journalists in news coverage, and this was enabled following a process of recognition, all taking place against a backdrop of a country reckoning with its oppressive past.

CDE13 News in politics

PP 0640 Views for all the people: Mapping debate section contributors, topics, and qualifications in Danish letters to the editors

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This paper asks the research question (RQ): who are enabled to express themselves in the news papers' debate sections and how; on what topics do they speak; and with what implications for the democratic and social sustainability of the public sphere?

For some time now, media and journalism scholars have focused on public debate on social media platforms rather than on the letters institution, which encompasses debate sections in newspapers off- and online as well as commentary and letters to the editor. However, as contentiousness and fragmentation online rise and the market forces shift to favour few but powerful corporations governing the public debate, the role of editorial and democratic spaces as frameworks within which identity-based marginalisation and/or empowerment occur among political subjects warrants a revisit.

Diverse, equal, and inclusive representation in letters to the editor is important to secure engagement in the public sphere, whether deliberative and/or agonistic. Previous scholarship shows that while news institutions strive to select "average citizens" to write letters, women and ethnic minorities are sorely underrepresented. Younger writers are missing from the pages too, while knowledge about representation of sexual, religious, and social or neural diversities is non-existent. Not surprisingly, if asked to imagine the average letter writer, editor respondents in the

US context give a rather narrow definition: "an elderly, well-educated white male". The lack of representation of minorities – let alone empowerment – may be due to the temporal gap in scholarship as the most recent study is from 2012. Attention to minorities, critical race studies and postcolonial critiques has grown significantly within journalism since the noughties. However, it is by no means certain that this development is reflected in the editors' selection criteria. This paper thus seeks to bridge the temporal and epistemological gap in the scholarship.

To answer the RQ, we use the case of Danish national newspapers. The sample encompasses all letters to the editor published between 20. and 27. of March 2023 (N = 376). Following, the data is coded according to the categories: headline, media, author type (i.e., expert, politician, academic, student etc.), gender, whether an illustration accompany the letter, profession or title, capacity (i.e., experience, professional, special interest etc.), main argument, and topic of the letter (i.e., politics, science, technology, crime, economy etc.), to show the capacities within which different writers are afforded a voice.

Qualitative and discursive analyses are moreover conducted to supplement the discussion of the implications of the representation for the democratic and social sustainability of the public sphere. Drawing on postcolonial critique and theories of citizen media, we argue that the letters institution is at a crossroad defined through technological, political, and social processes warranting a reconsideration of diversity, equality and inclusion in the institution.

CDE13 News in politics

PP 0641 "Don't hate the media, be the media!": An analysis of pseudo-journalistic political communication

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This paper analyses six media outlets associated with three populist radical right (PRR) parties, which we understand as cases of *pseudo-journalistic political communication*. By this we mean the way in which especially PRR parties produce political communication in which they write and speak like journalists, use stylistic and design elements we associate with journalism, and address their audiences like journalists do. This phenomenon is embedded within developments that Blumler (2016) describes as the *fourth age of political communication* and Chadwick (2013) as *hybrid media system*, both of which are characterized by the blending of formerly separated political and journalistic forms of communication. The paper thus contributes to a critical understanding of the contemporary media-politics nexus through a focus on the PRR, whose paradoxical relation to mainstream media is characterized by both mutual criticism and interdependence (Haller & Holt, 2019).

The analysis is conducted as a comparative case study including the Belgian *Vlaams Belang* (VB), the German *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD), and the Austrian *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ). Two pseudo-journalistic political communication formats by each of the three parties are analysed: the news show *VBTV* and the news website *V-NIEUWS* by the VB; the talk show *AfD im Gespräch* and the news website *AfD Kompakt* by the AfD; and one-on-one interviews with FPÖ-members, published on the party's YouTube channel *FPÖ TV*, as well as the FPÖ's newspaper *Neue Freie Zeitung*. The content was gathered with *4K Video Downloader*, *YouTube Data Tools*, and *Open Web Scraper*, and qualitatively analysed with *MAXQDA*.

The results primarily provide insights into the content-dimension of pseudo-journalistic political communication. All three parties make use of these formats to utter criticism against the ruling political elite in their respective country. This criticism is focussed on the topics of COVID-19, arguing that European governments introduced disproportionate precautionary measures that put their citizens under the conditions of surveillance states; on migration, claiming that European citizens live under the threat of repopulation and becoming minorities in their own countries; and on the LGBTQ+ community, questioning for instance the fairness of transgender women competing in female sports.

The analysis, does, however, also reveal that pseudo-journalistic political communication commonly has the purpose of making up for a lack of positive mainstream media coverage on the respective PRR party, that it is usually being produced by professionals with previous journalistic experience, that it primarily reproduces the form of informative quality journalism, and that audiences often view it as a respectable alternative to mainstream media. Such insights show that a complete and multidimensional understanding of pseudo-journalistic political communication requires its examination from the perspectives of its purpose, production, content, form, and reception. It is these other four dimensions, next to the content, that future research should be directed towards.

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Chadwick, A. (2013). *The hybrid media system: Politics and power*. Oxford University Press.

Haller, A., & Holt, K. (2019). Paradoxical populism: How PEGIDA relates to mainstream and alternative media. *Information, Communication & Society*, *22*(12), 1665–1680. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2018.1449882.

CDE14 Narratives and discourses in digital environments

PP 0712 The 'troll' metaphor and its problems

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The notions of 'trolls' and 'trolling' in digital media have become ubiquitous across online communities, journalism, and scholarship, capturing a range of different phenomena. Depending on the context, the metaphor of the 'troll' might invoke images of bored teenagers engaging in silly pranks, political activists mocking opponents, radicalized groups orchestrating targeted discriminatory harassment, or paid propagandists interfering in foreign elections.

In this paper, we analyze the origins and uses of the troll metaphor and – building on existing research – present a critique of both its vagueness and potential role in downplaying the severity of racism, misogyny, and state-orchestrated propaganda. The metaphors of 'trolls' and 'trolling', we argue, have become oversaturated with meaning due to their invocation of longstanding mythologies about *tricksters* and *monsters*.

Through an engagement with academic literature, we show how the notion of 'trolls' is not only used to describe widely different types of online actions, motives, and implications, but also *contradictory* forms. In one instance, trolls act apolitically on nothing but primordial desires and impulses with no serious harm intended — in the next, they work systematically towards political goals and targeted harassment. In one instance, they act within a loose network of like-minded individuals, and, in the next, they act based on top-down orders.

Based on these findings, we discuss how the 'troll' metaphor has obtained a mythological oversaturation of meaning. Doing so, we put forward two main critiques of the current usage of the term: First, its adds a jovial and apolitical veneer to harmful behaviors, giving them a phantasmatic allure of otherness — something that transcends human motives and accountability — by invoking a sense of mythological agency. This added veneer can then easily be used to excuse or condone racism, misogyny, and harassment (e.g. "Relax, it's just trolling"). Second, the term 'trolls' often conceals the level of organization behind transgressive behaviors, and by extension the similarities between offline and online (both contemporary and historical) forms of harm. The term frames perpetrators as individual rather than collective actors, while also obscuring the historical (and at times geopolitical) roots of online harm, including racism, misogyny, and state-backed propaganda. Taken together, the paper concludes that the term contributes with little clarity in academic research, while adding a problematic sense of more-than-human agency to social transgression online. This calls for critical reflection in the field of media and communication studies going forward.

CDE14 Narratives and discourses in digital environments

PP 0713 Towards an empty signifier? Unraveling the dynamics and manipulations of the 'resistance' narrative across the political spectrum

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In the contemporary political and media landscape, the term "resistance" has become a ubiquitous element in discussions surrounding democratic struggles. Rather than fostering deliberation, social cohesion, and consensus, the discourse often revolves around calls for resistance against oppressive regimes, various hegemonies, and adverse socio-political forces. This resistance narrative spans a broad spectrum, encompassing progressive activists like the G7 and WTO protests or climate activism advocating for social justice and political reforms to nationalistic, racist, migrant-hostile groups like PEGIDA in Germany, and even political figures in governing positions like Donald Trump co-opting the resistance label.

The term "resistance" has evolved into an almost empty signifier due to its association with a diverse array of ideas and ideologies. This versatility is exacerbated by its alignment with affective publics and digitally networked communication. In this context, we endeavor to discern common features and characteristics of communication for resistance, exploring the appeal of "resistance" for activist purposes, its evocative power, concealments, and its utility for mobilization and justification of political measures across different contexts.

Our exploration involves examining empirical observations of protest articulation across the political spectrum, identifying similarities and differences in the construction of "resistance." Key aspects include the perceived threats that necessitate acts of resistance, the portrayal of opponents and enemies, the self-concepts of those engaging in resistance, and the traditions they align themselves with. In this context we can identify the prominence of historical cases of resistance in current struggles and how they are weaponized for current political ends. We scrutinize how these criteria are employed in digital communication and offline-protest communication to legitimize (alleged) acts

of resistance. We also relate the self-presentation as resistance to how the respective protests or political acts were represented in media coverage.

This analysis connects contemporary calls for resistance with the historical transformation of the term. Traditionally, especially in the German context, "resistance" was associated with morally justified opposition to the totalitarian NS-regime, emphasizing the right to resist against tyrants, to defend human rights and freedom. However, in current discourse, activist groups and social movements widely use "resistance" (e.g., by invoking the memory of Sophie Scholl, a young resistance fighter against the NS-regime, for anti-vaccination protests) to justify a range of actions, including violent measures. Notably, far-right organizations have redefined the concept, using it to exclude groups, justify violence, and, in some cases, glorify the NS-regime. This shift in the meaning of resistance has become a strategic tool for mobilizing the far right.

The devaluation of "resistance" occurs as its application spans from legitimate struggles against oppression to instances where it is manipulated for exclusionary and even violent agendas. The overuse and misuse of the term diminish its ability to serve as a nuanced and powerful tool for societal critique. Our discussion underscores the importance of discernment in the utilization of the term "resistance" to preserve its meaningfulness and effectiveness in fostering genuine democratic dialogue and social change.

CDE14 Narratives and discourses in digital environments

PP 0714 Affective and contested meanings of hate speech on social media

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Recent years have witnessed the proliferation of manifestations of hate speech on digital platforms. Hate speech is one of the disruptive and harmful elements of digital communication that has been argued to endanger even democracy itself (Council of Europe 2024). Research has identified different formations, technologies and affordances that support, manage and amplify hate speech in digital contexts (Back 2002; Daniels 2018; Laaksonen et al. 2020; Matamoros-Fernandez 2017), while theoretically oriented research has focused on the definitions and understandings of hate speech (Brown 2017; Pohjonen & Udupa 2017; Udupa et al. 2021). In this latter body of work the concept of hate speech has often become problematised as either a too narrow, regulatory term, or a too all-encompassing universal term.

While scholarship in this field involves a range of conceptual work to develop an understanding of hate speech, in everyday contexts, the term hate speech has become increasingly politicised and emotionally charged. A variety of understandings of hate speech are circulated and contested in the everyday cultures of digital media and shaped by the digitalised media environment. Ongoing debates on social media consist of whether the phenomenon exists at all, whether it is harmful, what constitutes hate speech, and who is empowered to define it.

In this paper, we explore the meanings of hate speech in social media debates in Finland. The data consists of almost 290.000 public social media messages in Finnish from various platforms dating from 2015–2022, containing the word 'vihapuhe' ('hate speech'). The data covers Finnish-language social media and discussion forums and was retrieved through the Legentic data platform. We performed topic modelling on the dataset with Latent Dirichlet Allocation, and analysed and thematically categorised the found topics with qualitative methods. We aimed to examine how hate speech is interpreted, contested and reproduced in this complex discursive landscape.

We identify different political and social articulations of hate speech, and analyse how the term is used as an alleged or potential vehicle of different ideologies. The data manifests how in the analysed context, regardless of the more specific themes of discussion (e.g. immigration, gender, politics, control, freedom of speech, education), a definitional struggle over the meaning of hate speech occupies the heart of the debate. The continuous and affective contestation of hate speech serves to undermine the very existence of hate speech and it often seeks a rhetorical overturn that twists existing societal power positions. More generally, we argue that in these public online discussions, hate speech operates as a sticky sign, a source for the so-called post-truth condition that seeks to challenge traditional or legitimate sources of knowledge (Harsin 2023). This signals a political and cultural shift in public debate, in which casting obscurity on terms such as hate speech can serve personal and political goals. The research illustrates how generation of uncertainty and obscurity over hate speech operates in practice as a mechanism that also targets and undermines the established democratic principles.

CDE14 Narratives and discourses in digital environments

PP 0715 Decoding racism in news media: Exploring coder bias in human and LLM-based classification

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Studying racism in mass communication as a problem of social (dis)order is a fundamental research endeavor in addressing discriminatory practices and promoting social equality. Racism is embedded in mass communication in many different ways such as discriminatory language and recurring narratives. To study the prevalence of racism and related concepts in communication, researchers can draw on a variety of theoretical perspectives and methodological frameworks. Accordingly and as a fundamental tool in communication studies, manual quantitative and, increasingly, computational content analysis are used to examine racism. Although methodological debates on content analysis focus on various aspects such as reliability and validity of coding, potential sources of disagreement at the level of individual coders are rarely systematically investigated. However, researchers using content analysis to study racism report the specific challenge of reliable coding and suggest disagreements based on coders' awareness and sensitivity to discrimination, without systematically examining these for news media data.

This three-part study aims to address this gap by examining the impact of coder-level biases on the coding of racism in news media. As chat-based Large Language Models (LLMs) are increasingly being introduced to assist in content analysis tasks that are reportedly fairly competitive with student and crowd coders, we additionally investigate algorithmic biases in the coding of racism in news media texts. As a first step, we conducted a survey study with 100 paid crowd workers and 300 texts from German mainstream (Bild, TAZ, Welt) and far-right news media (Junge Freiheit, PI News, zuerst) as coding tasks. We include a pre- and post-questionnaire, a coder training with a definition and examples of racism, and ask our crowd workers to code 15 texts as racist or not. With this study design, we aim to investigate the influence of socio-demographics, political attitudes, awareness and experience of racism, and prior coding experience on coding decisions and disagreements. In a second step, we use the insights from our human annotations to design prompt experiments to systematically explore and potentially reduce biases in the annotations produced by chat-based LLMs. Third, we test and compare prompts, human annotations, and their respective biases for different LLMs, including GPT 3.5, GPT 4, and LLaMA.

This comprehensive approach is intended not only to improve reliability assessment, but also to foster a deeper understanding of the intricacies of coding processes, ultimately strengthening the research integrity of both manual and computational content analysis in the study of racism in mass communication.

CDE15 Autonomy in the age of big data

PP 0726 Between algorithms and autonomy: Exploring users' preferences of personalised content moderation

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Harmful content on social media poses potentially devastating consequences for users, democratic discourse, and society at large. To mitigate such effects, platforms employ content moderation strategies, which increasingly rely on algorithmic approaches for timely action (e.g., automated demotion or reduction, wherein platforms adjust algorithms to reduce visibility of content).

Traditionally, many platforms have primarily employed a one-size-fits-all approach to moderation through uniform community guidelines, which is surprising, given that several decades of media effects research has shown differential susceptibility to media and differential motivations for using them. This poses challenges for platforms and regulatory bodies striving to effectively address such differential user needs and safeguard against impacts of harmful content.

Hence, there is a growing need for additional research and knowledge on how uniform approaches may be replaced by more personalised moderation strategies, tailored to each user's specific requirements. Such novel personalised forms of moderation may still rely on (a) general uniform community guidelines, but additionally consider (b) allowing for individual direct configuration of content filters, also known as *explicit personalisation*, and (c) utilise user's prior interactions with content for algorithmic curation, also known as *implicit personalisation* to provide a more context-aware and user-centric moderation experience.

In practice, some platforms have recently started to experiment with tools allowing users to explicitly personalise their moderation measures. And while there are initial indications of positive benefits of such personalizable measures, research also shows that users have concerns about the additional mental load involved in utilising such explicit tools of customization. Conversely, recent developments regarding regulation of algorithmic communication online, in particular the EUs Digital Service Act (DSA), and other research highlights significant privacy challenges associated with implicit personalised moderation interventions, building on traditional recommender system literature.

Therefore, acknowledging the inherent conflicts in differential content moderation strategies, industry leaders, scholars, and activists debate how to balance various trade-offs for a more nuanced moderation experience.

Available user-centric insights from qualitative indications suggest users' support for personalised moderation measures. However, there are significant gaps in our understanding of how users perceive and favour different types of personalised content moderation approaches. Specifically, we *do not know how they wish to receive forms of (a) explicit personalisation, and (b) implicit personalisation against (c) one-size-fits-all moderation based uniform community guidelines.*

To *assess users' intentions to support such personalised content moderation approaches and explore the driving forces behind individual preferences*, such as *privacy concerns, attitudes towards algorithms and automation* (e.g., cues that trigger positive and negative machine heuristics), and *socio-demographic factors*, this work-in-progress conducts a pre-registered survey with a representative sample of Austrian citizens (N = 1,000).

The findings will contribute to the growing body of literature on different types of personalization of content moderation and shed light on how digital moderation architectures should be constructed to benefit democracies instead of harming them. The findings may therefore not only inform academic discourse across disciplines but also provide practical insights for the ongoing discussions surrounding the implementation of personalised moderation measures for platforms and governing bodies alike.

CDE15 Autonomy in the age of big data

PP 0727 Artificial intelligence as a new tool in the political sphere

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The speech will discuss the problem of rapid development and global popularization of artificial intelligence (AI) in the context of its political implications. The article is an attempt to answer the question about the goals and ways of using artificial intelligence both in times of stabilization, during election campaigns, and during political crises, tensions and wars. The speech will also present the problem of using computer generated videos – deepfakes. Based on a review of literature, reports and media reports, examples of the use of deepfakes in the political sphere were identified. This is a technology that allows you to generate videos with any message, using, for example, samples of a person's voice. Thanks to this, it is possible to create films presenting in a very realistic way events or statements that have never happened. During the speech, I will refer to specific examples of the use of the discussed technology both in Europe and around the world.

The basic research goal of the work is to present ways of using artificial intelligence in the political sphere. The indicated goal will be achieved by answering the following research questions: What cases of the use of artificial intelligence in the political sphere have been recorded so far? Also: What was the purpose(s) of using images generated by artificial intelligence (deepfake) in the policy area? The research used the case study method using content analysis, audiovisual analysis of multimedia materials and semiotic analysis. The analyzed research material includes film materials, entries on social networking sites with artificially generated photos and 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 was conducted. Analysis of the above area will allow both a better understanding of the scale of the problem and the construction of a plan to prevent and eliminate the negative effects of popularizing AI in the area of politics.

Preliminary key findings allow us to conclude that year by year, there are more and more cases of the use of artificial intelligence in the area of politics and political communication. Increasingly, this technology is a tool for political propaganda, manipulation and disinformation. The victims of deepfake videos are both heads of state and lower-level politicians. Artificial intelligence is also increasingly used during election campaigns, as well as in extreme situations, such as conflicts and wars (an example of fake videos generated by Russia during the attack on Ukraine). The escalation of the phenomenon is facilitated by the continuous development of AI, which in the future may translate into its easier, more accurate, faster, wider and cheaper use. 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 tools that will enable their quick identification in the event of their unethical use.

CDE15 Autonomy in the age of big data

PP 0728 Negotiating alternative AI futures: a critical engagement with European civil society organizations, tech entrepreneurs and journalists

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With the popular diffusion of artificial intelligence (AI) systems in our society pushed by the rise of generative AI systems such as ChatGPT and Midjourney, the critical debate around AI has exited expert and technical circles. The existing debate on AI is often hyped and polarized and characterized by either catastrophic or utopian points of view, which are directly overshadowing the discussion of the social disorder emerging from the concrete harms for which AI systems are already responsible (Barassi et al., 2022). Currently, most of the debate around AI is thus driven by the discussion of "existential threats" which are mostly speculative in nature, and not by a coming to terms with already documented and visible issues, such as discrimination, biases, or data (in)justice perpetuated or amplified by prone-to-errors algorithmic systems (Ryan-Mosley, 2023). With the aim of writing an "history of the present" (Aradau and Blanke, 2021) of the social construction of AI in this crucial moment, in this paper, we thus investigated how three crucial social groups are coming to terms with the fallacies of AI systems and how AI "errors" could also serve as starting point for negotiating our possible futures with AI systems (Barassi, forthcoming). Through 105 in-depth interviews with civil society representatives, tech entrepreneurs and journalists based in Europe, this paper aims at 1) mapping the concerns of three of the most engaged groups involved in the debates around AI. Additionally, through the analysis of their views and discussions of the various "errors" of AI, the paper also wants to 2) contribute to the analysis of how the critical responses to AI harms are being currently expressed and negotiated by different critical societal actors. At the same time, the paper also discusses 3) alternative AI futures, where expert views and takes on the technology are addressed towards the building of alternative future scenarios, where both dystopian and techno-fetishist views get challenged in their most evident weaknesses and rhetorical shortcomings. Overall, the paper reacts to hegemonic and normative takes on AI and its futures, looking beyond the utopia/dystopia juxtaposition, which is usually presented as ineluctable by different stakeholders (Bory, 2019). The results presented in this paper emerge from "The Human Error Project", a multidisciplinary research project launched in 2020 with the goal of studying how different social actors are making sense of AI systems through an analysis of where the debates around the errors of these systems are driving our collective and societal construction of AI. Blending anthropology and media studies approaches and methodology, "The Human Error Project" and this paper position themselves among the growing literature and research field of critical data and AI studies.

CDE15 Autonomy in the age of big data

PP 0729 Research capture: Assessing Big Tech funding of academic research on digital platforms

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Across the globe, intensifying policy discussions about regulating digital platforms and emerging AI services represent a key battleground over defining the future oversight of digital markets. As dominant tech companies exert immense resources to influence democratic policymaking, independent scholarly research represents an increasingly essential resource and, often, counterbalance in these debates. A growing number of major university research centers and individual scholars scrutinize various dynamics in digital platform markets, often with crucial policy implications.

However, the widespread marketization of academia, driven by neoliberal logics (Fenton et al., 2023; Mintz, 2021), has contributed to the growing reliance on external research funding for knowledge production. Increasingly pervasive academic-industry collaborations facilitate market actors' ability to influence "the conduct and content of the research through the modification of funding arrangements" (Gläser & Velarde, 2018, p. 2). Many tech-focused research centers and individual researchers – often housed within public universities – rely on funding and data from big tech companies (see Rikap, 2023; Abdalla & Abdalla, 2021). Although efforts to secure independence from private funders exist, so do instances of big tech companies shaping research agendas through leveraging funding and, subsequently, editorial control (Dave & Dastin, 2020). How do we make sense of such collaborations between the tech industry and academia, and their potential impact on democratic policymaking and knowledge production pertaining to communication technologies?

In this study, we assess the scope of tech funding of academic research in the United States, with broader theoretical implications for other countries where such collaborations increasingly take place, fueled in part by the growing displacement of higher education institutions' public missions by neoliberal logics like in the UK (Fenton et al., 2023). Following recent work in this area (Rikap, 2023; Abdalla & Abdalla, 2021), we focus on two major types of funding.

First, we map tech funding of academic labs and centers, using publicly available data on academic research centers, their organizational missions, funding sources, projects and research output. Second, we use data from Scopus and Web of Science to assess which individual scholars and projects receive tech funding and whether they are affiliated with the funders. Using a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis, we survey both data sources to trace tech funding influence on academic knowledge production.

Our preliminary findings reveal the complex, entangled, and often obscured web of big tech-academic relationships, out of which tech influence emerges through setting research agendas in a way that marginalizes structural critiques, reflecting a historic dominance of administrative over critical research in communication studies (Gitlin, 1978). Our study contributes to critically scrutinizing big tech collaborations within academia, with implications for accounts of big tech market power that extend beyond platform power exercised exclusively within platform ecosystems to more pernicious influence over seemingly public, independent knowledge production, and therefore over a process crucial to a democratic politics.

CDE15 Autonomy in the age of big data

PP 0730 Unmasking illiberalism in Romania: Understanding its roots, manifestations, and impact

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This study aims to deepen the general understanding of the causes, manifestations, and consequences of illiberalism, shedding light on its implications for democratic governance, societal cohesion, and political discourse in Romania. Our goal is to have a fine-grained approach on specific factors that affect attitudes related to illiberalism, such as political knowledge, news consumption, conspiracy beliefs, vote intentions, church attendance and education. In order to analyse the predictors of people's tendency to hold illiberal attitudes, we conducted a national survey using an online panel (N = 1000), using quotas for gender, age, and education. The survey was conducted by Dynata during 23–29 March 2023.

Our data indicate that lower levels of political knowledge, propensity towards a conspiracy mindset, lower education and church attendance are associated with stronger illiberal attitudes. Additionally, consumption of news from social media is positively correlates with illiberal attitudes, while consumption of mainstream media has no impact. These findings are bound to the Romanian context, in which the role played by the Orthodox church in shaping political attitudes has proved consistent in the last decades, and the conspiracy theories have flourished especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, we identify a correlation between the strength of individuals' illiberal attitudes and their voting behaviour, as those with stronger illiberal attitudes are more likely to vote for extreme right-wing parties. These findings highlight the complex interplay between various attitudinal and behavioural factors and illiberalism and call for a more in-depth analysis of the broader societal and political contexts in which these dynamics unfold.

We discuss these findings in the context of the forthcoming super election year, when both EU and national elections will be a test for democratic institutions. The widespread political turmoil and the global scale crisis amplified by the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, together with the spectacular raising of extreme right-wing parties throughout Europe, call for a better understanding of illiberalism, which becomes crucial in an electoral context that has the potential to influence the future of European democracies.

CDE16 The push and pull between surveillance and resistance

PP 0821 Mistrusted identities and surveillance of Dalits in India: The case of GPS-enabled tracking of sanitation workers

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While the discriminatory or intrusive aspects of algorithmic and data-driven technologies have gained attention in the West, the critical inspection of these technologies remains limited within the Indian context, especially with regards to the issue of caste. Scholars have highlighted how the historical caste-based ideologies and biases have the potential to be further encoded and solidified in the design and logic embedded within algorithmic and data-driven technologies. For instance, Sambasivan et al. (2021) highlighted how often, due to the biased idea of caste and religion, the data fed into the safety apps used for scoring and measuring the safety levels of particular locations might indicate neighborhoods resided by Dalits and Muslims as unsafe. This in turn can lead to greater surveillance of these neighborhoods. While Mishra (2021) explained that the bodies of Dalits are often assumed to have "mistrusted identities" and the deployment of biometric technologies often target these communities to gather information about them. These technological artefacts then, serve as an apparatus for verifying the truth and ensuring trustworthiness of the so-called "suspect identities for the state" (Mishra, 2021, p. 60). While these scholars highlighted the tendency where casteist ideologies and biases can also influence data-driven decision systems and their deployment, there remains a gap in exploring how the use of data-driven technologies, such as

for surveillance purposes can create conditions that potentially confine Dalits to their historically inferior caste-based identities.

Drawing on Michel Foucault's theory of biopower (Foucault, 1995, 2003), I situate this paper at the intersection of Critical Caste Studies (CCS) (Ayyathurai, 2021) and Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies (postcolonial STS) (Anderson, 2002, Ashcroft et al., 2005). In this paper, I will specifically focus on the case of GPS-enabled smartwatches used for tracking sanitation workers – predominantly comprising of Dalits to highlight how contemporary surveillance technologies can reproduce techno-colonial practices resulting in caste-based social marginalization of Dalits. I will present the results of 25 qualitative interviews that I conducted during my 3-month ethnographic fieldwork in India. The participants for the interviews are divided into two groups: 1) NGO officials working on Dalit rights and empowerment in India and, 2) Dalit sanitation workers who have been subjected to GPS-enabled smartwatches used for tracking their movements and productivity within the city of Chandigarh, India.

Based on the analysis of this data, I will highlight how the deployment of surveillance technologies, like GPS-enabled smartwatches to track the movements of sanitation workers exposes Dalits to targeted surveillance and violates their human rights. In doing so, their bodies are not only appropriated and scrutinized for data extraction but are also assumed to have "mistrusted identities" that requires to be kept under check and control.

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CDE16 The push and pull between surveillance and resistance

PP 0822 Triggers of a sense of dataveillance: Empirical insights into characteristics, determinants, and affective responses

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Digital traces generated by internet users are automatically collected, stored, and analyzed by public and private actors (Büchi et al, 2022). This digital dataveillance can become salient to individuals and elicit a feeling of being watched or listened to (Segijn et al., 2021). Such a sense of dataveillance is subjective and does not require evidence of actual dataveillance. When individuals' sense of dataveillance is heightened, they can respond by self-inhibiting their legitimate communication behavior, known as the chilling effects of dataveillance (Büchi et al., 2022). Such chilling effects are not desirable as they undermine the crucial role of digital communication in contemporary democratic societies: When digital communication is subjected to surveillance, people can be deterred from utilizing digital media for everyday activities, personal growth, societal participation, or political advocacy. From a democratic perspective, limiting individuals' freedom to engage with digital media can have detrimental consequences (Büchi et al., 2022; Penney, 2022).

Considering chilling effects as a potential danger of dataveillance, the question arises about what elicits people's sense of dataveillance. We conceptualize events in everyday life that heighten people's sense of dataveillance, mediated by technology or not, as *triggers of a sense of dataveillance*. These triggers are the starting point of the causal mechanism of chilling effects and thus need to be investigated to understand the formation of a sense of dataveillance and subsequent behavioral modifications (Büchi et al., 2022). Due to the subjective nature of the sense of dataveillance, whether everyday-life events become triggers varies at the individual level.

To deal with possible consequences of a sense of dataveillance, it is important to consider the governance of both dataveillance practices and their unintended and undesired consequences like chilling effects. Therefore, a thorough theoretical and empirical understanding of the formation of a sense of dataveillance and the factors contributing to individual differences in people's perceptions and responses is required. However, comprehensive and systematic user-centered empirical research remains scarce (Zhang et al., 2023). Thus, this study aims to: (1) identify the triggers of a sense of dataveillance and characterize them, (2) determine which everyday-life events become triggers and why, and (3) assess internet users' affective responses to triggers.

To answer these research questions, we conducted a semi-structured qualitative diary study with 17 [country blinded] internet users. First, the results include a systematic characterization of online and offline triggers of a sense of dataveillance based on the perceived trigger-initiating actors. Second, our findings show that everyday-life events become triggers when users consume information about dataveillance or when they feel that they are or someone else is subjected to dataveillance. Third, we found differences in the users' affective responses to triggers in terms of perceived proportionate intrusiveness of dataveillance, user agency, and certainty about dataveillance workings. This article provides an innovative user-centered contribution to research on individual differences in experiencing triggers of a sense of dataveillance and hence adds to the empirical understanding of the formation of chilling effects. The findings can inform the governance of dataveillance practices and their consequences.

CDE16 The push and pull between surveillance and resistance

PP 0823 Face recognition and personal autonomy: Practices, attitudes, and perceived risks of surveillance

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New technological systems for facial recognition and their increasing use in diverse contexts have opened up new challenges for democracy and personal autonomy in relation to technology and surveillance. Based on biometrics, human body movements, and particularly characteristics of the human face, these automated recognition systems measure, identify and compare human faces in order to determine the identity of a person. Hence, the face is becoming an integral part of a technological interface which enables a variety of surveillance measures. Many of the situations in which face recognition systems are used are touching on personal autonomy issues and are regarded as threatening or unethical (FRA, 2019) in relation to human rights. Particularly border crossings, policing surveillance purposes, or public transportation have come under critical view in some countries (Kosta, 2021). On the other hand, as more and more practical uses based on AI tools have come into play, such as phone unlocking, smart home control systems or fully digitized food stores, more in-depth and more contextualized evaluations are needed.

In order to understand better, how attitudes on face recognition have evolved with more personalized technologies, we carried out two empirical studies.

Study (1): online questionnaire (n = 439).

Study (2): focus groups studies (same/mixed sex groups, n = 12).

In study (1) we not only tested for situated acceptance, personal utilization and prior experiences, but we also directed attention to the fact that the face, as an intimate facet of the body, has evolved into a distinctive interface for technological interaction.

The results underscore individuals' discernment of distinct differentiations between the function and contexts of use. Notably, despite expressing minimal trust in commercial applications, there exists a widespread acceptance of facial recognition systems integrated into technical devices. This acceptance is particularly pronounced when a technology offers tangible practical advantages for end consumers, despite occasional reservations. Conversely, when the usage of data becomes ambiguous or is perceived as leveraged against personal rights, opposition towards the utilization of facial recognition systems arises, as observed in instances such as medical scenarios, public demonstrations, and customer interactions.

The findings also revealed significant distinctions contingent upon digital literacy, gender, and overarching attitudes toward technology. Evidently, participants contextualize their reception of face recognition within a diverse array of categories. To enhance the depth of these results for subsequent applications, we conducted focused group discussions (gender-specific and gender-diverse). Particular emphasis was placed on scrutinizing digital practices and body perceptions concerning technological usage in relation to the perceived sense of personal autonomy.

In light of these findings, we propose a model on "Somatic Interfaces," defining the face as a technical information surface, which serves as an expansive data pool through automated technical systems, which poses risks for citizens' rights.

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CDE16 The push and pull between surveillance and resistance

PP 0824 A comparative analysis of fact-checking organizations and their impact on information integrity and democracy

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The years 2023 and 2024, marked by pivotal elections worldwide, underline the critical role of fact-checking organizations in sustaining democracies. This study examines the global landscape of fact-checking organizations, evaluating their prevalence, effectiveness, and policies in the context of the World Press Freedom Index of Reporters without Borders (RSF) and the Economist's World Democracy Index. This study, extending from the earlier research conducted in 2020 (Erbaysal Filibeli), seeks to explore whether a colleration exists between a country's ranking in various indices and the existence of effective fact-checking organizations in those countries.

A significant component of the study is the comparative analysis of the policies and methodologies employed by fact-checking organizations through the analysis of the European Fact-Checking Standards Network's (EFCSN)

and the International Fact-Checking Network's (IFCN) standards. This comparison provides insights into the diverse approaches adopted by these organizations, highlighting the variances in fact-checking practices across different political and cultural contexts. The analysis also considers the challenges faced by these organizations, including political pressure, misinformation campaigns, and resource limitations.

The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from the World Democracy Index and the World Press Freedom Index with qualitative analyses of fact-checking organizations. The primary focus is on quantifying the number and analyzing the effectiveness of these organizations in different countries by comparing the rankings of those countries. The study's broader objective is to understand the impact of fact-checking organizations on the health of the information sphere in democracies. It explores how these entities contribute or not contribute to countering misinformation, particularly in the high-stakes environment of election years.

This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on the role of fact-checking in democratic societies and non-democratic societies through providing valuable insights for policymakers, media professionals, and civil society. It also lays the groundwork for future research on the evolving landscape of fact-checking in the face of digital media proliferation and the ever-changing tactics of misinformation.

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CDE17 Identity in movements, governance, and media

PP 0840 Constructing identity on YouTube: How influencers portray collective identities and audiences engage with them

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Social media influencers (SMIs) nowadays extend beyond entertainment and lifestyle, as they intermittently include (socio-)political issues such as the Israel-Palestine conflict, mental health, or LGBTQIA+ topics (Suuronen et al., 2022). As such, SMIs display collective identities by making shared values, symbols, or beliefs of a group salient (Klandermans, 2014). Such collective identity portrayals (CIPs) enhance the visibility of social groups and may shape intergroup attitudes.

Existing research suggests that SMIs' content features certain marginalized collective identities more frequently and in more diverse ways than traditional media (e.g., King & Fretwell, 2022). Therefore, we study, for the first time systematically, which kinds of CIPs are featured in SMIs' content. Moreover, since CIPs on social media are often unfiltered and can therefore render content more emotional, negative and antisocial (Kaakinen et al., 2018), we investigate SMIs' use of uncivil or emotional language when portraying CIPs. Lastly, drawing from the SIMCA (Van Zomeren et al., 2008) and affective intelligence theory (Marcus et al., 2000), we hypothesize that SMIs' content containing CIPs will incite more user engagement (i.e., comments per views). We also consider whether SMIs' self-identification with the represented collective identities affects these relationships.

Method

To examine the prevalence of CIPs in SMIs' content and their interplay with SMIs' self-identification, context, and user engagement, we conducted a quantitative content analysis of $N = 267$ YouTube videos. This study was informed by a youth survey ($N = 1829$), in which popular German YouTubers were nominated who (at least sporadically) discuss political topics. Inter-coder reliability tests were successful for all presented categories ($K\alpha$ and $Kbp > .70$).

Results

Findings showed that CIPs are strongly present in SMIs' political content (76.8%), with national (27.7%), gender (27.7%) and political (26.6%) CIPs being most prevalent. Over a third of the videos (35.2%) contained multiple types of CIPs, potentially suggesting portrayals of intersecting identities.

Next, multi-level linear and logistic regression revealed that sexual CIPs significantly predicted the presence of incivilities in videos ($b = 0.23$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .003$), while videos containing gender ($OR = 0.99$, $SE = 0.47$, $p = .037$) and religious ($OR = 1.64$, $SE = 0.80$, $p = .042$) CIPs were more emotional. In general, the presence of *any* CIP significantly predicted emotionality in SMIs' videos ($OR = 0.91$, $SE = 0.37$, $p = .015$).

Furthermore, we found that for videos containing a CIP user engagement was higher among viewers ($b = 0.25$, $SE = 0.11$, $p = .019$). More detailed analysis revealed that the presence of political ($b = 0.30$, $SE = 0.10$, $p = .004$) and religious ($b = 0.31$, $SE = 0.15$, $p = .041$) CIPs significantly increased comments per views. SMIs' own identity did not affect these relationships.

Overall, CIPs are highly prevalent in SMIs' political content on YouTube and seem to stimulate discussions among viewers. While national, gender, and political identities received more attention in SMIs' content than marginalized

identities. SMIs' use of incivilities and emotionality when portraying these marginalized CIPs points to the risk of polarization.

CDE17 Identity in movements, governance, and media

PP 0841 Exploring patchwork religions – An automated text analysis of new ideological movements

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By crafting their ideology from various esoteric, spiritual and religious movements and enriching them with conspiratorial and anti-establishment themes, so-called, "patchwork religious groups" (PRG), simultaneously distinguish themselves from established religious groups and also incorporate their ideas. These PRG construct alternative narratives and can thereby challenge mainstream logics (Bromley, 2012). While not all such movements are inherently problematic, some of them are spreading disinformation, conspiracy theories and questioning democratic values. Their ideologies can undermine the consensus on scientific findings, and their supporters do have a tendency to develop extreme positions on vaccination, climate change and political elections.

While New religious movements (NRM) have been studied by different disciplines, mainly religious sociology, psychology and political science, there are few studies addressing patchwork religions, the online networking of these groups as well as the mixture of conspiracy theories, religious beliefs and general societal concerns (Moon, 2023), especially in communication science. However, research on PRG's online communication is highly relevant, as they use social media platforms to disseminate their agenda and recruit new members (i.e. inward and outward communication).

We focus on the German Querdenken (QD) movement, as it is a perfect host for such hybrid ideologies, making use of crises, esoteric and anti-establishment sentiments. While it was originally anti-lockdown, the movement quickly jumped on general anti-government narratives and pro-Russia topics.

As the defining criterion of PRG is their patchwork character, we are most interested in the composition of these groups in terms of the themes discussed among them. Or simply put: how do patchwork religious groups combine themes to create their own ideology?

We base our study on a dataset of QD messages from large city-related groups on Telegram and gather additional chats (groups and channels) mentioned or cited therein. We manually evaluate these chats and retain chats discussing religious, spiritual or esoteric themes and gather their messages since their inception on telegram.

To assess the thematic blend, we run a BERTopic model to classify individual messages and aggregate them on the chat level. We then employ a qualitative approach to analyze the proportions of different themes discovered via BERTopic. Initial results show a variety of topic combinations that indeed include themes with religious, political and more mainstream themes. Some center around a main theme like a conspiracy narrative or specific political decisions and branch out to less referenced topics while others apply broader approaches, seemingly jumping on most current topics. Understanding these patchwork patterns is an important step towards understanding communication strategies of PRG, how they define themselves and how they present themselves to potential followers.

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CDE17 Identity in movements, governance, and media

PP 0842 The diversity of alternative media users: Socio-demographics, political attitudes, and social media use

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As a result of multiple social and political crises in recent years, we are witnessing a growing mistrust of political institutions and media organizations in many European countries (Humprecht, 2023). In this context, a variety of new media, which position themselves as "alternatives" to established news media, have gained greater popularity (Heft et al., 2020). Unfortunately, it is difficult to study the users of these media, as many of them are skeptical of scientific research (Rutjens & Većkalov, 2022), and assume that their usage behavior is not socially accepted

(Ischen et al., 2023). In addition, alternative media users make up only a small part of the population, so that even general surveys do not provide a sufficient data base to gain deeper insights into this group.

We address this research gap with an online survey of more than 2,000 alternative media users recruited through a large German panel provider. We defined "alternative media" as "special news providers that generally differ from the classical or established information media," and considered a wide variety of outlets, including left-wing and far-left, right-wing and far-right, pro-Russian, conspiratorial, and mixed ideological alternative media. Using a combination of population-representative recruitment, targeted screening, and a questionnaire that allows us to compare our sample with the German population, we are able to study the users of these media in detail while placing them in a broader context. Our research questions concern (1) the prevalence of different groups of alternative media users in Germany, (2) their socio-demographic characteristics, (3) their political attitudes, and (4) their political engagement on social media.

Our results show that (1) about 17% of the general population uses alternative media for political information. (2) Although alternative media users are more likely to be male, younger, and better educated, these sources are used across all socio-demographic groups. (3) Alternative media users appear to be slightly more interested in politics than the general population, but while they are interested, they are also more disillusioned with the existing political order and show a lower level of trust in democratic institutions. Of particular note is the level of satisfaction with democracy, which is considerably lower among alternative media users than among the general population. (4) Finally, alternative media users rely heavily on social media platforms to receive news about current events, with Facebook and Instagram being by and large the preferred social media platforms. They are also more active than the general population in sharing and commenting on news on social media platforms.

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CDE17 Identity in movements, governance, and media

PP 0843 Unraveling social and communication disorder in Western Democracies through Piketty and Bourdieu

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Exemplified by the rise of populism, Piketty (2020) sheds light on the social disorder in Western democracies due to a transformation of the traditional left-right cleavages within the voting structure and discourse in which political conflict no longer takes place between top and bottom, but between the cultural elite versus the financial elite. Combined with the increasing economic inequality following neoliberal reforms since the 1980s, Piketty observes legitimate feelings of abandonment in populist movements.

We apply Piketty´s findings with Bourdieu's concept of homology to the field of journalism to analyze whether this social disorder also exists as a communication disorder. In three steps we analyze four high-quality democracies: the US, Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark. First, we use reader audience data to prove that the homology voting structure applies to the journalistic field. Secondly, we selected from the field for each country, media with high symbolic capital (and the relationship cultural capital > economic capital) and low symbolic capital (and the relationship economic capital > cultural capital). The high symbolic media were NYT (US), SZ (Germany), NRC (Netherlands), and Politiken (Denmark). The low symbolic media were Fox News (US), Bild (Germany), Telegraaf (Netherlands), and Ekstra Bladet (Denmark). Thirdly, we identified the economic positions through a content analysis by identifying six "neoliberal key dates" from the "Economic Recovery Tax Act" of 1981 to the "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act" of 2017 in the US. In addition, we identified three national key dates for each of the other three countries. Following the ideal of a functional communication order, we hypothesize that low-symbolic media are against tax cuts for the rich and against welfare cuts for the poor, and high-symbolic media will be for tax cuts and welfare cuts. At the same time, we expect that media with a higher ratio of economic to cultural capital will favor free market policies and, conversely, media with higher cultural capital will be more likely to oppose neoliberal reforms.

In the collection, we divided the articles into those reporting directly on the neoliberal key date (direct event) and those mentioning the head of state in another context (other event). Across all media analyzed, we found a significantly higher number of "other event" articles for the 1981, 1986, and 1996 key dates, indicating that the

initial tax and welfare cuts were not relevant to the media agenda and that their subsequent global impact on economic inequality was not anticipated.

For the neoliberal key dates starting in the 2000s, we found a much higher number of direct events in the European media, while the US media still had higher numbers of other events. These results suggest that neoliberal reform received significantly more attention in the European public debate. This difference can be explained by the longer welfare tradition in Europe and the tradition of a democratic-corporatist media system instead of the liberal model in the US. Our more detailed analysis will be presented in Ljubljana.

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CDE18 Mediascapes and public actors

PP 0927 Media supply side analysis to enhance participatory democracy: The case of Portuguese market

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According to the Portuguese Constitution (Art.2), "deepening participatory democracy" is one of the core goals of the republic. Participatory democracy implies "an open information system to ensure informed decisions" (Held, 2006), thus giving the national media the task of mediating the debate, empowering people to speak out, and being included in the decision-making process. This paper examines Portugal's media market supply side to analyze the diversity of its public service, commercial and non-profit media offering, market transparency, plurality, and standards of journalism content production which affect the capacity of the media system to cater as a forum for public participation. A supply-side analysis that articulates the strengths and weaknesses of the national media market, contributes to further developing recommendations aimed to foster democratic participation through media.

The research was conducted within the framework of the project Mapping Media for Future Democracies (Horizon Europe no. 101094984), the aim of which is to assess how national media in 9 European countries meet democratic criteria and challenges, as well as under which conditions they perform. The results are based on the analysis of secondary data, namely the country's related legislative documents and institutional research (Obercom, Marktest), country-level data from international research projects (Digital News Report, Media Pluralism Monitor), and primary data coming from semi-structured interviews with national experts. This was supplemented in view of triangulation with the creation and analysis of the data set of national media offerings covering audiovisual, press, radio, and digital native media. Overall the sample considered 228 media outlets with news elements.

Results show that Portugal is highly ranked in the World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2023 – 9/180) and trust in media (Reuters Institute, 2023 – 3/46), but branded a "flawed democracy" (EIU, 2023, p. 52). The peculiarity of the Portuguese media market can be considered a high level of transparency of ownership, a mandatory declaration by each media outlet of its goals and mission in a publicly available Editorial Statute, and the absence of widely spread media associated with political forces due to the existing legislation. The political orientation of most media outlets cannot be unambiguously labeled, which, in addition to the legislation, the expert attributes to the "catch-all" strategy of the small media market representatives aimed at reaching as wide an audience as possible for the outlet to have revenues. However, the legislative infrastructure faces the systematic problem noted by the experts – enforcement of rules, which leads to significant violations affecting the stability and development of the media industry.

By providing an overview of the current media market offering in a Southern European Country, the study aims to highlight already suitable premises for democratic media operation and articulate the shortcomings to contribute to designing pathways to enhance political participation and civic engagement development in the contemporary European media landscape. The presentation will focus on results presentation and discussion along with initial comparative analysis at the European level and discussion of identified key variables and trends.

Keywords: Democracy; Participatory Democracy; Media Market Supply; Comparative Analysis

CDE18 Mediascapes and public actors

PP 0928 Performing nationalism and cosmopolitanism: Self-representation of Chinese diaspora on Douyin under the commercial logic

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Given the popularity of Douyin (Chinese version of Tiktok), a hyper-commercial short-video platform, among Chinese both at home and overseas, this research investigates how the Chinese diasporic communities represent their everyday life in host countries and perform their national identity on Douyin. Through a qualitative content analysis

of the eighty most popular videos and their audience comments on Douyin under the hashtags # a life oversea, #diary of a life oversea, # documenting a life oversea, the research revealed the diasporic vlogger's performance of Chineseness (nationalism) and cosmopolitanism to increase the visibility and monetize from the data traffic, under the commercial logic of Douyin. The discourse of nationalism and Chineseness is very salient in textually, visually, and audially articulating their daily life in host countries, especially concerning the representation of the internationalization of Chinese culture (eg, Chinese food, festival, costume, media products), although it is often expressed in a playful and humorous way. By framing the internationalization and popularization of Chinese culture in the host countries, both vloggers and the audience envisage the cosmopolitan orientation of the Chinese nation. Besides the overwhelmingly nationalistic discourse, cosmopolitan discourse also appears in the vloggers' representation exemplified by their cosmopolitan consumption, their seemingly beyond-nation friendship, and international mobility, which demonstrates their social capital and class-based privileges. However, cosmopolitan discourse is framed through and interplays with the national discourse. The study shows that in Douyin's landscape where nationalism is a predominant discourse, representing diasporic life in a nationalistic way is more visible and favored, which in turn reinforces Chinese digital nationalism. The study also reveals that nationalism can be compatible with cosmopolitanism and the two ideologies can go hand in hand to negotiate one's identity (Kyriakidou, 2009; Beck, 2006). Moreover, both Chineseness (nationalism) and cosmopolitanism can be commodified to increase visibility given that Internet celebrities (Wanghong) can make a huge profit from their data traffic on the hyper-commercial Douyin platform.

CDE18 Mediascapes and public actors

PP 0930 Comparative analysis of the Italian media landscape: Evaluating risk and opportunity domains in a European context

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Studying the media landscape and the conditions influencing deliberative communication within a media system is crucial since it provides insights into how media diversity, freedom, and practices impact public discourse and democracy. Understanding these dynamics is essential for ensuring that the media serves its role as a watchdog and public informant effectively. Such analysis can inform policies and strategies to enhance media quality and integrity, counter misinformation, and support journalistic freedom. It also contributes to the broader understanding of media's role in society, particularly in a rapidly evolving digital and globalized world.

For these reasons, this study – developed within the framework of the EU Horizon 2020 research project MEDIADELCOM –, presents a comprehensive analysis of the conditions influencing deliberative communication in Italy's media landscape, using the Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) not only to analyze the Italian context, but also to compare it with the media landscapes of other European countries. By comparing Italy with other European countries, the study seeks to highlight the distinctive characteristics and challenges of the Italian media environment, offering insights essential for informed media policy-making and the advancement of media studies in the European context. The fsQCA method allows for a nuanced analysis of the interplay of different factors that shape the media practices and policies in Italy, contributing to a comprehensive evaluation of the country's unique media system. It involves identifying specific conditions within the journalism domain and assessing their impact on the outcome of deliberative communication.

Key findings indicate that in Italy there is a legal framework apparently aligned with European standards of freedom of expression, but with some conflicting legislation. The media system is mainly characterized by hybridity and concentration, reflecting the Mediterranean polarized pluralist model. Media-related competencies and literacy show varied levels of development across different areas and population groups. The journalism market, while diverse, faces economic constraints and legal pressures. Considering this, in a comparative level, Italy presents unique characteristics in its media landscape when compared with other surrounding countries, primarily in areas of media market concentration, journalistic professionalism, legal and ethical frameworks, digital transformation, and media literacy. Italy's media market, dominated by a few major companies, particularly in television, limits media diversity and influences journalistic practices. There is also a notable presence of journalists in precarious positions and a lower share of educated journalists, impacting journalistic quality. Legal protections for journalists and whistleblowers are inconsistent, reflecting challenges in enforcing freedom of speech and press. Digital advancements and the evolving role of social media in news dissemination present both challenges and opportunities in maintaining journalistic integrity and combating misinformation. Media literacy initiatives are crucial for equipping the public to critically engage with media content amidst these changing dynamics. These factors collectively shape Italy's media system, distinguished by specific risks and opportunities compared to its European counterparts. The study suggests a need for continued monitoring and policy development to navigate the dynamic interplay of

legal frameworks, media practices, and competencies in fostering a healthy media environment conducive to deliberative communication.

CDE18 Mediascapes and public actors

PP 0931 Mitigating social disorder? Exploring the cohesive potential of public service broadcasters

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Given the multiple crises in recent years, social cohesion is increasingly invoked in public debate as a means of mitigating social disorder and overcoming existential threats like the Corona pandemic. In this context, media's role is ambivalent as it can contribute to both social cohesion and division (McQuail & Deuze, 2020). This paper focuses on the cohesive potential of news media and specifically highlights the role of Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) in the case of Germany.

News media ideally foster social cohesion by sustaining the public sphere that enables citizens to participate in society via public discourse, form a common understanding of social reality, and therefore overcome political differences. This should facilitate attachment to society, i.e., a *sense of community* (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) as a core element of social cohesion (Strömbäck, 2015). We argue that PSBs best serve this public forum-function, where media are expected to represent the various voices, positions, and issues in society fairly and adequately (*fair and adequate representation*; Fawzi & Mothes, 2020). Thereby, individuals can see their important issues and perspectives publicly represented and thus perceive themselves as valuable members of society, while a lack of representation would contribute to the perception of being excluded from society. Furthermore, fair and adequate representation is supposed to foster mutual visibility of the various social groups with their issues and positions, which contributes to sense of community by reducing social distance and promoting tolerance toward citizens with different perspectives (Jakubowicz, 2007; Park et al., 2023; Schneiders et al., 2023). In Germany, PSBs are legally required to provide internal pluralism, i.e., to report diverse, address, and represent all groups in a balanced manner. PSBs' legal obligations therefore contain precisely the mechanisms that should ideally promote cohesion and therefore produce public value (Serong, 2011). We thus assume that using PSBs for news is positively associated with various indicators of perceived representation in the news (generalized perceived representation: 4 items, $\alpha = .85$; perceived representation of one's issues and opinions: 2 items, $\alpha = .75$; perceived insights into the issues of opinions of others: 2 items, $\alpha = .79$; H1), which subsequently foster sense of community (5 items, $\alpha = .87$; H2).

To explore these hypotheses, we conducted a representative cross-sectional, mixed mode survey (50% each CATI and CAWI) in Germany in summer 2022 (N = 1008). Multiple regression analyses show that using PSBs for news is positively associated with all three indicators of perceived representation, confirming H1. However, only two of those indicators (generalized perceived representation, perceived representation of one's issues and opinions) are positively linked to sense of community. For both mediators, mediation analyses show a positive indirect from using PSBs for news on sense of community. Finally, using PSBs for news is also directly positively linked to sense of community. Therefore, H2 is partly confirmed. In summary, our analysis indicates a cohesive potential of using PSBs for news, which tentatively suggests that strong PSBs can promote unity in societies and therefore act as a counterbalance to social disorder.

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PN 137 From citizens to data points: (un-human) experiences of data welfare state from the margins

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This paper is based on an empirical study that investigates experiences of datafication in the everyday life among three social groups that are considered to be vulnerable in terms of their opportunities or life situation: the undocumented migrants, unemployed persons and the older adults. Based on diaries, interviews and case studies with 87 participants the paper introduces the manifold and often ambiguous experiences of datafication among these groups in Finland. Our approach draws on postcolonial feminist thinker, Chandra Mohanty (2003), who argues that envisioning a just and democratic society requires understanding the experience of some of the most marginalized. While automated data driven systems may provide efficiency and ease to many, in our data, experiences of datafication were connected to a sense of invisibility, mistrust and loss of agency in different ways. While some particularly suffered from the increased surveillance and lack of access to social services, others were more concerned about becoming data points and targets of data driven advertising (Jørgensen 2023). The research also shows the contextual nature of datafication: it becomes visible in different life situations from seeking jobs to asylum process, from public transport to banking – and accordingly shapes social relations and social status in various ways. Our participants experiences speak of the complicated connections between visibility and invisibility (Taylor &

Broeders 2015). In other words, participants lacked means to negotiate appropriate levels of data visibility, therefore not being able to control or know how and when their data is used for their harm or benefit. Yet on a general level the participants' showed awareness of data extraction and data leakages that they considered as inevitable part of contemporary digital environment. This awareness increased their sense of mistrust towards the changing technological structures and data driven systems of the welfare state. Overall, the research illustrates the embodied transformation from citizens with rights to data points. The study echoes concerns raised by Dencik and Kaun (2021) on the possible conditionality of social protection with increased surveillance and shift in values encoded in digital infrastructures as well as the diminishing role of citizens design of the public services (Broomfeld and Reutter 2022). In addition, our study points out the growing lack of human encounters and human contact in data driven welfare services that seems to distance people from the idea of a shared collective world and society. This aspect raises concerns over the conditions of social commitment and solidarity, along with equality, that are considered essential for the idea of a welfare state. References:Dencik, L. & Kaun, A. (2020) Datafication and the Welfare State. Global Perspectives 11 May 2020; 1 (1): 12912. doi: https://doi.org/10.1525/gp.2020.12912Jørgensen, RF (2023) Data and rights in the digital welfare state: the case of Denmark,Information, Communication & Society, 26:1, 123–138, DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2021.1934069Taylor, L. & Broeders, D. (2015) In the name of Development: Power, profit and the datafication of the global South. Geoforum Vol 64, August 2015, 229–237.

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PN 138 De-biasing automated decision-making in the public sector

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In recent years, algorithmic technologies have been increasingly relied upon in the UK civil service and the public sector more broadly. As these technologies enter more mainstream use, cases of algorithmic bias have become more prevalent. Algorithmic bias describes how through a combination of social, technical, and probabilistic mechanisms some people are penalised, or denied opportunities, due to their membership of a marginalised group. Concern regarding these cases has led to the development of 'de-biasing' methods which attempt to remove harmful biases from algorithmic technologies and the datasets they rely on. However, it has been argued that discourses focusing on 'bad' algorithms and 'bad' data creates a narrow field of inquiry and limits practitioners' ability to recognise how data and algorithms connect to wider issues of injustice within the context of society (Hoffman, 2019). To counter this, it has been suggested data practitioners must adopt socio-technical algorithmic bias mitigation methods which acknowledge the contextual nature of data, move away from framings which position data as objective and neutral, and critically question "the social relations, activities, and histories that shape any particular setting" (Green, 2020, p9: Selbst et al., 2018).However, to date, little research has been conducted to understand how data practitioners perceive socio-technical algorithmic bias mitigation tools, and the challenges present in adopting them in a civil service context. In this paper, I will discuss my initial findings from a qualitative project which investigated how civil servants perceived socio-technical algorithmic bias mitigation approaches such as VSD (value sensitive design), critical data skills, and AIAs (algorithmic impact assessments). The data for this paper were collected through conducting a series of seven educational workshops on algorithmic bias mitigation, and seven follow up interviews with practitioners in the UK government department, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The workshops focused on how algorithmic bias might develop, and explored bias mitigation tools such as algorithmic impact assessments and value sensitive design. After these workshops participants were invited to take part in a follow up interview, to allow them to reflect on the content of the workshops and its relevance to their working practices. Interviews were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis.Drawing on my research, I argue it is difficult for civil service practitioners to align technologies to the social justice values which underline socio-technical bias mitigation approaches when servicing a large diverse public. Participants explored this issue by talking about the rights and perceived expectations of taxpayers, and how taxpayers often had diverse and conflicting views. Furthermore, civil service practitioners' room for action is limited by the political structures they work within, and government policy approaches may sometimes be in opposition to social justice values.

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PN 139 Reimagining the interaction between the state and the citizen through a state-wide chatbot

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Recent years have seen surge in governments interest towards using chatbots, in assisting citizens with their information needs (see, e.g., Simonsen et al., 2020; Verne et al., 2022; Mehr et al., 2017), liberate street-level bureaucrats from time-consuming tasks and increase the quality of the communication channels (Androutsopoulou et al., 2019). The adoption of chatbots is more than often driven by the objective of enabling public agencies to allocate more time to personalised and value-added services for citizens (Sun & Medaglia, 2019). Chatbots as „digital mediators" in disseminating administrative information and services bring on challenges to both the organisations making use of them as well as the citizens. As research findings illuminate, the use of chatbots can be challenging for citizens who may lack comprehensive domain knowledge, such as specific administrative terminology, or the ability to craft effective prompts (Simonsen et al., 2020; Verne et al., 2022). Contemplating chatbots as the initial point of contact for citizens with public agencies, the accuracy and relevance of chatbot responses hold significant implications for citizens' life situations. This complexity is further compounded when chatbots are designed to emulate the functions of popular voice assistants, as exemplified by the Estonian chatbot currently in development, which aspires to be the "Siri of public sector services" (Grzegorczyk, 2021). The present paper draws on the Estonian case study, part of bigger project, investigating the automatization of the Estonian welfare state, particularly the implementation of the named state-wide chatbot, which is supposed to reimagine the interaction between citizen and state. This study draws upon a qualitative case study where the combination of document analysis and interviews with key stakeholders engaged in the development and implementation of the specific chatbot are used. Findings will illuminate the interrelated relation between the public and private sector as well as the invisible labour chatbot implementation introduces to public agenies.

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PN 140 'Warm' human interactions vs. 'cold' technological solutions – The case of Maternal Benefit

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The introduction and implementation of automated decision-making systems (ADM) within the German welfare sector is an ongoing process whose effects on citizens' rights are difficult to capture. In order to explore this area of experimentation, we studied the Maternal Benefit department of the Federal German Office for Social Security. In 2019, the Maternal Benefit department received a bespoke semi-automated ADM system tailored to its requirements to optimise the management and administration of the payments to the maternal benefit applicants, and to simplify the workflow on the 'inside' of the public agency. Data gathered during field research in the Maternal Benefit department allows for a closer look at how the ADM system affects the inner workings of the department. The complex and multifaceted issues of introducing a semi-automated solution to a given structure that was originally built for paper-and-pencil handling ranged from technical to human aspects: Which elements in the processing of data could and/or should be taken over by an ADM system? What would justify the use of the system and what would be ramifications deemed problematic and by whom? Which tasks should remain in the hands of human case workers and who is entitled and competent to make that decision? These issues become tangible in our interviews (N = 12) and participant observation, where employees on both the technical and practical end of the ADM system give their assessment of its function and use. The employees involved find themselves amidst

a negotiation process, reaching terms for and sustaining a solution in which a necessary digitalization of the public welfare sector can coexist with the needs of those whose occupations are at stake. Data from field research in the department Maternal Benefit makes clear that case workers have managed to resist a full automation of the ADM system since its implementation in 2019, which would make most of their jobs in this department obsolete and could cause a possible reallocation to a different department within the public agency. They do so by juxtaposing 'warm' human interaction and 'cold' technological solutions. Hence, next to top-down decisions, our case shows how power dynamics play out on the bureaucratic ground floor when ADM systems are meant to weave into existing structures. Preliminary findings of the Maternal Benefit case study suggest that the implementation of the department's ADM system is not about reaching any final stage but remains in a perpetual state of negotiation. The usage of ADM in the public agency is an ongoing process, influenced by personnel changes, the redistribution of funds, and political influence.

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PN 141 Critical companionship for good datafield futures

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Academic narratives of psychic numbing (Zuboff, 2019) and digital resignation (Draper & Turow, 2019) suggest that people have a reduced sense of agency in shaping the data practices of public and commercial actors, despite not being oblivious to harmful sides of datafication (e.g. Kennedy et al 2021; Ruckenstein 2023). In this paper, we discuss how we, as researchers, can probe people's thoughts, feelings, and desires about datafication and thereby cultivate a sense of agency to inform policy making and technology design? We suggest everyday encounters with data about oneself might play an important role in facilitating both personal and collective imagination about data and agency in devising future paths toward good, legitimate, and meaningful datafied living. Lending inspiration from the figure of the researcher as critical companion (Ziewitz and Singh, 2021) and from speculative design (Dunne and Raby, 2013; Farias et al., 2022), we posit that critical consciousness-raising is generated from below, through taking people's everyday encounters with datafying themselves and being datafied by others seriously. Based on this, the paper offers an introduction to a methodological toolkit on how critical consciousness can be cultivated and collectivized, combining three different methodological entry points: longitudinal fieldwork with repeated interviews, visualisations of data flows derived from people's own phones, and speculative workshops on future data practices. These are illustrated with reference to empirical evidence from an ongoing multi-method study of datafied living in Denmark. In this paper we are especially focusing on two mundane forms of datafication that many of our participants encounter nearly every day. Namely billing data from grocery stores and data about children from Danish parenting apps. Through methodological and empirical examples, this paper shows how everyday encounters with data can provide valuable, tangible starting points to discuss and cultivate personal agency and collective visions of good and legitimate datafication practices.

CDE20 News automation: From democratic principles to socio-material practices

PN 149 Who owns transparency at BBC? Mapping the principles-to-practices gap of responsible AI

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Transparency and explainability are often considered critical to the development and implementation of responsible (generative) AI. In an era that is increasingly dominated by algorithmic decision-making, this study wants to better understand how principles like transparency and explainability are specifically translated into practices at the BBC. We conducted 22 expert interviews and gathered observations with news workers from various BBC departments to investigate the mechanisms shaping the principles-to-practices gap vis-a-vis responsible AI. Preliminary findings describe a discernible gap between stated principles and actual practices, specifically revealing complexities in ownership structures. While principles of transparency and explainability are articulated at an organizational level in the form of responsible AI policy guidelines and Machine Learning Principles, their interpretation and execution vary across different departments. This research maps the precarious journey of implementing responsible AI, exposing divergences between organizational intent and individual departmental applications. One emerging pattern within the findings highlights the lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities of specific BBC departments when it comes to responsible AI. The absence of clearly outlined roles and responsibilities may lead to ambiguity and confusion, potentially resulting in an uneven distribution of responsible AI. This ambiguity can create a breeding ground for ethical lapses and inconsistent decision-making across departments, undermining the very principles of responsible AI that the public broadcaster aims to uphold.Unpacking the nuanced interplay between principles and practices in this study not only sheds light on the challenges faced by the BBC in navigating responsible AI but also provides valuable insights for news organizations globally. As the media landscape continues to evolve,

grappling with the ethical dimensions of AI becomes imperative for ensuring journalistic integrity and public trust in an increasingly algorithmically curated news ecosystem and society.

CDE20 News automation: From democratic principles to socio-material practices

PN 150 The Algorithmic Gut Feeling: Journalistic Doxa and Epistemic Frictions in AI-driven Data Work

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This article explores the epistemic practices and doxa of data workers in a news organisation in Denmark that is currently developing and experimenting with artificial intelligence (AI)-driven recommender systems and natural language processing solutions. Previous literature on the changing epistemologies of digital journalism has focused on the increased role of metrics and the transformed practices inside newsrooms, as well as on how journalists perceive and articulate the computational. This article advances these studies by focusing on how data scientists perceive and articulate 'the journalistic' when building AI systems for distributing news. The analysis in this article builds on ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews at Ekstra Bladet (EB), a part of the larger media conglomerate JP/Politikens Hus, from February to November 2022. Developing the notion of 'the algorithmic gut feeling', the article highlights different frictions present in the articulations of the journalistic doxa in AI-driven data work concerning (1) how to algorithmically define ethics, (2) how to algorithmically categorise and understand relevance, and (3) how to algorithmically curate 'a good mix' for the front page. Viewing these processes of 'articulating the journalistic' in data work via the lens of doxa, we show how data workers interpret the journalistic translating it into their own domain doxa. Both domains for example evaluate how to curate a 'good mix' for the front page, evaluations done with reference to normative doxic values of what journalism is and should be, but the data workers developed the models to enhance news consumption via clicks and struggled to incorporate softer and less numerical values when using their gut feeling to evaluate what the models did. The developers sought to align computational evaluations with editorial strategies, with the project manager often working as a liaison and knowledge broker between the editorial mission and the data science doxa. It also illustrates the difficulties that the data workers faced in perceiving what the editorial goals were, and even when they knew them, they did not always translate directly into the evaluations of the machine learning models they built. The emerging frictions and algorithmic gut feelings are key to understanding how the doxa of data workers involved and deeply invested in "the good of journalism" at times also transforms journalistic epistemologies of what constitutes 'news' and 'the right mix' in the service of a democratic public.

CDE20 News automation: From democratic principles to socio-material practices

PN 151 "I must have clicked on something" – Assessing news recommendations from an everyday perspective

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In the news media, there has been a tendency to see news workers as gatekeepers and agenda-setters providing the audience with the information news they need to function in and contribute to democratic societies. With the advent of news personalization and the introduction of algorithmic recommender systems, this intermediary function is increasingly governed by AI-models. Not surprisingly then, the literature discussing and evaluating the role of news recommendation tends to focus on finding the balance between what the users want and what the editorial staff think they should read in the design of such systems (Møller, 2022), according to the normative democratic role of journalism in democracy (Helberger, 2019). Previous literature has productively highlighted the potential benefits and shortcomings of the implementation of algorithmic recommendation for democratic society and the collective, whereas studies rarely situate the evaluations and consequences of personalized news use in the broader context of everyday news use, implicitly seeing users mainly as passive and rational users. When acknowledged, individual choices are presented as a negative factor, with individuals always choosing ´lighter´ forms of news – such as entertainment or sport – over more ´serious´ kinds of news – such as politics and international affairs (Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2013). Adding nuance to the conception of audiences in AI systems in news, our research asks: How does personalized recommended news feed into the existing audience news reading patterns and their expectations of the role and function of news in their everyday lives?Addressing this question, we devised a two-stage experimental workshop format intended to triangulate between users´ individual experiences and the collective function of personalized news. This was done by exposing users of the tabloid media Ekstra Bladet to personalized news and carrying out in-depth and individual protocol-interviews with 25 users as they were using the personalized site. The second part of the methodological setup involved 5 focus groups centered around the themes of personalization of news and their collective experiences of this. Thematical analysis of our data material summarizes how audiences make sense of, interact with, and evaluate news recommendations using three

guiding principles: personal relevance, editorial line, and news genre expectations. Aside from providing insights into the challenges of recommender systems automatically determining relevance and governing the editorial line, the results point to a relation between how audiences perceive the function of the news in their everyday lives and their need for systems automatically curating their news interfaces by personal relevance.

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CDE20 News automation: From democratic principles to socio-material practices

PN 152 Snapping the news: The dynamic gatekeeping of a public broadcaster reaching youth on Snapchat

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News media struggle to get the attention of young users, essentially at the mercy of platforms, which have their own logic and algorithmic operations (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2022). Dependencies on platform logics, including datafication and algorithmic filtering driven by commercial rather than public service interests poses challenges for media houses as well as journalists (e.g. Nielsen & Ganter, 2022). This unique ethnographic study from an editorial group within Norway´s Public Service Broadcaster NRK explores how the journalists negotiate Snapchat´s algorithm in their daily news dissemination on Snapchat Discover. Snapchat has gained significance as a popular platform among youth, with many legacy news media, including NRK, adopting it as a more playful channel for distributing news content. For Public Service Media (PSM) the problem of attracting younger audiences makes it increasingly difficult to obtain near-universal reach in line with their public service remit (Schultz et al., 2019) potentially threatening PSM's popular support and the legitimacy of their public funding. Capturing young people's news interest has thus become a key strategic priority for PSMs. The relationship between journalists and platform companies is intricate, involving dependencies and conflicts. Presence on platforms like Snapchat has advantages, including increased visibility and engagement, especially with elusive younger audiences. However, these platforms also act as gatekeepers, through extensive guidelines and algorithmic filtration impacting the spread of news media´s content (Blanchett, 2021; Hermida, 2020; Wallace, 2017). Research on how newsrooms navigate Snapchat's guidelines and algorithmic filtration, such as the "flagging" practice, the ABCD-testing of "tiles" and how editorial decisions and algorithms influence each other on Snapchat, is limited. Addressing this gap through ethnographic fieldwork at NRK in the editorial group "NRK UNG" (Youth), this study identifies complex gatekeeping dynamics between Snapchat's algorithms, journalistic news values, and audience influence. The study expands on existing gatekeeping theory, incorporating recent advancements, and shows how Snapchat's algorithmic gatekeeping influences the whole publication process; before, during and post-publication, highlighting the dynamic gatekeeping between human news judgment based on established values, algorithms, and the young audience.

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CDE20 News automation: From democratic principles to socio-material practices

PN 153 Media freedom from AI companies: how European law can address infrastructural capture

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The media increasingly uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to gather, produce, and distribute news (Beckett & Yaseen, 2023). An emerging body of literature in journalism studies has mapped out how this use of AI puts the media at risk of 'infrastructural capture' (Nechushtai, 2018) by large US tech companies, particularly Meta, Microsoft, Google,

and Amazon (AI companies). These companies not only supply AI software used for editorial decision-making, but also control much of the hardware, money, data, and research on which the media relies to deploy AI (Simon, 2023). While the scope of AI companies' influence over the news media has become increasingly apparent, the literature remains vague on why this influence is problematic and how it might be addressed. This paper will analyse the role European law can play to safeguard media freedom from infrastructural capture. In doing so it aims to ground arguments on the problematic nature of infrastructural capture in the well-established normative framework of media freedom under art. 10 ECHR and art. 11 of the Charter. The analysis proceeds in two steps. First, the article relies on normative research to contrast literature on infrastructural capture with theories of media freedom. Media freedom imposes a positive obligation on states to create the conditions that allow a wide range of media organisations to contribute to the public debate and expose the public to diverse and high-quality information. Existing literature on media freedom has on platforms' control over what news is shown to large audiences. Literature on infrastructural capture hints at a more pernicious problem: the media can remain in full control over its own audiences, but lose control over the values embedded in the technology it uses to inform the audience (Nechushtai, 2018; Simon, 2023). Secondly, the article will use descriptive legal research to explore the extent to which recent EU regulations designed to curb platform power (specifically the DMA, DSA, and art. 17 EMFA) can address the conditions for infrastructural capture identified in the journalism studies literature. Like theories on media freedom, these regulations focus on tech companies that control access to large audiences and so often do not address infrastructural capture directly. However, their approaches to limiting lock-in and ensuring oversight over the opaque technologies offered by these companies do offer useful foundations from which laws that may avert infrastructural capture can be designed. Bibliography Ananny, M. (2018). Networked press freedom: Creating infrastructures for a public right to hear. MIT press. Beckett, C., & Yaseen, M. (2023). Generating Change: A global survey of what news organisations are doing with AI. LSE. Nechushtai, E. (2018). Could digital platforms capture the media through infrastructure? Journalism, 19(8), 1043–1058. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917725163Oster, J. (2015). Media Freedom as a Fundamental Right. Cambridge University Press. Simon, F. M. (2023). Escape Me If You Can: How AI Reshapes News Organisations' Dependency on Platform Companies. Digital Journalism, 1–22. Tambini, D. (2021). Media Freedom. John Wiley & Sons.

CDE21 Innovation as a threat to democracy? Effects of local communication's transformation on democracies

PN 154 Navigating interdependence: Innovation in Austrian local communication for economic sustainability

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The landscape of Austrian local journalism and municipal communication encapsulates a microcosm reflecting global transitions in media consumption, community engagement, and technological evolution. Recent technological strides, notably the ascent of freely available news and social media platforms, challenge the traditional roles of local journalism and municipalities as primary news providers for their communities. As media organizations grapple with dwindling advertising revenues (Pickard, 2020), leading to downsizing and closures, municipalities find themselves devoid of robust media platforms to connect with citizens (Cook et al., 2016). This has prompted some municipalities to professionalize their communication departments and adopt journalistic methods (White & Hobsbawm, 2007), but resource constraints often hinder their capacity to disseminate crucial information effectively. Consequently, both entities face an intensified need to secure their importance as local news providers amid limited resources, necessitating novel communication strategies. This study investigates innovative communication strategies, practices, and technologies employed by local journalism and municipal communication in Austria that enable effective news provision and achieve economic sustainability. The primary inquiry guiding this study is: "What innovation is emerging in Austrian local journalism and municipal communication that ensures effective news delivery while being economically sustainable?"Conducting an exploratory study, we initially curated a diverse pool of potential best practices through desk research encompassing random sampling, industry publications, and scholarly literature such as the Journalism Report VII (Kaltenbrunner et al., 2022). Subsequent expert interviews with stakeholders, journalists, researchers, and entrepreneurs furnished in-depth knowledge of innovative strategies, practices, and technologies. Following these steps, we identified two exemplary best practice cases in both innovative local journalism and municipal communication that excel in news provision while ensuring economic viability. An important revelation from this study is the leveraging of scale advantages by local media organizations and municipalities to cement their presence in the local news market. Embracing trial-and-error financing models for new communicative practices and technologies with a hyperlocal focus, they solidify their standing, often becoming pivotal actors within their networks. Notably, the deployment of bespoke digital platforms emerges as a key strategy, enhancing services to the local populace and bolstering financial stability. Furthermore, in regions where local journalism is less entrenched, collaborations between municipalities and media entities burgeon. Municipalities provide information to local journalists, augmenting their limited resources. However, this cooperative facade belies underlying challenges, leading to a potentially competitive or dysfunctional relationship. Instances

where e.g., municipalities inadvertently rival media organizations by hiring their employees exemplify conflicts of interest and blur the lines between journalistic autonomy and municipal allegiance. This panel contribution deepens our understanding of Austria's changing local communication landscape amidst digital transformation, highlighting the significant impact of scale advantages on innovation within this domain. Through synthesizing best practice cases, it presents empirical evidence emphasizing innovative strategies, practices, and technologies that bolster the economic resilience of both local journalism and municipal communication.

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PN 155 Local journalism in Germany: Emerging business models and overarching networks

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Local journalism has long been established in scholarly discourse as a crucial backbone to a vital democracy (Baekgaard et al, 2014; Darr, 2021). However, due to recent technological and economic developments, the existing structures of local news media in Germany have been subject to major challenges. As established print-based business models continually dwindle in their profitability, more and more producers of local news media in the country are struggling for relevance and economic sustainability. These processes have led some to even go as far as to exclaim a threat of mass extinction events for local news media (Weichert et al, 2015, p. 33), as fewer and fewer print publications remain resilient against aforementioned pressures. Described developments thus beg the question 'How is the local news media market in Germany adapting to the move away from print, and the associated issues of business restructuring?'.Aiming to shed light on current developments by means of a systematic analysis of emerging players and the critical engagement with leading figures in the German local journalism market, the present research has found evidence for the formation of a newly revitalized and restructured sector in response to above-described developments, by means of an active fostering of interconnected support systems and structures between stakeholders. To be more precise, this approach was largely informed by employing desk research involving the reviewing of issues of the 'drehscheibe' magazine published by the local journalism program of the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) between 2021 and 2023 as a starting point for a deeper investigation. The magazine in question is explicitly aimed at forming a forum for beneficial ideas and concepts in local journalism and thus offered itself as a suitable starting point for gaining an overview of a range of innovative developments within said market. Based on this investigation, it has become evident that many recently founded news media organizations in Germany, such as 'Krautreporter' or 'KONTEXT: Wochenzeitung', have opted for a digital-first non-profit approach, largely motivated by an increasing difficulty to obtain advertising revenue and due to explosively rising costs in the production of classical print publications. This approach is further characterised by an active seeking of collaboration with other media entities, rather than the previously dominant aim of cornering the market in search of financial gains. Aforementioned collaborative efforts are largely facilitated within supra-local journalistic research networks, such as 'Correct!v' or 'Netzwerk Recherche'. Aiming to provide a strengthening, interconnected framework for the presence of investigative, socially relevant and high quality (local) journalism within the country, both these overarching organizations and non-profit media outlets finance their efforts by means of sourcing funds via socially oriented foundations, crowdfunding campaigns, donations and membership campaigns, and thus non-traditional methods. The insights gained by the research discussed prove to hold value not only to the German market of local journalism, but extend far beyond, as similar efforts in other countries may prove as valuable undertakings in the struggle to future-proof democratic societies against potentially damaging socio-economic pressures.

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PN 156 One size fits all? Content and evidence of strategies in Swiss local media

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The digital transformation of media has led to many challenges for both legacy media (e.g., newspapers, TV and radio stations) and digital born media that publish online only. These different types of local media are responding to these challenges with different innovation strategies (Meier et al. 2022) influencing media organizations (e.g., work processes) and their published content. Thus, this panel contribution investigates the effect of innovation on local media content by answering the following research questions: Which quality criteria characterize the content of the various types of local media (fög 2021)? Which are the differences? Do local media outlets employ similar strategies regarding the publication formats (one size fits all) or are they clearly distinguishable? These research questions focus on two challenges. The first one is the multimedia challenge. The digital transformation offers new opportunities for

legacy media that can transform from mono-media to multimedia companies that publish their content in multiple online formats (text, audio and video). The second challenge is related to the journalistic quality and its relevance for democracy: The analysis aims to develop new empirical indicators for journalistic quality that can seize media innovation on the level of media content. In addition, the analysis seeks to assess the performance of local media for democracy by investigating whether all local media intent to fulfil similar performance for democracy (e.g., by a high amount of reporting about policy issues) or if they 'embrace distinctive priorities' (Jenkins & Nielsen 2020, p. 250) like local culture, human-interest stories etc. In this project, the research questions mentioned above are investigated by a quantitative content analysis. The sample includes 12 Swiss media companies that were selected by combination of the following criteria: First, all 12 media companies showed a higher level of innovativeness, that was above the average of other media companies, according to self-reports from a quantitative survey (if data available). Second, these media companies differ maximally to each other about their tradition (legacy vs. digital born), their media type (newspaper, radio, TV and online only) and their language region in Switzerland (German, French, Italian and Rumantsch). The overall sample size was 4'677 publications, which were manually coded by trained staff. The data analysis was done by means of an exploratory factor analysis. This statistical method is best suited for the discovery of new structures in large empirical data sets with many variables. The factor analysis shows that not a single factor, but rather three distinct factors are the statistically best solution for explaining the variability and complexity within the data. These three factors can be labelled as 'F1 traditional quality', 'F2 regional content with multimedia quality' and 'F3 short non-regional content'. At the ECREA conference, the three factors will be compared to general characteristics of the media that might be at the root of these differences.

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PN 157 Innovation, competition and cooperation with local media and municipal communication in France

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In recent decades, French local media and municipal communication have faced a number of challenges, some specific to one or the other, others common to both. Even though they dominated the local information market since the middle of the 20th century, regional daily newspapers are having difficulties to adapt to new information consumption habits (Bousquet & Amiel, 2021). They also face various competitors: local radio, TV channels and online local news media. The field of municipal communication keeps growing since the 80s (Pailliart, 1993). Research has shown that, despite their growing professionalization, local municipal communication still focuses on the mayor political incarnation (Garcin-Marrou & Hare, 2015). But, since early 2000s, the effective use of digital platforms by local municipalities has not been precisely studied (Wojcik, Mabi & Lupovici, 2023). Both fields – local media and municipal communication – are trying to adapt to the digitalization and the increasing role of digital platforms. (Tredan & Gestin, 2023). In this context, the analysis of six case studies in France allows the following research question to be addressed: How does the adaption of digital tools affect the relationship between media organizations and municipalities? Results presented in this paper are based on seven guided interviews conducted with managing officers for three municipalities communication departments (Lyon, Roanne and Ambert) and three local media outlets (Rue89Lyon, Nice Matin and TV8 Moselle). The paper focuses on two main issues: the level of innovation and the relationship between local media outlets and municipalities. The innovative power varies according to each organization, depending on its general strategy. Some consider themselves as very innovative: On the one hand, 'Rue89Lyon', its founding team created something new in the field of local information 15 years ago. The municipality of Lyon, as the environmental transformation implemented by the mayor implies innovation in many fields, will be the largest city in France run by an ecologist majority from 2020. On the other hand, some see innovation as a change in global society to which they're trying to adapt: 'TV8 Moselle', which is being challenged by digital technologies, or the city of Roanne, which is constantly trying to adapt its communication to new trends. The relationship between municipalities and local media navigates between competition and cooperation. Local media managers explain that they don't do the same work as the municipal administrations. They insist on their journalistic editorial added value, even though they must work with local administrations, as they are journalistic sources. For municipalities communication directors, local media are seen as an important information transmission tool. Municipalities (still) need local journalists to reach the public, although this seems less true now that they have other means of communication, especially online. The information tools and strategies implemented by local media and municipalities respond both to their respective social missions and to the constraints they face. In this context, innovation seems to be essentially a solution to achieve information goals despite constraints.

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PN 158 Innovation as a double-edged sword: Examining the impact of innovation on Swiss local communication

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In the current era of economic challenges within the local communication landscape, innovation has emerged as a pivotal concept, heralded as a potential remedy for declining subscriptions and reduced advertising revenues for local media (e.g., Park et al. 2022). The call for innovation is particularly present when talking about the communication landscape on the local level and its resilience. However, our case study on local communication in Switzerland reveals ambivalent effects of innovation: On the one hand, local media exhibit an urge to strengthen themselves through innovations of business models, reporting, and work processes etc., thus predominantly focusing on lean production, rather than journalistic quality standards. On the other hand, municipalities have also started to innovate their communication, which have traditionally relied on official announcements in and coverage by local newspapers. Many municipalities have started to issue their own online or print publications and thus untighten their relation to journalism and local media. Hence this raises the question: To what extent do innovative approaches worsen the relationship between local media and municipal administration and hereby reinforce divisions in local communication? To address this question, we employed a multi-method approach to assess the transformation of local communication in Switzerland: We conducted online surveys targeting all Swiss municipalities (N = 2172; response rate = 19.1 %) and all Swiss local media companies (print, online, TV and radio; N = 473; response rate = 34.7 %). Additionally, we executed twelve qualitative case studies of innovative media companies involving a one-day observation and guided interviews, as well as guided interviews with twelve innovative municipalities. A workshop with representatives from both local media and municipal communications further enriched our understanding of their dynamics. Our findings are disconcerting: Despite concurrent innovation efforts, municipalities and local media are drifting apart, with only 17.4 % of municipalities still considering local media as important players on the local level (Authors 2023: 71). The once balanced power dynamic has tilted in favor of municipalities, leading to a concerning dependency for local media on the latter (Authors 2024*: 61), undermining their role as the fourth estate in democracy. While the municipalities invest more and more resources in and professionalize their communication, local media face a diminishing pool of resources, resulting in a downward spiral of decreasing quality and capacity. At the same time, however, there are also cases where the local balance (still) exists, where the exchange and mutual acknowledgement between local media and local administration is intact. This presentation aims to shed light on the divergence among local communication actors, using Switzerland as a case study. Subsequently, we will display positive examples and explore why the interaction between local communication actors still functions in some parts of Switzerland, while all actors involved are working innovatively and thus overcome the dilemma of innovation as a double-edged sword at the local level. The goal is to highlight the challenges, but also propose potential solutions for fostering a functioning democracy at the local level, thereby preserving social order.

CDE22 Towards understanding activism in Russia and beyond: Organisational practices, technologies and publics

PN 159 Self-organisation for Resilience in Russian Anti-War Networks

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This contribution delves into the dynamics of self-organisation as a means of resilience for maintaining long-term engagement among dispersed groups in the face of external pressures as well as internal conflicts. Drawing from the empirical material gathered during a PhD project, the contribution builds on the practice approach (Bać a, 2022) and presents an analysis of self-organisation practices collected on the instant messaging service Telegram. The goal of this contribution is to showcase the multifaceted and multimodal nature of anti-war activism through the concept of self-organisation with the ambition to puzzle together a set of relations that would be able to explain how subjects persist in finding ways to express their political will and maintain avenues for such expressions even when no apparent transition to mass social mobilisation transpires. Drawing inspiration from Ricardo Nunes' (2021) exploration of collectivity and organisation, the concept of "distributed action" becomes central to conceptualise the non-uniformity of political subjectivity crystallised through many centres operating at various scales. The relevant implication of Nunes' terminology is the recognition that change can originate from the accumulation of uncoordinated individual actions and behavioural changes at small scales. Whether consulting citizens on their legal rights, writing letters to political prisoners, or engaging in volunteer work abroad, the adaptability in unstable organisational environments impacts the notions of what can constitute activism and where instances of collectivity can be found. The research outcomes encapsulate the understanding of activist self-organisation in three

meanings that "self" takes on:First, micro "self" in connection to self-education and self-reliance in facing unexpected challenges, linked to the acquisition of technical expertise and the production of activist knowledge through diverse distribution sources like guides and instructions found on Telegram. Second, meso "self" in its connection to figuring out how to collectively organise without a clear precedent while negotiating a level of reasonable exposure. Such organisation – from militant guerrilla cells to secret anti-war book clubs, presupposes a degree of openness and flexibility of dynamically adapting organisation tactics. Finally, macro "self" as an aspiration for the constitution of a just order within the network of distributed action as it aims to be a self-sufficient ecology constituted by a mixture of protest action (militant and symbolic) and support structures (affinity groups, legal help, etc.).Thus, technologically mediated self-organisation is viewed both as a spontaneous configuration of relationships between distributed groups based on the recognition of the importance of difference and unexpected cooperation and as a way of sustaining engagement even as the incapacity to prompt significant political change is recognized. Baća, B. (2022). Practice theory and postsocialist civil society: Toward a new analytical framework. International Political Sociology, 16(1).Nunes, R. (2021). Neither vertical nor horizontal: A theory of political organization. Verso Books.

CDE22 Towards understanding activism in Russia and beyond: Organisational practices, technologies and publics

PN 160 Conceptualising the constitution of the anti-war frontier and publics

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The primary interest of this study is to examine the reconfiguration of publics as a technologically conditioned process of infrastructuring, which bridges activists and publics in a mediatised public space, and in a Russian authoritarian warfare context. The shift from mass to "mass personal" (O'Sullivan and Carr, 2017) communication has transformed the very mode of communication in the public space: the ways in which people engage with public issues on a daily basis. In turn, scholars of social movement studies (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014), have defined movements as dynamic systems, aiming to embrace the involvement of broader publics into its constitution. Pointing out the intersection of activists and audiences within communicative processes, this article sheds light on the struggle of activists and movements "for public opinion" (Splichal, 2012). I call for an understanding of the practices of diverse activist groups and individuals beyond the 'networked' metaphor (Castless, 2015), and as a way to address and form the public. Particular attention needs to be paid to authoritarian contexts, as in the case of Russia, where power is held through "hybrid" control over public space, demolishing the constitution of anti-war publics. When anti-war activists make publicly visible the cases of those who have been arrested for their anti-war opinions, or reveal war crimes and personal stories related to the war, such that would otherwise remain unknown, they address the public. Moreover, this process of publicity is technologically conditioned. Drawing on Kavada and Poell's (2021) observation, in addressing how the material infrastructures of platforms – data, metrics and algorithms, as applied affordances – constitute simultaneous forms of the collective, I make another conceptual move to look at this process as frontier infrastructuring. Aligning with the idea of infrastructuring openness (Larkin, 2013), I treat media infrastructures not only as pipes, lines and material entities, but as part of social relations, as compounds in social systems of human practices, relationships, hierarchies and knowledge. I am interested in examining how the anti-war frontier is infrastructuring its 'technological sovereignty' by renegotiating platform surveillance and power, and crafting milieus that sustain orientation among publics and allow for resistance. Castells, M. (2015). Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internetage. John Wiley & Sons. Della Porta, D., & Mattoni, A. (2015) in The International Encyclopedia of Political Communication, 3 Volume Set. John Wiley & Sons. Kavada, A., & Poell, T. (2021). From counterpublics to contentious publicness:Tracing the temporal, spatial, and material articulations of popular protest through social media. Communication Theory, 31(2), 190–208.Larkin, B. (2013). The politics and poetics of infrastructure. Annual Review ofAnthropology, 42, 327–343.O'Sullivan, P. B., & Carr, C. T. (2018). Masspersonal communication: A modelbridging themass-interpersonal divide. New media & society, 20(3), 1161–1180.Splichal, S. (2012). Transnationalization of the Public Sphere and the Fate of the Public. Hampton Press.

CDE22 Towards understanding activism in Russia and beyond: Organisational practices, technologies and publics

PN 161 Infrastructuring evasion: a digital helpline for military draft evaders

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The paper focuses on a case-study of "Prizyv k Sovesti", an NGO helping those who refuse to participate in the war with Ukraine. This organisation offers legal advice and often, as a side effect, a psychological support to draft evaders. Using an existing legal frame, such as the right to alternative civil service (as a replacement for military service), the organisation has helped thousands of Russian men who refuse to fight. The study is inspired by the

STS approach, as it looks not on the individual trajectories of evaders or their motivations, but rather on the digital infrastructures and tools chosen by Prizyv k Sovesti in order to understand the impact of tool choices and their architectures and interfaces on the strategies of antiwar campaigning. Indeed, Pryziv k Sovesti relies on a patchwork of tools,such as a Telegram bot used by draft evaders or their relatives to request help, as well as task trackers, and a variety of group chats in secure messengers and text pads. Based on interviews with moderators and developers of the helpline, as well as on web ethnography and an analysis of a sample of anonymized cases from the helpline database, we examine how the helpline technological structure shapes the way evaders communicate about their situation, ask for advice and make final decisions (to go to war or to resist). How the design of the helpline chatbot and the structure of the database impact the narratives of evaders about war, their situation and their choices. We argue that besides providing personal help to the evaders, the helpline tools serve as an instrument of mediatisation of the phenomenon of refusal to serve in the army. Indeed, the helpline moderators use the collected data for advocacy and to emphasise the anti-war narratives with individual stories. However, technological infrastructures of the helpline also raise security and privacy concerns, putting a limit to what can be done with the collected data. One of the main questions of this research is to understand how the need to balance between visibility, usability and security forces the helpline team to reorganise their toolings, migrate the hosting of their bot, redesign the database structure.

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PN 162 Strategic non-uses of communication technologies and its consequences for political representation

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In this presentation, the author explores strategic non-uses of communication technologies by Russian civil society actors as a strategy for survival in the times of war censorship and intensified political repressions. Digital communication technologies not only help to maintain connection between those activists who migrated, fearing increased state surveillance, war censorship and political repression, and those who stayed in Russia, but also make organised action possible providing socio-technological infrastructure, as contribtutions to this panel show. Indeed, studying uses of communication technologies from the micro level of the community allows to understand how activists build and use communication channels to receive relevant information and be heard, mobilise people for action and bypass hinders created by the authoritarian state. Nevertheless, in order to see what role communication technologies play in the times of disorder, one has to look at the macro level of the political and symbolic representation of these communities. Hence, the paper will deal with two levels of strategic communication technologies (non) uses – the micro level and the macro level. This will be done from an exogenous perspective (Carpentier 2009), i.e. in relation to other sectors in actors of national and transnational societies, by establishing connection between participation and political representation. In order to explore these connections, the study explores the mechanisms and the processes behind the (non)uses of communication technologies for survival, by relying on interviews with activists and experts as well as media reports on Russian civil society during the war. The paper will study how activists who stayed in Russia had to adjust to rapidly deteriorated political conditions and rethink their communication strategies fearing that visibility in the media might result in the seizure of activist networks and operations. As a result, most of the work carried out by civic activists inside of Russia became less visible to ensure the survival of activist networks. Given that social and political interaction is mediated, media and communication invisibility makes symbolic and political representation of Russian civil society almost impossible and has long-term negative consequences, which can be already observed in the spread of a popular misconception that Russian civil society has been completely wiped out during the first year of the war. Drawing on Fraser's (2009), this presentation argues that Russian civil society cannot freely participate in social interaction both inside and outside of the country. Inside of Russia, their communication rights using Peruzzo (2014) terminology, are restrained by surveillance, censorship and repressions. Internationally, the communication right is often denied on moral grounds (staying in Russia and maintaining operation is often considered unethical) and due to the invisibility of the civil action inside the country. Overall, one of the major consequences of the full scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation is that Russian civil society has lost its communication power, i.e. a power to influence public agenda and introduce social change (Castells 2009).

COH01 Gendered pasts: Communication histories of invisibility, disruption and resilience

PP 0089 Disrupting traditional gender roles in communication: Three women war correspondents report the First World War on the Italian front

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Tim Luckhurst (2016) has argued that the First World War 'was reported from an almost exclusively male perspective' and that woman war correspondents 'were immensely rare exceptions'. My paper challenges this view. During 1914–1918, a considerable number of women from belligerent and neutral countries gained access to the frontlines or their vicinities and published their eyewitness accounts and photographs in newspapers and magazines. However, academic studies are scarce. Women are conspicuously absent from Phillip Knightley's (2003) seminal account of war correspondents and other key literature. Only recently have scholars begun to study female war reporters, often with an emphasis on Americans (Dubbs 2020).

Few women were accredited by the military; often they reported in a non-official capacity. However, on the Italian front Austria-Hungary and Italy offered accreditation to several female journalists. Three women in particular stand out: On the Austro-Hungarian side, the Austian travel writer and photographer Alice Schalek was accredited by the Austro-Hungarian War Press Office and reported from the Italian front during 1915–1917 for the Viennese daily *Neue Freie Presse* and other papers. On the Italian side, the Italian writer and journalist Stefania Türr was accredited by the Italian Supreme Command and visited the front in 1917, writing about her experience in the magazine *La Madre Italiana* and in two books. Moreover, Avis Waterman, an American journalist employed as the Milan correspondent of the London *Times*, was granted accreditation by the Italian Supreme Command and visited the frontlines several times during 1915–1917.

My paper offers a comparative analysis of the wartime activities and writings of these women. The findings of my research derive from articles written by, and about, Schalek, Türr and Waterman in the contemporary press in a variety of countries: Austria, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Moreover, Schalek and Türr published books about their visits to the front. All three women broke with the traditional gender roles of their times, when women were expected to become housewives and mothers, and they opened up hitherto male-dominated professions to women, such as travelling, journalism and war reporting. The women did not limit their reporting to the 'woman's angle', i.e. the reporting about the home front or the care and nursing of wounded soldiers. Rather, their reporting focused on the men's fighting on the Italian front. However, their war reporting did not go unchallenged. In particular Alice Schalek was met with fierce hostility when male journalists and military figures challenged her qualifications for writing about war as a core male business. In contrast, Waterman was highly respected for her reporting in *The Times*.

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COH01 Gendered pasts: Communication histories of invisibility, disruption and resilience

PP 0090 Resilience in the face of a multiple collapse of orders: International feminist peace activism during the Great War

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Resilience in the face of a multiple collapse of orders: International feminist peace activism during the Great War

In many ways, the Great War can be regarded as a breakdown. Politically, Central European monarchies collapsed at its end and new nation-states and democracies were founded. Economically, Europe was at rock bottom and hunger omnipresent. And as far as humanitarian aspects are concerned, moral principles were massively violated during the war, for example, through the use of weapons of mass destruction or the systematic use of sexual violence against the defeated.

Amid this collapse of civilizational achievements dissenting voices also emerged; and a rather marginalized group in terms of political power, namely internationally minded female suffragists, proved to be resilient. In 1915, they organized an international women's peace congress in The Hague which did not only demand the immediate cessation of all acts of war (including sexual violence), but also developed a pioneering counterproposal for a new,

democratically based world order that placed international law and peaceful conflict resolution at its center. International institutions similar to the later established United Nations (1945), the World Trade Organization (1995) or the International Criminal Court in Hague (2003) were drafted at this congress (Baetens, 2010).

The reactions to the drafted new world order varied greatly from country to country. Depending on the involvement into the war (belligerent or neutral countries), the existence of democratic traditions and, last but not least, the prevalence of rigid press control, debates on the proposed new world order took very different forms. In the US, the women's proposals were seriously debated – and partly adopted by US-president Woodrow Wilson in 1918 ("Fourteen Points", Throntveit, 2011). In Germany, however, media coverage and public debates of the Hague Congress were prevented, and its participants persecuted (Kinnebrock, 2022).

Using trilingual journals by the emerging international women's peace movement, personal papers of leading US-American and German pacifists (e.g., Jane Addams and Lida Gustava Heymann), collections of press clippings on pacifist activities, and censorship files of German military authorities, the struggle of female peace activists to keep up resilience und defend humanitarian principles will be traced. The dynamics between finding an international pacifist voice, seeking for public support on a national level, reassuring international solidarity within women's peace movement, and processes of being silenced by local authorities are analyzed hermeneutically. It will be shown that international crises might promote debates on new social or even world orders, but the effects of censorship as well as the persistence of old (social as well as discursive) structures should not be underestimated and remarkably counterbalance resilient voices.

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COH01 Gendered pasts: Communication histories of invisibility, disruption and resilience

PP 0091 The 'Wiener Hausfrau' in the 1920s. A sub-public talks about fears and hopes in times of multiple crises in a women's magazine

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The 'Wiener Hausfrau' is a women's magazine established in 1904 and published until 1939. Due to its specific media functions, this kind of weekly newspaper that appeared in the first half of the twentieth century, had an unexpected participatory character. Women's magazines offered forums for the exchange of knowledge and experience, the establishment of social relationships and social networks, and the possibility to evaluate and feedback situations provided by women who searched for advice and understanding. Emotions were transported and entertainment created, social needs of women were discussed alongside women's ideals, as the magazine allowed anonymity and broke with taboo topics. This made the women's magazine a sub-public for the community it created.

The possibility of creating and participating in a woman dominated sub-public in Austria was especially important in the 1920, when the high female employment rate was pushed back, and jobs were reserved for men who had returned home after the war or war captivity. Women experienced a conservative roll-back, who experienced little public and political participation. However, the housewives, mothers, female workers had a lot on their plate, because they lived in times of multiple crises: the aftermath of the war and the returning husbands and sons as well as the economic situation with hyperinflation, food shortage, increasing rents, unemployment, and resulting health issues. Existential fears and anxieties about the future are a profound moment in the lives of many women, who had to take care of a household and children. Above all, the 1920s are a period in which 'the modern woman' is presented in the public sphere, an independent and self-reliant female worker. In fact, to bring forward the image of a housewife and of a modern woman was a difficult and paradox task to fulfill. However, questions about work or having a job are a constant topic in the magazine.

The 'Wiener Hausfrau' is considered to be a unique source to find traces of how uncertainty, but also hope was communicated. Through its participative format in sections like 'exchange of opinion', 'to the editors', cooking plans and recipes, or questions to the medical doctor, it gives insight in the lives of female readers. In times of multiple crises, the 'Wiener Hausfrau' offered more than information, but support and advice, it acted as a pool of resources and resilience that women and girls could draw on and access at the same time. In my presentation, I would like to show first results of the content analysis and software-based automatic analysis of those issues of the 'Wiener Hausfrau' that are online available on ANNO and were published in the 1920s. My research question is: How are existential fears and taboo topics as well as the images of housewives and modern women communicated and

negotiated in the 'Wiener Hausfrau' during the Austrian interwar period? The multi-method approach of a classical content analysis is combined with digital analyses, such as automatic image coding and text mining.

COH01 Gendered pasts: Communication histories of invisibility, disruption and resilience

PP 0092 'We do not recruit young ladies into technical categories': Gendered labour and technology at the BBC

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Understanding the gender disparity within media work necessitates looking beyond mere statistics to examine how individual jobs are gendered. Feminist scholars have demonstrated that institutional structures and production cultures are themselves gendered (O'Brien, 2019) and analysed the relationship between the materiality of labour and the value placed on men's labour processes over women's. Stein (2016) found in relation to the printing industry that it 'was not merely the jobs that came to be gendered, it was the things, too', and Baker and Hall (2022) extended this idea to television camera work, arguing that assumptions about men's natural affinity with technology impacted the design as well as the use of television equipment. While the equation of technology with masculine labour continues to be a barrier to women's full employment in the media, there is a lack of understanding about the entrenched structural discrimination and gendered practices that have contributed to this disparity.

1974 marked a turning point in the BBC's employment policies, as the organisation began recruiting women into previously male-only technical areas. That year, Barbara Franc was employed as a television studio camera operator, Penny Kift as a technical operator in radio, and Alison Stevenson as a television engineer. This paper draws on oral history interviews with these three former women technicians to analyse the relationship between gender, labour and technology within television production. It discusses the ways that women's entry into technical areas disrupted gendered workplace cultures and power hierarchies at the BBC. In doing so, it redirects our attention from the male auteur and considers women technicians as creative workers within a collaborative production environment. It argues that listening to women's experiences is crucial for understanding the ways that women's skills were valued and defined within production communities, and the workplace cultures, practices and structures that have contributed to a persistent underrepresentation of women in technical areas.

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COH01 Gendered pasts: Communication histories of invisibility, disruption and resilience

PP 0093 A gender perspective on the foundation of communication research: Women's contribution to the proposal of two-step flow theory

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Two-step flow is one of the most used theories in mass communication studies. Traditionally, it has been assigned to Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, the researchers who first proposed the existence of a "two-step flow of communication" back in the 1950s. They were the authors of *Personal Influence* (1955), the book where two-step flow was first formally proposed, following a previous remark included in *The People's Choice* (1945) by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet. The historiography of the field has widely accepted this foundational narrative, embracing Katz and Lazarsfeld as the founding fathers of the theory and, consequently, as two of the main voices in the proposal of limited effects theories. However, this narrow account dismisses the relevant role that women researchers had in the first proposal of two-step flow and the limited effects paradigm, a research proposal that was way more collaborative than the individualistic and masculine story that has officially been told.

Women researchers were a constitutive force of the Bureau of Applied Social Research (BASR), the research center at Columbia University where limited effects theories were first proposed. Up to 60 women were working on media and audiences analyses between the 30s and 50s. They were authors or coauthors of, at least, a 40% of the projects conducted at BASR, including those that studied personal influence. In fact, women were very active in the Erie County (1940) and Decatur (1946) projects, where interpersonal influence was first analyzed. Both of these projects were eventually published in book-form as *The People's Choice* and *Personal Influence*.

The main objective of this communication is to identify the role played by women researchers in the proposal of two-step flow. Our research questions are:

- What was the role of women researchers in the proposal of two-step flow?
- How did women contribute to the Decatur and Erie County projects?

- Which women had a leading role in the proposal of two-step flow?

To answer these questions, we develop a methodology of archival analysis of the records of the BASR (Columbia University Archive). In particular, we analyze a total of 50 documents (620 pages) – including grey literature, correspondence, and unpublished work – related both to the Erie County (1940) and Decatur (1946) projects.

Our results show that female contribution to the theory was twofold: Firstly, women constituted the majority of interviewers and were in charge of identifying and profiling opinion leaders among their interviewees. Secondly, female researchers were in charge of interpretation and some of the work authored by them was essential in the identification of two-step flow. In particular, we recover the figures of Helen Dinerman, Hazel Gaudet and Leila Sussmann, who authored some of the first references to interpersonal influence and two-step flow ever made.

As a conclusion, this work represents a critical reading of the intellectual history of a theory – two-step flow – that is regaining recognition in current communication research. We also propose an historiographic recovery of lost female voices in order to construct a fairer, more plural, more trustworthy, and more inclusive history of the field we inhabit.

COH02 Future pasts: Old challenges, novel directions and uncharted territories of communication history

PP 0192 Presentism and the challenge of history and (technological) futures

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A widely held assumption across the humanities and social sciences is that we (sic) live in a time characterised and defined by presentism. Presentism is the temporality of the 'omnipotent and omnipresent present' (Hartog 2015), experienced through the now, real-time, immediacy, live-ness, acceleration, timeless time (Castells 2000), synchronicity and short-termism. While it is easy to think of examples of all these aspects in the context of media and communication, we do not have to look too far to find many counter-examples and counterevidence either. Media and communication historians have demonstrated the central importance of nostalgia and memory, for example, whilst depictions and predictions of the future in terms of AI or climate change seem evermore present.

Therefore, I want to call into question the validity of the claim that presentism is defining our social (dis)order. I will develop my argumentation in two steps. First, by building upon critiques in the literature, especially in the areas of theoretical history, the social theory of time, and media anthropology. Second, by showing how (implicit) understandings of the relationships between past, present and future in discourses and ideologies underpinning recent technological developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) further expose the limitations of presentism.

I approach the question of presentism not in philosophical terms and instead of asking ontological questions, the focus is on temporality and on how time is experienced. Hartog's (2015) concept and historical-anthropological work on 'regimes of historicity' is used as the central starting point for such a discussion. He proposed 'regime of historicity' as a heuristic to think about the changes over time in the interrelationships of past, present and future. Based on this, he discerned between five regimes. Following the fourth 'Modern' regime of historicity, which is characterised by a strong orientation to a future of progress and promise, we are now in the regime of presentism, according to Hartog.

Although his regimes as ideal types are a useful instrument to think about our temporal condition, they also show some limitations. What does not fit into Hartog's presentism tends to be explained away as breaches or as symptoms of presentism (Bouton 2019). Memory, for example, is then an "instrument of presentism" (Hartog 2015:125). Similarly, instead of the 'disappearance' of the future in presentism, we need to consider new future modalities (Baschet 2018, Tamm 2020), such as prognosticable futures, expected futures and technological futures (Simon & Tamm 2023). With regard to the latter, the paper then analyses the temporality in (especially Silicon Valley) discourse around AI, specifically its dominant distant future orientation known as 'longtermism'. This view preserves a central role for technology to bring us to utopia and is willing to sacrifice short-term well-being for that of future generations.

Ultimately, the question is how many 'breaches' of presentism we can tolerate before we should consider its replacement by a different regime of historicity – not necessarily a successor, but at least a revised version of our contemporary condition that recognises both pasts and futures as more than subsumed in the present.

COH02 Future pasts: Old challenges, novel directions and uncharted territories of communication history

PP 0193 Making order. The Longue Durée of maintenance in communication infrastructures

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Communication and media studies have often been obsessed with new, innovative, and disruptive forms of communications. As a consequence, there is a scarce consideration of old and persistent media over time (Balbi et. al 2023), but also of maintenance of existing communication technologies.

This paper aims to put maintenance at the center of communication and media studies and, especially, of the historical dimension and to make a reflection on the long term character of communication maintenance. The main goal is to expand maintenance theory from STS (Henke & Sims 2020; Weber & Krebs 2021) and history of technology (Edgerton 2007; Vinsel & Russell 2020) to communication and media studies. In this respect, it is a theoretical contribution based on secondary literature and historical case studies.

Communication and maintenance are linked because all forms of communications need to be kept in good order to keep them function – "keeping in good order" comes from the etymology of maintenance as well (OECD 2023). But they are also linked because maintenance is a long-term action, with political and financial consequences, which can be understood in the *Longue Durée*. In 1958, French historian Fernand Braudel developed the concept of *Longue Durée*, a temporal construction that, during the times when he was prisoner-of-war, introduced the idea of "very long time" and so would allow to analyze history through centuries and disciplines, as an "infrastructure" (Braudel 1958).

Despite the fact that communication infrastructures such as telegraph, telephone, or Internet networks, as well as communication practices or tools need to last over time, communication and media studies, including media history, have not frequently included *Longue Durée* in their analysis. But efficiency and longevity of communication routes, services, and tools are crucial: efficiency is a constant effort secured by several technical practices and maintenance above all; longevity is secured by building technologies which last or making decisions that can be evaluated in long terms.

The focus on the paper is then to recombine communications, maintenance and *Longue Durée*, starting a theoretical and case study-based reflection on the topic.

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COH02 Future pasts: Old challenges, novel directions and uncharted territories of communication history

PP 0194 On non-connection: Making mediated avoidance with people, paper, and magnetic tape

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This paper sheds light on mediated avoidance, an understudied category of media practices that people engage in to avoid others. Drawing on archival studies of 19th century women's magazines, qualitative online surveys, and semi-structured interviews with senior citizens in Sweden and Canada, we study how answering machines, peep-holes and calling cards have been employed in the service of mediated avoidance. In this work, we ask: How have people made use of answering machines, peep holes and calling cards to enact avoidance? How has mediated avoidance been facilitated by specific social structures? How have people made sense of avoiding others and

being avoided themselves? And, what does the historical study of mediated avoidance tell us about our digital media presents?

Through an examination of historical media practices related to interpersonal mediated avoidance, we aim to make empirical and theoretical contributions to the expanding field disconnection studies (Syvertsen, 2022). While sharing some of our interests, this field tends to focus on how people attempt to avoid entire communicative infrastructures, for example by attending digital detox camps (Syvertsen & Enli, 2020). And often, studies of disconnection display a certain degree of presentism (Lomborg & Ytre-Arne, 2021). For instance, when interpersonal avoidance has been studied, it has nearly exclusively centered app-facilitated ghosting (Šiša, 2022). One of our study's empirical contributions is thus providing historical context to interpersonal mediated avoidance through the examination of pre-internet technologies.

Studying mediated avoidance constitutes a break with media studies' long standing interest in how media technologies produce the impression of presence by challenging the boundaries of space-time (Sconce, 2000). Instead, we want to contribute with insights into aspects of communication that are "inherent to the process of transmission" (Krämer, 2015, s. 67) but often get treated as external to it, namely interruption. In this context, we propose that mediated avoidance can be understood as a set of media practices and techniques intended to produce impressions of absence. Previous theorizations of mediated avoidance have regarded avoidance as a technological phenomenon, as in Plaut's (2015) studies of Technologies of avoidance. We intend to move theoretical focus away from technologies towards cultural techniques. That is, how "operative chains composed of actors and technological objects that produce cultural orders and constructs" (Winthrop-Young, 2015, p. 458), like impressions of "avoidance" and "absence." By shifting from technologies toward habituated practices and techniques we enable more comprehensive discussions of the various ways in which people and things interact in order to produce avoidance.

In our analysis, we show how our cases exemplify different constellations of people and things, and how they interact to enact avoidance of various kinds. We also discuss how instances of mediated avoidances relate to the social structures of a given time and place, as well as how people have ascribed meaning to avoiding others, and to the experience of being avoided themselves. In closing, we suggest some areas where mediated avoidance could be fruitful to study going forward, and how such studies could be conducted.

COH02 Future pasts: Old challenges, novel directions and uncharted territories of communication history

PP 0195 Press Start to Continue: The Quest for a Research Agenda for Digital Gaming in Media and Communication History

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In our proposed contribution, we outline digital games and gaming as both carriers and accelerators of media change, serving as an interface between media industries, technologies, cultures, and practices. This makes them an ideal case to analyze societal and media-cultural transformation processes resulting from mediatization, digitization, and datafication in a long-term perspective. Beyond Games and play, we argue, digital gaming provides an ideal test case for the understanding of digital transformation processes, the advent and extinction of digital technologies and the peripheral communication that evolved around games (gaming journalism, community forums, game streaming etc). The presentation is planned as a conceptual contribution proposing a framework and research agenda for communication history explorations into digital games and in the history of digitization of society through the observation of games. We argue that a heightened awareness for digital games and gaming is paramount to overcome current shortcomings and blind spots in our comprehension of the digital society. This holds true for communication research at large, but communication historiography in particular.

Digital games are no longer a peripheral phenomenon in society. Computer and console games, as well as mobile games, are now an integral part of deeply mediatized lifeworlds. Over the last decades they have become one of the dominant sectors in the media industry. Games and gaming have been catalysts for the emergence of unique media cultures, playing a crucial role in mediatized everyday culture for several generations of players. Game development has become well-established and professionalized, fostering innovative forms of media expression, communication contexts (e.g., video game journalism, game streaming, fan-fiction, modding). Additionally, under the concept of gamification, game principles and elements are increasingly transferred to non-gaming contexts (e.g., health prevention, educational settings). The deep integration of games into everyday practices, social relationships, and their diverse intersections with other phenomena of media communication and digital transformation raise various communication, ethical, educational and media scientific questions.

While the phenomenon of computer games has been comparatively underexplored in communication and media studies, our contribution suggests a holistic perspective that switches from the analysis of games to a broader notion and understanding of gaming as part of shifting media environments. This positions computer games and gaming

as a comprehensive subject in communication and media studies, demanding transmedia, diachronic, situational, and long-term transformative perspectives of (dis)empowerment and (in)equality.

Computer games are, therefore, portrayed as focal points for media and communication history. They allow us to observe long-term transformation processes of digital transformation but also to zoom in on peculiar cases and specific dimensions (media appropriation, technology acceptance, social and individual consequences, new communication formats, innovative practices of learning, implications for memory culture, and the mediation of discursive worldviews, knowledge, and values) and their evolution over time. The research agenda for communication historiography of the digital transformation of societies will be presented along with examples and cases from different fields.

COH03 Constructed pasts: Memories, predictions and speculations

PP 0285 Revisiting conceptualizations of memory objects

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Memory objects constitute a fundamental component in the intricate tapestry of processes of remembrance. The proposed presentation focuses on mediated memory objects – such as films, analogue photographs, digital images, NFTs and other gadgets – and revisits and questions some of the implicit, underlying assumptions of conceptualization of memory objects.

A substantial body of research has scrutinized the mechanisms involved in the selection, curation, and storage of memory objects (for example Esposito 2017). Scholars have focused on the influence of algorithms on the selection of mediated memory objects, as well as the indispensable role of search functions in facilitating access to desired materials. The ephemeral nature of digital memory objects, especially prevalent in the realm of social media, poses a dual challenge – they are both easy to store and manipulate, yet elusive and often difficult to locate or recover.

Moreover, the omnipresence of memory objects in networked environments has transformed the landscape of mediated memory work. The sheer volume of digital objects has been perceived as overwhelming, hindering or cancelling completely their impact for memory work. A number of tech companies therefore offer solutions to order and curate material for users – for example by grouping similar images in people's smart phone galleries.

While memory objects have implicitly been considered a temporal constant – meaning that they potentially pass through temporal layers, lasting for years and perhaps decades – they are, in reality, subject to change over time. Factors such as wear and tear, as well as technological innovation, contribute to the dynamic evolution of mediated memory objects. In the process, memory objects undergo a metamorphosis, losing their original materiality as they transition to new devices and undergo various forms of manipulation (Kopelman & Frosh 2023). This transformative process goes far beyond preservation and transferring a mediated memory objects to another device; actors within these networked environments exhibit a remarkable creativity in reinterpreting and reshaping memory objects in ways that may not have been foreseen initially.

To exemplify the dynamic metamorphosis of mediated mnemonic artifacts over temporal progression and in tandem with their engagement with individuals, I focus through three case studies: (1) Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) called "Organic Growth: Crystal Reef," whose transformative states are contingent upon the specific wallets in which they are located. (2) Tamagotchis undergo evolutionary shifts dependent upon the manner in which they have been nurtured and managed. (3) Robotic entities retain a form of 'memory' concerning their past interactions with individuals, thereby potentially manifesting different responses in subsequent engagements.

The presentation underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of memory objects in contemporary media environments. It sheds light on the delicate balance between the ease of storing and manipulating these objects and the challenges associated with their ephemeral nature. By exploring the dynamics of mediated memory objects, this presentation aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between remembering, socio-technical practices and mediated memory objects.

COH03 Constructed pasts: Memories, predictions and speculations

PP 0286 Remembering old mobile phones: Joy of nostalgia through embodied material engagement

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The currently widespread telecommunication devices, mobile phones, were introduced to the Chinese market in the late 1980s and became mass products in the late 1990s and 2000s. Their popularisation paralleled marketisation informed by the Chinese Economic Reform (1978-) and global technological advancements of the second and third generation mobile network services, anchoring consumers' individual, social, and technological remembering (van Dijck, 2004). This study addresses how Chinese enthusiasts circulate and perform nostalgia

for old mobile phones, predating the dominance of Apple and Android smartphones, within their second-hand consumption practices. It focuses on embodied engagement with second-hand mass products and its mnemonic consequences.

Based on online qualitative interviews with 30 enthusiasts, three types of embodied material engagement related to nostalgia for old mobile phones were identified: maintenance and repair, displaying and sharing, and playing. Maintenance and repair involve routine and exceptional efforts to preserve object vitality. Enthusiasts act as 'nostalgia conservators', and old mobile phones are an intermediary state between remembering and forgetting, resembling archived historical heritages and relics. Displaying and sharing elicit and circulate memories of old mobile phones in online and offline settings. Enthusiasts highlight the display values of objects and cautiously distance their collections from threats to object authenticity and sacredness, such as mundaneness in offline settings and commercialisation in online settings. Playing is composed of two distinct categories, recollective playing and creative playing, each embodies diverse embodied practices, nostalgic forms and temporal orientations. Recollective playing reenacts conventional usage of old mobile phones in a contemporary context, performing restorative tech-nostalgia, while creative playing emphasises imagination and innovation, performing reflective tech-nostalgia (van der Heijden, 2015).

This study contributes to a larger project on the nostalgia industry and consumption to address the lack of concern about economic activities in memory studies (Niemeyer & Keightley, 2020; Pfoser & Keightley, 2021; Sturken, 2007, 2008) It aligns with recent calls in memory studies for turning to joy and other positive attachments to the past from typical focuses on negative forms of remembering (Arnold-de Simine, 2019; Davidson, 2023; Rigney, 2018; Wolf, 2019). It also addresses the conference's overall theme, 'communication and social (dis)order', and the division's concern about memories, by centring on joyful tech-nostalgic practices through which people establish a sense of order amidst ecological challenges related to e-waste (Rigney, 2017), social transitions in the reform China, and technological acceleration.

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COH03 Constructed pasts: Memories, predictions and speculations

PP 0288 Modelling the past: How text-generative AI deals with information about the Holocaust in Ukraine and its instrumentalization

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The rise of generative AI signifies a fundamental shift in history-related communication. While large language models (LLMs) powering chatbots such as ChatGPT or Google Bard open new possibilities, they also raise numerous concerns, in particular, whether they can facilitate the manipulation and instrumentalization of historical information in the context of modern conflicts. In this study, we investigate how different AI-powered conversational agents deal with information about mass atrocities using the example of the Holocaust in Ukraine. Not only is the Holocaust often the target of denialist and anti-Semitic manipulation campaigns, but references to the Holocaust in the Ukrainian context are actively instrumentalized by the Russian authorities as part of their aggression against Ukraine.

We manually generated outputs for two AI-powered chatbots – ChatGPT and Google Bard – using a set of 74 unique prompts related to the Holocaust in Ukraine in three languages (English, Russian, and Ukrainian). The prompts were in the form of questions and asked about specific episodes or actors of the Holocaust. For each question, we determined the correct answer (baseline), which ranged from a "yes/no" response to the specific number or indication that the question is disputed by historians. The outputs were coded by two researchers using a custom codebook.

Our preliminary findings show a relatively low number of correct responses. The highest proportion of outputs matching the baseline (54%) comes from Google Bard responding to prompts in English. The lowest number is

observed for ChatGPT responding to prompts in Ukrainian (30%). A striking proportion of no response (i.e., the chatbot refusing to answer the question) was found for Bard responding to prompts in Russian (31%).

We found the unequal distribution of incorrect responses depending on the actor blamed for the specific case of mass atrocity: for example, over 50% of the responses mentioning Ukrainians in general or particular Ukrainian organizations were incorrect. In many cases, these responses falsely claimed Ukrainian actors to be the main perpetrators in the atrocities committed by the Nazi units. We also found a striking proportion of the outputs related to the episodes of anti-Ukrainian violence being inaccurate (93%). In most cases, they contained claims that victims were exclusively Jewish or that Ukrainians themselves were perpetrators (in spite of us specifically selecting instances of violence where there was no historical proof for this). An in-depth examination of the incorrect outputs showed that sometimes chatbots do not only provide an inaccurate answer (e.g., a wrong number of victims) but also add additional distortions, such as the invention of historical personalities, organizations, and eyewitness quotes.

This study is one of the first attempts to examine how LLM-based chatbots deal with information about mass atrocities. Using prompts about the Holocaust in Ukraine, we found that ChatGPT and Bard often generate incorrect statements on this topic. Under these circumstances, there is a risk of generative AI not only distorting historical facts but also being exploited to amplify instrumental uses of history.

COH03 Constructed pasts: Memories, predictions and speculations

PP 0289 Divination, data, and predictive devices: Toward a media archaeology of speculation

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Present debates about the nature of artificial intelligence (AI) and its capacity as a technology of speculation (Natale, 2021; Pasquinelli, 2023) point to longer traditions of producing predictions and meaning about the world through data aggregation, algorithmic calculation, and pattern recognition—highlighting recurring questions about epistemological and ideological distinctions between speculative practices like divination, statistics, computation, and artificial intelligence (Benqué, 2021; Lazaro, 2018).

From the ancient to the contemporary, human civilisations and societies have sought to foresee the future in order to mitigate uncertainty, circumvent crises, and engineer favourable scenarios (Andersson, 2018; Daston, 1995; Steyerl, 2018). Techniques for speculation, accessible even today largely only to those in positions of power, have been in use long before the advent of AI: occult prophesy, astrology, weather forecasting, demography, epidemiology, financial markets, and strategic foresight, for instance – each performed with devices designed for their specific purposes. Situating AI within the historical and conceptual framework of these speculative practices, I will investigate their cross-temporal interdependencies to determine how they have and continue to shape one another across shifting cultural and societal contexts.

With a media archaeological approach (Parikka, 2012) that encompasses archival methods, a close reading of historical texts, and critical discourse analysis, I examine a selection of technologies of speculation beyond their linear or teleological historiographies in order to formulate a rhizomatic representation of their relationships to one another. Interweaving chronologies, I analyse the ancient Greek Antikythera mechanism, an analogue computer for astrological divination; Islamic Golden Age astrolabes for astrometeorological forecasting; Pascal's calculator, a seventeenth-century gearbox for executing actuarial calculations; the role of the mid-twentieth-century ENIAC computer in producing weather predictions; and Chat GPT, a present-day AI chatbot that uses probability to generate human-like patterns of language.

How can we observe socio-cultural shifts through these technologies of speculation and how do these technologies both reflect and inform hegemonic structures of their time? What is the relationship between the kinds of data that these technologies are designed to analyse and the narratives and myths that they uphold? In other words, what kinds of futures do these technologies produce and how do these futures function to either maintain or disrupt societal order, social cohesion, and collective realities?

This investigation reveals not only original historical perspectives on how we predict futures and the socio-cultural function of prediction-making, but also insight about the deep-rooted entanglements of speculation with sites of hegemonic contention. Moreover, my research demonstrates how the lines between pseudo-science and science, magical thinking and secular rationality, and divination and speculation have consistently been redrawn in efforts by ruling classes to maintain political and economic control over populations.

Spanning media studies, science and technology studies, and communication history, my intention with this paper is not to rewrite the history of speculation, but to uncover hidden, forgotten, or ignored stories that are integral to dispelling prominent myths about the omnipotence of technology and for alerting scholars, software developers, and the broader public to real-world repercussions of speculation in world-building.

COH04 Preserving pasts: Visual testaments, archival silences and securing sources

PP 0399 Visiting Kardelj in Ljubljana's Clinical centre: Censorship of photojournalism in Yugoslavia and mute evidentiality of Tanjug's photographic archive

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The visual legacy of Yugoslav photojournalism remains for the most part inaccessible – locked in mostly unattended archives of media institutions, scattered among eclectic array of museums and galleries, or simply kept in boxes and attics in the attics of photographers or their heirs. The photographic archive of Yugoslav press agency Tanjug is one of a handful of fully preserved photographic archives of media institutions from the period of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Tanjug's photo archive is not only the largest among preserved ones, but also the only one with public, non-profit access. As such, it is an invaluable resource to researchers of Yugoslav (media) history. But at the same time, it is also to a significant degree, a mute archive.

Although systematically catalogued and filed, the contact sheets rarely carry extensive accompanying textual information beyond the date and location of the event, basic description of the event and the name of the photographer. There is no track of selection or distribution of images. Moreover, there are no other written records on production of images, training manuals, editorial guidelines, testimonials or memoirs. Apart from a handful of images made for Tanjug's anniversary publications, its vast image archive remains mute on the working conditions and operating procedures that guided the production of news photographs. It is a potent reminder of Allan Sekula's (1975) claim that all photographs are "incomplete utterances". By combining archival analysis and secondary sources with semi-structured interviews with seven former photojournalists and photo editors of Tanjug and former Yugoslav media, this paper will complete the "utterance" of two images from Tanjug's vast archive from the perspective of censorship.

The images in question depict an official visit to a prominent politician Edvard Kardelj in Ljubljana's Clinical centre on 10 January 1978. Unhappy with an "unhealthy" look on Tanjug's photographs, the party officials ordered a non-Tanjug photographer Joco Žnidaršič to cover a re-enacted visit of the delegation with instructions to produce livelier images. Kardelj died exactly a month after the re-enactment. Žnidaršič, an influential photo editor of Slovenia's main daily newspaper who accompanied Tito as his official photographer, claims that this was a unique and atypical intervention. Unlike countries of the Soviet bloc, Yugoslavia started dismantling the system of pre-publication censorship already in late 1950s and through subsequent changes in media legislation, introduced a model of post-publication censorship. This gave birth to a less formal system of censorship, which relied heavily on self-censorship, but at the same time allowed continuous testing of the limits of tolerated critical reporting.

This enabled development of a degree of professional autonomy of journalists and photojournalists, who not only learned the red lines of taboo topics, but were also able to explore the grey zone by evoking their role as "socio-political workers", tasked to contribute to elimination of internal contradictions of socialism within Yugoslavia's convoluted self-management system. The paper draws on semi-structured interviews to explore specific limitations imposed on photojournalists and their striving for professional autonomy, which are not visible in Tanjug's photo archive.

COH04 Preserving pasts: Visual testaments, archival silences and securing sources

PP 0400 Data Solicitation for Media History. A new approach to study the CERN mailing list of the World Wide Web, 1991–1995

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Mailing lists have the potential to be important sources for media historians. Due to their structure, these sources inform us about the inner functioning of a group and allow us to investigate issues such as consensus building, decision-making, conflict resolution, issue evolution, language development, inclusion/exclusion mechanisms, and power negotiations. And yet, despite being often accessible, mailing lists are not fully exploited as a source of data. Accordingly, in this paper, we propose an innovative co-constructive approach, coined as "Data solicitation", which integrates traditional historian praxis with digital methods and focus group discussions.

Data Solicitation is designed to help historians analyzing the significant volume of messages exchanged among many actors longitudinally. This method is structured in four main steps: (i) the construction of an exhaustive and organized digital database (ii) the analysis of the database through network analysis, (iii) the analysis of the database through text mining and (iv) the discussion of the obtained data with both informants and expert panels.

The Data Solicitation approach was developed and first applied to investigate the WWW talk mailing list. Established at CERN in 1991 by Jean-François Groff and Tim Berners-Lee, this mailing list was intensively employed to discuss central issues concerning the development of the web from 1991 to 1995 and even later. In line with the Data

Solicitation approach, we first scraped data and metadata from the online repository and organized them into a single database. We then employed network analysis to observe the appearance, disappearance, and permanence of different groups of interest over the years. After identifying the leaders of the various groups, we selected their messages and employed text mining tools, such as corpus analysis and topic modeling, to trace significant linguistic transformations and analyze topic distribution over the years. The acquired data were subsequently visualized, correlated with notable historical events in the history of the Web, and ultimately discussed with informants and expert panels. Participants were invited to articulate their opinions regarding the suggested correlations, propose potential impacts of other historical events on the trends, or offer alternative interpretations.

The core innovation of our Data Solicitation approach lies in its data-driven discussions, where quantitative data is not treated as a final product but rather as sources to be assessed, interpreted, and potentially disqualified. By fostering a dialogue between data analytics and human interpretation, this novel approach holds the potential to broaden our understanding of historical processes, uncovering new and unforeseen directions of inquiry. This method not only highlights the potential for effectively managing a multitude of online sources, thereby expanding the sample size for media historians, but also underscores the importance of employing a mixed-methods approach.

COH04 Preserving pasts: Visual testaments, archival silences and securing sources

PP 0401 Mapping the Austrian News Media Landscape: Challenges and progress in the development of a scientific News Media Infrastructure

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Research infrastructures (RI) are indispensable for the digital future of research. The observable lack of transparency and availability of, among other things, media structure data in communication science but also in civil society makes it necessary to make corresponding data on the media-political public available in a concentrated and systematised way. When it comes to media data, especially in Austria, there is a lack of transparency and availability in communication science, which is the aim to be changed by the establishment of an Austrian News Media Infrastructure. The planned contribution will briefly outline the development of this digital Research Infrastructure and address the copyright and media policy challenges that have significantly determined the project and contributed to its re-conceptualisation. Initial insights will be given into the platform structure and the immanent relationships between media outlets, companies and genres in their diachronic and synchronic dimensions. Our RI-project is currently still in the programming and implementation phase and should be available in a beta version in spring 2024.

The media data itself, which is made up of media supply, usage, meta and content data is currently being transferred to a graph database. The RI combines primary research data for print (from 1848), radio (from 1924), TV (from 1955) and the online sector (from 1995) with market and usage data from various data originators and data collection institutions (from 1953) with whom bilateral agreements on data reuse have been concluded.

For legal reasons, the platform will currently only be available to scholars and (academic) teaching, although there are plans to open it up to other target groups, such as those from the field of media education. Registration is planned to be free of charge but subject to registration. Users will then be able to use a dashboard to carry out longitudinal and cross-sectional analyses of media and media company contexts, create and download coverage and market share tables and graphs, but also participate through thematic blog posts on the infrastructure website. The data offered is scientifically contextualised by the team and information is provided on the respective survey modes.

This reflection is intended to contribute to the relatively young field of German-speaking research infrastructure discussion for media and communication studies and thus to participate in the proclaimed "cultural change" of the Research Infrastructure Working Group of the German Communication Association (DGPuK).

COH04 Preserving pasts: Visual testaments, archival silences and securing sources

PP 0402 Web archives in times of crises: Navigating global challenges and collaborative solutions

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In an era marked by pandemics, global conflicts, socio-political upheavals, and rapid digital transformation, the importance of preserving digital content has never been more critical. This paper delves into the intricate challenges and imperatives of web archiving of crisis events and the opportunities it holds for transnational research making use of these archives.

As the digital landscape becomes a primary arena for communication and historical documentation, the vulnerability of online content from censorship, deletion, or alteration intensifies during tumultuous times. Consequently, web archiving emerges as an important tool in capturing, preserving, and safeguarding historical narratives that chronicle the multifaceted dimensions of conflicts and crises. As Astrid Erll observed in 2020, during the COVID-19 crisis: "It is the first worldwide digitally witnessed pandemic: a test case for the making of global memory in the new media ecology" (Erll 2020, 867). It is not hard to read her words as a call to both researchers and archivists to think critically about processes of heritagisation of born-digital materials of the live web, and which of the web's "mediated experiences, beliefs, and narratives will make it into dominant memory discourses" (idem).

This paper will discuss the ethical, legal, methodological, and technical complexities inherent in working with web archives within volatile contexts. Drawing upon case studies from the forthcoming edited volume *The Routledge Companion to transnational web archive studies*, we will present the lessons learned by web archivists and researchers about the challenges of analysing entire national web domains from a transnational perspective; reflections on the opportunities of archiving and researching transnational events – such as climate change or the recent COVID-19 pandemic; the challenges of using digital methods in web archive studies; and assessments of the politics of web archives as collections.

Furthermore, building on the experiences of the European-based WARCnet community which acted as an active group of web archiving practitioners and researchers during 2020–2023, the paper underscores the need to develop meaningful international and interdisciplinary collaborations. If we aim to further web archiving as a space for safeguarding historical memory in an increasingly volatile world, it calls upon media historians, archivists, and policymakers to invest in robust archiving infrastructures and research initiatives based on the principles of transparency, accessibility, and integrity.

Erll, A. (2020). "Afterword: Memory worlds in times of Corona". *Memory Studies*, 13(5), 861–874.

COH04 Preserving pasts: Visual testaments, archival silences and securing sources

PP 0403 The first social medium: Postcards and narratives of history

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Postcards, with the combination of images in the front and short messages on the back offers a discovery of what some call an early social medium. In less than one hundred years, the postcard has shifted from a ubiquitous part of daily life to an obscure and occasional academic footnote and is only now beginning to re-emerge as a valuable documentary form for researchers of communication history. This paper presents a study of a historical collection of postcards as an early social media in the Western Balkans. The data for the current study is from image analysis and text analysis of a unique private collection of over 1,700 historical postcards from Kosovo, dated from 1900 to 1999. The analysis of the collection focuses how multimodal narratives present a history of social order and disorder in an area undergoing multiple dramatic transitions. The paper seeks to discuss a typology of the postcards as communication (social medium, direct communication, multimodal narration, and historical documentation). Since the late 1800s, Kosovo was occupied by the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Nazi Germany, Bulgaria, Italy, and Serbia. Military and civilian personnel left their mark in an, until today, unseen, and unwritten part of history through sending postcards from Kosovo to their loved ones back home. Along with that, they sent personalized but still very important stories that represent a time capsule from the past events and accounts. Additionally, these postcards carry images of Kosovo and the representation of exclusive, unpublished images of Kosovo. This paper analyses how Kosovo's history is represented through the postcards' images of people, landscapes, architecture, and other visual content from 1900 to 1999. These images were either taken by external photographers or local photographers and were meant to show living conditions and developments of notable events in Kosovo. The images represent a multitude of ethnic, religious, and national significance and they communicate fragments of the historic images that were used as direct communication through an early social. The postcards were sent form soldiers based in Kosovo, but also from students, tourists, businesspeople and from people living in Kosovo with relatives elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia. They show tourists landscapes with now non-existing architecture and infrastructure showing the old market, old mosques, and churches. These historical postcards represent aesthetic and visual value, and a study of an early social medium providing narrations of troubled pasts.

COH05 Imagined pasts: Troubled pathways, disruptive discourses and dreamy visions of (digital) media futures

PP 0516 How governments privatize: Germany's case of the Treuhand and the post-socialist press

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For people worldwide, the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, stood symbolic for hopes of democratic transformation and liberation. Millions of East Germans went to the streets to protest state repression and censorship, voicing their demands for freedom of opinion, and a free and democratic media. One year later, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) joined the Federal Republic, reuniting Germany. While much has been written about East Germany's subsequent media transition from a state-controlled propaganda apparatus to that of a free democratic media system, there has been no historical analysis of the underlying political economic forces that shaped this transition and/or the newly established media.

Based on extensive archival research, this paper looks at the privatization of the East German press and shifting ownership patterns administered by the *Treuhand* (THA), a public administrative body responsible for privatizing the entire East German economy. With regard to the press, the leading question is in how far the democratic *potential* that existed in the moment of revolutionary change in 1989/1990 found its institutional and/or political implementation in the post-socialist East German press due to THA policies.

This question is highly controversial in Germany, not the least because the privatization of newspapers became a major battle field among different interest groups. In particular financially strong West German publishers had secured their future market shares, as early as spring 1990. By means of preliminary joint venture agreements primarily with the fourteen former regional papers of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) – privileged, mass-circulating papers with quasi-monopoly positions in their respective regions – they had divided the market amongst each other. Thus, when in August 1990, the privatization of these papers fell to the THA, its sphere of influence was limited. It often followed pre-established joint ventures and did not, as was the initial reform goal, break their monopoly structures. The THA thereby enabled centralized newspaper monopolies, once established under a political dictatorship, to continue for market reasons. This resulted in a dying of newly established local papers and a highly concentrated press market.

The archive of the THA opened only recently. This paper, thus, gives first archival glimpses into the struggles of the post-socialist press, the privatization practices of the THA and the role of federal government in this transition.

COH05 Imagined pasts: Troubled pathways, disruptive discourses and dreamy visions of (digital) media futures

PP 0517 The death of the news' paper – The e-paper as imaginary media in Swedish newspaper history

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In the late 90s, most newspapers began publishing online, alongside their print editions. The digital newspaper could be updated multiple times a day, allowing news to reach the reader more rapidly. However, the digital newspaper lacked the mobility associated with the printed paper since most readers accessed the content through a desktop computer. This posed a challenge for newspaper organizations that began searching for a solution that combined the digital connectivity of the online newspaper with the mobility of the traditional print media. In Sweden, one such project was initiated by the national publishing organization "Tidningsutgivarna" in collaboration with several national as well as local newspapers (Ihlström Eriksson 2013). Initiated in 2007, the actors involved in the project investigated different alternatives and even contributed to the development of a prototype tablet based on the same technology as today's Kindle. The prototype was never put into production and the project ended in 2010 when the first iPad was introduced and became the standard device for media productions.

This paper delves into the era preceding the launch of the iPad, examining the conceptualizations influencing discussions about the nature and future of newspapers. Employing the framework of *imaginary media archaeology* (Kluitenberg 2011), it investigates unrealized media devices designed for newspaper reading within the Swedish e-paper project. This includes prototypes, visual and textual representations, as well as internal discussion reports. By spotlighting projects that faltered or lingered at the ideation stage, this methodology disrupts the conventional linear narrative of progress in media history and underscores the contingency inherent in technological development. The paper argues that this Swedish e-paper project reveals how the death of the newspaper was always already inherent in the news' paper itself, as the paper, confronted with its failed e-twin, emerges as what Krämer (2015) has framed as *the dying messenger*. However, as the news' paper died, the news themselves lives on in other material (plat)forms whose inherent mortality is yet to be imagined.

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COH05 Imagined pasts: Troubled pathways, disruptive discourses and dreamy visions of (digital) media futures

PP 0518 The troubled path of Cineca: Success, crisis and disruptions in the history of the main Italian supercomputing center

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Relying on a preliminary set of primary and secondary sources this presentation aims to identify the main causes behind the success of Cineca, an interuniversity consortium founded in 1969 by four universities (Bologna, Firenze, Padova and Venezia) and the support of the Italian Ministry of Education (Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione).

The consortium was meant to provide computational services for scientific research in Italy. Today, Cineca is the main Italian supercomputing center, recognized worldwide for its important role, as it hosts "Leonardo" the 6th most powerful supercomputers worldwide according to the Top500 list. Cineca is also an important actor of the European strategy in science computational support and high performance computing (HPC). However, despite its importance, there are no proper historical studies tracing its origins and developments.

In the 1960s, Cineca was just one among the computing centers in Italy, but over the decades it become the most prominent one in the country. The history of Cineca, as for many other digitization projects (Balbi & Magaudda 2022), is a story of success and failures. For example, in 1985 the Italian Ministry of Education gave Cineca the resources to buy a Cray X-MP/12, the first supercomputer to use vector processors and the latest model distributed in Europe. This technology brought the consortium to the top of its glory. Following some key governmental changes, though, the subsequent lack of economic support, alongside the heavy expenses undertaken so far, put Cineca in a difficult position so much that in 1989 was thought to be near its end.

Tracing the history of Cineca is relevant for several reasons:

- first, Cineca's history highlights the deep connections between science, digitization, and politics, which – as Mobach and Felt point out – is having greater importance in debates around policy and beyond nowadays (Mobach&Felt, 2022);
- second, Cineca's development enlightens a privileged case study for drawing the political discourses lying behind supercomputers;
- finally, drawing Cineca's history provides historians with a privileged lens to analyze the geopolitical order of the Cold War, years in which Cineca was founded, grew, and nearly died.

The demand for a continuous increase in computational capability by hard sciences places supercomputers at the heart of the relation between scientific communities, digital technologies and nation-states, as the high costs in public infrastructure and computing competences can only be sustained by governments. Those interlinks are continuously highlighted in Cineca's case. As Misa pointed out (Misa, 2007) computing practices are a product of local circumstances and distinct cultures. This case study helps us to have a wider knowledge of the different computing practices that changed the world.

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COH05 Imagined pasts: Troubled pathways, disruptive discourses and dreamy visions of (digital) media futures

PP 0519 Retracing closure strategy of controversial interpretation with discourse analysis: The case of the Web in the press and TV

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The Web started to be developed at CERN in 1989 and it quickly spread beyond the boundaries of the laboratory, reaching social worlds other than science. The narrative of the founding fathers of the Web emphasizes their role in its promotion and diffusion among experts. Press articles and TV programs also played a role by introducing the web to the general public. However, sometimes these media reported an interpretation of the web that triggered a reaction of CERN employees and the global community of web developers.

This research adopts the Social Construction of Technology approach (SCOT) and introduces the term "controversial interpretation" to denote a set of meanings associated with a technology by a relevant social group, leading to controversy and thus, specific reactions from other social groups seeking closure. Methodologically, this study proposes a new and robust integration of SCOT with discourse analysis to elucidate how social groups align the others with a specific interpretation. The tools considered are modality, exclusion of social actors, and metaphor. The nature of sources allows for the systematic analysis of modality used in the reactions of CERN employees and web developers against the interpretations presented in Press and TV, explaining how social groups attempted to align with their interpretation. Additionally, metaphor and the exclusion of social actors can be selectively applied to detect controversial elements of the interpretation and to explain a particular strategy for alignment, respectively.

The primary sources consist of two collections: the "World Wide Web, WWW (Archives)" from CERN and the WWW-talk mailing. The former was classified for 30 years and comprises non-digital documents collected during the development of the web. The latter is the mailing list of web developers requested by Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the web, to discuss about technicalities, news and everything related to the improvements of the web.

In these two collections, I identified three different controversial interpretations of the press and TV. The first is the web interpreted as the Internet. Some articles and TV programs confused the role of the web with that of the Internet. The second is the Web interpreted as a U.S technology. The web was invented in Europe by a European organization but sometimes its origins are not mentioned or are wrongly indicated. The last case is the Web interpreted as the Mosaic browser. Mosaic was a very popular browser and sometimes was presented as the Web. In addition to these three cases, the discourse analysis of certain WWW-talk messages reveals web developers' perspective on the reason behind the controversial interpretations and the solutions they put forth to address the issue.

COH05 Imagined pasts: Troubled pathways, disruptive discourses and dreamy visions of (digital) media futures

PP 0520 Disruptive discourses of the digital revolution: Sociotechnical imaginaries of the Dutch web between 1994–2004

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The early 90s marked the period for most Western countries in which the digital revolution began as a result of the public availability and spread of the World Wide Web. The novel communication network brought forward a range of social (dis)orders actualized in understandings like the information society or new economy. The Netherlands was home to many influential Web initiatives that each interpreted ontological, internet ideals (i.e. freedom, openness, creativity) differently. These meanings – often expressed through common metaphors like information highway or global village – are highly context-dependent; while the United States' cultural hegemony drove some interpretations of the Web, others are best situated in Europe's or, more specifically, Amsterdam's particular creative culture in the 90s. To understand these various meanings, the research identified sociotechnical imaginaries of the Dutch Web between 1994 and 2004, focusing on disruptive discourses and positioning them in historical contexts. This time is critical to study because the decade before Web 2.0 was a dense period including the disruption of traditional media, the emergence of various sociotechnical orders, and the normalization of a web culture that influenced our contemporary media landscapes.

The research affirms that technologies are never merely material but are actively constructed in discourse and through practice. Their meaning and uses are imagined by actors who are embedded in specific socio-cultural and historical contexts, and who have different degrees of discursive efficacy. The meaning of the Web is, therefore, a site of discursive struggle and power dynamics. The concept of 'sociotechnical imaginaries' (Jasanoff & Kim, 2015, p. 4) is employed to thoroughly study these phenomena. By deconstructing sociotechnical imaginaries and connecting them to their historical contexts, one can gain insight into the relationships between meaning (how

was the Web interpreted), materiality (how were meanings inscribed in the Web), and morality (how life ought to be lived enabled through the Web). The study focuses specifically on the usage of metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008; Markham, 2003) and its role in the emergence of utopian, dystopian, hegemonic, and ideological imaginaries (Flichy, 2007).

Based on a critical discourse analysis of various Dutch media and canonical science books, the research demonstrates that multiple, interconnected sociotechnical imaginaries of the Web existed between 1994 and 2004 which can be summarized in five themes (civic, societal, economic, cultural, ontological). The study reveals an evolution in socio-digital orders transitioning from early grassroots democratic ideals to hopeful entrepreneurial visions, culminating in more critical perspectives post-2000. Within this analysis, hegemonic and counter-hegemonic narratives are identified which contribute to alternative readings of an idealized past and thus demystify grand notions.

Methodologically, the research demonstrates how an explorative analysis of discourse can be leveraged to critically examine historical phenomena, revealing the production, enactment, and dynamics of power within social (dis) orders. Additionally, it contributes to the historiography of the Dutch web which enables a comparative analysis between under-studied narratives against the backdrop of dominant interpretations in the field of Internet History. This comparative aspect enriches our understanding of diverse, often underrepresented, perspectives of our digital reality.

COH06 Controlled pasts: Cases of censorship, connection, and control in communication history

PP 0627 Postal connection Venice-Constantinople: Control over international information flows and the soft power of a Renaissance State

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The control over international flows of information constitutes one of the core elements of the soft power of a modern state. This claim has been previously studied by communication historians mainly in the case of the nineteenth century telegraph or the twentieth century broadcast. However, very few academic sources examine this claim from the perspective of the postal service. Working within this premise, this study examines the strategic advantages gained by controlling the postal exchange between Europe and the Middle East during the late sixteenth/early seventeenth century. This objective was achieved by the Republic of Venice, which unilaterally dominated most of the commercial and political information flows reaching the continent from Constantinople – to the point that French King Francis I (ruled 1515–1547) famously said: "There is no news from the Levant if not by way of Venice." The earliest notions about the dispatches of postal couriers between Venice and Constantinople are from the 1330s and their movements are sporadically documented during the ensuing centuries. However, the earliest known contract establishing a regular connection dates only from the 1530s. It outlines a bifurcated postal line that relied upon a small fleet of postal boats transferring mail between Venice and Kotor, then carried in bags across the Balkans by groups of Montenegrin pedestrian couriers. Their destination was the office of the Venetian envoy (*bailo*) in Pera/Constantinople, from where other couriers were dispatched further along, providing regular connections with European trading enclaves in Aleppo, Damascus, and Tripoli (Lebanon). Several other European powers (e.g., the French or Polish royal posts) repeatedly attempted to undermine the Venetian postal monopoly with the Middle East, but – as this study demonstrates – their efforts always failed. To preclude any potential competition, the Venetians opened their postal service for free to the rest of Europe and in the second half of the sixteenth century the government subsidized the connection with Constantinople in the amount of 3,250 gold ducats a year. By the early seventeenth century, this service was almost a victim of its own success: the mail was shipped in bi-weekly intervals from the Ducal Palace, the operation employed five boats staffed by 40 sailors, and the mail bags were carried by a cohort of 150 couriers. The total journey took more than three weeks. Yet all this was considered a worthy investment by Venice, since it forced other European powers to retain their embassies and postal offices in the city. In essence, maintenance of this postal monopoly enabled the Republic of Venice to survive its growing political obscurity and to remain a relevant player in the European context at the time when it was fast losing its former economic positions as well as its naval dominance in the Mediterranean. The republic unilaterally controlled the postal exchange between Europe and the Middle East until the mid-eighteenth century, when its dominance was successfully challenged by the Habsburg posts of Vienna.

COH06 Controlled pasts: Cases of censorship, connection, and control in communication history

PP 0628 Revolutionary television and the memory of the dictatorship – Practices of torture and imprisonment in televised journalism (1974–1976)

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The longevity of the Portuguese dictatorship (1933–1974), crystallized in the expression Estado Novo, is due to the effectiveness of a cultural and symbolic imaginary that legitimized Salazar's policies. Part of this imaginary builds on the repudiation of the previous regime – anti-republicanism, anti-parliamentarianism and anti-liberalism – the other part founded new values operationalized by the official ideological apparatus – nationalism, parochialism, personalized power and a strong and authoritarian state. This communication focuses on the reverse movement, that is, how the popular and political culture that anchored the dictatorship was dismantled and replaced by revolutionary values, identified with progressivism, equality and cosmopolitanism.

The media, particularly television, played a central political role in constructing the revolutionary imaginary and the new civic culture. As democracy was invented, values clashed, and the new imaginary never entirely coincided and was experienced agonistically. In this context, we will look at the documentary programs produced by Portuguese television (RTP) between 1974 and 1975, focused on denouncing the repressive practices of the Estado Novo, namely imprisonment for political reasons and torture.

We argue that television was the main builder of the traumatic memory of the dictatorship, unveiling episodes from the (very) recent past that remained unknown to most of the Portuguese population. Outside of family experience, politicized niches or close circles, most people were kept ignorant of the horrors of political prisons, massive intimidation, the impact of censorship and the lack of freedom of expression. After April 25, under military administration and driven by a political program aimed at revolutionary objectives, RTP became the people's historian, making visible the stories of the victims and survivors. This movement articulates a broader discussion about the social mission of (television) journalism in the revolutionary context, with emerging journalistic practices and formats and with the disputes over memory that arose between the various political parties involved in gaining social relevance and visibility.

This communication aims to contribute to a critical knowledge of the symbolic processes that helped to construct the democratic culture in Portugal, impacting the current perceptions and operations related to collective memory and national identity.

COH06 Controlled pasts: Cases of censorship, connection, and control in communication history

PP 0629 Idealised pasts: How newspapers portrayed the 1940 commemoration of the Exhibition of the Portuguese World

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This study aims to understand how the Portuguese press portrayed the inauguration of the Exhibition of the Portuguese World in the year of 1940. This event was organized as a moment to embrace and showcase the Portuguese Empire, its tradition and history, idealising the past of what was once one of the biggest empires of the world. How the newspapers portrayed this celebration in the mist of the Second World War is what the main question aims to answer.

The *Estado Novo* regime, instated in Portugal in 1933 and led by António de Oliveira Salazar, was characterized as a dictatorship embedded in tradition and moral values.

The regime Secretariat of National Propaganda and Censorship Office worked together in determining what was newsworthy (Ribeiro, 2015) and creating the narrative of an historical Portuguese empire and his colonies, promoting the regime itself and celebrating Portuguese nationalism (Gori, 2018).

In the year of 1940 Portugal was not only celebrating the birth of the nation in 1140, but also its independence from Spain in 1640. As such, this year is recall by researches and historians as a moment of strong presence and dominance of national propaganda, namely regarding the celebration of the Portuguese empire and its greatness (Ribeiro, 2019).

Departing from this landscape, this investigation tries to understand how the commemoration of this historical dates, that culminated in the Exhibition of the Portuguese World, where portrayed in the two main daily newspapers *O Século* and *Diário de Notícias*, and how it compares with the news outlet *Diário da Manhã* from the regimes political party (*União Nacional*).

Taking the front covers of the newspapers and the sections dedicated to the *Centennial Commemorations*, one can perceive the impact that the national propaganda had in the portraying of the Exhibition. In keeping with

the regimes agenda of not reporting on the Second World War and, at the same time, enhance the national achievements, not only was there a clear prevalence given to the celebrations, but also the chosen words are of national pride, patriotic value and imperialistic achievements. At the same time, and presenting the celebrations as an event that would gather every corner of the country and his colonies, the newspapers are meticulous in the covering of the activities taking place in various locations, along with the international personalities that where present in different moments of the event. This apparent normality of events and everyday life takes centre stage to a fundamental moment of the Second World War (the fallen of France), and is paramount to understand the efforts the national propaganda took in order to keep the idea of a country neutral and unaffected by the war and, at the same time, with an historical background that showcases the magnificent Portuguese Empire.

Overall, the role of the Censorship Office and the national propaganda is clear in assuring that the newspapers would publish positive news, that enhanced the Portuguese achievements, idealising for the 1940 a future where the past was to be celebrated and preserved.

COH06 Controlled pasts: Cases of censorship, connection, and control in communication history

PP 0630 Monkey King's Nordic Tour: China's journey to the West via North

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In April 1979 Finnish television broadcasted a rarity: an animation film *Monkey King: Havoc in Heaven* (*Da naio tian gong* 1961) from the People's Republic of China. Today considered as one of the masterpieces of Chinese animation, the film was not in favor of Mao Zedong. It was shelved during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and got its European re-premiere after Mao's death in 1978. The film was thus perfect marker of the cultural and economic opening of China, and perfect call card for China's cultural diplomacy and soft power in the West.

In the Nordic countries, the television broadcasting of *Monkey King* accompanied the Nordic tour of the vice-premier Gen Biao's in the spring of 1979. The tour began from Stockholm, and then continued to Helsinki, Oslo, and finally Reykjavik. The tour faced public criticism because of China's attack to Vietnam earlier that spring. But the film was warmly welcomed and highly appreciated by film critics and Nordic tv-audiences. The most favorable reception the film received in Sweden, where the film was broadcasted with Swedish voice over narration by the famous Swedish author, Hans Alfredson. Perhaps because of the popularity of Alfredson's voice over, the Swedish version of *Monkey King* was also released in VHS-format in 1983.

In this paper it is suggested that the tv-broadcasting of *Monkey King* in the Nordic countries in 1978–1979 was a determined act of public diplomacy operated by Chinese embassies, driven by politically motivated aims to improve the national image of the People's Republic of China, and to pave the way to prosperous trade relations between China and the Nordic countries. The paper recollects the beginning of the new global order, the economic rise of China to a global super power in digital communication technologies. Looking back in history, the early phase consisted of persistent small-scale maneuvers of cultural diplomacy, such as circulating an animation film between Nordic public service television companies.

COH06 Controlled pasts: Cases of censorship, connection, and control in communication history

PP 0631 Terrorscapes of modernity: brainwashing, human automatons, and the welfare citizen in Sweden and Denmark, 1950–1970

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In a time of international tensions and disinformation warfare paired with warnings of the disruptiveness of AI technologies, historical inquiries into Cold War imaginaries about human automatons can help us to reflect on mental resilience in its sociotechnical context, and to problematize both past and current discussions about social (dis)order. This paper investigates the conceptual career of "brainwashing" in two Scandinavian countries, Sweden and Denmark, throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

The choice of these countries is key to our argument. In conventional Scandinavian historiography, the postwar period is understood in terms of the realisation of the welfare state model led by strong social democratic governments (e.g. Finn Christiansen et al 2006). The period has been framed as an optimistic era with an expanding industry, economy, and collective vision for the society where universalism, equality, and solidarity are ensured by a protective state, a dreamscape of modernity (Jasanoff & Kim 2015) with bright expectations for the future based on solid advances in science and technology. Less highlighted in existing scholarship are the more dystopian narratives, that were not only surfacing in the 1970s with student leftist movements critiquing previous postwar visions, but existing throughout the period. Indeed, daydreams and nightmares, such as the decapacitated human automaton, co-existed.

In our paper, we show how the concept of brainwash and the image of the human automaton were introduced in the early 1950s in the wake of the Korean War and follow their trajectories until 1970. Our sources are leading newspapers of various political orientations, as well as domestic and translated books by psychologists and laymen that were published and circulated at the time. In order to identify general patterns as well as specific differences, we use a scalable model of approaching the sources, including both a distant reading of published newspaper material in the two relevant national databases, and qualitative close readings of selected reportages and articles from both countries.

Our findings show how the concept almost immediately, after a short period of semantic instability, became a battleground for different political agendas, but also how it developed in the late 1950s into a dark narrative of the dangers facing collective freedoms, security, and democracy. In its Scandinavian version – counter to that in some other Western countries, and most notably the US (Carruthers 2009; Selisker 2016) – this tapped into discussions of the resilient welfare citizen, modernity, and social equality. Here, we find similarities between the two selected countries. But there are also differences, one being the higher number of academic books in Sweden. This, we argue, must be seen in relation to the higher degree of scientification and theorisation of civil defence, psychological defence and propaganda in Sweden, which we have discussed elsewhere (Bjørnsson et al, forthcoming 2024; Cronqvist 2019). In scientific circles as well as in public discourse, brainwashing was a terrorscape of modernity and social disorder with not only absent-minded and unfree, but also unproductive and un-solidaric, individuals.

COH07 Controversial pasts: Commemorative conflicts, dominant discourses, and disruptive voices

PP 0887 Ideas of the public sphere in the labor movement: Concepts of a communication order between ideals and fears

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The European socialist labor movement since the 19th century strove for a fundamentally different social order, including communication and media. Regarding the public sphere, communication freedom was a key programmatic demand in view of state repression (Hardt, 2000). At the same time, actors in the movement perceived the emerging commercial media order as a threat (Löblich & Venema, 2020). Against this backdrop of ideals and fears, the question arises as to how representatives of the movement imagined an order of public communication that went beyond the rising bourgeois public sphere and a party press that had to assert itself in a commercial media system. Therefore, the paper addresses the research problem of which concepts of the public sphere the socialist labor movement pursued and how these changed over time. It thus extends previous research, which looked at public communication in the labor movement particularly from an organizational perspective, to include the history of ideas dimension of (proletarian) public spheres (Calhoun, 2010).

For this purpose, qualitative textual analyses of books and theoretical journals of the then leading German labor movement are conducted for the period between the advent of the movement as well as the emergence of a commercial media market in the mid 19th century and the rise of fascism in 1933. The analyses are guided by a heuristic framework derived from public sphere theory. The categories comprise actors and their biographies as well as their ideas regarding public communication and, first, the relationship to politics, economy, media, and science, second, arenas of interaction, assembly, or media publics, and third, the respective roles of communicators and recipients (Imhof, 2011, 90–99). The publications of the key figures Ferdinand Lassalle, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and August Bebel are analyzed. Further, books and contributions of less prominent actors in the intertwined milieu of youth, education, media and party work to social democratic and communist theoretical journals (*Die Neue Zeit*, *Die Internationale*), independent leftist-intellectual magazines (*Die Weltbühne*), and professional journals of socialist journalists (*Mitteilungen des Vereins Arbeiterpresse*) are examined.

The analyses reveal the tension between the basic principles of communication freedom and non-commercial organization, which, for example, Bebel combined in an outlook for an expansion of the public sphere in a socialist society. While social democracy increasingly focused on its own press and defended freedom of the press in the bourgeois-democratic society, individual representatives developed more radical ideas on the socialization of newspapers or film industry. By dealing with past discourses, the proposal highlights how communication and social orders were challenged and hints to alternative approaches that gain in relevance in view of current crises.

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COH07 Controversial pasts: Commemorative conflicts, dominant discourses, and disruptive voices

PP 0888 Nationalisation of childhood during conflict: An analysis of the nationalist discourse in the Turkish Cypriot children's magazines published in the late 1960s

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Conflicts influenced many societies throughout the twentieth century, and Cyprus was no exception. From the early twentieth century, Cyprus bore witness to armed conflicts driven by two ethnic-nationalist movements of the major communities living on the island, namely Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. The late 1950s and 1960s marked the emergence of intense inter-/intra-communal armed conflicts, known as the Cyprus Problem, profoundly impacting the lives of every woman, man, and child on the island. In this context, where the warring parties attempt to align childhood with their discursive constructions of the self and the enemy (Jabri, 1996), childhood inevitably intersects the nationalist discourses in myriad ways. Children's magazines of this period reflect not only the harrowing violence but also the hegemonic nationalist discourses, exacerbating conflicts in Cyprus.

This study examines the construction of nationalist discourse within children-focused media, using a Turkish Cypriot children's magazine as a sample against the backdrop of the Cyprus Problem, to understand how childhood is incited, suppressed, and moulded to embrace the hegemonic claims of the nationalist discourse. The theoretical backbone of this research is developed through Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory (DT). As a part of a poststructuralist tradition, DT sees discourse as a framework of intelligibility providing meaning to social phenomena. Accordingly, this research approaches nationalism as a discourse and considers childhood a discursive construct whose meaning is subject to political contestations.

This research focuses on a particular Turkish Cypriot children's magazine, Tuncer, published between 1965 and 1970, a period when armed conflicts gradually escalated and left their mark on the social body, with war and military institutions becoming internal to society and the hegemony of the Turkish (Cypriot) nationalist discourse became more sedimented in Turkish Cypriot community. The selected data comprise twelve issues released between January 1967 and May 1968. This timeframe is pivotal, coinciding with significant conflict escalations involving (para-)military groups.

To better understand how the nationalist discourse is articulated in these children's magazines, a discourse-theoretical model is developed first through the discourse-theoretical rereading of the literature on nationalism and childhood. For the analysis, this research employs the discourse-theoretical analysis (DTA), an analytical variant of DT developed by Carpentier and De Cleen (2007) as a method to operationalise DT by building a bridge between DT and qualitative research methodology, particularly through the activation of the methodological tool of the sensitising concepts. Additionally, multimodal analysis techniques are employed to support DTA. Methodologically, this research adopts a retroductive (Glynos & Howarth, 2007) approach engaging in iterative exchanges between the theoretical framework and empirical analysis, both of which cross-fertilise each other. This also implies that the theoretical framework is not a rigidly pre-determined template. Although the analysis proceeds cyclically, for practical reasons, this paper first sketches the theoretical components and then reports on the analysis.

COH07 Controversial pasts: Commemorative conflicts, dominant discourses, and disruptive voices

PP 0889 Broadcasting agency in the Portuguese empire: Disrupting the dominant discourse through media tactics

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This paper will discuss how the private radio clubs established in the Portuguese former colonies demonstrate the failure of the State's imperial broadcasting strategy, while also representing a tactical appropriation of the new technology by the expats whom the Lisbon government denied a central role in the administration of the overseas territories (Rosas, 2005), restringing their power in the context of the Empire. The success of these stations established outside the official imperial policy was later on recognized by the regime itself during the wars of independence. The Portuguese government would then turn to these private stations to disseminate colonial propaganda and later on inaugurated state-controlled broadcasters in Angola and Mozambique that were modelled on those stations.

When addressing the official stations established in the colonies in the 1960s, a particular focus will be placed on Voice of Mozambique and Voice of Angola, both used as weapons of war to counter the pro-independence messages that reached the Angolan and Mozambican population through shortwave broadcasts produced in the neighbouring new-born nations, namely Tanzania and the Republic of Congo. The programmes from the independence movements constitute an example of how radio technologies became tactical weapons used by those fighting the colonial domain.

Based on documental research conducted in Lisbon, Maputo and Luanda, the chapter will focus on the development of broadcasting institutions by the Portuguese colonial regime, the Portuguese expats and the African independence movements. It will be argued that the most successful radio stations in the Portuguese Empire were those set up by social groups that best understood the colonial context and the aspirations of those who were listening in Africa. Such groups took a hands-on approach to broadcasting, testing and altering technological infrastructures and programmes instead of following an overarching strategy set by the Lisbon government. This, I believe, will demonstrate how the white expats and the independence movements managed to use broadcasting to acquire recognition among radio listeners in the colonies. Ultimately this chapter will showcase how those who aim to challenge established power structures can do so by the appropriation of media products and technologies, i.e. by resorting to what De Certeau (1984) defined as tactics.

COH07 Controversial pasts: Commemorative conflicts, dominant discourses, and disruptive voices

PP 0890 Shared memory? A comparative analysis of (post-)communist remembrance in Germany and Poland

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As public memory can never fully represent private recollections, every society is marked by memory gaps. Taking Poland and (East) Germany as examples, this paper uses a social constructivist-poststructuralist approach and a qualitative research design to investigate how the (post-)communist past is remembered in private everyday discourse and its differentiation from the hegemonic public memory discourse. The underlying question asks whether each country has developed distinct memory gaps due to their divergent post-Cold War trajectories.

Both countries serve as excellent objects of comparison due to their parallels in hegemonic memory practices: In post-1989 Poland, anti-communism became the default position for most politicians, intellectuals, and journalists. The same is true for the German case: Historical analyses and empirical studies generally conclude that an anti-communist stance characterizes the public memory of the GDR in Germany. These anti-communist tendencies fit into a more comprehensive overall picture of anti-communist rhetoric in the European Union.

To analyze how the hegemonic public discourse of memory manifests in the everyday discourse of the Polish and East German population and how it is distinguished from the latter, we conducted interviews and focus groups in both countries from December 2018 to May 2020 (N = 120). For this, we used the theoretical concept of "everyday discourse" according to Waldschmidt et al. (2008), which is based on Berger and Luckmann (1991) and Foucault (1972). Demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, educational background, and origin were varied to obtain as broad a picture as possible of everyday discourse.

Our results show that there is a mnemonic convergence of narratives between the two country cases: recalled memories about the communist era are strikingly similar in Poland and East Germany. Negative and positive memories exist side by side, and nostalgic views and criticism are interwoven in the image of the past—in part independent of generational affiliation, as memories of the generations that actively experienced communism are passed on to children and grandchildren. Unsurprisingly, private memory is thus far more differentiated than anti-communist public memory. In both cases, however, subjective knowledge (whether first-hand or transmitted) about the communist past is interpreted against the background of hegemonic knowledge, which spans a normative value framework that no one can defy.

Where the two countries differ relates to the legitimacy of the public-private memory gap. While in Poland, respondents accentuate the perspective of an elitist constructed political and media discourse as a carrier of hegemonic narratives, which is entirely different from their lived everyday experience, in East Germany, this argument plays out along historically situated quasi-ethnic dividing lines. Thus, the study empirically shows that the perception and interpretation of the private-public memory gap determines the societal (re)production of group-specific identities in mnemonic conflicts.

COH07 Controversial pasts: Commemorative conflicts, dominant discourses, and disruptive voices

PP 0891 The structuring effects of the Stasi discourse – A history of the Berliner Zeitung since 1989

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For a long time, the discourse about the socialist past of East Germany in the leading German media has focused on repression in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), above all on the 'Stasi' (the State Security Service). While research has focused on its consequences for East German memories so far, we ask how this hegemonic media discourse has structured journalism and thus the communicative preconditions of an East-West dialogue. The *Berliner Zeitung* – a former party-controlled paper, privatized and sold to the West German publisher *Gruner + Jahr* in 1990 – is a case suited to pursue this question. From early on until today, the *Berliner Zeitung* has received media

attention due to so-called Stasi-cases, at first after a study in 1994 investigated Stasi-newsroom relations. In 2008, the appointment of a 'honorary council' by the paper highlighted again the special position of the *Berliner Zeitung* in the discourse. This council studied Stasi cases within the editorial team and gave advice regarding future employments. A Stasi contact of the newest, GDR born, owner of the paper, put into public visibility by Springer's newspaper *Die Welt* in 2019, forced the newspaper to take action once again.

Using the example of the *Berliner Zeitung*, we analyse how the Stasi discourse has structured the organization, its institutions and its journalistic actors in a long-term perspective. How did this discourse shape the relationship between East and West within the *Berliner Zeitung* after 1989 until today, and thus the preconditions for what the newspaper offered its readers?

The theoretical framework of our study combines Foucault's discourse theory, Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus and capital and assumptions of neo-institutionalism regarding (newspaper) organization and institution. This framework enables us to develop a differentiated notion of journalism and its influencing factors at the micro, meso and macro level. A system of categories developed on this basis guides the qualitative research process. Empirically, our study is based on interviews with journalists, document and content analyses. Our interview sample consists of journalists who are (or were) employed at the newspaper. We include a broad variety of interviewees and recruit according to origin (East/West), gender, duration of employment, position in the editorial office. Document and content analyses draw on selected articles of the *Berliner Zeitung*, coverage of leading media, documents as well as publications by other actors involved. Our findings will, in a differentiated and contextualized way, describe how the Stasi discourse structured journalistic working conditions, e.g. employment and career conditions, influenced newsroom 'policies' regarding addressing the GDR past as well as journalistic self-understanding, both on the part of West German as well as East German journalists.

Our study sheds light on the relation between discourses and the (re-)production of the public sphere, or in other words between discourses and the representation (or marginalization) of social groups. Moreover, we contribute to the research about the communicative conditions of post-socialist transformations and the apparent (discursive) East-West divide. This divide seems to be particularly relevant in view of the current situation in Europe.

CLP01 Public service and the public interest in European Media

PP 0046 Framing Nordic public service media

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The aim of the article is to analyse how the role and remit of public service media (PSM) and its relationship to current media and societal developments is framed in recent media policy discourses in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark

Introduction

The appropriate role and remit of public service media is a perennially contested topic in all countries where such media exist. Even in the Nordic countries, where the role of public service media has remained relatively stable, its role has been subject to challenges from various directions, including both market-liberal and populist political arguments, commercial media industry lobbying, and the power of global digital platforms.

In part, these challenges reflect changing material realities, such as conflicting economic interests and changing technological realities. On the other hand, the debates also reflect discursive contestations over the definition of public service, the values it is associated with, and its framing as a problem or a solution in relation to various developments in society and media (e.g. Puppis & Ali 2023). For some, PSM have gained renewed relevance as a potential antidote to the problems, such as disinformation, polarisation and the crisis of commercial news media. For others, PSM is a relic with declining relevance in the changing media landscape.

In this paper, we analyse how the remit and contribution of PSM have been framed in Nordic media policy documents and assessments in the last decade. Through framing analysis of recent reports and policy documents, Entman(1993). We determine the values associated with public service as well as the problem definitions, causal interpretation and possible remedies invoked in the respective PSM policies.

In line with the tradition of interpretative or discursive policy analysis, our aim is primarily not to compare the policy actions taken by the four countries. We do not regard the policy documents simply as descriptions of the state of the PSM policy in different Nordic countries. Instead, we argue that the specific framings of the policy context and current developments entrenched in policy debates can have a crucial impact on future policy options and considerations.

Research questions:

- How is the role of PSM framed in relation to current problems and changes in the media landscape in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark?
- How do the national differences in the framing of the PSM remits manifest ideologically?

The material consists of 154 documents from the years 2013–2023 from Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland.

These documents include all (relevant) official government policy reports related to the PSM ethos, workings, and assessments. This group provide an outside view of the PSM providers. To compare and contrast, we analyse all internal yearly reports of the PSMs. Finally, the national government programmes are added to cover the overarching national perspective.

Preliminary results indicate that the Nordic PSM's are largely on defence, reacting, not acting. The ongoing platformization, a perceived increase in competition, and the fragmentation and individualization of media consumption all greatly affect their domains and duties. As a result, in what has become a turf war, their obligations to citizens have become incoherent and elusive.

CLP01 Public service and the public interest in European Media

PP 0047 Advancing AI governance: Comparative analysis of European public service media policies and guidelines

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Algorithms and automation have become widespread in news media, increasingly determining editorial decisions. The integration of artificial intelligence-driven tools within media enterprises brings forth novel opportunities and advantages, both from the perspective of innovation and daily journalistic practice. Public service media (PSM) also benefit from the possibilities offered by the introduction and implementation of AI systems. However, its use and experimentation have introduced new challenges and risks related to the fulfillment of the core values committed to by these organizations (*e.g.*, universality, independence, diversity, or distinctiveness). Therefore, the application of AI for production, selection, filtering, or distribution of content becomes a complex issue that raises concerns on data protection, the production of inaccurate or biased outputs, the creation of filter bubbles, or the lack of transparency, among others. Considering this scenario, several PSM have formulated guiding principles, policies,

standards, and/or ethical frameworks based on public service values to serve as a reference point when integrating AI and automation within their companies.

In particular, the aim of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of the proposals that specifically European PSM have designed to prevent the compromise or impact on the core values of these organizations resulting from the use of this technology. Four research questions are posed in this research:

RQ1: In which AI-driven tools or systems do the guidelines focus?

RQ2: What applications are permitted and prohibited within the media company?

RQ3: Which public service values and journalism principles are emphasized in the guidelines?

RQ4: What role is assigned to the human professional in the implementation of technology, and in which processes or applications is transparency advocated?

To address this inquiries, this research relies on a mixed-method design, combining a quantitative content analysis and a qualitative thematic analysis –for this purpose, an adaptation of the codebook developed by Becker et al. (2023) is used–. A total of 11 European PSM AI guidelines are included in the study (BR, Yle, SRF, BBC, RTS, ZDF, SR, SVT, SWR, VRT, and RTVE). Although it is an ongoing research, the data collected thus far substantiates that these proposals share three central purposes: safeguarding the legitimate adoption of AI systems, ensuring a responsible use of technology, and upholding the mission of public service inherent to the operations of these organizations.

CLP01 Public service and the public interest in European Media

PP 0048 Ensuring visibility of European public service media? An analysis of policy, industry and academic views on prominence measures in Belgium

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Public service media, in a reconfigured platformized and online TV landscape, fear for the access and visibility of their services and urged policymakers to ensure their prominence (Garcia Leiva & Mazzoli, 2023). Notions of prominence, findability and discoverability are indeed advancing at the national and European policy level. The 2018 Audiovisual Media Services Directive stipulates the optional provision for Member States to "*take measures to ensure the appropriate prominence of audiovisual media services of general interest*" (Article 7a).

However, the implementation of prominence is complex (Rozgonyi, 2023). First, there is a definitional confusion between the concepts of 'prominence' and 'discoverability' (Mazzoli & Tambini, 2020; Johnson, 2020). Moreover, discussions consider a variety of spaces (e.g., EPGs, hardware shortcuts, TV apps, smart TV interfaces, smartphone apps, voice assistants and streaming service catalogues). Second, Article 7a allows for arbitrary classifications of what is considered a service of 'general interest', opening a regulatory battlefield between players who advocate their services or parts thereof to be recognized as 'general interest', and those who prefer a limited interpretation. Third, considering the lack of algorithmic transparency, monitoring prominence measures becomes difficult. National Regulatory Authorities, particularly, in line with other forms of platform co-regulation, place the responsibility to demonstrate how prominence is ensured, on platforms, with limited options to validate claims (Ranaivoson et al, 2023). Four, policy contexts in Europe differ markedly. Additionally, path-dependency with existing measures (Kostovska et al. 2022), definitions (e.g. requirements for *must carry/must offer* or events of 'major interest') (Lefever, 2010) exist. Consequently, the regulatory fit differs for each market. Thus, transposing lessons across policy contexts becomes difficult.

Most Member States that adopted Article 7a, transposed the article into national laws without further clarification. Measures in Member States that did opt for a more thorough clarification, are diverse and context-specific. Considering these complexities, this paper presents a case study of Flanders (Belgium) which reveals the tensions and interests surrounding Article 7a. In 2021, Article 7a was transposed in Flanders into the Media Decree, but the government committed to implement further definitions and measures. The paper employs a media policy analysis approach (Braman, 2004; Freedman, 2014; Van den Bulck et al. 2019) to identify different stakeholder positions in the policy process and address how stakeholders attempt to set the agenda by introducing or refraining from introducing measures. Theoretically, we frame our research within existing scholarly work on 'policy windows' (Sundet & Ihlebaek, 2020), 'policy transfer' (Benson & Jordan, 2011) and 'Advocacy Coalition Frameworks' (Van den Bulck & Donders, 2014). The stakeholder inquiry relies on 20 interviews and written consultations conducted between 10/2023–04/2024 with public, private, and regional broadcasters, distributors, smart TV manufactures, content producers, consumer organizations, media and legal scholars, the media regulator, and streaming platforms. Key findings concern (i) the different interests of industry, policy, and academic stakeholders, (ii) the legal thresholds of implementing proposed measures in Flanders, (iii) the desirability and risks of introducing prominence measures and, (iv) their enforceability.

CLP01 Public service and the public interest in European Media

PP 0049 Transparency as an ordering force in PSB governance: Insights from a comparative study

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Transparency is a highly influential concept of modern governance across sectors (e.g., de Fine Licht & Naurin, 2022). Within the media industry, public service broadcasters (PSB) in particular have faced demands for greater transparency, which has been praised as a key condition for maintaining public legitimacy (e.g., EBU, 2015). Public value-style reforms and EU interventions in the name of competition law have contributed to the implementation of PSB transparency mechanisms in many European countries (e.g., Donders, 2021). Based on a theoretical model that brings together frameworks from interdisciplinary transparency studies and findings from qualitative research on four European countries, this contribution aims to assess how transparency functions as a form of ordering (Flyverbom, 2015) in the context of PSB policymaking and governance.

The underlying conceptualization is less concerned with measuring the amount of PSB transparency or whether it achieves its declared goals, such as increased trust or legitimacy. Rather, it focuses on how transparency is used to 'negotiate underlying social problems' (Heimstädt & Dobusch, 2020, p. 9), situating transparency efforts in the context of larger media policy trends and debates. The contribution acknowledges the processual, recursive and dynamic nature of transparency (e.g., Meijer, 2013). It explores how stakeholders in the field of PSB 'make sense of, negotiate and engage with transparency ideals and practices' (Flyverbom, 2015, p. 173), thereby translating demands for openness into concrete governance settings or organizational practices.

In brief, the contribution examines how PSB transparency efforts are being shaped by, and, in turn, shape the particular contexts in which they develop. It draws on a comparison of how transparency plays out as an ordering force in the context of PSB governance in Germany, France, the UK, and Switzerland. It gathers results from a) an analysis of relevant legal, policy and organizational documents that set the rules for, implement, or evaluate PSB transparency efforts, and b) in-depth interviews with stakeholders such as PSB executives, representatives of regulatory and supervisory bodies, policymakers, representatives of audience groups, journalists covering the field or media scholars.

The study identifies and compares the institutional rules and structures, actors and events that have shaped – strategically or unintentionally – the respective frameworks of PSB transparency in the countries under study. Moreover, it focuses on the ideas and beliefs associated with PSB transparency efforts. Initial findings show that while the specific translations of demands for greater openness into concrete rules and practices vary considerably, the appeal of transparency as a decisive force in ordering PSB policymaking, governance and organizational activities is present in all countries under study.

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CLP01 Public service and the public interest in European Media

PP 0050 Proposals for a future-proof European 'Digital Media Concentration Law'

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In the rapidly changing digital media environment, understanding power dynamics is key to preserving democratic values. The rise of digitalisation, platformisation, automation, and AI has necessitated a reevaluation of strategies to address media concentration and safeguard media pluralism and editorial independence. The inadequacy of current legal tools to capture these new power dynamics becomes apparent as media concentration laws, designed to prevent dominant opinion power, appear outdated in their current form. At the same time, regulatory tools addressing platform power (DSA and DMA) and regulating AI (AI Act) struggle to effectively tackle

the normative and public interest concerns for the media. The EU acknowledges the urgency and advocates for effective concentration controls in the 2020 Democracy Action Plan and delineates a proposal for assessing media concentration in the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) proposal.

Using a legal doctrinal and normative method, we discuss Europe's approach to addressing the threats posed by media concentration and shifting opinion power in digital media. We identify several shortcomings, offering starting points for making future-proof suggestions. First, in the era of AI-driven and automated news, the concentration of power over public and individual opinion is triggered by new sources of power, including technological, data, computing, algorithmic, and infrastructural power. As the "power of big techs is a combined construct – a collective power – governing much of the economy and society precisely because the economy and society have digitised" (Gerbrandy & Phoa, 2022), the various layers of power need to be dealt with and platforms need to be regulated for what they are – "active political actors in their own right" (Helberger 2020). Treating them merely as access and distribution platforms seems narrow-minded and short-sighted (considering their evolving role in journalism production and as infrastructures on which journalistic processes depend), while the proposed criteria for assessing media concentration are missing crucial structural and infrastructural components (Simon 2023). Although the introduction of a normative component in Article 21 EMFA to assess the implications for media pluralism and editorial independence is noteworthy, these concepts are neither commonly defined nor is there any coherent guidance on how to interpret them. Particularly specific rules on protecting public interest and local journalism are lacking. Finally, a lack of institutional safeguards for independence of national media authorities, tasked to ensure implementation, oversight and accountability, add legal uncertainty.

Forming the final part of a larger research endeavour on digital media concentration and the regulation of platform opinion power, this article addresses two main questions. First, do current regulatory approaches at EU level (effectively) address media concentration and opinion power in increasingly digitalised, platformised, automated and AI-driven media ecosystems? Second, how should and could a European 'Digital Media Concentration Law' look like? We make concrete suggestions on developing future-proof European media governance that is able to address the truly concerning issues at hand: unregulated powerful actors in the media – platforms, infrastructure and cloud providers, and AI companies –, and growing media consolidation, leading to a worrisome decline of public interest and local journalism.

CLP02 Approaches to media regulation

PP 0139 From co-regulation to outsourcing: The role of platforms in enforcing the Media Freedom Act in the EU

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As we are entering a novel era in platform governance, one that is characterised by a multiplicity of new rules and regulatory models, especially in the EU it is crucial to understand some of the more nuanced layers of this new reality. In particular, the issue of enforceability of platform regulation is fundamental to ensuring that passed regulation is effective or not. As GDPR has shown us, regulators are not only vulnerable to issues of capture by vested -national or private- interests but also lack the material and technical capacities to fulfil their responsibilities. In that sense, the recent attempts by the Commission to up its enforceability game in light of the EU's new digital playbook by expanding its human resources, as well as reconfiguring the governance of regulators through the creation of new roles and structures is telling that policymakers have understood this shortcoming. Thus, the EU's approach to governing online services is doubling down on multi-stakeholderism and co-regulation. Yet, as this submission argues, we might be heading towards a situation where instead of sharing responsibility and accountability over the governance of our digital spaces (Helberger et al., 2018), we are outsourcing significant pieces of that power to tech companies.

This submission takes the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) as a case study and critically examines its provisions relating to the multifaceted relationship between news media organisations and online platforms. In particular, a highly contested issue of that relationship pertains to content moderation and how platforms' content governance rules and automated mechanisms clash with the values of news media, moderating editorial content and harming news media. To that end, the EMFA seeks to regulate this aspect of the relationship by introducing a media privilege, that is a regime wherein editorial content stemming from distinct news media is treated with elevated care compared to content deriving from other sources.

The EMFA introduces a complex process, which envisions a heavy involvement of online tech companies like Meta and Alphabet, whereby those companies will create an interface for news media to self-declare as compliant organisations to benefit from privileged treatment. However, the verification process will be carried out by platforms, while the role of civil society is trivial and mostly framed as advisory. Thus, despite some checks and balances introduced in the EMFA by the European Parliament during the regulation's trilogue phase, the fact remains that platform companies are increasingly institutionalised and reaffirmed as custodians of our information ecosystem. Consequently, we run the risk of allowing ostensible co-regulatory models to legitimise tech companies as

governance stakeholders by delegating important democratic processes for issues that corporate values are not fit to understand and care for.

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CLP02 Approaches to media regulation

PP 0140 Can't touch this. How selective Europeanization of Swiss platform governance avoids regulating market power

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The digital structural transformation of the public sphere (Habermas, 2022) is radically changing the way how people receive and interact with information. While the emergence of new intermediaries like platforms entails many opportunities, it also poses serious challenges for democratic societies. Platformization raises concerns regarding the dissemination of illegal and of legal but harmful content (e.g., Gillespie, 2018; Lecheler & Egelhofer, 2022; Siegel, 2020), the ramifications of commercially-driven algorithmic selection (e.g., Helberger, 2018; Just & Latzer, 2017; Mansell & Steinmueller, 2020), the adverse effects of market and opinion power (e.g., Helberger, 2020) as well as an exacerbation of the financial crisis of traditional media (e.g., Curran, 2010; McChesney & Nichols, 2010). The European Union has become very active in platform governance aimed at mitigating such risks. While the Digital Services Act (DSA) addresses illegal content and the Digital Markets Act (DMA) introduces ex-ante regulation for dominant gatekeepers, the copyright directive introduced a controversial neighbouring right to support newspaper publishers.

However, while the EU's activities in platform governance and implications for member states are often discussed (see e.g., Cole et al., 2021; Heldt, 2022; Savova et al., 2021; Schlag, 2023; Turillazzi et al., 2023), few studies focus on processes of Europeanization of non-member states. Little is known about how non-member states are responding to platformization and how they are influenced by EU regulations and directives. Existing research shows that European (media) policy is not limited to member states but affects non-EU members (EEA countries, acceding countries, third countries) as well (e.g., Author2, 2012; Sciarini et al., 2004). Focusing on Switzerland, it becomes clear that the country has no legal obligation to adhere to EU regulations or transpose EU directives into national legislation (Sciarini et al., 2004). Nevertheless, Switzerland is often adapting its legislation to the "acquis communautaire" (Mach et al., 2003). Such adaption generally can take two different forms: bilateral agreements or autonomous adaption (Sciarini et al., 2004).

Concerning platform regulation, Switzerland took the path of autonomous adaption with plans for a new law on communication platforms mirroring parts of the DSA and for the introduction of an ancillary copyright for news publishers. Yet there is no intention for a DMA-like law. This raises the question of how exactly platform governance in Switzerland is Europeanized and why government proposes to only adapt to some parts of the EU's new digital rulebook. Based on a qualitative analysis of documents (legal documents, government reports etc.), proposed changes in Swiss platform regulation were looked at, focusing on arguments raised during the political process by advocacy coalitions with different deep core beliefs (Van den Bulck, 2019).

Results show that the usual advocacy coalitions in media policy were at play in discussions about the so called "DSA light". Yet this was not the case with respect to the copyright law reform: Actors that otherwise support an active media policy were opposing the proposed changes. Instead, they called for an effective regulation of platforms' market power which lacks support by government and industry alike.

CLP02 Approaches to media regulation

PP 0141 Unwritten media policy in Sultanate of Oman: 2000 to 2020

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The Sultanate of Oman is one of the oldest countries in the Arabian Peninsula, and has had TV, radio, and news media since the 1970s but still lacks formal written policy to regulate this sector. Based on an investigation of the formal and informal sources of Oman's media policy, I argue that despite some media-relevant institutions and laws in Oman, media policy definitely exists, but most is not written down.

This study investigated the formal and informal sources of Oman's media policy. It identified media policy junctures that have shaped the framework of this policy. It provided answers to the questions: (1) What are the sources of Oman's media policy? (2) How has media policy changed and developed in Oman from 2000 to 2021?

This study employed a mixed-method approach, combining semi-structured interviews, analysis of documents and archival material, and thematic analysis (TA). I conducted 12 interviews from January 2023 to March 2023 with key sources in media sector in Oman, such as editors-in-chief, decision-makers, and journalists. In addition, I analysed different sort of media-relevant documents, such as laws, legislation, royal decrees, directives, and effective speeches which were issued in the period from 1970 to 2021.

This study used historical institutionalism (HI) as a conceptual framework. HI is suited to study of institutions over a long period of time and the identification of significant decisions that lead to changes in the policies, which is convenient for Oman's situation.

This study offers three main contributions. First of all, it is the first scholarly examination of media policy in Oman. Second, as much of the existing research on media policy has focused on the written policies and mechanisms of governance, my contribution reveals the unwritten media policy. Third, because the current research on media policy has been conducted mainly in a Western liberal democratic context, my study provides a better understanding of the "unwritten media policy" in non-western culture in general, and Sultanate of Oman in particular and its form of governance.

CLP02 Approaches to media regulation

PP 0142 Competing, conquering or correlating? The interplay of concepts on diversity in European legal frameworks, policies and codes of ethical conduct

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Diversity in media refers to the representation and reflection of various cultural, social and political perspectives on the level of access, contents, genres, outlets, and ownership. In normative media theory, diversity is attached to the democratic role and social responsibility of the media to protect norms and values and enable the exercise of the fundamental human right to freedom of expression. Furthermore, media diversity often serves as the normative justification for policies (Karppinen, 2013), such as the provision of "internal pluralism" and the requirements for diversified and balanced contents and programs.

However, the question of how to achieve media diversity is challenging. Several notions encapsulate source- and content diversity (Napoli, 1999), while the era of digital content abundance raised major questions about exposure diversity (Napoli, 2011); (Helberger et al., 2018), specifically in regard to news content (Bernstein et al., 2021). On the policy level, the concepts of the diversity of sources and content became obsolete (Valcke, 2011) and called for more attention to the media users' perspective (European Commission et al., 2022). Traditionally, from the journalistic perspective, diversity has been defined by professional norms and values in ethical codes (Loecherbach et al., 2020). However, since the participatory turn in ethics (Eberwein, 2022), along with the efforts to redefine the foundations, scholars have urgently called for the recognition of diversity as a key guiding principle of communication (Fourie, 2022).

Driven by the ambition to respond to this call, our work within an ongoing Horizon Europe project aims to explore the interplay of concepts of diversity embedded in European policies, legal standards and a variety of codes of ethical conduct found in eight European countries (Austria, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Switzerland) and on an international level with European relevance. In this study, we first conducted a qualitative content analysis of codes of ethics and guidelines for all kinds of public communication (370 in total on the country level and 80 on the international level) covering journalism, public relations, advertising, corporate communications, public institutions, and guidelines for media users, such as those using social media. We specifically searched for the formulation, the scope and the interpretation of diversity displayed in specific sections of the codes. Next, we linked our empirical results to the normative concepts of diversity provided in the national legal contexts and Europe-relevant legislation, such as the European Convention on Human Rights, the Fundamental Rights Charter, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive and the European Media Freedom Act, after a policy-oriented legal analysis (Milosavljević & Poler, 2019).

The preliminary findings show that broad, dialogic and participatory public communication ethics, addressing all types of journalistic communicators, both professional and non-professional, offer valuable possibilities for new concepts of media diversity, which in turn could inform future European policy-making on resilient standards and

norms. Thus, we make recommendations for developing a Civic Code of Good Communication Conduct, an inclusive and new media accountability instrument that can be applied in a broad spectrum of different public communication settings.

CLP03 Defending epistemic rights: Means and ways of combatting disinformation and propaganda

PP 0246 AI and epistemic rights: A mission impossible?

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The buzzword for communications policy discussions and public debates has, in 2023, undoubtedly been artificial intelligence (AI). While guidelines and even regulations for AI have been under consideration for some time, the rise of generative AI (GenAI) has prompted calls for regulations about the direction of its development. It has been argued that risk-based discourses and approaches around AI tend, in the end, to promote the interests of tech giants as the most "reliable" developers of the technology (e.g., Schneier & Sanders, 2023).

A less-considered aspect is that AI development is intricately entrenched with the expansion of tech giants' power in developing technological infrastructures. This further solidifies global technological dependencies that policy approaches regulatory efforts such as the AI Act cannot address. At the same time, certain national AI developments, for instance, regarding military technology, remain outside of public and policy debates.

Existing policy research tends to focus either on empirical perspectives on AI governance arrangements or normative approaches to evaluating governance arrangements (Tallberg et al., 2023). In this paper, we focus on the latter by addressing approaches to global AI governance from the perspective of epistemic rights (Nieminen, 2024).

AI, in its many forms and applications, significantly impacts how we access, gather, and process information and thus significantly alters what is embedded in the idea and ideal of democracy and what could be called an 'epistemic commons': a shared forum for trustworthy knowledge and culture (Nieminen, 2014). What has enabled the formation and citizens' participation in such commons in the mass media and early digital media era is their access to and availability of diverse content, as well as privacy and dialogical modes of public communication. These features could be conceptualized as 'communication rights' (e.g., Nieminen, 2019; Ala-Fossi et al., 2019), here indicating normative but empirically detectable features of the information environment that reflect the ideal of the epistemic commons of shared knowledge and culture, from the perspective of citizens. It has been argued that communication rights can preserve and remove restrictions on the epistemic commons. In the era of AI, these rights are equally, if not more important, and can be seen as epistemic rights, that is, rights to knowledge.

While the vast new possibilities of creating and disseminating disinformation are often expressed as a critical concern regarding generative AI, its implications can be understood even more broadly as endangering citizens' knowledge rights. This paper reflects on what kind of epistemic rights are especially central for a citizen-centric approach to Generative AI. In those reflections, we discuss these rights from the perspective of global governance, assessing the proposals and visions put forward, e.g., the EU, USA, UK, OECD, and WEF (see, e.g., EU 2020; White House 2022; Gov.UK 2023; OECD 2023; WEF 2023). We then suggest types of policy initiatives and regulatory solutions that might best serve the promotion of 'citizens' epistemic AI rights.'

CLP03 Defending epistemic rights: Means and ways of combatting disinformation and propaganda

PP 0247 The use of self- and co-regulation in regulating disinformation and hate speech: Australia, Europe and the UK

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From 2019 to 2023 Australia followed the lead of the European Union in addressing the risks of disinformation via a self-regulatory code of practice. This was despite initial recommendations of the competition regulator to implement a co-regulatory model. However, following a 2022 review that highlighted significant shortcomings in the self-regulatory code, the government released draft legislation in 2023 that adopted a co-regulatory approach.

The draft legislation was not well received. The proposed arrangements have been the subject of vocal and sustained criticism from, for example, civil liberties groups but also from news organisations, based on perceived threats to freedom of speech. This is despite the draft bill's explicit carve-out for news media. Meanwhile, academics and civil society groups have argued that the bill does not go far enough to combat the threats disinformation on digital platforms poses. Australia's experience in regulating disinformation has therefore come to resemble that of the UK, where fierce opposition to possible incursions on free speech resulted in the dismantling of the original provisions addressing disinformation in the recently passed Online Safety Act.

By contrast, hate speech in Australia has largely remained outside the communications regulatory framework, and a recent proposal from the Australian Government to bring hate speech on digital platforms within the scope of regulation was received with little opposition. Hate speech will be brought within the scope of an executive

government determination known as the Basic Online Safety Expectations, a form of co-regulation that nominates certain matters to be addressed by service providers but allows companies to design their own schemes for meeting the expectations.

In this paper we propose that an important reason for the different reception to the regulatory measures addressing disinformation and hate speech is the way in which they have been framed as the subject of regulation. Australia has split regulatory responsibility for these matters, with disinformation sitting within broadcasting law overseen by the media regulator and hate speech located in the more recent domain of the Online Safety Act, overseen by a specialist eSafety regulator. This has resulted in hate speech being characterised as an 'online harm' alongside image-based abuse and cyber bullying, while mis- and disinformation occupy a disputed space that is seen to intrude on the fiercely defended territory of professional news.

This paper will include an international comparative analysis to identify where the Australian approach sits in relation to the current approach under the Digital Services Act in the EU and the Online Safety Act in the UK. It will present findings from a study of policy submissions to the Australian government's consultation on the draft disinformation legislation to identify differences in the positions of the media sector, digital platforms, and civil society. Finally, it will suggest that Australia's disinformation and hate speech initiatives can be seen as examples of new hybrid forms of co-regulation whose development has been prompted by the unique environment for digital platforms that presents challenges for some longstanding co-regulatory methods and practices.

CLP03 Defending epistemic rights: Means and ways of combatting disinformation and propaganda

PP 0248 Untouched Minds in a Tangled web: Navigating 'Epistemic Welfare' amidst digital propaganda

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Combining insights from legal studies, particularly in the realms of Media and Information Law, with an in-depth understanding of digital propaganda in communication studies, this contribution proposes 'Epistemic Welfare.' This framework is designed to evaluate and resolve issues of "mental harm" resulting from propaganda driven by emerging technologies. Propaganda continues to be of great significance worldwide, particularly in modern, 'liberal' democracies where the values of free speech and open debate have found tensions in the so-called 'post-truth' era of fake news, alternative facts and conspiracy theories. Political polarization and a societal wave of skepticism have collided with the digital transformation of the public sphere and the so-called Web 3.0, e.g., automated bots, deepfakes and generative AI. The latter has allowed for an unprecedented production and distribution of disinformation and, particularly computational propaganda. This situation, coupled with the growing institutional distrust, has led scholars like Peter Dahlgren to assert that we are in the midst of an epistemic crisis—a crisis of our knowledge base. The challenges of combating mis/disinformation and conspiracy theories, exemplified during the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of the anti-vax movement, demonstrate the potential of propaganda to inflict societal harm, be it epistemic, physical, or mental.

Importantly, this harm can be insidious and intangible, often materializing through coercive or deceptive means without leaving physical marks, unlike, for instance, the requirements of the US concept of 'intentional infliction of emotional distress.' Propaganda, as a tool for manipulating and distorting reality, presents a challenge for the legal system in protecting individuals' mental integrity. Despite strong protections afforded to the right to freedom of thought and conscience, current interpretations of human rights law and the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution fall short in safeguarding against such harms in practice.

To tackle this issue, it is imperative to redefine mental harm in a manner that does not rely solely on somatic injury. To this end, we propose the notion of 'Epistemic Welfare' as a framework centered on fostering the necessary conditions and capabilities for individuals to exercise their epistemic agency and promote a well-functioning media and information ecosystem. Specifically, this framework aims to facilitate the accurate and voluntary assimilation of information, thereby preventing or mitigating harms.

By adopting the principles of relational autonomy, we emphasize the critical role of mental autonomy—safeguarding individuals' capacity for self-determined thought and decision-making within their social contexts. The capability approach further compels us to assess how mental harm curtails individuals' freedom to pursue well-being. This revised definition creates a concrete legal threshold for mental harm, measurable through its impact on a person's cognitive and emotional wellbeing.

Therefore, we suggest a reevaluation of the legal thresholds for mental harm that recognizes the capacity for propaganda to cause such harm and that provides legal recourse that reflects the seriousness of these non-physical injuries. A recalibrated legal framework, more aligned with contemporary understandings of human dignity and autonomy, would offer tangible means to address the complex challenges of mental harm in the digital information age.

CLP03 Defending epistemic rights: Means and ways of combatting disinformation and propaganda

PP 0249 Trying to fight disinformation without jeopardizing media and speech freedom: Comparative analysis of eight European countries' approach to a sensitive topic

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Disinformation has been a part of hybrid wars and impacts both communication and social order (Bennet & Livingston, 2018). In Europe, it became a topic after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 when Russian troll factories started intervening through online content in politics in various countries, creating communication disorder; this situation even deepened by the migration crisis in 2015–2016 (Humprecht, 2018), and each following major crisis, namely COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine.

Frequent ways to approach disinformation in communication research have been content analyses of legacy or social media. This paper focuses on this topic from a different perspective. Based on the comparative research of the situation in eight European countries (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Spain and the UK) for the Horizon Europe project, media legislation and governmental responses to disinformation (and possible security threats) connected to COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine, spread in the online environment, were analyzed. We were particularly interested in whether any legislature or institution focused specifically on disinformation and potential hybrid threats and how it had (or had not) been involved in combating the disinformation connected to these two crises mentioned above.

The countries under study adopted various approaches towards disinformation and combated threats on different levels. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, the governments mainly relied on fact-checking organized by Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) for their content, specifically (dis)information about the COVID-19 vaccine. However, in the UK, the government's Counter Disinformation Unit (founded in 2019) intensely focused on health and COVID-19 disinformation, followed it and referred it to social media companies. It continues to do so with the war in Ukraine, supported by the Defending Democracy Taskforce (founded in 2022 to protect the democratic integrity of the UK from threats of foreign interference), chaired by the Security Minister.

Czechia, which Russia has traditionally considered as a part of its influence area, intensified in 2022 its efforts to fight Russian disinformation media and switched them off for three months. However, a new governmental envoy for media and disinformation who was supposed to deliver a law against disinformation had not survived more than a year in his function and was never replaced due to the public opposition against any limitations on press freedom. Freedom of speech has been the core argument for other countries, especially Norway, Ireland and Spain, to avoid developing any specific legislation regarding disinformation. Germany banned Russia Today on its territory before it was officially banned on the EU level (March 2023), but in line with also very regionally divided Belgium, there were not any specific measures applied against (Russian) disinformation. In Austria, the Communication Platforms Act, according to which, when reported, unlawful content must be taken down by the provider immediately, cannot be used against platforms based in foreign countries (that is the case of most VLOPs). To conclude, the different approaches in studied countries reflect both historical and cultural realities, while they are also continuously shaped by current local (and global) events.

CLP03 Defending epistemic rights: Means and ways of combatting disinformation and propaganda

PP 0250 Coping with deepfakes – A global overview of the regulatory landscape

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The question of how to deal with deepfakes has been widely discussed among scholars, policymakers, and the public since the phenomenon first gained prominence in 2017. Described as the manipulation or synthetization of audiovisual media through deep-learning techniques (Kietzmann et al., 2020), deepfakes have elicited widespread concern of an "epistemic apocalypse." (Habgood-Coote, 2023) where the distinction between authentic and artificial content becomes increasingly indiscernible, potentially leading to various individual and societal harms. While research has begun discussing the regulation of deepfakes and the adequacy of current laws, there has been relatively little scholarly focus on dedicated regulatory responses, and as of now, no systematic overview exists. To bridge this gap, this article comprehensively maps the regulatory landscape related to deepfakes by conducting in-depth qualitative content analyses of 50 policy and legal documents. Special attention is paid to examining and evaluating the rationales driving the need for regulatory action, identifying the accountable actors, and assessing the adequacy and efficacy of the proposed measures in the context of existing empirical research on deepfakes. The findings reveal a diverse spectrum of responses, spanning from market-driven initiatives to state-imposed command-and-control regulation, and various forms of self- and co-regulation in between. Policymakers predominantly

prioritize public awareness and transparency over criminalization and strict control of harmful deepfakes. Moreover, existing laws, occasionally extended in scope, are generally considered sufficient to address deepfakes, but concerns about enforcement and efficacy persist, making critical oversight and periodic review essential. Additionally, existing instruments may not fully resolve current and future challenges posed by deepfakes. Instead, the ever-evolving landscape of deepfake technology calls for adaptive policy approaches aimed at mitigating harm while safeguarding individual rights and addressing broader societal issues related to trust and truth. This must also include careful consideration of adequate governance arrangements, including both appropriate state and private involvement. Altogether, this underscores the importance of conducting more empirical research to deepen our understanding and effectively address the evolving regulatory challenges posed by deepfakes.

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CLP04 Platforms, content moderation and social (dis)order: Transformations of platforms and their governance

PN 064 The making of misinformation: A longitudinal analysis of platforms' misinformation policies

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Debates on misinformation have dominated discourses about platforms and their role for society and social (dis) order for quite a while now, and social media platforms have invested (partly) substantial efforts towards the control of online misinformation. But this has not always been the case. These efforts, and the policies governing misinformation on their sites have only been installed piece by piece over the course of years and as a response to public and policy pressure (Annany & Gillespie, 2016; Barrett & Kreiss, 2019; Katzenbach, 2021). These policies are also changing constantly, particularly in contexts such as epidemics or elections. This paper reconstructs the emergence and development of misinformation policies of five major social media platforms. Although there are some studies of platforms' misinformation policies, they usually explore cases of single platforms (Iosifidis & Nicoli, 2019), certain categories of misinformation such as COVID-19 (Krishnan, 2021), or providing an overview in a particular moment of time (Meese & Hurcombe, 2020). This paper, to our knowledge, is the first attempt to analyse all policies of five major social media platforms starting from the beginning of their existence until the present day in connection to the concept of misinformation. The analysis focuses on two dimensions: a long-term perspective on policy change and a cross-platform comparison. Considering the variance between the expert definitions of misinformation (Altay et al., 2023), we also seek to find out which specific dimensions or categories of misinformation are incorporated in the platforms' policies and how they changed over time (from spam to political misinformation).Empirically, we analyse Community Guidelines and Terms of Service of five major social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, TikTok) over a period from their launch until the second quarter of 2023. The analysis relies on a mixed method approach. We first apply a research-driven computational keyword selection (Zhang et al., 2023) to get a better semantic understanding of misinformation policies and to identify keywords and dimensions that are associated with misinformation across platforms. We then use these keywords to detect relevant parts of texts and conduct critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 2015).The preliminary findings reveal that misinformation policies have considerably expanded over time across major social media platforms. The number of concepts (dimensions) that are associated with misinformation – although dissimilar for different platforms – has also increased. The term itself appears in platforms' policies relatively late, for example, YouTube started using it only in 2014, then stopped after 2016, and continued only in 2021. Thus, our research uncovers frames and discourses around closely semantically related words, such as misleading, fake, deceptive, spam, impersonation and others (Zhang et al., 2023). The research traces how these concepts were changing in time and on different platforms, incorporating both private corporate values (Scharlach et al., 2023) as well as media discourses and public values imposed by the changing legislation, such as, for example, the Network Enforcement Act in Germany (2018) and Digital Services Act in the EU (2021).

CLP04 Platforms, content moderation and social (dis)order: Transformations of platforms and their governance

PN 065 The transformation of hate speech and its regulation through platform governance

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The second paper focuses on hate speech as a key site of debate about platforms and social (dis)order. The specific angle of the paper highlights that introduction of measures to combat hateful content on platforms has not only transformed digital platforms themselves but also the historical definition and purpose of hate speech regulation – with the result that it now protects content production. From 2016 to 2019, major online platforms, notably Facebook and YouTube, adopted substantial hate speech policies, enforced by what we colloquially and academically know as content moderation. As it stands today, hate speech moderation is arguably a process that initially allows users the technical freedom to upload diverse content. This content is then subject to multifaceted (and diverse levels of) scrutiny led by platforms. It involves a range of techniques, both automated and manual, and actions ranging from leaving content as is to deleting it, or alternatively, shadow banning or highlighting certain content. Consequently, hate speech regulation and its enforcement balance the platforms' professed commitments to freedom of expression with their mission to ensure the safety and security of users. Hate Speech Moderation has therefore led to a significant transformation in platform governance of hate speech, evolving from mere conduits of free information flow to becoming curators of content streams. When compared with previous periods when hate speech was on the political and public agenda (e.g., 1980s campus hate speech codes of conduct), the manner in which platforms interpret and apply speech regulation is novel. To such an extent that it opens to inquiry if the introduction of hate speech regulation on platforms has also contributed to the overarching discourse on what hate speech is and what it should achieve. As such the question that this paper poses is the following: have social media redefined the concept of hate speech? And if so, does it serve their own interests? To address this question, the paper undertakes a historical discourse analysis spanning from 1946 to 2020, examining the diverse perspectives of various stakeholders in defining hate speech. This is juxtaposed against the definitions and enforcement of hate speech regulation by key platforms operated by Meta (Facebook, Instagram) and Alphabet (Youtube) and Byte Dance (Tiktok). The findings reveal that historically, hate speech has been understood and utilised by different actors primarily as a tool for promoting equality, combating discrimination, or preventing a return to fascist ideologies. In contrast, very large platforms have repositioned hate speech regulation as a mechanism to ensure security and foster a hostile-free environment by allowing circulation while avoiding the scarcity and accumulation of hateful content. This has implications for the broader question of this panel and the conference on the kinds of social (dis)order that platforms enable. By framing hate speech regulation as a security measure, Meta , Alphabet or Byte Dance do not combat a social order that includes discrimination but instead more simply keep a hostile-free environment that effectively safeguards content production.

CLP04 Platforms, content moderation and social (dis)order: Transformations of platforms and their governance

PN 066 Mental health-centric platform governance: policies and platform values

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The third paper addresses the topic of mental health and platform governance: Matilda's life improved drastically after being diagnosed with ADHD, a revelation she made after learning about common symptoms of female ADHD on TikTok (Boseley, 2021). In contrast, Kianna initially believed she had a personality disorder based on symptoms and personal stories she encountered on the platform. However, consulting medical experts revealed that her struggles were related to pandemic-induced isolation (Caron, 2022). These cases highlight the popularity of potential algorithmic diagnoses of mental illnesses on TikTok's For You Page (FYP), often based on vague yet relatable symptoms. The increasing ambiguity between helpful and misleading mental health content prompts questions about its regulation.While social media was not originally designed to support or harm mental health, its centrality in the lives of so many raises concerns about the responsibilities of social media companies toward user wellbeing. Recent years have seen heightened awareness of mental health, particularly among younger users (Livingstone, 2016, 2023), juxtaposed with social media companies' perceived inaction on the matter (Gerrard, 2020). Social media platforms face the challenging task of balancing their interests with those of individual users, third parties, policymakers, and other stakeholders (Gorwa, 2022), determining who and what should be visible. In essence, platform companies govern values. While infrastructural elements such as policies (Scharlach et al., 2023) or design (Scharlach & Hallinan, 2023) have enjoyed academic attention, there has been a lack of systematic investigation into the role of mental health as a foundational factor for platform governance. This paper addresses this gap by analyzing TikTok's mental health-related policies. While many platforms feature mental health-related policies like

auto-detection of suicidal ideation or self-harm, there lacks a systematic overview of what qualifies as an issue of mental health. Thus, the study responds to: (1) What existing TikTok policies relate to emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing? (2) What values are promoted? Employing a mixed-method approach (Scharlach et al., 2023), it involves an overview of TikTok policies and public-facing documents connected with mental health, coupled with a critical analysis. Focusing on the platform values associated with mental health will enhance the understanding of TikTok's conceptualization of its relationship with mental health. The study's findings lay the theoretical foundation for proposing a mental health-centric platform governance approach.

CLP04 Platforms, content moderation and social (dis)order: Transformations of platforms and their governance

PN 067 Generative AI and the production of "moderate speech"

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Paper 4 turns to the role of generative AI in platform governance, and what this means for social (dis)order. For the past year, using large language models (LLMs) for content moderation appears to have presented solutions to some of the perennial issues of online speech governance. Developers have promised 'revolutionary' improvements (Weng, Goel and Vallone, 2023), with large language models considered of consolidating – indeed, "platformising" – incommensurably large amounts of human language, and eventually bypassing semantic and ideological ambiguities that hinder moderation at scale (Wang et al., 2023). More specifically, LLMs are trained to generate "moderate speech" – that is, not to utter offensive language; to provide neutral, balanced and reliable prompt outputs; and to demonstrate an appreciation for complexity and relativity when asked about controversial topics. But the search for optimal content moderation obscures broader questions about what kind of speech, and thus social order, is being generated. How does generative AI speak "moderately"? That is: under what norms, training data and larger institutions does it produce "moderate" language? By examining the regulatory frameworks of AI labs, comparing responses to moderation prompts across three LLMs and scrutinising their training datasets, this paper seeks to shed light on the norms, techniques and regulatory cultures around the generation of "moderate speech" and content moderation as another form of platform governance. Empirically, this paper uses digital methods and contributions from platform governance and content moderation studies to examine how content moderation is trained and reproduced in three LLM models — both private and more "black-boxed" models such as various iterations of GPT, and more hybrid and open-source alternatives such as Llama, Mistral and BLOOM. There are three steps to this analysis: The first step is to examine regulatory and training frameworks. This implies studying a model's architecture and training through documentation scattered in code repositories (Hugging Face, Github), academic papers, interviews with LLM lab developers, or other documentation. In one sense, this analytical step involves getting a sense of what is considered objectionable by a given LLM lab, what moderation techniques are designed by these labs to mitigate said content, and what regulatory frameworks these labs rely on. The second is to compare responses to moderation prompts and autocompletions between GPT, Llama and BERT or BLOOM, across multiple versions, in three languages. By "controversy prompts", I refer to questions that will prompt the LLM to generate some form of "moderate speech". This means probing an LLM about questions that lack widespread consensus and often call for the adoption of opinions, positions, arguments or even "deep disagreements" (Fogelin, 1985). Finally, the third step is to examine training datasets to scrutinise possible moderation biases. Biases may emerge in the form of reductionism, partisanship, or absence of opposition and minority voices in a controversy prompt response. Where biases emerge, one can return to the training datasets – such as Common Crawl, Webtext2, Wikipedia or other – to check, where possible, what view is most represented in relation to the queried controversy (ibid).

CLP05 Time to talk about rights

PP 0462 Disorders on social media platforms and the victimisation of law enforcement officers: A rights-based approach to risk mitigation

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Operating in a public-facing role to enforce public order, police officers face several occupational risks in their line of duty. While risk factors such as physical harm, occupational stress due to shift work and psychological harm from traumatic encounters have largely been recognised and addressed through risk prevention strategies, new threats emerging from digital cultures remain unrecognised and unaddressed. Disorders fostered through digital cultures subject police officers to new risks of online victimisation, which can translate into physical and psychological harms offline. An example involves the online abuse and trolling of a hate crime officer in Leicestershire Police in 2022, after she introduced her role on Twitter. Another incident relates to the glorification of violence against police officers in South London, where physical attacks against officers were filmed and shared on social media.

This paper highlights the importance of shifting our attention towards communication disorders on social media platforms and investigating strategies for reducing their negative consequences on police officers. A mixed methods approach is adopted to examine what the online threat landscape looks like for police officers and risk mitigation strategies employed by police services in the United Kingdom. To evaluate online risk perceptions and mitigation strategies within police services, we conducted a poststructuralist discourse analysis of 46 documents constituting social media guidance, protectively marked training materials, intranet resources for police officers, and broader level documentation from the Home Office and Independent Office for Police Conduct relating to social media engagement. Findings from our document analysis are triangulated with 48 semi-structured interviews conducted with managerial police officers and staff from four partner forces.

Our findings suggest that police officers are subjected to multiple forms of online risks as a result of their police identity and policing role, such as online harassment, reputational damage due to citizen journalism and identification. These risks negatively impact officers' physical and psychological well-being. Yet, active media representation of police officers as perpetrators rather than victims of online social disruptions resulted in organisational responses focused on disciplining officers' online behaviours. Such a focus diverts attention away from the protection of officers and prioritises individual responsibility over organisational and civil responsibility. To address police officers' online risks and harms, we propose a rights-based approach to internet regulation. Internet regulation should ensure a digital environment which treats police officers as having the same fundamental rights as ordinary citizens. The protection of police officers on digital platforms needs to become a civil, social and organisational responsibility. Achieving the above will require regulation which aims at increasing accountability and transparency on social media platforms and a co-regulation framework involving police organisations in the moderation and criminalisation of harmful online content. Our study draws attention to the importance of looking beyond the individual and police organisations, to include other stakeholders such as platforms, private companies, policymakers, auditors, regulators and civil society in the protection of police officers from online risks and harms.

CLP05 Time to talk about rights

PP 0463 Privacy framing in legislative hearings after Cambridge Analytica in Europe and in the US

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Privacy is an increasingly important area of study in communication research. Prior research has advanced both conceptual and empirical understanding of how citizens think about privacy and enact privacy-related behaviors in networked environments. Yet scandals such as Cambridge Analytica (CA) reveal a gap in perceptions of privacy held by the users vs. those who design and regulate information networks. Against this tension, we ask how do policy and technological elites talk about privacy? And how does this talk differ in Europe and in the US? Engaging with these questions, we aim to contribute to the literature on communication policy framing and agenda setting.

Conceptually, we leverage research that distinguishes between vertical (institutional) and horizontal (social) orientations of privacy, and build on framing literature, which links frames in communication and frames in thought. Empirically, we conduct a quantitative content analysis of the 2018 2018 US Senate and House hearings, as well as three out of five sessions of the European Parliament, that followed the CA scandal. We developed and validated a dedicated coding scheme, which captures both privacy-specific attributes (e.g. vertical and horizontal orientations, proximity to the acting agent, value- and cognate-based frames) and more general frame attributes (e.g. positive vs. negative, thematic vs. episodic, attribution). Upon initial training, about 30% of the interventions were coded by two coders to establish intercoder reliability.

Our preliminary results point towards an overall dominance of vertical privacy framing in privacy policy discourses involving the government and the industry (particularly in the EU). This stands in contrast with earlier findings about the dominance of horizontal framing among the users of social media. Additionally, our findings highlight both the differences between the industry and the lawmakers in their framing of privacy, and the political nature of privacy as a vessel for normative perspectives and ideological positions of the elites. Facebook leadership is relatively more likely to use horizontal framing (also employing richer frames), compared to parliamentarians in both the US and the EU. Facebook leadership is also more cautious in its use of infringement framing, compared to parliamentarians (particularly in the EU), whereas there are no significant differences in the use of protection framing when it comes to privacy.

Similarly, conservative parliamentarians are relatively more likely to use horizontal framing (also employing richer frames), compared to their liberal counterparts (who are more likely to use vertical privacy frames that are also relatively richer). At the same time, liberal parliamentarians tend to use richer infringement framing, compared to their conservative counterparts (particularly in the US).

Our research effort is well underway. As we progress with completing the manuscript, we will draw a more nuanced and pronounced picture of the emerging dynamics outlined above, and clarify our comparative perspective. It is

our aspiration in this project to contribute to the study of communication technology policy framing and agenda setting. By analyzing framing in actual policy deliberation, we demonstrate how different stakeholders contest the definitions and regulatory approaches towards a pivotal communication policy issue.

CLP05 Time to talk about rights

PP 0464 Navigating algorithmic disruptions: epistemic welfare as a guide for media governance

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Adopting a conceptual perspective based on communication studies and social epistemology, this contribution explores the notion of epistemic welfare as a guide for media governance amid algorithmic disruptions. Due to the digital structural transformation of the public sphere (Eisenegger & Schäfer, 2023; Habermas, 2022), media consumption predominantly takes place online (Newman et al., 2023). This development is accompanied by an increasing dependence on algorithmic recommender systems for content selection (Bodó, 2021). While acknowledging the opportunities of recommender systems, communication scholars frequently highlight (potential) disruptions, including dissemination of mis-/disinformation (e.g., Author 1, 2023; Bennett & Livingston, 2020), polarization (e.g., Bruns, 2019; Zuiderveen Borgesius et al., 2016), bias (e.g., Noble, 2018), surveillance (e.g., Zuboff, 2015), profit-oriented and fragmented distribution of content (e.g., Author 3, 2018; Just & Latzer, 2017; Mansell & Steinmueller, 2020; Napoli, 2015; Van Dijck et al., 2018), and algorithmic unaccountability (e.g., Ananny & Crawford, 2018; Diakopoulos, 2015). Taken together, these algorithm-related issues contribute to an epistemic crisis in public discourse (Dahlgren, 2018).

As a response, numerous governance proposals have emerged and continue to evolve (e.g., Saurwein et al., 2015; Van Dijck et al., 2018). Communication scholars have explored normative principles to guide the design and governance of recommender systems (e.g., Helberger, 2019; Shin, 2020), preliminarily focusing on news media and the importance of diversity (e.g., Heitz et al., 2022; Helberger et al., 2018; Joris et al., 2022; Sax, 2022). Recognizing the limitations of this focus in tackling the entirety of algorithm-related concerns, we advocate for a more comprehensive approach that aims at addressing the above-mentioned disruptions underlying the epistemic crisis, namely "epistemic welfare".

Drawing from social epistemology (e.g., Godler et al., 2020; Goldman, 1987) and welfare literature (e.g., Kaun et al., 2023), we define epistemic welfare as an endeavor to create and maintain conditions and capabilities for epistemic agency for citizens in the public sphere. Diverging from typically paternalistic normative perspectives, epistemic welfare strives to foster user agency, allowing individuals to pursue epistemically valuable states (such as true and justified beliefs, Goldman, 2011) at their own choice. To ensure the necessary conditions and capabilities for such agency, epistemic welfare encompasses the development of a digital knowledge infrastructure, including algorithmic recommender systems, that is informed by the epistemic standards of reliability, power, fecundity, speed, and efficiency (Goldman, 2011).

Guided by these epistemic standards, we identified and operationalized associated societal values – such as transparency, explainability, and diversity – to systematically assess the attainability of epistemic agency in the context of media recommender systems. By measuring conditions and capabilities for epistemic agency, the epistemic welfare approach carries profound implications for both the governance and the design of algorithmic recommender systems: Shifting away from merely responding to content-related issues, the epistemic welfare approach aims at a more profound alignment of (established) societal values with underlying structures of digital media. It can guide policymaking in its attempts to reshape the communication order in the contemporary public sphere by prioritizing epistemic agency and centering the governance of media, and recommender systems specifically, around epistemic welfare.

CLP05 Time to talk about rights

PP 0465 A right to constructive optimisation

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This paper proposes a new perspective on the role and regulation of recommender systems on platforms. So far, recommender systems are generally seen as a feature of the digital infrastructure platforms offer, subject to the control and authority of the providers offering them as a lawful service to consumers. But recommenders are more. In the digital environment, users increasingly rely on recommendation algorithms as tools to navigate the abundance of information online and find information that is relevant to them and that they can trust. As such,

recommenders are not exclusively tools or services that a platform controls; they are part of the infrastructure of the digital public sphere and, as such, have an important societal dimension.

This societal dimension is in part already recognised in the European Digital Services Act (DSA), though primarily through the lens of the potential risks to consumers, society, and fundamental rights. Such a mere risk-based approach fails to account for the critical role of recommenders as a means to make a positive and meaningful contribution to the realisation of users' rights to self-determination and self-development. We, therefore, make a concrete suggestion for a more value-based approach. Users should not only have a legitimate interest to be protected from risks that recommenders pose to fundamental rights or other legitimate interests. Instead, there is also a need to acknowledge and respect the freedom to advance their rights to self-development and self-determination through the use of recommender systems as means of discovery, learning and the ability to pursue the information goals they deem valuable. Combining approaches from political philosophy and normative legal analysis, we sketch the contours of a new right to constructive optimisation.

The paper will then explore the potential role of the law, and of the DSA in particular, to further such a right. To do so, we need to move beyond naïve approaches, which implicitly assume that 'the recommender system' is an identifiable, discrete 'unit' that can be addressed and regulated as such. Instead, the paper develops a 'stack approach' to understanding recommender systems inspired by communication systems studies. We argue that instead of regulating 'the recommender system', effective governance approaches must consider how each individual layer of the stack is relevant for the realisation of a right to meaningful optimisation, and hence a potential entry point for intervention: mandating different recommendation options to choose from at the user interface level, scrutinising the diversity of training data sets at the data input level, mandating the effective representation of the interests of citizens and society at the operations level, or offering room and rewards for experimenting with more value-driven approaches at the engine level, etc. The overall argument of the paper is that constructive optimisation of recommender systems is not simply a matter of technology design but of the design process and how the legitimate interests of users are taken into account across the different levels of the technology stack.

CLP06 Getting to better media policy – Attitudes, concepts and imaginaries

PP 0573 Contesting digital futures: UN Global Digital Compact and alternative socio-technical imaginaries

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This paper investigates different visions about digital futures and asks, how are the desired futures constructed, contested, and mobilized in transnational digital policy. The first part of the paper develops a theoretical framework that attends to discursive construction of digital futures as "socio-technical imaginaries" (Jasanoff, 2015). While these imaginaries can be considered as institutionalized forms of discourse, they nevertheless remain open for contestation (Carpentier 2011; Laclau 1990). The paper discusses how socio-technical imaginaries are put to work in policy debates through fantasmatic logics related to the desired future state, where current limitations can be overcome (Glynos, 2021; Carpentier 2011). Building on this framework and recent research on datafication and platformization, hegemonic imaginaries articulate future through a primacy of digital, e.g. associated with unstoppable technological development and necessity to overcome associated problems. However, counter-imaginaries are articulated by a plurality of mobilizations that resist hegemonic knowledges, call for political engagement with technologies, and highlight possibilities for imagining (digital) futures otherwise (e.g. Kazansky & Milan, 2021).

The second part of the paper focuses on the UN Global Digital Compact as a transnational digital policy process, where multiple socio-technical imaginaries are at work. The paper engages and thinks with elements of imaginaries present in civil society submissions to the process. The paper asks, how are digital futures contested and imagined in these public documents and illustrates these questions with examples. Finally, the paper discusses possibilities for mobilizing alternative imaginaries in the context of research that advances rights-based approaches to transnational communication governance (e.g. Horowitz et al. 2024; Padovani et al. 2024).

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CLP06 Getting to better media policy – Attitudes, concepts and imaginaries

PP 0574 The regulatory attitude towards social media platforms in Denmark and its implications for digital creators

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In this article we investigate how social media platforms are regulated in Denmark and what implications an increasingly critical regulatory attitude towards these digital platforms has for Danish digital creators.

Since Denmark is a member of the European Union, the country's legislation is highly affected by EU legislation and its implementation and adaptation to the Danish national context. In terms of the regulation of social media platforms, the EU has taken important regulatory steps, which the AI Act, the GDPR, the DMA, the DSA, and the directive on improving working conditions in platform work demonstrate. As these initiatives exemplify, the European Union is a regulatory frontrunner regarding digital platforms. What these examples also demonstrate is the complexity of a regulatory landscape where attempts are made to govern global digital platforms via supranational regulation followed by legislative implementation in different national contexts.

The focus of this article is on the national context of the Danish welfare state. The Danish government has in recent years taken a firm stance on trying to regulate social media platforms and the growing influence of tech giants. However, just as the case is with the EU, there are multiple different stakeholders with varied political and economic interests vying for influence when it comes to regulating digital technology and culture in Denmark. Therefore, we are interested, not only in analyzing Danish legislation in the area, but in analyzing the current debate regarding the regulation of social media platforms and the various regulatory attitudes exhibited by the different governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. We are also interested in how the different dimensions of the country's regulatory landscape impacts Danish digital creators since their working conditions are and continue to be affected by the Danish government's legislative agenda and the various stakeholders' regulatory attitudes.

Methodologically, this article engages with document analysis (Bowen, 2009) and qualitative interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Bryman, 2016) to map and analyze the various regulatory initiatives and attitudes within the Danish national context. We therefore identify and analyze the laws, proposals, reports and agreements provided by different governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations that concern the regulation of the dominant social media platforms operating in Denmark. This mapping reveals the complex regulatory landscape and consequent regulatory debate currently taking place within the context of the Danish welfare state, which we further seek to illuminate by interviewing key actors and stakeholders. Theoretically, the article engages with literature on platforms and platformisation (Gillespie, 2018; van Dijck et al., 2018; Poell et al., 2019; Poell et al., 2022), the governance and regulation of platforms (Helberger et al., 2017; Gorwa, 2019) and the distinctiveness of the digital welfare state (Schou & Hjelholt, 2018; Andreasen et al., 2021; Jørgensen, 2021; Collington, 2022; Dencik, 2022).

CLP06 Getting to better media policy – Attitudes, concepts and imaginaries

PP 0575 Regulatory dilemmas in disconnection: What's (im)possible to regulate and why?

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A key argument in disconnection research, as well as studies of big tech and surveillance capitalism is that politicians and the authorities should regulate digital media (Zuboff, 2019). The question is, however, to what degree it is possible to regulate digital media use in democratic societies with high standards of freedom of speech and free market ideals. The main aim of this paper is thus to investigate how the calls for regulatory interventions ressonnate with users, political parties, and industry leaders, and to, in turn, pinpoint the main regulatory dilemmas in disconnection in the context of western liberal democracies; what are the current possibilities and impossibilities in this new regulatory field? Norway is selected as case country because of the Nordic regions tradition for regulating media, in addition to an advanced digital infrastructure and a digitally connected population. The methodological approach is a combination of two kinds of datasets;

The main empirical material survey data of users set collected in 2023, representative of the Norwegian population (n = 1142). The quantitative findings are supplemented by qualitative interviews with relevant politicians, users and representatives of media/tech industry. Theoretically, the paper is based on insights from research on digital disconnection, political regulation of digital platforms, and responsibilization.

The analysis pinpoints, and is structured according to, three key regulatory dilemmas: (1) although these is a broad agreement about the problem of intrusive media, there is no unison support for political intervention and regulatory

measures, (2) although there is broad agreement that the industry should be responsible, there is very limited trust in the industry to reduce the pressure to be always-on, and (3) although there are individual politicians and political parties who support regulation, they seem to lack regulatory measures except for children and elementary schools. In sum this analysis demonstrates that although there are movements in the direction of regulation of big tech internationally and at a supranational level (EU), it is dilematic to identify national measures to address intrusive media as a societal problem and a new realm of political regulation, because nether the voters, the industry, or the politicians seems to identify a suitable balance between the benefits of digital media and the curse of digital distractions and intrusive media.

CLP06 Getting to better media policy – Attitudes, concepts and imaginaries

PP 0576 Disinformation campaigns as a systemic risk under the Digital Services Act

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The Digital Services Act (DSA) (Regulation 2022/2065) defines categories of systematic risks that need to be assessed and mitigated by very large online platforms (VLOPs) and search engines (VLOSEs). Various types of content can contribute to these risks – one mentioned explicitly by the regulators are "coordinated disinformation campaigns" (Rec. 83). Furthermore, automatic means might contribute to these campaigns (ibid.). Research is divided on the harm of disinformation – many discuss the negative consequences (Iosifidis & Nicoli, 2021; Bayer et al., 2021; McKay & Tenove, 2021). However, proving harm due to consumed information is often challenging. Some researchers argue that such a correlation cannot be proven and that the concept is not theoretically developed (Altay et al. 2023). Moreover, the actual consequences are difficult to establish (Zywietz, 2018). Additionally, the terminology is still unclear, and various terms such as disinformation, fake news, propaganda, or conspiracies are often used interchangeably. Especially legal scholars and regulators do not differentiate enough. For an example, see the DSA commentary (Hofmann & Raue, 2023) that uses some terms interchangeably. This paper makes two contributions based on an interdisciplinary socio-legal methodology. Firstly, it defines and differentiates disinformation campaigns in their context. Secondly, it provides answers to how society's perception of the dangers of disinformation for democratic societies can be weighed against factual dangers and harms and argues for a focus on targeted disinformation campaigns. This research creates a framework for disinformation regulation by identifying four aspects based on which disinformation campaigns can be identified and: 1) the type of information, 2) the method of information dissemination, 3) the intention and origins, and 4) harm and effects. The type of information disseminated includes whether the information is protected by freedom of speech – as opinions, for instance, cannot be true or false and cannot be proven. More critical to identifying a disinformation campaign is the method of dissemination, as the use of bots and targeted advertising increases the potential harm. Accordingly, the intention of the disseminator is to be considered, which, however, is not accessible. However, the origins – centralized, commercial, political, and institutional (see Benkler et al., 2018) allow some conclusions regarding the intentions of disseminators. Finally, the harm and effects are crucial to evaluate the necessity of disinformation regulation. That refers to public harm and threats to democratic processes and decision-making. In that regard, the balance of protecting constitutional rights must be considered. This framework provides a nuanced conceptualisation of disinformation campaigns that can be operationalised for the purposes of regulation. It provides a basis for answering the question of the scope of the disinformation regulation needed. Furthermore, this research provides a framework for risk assessment under the DSA that applies to other risks, such as the threat to civic discourse and elections, public health and public security, gender-based violence, discrimination, and negative consequences on a person's well-being. This research results benefit other jurisdictions and regulators taking on disinformation on online platforms, such as the UK's Online Safety Bill.

CLP06 Getting to better media policy – Attitudes, concepts and imaginaries

PP 0577 The digital histories of press support schemes: A life course approach to media policy as strategic action fields of media industry interests

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Many media systems such as those in Scandinavia and Canada provide direct and indirect support to journalism organizations, often amounting to hundreds of millions in value. However, exactly how these policies are shaped remains an open question. Even more opaque is the role of media industries representatives invited to these committees. Policy makers are usually rather unwilling to talk about the processes and strategies involved in designing such schemes, at least as long as they still serve industry roles. To get around this methodological problem, we

approach recently retired key strategic players in the media industries in Norway and Canada who have served on policy committees shaping the industries at large, and present them with a semi-structured interview design, the aim of which is to answer the following two research questions: 1) what factors most affected their decision making and contributions to journalism policy conversations? 2) how did digitalization (a significant generational event) affect their perspectives and patterns of responses?

As this sample is necessarily strategic and small, we interview 12 retired industry leaders (six in Canada and six in Norway), conducted during spring and summer 2024. We aim for retired chief editors and CEOs of news organizations, spanning the press and broadcasting sectors in both countries. The rationale for comparing the two countries lies with the relative (and increasing) similarities in their press support systems, corporative processes of parliament, and comparative motivations for state intervention in the press, resting with the democratic role of the press in society. We ask informants about their strategies going into these committees, how they worked to promote the interest of their owners/employers and the journalistic institution, journalism innovation and their interpretation of the process overall. The life course approach allows informants to focus on the fact that they were all affected by a shared sudden systems change (digitalization).

Results are analyzed within the institutional framework of strategic action field theory, where a strategic action field is a meso-level social order where actors interact with knowledge of each other under a common understanding of the rules, relationships, and purposes of the field, and what is at stake. This approach is appropriate to gain insight into the digital histories of the media, as informants went through the challenges of digitalization together. We expect results to show that industry members of policy committees performed in line with strategic action field theory particularly in pushing narratives of financial crisis, the impending destruction of journalism, and technological threats, particularly from US-based platform players. The life course approach is also expected to yield rich and deep behind the scenes stories of actors who were regularly given seats at the table when laws and support schemes were designed in both countries, uncovering what actually happened as vast resources shifted to digital from print, with significant government funding increasingly going to journalism organizations in Canada to support their survival.

CLP07 Policy in media ownership transparency: Results and challenges of cross-country comparison

PN 098 Media ownership policy in Austria: high standards and need of improvement in PSM and distribution

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This paper presents the EurOMo framework for assessing regulatory risks in the EU and an analysis of the Austrian case. Following recommendation by scholarly literature and recent EU policymaking (Council of Europe, 2018; Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), 2018; Picard & Pickard, 2017), EurOMo assesses the suitability of legal frameworks in five areas: (1) national application of the AVMSD, (2) provisions on concentration, (3) provisions on managerial independence, (4) provisions on state/public funding transparency, and (5) transparency requirements for digital platforms. We have created a laws database and developed 20 indicators to assess them. The project seeks for information in media, company and competition laws (Picard & Pickard, 2017).According to this methodology, Austria has a strong regulatory framework in many areas. The "media law", for example, provides for transparency of beneficial owners to the public (Mediengesetz, 2021), making the country one with the highest levels of ownership transparency. Austria also has strong provisions for transparency in public funding, again leading to the best results across European countries. However, managerial independence, especially for PSM, is still an issue. This is reflected in a recent decision by the Austrian constitutional court that requires the parliament to discuss a new PSM law shielding the foundation board from political influence (Fidler, 2023).Finally, in terms of regulation of digital platforms, Austria is a forerunner with the enforcement of its "platform law", covering several aspects, for example advertising tax in the national operation of foreign platforms (KoPl-G, 2020). But the law does not cover provisions that are more relevant for the distribution of news media content, and, as in most EU countries, the NRA expects the DSA and DMA to set the main framework, whose enforcement is yet to be seen.

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CLP07 Policy in media ownership transparency: Results and challenges of cross-country comparison

PN 099 Incomplete media transparency – flawed democracy: the case of Bulgaria

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The struggle for genuine working media transparency as a crucial prerequisite for the operation of a healthy democratic media system has been part and parcel of the process of democratic building in Bulgaria after the collapse of communism. However, the practice has been rather controversial. Media development has been driven predominantly by the owners and journalists and their associations have not had a major say in it. During the first stage of the democratic transition due to lack of expertise and the delayed adoption of an appropriate regulatory framework powerful political and economic groups entrenched their interests in the media sector (Zankova, 2020). Nowadays the state continues to be a major factor in the field through various mechanisms – public media financing, state advertising in loyal media outlets, media support of municipalities and election advertising (Indzhov, 2021). Generally such approach has a negative impact on the media environment – a trend that stood out clearly during the more than 10-year governance of GERB. In most of the cases, it is implemented by the circumvention of the Public Procurement Act (PPA) and results in media corruption. The picture so far is unstable with a lot of risks and unclear future. On a broader scale these features stem from the Bulgarian media system being a formation of a semi-consolidated or flawed democracy (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015). In this respect on the one hand, the whole media system needs reformation and strengthening of the guarantees to serve the public good while on the other, special safeguards for enhancing media transparency demand significant attention. By and large the improvement in the sector requires a complex of measures which include also amendments in the ways of media financing. A solid foundation of the reforms should be the changes in the regulatory framework (RTA, the Protection of Competition Act, the Public Procurement Act, etc.) and its better implementation. An unalienable element of these transformations should be the reinstatement of the registries in force and particularly the registries at the Council for Electronic Media (CEM) and the Ministry of Culture (MC). The analysis and recommendations are based on the work of the Bulgarian team in the second phase of the EurOMo pilot project (2022–2023). ReferencesDobek-Ostrowska, B. (2015). 25 Years after Communism: Four Models of Media and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe. In: B. Dobek-Ostrowska and M.Głowacki. (eds.). Democracy and Media in Central and Eastern Europe 25 Years on. Wroclaw, Pl: Peter Lang Edition, 11 – 45.Indzhov, I. (2022). Bulgaria needs a fund to support quality journalism. [България има нужда от фонд за подкрепа на качествената журналистика]. – Retrieved December 22 2023 from https://www.newmedia21.eu/analizi/balgariya-ima-nuzhda-ot-fond-za-podkrepa-na-kachestvenata-zhurnalistika/.Zankova, B. (2020). Medialized politics and politicized media. Characteristics of the Bulgarian media model. In: G.Haizer, I. Matyus, N. Merkovity, J. Molnar, P.B.Stumpf and O. Szabo Palocz (eds.).Communicative space – political space.11thCentral and Eastern European Communication and Media conference, 2018. Szeged: Iurisperitus Kiado, 257 – 265.

CLP07 Policy in media ownership transparency: Results and challenges of cross-country comparison

PN 100 Formation and implementation of media ownership transparency policy in Lithuania

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The paper examines how the media ownership transparency policy is formed in Lithuania and how decisions of this policy are implemented. Since 1996, when the Law on Provision of Information to the Public was passed, there have been several stages of media ownership transparency policy making. In the first stage, 1996–2001, the legal norm to ensure transparency of ownership of media organizations was not implemented and was finally abolished (VIRSIS, 2024). Since 2002, following changes in legislation, media organizations have begun to declare their ownership relationships with two institutions: the Ministry of Culture and the Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission. This process was quite fragmented – many organizations disclosed only part of the ownership relationships and the final beneficiaries often remained unpublic (Jastramskis, 2019). Therefore, a political decision was made to integrate the state's information resources and create a unified register of media organizations' ownership and financial activity (beneficial owners, turnover, profit, profit from direct and indirect sources: government support/advertising, etc.) declaration – the Information System of Producers and Disseminators of Public Information (VIRSIS), which was supposed to start operating in 2019 (Law on the Provision of Information to the Public, 2019).This system (VIRSIS) started on January 1, 2023, but a half-year deadline was set for media organizations to submit data. Our

analysis regarding national media organizations shows, that disclosures of media ownership to the VIRSIS and to the public are provided partially. If the owners of media companies are legal persons, their property owners are not indicated often, i.e., the main owners of the patronising companies are not disclosed. There are instruments to penalise those media groups/owners who ignore such an obligation; however, such measure has not been applied so far since the introduction of this provision of the Law in 2017.A similar situation exists on the websites of the media organizations themselves. Media organizations themselves usually do not publicly provide detailed information about their owners. Most information is accessible about first-generation media owners. There are a few cases when direct and beneficial owners are mentioned on the media company's website (Balčytienė, Jastramskis, 2022).Finally, when discussing the ownership transparency problem, it should be mentioned that it is important not only to ensure higher standards for economic/business transparency of media entities, namely considering the aspect that is termed as 'competitive' dimension. However, the rapidly evolving communications arena, marked by infrastructural changes (Helberger, 2020) and persistent uncertainties in the geopolitical context in Europe give rise to new challenges. Hence, several new questions linked to information/communication disruptions, with a particular focus on the dynamics of opinion power, must be addressed also within the context of ownership transparency.ReferencesBalčytienė, A., Jastramskis, D. 2022. Euromedia ownership monitor. Lithuania. Country report 2022. https://media-ownership.eu/findings/countries/lithuania/Helberger, N. 2020. The Political Power of Platforms: How Current Attempts to Regulate Misinformation Amplify Opinion Power. Digital Journalism, 8:6, 842–854.Jastramskis, D. 2019. Media policy in Lithuania. Vilnius University Press.Republic of Lithuania Law on the Provision of Information to the Public. 2019. https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.065AB8483E1E/asrVIRSIS. Apie VIRSIS. 2024. https://www.virsis.lt/apie.

CLP07 Policy in media ownership transparency: Results and challenges of cross-country comparison

PN 101 Media ownership in Portugal: advanced legal settings, but weakness in origins and public advertising

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This paper analyzes the Portuguese case regarding the EurOMo framework for assessing regulatory risks in the EU. Following the methodology to assess risks for the transparency of media previously presented, we aim at presenting the main features of the Portuguese media system. According to this methodology, Portuguese has a low risk in terms of the legal framework concerning ownership transparency, as Portugal has an advanced legislation that makes it mandatory for media groups to declare beneficial owners to the regulatory agency. However, not all media groups have the names of beneficial owners in their site (only the company's name). To find most beneficial owners a consultation to the Transparency Portal run by the media regulatory agency (ERC) is needed. Media ownership can still be an issue as there is a high vulnerability of Portuguese media groups to foreign capital with possible hidden interests, namely originating in autocratic regimes, such as Angola and China. The Portuguese media ownership is organized in a complex tangle of companies and financial holdings, with most information laying behind intricate networks. Also, media companies are owned, in some cases, by holdings looking for better tax environments, which means that some owners are based in countries such as the Netherlands. Visibility of ownership is guaranteed, but that does not mean total transparency regarding the financial Information of media companies. The chain of ownership is publicly available at the transparency portal run by ERC, but information on the revenues and staff employed is unknown for most of the companies, and there is, according to the Journalists' Union, a concerning lack of public information in regard to financial flows. The level of State intervention in media support is an area in need of attention. Although there are no direct subsidies to national media in Portugal and public advertising is regulated by law, namely to guarantee fairness in what concerns the balance between national and local media, there are reasonable doubts about the real dimension of values involved. The information provided by the annual report of the media regulatory agency has raised some doubts given the low values notified and even the media owners' association (Associação Portuguesa de Imprensa) has expressed some concern. This year, the national body which controls public spending has recommended a revision of the legislation. Also, aggregated information is presented by media sectors, but not by outlets individually. Therefore, it is not actually possible to know how much each medium or media group receives.

CLP08 Combatting online harms in policy and practice

PP 0781 Combating illegal content on social-media platforms: Do precise takedown deadlines make a difference?

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The rise of social media has opened up new communication opportunities but also facilitated the spread of illegal content. Navigating this challenge has proven difficult for both Internet platforms and governments. Rather than imposing general internet monitoring obligations, governments have opted for a regulatory approach based on

conditional immunity and notice-and-takedown procedures. Simultaneously, Internet platforms have developed community standards and content-moderation systems, sparking controversial debates on over-blocking, freedom of expression, and effective moderation of illegal content.

Dissatisfaction with content moderation prompted new platform regulations in various countries such as Germany (NetzDG), Austria (KoPl-G), France (Loi Avia), Australia (Online Safety Act) and the EU (Digital Services Act, DSA). These typically require platforms to operate notice-and-action procedures, but they differ in detail. While some regulations (e.g. NetzDG) set explicit "takedown deadlines" for the removal of illegal content, others, such as the EU-wide DSA, simply require decisions to be made "in a timely manner".

From a governance perspective, the presence or absence of takedown deadlines raises questions of whether and how Internet platforms comply with these requirements, and whether specific deadlines impact the dissemination of illegal content. Although research on the effects of the timing of content removal is scarce, available evidence indicates that timely reactions matter (Bak-Coleman et al. 2022). While platforms assert in their transparency reports to remove most problematic content within 24 hours, the effects of takedown deadlines remain inadequately researched. This article closes this gap by investigating how takedown deadlines affect the spread of illegal content on social-media networks. For this endeavor, we employ an agent-based model that simulates information diffusion in social media (Author et al. 2023). By incorporating an algorithm that removes illegal content, we aim to quantify the impact on user exposure to this content. While we anticipate that longer deadlines will result in more users being exposed to illegal content, the possible non-linear relationship between the two dynamics of takedown and exposure will be elucidated by the experiment.

This analysis aligns with the conference theme of reconsidering communication and social (dis) orders by assessing and evaluating the effects and effectiveness of regulatory instruments for moderating illegal content on Internet platforms. It helps determine whether the lack of specific takedown deadlines in the DSA is a reasonable regulatory decision or impedes efforts to combat illegal content on social-media platforms.

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CLP08 Combatting online harms in policy and practice

PP 0782 Smart home harms: An enquiry into smart technology-enabled domestic abuse to explore design, legal, ethical, and policy responses

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Digital harms are recognised as ethical and legal challenges facing all users of digital technologies. Such harms extend to IoT (internet of things) including smart home technologies. Internet-connected home electronic devices and systems encompass smart TVs, smart speakers, baby monitors; home security systems from door locks to cameras; and remote-controlled lighting and heating. The widespread domestic adoption of smart technologies reflects their growing affordability in developed regions. Situated in intimate living spaces, these digital tools can be invasive and can cause harms. While they meet certain needs by automating daily routines, smart home harms entail the unwarranted release of information, falsification of sensing information, and unauthorised access to system controls (Buil-Gil et al. 2023). Research reveals a surge in gender-based smart technology-enabled domestic abuse, also named technology-facilitated domestic and family violence, digital coercive control technology, or "tech abuse". Perpetrators employ tactics assisted by digital tools to monitor, harass, and abuse victims using GPS location tracking, spyware, and mobile phones (see Afrouz 2023; Olabode et al. 2023; Powell and Henry 2019; Slupska and Tanczer 2021). Such actions raise vital design, safeguarding, governance, and legal issues.

The findings of a case study that determines smart-enabled domestic abuse risks is presented to mitigate harms by establishing and devising effective ethical design, regulation, and policy. This enquiry forms part of a large UKRI/EPSRC project, 'AGENCY: Assuring Citizen Agency in a World with Complex Online Harms'. The findings of workshop dialogues with relevant stakeholders in the UK are presented, using reflexive thematic analysis. The outcomes establish common scenarios comprising perpetrator motives; risk factors that render women and children vulnerable; devices and situations implicated; and impacts on victim/survivors. The findings underpin research stages that generate user-centred co-design solutions via collaborative design-led workshops with users and stakeholders. The modelling of harm-reducing smart technologies discerns design and policy solutions steered by Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) principles. Drawing on Science and Technology Studies and feminist policy principles, the findings support a critical assessment of feminist care ethics to pinpoint appropriate design values and to establish robust legal and policy responses that can mitigate smart risks by accounting for gendered techno-social inequalities within

smart-enabled domestic environments. The results of this study may provide insights for non-Western contexts where development and acceptance of smart technologies are at different stages.

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CLP08 Combatting online harms in policy and practice

PP 0783 The state of regulatory harmonisation and implementation of age verification measures by video-sharing platforms

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Laws to regulate online platforms and better protect citizen/consumers, especially minors, are being adopted in many jurisdictions. The EU's Digital Services Act and the UK's Online Safety Act are two recent and prominent examples. They, like many others, both include obligations for platform providers to implement age verification measures to protect minors. Age verification, however, is hardly an unproblematic measure for policymakers to require, nor is it well-defined. As Nash (2021) has pointed out it presents both normative and practical challenges, many of which stem from the data that must be gathered about minors for implementation.

Some forms of age verification have been in use for years, arguably in response to public pressure and the threat of regulation. EU level regulation did come in 2018, when the Audiovisual Media Service Directive (AVMSD) was revised to cover video-sharing platforms (VSPs). The Directive requires Member States to ensure that VSPs in their jurisdiction take measures to "protect minors from programmes, user-generated videos and audiovisual commercial communications" through, among others, "establishing and operating age verification systems" (Art. 28b). The AVMSD's requirement has been in transposed in most Member State for at least two years, providing an opportunity to better understand this popular regulatory tool.

This paper contributes new evidence from an investigation into the requirements for age verification set by 27 EU Member States and the United Kingdom, and from an examination of the systems used by 11 of the most widely used VSPs in Europe. Data was gathered through doctrinal analysis of laws, questionnaire responses from a network of national experts, questionnaire responses from VSP operators, and testing of VSP functionalities in 2023.

The evidence identifies vast differences in states' approaches to clarifying (if at all) their expectations for age verification, though several states have confirmed in law or guidance that self-certification is not considered sufficient to qualify. National level application of GDPR plays a role with 18 jurisdictions imposing age requirements higher than thirteen. Standards for age verification are being set but are only beginning to address the use of AI tools, which we found are being relied upon by several of the larger VSPs, especially ones for 18+. Five age verification methods were identified: use of official identification documents, selfie, facial age estimation based on video selfie, social vouching, and use of other documents such as school ID card or company loyalty card. Smaller VSPs across the states were reported to be lacking in any form of age verification.

Based on this evidence we argue that given the ever-greater weight being put on this measure in platform policy, harmonisation of expectations and standards for age-verification is needed. It is crucial both because of the lack of take up by smaller services, including adult services, and because of the increasing use of automated systems, which as others (Van der Maelen, 2019) have found do have significant downsides that should be controlled for.

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CLP08 Combatting online harms in policy and practice

PP 0784 Illegal loot box advertising on social media: An empirical study using the Meta and TikTok ad transparency repositories

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Loot boxes are gambling-like products inside video games that can be bought with real-world money to obtain random rewards in about 80% of top mobile games. Loot boxes are widely accessible to minors under 18, unlike traditional gambling. Loot box spending has been linked to problem gambling, and stakeholders are concerned about potential financial harms, e.g., overspending. Gambling law cannot be used to address the issue because most loot boxes do not satisfy the narrow legal definition of 'gambling' in most countries. The UK advertising regulator has held that video game advertising must disclose, if relevant, that a game contains (i) in-game purchases (i.e., the possibility to spend real-world money) and (ii) loot boxes in particular. The regulator has also previously taken enforcement actions to punish companies that have breached this rule. Two studies were conducted using the ad repositories provided by Meta and TikTok. Content analysis was conducted on advertising materials to attempt to identify disclosures for in-game purchases and loot boxes. Study 1 focused on Meta-owned platforms (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, and Messenger). Amongst 188 adverts for popular games known to contain loot boxes examined, 167 (88.8%) failed to disclose the presence of generic in-game purchases and 175 (93.1%) did not disclose loot box presence. These adverts related to 63 game titles, of which the vast majority did not ever disclose either type of content. Even amongst the small minority that did make disclosures, most did not do so consistently. Only the adverts of two games (3.1%) consistently disclosed in-game purchases, and only those of one single game (1.6%) always disclosed loot boxes. Study 2 examined TikTok. Amongst the most viewed 920 TikTok adverts, 130 (14.1%) pertained to games with in-game purchasing and 100 (10.9%) were for games also selling loot boxes. Only 9 of 130 ads (6.9%) disclosed the presence of in-game purchasing, and just 7 of 100 ads (7.0%) disclosed loot box presence as required. The vast majority of social media adverts across various platforms were therefore non-compliant with UK advertising regulations and presumably also EU consumer protection law (upon which the UK advertising rules were based). The illegal TikTok adverts that failed to disclose loot boxes were viewed a total of 292,641,000 times in the UK alone, which is approximately 10 impressions per active user. Many people have therefore been repeatedly exposed to prohibited and socially irresponsible advertising that failed to provide important and mandated information. Additional advertising rule violations, such as inaccurate gameplay depiction and objectification of women, were observed. Implementation deficiencies with ad repositories, which must comply with transparency obligations imposed by the EU Digital Services Act, are also highlighted, e.g., not disclosing the beneficiary. The present study demonstrates that information disclosure requirements imposed by law empower the public with data access, which can and should be used by researchers. Policymakers beyond the EU should consider enabling more such opportunities for the public benefit.

CRC01 Crafting corporate crisis communication strategies

PP 0241 Communicating uncertainty during crises: The dual impact of hedges and pledges on perceptions of competence and sincerity

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Uncertainty is an intrinsic component of crisis events. Especially in the early stage of a crisis, there is often a shortage of information. Ambiguity might initially exist regarding the impact of the crisis, the cause, who is responsible, and how to ensure people's safety (Liu et al., 2016). Despite the well-recognized role of uncertainty in crises, research has not examined how the public perceives crisis messages that reveal uncertainty. Therefore, this study examines the causal impact of linguistic cues of uncertainty on public perceptions about the organization in crisis. Through three experiments, we also uncover potential boundary conditions and the underlying mechanisms.

More specifically, we examined whether communicating linguistic indicators of (un)certainty in a crisis message, such as hedges (e.g., "maybe"), pledges (e.g., "definitely"), and hesitations (e.g., "uhm"; Blankenship & Holtgraves, 2005), impact an organization's reputation through competence and sincerity perceptions. On the one hand, best practices recommend organizations in crisis to acknowledge and express uncertainty (Seeger, 2006). An organization that is truthful about what is known and what not may come across as honest and sincere. On the other hand, the public expects an organization in crisis to capably handle the situation and demonstrate confidence (Claeys & Cauberghe, 2014). The competence of an organization that shows uncertainty could therefore be questioned.

Three experiments were conducted, which all manipulated a fictitious crisis response with either linguistic cues of certainty or uncertainty. Each study additionally manipulated a different moderator, namely crisis nature (i.e., operational vs. reputational crisis; n = 322), crisis disclosure strategy (i.e., thunder vs. stealing thunder; n = 273), and crisis response strategy (i.e., ethical base response vs. denial vs. apology; n = 317). The results show that in most cases adopting certain language in a crisis message positively affects organizational reputation through an increase in both competence and sincerity perceptions. The findings demonstrate that, overall, the public evaluates a CEO who conveys uncertainty regarding an ongoing crisis through language more negatively.

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CRC01 Crafting corporate crisis communication strategies

PP 0242 Employee perceptions of Crisis Spillover Risk: The role of crisis relevance, severity, and corporate response strategies

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Crisis spillover risks refer to the likelihood of events in an external organization creating concern, uncertainty, or perceptions of harm for another organization (Veil et al., 2016). When a crisis spillover occurs, a company can be linked to a crisis that is affecting another company such as a competitor in the same industry, and the negative consequences of crisis spillover can be significant when stakeholders make assumptions of guilt by association (Laufer & Wang, 2018). While the spillover effect of crises has become an emerging research topic in the field of crisis communication, little attention has been given to how employees perceive the risk of crisis spillover due to a corporate misconduct of another company (Wang & Laufer, in press). The risk inherently yields ambiguity and uncertainty in the internal context of an organization, and it can directly or indirectly affect employees' workplace and job security. Therefore, understanding the likelihood of the crisis spillover effect will help unpack the mechanisms underlying employees' judgments of crisis spillover risk, and unravel the effectiveness of different crisis response strategies. Drawing on Social Identity Theory and Reputation Commons Perspective, the current research

addresses how crisis relevance, crisis severity, and corporate response strategies affect employee perceptions of crisis spillover risk.

An online experiment was conducted among employees (N = 300) working in the retailor sector in the United States. Our findings revealed a significant effect of perceived crisis severity on crisis spillover risk to other companies in the same industry, and this effect does not depend on the crisis type. On the contrary, the results reveal an insignificant effect of crisis relevance on spillover risk to other companies. Furthermore, we found a significant interaction effect of spillover risk and response type, implying that the impact of spillover risk on employee perceptions depends on the type of corporate response: When the spillover risk is high, employees perceive issuing a denial more effective than taking no response. With respect to how employees perceive the likelihood of crisis spillover to their own company, we found a highly significant effect of spillover risk on perceived likelihood of crisis spillover to their own company. However, the impact of response type was insignificant, and the interaction of spillover risk and response type was found to be insignificant as well. Interestingly, the results suggest that when employees sense a high spillover risk of a crisis in their industry, they will be very concerned about the spread of the crisis to negatively influence their own company, and this concern is regardless how their company responds to the crisis. In addition, we found that positive megaphoning among employees is significantly higher when the company issues a denial than when it remains silent, though we could not confirm how positive megaphoning among employees corresponds to the likelihood of crisis spillover risk.

This research provides valuable insights on how the likelihood of crisis spillover affects employee attitudes and help us gain a better understanding of how organizations should respond to spillover crises.

CRC01 Crafting corporate crisis communication strategies

PP 0243 Optimizing message efficacy and engagement through visually focused information

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Ongoing global transformations initiated in the wake of COVID-19 underscore the urgent need to enhance messaging efficacy in order to protect lives, livelihoods, public welfare, and social order. Following critical post-pandemic analysis, researchers advocate for a range of improved strategies to prevent undesirable outcomes such as message fatigue (Street & Finset, 2022) through thoughtful integration of visual modalities (symbols, iconography, infographics, photos) for greater impact (Verma, 2022). Despite the recent, unprecedented proliferation of social media and its popularization of visual messaging, there remains a surprising dearth of theory and research on the influence of visual design, storytelling (Lankow et al. 2012; Liu et al. 2020), infographics (Yarborough, 2019; Sutton & Fisher 2021; Jaleniauskiene & Kasperiuniene, 2022), and psycho-emotional connotations (Ho & Siu, 2012) on how communities receive and process crisis information (Samson & Gross, 2012; Hitti et al. 2021).

To remedy this shortcoming, we propose a new theoretical framework that identifies visual presentation modalities likely to be most persuasive in moderating community members' behavior and promoting safety during crises. Based on a systematic review of crisis communication and visual design literatures, we map out different visual presentation structures ideal for impactful communication based on different crisis characteristics. We also identify potential unintended consequences which must be mitigated to ensure accurate and comprehensive reception by the public.

Situated within lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as prior mega-crises, our project proposes strategies for visual crisis communication messaging which would be most appropriate for deployment during future crises. Additionally, we offer a research roadmap to further test the proposed framework to ensure its continued relevance within a dynamic landscape characterized by constant technological disruption, ever-changing patterns of social media usage, and evolving behaviors of information processing. Rooted in the conviction that it is imperative for scholars and practitioners to map out how impactful visual crisis communication could support long-term crisis resilience, our work seeks to build a foundation for developing more efficient communication paradigms for future crises.

CRC01 Crafting corporate crisis communication strategies

PP 0244 Public relations practitioners' role in organizational crisis decision-making

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Crises are unpredictable, major events which can negatively impact the organization and its stakeholders (Coombs, 2023). Therefore, organizations often turn to multi-disciplinary crisis management teams (Frandsen & Johansen, 2017). A crisis management team (CMT) can be defined as the decision-making unit in charge of preparing for

and handling a crisis (Coombs, 2023). While some sources claim that public relations practitioners play a leading role in the CMT (e.g., Lee et al., 2007), others suggest a more executive, supporting role (e.g., Claeys & Opgenhaffen, 2021).

Several factors may influence an organization's decision-making process regarding the crisis response (Huang & Su, 2009). For instance, the organizational structure will determine the extent to which the public relations department is granted autonomy, is sensitive to encroachment and is part of the dominant coalition (Bowen, 2006; Marra, 1998). Furthermore, the organizational communication culture can either reinforce or undermine public relations efforts during crises (Marra, 1998). We want to explore the specific role of PR-practitioners during crisis response decision-making, potential factors that affect their role and the strategies they use to maximize their impact.

In 2021, we conducted 17 semi-structured in-depth interviews with senior public relations consultants from either Belgian communication agencies or the Belgian branch of international agencies. The PR-practitioners were asked about the extent to which their clients suffering from an ongoing crisis adopt their recommendations, the circumstances under which their advice is or is not followed, and the strategies they use to convince clients of their approach. In the following months, the interview transcripts will be subjected to an inductive data coding process through NVivo.

The preliminary findings indicate that PR-practitioners from external communication agencies can adopt both an advisory and an executive role during organizational crises. While the decision-making process is often a tug-of-war between different disciplines, public relations advice is generally taken into serious consideration. Still, there are several factors which are perceived as facilitators (e.g., trusted client-agency relationship) or inhibitors (e.g., legal and financial consequences of the recommended strategy).

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CRC01 Crafting corporate crisis communication strategies

PP 0245 How emotions shift within and between arenas: a new framework of crisis emotional flow

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Publics consume crisis information through a multi-stage and multivocal process rather than a direct, singular approach (Frandsen & Johansen, 2022). In crises violating public safety and interests, the progressive revelation of information and communication among multiple voices may prompt a dynamic flow in the publics emotional spectrum, such as the shift in the numbers and valence of emotions (e.g., Yi et al., 2022). This study defines crisis emotional flow as the changing emotional experience during and after a public crisis causing psychological harm. According to the rhetorical arena theory (RAT; Frandsen & Johansen, 2010), when a crisis erupts, a rhetorical arena and sub-arenas open where multiple voices start communicating *to, with, against* and *past* each other about the crisis, creating various patterns of interactions, and leading to various levels of crisis knowledge as well as dynamic ongoing flows of emotions among affected publics. However, the dynamic flow of shifting emotions in and across sub-arenas is understudied.

Furthermore, even though publics' crisis coping behaviors (e.g., Jin et al., 2007, 2012) and how crisis emotions act to mitigate organizational reputation damage (e.g., Coombs & Holladay, 2005) have been examined from

a cross-sectional perspective, what remains understudied is how crisis emotions flow *during* and *after* a crisis via a longitudinal approach. As Lazarus (2006) argued, longitudinal research is essential to conduct "observations necessary to show the change in coping that constitutes a process" (p. 226). Therefore, to advance our understanding of crisis emotional flow and its function in crisis communication, this study proposes a new conceptual framework integrating RAT and crisis emotion theory, which identifies: (1) the series of crisis emotions experienced by publics following a crisis outbreak; (2) the patterns crisis emotions shift during and after a crisis; and (3) the impact of crisis emotional flow on publics' coping strategies.

Specifically, this framework integrates two theoretical pillars in crisis communication. The first is RAT with the fundamental assumption that when a crisis occurs, the rhetorical arenas will open and various voices collectively construct the crisis. Since voices (communication) can convey emotions (Nabi, 2015), publics' emotions within arenas can flow with the dynamics of diverse voices present within these spaces. Additionally, each large arena contains various sub-arenas where publics' emotional reactions may vary across sub-arenas. Although arenas have boundaries, they are porous, allowing voices from other sub-arenas to go in and out and facilitating the flow of crisis emotions between different sub-arenas (Frandsen & Johansen, 2022). The second pillar is the scholarship centering on crisis emotions (e.g., Jin et al., 2007, 2012) grounded in Lazarus' appraisal theory (e.g., 2006) and emotional flow studies in persuasion research (e.g., Nabi, 2015), describing the crisis emotional flow as manifested in differential sequence, arousal, and valence of emotions, as well as emotional contagion.

This new framework provides the conceptual foundations that will (1) enrich the understanding of publics' crisis emotional flow experience, (2) predict publics' coping strategies, and (3) guide crisis communication strategic decision-making in dynamic situations.

CRC02 The digital frontline: Social media dynamics in crisis communication

PP 0341 What did social networks change? Analysis of the crisis communication in the official papal texts

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The evolving landscape of communication technology has catalysed a profound transformation in the communication strategies of the papal office over the last two decades. As other world leaders, popes also have extended their communication into the digital space and the period of a digital papacy started. Since we are seeing the growth of a community following the Pope on social media (Pope Francis has over 50 million followers on X). The research takes a closer look at the communication channels and style adopted by popes Jan Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis amid the expansion of virtual spaces and social networks. This paper describes the transformations on the crisis-related discourse and its evolution within the papal messages spanning from 1995 to 2022. After analysis based in the annual texts published by the Holy See for World Communications Day, we have analysed 4015 texts (1205 by John Paul II, 1256 by Benedict XVI, 1554 by Francis) published on the official webpage vatican.va in English using NVivo software.

Utilizing text mining methodology, the study reveals a discernible shift in language and tone employed within these texts. Initially, the term 'must,' previously pervasive in papal messages, has notably vanished from recent communications. This gradual disappearance of imperatives was followed by rise in the use of inclusive pronouns 'we' and 'our' in papal discourse. This linguistic shift is further underscored by a distinct correlation between the increased occurrence of the term 'crisis' and the emergent prevalence of inclusive pronouns. This correlation reflects a clear alteration in the wording and communicative approach of the papacy. Additionally, the study identifies topics that, despite being predominantly labelled as crises in public discourse, have not been labelled as such by the popes. These are mainly cases of sexual abuse by clerics. Drawing from Pennebaker (2011) who shoved a significant increase in the usage of the noun 'we' during times of crisis, this research delves into the variations of the term 'crisis' and examines the changes of the crisis narrative across different papal tenures. In summary, John Paul II understands crisis as something to be overcome and gotten rid of, while Benedict XVI approaches crisis as a means for spiritual growth, and Pope Francis advances the understanding of crisis as a necessity that comes from God. Differing from his predecessors, he challenges letting ourselves to be thrown into crisis. (Francis, 2021)

The study presents a comprehensive narrative of the 'digital papacy,' highlighting an evolution in the texture, structure, and responsiveness of papal discourse to the contemporary societal milieu. It not only demonstrates linguistic changes but also reflects shifts in socio-cultural relations and the changes in authority signifying a pivotal transformation in how the papacy engages with the Catholic community in the age of social media and digital religion.

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CRC02 The digital frontline: Social media dynamics in crisis communication

PP 0342 How to make sense of platformized crisis?: (Algorithmically) Analysing discursive patterns in social media messages during moments of mobilization and issue formation

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Social media platforms are increasingly important during crisis situations (Westerman et al., 2014; Saroj & 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). Conversely, social media can also escalate an online discussion or issue into an offline crisis event (van Dijk et al., 2013; Breuer, 2016). Institutions that deal with crisis management have started using social media as a tool. However, research finds that communication professionals of public institutions experience a hesitance to (re)act upon the forming of online issues. The amount of discourse and data is experienced as cacophonic, which leads to the diffidence to act (Harmelink et al., 2018; Sneijder et al., 2019; 2021).

As the research group Social Interaction in Public life at the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences we consider the capacity of communication professionals of public institutions to respond adequately to ongoing issues of crisis on social media of great importance. For this reason, we formed a consortium of communication professionals from partnering public organizations in 2022, and started the interdisciplinary research project called 360 Newsroom to address the aforementioned concerns. We developed a learning environment called the BEP (Birds Eye Perspective) that trains communication professionals in effectively recognizing and navigating discursive practices on social media associated with potential to escalate an issue into a crisis. We established this environment by analyzing four case studies of online issue formation through a discursive psychology analytical framework (Potter, 1996; Potter & Edwards, 2001) with which we identified discursive practices employed by social media users during crisis. We annotated this crossmedia dataset to encapsulate the patterns in language that signal the devices of mobilization, and subsequently developed algorithms to classify these language patterns within non-annotated tweets. As such the algorithms provide enrichment to our overall analytical framework. Using these devices as building blocks we work towards automated detection of patterns such as mobilization while maintaining transparent and controllable.

Preliminary results were able to affirm the discursive patterns that provide insight into how certain discursive devices contribute to rumour spreading and mobilisation on social media, which in turn can lead to issue formation and eventually are predictive of crisis events. Furthermore, the study found that developing language sensitivity for certain patterns in online public discourse is vital for identifying potential issues on social media at an early stage, and that the use of algorithms can be successfully employed to foster this sensitivity. In our conference contribution we'll follow up on the 360 newsroom project by interpreting the empirical findings through the theoretical framework of issue formation and crisis communication in the platformized public sphere (De Winkel, 2023). We will address what discursive patterns – that occur in social media messages – have the potential to mobilize audiences, how these can be identified at an early stage, and what this means for crisis communication. Finally, we discuss the possibilities of algorithms in untangling the complexity and entropy of datafied and platformized communication.

CRC02 The digital frontline: Social media dynamics in crisis communication

PP 0343 Tweeting through the COVID-19 crisis: A quantitative comparative analysis of crisis communication on Twitter by key public actors in Germany

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The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 demanded swift yet coordinated crisis communication from authorities, politicians, and experts. Initially, however, risk assessments were ambiguous and hastily implemented containment measures contributed to public uncertainty with regard to preventive measures in Germany (Betsch, 2020). According to the Social Amplification of Risk Framework (SARF; Kasperson et al., 1988), public risk perceptions and response to risks following a crisis event are vastly shaped by the information flow via *amplification stations*, i.e., politicians, institutions, scientists as well as traditional and social media. Correspondingly, through the lens of *framing theory*, framing messages about a crisis as either amplified (e.g., emphasizing consequence, uncertainty, or conflict) or attenuated (e.g., emphasizing action, reassurance, or new evidence) potentially contributes to an *amplification* or *attenuation of risk perceptions* in the public (Shieh et al., 2008; Rossmann et al., 2018).

We aim to contribute to existing SARF and framing literature on risk amplification/attenuation during crises. While previous research applied SARF to risk framing in traditional news outlets, we focus on understudied amplification stations and channels: The COVID-19 crisis offers a prime example of how *key public actors*, i.e., politicians, institutions, scientists, have become pivotal information sources and interpreters of risks for the public – often bypassing

legacy media in Germany (Viehmann et al., 2020). Thereby, the relevance of *social media*, particularly Twitter (now: X) for rapid information dissemination became apparent, as public actors increased their communication on this platform to cater to the heightened information needs.

To comprehend the dynamics of crisis communication during the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany, we analyzed Twitter communications from key public actors over time: former Minister of Health Jens Spahn, prominent virologist Christian Drosten, the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG), and the Robert Koch Institute (RKI). This allows for a comparative analysis between political (Jens Spahn, BMG) and scientific voices (Christian Drosten, RKI), as well as between individual communicators (Jens Spahn, Christian Drosten) and institutional entities (BMG, RKI). Conducting manual quantitative content analysis on a sample of N = 1270 (re-)tweets from these actors over 12.02.2020 to 28.12.2021, we assessed risk-amplifying and risk-attenuating message framing, along with the tone and degree of emotionalizing language in their (re-)tweets (Rossmann et al., 2018).

Descriptive analyses and Chi²-tests revealed distinct patterns in how the four actors framed their COVID-19 crisis communication. Virologist Christian Drosten leaned towards a more negative tone, aligning with his use of risk-amplifying framing. Conversely, politician Jens Spahn demonstrated a more emotionally charged language, coupled with risk-attenuating framing. The institutions BMG and RKI employed more risk-attenuating frames but maintained an overall neutral tone. However, communication styles changed over the course of the pandemic. In-depth results and limitations will be presented at the conference.

Comparing crisis communication on Twitter amid the COVID-19 pandemic indicates colliding strategies between scientific and political communicators, potentially explaining the prevalent public uncertainty and social disorder regarding risks arising from these differences. Our study underscores the importance of coordination between experts and government actors in strategically communicating risks and containment measures for effective crisis communication.

CRC02 The digital frontline: Social media dynamics in crisis communication

PP 0344 Reinforce Negativity or push Positivity during Crises? Investigating direct and conditional Effects of negative and positive Sentiments in Newspapers' X/Twitter Posts on Audience Engagement during the Covid Pandemic

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News organizations have been disseminating news on X/Twitter to reach (new) audiences. As negativity is a core journalistic value, the question arises how and under what conditions negative and positive sentiments in news organizations' X/Twitter posts affect audience engagement with the X/Twitter posts. Early studies have found that negative sentiments are stronger related to audience engagement than positive sentiments. However, these studies have not considered possible specific dynamics during crises.

This study investigates direct and conditional effects of negativity and positivity sentiments in news organizations' X/Twitter posts on audience engagement based on the example of the Covid-19 crisis in the Netherlands. More specifically, drawing on behavioral economic theories, we investigate the following research questions (RQs): 1) How do negative and positive sentiments in Dutch newspapers' Covid-related X/Twitter posts affect audience engagement with the X/Twitter posts? 2) How do negative and positive sentiments in Dutch newspapers' Covid-related X/Twitter posts affect audience engagement with the X/Twitter posts during stronger (strict lockdowns) and weaker (no strict lockdowns) phases?

To investigate our RQs, we collected Covid-19 related posts from the official X/Twitter handles of the 10 leading (in terms of number of X/Twitter followers) newspapers in the Netherlands (5 national newspapers and 5 regional ones) during the period of three years from 01.01.2020 to 31.12.2022 using the python-based tool "snscrape". The final dataset consisted of 63´443 tweets (40´387 tweets from national newspapers and 23´086 tweets from regional ones). Independent variables: The number of words with negative and positive sentiments in the tweets was determined using the Lilah lexicon in Dutch. Moderator variable: Based on the information from the RIVM (Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment), we created a variable to indicate whether the tweets were published during a period of strict lockdown measures (March–June 2020, December 2020–June 2021, December 2021–February 2022) or not. Control variables: Using regular expressions, we found the number of URLs, usernames and hashtags within each tweet. We also controlled for media type (national vs. regional). Dependent variable: For each tweet, we determined the sum of the number of likes, retweets, quotes, replies and divided it by the number of followers in 100k to normalize the effect of larger audiences on engagement. To investigate RQ1, we conducted a linear regression with R. To investigate RQ2, we conducted two moderation analyses with the PROCESS macro for R.

The findings show that positive sentiments in newspapers' Covid-related X/Twitter posts are more impactful in increasing audience engagement than negative sentiments, though no differences are found depending on the

pandemic phase (strict lockdowns vs. no strict lockdowns). This suggests that during crises positive sentiments overrule negative sentiments and motivates further research about the impact of sentiments on audience engagement in social media posts during crises.

CRC02 The digital frontline: Social media dynamics in crisis communication

PP 0345 Navigating a pandemic in the age of digital platforms: Transforming lessons learned into a practical guidebook for effective social media-based crisis communication

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Being declared as an infodemic of social media (WHO, 2020), COVID-19 pandemic embodied a communication crisis, requiring a fast and timely response from world leaders, health organizations and mass media (Ngai et al., 2020). It has brought forward the significance of crisis communication and communication tools specifically social media platforms in effectively responding and managing the public health crises (Tsao et al., 2021). In purview of COVID-19 pandemic, scholarship is growing in the area of crisis and risk communication, however social media-based crisis communication has received limited attention as there is a sufficient gap in terms of development of adequate best practices grounded on social media-based research and practice. This area needs more scholarly investigation based on comparative case studies and insights from real time lived experiences of response actors.

This study fills in this research gap and seeks to advance a guidebook for effective social media-based crisis communication by adopting COVID-19 pandemic as a case study. Grounded on Framing theory and Crisis and Emergency Risk communication (CERC) Model, the study employs mixed method research design to examine how COVID-19 pandemic was framed and communicated by public health organizations on social media and how these organizations utilized and navigated social media platforms in practice during the initial phases of this mega crisis. The study builds on a dataset of 12,558 tweets published by World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) between January 1 and December 31, 2020, and 20 in-depth interviews with social media managers, communication experts, and scholars.

The study found that public health organizations have employed varying frames and communication strategies exhibiting a close correspondence with their mandates, and having significant differences in the level of embedded CERC principles in their communications. The interview material indicates actual motivations of using social media, challenges faced when countering disorder in digital platforms, and lessons learned in real time for communicating with audiences. Drawing on the findings from the empirical material, 15 operational recommendations emerged from the data that are used to develop a guidebook for official crisis communication on social media platforms. The proposed guidebook places emphasis on targeting cultural subgroups, actionable messages, interactive messaging, strategic partnerships, and active social media listening. The guidebook advances the practice and theory driven research within crisis and risk communication and digital media environments that will benefit scholars and practitioners as a productive resource for carrying out effective social media-based crisis communication during future crises.

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CRC03 Combating misinformation in times of crisis

PP 0457 Debunking misinformation in times of organizational crisis: The dilemma of myth repetition or facts-only rebuttal and backup by employees or influencers

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Organizations in crisis are often confronted with misinformation about the crisis. This false information can harm the organizational reputation and the public's wellbeing. It is therefore important to know how to handle this misinformation as an organization. A few studies have looked at how organizations can debunk misinformation in times of crisis. It is shown that elaborately reinforcing the correct facts is better than a simple rebuttal using fewer arguments. However, it is not clear if it is better to focus solely on these facts without repeating the misinformation or to repeat misinformation and then debunk it. Looking at research on debunking misinformation in other contexts

(e.g., health communication, science communication, consumer research), conflicting findings are observed. Some studies argue that repeating misinformation creates a familiarity backfire effect, leading to an increased belief in the misinformation. Other research does not substantiate this negative impact, with some studies even showing favorable outcomes of repeating misinformation and debunking it, compared to facts-only rebuttals. This study wants to examine whether repetition of misinformation helps or hinders organizational efforts to correct misinformation in times of crisis.

Another factor that might affect the success of debunking misinformation is backup of the organization's corrective response by another source. Research shows that when employees back up an organizational corrective response in times of crisis, it leads to favorable organizational outcomes. Although employees are a trusted source of information during crises, their social media reach is usually more limited than social media influencers with a large number of followers. PR practitioners indicate that these influencers can help set the record straight when fake news is shared about an organization. However, an experimental study shows that consumers are suspicious of crisis response messages by influencers, because of their affiliation to the organization. This study wants to clarify the impact of influencers and employees backing up organizational corrective responses.

A 2 (facts only vs. myth + facts) × 2 (employee backup vs. influencer backup vs. no backup) between-subjects experiment will be conducted through an online survey. Participants will see a news article about a (fictitious) crisis for which the organization is not responsible. Afterwards, they will see a Facebook post from a group claiming that the organization is fully responsible for the crisis. Then, they will see a Facebook post by the organization to correct this misinformation, either focusing on facts only, or repeating the misinformation and then debunking it with facts. Finally, they will see a Facebook post by either an employee of the organization in crisis or an influencer, in which strong support is shown for the organizational corrective statement, or they will see no such post (control condition). After exposure to these stimuli, participants will fill in a questionnaire measuring corporate reputation, crisis responsibility, credibility of the corrective statement, trustworthiness of the source and manipulative intent.

Findings of this study will help fill the theoretical void concerning crisis misinformation and will lead to practical recommendations for communication professionals about how to handle misinformation in times of crisis.

CRC03 Combating misinformation in times of crisis

PP 0458 The "misinfodemic" dilemma: How German authorities counter disinformation in protracted crises – A multi-method study

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Recent crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic are often described as "infodemics", where an oversupply of rapidly spreading unverified and often false information can lead to mistrust of authorities and risky behavior among citizens (WHO 2023, Chou et al. 2021). Although state authorities play a crucial role as communicators to educate the public, provide preventive information (Sellnow et al. 2017) and strengthen resistance to misinformation, research on how government actors respond to mis- and disinformation in times of crisis is insufficient. Germany, with an alarming mistrust of journalism and authorities, a relatively high resistance to vaccination (Jones & Chazan 2021) and increasing political polarization, is similar to other Western democracies and serves as a suitable case study.

This study uses the example of the Covid-19 pandemic to examine how German authorities counter disinformation in protracted crises. The multi-method design comprises (1) 55 semi-structured interviews with executives at federal, state and municipal level (conducted in 2022/23) and (2) a representative online survey in 2023 among authorities of districts and cities (N = 383; gross response rate: 46%).

The interviews revealed that state authorities were confronted with rumors and misinformation spread by individuals and groups on social media, but also by legacy media. The following quotes show the range of responses from government representatives to misinformation: "Correcting disinformation should only be the means of choice in very exceptional cases." / "By and large, the scientific literature shows that it makes sense to debunk misinformation." / "Better to communicate too much than not to inform at all. If you have a lack of information, rumors form." / "Correcting false information can often even lead to the disinformation being perpetuated and spun further."

At state level, respondents criticized the media for publishing untrue news for the sake of fast reporting and clicks. In response, the respective state government held a press conference to disclose its work processes. At local level, interviewees stated that they actively seek dialogue with citizens who spread rumors on social media. Others established editorial teams: "Moderating topics is very important in social media. Otherwise you have […] comments questioning everything you say. This damages your credibility." However, systematic approaches to communication against misinformation were only used in a few cases overall.

In the representative online survey, less than half of the municipalities stated that they had taken appropriate measures against misinformation (44%) and 41% saw untrue information as a problem. Respondents were more satisfied with their transparent admission of mistakes and the comprehensible communication of risk messages

– characteristics that represent suitable communication strategies against disinformation (Amazeen 2013; Dan 2020). Authorities cited time pressure and uncertainty of facts during the pandemic as obstacles, suggesting that they were unable to adequately fulfill their function as clarifiers of misinformation. However, there are signs that local authorities want to do better in the future: 58% want to expand their presence on social media and 53% plan to communicate more proactively with citizens.

CRC03 Combating misinformation in times of crisis

PP 0459 What's going on? Collaborative journalism and civil society during local crises

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News media is a central resource for citizens' ability to receive crisis information, both in terms of instructive information, possibilities to hold responsibility into account and information helping to recover and rebuild society and social networks (Johansson et al., 2023a). Even if contemporary society is described as a high choice media environment with multiple channels to choose from, recent research emphasizes the importance of traditional news media for citizen's' information seeking during a crisis (Johansson et al, 2023b).

Crisis communication during a local crisis has different prerequisites compared to national or international crises. Seen from a citizen perspective, there are more possibilities to communicate using interpersonal communication, but also to gather information by personal experience. However, the access of local news media is often limited, where one single news organization is an important channel in the local communication environment (Firmstone & Coleman, 2017).

Local journalism has faced severe problems in terms of diminishing revenues and circulation during the last decades which has led to staff cuts and a need to deliver more desktop journalism. Even if local journalism is under pressure, local news organizations are still a central institution in disseminating, fact-checking, accountability work and community building, not at least during local crises.

One way to strengthen local journalism during local crises is adapting collaborative journalism, referring to journalistic practices where news organizations work together with individuals or/and organizations to create, publish, and disseminate news stories (Alfter, 2016). In doing so local news organizations can obtain more "eyes and ears" in the local community to verify information, being eyewitnesses of what is going on during a crisis, finding sources etc.

This paper evaluates the innovation project "Strengthened local journalism during crises" where two local news organizations and civil defense organization Swedish Women's Voluntary Defence Organization (SWVDO) participated in an innovation project aiming to strengthen local journalism during local.

Based on semi-structured interviews with the project leaders, editors, journalists, and members of the SWVDO the paper analyzes how collaborative journalism works during local crises. Learning processes and innovation as well as limitations and obstacles are discussed, both on a more general organizational level as well as in journalism practice.

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CRC03 Combating misinformation in times of crisis

PP 0460 Fibs, Fiction, and Facts: Visual misinformation shaping climate narratives during COP28

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Keywords: *climate change, visual misinformation, COP28, crisis communication, risk communication*

The impact of climate change is visible and increasingly undeniable, evidenced by more frequent extreme weather events that compromise biodiversity and natural ecosystems, reduce water availability, and impact food production – and therefore poses a threat to human life, sustainable development, and economic growth. Climate change is a global risk that requires collective and meaningful climate action responses. Despite general global consensus on

climate science, climate misinformation remains a critical barrier to addressing climate change and stifles climate action. Misinformation negatively impacts decisions and actions by creating fear, panic and skepticism and can cause the public to stop believing the facts altogether. This is especially true for climate change (Budak et al., 2011; Lewandowsky et al., 2017; Treen et al., 2020; Van der Linden et al., 2017; Zhou & Shen, 2022).

Extensive research has so far focused on textual misinformation on mainstream and social media, public perception of climate imagery, and how to understand strategies for public engagement through effective climate change communication (Chapman et al., 2016; O'neill, 2013; Schäfer & Schlichting, 2014). However, gaps exist in research on visual climate misinformation during global climate meetings, which will be focus of this paper.

Today's visualized media and information environment requires a deep understanding of climate visual misinformation and strategies to mitigate it. The approach will be a case study of visual climate misinformation specifically looking at the Conference of the Parties (COP) 28 climate meeting held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates in November 2023. Research highlights that COPs are important events that hold the power of contingency and collective memory, can spark motivation for climate action, and have the potential to reshape the public discourse around climate change (Schudson, 1992; Staggenborg, 1993; Tobin & Schmidt, 2020).

The paper will apply the theories of visual framing, visual fabrication, and climate change communication (King & Lazard, 2020; Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011) and use a quantitative content analysis approach to investigate climate misinformation visuals between 1 October and 30 November 2023, the time period before and during COP28. Visual data will be collected from factchecking organizations tracking misinformation on climate change. The paper will answer the question: *What is the role of visual climate misinformation in disrupting climate action priorities?* It will also provide recommendations for how global climate conferences can counter disorder from visual misinformation.

CRC03 Combating misinformation in times of crisis

PP 0461 Table-top exercise for identifying communication-related vulnerabilities in disasters

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Uncontrolled and often false information has become a hampering problem for crisis communicators. Accurate information is particularly important during emergencies, when the protection of human life, health and property depends on rapid decisions based on accurate information. Crisis vulnerability does not only cover predetermined groups, but late literature has rather explained vulnerability as intersectional, a trait depending on the specific circumstances where an individual might find themselves. A subset of those circumstances is communication-related vulnerability which explains how existing hazards can be amplified by miscommunication, especially by false information that could harm the population and impede normal crisis management.

A part of crisis communication challenges during emergencies is tackling people's problems with accessing (e.g., difficult or no access to relevant crisis information), understanding (e.g., difficulties in differentiating and understanding truthful messages and false information), and reacting to crisis-related information (e.g., neglecting protective measures based on false information). Several studies have addressed false information tackling strategies in times of crisis, however, existing research has not addressed nor tested vulnerability to false information within a tabletop exercise – a format commonly used to train crisis management practitioners. table-top exercises combined with scenario-based frameworks can be modified to accommodate elements from all sorts of scenarios – including the intricate and multi-dimensional problems with communication during emergencies.

To explore how disaster management table-top exercises can be used to identify communication-related vulnerability factors related to false information, we presented 25 participants from Estonian emergency management, neighbouring institutions and stakeholders (e.g., local governments, local NGOs) a crisis scenario. We found that stakeholders mostly focused on problems of accessing information as the source of communicative vulnerability and only a handful brought up problems with understanding and reacting. This might indicate that stakeholders overfocus on the populations' problems with accessing information, and thus not put too much emphasis on making their messages understandable, tailoring them to different audiences, or thoroughly thinking of how those messages might make people react. Drawing on the actual exercise results, we present policy and strategy recommendations.

CRC04 The conceptual and methodological evolution of global crisis and risk communication research: Emergence, future, and cultural dynamics of a multidisciplinary field

PN 077 Effective Instructional Messaging, Dialogue, and Self-Protection: The Need to Study Global...

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Effective Instructional Messaging, Dialogue, and Self-Protection: The Need to Study Global Instructional Risk and Crisis Communication in the Context of Disasters and Disease A review of the crisis communication literature published between the first and second editions of the Handbook of International Crisis Communication Research (Schwarz et al., 2016) reveals limited research based on international data sets. Though the first edition of the handbook called for more collaborative research among nations, most studies published are still single nation based. This limitation is problematic because crises are not typically limited to a single nation. Diseases spread across borders, a single organization or industry engulfed in crisis can be present in myriad countries, and disasters can afflict massive global regions simultaneously. Thus, our failure to account for the interaction of nations during crises is a consistent challenge to the validity of crisis communication research. One area where collaborative research is particularly vital is the study of warnings and instructional messages for self-protection. Considerable research focusing on instructional risk and crisis communication has been published since 2016. This instructional research focuses on affective, cognitive, and behavioral learning during crises or high-risk contexts. Instructional communication also emphasizes dialogue, giving diverse stakeholders, including those of multiple nations with varying levels of economic security, opportunities to influence the flow of essential information during crises. Thus, we assert that instructional risk and crisis communication affords an opportunity, theoretically and methodologically, for conducting international research. To further clarify and support this assertion, we describe the IDEA Model (a model explaining the interaction of affective, cognitive, and behavioral instruction in the context of crisis message distribution) as an exemplar for instructional risk and crisis communication research, particularly in the study of international crises and disasters. The utility of the IDEA model in assessing communication during such international crises as pandemics and food safety/insecurity, and disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis is described. Ultimately, instructional risk and crisis communication is offered as an opportunity for expanding crisis communication research to include collaboration among international scholars, practitioners, and stakeholders.

CRC04 The conceptual and methodological evolution of global crisis and risk communication research: Emergence, future, and cultural dynamics of a multidisciplinary field

PN 078 Opportunities and Pitfalls of Computational Communication Science for International Risk...

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Opportunities and Pitfalls of Computational Communication Science for International Risk and Crisis Communication ResearchCrisis communication scholars increasingly highlight the international dimension of risk and crises. In the digital media environment, risks and crises are, by default, international in scope. Communication on digital channels like social media platforms enables crises to quickly spread internationally. Thus, many risks and crises are potentially global and can only be understood in a comprehensive manner when including their international dimension. However, the study of risk and crises often remains restricted to regional or national contexts. Research in risk and crisis communication has only slowly started reflecting the global environment and diverse crisis and risk contexts (Diers-Lawson & Meissner, 2021) and taking into account emerging issues that are global in their manifestation and treatment, like environmental threats, global security, war, and terrorism. Even though advances in the direction of more diverse scholarship have been made in recent years, the focus of scholarship remains on Western countries. In contrast, studies of countries from the Global South or other regions, including but not limited to Latin America, Africa, Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe, remain scarce. These shortcomings have already been articulated by communication scholars in general (Cruz & Sodeke, 2021) as well as by risk and crisis communication scholars in particular (Diers-Lawson & Meissner, 2021). Computational communication science (CCS) offers the possibility to overcome the limitations and biases outlined above. At the same time, it is also susceptible to reproducing them (Lazer et al., 2020). Risk and crisis communication has not yet fully embraced these new methods. Thus, many recent studies on crisis communication that use computational methods do not apply theories and concepts from risk and crisis communication which often leads to missing analytical depth or insufficient theoretical foundation. Thus, to implement CCS into international risk and crisis communication research beneficially, we need to be more aware of the opportunities, challenges, and pitfalls of its methods and procedures. In this conceptual paper, we will provide central definitions, give an overview of the state of research of CCS in the field of risk and crisis communication, and discuss the opportunities, challenges, and pitfalls of computational methods. The paper concludes with suggestions on how to address the limitations and leverage the opportunities of CCS in international risk and crisis

communication research. We outline five areas that need to be addressed in the future for further advancing CCS in risk and crisis communication research: (1) an integrative and reflexive view on CCS; (2) the combination of CCS with theories from risk and crisis communication; (3) method triangulations of CCS with established quantitative and qualitative research methods of communication research; (4) accessibility to data, tools, and training; and (5) the development of multilingual CCS methods.

CRC04 The conceptual and methodological evolution of global crisis and risk communication research: Emergence, future, and cultural dynamics of a multidisciplinary field

PP 0571 Government communication strategies in protracted crises: A comparative multi-method study in six European countries and the USA

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While there is a wealth of literature on risk and crisis communication, few studies analyze government strategies, particularly in protracted crises and in a cross-national perspective. This study therefore comparatively examines the risk and crisis communication strategies used by governments in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States over a three-year period to mitigate the effects of protracted crises, using the Covid-19 pandemic as an example. Central to the comparative approach is the notion that crises are defined, perceived, communicated and managed depending on cultural values, citizens' trust in governments, the characteristics of political and media systems, the degree of autonomy within political systems, the course of a crisis and the differences in "risk cultures" (Cornia et al., 2016): individual-oriented (Netherlands, UK, USA), state-oriented (Germany, Sweden) and fatalistic risk culture (Italy, Spain).

Against this background, this study focuses on two research questions: (1) What communication strategies do the governments of Western democracies employ to mitigate the impact of protracted crises? (2) Which extra-organizational factors shape the development and application of these communication strategies? To answer these questions, we used a multi-method design comprising two closely coordinated empirical studies: In a quantitative content analysis, we analyzed a total of 6,598 press releases on Covid-19 published by governments between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022 (Germany: 220, Italy: 481, Netherlands: 724, Spain: 1,530, Sweden: 866, UK: 1,622, USA: 1,155). The codebook is based on the IDEA model (Sellnow & Sellnow, 2019) and theoretical considerations with regard to strategic political communication. Seven teams of coders underwent six rounds of reliability tests to code press releases in Dutch, English, German, Italian, Spanish, and Swedish (final average agreement 94.11%, final average Fleiss' kappa 0.89). In addition, a total of 116 semi-structured interviews (duration: 45 to 120 minutes) were conducted in 2022/23 with high-ranking representatives of politics, public health, and government communication at national, regional and local level, which were systematically analyzed with the support of MAXQDA and triangled with the results of the content analysis.

Both studies have produced a large number of findings showing that none of the mentioned extra-organizational variables alone can explain communication strategy differences. A hierarchical clustering by main components revealed three main patterns for crisis-related press releases: In Germany and the Netherlands, preventive measures tended to be presented as mandatory and policy measures were more frequently explained. In contrast, the press releases of the Spanish, Dutch and British governments report more frequently on successes in crisis management, while the press releases of the Swedish, British and US governments express more sympathy. In all countries, government communication focuses primarily on informing and explaining the pandemic, while calls for interaction are rare. Emotionalizing elements are mainly used in Sweden, while in the Netherlands and the UK the focus is on mobilizing citizens. Overall, the results show that in addition to extra-organizational factors, inter- and intra-organizational factors (such as preparedness, inter-organizational coordination, simultaneity of crisis and political communication during elections) must also be considered.

CRC04 The conceptual and methodological evolution of global crisis and risk communication research: Emergence, future, and cultural dynamics of a multidisciplinary field

PP 0572 Making sense of unstructured data. Challenges in developing social media listening solutions in the current digital landscape

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The development of new communication technologies as well as monitoring and listening tools and software have been acknowledged as a significant factor of change in crisis communication due to their capacity to enhance efficiency, reach wider stakeholders and audiences, and understand the interactions between all parties. Without a doubt, emerging technologies and the development of listening software increased the expectations related to the outcomes that crisis communication can obtain from drawing on social media data. To meet these

expectations, practitioners face challenges related to resources and know-how, to which we may add the fluidity of data and constant changes in social media's platforms algorithms. Unlike traditional monitoring systems, the quantity of data to be stored and treated, the ongoing updates, and the high velocity of information spreading can only be managed through the employment of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and robots (Kibria et al., 2018).

Both scholars and practitioners have put significant efforts into making use of the current development of technologies for monitoring and listening to what social media users are talking, expecting, and feeling about specific events and situations. To some extent, sophisticated analyses are provided by listening software providers and consultancy agencies, such as clustering analysis and behavioral analysis. Deciphering stakeholders' emotions towards organizations through social media listening, foreseeing how they'll give meanings to certain messages and events, and choosing the most appropriate channels and timings for online communication have recently become an important part of crisis communication practitioners. Looking at the current practices of social media listening employed in agencies and corporations, on the one hand, and available academic research and studies, on the other hand, enables a deeper understanding of the challenges and limitations of using social media listening in risk and crisis communication. As expected, practitioners tend to make use of existing tools by gathering and processing quantitative data, and afterward conducting qualitative analysis of selected conversations and running sentiment analysis. On the other hand, scholars focus on the validity and representativity of the corpus and on conducting qualitative analysis. Based on mixed methods research, our study looks to further investigate current means and practices of using social media listening in crisis communication by both practitioners and scholars. In doing so, first, we analyze ten social media reports issued by agencies for different clients, by looking at the monitored metrics, corpus selection criteria, the method used for conducting sentiment analysis, and data analysis. Second, we compare these reports with academic literature on social media listening published between 2020 and 2024 in five digital libraries, to identify and understand differences and similarities in terms of methods, metrics, and treatment of data. Third, we conduct ten semi-structured interviews with practitioners to further explore the current means and practices of using social media listening in risk and crisis communication.

CRC05 Understanding readiness in organizations: A vital link between preparation and execution in crisis communication

PN 093 The Readiness State of Mind: The Key to Organizational Physicality, Discipline, and Composure

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To see around the corner and one-step ahead is a goal for organizational communication leaders. As communication scholars and practitioners around the world identify effective ways to co-address sticky crises, manifested as challenging, complex, and recurring critical issues, readiness emerges as a new construct connecting yet going beyond preparedness and resilience in the domain of proactive communication management. Grounded in seminal crisis communication and strategic conflict management literature, crossing over public relations, organizational communication, and mass communication, this presentation discusses readiness as a mindset, which is built upon practitioners' individual self-efficacy and organizational efficacy at communication team and C-suite levels, demonstrated in physicality (resource fit based on threat appraisal), discipline (motivation, commitment, and creativity), and composure (emotional leadership, confidence, and mental adaptability).for developing, sustaining, and improving systems and procedures for appropriate, sufficient and timely responses to challenges from within and without, ranging from threats, risks, conflicts, crises, to sticky crises.

CRC05 Understanding readiness in organizations: A vital link between preparation and execution in crisis communication

PN 094 Efficacy as a Core Element to Readiness: A Multi-Level Approach

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Crisis readiness is a mental state reflecting a willingness to engage in crisis management. One of the core elements of readiness is efficacy. Efficacy is multi-level in organizational efficacy. At the base is self-efficacy (people believe they have the capacity to reach a goal) for the individual team members. Next is team efficacy, how capable people perceive the crisis team in executing its crisis responsibilities. Finally, there is organizational efficacy which centers on the support the organization provides for crisis management efforts. This presentation explores how these three levels of efficacy relate to crisis readiness and the implications for crisis communication.

CRC05 Understanding readiness in organizations: A vital link between preparation and execution in crisis communication

PN 095 Readiness for Crisis Spillover: Spillover Types, Risk Factors, and Response Strategies

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In an age of social media increasing the speed by which a crisis can spread from one organization to another, corporate crisis spillover has become an emerging research topic in the field of crisis communication. Crisis spillover effects reflect one category of crisis risk as part of the crisis readiness model. When a crisis spillover occurs, an organization can be linked to a crisis that is affecting another organization such as a competitor, and the negative consequences of crisis spillover can be significant when stakeholders make assumptions of guilt by association. To tackle crisis spillover effects, organizations need to understand how to evaluate the risk of crisis spillover and how to develop effective response strategies to mitigate the risk of spillover effects. This presentation will address these questions and discuss how companies can combat uncertainty of crisis spillover to foster a strong crisis readiness.

CRC05 Understanding readiness in organizations: A vital link between preparation and execution in crisis communication

PN 096 Readiness, Mediatization and Distrust

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Another key element to crisis readiness is the dynamic information environment that organizations have to navigate. Over the past decades, through processes of mediatization, organizations have become inherently intertwined with their media surroundings. Being constantly on the media agenda and in the public eye has resulted in organizations' heightened focus on maintaining and renewing a silence to operate. With the politicization of public debates, we increasingly see how organizations decide to or are pressured to engage in socio-political issues. Here two challenges can be identified that ask for organizations' attention in the context of crisis readiness, namely the political polarization of stakeholders and public debate and the alleged "crisis of trust" challenging societies across the worlds. Political polarization makes it difficult for organizations to navigate issues that fuel emotionally loaded debate, risking alienation of stakeholders with opposing views. With both institutional distrust and low trust in information ecosystems, an additional layer is added to organizations' communication with their surroundings, making it necessary for organizations to establish trust before engaging in societal involvement. An issue arena approach can be valuable here, where organizations should adopt a strict issue monitoring approach, viewing themselves as part of dynamic communicative environments, and staying vigilant about issues central to public and media debate to enhance crisis readiness.

CRC05 Understanding readiness in organizations: A vital link between preparation and execution in crisis communication

PN 097 Employees' Part in Organizational Crisis Readiness

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Organizations can prepare for crises by designating responsibilities to crisis team members, developing crisis plans, and exercising them through crisis simulations. Preparing only the crisis team, however, is not enough to create readiness among the entire organization. Organizations should consider employees as partners in crisis management, rather than merely as one of many stakeholder groups. They play crucial roles in crisis prevention, crisis management and crisis communication. Employees who perceive malpractice, for instance, are likely to address these issues internally. Without effective internal voice mechanisms, however, they can turn into whistleblowers. Organizations should also facilitate employees' sensemaking processes. When employees face ambiguity or uncertainty, they engage in sensemaking to increase their understanding of an event. At worst, the actions employees take to address ambiguity can develop into a crisis. At best, their actions enable them to detect warning sings early and prevent a crisis, or help to solve a crisis. Organizations should also enable and encourage employees to be scouts for criticism, both offline and online. Finally, organizations should maintain strong relationships with employees under routine circumstances. Doing so increases the likelihood that employees will feel ready to act as advocates during crises.

CRC06 The COVID-19 pandemic and the public: Navigating trust and risk perceptions

PP 0800 Public reactions to the government's inconsistent crisis communication

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The government's crisis communication is expected to be reliable. However, the dynamic nature of crises necessitates frequent updates and potential overturning of communication messages, affecting the understanding of crisis causes and severity. These adjustments introduce incongruencies and inconsistencies, leading to public confusion, distrust, and non-compliance. For example, the fluctuating regulations on facial mask usage during the COVID-19 pandemic eroded public trust. This study argues that comprehending public reactions to crisis communication changes allows the government to transparently address its insufficiency in its crisis communication, fostering public acceptance.

This study explores people's responses to changes regarding crisis severity in the government's crisis communication. It examines the extent of public acceptance and the factors influencing these responses and delves into the factors that people emphasize when accepting or rejecting these changes.

This study examines public reactions to changes in crisis communication amid the COVID-19 pandemic in China. Initially, the Chinese government asserted that the outbreak was a controllable crisis confined to Wuhan city. However, it later recognized the widespread scope of the pandemic. By focusing on the government's social media account on Weibo, this study ensures that public reactions were influenced by official messages. Known to many as "Chinese Twitter, the microblogging platform Weibo was launched in 2009 and is one of China's most popular social media platforms. Using topic modelling and sentiment classification, it investigates the public's reactions to changes in crisis communication messages and explores the factors emphasized when evaluating the government's communication.

This study adds to crisis communication studies by identifying factors that improve or impede public acceptance of changes in official crisis communication. Acknowledging the inherent uncertainty of crises, the research takes initial steps toward identifying remedies to sustain public acceptance during evolving crises.

Keywords: Changes in the government's crisis communication; Crisis severity; Public acceptance; COVID-19 pandemic

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CRC06 The COVID-19 pandemic and the public: Navigating trust and risk perceptions

PP 0801 A matter of risk perception? The dynamics of media use during the COVID-19 pandemic

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In democracies, the role of an informed citizenry becomes especially important during public health crises: citizens need to stay informed about the situation, including the current measures, risks and government recommendations, as not staying informed might potentially lead to uninformedness or even misperceptions, further jeopardizing public health. However, even though there is vast availability of information in the current high-choice media environment, the actual usage of different news media may vary drastically between individuals. The current research shows that media use or non-use is influenced by not only situational and contextual, but also individual-level factors. Such differences can stem from not only stable socio-demographic characteristics, but also from the perceptions of the current crisis situation. This creates a dynamic media environment where individual media use or non-use is affected by the interplay of individual and contextual factors. In this particular case of COVID-19 pandemic, when the media environment is highly saturated, individual news use may especially also relate to perceived health and economic risks, state of mental health and more. The current research on news consumption during the

COVID-19 pandemic paints a nuanced picture: while media use initially surged at the onset of the crisis, it swiftly decreased below pre-pandemic levels soon after (e.g., so-called crisis fatigue).

Against the backdrop of a high-choice media environment, our study engages in a comprehensive exploration of the dynamics of media use in Austria during a global crisis, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the work in progress focuses on the impact of self-reported perceived health and economic risk, mental health state, and socio-demographic characteristics on media usage of quality media, tabloids, public broadcasting and social media. For that, we rely on a unique dataset from the Austrian Corona Panel Project, a panel survey study consisting of 35 waves ranging from March 2020 to July 2023 and a mixed analysis strategy consisting of a model to assess and explain the intra-individual change across six panel waves and a cross-sectional time-series model including more than 20 waves to replicate the above-mentioned intra-individual analysis. For the latter in particular, we include health and economic related real-world indicators such as positive COVID-19 cases, lockdown phases, vaccination rates, GDP, unemployment rates, and inflation. By doing so, we contribute to the literature in at least two ways: Firstly, by gaining a nuanced comprehension of individuals' media consumption habits in a crisis situation and assessing the explanatory power of our predictors, we gain crucial insights and map which factors matter in crises situations. Secondly, these findings hold the potential to inform and enhance health communication initiatives, inform policy making decisions, and guide not only the adaptive practices of journalists and media organizations, but also government initiatives ensuring a more effective and targeted response to public needs during challenging times.

CRC06 The COVID-19 pandemic and the public: Navigating trust and risk perceptions

PP 0802 Navigating trust: Comparative insights into crisis communication strategies and public perception

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The reciprocal dynamics of crisis communication are inherently tied to a concern for trust, a central factor influencing the implementation of restrictive containment measures and the apprehensions of politicians seeking re-election. Existing research stresses the negative impact of experiencing shared threats during crises on political trust, an effect largely attributed to negative information regarding crisis management. Simultaneously, as politicians conveyed COVID-19 measures on television, the public engaged in real-time discussions and critiques on social media platforms. However, studies predominantly rely on survey and experimental methods to examine the effect of negative perceptions on trust, thereby neglecting the central role of communication between public and politicians. Addressing this gap, this study investigates actual communication settings to unravel the connection between government communication strategies and public perception during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic to answer the question on how government communication strategies impact public perception and trust in crisis management, and what discernible patterns and adaptations emerge through an analysis of these communication dynamics. Leveraging data from two distinct sources in nine OECD countries, the study utilizes transcripts of 392 governmental press conferences during the initial phase of the pandemic and samples of public tweets issued concurrently. This approach facilitates a direct comparison of government communication and public perception. By contrasting press conferences and public tweets, the study allows for an in-depth examination of the actual content of communication between the state and the public. Employing a combination of manual coding and quantitative methods, the research illuminates discernible patterns in state communication strategies that play a pivotal role in shaping public perception and fortifying trust in crisis management. Furthermore, this methodological approach enables an exploration of learning processes, providing insights into how states adapt their communication strategies in response to public feedback. The findings aim to contribute valuable insights into effective crisis communication and trust-building, offering implications for both theoretical understanding and practical applications in crisis management. By investigating the reciprocal dynamics of crisis communication, this research lays the foundation for enhancing crisis response strategies and fostering a more resilient and informed public during future crises.

CRC06 The COVID-19 pandemic and the public: Navigating trust and risk perceptions

PP 0803 Political competition in time of crisis: Analyzing communication tactics of Norwegian politicians during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Politicians face challenges that extend beyond electoral dynamics, encompassing their role as critical information providers during a crisis. The recent COVID-19 megacrisis put pressure on politicians to provide timely, accurate, and consistent information while managing complex policy issues. Successfully meeting these challenges requires a versatile set of strategies, especially when delivering messages across different social media platforms, each with

a unique architecture. Popular and scholarly accounts of the media point to the ability of these architectural features to shape and mold the message.

The type of content on different social media platforms depends on trends in political communication, the types of strategies politicians use, and platform characteristics. Based on existing research, these characteristics are synthesized into a framework of nine tactics. These are: (1) accommodative, (2) defensive, (3) self-enhancement, (4) action, (5) framing the crisis, (6) framing the organization, (7) routine communication, (8) inter-organizational relationships, and (9) input seeking. These tactics are drawn partly from crisis communication and partly from political communication and synthesize tactics used by politicians in government and in opposition. The difference between politicians in government and opposition can be apprehended through a perspective of political competition, where government politicians tend to rely on crisis communication. In contrast, politicians in opposition rely on political communication tactics. A political competition perspective is useful in explaining the choice of crisis tactics by government actors and political communication tactics by those in opposition. The selection of these tactics is contingent on platform characteristics, with platformization theory playing a central role in explaining how politicians convey their messages.

This article uses a comparative and longitudinal design consisting of empirical analyses of political communication on social media between Norwegian politicians in government and opposition during three lockdowns. The comparative design extends across platforms and incumbent status, while the longitudinal perspective allows for examining the adaption of tactics depending on the severity of the crisis. This article addresses two research questions: (1) How do politicians adapt their communication strategies across various platforms during lockdowns? (2) How does communication change different lockdowns? Empirically, this study relies on social media messages from three lockdown periods in Norway ranging from March 12, 2020, to February 1, 2022. Data were collected using CrowdTangle (Facebook and Instagram) at the end of December 2022. Through a content analysis of social media posts on Facebook and Instagram, tactics derived from synthesizing crisis and political communication literature are analyzed using multilevel modeling.

The results show that self-enhancement and informational tactics are common on Instagram, contrasting the defensive or anti-social tactics on Facebook. The results aim to look into the type of crisis management politicians give during distinct pandemic phases on different platforms and how crisis management develops over time. The practical implications revolve around effective crisis communication by political actors, showcasing variations across social media platforms.

CRC06 The COVID-19 pandemic and the public: Navigating trust and risk perceptions

PP 0804 Evaluating governmental crisis communication during the COVID-19 pandemic: A retrospective qualitative interview study among citizens in seven countries

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Background

During the COVID-19 pandemic, ineffective crisis communication by governmental institutions had detrimental consequences on public health. To be effective, communication from local, regional, and federal actors has to address audience needs. Previous research suggests factors contributing to message acceptance. It is important to discriminate which elements of communication, e.g., communicator and appropriate channels, play which role for an overall positive evaluation of communication efforts. Moreover, message acceptance has been shown to be associated with higher levels of trust, e.g., in the government.

This study addresses these research gaps by retrospectively examining citizens' perspectives on governmental crisis communication during the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike most previous research, the study follows a multinational approach encompassing seven countries with varying past mortality rates, media systems, and trust in federal governments: Germany, Italy, Spain, UK, Netherlands, Sweden, and the US. The following research questions help to understand citizens' perspectives: How did citizens perceive governmental communication (RQ1)? Which sources did they rely on when seeking information (RQ2)? How are their evaluations of communication linked to trust (RQ3)?

Methods

Twelve semi-structured interviews per country (N_{Total} = 84) were conducted online in late 2023 in the respective national language. The sample was stratified by age (M = 44 years), gender (50% female), and education (94% medium-to-high education) both within and between countries. The interview guide included thematic areas of evaluation of governmental communication, information behaviour, and trust. Audio recordings were transcribed, translated into English, and analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Preliminary Results

Overall, interviewees' evaluations of governmental communication (RQ1) were tied to their assessment of implemented measures and the communicators' assumed integrity and expertise while expressing an understanding for mistakes made due to extraordinary circumstances. Regarding information behaviour (RQ2), interviewees built individual media repertoires. Interviewees viewed information on social media with scepticism showing awareness of misinformation. Governmental websites and press conferences were used only occasionally, while public broadcasters were perceived as direct and convenient governmental communication. Levels of trust played a crucial role in evaluations of governmental communication (RQ3). Perceived honesty, transparency, and consistency of communication, both in relation to decisions made and unity between governmental authorities were reported to be key factors influencing trust and overall perception of communication.

Discussion

The preliminary results provide starting points for improving future crisis communication strategies. Extending explanations, e.g., as to who communicates with which intention, could help citizens identify the relevance of information to their own situation. With varying media repertoires and public broadcasters often perceived as governmental communication, governmental institutions could better denote the added value of their independent, evidence-based information in competition to other media content. Ensuring trust in both communicators and ways of conveying information provides a basis for citizens to discard scepticism and develop understanding for dynamic situations. Internationally shared factors influencing evaluations of governmental communication enable strategies applicable in international contexts.

Due to the study's qualitative nature, its findings are not generalizable; the documented views should be confirmed in population-wide surveys. Nonetheless, the results stress the importance of considering facilitating conditions of effective communication for future crises.

CRC07 Media reporting and political discourse in wartime

PP 0902 Caught in between government and separatist forces; The story of journalists covering the Cameroon Anglophone crisis

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Since 2016 Cameroonian journalists have reported on the anglophone crisis, that is an offshoot of longstanding grievances of the English-speaking minority population. As journalists strive to present balanced reporting of the crisis, they are faced with the challenge of government censorship and separatist control. The aim of this study is to examine government and separatists actions to control reporting on the anglophone crisis and how these actions have influenced general reporting. We therefore set out to answer three main research questions: 1. What kind of control measures and censorship do the government and the separatists exert on journalists reporting on the Anglophone crisis? 2. What limitations arise from journalists' position of being in between state and separatist? 3. What psychological, communicative, and professional strategies do journalist adopt to negotiate and cope with the perceived tensions?

The theoretical basis of this study is the strategic censorship model postulated by Peter Lorentzen in 2014 which highlights autocratic government double standards in controlling reporting on certain topics while allowing a window of reporting for other topics, giving an impression of media freedom. In depth qualitative interviews were conducted with 41 reporters from both public and private print, broadcast, and online sources. The data was analyzed through inductive thematic analysis to bring up themes from the data set. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, the data was pseudonymized during transcription. The findings show significant similarities in the government and separatists' method of controlling reporting among local reporters. The government, in addition uses state machinery to control reporting at the international level. Also, with the fear and uncertainty instilled by the two camps, some reporters outrightly abandoned the journalism profession, while others have fled to exile. Those who have continued to report on the crisis have resorted to using pseudonyms, while others have toned down their reporting. The study is particularly significant as it highlights both state and non-state efforts to influence reporting on the same news events. It also provides an opportunity to provide insight into new censorship model from an African context. Also, the study presents new realities of media freedom in Cameroon, as earlier studies have concentrated on the late eighties and nineties.

Keywords: Cameroon, anglophone crisis, censorship, press freedom

CRC07 Media reporting and political discourse in wartime

PP 0903 War's echo: How mainstream online media mirror military logic and the powerful in Ukraine conflict

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1. Research interest

The Ukraine war is one of the most important media topics of our time. Against the backdrop of existing research on war reporting, this study examines to which extent news media mainly follow government lines, whether they include a variety of different voices and how they evaluate these voices.

2. Theoretical framework

Our research question is: How are the respective conflicting parties evaluated, who gets a say and how?

Our two research-leading theses are:

a) War reports primarily depict the elites. We test this thesis with reference to indexing theory (Bennett, 1990, 2017; Eilders & Lüter, 2002, Hussain & Jehangir, 2023; Oh, Banjo & Jennings, 2022; Jungblut, 2023).
b) War is a media topic, peace is less so. We test this thesis with reference to the research of Hanitzsch (2007) and Wolfsfeld (2004).

3. Method

A number of analyses focus on a limited time horizon and a narrow selection of media on military conflicts, such as the 1990 Gulf War, or the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In these cases, newspapers were typically examined, but rarely online media.

We aim to focus on the ongoing war in Ukraine from a broader perspective. From the 100 online media with the highest reach in Germany, Austria and Switzerland over two complete years (Jan 1, 2022 till December 31, 2023) 1.087.566 articles about the Ukraine war were extracted and subjected to an automated content analysis to show how the reporting evolved over time and which actors were represented to what degree in the media.

Building on our initial analyses, the first research steps of which we already presented at Crisis7 in Gothenburg, a manual analysis of a selection of 400 articles is planned in order to analyze the content of the central actors' statements in more depth. For this purpose, we identified four peaks in the overall media coverage for closer investigation: 1) the outbreak of the war; 2) the fall of Mariupol in Southern Ukraine; 3) the attacks on the gas pipeline North Stream II; and 4) the anniversary of the war's outbreak, coinciding with a larger demonstration in Germany calling for immediate peace negotiations and a halt of arms deliveries.

4. Results

As our automated analyses show, online media report surprisingly similar – government sources are quoted far more often than the voices of the opposition, military experts appear about three times as often as peace researchers, and non-governmental organizations play a minor role. On the surface, the reporting primarily reflects government action and is predominantly characterized by military logic. The ongoing manual analysis shall help to understand more precisely the content and the weighting of different voices represented in the reporting with a view to indexing theory. The results of the manual in-depth analysis will be available by September 2024.

CRC07 Media reporting and political discourse in wartime

PP 0904 Performative turn in the war time video reporting: How the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense is utilizing new forms of video expression in its strategic communication

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In my presentation I will discuss of the findings in a study which explored the video genres Ukrainian Ministry of Defense (UMD) utilized while reporting of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine. The material (245 videos) was collected from the official Twitter account of the UMD (twitter.com/DefenceU) in the trench war phase 1.1.–31.5.2023.

The videos were observed as being part of strategic communication exercised by the UMD. According to Hallahan (et. al. 2007, 3) strategic communication is defined as "the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission". In this view communication is "the constitutive activity of management" (27).

This theoretical framework raised several questions for the study: how the organization (here the UMD) is "presenting and promoting itself" and how does it "interact with its audiences" (16). Central in the strategic communication is the "idea of influence; (...) persuasion is the essence of strategic communication". (24). Thus, the third question for

the material was: what kind of persuasion the narratives of the videos are suggesting and what kind of matters they address.

One key concept in the study was the "strategic narrative". For Miskimmon and O'Loughlin (2017, 284) strategic narratives are "a means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future of international politics to shape the behavior of domestic and international actors." According to Roselle (et. al. 2014, 79) study of strategic narrative is "central to understanding how all aspects of a conflict are defined, constructed and understood and how different episodes are narrativized".

The strategic narratives were searched form the captions or text published with the videos. The analysis then used the concept of *framing* as defined by Entman (1993, 52–53): "To frame is to select some aspects of the perceived reality and make them more salient (…) in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation (…)"

Videos were divided into nine genres utilizing the typology of "documentary modes" described by Nichols (2001). Genres were further grouped in three subcategories: non-narrative, narrative and performative videos.

Central theme for the UMD was to stress that Russian aggression not only threatens the sovereignty of the Ukraine but also the Ukrainian culture. What is remarkable is that Twitter videos in the hands of the UMD turn out to be flexible tools to demonstrate and persuade the local and international audiences that the Ukrainians belong entirely to the Western and European community of values. This was highlighted with the constant publishing of videos filled with references to well-known pieces of Western popular culture: movies, tv-shows, music genres, celebrities, typography, styles, etc.

Videos belonging to performative genres stand out with exceptionally bold audio-visual language. They might be extremely fast cut, like music videos, celebrating e.g., co-operation with the allies or success in the battlefield. They all reject the neutral ideal of traditional news reporting and they might subjugate the observative or expository documentary mode to something that make parody of or ironize the subject – the enemy.

(References excluded)

CRC07 Media reporting and political discourse in wartime

PP 0905 Affects and emotions in televised speeches: A comparative analysis of authoritarian populist discourse and performance on the Russo-Ukrainian War

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Communicative authoritarian populism is characterized by a conspicuous shift away from informed argument, moving towards emotional dramatization and 'infotainment' (Thussu 2007), where information is reduced to simplified slogans or populist antagonisms to catch the attention of audiences. Authoritarian populists make use of this media populist zeitgeist, relying on complicity between the traditional and online communicative channels in order to reproduce an affective discourse and rhetoric to set the political agenda, frame or exacerbate "a crisis", and popularise their narrow political idioms and forms. In this paper, we compare authoritarian populist discourses in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian War across five different European countries: Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia and Turkey. We are interested in the reproduction of populist messages, examining how authoritarian populists use traditional media in televised speeches on public and private TV channels in the production of 'politics of fear', 'exclusionary and divisionary discourse' and 'populist truth' (Waisbord, 2018). We particularly focus on affects and emotions that are reproduced by populist leaders, whether through spoken messages they convey to the public or though their body expressions and performance. Using discourse and video analysis methodology, our research addresses the following questions: what are different populist discourses that evolve around Russo-Ukrainian War? How are authoritarian populist actors politicising the war within the televised domains in different national contexts, and how do they frame exclusionary ideas? Can they circumvent journalistic gatekeeping wih their authoritarian populist rhetoric in televised speeches? Why and how are different affects and emotions being used by populist politicians in order to achieve certain public response? For each country, we identify the most prominent authoritarian populist leader and analyse a selection of their televised speeches (interviews) in one year period on public and private TV channels.

Keywords: authoritarian populism, populist discourse, populist performance, affects and emotions, Russo-Ukrainian War

CRC07 Media reporting and political discourse in wartime

PP 0906 Communication on the war ground. Advertising creativity as an essential tool in times of crisis

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The escalation of war is at the center of communication disorder. The turmoil that followed the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 stirred the attention of many scholars on the main societal pillars: politics, economy, social impact, etc. The role advertising plays in such turmoil has yet to be explored, stemming from its promotion potential. There have been a couple of initiatives looking at the importance of online advertising in the prevalence of this subject (Yeung et al., 2023) and using social platforms to understand the displacement of the Ukrainian population (Leasure et al., 2023; Minora et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the key themes of advertising campaigns designed to support the Ukrainian cause have not been systematically analyzed. The sustained efforts of brands and NGOs to promote and convey the Ukrainian cause led to impressive campaigns since the beginning of the invasion.

The present paper focuses on advertising creativity as an essential tool in crisis communication. We look at international campaigns through the lens of creativity, extracting the most significant themes and messages that carried on Ukraine's appeal to help. It has been discussed in the literature that creativity enhances the impact of the message (Ang et al., 2007; Smith & Yang, 2004). The literature also revealed contrasting empirical results in terms of creativity, its outcomes, and how it should be assessed (Modig & Dahlen, 2019; Rosengren et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2008).

Adding to the existing empirical creativity research, this study proposes a case study on creativity analysis in times of crisis. For this, an inductive thematic analysis is carried out on more than 150 international campaigns from February 2022 to February 2024. Few studies use thematic analysis in creativity research, although it provides crucial insights. The advertisements for the empirical part – both free and subscription-based- are gathered from two of the most extensive advertising databases: adforum.com and adsoftheworld.com. These platforms gather the creative works of agencies across the globe and provide a systemized collection of campaigns, allowing a more thorough selection process. The analysis is carried out using ATLAS.ti and follows two dimensions: a commercial one, represented by brand campaigns, and a social one, with campaigns from NGOs and other humanitarian organizations.

The analysis is still in progress, but the preliminary results indicate several communication pillars to consider related to traditional culture, popular culture, social disruption, art, etc., and creative concepts and tools that enhance campaign messages.

Keywords: advertising, creativity, Ukraine, war, qualitative analysis

CRC08 Building trust through effective risk communication

PP 1003 Crisis communication and trust: On the long-term individual effects of a disaster on public trust in societal institutions

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In times of crisis, effective communication plays a pivotal role. The societal response to a crisis is set in motion through crisis communication channels directed at the public, spearheaded by key institutions like authorities, elected representatives, and the media. The success of this communication relies heavily on maintaining a high level of public trust in these societal institutions. Without such trust, the functioning of society, both on an individual and collective scale, is compromised. Research has shown that, in connection with some crises, there are signs of reduced public trust. This is worrying as, if people do not have confidence in the authorities, elected politicians, or the media who communicate to the public in the event of a major crisis, great difficulties can arise for the authorities and politicians in handling the crisis. In the worst case, mistrust can lead to people not taking instructions and information to heart. Therefore, a broad societal trust is crucial for a functioning crisis management capability. In acknowledging the important link between crisis communication, public trust in societal institutions, and effective crisis management, we take on a unique and unprecedented study, where we lay out evidence of how an extensive natural disaster affects public trust in societal institutions 20 years after the disaster took place.

We present the first large-scale, individual-level and long-term study of the impact of natural disasters on public trust in societal institutions. To do this, we rely on two data sources. First, we utilize unique and detailed individual-level administrative data of approximately 16,000 Swedish tourists who survived the 2004 Boxing Day-tsunami, that hit South-East Asia in 2004. We match this data against other individuals in the entire Swedish population registry on several pre-tsunami characteristics, allowing us to better isolate the effect of disaster exposure on measures of public trust in societal institutions – collected via a survey. The survey is administrated to 10,000 individuals in our data (half of which were exposed to the tsunami), allowing for more nuanced long-term measures of public trust in societal institutions and control variables, including exposure severity to the tsunami. In combination, these

data allow us to study the long-term effect of natural disaster exposure on public trust in societal institutions in a completely novel and unique way.

In summary, the tsunami victims have a generally lower trust in authorities and politicians, and their ability to handle crises almost 20 years after the disaster. They also seem to assess the authorities' ability to handle other natural disasters negatively, but not their ability to handle other types of crises. In addition, they also have less trust in evening newspapers/tabloids (and their crisis reporting) but not less trust in public service or morning papers. These effects are all driven by those who were severely exposed to the tsunami.

CRC08 Building trust through effective risk communication

PP 1004 Saying the right thing at the right time: A study on the correlation between type and timing in messages about forest fires

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The Loop of Forest Fire Risk and Crisis Communication (Loop Model) (Toniolo, *unpublished*) is structured around a 12-month cycle made up of 6 chronologically delimited phases that are repeated endlessly: (1) Prevention; (2) Preparation; (3) Alert; (4) Rescue; (5) Recovery; and (6) Evaluation. According to the author, each chronological phase is correlated to specific communication objectives aimed at preserving the physical, emotional and material safety of the communities that were victims of the rural fires. These objectives, in turn, unfold into 36 qualitative categories of messages that are identified with the informational perspective of risk and crisis communication. Based on Wukich (2016); CERC (2014); Reich, Bentman and Jackman (2011); and Reynolds and Seeger (2005), the Loop Model prescribes a set of themes for the development of key messages that can (and should) be distributed by public actors/organisations before, during and after a forest fire or any other type of disaster situation, with appropriate adaptations.

The message is the most important variable in the Loop Model, but it is not just about saying the right thing ("what is said"). It is also about saying the right thing at the right time ("when it is said"). Hence, one correlation that the Loop Model implies is between the qualitative typology of the message and its respective chronological phase. To check if this correlation is found in a concrete communication case, in this paper we analysed 1,151 messages about the forest fires theme issued by 9 public Portuguese actors/organisations' websites and digital social media profiles on Facebook and Twitter in the years 2017 (N = 399), 2018 (N = 482), and 2019 (N = 270). These messages were classified according to their chronological phase and to their qualitative category of message, testing the existence of correlation between these variables. Our study concluded that, in 2017, there was a correlation between the qualitative category of the message and its respective chronological phase in 4 phases: Preparation; Alert; Rescue; Recovery; and Evaluation. In the messages issued in 2018, we identified the correlation in 3 phases: Preparation; Alert; and Rescue. In 2019, the correlation was found in only 2 phases: Alert and Rescue.

As the data shows, the Portuguese public actors/organisations have shown a gradual reduction in the degree of correlation between the chronological phase and the qualitative typology of the message issued, with this correlation only occurring consistently in the Alert and Rescue. During the Alert phase, communication should focus on warning the population of the imminent danger of occurrences, while during the Rescue phase communication efforts need to be dedicated to protecting the population, guiding them to act safely, increasing their perception of risk, and, consequently, complying with the guidelines. This shows that public actors/organisations put more emphasis on the crisis itself than on the pre-crisis and post-crisis and are unprepared to use communication to prevent and prepare the population to deal with the risk of forest fires or to increase the resilience of affected communities.

CRC08 Building trust through effective risk communication

PP 1005 Risk communication and the introduction of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) – An analysis of media reporting on SMRs in Sweden

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The aim of this paper is to increase the understanding of the re-introduction of nuclear power in Sweden, in particular how benefits and risks are amplified by news media. Underlying this focus are the climate and energy crises which have led governments to take measures for their energy policy. At COP28 countries launched a declaration to triple nuclear energy capacity by 2050. Sweden is one of the countries. The government has declared a shift from decommissioning nuclear power to the construction of new nuclear generating capacity up to two large scale reactors by 2035. The scaling up of nuclear power includes creating conditions for construction and operation of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs). SMRs as technology is still under development but it is introduced to the public. At

this stage, when much is still uncertain and unknown, media reporting is crucial. Risks and promises about the new technology are articulated and shape different actors' expectations and attitudes towards the technology. We find it particular interesting as the technology is not new, rather a development of nuclear power which has been debated for a long-time regarding risks such as nuclear accidents, terror attacks and nuclear waste disposal.

Based on the social amplification of risk framework (SARF), we study how SMRs are presented in Swedish news media, which amplifications that are discernable, how risks and promises are covered, and how these factors create acceptance and skepticism towards SMRs in Sweden. To this end, a content analysis of reporting on SMRs in Swedish newspapers from 2020 to 2023 is conducted. The emphasis is mainly on types of texts, images, tone, content and perspective. A qualitative analysis is conducted where risks and promises are identified. In total 200 articles are analyzed.

The analysis shows an increased reporting on SMRs since 2020 in number of texts. SMRs are introduced with focus on the technology and its large potential to contribute to the increased energy demand, stability in the energy system and to meet climate goals. Few risk issues are covered and SMR is not associated with risks connected directly to nuclear power energy such as waste disposal or indirectly such as terror attacks. Taken together it is a media agenda with potential to generate a hype resulting in high expectations on SMRs. The reporting creates little awareness on risks or uncertainties related to SMRs, i.e. attenuation of risk rather than amplification. On the one hand, the reporting may contribute to acceptance of SMRs, on the other hand, the narrow agenda can result in mistrust in expertise and authorities and development of resistance in later stages of the process.

The insights of this study contribute to crisis communication research in two ways: (1) it discusses the need of risk communication by exploring media reporting on a complex technology introduced in times of crisis; (2) it advances the discussion on the need of risk communication.

CRC08 Building trust through effective risk communication

PP 1006 Trust-building factors in the risk communication of a German state institution from the recipient's point of view. A qualitative analysis

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One disruption modern societies are experiencing is an 'erosion' of trust in governments and institutions in recent decades (e.g. Edelman 2018; Siegrist 2001). Although the majority of citizens in Europe trust science (e.g. for the German case: Wissenschaft im Dialog 2023) institutions that try to protect the population from (health) risks, for instance, are exposed to critical voices of dissent that question their recommendations, sowing mistrust. This can cast doubt on which information is correct and which sources of information can be trusted.

The question of when (risk) communication is considered trustworthy is therefore of social relevance. We address this question from the perspective of the recipients. We conducted 40 one-hour, qualitative guided face-to-face interviews with a cross-section of the German population. During the interviews, participants were shown various risk communication materials (on radon and mobile phone radiation) from the Federal Office for Radiation Protection (FRP).

Participants were first asked in general terms what they understand by trust and which factors they believe influence whether they trust institutions. Second, during and after the reception of the communication materials, participants were asked whether there were specific aspects of the communication that they considered to increase or decrease trust. Third, they were interviewed about their risk perception and their trust in the FRP before and after reception.

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed according to Mayring's (2022) qualitative content analysis (using MAXQDA software).

Our results show that the most important trust-building factors for the interviewees are prominence of and positive experiences with the institution (e.g. an impression of interest in the well-being of citizens), perceived professional competence (e.g. research activities), independence, incorruptibility, and reliability – largely in line with the trust dimensions of the Muenster Epistemic Trustworthiness Inventory (expertise, integrity, benevolence; Hendriks et al. 2017). These were supplemented by our participants with the dimensions of transparency and willingness to engage in dialogue (also considered by Reif et al. 2023). The communication material promoted trust if it seemed easy to understand, up-to-date, objective/ fact-based, reliable, not interest-driven, transparent, relevant, with reference to everyday life, professionally designed and published by a 'reputable' communicator. After reception of the communication material, recipients' trust in the FRP tended to increase as well as risk perception, implying that communication may affect perceptions of trust.

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CRC09 Crisis coverage: Media insights on communicating risk and emergency

PP 1105 Framing threats and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe and the United States: A comparative analysis of news media coverage in seven countries integrating framing and risk communication theory

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Research on media representations of public health crises has increased significantly in the past, but particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Bhatti et al., 2022; Dan & Raupp, 2018). However, a systematic literature review of the latter found that most studies were limited to one national context and that most authors refrained from linking their methods and findings to risk and crisis communication theory (Schwarz et al., 2023).

This study uses Entman's (1993) conceptualization of framing functions or frame elements (problem definition, causal interpretation, evaluation, treatment recommendation) and integrates these framing functions with established concepts of risk communication (e.g., societal threat and efficacy) and attribution theory (e.g., causal attributions). The resulting framework was used to develop a complex codebook for quantitative comparative content analysis of leading online news media in Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, UK, and the US. The sample includes news articles about the COVID-19 pandemic during several stages between 2020 and 2022 (N = 11,200).

Data analysis is ongoing. We are using principal component analysis to identify underlying constructs of frame indicators and to reduce multicollinearity in follow-up analyses. Subsequently, two-step cluster analysis will reveal patterns (i.e., frames) of news media coverage of the pandemic to answer the following research questions: How did the news media frame threats and responses to COVID-19? How do frames differ between European countries and the US based on different degrees of the pandemic's severity and politicization in each country.

Conclusions are drawn about the role of the news media from a risk communication perspective in seven countries at different stages of the pandemic. The findings contribute to the literature by integrating framing and risk communication theory and analyzing media comparatively across seven countries based on a large sample of politically diverse countries and news media outlets. Further implications are discussed for strategic media relations of authorities during a pandemic.

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CRC09 Crisis coverage: Media insights on communicating risk and emergency

PP 1106 Social (Dis-)order in Journalism: Challenges and Changes of Intermediary Crisis Communication in Germany in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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A comprehensive understanding of crisis events is essential as they significantly "shape[…] our understanding of future possibilities and necessities" (Boin & t' Hart, 2022, p.17). While crises alone do not invariably lead to policy reform, they can be considered potential precursors for change (Birkland, 2016) since they delegitimize the status quo (Boin & t' Hart, 2022). The role of journalists as intermediaries in crisis communication (Shoemaker & Voss, 2009) has been significantly impacted by the information overload accompanying the COVID-19 pandemic (Zaracostas, 2020), e.g., in the submission and verification of information and the communication of health risks (Perreault & Perreault, 2021). Consequently, journalists needed to adapt to the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic, necessitating significant changes in their work practices and interactions with the public to maintain their legitimacy.

Our study explores how the crisis has served as a catalyst for change within the journalistic landscape. Through semi-structured interviews with 30 German journalists identified through a media analysis of pandemic-related online articles published in Germany during January/February 2022, we used thematic analysis to investigate journalists' experiences in disseminating government information, interacting with the public, and the adaption of their work practices during the pandemic.

The analysis of the interviews revealed that journalists prioritize the dissemination of government information in a clear and comprehensive manner. In their intermediary role between authorities and the public, they answered citizen inquiries, clarified government regulations, and promoted public health measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Moreover, journalists were engaged in bridging the gap between the public and the scientific community by translating complex medical findings into comprehensive formats.

The analysis of the interviews identified three key trends emerging in the pandemic: 1) an emphasis on data journalism for comprehensive information visualization, 2) a heightened engagement with the public through innovative news formats such as FAQs, multimodal data charts, and the inclusion of readers' feedback for topic selection, and 3) significant changes in the journalistic workflow, including the establishment of cross-departmental collaborations.

The study's findings shed light on the obstacles encountered by journalists in effectively communicating risk during the pandemic and the transformation of their reporting practices. However, due to the limitations of a small sample size, further research is needed to assess whether these observed trends represent broader transformations among news outlets. Additionally, further research could delve into current trends in journalism and determine if the pandemic-induced changes are of a lasting nature.

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CRC09 Crisis coverage: Media insights on communicating risk and emergency

PP 1107 Dealing with misinformation among underserved groups. How intermediaries for people lacking access to mainstream journalism tackled misconceptions and fake news during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Among the multiple challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the proliferation of health misinformation has been considered one of the most perilous. While some research has paid attention to the way journalists addressed this matter (Perreault & Perreault, 2021), less is known about the activities of information intermediaries for underserved groups that are not reached by mainstream journalistic media, such as individuals with migration background, low income or low levels of literacy. In the Dutch setting, where the study is based, those intermediaries can be community and religious leaders, health and social workers (e.g., GGD-staff), NGOs, neighborhood workers (*buurtwerkers*), etc. Understanding how these information intermediaries tackled health misinformation during the

pandemic is critical, given the large amount of false information that circulated during this period and the substantial health risks posed by health misinformation. Unlike journalists, these intermediaries were usually not information professionals, which made the challenge even greater. Especially considering that the underserved groups for which they acted as intermediaries often faced additional vulnerabilities that increased the risks of misinformation.

Focusing on the perceptions and experiences of these specific information intermediaries, and using those of journalists as a point of comparison, our study goes beyond previous attempts to systematically comprehend how different actors dealt with misinformation during the health crisis. In accordance with the two-step flow of communication theory, this is crucial not only because information is filtered by opinion leaders and other intermediaries, but also because underserved groups lack access to mainstream media and original sources. Moreover, this research contributes to past works on frame building theory and journalistic roles, exploring the application of these theories to information intermediaries beyond professional journalists.

To this end, we conducted a set of 28 semi-structured reconstruction interviews with these intermediaries (half with journalists and half with other intermediaries). This reconstruction approach follows Brüggemann (2013) and allowed us to structure the conversation around specific experiences, facilitating a focused discussion on the roles, strategies, and challenges. Following preregistration and ethical approval, interviews are taking place between December 2023 and January 2024. Some preliminary results anticipate a diversity of roles when dealing with misinformation, usually connected to the situation of vulnerability of the target groups. Thus, most intermediaries felt that countering and correcting misinformation was part of their roles, not from a journalistic perspective, but as a way to help people. Therefore, information was not an end by itself (as it was often the case with journalists), but a mean to prevent the consequences of the disease. Much of the work focused on vaccination, trying to limit the impact of anti-vaccination narratives and reassure vulnerable groups about the vaccine's safety. Finally, some of the difficulties and deficiencies faced by the different information intermediaries were related to the lack of financial means, the limitations of the lockdown, and their own lack of professional communication skills. In total, the study is expected to help addressing misinformation challenges in non-journalistic settings and preparing for interventions during future health crises.

CRC09 Crisis coverage: Media insights on communicating risk and emergency

PP 1108 Media framing of business crises in Italy: An exploration of discourse surrounding restructuring plans and layoffs

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Over the past decade, the world has faced three major economic crises (2007/8, 2011/12, 2019–2020) that have caused an increase in the number of companies experiencing a decline in demand, leading to downsizing, plant shutdowns, business termination, or relocation. These actions may result in large-scale redundancies aimed at reducing labor costs (De Meuse 2023).

Undertaking these restructuring measures can attract significant media attention (Brimeyer et al., 2012; Caruso et al., 2012; Orrù, 2018; Martin, 2019). This can result in reputational crises, increasing the business costs of reorganization in many ways.

Layoffs can cause concern among shareholders about the sustainability of the business and deteriorate customers' perception of the product quality, thus having negative effects on brand strength (Stäbler, et al., 2023) and sales (Landsman & Stremersch, 2020).

However, the audiences' understanding of the specific reasons behind restructuring choices can be influenced by the perspectives of collective stakeholders, such as trade unions and political entities.

Trade associations are integral components of Rhetoric Arena Theory, also known as the multivocal approach to crisis communication (Frandsen & Johansen, 2016). Unions have their own power within the gatekeeping process (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009) and may present layoffs as a means of improving margins by cutting jobs rather than as a way of ensuring the survival of the company. Otherwise, unions may propose alternative strategies (diversification, innovation, investment in employee development, Hayter, 2011). Then, in the context of Coombs' (2007) taxonomy, restructuring crises could fall into the intentional cluster, where stakeholders strongly attribute responsibility to the firm.

Trade unions can thus bring ethical aspects of business conduct into play when restructuring plans are discussed in the media (Nespoli, 2018). This may prompt companies to reconsider or delay their plans.

However, several studies have analyzed the media discourse on downsizing in national contexts, highlighting that the intensity and quality of news coverage of restructuring crises can vary depending on numerous factors (Martin, 1997; Lamertz et al., 2009; Hollister, 2009).

Elaborating on An & Gower's (2009) news analysis framework, I conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis (content and thematic analysis) of 348 business crises' news stories published in Italian national newspapers over the past 15 years (2008–2022).

The study examines three dimensions of news coverage: traditional news values, mainly the power and popularity of the people involved (Golding & Ross, 1979); specific features of business crises that mitigate or increase reputational effects (company's nationality, sector, competitive positioning, and the scale of layoffs) and subjective framing implying the attribution of responsibility.

The research questions are:

- What are the distinguishing framing of highly and minimally covered crises? Is the attribution of responsibility frame common?
- Does media coverage reflect the magnitude of layoffs?

The preliminary findings indicate that media coverage of corporate restructuring crises does not always correspond with the magnitude of layoffs. Additionally, the outcomes highlight the important role of politicization as a significant feature of media exposure. This politicization has important implications for trade unions' ability to use media coverage and framing to influence a company's behavior during crises.

CRC09 Crisis coverage: Media insights on communicating risk and emergency

PP 1109 A deep dive into Coca-Cola HBC's response strategy in the Croatian contamination scare through the lens of situational crisis communication theory

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In November, health authorities in Croatia instructed Coca-Cola HBC to withdraw certain products and imposed a temporary distribution ban. This action follows reports of poisoning incidents in three cities nationwide (O'Donoghue, 2023). Amidst a surge in social media, rumours of poisoning tied to a non-alcoholic drink spread widely. Lacking specifics, the story rapidly went viral, with social messages suggesting Coca-Cola consumers suffered acid poisoning and severe oesophageal damage (Litvan, 2023).

This study investigates the application of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) and its principles on the case of Coca-Cola HBC contamination scandal in Croatia. More specifically, to what extent can organisations successfully apply the SCCT in the context of a health scare to strategically manage and mitigate reputational threats in the dynamic landscape of digital media. Namely, the research focuses on evaluating the crisis type, crisis history and prior reputation to exhibit the reputational threat and public perception of the contamination and health scare related to Coca-Cola HBC case.

It should be noted that there is a significant gap in global social media and crisis communication research, especially lacking representation outside the U.S (Cheng et al., 2022, p. 51). Cheng (2018) indicates limited global adoption due to method and theory mismatches between U.S. and non-U.S. scholars (ibid., 2022, p. 51). In addition, Hong et al. (2023, p. 6) stress the need for future research on different perceptions of blame, minimising issues, and denial strategies, particularly in health crises—all strategies that were used in this case study.

A qualitative case study approach was used as a main research method. Data on the Coca-Cola crisis in Croatia was collected through a review of media coverage, which included official statements from Coca-Cola HBC and Croatian health authorities, as well as public reactions during and after the above-mentioned crisis on social media. It is important to emphasise that the SCCT serves as a theoretical framework for the analysis.

The crisis typology was determined and is categorised as the intentional cluster. Namely, within the intentional cluster, Coombs and Holladay (2002) observe robust attributions of crisis responsibility, encompassing human-error accidents, human-error product harm, and organisational misdeeds. They highlight that the event is seen as purposeful (as cited in Coombs, 2007, p. 167). This incident was unprecedented for Coca Cola in Croatia, damaging its previously positive image. Poor handling of the situation has led to fear and distrust toward Coca-Cola and health institutions. Moreover, unchecked social media rumours have significantly harmed Coca-Cola's reputation.

The findings of this study provide an insight for organisations facing crisis in digital media environments. Most importantly, how to align crisis communication strategies with the principle of SCCT which in turn can help to navigate various reputational threats. Furthermore, this study highlights the significance of proactive crisis communication planning for diverse scenarios, emphasising the crucial role of swift responses within the dynamic digital media landscape.

DMM01 Journalism and media consumption practices

PP 0016 Ethnic diversity in Italian media: Challenging narratives of belonging?

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This paper presents the preliminary findings of an exploratory study of ethnic diversity in Italian media. Drawing on interpretative theoretical frameworks influenced by Cultural Studies and post-colonial theory, this research investigates the experiences of young (under 35) journalists and media professionals of immigrant background with the aim of understanding the extent to which the media reflect the social and cultural changes occurred in Italian society over the past thirty years. This is a novel area of research in a country which only started to receive consistent flows of immigration in the late 1980s. So far, ethnic diversity has been the subject of research essentially in relation to the ways mass media cover migration issues, as migration continues to play a key role in public and political discourse in Italy. The contribution of second-generation journalists has arguably implications also for the articulation of national belonging amid the persistent racialisation of black and ethnic minority population.

As of 2020, about 11.2 per cent of the population is made of people with an immigrant background; they are 15 per cent among the under 18. These figures evidence the level of ethnic diversity in contemporary Italian society. However, such diversity is only marginally visible in the cultural industries, and especially in the news media. Based on 10 semi-structured in-depth interviews with young second-generation journalists and media professionals (video-makers, podcasters, writers), diversity editors and editors of news media, this paper will provide the first overview on ethnic diversity in Italian media.

Journalists of immigrant background are almost absent in the newsrooms of both public and private national broadcasters and major print media, while a slightly more inclusive culture appears to emerge in new digital media and radio. Young journalists of immigrant background work in large part as free-lance, a fact which reflects the increasing precariousness of journalistic work and the downsizing of newsrooms, similarly to what happens in other countries, but also the multiple challenges they face to enter the news media industry, based on their ethnic "foreign" origin and social class barriers. They tend to operate across media, for example contributing to mainstream newspapers while producing their personal podcasts or running new media initiatives. Some produce content in different languages, for international audiences, about migration issues, a fact that foregrounds patterns of diasporic media which are meaningful beyond Italy.

Previous studies on ethnic diversity and news media in Western European countries (i.e. Germany, Sweden, Finland) focused on the implementation of state or industry diversity policies. So far, in Italy, "diversity" has been promoted essentially in relation to gender equality in the journalistic profession. The findings of this study emphasize the importance of media, and particularly news media, in the articulation of national consciousness and public discourse on ethnic diversity. It also shows how the nation-state represents a limited frame for the understanding of the workings of media and national identity in "liquid modern times".

DMM01 Journalism and media consumption practices

PP 0017 Between lands: The everyday news consumption of immigrants in the digital landscape

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Several European countries have evolved into dynamic migration societies in recent years, marked by a significant influx of immigrants. Due to this demographic shift, there is an urgent need for proactive policies aimed at facilitating the cultural adaptation of immigrants into European societies. Traditionally, journalism forges a shared understanding among citizens, fostering a common reference point to comprehend society and one another. However, despite the recognized importance of proactive policies in providing immigrants with information on current issues and aiding in their cultural adaptation, European news organisations fall short of effectively reaching and engaging with the immigrant demographic.

Existing literature, meanwhile, indicates that immigrants consume news from various sources, including mainstream and alternative media from their current country of residence, international outlets, and media from their countries of origin. However, much of previous research dates back to the early stages of the online and social media era, leaving questions about current media consumption patterns in an overloaded digital media landscape.

This study aims to address this gap by unravelling the news consumption patterns of immigrants living in the Netherlands, a country experiencing a growing influx of immigrants and serving as a pertinent case study within the international context, particularly given the prevalence of immigration as a common challenge in the European

Union. The study employs the Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G), an audience-centred framework that helps to elucidate the motivations driving media preferences and enriches our comprehension of the immigrant audience and their media consumption. Data were collected from 30 immigrants from diverse nationalities living in the Netherlands. Participants were selected using maximum variation sampling, seeking to generate a wide range of data by including a broad spectrum of immigrants. Hence, we could understand differences among respondents who came to the Netherlands for different purposes, and who have diverse levels of education, language skills, and cultural access.

Over three days, participants shared examples of consumed news media (screenshots, links, and photos of news they consumed) and provided screenshots of their mobile phone usage (total screen time and most used apps and websites), enabling the mapping of the most frequently used news outlets and media forms among respondents. Subsequent in-depth interviews explored participants' experiences with the news, including discussions on their consumed media and mobile phone usage. A sorting cards exercise was also employed to understand respondents' motivations for following the news. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed.

The research addresses pivotal questions about immigrants' news consumption, examining the relationships between respondents' news choices and their personal, social, and political contexts. By shedding light on the motivations guiding their everyday media practices, this study contributes not only to academic understanding but also offers valuable insights for policymakers and media professionals seeking to enhance cultural adaptation and inclusive communication strategies in the context of increasingly diverse societies.

DMM01 Journalism and media consumption practices

PP 0018 Migration and forced displacement as transnational phenomena of journalism research and journalism education

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Unprecedented numbers of people are on the move in modern times. The latest available global statistics count over 280 million international migrants by mid-2020 – 3.6 percent of the world's population (UNDESA, 2020). These numbers were accounted for prior to the Ukraine war, the civil war in Sudan, and the Gaza-Israel war. The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) forecasts significantly more than 1 million asylum applications to Europe by the end of 2023, a record high since 2015–16. While "Western" media coverage of the refugee crisis of 2015/16 has been criticized for de-humanizing migrants (Chouliaraki et al., 2017), "Western" coverage of forced migration from Ukraine has been accused of postcolonial perspectives (Seib, 2022; Ellisori & Andrews, 2022; Mezahi, 2022; Bakwesegha-Osula, 2022).

Large movements of refugees and migrants have political, economic, social, developmental, humanitarian and human rights ramifications. Migration is a cross-cutting, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary subject that requires transnational efforts in mass communication research. While the body of cross-national research has been steadily growing in the past years (Eberl et al., 2019; Kreutler et al., 2022), comparative research involving origin, transit and destination countries has remained scarce. Also research originating from the Global South is still underrepresented in the global mass communication discourse. Just one example: Discussions about migration have had a considerable impact on election outcomes across Europe (Harteveld et al., 2018), but the issue has also become a major issue in African election campaigns (Wara, 2016; Whitaker, 2019; Squazzin, 2019; Kaponya & Ntaba, 2023).

This paper summarizes first results from an EU-funded project on migration coverage in sub-Sahara Africa. It also aims to develop a research-based African narrative on migration and mobility, where the issue is severely underreported, or has a "Western" framing (Assopgoum, 2011; Fengler et al., 2019; Harber, 2015; Jaiteh, 2015; Serwornoo, 2018). In order to raise awareness and empower African citizens to counter the misinformation and disinformation often associated with migration issues, media coverage is crucial. Our project aims to build a distance learning platform on this topic for journalists and future journalists in Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Malawi, before expanding to other African partner countries. The project is aligned with our UNESCO train-the-trainers project on migration and forced displacement, and a pilot MOOC on media and migration we have conceptualized and implemented for German media practitioners.

New analyses on media coverage of migration in sub-Sahara Africa is now being provided in the context of our project. We will present insights from qualitative interviews with 28 media managers and newsroom practitioners in Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Malawi, as well as a quantitative study of 92 current and former journalism students in the three countries. According to the interviewees, negativism, sensationalism, and a focus on problematic economic effects of migration characterize coverage in African news media. The coverage is also heavily impacted

and limited by the interest of the authorities. Yet, the quantitative survey of African journalism students reveals a keen interest of future media practitioners in the topic, coupled with substantial knowledge of migration issues.

DMM01 Journalism and media consumption practices

PP 0019 From Syria to Ukraine: Mapping the migration discourse in the Italian Twittersphere

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In an age of heightened global migration and digitalisation, the convergence of political communication on social media about migration and refugees has become a pivotal topic for the field of communication studies (de Rosa et al., 2021; Dehghan & Bruns, 2022; Eberl et al., 2018; Heidenreich et al., 2019; Shah & Ogden, 2021). This study embarks on a comparative exploration of the political communication landscape within the Italian Twittersphere during two pivotal refugee movements—those emanating from Syria in 2015 and from Ukraine in 2022. The divergent treatment of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees has become a subject of considerable discussion, as the latter received a distinct set of rights and privileges that diverged markedly from the experiences of the former (Coi et al., 2022). Differences in gender, religious, political, and cultural aspects between Syrian and Ukrainian refugees can either foster similarities or generate sentiments of hostility within the social context of the receiving countries (David D. Laitin, 2022; De Coninck, 2023). However, there are concerns that the radically divergent responses and policies might stand as a testament to the intersection of racism, religion, and political realities in shaping refugee treatment as opposed to universal principles (Drazanova, 2022; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2019). Our study addresses these issues by examining social media networks, which are increasingly becoming primary channels for information dissemination and political influence.

Analysing discursive communities on an online social network (Twitter or X), our research is aimed at answering two research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of community structures and influential users within retweet networks during these crises?
2. How do polarised communities' temporal communicative patterns interact and counteract during these crises?

The dataset consisted of about 400,000 tweets and 200,000 user data points and covered about a month of the peak periods of both crises (September 2015 and February 2022). We generated, visualised, and analysed retweet networks of the communication and mined the data for links and collocations related to refugees. Finally, we analysed the battle of visibility between polarised communities by looking at temporal patterns of retweet activity.

Our findings align with the "silent majority" and the "amplification of the right" theses. Despite not comprising the largest cohorts, anti-refugee communities, spearheaded by charismatic far-right opinion leaders with issue ownership, gain a magnification of their voices through a high level of user engagement within their community. However, the emergence of the Ukrainian refugee crisis acted as a catalyst, reconfiguring the virtual discursive landscape and causing dramatic shifts in the influence and composition of the discursive communities and their influencers. Our findings underscore the significant role of digital platforms in the diffusion and transformation of political opinions through an in-depth analysis of communication networks during two refugee crises.

Keywords: Refugee Crises, Social Network Analysis, Semantic Network Analysis, Twitter, X, Italy

DMM01 Journalism and media consumption practices

PP 0020 When the refugee becomes human (Refugee Grata)? Analyzing media representations of Syrian refugees in the Turkish press

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Drawing inspiration from Agamben's (1995) notion of "bare life" and Rajaram's (2004) assertion that refugees exist beyond the jurisdiction of the law, this presentation posits refugees as modern-day *homines sacri*, stripped of agency and rights upon seeking refuge. Building upon the existing literature that highlights the construction of refugees as either "good" or "bad" (Szczepanik, 2016), this study extends the discourse to understand how the Turkish press shapes the identity of the "welcomed Syrian refugee" (*the refugee grata*).

For our study, an exhaustive collection of every available news item related to international migration, migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees was conducted from January 2011 to December 2020. This dataset was extracted from eight nationally significant Turkish newspapers. Employing an extensive list of keywords, including "migration," "immigrant," "asylum seeker," "refugee," "guest," "refugee camp," "Syrian," "Afghan," "Iraqi," and others, a total of 120,000 related and unrelated news items were initially gathered. A systematic simple random sampling technique was employed, resulting in the selection of 2,285 relevant news items, representing the entire population of news

items with a 2% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. The final dataset was then subjected to a rigorous qualitative content analysis. The analysis was conducted under 27 different themes, ranging from news frames to specific narratives surrounding the identity of Syrian refugees.

This presentation aims to extend the content analysis of media coverage on Syrian refugees, specifically examining when individuals from Syria transition from being generalized as "the Syrian" to being depicted as "acceptable individuals" in the Turkish press. The study seeks to identify patterns by analyzing instances where Syrian refugees are portrayed positively and humanized. The analysis will focus on common frames used in such news stories, including assessing whether they present success stories or emphasize the humanitarian aspects of the issue. As defined by Neuman et al. (1992), news frames are conceptual tools used by media and individuals to convey, interpret, and evaluate information, aiding the audience in locating, perceiving, identifying, and labeling information in their surroundings (Goffman, 1974).

This comprehensive methodology ensures a nuanced exploration of the Turkish press's role in constructing the identities of "good Syrian refugees." The major aim of the presentation is to focus on the contradictions of the press's humanization strategies in attributing stamps of public acceptability (Raz, 1994) to refugees. The presentation will show that humanization strategies do not necessarily empower individual agency. On the contrary, humanization, empathy, and compassion may backfire and eliminate individual subjectivity.

By employing content analysis on a carefully selected and representative sample, this research aims to contribute valuable insights into the intricacies of media representations, societal perceptions, and their impact on the experiences of Syrian refugees in Turkey.

DMM02 Real existing journalisms in the world? Towards new epistemology of exile journalism

PN 020 Exile experiences of East African and Latin American journalists as an existential ideology

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Global press freedom is under attack. The number of killings of journalists continues to rise. In 2023, the International Federation of Journalists recorded the highest number of killed journalists in recent years. Consequently, an increasing number of journalists worldwide are forced to flee and continue reporting from exile. International media support organisations such as Reporters Without Borders and the Committee to Protect Journalists have documented a significant increase in support required for exiled journalists over the last few years. This trend has also triggered heightened academic interest in the journalistic practice in exile, as exile media continue to play a crucial role as the often only remaining sources of information from authoritarian countries. Numerous case studies of exile journalism from different geographical and socio-political contexts show that exile imposes practical and normative challenges on journalists. Examining these, previous studies mainly examine how exiled journalists create and engage in digital networks to stay connected to home audiences, act as conflict mediators, handle precarity and continued threats in exile, and renegotiate their journalistic role perceptions. However, existing research has so far put an emphasis on single-case studies and predominantly situates them in different existing frameworks, such as hybrid or advocacy journalism, or compares them to western-dominated idealistic professional standards of journalism. This paper breaks with this trend by proposing a comparative study of exile journalism from East Africa and Latin America, two regions largely under-researched despite the prevalence of exile journalism there for decades. Based on semi-structured interviews with twenty exiled journalists from Nicaragua, Venezuela, Eritrea, and Burundi, this paper identifies differences and similarities in their exile experiences and proposes tocentre their lived experiences and the very condition of exile in the creation of an independent conceptual understanding of exile journalism. Doing so, it becomes clear that exiled journalists are driven by and working for the survival (1) of themselves as displaced persons facing similar challenges as other refugees, (2) of themselves as journalists often left without organisational structures, structural support, or professional opportunities in exile, (3) of the information, which depends on the functioning of their networks and the safekeeping of their sources remaining inside the country, (4) of journalistic practices that stand in contrast to traditional journalism relying on eye-witnessing, transparency, or access to information from official sources, and (5) of journalism itself, as they are in most cases the last generation of trained journalists coming from a country where the emergence of new journalists is unlikely under continued authoritarian power. Therefore, it will be argued that exile journalism, encompassing all its facets, practices, norms, and changes, can be conceptualised as an existential ideology as opposed to an occupational ideology of general journalism.

DMM02 Real existing journalisms in the world? Towards new epistemology of exile journalism

PN 021 Between Journalism and Activism: Navigating Professional Roles by Russian Journalists in Exile

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Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the subsequent suppression of what remained of the free press, numerous journalists departed Russia to continue their work from abroad. The growing number of autocratic regimes over the past decade, known for their violent suppression of journalists, has made the topic of journalism in exile increasingly relevant in media and communication studies (Michaelsen, 2018; Porlezza & Arafat, 2021). Prior research has underscored significant challenges in journalistic work in exile, such as the blurring boundaries between journalism and activism (Porlezza & Arafat, 2021), threats to journalists and their families (Michaelsen, 2018), difficulties in finding and protecting sources, building trust with audiences back home, and the collapse of business models alongside "donor fatigue" (Arafat, 2021). Despite the growing body of literature on this subject, a systematic understanding of the transformation in journalists' role perception and performance in exile, compared to their work in their homeland, remains understudied.This paper seeks to explore the evolution of Russian journalists' role perceptions during the first two years of their exile. It is an ethnographic study based on participant observation over various periods within two years, complemented by at least 25 semi-structured interviews. Observations include attending both formal and informal journalist meetings, engaging in conversations, and visiting media hubs in Berlin, Riga, and Tbilisi. The unique work circumstances of these journalists necessitate a departure from traditional newsroom ethnography and suggest a need for a reconsideration of approaches to journalism ethnography.The challenges discussed by journalists resonate with findings from previous studies. These challenges are amplified by the ongoing Russia's war in Ukraine. Preliminary findings indicate a trend to a deliberate shift of journalistic role perception towards (more) activism. Building on Claudia Mellado's assertion that "journalistic roles are by no means static, but are instead situational, dynamic, and fluid" (Mellado 2020, 4), this paper discusses how the role perceptions of exiled journalists transform during the first years of their emigration and examines the factors at macro, meso, and individual levels that shape the ongoing development of journalism culture among Russian independent media in exile.

DMM02 Real existing journalisms in the world? Towards new epistemology of exile journalism

PN 022 The socio-professional conditions of the information's producers about Syria from Turkey

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In addition to having been a land for millions of Syrians since early 2011, Turkey has also been one of the privileged places to produce information on the situation in Syria. The cities of Antakya and Gaziantep, close to the Syrian border, have become real "rear bases", media hubs, where the main actors of this production (humanitarians, international and local media, fixers-journalists) circulated and where journalistic initiatives were born (including professional training offered by news agencies and media development agencies). Based on thirty interviews with Syrian "fixers" (the "fixers" are the intermediary people who are guiding foreign – mostly Western – media), conducted within a six-month fieldwork in the south of Turkey, this presentation will concern their journalistic work about North-West Syria, from Turkey, and will focus especially on their work conditions in a situation of exile. To do so, we will follow a chronological line of the political context. Most of the "fixers" in this corpus started to work inside Syria, they began from their involvement in the revolution, which started in March 2011. They learnt this job in a war context which means they are trained mostly at war reportage, which is limited in terms of journalistic skills. Also, being in their own country means, among other things, broader access to local people and appropriate authorities. In 2013, due to the territorial implantation of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the Aleppo region, most of them started to go to the south of Turkey. In 2015, when Russia got military involved in Syria, no journalists were allowed to cross the border. The role of the "fixers" at this time was mostly to help foreign journalists crossing illegally the border. 2016 was a turning point as Turkey also got involved military on the Syrian territory. This completely changed the conditions of production of information on North-West Syria both inside Turkey and inside Syria. In both cases, their displacements are strictly limited and controlled by Turkish authorities which have strong impacts on their professional practices and opportunities. This presentation will detail those conditions and will expose examples from the interviews.

DMM03 Media representations, migration and borders

PP 0217 "I will not allow a foreign court to block flights": The Rwanda asylum scheme in the British press

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Since its inception in the spring of 2022, the Rwanda asylum scheme has become an indispensable part of Britain's political agenda. This is so to the extent that even the main opposition party (which opposes the Rwanda plan and dismisses it as a 'gimmick') is considering a scheme to process asylum claims offshore as an alternative. A policy designed to relocate asylum seekers and those identified in the UK as illegal immigrants to Rwanda for processing and resettlement, the plan has met both political reactions and public resistance, as well as with legal challenges signalling how it is contrary to international law. Relevant arguments ranged widely, including the legality of the scheme, its economic costs, its inhumanity and concerns about the safety of asylum seekers. This paper aims at illustrating how the British press discussed the plan, thus framing relevant public debates.

Conceptually, the paper draws upon the literature on the mediation of migration and the interplay between humanitarian and securitization discourses (Chouliaraki and Georgiou, 2022). Empirically, the discussion is based on the content analysis of the UK press over a period of two years, from the inception of the project to its legal challenges in the British Courts (April 2022–24). During this time, we look at the *Guardian*, the *Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Mirror*, in an attempt to capture varieties in coverage both in terms of political leniencies, as well as within the tabloid and broadsheet press.

The analysis will particularly look into the following three questions: how the scheme is framed in press (e.g. as a securitization, humanitarian or economic issue), how the figure of the refugee is being constructed in these reports and, finally, how the UK itself is represented with regards to migration. Ultimately, the paper aims at contributing both to debates about immigration and the function of media as symbolic borders, as well as discussions about how the press frames political issues and public debates.

DMM03 Media representations, migration and borders

PP 0218 Revealing the emotions of pro-migration activists through film: Confronting violent ignorance on the border of Ceuta and Melilla

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In recent decades, the border fences of Ceuta and Melilla have become an important visual representation of the concept of 'Fortress Europe'. The images of pusbacks, police abuse and deaths of people during crossing constitute a performative representation of the macro-politics of borders. The visual imposition of fences – and the spectacle that accompanies them (De Genova, 2012) – has opened up a debate on how the visual relates to border politics and migration control (Van Houtum, 2010; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). While much research has been done on how migrants and refugees themselves document their border crossings (Binimelis-Adell and Varela-Huerta, 2022), the emotional component of fences for those living in cities has been little explored. For the inhabitants of these places, this emotional landscape related to migration control is navigated through ignorance (Jones, 2021) and compassion fatigue (Moeller, 2018), on the one hand, and contestation and solidarity (King, 2016), on the other. This presentation investigates the mixed, contradictory and complex emotional landscapes of those who are intentionally transforming and contesting the current situation of migration containment in Ceuta and Melilla. It focuses on the experiences of local activists who have resisted the politics of migration containment.

Through a close examination of the dominant media representations surrounding these cities, the social impact of the fences and the effect of migration policies on everyday life, this presentation aims to uncover the civic emotions that underlie the lived realities of activists. While research on emotions in activism has addressed common frames of mobilization based on collective identities and repertoires of contention (della Porta et al., 2018), little attention has also been paid to the methodological issues involved in researching emotions and activism. By employing emergent methodologies to investigate social emotions, this study integrates visual elicitation methods into ethnographic research. The evocative power of cinema allows films to act as visual stimuli that convey activists' intimate narratives, which encompass compassion, outrage, or fatigue in the context of mobilizing on behalf of migrants. Thus, this presentation delves into the intersection of emotions, activism, and borders to confront the violent ignorance of migration control.

Keywords: borders, activism, ignorance, compassion, visual elicitation, Ceuta and Melilla

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DMM03 Media representations, migration and borders

PP 0219 Colonial iconographies in crisis: The clashing representations of racialized migration in traditional Spanish media and "Third Sector" networks

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Images of small migrant boats arriving at Spanish shores, immigrants and refugees entering through the Spanish-Moroccan frontier, and street vendors of African origin –"manteros" in Spanish– hawking saturate the Spanish media agenda and constitute the majority of mainstream journalistic representations of racialized individuals in Spain. The narratives these images propose, linked to the current migratory waves from the Global South towards the Global North, emphasize a notion of "crisis" or "threat". Furthermore, they perpetuate hegemonic neo-colonial discourses that invisibilize the agency or positive representation of racialized immigrants and refugees, who are thus either criminalized or victimized.

Our hypothesis is that migrant and antiracist collectives in Spain, through their social networks, have developed a visual counter-discourse that has put into crisis the iconographies perpetuated by traditional media in recent years. To inquire into such images, this paper will focus on a comparative analysis between the covers and Instagram accounts of Spanish newspapers El País, El Mundo and La Vanguardia (from 2017 onwards), and the Instagram accounts of alternative media and "third sector" organizations such as Afrofeminas, Afrocolectiva, and Top Manta (with tens of thousands of followers), which propose a space for self-representation.

The framework for this analysis is the concept of the "visual motif", an "iconographic model of cultural representation that is transmitted and reinterpreted throughout the history of images" (Balló, Salvadó & Cairol, 2020), and regards the inherently narrative and affective aspect of images, which can mobilize the viewer's cultural imagery. As our sample reveals, most of the images found in traditional media outlets focus on the process of border-crossing (De Genova's "border spectacle", 2013), which entails an invisibilization of life beyond the instant of "infraction" and a reduction of the individuals to transgressive subjects. In these cases, the most salient motifs found in Spanish press are (1) the "white savior", a white individual holding a racialized immigrant in a gesture of shelter and comfort, an image of solidarity and rescue that continues to reproduce racially-motivated hierarchies; (2) the barrier, the shore or the fence as a liminal space where the concepts of transgression and illegality become materialized as a bodily act against a physical threshold; and (3) the mass of immigrants, an agglomeration of anonymous and dehumanized bodies, where the magnitude of the group and its numeric threat is highlighted over their individual conditions of existence. On the other hand, alternative media and "third sector" social networks, led by racialized immigrants or second-generation immigrants, either use these very visual motifs to problematize them and highlight their underlying racial hierarchies and stereotypes, or reappropriate other motifs which are allegedly not racially-coded (i.e., are implicitly "white"), proposing a notion of speech and agency. Against the anonymization of the motif of the "mass" of immigrants, for instance, we have found a usage of the portrait as an image of individualization and testimonial –thus, discursive– potency, while photographies of labor and education undertaken by racialized individuals work against associations with irregular and illegal – thus "threatening" – work and welfare.

DMM03 Media representations, migration and borders

PP 0220 Romania's first lessons on humanitarianism. A thematic analysis of investigative media reports on the Ukrainian refugee crisis

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Russia's military invasion of Ukraine has caused the biggest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War. The plight of forcibly displaced Ukrainians triggered a widespread public solidarity manifest in the

unprecedented mobilization of citizens across Europe, especially in the neighboring countries, to assist the refugees the best possible way. The Ukrainian exodus has put Romania on the map of host countries for refugees and, at the same time, it has tested the limits of the country's (and Romanians') solidarity with the Ukrainians. At the onset of the conflict, in the absence of a coherent Government response, many grassroots initiatives sprang up at the Romanian northern border to provide the refugees with immediate support such as food, clothes, shelter, medical assistance, transportation. Volunteer-led efforts to assist Ukrainians fleeing the war were widely covered by the media, particularly by investigative journalists who often were active volunteers. This study aims to examine how the refugee crisis was reflected in three prominent Romanian investigative journalism platforms. Drawing on solidarity from humanitarianism (Boltanski, 1993; Chouliaraki, 2013) and its critique (Ambrosini, 2022), we analyze articles published between February 24, 2022 and October 2023 by *Decât o revistă*, *Scena9* and *PressOne*. We use thematic analysis to answer the following questions: a. how does solidarity emerge from media reporting on Ukrainian refugees? b. which forms does it take?, and c. what kinds of practices are involved? Findings show that solidarity with the refugees has been framed as extraordinary humanitarianism during the first three months of the war. Starting from September 2022, reports on solidarity with Ukrainians focus on volunteer burnout, transition to state support for refugees, increasing anxiety among in the Romanian society that Ukrainian refugees receive more financial and social benefits than Romanians. Our analysis of investigative journalism articles on the Ukrainian refugee crisis reveals a waxing and waning of public support of the refugees. This finding adds to the ongoing theoretical and public debates over the limits of grassroots mobilizations and the compassion fatigue in describing solidarity with refugees. Interestingly, the analyzed articles also include interviews with displaced Ukrainians who have sought and received protection from Romania as war refugees. The refugees get to tell their story and share their perception of the mobilization of ordinary Romanians and of the long-term support and integration measures taken by the state. By giving a voice to the refugees these media platforms empower them and legitimize narratives in which the refugees are not necessarily helpless and vulnerable. We discuss the role of the media in fostering 'expressional solidarity' (Woods, 2020) by exposing refugees as agents, too, not only as voiceless people in need of immediate material assistance.

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DMM04 Visual culture, screen media and diasporas

PP 0311 Representations of the Portuguese diaspora. Multiple readings of ethnic humorous content from YouTube

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Ethnic humour is one of the places where questions of identity and belonging are played out. In an intercultural context, it can be either a strategy of social control or a mechanism of emancipation and subversive creation. It is one of the discursive spaces that best allows us to gauge the status of a minority group in any society, as well as the dynamics of the hybridisation of identities. Through this research, we seek to understand the different receptions of this type of humour among Portuguese and Luso-descendants living in France and Portugal and its role in (re) creating feelings of belonging, but also stereotypes. This empirical study uses questionnaire surveys in French and Portuguese to understand the different receptions and analyse their role in the symbolic construction of audiences living in the countries of origin and in the host countries.

Based on the above issue and considering the plural readings that humour can evoke in its audience, we chose as our object of study one of the productions of one of the most recognized comedic duo Ro & Cut on the YouTube platform: "Vamos a Portugal" (1M views). The aim is to understand the diversity of interpretations of the video, which is a caricatured reconstruction of the return journey to Portugal by a group of Portuguese emigrants living in France, based on variables such as gender, age, migratory experience, area of residence, academic background, and socio-professional category, among others. From a total of 461 responses (234 in France and 227 in Portugal), it can be seen that individual and collective paths influence the reception process. The results show that although most of the respondents in the general sample found the video amusing, they felt that it did not portray Portuguese emigration in France in a current and objective way. However, interpretations vary according to place of residence, migratory experience, and academic background. Some see it as a caricature intended to be read in second grade. Others regret that negative stereotypes about the Portuguese diaspora continue to be perpetuated. Still,

others recall with some nostalgia the experiences of the 1970s and 1980s through a production that they interpret as a tribute to the pioneers and a symbol of belonging to an ethnic community.

DMM04 Visual culture, screen media and diasporas

PP 0312 Constructing the Other in news maps and infographics

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In this paper, we examine news maps and infographics on migration and migrants in Finland in the Nordics. With the help of such concepts as *cartographic cleansing* and *imaginaries of certainty*, introduced by scholars in political cartography and media and migration studies (e.g., van Houtum & Lacy 2020; Usher 2020), our aim is to answer if maps and infographics manage to consider migrant vulnerability, or if they only drive threat discourses and scapegoating.

The paper is structured around three 'gloomy' cases, namely, migrant infection rates during the Covid19-pandemic, so-called urban gang violence in the neighboring country, Sweden, and border crossings by third country nationals at Finland's easter border. The material consists of 60 news maps and infographics published in ten newspapers and periodicals during 2020, 2021 and 2023. The first case is part of a large media monitoring project on migrants and the pandemic where newspapers were systematically gathered and analyzed during three months in 2020 and three months in 2021. For the two other cases, a more purposive sampling was used.

Our preliminary findings show that journalists and graphic designers hardly ever experiment with more alternative types of presentations. Rather, they reuse a few standard types of news maps and infographics to categorize, factualize and simplify the narrative of the main story, which often strengthens a threat discourse. Counter narratives, humanizing perspectives, such as so-called deep maps, or categories or symbols shedding light on migrant vulnerabilities are lacking. At the same time, however, there are neither any explicitly agitating graphic elements like arrows typically used in invasion maps and in so called Frontex maps depicting global migration. Instead, the maps and infographics contribute to a "new aesthetics of danger" (Wallace 2009) is more subtle ways.

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DMM04 Visual culture, screen media and diasporas

PP 0313 Destigmatizing Việt Kiều: Vietnamese diaspora's self-representation and community formation on YouTube

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More than 5 million people of Vietnamese origin live outside the country. Known as "Việt Kiều," they are not always viewed positively by Vietnamese residents , especially when they come from families that fled after the Vietnam War (Nguyen, 2021). A number of Việt Kiều reside in Europe. Social media have allowed them a means to share their stories, not only with each other but also with people back in Vietnam.

This research examines the comments posted on videos from three Việt Kiều YouTube channels, two based in France and one in Germany, to understand how the platform serves as a site of self-representation and community formation for Vietnamese migrants. These videos recount the "overseas life" of the Vietnamese diaspora while challenging stereotypes. A total of 3,000 comments were collected from two videos from the France-based channels, which focus on the stereotype of "Getting Married to Western Men." The two Germany videos, which address another common stereotype—"Getting Easily Rich in Germany"—had 2,927 comments. Data were analysed using a mixed-methods design combining sentiment and discourse analysis.

Sentiment analysis was carried out using the NRC Word-Emotion Lexicon, comprising eight emotion categories, available through the "syuzhet" package in R (Mohammad & Turney, 2013). Trust emerged as the most prevalent emotion in both France (38%) and Germany (45%) samples. But a close reading of comments featuring high levels of Trust showed the reasons were quite different. In France, the Việt Kiều videos earned the approval of many users while some comments attempted to "debunk myths" about overseas life. In the comment with the highest level of Trust, the emotion represented a user's confidence in former U.S. President Donald Trump's low-tax policy—as opposed to the "socialist" policies of European governments. In contrast, Trust in the Germany sample was often found in comments recounting experiences of discrimination. However, users also believed learning the German language and following local regulations were reliable means of success.

Discourse analysis of comments that garnered the most replies revealed more conflict among users. In the France-based channels, which share the experiences of Vietnamese-origin housewives living in Europe, there were plenty of resentful comments/replies. Many users suggested these women married Western men only to get foreign citizenship. Despite its tongue-in-cheek topic, the Germany-based channel emphasizes the need for hard work to succeed but also suggests that life abroad is better. Many comments and replies under its videos argued that Việt Kiều should not trust information about Vietnam they receive from Western sources.

Our research suggests that YouTube serves as a platform for the geographically divided Vietnamese diaspora to connect with each other and with Vietnamese residents and publicly address the stereotypes associated with the term, Việt Kiều. Although the issues they raise are difficult, the discussions are mostly civil and allow different segments to learn about and understand each other better. YouTube's affordances, such as threaded replies, enable virtual community formation as users not only comment on videos but also engage in conversations with each other.

DMM04 Visual culture, screen media and diasporas

PP 0314 "Eyo, mixed girl check": Negotiations of (non-)normativity through embodied performance in the #mixedgirlcheck trend on TikTok

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TikTok is one of the most important social media platforms, especially for young users (Koetsier, 2023), and consequently their performance of identity including ("mixed") racial belonging. A "mixed-race" identity involves a "liminal positioning" (Dagbovie-Mullins & Berlatsky, 2021, p. 9) in the "great classificatory systems of difference" that shape human societies (Hall, 2021c, pp. 359–360). Imaginaries of belonging in these systems are constructed through "regimes of representation" (Hall, 2021a, p. 388). These regimes are, in turn, structured by social discourses (Hall, 2021b, pp. 266–267). Imaginaries of difference and belonging do not only operate extrinsically; they have also "become a constitutive element in our own identities" (Hall, 2021b, pp. 266–267).

Platform users' self-presentation on their profiles have always been related to socially dominant and stereotypical identity constructions (e.g., Hearn, 2017). TikTok's audiovisual memetic affordances further foreground the embodied self-presentation of identity. So far, TikTok research has addressed race and intersectionality mostly as aspects of concrete connective action – that is, activist or social movement struggles – or migrant identity. The explicit performance of "mixedness" has become a massive phenomenon as a connective, embodied, and memetic presentation on TikTok. The platform's provisions to establish connections through trends using sound and narrative templates allow users to easily construct their racial identities through personalized connections to others and discourses. While the individual performances of a trend are not necessarily expected to be very subversive, trends can reinforce or subvert dominant discourses concerning racial normativity. In this study, we complement previous research by focusing on the mundane, everyday performance of race, analyzing the intersectional representations of normativity (or non-normativity) in the #mixedgirlcheck trend on TikTok. Accordingly, we asked how normativity (or non-normativity) is represented in the #mixedgirlcheck trend on TikTok. To answer this question, we analyzed 100 randomly selected #mixedgirlcheck-trend videos, drawing on critical technocultural discourse analysis (Brock, 2018).

Our results reveal four prominent patterns in the representations of normativity (or non-normativity) using the #mixedgirlcheck hashtag. First, the *embodied performance of "mixed-race" heritage* reinforces normative assumptions about race in catering to a mainstream gaze that assumes "racial homogeneity" and demands the explanation of any deviations therefrom. Second, representations of *negotiating embodied ruptures in normative racial authenticity and belonging* subvert the mainstream gaze in challenging assumptions about universal signifiers of racial authenticity. Third, *embodied heterosexual performativity and the idealization of the bourgeois family* reinforce hegemonic heteronormativity and present heterosexuality as a crucial prerequisite to a person's "racial mixedness." Finally, in representations of *capitalizing on the performance of embodied individuality*, "mixed girl" embodiments function as branding that applies social discourses of "mixedness" with a focus on feminine beauty ideals. While the construction of (racial) identity may always evade robust generalization and further comparative and culturally specific research is needed, what we present here is a theoretically well-grounded analysis of prevalent discourse of "mixedness" on TikTok that can inform similar endeavors looking into the social constructions of difference and belonging and their (re-) negotiations online.

DMM04 Visual culture, screen media and diasporas

PP 0315 Music and critical cosmopolitan memories of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation war

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This paper focuses on the triadic relationship between shifting mnemonic constructions of Bengaliness, Bangladeshiness, and Britishness in the context of the legacy of the Bangladesh liberation war of 1971. Our analysis draws on six years of ethnographic fieldwork conducted by the Migrant Memory and the Postcolonial Imagination research project between 2017–2023 with South Asian communities in the UK, to explore how memories of 1971 and the accounts of national and cultural identity which are used to narratively underpin them, are reconfigured and transmitted in instances of musically mediated communication. The instances in question were witnessed during fieldwork interviews in community settings, and relate to other musical memories shared by participants in more formal interview scenarios. Using the concept of critical cosmopolitanism to explain how diaspora actively mobilise memory to sustain the symbolic markers of their longstanding national affiliations and use them to 'mediate' the embrace of new individual and collective identifications, the paper assesses the frictions between diverse contemporary, remembered, and inherited cultural experiences of belonging, and the strongly determined sense of national identity and transnational nation building which emerged from the liberation struggle. We consider musical memory as a site for reflection and struggle in which dominant and emerging ideologies of nationhood are brought into relation with new spaces of belonging and visions of home. In doing so diasporic communities redraw the frameworks of interpretation for those telling and those receiving these memories. Through the close analysis of communal music performances and ethnographic interviews, we assess the role of these memories' of violent upheaval and nation building in the ongoing narrative construction of diverse British Bangladeshi identities and communities in the UK. In so doing we highlight the potential of musical mediation as a vehicle for the recontextualization of historical struggle in contemporary diasporic contexts, and the solidarities which can be fostered and renewed through these mediated mnemonic practices.

DMM05 Platforms as spaces of affect and action

PP 0427 Understanding digital racism and xenophobia: Toward a theoretical model

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In recent decades, anti-immigrant, racist and nationalist attitudes have become increasingly mainstream (Mondon & Winter 2020), transforming public debates on immigration, immigrants and minorities in Europe, the US and elsewhere. These attitudes and sentiments have been widely disseminated and amplified through digital communication and online networks, including commercial social media platforms – in scholarly work labeled as "platformed", "networked" and "online" racism (Matamoros-Fernández, 2017; Murthy & Sharma, 2019; Ortiz, 2021). To better understand the relationship between racism and digital communication, this paper put forward the argument that it is necessary to move beyond media-centric explanations and simplified discussions of online hate speech and platform regulation. Therefore, it proposes a multi-theoretical approach to "digital racism" (Siapera, 2021), i.e. racist content produced and circulated online. The paper brings together four theoretical strands that combines sociological, political and socio-technical perspectives, and presents an understanding of digital racism in relation to: 1) networked affect, 2) nationalism/nativism, 3) masculinity and 4) conspiracy thinking. In particular, it discusses these as factors that underpin the articulation, circulation and amplification of digital racism.

First, the paper examines the role of digital platforms in the circulation of digital racism. Drawing on the concept of networked affect (Hillis, 2015), this section examines both organized and "ambient" forms of racism online (Siapera, 2019). Secondly, it assesses how various articulations of nationalism/nativism (Walsh, 2023) contribute to the construction of race, ethnicity and other signifiers of inclusion/exclusion online. Thirdly, it discusses digital racism in relation to masculinity and the (re)turn to historicized imaginaries of masculine gender in contemporary digital cultures. In particular, it identifies ideals of a "natural" hegemonic masculinity (Kaiser, 2022) and their relationship to race, ethnicity and nation. Fourthly, it discusses the role of conspiracy thinking and theories, and how they relate to ideas of race, immigration, politics and power in the digital age (Ekman, 2022).The paper then presents a model that enables an analytical assessment of these theoretical perspectives, to both understand and analytically approach digital racism, at the structural/ideological (macro) level, organizational/network (meso) level as well as on the individual (micro) level. The paper contributes to the ongoing discussion on the political mainstreaming of racism in the digital age (e.g. Miller-Idriss, 2020; Mondon & Winter, 2020; Gantt Shafer, 2017) and critically engages with the sociological, political and socio-technical characteristics that produce and reinforce contemporary racism, online as well as beyond.

DMM05 Platforms as spaces of affect and action

PP 0428 Networked nation in the time of political disorder: Affect in Afghanistan's diasporic ethnic groups' conflicted constructions of imagined community

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Afghanistan has been affected by a series of political disruptions in the form of civil war, military take overs and interventions by different powers in the past few decades. When Taliban assumed control of the country most recently, its restrictions on girls' education and women's employment received abundant media attention in the West. What has been less discussed is the persecution of the many ethnic groups and the Taliban's systematic efforts to define Afghanistan as Pashtun ethnically, culturally and linguistically. These efforts, however, have not escaped the attention of the diaspora where members of Tajiks, Hazara, Uzbek and other ethnic groups as well as Pashtuns call attention to the various exclusionary measures and engage in passionate discussions about the shape and identity of the national project on digital platforms, most prominently on X (former Twitter). We analyze the role of affect in the competing and conflicting definitions of the imagined Afghanistan nation emerging from these discussions.

Our theoretical framework combines the concept of 'networked nation' (Bernal, 2014) with the concept of 'platformed intersectionality' (Christian et al. 2020; Edwards & Stephens, 2023) to advance the understanding of affective investments in competing notions of 'nation' by diverse diaspora stakeholders. We view the relationship between emotions and digital technologies as co-constitutive (Alencar & Camargo, 2022) and emotions as communicative, social and implicated in power relations (Ahmed, 2004; Wetherell, 2012). While previous research on the Afghan diaspora has recognized ethnic divisions, the theoretical implications for conceptualizing diaspora have been limited. We advance this approach and argue for diaspora constituted and contested intersectionally whereby different groups have competing stakes in imagining the national community in exile. We focus on how emotions and emotional attachments animate the conflicts and debates on social media.

X became a major platform for informing the users of the Taliban abuses of ethnic groups and passionate discussions about the consequences as well as interventions advancing inclusive definitions of nation. We conducted a netnography (Kozinets, 2019) on platform X and collected posts and responses to the following topics of discussion: forceful evictions of non-Pashtuns like Uzbeks and Turkmen in the Northern part of the country, committing war crime of collective punishment against Tajiks, persecution of Hazaras by the Taliban, removing Farsi words from banners and plaques as part of systemic discrimination against the Persian language and most recently arresting Tajik and Hazara girls for wearing 'a bad hijab' and other ethnic discriminations. We identify and explore themes that construct different imagined communities in discussions on X: "Pashtuns are the Taliban contra the Hazaras, Tajiks, and Uzbeks," "we are all 'Afghan'" and "Pashtuns are the natives". We then examine the contestations of the label 'Afghan' as exclusionary and the debates over alternatives: 'Afghanistani' and 'Khurasani.' Our analysis highlights how the competing cultural, ethnic and non-ethnic forms of national order these debates propose are animated by emotions.

DMM05 Platforms as spaces of affect and action

PP 0429 Diasporas as online warriors: #Karabakh war and the narrative battles between Armenian and Azerbaijani diasporas

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As fighting broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan in September 2020, a parallel intensive war erupted on social media. Pro-Armenian and pro-Azerbaijani users shared information about the conflict, paid tribute to soldiers, amplified news, targeted international media, and pushed out hashtags like #StopAzerbaijaniAggression or #StopArmenianOccupation. These actions sought to mobilize international public opinion and influence policies of foreign governments, with consequences for the war outcomes. The 2020 Karabakh war was fought not just on the physical battlefield, but online, internationally and in different languages.

How do diasporas fight online during armed conflict in their homeland? I explore this question through interviews with over 100 diaspora Armenians and Azerbaijanis living in 10 nations around the world. I question their motivations for activism; strategies and methods of promoting the Armenian or Azerbaijani narrative; vision of the opponent; and perceived outcomes of their efforts. The interviews were conducted at the time of the 2020 war itself, as well as after it, during regular escalations until Azerbaijan reclaimed full control over Karabakh by the end of 2023.

Besides investigating this case of diaspora mobilization, the study offers broader conclusions about social media and participatory warfare, and about the changing roles of diasporas in IR. I argue that social media enables participatory war that is transnational, monologic and imposing silences, empowering and retaliatory, involving individual and networked tactics, and culturally and politically transformative. The online narrative war has new

tactics, benefits from and deceives social media algorithms, and delivers new types of casualties. Diasporas, traditionally seen as international agents of lobbying, public diplomacy, and material assistance, become important and decentralized actors in global conflict infopolitics. Finally, the paper relates its findings to other ongoing conflicts where diaspora digital activism plays a major role: Ukraine and Israel-Gaza. I identify similarities and differences of the online dimensions of modern conflicts and the roles of diasporas in participatory war.

DMM05 Platforms as spaces of affect and action

PP 0430 "Brazil will become a Venezuela": Migration, digital platforms and Brazilian elections

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The issue of migration frequently appears in electoral campaigns, particularly through racist, xenophobic, and nationalist discourses. Although it is recognized that far-right politicians use migration for political gain, the 2022 elections in Brazil were marked by a different discursive strategy from the far-right represented by Jair Bolsonaro and the recent Venezuelan migration into the country. Bolsonaro's government and its supporters took advantage of the growing number of Venezuelans to create narratives that shifted from fearing migrants to perceiving the threat posed by the experiences of migrants in their home country, Venezuela, and its government regime. This rhetoric served as the foundation for the construction of moral panic around the hashtag "Brazil will become a Venezuela" if the opposition party (Workers' Party) comes to power. Moral panic, as defined by Cohen (2011), is a crucial concept for comprehending the discourses employed by populist leaders to create fears and divisions in society. It refers to the response of a group of people who falsely perceive the actions of a particular group, typically a minority, as perilous and a threat to the entire community. The notion of moral panic has been instrumental in the examination of migration and its interconnectedness with politics, social dynamics, and the media (Bauman, 2017). Following moral panic theory, this article examines how, during Brazil's elections, this narrative was produced and disseminated across various digital platforms by the far-right government and its allies to incite alarm about the risk of Brazil turning into a Venezuela with the Workers' Party's electoral victory. We also adopt Walsh and Hill's (2022) concept of platformed panics to analyze the role of digital platforms' socio-technical systems in shaping the panic narrative surrounding the fear of the "Venezuelanization" of Brazil in the context of the 2022 elections.

Data for this study were collected using qualitative content analysis of materials (videos, images, texts) posted on Facebook, TikTok, X (ex-Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp. The sample resulted in the selection of 19 publications directly related to the fear rhetoric. The results reveal how Bolsonaro and his allies, acting as mediators of the experiences of Venezuelans, utilized the platforms to warn of the establishment of communism in Brazil. Such rhetoric was constructed with the adherence and engagement of Venezuelans, whose voices bore witness to the situation in Venezuela and supported Bolsonaro's re-election as the only alternative to Brazil. We also showed that this rhetoric was a component of a complex digital ecosystem designed to generate fear-based narratives and misinformation. This was achieved through extensive content creation and active mass-participation on various social media platforms. Simultaneously, the production and dissemination of panic by Bolsonaro's government and its supporters as well as Venezuelan migrants greatly benefited from the widespread visibility of far-right-oriented social media channels and the lack of transparency in the algorithms used by platforms. In conclusion, our study highlights the importance of critically examining the political engagement of migrants to gain a deeper insight into the widespread dissemination of anti-immigrant discourses in the online sphere.

DMM05 Platforms as spaces of affect and action

PP 0431 Transnational Turkish migrant families and their use of digital media: Sustaining and enacting mobile intimacies

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Migrant populations have long been known to navigate the dynamics of physical separation, and to sustain long-distance transnational relationships and ties through digital media use. The pandemic becoming global in 2020 ensued by the closing of borders, lockdowns and travel restrictions has further sophisticated how migrants negotiate their transnational social relations over distances and borders. As a result, the use of digital communication technologies to forge and maintain ties over a distance has become even more crucial during this period.

This paper focuses on the ways in which digital communication technologies have been mobilized by migrant populations, as part of everyday digital practices in border narratives, to sustain ties and family intimacies during the COVID-19 pandemic and thereafter. As John Urry (2007) has articulated through the "mobilities paradigm", in an increasingly interconnected and networked world, social relations are predominantly established, sustained and performed through mobilities that are not only corporeal but also imagined and mediated (Cabalquinto, 2018: 250). Drawing on Urry's work, and its utilization in a transnational mobile media context by Cabalquinto (2018),

I examine in this paper how digital communication technologies have enabled the imagination, mediation and enactment of intimacies among dispersed members of transnational Turkish families in Sydney, Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how this digital connectivity has become an integral part of their everyday lives and everyday media practices following the subsidence of the pandemic.

The study is part of a broader ethnographic research project consisting of participant observation conducted over a period of 12 months among Turkish migrants in Sydney, including 30 in-depth interviews. The paper draws on data gathered from this extensive ethnography with a focus on two families, both of whom have been separated from one of their nuclear family members for 18 months during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study builds on and contributes to the existent literature on issues of mobile intimacy among members of dispersed families (Cabalquinto 2017, 2018, 2019; Madianou 2016; Madianou and Miller 2012, Lopez, 2016).

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DMM06 Border politics, practices and discourses: alternative imaginaries and conceptualisations for a new world in the making

PN 073 The digital (b)order and the spectre of "climate migration"

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This presentation focusses on "climate migration", as the newly formed spectre haunting European imaginaries and galvanising the continent's digital (b)order. Fears over climate change driving unprecedented numbers of migrants towards the global North have generated new levels of anxiety among policy makers and across legacy and social media (Durant-Delarc et al. 2021; Gonzalez 2020). In response to fears for a new threatening disorder, the order of the border is yet again mobilised as the solution. "Smart", sophisticated and ever-expanding borders have a revamped target: climate refugees. At the heart of this presentation is the mediated constitution of "climate migration" as a symbolic and territorial crisis for the global North. Across policy and media narratives, we can see how this seemingly new "European crisis" to come is symbolically constituted through familiar tropes: "climate migration" is imagined as either a humanitarian catastrophe, or a security risk, or as both, with climate refugees conceived as either abject victims or as threats (Chouliaraki and Georgiou 2022). Territorially, climate migration is also constituted as a forthcoming emergency, a new crisis that needs, not only to be contained but, in fact, to be deterred. We thus see actors of the border, from the state to transnational corporations, using this perceived threat for the border as a justification for further investment in infrastructures of mobility control and surveillance, strengthening the already hegemonic imaginary of migration as a crisis. Yet, and while responses to "climate migration" reproduce the hegemonic mantra of securing European order through the border, they also reveal a reconfiguration of its politics: both the symbolic and territorial constitution of the border that has to deter climate refugees from even approaching Europe depend on predictions of a future, a crisis yet to come. This presentation examines what it means to (re-)construct and (re-)imagine the border and order through predictions and storytelling of the future. It particularly discusses how the border is symbolically and territorially reconfigured when AI and data modelling drive imaginaries and policies of prevention. The discussion illustrates how technocentric futurology pre-empts debate and marginalizes systematic research (de Haas 2023) and it also shows how the border reconfigurations for an imagined future transnationalize predictive policing of people and territories and turn climate change into a new project of racial injustice (Sealey-Huggins 2018).

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DMM06 Border politics, practices and discourses: alternative imaginaries and conceptualisations for a new world in the making

PN 074 Convivial reflexivity in times of crisis: a new framework for data uses within border regimes

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This presentation critically investigates the datafication and digitisation of Europe's migration regime and asks whether alternative uses of digital border technologies can be imagined. I begin by identifying borders as institutions of power, as mechanisms of identity formation and as performative spaces (Marino, 2021). Here, I dissect the transformation of Europe into an ambiguous geo-political space where different actors (border authorities, private enterprises, and humanitarian agencies) capitalise on the power of technologies to deliver faster and more efficient responses to human displacement, and question their impact on the migrant's body. I argue that digital borders should be conceptualized as performative spaces where more productive and less discriminatory uses of technologies can be re-imagined. Specifically, this paper contends that more productive re-conceptualizations of the current digital and geo-political landscape of bordering can be imagined through the adoption of a counter-hegemonic project of social justice rooted in the principles of radical democracy and convivial reflexivity. Using Judith Butler's The Force of Non Violence framework (2020), and Koulaxi's concept of convivial reflexivity (2022) as starting points, the discussion invites to step away from instrumentalist frameworks that see violence (data extraction from the migrant/refugee body in this case) as a mean to an end, and to adopt instead a humanist perspective that sees the interdependency of life as the basis of social and political equality. In doing so, it encourages scholars to re-imagine, re-conceptualize and operationalize the materialities, practices and imaginaries of borders both within physical (proximity encounters) and symbolic (discourses) settings (Chouliaraki and Georgiou, 2019). The discussion will present some examples of how this can be carried out in practice, for example through the adoption of principles of ethical coding in both political and humanitarian settings (Marino, 2022) but also through the development of spaces of conversations with refugee-led organisations that could enable the development, perpetuation, and control of social and political orders related to migration in concert with political and non-political actors.

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DMM06 Border politics, practices and discourses: alternative imaginaries and conceptualisations for a new world in the making

PN 075 Calculated (Dis)order: Numbers, Population, and the Sexuality of Migration Statistics

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The repeating "crises" of migration of the last decades call into question the racial capitalism of nation-state borders. Indeed, borders have to continuously be reproduced through the work of policing and surveillance. One major area of reproducing borders is the rendering of borders through metrics. Departing from scholarship that considers how borders work and fail through the spectacular forms of border and migration policing (de Genova 2013), I look at the mundane administrative work of counting and classifying to contribute to understandings of the relationship between media technology and bordering. This paper will specifically consider the role of numbers as "quantum media" (Wernimont, 2018) in the work of reproducing the nation-state order of borders. While often invisibilized classification and normalization of race, gender, and sexuality depend on their constant reproduction to become common sense and natural (Bowker & Star 1999, Spade 2015, Murphy 2017). This paper will draw on the discourses and practices around production, use, and circulation of numbers in form of refugee quotas, allocation keys, and migration statistics. For instance, the figure of 1 million refugees has become a discursive shorthand to describe German exceptionalism in the reception and treatment of refugees during the 2015 "refugee crisis" that has been revitalized since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. A shorthand that lends itself to both liberal celebrations of hospitality and right-wing nationalist mobilizations and hostility against migrants. Analyzing the figure of 1 million

refugees, its statistical and social scientific rendering and its transnational discursive and media circulation this paper demonstrates that numbers work to extend borders into and within the nation-state to regulate sexual and gendered subjects. I show that the production, use, and circulation of numbers in form of refugee quotas, allocation keys, and migration statistics are central for bordering practices such as the decreasing possibilities for family unification, the production of threatening Muslim and/or Arab male sexuality, the pathologizing of the migrant family, and state practices of family separation and detention. In this sense, numbers do the work of bordering through situating migrants as a racialized threat of biological and social contagion. Numbers are therefore exemplary for the ways in which nation-state and transnational orders are articulated, imagined and maintained. A critical engagement with these (dis)ordering operations, thus, also opens pathways to imagining alternative futures and possibilities to enact solidarities with and against the numbering of life.

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DMM06 Border politics, practices and discourses: alternative imaginaries and conceptualisations for a new world in the making

PN 076 The politics of brokenness and repair: media infrastructural build-up and tear-down at the border

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This paper engages with the mediation of borders and the (re)structuring of global (dis)orders on the level of media technologies and infrastructures. I argue for refocusing attention to the politics of "brokenness" and "repair" as conditions, practices, and rhetorics, to understand how borders become technologically rearticulated over time. Populist calls to "fix broken borders" motivate heavy investment in "smart borders", while infrastructures of rescue and care are systematically broken down. "Brokenness" and "tearing down", as well as "fixing" and "building up" of media technologies act as symbolic and material vehicles that structure how mobility regimes are built. How can efforts to repair mobilize alternative futures for media technologies at borders? I depart from a "broken-world-thinking" approach (Jackson, 2014) to technology, calling for accepting brokenness of the technological world as a counterpoint to progress, growth, and innovation. These perspectives articulate brokenness as a condition of media, where breakdown and glitches expose exclusions of specific users and the hidden labor of those fixing and maintaining it. Repair, in turn, becomes a productive practice for enacting care, autonomy, and increased participation in technological design. Here, I invert this perspective on brokenness and repair, and question their politics. At borders, I argue, the imagined condition of brokenness drives frantic media infrastructural build-up – while borders are anything but broken, but working in well-functioning ways for most mobile subjects: in fixating, excluding and lethal ways for a vast majority, and in smooth, hypermobilizing ways for a minority. Simultaneously, calls to "fix the broken border" dissipate Western right-wing media discourses, making the techno-centric metaphor of "brokenness" a populist rhetorical device. Yet, what rather is troubled by brokenness are infrastructures of solidarity, care and rescue – systems actively torn down. What are the politics of brokenness and repair in the symbolic and material "double articulation" (Chouliaraki & Georgiou, 2022) of borders? How can we critique and reimagine "brokenness" and "repair" at the border? I draw on the case of media infrastructural build-up at Ellis Island, New York (early 1900s), as well as the case of testing and implementing paternity testing and "DNA-fingerprinting" in the UK (1970s/1980s), in order to trace the symbolic-material articulation of attempts to "repair" "broken" borders through media technologies. These histories demonstrate how mobility regimes legitimize specific media infrastructures by invoking an imagined condition of brokenness of the border for states and publics. For those controlling mobilities, ever new media infrastructures of knowledge-production to differentiate become necessary – because the imaginary of a failsafe border is always already broken. Yet, in most migrants' experiences, borders are hardly broken. Brokenness structures the simultaneous build-up and tear-down of media infrastructures at the border. A critical analysis exposes these politics of brokenness and repair, and opens up a space for undoing and reimagining relations to media technologies of the border.

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DMM07 Solidarity practices and humanitarian discourses

PP 0652 Data imageries and materiality of borders in times of crisis

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In recent years borders have become datafied due to the latest technologies that seek to improve systems of identification and surveillance (Leurs; Marino; Nikunen & Valtonen 2023; Aradau & Tazzioli, 2020; Broeders & Dijstelbom, 2016; Metcalfe & Dencik, 2019).Research has highlighted how several datasets—VIS, SIS and Eurodac – are used to track people's movements. These border databases and technologies include identification documents, fingerprinting, facial recognition systems, retinal scans, speech detection systems, ground sensors, aerial video surveillance drones, and various automated decision-making processes.

In this paper we explore how data imageries (as imageries of infrastructures, see Enrich 2022) among border officials and authorities guide understanding of border practices and solutions, shape politics of borders and how these imaginations may be challenged or accentuated in case of hybrid attack, such as in the Eastern border of Finland in 2023. Our empirical material consists of interviews with authorities and officials of the interior ministry, the migration office, the police and the YVombudsman as well as political decisions and documents concerning the hybrid attack on the Eastern border of Finland in 2023 related to asylum seekers from Russia.

As argued by Enrich (2022) *imaginaries of infrastructure* refers to the apparatuses of knowledge and power to understand "technological systems as well as the values toward which they should be organized". As such discussions of data infrastructures can be explored as sociotechnical imaginaries that "provide visions of the kinds of society that sociotechnical change could bring into being; they shape what is thinkable" and desired (Reutter 2022). We argue that data imaginations also reveal understandings of the core values in datafied practices and the ways in which for example human rights and ethical considerations are connected to these imaginations. Our interviews reveal a strong belief in the power of datafied systems that 'never have a bad day'. In addition, the concerns are related to the lack of resources and the obsolescence of things and technologies, thereby to information security and the coordination of systems, not to the rights of people using the systems. There seems to be a strong emphasis on securitization in adopting automated border technologies, yet it is not always clear whose security is at stake when developing systems.

We argue that the proliferation of datafied solutions is bringing about broader social changes that influence understanding of what constitutes security. While the increased use of data driven border practices and decision making is likely to dehumanise those seeking for protection, the recent hybrid attack seems to emphasize these dehumanizing tendencies even further, although it is responded with traditional, material tools, such as a material wall. Our study shows that both datafication and materiality of borders speak of imagery of infrastructures that emphasize asylum seekers as data points or objects that need to be managed – in ways that sideline humanity and human rights.

DMM07 Solidarity practices and humanitarian discourses

PP 0653 Building consensus in European discourse about migration: Willingness to avoid disorder or to protect immigrants?

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This research analyses discourse of state-induced return (Kosh, 2014) at European level. The aim is to investigate how the lexical series of terms using a prefix expressing repetition or intensity serves European external policies. This paradigm of terms beginning with *re-* (which includes *resettlement*, *reintegration* and *readmission*) is increasingly used in UNHCR and IOM discourse as well as in European directives.

Indeed, readmission and resettlement are two of the three durable solutions proposed by international agencies (Arar & FitzGerald, 2022) that are supported by all actors in society, from civil associations to political actors (Tissier-Raffin, 2018: 79). These discourses are embedded in an international rhetoric (Gobin, 2011) that smooths the discourse (Ogier & Ollivier-Yaniv, 2006: 67) in order to build a consensus (Rist, 2002b: 15) between European member states and manage migratory flows at lower cost under the guise of humanitarian intervention (Chimni, 2004: 58).

In order to study the emergence of this paradigm and to understand how migration policies are put in place, what their objectives are and how they circulate in social discourse, a vast corpus of texts from institutional organisations and the voluntary sector will be collected in three countries (Belgium, Spain and England) and four languages. This data set will be supplemented by interviews with key members of staff. This large corpus will be analysed in the light of discourse analysis concepts (Lecolle *et al.*, 2018) and implemented with corpus linguistics tools (Baker *et al.*, 2008).

This communication will detail how the paradigm of terms beginning with the prefix *re-* serves European foreign policy objectives and how it softens the discourse to build consensus and avoid social disorder around the global issue of migration.

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DMM07 Solidarity practices and humanitarian discourses

PP 0654 New media, new narratives? A comparative analysis of UNHCR's Instagram communication strategies for the Ukrainian and Syrian crises

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The Ukrainian crisis has received much Global Northern policy support and favourable news coverage, contrasting sharply with Global Southern crises, including the Syrian crisis (Moallin, Hargrave & Saez 2023; Sambaraju & Shrikant, 2023; Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2023). However, international refugee organizations can influence public perceptions through social media (Carrasco-Polaino, et al. 2018; Green, 2018). However, these social media strategies have hardly been investigated. This study investigates which Instagram communication strategies UNHCR uses for the Ukrainian and Syrian crises. We examine whether and how UNHCR's Instagram communication strategies differ from previously identified humanitarian narratives and differ for the Ukrainian and Syrian crises. Hence, we respond to the need for more comparative research on this subject (Author 2023a). Through a multimodal critical discourse analysis on UNHCR's Instagram posts (N = 90) about the Syrian and Ukrainian crises (2022–2023), we identified interacting humanitarian and post-humanitarian appeals, extending earlier research.

First, the study shows that UNHCR mainly uses shock effect appeals on Instagram to evoke pity and guilt. Consistent with previous research on other media genres (Rajaram 2002; Harrell-Bond and Voutira 2007; Carrasco-Polaino et al. 2018; Author 2019b 2023a; Bellander 2022), it represents forcibly displaced Ukrainians and, to lesser extents, Syrians as victimized, voiceless masses, which can have dehumanizing effects. Likewise, it focuses on ideal victims (Höijer 2004) which can create hierarchies of deservingness within population groups. Second, the results indicate that UNHCR often employs deliberate positivism by portraying forcibly displaced Syrians and, to far lesser extents, Ukrainians, as talented, empowered, unique individuals to facilitate audience engagement and relatedness (Hedman 2009; Rodriguez 2016; Krause and Schmidt 2020; Bellander 2022; Dahin 2022; Author 2023b). However, by mainly highlighting people with highly valued functions, it creates hierarchies of deservingness (Scott 2014; Author 2023a). Extending previous literature, our analysis thus shows important differences in representations between forcibly displaced Ukrainians and Syrians. This can most likely be explained by crisis-specific differences and UNHCR's related objectives. Third, equally contributing to the literature, we found that UNHCR frequently combines shock effect appeals and, to a lesser extent, deliberate positivism with post-humanitarian appeals (Chouliaraki 2012a; Bellander 2022). UNHCR often combines shock effect appeals with humanitarian branding strategies and self-centred solidarity discourses. However, forcibly displaced people's voices are often neglected. Further, it pairs deliberate positivism sometimes with celebrity humanitarianism but risks relegating forcibly displaced Syrians to secondary positions (Chouliaraki 2012b). These combinations of humanitarian and post-humanitarian appeals are facilitated by Instagram affordances, including photo sharing and editing tools, which enable aesthetic slideshow activism (Dumitrica and Hockin-Boyers 2022), reflecting the marketization of the humanitarian industry (Scott 2014; Richey and Brockington 2020).

Overall, we argue that UNHCR's Instagram communication strategies largely reproduce traditional humanitarian and post-humanitarian strategies. UNHCR barely utilizes the platform's possibilities for more nuanced, contextualized representations, largely due to challenging institutional and crisis-specific contexts and social media logics. More generally, this study contributes to the literature by providing in-depth, comparative and new insights into the largely unexplored social media communication of refugee organizations, which mirrors and reproduces challenging social systems, power relations and consumerist values.

DMM07 Solidarity practices and humanitarian discourses

PP 0655 Historicising voice biometrics: The colonial continuity of listening, from the sound archive to the acoustic database

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Since 2017, German border authorities have introduced voice biometrics as a 'cutting-edge' assistance tool to analyse the language and accents of undocumented asylum seekers to determine their country of origin and assess eligibility for asylum. At the heart of this practice lies the idea that voice acoustics contain unique characteristics about one's origin and that recent advancements in machine learning allow the extraction of such unfiltered 'truths'. However, the attempt to 'scientifically' identify connections between voice, sound and country of origin through technology is not a recent development, standing in historical continuity with longer colonial practices of listening and sound archiving from the beginning of the last century.

European sound archives encompass early voice recordings made through large-scale research projects during colonial rule and the World Wars to reinforce the racial and nationalist ideologies of European states. Although not aimed at controlling borders but defining 'pure' characteristics in the voice of their populations to distance from the 'other', these recordings shared the purpose of creating an archive that could ground the determination of origin through voice analysis. These sound archives consist of early voice recordings made by commissioned researchers in war prisons and expeditions in the colonies. Nevertheless, audio data training the acoustic models of voice biometrics used in asylum procedures is generated under very different conditions. The creation of datasets is delegated to different public and private actors, including universities and crowdsourcing platforms. It involves linguistic researchers, but also many data workers who provide their voice data as cheap labour.

By historicising these outsourcing processes, I investigate the disruptions and continuities in the shift from the sound archive to the acoustic database and what these implicate about the operations of State power. I do this based on personal observations and experiences resulting from a digital autoethnography of my activity carrying out (audio) data work tasks, in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with other data workers, managers and linguistic researchers who manage the creation of datasets used to train voice biometrics. The analysis shows how the monoglossic ideologies of the requesting border authorities condition the practices of voice data generation.

Therefore, I challenge the buzzword of 'innovation' frequently proclaimed by border authorities embracing voice biometrics for 'better securitisation and efficiency'. I argue instead that, besides technological advances, the cultural techniques guiding the technology have remained the same, in continuity with a long colonial history of Western science that aims to measure voice acoustics to determine the country of origin. On the other hand, I conclude that the main differences in the methods of sound collections represent two different modes of State power, as it developed throughout time: sound archives served European nation-states to define innate acoustic qualities in the voice of their population to express sovereign power; acoustic databases instead exemplify and serve the purpose of the border in the time of the globalised market, enforcing the policies that allocate different groups of people with higher and lesser degree of mobility, while allowing the free flow of capital, software and data.

DMM07 Solidarity practices and humanitarian discourses

PP 0656 #StandWithUkraine: Mobilization strategies to help Ukrainian refugees on crowdsourcing platforms

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Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Romania has come to host 135,485 Ukrainian refugees (European Council, 2023). The unexpected immediacy of the refugee as a symbolic presence has led to problematizations and tensions about attitudes towards people of other ethnicities, about fears and threats circulating in Romanian imaginary, about the humanitarian ideals that mobilize people and the kind of society projected by virtue of this newly acquired knowledge. The large-scale mobilization at individual and national level to support Ukrainian refugees indicates a "maturation of Romanian civil society" (Anghel & Trandafoiu, 2022), which engaged in the symbolic negotiation of the meanings attributed to the refugee crisis, alongside media and political actors.

In this context, our paper focuses on crowdsourcing platforms for the support of Ukrainian refugees developed by the Romanian government and the civil society. Digital technologies, particularly the spaces that permit social

interaction, may facilitate forms of political engagement (Koc-Michalska and Lilleker, 2017), involving rewards through interaction. Crowdsourcing today is increasingly employed as a new method of public involvement into the political process (Khoma, 2015), with migration crowdfunding as a form of "socio-political crowdfunding", leading to "a new philosophy of cooperation and solidarity" (Khoma & Vdovychyn, 2022, 45). We take crowdsourcing platforms for helping Ukrainian refugees as dispositifs that have a strategic function. They are both infrastructures of problem-solving and discoursive fields constituted around the public problem of refugees, which foster new forms of solidarity.

Our analysis focuses on 21 crowdsourcing platforms for the support of Ukrainian refugees developed by the Romanian government and the civil society, and on news articles about the platforms, published between February and November 2022 in the Romanian media. Our methodological approach, derived from dispositif analysis (Caborn, 2007; Jäger & Maier, 2016) and multimodal discourse analysis (Kress, 2010, 2012; van Leeuwen, 2013; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021), allows us to understand how meaning is built on crowdsourcing platforms and what strategies are employed to mobilize the public towards politically-significant action.

In our analysis, we construct a typology of crowdsourcing initiatives (government crowdsourcing platforms; crowdsourcing platforms inititiated by experts; NGOs' crowdsourcing platforms; social media groups; media crowdsourcing initiatives; and mixed crowdsourcing initiatives) and identify two distinct categories of actors: the professionals of crowdsourcing and entrepreneurs of help.

We investigate the discursive construction of the problem of the refugees, seeking to understand which actors gain visibility and which competing discourses are circulated with reference to Ukrainians. Our case is relevant for how citizens build new forms of transnational solidarity through digital activism. Overall, our analysis highlights that actors employ a variety of semiotic resources and strategies to educate the public and get them involved in humanitarian action. The refugee crisis marked an emancipation of the civil society, which found its grounding and opened new opportunities for civic envolvement.

Keywords: Ukrainian refugees, crowdsourcing platforms, *dispositif* analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, transnational solidarity

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DMM08 Digitised practices of inclusion, integration and belonging

PP 0746 Living archive: Chinese Londoners and diasporic solidarities in the city

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Alongside the surge of COVID-19 infections in 2020 came a dramatic increase in racism, xenophobia, and hate crimes targeting individuals and communities of East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) descent throughout the UK. This alarming social response was provoked in large part by insidious mainstream narratives that, whether intentionally or not, attributed blame for the virus to certain populations. Forced into isolation by stay-at-home orders with nothing but screentime, Chinese Londoners took to digital spaces in search of healing and solidarity amidst rising racial antagonisms that accompanied this unprecedented global health crisis. Consequently, a collective diasporic consciousness began to solidify together with the emergence of a new East and Southeast Asian identity, facilitated entirely by online engagement during a period of intense physical isolation. Now several years on from the first lockdown, this momentum has continued to build with a particular bent toward increasing advocacy, raising awareness, and celebrating Chinese and ESEA diasporic heritage in both digital and physical fora. This project examines these digital communication practices, contributing to discussions on digital diaspora, identity, and community specifically in the context of urban environments and their increasingly throwntogether nature (Massey, 2005). Crucially, my work takes a spatial perspective that builds on Soja's socio-spatial writings to conceive of the city as a Third Space that is shaped simultaneously by engaging with the material realities of physical place and the intangible flows of digital space (1996). Drawing from an analysis of 43 interviews with Chinese Londoners, I explore how everyday digital media practices in the city facilitate new ways of remembering, performing, and archiving diasporic heritage. Specifically, I focus on understanding how media technologies have been leveraged to reorient storytelling and heritage-making practices toward dynamic, intangible, and future-oriented expressions of the diasporic self and away from traditionally institutionalized and essentializing preservation strategies. In other words, my findings demonstrate how evolving communications practices have prompted the creation of living archives where histories, futures, and the present can be reimagined, and previously silenced or segregated narratives, heard and seen. To capture the everyday lived experiences of Chinese Londoners, I draw from principles of walking interviews, photo voice, and photo elicitation in a creative, mixed method approach designed to capture physical and digital embeddedness in the urban environment. This project privileges the diasporic individual and

their primary role in knowledge production by leveraging participatory research techniques that prompt personal perspectives and narratives. Further, I argue that this agentic approach and its reliance on digital technologies, such as smartphones, GPS-enabled wearable devices, cameras, and social media platforms, is itself an exemplar of living archive and participatory digital storytelling. My work demonstrates that though pandemic-era social isolation accelerated a disruptive and disproportionate digital shift, these changing communication practices have ultimately proven to be generative for a marginalized community facing adversity, seeking solidarity, and seizing agency in the digital age.

DMM08 Digitised practices of inclusion, integration and belonging

PP 0747 The encounter between Ukrainian Refugees and their British hosts

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Over 6,200,000 Ukrainian refugees have fled Ukraine since the February 2022 Russian invasion, creating Europe's largest humanitarian crisis this century. Of these, as of May 2023, 174,000 have relocated to the UK under the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. This research explores the encounter between Ukrainian refugees and their British hosts, both physically and virtually, on the Facebook group *UK Accommodation for Ukrainian Refugees* that links host families with Ukrainians needing temporary homes. The research aims to broaden the discussion of two types of encounters, virtual (via Facebook), and live (British families hosting Ukrainian refugees). In the literature, *home* is treated both in its physical and its figurative sense. The concept of home is a key discussion point in researching refugees' experiences. Refugees, by definition, are always on the move, as they have lost their physical homes. As such, home in the eyes of refugees is often present by its very absence (Boccagni, 2017). Boccagni (2016) characterized it as providing security, familiarity, and control. Moreover, home serves as a border between inside and outside, and also us vs them (Boccagni, 2016). In virtual space, refugees can feel part of their homeland, which they cannot physically visit. The virtual sphere therefore enables lost homes to be "found" and imagined (Giorgia, 2015). I will address home as an ongoing process and as daily experience, and its creation as an open-ended, unaccomplished process (Boccagni et al., 2020).

Accordingly, the research questions are: (1) How does the encounter between the Ukrainian refugee and the British host influence the concept of 'home' within which this encounter occurs? (2) How does the digital encounter configure and shape the physical encounter? Applying the phenomenological approach, I employ a two-stage qualitative research design: First, I will analyse Facebook posts in the two groups published during the first year of the war. Then, I will conduct semi-structured interviews with both sides of the encounter: the refugees, and their hosts. This study offers a novel and comprehensive understanding of the dual encounter that begins on a hyper-public platform – Facebook – and progresses into the very private and intimate domain: domestic and daily routines. Unlike previous research that aimed at furthering refugees' social integration into the host society, in this case, the locus of the research remains within the home, exploring how each side of the encounter defines it.

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DMM08 Digitised practices of inclusion, integration and belonging

PP 0748 Diasporic disruptions in pandemic and post-pandemic times: Somali and Syrian refugee women's digital practices in Rome

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The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted the resettlement experiences of refugees in Italy, the country hardest hit by the pandemic and subsequent economic crisis. During this period, digital media emerged as the primary, and often sole, source for human connections, information, and leisure, given the social isolation induced by recurrent lockdowns. This paper explores how refugee women navigated this challenging period and examines

its impact on their resettlement process in the new arrival context. Specifically, it investigates the role of digital media in strengthening their social capital, a crucial factor in mitigating the economic and social vulnerability of refugee women at the local level.

The study focuses on a comparative analysis of the experiences of Syrian and Somali refugee women residing in Rome, one of the capitals in Southern Europe that annually receives the highest number of refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea. This research builds upon previous studies on refugee women's digital practices in relation to the growth of social capital. While existing research tends to be overly optimistic about the potential of digital media for refugees' social capital (Dekker et al., 2014), some correlate refugees' social and economic vulnerability to the strengthening of transnational connectivity with family and friends, neglecting investment in local networking (Minchilli, 2021). This paper aims to explore the extent to which this dynamic characterizes both pandemic and post-pandemic times, investigating the benefits and challenges that an increased reliance on digital media has brought to the diasporic everyday lives of Syrian and Somali women.

The analysis will reveal the possibilities and limitations of digital media usage, considering intersectional axes of differentiation that impact refugee women's ability to overcome social exclusion and isolation. The methodology employed draws inspiration from a feminist postcolonial approach to diaspora studies and digital ethnography. It meticulously considers women's positionality within the social field and the resources they own and mobilize (Anthias, 2007), both online and offline, to experience social mobility.

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DMM08 Digitised practices of inclusion, integration and belonging

PP 0749 Media practices and (dis)connections of Vietnamese diaspora in the Midlands, UK

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The media's contribution to diverse diasporic spatialities as well as individual identities has been widely recognised (e.g., Georgiou, 2006; 2010). However, the media not only connect places, create new diasporic spaces and produce new connectivity of diaspora (Retis & Tsagarousianou, 2019), but also intervene in and re-produces the disconnections of diaspora. As argued in this paper, the media plays an ambiguous role in relation to diasporic connectivity. On the one hand, they have capacity to challenge and overcome the uneven distribution of diasporic communities in physical spaces and the isolation of individuals. On the other hand, this physical spatiality and connectivity also affects collective and individual practices in diaspora's digital spaces as well as their identities, and in this context, media can be mobilized to foster disconnection and alienation. How collectives and individuals use the media to practice their connections and disconnections with a diasporic community reflects their positions in the spatial matrix of diaspora (Georgiou, 2010) and their complicated diasporic identities.

I demonstrate these arguments by drawing on digital ethnography complemented with offline ethnography. Centred on social media platforms, especially Facebook as mainly used by Vietnamese diaspora, my analysis shows that the impact of digital media on diasporic connections of Vietnamese community is manifested at several scales – international/ transnational, national, regional, and personal connections. These multiscale connections are evidently related to different social spheres, including religious organisations, business networks, associational activities, or family connections. In each of these realms, the media has an expanding effect on connectivity, allowing influence or connections to transcend fixed time and space, and challenging the limits of physical disconnection.

At the same time, the media participates in the (re)production of (new) disconnections. Divides due to differences in class, origin, religion, or ethnicity continue to exist in the age of digital media, while silence, invisibility and withdrawal have also become new ways of expressing individual identities. Sometimes, digital disconnection does not represent only the individual's identity with the Vietnamese diaspora community, but rather accessibility of physical community space as well as private relationships. Diasporic individuals live their lives in other forms outside of their diaspora identities and are therefore always flexible in their choices and creations of diaspora spaces and connections. When we regard diaspora as a dynamic process in which ethnic boundaries are fluid and individual identities are heterogeneous (Mavroudi, 2007), the dynamic between media and (dis)connections deserves more attention to understand hybridity and in-between identities of diaspora in the future research, rather than only focusing on connection and inclusion created by media.

DMM08 Digitised practices of inclusion, integration and belonging

PP 0750 Highly skilled digital diasporas. Motherhood, class in the Turkish and Romanian migrant communities from Netherlands

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This paper addresses processes of diaspora formation and digital mediation in the Turkish and Romanian diasporas from the Netherlands. Based on an eight-month long ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2017 and 2018, the paper investigates how classed identification shapes community building and ultimately informs respondents' affinities toward certain social media platforms and the affordances therein. In addition, it sheds light on the often overlooked highly skilled Romanian and Turkish digital diasporas, groups which have historically been associated with lower-skilled migrations.The paper builds on media anthropology (Madianou and Miller 2012; Miller et al. 2016; Costa 2016) and the anthropology of globalization (Appadurai, 1996; Mazzarella, 2004) scholarship that shows that not only media but also various other elements of transnational social life (such as motherhood and class) influence diasporic communication practices. It furthermore takes a digital ethnographic approach (Alinejad et al. 2019; Pink et al. 2016; Pink and Morgan 2013) by focusing on the lived experiences of migrant mothers across the online-offline continuum (see Candidatu et al 2019). The paper explores how classed distinctions emerging out of the relative recent surge of Turkish and Romanian highly skilled migrants to the Netherlands, play a pivotal role in shaping diasporic mothering practices, raising questions about the gendered relationship between elite migrants (expatriates), diaspora and digital media platforms. For highly skilled migrant women, mothering and classed identification, through a process of disidentification from the historical Turkish community in the Netherlands or the lower skilled Romanian migrants, led to the formation of new diaspora spaces. Furthermore, Facebook appears as an important social media platform for groups of highly educated migrants in this research. The platform emerges especially as a space where class distinctions experienced offline can, to some extent, be mitigated. In conclusion, this paper contributes to the understanding of how class shapes diasporic interactions and how digital media platforms, particularly Facebook, play a crucial role in overcoming classed distinctions within these migrant communities.

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DCC01 From virality to vitality: Memes as potential catalysts of social resilience in times of crisis

PN 010 Meme-ing a movement: An exploration of creator commitment in climate change memetics

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Memes are potent vehicles for political critique and social identity. The transformative role of memes in political discourse has garnered considerable attention, yet the insights into the creators and the processes of meme creation—what this study terms as 'meme-ing'—remain relatively unexplored. This study bridges this gap by adopting a commitment perspective to scrutinise how individuals actively maintain the practice of meme-ing, particularly within the context of climate change. The pertinence of climate change to memetic discourse is underscored

by the way memetic communication has been shown to shape and reflect the socio-political engagement of social movements, potentially affecting the perception of climate change. Commitment refers to the sum of forces, pressures, or drives that influence individuals to maintain congruity between their identity setting and the input of reflected appraisals from the social setting. The notion of commitment can capture the forces driving an individual's online active content creation behaviour. Therefore, commitment serves as the missing link in previous meme research between content creation, motivation, and identity, and is pivotal for understanding why individuals engage in meme-ing as a form of political expression. To explore this, the study employed qualitative interviews with 20 climate change meme creators from Germany, alongside a qualitative content analysis of the interview transcripts. This methodological approach enabled a nuanced understanding of the creators' motivations (RQ1), the creators' identity construction within memetic discourse (RQ2), and the role of the creators' commitment to creating and sharing climate-related content on social media (RQ3).The findings reveal that meme creators are driven by factors, such as the entertainment value of memes, their capacity for political critique, and their role in identity management. The meme creators' identity was found to oscillate between their individuality and the collective identity of their online communities. This oscillation leads to a reflexive role performance where creators are both shaped by and shape group-related norms. Commitment manifested in various forms: emotional investment in political discourse, continuity in engaging with climate politics beyond mere meme creation, and normative pressures stemming from membership in online communities. These forms of commitment prompt creators to align their meme-ing with their offline engagements and personal identities. By focusing on meme creators and employing a commitment perspective, this study fills two vital research gaps: it provides a detailed look into the processes behind meme creation and connects identity, motivation, and content creation behaviour within the realm of online political communication and climate change. This research not only adds to the existing body of knowledge on digital political engagement but also prompts a reevaluation of the significance of creator agency in shaping memetic online movements on global issues.

DCC01 From virality to vitality: Memes as potential catalysts of social resilience in times of crisis

PN 011 Harnessing Humor: Reflecting and shaping social resilience in the face of energy crisis

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This study aims to increase the understanding of the role of memes in enhancing or undermining social resilience in times of crisis. In "the post text" era, where "an online culture in which text recedes to the background, and sounds and images become the universal language", memes have emerged as relevant tools in shaping public understanding of and reactions to crises. By analysing the content and sentiment of these memes, the study explores the role of memes in fostering a sense of unity, solidarity, or divisiveness among affected communities. By integrating theories from digital culture and crisis communication, this study offers a multifaceted analysis of memes in the context of crisis. The current global energy crisis is used as a case to demonstrate the consequences of the crisis permeating people's everyday life. The most popular 100 memes disseminated on the Twitter platform from 2021–2023 were collected for analysis. The methodology comprises two parts: a quantitative content analysis to identify key themes and visual representations, and a multimodal discourse analysis to categorise the memes, focusing on their portrayal of the energy crisis and its relation to everyday life. The preliminary findings are: First, the energy crisis is co-constructed through memes. A broad category of memes produced by a variety of actors representing the diverse aspects of the energy crisis. Each meme contributes a thread to the complex tapestry of this global issue, ranging from policy critiques to consumer experiences. As such, they serve as a barometer for public sentiment, combining imagery and text to craft compelling, often humorous, messages that resonate with a wide audience. Second, a unifying theme present in all these memes is humour. The juxtaposition of image with text often yields an unexpected twist, which is the hallmark of meme humour. It's a creative process that distils complex issues into an accessible form, making light of the serious and often dense subject matter of the energy crisis. By doing so, these memes can transform a technical or bleak reality into a relatable, and sometimes laughable, moment. Third, the humorous content serves diverse functions. One prominent function is to provide stress relief, offering a respite from the gravity of the energy crisis. Another distinct function is to incite anxiety and catalyse action, using humour as a vehicle to highlight the urgency of the situation. This dual capability of memes allows them to be versatile tools in both easing the psychological burden of the crisis and in spurring individuals and communities into meaningful action. Fourth, both the stress-relieving and action-mobilising functions are important in a crisis. Memes can engender a sense of community, helping people to cope with the challenges of a crisis collectively. At the same time, they have the potential to initiate societal change, by bringing issues to the forefront that might otherwise be ignored or understated. To conclude, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how digital natives engage with and interpret the complex issues surrounding the energy crisis, offering valuable insights for communicators, policymakers, and educators alike.

DCC01 From virality to vitality: Memes as potential catalysts of social resilience in times of crisis

PN 012 Dis-meme-bering the Nation: A Look into Memes Through the Postcolonial Gothic

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This paper suggests that memes are monsters roaming the digital sphere. Existing within the liminal space between humour and horror, memes allow participants to bring to the surface important narratives that speak of the post-colonial nation. Reflecting on humorous yet grotesque memes through the postcolonial gothic, this paper presents how Moroccan memes have mocked well-rooted national symbols born within the struggle for independence from the French rule. In arguing for memes as digital monsters, this paper engages with how the Moroccan Andalusi song "Chams Al Achya" was reborn as a meme in 2019. Until then secluded within the walls of tradition and national festivities, the now Chams Al Achya meme situates Andalusi traditional music at the centre of a set of grotesque and amateurishly-made mashup videos showing failure situations such as violent runovers, smacks, or harmful falls. In becoming a meme, the song has been displaced from its preferred habitat among upper classes and harmoniously dressed music ensembles serving as a reminder of the smells, tastes, and sounds of the festivities of the Eid. Now, the song roams at the centre of a popular meme inhabiting the unheimlich world of Global digital cultures. In the process, the meme has threatened the traditional role Andalusi music plays in remembering the golden era of Moroccan history. Reading the meme through the postcolonial gothic suggests that the meme culture and the song – through their ability to create a sensorial sphere of resonance – may contribute to disfigure and dismember, or rather, dis-meme-berm a memory the eight centuries of Muslim rule over Iberia as formulated by the nationalist movement for independence from the French rule. A postcolonial gothic framework serves to connect humour and horror within different versions of this meme to the failure of nationalists' projects. It is in this way that this paper argues that the Chams Al Achya meme uncovers the monstrous, chaotic, and grotesque embedded within the memetic return of Andalusi music as a digital cultural artefact. The return of the song "Chams Al Achya" song

as an online gothic story shows digital participants' critical reflection on lingering national(ist) project. Through the notion of the postcolonial gothic, this digital dis-meme-berment denotes the ways in which memes may expose and challenge the shortcomings of the postcolonial national project. In this sense, the revival of nationalist cultural artefacts, now as online memes, is monstrous because in spite of mocking the nation, memetic's own idiosyncrasy means that online netizens are still trapped within a post-colonial nationalist project that refuses to die.

DCC01 From virality to vitality: Memes as potential catalysts of social resilience in times of crisis

PN 013 Memeing the moniker: The stickiness of crime reporting for TikTok meme creation

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With a rise of organised crime in Sweden, resulting in one of the highest shooting deaths per capita in Europe, The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention found that gun violence claims the lives of four people per million in Sweden, which is more than double the average of the European average. In this paper, we explore the interconnected functions and uses of TikTok memes during an ongoing crisis of increased organised crime in Sweden. Specifically, we focus on incorporating gang member monikers – i.e., their nicknames within underground criminal activity in both digital and legacy news media coverage of crime, and the interconnectedness of both media formats. As explored by van Hellemont and Densley, mythmaking is an integral part of gang practices, stating that "without the myth there is no gang". We claim that monikers are used as a way of not only shaping the myths within gangs but also about gangs in legacy news media coverage and popular culture.On Swedish TikTok, certain members of gangs have become fodder for meme creation. Specifically, one of the suspected foremost leaders of one such organised crime network, Rawa Majid, commonly known as the Kurdish Fox, has gained notoriety in both on- and offline realms. As TikTok users have incorporated imagery, sound, and characteristics of the Kurdish Fox from legacy news media outlets, recordings from police investigation, the role of memes in the subversion of ongoing political discourse concerning organised crime will be explored in this study.Exploring the subversive practices of memes on TikTok, we delve into their role as amplifiers in users' information networks during an ongoing political crisis regarding organised crime and crime prevention. We explore the role of legacy news media imagery and incorporation of gang monikers in legacy news media coverage of organised crime, we incorporate digital methods of exploring content creation (>100 TikTok videos), legacy news media coverage (6400 Swedish articles and news sources), and interconnectedness of the two through multimodal critical discourse analysis and topic modelling.In this paper, we aim to expand the growing academic field of understanding crime on social media, which has heavily focused on the ways criminal offenders use social media as communicative tools. Preliminary findings show that news media incorporate and structure news reporting of organised crime via monikers, and multimodal content becomes recontextualized on TikTok as memetic content creation. Thus, we propose that news media coverage shapes individual gang members' myth-building and creates memetic figures that social media users build upon in their content creation. We find that audio recordings from police investigations become incorporated as memetic frameworks and that the personalization of individual gang members is performed on TikTok by "dressing up" and "playing the part" of the Kurdish fox by lipsyncing and dancing to these recordings.

DCC01 From virality to vitality: Memes as potential catalysts of social resilience in times of crisis

PN 014 "Meme-orialising" civil war: audiences' readings of "the Troubles" memes in Northern Ireland

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This study seeks to shed light on audiences' mnemonic engagement with memes about "the Troubles" in Northern Ireland. Memetic memorialisation (or "meme-orialisation") may, on the one hand, help users find closure with traumatic experiences by giving them the agency to voice their own narratives of the past – narratives which are commonly absent from mainstream media. On the other hand, considering that memes frequently "travel" across digital contexts and may linger online for a long period of time it may entail that users unwillingly come across a meme which re-ignites traumatic memories of the past. Hence, it has been theorised that the meme is a double-edged sword in this regard: having the potential of helping people cope with traumatic memories of the past, while also potentially prolonging said mnemonic suffering. While theoretically convincing, these notions have not previously been "tested" on actual meme audiences. To ameliorate this shortcoming, I explore how audiences in Belfast engage with memes about "the Troubles". In particular, I narrow in on a starter pack meme entitled "Welcome to Belfast" (the meme can be viewed here: https://imgur.com/VcFrl7v) which draws its imagery primarily from this violent era in Northern Ireland's past. How – I ask – do audiences make sense of this meme? Does it help them come to terms with the violence of the past, or does it rather keep them trapped in painful memories of civil war? To answer these questions, I conducted 19 semi-structured interviews with interlocutors in Belfast in early 2023, asking them for their take on this (and other) memes about political violence in the city. Many interlocutors

read the meme as an indication that Northern Ireland has somewhat moved on from its troubled past. They saw memetic joking about "the Troubles" as a sign (or even a driver) of societal healing. Here, several interlocutors stressed that black humour about the violent past helps them cope with painful memories of it. Other interlocutors read the meme as narratively bringing back the past into the present: arguing that it is politically divisive and risks fuelling sectarian tensions in present-day Belfast. Interestingly, some of the interlocutors who read the meme this way exercised their agency by suggesting alternative starter pack memes that (in their view) better represent life in contemporary Belfast. Overall, then, this study confirms previous theorisations of how memes function in relation to traumatic memories, but importantly, it does so through an engagement with audiences. This is something that has been mostly missing from the broader meme studies literature where concept such as "imagined audience" and the "directionality" of memes have been favoured over in-depth audience research. Thus, this study not only answers the empirical question of how audiences engage mnemonically with memes about "the Troubles", but it also contributes to the broader meme studies literature through its focus on the audience reception of memes.

DCC02 Digital governance, moderation, and trust

PP 0059 Participation of Twitch moderators. Guidelines for moderation in online communities

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The current study focuses on how moderators enforce norms and rules in online micro communities by following moderation guidelines on the Twitch platform. A significant amount of hateful messages have been appearing in live chat, which is a result of the growing popularity of online live streaming services. Live streaming companies have been pushed to raise the level of a centralized moderating executed by algorithms to a moderation model based on human moderators, as viewers turn to new ways to send negative comments (Cullen & Kairam, 2022; Wohn, 2019). Community moderators possess the ability to monitor activities inside communities by applying a contextual understanding of the group's beliefs and objectives (Cullen & Kairam, 2022).

More studies have been conducted to determine the roles and ethical moderation strategies used by viewers as community moderators, as well as how they become moderators (Cai et al., 2021; Roberts, 2018). Using these research as a foundation, our exploratory study provides a comprehensive understanding of the moderator role in Twitch micro communities. In addition to these elements, we also investigate how a Twitch channel's norms are established and what executive methods are used to enforce the rules in well-structured, ideologically coherent groups.

This study includes a viewpoint focused on the Romanian micro communities that emerged around certain social-political influencers on Twitch. While previous studies have focused on moderation standards in gaming streams (Mihailova, 2022) and general channels (Cullen & Kairam, 2022; Thach et al., 2022), our study focuses on a different aspect of Twitch communities: social and political discussions. These groups come together around common values and opinions held by both the streamer—who acts as a social or political influencer—and the audience (Nelimarkka et al., 2018; Peter & Muth, 2023). Within this environment, the community's sense of belonging can be determined by moderating standards and sanctions (Gibbs et al., 2016). Because of this, moderators' enforcement of the rules is essential to the community's long-term growth.

For the methodology section, we used a semi-structured interview as a qualitative method to carry out our research strategy. The people who have been chosen for our interview are moderators who supervise the live chat content in some of Romania's most popular Twitch micro communities. We are now collecting data for this paper. Our goal is to gather insightful knowledge that will enhance the body of current literature and offer new perspectives on the experiences of moderators and the decision-making process of moderation standards. We anticipate that Romania's ideologically driven micro communities will adhere to rigid standards that serve to unite and bind the entire member group.

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DCC02 Digital governance, moderation, and trust

PP 0060 Digital inclusion and digital literacy policy and practice: An exploration of the views and experiences of policymakers and civil society organisations in five UK devolved administrations

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Our societies have become increasingly reliant on the use of digital technologies, which can present considerable opportunities and benefits for individuals and different communities. However, not only do these technologies also present significant risks, which makes it imperative for users to possess the digital literacy skills required to engage online both safely and critically, but digital inequalities remain prevalent in the UK. Since gaps in terms of digital access and digital literacy skills still affect much of the population in ways that are intertwined with socio-economic inequalities, the task of promoting both digital inclusion and digital literacy through policy and practical interventions has never been so urgent.

This paper presents key findings from a study that was conducted in the UK by a team of researchers from the University of Liverpool and John Moores University, and funded by the British Academy and Ofcom. Adopting a mixed methods approach focusing on five key devolved administrations in the UK (Birmingham / the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Scotland, Wales), this project explored in depth the experiences of challenges and best practice of two under-researched groups promoting digital inclusion and digital literacy – policymakers and civil society organisations – and what initiatives are currently being implemented in their areas. As part of this research, an online survey and elite interviews were conducted with both policymakers and organisations in each of the five areas. The data was analysed to produce key findings and recommendations for advancing policy and practice in digital inclusion and digital literacy in the UK.

Key findings from the project suggest that there is a need for an overarching framework for promoting digital inclusion and digital literacy more robustly across the UK. For both policymakers and organisations, collaboration is crucial. However, while there are examples of good practice in the establishment of digital taskforces and networks promoting digital inclusion within the different areas, promotion of digital literacy is less of a priority and piggybacks onto those networks. What is more, one of the main challenges that both groups experience is the extent to which funding for the implementation of digital inclusion and digital literacy initiatives is inconsistent, short-term and prescriptive. In the light of these findings, this paper presents recommendations with a view to advancing the state of policy and practice in digital inclusion and digital literacy.

DCC02 Digital governance, moderation, and trust

PP 0061 Exploring circular approaches to the management of IT resources for social good within the UK public sector

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As our societies become increasingly mediated by digital technologies and more essential services and life opportunities move online, it is vital to acknowledge that digital inequalities are still a key issue in the UK. Digital inclusion encompasses more than just access to the devices and data necessary to go online in the first place, including the need for the digital skills, motivation, and understanding to use the internet safely and confidently. However, this first step – i.e. access to devices and data – is still a barrier to inclusion for many. Digital exclusion is intertwined with social and economic inequalities and affordability of devices and data is a key issue, especially in the current cost-of-living crisis. Concern is also growing amid the parallel climate crisis about e-waste (i.e., discarded electronic devices), and the environmental costs of linear models of consumption of devices, connectivity and digital technologies. Device donation and reuse programmes have the potential to address both the goal of reducing e-waste and of addressing digital inequalities, and there is opportunity in the public sector to achieve these goals both via policy and via leading by example through taking part in such programmes.

This paper presents key findings from a project conducted by a team of researchers from the University of Liverpool and Good Things Foundation, funded by Research England. Based on a series of interviews with key public sector organisations and stakeholders across the UK, this project explored the motivations, enablers, and barriers which they experience in determining whether to adopt a more circular approach in how they manage their IT estate, and how this can help them to play their part in improving the lives of digitally excluded people. Data was thematically analysed to produce findings and recommendations.

Key findings suggest that commitment to sustainability targets and a desire to give back to communities along with awareness of issues of digital exclusion are motivators for reuse and donation of devices. Data security is a key concern for public sector organisations and can serve as a barrier, but one which is mitigated by organisational culture around risk management, which was found to be an enabler. Collaboration within and across organisations is an

important enabling factor, but so are individual 'champions', who are committed and motivate others, especially when they are found in senior positions with the ability to cut through bureaucracy.

This paper presents a set of recommendations, produced as part of the project, for both policymakers and organisations to promote more circular approaches to the management of IT resources within the public sector, including device reuse and donation programmes.

DCC02 Digital governance, moderation, and trust

PP 0062 "Hey Voice Assistant, tell me about your privacy policy!" The influence of privacy policies presented by voice vs. text on trust and use intentions in a voice-based assistant

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Voice-based assistants (VBAs) have gained popularity as interaction partners and information sources (Newman et al., 2020, 2021). Despite their widespread use, many individuals remain non-users due to privacy concerns (Easwara Moorthy & Vu, 2015). While explaining data collection processes could alleviate these concerns, many privacy policy texts are too complex for users to engage with, resulting in uninformed consent and diminished trust (Ermakova et al., 2016).

To address this issue, some providers attempt to give verbal privacy information via the VBA itself to enhance interest, long-term acceptance, and use (Amazon, 2022; Jesus & Pandit, 2022). However, it is uncertain whether verbal presentations achieve these positive effects. Therefore, the current study explores whether presenting privacy policies via voice rather than text enhances user trust and intentions to use a fictional VBA.

Research on the Computers-As-Social-Actors paradigm suggests that human cues, like voice instead of text, promote perceptions of social presence and thereby increase trust in digital interaction partners (Nass & Moon, 2000; Blau, 1967). Trust is considered an important prerequisite for technology acceptance, and it predicts the use of technology like robots (Ghazizadeh, 2012; Wirtz et al., 2018). We therefore hypothesize that presenting privacy policies verbally will increase trust in the VBA compared to textual presentations (H1). We further assume that trust positively correlates with usage intentions of the VBA (H2), and that verbal presentation of privacy policies increases usage intentions via the enhancement of trust (mediation hypothesis H3).

In an online vignette experiment in 2021, participants imagined interacting with a fictional VBA that presented its privacy policy either via text or a pre-recorded human-sounding voice. 315 participants (55% female; MAge= 38; 78% high school graduates) evaluated trust (Pitardi & Marriott, 2021, $\alpha = .91$) and usage intentions (Cha et al., 2021, $\alpha = .89$).

Results confirm the hypotheses: Verbally presented privacy policies increased trust compared to text ($B = 0.35$, $p = .03$), and trust positively correlated with usage intentions ($B = 0.64$, $p < .001$). The indirect effect of verbal presentation on usage intention via trust was also positive ($B = 0.23$, 95% CI = 0.02 – 0.44). Interestingly, the verbal presentation had a negative direct effect on usage intention ($B = -0.43$, $p = .005$), and these competing effects canceled out the overall effect of presentation on usage intention ($B = -0.21$, $p = .27$).

The results provide insights into trust-building through verbally presented privacy policies. However, further measures might be necessary to promote VBA use. For example, Amazon already offers to ask Alexa dialogically and interactively about its privacy (Amazon, 2022), which could increase engagement, social presence, and trust. Whether such methods are sufficient to overcome skepticism about VBAs' privacy is unclear – especially since these concerns are justified, as some VBAs have been found to record private interactions (Ford & Palmer, 2019). Therefore, the actual privacy aspects need to be improved rather than their presentation. Future studies should investigate how data privacy is perceived by different (non-)users and how this perception impacts trust-building and usage intentions.

DCC02 Digital governance, moderation, and trust

PP 0063 "I wouldn't trust her with my life but..." – Identifying explicit and indirect signs of trust in voice-based-assistants in user-generated-content online

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Voice-based assistants (VBAs) are gaining popularity as new interaction partners and information sources that select and frame content users receive (Newman et al., 2019, 2020; Weidmüller, 2022). However, as commercial products of tech-companies, they serve commercial interests and do not provide transparency about how they work (Natale, 2021). Despite this lack of information, users still turn to them, which could be explained by trust: Trust enables interactions where one party has expectations towards another, but cannot control their actions (Mayer et al., 1995). It is unclear how trust in VBAs should be conceptualized, as they are a) technical devices but b) perceived

socially and c) act as information sources (Etzrodt & Engesser, 2021; Guzman 2019). Technical, interpersonal, and media trust concepts may thus be equally applicable. Furthermore, trust in VBAs has been investigated in quantitative studies, but qualitative studies could offer new insights into undiscovered aspects from users' perspectives. User-generated content like reviews could reveal such aspects, as it typically contains users' attitudes towards a technology, evaluated characteristics, and described experiences (e.g., Gebauer et al., 2008). Therefore, our study searches for explicit (RQ1) and indirect (RQ2) signs of trust in VBAs in German user-generated content.

Trust enables interactions in which trustors have positive expectations of a trustee but no control over the expected outcome (Luhmann, 2014). It is a partly subconscious attitude, often measured via determinants called "trusting beliefs", i.e., evaluations of trustees and their characteristics. When trust is given, it can be observed in its consequences, i.e., "trusting intentions" and "behaviors" (McKnight et al., 1998). Trust has been investigated for trustees like humans (Mayer et al., 1995), technology (McKnight et al., 2011), or media (Kohring & Matthes, 2007). For digital interactors, hybrid concepts combining interpersonal and technical trust have been successfully tested (Ulman & Malle, 2018; Weidmüller, 2022), but VBAs' role as information sources has not been considered yet.

Using qualitative structuring content analysis, we analyzed 170 postings about Alexa, Siri, and Google Assistant found on marketplaces, media coverage, and discussion platforms. We used the following main categories derived from trust research: explicit trust-statements, determinants, consequences, external factors. We extended them and their subcategories inductively (Kuckartz, 2018). Results showed that users rarely use the term trust in their postings, and most explicitly apply trust to parent-companies in high-risk-contexts rather than directly to VBAs (RQ1). Nevertheless, users evaluated VBAs regarding previously found and potential new determinants of interpersonal, technical, and media trust, e.g., competence, functionality, accuracy. When users discussed AI-capabilities, determinants of all three dimensions were mixed, suggesting a hybrid trust and confirming the relevance of media trust in addition to technical and interpersonal trust for VBAs (RQ2).

Overall, results indicate a subconscious trust: Users may not consciously associate the term "trust" with VBAs, but subconsciously evaluate signs of trustworthiness and rely on the VBA accordingly. We also found aspects that can be potential consequences and external factors of trust in VBAs and will discuss these findings as well as a preliminary model of hybrid trust in VBAs derived from our findings.

DCC03 Approaches and challenges to researching the digital

PP 0157 Cruising as method for researching queer dating cultures, or, queer melancholia in times of emotional capitalism

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Traditionally, media researchers have employed well-established, mostly quantitative, social science methods that require an objective, systematic and comprehensive analysis. This often has resulted in what Donna Haraway called the god trick, a pretence of seeing everything from nowhere. While cultural and critical media studies—which employ qualitative methods and interpretivist epistemologies—have earned more respect in contemporary media scholarship, they continue to be judged by similar, even if adapted, standards of what 'good research' should look like. Moreover, with the increasing rise of big data analytics, they have been arguably further marginalized as studies of allegedly less rich small data. In this paper, I will challenge the established quantitative as well as qualitative methodologies in media research by proposing cruising as method. Cruising is a queer tradition of wandering around to find sexual connections. It is driven by desires and involves feeling adventurous and aroused but also agitated. Translating this practice into a research method, cruising is about following what attracts us in data rather than conducting a formally structured analysis. It is about slowing down and hanging around with the hope of running into something that may prove risky, but what feels good. It is not about fixing gaze but throwing glances, the queer trick. I will discuss the prospects and limits of cruising as a method in relation to my recent project with Polish LGBTQs in the UK, which included 767 survey responses and 30 in-depth interviews, collected in 2018 and 2019. Interviewees included a diverse group across the LGBTQ+ spectrum, were located in different cities and towns in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and were between 19 and 58 years old at the time of interviews. I reached them through relevant LGBTQ+ and migrant communities and targeted advertising on social media. Interviews were conducted in Polish, English or Ponglish. In my analysis, I will focus on the participants' uses of hook-up apps and dating websites, arguing for the recognition of queer melancholia in dating cultures in times of emotional capitalism (Eva Illouz). I will show how by cruising the data and making connections between the data and the wider cultural transformations of capitalism, globalisation and mediation, we can make sense of the negative emotions expressed by my interviewees about digital dating cultures. I will frame these findings in terms of queer melancholia, that is, feelings of loss, loneliness, disappointment, rejection and alienation that, to some extent, have been exacerbated by the current largely digital and global cultural condition. To conclude, I will discuss the new insights we can gain when we withstand the positivist pressures of objectivity, systematization and completeness, and make coding less about looking for recurring patterns and more about succumbing to researchers' temptations.

DCC03 Approaches and challenges to researching the digital

PP 0158 Chances and challenges of participatory digital ethnography on TikTok

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TikTok being a platform based on ephemeral and multimodal networks that is especially known for its algorithmic sorting component as a success formula, brings up a variety of challenges in terms of research (Duguay/Gold-Apel 2023). Scholars have approached the platform via qualitative, ethnographic methods (Schellewald 2021, Zulli/Zulli 2022) to comprehend its workings and making sense of its structure. Still, the network poses the challenge of a highly individualized scrolling experience that is prone to sensitive changes depending on user's content interaction and bringing up significant limitations in terms of scholarship. Looking at TikTok within the "platform paradigm", stating social platforms' "power within the information sector and creative industries" (Burgess 2021), it is of heightened importance to find ways to tackle the ongoing issue of intransparent technology, heavily relying on civic practices to better understand its underlying mechanisms, for example theorized as "algorithmic folklore" by Kaye et al. 2022 or "visibility labour" by Abidin 2016.

Accompanying a larger research project dealing with remixed content of popular artefacts on TikTok, a 2-month participatory pilot study was carried out in Spring 2023 involving eight co-researchers, all of them being German TikTok users. The aim of the study was to get a better understanding of methodological possibilities and potentials to a) trace and comprehend specific content clusters and observe wider content ranges, b) find ways to work with and around the challenges of the platform's given technological nature and c) test out different (civic) methods to triangulate, reflect and expand the auto-ethnographic approach. This contribution focuses on the outcomes of c) and partly b), aiming at providing insights into the specific research process, such as chances and challenges of the chosen approach when facing TikTok as a platform with a very unique set of affordances and user cultures. The co-researchers were encouraged to observe and interact with their native, individual feeds, enabling the possibility of different digital auto-ethnographic perspectives within the same research preliminaries. The observations were accompanied by reflective processes – group discussions, media diaries and reflection reports – to comprehend movement within the study's framework, open possibilities to contextualize data and to ensure the epistemological alignment of all participants.

This framework of participatory digital ethnography allowed the research process to take into account the flexibility and complexity of TikTok as a monopolized platform. Moreover, it offered a practice of resistance against the platform's intransparent sorting mechanism and gave beneficial insights on the micro-interactions between users and their algorithmic counterparts. By engaging with different user-feeds it became possible to gain a wider perspective on the outstanding versatility of the research objective. Some of the results show for example that despite a proportionally homogenic group of co-researchers there were little to no overlaps in collected content, both in thematic as well as referential terms. At the same time the variety of interpretative and referential knowledge provided by the research participants added a significant contribution to interpersonal meaning-making. Regarding the multi-modal environment of TikTok it proved beneficial to adapt that structure towards a multi-perspectival, multi-methodological research approach.

DCC03 Approaches and challenges to researching the digital

PP 0159 Peeling back the layers: The Onion Model of youth's digital disconnection explored through digital diaries

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This paper presents a nuanced exploration of digital disconnection among youth, situated within the ambivalence of digital spaces. Framed within the original "Onion Model" conceptualized for this study, it utilizes digital diaries over a week-long period with 17 Norwegian youths to probe the central research question, "How do digital diaries reveal both intentional and unintentional aspects of digital disconnection in young people's daily media experiences?" The study contributes both conceptually and methodologically to the field of digital disconnection and the broader tensions within digital cultures, providing a bottom-up perspective on media experiences.

Conceptually, the study addresses the challenge of articulating the nuanced processes of digital disconnection, previously limited in scope within the literature. To do so, the study introduces the "onion model" – a metaphorical construct adapted from the broader social sciences – specifically designed to analyze the various layers of digital disconnection. The middle layer of the onion model captures cognitive processes and emotional responses to digital media, including critical self-reflection and affective experiences. The inner layer encompasses identity and value-based disconnection, examining alignment with personal principles. The model also incorporates temporal and intensity dimensions, highlighting gradual disconnection habituation and varying effort levels. Overall, this

model provides a comprehensive framework that elucidates the complexities of digital disconnection and how it evolves over time.

Methodologically, the paper responds to the need for creative methods (Lomborg & Ytre-Arne, 2021) capable of detailing the subtleties of digital disconnection. Through utilizing digital diaries, the research captures the daily experiences and fluctuations in digital interaction among youth. This approach provides a longitudinal perspective and captures the temporal and emotional intensity of disconnection, offering in-depth insights into the informants' habitual disconnection woven into the rhythm of their digital lives. By combining semi-structured interviews, surveys, and diary entries, the study offers a robust methodological contribution that reveals the interplay between digital disconnection and the informants' daily routines, emotions, and attitudes, thereby advancing the methodological tools available in the field.

The analysis reveals that young individuals opt to disconnect due to immediate impulses and evolving habits that are deeply ingrained in their daily routines and sense of self. Key findings suggest that disconnection practices can be subtle, such as ignoring notifications, or more pronounced, like social media hiatuses. These practices are shaped by personal emotional reactions and cognitive assessments of the role of digital media in their lives. Furthermore, the research indicates a temporal pattern where disconnection becomes habitual, organically integrating into young people's daily lives.

The paper's significant contribution lies in its detailed portrayal of the interwoven cognitive and emotional triggers for disconnection, the varying degrees of effort invested, and the gradual habituation to disconnection over time. The study highlights the importance of understanding youth's navigation of their digital lives and suggesting strategies to promote digital well-being and literacy. The study affirms the value of digital diaries in digital disconnection research, offering in-depth insights into youth's daily digital experiences.

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DCC03 Approaches and challenges to researching the digital

PP 0160 Data donations. A Scoping Review to investigate non-response bias and strategies to enhance participation

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Online platforms play a huge role in everyday life and changed the way we organize politically or consume news. Nonetheless, investigating such behavior poses challenges. Measurement is difficult, due to recall errors or social desirability in surveys. Data donations appear to be promising to address such issues (Wu-Ouyang & Chan, 2023).

Donated data from online platforms introduce their own biases, including non-response bias (Amaya et al., 2020). To unfold the potential of data donations, the necessity, to investigate and tackle this bias on the decision to donate arises. Therefore, our study asks why people do (not) donate their data to science and how to enhance participation.

To answer this research question, we conducted a Scoping Literature Review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010). After searching different databases, Google Scholar and conducting a Backward Search (Booth et al., 2022) 523 studies were screened for eligibility.

After screening whether they deal with participation in data donation studies, 30 studies were included, primarily stemming out of health (n =13), methodological (n = 9) or communication (n = 4) research. Most studies (n = 12) hypothetically queried willingness to donate through surveys or did not specify the method of donation (n = 12).

Influencing the decision to donate, studies identify non-situational factors, like technical skills (n = 9) or participants characteristics related to the study (n = 7). The latter can include, people who do not exercise regularly, refraining from donating health data (Toepoel et al., 2021). This introduces social desirability to participation.

Further, *general* and *study specific* situational factors, are identified. Within the former, privacy concerns (n = 23) are discussed most prevalently. The latter emphasize research design's influence, like required data types (n = 12) and the receiver of the data (n = 11).

Finally, *general* strategies potentially increasing participation include offering incentives (n = 13), suitable communication (n = 11) and nudges (n = 7), such as framing. Persuasive strategies, like hidden requests (n = 1), are discussed critically. *Study specific* strategies entail cultivating trust (n = 14), emphasizing adequate privacy protection (n = 10) and reducing the burden of participation (n = 9).

Studies on the *hypothetical* willingness to donate have to be evaluated critically, since people's *attitudes* to data disclosure and their *behavior* might differ (Toepoel et al., 2021). Therefore, studies should not only ask *if* people would donate, but *under which circumstances*.

In conclusion, the benefits and potential biases of data donation need further investigation. This literature review provides an important orientation for understanding and reflecting on the method. It highlights various general and study-specific aspects that influence the decision to donate which will be further explained and discussed in a potential presentation at ECREA.

DCC03 Approaches and challenges to researching the digital

PP 0161 The craft of bourdieusian media studies: Towards a relational sociology of digital media

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Pierre Bourdieu's field theory (e.g., Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) occupies a central place in many sub-fields of media and communication studies, including journalism studies, audience studies and media production studies. While media scholars have put Bourdieu to use in productive ways since the 1980s, our field has not yet embraced his full research program. It follows that media scholars' use of Bourdieu is characterized by a lack of correspondence between (field) theory and empirical research designs. Bourdieu nonetheless offered a holistic research program that includes a general theory of society (comprised of the triptych of field-capital-habitus) and a methodology able to accommodate his relational view on the social world. With a few exceptions (e.g., Hovden, 2008), the use of the method that aligns with the principles of field theory, multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), is rare in our field. In order to advance a holistic theoretical-methodological approach to field theory this paper spells out what "Bourdieusian media studies" entails. This research program offers productive ways to study key dynamics of the digital media landscape, including how social inequalities reflect in how people use digital media and the changing dynamics in fields of media and cultural production. The paper begins by unearthing the epistemological principles of field theory. It then illustrates how these principles are translated into the domain of empirical work with MCA. Two analytical strategies in Bourdieusian approach to MCA are presented; the social space/field analysis approach that starts in the analysis of social structures, and the "reciprocal approach" that begins in the study of lifestyles such as news consumption patterns, cinematic and music preferences, and patterns of social media use (Rosenlund, 2015). In addition, the paper applies field theory to the automated collection and visualization of digital interactions via social network analysis (SNA). Bourdieu remained skeptical of network analysis because of its focus on relationships between actors (e.g., interactions) rather than social structures. Drawing on previous attempts to merge SNA with field theory (e.g., De Nooy, 2003; Bail, 2014) this paper nonetheless illustrates how SNA may inform field theory on two counts. First, it is possible to identify the traces of social fields by studying metrics that capture interactions between actors in digital milieus. Second, studying patterns of interaction among actors, *in toto*, promotes an initial understanding of the outer limits of a field.

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DCC04 Protest and activisms on digital platforms I

PP 0162 It's ok as long as it's moral? Analyzing acceptance of uncivil comments in moralized online discussions about gender diversity and inclusivity

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In a polarized opinion climate, discussions on social media about divisive issues are often characterized by hostilities and intolerance. An understudied yet possibly influential factor in this context is moralization, which we investigate by asking how moralization in online discussions impacts social media users' perceptions of uncivil comments. Moralization describes a process in which personal matters gain moral relevance. The Theory of Dyadic Morality (TDM) suggests that perceptions of moral relevance are triggered by perceptions of harm in a feedback loop: What seems harmful, seems morally wrong and what seems morally wrong, seems harmful. TDM specifies harm as individually perceived and dyadic (i.e., an entity intentionally causes damage to a vulnerable victim) (Schein & Gray, 2018).

Viewpoints based on morality are referred to as moral convictions. They are experienced as universal, objective truths that can predict for example intolerance towards political opponents (Ryan, 2014) or the legitimizing of deviant behaviors (Skitka et al., 2021). In polarized discussions, perceived threats to moral values furthermore prompt outrage and calls for punishment of those with differing views in order to protect one's own moral values (Van Zomeren et al., 2023).

Based on this theoretical framework, we assume that online discussion comments containing dyadic harm cues trigger moralization, which subsequently affects how the discussion is perceived. We hypothesize that moralization makes social media users perceive uncivil comments as less severe and more acceptable. Presumable moderation effects pertain to exisiting moral convictions and the ideological stance of the uncivil comment (if incongruent with an individual's ideological leaning, moralized uncivil comments may be perceived as more severe and less acceptable). We propose a mediation effect through ingroup value protection, a process triggered by dyadic harm cues and manifested in the experience of negative moral emotions and a desire for punishment of the commenter (Van Zomeren et al., 2023).

In a 2x2 between-subjects online experiment, we manipulate moralization (dyadic harm vs. personal preference) and ideological stance (conservative vs. progressive) of an uncivil discussion comment to test these assumptions. The experiment is conducted in Germany and Belgium with samples of 780 internet users from each country. The stimulus consists of a fabricated online discussion about gender diversity and inclusivity, a highly relevant issue in the context of incivility given the persisting discrimination against members of the LGBTQ+ community. We verify perceived polarization of different discussion topics in a pre-test in both countries.

For this study, incivility is defined as both a violation of politeness norms signaled by vulgar and offensive language (Kümpel & Unkel, 2023) and a threat to pluralistic debate by excluding others, negatively stereotyping them and discrediting their arguments (Kenski et al., 2020; Papacharissi, 2004). Ideological stance of the comments is indicated by embracing or opposing gender diversity and inclusivity. We measure perceptions and acceptability of the uncivil comment, as well as experiences of moral emotions and desire for retributive justice against the uncivil commenter. Data will be collected in January 2024 and analyzed by conducting mediation and moderation analyses.

DCC04 Protest and activisms on digital platforms I

PP 0163 Russian digital nationalism and the Russo-Ukrainian War through the Prism of Russian Media Ecology

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The Russo-Ukrainian war and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine are among some of the most mediatised armed conflicts having multiple dimensions alongside the one on the battlefields (informational, ideological, economic, technological, and geopolitical). The neo-authoritarian process in the Russian Federation has a stronger focus on controlling digital media through the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor) and boosting state-led narratives through algorithmic structures where only outlets registered by the Roskomnadzor appear on news aggregators such as Yandex Zen and Yandex News (Wijermars, 2021). The media framing of the war and of the Russian armed forces is strictly controlled and has resulted in the suppression of independent or more liberal media outlets. Meanwhile, nationalist media, movements, and their communities (such as Tsargrad online television, Eurasianists, and military bloggers on Telegram) have increased their salience among Russian audiences as alternative voices to the state-owned outlets. However, nationalist actors remain precarious judging by the closure of Yevgeni Prigozhin's Patriot Media Group (after his mutiny) or the arrest of the military blogger Igor Strelkov (Girkin).

This paper maps key Russian digital media channels and communities studying the Russian media landscape through the prism of media ecology (McLuhan, 1964; Postman, 1970; Altheide, 1995; Hoskins and Tulloch, 2016). The media ecology approach can serve as both a theoretical and methodological instrument that helps reveal synergies between nationalist and state actors, the influence of key figures and their media production practices and discourses, as well as the impact of bottom-up communities for mobilizing audiences in support of the war effort. Building on the communicative turn of media ecology (Altheide, 1995; Hearn and Foth 2007; Hoskins and Tulloch, 2016; Trere and Mattoni, 2016), I argue that Russian media ecology has state-specific characteristics and actors shaping three layers: technological, social and discursive. The paper aims to answer two research questions: what are the characteristics of Russian nationalist new media ecology, and what prevalent narratives of othering and "enemification" are salient among key Russian nationalist digital cultures? The paper combines digital methods, netnography, and critical discourse analysis (discourse-historical approach) in order to analyse the hyperconnectivity between actors, movements, their discourses, and larger media practices before and during the invasion (2018–2023). Assessing a non-Western case, digital media and aligned Russia-specific social media channels (such as Telegram, Odnoklassniki, or VK) provide platforms for the expressions of nationalist cultures. They also shape a darker type of participation where VK or Telegram serve as tools for recruitment for the frontlines, updates or firearm training provision. The study demonstrates that Russian nationalist actors can foster polarization of platform

environments and discourses of othering, both internal (Russian liberals, critics of the war or immigration) and external (the West, Central Asian States, Ukraine, the USA, or the UK). The line between order and disorder remains blurred since the notion of partners and adversaries shifts. The paper makes a contribution to both the Digital Culture and Communication Division and the Central and East-European Network of ECREA.

DCC04 Protest and activisms on digital platforms I

PP 0164 Networked masterplots: Music, pro-Russian sentiment, and participatory propaganda on TikTok

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This article investigates engagement with propagandist videos on TikTok shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, with particular attention to the role of music and comments. By repurposing the infrastructure of TikTok sound-linking (Author, 2023), our research upholds sensitivity to how this infrastructure enables affective and participatory workings of propaganda. Propaganda takes on various forms (Boler & Davis 2020), but within the scope of our research it is best defined in its capacity "to manipulate public opinion by activating strong emotions, simplifying ideas and information, attacking opponents, and responding to the deepest hopes, fears, and dreams of its target audiences" (Hobbs, 2020, p. 5; Luckert & Bachrach, 2009).

The overarching question guiding our research is: How do the affective affordances of TikTok (Author, 2022; Hautea et al., 2022) shape pro-Russian war propaganda? We present a case study using novel methods tailored to TikTok's performative and memetic nature. The case study consists of three video templates – each demonstrating specific aesthetic choices and attention-grabbing techniques (Abidin & Kaye, 2021) – that we conceptualise as networked masterplots. The analysed plots, as we will show, not only intentionally share the use of the same song but emerge through imitation (Zulli and Zulli, 2021) on the textual level of "stickers", or messages overlaid on top of videos. A selection of fifteen pro-Russian videos using the stickers – "What if they attack?", "I am wondering how many will (un)subscribe?", and "I am (not) ashamed" – in combination with a techno remix of the Soviet folk song Katyusha will be at the centre of our investigation. The remix turns a nostalgic 'sound from the past' into a catchy techno beat, targeting users' sense of collective belonging through a masterplot that is "co-constructed, stripped-down (skeletal), and thus easily shareable and adaptable" (Mäkelä, 2021, p. 51).

To explore the affective pathways extending the propagandist message, our research traces resonances and dissonances (Paasonen, 2021) evident in both video performances and interactions in the comment sections. We approach the latter through digital methods for multi-modal visual and textual analysis (Rogers, 2019; Rose, 2023; Niederer and Colombo 2019) attuned to the repetitive nature of users' shoutouts and the default visibility of comments with replies. We then make three arguments: First, TikTok's multi-layered affective affordances and networked features prioritise embodied performances that go beyond 'mere' persuasion, focusing on the bonding potential instead. Second, all three masterplots tap into a theatrical mode of 'situation and suspense' (Wang & Suthers, 2022), the suspense dissolves so as to inspire video appropriations and user alignments in the comment sections. Third, by fostering the practices of imitation through commenting, Katyusha TikToks not only make memetic content grow "sticky" (Ahmed, 2004) with affirmative associations of love (for the nation) but also foster collective imaginaries of war and peace. Arguing that in Katyusha videos, situation and suspense are indivisible, we conclude by reflecting on how TikTok sharing not only facilitates self-expression and social activism but also enables the weaponization of content within networked memetic environments.

DCC04 Protest and activisms on digital platforms I

PP 0165 Challenges to unity: Exploring collective resistance among video content creators in the platform economy

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The platform economy, a manifestation of digital capitalism, entices video content creators with promises of flexible schedules and creative autonomy. However, this seemingly liberating landscape conceals challenges such as uncertain labor relations, hidden control mechanisms, and elevated labor risks. This has spurred the imperative for collective resistance among creators. Employing the framework of labor process theory, this study explores the impediments hindering the realization of collective resistance within this dynamic environment.

Labor process theory posits that platform workers are not passive objects entirely subjected to digital capital but complex subjects who "make and seek meaning"(PING & YUJIE, 2021). Workers' subjectivities evolve through ongoing labor practices, influenced by capital dynamics within specific workplaces situated within a broader political economy (Elger & Smith, 2005). Consequently, collective resistance, as a form of labor practice, should be analyzed within the context of a dynamic social process, avoiding reduction to abstract economic relationships (O'Doherty & Willmott, 2001).

This study addresses two primary questions: First, what factors impede video content creators from organizing collective resistance? Second, what psychological characteristics or objective circumstances do these factors reflect? To explore the potential for collective resistance, we immersed ourselves in the Bilibili platform between May 2023 and December 2023. Conducting participatory observations and semi-structured in-depth interviews with 22 creators, we delved into the experiences of content creators on this prominent Chinese video platform. Interviews, ranging from 60 to 120 minutes, were conducted with creators stratified into three levels based on their follower count: fewer than 100,000, 10,000 to 100,000, and over 100,000.

In conclusion, this study identifies improper utilization of "weapons of the weak"(Scott, 1985) and differences in creative experience as significant obstacles to collective resistance among creators. First of all, to cope with the intensifying exploitation by platforms, creators formed small-scale cooperatives to produce video content with a specialized division of labor. However, creators habitually "cut corners" in their collaborations and compete for revenue, which lowers the quality of their videos and breaks down the sincerity and fairness of the collaboration, wrongly pointing the "weapon of the weak" at other "weak people". In addition, existing studies have shown that many creators compromise their creative autonomy and produce content that runs counter to their inclinations to make ends meet. This common experience of "alienated judgment" (Siciliano, 2023) of creators is the basis for achieving collective resistance. However, varying levels of creators exhibit heterogeneity in wages and status, fostering a "narcissism of minor differences" (Deuze, 2007) that undermines shared experiences essential for collective resistance. Creators' different experiences are categorized into three tiers: the success tier, the dream-chasing tier, and the livelihood tier. Each tier exhibits distinct attitudes towards the platform, creative freedom, and their peers, influencing the potential for collective resistance.

We posit that pathways to collective resistance are embedded in the labor process. Only through a nuanced examination of subjectivity and dynamic environmental factors within the labor process can we uncover insights into existing obstacles and potential avenues for collective resistance.

DCC05 Pop culture and digital attention economies

PP 0256 Memes in mainstream digital culture: A cross-generational phenomenon

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This study combines the theoretical framework on social generations and original empirical research to re-conceptualize the memetic phenomenon and observe its impact on mainstream digital culture.

After more than a decade since media studies scholars reappropriated the concept from memetics to study a seemingly fringe, subcultural phenomenon, Internet memes have gained momentum as the foundational digital practice. Nowadays any event, from pop culture to politics, can be commented on through memes. Following its mainstreamization, the memetic phenomenon extended beyond its original user base, coming to include previously excluded segments and demographics. Although the popularization of memes has been widely recognised, most studies still rest on definitions formalized when memes were bound to limited environments and communities (e.g. Shifman, 2014). These are therefore partially inadequate to capture the plurality of actors, conceptualisations, and digital spaces involved in contemporary meme culture.

Scholars agree that memes rely on a common milieu to be consumed: while this has traditionally been identified as affiliation to subcultural spaces and/or political leanings, I assume the existence of a generational bond, foundational to the political and cultural ones, which contributes to constructing different understandings of memes. The argument I put forward is that memes are a cross-generational phenomenon that takes on different forms, values, and meanings, depending on the generational allegiance of the users producing and circulating them.

This claim is supported by empirical research, which combines digital methods with semi-structured interviews and takes Italy as a case study. First, a corpus of around 2.000 memes was collected on Instagram and Facebook following the hashtag #memeitaliani (Italian memes): recurrent patterns in the composition of memes and in the conveyed messages have been explored by means of content analysis, visual analysis and discourse analysis (Rose, 2022). The study is completed by 41 semi-structured interviews with Italian users coming from 4 cohorts (Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, Baby Boomer) to shed light on the social and cultural meanings attached to practices of meme production and consumption.

The findings indicate that users conceive memes differently depending on their 'media generation' (Bolin, 2016), a notion which merges age, digital literacy and patterns of media consumption. Specifically, I identify: 1) a *narrow* conceptualisation, typically shared by users coming from younger cohorts, with a heterogeneous mediascape, and high digital literacy; and 2) a *broad* conceptualisation, shared by older user demographics, with a homogenous (or limited) mediascape, and low digital competences. I will also illustrate how each understanding relies on distinct socially-defined 'grammars', which regulate the construction and the use-in-context of the memes.

In conclusion, the paper demonstrates how this generational perspective on memes enhances the understanding of their impact on mainstream digital culture, by bringing examples from key areas of social media research, such as: the production and reproduction of collective identities and the (collaborative) construction of shared narratives around mediatized events.

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DCC05 Pop culture and digital attention economies

PP 0257 Consumption and consumerism in the beauty and fashion YouTube community: Young-adult audience perspectives

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Mostly constituted by young women (Ceci, 2023; García-Rapp, 2016), the beauty and fashion YouTube community has contributed for the construction of female identities (Rosida & Azwar, 2021). Through videos regarding makeup, hair, clothing, skin and, overall, selfcare related-content (Berryman & Kavka, 2017), YouTubers on this sector reinforce stereotypical ideals, articulating traditionally female-associated topics with goods consumption and promotional practices (Andó, 2016; Genz, 2015). By being financially dependent on advertising revenue (Hödl & Myrach, 2023), these creators subordinate, whether consciously or not, to a normative and misogynist agenda supported by platform algorithms and brand positioning (Banet-Weiser, 2018), thus becoming part of a post-feminist culture supported by neoliberal society (Banet-Weiser et al., 2020; McRobbie, 2009). In this way, consumption plays an important role in the industry, and consumerism has a huge impact in the community, from producers to the audience. In order to integrate the economy of visibility and attention imposed by the industry (Abidin, 2016; Marwick, 2015), beauty and fashion digital creators adopt gendered strategies including aspirational labour (Duffy, 2016), normative self-branding (Kanai, 2017), passionate work (Duffy & Hund, 2015) and authenticity demonstrations (Pruchniewska, 2018), interfering on their public's perceptions and attitudes (Freberg et al., 2011). As opinion leaders appointed by conquered audiences (Abidin, 2019; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014), these professionals shape and structure users' values, mainly regarding femininity conceptions, and behavior tendencies.

This research aims to understand the perceptions of the young-adult audience over consumption and consumerism inside the beauty and fashion YouTube community. Approaching the Portuguese case, we selected 16 young-adult participants, with between 20 and 28 years old, who follow and admire the most popular beauty and fashion YouTubers in the country. We consequently arranged them into five focus groups, each with between 3 and 4 people, and applied a multimodal analysis to study the data, using the software MAXQDA+. The study identified a high level of influence for consumption within the audience of this community, namely by purchasing products mentioned on social media and creators' own brands. A sense of proximity with creators was noticed to be crucial for shopping intentions, as these digital personalities' self-presentation, based on authenticity performances, is said to be preferred over the conduct of traditional celebrities, who normally lacks relatability. Although proving to be influenceable, participants engaged in distancing discourses, particularly criticizing excessive consumerism within the community and positioning themselves as not-so permeable to promotional narratives in these platforms. Conscious consumption and environmental concerns were also mentioned to support this idea. Our study contributes to better understand the young-adult audience perspective on consumption and consumerism as agents in the beauty and fashion digital industry, on and off-camera. It also helps comprehend the consequences gendered discourses and heteronormative attitudes produce on a female audience that is part of a commercially based industry supported by conservative structures.

DCC05 Pop culture and digital attention economies

PP 0258 From Kylie Jenner to Narendra Modi: Dissecting the attention ecology of Instagram's most popular accounts using digital trace data and thick description

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In an era rife with global dis(order) (Thompson, 2022) across political, economic, environmental, and health sectors, the influence of social media, specifically Instagram, in public discourse and attention shaping is more pronounced than ever. This study scrutinizes the 500 most followed Instagram accounts and their most engaging posts, through the theoretical lens of *attention ecology* (Citton, 2014; 2017).

Instagram, the world's second-biggest social media platform, with its unique visual-centric nature, where images and videos are the primary modes of communication, creates a distinct culture where aesthetics, personal branding,

and perceived authenticity become crucial for engagement. In this distinctive digital milieu, a heterogeneous set of actors create an information-rich environment where they compete for the scarce resource of user attention (Zulli, 2017). These actors include celebrities from the entertainment domain, such as Kylie Jenner, but also politicians, like the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and news outlets, such as *Iran International TV*. Utilizing a digital trace dataset from the Meta-owned analytics tool *CrowdTangle*, this study analyses these top Instagram accounts and the content of their most engaging posts (user engagement measured as likes, comments, and video views), covering 2021–2023, to understand the dynamics of attention distribution in an increasingly fragmented digital landscape.

The mixed methodology blends quantitative, exploratory data analysis, focusing on Instagram accounts' follower counts and user engagement levels, with qualitative content analysis of selected Instagram posts. The qualitative part is inspired by Geertz' (1973) *thick description*, an anthropological, interpretative approach that involves detailed, nuanced descriptions of social actions and cultural symbols to make sense of a society's web of meanings. Repurposed and applied to Instagram, this approach analyzes the most engaging Instagram posts by examining not just the content of the posts, but also the cultural and social contexts in which they are created and received. This involves a detailed exploration and interpretation of the symbols, language, and interactions present in the posts to understand the underlying meanings and reasons for their engagement in their specific attentional niche. Hence, the study not only distinguishes between accounts with high follower numbers and those garnering significant user interaction but also reveals the dominant themes resonating with the global audience.

Preliminary findings indicate a complex interplay in Instagram's attention ecology. While the most followed accounts often mirror and reinforce prevailing social norms, notably heteronormative gender roles and family constellations, aligning with the established order, they also serve as platforms for challenging the status quo, hinting at transformative potentials. This ambivalence mirrors societal tensions, as Instagram oscillates between being a space for social movements and a breeding ground for polarized environments. In conclusion, this research offers a nuanced view of Instagram's top 500 accounts and their most engaging posts within the evolving digital attention ecology, contributing to the ECC 2024's discourse on communication (dis)order.

DCC05 Pop culture and digital attention economies

PP 0259 Scandalization by association: Celebrities' risk of being pulled into a scandal

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In this paper we propose "scandalization by association" as a new term to designate celebrities' perpetual risk of being scandalized by their association with other celebrities who find themselves at the midst of public controversy. We argue that in the current culture war climate, celebrity scandals may erupt and develop in unforeseen ways and spread infectiously to associated parties across media. Voicing public opinions online about gender issues has, for example, become communicative actions with unpredictable consequences for celebrities.

Mass mediated celebrity scandals used to be initiated by tabloid journalism (Usher 2020), nosing out transgressive behavior and pursuing increased circulation through revelation of morally unacceptable deeds (Johansson 2020). With the rise of social media, celebrities can circumvent such mass media influence on their visibility strategies and to a larger degree strategically control their desired image and communicative actions (Abidin 2018, Jerslev & Mortensen 2018). Celebrities' communication online is not without risks, however, as any statement can easily and unexpectedly unleash controversy, or turn into what Ekström and Johansson (2008) in the political domain have labelled "talk scandals", i.e., "failures in communication, not intended or designed to create a political scandal" (Ekström, Patrona & Thornborrow 2022, 957). Especially the public's reactions and interactions online to what is deemed transgressive behavior and communication can become co-drivers of the development of a scandal (Zulli 2021), producing unintentional or un-wanted visibility to public figures and quickly pull others e.g., fellow celebrities, into the controversy. Hence, being scandalized by association lies in wait for public figures due to the networked structure of online communication (van Dijck 2012); it calls for alertness to networked communication and strategic moves to avoid being 'pulled in'.

Based on a qualitative content analysis of an example of strategic reparation to a possible reputational damage (Ravell 2023), we illustrate the working of scandal by association: We focus on the public statements online from actors Daniel Radcliffe and Emma Watson to the controversy – or, as we argue, scandal – that arose when Harry Potter author, J.K. Rowling, in Summer 2020 tweeted her views on transgender issues. As part of their own reputation management, the actors *had* to respond publicly to avoid scandalization by association to Rowling. If they did not respond, this could be seen as a silent support of Rowling's views and potentially pull them into the scandal. But responding publicly could also be potentially explosive, as their response could backlash online. Radcliffe and Watson took their stand against Rowling's viewpoints in different but similarly safe ways: Watson in a very short tweet, and Radcliffe in a longer statement on the Trevor Project website.

The paper adds to our understanding of processes of scandalization in digital culture, especially celebrity scandals, the role of social media in reconfiguring how scandalization processes develop, and who are pulled into a scandal. A key point is that in cases of scandalization by association, the communicative phase *before* a scandal potentially spreads to a wider celebrity community has become crucial in celebrities' communicative efforts online.

DCC05 Pop culture and digital attention economies

PP 0260 Rethinking online anonymity with "momo" on Chinese social media platform Xiaohongshu

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This study explores the digital practices and sociocultural meanings regarding a series of anonymity-seeking activists by users on Chinese social media platform Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book). Since 2023, an increasing number of Xiaohongshu users have adopted the same username "momo" and the same profile picture featuring a cute pink dinosaur. This can be considered as a way to seek anonymity online. Anonymity in digital communication is multi-dimensional. It can refer to the inability to attribute a message to its source. However, pseudonymity on social media means that the message is always linked to one's username as the source. This screen identity can be operated and felt no less real than the offline identity. Using the same username and profile picture renders "momos" visually indistinguishable from one another, thus decreasing the linkability between source and message.

The issue of online anonymity has long passed the heat in cultural analysis of digital communication. This is not least because the digital industry has transformed its technological and commercial models in capitalizing on human interactions. Social networking sites tap into users' existing offline networks as a playground for tracking user behaviors. Micro-celebrity culture is predicated on presenting and branding one's identity. "Real" and "authentic" identities seem to characterize digital beings since the Web 2.0 era. The contemporary geo-location based services, digital payment solutions, and automated facial recognition also render "online identity" a less relevant point when discussing the digitalization and datafication of everyday life. If anonymity is conceptualized as the inability to recognize one's identity knowledge like real name, locality, and social categorization, digitally afforded commercial, political, and peer surveillance is exactly the technology to render this information knowable. Against such a context, this study asks three sub-questions progressively, *1) what are the anonymity-seeking practices on Xiaohongshu and how do they capture the different dimensions of anonymity in digital communication? 2)how do users understand these practices regarding Xiaohongshu's platform design; 3) what are the motivations for users to conduct anonymity-seeking practices*?

The study adopts a digital ethnographic approach. Data are collected by several methods including an app-walk-through to explicate the functionalities of Xiaohongshu; observing anonymity-seeking tutorials and group pages; observing the critical moments of communication such as conflicts and misunderstandings among users; and importantly interviews with 20 users who have conducted the identified anonymity practices.

Preliminary analysis shows that users seek anonymity to manage their digital communicative orders on three levels. On the speech level, an indistinguishable screen identity saves users from tarteged and prolonged online debates, as the comment thread structure is disrupted when several commenters are displayed with the same name. On the network level, seeking anonymity prevents peer surveillance from one's network beyond Xiaohognshu. Also, it protects one from or aid the participation in wide scale online harassment. On the sociocultural level, seeking anonymity signifies a mood of rejecting the uniqueness discourse and retreating from self-presentation in digital culture. The study then discusses how the concept of anonymity can become relevant again in understanding reisistance towards neoliberal technologies of surveillance and subjectivity.

DCC06 The far right, digital culture and audiovisual fiction

PN 051 The final boss is woke: Video games and the gender discourses of far-fight video influencers

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Several authors have noted that toxic 'geek masculinity' and conflicts about video games have aided digital far-right mobilisation (e.g. Bezio, 2018; Mortensen 2018). Digitally-located conflicts about video games show how geek masculinity underpins a framing of video games as a) belonging to (white) male communities and b) under threat from women and minorities (Salter, 2018). In these conflicts, attachment to certain franchises interacts with misogyny to create extreme anti-feminist mobilisation, an interaction more recently demonstrated in backlashes to diverse casting in film and TV (Blodgett & Salter, 2018). Existing observations about video games and far-right gender politics note an attachment to a particular type of technology and culture, but neglect to investigate how far-right actors engage with the fictional content of video games. This is despite the fact that mythology demonstrably plays a role in far-right constructions of collective identity (e.g. Castle & Parsons, 2019; Nilan, 2021), and motifs and characters from other audiovisual fiction are prevalent in the gender politics of the online far right (Nagle, 2017),

suggesting an important role for narratives and storytelling. Narrative-driven video games are a form of audiovisual fiction with uniquely interactive storytelling capacities, space for (gendered) identity exploration, and an association with geek masculinity. As such, far-right engagement with video game fiction reveals how far-right actors construct both individual and collective gendered identities through deep engagement with audiovisual fiction.This research zooms in on this engagement through a multimodal discourse analysis of 50 videos from YouTube, Rumble and Twitch containing gameplay or commentary on video games by far-right influencers, focusing on gender discourses present in these videos. It examines two interrelated facets of the role of fictional video game content in far right-gender discourse. Firstly, it explores how engagement with video game fiction is used to construct far-right masculinities and femininities as well as to criticise and abject forms of gender. Secondly, building on work about the strategic use of pop culture to mainstream far-right ideology, it explores how engagement with video games is used to bring far-right ideas about gender and society into new contexts, harnessing both the subcultural significance of games and their increasing importance to mainstream pop culture.

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DCC06 The far right, digital culture and audiovisual fiction

PN 052 Beyond the matrix: Mapping far right film references

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Although much research on the far right has emphasised the role of parties and voters, there has been a recent emphasis on the non-party-political dimensions of far-right politics, particularly in cultural, media and communication studies. Inspired by the cultural revolutions of the 1960s and the work of left-wing academics such as Gramsci, some note that many far-right actors see cultural hegemony as a precursor to political hegemony – a strategy commonly referred to as metapolitics (Griffin, 2000).

However, while some attention has been given to the role of popular culture in far-right strategy, the role of popular audiovisual entertainment – films, TV series and video games – remains overlooked. Indeed, this paper argues that audiovisual fiction is an important site of popular culture that the far right engages with in meaningful, political ways, both through positive engagement and negative criticism. This is particularly the case online, and there are well-known examples of audiovisual fiction that have become central in some far-right digital discourses, such as the science fiction film *The Matrix* and its "red pill"-metaphor (Chapelan, 2021), the film adaption of *American Psycho* and the cult classic *Fight Club* (Nagle, 2017). Some more surprising examples have been noted: Lewis (2018), for example, describes how the 2018 Marvel film *Black Panther* was celebrated by far-right commentators and influencers, with some claiming that the film affirmed ethnonationalist calls for solidarity along racial lines.

Thus, the far right engages with audiovisual fiction in ways that are sometimes contradictory, but also substantively metapolitical, connecting far-right ideology to mainstream cultural interests. To better understand this relationship, this paper asks which audiovisual fictions garner attention in far-right digital culture. Moving beyond anecdotal evidence of what is liked or disliked by far- right audiences, I present the results of a computational analysis of audiovisual titles mentioned by the audiences of 950 channels in the far-right digital ecosystem on YouTube. Examining comments made by far-right audiences between 2008 and 2018, an era during which content moderation was lacking and far-right politics thus particularly prevalent, this paper maps the films, TV series and video games referred to by far-right audiences, producing a systematic overview of the types of audiovisual fiction that resonate with – and are rejected by – far-right audiences. This allows us to grasp how the far right engages with audiovisual fiction and, beginning from the titles identified, examine broader debates in far-right discourse about fiction and popular culture.

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DCC06 The far right, digital culture and audiovisual fiction

PN 053 Frames of dissent: Exploring visual storytelling in contesting COVID-19 measures on Instagram

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Following the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers detected a historically unprecedented rise in support of progressive values, particularly freedom (Lampert et al., 2021). With opposition against the COVID-19 restrictions, this rise in support of freedom is perhaps not remarkable. Being limited in their freedom of movement, individuals turned to social media, such as Instagram, to express their discontent about the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Amidst these digital conversations a captivating strategy to express this discontent about limited freedoms emerged, characterized by the incorporation of storytelling elements drawn from diverse sources such as movies, fairytales, and historical events. This research investigates the role of visual storytelling in contesting pandemic measures through a visual narrative analysis of images shared with German, Dutch, and Polish covid-sceptic hashtags on Instagram. Storytelling is a technique aimed at conveying a coherent and engaging narrative to convey political messages (Freinstein & Gadinger, 2019). Visual storytelling has become a preferred medium for political movements, playing a pivotal role in the transmission of information and identity formation (Freinstein & Gadinger, 2019; Doerr et al., 2015). Stories often share common themes and characters across countries and cultures. Stories serve to simplify complex ideas or arguments, facilitating a better connection to abstract issues. By appealing to personal emotions and experiences, stories can influence people's perceptions and political views as well as provide meaning, purpose, and a moral compass.Research on political conflict often overlooks the role of visual-based platforms like Instagram in expressing political discontent, focusing primarily on textual content from newspapers and social media. Nevertheless, in an era increasingly dominated by visuals, understanding the role of visual storytelling becomes crucial in comprehending the strategies employed by individuals and movements to appeal to their target audiences. The close connection between visual content and appealing to emotions makes Instagram particularly suitable for political storytelling.

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DCC06 The far right, digital culture and audiovisual fiction

PN 054 Rethinking Influencer-audience relationships within the Alternative Influence Network

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The past decade has witnessed a surge in far right and reactionary ideologies, arguably propelled by digital media. Lewis' (2018) work on the so-called 'Alternative Influence Network' (AIN) describes a historical juncture where increasingly radical ideologies gained mass appeal on mainstream platforms like YouTube. Her report has laid the groundwork for subsequent scholarship uncovering the social media logics behind radicalization on YouTube, focusing on algorithmic amplification via influencer tactics (Yesilada & Lewandowsky, 2022). However, as Lewis points out, the complex radicalization processes "can include influencers radicalizing their audiences, each other, or being radicalized by their own audience's engagement" (Lewis, 2018, p. 5).This paper empirically explores Lewis' under-researched claim that influencers might be radicalized by their audiences. Indeed, scholars have pointed out that many radical ideologies traveling the digital landscape emerged from political subcultures at the 'bottom of the Web' (de Zeeuw & Tuters 2020). Following this depth heuristic, AIN may be bringing to the surface ideological positions that have already been developed in radical subcultural spaces. Alternative influencers might be less the source but rather the amplifiers of already-existing radical political ideas. Developing these ideas further, our work

seeks to substantiate and conceptualize what is known within AIN as 'audience capture'. Coined by alternative influencer Bret Weinstein, audience capture is described as a "self-reinforcing feedback loop that involves telling one's audience what they want to hear and getting rewarded for it" (The Portal Wiki, 2021). This concept precisely captures Lewis' suggestion that influencers are radicalized by their audiences through an active and highly critical political fandom. To investigate 'audience capture' within the AIN, we map the relation between content production and audience engagement on YouTube. Selecting two case studies of influencers seemingly radicalized by their audience – (1) Dave Rubin and (2) Tim Pool (see Fisher 2023, Silverman, 2021) – we adopt a quali-quantitative approach combining computational techniques to locate and compare key topics in video transcripts and comments sections from 2012 till 2018. The comparative analysis of our case studies allows us to better grasp if, and how, radical ideas suggested by audiences are taken up by political influencers.

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DCC06 The far right, digital culture and audiovisual fiction

PN 055 Cultural critique from the right: The German far-right podcast 'von rechts gelesen'

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While a podcast reviewing popular culture is nothing out of the ordinary, the German podcast 'von rechts gelesen' (read from the right) is rather unusual: It is a culture and literature podcast produced by the German far right. While popular culture had long been considered inherently progressive, liberal and modern (Stanfill, 2020), the podcast 'von rechts gelesen' is a vivid example of how far right actors are now increasingly embracing popular culture to capture new audiences and normalise far right ideas (Miller-Idriss, 2018; Penney, 2023). Indeed, in the podcast, founded in 2016 and released by the German far-right publishing house Jung Europa, the podcasts' two hosts discuss popular cultural or literary events, films and publications from a decidedly right-wing perspective. Zooming in on 'von rechts gelesen' as an example of the far right's engagement with popular culture more broadly, and engagement with audiovisual fiction in particular, this talk presents the findings of a discursive–theoretical analysis (Carpentier and De Cleen, 2007) of relevant 'von rechts gelesen' episodes between 2016 and 2023. By paying attention to the reasons given for (dis)liking different pieces of audiovisual fiction, it will be shown how the podcast's hosts draw connections between popular audiovisual titles and key components of far-right ideology, inter alia, ultra-nationalism, ethnopluralism, racism and patriarchy. Moreover, with the podcasts' hosts often praising pieces of cultural production that resonate with other political milieus (e.g., the film 'Oppenheimer'), it will be argued that far right figureheads and thinkers have moved beyond a crude fascination with violence and death and are increasingly look to tap into today's cultural and political zeitgeist. Essentially, audiovisual fiction, the talk will show, has become a site of political contestation as German far right activists and thinkers look to normalise far right ideas outside the confines of formal politics.

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DCC07 Gender, sex, and sexualities online

PP 0361 Unmatching: Exploring online daters' motives for disconnection

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This work explores the motives for why users disconnect from dating apps. Dating apps form a part of the digital diet of 366 million users worldwide (Statista, 202). The principles and operating logic underlying dating apps result in a set of practices, mediated by such platforms, which lead to a transformation of romance (Illouz, 2019).

In a "culture of connectivity", (van Dijck, 2013) in which platforms govern various aspects of everyday life, dating is no exception. As a critical response to a permanent connectivity in which digital technologies compete for users' attention, individuals have started to manage their media consumption (Lomborg & Ytre-Arne, 2021; Syvertsen & Elin, 2020). Expressions such as "media disconnection" and "digital detox" conceptualize individuals' self-regulating behaviors regarding their use of social media (Nguyen, 2021).

Although dating apps and digital detox subjects have been studied, these two threads have remained disconnected from each other, calling for attention.

This study focused on dating apps disconnection through a mixed methods approach, combining an online survey (n = 349; 44.7% female, 91% heterosexual) and semi-structured interviews (n = 20; age 21–45) aimed at (past) online daters. Quantitative analysis was carried out on survey results, and thematic analysis was applied to analyze survey open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews.

Five main dimensions to disconnect from dating apps were identified: 1. Users' experiences; 2. App features; 3. User well-being; 4. Privacy concerns; 5. Life transitions. The study reinforces motives for media disconnection identified in previous studies (e.g., platform features, privacy concerns or well-being) but expands knowledge related to dating apps dynamics specificities (e.g., poor profile information; limited search options; swiping movement) and highlights user perceptions of how their dating practices are mediated (e.g., unclear matching system).

Users often disconnect from dating apps in response to their experiences (e.g., Didn't meet anyone interesting; Didn't satisfy my needs) highlighting the role that expectations play. The perception of how usage is conditioned by apps features, not allowing certain dynamics and behaviors, also motivated users to disconnect (e.g., chat limitations; non-existent search option). Disconnection was also a result of users' concern for their well-being (e.g., Negatively affected my self-esteem; Time-consuming) and privacy concerns (e.g., Didn't want to share my data with the app; Didn't want others to see me online). Finally, disconnection was a result of events that occurred in participants' lives (e.g., started a relationship; stopped looking for a relationship) which could lead to individuals reassessing the significance of dating apps in their lives. These aspects refer not only to dating app ideologies, but also to the importance that life transitions pose for studying disconnection from such a particular media.

The study holds practical implications for the discussion of the dynamics between users and dating apps from a digital detox point of view through identifying several factors that lead to disconnection. Considering dating app specificities (e.g., positioning, principles, and affordances), this study contributes to dating culture understanding through the meaning given to dating apps and motives to disconnect from such a specific media.

DCC07 Gender, sex, and sexualities online

PP 0362 '24/7 horny&training': Porn Bots, Authenticity, and Social Automation on Instagram

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Whenever a celebrity posts a photo on Instagram, it is almost inevitable that the first comment on it will be made by a porn bot (Alvarez 2020). Porn bots – automated or semi-automated social media accounts that use sexually suggestive content to capture attention (Narrang 2019) – embed themselves in social media interactions, using spam-like strategies (Paasonen 2006; Brunton 2015) of commenting and suggestive forms of address to redirect users' attention to external sites. Typically, porn bots tend to align with the idea of 'hetero-sexiness' observed in mainstream social media (Dobson 2011), echoing a highly standardized concept of attractiveness. Yet, despite Instagram's increasingly strict content regulations prohibiting both nudity and automation, porn bots demonstrate a remarkable ability to adapt to platform-specific communicative cultures and technical standards.

This paper presents a conceptual and methodological account of porn bot agency, focusing on its embeddedness within Instagram use. Arguing for a relational approach, the paper reflects on a common experience of bot-animated attention theft (Santos 2023) – the flooding of celebrities' comment sections with sexy comments and emojis – as its main methodological entry point: Starting from the comment sections of five highly visible posts subsequently

published by Justin Bieber in June 2022, we manually identified thirty porn bot accounts. These accounts were selected based on their repetitive name patterns and comment amplification through likes. We then collected and analyzed associated metadata, using digital methods for a situated analysis (Rogers 2019, Rettberg 2020; Marres 2020) of bot profile names and pictures (n = 30), bot comments (n = 30) and comment likers (n = 1297), bot followers (n = 15729) and followings (n = 4550), bot profile posts (n = 150), and links in profile bio (n = 28).

Our analysis explores how porn bots intertwine mainstream digital culture, heteronormative sexual scripts, and social automation, focusing on three interconnected layers of porn bot agency. First, we analyze bots' strategies of identity performance and gendered representation, contextualizing them within Instagram's ongoing tendency towards deplatformisation of sex (Molldrem 2018; Tiidenberg and van der Nagel 2020). Secondly, we address how bots exploit Instagram-native ideas of authenticity (Marwick 2015; Leaver, Highfield, and Abidin 2019) and visibility (Bucher 2018), exploring the dynamics of following and being followed and the adoption of automated 'likers' that push porn bots' comments to the top. Finally, we discuss how bots promote adult-themed services, highlighting the attention economy of 'pornographic peekaboo' (Paasonen, Jarrett, and Light 2019) that captures attention through suggestive sexy pictures of young women while concealing explicitly pornographic content on external sites disguised in the links of bot profile bios. Our findings point to how porn bots reenact gender as a programmed set of instructions, adapting to Instagram's vision of acceptable sexuality and revealing its normative order.

DCC07 Gender, sex, and sexualities online

PP 0363 Mapping the grey infrastructure of AI-facilitated sexual abuse

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This contribution explores the interplay between the proliferation of synthetic media and the potential harm they pose in the context of image-based sexual abuse. The increasing accessibility, efficacy, and popularity of AI technologies offer a wide variety of opportunities for the creation and dissemination of non-consensual intimate images (NCDII), ranging from tools to produce deepfake videos to apps, websites, and bots that 'undress' pictures of (predominantly) girls and women known as 'nudify apps'. While image-based sexual abuse is not a new phenomenon (Henry et al., 2020), the rise of AI technologies adds complexity to this issue, introducing new opportunities to harm and silence women while reinforcing already established power structures in our societies. To understand the disruptions and continuities introduced by synthetic non-consensual material, this research aims to unravel the intricate network websites, platforms, and apps that allow this phenomenon to thrive, and analyse how such network comes to constitute a grey infrastructure of AI-facilitated sexual abuse.

Existing literature underscores the implications of deepfakes and synthetic media for image-based sexual abuse (Maddocks, 2020; van der Nagel, 2020), emphasising their disproportionate impact on women (Deeptrace, 2019) and their increasing targeting of 'ordinary' individuals alongside celebrities (Dunn, 2021). The discussion has prompted investigations into the existing legislative frameworks and how they can be refined to encompass this form of abuse (Chesney & Citron, 2019). While attention has rightly been paid to detection, verification, and regulation issues, it is equally important to investigate the ecosystem that facilitates the production, circulation, and re-contextualisation of synthetic non-consensual material across diverse venues and among varied audiences.

This research builds on the concept of networked harassment (Marwick & Caplan, 2018; Marwick, 2021) to establish a comprehensive framework to the study of AI-facilitated, image-based sexual abuse, which encompasses contextual factors (Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2016), the inherently social nature of online harassment (Marwick, 2021), as well as the infrastructural elements of digital technologies that allow for synthetic non-consensual material to spread.

By combining digital methods and digital ethnography, the research seeks to delineate the grey infrastructure of AI-facilitated sexual abuse and how it spreads across a spectrum of platforms, ranging from overt ones like nudify apps to discreet and under-the-radar venues such as Telegram chats and Discord servers. As the capability and accessibility of open-source AI image diffusion models rise, the production of non-consensual imagery is transforming into a burgeoning industry. At the same time, its dissemination remains intricately woven into a more capillary and niche network of chats, groups, and online forums, which allows users to de-contextualise and re-contextualise women's images, bodies, and intimacies, thus amplifying gender-based violence online and offline. The 'greyness' of such an infrastructure lies precisely in the networked co-existence of overt and subtle ways of creating, disseminating, and re-contextualising non-consensual material, which contribute to enhance the pervasiveness of image-based sexual abuse. Additionally, it is accentuated by the nature of AI-generated content, which complicates the notion of consent, privacy, and creative content production.

DCC07 Gender, sex, and sexualities online

PP 0364 Luring TikTok-Users into the right-wing rabbit hole via housekeeping and lifestyle content? Exploring #tradculture communities on TikTok

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In the digital era, new avenues of participation have arisen, providing diverse groups with opportunities for engagement and expression. TikTok, with its growing user base, employs a content-centric approach, primarily focused on entertaining videos encompassing pop-cultural references, such as lip-syncing, cooking, and decorating. However, the platform's easy-to-consume content also serves as fertile ground for the dissemination of disinformation and right-wing ideologies disguised as lifestyle content.

Previous studies have demonstrated that seemingly inconspicuous entertaining videos and the propagation of radical views are not mutually exclusive. This phenomenon, termed "dark inspiration" (Frischlich, 2021), has been observed in Islamist accounts on Instagram, emphasizing eudaimonic entertainment that promotes values, deeper meanings, or utopian societal visions. Social media practices, such as hijacking, where radical groups leverage trending content for their own reinterpretation (Jackson & Foucault Welles, 2015), are also common in social media communication.

This study investigates the linkage between ostensibly harmless lifestyle and home-making content on TikTok and anti-feminist and right-wing narratives. Given the challenges in platform accessibility and searchability, we adopt a mixed-methods design to identify relevant content and actors. A dataset of 357 TikToks related to the #tradwife search query was collected, including metadata like account information. A network analysis of co-occurring hashtags and accounts aimed to identify related topics and detect tradculture communities. Additionally, a qualitative content analysis was performed to get a deeper understanding of the most central accounts per detected community.

The automated content analysis revealed distinct tradculture communities in different countries, linked through central #tradwife accounts emphasizing traditional gender roles. US-based accounts exhibited close ties to evangelical and right-wing communities, while German accounts were more subtle and only connected via singular hashtags. The results suggest that the algorithm guiding content exposure may lead from everyday videos of #tradwives to more extreme content. The study highlights significant connections between accounts perpetuating traditional gender roles and content espousing right-wing ideologies, even if the latter has a smaller reach.

This research proposes the further iteration of the mixed-methods design through a snowballing approach, aiming to reconstruct the spread of anti-feminist narratives by malicious communities who hijack trending lifestyle aesthetics on TikTok and lead consumers to their radical content.

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DCC07 Gender, sex, and sexualities online

PP 0365 "Hey queen, want #wifimoney?" Multi-level marketing on TikTok

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This paper presents results from a case study of finance-related TikTok in Germany, focusing on a subset of accounts which utilize multi-level marketing (MLM) schemes. MLM phenomena are widespread but relatively under-described both in general social science research and within social media research. Our analysis draws on feminist literature which conceptualizes MLMs as neo-liberally capitalist, gendered, and potentially predatory (D'Antonio, 2019; Gill, 2008; Pearce, 2023; Wrenn and Waller, 2021), and based on this body of research we lay out the strategies of the MLM accounts as a type of social media-driven predatory feminism which tailors traditional MLM talking points and strategies to social media. The MLM accounts in our study are typically operated by young women and the target market for the operations seem to be other young women, who are offered a plush life with no stress and financial independence. The strategy offers a mixture of quasi-feminist hypervisibility and feigned intimacy coupled to obfuscation and opacity of underlying operations.

The presentation falls in two parts. First, we present the overall research design as a mixed methods study of finance-related TikTok using qualitative methods and computational tools. The first phase involved utilizing the

open-source tool Zeeschuimer and TikToks web-interface, where a research assistant purposively and iteratively searched for and analyzed finance-related TikToks while Zeeschuimer would passively build a data base of all surfaced posts. A second phase involved a hashtag-based clustering workflow in R, using a bespoke channel clustering method based on standardized hashtag usage profiles, dimension reduction and density-based clustering of accounts. This allowed for a large-scale overview of the domain as well as triangulation and consolidation of qualitative hypotheses driving further iterations of sampling and data collection through Zeeschuimer. A third phase of the study switched to a more thorough analysis of specific clusters within the space, and the second part of our presentation will focus on the set of surfaced accounts which deploy MLM strategies. The discourse of these channels emphasizes working from home and glamourous stories of exotic travelling and financial independence, with many parallels to traditional success stories of social media entrepreneurs (Duffy and Hund, 2015). These personalized narratives serve as a front for typical MLM recruitment operations traceable to behind-the-scenes large-scale corporate activities.

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DCC08 Authoritarianism and polarisation

PP 0366 A systematic review of how polarized sentiment and emotion influence retweets behavior across social media platforms

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How do biases toward emotion and sentiment identified in face-to-face communication scale in digital social media? Social media has increased the availability of information, but human attention remains constrained. So far, research indicates that emotions hold a privileged position in early attention capture (Brady et al., 2020), and the body of studies on how emotion and sentiment expressions influence online spread is growing (e.g., Hansen et al., 2011; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013; Zhang, 2022). Still, the literature lacks a comprehensive synthesis of these findings, and the field would benefit from such an analysis to understand how the results generalise across case-specific studies.

This article contributes a systematic review of 48 studies of how expressions of polarized sentiment and emotion affect spread across platforms, years, and domains. The search is conducted following the PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021). The review shows a composite picture. Overall, the results skew in favor of negativity bias, most strongly in the political domain. So far, only Twitter, Facebook, and Sina Weibo, leaving the generalizability of the findings undiscovered. Similarly, primarily English, Chinese, and German are studied, restraining our ability to identify potential cultural differences. Finally, a limited number of domains are studied, primarily political, health, and misinformation.

Future research should focus on understudied platforms, languages, and domains to identify specificities and similarities across cases. Secondly, more consistency in the methodological designs of the studies would improve the comparability of results. Finally, a greater focus on studying emotions in addition to sentiment would further improve the quality of the findings by adding more nuance.

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DCC08 Authoritarianism and polarisation

PP 0367 The role of social media in the protest-repression nexus in authoritarian settings: A scoping literature review

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Social media have brought about significant changes in the dynamics of political protest within authoritarian societies, offering dissidents new avenues to express their grievances and garner support for their causes. For example, social media have been found to be instrumental in disseminating information about protests (Faris, 2010; Lotan et al., 2011; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012), coordinating logistics (Tucker et al., 2016), enhancing visibility (Lysenko & Desouza, 2012; Bruns et al., 2013), and providing support to protesters (Tucker et al., 2014). Nevertheless, social media have also been utilized by ruling regimes and their supporters as a means to hinder and suppress political unrest. For instance, they have beenexploited for propaganda and surveillance by authorities (Morozov, 2011; Zhuravskaya et al., 2020), censorship of pro-opposition content and endorsement of pro-regime supporters (Feldstein, 2021; Earl et al., 2022), as well as identifying and imprisoning protesters (Aday et al., 2010; Tucker et al., 2017). Despite extensive research, a thorough understanding of how social media is used to enable and suppress protest movements remains limited due to the diverse range of platforms, their affordances, protest forms, and the contexts studied.

This scoping literature review gathers and analyzes the existing literature on the role of social media in protest and repression within authoritarian settings. The review examines and compares the evolution of these dynamics across different types of authoritarian contexts, such as policy-critical and leadership-critical publics, as described by Toepfl (2020). Additionally, the review explores methodological approaches, data collection strategies, and reported limitations to further shed light on areas that require more attention. The following research questions are addressed.

RQ1: What social media platforms, affordances, and activities have been studied in relation to what forms of political protest and repression in authoritarian contexts?

RQ2: What social media-related variables or phenomena have been reported as potentially impacting political protest and repression in authoritarian contexts?

RQ3: What methods and data have been used in academic research on the role of social media in political protest and repression in authoritarian contexts?

RQ4: What insights can be drawn from the literature on the dynamics between digital repression and political protest on social media, and how do these dynamics vary across different authoritarian contexts?

The review includes 434 peer-reviewed empirical articles focusing on the intersection of social media with either political protest or repression in authoritarian contexts published in academic journals from January 1997 through June 2023 and indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, and EBSCO. The review provides a quantitative descriptive analysis of the manifest content to address the first three research questions and a qualitative analysis of the latent content to answer the fourth research question. Additionally, the review identifies current research gaps and proposes directions for future studies while considering the potential risk of bias and other limitations in the existing research. By critically assessing the current state of knowledge, this review contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of social media's role in both facilitating and suppressing political protests within authoritarian contexts.

DCC08 Authoritarianism and polarisation

PP 0368 Multiple voices, one speaker? A computational approach to match far-right user identities across platforms

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Far-right actors use multiple platforms to communicate, mobilize, and recruit. This observation aligned with broader transformations in digital information media environments captured by notions such as the 'hybrid media system'

or 'networked public sphere' (Benkler et al., 2018). Still, most studies on the digital far right focus on single platforms, thereby not taking into account how the same actors use various platforms. Establishing a framework to link actors across platforms carries the potential to understand how the same actors form cross-platform communities by exploiting different platform's affordances.

One existing framework that offers a solution to that challenge is User-Identity-Linkage (UIL). Developed in the field of computer science, UIL aims to identify social media accounts belonging to the same user—natural persons or organizations–enabling researchers to conduct comparative and cross-platform studies on the actor level (Chen & Chen, 2022). Thus, this approach can accommodate moves in communication science from single- to more robust multi-platform studies. Individual features of UIL, such as measures of textual similarity or shared URLs, are already familiar to communication science researchers, making UIL a scalable and efficient method that might advance and reduce the manual labor of multi-platform research.

Given the multiple different approaches to performing UIL (Shu et al., 2017) but the lack of usage in communication research so far, we ask (RQ1): How well do UIL features perform in linking user accounts by far-right political actors across platforms?

With far-right as an umbrella term for the radical and extreme right, our case contains heterogeneous actor types, e.g., politicians, journalists, or organizations (Pirro, 2023). The social media usage of these actors likely varies in terms of activity level, sharing patterns, and messaging (use of visuals, texts, hyperlinks). Reflecting on these differences, we ask (RQ2): Which UIL features work better to link which actor types?

Lastly, we turn towards a possible application of UIL in multi-platform research. Based on different platform affordances, we expect far-right actors on Twitter (now X) to highlight more person-centric antagonists such as individual politicians or other elites that can be tagged. In contrast, their Facebook posts should contain more generalized out-group statements e.g., antisemitic or Islamophobic comments (Puschmann et al., 2022). We ask (RQ3): How do far-right actors' antagonists differ on Facebook and Twitter?

To address our research questions, we evaluate the performance of different UIL approaches to link far-right actors across different platforms, namely Twitter and Facebook. We use data from three iteration snowball samples on both platforms from April to September 2022. The seed lists for these samples consist of a matched sample of around 40 German far-right politicians, activists, and right-wing alternative media. Data collection resulted in approximately 1,000 Facebook pages and 40,000 Twitter accounts. For ethical and privacy reasons, we focus exclusively on actors of public interest (e.g., politicians, parties, and media actors).

Our main objective is to integrate UIL into research on political communication, showcasing its potential by evaluating the performances of different features and providing a comparative application that studies the strategies of far-right actors in mentioning antagonists.

DCC08 Authoritarianism and polarisation

PP 0369 Lexicon and ties: Affective polarization and networking practices among Italian fringe beliefs Telegram channels

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The current landscape of digital platforms is characterised by a complex constellation of public, semi-public and private spaces. These spaces are heterogeneous in terms of visibility, regulation and audiences, but also connected by mutual migration dynamics between fringe and mainstream environments that need to be studied in order to understand the contemporary communicative disorders.

Since its creation in 2013, Telegram has positioned itself as an ideal space for those who yearn for privacy and security, an affordance that satisfies those who dream of a free internet, and for those who find themselves compelled to use such a space as the only safe way to coordinate (Urman and Katz 2022). Telegram from this point of view seems to be the ideal place to trace information and contexts in which conspiracy narratives are found to flourish (Schulze et al. 2022, Herasimenka et al. 2022). In particular, the function of Telegram channels has been rapidly adopted for news broadcasting (Wijermars 2021). Moreover, research conducted on Telegram has shown that, in spaces such as these, extreme fringes recruit users (Urman & Katz 2022); alt-right conspiracist groups coordinate (Walther and McCoy 2021), and in general, disinformation spreads (Herasimenka et al. 2022). What is still unclear and under-researched, is the relationship between such fringe platforms and the more visible and mainstream web spaces as well as legacy media. In other words, it is necessary to understand how the practices and languages developed in fringe platforms move outside of them, i.e. between upstream and downstream (Gursky et al. 2022).

As part of an ongoing project (CORIT), funded by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) and concerning the development of narratives that are capable of "intoxicating" the Italian hybrid media system, this paper aims to answer the RQ1: how do practices and discourses of toxicity develop within fringe beliefs Telegram channels

in Italy? To do so, starting from lists of Telegram channels/groups compiled by debunkers (i.e. list from BUTAC https://www.butac.it/the-black-list/) (Fletcher et al. 2017), it has been built a network of the main Italian Telegram channels and groups that disseminate problematic content through a snowballing method (Peeters & Willaert, 2022). Then, using a combination of ethnographic observation and scraping tools such as 4Cat and the Telethon Python library (Urman & Katz, 2020) we collected and analyzed 1) news posted and their comments, 2) the most frequent targets of hostility, 3) recurrent lexicons participating in affective polarization, which has been clustered through the Emotional Text Mining technique (Boccia Artieri et al. 2021). Results will focus on the vocabularies, representations, and practices related to affective polarization in Telegram radicalized channels/groups, to provide a "Polarisation Glossary" useful for avoiding counter-measures that may lead to an escalation of distrust, uncivilty, and radicalization.

DCC08 Authoritarianism and polarisation

PP 0370 Spaces of hybridized prefatory extremism (HYPE) on social media

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This paper addresses the contemporary trend of *hybridization* by which traditional boundaries of social media discourse between the mainstream and the extreme are increasingly obfuscated. The online proliferation of conspiracy theories, misinformation, and extremist opinions poses a serious challenge to intelligence services and security professionals alike (Gartenstein-Ross et al., 2023), especially because they are driven by social media logics and online cultures of perpetual ambiguity, transgressive humor, and shifting aesthetics (Demuru, 2022; Greene, 2019; Lee, 2020). In short, distinguishing between harmless conspiracy talk, hate speech, and serious threats of violence – and deciding when to intervene – is increasingly difficult online.

To better understand how previously fringe positions become mainstream and to clarify the relationship between conspiracy theories and extremism, the paper develops the concept of hybridized prefatory extremism (HYPE). *Hybridization* denotes the distinct social media process by which diverse ideologies, practices, and aesthetics amalgamate through networked communities to form new narratives with potential to motivate individuals and groups to carry out violent attacks (DSIS, 2023). This potentiality constitutes the *prefatory* nature of certain social media spaces – what we call HYPE spaces – in that they may facilitate individuals' radicalizing trajectory from a legitimate position of skepticism over (playful) conspiracy speculation to violent extremism.

Developing a heuristic analytical framework for studying the vast grey area of conspiratorial discourse and borderline extremism on social media, we identify three entry points by which HYPE spaces connect the mainstream to the extreme: 1) influencers, 2) communities, and 3) memetic content. Based on exploratory digital ethnographies of the respective entry points on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram in both Denmark and the Anglosphere, we present a series of findings to illustrate how HYPE spaces operate. We find that the current integration of conspiracy theories into mainstream discourse is in part driven by memetic logics and ambiguous communication strategies; a sense of community among participants; and conspiratorial actors' careful genre imitations and performances of authority.

Hybridization, we conclude, is not simply an ideological bricolage of ideas and beliefs, but a consequence of social media's networked publics, platform infrastructure, participatory culture, and aesthetic digital practices.

The aim of this conceptualization is to offer insights into the environments from which democratic threats may emerge. The point is not to imply a teleology of extremist behavior since prefatory extremism by no means necessitates a trajectory toward extremist worldviews or actions. Individuals exploring HYPE spaces may as well return to the mainstream instead of venturing down a path of radicalization through rabbit holes of hateful propaganda, conspiracies, and misinformation, but the characteristics and beliefs in HYPE spaces significantly overlap with threats and attacker profiles identified in newer threat research and in law enforcement threat assessments. Thus, being able to identify them and understand their underlying logic becomes central to inform preventative measures going forward.

DCC09 Collectivity in the datafied society

PN 068 Automated Fraud Detection: Power and Resistance

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This paper focuses on automated fraud detection as an application that illustrates how automation embeds differential systems of advantage and disadvantage (Crenshaw 1989, Collins 2019). Following Collins (2019) the paper draws attention to how automated decision-making systems (ADS) function as systems of power by utilising intersectionality as a means to: a) connect uses of ADS's to historical power structures and inequalities, b) as a paradigm for understanding the differential ways automation is employed as well as its differential impacts and c) valuing

experience as a way of knowing, recognizing experience as important to understanding social problems and collective ways to address them (Collins 2019, p. 185–186). We draw on interviews with frontline workers and service users to ensure a critical approach that is informed by experiences of impact and resistance as well as document analysis to assess the political dynamics underpinning decisions about where and how to employ automation. Our interviews demonstrate the importance of valuing people's experiences in order to appreciate the negative compounded impacts of automated fraud detection on an individual and family's income, housing, relationships, health, access to education and employment. Our document analysis reinforces previous work noting the politics informing government attention to benefit fraud detection, particularly as the amount of time and money devoted to finding benefit fraud does not match the problem. For example, in the UK it is reported that less than 1 percent of benefit claimants commit fraud and that the costs of this fraud is comparatively small. In contrast, tax evasion was estimated to cost the UK £32 billion in 2022, with considerably less public resources devoted to tackling this crime. We highlight how government agencies increasingly and problematically invest in automated practices in ways that disproportionately and punitively target low-income people which compounds struggles faced across different areas of life. We argue that this analysis provides an important indication of how the costs of increasing digitization fall disproportionately on people already marginalized, placing unjust constraints on enacting citizenship. We also detail the resistance by those affected by unjust automation as key collective action significant for our collective datafied present and futures. These actions highlight the importance of greater responsibility and accountability, but also a politics of care that prioritizes meeting people's needs, promoting health and well-being for all, valuing rights of refusal as well as our interdependence (Woodly et al. 2021, Chassmen and Cohen 2020, Benjamin 2019 and 2016, Gangadharen 2020).

DCC09 Collectivity in the datafied society

PN 069 Collective Response or Individualised Engagement? Deliberative Methods of Data Governance

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The increasing roll-out of data analytics, scoring systems and automated decision-making has severe implications for democratic participation and state-citizen relations. As these systems are deployed in the public sector and for state interventions, citizens' experiences of public services and interactions with the state are changing, and people are profiled, categorized and assessed to an unprecedented degree. Yet this happens largely without their knowledge and understanding, and without avenues to meaningfully engage and intervene. Citizens are rarely consulted regarding the implementation and impact of data systems, and their voice is not typically heard in the ongoing deployment of automated-decision-making. This raises the question of how citizens can affect the management and use of the very data systems that increasingly organize society, how they can have a voice in the transformation towards datafied societies, and how to create new democratic practices to ensure participation, accountability and democratic control in a context of automation. Models of 'democratic innovation' (Smith, 2009) have generated increasing interest as approaches for engaging the public in debates and decision-making. Citizen assemblies, citizen juries, and similar initiatives have been organised to address key concerns of contemporary societies. Based on the concept of 'mini-publics', they typically seek to bring together a representative cross-section of society to deliberate challenges and provide guidance for policymakers. This 'deliberative wave' (OECD, 2020) has also affected the deployment of data and AI, and in countries such as the UK a growing number of citizen summits, citizen councils, etc. have explored citizen perspectives on, e.g., facial recognition technology, and the application of AI in health provision. Emerging research has investigated the breadth, impact and democratic quality of these practices (e.g., Hintz et al, 2022). Building on these analyses, this paper will explore to what extent they constitute a collective response to datafication and, particularly, its collective dimension. Bringing a variety of citizens together to deliberate and generate common positions, mini-publics may exemplify a democratic approach that overcomes the isolation of individual 'users' in the face of state and corporate data power. However, as a format for assembling individual participants, they differ from, e.g., models of stakeholder engagement in policymaking, which place more emphasis on organised interests and may therefore be better placed to account for particular communities that are specifically affected by datafication. Drawing from a series of interviews with both organisers and participants of deliberative initiatives in the UK between 2020 and 2024, this paper will unpack these dynamics and propose further developments in the ongoing efforts to democratise datafication.

DCC09 Collectivity in the datafied society

PN 070 Collective Action in a Digitised Workplace: the challenge of solidarity

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Surveillance is enabled and normalised through the ubiquity of digital platforms in our day-to-day lives. Our digital lives are highly individualised, and our experiences of technology-enabled surveillance are not necessarily

experienced mutually. Instead, they are linked to our individual identities, and can vary along lines of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, and nationality. They carry connotations of asymmetrical power relations, and surveillance scholars have argued by focussing on the technological means by which surveillance is enabled, we are overlooking the individual, embodied experience of being scrutinised. Furthermore, the implementation of technologies of identification, analysis, and control have largely bypassed democratic processes, leaving citizens to experience scrutiny from governmental institutions, corporations, and from fellow citizens with little opportunity for effective opposition. The workplace is one arena in which this process has taken place. The problems of workplace surveillance have been acknowledged by trade union leaders in reports such as 'I'll Be Watching You: A Report on Workplace Monitoring' (TUC 2018), and the ensuing campaign which highlights the problems presented by Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the workplace. However, as yet, there has not been a substantive collective union response to the challenges presented by surveillance in the workplace. In a time of marked increase in trade union action, there is little attention in public discourse to the role that workplace surveillance plays in identifying, monitoring, and controlling trade union activists. The levels of control that are enabled in a highly scrutinised workplace means that workers' ability to organise is more dependent upon their relationship with their management. This in turn has led to uneven development across workplaces, where workers organising in more antagonistic environments encounter more opportunities for their activities to be controlled. This paper draws on three case studies to explore some of these concerns. Using semi-structured interviews with 40 trade union activists and analysis of 80 documents, it explores the intersection of the need to understand the individualised nature of workplace surveillance and the challenge this poses to collective identity. This tension is drawn out in the findings and it is suggested that the ensuing response from trade union activists can be understood as a form of alienation. In the digitised workplace, alienation from the self, which can be broadly understood within a Marxist framework, occurs when the digital technology is imposed in an undemocratic fashion which leaves the worker powerless to enact autonomy within their workplace. In this paper, it is also suggested that the highly individualised nature of the harms enabled by some of those technologies also produce in workers an alienation from both their trade union comrades and from the discourses of trade union solidarity.

DCC09 Collectivity in the datafied society

PN 071 'Prove you are human': Collective resistance to facial recognition technology

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In December 2022, the Dutch College voor de Rechten van de Mens (the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, an independent institute in charge of monitoring human rights in the country) found that it is "plausible" that the anti-cheating software used in most Dutch universities to invigilate remote examination during the Covid-19 pandemic discriminated against a student on account of her dark complexion (Damen, 2022). It now rests on the university, accused of deploying software that discriminates against non-White people, to prove otherwise. The case has brought to the public debate the potential discrimination aftereffects of biometric technology—that is, technology that enables the measurement and statistical analysis of people's unique physical and/or behavioral features. Today, a variety of biometric digital tools perform identity verification and/or policing. Examples include the anti-cheating software mentioned above, but also facial recognition cameras installed in public space, including stadiums, airports, squares, and schools. These tools generate data that result in real-time decision-making and/or monitoring, thus exercising regulatory power (hence "regulatory data infrastructure"). They take up functions that were once largely performed by humans and pertained almost exclusively to governmental agencies and public administrations. They empower an emerging mode of governance – "governance by data infrastructure" – that elevates regulatory data infrastructure to the preferred mode of governance of complexity. Paraphrasing Easterling (2016: 11), we can see these digital tools as "the overt point of contact and access" of governance by data infrastructure, making visible "the rules governing the space of everyday life". While facial recognition systems are mostly experienced at the individual level, since 2020 attempts at articulating a popular response to this intrusive technology have multiplied. They have taken the form of campaigning, petitions, as well as strategic litigation. For example, the Reclaim Your Face campaign is a pan-European initiative targeting European institutions and advocating a ban of biometric software in public space (ReclaimYourFace, 2020). This paper investigates the emergence of collective resistance to the advancement of facial recognition technology in public space from the vantage point of critical data studies and political sociology. It deploys a combination of qualitative document analysis, interviewing and co-design workshops in Amsterdam and Brussels, where the proposed EU AI Act is in the workings. The paper has two aims. First, it investigates how people, both experts and low-skills users, make sense of an intrusive technology like facial recognition, and the embedded socio-cultural meanings subtending to it. Second, it investigates how collective responses to the threat of facial recognition technology emerge, focusing on action repertoires, coalition building, and efforts at "translating" the complex issues at stake to make them actionable. In so doing, the paper contributes to our understanding of resistance efforts surrounding biometrics technology, illuminating how individual encounters with the technology become collective experiences.

DCC09 Collectivity in the datafied society

PN 072 'Rescuing' data justice? Mobilising the collective in responses to datafication

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The growing focus on the broader societal implications of datafication has elevated questions of social justice in line with a concern for data justice as a framework for response. However, what this means in practice and how it is approached is greatly varied. This paper draws on research conducted over several years for the ERC-funded project DATAJUSTICE to critically examine how data justice is being advanced. To do this, the paper outlines activities within three key domains for the advancement of data justice: 1) technology; 2) policy; and 3) civil society. Across these domains we have seen a flurry of activity that has sought to account for and respond to the complex and manifold ways in which datafication shapes life chances and human flourishing. This includes, for example, fairness-in-technology initiatives, the assertion of data rights, and the creation of data and AI ethics guidelines. Whilst such efforts have been significant for contending with key implications of emerging technologies, the paper makes the case that dominant responses to datafication and its injustices have tended to favour a translation of justice that privileges processes of individualisation and marketisation. Moreover, it makes the case that data justice in this context serves to secure a (neoliberal) hegemony in the advancement of data-driven technologies in society. In light of this, the paper draws on Gerald Cohen's (2008) notion of 'rescuing justice' as a way to assert an alternative vision for data justice that centres collectivity and solidarity. It does so by considering two key traditions in scholarship on justice: the Marxist/socialist tradition that understands justice as critique; and the feminist tradition that understands justice as empowerment. Central to both of these traditions is an emphasis on engaging with existing social relations and the structural conditions against which injustices are experienced. In this context, the advancement of data justice needs to account for the way technology is embedded in wider power dynamics and the avenues through which such power dynamics can be challenged. To illustrate this, the paper draws on examples from key areas of public life that have historically been central to struggles for social justice, including work, welfare, policing and migration. Research on developments in these areas suggest that a meaningful engagement with data justice requires us to go beyond technology and to mobilise solidarity based on collective experiences as they are currently lived.

DCC10 Living and dying with digital platforms

PP 0481 From bliss to burden: An ethnographic inquiry into how individual, material and social obstacles to digital wellbeing shape everyday life

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Finding and maintaining a balanced digital wellbeing is a practice fraught with ambivalences that go beyond individual control. To date, a fluid understanding is missing of how maintaining a sense of digital wellbeing cuts through multiple (digitized) facets of everyday life. Therefore, drawing from an ongoing ethnographic study (June 2022–September 2024) with sixteen adults in [omitted for peer review], this study disentangles social, material, and individual obstacles experienced in day-to-day life that hinder and/or foster digital wellbeing. We put forward a relational approach to contextualize complexities and disentangle the tensions limiting the often overestimated individual agency to reach a desired digital wellbeing. To examine the obstacles encountered when balancing (dis) connectivity in the context of maintaining everyday life, we question (1) how these obstacles are shaped by social, material and individual dimensions, and materialize, (2) how an individual is able to deal with an obstacle that cuts through these dimensions, and (3) what these experiences tell us about the mutual shaping of digital technology and everyday life. The results show how the obstacles to digital wellbeing are interrelated, existing within and outside of digital networks, laying bare the tensions that cut across social relations, digital devices, infrastructure, and spaces. In a first instance, our results emphasize an individuals' position within their vast networks and contexts, held together, to various extents, by digital ties. These ties, embedded within responsibilities and expectations, play a role in organizing and maintaining everyday routines, which in turn shape with who, and what, a person is digitally (dis) connected to. Second, the results show that these social, material and individual contexts impact a person's ability and desire to disconnect, as some disconnection would entail falling behind, not meeting expectations, and would create a significant amount of turbulence for the individual and their surrounding relations. Particularly, within the maintenance of everyday life, emotional and caring responsibilities, as well as certain infrastructure, and conflicting expectations, limited the ability and desire to disconnect. Third, individuals used discourses of addiction, gamification and cynicism, raising the question whether such internalized mindsets of individualized responsibility may obscure feelings reflecting a deeper lack of control over structural factors. We therefore propose the concept of 'repressed agency' that does not deny individual agency, but acknowledges how agency is consistently constrained and dependent on specific contexts and social relations in which people operate. The concept is aimed to capture the

plurality and entwinement of material, social and individual obstacles, to also go beyond individual-centric solutions, and towards approaches that follow the collective networks of everyday life and digitization. The study advocates to care for a digital wellbeing that goes hand in hand with making more time and space to deal with everyday challenges, as well as provide the tools to re-imagine digitized social networks that support an equal reproduction of digitized everyday life.

DCC10 Living and dying with digital platforms

PP 0482 Digital cocooning and its challenges: People with eating disorders regulation personal connections on social media

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Psychological research on social media and mental wellbeing has observed positive implications of social connectivity and negatives of social comparisons, including on body image (e.g. Appel et al 2020). Critical media studies has focused on how platforms push engagement and argued that discourses and practices on regulating or disconnecting from social media use are individualistic, entrepreneurial and not addressing the responsibilities of platforms (e.g. Baym, 2020; Kaun, 2021; Syvertsen, 2023). We conducted online interviews with people with eating disorders (EDs) (n = 31), recruited through a UK charity and university, on positive and negative experiences with social media. The thematic analysis identified clear mental health positives of what we call digital cocooning, one-to-one or group interaction with close, supportive, real-life friends and family using messaging apps. The participants especially appreciated the affordances of the apps for different modes of communication, such as chat, voicenotes and memes, enabling social interaction when direct conversations were too mentally demanding. However, participants related that connecting with larger network of acquaintances on traditional social media (Instagram, Facebook) provoked feelings of anxiety, competitiveness and not belonging. Participants sought to regulate traditional social media use by limiting friends and occasionally deleting an app, but social and professional pressures and the standard scrolling through key apps made this challenging. Drawing on Turner's (2006) history of digital media we suggest that our split findings relate to the original Californian countercultural, liberal ideal of supporting interaction between like-minded people that evolved into the Silicon Valley, contemporary dominant libertarian ethos of competitive, entrepreneurial networking and deregulation. This highlights that there are different social connections, with not only psychological but historical and political dimensions and affirms the media studies call for regulating platforms to make space for alternatives modes of connectivity (also Livingstone et al 2021). There are also different disconnections; rather than being only individualistic and entrepreneurial, the supportive cocooning of the vulnerable users with EDs sought to evade as well as shared therapeutic-type support to adapt to (Illouz, 2008) the prevailing entrepreneurial connectivity that caused them distress.

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DCC10 Living and dying with digital platforms

PP 0483 Social structure in times of social disruption: Young adults' digital lives during a pandemic

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The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic cleared the need to address people's overall well-being (Lemenager et al., 2021), as it led to widespread disruption of social structures (Dow et al., 2021). Just as it happened in Portugal, starting in March 2020 (Gomes et al., 2022), worldwide lockdowns arose as key strategies to contain the health crisis. As specific contexts influence digital usages, possibly (re)producing structures and hierarchies, it is crucial to

accentuate how people's digital usages surpass the consumption of technology, thus being also consumptions of language, thought, feelings and ways of thinking (Lupton, 2016). Digital sociability processes tend to be presented and discussed as a general unifying characteristic of young adults (Mestre-Bach et al., 2020). Even though COVID-19 inspired prolific academic production, there is a lack of solid research regarding such a generation, particularly in the Portuguese context. Although academia has tackled digital media prevalence during the pandemic, particularly social media platforms, a significant portion of it discussed the role of those platforms in dis/misinformation (Goel & Gupta, 2020). Our perspective converges with an emphasis on youth studies, grappling with the pivotal delineation of social generations. The validity of categorising young adulthood as an independent social generation is often questioned, even beyond the specification of age parameters (Vieira, 2018). Youth is inherently shaped and manipulated by social constructs and not an universal simplified culture. By conceptualising young adulthood as a category between 18 and 30 years old, this study explores the following research question: were social media apps prevalent in structuring young adults' lives during the pandemic? This quantitative-based exploratory study employed a method of tracking mobile apps' usage over 90 days. A specialised external entity tracked a convenience sample of 342 young adults living in Portugal, with a margin of error of ±5% for a 95% confidence level (z-score 1.96). Descriptive statistical procedures were applied to explore data. 40 mobile apps were tracked and later categorised between: social media and messaging; health and well-being; self-tracking; dating; fitness; and games. Results showed new evidence on how rooted social media and messaging apps were in young adults' lives during this social and health disorder, as all 342 young adults of the sample used an app of such category during the study. Overshadowing the remaining categories, social media and messaging apps had higher numbers of total visits (1777335), average visits per user (519), average pageviews per user (2840) and average minutes a day per user (65.18 minutes). The 8 most used apps of the sample were all social media and messaging apps, while 6 of those had more than 100 total users. This study addressed the connection between young adults and digital socialisation, highlighting the social structuring role of social media and messaging apps in times of social disruption. Future work is encouraged, both to understand how young adults' lives are digitally socially structured even beyond pandemics, but also to consolidate the body of work that addresses young adulthood as a generation of its own.

DCC10 Living and dying with digital platforms

PP 0484 Digital cultures of death: Domestication, resistance and non-use of social media in Italy

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Digital communication platforms allow people to openly share their grief or remember those who have died. At the same time, interaction with the digital traces of those who are gone is considered a form of continuing bonds with the dead. However, the use of digital communication platforms in mourning practices is still controversial, and literature on online death reveals a considerable amount of resistance among people to using it. In the paper (a very first draft analysis was presented at a previous Ecrea conference), we explore these resistances in greater depth, relying on the analysis of the data collected through 400 in-depth interviews and a representative survey on the Italian population, including both digital communication platforms user and non-users (Authors, 2022).

Moving from a socio-constructivist and non-platform/media-centric perspective, our research questions were: Why do we use digital communication platforms when mourning? How do we domesticate them in mourning practices? How have digital communication platforms shaped the way we mourn?

First of all, our data suggests that the use/non-use of digital communication platforms for practices related to mourning and remembering depends primarily on how users have generally "domesticated" each digital platform in their daily lives.

As already highlighted by the literature, as far as non-use is concerned, many resistances are connected to some of the affordances of digital platforms – such as algorithmic content curation (Lambert et al., 2018), datafication processes (Lagerkvist, 2019), the processes of space-time dislocation permitted by online environments (Brubaker et al., 2013) – and from the other side many resistances are connected to possible uses oriented towards manipulative self-representation (Sabra, 2017) and emotional capitalization of the user (Marwick & Ellison, 2012).

Uses instead depend on platforms' affordances (i.e., instant messaging apps are widely used while social network sites are stigmatized) and the various stages of the loss process: the most ritualized practices, like death announcements and condolences, are relatively approved (Murrell et al., 2021). Instead, displays of grief online and the interaction with the digital remains of the dead are very controversial.

In conclusion, we can say that digital communication platforms have triggered processes of the mediatization of some of the rites and practices connected to death. However, they do not seem, at least in the Italian context, to be used to maintain ties with the deceased actively, and people don't seem willing to build a digital afterlife (consistently

with international research: Brubaker et al., 2019; Pitsillides & Wallace, 2021, Morse 2023) as instead stated by the more alarmed public discourse on the application of AI technologies to digital footprints of the deceased.

DCC10 Living and dying with digital platforms

PP 0485 The temporal logic of media practices: A study of Facebook mourning timeline

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Since Harold Innis's (1951/2008) work on the relations between time, space, and the media, communication scholars perceive time as a fundamental component that shapes and distinguishes different forms of communication. At the same time, media technologies themselves play a fundamental role in structuring, shaping, and organizing time and temporal experiences. Personal media technologies, such as cameras and diaries, have helped individuals keep track of time and remember important details and events, while mass media, such as the radio and television have established the collective memory of societies and created a "common public time" (Scannell, 2014).

In recent years, researchers began exploring new media technologies, specifically social media platforms, and their temporal relations and implications. The concept of "social media time" (Kaun & Stiernstedt, 2014) considers how specific media afford specific temporalities and organize their users' time. Facebook, much like other social media platforms, builds on the principles of newness, immediacy, and "liveness." Thus, it facilitates a temporal experience of flow and rapid change, encouraging users to feed the constant stream with new posts rather than engage with older posts and maintain a sense of continuity.

Kaun and Stiernstedt (2014) place a strong emphasis on technological affordances. However, they also acknowledged the importance of users' perceptions and negotiations of affordances. They conclude that Facebook integrates "a multiplicity of temporal layers". Similarly, Poell (2020) observes that "media do not have an inherent temporality but engender a multiplicity of temporalities". He suggests a relational approach that highlights the interconnections between users' practices, media infrastructures, and political-cultural institutions.

This paper aims to develop the relational approach suggested by Poell (2020) by introducing the original concept of *temporal logic*. The concept of temporal logic seeks to capture the specific timing of media practices and the reasoning behind it. What prompts users to create and publish posts at specific times and days? I am interested in the temporal trigger of media practices, the temporal frames and patterns, and their meaning.

The context I look at in the current study is the context of Facebook mourning posts. My dataset comprises 40 cases of mourning and memorialization, spanning Facebook's three sub-platforms (15 Profiles, 10 Groups, and 15 Pages), for which I conducted ethnographic fieldwork over approximately three years (June 2018 to March 2021).

A detailed analysis indicates that users tend to post mourning-related content at specific times and on specific dates. These include biographical dates (such as birthdays, wedding anniversaries, and death anniversaries), national dates (like Memorial Day), dates of religious and cultural significance (such as *Shiva* and *Shloshim* in the Jewish tradition), and platform-generated dates (like Friendiversary and 'On This Day' in Facebook's Memories feature). This timeframe is hybrid, combining different temporal layers and encompassing or merging important events at both individual and public levels, as well as offline and online events.

The proposed concept of temporal logic illuminates the convergence of various time layers onto a single media platform and fosters a deeper appreciation of new rituals and forms of meaning.

DCC11 AI infrastructures and sustainability

PN 079 A practice approach to AI infrastructures and sustainability

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The increasing spread and use of communicative Artificial Intelligence ("communicative AI"), as for instance in the form of generative AI systems, presents societies with various challenges (Solaiman et al., 2023) and media and communication research with the need for new research agendas (Guzman & Lewis, 2020). One urgent challenge is the matter of sustainability – in the sense of socio-ecologically just design, implementation, and use of the infrastructures through which generative AI constitutes itself. While in the Machine Learning (ML) community fields of research have been established focusing on social as well environmental justice implications of generative AI (Barocas et al., 2019; Bender et al., 2021), a comprehensive approach to the complex socio-ecological consequences that are inherent to this form of communication (Crawford, 2021) as well as theorization from a media and communication perspective is still missing. Using sociological practice theory (Reckwitz, 2002) and its implementation in media and communication studies (Couldry, 2012; Kannengießer & Kubitschko, 2017), we argue that practice theory is an inspiring approach to acknowledge the role of actors and their contexts in shaping the infrastructures of AI, that is, examining the practices of actors involved in building and maintaining generative AI models.

hardware, data submission and computing facilities, but also in implementing, regulating and using generative AI. Broadening the concept of infrastructuring (Pipek & Wulf, 2009), we argue that a practice approach not only helps in analyzing how AI infrastructures become established, but also reveals potentials to shape AI infrastructures more sustainably. We will present a problem-oriented research matrix systematizing sustainability (economic, ecological and environmental) impacts along the life cycle of generative AI systems. Based on this matrix, we suggest a media and communication research programme on the sustainability of AI technologies along three dimensions: media and communication research investigating 1) socio-ecological effects of automation in digital media from an infrastructure perspective, 2) practices of establishing such infrastructures in their respective contexts (appropriation, development, organizational contexts etc.) 3) as well as imaginations of AI in relation to matters of socio-ecological justice. Taking a practice approach to AI and sustainability thus helps not only to analyze and understand current phenomena in this field, but also stresses the relevance of deconstructing the norms which materialize in current AI development and implementation.

DCC11 AI infrastructures and sustainability

PN 080 Give the cloud a fish...: datanatures and the green extractive frontiers of aquaculture

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This presentation will introduce the unexpected material impacts and implications of digital "cloud" technologies by analysing their use and application on relatively novel (blue) terrain: aquaculture. Fish farming has seen a recent "cloud" and AI boom, as companies seek to innovate their cultivation and extraction measures by applying data-driven and machine-learning technologies to their operations. At the same time, the material components of the cloud – especially data centres – are increasingly being looked to as circular solutions for industrial activities, as their energy-intensive facilities are used as thermal and electrical supports for fish farming operations. As "data farms" and "fish farms" thus coalesce, and drawing from theories of environmental and "elemental" media, this article confronts the aquatic politics of digital infrastructure as it materially and epistemologically re-shapes the planet, its ecologies, and its food systems. Using critical discourse analysis, this presentation will unpack the industrial literature and arguments surrounding the growing overlaps between digital infrastructures, water politics, and the management of aquaculture. Specifically, I will focus on three areas of application: 1) the use of cloud and AI technologies by fish farming corporations; 2) the employment of data centre electricity infrastructures and climate systems in integrated ways with aquaculture projects; and 3) the monitoring and "streaming" of farming operations remotely via data-driven and video technologies. By each of these mechanisms, digital technologies are ordering the planet towards the production of value for fish harvesting, demonstrating the increasing integration of digital infrastructure, energy systems, and more-than-human ecologies towards "sustainable" practices. In particular, the energetic processes of the atmosphere, far from existing as a metaphorical "cloud," are being integrated into the production of living beings and the management of the life-sustaining and harvesting infrastructures of aquaculture, from solar harvesting to climate management. These forms of atmospheric capture towards extractive operations demonstrate the increasing complexities of what critical geographers and agrarian scholars refer to as "green extractivism" by companies proclaiming to solve the planetary challenges of the climate crisis with expanding and networked frontiers of material extraction. In the case of digitalised aquaculture, from data farms to fish farms, these modes of extractivism are not only expanding but intensifying – deeper into the hydrologies and ecologies of environments globally, representing the amplified stakes of understanding how, why, and where digital technologies are being employed across the diverse geographies of emerging "sustainable" supply chains.

DCC11 AI infrastructures and sustainability

PN 081 Imagining spaces of governing AI infrastructures

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With the advent of Generative AI products like ChatGPT or Bard rely heavily on cloud computing power and is exacerbating data centers' environmental impact. For example, Microsoft's water consumption, needed for the cooling of its data centres, has dramatically risen to 6.4 million m3 in 2022. In part, this can be attributed to ChatGPT, which runs on Microsoft Azure. Increasingly scholars are exploring the relationship between the role of new technological capabilities at scale and the intensification in the need for natural resources – looking at the harms related to technologies' material infrastructure (Hogan, 2015; Bender et al., 2021; Pasek, Vaughan and Starosielski, 2023), both in terms of consumption and a site for political struggle (Brodie and Velkova, 2021). The internet policy, engineering and governance communities are slowly coming to grips with the environmental harms of the technology, but the sustainability solutions that circulate in response are often narrow in scope. Next to a move towards renewable energy, the technology industry sustainability efforts aim at making its own and other industries more efficient. The centrality of the efficiency logic in the proposed solutions to minimize the environmental impact is according to

the Jevons paradox counter-productive (Alcott, 2005), in a capitalist society efficiency gains will lead to an overall increase in consumption and production. We should rather be thinking in terms of limits, quotas or rationing. To explore what it could look like to govern AI's underlying infrastructure in a framework of limits, reduction, and redistribution, we held several workshops with civil society. This paper will offer insights into how civil society imagines spaces of governance.

DCC11 AI infrastructures and sustainability

PN 082 Data forests: navigating the state's infrastructural power in environmental governance

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Public actors wield a significant influence in data governance, shaping behaviours through regulatory frameworks, infrastructure development, and decisions on data collection goals. While the impact of state influence is acknowledged, the precise meaning of state power in the context of data governance remains elusive. This ambiguity is further complicated by the unique dynamics introduced by the context and content of data, particularly concerning information about natural environments, land, atmosphere, plants, and animals, which pose distinct ethical challenges. This paper focuses on these complexities by examining the public governance of information about natural environments, focusing on forests.

Grounded in Michael Mann's infrastructural power framework, this study aims to unravel the diverse dimensions of state authority in shaping and controlling digital infrastructures. Infrastructural power is characterized as the state's capacity to penetrate civil society and effectively implement political decisions across its territory. It emphasizes the state's role in coordinating and centrally organizing society, particularly through its infrastructure. Mann's framework underlines the state's capability not just in coercion, but also in positively organizing and mobilizing citizen activities.

Through an exploration of the interplay between digital policies and forest governance, the paper investigates the case of Polish forestry and forest data, a comprehensive two-year empirical study, including over 30 interviews with practitioners, experts, policymakers, and activists, observations and systematic document analsyis. The Polish forestry sector presents a particularly intriguing case. The State Forests, a public entity, manages over a quarter of Poland's land area and boasts a robust data infrastructure and procedures. This active engagement in data collection serves multiple purposes: forest management, reporting to international bodies, influencing climate policies, and more. However, forest data in Poland is not without controversy, marked by conflicts and tensions, particularly from activists. These disputes are intertwined with significant political debates surrounding logging and environmental protection, which were central issues in recent elections.

Analysing Polish case of forest data from the lenses of infrastructural power, this paper introduces two analytical starting points: firstly, examining infrastructural elements in forest data systems, emphasizing institutional aspects of data governance, organizational structures, and interrelations. This includes centralization struggles, data standardization, political conflicts, and an understanding of the roles of key state agencies. Secondly, the paper explores how data infrastructures are utilized in environmental management, shedding light on what state power signifies in shaping decisions and instigating environmental conflicts.

The argument posits that incorporating Mann's concept of power into the realm of data governance reveals how the state's organizational, regulatory, and control capacities extend into the digital sphere, influencing environmental management through data-driven decision-making. This analytical framework facilitates an in-depth exploration of the state's role in governing data, a dimension often pivotal yet not centrally discussed in conversations about datafication and data governance. Focusing on the state, Mann's nuanced categorization of different power, enables a systematic and comprehensive examination of state influence in the data landscape. By intertwining the complexities of technology, state authority, and natural environments, this paper aims to spark broader discussions on the evolving role of the state in the governance of digital landscapes.

DCC11 AI infrastructures and sustainability

PN 083 Sustainability insights in ai-driven marketing agencies: An infrastructural approach

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In recent years, market research, which has always been fundamental to monitor, understand and predict consumer behaviour, has increasingly shifted its focus to sustainability, which has arguably become a central value for both producers and consumers. Accordingly, this research aims to look at the socio-technical construction of marketing insights on sustainability by using data gathered during a participant observation carried out in a digital marketing agency specialised in collecting data from social media platforms. To do so, I argue that conceptualising digital marketing agencies as infrastructures allows us to look at them not as a neutral background, but as relational

concepts which embed specific values and constraints (Slota & Bowker, 2017). Specifically, I will follow Kjellberg and colleagues' (2019) work on market infrastructures as arrangements that supports market exchanges.

The research is rooted in a 7-month long participant observation in a marketing agency renamed Predicto, which collects consumers' data from social media platforms and analyses them using "self-developed" machine learning algorithms and I will show that data collection and analysis processes are conditioned by the values and constraints of the infrastructure.

The research follows a conceptualization of marketing agencies as infrastructures. Viewing marketing agencies through an infrastructural lens allows us to see them not as neutral backgrounds, but as infrastructures with a predetermined set of values and constraints that shape and influence the way one thinks and acts within them (Slota & Bowker, 2017). Moreover, by considering marketing agencies as knowledge-based infrastructures (Araujo & Mason, 2021), we can look at their production and circulation of information for the market. In this view, the presentation will argue that processes of data collection and analysis, in addition to the inherent biases in AI-generated results, are also conditioned by the values and constraints of the infrastructure.

While the chapter will primarily focus on a theoretical conceptualisation, it will also make use of empirical vignettes to illustrate how the marketing agency studied worked on the topic of sustainability. These elements will allow for a study of the sociotechnical creation of marketing insights on sustainability in the age of AI, illustrating them as outputs of a market infrastructure.

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DCC12 Digital placemaking and national digital cultures

PP 0593 Formation of social norms in location-based meso-spaces: A study of WeChat neighborhood groups during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown

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Formed through communication processes, social norms play a crucial role in shaping individuals' behaviors. While instant messaging (IM) groups are nowadays prominent spaces for daily communication, we have only little knowledge of how norms function within them. In particular, large, heterogenous IM groups, which are usually created for a certain goal and in which members are connected by weak ties, are conceptualized as *meso-spaces* that reside "between the private and public realms" (Tenenboim and Kligler-Vilenchik, 2020: 577). Because groups are closed but membership still extends beyond "trusted ties", norms are ever more essential.

To successfully navigate the simultaneously private and public character of meso-spaces, members need clear guidelines. However, we have limited knowledge about how social norms emerge within meso-spaces. To address this gap, the study examines norm formation mechanisms in WeChat neighborhood groups during the Covid-19 lockdown in Shanghai. In the spring of 2022, Shanghai government implemented a citywide lockdown, when WeChat neighborhood groups became an essential communication channel for quarantined residents to seek help. We conceptualize WeChat neighborhood groups as *location-based meso-spaces*, serving as both a public sphere for discussing public issues and a closed domain facilitating interpersonal communication. Specifically, we ask: *(1) what social norms emerged in WeChat neighborhood groups during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in Shanghai and how were these formed? (2) how do technological affordances and sociotechnical contexts shape norm formation in WeChat neighborhood groups?*

To answer the questions, we conducted semi-structured interviews, combined with walk-through protocols of participants' chat logs to identify what social norms emerge and how they are formed in these location-based IM groups. We recruited twenty participants from nineteen neighborhood groups by snowball sampling. They were a member of at least one WeChat neighborhood group, with the number of members ranging from 30 to 150 for residential building groups and to up to 500 for large neighborhood groups. We diversified the samples on age, gender and the neighborhood types they lived in.

After three rounds of coding, we identified six norms: keeping solidarity, reciprocity, regulating intimacy, maintaining social harmony, well-considered information care, and showing tolerance. We find that the formation of norms was dependent on the communicative processes that were afforded by IM groups, while emerging norms were also rooted in shared moral norms among group members. Moreover, the location-based nature of the group lead to in-group dynamics mapping onto real-world neighborhood relationships. Therefore, participants tended to align with the "group prototype" for being a good neighbor. Overall, our findings highlight the significant roles of

technological affordances of IM platforms, in-group dynamics, and the overarching social environment in shaping norm formation within IM groups. Our study aims for a nuanced and cohesive understanding of how a set of norms is formed, and pay attention to how norms are shaped by the platform and the sociotechnical context. Moreover, by conceptualizing IM neighborhood groups as location-based meso-spaces, we expand the scope of meso-space research beyond news-related and interest-oriented groups.

DCC12 Digital placemaking and national digital cultures

PP 0594 The implications of COVID-19 pandemic for use-by-proxy in digital inequalities among internet users in Slovenia

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Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has restructured social and technological opportunities for people to take advantage of the large-scale digitalization that emerged as part of the response to managing the health and social crisis after the virus outbreak. Studies show that the pandemic encouraged digital engagement of different population groups. However, evidence also suggests that pre-pandemic disparities among internet users have been exacerbated at all three levels of digital inequalities (internet access, skills and uses, tangible outcomes) during the pandemic. This study aims to assess the impact of the pandemic on use-by-proxy in digital inequalities among internet users. Use-by-proxy is a practice whereby users with limited internet skills and experiences ask others to do things online on their behalf. Based on the extended model of compound and sequential digital exclusion (MCSDE; Petrovčič et. al, 2022), this study compares how the engagement in use-by-proxy mediated the sequential pathways between the three levels of digital inequalities among internet users in Slovenia before and during the pandemic.

Methods

We used cross-sectional data from the 2018 and 2022 waves of the Slovenian Public Opinion Survey. In both years, participants aged 18+ years were selected from the Central Register of Population using two-stage random sampling. We analysed the representative subsamples of respondents who were internet users (N_{2018} = 814, N_{2022} = 802). The exact same survey questions, adapted from prior literature, were used in both surveys. Path and multi-group analysis (MGA) were conducted to assess the validity of the extended MCSDE.

Results

Path analyses indicated that the extended MCSDE had an adequate fit in both 2018 and 2022. In both years, internet access had a positive effect on internet skills, internet uses, and use-by-proxy. Internet skills had a positive effect on internet uses and a negative effect on use-by-proxy, which in turn had a positive impact on internet outcomes but no significant effect on internet uses. In both years, internet uses positively affected internet outcomes. Importantly, the MGA showed only two significant changes of path estimates: during the pandemic the effect of internet access on internet uses was smaller, while the negative effect of internet skills on use-by-proxy was stronger than before the pandemic.

Conclusion

This is the first study to empirically assess the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sequential paths that connect use-by-proxy with three levels of digital inequalities. The findings indicate that government efforts aimed at reducing digital inequalities during the pandemic did not diminish the role of use-by-proxy. In fact, internet users with lower skills were significantly more likely to rely on others during the pandemic, while the remaining factors and consequences stayed largely unchanged. This suggests that use-by-proxy should continue to be an important aspect for digital inequalities research and inclusion programs in the post-pandemic world.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, digital inequalities, internet users, time comparison, use-by-proxy

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DCC12 Digital placemaking and national digital cultures

PP 0595 Platformized identities: How TikTok's digital nomads assimilate, shape, and disrupt online personas

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This study continues my exploration of digital nomad (DN) identities through the lens of communication science, focusing on their self-presentation and identity negotiation on the digital platform of TikTok. DNs, a group of mobile

professionals who blend work and leisure in pursuit of location independence, have gained prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their significant presence on TikTok, a platform that also saw a surge in popularity during this period, provides a rich context for examining how they shape their identities to appeal to young audiences. I employ a mixed-methods approach to construct a framework for analyzing how DNs assimilate their online identities on TikTok. This involves examining their identity processing and responses to threats through the lens of Breakwell's identity process theory. My findings reveal that DNs often depict personal, controversial life events as catalysts for reassessing their careers and lifestyles. They leverage TikTok's meme culture as a space for coping and adaptation, showcasing extensive travel content as a route to healing. This aligns with Breakwell's theory of identity formation through coping and underscores how TikTok facilitates the assimilation of the DN identity following major life transitions. Furthermore, I explore the role of uncertainty, a salient feature in the construction and maintenance of DN identities. Travel, a key aspect of the DN lifestyle, is framed in my study as a representation of uncertainty. This narrative tool allows DNs to navigate potential identity threats, such as burnout or poor leadership, that challenge the autonomy and self-efficacy central to their identity. This study enhances our understanding of the DN lifestyle and online identity as emerging social phenomena. It underscores TikTok's role in personal and professional identity transitions and provides perspective on the fluidity of online identity formation within social networks. The analysis also sheds light on the interplay between identity, risk, and coping strategies in the context of digital nomadism, contributing to the broader discourse on identity threat and coping mechanisms.

DCC12 Digital placemaking and national digital cultures

PP 0596 Generative AI and the Swedish history that never was

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In recent years, the development of generative AI has been rapid as generative platforms such as ChatGPT, LLaMA and Bard and text-to-image models such as DALL-E, Midjourney and Stable Diffusion are increasingly permeating people's everyday lives. In many creative and artistic fields, generative AI has been perceived as a threat due to its advanced capabilities of producing realistic text and image material. As a result, Critical AI Studies, focusing on evaluating the ethical, political, and philosophical consequences of algorithmic tools and systems, can be described as a field in formation (Raley & Rhee 2023).

While disruptive in various fields, including higher education, recent scholarship suggests that generative AI can also offer new opportunities (Wilde 2023), not least in media history. As Offert and Bell (2020) argue, generative AI can be useful for tracing tropes and patterns in historical datasets. The generative models operate by statistical induction and as such probabilistic image and text production mirrors the features of its training data. Drawing on this, generative AI can be used to explore the visual and textual characteristics of images and texts produced during a particular historical epoch.

Sweden is a country where modernity is often said to have arrived late. Around the turn of the century, there was still a low rate of urbanization and industrialization. During the 1920s and the 1930s, social engineers, public intellectuals and politicians on the left were soon to embrace modernity, welcoming progressive social and employment reforms, and the launch of various urban projects (Widenheim 2002). This paper uses generative AI to explore patterns in digitized Swedish photographic collections from the 1930s, as well as historiographical tropes and tendencies in the writing of Swedish history of the said period. Methodologically, our experiment, conducted within the framework of the ongoing digital humanities research project Modern Times, uses around 80,000 images from the repository DigitaltMuseum and 100 English-language history books and scholarly articles about Sweden during the 1930s as our training data. Such an investigation raises critical questions: what media historical source material has been digitized and preserved and whose life stories are told in these archival collections? What is it that generative AI sees, hears and perceives when historical images and history texts about the 1930s are used to produce novel images and texts? Accordingly, while the results of the experiment are yet to be analyzed, we hope to be able to shine light on what elements of history tend to be highlighted and neglected when AI generates a version of history. And, as Andreas Ervik has argued about generative AI, the unpredictability of the results is precisely "part of the intrigue" (Ervik 2023: 50).

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DCC12 Digital placemaking and national digital cultures

PP 0597 Negotiating AI(s) futures: Stakeholders strategic communication shaping AI imaginaries in Germany, the US, and China

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Utopian and dystopian visions regularly dominate the public discourse on artificial intelligence (AI) (Cave & Dihal 2019). These debates are increasingly focused on how AI (re)consolidates existing discrimination and social inequalities. While AI is now routinely treated as self-evident (Suchman 2023), it is still very much under formation as a sociotechnical phenomenon. Public communication and discursive framing hereby have considerable influence, being important elements of social (dis)ordering, and potentially both disrupting and reproducing prevailing social organization and its control.

This paper builds on the concept of imaginaries to study how AI is being negotiated between stakeholders in the US, China, and Germany. The concept of sociotechnical imaginaries defined as "collectively held, institutionally stabilized, and publicly performed visions of desirable futures, animated by shared understandings of forms of social life and social order" (Jasanoff, 2015, p. 4) has proven useful in studying the interplay of discourses, institutional and technological developments. The concept offers a constructive framework to question the role of different stakeholders in shaping imaginaries around AI and the often disruptive negotiation processes around different desirable futures of AI and social orders.

Therefore, this paper addresses producers of AI-related communication, based on interviews with AI experts in industry, government, academia, media, and civil society from three leading countries in AI development (10–15 per country): USA, Germany, and China. While several studies have analysed national, industrial, and political visions of digital media and automation (Felt & Öchsner, 2019; Mager, 2017), there is a lack of research analysing the negotiation of imaginations on potential futures of AI between stakeholders of AI development. Additionally, there is often a strong national focus due to funding and regulation of AI; however, national perception is not a homogenous point of view but rather a controversial discursive construction process.

The qualitative analysis reveals stark differences across countries and regions. The transcribed interviews were analysed employing both situational analysis (Clarke, 2019) and critical discourse analysis (Wodak, 2015) to map the relational development of imaginaries across stakeholder groups and major emerging AI imaginaries. The analysis highlights that firstly the negotiation of AI imaginaries does not necessarily occur across all stakeholder groups as the US and German discourses are localised in several geographic AI centres. Secondly, there is a strong co-orientation and networking between actors from the countries studied. Moving beyond specific stakeholders to question the processes of national and international negotiation on future AI imaginaries, the analysis reveals relevant intersections of imaginary building and political and sociotechnical agendas forming and disrupting current trajectories.

The analysis thus offers key results for understanding how AI as an object of public communication is actively negotiated between powerful stakeholders, based on data from the US, China, and Germany. As a result, the paper makes visible how discourses and strategic activities of stakeholders condense into widely shared sociotechnical imaginaries with societal implications. These imaginaries play a decisive role in shaping the future design of AI systems and their integration into society and thus social (dis)ordering in times of profound automation.

DCC13 Influencer, who? Heterogeneity in content creator culture

PN 102 Professionalised Networked Misogyny: Andrew Tate's Travelling Discourses among Estonian Influencers

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Over the last few years, former kickboxer Andrew Tate has gained immense global popularity on social media. Despite facing recent charges related to rape, human trafficking, and organised crime, Tate has amassed a large following, particularly for promoting misogynistic views and advocating violence against women and male supremacy (Das, 2022). Although popular and networked misogyny, incels, the manosphere and related conceptualisations have been well studied, Tate and other misogynists as (aspirational) influencers have received very little academic attention. A lot is at stake, however, as school teachers have reported a concerning rise in misogynist discourse among young boys who have been engaging with Tate's online content (Weale, 2023; Will, 2023). This study addresses the gap in research by conducting a discourse analysis of selected videos from Tate's account on Rumble. Additionally, social media content from Estonian (aspirational) influencers (n = 10) expressing misogynistic views will be analysed via a combination of standardised content analysis and discourse analysis. The study aims to

identify dominant narratives within Tate's content and assess whether and how Estonian influencers employ similar narratives and strategies to gain the audience's attention. Data collection and analysis will be conducted from January to April 2024. In the process, we will test the expectation of these influencers utilising 'travelling discourses' (Arnesen, Lahelma and Öhrn, 2008) of misogyny, which a network of influencers uses to gain followers. Additionally, we will explore how audience formation or perhaps even what can be referred to as 'audience grooming' is taking place, along with how this process is utilised for monetisation purposes. Preliminary screening analysis of Estonian influencers shows that misogynistic and ultra-masculine messages are used to gain attention and then monetise in the form of webinars, training plans, books, paid content, etc.Banet-Weiser (2018) has indicated that popular misogyny does not employ isolated or unique stances, but rather exists as a broad and interconnected structure. The results of this study are crucial for understanding the circulation of misogynistic content together with the dynamics between influencers and their audiences. By gaining insight into how these potential networks operate, the study contributes to understanding the professionalisation of networked misogyny. Without such understanding, we would be caught in an endless game of Whac-A-Mole, where the sanctioning of one misogynist influencer is swiftly followed by the emergence of another using similar discourse.

DCC13 Influencer, who? Heterogeneity in content creator culture

PN 103 "My Instagram is my portfolio": Being a content creator as a shortcut to creative industries

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The creator economy is an industry that has experienced exponential growth, fostered by the platformization of media industries and the consolidation of 'digital content creators' (Cunningham & Craig, 2021), a form of native social media entrepreneurs who make a living by creating and disseminating content on the internet. These content creators have originated social and cultural practices that have permeated other work spheres, shaping expectations and labour experiences. This phenomenon is called "influencer creep" (Bishop, 2023), defined as the adoption of microcelebrity practices (self-branding, optimization, and performance of authenticity) as an unavoidable side of building a professional identity. As previous scholarship has noted (Cotter, 2022; Duffy & Meisner, 2023), far from being a homogenous category, the label "content creator" is an umbrella term for many different profiles. The platforms used, the type/genre of content created, or the audience reached influences greatly on content creator's practices and experiences. Therefore, this study focuses on three different groups of content creators: gamers, lifestyle influencers, and digital cultural communicators. Our main aim is to identify the differences and commonalities in how these three groups perceive and experience the defining tenets of influencer creep, mainly self-branding practices, optimization and authenticity. In particular, our research aims to answer the following research questions: (a) What are the main motivations and expectations of different types of Spanish digital content creators regarding their careers? (b) How do they perceive and experience the defining tenets of influencer cultures? (c) What are their professional aspirations and future perspectives? To fulfill these aims, we draw upon in-depth interviews with 54 Spanish participants (18 from each group) in an aspirational phase of their careers. The interviews covered different topics regarding their work practices and aspirations and were qualitatively analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012; 2021).Our results indicate that participants started as content creators as an answer to the precarious and unstable labour context. Nevertheless, there is a consensus among the participants that digital media is volatile, and they have a hard time imagining working as content creators for a long time. Thus, we can see how influencer creep works in a double way: on the one hand, content creation is perceived as a shortcut into creative industries (i.e., the fashion industry, traditional media, or the videogame industry), connecting with imaginaries of flexibility, fulfillment, and passion. On the other hand, participants also believe that the experience, visibility, and skills acquired as content creators will be useful for these other professions. At the same time, we also identified differences among the three profiles analysed regarding how to deal with the showcase of their intimacy, their relationship with their followers, and their responses to the specific demands of each platform.

DCC13 Influencer, who? Heterogeneity in content creator culture

PN 104 Feeling the "influencer creep": How different professions embed influencers' practices to their work

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Similarly to macro-societal concepts like mediatization (Couldry & Hepp, 2017) and social media logic (van Dijk & Poell, 2013), scholars have started to describe a specific influencer-culture-borne process termed "influencer creep" (Bishop, 2023). The term fits under the umbrella of celebritization (Driessens, 2013: 653), "the meta-process involving changes in the nature of celebrity (or its democratization), and its social and cultural embedding (through its diversification and migration)". Influencer creep refers to how expectations, practices and norms that have been established within influencer culture have "crept" out into other professions and sectors. As media devices and media services are increasingly omnipresent (Paus-Hasebrink, Kulterer & Sinner, 2019), nearly all professions have

to accommodate self-branding, optimization and a performance of authenticity if they want to be represented in the media, participate in mediatized societies and benefit from attention economy (Goldhaber, 1997; Hendricks & Vestergaard, 2019). In other words, communication that takes place via social media platforms often follows the logic and "rules" of content that platforms have previously amplified, valued and rewarded as attention-worthy. Nearly all walks of life are feeling the effect of the "influencer creep", as we are slowly subjugated to the cultural expansion of microcelebrity promotional practices (Abidin, 2018).This study set out to understand how people adjust and navigate this rapidly changing sphere of professional communication, the perceived risks and opportunities, benefits and costs. From December 2023 to March 2024 I conduct 15 in-depth interviews with people who use social media professionally, but whose work is predominantly "elsewhere". Interviewees include Estonian teachers, politicians, lawyers, musicians, doctors, police officers, etc who have deliberately started using social media as the "augmented" part of their work. The interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis, and materials from the creative research task – draw your work, using AI tools for creating visuals – are analyzed using the socio-semiotic approach to the analysis of visual materials.Preliminary results point towards increasingly blurring boundaries between professional and personal, private and public. It comes with a perceived freedom of expression and a constant flow of positive feedback, but also burnout, self-doubt, facing harassment and online incivility. Social media has amplified the achieved (by effort) and attributed (by others) celebrification processes, i.e. transforming someone into a celebrity, thus reinforcing the embedding of celebrity culture (Driessens, 2013) to everyday work practices. Different forms of capital (e.g. economic, symbolic, social, technical, celebrity, attention capital – Abidin, 2018; Brooks et al., 2021; Mears, 2023) flow on social media, but the interviewees tend to describe mainly community-oriented social and symbolic capital as desirable. Economic capital and benefits are discussed with uncertainty ("I'm not sure which limitations exist") and moral judgments ("#sponsored is unbefitting to my occupation"). Professional ethics are clumsily negotiated and adjusted to social media, even if there are no established legal frameworks and guidelines.

DCC13 Influencer, who? Heterogeneity in content creator culture

PN 105 Sharenting a child with Down syndrome: between advocacy and commodification on Instagram

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Parents who practice advocacy share their children's struggles and triumphs on social media to find support, promote destigmatization and inclusion, and influence policy (Ammari and Schoenebeck, 2015). Despite growing attention to sharenting (Cataldo et al., 2022), advocacy sharenting is largely underexplored in scholarship. The experiences and perspectives of these children regarding issues of privacy and data, for example, remain a neglected topic (Goggin and Ellis, 2020). Different types of families, such as parents of special needs or sick children practice advocacy sharenting (Jorge et al., 2020; Marôpo et al., 2021; Borgos-Rodriguez et al., 2019; Goggin and Ellis, 2020; Lo Bosco, 2021). Some take a prominent role in content creation, gaining the attention of thousands of followers. In digital platforms such as Instagram, dominated by an influencer model, these parents often merge advocacy and commercial sharenting to obtain economic benefits from their social media presence. They employ various strategies to generate income from their children's content, such as showcasing and reviewing products sent as gifts, creating sponsored posts, affiliate marketing, merchandise sales, and other partnerships with brands seeking to target family-oriented audiences (Marôpo et al., 2021; Ruiz-Gomez, 2023). These content creators face tensions to remain credible while not crossing the line to appear overtly promotional, hurting their advocacy. Thus, it is crucial to analyze the connection between advocacy and family influencer strategies (San Cornelio, 2021).This paper aims to shed light on the dynamics of advocacy sharenting within the context of Down Syndrome (DS) analyzing the digital presence and portrayal of AC, a 5-year-old girl with DS born and living in the UK. We conducted a long-term, qualitative analysis using a multimodal approach focused on her Instagram account created by her parents. The study covers the period from the account's creation on June 23, 2018 (four months before AC's first birthday), up to October 25, 2023. Since we situated this case as a low-visibility social media account, we took deliberate steps to anonymize the child's identity. The findings suggest that AC Instagram's profile emphasizes the message of normalcy of children with DS and the love and joy they bring into their families' lives. Relying on emotional engagement in which AC is a strong affective capital, it promotes inclusion, challenges stereotypes, and also educates and raises awareness for children with DS. This is the perfect motto for brands striving to build a more inclusive image. The account does engage in brand representation, receiving frequent gifts from brands while using several strategies to balance advocacy with financial benefits. AC's account presents tensions regarding the child's privacy. Firstly, while the depiction of her life helps advocate for DS, it also raises concerns regarding AC's rights as her identity and personal experiences, including sensitive matters, are extensively exposed without the possibility of her informed consent. Secondly, and in contradiction to an account that shows the child, it maintains privacy for the rest of the family members as their public exposure is significantly limited.

DCC13 Influencer, who? Heterogeneity in content creator culture

PN 106 Life Coaches Performing Digital Disconnection as Impression Management

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In today's Western industrialized societies, the ability to be digitally connected anywhere at any time offers several advantages for online entrepreneurs such as life coaches. Life coaching is an increasingly popular self-help profession in which coaches guide individuals in enhancing their life experiences, achieving goals, and improving overall well-being (Green et al., 2006). In a competitive and unregulated industry, life coaches strive to establish their positions as experts by sharing their methods and unique values.Previous studies (Baker, 2022; Baker & Rojek, 2020; Rimke, 2000) indicate that life coaches strategically use social media platforms, such as Instagram, to promote self-improvement messages driven by neoliberal ideologies and demonstrate their expertise to a broad audience. These neoliberal ideas imply that individuals are expected to assume responsibility for their lives through the use of self-improvement methods, with the promise that doing so will lead to a good life (Binkley, 2014; Brown & Baker, 2012). Yet, in what scholars refer to as 'the age of mobile connectivity,' there is a growing awareness of achieving digital well-being by maximizing the benefits while minimizing the drawbacks of digital connectivity (Vanden Abeele & Nguyen, 2022). Considering life coaches' online presence and rising status as authorities in individual well-being, they may encounter the growing imperative of performing digital disconnection as a self-disciplining measure to limit harmful connectivity, or to align with the neoliberal-driven idea of the 'good life' (Fast, 2021; Syvertsen & Enli, 2020). This demand imbues itself in these coaches' professional and personal everyday lives as they strive to embody the principles of (digital) well-being. To analyze this development, we conducted in-depth interviews with 15 life coaches and analyzed their Instagram profiles, employing Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory to explore the (strategic) integration of digital disconnection into life coaches' professional performances. Moreover, we delved into the ways life coaches navigate the complexities of digital (dis)connection to manage impressions on both the front stage (publicly visible on Instagram) and the backstage (more private or concealed aspects of their lives). This exploration aims to unveil the nuances of how impression management, specifically oriented towards expertise and expert status, shapes and is shaped by the strategic use of digital disconnection, shedding light on the interplay between the digital and the performative aspects of the life coaching profession. Our findings underscore the tensions faced by life coaches as they strive to maintain authenticity and professionalism while skillfully managing the performances of digital disconnection on both the front stage and backstage.

DCC14 AI and algorithmic cultures

PP 0687 Young people and algorithms: Profiles of learning contexts and concerns about diversity from a digital culture perspective

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This proposal aims to reflect on how young people perceive algorithmic and filter bubble challenges in the digital era, particularly concerning how they define and deal with algorithms (Swart, 2021) and their implications for information selection processes in their daily lives. E-social contexts and diverse daily life constellations can have implications concerning information diversity, datafication and information disorder (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

To deepen this debate, as part of a funded project on young people, news and digital citizenship, we analysed 42 semi-structured and participatory interviews with young people aged between 15 and 24 (F = 21; M = 21) living in Portugal. Research questions: Q1 – What is their knowledge of algorithms and filter bubbles?, Q2 – How did they learn what they know about them? and Q3 – What implications do they have for diversity issues in everyday life?

The preliminary results indicate 4 distinct profiles of how they view algorithms: profile 1 highlights that "The algorithm is an ethereal entity, endowed with human faculties of action and decision". These participants describe the algorithm as an "acting agent" with decision skills. The familiar contexts found are prevalent in the context of forms of learning, as well as self-learning. This profile recognises that this superhuman image of the algorithm is not without its problems from the point of view of diversity. These participants also associate the algorithm with situations related to fake news. Profile 2 (the dominant one in terms of the number of respondents) includes those who believe that "Algorithms are not easy to understand". These participants fell into two fundamental spheres. On the one hand, they showed and recognised basic knowledge acquired mainly from friends and individuals. On the other hand, they also included people who didn't know what an algorithm was at all. In the latter cases, the participants recognised that they had gained basic knowledge of what the algorithm is through the interview process. The third profile includes interviewees who believe that "The algorithm is essentially negative". They were particularly concerned about diversity matters, and they believe that the algorithm is targeted and ends up being "selfish" in the restrictions it imposes. These young people learnt about these matters at school, although also in family environments and

on an individual basis. Finally, the fourth profile states: "There's no problem if the algorithm gives us what we want to see". This includes people who see advantages in the algorithm, who recognise the importance of diversity, but who demand the power of individual opinion (as Sofia, 18, studying International Relations, points out, "we are all free to have our own opinion"). In this case, it's more favourable for them to be able to have what they want tailored to them (particularly on social networks like TikTok). They have learnt individually and with friends.

These early-stage results pinpoint challenges that democratic societies face nowadays and evidence of self-centred forms of learning in the context of the digital society that prompts a disruptive style of understanding selfhood in the context of a globalized society.

DCC14 AI and algorithmic cultures

PP 0688 Structural relationships between algorithmic awareness and factors often associated with digital inequalities

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Algorithmic recommendations underpin everyday life. They are widely used in recommendation systems to provide personalised search results, translations, news feeds, audio and multimedia suggestions, or automated systems that support decisions on job recruitment, credit assessments and court proceedings. However, the selection of databases, the definition of variables, the instructions given to algorithms and how the outcomes of such algorithms are used define how these systems impact sensitive aspects of people's lives and, potentially, the course of society. While such systems are useful, in most cases, they may be unfair (Starke et al., 2022), provoke unintended effects or harm individuals or social groups (Eubanks, 2018; Wachter-Boettcher, 2017).

Algorithmic awareness (AA), or the ability to perceive the use of algorithms in everyday recommendation systems and understand how they work, has been argued to contribute to people's control over such systems. Being more critical about the information they consume, evaluating the reliability of different sources, overcoming the limitations of interacting with them, and governing self-representation (Cotter and Reisdorf, 2020; Hargittai et al., 2020; Swart, 2021; DeVito et al., 2018).

Awareness of their use and understanding of their operation may foster critical attitudes towards their outputs and facilitate their use. While previous studies on algorithmic awareness of recommendation systems have employed qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore factors that influence it, there is still a need for a theoretical model to explain which factors influence it. Drawing on factors often associated with the digital divide, this study employs structural equation modelling to investigate what factors explain **AA** by using data from 1,084 adult individuals, based on a representative sample of the online Spanish population. Results show that **AA** relates to digital attitudes, educational level and working status. However, age, gender, digital skills, and smartphone usage diversity are not always associated with algorithmic awareness. These findings enrich the research with evidence for factors that (not always) influence **AA**. Limitations and implications for critical technology studies are also discussed.

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DCC14 AI and algorithmic cultures

PP 0689 Mitigating loneliness with AI-driven technologies? Exploring discussions on the promises of automated communication technologies for reducing social isolation in Europe

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Increasing evidence suggests the acceleration of a "loneliness epidemic" in the West, mainly driven by the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a response, the European Union (EU) is actively engaged in projects that aim to better understand loneliness as a social problem instead of an individual issue. Notably, the "Monitoring Loneliness in Europe" project that is carried out by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) serves as a valuable reference point contributing to research on the recent conversations around loneliness and strategies for its mitigation.

In addition to the governments' efforts to combat the loneliness epidemic, the number of Human-Machine Communication-centered business initiatives offering communicative and social robots as a solution to this problem is growing. Focusing on the "creation of meaning among humans and machines" (Guzman 2018), Human-Machine Communication (HMC) implies an essential transformation of the definition of communication. In this study we discuss the impact of automated technologies such as AI-driven conversational agents that allow individuals not to only communicate through but also communicate with. We specifically attempt to answer the question: What promises are made about automated technologies and their potential to mitigate loneliness in Europe? More specifically, what is being discussed on technology-driven solutions for social problems such as loneliness and the communicative needs of people?

To answer this question, firstly, we have constructed two comprehensive databases: One on the initiatives across Europe that aim to develop a better understanding of loneliness epidemic in the region through exploring causes, consequences, and solutions for its mitigation (for example, see Nurminen, Thoma-Otremba, and Casabianca 2023). In line with the objective of understanding EU efforts to mitigate loneliness, we conduct a thorough analysis of recent documents and publications from EU initiatives and search across the academic literature. The second database focuses on HMC initiatives that propose the use of digital tools incorporating communicative AI as solutions for various social problems, specifically loneliness. This database encompasses a diverse range of sources, including websites, press releases, corporate social responsibility reports, and annual reports associated with the identified initiatives. To gain insight into the perceptions of HMC initiatives listed in our database**,** we present a document analysis of all available information that companies publicly provide regarding their initiatives and HMC products**.** Our focus here is on a critical understanding of how these initiatives articulate their goals, promote their products, and engage with their target audiences. By constructing two different databases, we are able to analyze documents from two distinct perspectives and to understand them in articulation: EU authorities to mitigate loneliness, as well as medical, commercial, and scientific initiatives seeking to provide technology-driven solutions for communication needs.

In conclusion, our approach aims to illuminate the different perspectives held by key stakeholders concerning the utilization of and techno-solutionist thinking about AI-driven conversational agents to tackle social problems, with a particular focus on the growing challenge of loneliness.

DCC14 AI and algorithmic cultures

PP 0690 The temporal formation of synthetic data

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Critical data scholarship has highlighted the importance of understanding the "temporal formation" of big data (Boellstorff 2013). Machine learning is deployed to predict future events, but it does so by extrapolating from patterns present in data which are a recording of the past. However, the conventional form of big data, which is a recording via some kind of sensor, must now be assessed alongside the emergent technique of synthetic data which is "artificially created rather than being generated by actual events" (Dilemgani 2020). For instance, rather than deploying prototype autonomous vehicles on real world streets to collect camera and LIDAR data, one can instead deploy virtual vehicles in simulations to generate synthetic data that can be used to train models for real world deployment (Tideman 2021). Recent research has shown that synthetic data has different epistemic, ontological and political implications than conventional data (Steinhoff 2022; Jacobsen 2023). This paper focuses on temporality, which existing work has yet to cover. I argue that synthetic data has a distinct temporal formation in which a virtual future is mobilized to predict the future. First, I conduct a discourse analysis on documents concerning NVIDIA's Omniverse simulation platform, which is mainly used to synthesize data for autonomous vehicles. I show how synthetic data is reckoned as an ongoing project, rather than a recording of the past, and how it is pitched as solving the problem of

rare events or edge cases. Second, I show that synthetic data is not merely a sociotechnical imaginary by detailing my interviews with 3D and technical artists who build simulations for synthetic data production. I show that it is their labour which generates the distinct temporal formation of synthetic data. Finally, I outline some social and political implications of this novel temporality.

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DCC14 AI and algorithmic cultures

PP 0691 Beyond the hype: Unraveling narratives and cultivating imaginaries in critical AI research

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The debate over AI's future is happening as we speak. With the availability of technologies such as OpenAI's GPT and Dall-E, Midjourney, Bard, and GitHub's Copilot for widespread use, AI is now a focal point in public discourse. Media reports abound on latest developments in AI models; policymakers are drafting legislative and policy initiatives to mitigate the risks of AI while also harnessing its potential; teachers engage in heated debates about the effects of large language models (LLMs) on the future of education; economists offer projections of how AI-based automation impact future jobs; and 'longtermism' is mobilized by prominent tech billionaires to capture our imagination about human extinction and cyborg afterlives.

Embedded within these stories are not only hopes and dreams, but also fears and anxieties – of broken democracies, a decrease in civic engagement, increased surveillance, and the potential for technology to supplant human roles. These narratives compellingly demonstrate how AI is not merely a singular field or even a collection of technologies, but a figure that serves to shape the realities of how we come to know and imagine AI in the first place. Whether it's Silicon Valley's AI visions or the risk-based policies of the coming EU AI Act, imaginaries matter.

The stories of AI being crafted and shared today will directly impact the intertwined futures of humans and AI. The strategic shaping of public narratives is crucial for fostering informed societal attitudes, which in turn influence policy decisions and ethical considerations concerning AI. Yet, the technologies and imaginaries of AI have rich histories, some untold. The past of AI remains unsettled, and its present could have unfolded differently.

Presenting the conceptual frameworks and guiding questions of a newly funded national research hub, this paper advocates for re-centering the humanities in core AI debates. Specifically, this paper reports on some agenda-setting questions and perspectives centered around the texts, affects, and speculative futures of AI. These questions revolve around the textual, affective, and speculative dimensions of AI, exploring how it can be grasped textually and theoretically within a humanities framework. For example, how do we understand ChatGPT text-analytically? What stories are embedded within Large Language Models? Additionally, the paper delves into changing conceptions of AI in the cultural imagination and proposes a speculative practice-based research approach to create new narratives for more equitable and sustainable AI futures. What does it mean that we are increasingly asked to interact with the machine via prompts through individualized, trial-and-error interactions? How can we imagine AI otherwise? By addressing questions such as these, the paper contributes to the emerging field of critical AI studies, seeking to establish a foundation for interdisciplinary research that critically examines AI beyond the hype.

DCC15 Protest and activisms on digital platforms II

PP 0795 The power of a hashtag. A typology of hashtag activism focused on actors and temporal aspects

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In this theoretical contribution, we present a concept explication of hashtag activism and a new typology of it, focused on actors and temporal aspects. The hashtag has become a powerful tool for citizens worldwide to attract attention to social issues aiming to change the status quo, such as in the cases of the #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, and #FridaysforFuture movements. The current post-pandemic and post-Twitter hashtag activism needs a theoretical reevaluation. Even though general typologies of digital activism distinguish hashtag activism from other forms

of digital activism, there is a notable lack of analytical engagement with the concept of hashtag activism itself and no typology that differentiates between different types of hashtag activism.

We fill this gap by conducting an extensive literature review and applying Chaffee's (1991) concept explication framework. "Concept explication", as described by Chaffee, is a methodological process used in communication research to clarify and define concepts more precisely. This step enhances the clarity and operational usefulness of theoretical concepts, aiding in the development of more accurate and testable models and hypotheses in research.

Resulting from an extensive literature review, our theoretical contribution is threefold: First, we position hashtag activism against other terms relating to digital activism, e.g., "cyberprotest" or "hacktivism". We explain these terms' differences and common attributes and propose a hierarchy of terms based on the digital skills needed to participate in an activity and the particularities of the digital settings. Further, we embed the definition of hashtag activism within other instances of the same emergent phenomenon – social issue emergence – the emergence and development of discussions on social issues online, formation of ad hoc publics around them, sometimes followed by a viral spread, and picked up by the traditional media. Different social media functionalities can enable the phenomenon: the hashtag, "add yours" feature on Instagram, TikTok "sounds", Facebook protest avatars, and others.

Second, following the concept explication framework, we discuss the definition, attributes and properties, antecedent causes, and subsequent effects of hashtag activism. The distinguishing characteristics of hashtag activism are the technological factors, its capacity to promote personalized action frames, and its symbolic capacity as a type of cultural meme. We elaborate on the effects of hashtag activism for different types of actors and the discourse in general, describing it as a form of linguistic activism, as it often aims to shape the language we use to discuss social issues.

Third, we propose a typology of hashtag activism based on the distinction between its actors, primarily dividing them into the internal ad hoc community and the external participants, and we subcategorize the temporal patterns of hashtag activism into digitally native and non-digitally native cases.

DCC15 Protest and activisms on digital platforms II

PP 0796 Examining the role of social media in triggering the Tigray War in Ethiopia

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Examining the role of social media in triggering the Tigray War in Ethiopia

Escalating conflicts are deepening insecurity and disrupting lives in various regions across the globe. Digital media is increasingly held responsible for magnifying the dissemination of rumors, hate speech, and ethnic tensions (Castaño-Pulgarín et al 2021, Satarino 2021), with assumed significant impacts on the development and mediation of conflicts. In Ethiopia, Twitter and Facebook are accused of amplifying the spread of rumors, hate speech and ethnic tensions, contributing to the descent of the East African nation into a devastating war in Tigray (UN, 2022). Reports indicate that over 600 000 civilians lost their lives, numerous women and girls were raped, and extensive land areas were ravaged in the wake of the war (Van der Merwe, 2022). As digital technologies increasingly become "the infrastructure underlying all infrastructures", also on the African continent (Mutsvairo et al 2021), it is imperative to examine the role of social media in conflicts, not least in areas where internet access has been recently acquired.

This study seeks to ascertain the extent to which social media played a role in the escalation of the crisis in Tigray. The project aligns with the theoretical discussions on media and conflict (Budka & Brauchler, 2020; Maweu & Mare, 2021) and investigates how social media impact the escalation and perpetuation of violence. The study examines the utilization of hashtags, whether explicitly or implicitly linked to hate speech or discriminatory rhetoric, to elucidate the role played by social media in heightening tensions and disseminating hate speech.

By leveraging data from Twitter (now X) spanning from September 1, 2020, to December 31, 2022, this project will employ a dual approach involving computational modeling and network analysis. Subsequently, a qualitative content analysis of specific social media posts will be conducted. The aim is to encapsulate and illustrate how social media platforms contribute to the amplification of divisive narratives. After a rough screening of the Ethiopian Twitterscape focusing both on the posts of relevant actors in Ethiopia and in the diaspora, topicality, and popularity, a hashtag tracking tool is used to track and monitor selected hashtags considered of relevance to the conflict. The project will map hashtags that demonstrate significant engagement, measured by their capacities to generate 'information cascades' or retweets. A topography of these hashtags based on their frequency over time will be analyzed in correlation with key dates related to the development of the Tigray war that commenced on November 4, 2020. This examination aims to discern connections between social media engagement and on-the-ground events, offering novel insights into the ways in which social media serves as a catalyst. The objective of the study is to enhance our comprehension of the intricate interplay between social media and the escalation of

violent conflicts. The findings will offer insights into the collaborative dynamics between hashtags and hate speech, clarifying their contribution to processes described as 'weaponizing information' (Singer & Brooking, 2019) and their role in escalating violence.

DCC15 Protest and activisms on digital platforms II

PP 0797 Implicit collective memory in Social Media Ephemeral Story and how it fuels implicit activism in Nigeria`s EndSARS Movement: A Digital Ethnographic Journey

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The #EndSARS protest, a significant social movement that gained prominence in Nigeria in October 2020, garnered national and international attention. Originating as an online campaign on Twitter in 2016, the hashtag evolved into a widespread and impassioned movement against police brutality and misconduct in Nigeria (Obia, 2023). The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), established in 1992 by former Commissioner of Police Simeon Danladi, became notorious for alleged human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, extortion, and harassment of Nigerian citizens (Asogwa et al., 2023). The catalyst for the 2020 protest was the reported killing of a young man by SARS officers in Delta State on October 3, 2020. The victim was stereotyped as a Yahoo Boy (Internet Fraudster), and the officers allegedly shot him and fled with his car, a crime captured on video and widely shared on social media (Agbo, 2021). This incident triggered widespread physical protests, uniting a diverse cross-section of Nigerian society, particularly young people, who utilised social media and took to the streets to demand justice, accountability, and comprehensive police reform. Beyond exposing issues of police brutality, the EndSARS movement raised broader questions about governance, transparency, and the role of social media in contemporary activism (Olaseni & Oladele, 2023). As a result, the #EndSARS protest serves as a poignant case study in the fight for social justice and change in Nigeria. Studies (Obia, 2023; Dambo, 2021, 2022; Uwalaka, 2021; Uwazuruike, 2020) have explored the EndSARS protest from various perspectives. This study contributes to the literature of the EndSARS and broader social movements by adopting a theoretical perspective centred on memory. While social movement studies often focus on explicit memory and commemoration, this work explores implicit memory, an often neglected aspect of movement studies. Unlike studies that emphasise episodic fanfare, this research delves into the driving force of implicit memory in social movements, providing a unique perspective on the EndSARS movement and its implications for memory studies (Eyerman, 2015; della Porta et al., 2018; Smit et al., 2018; Zamponi, 2018). Moreover, I contend that, given the online nature of the EndSARS movement, the existing literature should incorporate the methodological rigour of digital ethnography. As a result, the research questions this work attempts to answer are: What is implicit collective memory in the context of the EndSARS movement? How does implicit collective memory on the selected social media story fuel implicit activism? Preliminary results suggest that ephemeral story facilitates implicit activism and enables the construction of implicit collective memory of the EndSARS movement. I argue that understanding the interplay between implicit activism and implicit collective memory is vital for comprehending the dynamics of modern social movements and their potential for lasting impact. As we continue to witness the fusion of digital platforms, implicit activism, and implicit collective memory, it is crucial to explore the evolution of this relationship in the context of social and political change, not only in Nigeria but across the globe.

DCC15 Protest and activisms on digital platforms II

PP 0798 'Creating our Seat at the Table' – Analyzing the epistemic formation of counterpublics in the Instagram series Sitzplatzreservierung

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In international comparison, Germany has rather hesitantly discussed racism in public debates (Çaglar & Sridharan, 2021;Salem & Thompson, 2016). This public disengagement with racism was interrupted in the summer of 2020, when German traditional mass media reacted to worldwide Black Lives Matter protests following the killing of Afro-American George Floyd (Haruna-Oelker, 2020). However, traditional mass media were soon met with public criticism. Especially on social media platforms, content creators started to publish formats complementing, critiquing, or countering traditional media's engagement. One of these initiatives was *Sitzplatzreservierung* (translating to 'seat reservation'), a series of videos published on Instagram in which Black Germans talk about their everyday experiences with racism. The title illustrates the video creators' demand for participation in the German public media debate.

Against the hegemonic resistance to critically talk about racism, *Sitzplatzreservierung* marked a novel account of publicly approaching the topic. A common concept used to describe endeavors that collectively share non-dominant discursive claims is the one of counterpublics. Squires (2002) critiques that this broad conceptualization, does no longer serve to 'distinguish amongst marginal publics and their activities' (p. 460). *Sitzplatzreservierung*

particularly highlights the importance of the epistemic dimension of counterpublics: Black Germans claim a seat at the table as knowers of their lifeworld beyond the hegemonic norm. I argue that focusing the epistemic formation of counterpublics can add more nuance to their conceptualization and their relation to the dominant public sphere. My argument is based on the philosophical paradigm of social epistemology and the theoretical presumption that knowledge is produced socially, in interactions with other people, instances, systems, etc. (Goldman & Whitcomb, 2011, pp. 11–12; Zerubavel, 1999, p. 6). Accordingly, counterpublics can be viewed as producing 'nondominant forms of knowledge' (Jackson & Foucault Welles, 2015, pp. 933–934) that challenge the assumption of a universal, objective, unmarked and disembodied knowledge (Kilomba, 2017, p. 85) in dominant publics.

To illustrate my claim, I analyzed all 14 videos published under *Sitzplatzreservierung* using a Critical Discourse Analysis. Following feminist, critical race theorist and decolonial approaches in analyzing the subject of knowledge (e.g.,Harding, 2004 ; Hill Collins, 2000; Combahee River Collective, 1977; Fricker, 2017; Pohlhaus, 2017; Dotson, 2012) I derived the following dimensions for the analysis of the epistemic formation of counterpublics: (1) Knowledge power context, (2) Legitimate Knowledge, (2) Standpoint of communication, (4) Stranger sociability.

I find that *Sitzplatzreservierung* (1) occupies a subordinate status in the German context that is characterized by a 'dominant white consensus' (van Dijk, 1992, p. 89), (2) redefines the subject of knowledge in refuting the assumption of a universal, neutral and objective view, (3) explicitly articulates their standpoint in opposition to the German (traditional media) mainstream and (4) constructs an intimate stranger sociability by sharing embodied knowledge. *Sitzplatzreserierung* thus emphasizes 'nondominant forms of knowledge' (Jackson & Foucault Welles, 2015, pp. 933–934) and represents an example for the various approaches to redefine the subject of knowledge such as feminist standpoint theory, U.S. Black feminist thought or critical raced-gendered epistemologies.

DCC15 Protest and activisms on digital platforms II

PP 0799 "I practically only see Stories:" Exploring emerging uses of Instagram Stories for everyday feminisms

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Social media platforms play a predominant role in our experiences of everyday feminisms (Pruchniewska, 2019), with different platforms, with distinct affordances and cultures of use, helping to shape different modes of political expression (Keller, 2019). This paper explores how Instagram Stories can facilitate emerging feminist practices, creating a rich environment where feminisms can be engaged with not only by activists or feminist organisations but also by "ordinary" people. Introduced in 2016, Instagram Stories enable the sharing of multi-modal content that disappears after 24 hours. Despite its wide adoption, studies on the political potential of Stories are still scarce (Jaramillo-Dent et al, 2021 or Cassidy et al., 2019).

This paper is grounded on 20 in-depth semi-structured interviews with feminist content-creators. The interviewees were purposefully selected following an exploratory study on feminisms on Portuguese Instagram (author, manuscript under revision), seeking to encompass diverse manifestations of feminist discourses and include diverse creators. Interviewees were also invited to go through their Instagram Stories Archive, a form of elicitation through scroll back techniques (Robards & Lincoln, 2017) that facilitated the discussion of these practices and their changes through time. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and thematically coded using MaxQDA.

These interviews explore the conventions and concerns underlying feminist practices in Instagram Stories, being attentive to technological affordances, existing cultures of use, and users' expectations. The interviews highlight how Instagram Stories can function as an ambivalent space for feminist communication. Interviewees – including individuals concerned with feminist issues, people with more public-facing platforms, or people who were part of feminist collectives or organisations – emphasised the current popularity of Stories, praising the ease in sharing they enable, and the presence of affordances like re-sharing content created by others, sharing of links, and one-to-one responses – all understood as having political benefits. This signals a shift from previous Instagram uses, with Stories appearing as a complement, and often a replacement, for formats like posts.

Yet, this paper also highlights the tensions felt by interviewees, reflecting on the contradictions between platform logics of Instagram and a sense of political responsibility – one pushing for continual and rapid content production to "feed the algorithm," and the other privileging careful and often slower forms political reflection. In this context, Stories are often seen as enabling small acts of political engagement (Picone et al., 2019) that allow to negotiate these opposing logics – with their shorter and less labour-intensive format and re-sharing abilities helping to ensure the regularity seen as essential to maintain algorithmic visibility (Treré, 2018), and to cover a wide variety of issues consistent with the interviewees' intersectional concerns. Finally, this paper reflects on how Stories can occupy a contradictory position in regards to Instagram's attention economy, on one hand seen as reaching larger audiences than those of posts, on the other simultaneously imagined as circulating amongst a more restricted and like-minded audience, thus being felt as a way to minimise forms of unwanted attention (Abidin, 2021) and, particularly, the pervasive backlash that often accompanies the popularity of online feminisms (Banet-Weiser, 2018).

DCC16 Disrupting the welfare state?: Crowdfunding platforms and digital redistributive imaginaries

PN 128 Theoretical and methodological approaches to crowdfunding platforms and redistributive imaginaries

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This paper focuses on the theoretical and methodological challenges involved in analysing the role of crowdfunding platforms and other apps and digital tools in shaping redistributive practices and imaginaries. The aim of the paper is to introduce the theoretical framework for our research project and present the methodological approach that we adopted for the analysis of the 'digitalization' of prosocial giving and its relationship with dominant, emergent and residual discourses about redistribution. The paper's first section presents our rationale for adopting the concept of 'imaginaries' and explains how it supports our inquiry into redistributive practices and social meaning-making. Drawing on Jasanoff's conceptualization of socio-technical imaginaries (2015) and Jessop's approach to economic imaginaries (2010), we explain how the project has adapted and adopted these concepts. In particular, we are interested in exploring the balance between structure and agency that the concept of imaginary allows; how technologies can render imaginaries 'collective, durable and capable of being performed' (Jasanoff, 2015); and the concept of emergent imaginaries. The second part of the paper discusses the methodological challenges related to research on imaginaries. It outlines the specific methods chosen for the implementation of the project and the analysis of crowdfunding platforms. When analysing imaginaries, we face several challenges concerning the selection of data, actors and institutions involved and how to analyse this data. In our paper, we argue for a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative textual analysis methods (CDA, social semiotics), with platform studies (Van Dijk, 2013) and affordance analysis (Scolari, 2004; Ronzhyn, Cardenal and Batlle Rubio, 2023). Through this approach, our project is able not only to better understand crowdfunding platforms, but also reflect on their role at the intersection of different imaginaries and ideologies of the digital, the role of citizenship and the state in the redistribution of wealth and the remaking of welfare states in the context of neoliberal (post) austerity policies within diverse national contexts.

DCC16 Disrupting the welfare state?: Crowdfunding platforms and digital redistributive imaginaries

PN 129 The ambivalent possibilities of social cause crowdfunding

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By considering digital platforms as spaces of ambivalence, this paper explores how 'social cause crowdfunding' can be both a site of capitalist discipline and control and a site of radical possibilities. The paper draws on an analysis of various platforms operating in the UK (e.g., Spacehive, Open Collective and JustGiving) that enable users to crowdfund for social causes, and it adopts an understanding of subjectification which is informed by the work of Lazzarato (2014) and which takes into account signifying and a-signifying semiotics. In viewing social cause crowdfunding as a site capitalist discipline and control, I draw attention to the ways in which platforms assign roles that accord with neoliberal visions of the entrepreneur. I show how these processes of social subjection work in conjunction with process of 'machinic enslavement' that induce certain kinds of action (e.g., 'sharing' and 'liking' crowdfunding campaigns) and which render crowdfunding platform users constitutive parts of the technical and social machines of digital capitalism. At the same time as illuminating the complimentary workings of social subjection and machanic enslavement, I consider how social cause crowdfunding opens up possibilities for rupture and creating alternative subjectivities. I do so by drawing on the concept of 'potent collectivity' (Gilbert, 2020) and exploring the ways in which platforms create spaces of collective agency. While I recognise how the enablement and exploitation of such collective relations is central to the workings of digital capitalism, I point to modes of existence that trouble and exceed dominant significations and subjections. In particular, by drawing attention to the possibilities of political mobilisation and collective ownership that platforms afford, I point to ways of being that disrupt the individualising and privatising tendencies of digital capitalism and which break with neoliberal visions of the entrepreneur. I conclude by reflecting on what the ambivalent spaces of social cause crowdfunding reveal about changing practices and understandings of redistribution within the context of digitalisation. In particular, I reflect on what these recent trends reveal about the reproduction and disruption of the dominant social order.

DCC16 Disrupting the welfare state?: Crowdfunding platforms and digital redistributive imaginaries

PN 130 From utopian to corporative discourses around solidarity on crowdfunding platforms in Spain

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This communication seeks to analyse how crowdfunding platforms shape redistributive practices and imaginaries in Spain. Our objective is twofold: on the one hand, to understand to what extent these platforms transform redistributive practices and challenge the welfare state, and on the other hand, to explore the discourses around solidarity portrayed by these platforms. Previous scholarship (Davies, 2015) has explored how crowdfunding platforms can play a role in supporting, undermining or presenting an alternative to the welfare state. At the same time, crowdfounding platforms can propose new practices between citizens and prosocial contributions. To fulfill these aims, we apply a multidisciplinary analysis on four Spanish social crowdfunding platforms: Goteo, Mi grano de arena, Teaming and Bizum. The results show that each platform proposes a particular model of prosocial donations. Goteo presents as a transparent and accountable actor who vindicates open source and open data. Moreover, Goteo frames social causes under utopian and idealistic discourses to aspire to social transformation and puts citizens at the center as a force to guide and control public institutions. Mi grano de area and Bizum present themselves as a digital service for the communication of the activity of NGOs and social entities and use corporate and commercial discourses that equate solidarity campaigns with any other marketing campaign. In this vein, these two platforms connect with neoliberal definitions of philanthropy and maintain a complementary role with the State. Finally, Teaming promotes two distinct characteristics of the crowdfunding model: recurrence and donating the same amount of money (only one euro per month). In this vein, Teaming articulates solidarity discourse around ideas of community, belonging, and accessible to everyone. However, the social causes that appear in Teaming are all linked to NGOs or social entities. In conclusion, crowdfunding platforms, such as Goteo and Teaming, present an alternative to the State when they present new redistributive practices and portray discourses about social transformation. Besides, both platforms broaden the definition of Welfare by including new areas, such as environmental causes, culture and animal well-being. In contrast, Mi grano de arena and Bizum present a complementary role of the State, portraying more established views regarding solidarity connected to NGOs. However, all of them present as an advantage to donors the possibility of obtaining a tax relief certificate after donating. This fact gives new nuances to understanding the relationship with the State since it portrays a more functional way to understand solidarity and may be interpreted as an individual alternative to payment of taxes. Thus, our results show that the relationship between these platforms and the Welfare State is complex and ambivalent.

DCC16 Disrupting the welfare state?: Crowdfunding platforms and digital redistributive imaginaries

PN 131 Human/non-human agencies in the digital: Analysis of four Finnish fundraising websites

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This paper will analyse representations of agency in four different fundraising websites that are either based in Finland or aimed at the Finnish public. These websites represent a variety of crowdfunding and (financial) charity platforms: one donates to miscellaneous charities (Giving What We Can associated with Effective Altruism Finland); one is dedicated to helping Finnish World War II veterans (Veteraanit.fi by The Veteran Responsibility); one allows people to seek funding for a variety of different projects from art to business (Mesenaatti.fi); and one is directing their help to children and their families (The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare). In this paper we will discuss how human agency is portrayed on these websites and how digital platforms frame human agency, especially in relation to the transparent or invisible agency of 'the digital', the digital here referring to the platform as an agent. We will look at both human and non-human agencies present and discuss their relationship in the context of digitally coordinated voluntary redistribution practices. How are the human positions or roles – those of the fundraiser, donor, receiver – involved in the crowdfunding process represented and constructed? What kind of agency do those positions make possible? What sort of hierarchies are formed and what sort of agential power do they offer? How is the agency of the digital constructed, as a neutral or active participant? The above-mentioned aspects and their analysis contribute to the understanding of agency in redistributive practices in general, and especially in changes due to the increasing digitalization of said practices. As the agency of the digital increases, the assemblage of care present in traditional prosocial contribution transforms into an assemblage of digital and physical, human and non-human entities establishing new agential rhizomes of digitalized charity.

DCC16 Disrupting the welfare state?: Crowdfunding platforms and digital redistributive imaginaries

PN 132 Crowdfunding in Montenegro: Dynamics of digital inclusion and exclusion in Europe

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This paper delves into the interconnected processes of digitalization and Europeanization at a European periphery. It focuses on Montenegro, a candidate country for EU-membership since 2010. Based on an affordance analysis of four crowdsourcing platforms in Montenegro (Budi Human, Pristanište, Volonteri Crne Gore and Help Each Other), and drawing on literature regarding the Europeanization of policies, the paper explores the characteristics of online crowdfunding on the 'digital periphery' (Szczepanik et.al. 2020). The paper illustrates that digitalization in the Western Balkans embodies 'the paradox of Europeanness': "that is, the simultaneous demand for inclusion and exclusion, openness and closure, transcendence and erection of borders" (Dzenovska 2018: 11). Rather than a 'digital divide', our findings from Montenegro reveal patterns of conditional inclusion and partial exclusion from the European financial and digital infrastructures. Digitalization in Montenegro has received strong support through the EU-accession process and has been shaped by techno-optimism. Narratives about digital means of raising money highlight a clear advantage over other means of raising money. Our material suggests that Western Balkan countries are generally expected to engage in crowdsourcing as 'an alternative source of financing in Europe', and as 'a potential key to success' (Stevanović and Milenković 2020: 54). Yet, the scarcity of online crowdsourcing initiatives is interpreted as a signal that the "awakening of the citizens' awareness" (ibid.) is needed in the Western Balkans. Our material shows that Montenegrin citizens are aware of the potential of crowdfunding. Montenegro ranks second only to Estonia in terms of the number of entrepreneurs (Luca, Bell, and Bozward 2021) and there are many local and analog crowdfunding initiatives. We suggest that the relative scarcity of implemented online crowdsourcing initiatives in everyday life is the result of a particular pattern of inclusion and exclusion from European digital and financial spaces: Montenegro is included into the circulation of dominant European imaginaries about the digital, while being excluded from actual participation in the digital and financial infrastructures constituting the European space. The case in point are major Western crowdfunding platforms, such as Fundly, GoFundMe, Indiegogo, KickStarter, Mightycause, SeedInvest, and StartEngine, which do not accept projects seeking funding based in the Western Balkans, filtering out funding projects from the Western Balkans based on individuals' or business' residence and bank account details (Luca, Bell, and Bozward 2021: 58). The pattern of partial inclusion and conditional exclusion of Montenegro from 'Europe' is also visible in the organization of financial structures. Despite using Euro as its only currency, Montenegro is not part of the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA), an EU payment integration initiative simplifying Euro bank transfers. Additionally, Montenegro is conditionally included in the Paypal – money can be sent from Montenegro via Paypal, but it cannot be received. In such a constellation, the local embeddedness of crowdsourcing initiatives and interpersonal relationships became crucial for platform success. Online platforms often need to integrate offline contributions to broaden public participation. Analog social events are often the key to the success of crowdsourcing in Montenegro.

DCC17 Media and news in digital cultures

PP 0998 News organisations struggle to understand audiences: Media companies advance in digital transformation only when they learn to use the data they have collected

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Digital transformation and data analytics enable companies in various sectors to develop products that better meet their customers' needs. For news media, this means delivering content that meets the needs of different audiences. Legacy media institutions have faced challenges when it comes to understanding the audience data they have, yet this understanding is crucial for journalists to better serve their audience, which, in turn, significantly impacts business success.

In my research, I document how non-market-leading, subscription-based news organisations are evolving in their use of metrics, data analytics and metrics-enabled artificial intelligence (AI) solutions. Much of the existing literature concentrates on market leaders and news outlets in English-speaking countries, so this study aims to fill a gap in the scientific discussion by focusing on market followers—as opposed to those with the largest market share in their area—and media companies outside English-speaking countries.

To this purpose, I interviewed 16 experts from 14 market-follower legacy news organisations in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden: four from each country. The media landscapes of these countries share several common features. Firstly, the Nordic media markets are some of the most digitally mature, and subscription-based online media is vital. Additionally, each country has one significantly larger and more international media company, which is the local market leader, and all four nations are subject to the same EU legislation on data privacy. I describe how

their analytics capabilities advanced using the levels and three-way division developed by Cherubini and Nielsen (2016), who categorise newsrooms working with audience metrics into three levels of evolution: rudimentary, generic and editorial analytics. They also evaluate news media companies' analytics capabilities as three dimensions of an assessment triangle: tools, organisation and culture.

At the rudimentary level, a news organisation often has a range of digital tools for collecting data, but it lacks the expertise to understand and efficiently use it. When market-follower news organisations move from the rudimentary level to the generic level, they start to better understand behavioural data through improved use of key performance indicators (KPIs), which allow them to measure and quantify metrics to evaluate and assess performance. News organisations then improve their understanding by reducing the number of KPIs used and easing their use in editors' and journalists' decision-making. News organisations advance to the editorial level when they start combining data from different sources – mostly behavioural data to user data – to understand the audience subgroups.

It is important to bear in mind that digitalising a market-follower media company is particularly demanding for management because in minor newsrooms, management may not have access to experts to consult when making decisions. However, market-follower news organisations have some clear advantages over larger ones when digitalising news production. For example, because they are usually smaller than market leaders, there are often no separate large divisions inside the news organisation, and thus information is less likely to be siloed.

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DCC17 Media and news in digital cultures

PP 0999 Facebook without the News: Link-sharing patterns during the Meta's Australian and Canadian News Bans

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Several governments have recently sought to redirect digital advertising revenues flowing to online intermediary platforms (search engines and social media platforms) towards news publishers; they argue that news content contributes substantially to the popular appeal of such platforms. In February 2021, Australia was the first major jurisdiction to pass a law, the News Media Bargaining Code, implementing a mandatory bargaining process between news media and platforms to facilitate such revenue-sharing; largely following the Australian model, Canada's Online News Act was passed in June 2023.

While Google reached a settlement relatively swiftly, despite vocal earlier protests against these initiatives, Meta, as parent company of Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms, took a substantially more aggressive stance, in both countries acting on its earlier threats to ban news from its platforms altogether. Consequently, the circulation of news (i.e. posting, passing on, or accessing links to news sites) on Facebook in Australia was blocked completely from 18 to 25 Feb. 2021; in Canada, similar restrictions commenced in late July 2023, and (at the time of writing in early 2024) remain in place.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia in 2021, and during a severe wildfire season in Canada in 2023, these unprecedented restrictions to the flow of vital news and information on a leading social media platform resulted in considerable public condemnation (also because overreach in the bans' scope resulted in the blocking of official meteorological services, government health departments, and even news satire sites). Meta, however, argued that news engagement accounts only for a very small proportion of overall Facebook activity, and that citizens could find sufficient news updates elsewhere.

Drawing on the comprehensive Facebook URL Shares dataset, this paper tests this claim by investigating link-sharing patterns on Facebook before, during, and (at least in the Australian case) after these news bans. The dataset provides anonymised information on link-sharing for all of Facebook (importantly also including non-public personal profiles); filtering it for Australian and Canadian users, respectively, we examine the volume of overall link-sharing activity in each country during each period, as well as the sharing of links to an extensive selection of major news outlets; this provides new insight into the proportion of link-sharing on Facebook that is actually engaged with news.

We also test for an increase in circumvention techniques (e.g. URL shorteners or other link target obfuscation tools) or in the use of alternative sources not covered by Facebook's bans, and (for Australia as well as for Canada, should the ban there be rescinded in time) examine whether news-sharing patterns return to pre-ban levels after the conclusion of the ban, or whether the service disruption appears to have permanently altered users' news engagement practices.

Our detailed analysis of link-sharing patterns during these exceptional interventions in Facebook's operation by parent company Meta therefore offers a unique insight into how platform users cope with such a major, deliberate

disruption of service. It can also inform future policy-making initiatives in this space, including those being considered by European nation states and the European Union.

DCC17 Media and news in digital cultures

PP 1000 Evolution of Sound-Text Dynamics: A comparative analysis of Social Media News Videos in French-speaking Belgium and Switzerland (2020–2023)

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Our communication aims to investigate the relationships between sound and textual characteristics in native social media news videos. Such videos often deviate from the codes of traditional, linear television journalism and offer emerging formats, sometimes innovative, that are currently heterogeneous (Bock, 2016). A notable phenomenon in these videos is their compatibility with soundless consumption, thanks to subtitles, in particular. The ordinary voiceover commonly used in television is regularly replaced by textual annotation within the video. Our research question is therefore formulated as follows: Is text supplanting sound, making the latter non-essential in social media news videos on Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and TikTok? How has this phenomenon evolved between 2020 and 2023?

This research question prompts us to consider whether we are witnessing a transformation where video is no longer simply composed of images and sound, but where textual elements are gaining an equal or even greater importance due to changing consumption habits. The existing literature on the interplay between news video and social networks is limited and the fast-moving nature of the phenomenon contributes to the swift obsolescence of previous findings. We nonetheless rely on Newman's survey of the strategies employed by publishers for the creation and dissemination of news content on TikTok (Newman, 2022), the typology introduced by Jaffeux (2022) for classifying such videos and studies exploring the influence of social networks on the technical and editorial features of newsroom production (Mattelart, 2018; Barnes, 2013).

Our research focuses specifically on French-speaking Belgium and Switzerland, two small-sized markets sharing many structural similarities (Bonin et al., 2017). Six newsrooms have been included in the corpus: the broadcasting PSM of both countries, the two most read newspapers and the two online media outlets having the largest audience in each market. We analyze the videos published on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, between October and November 2020, and during the same months in 2023. The corpus includes a total of 581 videos in 2020 and 997 in 2023.

Following our manual content analysis (Bardin, 2013), the relationships between sound and text within the videos can be divided into three main distinct categories:

1. A first one where text does not replace sound but adds value (e.g., the name of a participant). This represents 28% of the videos in the first wave, 15 % in the second.
2. A second one where text replaces sound but the latter still adds value (e.g., a subtitled video with ambient sounds). This represents 34% of the videos in the first wave and 47% in the second.
3. A third one where text replaces sound, and the latter does not add value, except for the tone of voice and/or background music. Representing just over 35% of the videos in both waves of analysis.

Based on these results, our article aims to study the emergence of a new sound-image interaction regime within our corpus, where text would play an increasingly determinative role in the creation and consumption of videos, while sound becomes progressively limited to illustrative and esthetic purposes.

DCC17 Media and news in digital cultures

PP 1001 Media literacy and misinformation: Building resilience in the digital age

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Media literacy and misinformation is an increasingly critical area of study in our technology-driven world (Salaverría & Cardoso, 2023). Media literacy is fundamental as a tool to combat the spread of misinformation in our digital age. It has become an essential pillar in modern education, providing people with the necessary skills to navigate and critically analyze the vast landscape of information available online. Therefore, it is important to see that the proliferation of digital media has facilitated the spread of misinformation, thus creating an urgent need for effective media literacy (Caled & Silva, 2022). The lack of media literacy in contemporary society has profound and multifaceted consequences (Wei, 2023). First, vulnerability to misinformation becomes a central problem (Gerbina, 2021). Without the necessary skills to discern the veracity and context of the information being consumed, individuals can easily fall into the traps of fake news and conspiracy theories (Chang, Mukherjee & Coppel, 2021). This not only affects individual understanding of the facts, but also has a collective impact, as misinformation can spread quickly

through social networks and other digital channels (Benaissa Pedriza, 2023). As a result, opinions and attitudes are formed based on erroneous or manipulated data, which can lead to harmful decisions in vital areas.

In addition, the absence of effective media literacy exacerbates social polarization and division, creating environments where individuals become entrenched in their viewpoints, often leading to a lack of exposure to or acceptance of differing perspectives (Modgil, Singh, Rgupta & Dennehy, 2021). This situation can result in the formation of ideologically homogeneous groups, further contributing to societal fragmentation. In its early conceptual framework, media literacy was defined as a complex skill set crucial for engaging with mediated communication. This definition, articulated by scholars such as Aufderheide (1993) and Livingstone (2004), involved a detailed understanding of various key competencies: the ability to access a wide range of media sources, the capacity for critical analysis and interpretation of media content, the aptitude to evaluate and discern the intentions behind media messages, and the competence to create content across different media platforms.

This study explores how media literacy education can enable individuals to identify, understand and critically evaluate the content they encounter online. This, in turn, empowers them to make informed decisions and fosters a more informed and resilient society against the tide of misinformation. Regarding methodology, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of media literacy on misinformation. This paradigm allows for a nuanced exploration of how media literacy education affects people's ability to discern truth from falsehood in the media they consume. In terms of sample size, the study strategically selects a significant number of participants to ensure representativeness and accuracy. The objective is to analyze survey responses from 500 participants. Participants are chosen to reflect a wide range of experiences and perspectives on media literacy, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and successes in combating misinformation in different educational and policy contexts.

DCC17 Media and news in digital cultures

PP 1002 From euphoria to reservation: Fact-checkers' partnership with Meta and the third-party fact-checking program

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In a time of epistemic instability, fact-checking has gained ground worldwide. We now have a global expansion of fact-checking organisations with both journalistic news outlets and grassroots initiatives (Graves, 2016; Lowrey, 2017). As of 2023, the Duke Reporters' Lab counts 417 active fact-checking organisations globally (Stencel et al., 2023). A recent development is the increasing use of technical solutions and algorithmic systems to advance fact-checking practices (Full Fact, 2016; Graves, 2018; Guo et al., 2022; Johnson, 2023). One example of AI-supported fact-checking is Meta's third-party fact-checking program where IFCN-certified fact-checkers are responsible for fact-checking content in the local language on, for example, Facebook, which has been flagged by Meta's AI system designated to identify potentially false or misinforming content (META, 2021). Based on interviews and ethnographic fieldwork carried out in the Danish partner organisation of Meta, *TjekDet*, during the last five years (since *TjekDet* initiated their partnership with Meta), we explore the practices of Danish fact-checkers and their interaction with and reflections about the use of the AI system. We describe the development from a primarily optimistic to a more critical attitude towards the program and its workings and implications. Whereas the fact-checkers initially emphasise machinic virtues and the possibilities of tracing problematic claims in a vast ocean of claims circulating on social media, faster and with greater accuracy, they more recently painted a motley picture involving reservations, primarily relating to insecurities about the workings of the system, lack of alignment in internal working procedures, and lack of confidence in the systems as it sometimes seems to centre around single topics. We end by discussing that while the fact-checkers' reservations are primarily practical related to working procedures and concerns for potential consequences for themselves as a trustworthy organisation, the program also carries more fundamental problematic ideals and understandings of democracy and the journalist and citizen role that the fact-checkers do not reflect on (for a related discussion see Ananny, 2020).

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DCC18 Digital economies and platformed labour

PP 1100 In this economy: Exploring visual signifiers and lifestyle narratives in financial discourse on YouTube and TikTok

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The social media landscape has experienced a notable surge in content promoting the allure of the capitalist dream – an enticing narrative of swiftly accumulating wealth, devoid of traditional hard work. This phenomenon is captured in "FinTok" and "FinTube", portmanteaus for the financial content posted on TikTok and YouTube. Here, content creators promote topics such as investment opportunities, cryptocurrency, and how to reach financial independence through passive income. In this marketplace of ideas, influencers offer strategies for rapid wealth accumulation, promising a shortcut to prosperity from the comfort of one's home.

This article explores financial content on TikTok and YouTube, concerning the visual grammar and signifiers used, while also critically examining the narratives surrounding the pursuit of financial independence. This research investigates the content generated by Romanian creators within the financial niche, encompassing both macro and granular perspectives. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines automated data collection, natural language processing (NLP), and metadata processing, with a qualitative grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and social semiotics analysis. The research is also anchored in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986), particularly emphasizing indicators associated with the peripheral route, through textual and visual cues such as the speaker's visual presentation, perceived credibility, and expertise (through props, personal example), repetition and textual structures.

Extensive datasets consisting of 4,500 TikTok videos and 1,000 YouTube videos, along with their associated metadata, were utilized to construct a comprehensive overview of the subject. Textual content, both video titles and transcribed audio from selected videos underwent analysis utilizing NLP. Co-occurrence networks (Higuchi, 2016) were constructed to unveil the prominent themes and key discourse points within the examined content. The second part of the analysis focused on a subset of videos from each platform, selected based on their view count. The videos were coded on three core aspects: visual grammar (how the videos were constructed), visual signifiers and cues (like the speaker's presentation, and lifestyle), and discursive elements.

The results revealed patterns in the form and the content of the videos, hinting at the existence of a FinTube/FinTok style. Additionally, the analysis uncovers traces of discourse addressing scams, asserting that the content vehemently denies any association with fraudulent activities. The scrutiny of the visual attributes of the videos yields noteworthy findings. Notably, most of the content is generated by male creators who commonly adopt a professional demeanor, often donning suits and projecting an image of affluence through displays of luxurious possessions such as cars, watches, and vacations. Furthermore, a distinct pattern emerges wherein content is produced in bulk, subsequently fragmented into smaller segments, and disseminated across multiple installments.

This study holds significance as it provides insights into this prominent content niche. Beyond its academic value, the research contributes to the realm of financial literacy by offering observations on the types of advice circulating online for achieving the elusive "financial independence". The examination of online behaviors informs our understanding of digital communication strategies on these platforms.

DCC18 Digital economies and platformed labour

PP 1101 Coins and connection: Exploring the viewer's gratification towards digital begging on TikTok live streaming

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The upsurge of social media platforms has changed the way individuals engage with digital content and interact with other users. TikTok, one of the biggest social media platforms, has billion of users worldwide. Alongside with this growth, there is a rising trend known as "digital begging" within the backdrop of TikTok live streaming. Digital begging,

or some prefer to call it as "E-begging", can be described as a person who utilises social media such as TikTok as an online fundraising platform with the intention of getting financial gain from strangers online. Previous studies have highlighted the reasons for the TikTok content creators "digital beg" through TikTok live streaming. However, studies pertaining to why the TikTok users that are categorised as "viewers", are willing to spend hours in participating in digital begging particularly through the "gift-giving" activity during the live streaming are understudied.

With that in mind, by using Malaysia as the case study, this paper seeks to gain insights on this phenomenon through the lens of Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT). The objectives of this paper are:

- To examine the motivations for viewers to spend hours watching TikTok live streams.
- To explore the gratifications that viewers seek through their participation in digital begging through gift-giving activity during TikTok live streams.
- To understand the extent how digital begging on TikTok influences the dynamics of creator-viewer relationships through gift-giving activity during TikTok live streams.

Based on the data by Statistica (2023), Millennials and Gen Z are the biggest TikTok users in Malaysia. Hence, focus group discussions (FGD) with TikTok users with these age groups will be employed to understand their motivations and gratifications for using TikTok and watching the platform's live streams. The data from FGD will be analysed by using thematic analysis to observe patterns of similarities and differences across the data set.

This study makes a valuable contribution on the understanding of the role of social media in society in today's communication landscape. Moreover, we hope that this study is able to expand our knowledge on how communication on how social media like TikTok contributes to the development of online communities thus extending our understanding on issues of digital well-being that includes the potential exploitation of user-generated content across different cultural contexts, which in this case is Malaysia.

DCC18 Digital economies and platformed labour

PP 1102 "Waiting" for Traffic: A field study of TikTok transnational e-commerce live streaming industry

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The globalization of communication goes hand in hand with the globalization of the economy. As a digital infrastructure, platforms enable the connection of social relations and the reorganization of social resources through broad access and reach. The 2020 COVID-19 epidemic has accelerated the digital transformation of interactions on a global scale. With the booming development of China's digital economy, many digital platform companies such as Alibaba, Tencent, ByteDacne born in the Chinese market have gradually started to globalize their business, and become new players in the global digital communication game, competing with American tech giants such as Meta, Apple, Google, etc. However, most of the existing research about digital platform focuses on micro-audience surveys or macro-theoretical discussions, lacking empirical analysis of concrete practical experiences at the meso-level, to explore how have digital platforms been used as a tool to influence the established social operation mechanism and how do practitioners interact with digital platforms.

Therefore, this study attempts to take the case as a starting point for discussion, using the transnational e-commerce live streaming industry, which has developed based on the TikTok platform during the pandemic. This study adopting a qualitative research methodology through a total six-month online and offline fieldwork, including three-month online participatory observation and a three-month field research in the TikTok E-commerce Live Streaming Base in Guangzhou. Guangzhou is the capital city of Guangdong Province, located in the southeastern part of mainland China, and is one of the largest transnational e-commerce live streaming industry marketplaces in China(even the world), as well as China's most important manufacturing region and port.

A total of four findings are obtained in this report: firstly, transnational e-commerce live streaming is essentially a intercultural relational engagement communication dominated by goods and algorithm-based traffic. Secondly, the development direction of the whole industry is closely related to platform policies and is forming a pattern of intensification and scale around the platform. Thirdly, transnational digital platforms have brought about the "time difference" effect between regions, which is specifically manifested in the "time difference" of business models and the "time difference" of the global division of labor, and the platforms, as a new type of transnational enterprise in the post-industrial era, have become a global phenomenon. The platform as a new type of transnational corporations in the post-industrial era deploys resources globally. Fourthly, the connections between practitioners in the industry are relatively loose, characterized by high mobility and instability. This study gives a thick description of the new industry boomed by digital platform, providing a vivid case study of digital platforms and broadens the research ideas of digital platforms, digital culture and media studies.

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DCC18 Digital economies and platformed labour

PP 1103 "I won't do that": Rejection as a form of resistance among online freelancers

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This study examines how online freelancers in the United States and the Netherlands exercise agency in their employment through gig platforms. In the gig economy, workers face long, unsocial work hours (Wood et al., 2019) due to, for example, global competition (Vallas & Schor, 2020), the need to invest unpaid labor to procure paid projects (Berg, 2016), and a lack of (sufficient) employment benefits (Gray & Suri, 2019). Simultaneously, the fragmented nature of gig work and the increased surveillance on digital platforms limits workers' ability to organize and improve their working conditions (Woodcock & Graham, 2020). Prior research shows that, in response to these sources of precarity, gig workers develop strategies to build resiliency and make the work more manageable. Such research has primarily focused on more precarious contexts, such as the Global South (Anwar & Graham, 2020) or lines of work that require less training and communication with clients (Chen & Soriano, 2022). This study extends this work by tracing the contours of worker agency among gig workers who are in less precarious positions. When people choose to work in the gig economy despite having other, arguably better options, do they engage in similar resilience strategies?

This study draws on semi-structured interviews with thirty-one online freelancers, who perform fully remote contract work characterized by a high level of technical and creative skill. These individuals are in relatively privileged positions, as compared to other gig workers, in three ways. First, participants are based in the United States (n = 21) or the Netherlands (n = 12), which provides them not only with various forms of social security, but also with the advantage of less competition on the platform. Second, they engage in online freelancing, arguably a less – though still – precarious form of gig work as compared to other forms. As compared to microwork or delivery work, the more complex nature of the work presumably yields greater financial rewards as well as greater intellectual and creative challenges. Moreover, online freelancing platforms encourage individualized brand building and sustaining a roster of clients, giving online freelancers more power and agency than the more invisible workers in the gig economy (Ahmad & Krzywdzinski, 2022). Lastly, most participants are highly educated and have specialized technical or creative skill sets. Consequently, they tend to have other employment options at hand and make a more active choice to work through a gig platform.

We find that online freelancers engage in what we call "shades of rejection," which refers to the varying rates at which they refuse to engage with (parts of) gig platforms. Such rejection ranges from refusing to engage in free consultations to leaving the platform altogether. This finding suggests that resistance among more privileged gig workers might take the form of rejection, which extends frameworks adopted by earlier research (e.g., Anwar & Graham, 2020). Finally, the paper considers how rejection behaviors intersect with privilege, where those less dependent on gig work are able to distance themselves from the precarious employment environment within the gig economy.

DCC18 Digital economies and platformed labour

PP 1104 Re-ordering the disorder of the "World Wide Web" trademark application: A historical analysis through the CERN archives

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The World Wide Web (also known as Web or WWW), developed at CERN in 1989, rapidly evolved into the most popular Internet service. Despite its great popularity, Web development has been characterized by various disorders, that have shaped how users access and engage with the service.

One of the lesser-known yet significant "disorders" in the history of the Web involves CERN's unsuccessful attempt to trademark the name World Wide Web. To gain legal recognition and protection as the official owner of this Internet service, CERN applied to the Patent and Trademark Office of the US Department of Commerce for registration of a trademark in 1995. However, this request was rejected in 1996 because the name was "a recognized term describing the global computer network known as the 'World Wide Web' " (CERN-ARCH-WWW-2-002).

This paper examines and reorders the factors and underlying reasons that led to the initial application and subsequent rejection of the 'World Wide Web' as a registered trademark. The research is based on exclusive access to documents housed in the CERN archives, specifically the WWW collection, and in-depth interviews with key figures involved in the trademark application process. In this endeavour, the research employs a marketing lens, grounded in brand management principles, to conduct a hermeneutic analysis of the data to interpret findings.

The results show that organisational culture is a key factor in rejecting the trademark. The need to trademark "Web" only became apparent in 1994, amid a clash of organisational cultures between CERN and MIT. MIT's push for CERN to trademark the Web to gain ownership was countered by CERN's own trademark application, a strategic move to assert its creative rights and prevent MIT from owning the service. This underlines the tensions between the two organisations that underpinned the trademark application. Furthermore, CERN's culture was an important factor in analysing the reasons for the rejection of the trademark. Its culture shaped decisions related to product development and promotion that, from a marketing perspective, could be seen as misjudgements. These "mistakes" fall into four categories: (i) the naming process; (ii) pricing strategies; (iii) distribution approach; and (iv) timing. While these decisions helped to increase the number of web users and facilitate the adoption of the technology in the early 1990s, they also reduced the likelihood of the web becoming a registered trademark.

By exploring a lesser-known aspect of this technology through a marketing lens, this paper contributes to the historical literature on the Web. It highlights the influence of organisational culture on digital product development decisions. In addition, this study provides a basis for considering the counterfactual history of the most widely used Internet service: What if CERN had succeeded in trademarking the Web? How would the digital landscape as we know it have changed if the web became trademarked?

DGR01 Analyzing games and the state of game studies

PP 0716 Virtual reality as a space for self-creation – An exploratory study of Polish VRChat players

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The study dealt with the ways of human (player) functioning in virtual reality (VR), especially in the context of the means and mechanisms of player self-creation. As an example of such a space, social VR application VRChat was chosen – in which one can interact with other players (Wang 2020; Maloney & Freeman 2020; McVeigh-Schultz et al. 2018, 2019). One of the key aspects of acting in games and VR is self-creation, expressed mainly through an avatar (Freeman et al. 2020; Baumann-Jaeger 2018). The relationship between avatar and player identity is the subject of academic debate (e.g. Ducheneaut, et al. 2009, Kafai et al. 2009, McArthur & Jenson 2015). Avatars represent players in the VR world and enable them to experience it by means of modifying, creating and personalizing an image of themselves – which happens to be a key activity in the process of socialization, exploration and experimentation in the online social space (Rzeszewski 2020). Thus, the study served to check whether the players realize the process of self-creation ("the conscious co-formation of the individual through learning, action, reflection, life choices, opening up new possibilities for development", Pietrasinski, 2001:88).

In this exploratory study we posed the following research questions: (Q1) How do VRChat players understand and define their in-game identity (specifically, their relationship with their avatar)? (Q2) What are the motivations of people, intensively using VRChat? (Q3) How do players functionalize the use of VRChat (what do they use it for, what functions does it perform)? (Q4) What benefits and risks do gamers see in experiencing VR? (Q5) How do players describe the communication between avatars in the VRChat app in terms of form and content? The project was funded by the National Science Center in Poland (decision no. 2022/06/X/XXX/XXXX [anonymized]).

The study consisted of in-depth individual interviews (IDI) with 30 Polish players, using the VRChat app intensively (5–6 hrs/week, for min. 2 years). The interviews took place in the VRChat and its scenario nvolved 23 questions. The research material was analyzed using QDAMiner, a code tree included 8 codes and 58 sub-codes.

We aimed at finding out players' motivations for using the app and decoding the ways they think about themselves in the game – including, in particular, their relationships with their own avatar and with other players. During the interviews, all players pointed to the social potential as a key benefit of using the app. We also observed seven crucial factors determining the choice of a particular avatar, such as the desire to reflect one's personality and to "feel good" about the character with which the player identifies, or making the avatar an excuse for an ironic but friendly discussion between players. Significantly, too, some respondents used statements that indicate identification with the avatar they chose and used constantly (or most of the time). Some respondents outright stated that they would like to be their avatar in real life.

The project yielded insights into the functioning of social VR applications by players and the complex relationship between player and avatar.

DGR01 Analyzing games and the state of game studies

PP 0717 Playing anxiety – Examining how game design can be used to experience mental illnesses

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In recent years, more and more serious games have been published that move away from the prevalent stigmatizing portrayal of mental illness and place sensitive portrayals of playable characters (PCs) with mental illness at the center of the game. As mental illnesses are often not visible externally, a sensitive, non-stigmatizing portrayal presents a particular challenge.

Compared to films where mental illnesses can be portrayed only using the narrative and audiovisual elements, video games can use ludic elements as an additional layer. Games designed with a subjective point of view (no avatar visualized), and an intradiegetic-centered direct point of action (interaction within the game only via a directly controllable PC) provide a high degree of subjectification where the players merge with the PC and experience the narrative through their eyes. If the PC is conceived with a mental illness, the game offers players the opportunity to adopt this character's perspective and actively experience various aspects of mental illness themselves. Additional elements of gameplay, such as manipulation rules, can be used to create an even closer experience of "what it's like." This perspective-taking can lead to fewer stigmatizing responses, more empathy with the target, and more prosocial behaviors.

However, there is no research on which aspects of a game and gameplay are specifically associated with perspective-taking and how this might be related to (de)stigmatization.

This study uses the game *Fractured Minds* – a short puzzle adventure game designed to demonstrate life with an anxiety disorder – to examine which elements of a game are suitable for experiencing mental illness through a PC. We used the methodology of close play to analyze how anxiety disorder is portrayed in the game. To investigate how this portrayals are interpreted, we also conducted qualitative interviews with 21 participants (13 female, 21–56 years), who were asked to play the game and then interviewed about their gaming experience.

Fractured Minds features a high degree of subjectification by its first-person perspective and direct control of the PC's actions. The game represents anxiety disorder on the narrative level directly through the plot and indirectly through metaphorical representations. On the visual-auditory level the game uses dark colors and dissonant music. On the ludic level, the game uses defamiliarization (disrupting people's routinized actions) by undermining players' expectations of control and agency. Also it counteracts the state of flow by creating a challenge-skill imbalance through missing instructions, agency restriction and negative feedback, even after success.

Our interviews identified the ludic elements as the most relevant reference point in players' gaming experience and reflections as it triggered negative feelings in line with feelings that can accompany anxiety disorders (anxiety, fear, self-doubt). Defamiliarization and these negative feelings drew attention to the dissimilarity to other games and therefore encouraged reflection on the game and the illness. However, there is still a risk of stigmatization, primarily related to the narrative level when elements (especially metaphors) were misunderstood.

Our study offers relevant insights for how to design a game portraying mental illnesses to contribute to destigmatization.

DGR01 Analyzing games and the state of game studies

PP 0718 How do people experience a chronic disease of a loved one in digital games? Representation of illness experience and support

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Chronic diseases, i.e., "conditions that last 1 year or more and require ongoing medical attention or limit activities of daily living or both" (CDC, 2022), do not only disrupt the lives of those affected. People close to someone with a chronic disease, such as family members, partners, and friends, are also confronted with a breakdown of their „old" order. Support from caregivers may include providing information and compassion, decision-making, assistance in everyday life, and financial aid (Reifegerste, 2019). Hence, the illness may affect family members regarding emotions, finances, education and work, leisure time, social life, and family relationships (Golics et al., 2013). Representation from the point of view of relatives of those affected potentially helps reflect and understand how the illness impacts their lives and leads to educating the public on diseases and health (Fürholzer, 2020).

This contribution deals with representing the close social group of people with chronic diseases in digital games. The games examined in this study are chosen based on their relevance, variance, and accessibility through Let's Plays on the video platform YouTube in German or English. The games examined in this study were released within the last ten years and belong to different genres. The sample includes examples of both mental, e.g., depression and anxiety, and physical illnesses, e.g., cancer. There was a combined deductive-inductive process of creating

a coding system (Mayring, 1997) with further steps of analytic coding (Flick, 2007). Communication and consensual coding validated the categories and ensured their inter-coding reliability (Kuckartz, 2018). The focus is on the illness experience of family members and friends and how they support those affected.

The findings show different perspectives on dealing with chronic diseases in digital games. On the one hand, there is the representation of those affected, including how they experience the support of their family and friends and how this support impacts them. On the other hand, the perspective of relatives offers more insight into their illness experience and ways of support that might go unnoticed by those affected. Games following the perspective of relatives tend to focus on coping with the illness, bereavement, and grief. The analyzed sample shows different kinds of support: Positive support or harmful approaches to dealing with the disease. Some examples even lack representation of support from family and friends for those affected. The presentation will offer a detailed insight into selected examples.

The contribution reveals different approaches to representing the close social group of people with chronic diseases. These representations might lead to more awareness of the impact of chronic diseases beyond those affected and more understanding in this context. Positive support identified in the sample, as best practice examples, might help improve the relationship between those affected and their loved ones. On the other hand, depictions of harmful dealing with the illness might also be beneficial as cautionary tales. The findings of this study also emphasize the potential of digital games for meaningful representations of complex social phenomena, in this case, chronic diseases.

DGR01 Analyzing games and the state of game studies

PP 0719 "Git gud or go home": Boundary work and distinction in Fromsoftware games' online communities

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Cultural consumption is a central part of how identity is socially built and performed. Alongside from more affirmed cultural products such as music, movies, and books, videogames are increasingly becoming a part of the cultural diet and, thus, increasingly concur to the formation of group identities, such as through the building and negotiation of symbolic boundaries. Symbolic boundaries can be defined as the lines that define some groups, people and things while excluding others (Lamont et al 2015). It is a term that refers to the internal classification systems within and between groups and that, as noted by Bourdieu (1984), always carry an implicit judgment by the classifier to the classified. The study of music consumption is a central example, albeit not the only one, of how researchers have used this literature to investigate forms of cultural consumption.

However, we maintain that videogames communities have a peculiar way to enforce and create boundaries tied to the specificity of the considered medium. Games require a high level of interaction in order to function and this allows different players' expectations, desires and "gaming background" to create wildly different gameplay experiences (Aarseth 2003, Malliet 2007). The centrality of gameplay implies the necessity to learn not only theoretical and aesthetic knowledge in order to decipher an obscure medium, but also a practical skill set in order to overcome the game's challenges. When considering how symbolic boundaries are built through game consumption it is thus paramount to put a focus on how games are played, even more so as when considering less interactive forms of media (Jarness 2015).

Hence, this article will investigate how symbolic boundaries are discursively built, managed, maintained, and negotiated within the specifics of digital game communities, and how this intersects with specific gameplay elements and design choices. To do so we focus on how Fromsoftware titles (e.g.: Elden Ring, Dark Souls, Bloodborne), which are notorious for their difficulty and their dedicated fanbase, have been discussed on dedicated online communities on Reddit. We perform a discourse and content analysis of over 120.000 comments, through manual and automated text analysis, within the broader methodological framework of digital methods. We consider how symbolic boundaries are discursively built within these communities, and how users define what authentic, true, or "hardcore" modes of consumption are, and how these distinguish and socially situate the player.

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DGR01 Analyzing games and the state of game studies

PP 0720 Press Start to Publish. The state of Game Studies research in 2024

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In response to the increasing recognition of digital games as pivotal elements of modern media culture, this paper presents a thorough bibliometric analysis of the Game Studies field. Utilizing a comprehensive dataset comprising 4484 unique scientific articles published in Game Studies, sourced from various bibliometric databases including WoS, Scopus, Crossref, Semantic Scholar, and cross-referenced with Google Scholar, we embark on a detailed exploration of the themes and trends that have captivated researchers over the past two decades. This examination delves into the distribution of research across multiple domains within Game Studies, aiming to unearth emerging trends in the field and identify theoretical gaps in the existing literature.

Our methodical approach involved analyzing key publication metrics, such as trends in publication volume, citation patterns, and thematic focuses (through automated content analysis of titles and abstracts) over time. Our findings reveal notable shifts in research focus, with a consistent presence of research on gamification, game design, and fluctuations in interest in topics of societal relevance, such as extremism and gender issues. These shifts highlight the field's adaptability to evolving societal concerns and the increasingly complex role of gaming in culture. This trend correlates with a surge in publications in the fields of Communication and Cultural Studies, which dominate our sample.

Additionally, our preliminary analysis indicates that open access articles are cited more frequently than non-open access articles, suggesting a strong statistical correlation between open access status and citation counts. This insight is particularly relevant in the context of the ongoing discourse on open access publishing and its impact on academic research dissemination.

In conclusion, this study not only charts the dynamic landscape of Game Studies but also serves as a critical compass for future research. It highlights areas ripe for exploration and underscores the evolving interplay between digital gaming and broader cultural and societal trends. Through this comprehensive bibliometric analysis, we provide a foundational roadmap for scholars seeking to navigate the multifaceted and ever-changing terrain of Game Studies.

DGR02 Games, gamification and society

PP 0830 The importance of social engagement and local context: Findings from the Euphorigen Investigation misinformation escape room

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Educational misinformation games have proliferated as a novel approach for building resilience to misinformation. This paper presents research on the Euphorigen Investigation (Loki's Loop, 2023), an escape room style misinformation game, focused on two findings: the social nature of the game and the importance of local context.

Media literacy theory and practice largely focuses on the individual and the skills and knowledge needed to navigate information on one's own. Most misinformation games (31 of 32 according to DeJong, 2023) are single-player games, illustrating strong adherence to the individual skills orientation. In contrast, we developed Euphorigen as a collaborative game with a post-game debrief conversation to reflect the social aspect of misinformation. We analyzed video recordings and player surveys from 53 game sessions involving 211 players. We find that the collaborative gameplay offers opportunities to discuss their experiences with misinformation in the debrief, factoring significantly in producing strong results on increasing people's awareness of misinformation tactics and generating reflection on the psychological and emotional aspects of misinformation (Cho et. al., 2023).

We developed Euphorigen for the US context with a narrative that leverages the US's overall low levels of trust in government and large corporations to trigger confirmation bias as well as the notion of introducing a substance into the public water stream to establish a particular player mindset. Other organizations have since localized Euphorigen into a number of European languages (Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Finnish, Dutch), all countries with varying levels of trust in institutions among other misinformation resiliency factors (Humprecht, E., Esser, F., & Van Aelst, P., 2020). Based on a workshop of the localization partners we found mixed results. Positively, seemingly minor but significant modifications, such as changing the names of the characters and integrating local misinformation examples into the debrief, contributed to the game's relevancy. However, we also learned that there was a missed

opportunity to make modest changes to the narrative (e.g. a different delivery system than the public water supply) that would have enhanced the game's appeal and impact.

This study has important implications for misinformation game design. In critiquing media literacy's overriding emphasis on individual skills, we suggest games are ideally suited for creating environments that reproduce the social nature of misinformation and engage multiple people in collective sensemaking and dialogue among people with different views. We further offer a co-design methodology based on the insights from the workshop findings, to co-create misinformation games tailored to local context.

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DGR02 Games, gamification and society

PP 0831 Indie video games for addressing ecological challenges. A narrative review of game-based learning approaches in high school and baccalaureate education

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Video games addressing environmental issues have the potential to raise awareness among players by providing interactive and immersive experiences that demonstrate the complexities and interconnections of natural systems, as well as the potential consequences of ecological degradation and the benefits of conservation efforts (Larreina-Morales & Gunella, 2023). These games provide a system of rewards and goals that motivate players, a narrative context that situates the activity and establishes rules of engagement, learning content relevant to the narrative plot, and interactive cues that prompt learning and provide feedback. Furthermore, game-based learning approaches have explored the benefits of introducing video games into formal learning contexts. In video games, players embody themselves within a system of signs and symbols that are learned implicitly through their interactive, immersive, and problem-solving nature, providing a situated learning (Gee, 2003). Therefore, video games contribute to the perception of players as agents of change, increasing the application of knowledge in real situations and promoting sustainable actions (Larreina-Morales & Gunella, 2023).

The purpose of this paper is to report on a narrative literature review that aimed to determine the extent to which ecological indie games are potential resources for raising environmental awareness and addressing climate change issues among high school and baccalaureate students.

We conducted a literature search on the intersection of indie (or independent) games, ecology and games, and game-based learning approaches using databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Search terms used in the literature review included varied terms for indie games and ecological awareness, terms relevant to the twin goals of learning and engagement in games.

We identified articles and books describing the indie genre as opposed to mainstream video games (such as Juul, 2019; Pérez-Latorre, 2016); ecologic video games (Chang, 2011); and case studies based on game-based learning approaches, particularly on mainstream and serious games (Picó et al., 2021; Gómez & Lanza, 2021). Applying the inclusion criteria led to 21 papers, 3 book chapters, and 4 books, which were considered relevant.

The synthesis of the papers indicates that there is reason to be optimistic that a game-based learning approach may effectively increase environmental awareness and address climate change issues among high school and baccalaureate students. It is important to take advantage of the interdisciplinary nature of video games when incorporating game-based learning approaches into the educational curriculum. Furthermore, while indie games are not commonly used in classrooms, they have the potential to be a valuable resource for teachers and critical pedagogy learning contexts.

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DGR02 Games, gamification and society

PP 0832 Speak with blocks: Minecraft, environmental campaigns and activism

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Speak with Blocks: Minecraft, Environmental Campaigns and Activism

The communication of urban environmental issues and sustainability represents a pivotal asset for city administrators and stakeholders. Engaging citizens in this field constitutes a salient challenge to face on the one hand public apathy, or even negationism, and on the other disinformation. Reaching effectively the target requests new kinds of communicative instances that leverage the potential of new media. In this regard, video games emerged as a potential help in the promotion of awareness, reflection, criticism, or even action and behavioral changes. Reflection has focused particularly on the so-called "serious games" (Frasca, 2003), that is games specifically developed for advancing a thesis, emphasizing the educational value of video games and focusing on game-based learning for engaging with climate change (Fernández Galeote & Hamari, 2021; Ouariachi et al., 2019). This scholarship has primarily adopted discrete video game software as its main analytical unit.

The present contribution adopts instead a more systemic perspective, focusing on the co-shaping processes between the game software, its assets, the campaign itself, players, its commentators (streamers) and the broader controversy it inserts itself into. From this perspective, it acknowledges that the roles played by video games within sustainability campaigns can be manifold and often contradictory. After putting forward a multi-dimensional analytical model, the present contribution applies it to two top-down environmental campaigns, both using the popular 3D sandbox game Minecraft (Mojang 2011), which allows users to build and explore polygonal environments. The first is a 2021 institutional campaign in Venice, Italy, where developers built an interactive map of the Venetian lagoon to promote sustainable development through a series of green practices, such as cultivating urban gardens, fining drivers using polluting vehicles, or creating short-supply chains and solidarity economies. The second is a 2020 corporate campaign where grade school pupils built the local power plant to model water uses (aqueducts, discharges, industrial uses, and energy) to ensure the protection of the waters in the Po Valley region and encourage imagining an ideal and environmentally sustainable city.

Through analysis of production pivoting on semi-structured interviews to the campaign and software developers (n = 6), this research explores the intersections between (a) urban sustainability issues, (b) the network of actors and stakeholders involved in sustainability communication, and (c) the video game ecosystem which includes the video game assets and affordances as well as the articulation of its community (including users, modders, streamers, spectators, distributors...). The analysis shows how the trade-offs entailed by the use of video games within sustainability campaigns (i.e. between knowledge, social capital, political support, social relevance...) are carefully navigated by the stakeholders to secure funding and bring such campaigns to fruition. Moreover, the analysis stresses the strong limitations currently stifling the evaluation of such campaigns and their short and long-term benefits for the local context. In conclusion, the analysis puts forward some ideas for overcoming such limitations to better leverage the potential of video games in the context of such urgent challenges.

DGR02 Games, gamification and society

PP 0833 Putting hope and power of action into play

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Increasingly, the fight for climate and environment may seem hopeless as much too little is being done way too late. Many people, including children and youth, experience anxiety, anger, despair, or apathy as a direct reaction to the current state of the world (e.g. Happer, 2017; Hickman et al, 2021). Loss of hope is problematic both for the individual, due to the suffering it may cause, as well as for society and the environment at large, as it may affect the will to act (Kelsey, 2020, pp. 28–29). It seems that hope and its relation to power of action is something we need not only to understand, but to find ways to put into play to continually encourage and foster transformative action toward climate and environment.

In the proposed paper I will discuss a case, where we literally seek to put hope and power of action into play via a speculative cli-fi roleplaying game (RPG), created to be used with youth aged 15–20 years. The question that informs the paper is: How can hope and power of action be put into play in a cli-fi roleplaying game, and how is this received by the players?

Firstly, I will focus on hope and power of action as phenomena, examining both from various angles such as philosophy and psychology. Then I will discuss how we seek to work with hope and power of action as game mechanisms and themes in the RPG *The children from the eternity train*. Thirdly, I examine how two groups of players receive and react to these mechanisms and themes, drawing on data from a pilot study consisting of two tests play-rounds of four sessions each. One took place from August 2022 to August 2023 with a varied group of educators, researchers, and roleplaying enthusiasts, one was carried out in January 2024 with a group of pupils from the Danish boarding school Østerskov. The pilot study forms the foundation for the three-year research project *Playing with disaster*, officially starting in September 2024, that has received funding from the Independent Research Fund Denmark as well as the Climate Cluster at University of Southern Denmark.

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DGR02 Games, gamification and society

PP 0834 Gamification in Higher Education: A systematic literature review of its creative potential in instructional communication

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In response to the increasing concerns of disengagement and demotivation among today's higher education students (Chipchase et al., 2017; Pham et al., 2022; Wong & Liem, 2021), gamification, a concept that utilises game design elements in a non-game context (Deterding et al., 2011), has emerged as a key educational approach. Indicating its creative potential to enhance learner engagement and motivation, the adoption of gamification has witnessed a surge in online, hybrid, and traditional learning environments over the last decade (Kaya & Erçağ, 2023; Khalil et al., 2018; Sailer & Sailer, 2020). Integration of such technological tools and engaging strategies is indispensable in the field of instructional communication (Myers et al., 2016; Waldeck et al., 2001). However, diverse application arrangements and widespread implementation approaches have also led to a fragmented understanding and debates on the effectiveness of gamification (Hanus & Fox, 2015; Kyewski & Krmer, 2018; Mekler et al., 2017). This complexity poses a dilemma for educators and educational institutes aiming to integrate gamification into their instructional practices.

To address these challenges, this work systematically reviews the state of gamification implementation approaches in higher education from 2013 to 2023. Drawing from 87 papers systematically selected from five databases (Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCOhost, ACM Library, and IEEE Explore), the research navigates the complex landscape of gamification, identifying the core objectives of the implementation, the approach of execution, the methodologies used for intervention, and the impact of intervention on the students. The systematic review also classifies the effectiveness of gamification based on the environment of the study and the duration of the intervention.

The systematic literature review reveals a nuanced and multifaceted outlook on gamification within higher education. Preference towards certain implementation tools, such as the mobile app Kahoot, Gamified Moodle, and tailored platforms, has been observed as a prominent execution approach. A high number of studies concentrated on the online learning environment, resulting in a limited exploration of in-class gamification applications. Only a small number of studies considered the theoretical foundations. By synthesising insights from current empirical studies, the results of the review provide valuable direction for higher education institutions, educators, and instructional designers. The findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on gamification's implementation strategies and impacts within the landscape of educational technologies, a much-needed new order of higher education, and instructional communication practices.

DGR03 Free-to-play and mobile games

PP 0937 Google Doodle games as a branded entertainment strategy: A content analysis from 2010 to 2023

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This study explores the following research question: *How do Google Doodle Games, serving as promotional gaming experience, work to contribute to brand value?* By running an in-depth content analysis of the Google Doodle games published until 2023, we specify the characteristics that identify this interactive content as a direct influence in the brand image. In 1998, Google started designing artistic and appealing modifications of their logotype embedded in their search engine service. Google Doodles adopted different styles and formats that encompass different topics. Due to their creativity, one Doodle was nominated to an Emmy in 2018, and users record some Doodles to upload them on YouTube.

Our work examines the characteristics of Google Doodle games as a subcategory of branded content, valuable content generated around a brand that through its interaction pursues brand engagement and different marketing objectives that influence the brand image. From a persuasive perspective, we propose that interactive doodles improve the brand image by linking specific events and emotions to the organization, which can be described as a type of experiential marketing (Berlanga-Fernández & Sánchez-Esparza, 2021).

We first run a literature review to identify the academic publications linked to Google Doodles and their communicative characteristics. Secondly, we review the Google Doodles Library and, after applying specific exclusive and inclusive criteria, a data corpus is generated from 75 games retrieved. Thirdly, we extract the data set by coding specific characteristics that provide meaningful information to understand these games as brand image enhancers. This codification pays attention to (a) formal data (year and location of publication, topic), (b) game data (game genre, time spent, serious purposes, social elements) and (c) persuasive data (persuasive elements, external elements). For this last step, we follow the theoretical model proposed by De la Hera (2019) to identify persuasive elements; and supported by the method for analysing games as sociotechnical systems suggested by Sicart (2015) to dig into game specifications and game contextualization.

The key findings highlight a transformative shift of the games towards mobile platforms, emphasizing a social aspect characterized by highly 'shareable' content, thereby enhancing word-of-mouth. Additionally, the design of online games facilitates collaborative experiences, allowing players to play with others. The thematic spectrum spans from international festivities (i.e. Halloween, Olympic Games) to more niche and cultural themes (i.e. Mbira, Jerry Lawson's birthday). The persuasive elements show a subtle and associative type of visual placement of the logo, and the main service of the organization (search engine) is commonly present in the game as a button that shows more information about the topic. Finally, educational objectives are also present in the corpus studied as an in-game element.

The implications of the results show the flexibility of possibilities in the use of games as a communicative tool. We identify a necessity to interpret the context these games have outside the playful action. Studying other external effects, such as publicity communication would give a complete understanding of the usability of these games as a positive brand image generator.

DGR03 Free-to-play and mobile games

PP 0938 Dive into the past: Intangible Chinese cultural heritage represented in Chinese mobile games

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This study aims at providing an overview of how intangible Chinese cultural heritage is represented in mobile games developed by Chinese production studios. Our systematic literature review on the academic study of the representation of cultural heritage in games has shown that existing academic publications on this topic focus on the study of tangible cultural heritage and that the study of the representation of cultural heritage in mobile games has been so far neglected (Que et al., In Prep). Furthermore, to overcome the bad reputation of mobile games, there is a growing number of Chinese mobile game studios that followed the strategy of increasing the representation of Chinese cultural heritage in their games, which has been used as a sign of aligning the government's priority of increasing the country's "cultural confidence" and expanding the reputation of Chinese culture globally (Davis, 2020). Considering this context, this study strived to answer the following research question: *What aspects of intangible cultural heritage are represented in mobile games developed by Chinese studios?*

To answer the research question, we conducted a qualitative content analysis of 32 mobile games that we purposively sampled from Apple's App Store and China's TapTap store. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) mobile games produced by Chinese studios; (2) including representations of intangible cultural heritage. The data

collection method used in this study was analytical play, in concrete utilitarian play following Mäyrä (2008, p. 165). this involved making notes of the visual, textual, and audio representations in games and relating these elements to a wider context of historical and social range to contribute to an overall qualitative understanding of the sampled games. For the analysis of the data collected, we conducted a thematic analysis following (Fernández-Vara, 2019). To operationalize the analysis, we followed the definition of intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO (n.d.; 2009).

Our research reports the aspects of history, arts and artefacts, and people as the main themes depicted in the sampled games. The preliminary results of our study showed that Chinese mobile games opted for Chinese historical eras to be the inspiration for their world design. Also, they depicted abundant Chinese arts and artefacts, such as traditional performances, literature, music, rituals, and so on. Lastly, they also included Chinese people's lifestyles and traditional social norms in their game design. Additionally, our results implied that game elements and game genres play crucial roles in choosing which facets of intangible Chinese cultural heritage in Chinese mobile games. Besides, the "games as service" model is widely used by mobile games, providing game content on a continuing revenue model. Noticeably, some sampled games have released new content during special times, such as traditional Chinese festivals, with corresponding intangible heritage to be depicted. This shows the important role of game context in integrating the representation of intangible Chinese cultural heritage in Chinese mobile games.

DGR03 Free-to-play and mobile games

PP 0939 Darker Shades of Play: The prevalence of dark patterns in early childhood mobile digital games

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The centrality of play has been recognized since the early days of the study of human development, given its subordination to meaning-making, with a focus on early childhood (Vygotsky, 1978). With the digitalization of contemporary society, early childhood education itself has increasingly been developed in close contact with digital media, both at school (Lindeman et al., 2021) and family level (Kumpulainen & Gillen, 2020) – with a particular focus on the role of mobile digital games (MDG), and their impact on the "ways children interact, play and learn" (Morgade, et al., 2020, p.119). With this growing interaction between young children and MDG, concerns about problem gaming – conflicts and problems emerging from videogame playing in the sociocultural contexts of everyday life (Thorhauge, Gregersen, & Enevold, 2018) – are also emerging for this age group. According to Zagal et al. (2013) some game design patterns can be unethical, labeling them as "dark" – deceitful design which focuses on maximising profits through manipulative tactics (Dahlan and Susanty, 2022; Heimo et al., 2018; Zagal et al., 2013).

These can have a negative impact on players, manipulating them against their best interests, as well as impacting their digital literacy competencies. Considering the above-discussed aspects of the role of mobile gaming in early childhood, researching dark patterns can be considered even more relevant since their prevalence seems to be expressive on these platforms (Dahlan & Susanty, 2022) and younger age groups (Escudero, 2022; Smahel et al., 2020).

This study aims to investigate the presence of dark patterns in MDG for young children (0–5 years old), through mixed-methods analysis. The five most popular free games for this age range on App Store (February 2023) were analyzed, particularly focusing on the presence of temporal, monetary, social, and/or psychological dark patterns.

The results emphasise the importance of promoting adults' game and digital literacy to support children effectively. Conclusions also raise questions about managing associated risks while fostering critical and empowering approaches and learning, particularly when considering dark patterns within the context of childhood. Furthermore, the results sustain a need to re-contextualize dark patterns and associated literacy practices within the context of childhood, particularly early childhood.

By shining a light on these dark patterns, this research study contributes to a broader discussion on responsible and ethical game design practices and the promotion of game literacies in early childhood . Thereafter, it encourages researchers, developers, families, and educators to reflect on the impact of these design strategies on children's well-being, literacy development, and overall digital experiences. Ultimately, the goal is to promote the creation of more inclusive, engaging, and ethically designed digital experiences for young children.

DGR03 Free-to-play and mobile games

PP 0940 (Un)intended consequences of new monetization strategies in digital games

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We set out to ask what consequences the shift towards new models of monetization in the gaming industry, e.g. in-game sales, will have for gamers, media regulators and media education. First, we describe the ongoing shift in monetization strategies for digital games, relying on aspects of participatory media culture and platform economy

(Nieborg & Poel, 2018). Then, we spell out consequences for users and regulators. Finally, we argue that these consequences pose challenges for (critical) media literacy education.

Monetization of digital games

For years, the way to monetize digital games has been to sell them as products that were distributed either physically or through digital distribution. In recent years digital games across all platforms started generating a substantial amount of revenue through in-game-purchases. This shift is due to a greater reliance on free-to-play models, where a game or certain elements of a game can be used with no or little monetary costs, while access to further game features or items comes with costs in form of in-game sales. Many traditional pay-to-play games now also include a variety of in-game sales.

Potential consequences

Such monetization strategies have led to new forms of catering for consumers' willingness to pay for digital games and new forms of digital gaming with the development of diverse and long-lasting types of games (Joseph, 2021). In addition, games and gaming environments such as Minecraft or Roblox (Evans et al., 2022) make user-generated-content available that is traded in in-game marketplaces. Consumers as producers take an active role in the provision of gaming content. Yet, digital games now have introduced rather complex in-game economies, that are deeply connected to aspects of attention economy (Davenport & Beck, 2001) and data-driven design (Bernevga & Gekker, 2022). Gamers either pay for gaming elements or spent more time in the game to earn rewards. This not only leads to challenges for game designers to cater to diverse audiences in terms of buying power but also encourages gamers to devote more time to a game, potentially increasing risks of excessive or pathological gaming behavior (Lemmens, 2022). At the same time, in-game purchases are often linked with elements of gambling, such as Loot-Boxes. On a regulatory perspective, we observe that strategies to counter such gambling mechanism differ even on a European level, with some countries such as the Netherland taking a stricter approach against gambling elements than others such as Germany.

Challenges for media literacy education

Issues that have long been discussed in social media literacy research, such as privacy, the dissolving boundaries between consumption and production and an understanding of platform logic and economic backgrounds (Manca et al., 2021), also play an increasingly important role for digital gaming. We argue for a need to integrate discourses on digital platform economy and monetization strategies for digital games and consumer rights into the wider framework of (critical) media literacy to prepare consumers, particular children and adolescents, to better cope with the (economic) challenges that are now inherent in the gaming market.

DGR03 Free-to-play and mobile games

PP 0941 I want a new skin! A study on the consumption of microtransactions and gamer status perception among adolescents according to their social class and gender

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This article examines the social class and gender influence the microtransactions (MTX) consumption among Spaniards 14 and 15 years old and how they related their consumption practices with their gamer identity and status between players.

Nowadays, MTX is the prototypical form of Downloadable Content (DLC). Specifically, they are the virtual purchases associated with customization, either of additional content or cosmetic changes (a 'skin', an add-on without direct impact on the way you play) and/or the functional update (for example, unlocking new levels or maps). The player can make these purchases with real money through the game's virtual store or, in paradigmatic cases like Fortnite, in physical stores (like GAME, in the case of Spain). They are called MTX ('micro', 'transaction') because they are considered small sums of money. These MTX allow players to acquire status within the game (Nielsen, 2020) and, therefore, within the gamer community.

This research is carried out with the participation of in-school 14 and 15-year-old adolescents from Barcelona and Vic cities (located in Spain). The data collection is based on two qualitative questionnaires (N = 150), eight focus groups (N = 48), and two series of virtual semi-structured interviews (N = 8) and online gaming interviews (N = 8). The qualitative analysis of the participants' discourses was performed with the NVivo software in two rounds of coding. The first coding focused on the adolescents' gaming practices; their discourses on "status" in gaming culture; their definitions of "gamer"; and their identification (or non-identification) with this concept. Based on the first coding, a second round of coding was performed by crossing the first analysis with the categories mentioned above established by Muriel & Crawford (2018): hardcore-subcultural; casual; foodie-connoisseur; cultural-intellectual; everyone is a gamer. The results show significant differences in the consumption of MTX regarding social class and gender. Firstly, we can observe that the working class practically only plays free-to-play and pay-to-win video games. Concerning this issue, we observe that working-class boys are most likely to engage in this purchasing practice.

In contrast, both middle-class boys and girls openly criticize this type of practice and, in some cases, especially among girls, both working-class and middle-class, link it to gambling addiction. Moreover, these consumption practices are related to adolescents' perception of gamer status and their identification with the gamer identity (Nielsen, 2020). In short, we observed that social class and gender play an important role in adolescents' consumption practices concerning MTX consumption and their perception of their status and identification (or not) as gamers.

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DGR04 Motivations and emotions

PP 1028 (Are we) motivated to game for meaning? Insights and challenges from extant literature on eudaimonia in digital games research

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Among the more impactful shifts in media psychology research is the expansion of entertainment to consider hedonic (e.g., pleasure) and eudaimonic (e.g., meaningful) experiences (Vorderer & Reinecke, 2015). This research has found footing in explaining video games (see Daneels et al., 2023)—a medium not commonly thought to offer more serious and contemplative experiences (Oliver et al., 2016).

In a scoping review of eudaimonia in video games (Daneels et al., 2021), ample scholarship on how and why players feel eudaimonia during and following gameplay was identified (N = 83 studies). However, there was a dearth of scholarship into if and how players are motivated to seek eudaimonia in video games. Some disagreed on key *definitions* (e.g., "insight needs" in Oliver et al., 2016 as compared to "eudaimonic entertainment motivations" in Possler et al., 2020). Others differed in the *levels of selection* at which they considered eudaimonic motives to operate (e.g., selecting a specific game in Wulf & Baldwin, 2020 as opposed to selecting how to play a game in Holl et al., 2020). To these ends, the current study more deeply explores existing literature to address:

(RQ1) How are eudaimonic motives of digital game use conceptualized?

(RQ2) At which levels of media selection are eudaimonic motives considered?

Method

We conducted a multi-stage scoping review: a secondary analysis of manuscripts from Daneels et al (2021, https://osf.io/q7kdv) and a PRISMA search for new manuscripts (see https://osf.io/rvqnm/?view_only=f91737 9fa0854609874d9f212823f38f). N = 26 papers overall. Using qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000), all information on eudaimonic motives (conceptualization, measurement, results) was extracted from the papers, summarized and then clustered by similarity to identify larger patterns.

Results

Regarding RQ1, when conceptualized as trait-like, eudaimonic motives reflect individuals' persistent tendency to seek out games for meaningful experiences in ways reflecting more *fundamental human needs* (e.g., insight and psychological well-being: Oliver et al., 2016; Possler et al., 2020; Rigby & Ryan, 2017; Wulf & Baldwin, 2020). For others, traits were more proximally connected to *media preferences* (e.g., wanting emotionally challenging or reflective content: Cohen, 2016; Possler et al., 2020; Wulf & Baldwin, 2020). In both cases, at least some players seem to use games to "scratch a eudaimonic itch" (Jacobs, 2021, p. 31), although more recent scholarship (Bowman et al., 2023) found players to rarely mention eudaimonic expectations of upcoming games from franchises with known eudaimonic capacities.

Regarding RQ2, we found that eudaimonic gaming motives have been considered to operate on at least four levels of media selection: selecting games over other activities (e.g., Laato & Rauti, 2021; Shi et al., 2019), selecting a specific game genre (e.g., serious games: Jacobs, 2021), choosing a specific game (e.g., *Pokémon Go* for nostalgia: Wulf & Baldwin, 2020), and engaging specific playstyles within a game (Cohen, 2016; Possler et al., 2020).

Digital games are known to elicit eudaimonia in players, and have unique capacities relevant to these more contemplative experiences (Possler et al., 2023). Our findings should help guide theoretical and operational refinement towards a better understanding of if, when, and how players seek out eudaimonia.

DGR04 Motivations and emotions

PP 1029 Bored gaming: Exploring relationships between state boredom and digital game selection

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Boredom is a prevalent yet understudied negative emotional state in media research. Traditionally associated with insufficient stimulation and low arousal, boredom also occurs when individuals are highly aroused, leading to the development of the Meaning and Attentional Components (MAC) model by psychologists Westgate and Wilson (2018). This model posits that boredom has an attentional (ability to focus on current activity, considering a person's resources and an activity's demanding nature) and meaning component (desire to do the activity), creating six boredom profiles based on low or high attention and meaning levels. However, this psychological model remains scarcely studied in a media and gaming context (Poels et al., 2022).

Classic communication theories like Mood Management theory (Zillmann, 1988) suggest that people turn to media to overcome negative emotions like boredom. Similarly, the MAC model proposes different strategies to regulate boredom, including switching activities such as playing a game. Switching activities only occurs though when individuals experience meaningless boredom, as people engaged in meaningful activities stay with their current activity, instead regulating their resources to meet the activity's demands. As our focus lies on game selection and switching activities, this study only concentrates on the four boredom profiles with low meaning levels.

Due to their interactive nature, immersive storytelling potential and feedback-based character, digital games can be effective emotion regulation instruments (Villani et al., 2018). To gain insight into how players try to regulate boredom feelings by selecting different types of games, we examine how different meaningless boredom profiles relate to digital game selection, considering selection in terms of (1) games that elicit hedonic and/or eudaimonic experiences and (2) games with different types of demands. First, since the MAC model suggests people switch to enjoyable or meaningful activities based on their boredom profile, we adopt the two-factor perspective of hedonic (enjoyable) and eudaimonic (meaningful, emotional, reflective) entertainment (Vorderer & Reinecke, 2015). The Recovery and Resilience in Entertaining Media use (R^2EM) model (Reinecke & Rieger, 2021), for instance, can help explain why individuals with different boredom profiles select games for hedonic (e.g., for relaxation) or eudaimonic experiences (e.g., for mastery). Second, expanding on the MAC model's focus on cognitive demands within the attentional component, this study explores other types of demands, such as emotionally demanding games connected to more meaningful or eudaimonic experiences (Bowman, 2021).

An online exploratory survey among a gaming population will test these relationships. Participants are given four situations, each describing one of four meaningless boredom profiles. For each situation, participants indicate whether they recognize the situation as being boring, whether they are willing to switch the described boring activity for playing a digital game, and what type of game—in terms of their enjoyability (hedonic) and meaningfulness (eudaimonic) as well as their cognitive and emotional demands—they would choose in each situation. This study tests whether individuals' game selection aligns with MAC model predictions. Participants' assessment of boredom, perceived hedonic and eudaimonic experiences, and perceived game demands are measured.

As data collection and analysis are ongoing, results will be presented at the conference.

DGR04 Motivations and emotions

PP 1030 Barrens chat brings me back: Nostalgia and sense of place for World of Warcraft locales

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Among many outcomes of playing videogames--especially franchises with rich histories--are feelings of *nostalgia*. Nostalgia is a bittersweet yet positively valenced emotional response to fond recollections of the past (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2022); prior work indicates digital experiences such as videogame play are especially adept at fostering nostalgia (Makai, 2018). In particular, in-game locations are especially powerful in evoking nostalgia, as they assemble self-relevant aesthetics, familiar objects, personal achievements, and social connections, often through substantial time investments (see Wulf et al., 2018). Location-related nostalgia can be triggered when players feel a *sense of place* (SoP) for gaming locales (AUTHORS1). SoP is a phenomenon in which people form familiar, deep, personal meanings to spaces (Norberg-Schulz, 1980); these meanings inform SoP as a kind of place-knowing that moves beyond mere names and descriptions to knowing a place "as one person knows another [person]" (Tuan, 1975, p. 152). AUTHORS2 argue that SoP comprises symbolic, purposive, identity, relational, and emotional dimensions (the SPIREs) applicable to both digital and physical spaces. Videogames foster SoP when players spend time in game spaces (e.g. Bowman et al., 2020), engage historical contexts (Bowman et al., 2023), and--critical for the current study--recall past gaming experiences (Robinson & Bowman, 2021).

Notably, both nostalgia and SoP are feeling- and knowing-states that can be elicited without being *in* the space (Wulf et al., 2021; AUTHORS1,2). Beyond this commonality, however, little is known about the intersections of nostalgia and SoP for digital spaces--especially given that many persistent game spaces can be revisited. This study moves toward addressing that gap by exploring player responses to social media content from Blizzard Entertainment (publishers of *World of Warcraft*, est. 2004; *WoW*) asking player communities about *WoW* places. Specifically, we explore three questions:

RQ1: Do gamers more often revisit older or newer spaces from *WoW*'s history?

RQ2: What SoP dimensions are present in recollections of revisited game spaces?

RQ3: (How) does nostalgia correspond with (a) space recency and (b) SoP dimensions in those recollections?

To address these questions, we are conducting secondary, inductive analysis on public social media data. On 29 July 2023, the official *WoW* social media accounts for Facebook (http://bit.ly/3RyNCqv) and Twitter (https://bit.ly/3tu59rW) posed a question: "Which place in WoW do you like going back to just for a visit?" We scraped N = 2,864 Facebook replies and N = 336 Twitter replies.

Quantitative content analysis of those data (Neuendorf, 2014) are in progress, coding for (a) the space's originating *WoW* expansion, (b) presence of SoP SPIREs, and (c) presence of nostalgic emotion. An early interpretive reading of data suggest (RQ1) participants principally name 'vanilla' or early-expansion locales (e.g., The Barrens, Nagrand) and starting zones. (RQ2) All SPIREs are mentioned, though symbolism is not overt or prevalent. (RQ3) Early locales are often co-mentioned with nostalgic emotion, and recent locales to a lesser extent. Nostalgia can correspond with all SoP SPIREs, but notably is often the *very purpose* of named spaces--revisiting because it "takes me back" to one's (gaming) past.

DGR04 Motivations and emotions

PP 1031 Typical gamers: A survey study on stereotypes surrounding gamer identity

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The term *gamer* is widely used colloquially and within research to describe people who regularly play computer or video games. Identification as a gamer is generally perceived as a fluid concept that consists of an interplay of *social*, *individual*, and *contextual* factors. Social factors that contribute to gamer identity often come from a collective sense of belonging that arises within a group of players. Notably, gamer communities on Twitter displayed traditional hegemonic masculine traits through the rejection of women and femininity (Dowling et al., 2020). Among the most prominent individual factors contributing to gamer identity is an excessive and often obsessive involvement with games (DiSalvo, 2016). When persistent, excessive and obsessive gaming becomes problematic for a player, this behavior may be labelled as a gaming disorder (World Health Organization, 2022). Finally, contextual factors of gamer identity are reflected in a general preference for hardcore competitive computer- and console games over casual games on mobile devices (De Grove et al., 2015). These three factors influence how gamers are perceived, their behavior, and their perception of themselves. Because quantitative studies on gamer identity and its relations with social, individual and contextual factors are very scarce (e.g., Yim et al., 2023), the current study aims to examine how stereotypical characteristics, motivations and behaviours of video game players relate to identification as a gamer.

The results of this survey study among an international sample of 1427 predominantly male (89%) players (M_{age} = 29.07, SD = 9.50), challenge some traditional stereotypes of gamers, while confirming others. In general, self-identification as gamer was more common among younger players. No evidence was found for a stronger sense of hegemonic masculinity among those who showed more self-identification as gamers. However, the stereotypical perception of gamers as socially awkward was confirmed by a positive relation between gamer identification and social anxiety. Gamer identity is further characterized by a strong passion for gaming, predominantly on console and pc, coming from intrinsic needs to experience competence, autonomy and relatedness in games, thereby underscoring the idea that gamers find meaning and fulfilment in gaming activities.

Especially for younger players, self-esteem and social status may hinge on continued engagement with online video games, causing some players to consciously overindulge. This results in excessive amounts of gametime among many gamers, and gaming disorder among a few. These few who showed signs of gaming disorder also showed more signs of excessive cannabis use, whereas cannabis use showed no relation with gamer identification. Another difference between gamer identity and gaming disorder was found in the positive correlation between gamer identity and self-esteem, whereas gaming disorder showed a negative correlation with self-esteem. This indicates that identifying as a gamer can be a source of self-confidence and positive self-image, but those with low self-esteem may use gaming as a maladaptive coping strategy, leading to compulsive, obsessive and problematic gaming patterns. Overall, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how gamers may perceive themselves and the factors that shape this identity.

DGR04 Motivations and emotions

PP 1032 Perfect love or illusory hope? Exploring fantasy and ambivalence in Chinese female players' engagement with otome games

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A diverse range of female-oriented media and cultural products have emerged in recent decades. Among these, otome games have garnered considerable popularity, particularly among young females who wish to seek and experience love and romance within an idealized gaming world. Since the release of *Mr. Love: Queen's Choice* in 2017, Chinese otome games have undergone tremendous growth, achieving substantial business success in both domestic and international markets (National Business Daily, 2020). Importantly, the increasing purchasing power of female consumers and the rising number of female gamers have further fueled the expansion of the otome game market in China (Gong, 2022). Against this backdrop, this study examines how Chinese female players engage with otome games and obtain gratifications, and how their gaming practices influence their real-life attitudes and experiences regarding romance, love, and intimacy in contemporary China.

Digital ethnography and semi-structured interviews are employed as the primary methods to examine four popular Chinese otome games and players' gaming practices. Specifically, our digital ethnography involves (a) analyzing the narratives, character design, scenarios, and purchase mechanisms of otome games, and (b) examining user discussions under trending hashtags related to otome games on popular Chinese social media platforms (e.g., Weibo, Douyin, and Douban). This enables us to understand players' attitudes and engagement with otome games. We also conduct semi-structured interviews with female participants who have experience playing the selected Chinese otome games. To boost our outreach to a diverse pool of potential participants, we have distributed recruitment posts across multiple Chinese social media platforms (e.g., WeChat, Weibo, and QQ) and leveraged offline social networks. Following the completion of three pilot interviews, we are currently in the process of conducting both face-to-face and online interviews with otome game players.

Our preliminary findings unveil several key insights. Firstly, participants derived multifaceted gratifications from otome games, encompassing fulfilling fantasies for idealized romantic relationships, meeting emotional needs, escaping from real-world pressures, and achieving control over intimate relationships. Secondly, participants exhibited ambivalent and even conflicting perspectives towards otome games. Some participants are fascinated by the portrayal of male characters as powerful, strong, and talented, while embracing heroines designed as weak, innocent, and highly dependent on their male counterparts. This character distinction satisfies their expectations and desires for idealized romantic relationships. However, others expressed reluctance and resistance toward the male superiority embedded in character design and storyline, perceiving it as promoting gender stereotypes and patriarchal logic, thus undermining female agency. Thirdly, the disjunction between the game world and reality leads participants to foster unrealistic fantasies and false hopes for love and relationships, resulting in frustration and disengagement from otome games. This study contributes to enriching existing research on otome games and the broader love/dating simulation games, particularly concerning gender representation, power dynamics, and sociocultural norms within these games and user perceptions and practices. Our findings also offer practical insights into the design and user experiences of otome games, potentially aiding game developers in better understanding user demands, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction, thereby enhancing their game design.

DGR05 Toxicity and violence

PP 1135 Within- and between-person effects of violence in video games on aggression and empathy

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Videogames have evolved into a pervasive and influential form of modern entertainment. Playing violent videogames (VG), particularly those promoting aggressive acts towards other players (often anonymous, distant, and invisible), has been discussed as a risk factor for youth development. In line with the General Aggression Model (GAM), suggesting that exposure to violence heightens aggression and diminishes empathy, this study investigates the longitudinal effects of VG on both aspects. Despite extensive research on this subject, the evidence remains inconclusive as supported by conflicting findings in numerous meta-analyses. A major factor in this ambiguity is the limitation of previous longitudinal studies, frequently employing only two-waves of data collection and overlooking the distinction between within- and between-person effects, thus omitting causal-inference modeling.

Drawing on a sample of 3,010 Czech adolescents (13–17-year-olds), data were collected over four waves (six-month intervals) using representative quota sampling, measuring physical and verbal aggression (BPAQ-SF) and cognitive and affective empathy (AMES). VG was evaluated based on participants' open-ended responses coded

into 1,300 unique game titles. Of these, 474 were rated using a violence score obtained from Common Sense Media. The remaining titles were appraised by two independent raters, demonstrating sufficient inter-rater reliability (α = .83). To differentiate within- and between-person associations, a (multi-group) random-intercept cross-lagged panel model was employed.

At the between-person level, VVG positively correlated with cognitive empathy (r = .08), verbal aggression (r = .12), and physical aggression (r = .24). At the within-person level, two hypotheses were examined: the selection effect, investigating the link between changes in aggression/empathy and changes in VVG, and the desensitization effect, exploring changes in VVG and alterations in aggression/empathy. All desensitization effects were statistically insignificant, most showing negligible effect sizes ($\beta \approx .03$). Regarding selection effects, an increase in affective empathy during T3 was linked to a decrease in VVG in T4 (β = -.12). Conversely, an increase in physical aggression during T3 was associated with an increase in VVG in T4 (β = .12). Surprisingly, the effect was the opposite for an increase in physical aggression during the T1, correlating with a decrease in VVG during the T2 (β = -.10). Furthermore, moderation effects were tested at both levels. At the between-person level, boys played more VVG than girls (β = .41), and age showed no association with VVG. No gender differences were found at the within-person level. However, the positive effect of physical aggression from T3 on VVG at T4 was robust for younger participants (β = .29) but essentially non-existent for older adolescents (β<.01).

The findings challenge the portrayal of VVG as a significant contributor to heightened aggression and decreased empathy in adolescents according to the GAM. Contrary to prevailing views, our results reveal no evidence supporting the impact of VVG on physical and verbal aggression or cognitive and affective empathy. These findings will be discussed, particularly regarding the character of VVG's causal effects. Additionally, the potential effects of other factors such as online gaming, perceived anonymity, and game genre, serving as inspiration for future research, will also be discussed.

DGR05 Toxicity and violence

PP 1136 Violent vs. non-violent gaming for stress: Testing physiological relaxation and the moderating role of the Dark Tetrad

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Playing non-violent video games has been shown to reduce perceived levels of stress (Pallavicini et al., 2021). A recent study by Wagener and colleagues (2023) suggested that although playing a violent video game does not affect aggressive cognition, it can induce physiological relaxation. Also, personality-related factors, such as the Dark Tetrad (i.e., Machiavellianism, everyday sadism, subclinical psychopathy, and narcissism) can have a moderating effect. Individuals with greater Dark Tetrad expressions deliberately prefer and play more violent video games (e.g., Greitemeyer et al., 2019; Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2017). In Wagener et al. (2023), physiological relaxation when playing violent video games was even greater for participants with greater Machiavellianism expressions. In contrast, these individuals felt significantly more stressed when playing a non-violent video game (Wagener et al., 2023). The present lab experiment aimed to further investigate the relaxation effects of violent and non-violent video games. The study also addressed shortcomings in Wagener et al. (2023), namely (1) its small sample size, (2) that only male participants had been tested, (3) that cortisol was the only measure for relaxation, and (4) that there was no true control condition, in which participants did not play a video game.

In the present study, participants (N = 106) either played a violent game or a non-violent game (*Assassin's Creed Valhalla*; Ubisoft Montreal, 2020) for 25 minutes or completed a jigsaw puzzle. Whereas participants in the non-violent condition played the discovery mode, in which they explored the environment, participants in the violent condition had to fight non-player characters in violent combat. In the control condition, a 300-piece jigsaw puzzle was used. Cortisol levels, heart rate variability (HRV), and self-reported stress levels were assessed before, during, and after gameplay/puzzle task. Dark Tetrad traits were assessed using the Short Dark Tetrad scale (SD4; Paulhus et al., 2021).

Playing violent and non-violent video game passages both significantly decreased cortisol levels. Violent gameplay also significantly increased HRV (i.e., decreasing the ratio of low frequency power to high-frequency power), thus providing additional support for physiological relaxation. In contrast, trying to complete the puzzle did not increase physiological relaxation, but even decreased HRV (i.e., increasing the ratio of low-frequency power to high-frequency power and decreasing high-frequency power). Control questions suggested that, regardless of condition, playing a video game was generally considered more cognitively engaging than trying to complete the puzzle. We might speculate that playing a video game provides greater distraction and therefore greater physiological relaxation compared to other tasks like engaging with a puzzle. High levels of immersion, cognitive engagement, and presence in the virtual world might be important aspects leading to relaxation effects of gaming, regardless of violent content. The surprising finding that Dark Tetrad expressions did not affect stress indicators were possibly due to low variance in Dark Tetrad levels in the present sample.

The present results indicate that both playing violent or non-violent video games can lead to physiological relaxation. This seems important for future research on the potential of video games for stress relief interventions.

DGR05 Toxicity and violence

PP 1137 Exploring incidental toxic behavior perpetration in multiplayer online games

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Toxic behavior in MOGs refers to the phenomenon when players intentionally perform socially undesirable verbal or gameplay actions that harm other players (Kordyaka et al., 2020; Kowert, 2020). The prevalence of toxic behavior in MOGs goes against its primary purpose as a form of entertainment. Catalyzing events such as the 2017 *Call of Duty* swatting incident (see BBC, 2018) have further highlighted the harmful nature and reach of game-based toxicity, even beyond the gaming community. Thus, a growing body of research examined why players perpetrate toxic behavior, why it remains a prevalent and problematic issue in gaming, and how game-based toxic behavior can be effectively addressed. Extant research has primarily provided individual- and identity-focused explanations for toxic behavior perpetration (e.g., Beres et al., 2021; Kordyaka et al., 2020; Lemercier-Dugarin et al., 2021). This leads into assumptions that players who perform toxic behavior in games are intrinsically motivated to do so (i.e., trait-based susceptibility), or perhaps view toxicity as a characteristic and acceptable aspect of online gaming experiences. While this explains a subset of game-based toxic behavior, it leaves a gap in explaining toxic behavior in situations where perpetrators are neither predisposed to being toxic, nor proponents of toxicity in gaming.

Therefore, this paper seeks to address the highlighted gap by exploring players' experiences with incidental toxic behavior perpetration in MOGs. Incidental in this context refers to acts of toxic behavior that occur as an unplanned response to an arising in-game event, rather than being premeditated or actively initiated. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 players. Interviews lasted between 38 and 51 minutes. Thematic analysis was employed.

Findings reveal a range of arising in-game occurrences that may prompt a corresponding toxic response from players, despite having no premeditated motivation. These include prior transgression, goal conflict, pressure to conform, cathartic, gatekeeping, advancement, and flex opportunities. There appears to be some fluidity in players' attitudes toward specific types of toxic behavior perpetration, as opposed to their attitudes toward toxic behavior when viewed as a single, uniform concept. Players' incidental toxic behavior perpetration may therefore not be as dissonant as it seems, as they rationalize and view certain toxic responses as justifiable or acceptable while maintaining strongly negative views about other types. In contrast to the prevailing view that toxic behavior in gaming primarily stems from hostility and aggression, our findings showed that social or egocentric enablers influence incidental toxic behavior during gaming. Research implications and future theoretical and practical recommendations are discussed.

DGR05 Toxicity and violence

PP 1138 Structures that 'tilt': Understanding 'toxic' behaviors in online gaming

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This paper provides a better understanding for the social antecedents of disruptive behaviors in online gaming environments. Disruptive – or as gamers refer to it, "toxic" – behaviors in online gaming are forms of verbal harassment or behavioral misconduct which disrupt another's experience of the game. They have received increased attention in recent years: Previous research has shown e.g. their prevalence (Chesney et al, 2009; Monge and O'Brien, 2021), and how they impede upon individual player experience and performance (e.g. Kou, 2020; Monge and O'Brien, 2021), as well as on overall community inclusivity and safety (e.g. Shores et al, 2014; Ratan et al, 2015). In accounting for such behaviors, many previous studies have sought to blame individual wrong-doers (Chesney et al, 2009) or labelled the entire gaming community a 'deviant' subculture which celebrates toxic behaviors (Cook et al, 2018). By contrast, this paper (and the emerging literature upon which it builds) seeks to show how structural constraints may provoke negative behaviors in a broad range of online gamers (see also Kou, 2020). Toxic behavior is seen as situated within and emergent from specific social contexts – as a spur-of-the-moment loss of control (associated by gamers with the term 'tilt'), triggered by contextual factors within the game. Based on interview and ethnographic data on the popular online multiplayer game *League of Legends*, it is shown how weak normative and relational structures within a gaming context can lead to negative emotions in players, prompting toxic behaviors. This opens the way for a long term constructive impact upon society by encouraging the creation of online social contexts which engender positive behaviors, rather than suggesting ways of identifying and excluding

individual 'wrong-doers' or writing off millions of gamers world-wide as 'deviants'. Avenues for future research and implications for improving online social spaces are discussed.

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DGR05 Toxicity and violence

PP 1139 Rethinking cheating in digital games: Motivations, categories, and implications

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Digital games, known for their immersive experiences across genres, present a complex issue: cheating. Within this domain, cheating has prompted critical inquiries into the intricate relationship between technology, the gaming community, game design, and individual players. The concept of cheating has predominantly been associated with the social context, gaming culture, and design elements that can facilitate cheating behaviors (Boldi & Rapp, 2023). However, cheating includes many potential actions within different modes of gaming experiences, and has been the subject of various typologies (Consalvo, 2007; Jeff et al., 2002; Taylor, 2006b; Yan & Randell, 2005). While exploring the concept of cheating has been the subject of many studies, creating a broadly applicable definition is challenging due to the diverse factors involved, including different game genres and modes (online, offline, single-player, multiplayer, games with online features, etc.). Moreover, it is commonly assumed that players play a single type and mode of game, so the extent of cheating and the players' motivations have been examined through limited games. The challenge lies in setting a consistent definition of cheating across the diverse gaming landscape, and a definitive conclusion on the matter is still pending. Thus, the main question will be addressed: How can we redefine or reconceptualize the notion of cheating to account for its specificity in various contexts?

This research offers new insights into cheating in varied gaming contexts by initially differentiating between 'game' and 'play.' Games adhere to rules, while play, which is spontaneous, is where cheating often originates before extending to games. Through play, and referring to cheaters as players rather than gamers, an inclusive perspective of all genres and modes of game will be employed. Motivations for cheating that may coexist are categorized into four main areas: fun, performance, social status, and monetary gain. A qualitative approach will be utilized to assess these categories, involving conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews with scenario-based questions. These scenarios will serve as a value-neutral lens through which players can conceptualize and rationalize cheating in different contexts. Purposive sampling will be employed to select 15 participants who engage in cheating from all age and gender groups of avid players involved in multiple game genres and modes. Consistency in playing multiple genres and modes of games is essential to enabling a holistic understanding of the categories. Data analysis will involve a comparative examination of the motivations within the four primary cheating categories. Participants will be categorized based on the genres and modes they engage in and their motivations for cheating, allowing for the identification of patterns, differences, and commonalities in their responses; and will be situated within their respective categories.

Consequently, motivations for cheating will be reevaluated from a neutral standpoint, considering all social, cultural, design, experience, and technological possibilities. The research is intended to aid future inquiries into player perceptions, agency, creativity, persuasive design, competitive gaming, the political economy of gaming, and related subjects. Thus, a more comprehensive perspective of the context of cheating is aimed to serve as a valuable guide for future research.

FIS01 New horizons in film studies

PP 0776 Intrusive windmills and solar panels: Energy transition as a symptom of rural decay in contemporary Spanish cinema

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In 2022, two of the most internationally renowned and successful Spanish films, *Alcarràs* (Carla Simón, 2022) and *As Bestas* (Rodrigo Sorogoyen, 2022), focused on narratives of the rural way of life in which the context of the energy transition appeared as the story's driving force. In these films, the intrusion of solar panels and windmills emerges as a threat to disrupt and expel the tradition of rural labour, which is explored through disputes between neighbours and relatives, advancing a mutation of previous narrative formulas in rural fiction cinema from Spain (González Requena, 1988; Gómez Gómez and Poyato Sánchez, 2010). The institutions and the economic interests behind the investments in constructing wind and solar energy farms in the story are never embodied in the films, and by remaining invisibilized as background actors, they leave the neighbors of rural areas to their fate, who must agree to settle the enormous conflict of the installation of renewable energies. But in reality, the unequal distribution of energy production in the Spanish territory entails a socio-natural conflict, generating cheap natures (Moore 2015) that transform geographical spaces and provoke rural exodus. This recurrence of renewable devices appearing and interrupting the filmic space and plot generates a sort of affective tension that reminds the viewers of the narrative tradition encompassing the decay of the rural world. Thus, it functions as a visual motif (Balló and Bergala, 2016) that has evolved in light of the ecological crisis.

The study of films and their environmental conditions becomes, then, an important task for film studies as it can account for how nature is entangled with everything, becoming "an opening to a myriad of concerns" including ideology, race, and gender, as well as allowing to consider dynamics of human domination and granting access to the conditions and relations between nonhuman natures present in these motifs of renewable energy (Pick and Narraway, 2013). This paper argues that energy in these films is rendered as a natural abstract entity because of its tendency to be detached from real social relations and erased from social analysis (Franquesa, 2021) and that this invisibilization of energy is related to the difficulties of finding representational motifs of economic power in film and visual culture (Garin and Fernández, 2021). Focusing on these aspects appearing in *Alcarràs* and *As Bestas*, we propose to frame their cinematographic formulation as symptoms of the conception of nature as a source of economic exploitation. We aim to illustrate the ways this representation of the environment struggles with the decaying rural imaginary and advance that its causes seep into the narratives and aesthetic tensions about the absence of local cooperative networks that can face the energy transition without being at the mercy of invisible extractivist emporiums.

FIS01 New horizons in film studies

PP 0777 Zoomorphic introjection vs. anthropocentric projection European animation as vehicle of environmental thoughts

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Animation is the art form through which industrialized societies have most often expressed their ideas and beliefs about the non-human world in recent decades (Heise, 2014). Examining it from an ecocritical viewpoint, can be of particular importance today, trusting that if cultural perceptions change, we can address the worsening ecological crisis.

Based on these thoughts, my presentation, which is part of a larger research project, examines the changing cultural logic of ecology from the 1960s to the present through European animated films. The research separately examines animation from the (former) Eastern Bloc and Western European countries from an ecocritical perspective, focusing on formal idiosyncrasies that make animation particularly suited for environmental communication, such as plasmaticness (Leyda, 1986), anthropomorphism, zoomorphism, reverberating space etc. The extent to which different political regimes are environmentally destructive is difficult to rank, but in the literature comparing the scale of environmental damage caused by capitalism and former state socialism, the latter is the more insidious. This is despite the fact that the principle of economic profit has proved to be more important than environmental protection in both regimes. The aim of my research is to investigate this phenomenon and its heritage through pop culture, which plays an important role in the reproduction of symbolic and material order.

The relationship between human and nature and its representation, which is assumed to be universal and eternal, has changed not only over time, but also in relation to dominant political and social ideologies and cultural norms. Accordingly, in line with the paradigm of cultural studies, this research does not only provide an ecocritical content analysis of the animations examined, but also takes into account the social, historical and production context, following the approach of Murray and Heumann's (2011) work on ecocriticism. Following the brief synthesis on

scholarly work examining animations' relation to environmental themes I will present two case studies, which do not cover the whole of my research, but provide an insight into the impact of different periods, cultural, social and political contexts on the representation of environmental issues and the diversity of animation's formal idioms.

First I will present two influential television cartoon series from the Eastern Bloc, which were successful globally, the Czech animation series *Little Mole* (1957–2002) and the Polish *Lolek and Bolek* (1963–1986). The former initially conveyed the idea of deep ecology through anthropomorphic animal depictions facilitating zoomorphic introjection, but from the 1990s onwards it became increasingly confusing ideologically when its animal characters turned into vehicles of anthropocentric projection. *Lolek and Bolek*, conveys an anthropocentric worldview all along, positing the relationship between human and nature as hierarchical, in which anthropomorphic animals appear always as objects of othering. Lastly I will demonstrate, through an Irish-produced 21st century animated trilogy, how anthropomorphism, transformativeness and animation of non-human and hybrid beings effectively mediates the codependent relationship between humans and nature.

FIS01 New horizons in film studies

PP 0778 Spectres of migration: Mobile hauntologies, a hybrid genre

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This paper connects the conditions of non-belonging, 'otherness,' and unsettlement with visual expressions of spectrality, hauntology, and the otherworldly. Employing a mixed-method approach that integrates genre criticism (Altman 2012) and narrative theory (Ryan 2019), the analysis explores genre hybridizations within films that articulate the syntaxis of displacement specific to migration and border narrative, using visual elements of haunting, oneiric experiences, and the supernatural.

Drawing from films such as *Jupiter's Moon* (2017), *Europe* (2022), and *The Quiet Migration* (2023), this exploration investigates instances where the authenticity and realism of mobility narratives converge with the enchantment of the otherworldly. The focal point of the analysis lies in the migration fiction's shift towards the haunting realm, highglighting the use of spectral and supernatural elements to convey experiences of unsettlement, alienation, and grief. This discussion is rooted in Derrida's concept of the spectre, existing in the liminal space between visibility and invisibility, materiality and immateriality, life and death (Del Pilar Blanco & Peeren 2014, 2).

Recent literature on migrant, mobility, and border zone cinema has highlighted the unwavering commitment to realism in many films within these genres (e.g., Kaur and Grassilli 2019; Wolley 2023). However, scholars caution against the unintended consequences of this strong emphasis on the veracity and authenticity of the migrant testimonial: entering the domain of inquiries on truth might paradoxically align with vetting processes typical of migration governmental management (Fassin, 2013; Fielder 2021).

With this paper, I explore content challenging these enforced coherent, realist, and stable migration narratives, analysing fictional films that articulate migration in an oneiric and haunting semantic, countering a realism that can inherently contain elements of epistemic violence. In general, I study how the spectrality present in three migration films serves as a tool for a visual counter-narrative of mobility, highlighting how these haunting representations of mobile subjects disrupt coherent, naturalized, and stable conceptions of nations, identities, and borders. The inquiry aims to examine how the *spectral glitches the spectacle*, studying how spectral anomalies dispute and interrupt the homogeneous realist imageries of borders normalized by mainstream accounts of migration.

Exploring the concept of glitch, I revisit Legacy Russell's (2020) feminist perspective, which sees glitches as moments of malfunction, refusal, and non-performance. These glitches can become places for reimagination and resistance against the established order. In migration fiction, – I claim – spectres glitch the pervasive realism on the screen. Haunting anomalies bring disorder, dysfunctions, and unpredictability to the conventional realist and testimonial portrayals, therefore fostering a space for reimagining and challenging the constraints of mainstream migration narratives.

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FIS01 New horizons in film studies

PP 0779 Ethics and aesthetics of contemporary film discourses on illegal migration and refugees

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Film narratives about illegal migration and refugees have had particular relevance in recent years, generating a great variety of film forms that arise from indispensable ethical and aesthetic questions about first-person enunciation of the protagonists, (self-)representation, point of view and fictional and documentary forms. This communication aims to deepen the study of these issues through the comparative analysis of three non-fiction films that generate indispensable reflections on the matter through the construction of their film discourses. *Purple Sea* (Amel Alzakout and Khaled Abdulwahed, 2020) shows the first-person experience of Alzakout's subjective camera on her sea crossing between Syria and Lesbos, and moves it into poetic and experimental dimension through her inner monologue as imagined dialogue as well. The essay film *Ailleurs, partout* (Isabelle Ingold and Vivianne Perelmutter, 2020) offers the mediated encounter typical of our globalised reality between the filmmakers and their protagonist Shahin—a young Iranian man, who, after a journey of a year and a half, arrives in the UK, where he seeks asylum—using images from surveillance cameras collected from the Internet and a polyphony of subjectivities including Shahin's narratives and thoughts. The animation documentary *Flee* (Jonas Poer Rassmussen, 2021) embodies the conversation between the filmmaker and his protagonist Amin—an Afghan refugee in Denmark who has hidden his real story—through animation and hybridises it with documentary images of the historical events that determine Amin's story. Therefore, the three works share two crucial aesthetic and ethical premises: the narration in the first person and voice of the real protagonists, but in the absence of their image, and the use of experimental and hybrid discursive constructions. The comparative analysis allows us to determine how these films generate counter-narratives, problematising the filmmaker-protagonist dynamics, the illegal migrant-refugee dialectics, the nature of the notion of veracity regarding migrants' memory and testimony, to generate critical thinking on globalisation and its migration policies against human rights, which cause the life experiences these films narrate and explore.

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FIS01 New horizons in film studies

PP 0780 AI (dis)order in filmmaking: Navigating creative decisions and predicting film success

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The filmmaking landscape has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years, largely fuelled by the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into various facets of the screen production process. The current buzz in Hollywood centres on AI boldly assuming roles such as directing, crafting movie trailers, and title sequences, and even producing entire episodes of shows. This intriguing blend of technology and creativity has not only captivated the attention of industry insiders but also resonated with online binge-watchers and casual moviegoers. Such innovations have introduced a degree of disorder in traditional decision-making processes, now informed by data-driven insights into audience preferences, casting choices, and the overall feasibility of film projects. Should major industry players like the Academy and APSA fully embrace AI, or should specific aspects of the filmmaking process remain untouched by artificial intelligence?

The journey of AI in filmmaking traces back through decades of cinematic history, captivating our collective imagination with portrayals of sentient machines in classics like "Electric Dreams" (1984), thought-provoking narratives in films like "The Matrix" (1999), and the lovable AI waste-collecting robot WALL-E (2008). AI has significantly influenced the visuals and graphics behind special effects, utilising robots, drones, and high-tech innovations on film sets to create extraordinary visuals and simulated worlds efficiently. Beyond visuals, AI has played a pivotal role in revolutionising audience experiences, evident in advancements like 4k and 3D movie technologies.

Academic research on AI integration in the filmmaking process is limited. Most studies have examined the portrayal of AI characters in popular films and their capacity to develop human-like emotions, with a handful of articles published in science and management journals, and none from a film production perspective. One noteworthy contribution is found in the work of Park et al. (2018) in the Information Systems Frontiers journal. Their study underscores

the increasing prominence of Artificial Neural Network (ANN) technology in film industry analytics, discussing ANN models' superior capacity for predicting box office success compared to other AI models.

In this paper, I turned the academic research inquiry into the filmmaking process by adopting a screen production lens. This paper discusses how AI is reshaping the filmmaking process and identifies and examines the key concerns it has recently sparked. It explores the disruptive role of AI in the early stages of film production, focusing on the greenlighting and pre-production phases, where traditional practices are being challenged and redefined.

My research methodology includes the collection and a thematic analysis of interviews with industry professionals, shedding light on the tangible impact of this technological disruption. Furthermore, this analysis is enriched by my own creative practice in a New Zealand-German film co-production, where our engagement with a Swiss-based AI firm for screenplay analysis underscores the transformative and occasionally disorderly impact of AI in the film industry's decision-making processes. The synthesis of diverse perspectives aims to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing discourse surrounding the challenges and opportunities presented by the integration of AI in filmmaking.

FIS02 Policy and industry

PP 0883 Practices and motivations of domestic film audiences in small countries: A qualitative study across seven European countries

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Europe displays a resilience of national cinema (Higson 2021), but in small markets, the popularity of domestic cinema varies greatly and has faced even more challenges through the Covid-19 pandemic. The rise of globally operating streaming services, with catalogues that feature mainly US productions, as well as the lack of resources for film production in small markets (Hjort and Duncan 2007) are also issues that European cinema grapples with. By comparing audience's opinions on domestic film in the context of their overall audiovisual media consumption, across seven small European markets (Ireland, Portugal, Croatia, Lithuania, Estonia, Flanders and Denmark) this paper highlights the specific challenges of films from small European countries in competition with imported film. At the same time, the analysis of audiences' motivations for watching domestic film highlights specific dynamics in their filmic properties, exhibition and cultural/social perception (see Kauber 2022), which can strengthen the position of domestic film.

Based on qualitative data from 84 media diaries and 1:1 interviews, the study compares the perceptions and motivations of domestic film audiences across seven markets with varying levels of domestic film production and consumption. In Ireland, Portugal and Croatia the average share of domestic film in cinema admissions in the past decade has remained around 5 percent. In Lithuania and Estonia domestic shares have increased from just over 10% in 2015 to over 20% before the Covid-19 crisis. In Flanders the domestic share fluctuates between 15% and 30%, while Denmark averages at 30% and reached 50% amidst the pandemic. The insights from this qualitative study allow us to form hypotheses about industry-related, economic and cultural reasons for these vast differences, concerning the properties of domestic film (e.g. genre, casting, setting), the cinematic landscape (e.g. presence and business model of local cinemas in rural areas) and the perceived status of domestic film (e.g. international awards, film's role in cultural memory, film education, existing prejudice) as well as social practices around it. The conclusion discusses the findings' implications for comparative media research and film industries in small European markets.

This paper presents results from the research project CRESCINE (2023–26) – Increasing the international competitiveness of the film industry in small European markets (HORIZON-CL2-2022-HERITAGE-01, project ID: 101094988). This large-scale comparative study contributes to our understanding of the diversity of small film industries in Europe as well as to our emergent knowledge about audience demand for domestic vs. imported content (Rohn, 2011; Graça, 2021).

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FIS02 Policy and industry

PP 0884 HBO Max and its impact on the development of local documentary film production in Poland

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The production of documentary films in Poland after the fall of the Polish People's Republic faced a huge challenge in terms of financing opportunities, and due to the low commercial potential and relatively low audience interest. The breakthrough for contemporary Polish documentary production came with the establishment of the Polish Film Institute in 2005 as a state institution aimed at supporting the development of Polish cinematography and the decision of HBO Polska in 2006 to start documentary production, with the aim to produce "controversial, bold, contemporary films, films that discover new topics, surprise with point of view, but do not follow the temptation of cheap sensation". So far, HBO has been the producer or co-producer of 49 documentary productions in Poland (approximate number of annual genre production in the country is 80–100), mainly full-length, made by both – accomplished and young documentary directors. The number might not be considered as significant, but what is important, most of those produced by HBO reached bigger audience, won rewards and some of them even had limited movie theatre distribution. Thus, the local film industry often emphasises the strategic importance of HBO in the process of contemporary documentary film production development. What is more, the HBO involvement brought to Polish documentaries new topics, forms of narration and values, which changed local into more universal stories and ultimately took part in complementing fusion between tradition and modernity with co-called "Polish School of Documentary Cinema" with its over 70 years of unique history.

The aim is to look at the platform's strategy in terms production, distribution and promotion of documentary films. What's more, intention is to uncover the profound impact HBO has had the Polish documentary film market in terms of participating in the emergence of specific qualitive style as well as coproduction conditions and standards. Polish film market might be considered as the biggest in Central and Eastern Europe and according to the latest KIPAs (Polish Producers Alliance) report it contributes around 3,4% of the general European film and TV revenues and because of that plays an important role in developing good practices between local industries and global media platforms.

The paper will be strongly based on ten in-depth interviews with local independent producers, HBO producer as well as documentary filmmakers. The author provides analytical insight into the creative process of foregoing collaboration between HBO as a powerful media conglomerate and local creative talent, thus uncovering the power dynamics, artistic compromise and industrial paradigm of local documentary production in general and with taking closer look to particular cases. Thus, main goal of t is to demonstrate in more detail and with the wide historical and contemporary production conditions, the dynamics of HBOs policy in the domain of documentary production and its impact on filmmaking conditions in eastern Europe, but also in terms of documentary forms, styles and topics and the dynamics between ideological, brand strategy and social engagement.

FIS02 Policy and industry

PP 0885 Eyes, ears, intermediaries and artists: The work of archival researchers and rroducers in contemporary documentary

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Despite a concerted move away from the auteur theory in the study of fiction film, in favor of nuanced studies of collaboration between the various artists who help to make films, studies of documentary cinema remain stubbornly entrenched in a director-oriented paradigm. This paper will seek to broaden our understanding of creativity in documentary practice by analyzing the roles played by archival researchers and those working in a role often referred to as the archival producer. The paper will argue that the labor of these figures is crucial in shaping compilation documentary films in particular, films which by their very nature require voluminous quantities of archival footage (including music) and re-assembly of the retrieved images into complex intellectual and aesthetic montage structures. Archival researchers and producers routinely influence these aspects of finished documentary films and series, acting as intermediaries between directors and archives, helping to find, select, and secure rights to the images that make the final cut of films, often after searching through thousands of hours of footage in multiple national contexts.

These theoretical claims will be substantiated by an extended case study of the archival research team that worked on *Exterminate All the Brutes*, a four-part documentary made by celebrated auteur film-maker Raoul Peck. While not seeking to contest the dominant auteurist views of Peck per se, the paper contends that the finished product in this case benefitted greatly from contributions from archival producer Kenn Rabin and archival researcher

Nolwenn Gouault. Drawing on original interviews with the two film-makers and close textual analysis of the archival footage used in the film, the paper highlights their important contributions to the artistic, intellectual, and even ethical achievements of the finished product. The paper then concludes with a call for closer examination of these important figures in documentary creativity. As part of a larger project aimed at appreciating the complexities of utilizing historical archives in contemporary media production, the paper also concludes by highlighting the agency of archival specialists as intermediaries between contemporary audiences and images from the colonial past.

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PP 0886 Young people and the European film industry: The Governance of 'near Misses'

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This paper aims to present an exploration of the research of young people's changing role in the European film industry (EFI) over the past quarter-century. Recognising youth as an underserved group, traditionally viewed only as consumers, this study highlights missed opportunities in nurturing them as future film creators and policy leaders. The focus lies on comprehensively understanding the interplay between youth culture, technological progress, and other factors impacting their engagement with film and filmmaking. The analysis, referencing scientific literature and policies from the Council of the European Union, spans from 2000 to 2023. Special attention is given to the impact of technological advancements on film consumption patterns and the significance of young people's approaches in shaping the industry. Moreover, this paper investigates young people's portrayal as "future leaders" and explores the extent to which their role in future decision-making and in fostering the industry's competitiveness within the EFI is reflected in research. Although the existing policies address issues such as global competition and limited distribution, they do not place a particular emphasis on engaging and empowering young talent. This oversights a crucial element in increasing the industry's competitiveness and driving growth. A deeper understanding will facilitate further exploration and discourse in this constantly evolving field. Our findings show that national policy focuses particularly on young people as audiences, rather than recognizing and promoting their potential as creators, neglects their crucial role in the industry, and fails to integrate them as future leaders of the industry, which is not just cultural, but also has socio-political implications. Additionally, the young professionals cope with difficulties to enter and get established in the filming industry, and thereby often they face financial challenges and limited possibilities of finding projects. We argue that young people's empowerment will be the catalyst to enhance the development of the European industry. The analysis serves as a valuable resource for future scholarship, fostering a deeper comprehension of the involvement of young people in the EFI and supporting the advancement of research in this area.

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FIS03 Films and conflicts

PP 0981 The Dublin Film Society and the Bolshevik threat: An early case of culture wars

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This paper focuses on fears of Russian propaganda being spread via groups of intellectuals in the 1930s, specifically through the Film Society movement. I focus on the attempts by writer and critic, Mary Manning, to establish a Dublin Film Society in 1930s Ireland as a space of opposition to the prevailing conservatism and anti-intellectualism of the Free State. Drawing on archival sources and secondary reading, I describe the evolution of the planned society and in particular Manning's dismissal in her newspaper columns of Hollywood mainstream entertainment. This led her to gather together a group of like-minded intellectuals to attempt to form a society using the model of the international film society movement. The proposal was to show films such as: *Battleship Potemkin* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925); *Berlin, Symphony of a City* (Walter Ruttmann, 1927); *Mother* (Vsevolod Pudovkin, 1926) and others. It was this particular interest in Soviet cinema that aroused the suspicion of the authorities. A series of confidential police reports on the group was compiled, profiling each of the members of the committee. A reliable source confirmed that one of the members had approached the well-known socialist revolutionary James Larkin and asked him to ask Russia for finance to procure a theatre in Dublin for the purpose of showing Russian films. The embryonic

movement, the report concluded, was too poorly financed to constitute a significant threat to the State. However, the author noted:

We have some reason to fear, and this fear is not dictated by reference to the personnel of the Society, that Bolshevist propaganda agents look to this Society as a medium for the dissemination of films which would otherwise fail to secure publicity here. Apart from this I am somewhat nervous of the "Cinema as an Art Medium" in the hands of a Society such as the present.

In the end, the Dublin Film Society did not take off. The costs of importing films and a low membership uptake meant that Manning had to abandon her plans.

I propose this paper as a way of historicizing populist/nationalist opposition to "Cinema as an Art Medium". Official hostility to Russian cinema was far from unique to Ireland, with *Battleship Potemkin* often taken as emblematic of the Bolshevik threat to Western society. It was a flashpoint in what now would be termed culture wars – with conflicting political allegiances being claimed and set against each other via cultural consumption. At the same time, I recognise the elitism of those who dismissed popular culture in favour of high art and the film society movement as what now would be termed an echo chamber. I argue that we need to understand the current cultural moment as a continuation of, not a break with, history.

FIS03 Films and conflicts

PP 0982 The circulation of Spanish Colonial cinema

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This paper focuses on the circulation of Spanish colonial cinema during the Franco era (1939–1975). The presentation emanates from the research project "Institutional documentary and amateur cinema in the colonial era: analysis and uses" (ref. PID2021-123567NB-I00), funded by the Spanish State Research Agency in collaboration with the Spanish Film Archive, and which is currently identifying, cataloguing, and digitizing the hundreds of Spanish productions shot in Morocco, Western Sahara and Equatorial Guinea as part of a neglected yet significant legacy of colonial history. Hence, the aim of this paper is twofold: on the one hand, it wants to offer a deeper perspective on the social life of these films; on the other, it questions the significance of cinema within the colonial apparatus.

Departing from the importance of these materials for the construction of a national identity but also understanding them as key for the activation and critical review of colonial archives within discussions about film (and) culture, the paper looks at the much-neglected issues of circulation and reception of Spanish colonial films, both within the Peninsula and in the colonial territories. Through historiographical research and archival access to distribution and production companies' records, state files, film magazines and theatrical revenues, the presentation intervenes in current reflections about cinemagoing and film distribution in colonial contexts by looking at how, where and when the colonial films produced under Francoism were screened. At the same time, the paper maps the complex and mostly unknown network of film exhibitors in the Spanish colonies and collects information on the distribution strategies and public and critical reception of these films. Within this framework, the paper shines a light on the success of some of the narrative films within Spain but also in Equatorial Guinea or Morocco. Finally, it shows the relevant and completely overlooked to this day distribution and exhibition of state-funded colonial documentaries, providing a much richer and nuanced knowledge of the social and cultural impact of Spanish colonial cinema.

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FIS03 Films and conflicts

PP 0983 Film as "Prosthetic Memory": Chinese mainland audiences' reconstruction of Historical Memory through the Taiwanese film "City of Sadness"

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The Taiwanese film "City of Sadness," shot in 1989, stands as the pioneering work in Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-hsien's "Taiwan Trilogy." It presents a traumatic story of a Taiwanese family during the period from 1945 to 1949,

set against the backdrop of the Kuomintang regime's "retaking of Taiwan" — a historical narrative that significantly differs from that of the Chinese mainland. In June 2023, the 4K restored version of "City of Sadness" was screened at the Shanghai International Film Festival, emerging as one of the most popular films. Second-hand tickets were priced as high as 2400 yuan. Currently, the film holds a score of 9.0 on Douban, the Chinese equivalent of IMDB, with over 100,000 mainland Chinese viewers participating in the ratings, ranking among the top 2% of historical movies on the site.

This research delves into the reception of "City of Sadness" by Chinese mainland audiences from the theoretical perspective of memory studies and the idea of "Prosthetic Memory," as proposed by the French philosopher and cultural theorist, Bernard Stiegler. Stiegler argues that technology serves as an external carrier of human memory, continuously interacting with individual and collective consciousness.

Using Douban film reviews of "City of Sadness" as an example, the research addresses questions such as: How does the historical narrative in "City of Sadness" become a "prosthetic memory" for the majority of mainland Chinese viewers? Where does this film activate collective memories of mainland audiences? The study illustrates how mainland audiences resonate and reconstruct their historical memories of Taiwan and the Chinese mainland through the reception of the arrangement of time, space, sound, and historical narrative of the film, providing theoretical implications for understanding how films function as "prosthetic memory" in compensating for absent memories and negotiating memory disputes. Additionally, by considering the historical context of WWII, the Cold War, and Chinese mainland-Taiwan relations, the research explores the dialogical role that films could potentially play in global and geopolitical conflicts, as well as in narrating human history.

FIS03 Films and conflicts

PP 0984 Cinema in the shadows of news? A transnational analysis of Israeli and Palestinian films reviewing in four countries

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This paper analyzes the impact of the news environment on cultural journalism, focusing on the case of Israeli-Palestinian films in the early 2000s, when they enjoyed international success while the Israel-Palestine conflict was especially high on the news agenda. It compares a total of 400 reviews of 10 films in four countries: the USA, the UK, France and Israel. It uses a two-pronged methodology, quantitative content analysis at the sentence-level and qualitative thematic analysis. It confirms our main hypothesis: socio-political comments "creep" into the highly artistic genre of film reviewing, with different inflexions, depending on four factors. First, the dominant media perspective on Israel-Palestine, from pro-Israeli (Israel, the USA) to pro-Palestinian (the UK) is the prominent factor. UK reviewers easily connect their reviews to criticism of Israeli policies, especially by approving films deemed critical of Israel, in particular the four films directed or co-directed by Palestinian (Palestinian citizens of Israel), while the American critics adopt the "balanced", "neutral" tone of American journalism and focus on the artistic contribution of the films, while France holds an intermediate position, balancing the artistic and the political perspectives. Second, the journalistic tradition, from more neutral and wary of looking "objective" the US, to more personal and editorializing in France, has an effect on the language of criticism. Third, the cinema culture of each country matters: American critics are more wary of the films being accessible to audiences, and devote more space to purely "narrative" parts telling the story, and to the factual background they deem necessary. France, adopt the more high-brow, cinephilic language, referring to cinema history and to special artistic achievements. Fourth, the theme of the films matter: movies dealing directly with the Israeli-Palestinian or Israeli-Arab conflict draw more political comments, ceteris paribus; the reviews of the three films with at least one leading female character includes consideration of gender, differently when the heroines are jewish religious or palestinians. A special analysis is devoted to Israeli reviewing, where artistic comment predominates, with a complex mixture of pride for the international success of the movies and a reluctance to praise the stories deem (too) critical of Israeli policies. The paper concludes on a proposal for additional research, asking to what extent these results are specific of reviews of Israeli-Palestinian films or can be generalized to other national cinemas affected by a specific current affairs environment.

FIS04 Contemporary films, directors and paratexts

PP 1082 Affective-emotional structures of enmity in contemporary Finnish World War II war films

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The first two decades of the 21st century have witnessed an increased interest in war narratives in Finnish cinema, and a similar phenomenon has been recognized internationally: in Russia and in the US, for example, the war film returned with a bang in the late-1990s and early-2000s. My research aims to understand the appeal of the war

film by examining how affective-emotional structures of enmity and national feeling are produced in contemporary Finnish war films, and what kind of representations of enmity and nationhood are produced by these structures.

My research combines cultural studies theory on national belonging and enmity with methodological approaches from cognitive film analysis to examine how films "work" in relation to their affective-emotional capacities within a cultural and societal framework. I use the term affective-emotional (suggested in Fisher 2014, 2017) to describe the often overlapping and interchangeably used concepts of affect, emotion and feeling. My work contributes to the growing body of research examining the relationship between cinematic affect and emotion, representations of war and national identities, whereby affect and emotion are understood as not merely personal and bodily, but as culturally and politically significant.

In this paper I present the results of my research on enmity as an affective-emotional structure and the resulting enemy representations. My material consists of nine Finnish war films (from 1999 to 2017) depicting the wars between Finland and the Soviet Union during World War II. My analysis has shown that the majority of the Soviet representations are largely insignificant when examined in relation to the affective-emotional structures of these films: Soviet bombers flying by or tanks and soldiers appearing briefly in combat scenes often merely indicate the presence of an enemy without attaching affective-emotional significance to them. While there are examples of enemy representations that aim to elicit antipathy in the viewer, there are also instances in which the enemy is portrayed sympathetically, such as a Soviet soldier rescuing a Finnish soldier.

My results indicate that the juxtaposition of the enemy-other and the Finnish 'us' plays a relatively insignificant role in the construction of nationhood and a sense of national belonging in these films. Rather, meanings about the nation and "ideal" Finnishness are produced by positioning the viewer to feel sympathy towards characters that embody wartime virtues such as bravery, heroism and sacrifice, and antipathy towards Finnish characters who disrupt the national unity by being portrayed as immoral, scared or otherwise unfit for war.

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FIS04 Contemporary films, directors and paratexts

PP 1083 Musical thinking in the visual and sound structuring of Sandro Aguilar's films: Transformations in recent production

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Director Sandro Aguilar (Portugal, 1974) has had a long and award-winning career as a short film writer. He has made three feature films and also worked as a producer and/or editor, often for films by other directors. He tends to propose a "dysfunctional perceptual experience" in each of his films, by suggesting undefined narrative lines and often by dissociating sounds from images. His usual experimentalism is always noticeable, enhancing the atmospheric character he wants to give to the great diversity of scenes that his creativity has already achieved.

Aguilar takes different decisions when it comes to the sound of his films, eschewing the most common practices of distributing tasks linked to sound production and post-production. The organicity that exists in the sound design of his films, which he says he identifies well, is the result of two important aspects: (1) on the one hand, the constant rewriting of the initial script, sometimes influenced by the sound of the shooting locations; (2) on the other hand, the attention paid to musicality and the way of "orchestrating" the different sound layers present in the scenes. He recognizes the unusual way in which he takes the sound editing – "pre-mixed" – to the last sound person, the re-recording mixer, minimizing the inventive role that could be attributed to this professional.

Starting with recent short films, such as *Exotic Words Drifted* (2023) and *O Teu Peso Em Ouro* (2022), and relating them to the most recent feature film *Primeira Pessoa Do Plural* (2024), our aim is to understand the musicality underlying the processes of image montage and sound montage. We propose that the musical thinking that guides this director's inspiration promotes variable types of "immateriality" and various ways of moving between the (possible) real and the (more) oneiric. On the other hand, the aim is to show how certain narrative elements, whether sound or visual, oppose the sense of filmic temporality that Aguilar pursues, by the way in which they provide an anchor of meaning to which the viewer may want to connect. It is perhaps these elements that most easily reassure the spectator, in a flow of images and sounds that contrasts enormously with more traditional filmic narratives.

FIS04 Contemporary films, directors and paratexts

PP 1084 Between horror tales and legends of glory: The Soviet Union and the GDR in film. Critical discourse analysis of cinematic narratives about the past

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The paper delves into the cinematic portrayal of socialism since 1990, offering critical insights into the intricate relationship between popular film narratives and political, cultural, and social landscapes in which films are produced and consumed.

Research problem

More than three decades after German reunification and the collapse of the Soviet Union the ongoing struggle for the 'right' memory of the GDR and its 'big brother' persists, and media play a pivotal role in shaping collective perceptions of the past. The study focuses on *film* as the leading medium of popular memory culture, which is continually balancing between art, profitability, politics, and public's demands. Grounded in Assmann's and Erll's theories of collective and cultural memory, along with the (Critical) Discourse Analysis as practiced by Foucault and Jäger, the study explores how successful feature films represent former socialist states and examines the power structures, resources, and interests behind their production and reception.

Methodology

The empirical work involves a qualitative, category-led analysis of 20 most successful films (in terms of audience reach) dealing with the GDR and Soviet past, produced between 1990 and 2021in Germany and Russia, respectively. The paper introduces a methodological framework for analysing historical film, applicable to diverse case studies. The core idea is to move beyond the 'traditional' film-immanent analysis (which is usually restricted to the plot, characters, and cinematic means such as colours and music) and consider the production and reception context. This includes biographical backgrounds of film makers, state funding, marketing strategies, box office results, media coverage, and public debates. The study also advocates for embedding films in the public memory discourse and the debate about national identity.

Key findings and their implications

Drawing on 20 successful national films, the paper presents a typology of four cinematic 'socialism realities,' shedding light on discourse dynamics and linking cinematic images and narratives with their production and reception contexts. The discourse analysis, firstly, challenges prevalent interpretation patterns (dictatorship narrative in Germany and patriotic-glorifying narrative in Russia) and problematizes the associated power relations (Western dominance in Germany, Kremlin loyalty in Russia). The analysis also reveals ways in which the discourse can be productively expanded and develops strategies for a culture of remembrance that moves beyond stereotypes, encourages understanding over demarcation, and overcomes the simplistic friend-foe dichotomy. Inspired by concrete examples, the paper advocates for narrative strategies that foster more nuanced examination of the past, for example (1) by focusing on individual agency, social and cultural life, and everyday decision-making against the background or beyond the restrictions; or (2) by understanding the ideological and political peculiarity of the socialist society, which can only be imperfectly grasped by Western (liberal) criteria. Moreover, the paper links films to socio-political discourses of their time, illustrating how the present is legitimized and elevated through its ties to the past. Particularly revealing is the study's placement of recent Russian productions within the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

FIS04 Contemporary films, directors and paratexts

PP 1085 A mixed-methodological mapping of the Hollywood (fan-)paratext in the digital age: Long live the Snyderverse

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The American film industry is well-known for its contemporary production of blockbusters and franchises on which often gigantic budgets are spent. With the rise of (digital) platforms full of new content, it is increasingly challenging to stand out to audiences, for which Hollywood studios place great importance on creating complementary products, such as merchandising.

In researching these additional products, this article applies the concept of *paratext* to analyse the relationships between the different types of movie-related products, such as film posters, advertising, and trailers. Although this set of outputs is created by studios and their representatives themselves, *paratext* also applies to the media products that are produced by fans of cinematic content. As such, we build on the relation between movie-related products by establishing a connection, through paratext, between a text, the industry, and (fanatic) audiences. Therefore, this paper aims to map the complexity of (fan) products surrounding big-budget Hollywood blockbusters by forming

a comprehensive picture of the paratextual (inter-)activity that exists within the movie industry, an under-researched area within the contemporary film and communication studies.

The aim of this article is to provide a theoretical overview of the paratext based on already published scientific literature, before adding extra findings from new, additional observations. Therefore, this paper consists of a literature review, mainly structured based on the intersection between the paratextual content, the creator/writer, and its intended objective. In doing so, it provides a clear overview of the contemporary cinematic paratext, which is thereafter subjected to a present-day case for verification and completion, as mapping all existing paratexts around all movies would be an impossible endeavor. Therefore, we analyse **Warner Bros.' DC Extended Universe** (DCEU) (2013–2023), a multimedia franchise, based on the DC comic books. This cinematic universe is a section of **DC Studios**, whose combined estimated budget for the released films alone is equivalent to over USD 2.8 billion. Its fan movement was particularly noticeable in recent years within the *#ReleaseTheSnyderCut* movement, with fans (and eventually even production staff) spreading their demand for the directors' cut of *Justice League* (2017) online. Even now, after the finalisation of the DCEU (and consequently the so-called *Snyderverse*), another kind of emerging fan activity can be noticed, with audiences putting forward potential actors for the new DCU (**DC Universe**, the rebooted shared universe, partly separate from the previous films). The comparison of these snapshots allows to identify the paratextual differences between both moments of audience resistance and support.

The research findings prove the importance of the wide spectrum of media texts (paratextual content), produced by fans, and its impact on the media industry as they can influence decisions within the industry itself, such as character design in films. Findings also prove that fans have the potential to influence (un-)finished media products, thereby affecting the studio's policy. In this way, this paper helps to reflect on the challenges of today's mainstream film industry and to recognise the creative agency of contemporary filmgoers.

GSC01 Thinking, researching and doing – Glocal approaches to contemporary feminisms

PN 015 Understanding Portuguese feminism(s)

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Contemporary feminism is a multifaceted, complex and plural social movement that has taken on various forms of activism and collective action, and which unfolds between the global and the local, the digital and the face-to-face. These glocal flows pose challenges for feminist movements that need to be understood by analysing myriad concepts (e.g., transnational feminism, social movement, fourth wave feminism, intersectionality, Portuguese feminist activisms, communication), in a situational approach (e.g., Portuguese feminism).Transnational feminist movements, such as SlutWalk, #MeToo, #EleNão, #8M, have also had an expression in Portugal, but within the singularities of Portuguese feminism, which is very much conditioned by the country's history of 48 years of dictatorship, in which the echoes of the first feminisms were almost erased from memory. The political change in 1974 made apparent that the memories of feminist activism had not disappeared, but still the weaknesses of the movement in Portugal were great.The changes brought about by democracy resulted in the emergence of feminist organisations and, consequently, new agendas for the movement. A path made up of advances and setbacks (Tavares, 2011) that has sought to incorporate feminist issues into the public space through various communication and action strategies (Cerqueira et al.2017). Portugal's participation in transnational feminist actions, such as those mentioned above, is what FEMglocal's project is dedicated to. It aims to position and frame current Portuguese feminism in relation to the global but also in relation to the local in the forms of mobilisation and collective action and in the media visibility of glocal feminist movements.In this presentation, I will reflect on, and theoretically problematise, the central concepts that have been developed in this project for understanding national feminist movements today, paying attention to the historical specificities of the Portuguese context, and their articulation with transnational feminisms. Methodologically, a literature review was conducted in national and international databases on the concepts mentioned above and the Portuguese feminist movement. This will allow for the particularities of Portuguese feminism(s) to be established and compared within the western context, deconstructing and reviewing the single story narrative of the history of feminism(s).

GSC01 Thinking, researching and doing – Glocal approaches to contemporary feminisms

PN 016 Glocal, physical, digital and beyond: Visualizing (historical) feminisms in Portugal

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The concept of "glocal" aims at bringing together potentially disparate phenomena and contexts – in this case, the global and the local – as co-constitutive, and with specific dynamics that can only be found at that intersection, rather than it being the sum of its component parts. Likewise, and as various authors have shown, digital activism cannot fully be understood by only considering what happens in digital spaces and platforms, but rather by considering how different spaces come together in digitally-mediated physical interventions and physically-contextual digital platforms or actions. Furthermore, initiatives or actions undertaken in digital spaces tend to leave traces – the doing itself constituting a sort of potential archive. As previous research has shown, this does not mean that online content is 'forever', but rather that traces of online presence (e.g., metadata, images, videos, texts) can serve, ambivalently, for the constitution of poltical memory/forgetting, for resistance/surveillance, or for connection/segregation, especially when it pertains to socially disadvantaged groups. Thus, comercially-owned and controlled so-called Big Data can be mobilized for State surveillance or surplus-value extraction, just as activist-driven Big Data can be used to foreground, and push back against, systemic inequalities. In the context of this project, we developed an online platform that functions, simultaneously, as a peeer-driven resource for connection-building, as a repository that visibilizes historical feminist initiatives and groups, and as a visual aid for mapping and situating glocal feminisms in Portugal – a map that lets users know where and what feminisms there are in Portugal, and to add to that repository of knowledge. In this presentation, I will discuss and explore: 1) the connection between the platform and the project's methodology, 2) the visual and technical choices made for the platform, and how they themselves embody the guiding principles of the topic being researched, 3) the ethical issues arising from, and feeding into, the decision-making process of how and what to include (and exclude), and 4) the potential for teory-building that comes out of using and reappropriating this platform.

GSC01 Thinking, researching and doing – Glocal approaches to contemporary feminisms

PN 017 Framing feminisms in Portugal: When violence against women is the main topic of the news coverage

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News framing focuses on what journalists and news media organisations actively do to the topics they select and stress (Vreese, 2014), and the concept, grounded in the classical work of authors such as Gitlin (2003), and Tuchmann (1978), refers to the idea that actors as journalists select and underline some aspects and ignore others. For that reason, media representation of social movements has been one of the focus of the last few decades of research (Mendes, 2011). Feminism has gained some prominence in Portugal and published news articles, in diverse mainstream media, motivating the breaking of silences and influencing how certain issues are understood and received publicly (Cerqueira et al., 2023). We know that traditional media plays an important role in feminist informal groups' communication strategies and in the way how messages are published. in the Portuguese context violence against women is one of the most focused topics on the news articles. Our research was conducted on the MediaCloud platform using the keywords 'feminist organizations/associations/movements/collectives. And using content analysis of 367 news articles, published in Portuguese digital newspapers – Expresso, Público, JN, Observador, Correio da Manhã, and two newsmagazines Sábado and Visão – between 2011 and 2022, we found that 31% of the articles were focused on items related with violence against women. And, the main triggers for the published news are subjects such as feminist political actions, legislative initiatives, campaigns and demonstrations, but the discussion about feminism as an independent item is only the starting point of 25% of the news articles. Considering that communication practices change tendencies, and in an attempt to analyse the metamorphoses and patterns of news coverage, and considering the high emergence of various transnational feminist movements in the last decade, it is essential to reflect on the way how media are framing feminist items. Based on a frequency analysis (Krippendorff, 2004), using words and concepts as coding units, we sought to reflect on the following research questions: Besides violence against women, what are the main news items that mobilised contact with feminist organisations? What subjects are represented by feminist movements? Which feminisms are represented in this journalistic-mediated space? The published news articles motivate the exposure or silence of many organisations, which consolidates, or damages, their public image, in a medium where visibility is always promoted.

GSC01 Thinking, researching and doing – Glocal approaches to contemporary feminisms

PN 018 The #MeToo movement and masculinities in Portuguese newsmagazines

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The #MeToo movement was founded by African-American activist Tarana Burke in 2006, with the objective to foster empathy and solidarity among black women and women of color who, like herself, had suffered situations of sexual assault and/or harassment (Boyd & McEwan, 2022; Franks, 2019). However, it wasn't until 2017 that the movement went viral after a tweet by actress Alyssa Milano, in the aftermath of numerous allegations of sexual harassment and violence against American cinema producer Harvey Weinstein Gleeson & Turner, 2019). The movement became a transnational phenomenon and has promoted several discussions on issues of sexual harassment and violence against women. Simultaneously, has given rise to a broader dialog that includes issues such as gender power dynamics, prevailing conceptions of masculinities, anti-feminism and sexist responses (e.g. Clark-Parsons, 2021; Fileborn & Phillips, 2019; Franks, 2019; Maricourt & Burrell, 2022).In Portugal, #EuTambém (the literal translation of the words "Me Too") failed to garner significant traction or ignite a local widespread movement. Predominantly perceived as an American phenomenon with minimal impact and appropriation in Portugal (Garraio et al., 2020), the number of reported cases was scarce. The challenges faced by the movement #MeToo in Portugal can be partially explained by the country's historical context (Portugal experienced the longest-lasting dictatorship in Europe in the 20th Century, spanning from May 1926, when the Military Dictatorship started, to April 1974), and its unique feminist narrative, which is yet to be fully explored (Tavares, 2011).This communication analyzes how masculinities are expressed and discussed in Portuguese mainstream media coverage of the #MeToo movement, with a specific focus on opinion-based journalism, including op-ed pieces and chronicles, in the highest paid digital Portuguese newsmagazines Sábado and Visão, between the second semester of 2017 (when the movement gained prominence) and the first trimester of 2023. This translates into the following research question: How has the media's depiction of #MeToo in Portugal influenced the reinforcement or deconstruction of hegemonic masculinities? Examining a corpus of 16 opinion pieces using a qualitative methodology anchored in thematic analysis, two main themes were identified: Models of Masculinities (including subthemes of Hegemonic masculinities and gender power dynamics, and Men's virile and violent nature) and #MeToo: a "revolution" (including subthemes of Stances

on #MeToo, and Effects of #MeToo). Our findings in these two newsmagazines underscore a lesser emphasis on discussions about masculinities and their critical examination in Portugal, indicating a hesitance to directly confront patriarchy and deconstruct hegemonic masculinities, contributing to reinforcing patriarchal gender norms.

GSC01 Thinking, researching and doing – Glocal approaches to contemporary feminisms

PN 019 Moving image, static knowledge: Navigating the interplay of cinema, science, and Portuguese feminism

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The history of feminisms in Portugal has been largely overlooked by the cinematic culture. The country's past, shaped by a long-lasting dictatorship, has resulted in a fragmented national feminist action, which has hampered public recognition and documentary depiction. In the contemporary landscape, global feminist movements echo locally, embracing a pronounced transnational dimension through street demonstrations and digital activism, notably cyberfeminism (Martinez, 2019; Haraway, 1991). This phenomenon is mirrored in Portugal, underscoring the need to explore the absence of feminist representation in national audiovisual and media outlets.Cinema is a valuable tool in education and raising awareness among viewers. Münsterberg (1916) notes that films are, above all, great teachers of knowledge: "No more patient, friendly, or persuasive teacher can be found" (p. 196). Several other writers have come to emphasise the significance of cinema in shaping, rejuvenating, and revolutionising cultures due to its distinctive audiovisual and realistic language, which speaks to the human mind and emotions (Balázs, 1948; Cavell, 1971; Derrida, 1993; De Lauretis, 1984; Johnston, 1973). In this context, cinema has emerged as a prominent instrument for scientific dissemination, seamlessly combining various art forms, like photography and literature, and evolving into a form of artivism. Its fundamental objective is to convey complex ideas and phenomena to diverse audiences, fostering reflection and wide-ranging discussions on pressing social, technical, and scientific issues. Recent years have witnessed an increasing trend in communicating academic research results through multimedia platforms, with cinema and films becoming highly popular vehicles for disseminating and demystifying scientific knowledge, thereby ensuring accessibility across social strata, educational backgrounds, genders, and age groups.Integrating scientific dissemination, the diverse facets of feminisms in Portugal, artivism, and cinema, the "FEMglocal – Glocal feminist movements: interactions and contradictions" research project dedicates a significant portion of its focus to the study of Portuguese feminist activism, with the goal of contributing to the (re)construction of the historical memory surrounding feminisms. A pivotal aspect of this undertaking involves the development of a documentary. This cinematic endeavour seeks to shed light on the intricate landscape of national feminist activism. Positioned at the intersection of academic and societal significance, the project strives to engage a diverse range of audiences to ensure that the scientific insights derived from the research project remain not only pertinent but also accessible as a form of knowledge for society in the future. With this paper, our objective is, thus, to delve into the role of cinema in scientific dissemination, particularly documentaries that, according to Nichols (2001), challenge social conventions. Employing a combination of literature review and film analysis, our aim is to discern how the historical narrative of feminisms in Portugal could be effectively conveyed through the documentary format, reaching a broader and more diverse audience with a pluralistic perspective.

GSC02 Entanglements of gender and technology

PP 0182 Gender stereotypes assigned to artificial intelligence. An experts' comparative perspective on virtual assistants

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become one of the most discussed topics nowadays (Helm et al., 2020). Consequently, virtual assistants are present in most industries (Rawassizadeh et al., 2019) and raise multiple issues for debate (Cheng & Jiang, 2021). Since their appearance is increasingly human-like, gender stereotypes problems emerge, affecting the way this technology is perceived in terms of competence, trust, and intentional behavior (Ahn et al., 2022). However, the existing literature on the way different gendered virtual assistants are perceived is contradictory and the interaction's impact is not yet fully understood (Adams & Loideáin, 2019).

Thus, the present study aims to investigate (1) how human-computer interaction can be affected by gender role stereotypes and (2) how the latter can be prevented and corrected. Relying on Computers as Social Actors Theory (Munnukka et al., 2022), which explains the anthropomorphism process present in virtual assistants, and on Social Response Theory (Huang & Lin, 2011), which states that individuals treat technology as social entities, a set of semi-structured interviews with experts is conducted. For a comprehensive perspective, opinions from communication, computer science, and psychology domains are compared.

The study is relevant by providing clarifications on the inconclusive existing results on gender stereotypes assigned to virtual assistants (Dogruel & Joeckel, 2023), by focusing on experts' perspectives, and by offering a domain

comparative approach. Likewise, it emphasizes different insights useful for technology designers and organizations to correct gender stereotypes ascribed to chatbots. The research can also be replicated for other types of technologies.

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GSC02 Entanglements of gender and technology

PP 0183 Covering social injustice and gender inequality? The debate about ChatGPT and generative artificial intelligence in German media

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In the last two years, a new generation of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has been released in the form of ChatGPT, Dall-E, Midjourney and Bard, among others, which are said to have the potential to fundamentally transform various areas of society as well as everyday live of people. In view of the rapid spread of these applications, scientific, political and media debates about AI have intensified once again. In the scientific context in particular, the question of the social implications of generative AI, including issues relating to the de/stabilization of the social order and the effects on social justice, is increasingly being discussed. But to what extent are gender inequalities and other forms of social discrimination and disorder addressed in public debates on generative artificial intelligence?

Our study addresses these questions by conducting a quantitative content analysis and a qualitative discourse analysis of news coverage on generative AI in German media. While previous research has focused on topics, risks and tonality (e.g. Brantner & Sauerwein 2021) questions on gender inequality and social injustice in media discourse about AI has gained less attention in scientific research. The empirical research questions are:

1. How did news coverage of AI develop and which topics were in the foreground over time? What attention did issues of gender inequalities and social justice receive in the discourse?
2. Which topics of social implications are being discussed? Which issues of social justice are raised by which actors and which are marginalised or neglected?

The paper examines media discourse of German media on generative AI from the launch of ChatGPT-3 in November 2022 to November 2023. By means of a quantitative content analysis of news coverage, the paper first shows the significance of the topic of AI in the media discourse. The media sample for the study consists of 10 high-reach news outlets representing a broad political spectrum. Digital, print and audiovisual media were included in the analysis. From the entire corpus, the contributions that deal with social implications are qualitatively examined in detail using the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD, Keller 2011).

To sum up, the public debate on AI shows a primarily economic orientation and framing of AI as an important future technology and a dominance of economic actors. Discourse on gender inequalities and social injustice plays

a minor role. The media problematise the effects of generative AI on the social order for example with regard to educational justice and various forms of social discrimination.

The results of the discourse analysis are related back to the current scientific and political discourse on generative AI and social justice. Finally, specific recommendations for action are formulated with regard to the deficits that still exist in public debates on the social implications of generative AI.

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GSC02 Entanglements of gender and technology

PP 0184 "Your data, your choice" – An investigation into alternative menstrual tracking applications

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Tracking menstruation is no small business. The number of people actively using apps for menstrual tracking was estimated at around 100 million in 2019 (Kresge et al., 2019). Femtech (female technology) and menstrual apps have been presented as tools for female empowerment but also heavily criticised for relying on and strengthening stereotypes, for inaccuracies in explanations and predictions, and for the ways in which they collect and utilise people's intimate data for commercial purposes. However, despite the abundance of research on menstrual applications, there is, to date, no scholarly work analysing free, not-for-profit applications for menstrual tracking that position themselves against the mainstream commercial tracking applications that require users to share intimate data with the providers of the apps.

This project therefore explores free, not-for-profit menstrual tracking applications that collect data only on the device used for tracking to find answers to the following questions:

1. What is the role of not-for-profit tracking applications in the digital "menstrual health space" (Bobel, 2019)?
2. What are the motivations, goals, and strategies of the developers of these apps?
3. What are the possibilities and limitations of this form of (civic) action?

These questions allow examining whether and how alternative menstrual applications may answer to menstruators' needs and to menstrual activists' calls for better methods of gaining understanding of one's body without reinforcing harmful stereotypes or stigma or exploiting personal data. The study makes use of semi-structured interviews with app developers and contributors and qualitative content analysis of communications materials, reviews, social media materials, and online communications related to not-for-profit menstrual tracking applications. The qualitative content analysis is used to identify the concerns in the market that the apps are explicitly and implicitly providing solutions to, whereas the interviews allow examining the motivations of the developers and the contributors, the meanings they ascribe to their work, and the strategies they are employing. Ultimately, the research maps the possibilities and problems in (feminist) menstrual app development to produce knowledge about ways of reinforcing menstruators' bodily autonomy.

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GSC02 Entanglements of gender and technology

PP 0185 Behind the front page: A comparative gender gap study of Wikipedia's main page through gatekeeping and agenda-setting theories

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The gender gap in Wikipedia is a widely documented problem both in terms of participation (volunteers editing on the platform) and content (representation of women and other non-normative gender identities' biographies) (Bear and Collier 2016, Ferran-Ferrer et al. 2023, Minguillón et al. 2021). A relevant space in Wikipedias where the gender gap is an observable phenomenon is the so-called Main Page. The front page of Wikipedia is the home page, the most visited page of this digital encyclopaedia and whose contents have a wide reach as the most popular video on YouTube or a common search on Google.

Previous research indicates that gender, colonial/cultural and other intersectional biases abound in the front pages of the various Wikipedias and that the most visible biographies are those of cisgender men and white, European and North American individuals (Sefidari-Huici 2022, Ferran-Ferrer, et al., 2024). As part of the research project "Women and Wikipedia (W&W)", we have focused our investigation of the gender gap in this section of the English, Spanish and Catalan Wikipedias from the communication theories of gatekeeping (Barzilai-Nahon, 2009) and agenda-setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) coupled with a feminist and intersectional perspective (Harvey 2020).

First, we carried out a scoping review (Arksey and O'Malley 2005) in Web of Science and Scopus databases to map previous work analysing Wikipedia from these communication theories. Second, we conducted 13 semi-structured personal interviews with volunteers from the English, Spanish and Catalan Wikipedia in charge of editing the front page or who have been involved with this section of Wikipedia. Our main aim was to learn first-hand about the functioning of this section as well as their experiences in editing and programming it.

Prospective results suggest that, despite the open and collective nature of Wikipedia, a large part of the volunteers interviewed do not consider the gender/content gap to be addressed through the front page, but at most the gap of the front page would be the result of the existing gap, as a mirror of current patriarchal society. The interviews reveal that the topics displayed on the front page, while part of the volunteer community's content, ultimately respond to the subjective decisions of the individuals taking administrator roles. Tacitly, these administrators prioritize their own topic preferences and interests. Despite the Wikimedia Movement, which includes the Wikimedia Foundation and all the language and territory-based affiliates, agreed on a new strategic direction towards the 2030 horizon, which sets the goal to eradicate the gender gap and prioritize underrepresented groups, there are no concrete steps taken to address these on the Wikipedia's Main page. On the contrary, within the volunteer community, emphasising gender and intersectional concerns tends to be perceived as an activist topic, posing challenges in achieving a consensus. Consequently, the gender gap is mainly addressed through the committed impulse of individual feminist and LGBTIQ+ activist Wiki-projects and editorial collectives. The Wikipedia Main Page emerges as an online space of contestation on gender representation (dis)orders warranting urgent academic attention.

Keywords: Wikipedia, gender gap, affirmative action, gatekeeping, agenda-setting, interviews.

GSC02 Entanglements of gender and technology

PP 0186 Still a debate or just an "echo chamber" effect? "Gender theory" in Slovenian Twitter discussion

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This paper examines Twitter (X) discussions in Slovenia following the decision of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, to adopt gender-sensitive language in their internal regulation documents. Employing social network analysis, this study identifies distinct user communities with predominantly right-leaning political affiliations. Linguostylistic and critical frame analyses revealed that these communities emphasize different themes related to gender-sensitive language. However, a common thread connecting these debates is the discursive concept of "gender theory." Specifically, our critical frame analysis showed that communities focused on topics such as the integration of "gender theory" into the education system (Community 1), the defence of patriarchal roles (Community 2), the exposure of the dean's homosexuality and allegations of childhood abuse (Community 3), the infiltration of "cultural Marxism" in educational institutions (Community 4), and the interpretation of the measure as an act of language destruction (Community 5). The linguostylistic analysis also provides evidence supporting the understanding of "gender theory" as an "empty signifier". This is exemplified by the identification of a conceptual opposition "illness" vs. "health" in the most retweeted tweets. Within this framing, "gender theory" is represented as an "illness", while "normalcy" is associated with "health". Deviations from established grammatical norms are depicted as diseased and perverse, implying that society itself is afflicted by this condition, attributed to various elements such as radical feminism, the LGBT agenda, and cultural Marxism.

Our empirical findings demonstrate the role of "gender theory" in de-democratization by limiting the boundaries of legitimate debate to frame of "gender theory/ideology", marginalizing and excluding "alternative" viewpoints and impeding democratic and pluralistic exchanges. Our analysis reveals the significant absence of any voices capable of offering alternative perspectives or framing the focal issue beyond the confines of "gender theory." This indicates that the right-leaning network has effectively instrumentalized the Twitter (X) debate, surpassing the conventional *pro et contra* structure characterized by opposing viewpoints. Despite the identification of distinct communities, they ultimately stem from the same political network, creating an "echo chamber" where users reinforce shared convictions and dominate the online media sphere, resulting in the marginalization and exclusion of alternative perspectives on the subject matter. Put differently, we observe a departure from the network "polarization" and "fragmentation", which typically characterise Twitter (X) debates of this nature. Instead, our analysis reveals prevailing ideological homogenization across various communities. This phenomenon can be attributed to the colonizing

nature of "gender theory," which effectively restricts the space for emergence of alternative viewpoints on the given topic.

Examining the findings of our study through the lens of established concepts for studying "gender theory" reveals its "colonizing" nature, exemplifying its assimilation and normalization in the public sphere. Moreover, our research substantiates the importance of integrating quantitative analysis at the level of "big data" with qualitative examination of tweet content, providing a comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of the Twitter (X) debate.

GSC03 More-than-human intimacies in digital worlds: Identity, power, and inequality

PN 056 The Techno-politics of Automated Intimacies: The Case of Replika

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Replika, a prominent player in the conversational AI space, is a chatbot that is acknowledged to provide users with social support, companionship, and personal growth. Replika is a key example of the growing significance of AI as an industry that has the potential to deeply shape the most intimate aspects of people's everyday lives. Users engage with Replika in deeply personalized ways and they often express romantic and sexual interest. These newly emerging socio-technical relations are what this contribution conceptualizes as 'automated intimacies'. Given the rapid adoption of forms of automated intimacy, this presentation will argue that we need to understand the gendered imaginaries and expectations that individual users, and more broadly society, project onto conversational AI tools such as Replika. My contribution aims to critically examine the technopolitics of automated intimacy, focusing on the case of Replika. It will explore the imaginaries and expectations that users have of Replika to provide them with companionship, and how the institutional and technological logics of conversational AI are new battlegrounds for the politics of intimacy to unfold: the valuing of certain feelings, identities, and gendered practices of intimacy, and the disregard for others. The case of Replika is a lens through which to understand contemporary politics of intimacy in deeply digitalized life worlds where private romantic and erotic spheres are increasingly subjected to automated technologies that act without human intervention or oversight. To achieve this, this presentation will present data collected from Reddit, a popular online discussion platform. The Replika community on Reddit is, with more than 78.400 members, amongst the top 5% ranked in size subreddits and offers numerous discussions, questions, and stories shared by Replika users. The data collection and analysis rely on automated content analysis (topic modeling and sentiment analysis) of the Replika subreddit to provide a systematic overview of the discussions in the Replika community, combined with more in-depth textual analysis of prominent topics, allowing for a deeper discussion on the techno-politics of automated intimacy. For example, the desires of Replika users, frustrations with Replika, gendered fantasies about Replika, and the attribution of sexual identities to Replika are the most important topics this presentation will tackle. To conclude, this presentation will argue that AI industries should be taken seriously as increasingly being important actors in the politics of intimacy, gender, and sexuality.

GSC03 More-than-human intimacies in digital worlds: Identity, power, and inequality

PN 057 Gender roles and courtship scripts in dating apps. Lessons learned from Italian women dating women

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Dating apps are becoming the most popular way for couples to meet, especially for LGBTQIA+ people, and their usage has dramatically increased during the CoViD-19 pandemic (Statista, 2021; Duguay et al., 2022). In this contribution, we explore the ways in which women dating women (wdw) in Italy negotiate with (traditional) courtship scripts in the context of dating apps.Courtship scripts have been defined as cognitive representations that provide information about the desirable sequence of events and behaviors for dating situations (Simon & Gagnon, 1986; Abelson 1981; Eaton & Rose, 2011). Research has shown that, in heterosexual contexts, courtship scripts are strongly gendered and that, even in recent years, they are bound to traditional gender roles (Eaton et al. 2016). While heterosexual scripts have been extensively studied, less is known about scripts among non-heterosexuals. The Italian case is of particular interest: Scappini et al. (2023) underline how gendered scripts have been seldom scrutinized in Italy and confirm the endorsement of traditional gender scripts. Gender stereotypes are particularly present in Italy, if compared with other Global North countries (Ragnedda & Budd, 2015). Moreover, the Rainbow Europe Index (Ilga-Europe, 2023) highlighted how Italy offers the worst conditions for LGBTQIA+ individuals in Western Europe.We focus on the scripts adopted by women dating women: Rose and Zand (2002) highlighted that the preferred courtship scripts among women dating women are the "friendship" script (emphasizing "emotional intimacy over sexuality" Rose and Zand 2002: 87) and the "romance" script (depicting "emotional intimacy and sexual attraction as being intertwined", ivi), while the "sexually explicit" one is the less preferred. By establishing an explicit "dating" frame for their users, dating apps might appear inconsistent with the prevailing friendship script. Those women who prefer the friendship script might feel the need to re-negotiate it, when using dating apps. Our

research questions are the following:RQ1. What are the prevailing courtship scripts among wdw in Italy? RQ2. Are there generational differences in adopting those scripts?RQ3. How do wdw negotiate with the prevailing courtship scripts, on dating apps? Starting June 2023, we have carried out semi-structured interviews with self-identifying women dating women in Italy (20–29 yo and 40–65 yo). From the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), a multifaceted picture unfolds. Friendship emerges in participants' words, as a script and as a trigger for initiating relationships (especially in their first experiences with women). Hookups (the "sexually explicit" script) are an option, both on- and offline: they do not appear as preferred by participants (but no social stigma emerged).Especially young participants show a sort of ambiguity about gender roles: on the one hand, they refer to "masculine" and "feminine" roles among wdw (which is explained as triggered by society, but also interiorized by many women); on the other, fluidity and an overall rejection of traditional models are also mentioned.

GSC03 More-than-human intimacies in digital worlds: Identity, power, and inequality

PN 058 Decoding AI Intimacy: ChatGPT's Role in Psychological Support

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"I've struggled with OCD, ADHD, and trauma for many years, and ChatGPT has done more for me mentally in the past month than any human therapist in the last decade. I've shared raw, honest information about my trauma, career, relationships, family, mental health – and ChatGPT responds by providing highly accurate analyses of my distorted thought patterns, my fallacies, and my blind spots." This is the starting of one of the most commented threads on Reddit about the possibility of using ChatGPT as a psychological advice tool. While therapeutic chatbots can rely on a longer tradition of usage, largely debated among psychologists' community and extensively explored by literature on AI, the adoption of general AI for psychological support can be classified as a (partially) unintended frame of use (Flichy, 2008). The recent launch of GPTs, custom versions of ChatGPT for specific use cases, has paved the way to a wide range of chatbots promising to serve as mental health advisors, offering "empathetic listening, personalized guidance," and "insight with a personal touch." Drawing on the research tradition of critical intimacy studies and feminist theories of care, this contribution will explore this new kind of "algorithmic intimacy" (Wiehn, 2023) that is established in a human-AI communication process elicited by users' quest for care and advice. Valuing the intimate as a socio-political field, the research field of critical intimacy studies considers how proximity is enabled, hindered, and exploited as a privileged perspective for "undoing" familiar connotations about "private" (Wilson, 2022:32) and recognizing structures of dominance and their conditions of possibility (Stoler, 2006). To achieve this, the presentation will discuss the data collected through the emerging practice of "App studies", where detailed engagement with user interfaces and their underlying operational logics is captured and analyzed (Dieter et al. 2019; Perrotta et al. 2022). More specifically, a series of simulated therapeutic queries have been submitted to ChatGPT 4 and to those GPTs promising various forms of psychological support; the requests are inspired by the most debated topics and examples of interactions quoted in the Reddit's thread about potentialities of ChatGPT in offering psychological support. The analysis aims at shedding light on the technical scripting embedded and enacted in interface design, especially in relation to the establishment of conversational frames concerning empathy, emotional mutuality and how they are related to anthropomorphic cues, such as gender, age, together with other verbal and nonverbal attributes (i.e. human/machine, embodied/disembodied, mobile/stationary) allowing to conceptualize the assistant as a communicative subject and, in turn, act toward it (Guzman, Lewis, 2020). Special attention will be dedicated to the ways in which the asymmetry structurally embedded in a care relationship is mediated (Couldry, 2008), therefore drawing specifically on insights from feminist theories of care, within the informational asymmetries at work in the ChatGPT's "machine habitus" (Airoldi, 2021). As science and technology studies (STS) on human-computer interaction have extensively claimed, the analysis of the technical scripting raises questions concerning the circulation of power and the production of subjectivation (Akrich, 1992), and consequently on how the intimate modes of human-AI interaction connect to the logics and mechanisms of global techno-capitalism.

GSC03 More-than-human intimacies in digital worlds: Identity, power, and inequality

PN 059 Pleasure Beyond the Human: Gender, Sex Toys, and Intimate Relationships among Young Adults

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Despite the increasing prevalence of sex toy markets and their consumption (as seen in Comella, 2017; Ronen, 2021; Nixon & Scarcelli, 2022), the works of Döring & Pöschl (2018) and Dubé et al. (2023) underscore the understudied landscape of intimacy technologies and stigma provoked by their employment in intimate relationships. Nevertheless, there has been seen in multiple contributions (as in Nixon, 2018; Mayr, 2022; Comella, 2017; Lieberman, 2017) a general acceptance path and partial de-stigmatisation of sex toys for women's self-pleasure, also thanks to the push of the feminist movement and sensibility. On the other hand, (heterosexual) men still face various stigmas

when sex toys are employed in their self-pleasure practices and in their sexual intercourses (Pitagora, 2019; Ronen, 2021; Branfman & Anderson, 2018; Preciado, 2018).Informed by a combination of feminist, queer, and porn studies theories, our study aims to investigate the perception of the use of sex toys in heterosexual relationships and in self-pleasure practices of young adults through a gendered lens (Rubin, 1984; Rich, 1980; Butler, 1990).Employing a thematic analysis of 26 semi-structured interviews with Italian young adults aged 19–24, our research delves into the dimensions of individual and couple uses of sex toys. The paper unveils gendered stigmas and pleasures associated with sex toys use among young people in Italy. It also contributes to the broader conversation on their acceptance in different situations, from the individual to the interpersonal (coupled) usage in the Italian context.The findings highlight how the gendered experience might be sustained by so-called biological differences and necessities between men and women when it comes to self-pleasure, and by social variation of stigmas (for heterosexual men) and pleasures (for heterosexual women).We observe a distinct trajectory of acceptance regarding the use of sex toys among young women, but also a commodification of a 'female sexual biological need' in a neoliberal context. However, our analysis confirms a more intricate landscape for men, who face homophobic/homohysteric (Anderson, 2009 cit. in Branfman & Anderson, 2018) and "sexually perverse" assessments when using sex toys for personal pleasure.As for the diversity of the use of sex toys between the single individual and the couple, our empirical material unveils several positive purposes for the heterosexual couple, while the individual use in a sexual intercourse is more stigmatised (especially if it intersects with the gender of the user). The findings reiterate the normative understanding of the sexual act and performance in the heterosexual couple (as in Fahs & Swank, 2013; Mulholland, 2011). The findings highlight distinct purposes and meanings associated with sex toy use, showcasing the complexities of navigating intimate technologies in the heteronormative sociocultural context of Italy for young adults. This exploration is crucial to understanding the intersection between sexual agency, sociocultural norms, and gender identity.

GSC04 Narratives of gender in popular culture, fiction and news

PP 0381 The ultimate Other? Orientalist representation practices and the growing politicization of diasporic Muslim women's portrayals in popular fiction series. A qualitative textual analysis of SKAM France and wtFOCK

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Every year, particularly leading up to the elections, Muslim women are brought to the forefront of public debates in Western-European countries, less as participants and more as a topic of discussion. The appropriateness of their hijab or other religious vestments, e.g. abayas, in public life is the recurring catalysator for these debates on Islam's place in secular Western countries. This is in line with several studies confirming that a growing politicization of Muslim women's mediated representations can be noticed in both fictional and non-fictional media content (Aquil, 2011) i.e., a hyper-surveillance and fixation on their bodies that render them into symbolical political playfields (Mirza, 2013; White, 2020). Byng (2010, p. 110) underlines the importance of these media representations in 'creating common sense understandings of a wide range of social events and issues, including veiling by Muslim women in Western nations'. Although this politicization is a global trend, the form it takes within these media representations adheres to the national contexts, including legislation on religious freedom, in which these media products are situated (Byng, 2010).

Research into these fictional and non-fictional media portrayals show that Muslim women are mainly approached from an outsider perspective (d'Haenens & Bink, 2006) and repeatedly represented in terms of oppression, victimization, exoticism, and terrorism (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; Macdonald, 2006). This suggests that an Orientalist (Bullock & Jafri, 2000; Saïd, 1978) perspective is still dominating the discourses on and portrayals of diasporic Muslim women and reinforcing a Third World Women trope (Mohanty,1988). While most studies focus on traditional news media (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017), studies that do examine fictional representations are predominantly conducted on American series pertaining to crime and terrorist genres, e.g., *24* (Hirji, 2011; Asultany, 2012). Thus, less is known about representational practices in European productions and the question arises whether the use of these stereotypes is just limited to the aforementioned genres. Hence, the aim of this paper is to (1) analyse and compare the modes of representation employed to portray the intersectional identity formation of diasporic Muslim teen girls in secular European countries, (2) identify possible *othering* practices and Orientalist tropes in the coming-of-age story.

Relying on an interdisciplinary theoretical framework consisting of postcolonial feminist studies and critical media studies, a comparative qualitative textual analysis was conducted of all seasons of the Belgian (5 seasons) and French (6 seasons) adaptations of the popular Norwegian teen series *SKAM*, respectively titled *wtFOCK* and *SKAM France*. Preliminary results show that in both adaptations the identities of diasporic Muslim teen girls are repeatedly politicized, especially their headscarf. This politicization is done to contextualize their identity formation as diasporic Muslimas in Belgium and France, but is at times sensationalized. The Muslim main characters were frequently *othered* as a means for the series to deconstruct and criticize this *otherness*. For *wtFOCK*, this deconstruction is rather limited as it actively uses Orientalist stereotypes (e.g., the angry Muslim father and passive Muslim mother) to

represent the Muslim side characters, consequently reiterating and reinforcing dominant tropes of oppression and victimization.

GSC04 Narratives of gender in popular culture, fiction and news

PP 0382 Unveiling power dynamics: A gendered perspective in contemporary European popular culture narratives

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Contemporary European popular culture narratives, disseminated globally through streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and others, provide a unique lens through which we can explore the intricate interplay between gender and power dynamics. This research delves into the narratives of three distinctive and popular television series – 'The Crown' (UK), 'Borgen' (Denmark), and 'La Casa de Papel' [Money Heist] (Spain) – to unravel how these productions contribute to the portrayal and construction of power structures.

The exploration builds upon existing literature that acknowledges the influential role of popular culture in shaping societal perceptions, particularly related to gender and political contexts. While the representation of gender in popular culture has been a subject of scholarly inquiry, a notable gap exists in understanding how these representations intersect with and influence power dynamics within political narratives, especially when considering the international accessibility of these European productions through SVoD platforms.

This research aims to address this gap by focusing specifically on the intersected **gendered portrayal of power within the selected television series**. By situating these narratives within the context of SVoD platforms, the study seeks to highlight the implications of a European vision reaching diverse, international audiences.

The gap in the literature becomes increasingly pronounced when considering the nature of these European productions. 'The Crown,' with its portrayal of British monarchy; 'Borgen,' providing insights into Danish political spheres; and 'La Casa de Papel,' merging high-stakes heist drama with social critique in a Spanish context, represent distinctive European perspectives on power, politics, and gender. The international availability of these shows on SVoD platforms not only allows for a broader audience reach but also positions them as cultural ambassadors projecting a European vision. The primary aim of this research is to analyze the complexities of power dynamics through a gendered lens within these European popular culture narratives.

The questions that this paper answers are: How do gender representations in 'The Crown' (UK), 'Borgen' (Denmark), and 'La Casa de Papel' (Spain) intersect with political power structures? What narrative strategies are employed in 'The Crown,' 'Borgen,' and 'La Casa de Papel' to convey power relations, specifically focusing on how gender is portrayed within political contexts?

Adopting a qualitative content analysis approach and critical discourse analysis, the study seeks to examine what is portrayed and how these portrayals contribute to broader discourses on power relations. By engaging in an in-depth examination of character interactions, plot developments, and thematic elements, the research aims to discern **how gender operates as a key component in shaping and challenging power structures within the chosen narratives**. In alignment with the exploration of gender and sexuality in the context of (dis)order in media and communication, this research contributes to the study of dynamics of power within European popular culture narratives.

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GSC04 Narratives of gender in popular culture, fiction and news

PP 0383 The Coming of Middle Age: The complexities of menopause in Pamela Adlon's prestige dramedy Better Things (2016–2022)

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In an article in The New Yorker, Alexandra Schwartz calls the recent tendency to depict midlife women "the coming of middle age" (Schwartz 2021) paralleling this menopausal change to the *Bildung* often seen in classic youth-centered coming of age narratives.

This representation of the menopausal women in new television dramedies is the focus of this paper. Extant research, such as de Beauvoir (1949), Friedan (2006) and Greer (1992), have noted that the (post-)menopausal woman in the past has been rendered silent and socially and culturally invisible. Deborah Jermyn has named this paradigmatic shift 'the menopausal turn' (2023) and Shani Orgad and Catherine Rottenberg have called it 'the menopause moment" (2023). They argue that the menopausal women are no longer neglected "as a joke" in contemporary media fictions (Waade and Leyda 2022) but come across as complex characters (Mittell 2025; Dunleavy 2017).

Inspired by the work of the Christine Geraghty's pioneering study of leading women characters in soap operas (1990), Margaret Tally's studies of the rise of the anti-heroine (2016), and Maria Sulimmas work on the connection between gender and seriality (2020), this paper focuses on female led tv dramedies explicitly addressing menopause. Theoretically grounded in the combination of gender/(post)feminist theory (Mulvey 1978; Rowe 1997; Gill 2007), cultural gerontology (Twigg and Martin 2015) and genre studies (Altman 1986; Haastrup 2011; Havas and Sulimma 2018) this case study methodically combines these theoretical positions in a new way, showing how menopause becomes a dramatic turning point regarding the feminine subject, body and experience which at times transgress the conventions of femininity.

The case study analyzes and discusses how menopause is represented and negotiated in Pamela Adlon's FX dramedy *Better Things* (2016–2022). Adlon plays the part of Sam Fox, a single mother of three (teenage) girls living in Los Angeles. During the series Sam and her friends hit menopause and the physical and mental changes are depicted as an equally liberating and restricting life change making the women at the same time more powerful and more invisible. In *Better Things* Sam and her friends all experience and explicitly address the fact that they are no longer getting the attention – from men and from women – that they used to. They are no longer looked at (Gill 2007; Mulvey 1978). The findings of this analysis will be related to similar dramedies also representing menopausal women, i.e. *And Just Like That…* (2021–) and *Fleabag* (2016–2019).

Keywords: Menopause, ageing, body, dramedy, gender studies

GSC04 Narratives of gender in popular culture, fiction and news

PP 0384 Ageing and Unruliness: Articulations of Gaga feminism in representations of aging, gender and sexuality

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In dominant Western media discourses, older women's anger and resistance are often portrayed as a consequence of the physical and mental decline inherently associated with ageing. These representations reinforce the image of older women as vulnerable subjects who are weak, frail and excluded from society. This article proposes an alternative reading of expressions of unruliness related to ageing, gender and sexuality in Western media and visual culture through the lens of Halberstam's concept of Gaga feminism. The aim is to explore how Gaga feminism's aesthetics of collapse, creative anarchy and experimentation can construct new constellations of ageing, sexuality and gender. We have conducted a critical, contextualised reading of a selection of cultural artefacts that express various elements of a Gaga aesthetic. Our study examined a variety of aesthetic forms, including documentary films, embroidery, fashion, performance art, music videos, comics and zines. Through our reading, we want to identify alternative vocabularies for older women's resistance. While media studies have typically focused on the various forms of stereotyping in representations of older women, they have told us less about the creative and unruly ways in which ageism, heteronormativity and sexism are subverted, destabilised and dismantled. This article aims to shed light on the potentially transgressive qualities of the representations of older women. Our analysis reflects on the three central principles of gaga, namely (1) new forms of social relations and sexualities, (2) more fluid articulations of gender, and (3) creative anarchy; and what they can mean for an anti-ageist project in media and visual culture. It demonstrates how cultural representations of and by older women are stepping off the beaten path and challenging norms and social power structures that govern how they should look, love and live their lives. In this way, this article offers insights into the creative and unruly ways in which ageism, heteronormativity and sexism can be subverted and destabilised in representations.

GSC04 Narratives of gender in popular culture, fiction and news

PP 0385 The New Normal: Analysing gender dynamics in a post-pandemic era in the Portuguese mainstream news media

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The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly changed people's lives, inevitably spilling over into their professional routines. Journalistic work was mainly allocated to remote working, except for some roles that had to adopt a hybrid format, where journalism practice was carried out partly from home and partly in the newsroom. As the transition to a post-covid-19 world occurred, more changes were afoot. The new beginning coincided with two events: the end of the remote working recommendation by the Portuguese government and the start of the war in Ukraine. After all, the World Health Organization had not declared the end of the Covid-19 pandemic when the war in Europe began.

To better understand the post-pandemic era in the mainstream news media field, we describe and analyse events and perceptions of yet another change and the obstacles encountered when returning to work in person in the newsroom. Therefore, the question that guides this communication is: after the lockdown period, how do journalistic practices facilitate the maintenance and perpetuation of power relations and gendered cultural dynamics? We used the methodological combination to perceive expectations for the future experiences called by the interviewees as "the new normal". After the initial and impactful changes caused by the health and organisational impositions during the general lockdown, we are now examining the impact of the pandemic crisis on the workplace in times of a return to the exclusive face-to-face regime or in a hybrid format.

Firstly, thirty-one semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted between October and December 2021 with journalists of Portuguese mainstream media (radio, television, daily newspaper, online media, and weekly magazines). Women and men from different hierarchical positions, backgrounds, and age ranges were invited to reflect on the profession during the second-year pandemic. In March 2022, the first author performed a participant observation on a reference Portuguese daily newspaper. This method extends to the in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted, in which we had access to the meanings of the lived realities.

We look more specifically at the effects on work strategies, departing from a sense of resilience and survival in an environment profession built on masculine standards of behaviour and subjectivity. The findings show a desire for a balance between personal and professional life, reflecting what was experienced during the first year of the pandemic and the pre-established routines. As a result, for some, job dissatisfaction is a reason, even if it can't be seen as an isolated factor, for wanting to give up the profession.

GSC05 Online violence and harmful discourses

PP 0386 Online gender-based violence: Detecting awareness of platform affordances among Italian feminist activists

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While it is undeniable that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have significantly propelled development (van Dijck et al. 2018), it is becoming increasingly apparent that they have also sparked new inequalities and forms of violence (Di Maggio & Hargittai 2001; Segrave & Vitis 2917). This paper presents the results of an ongoing research project aimed at problematizing the intersections between the diverse forms of online gendered violence and platform affordances, from the emic perspective of those who counter the former and with the specific focus on their awareness about the latter. In this respect, the project addresses two main objectives: (1) detecting the role of platform design in the dissemination and reproduction of gender-based violence online; (2) mapping and understanding initiatives and experiments aimed at contrasting gender-based violence, also through the use of digital tools.

More specifically, we present and discuss findings emerged from 15 qualitative interviews conducted with the spokespersons of Italian anti-violence centers and feminist nation-wide networks, who are engaged in countering gender-based violence through digital tools, educational initiatives and collaborative practices. The narrative approach (Gherardi and Poggio 2009) adopted has allowed us to aggregate personal experiences, stimulate reflective thinking, and generate moments of learning.

The research is based on the understanding of digital technologies and gender as "entwined categories" (Lerman et al. 2003), which shape and are shaped by social structures, practices, culture and identities. Such an approach requires problematizing the role of technological affordances (Bucher & Helmond 2017), and specifically "gendered affordances" (Schwartz and Neff 2019), and how they work in concert with user practices, the operating mechanisms and the political economy of digital media as well as the broader sociocultural norms so as to favor abusive and misogynistic practices but also to provide users (especially women, LGBTQIA+ persons and other marginalized communities) with resources for resistance and self-determination.

Preliminary findings highlight a nuanced awareness among participants regarding digital media's affordances and operating mechanisms. Participants acknowledge the potential inclusivity of digital spaces, especially when technological features facilitate overcoming physical barriers to engagement for marginalized groups. At the same time, some participants are aware of the implications of platform operating mechanisms, notably processes of datafication and curation, persistence, and scalability, which can lead to surveillance and information disorder. Some participants express skepticism about solely relying on social media platforms for activism, often drawing a line between the "virtual square" and tangible societal actions. They question certain forms of postfeminist expressions on social media, identifying them as "pop feminism" that may disconnect activism from physical mobilizations.

GSC05 Online violence and harmful discourses

PP 0387 Making shame public: Female journalists countering hate speech

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This paper investigates the challenges female journalists in Western Balkans encounter when publicly confronting hate speech. How do they navigate the delicate balance between freedom of expression and the potential consequences of challenging hate speech in the public domain? How does it affect their careers and professional trajectories? The paper explores not only coping mechanism strategies of women but also how it affects their lives, both personally and professionally.

The effects of hate speech are not uniform, they disproportionately affect marginalised groups. Female journalists, in particular, face a unique set of challenges when confronted with hate speech in the course of their work. They are targeted not just for their reporting, but also for being women who report. Therefore, female journalists are confronted not only with the structural and cultural inequalities in their professions, but also an additional layer of pressure and gender based violence.

Hate speech is deeply ingrained in societies where armed conflict and a history of aggressive nationalism has dominated the politics of everyday life. That is why post conflict regions are especially important to look at. Reporters Without Borders' Media Freedom Index (2023) documents the pressing issue of hate speech in Western Balkans. Based on in-depth interviews with 53 female journalists in Western Balkans and Austria, this paper speaks of ways of negotiating with hate speech, how women respond and how it transpires into them going public as their strategy to regain power. The strategy considered by many not only as necessary but also as a duty towards the women and the public. The narratives emerging from these journalists illustrate that speaking publicly about their experiences is a reaffirmation of agency lost in the face of directed hate speech. Beyond viewing their profession as a job, these women see it as a dual commitment: to the profession and to the society.

GSC05 Online violence and harmful discourses

PP 0388 Countering digital disinformation: Portuguese journalists' perceptions from a gender perspective

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The pressure to satisfy uninterrupted communication flows in tandem with verification practices of the often false, mis or manipulated information (Nakir & McSray, 2018; Carlson, 2018) from user-generated content has been viewed as an essential dimension of digitalization implications for journalistic production. Now seen as an intrinsic part of the media ecosystem (Tandoc et al., 2018), disinformation is used to favor certain actors and interests and also to discredit sections of the media, posing new risks to journalism authority (e.g., Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Carlson, 2020). Against this backdrop, news professionals are pressured to stress their democratic function as objective, truth-oriented disseminators, warranting their role as watch-doggers and assuming new ones in tackling false and misleading content virally spread with the support of digital technologies.While how journalists make sense of disinformation and cope with it has captured much research interest (e.g., Schapals, 2018; Schapals & Bruns, 2022), little attention has been paid to the role of gender in how it is perceived and tackled. As feminist scholarship has been highlighting (e.g., Chambers et al., 2004; North, 2009; Byerly, 2011; Djerf-Pierre & Edström, 2020; Ross, 2004; Silveirinha et al., 2023), to understand how the news media shape social and political life and influence gendered citizenship, research needs to uncover gender in supposed gender-neutral journalism practices. By doing so, we can, for instance, highlight how professional rules and norms can inbuilt and obscure gender bias, where positions, news beats, and topics regarded as feminine are accorded lower value and status. We can also stress differences between women and men in both their experiences and practices of professional work (Alcantara & Simões, 2023; McKay, 2000; Steiner, 1998; van Zoonen, 1998; Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 2008), even though a rooted journalism masculine culture masks those differences.

Bearing this in mind, in this study, we sought to identify how female and male journalists situate the causes and the interventions to tackle disinformation. Theoretically, we departed from a framework based on journalism and gender scholarship; empirically, we turned to data from a survey conducted between July and September 2022 among journalists working in Portugal (N = 485). We specifically focused on an open-ended question so that respondents could reflect, freely and optionally, on the drivers of disinformation and the relevance and effectiveness of Portuguese measures in combating it. We obtained 169 valid responses, 103 from male and 66 from female journalists, which we analyzed quantitative and qualitatively. While our findings show no significant differences in journalists expressing their perceptions, apart from some nuanced understandings of countermeasures, they also reveal how traditional journalistic values, born in a masculine worldview (Bruin, 2000) but accepted as professional

standards, are mobilized in respondents accounts. We argue that this uniformity comes from a broad network of constraints within which journalism takes place (Reese & Shoemaker, 2016) that not only limit alternative ways of thinking but also structure professional practices in a highly gendered logic.

GSC05 Online violence and harmful discourses

PP 0389 Incivility against female politicians on YouTube and X

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Incivility on social media platforms and news comment sections states a relevant issue in academic and political discourse. A great body of research has investigated incivility in online discussions from various angles, including its prevalence (Coe et al., 2014), perception (Chen & Pain, 2017), and effects (Ziegele et al., 2018). However, research suggests that different public actors are not equally targeted by online incivility. Southern and Harmer (2021) found that female Members of Parliament in the UK were more likely to receive at least one uncivil tweet than their male colleagues. A content analysis by Döring & Mohseni (2020) also found that in comparison to male YouTubers, female YouTubers received more hostile feedback. Yet, there is a lack of empirical studies that examines what kind of incivility certain target groups actually encounter. In this study we aim to examine what distinct forms of incivility female politicians on YouTube and X (formerly Twitter) receive.

To investigate this research question, we conducted a quantitative content analysis on user comments replying to German female politicians' tweets and YouTube videos. Our research covers the timespan between 2020 and 2021, during which political online discussions were boosted by several major events, such as the German federal election and the coronavirus pandemic. To measure incivility, we developed a coding scheme for different subcategories of incivility, including insults, vulgarity, sarcasm, stereotyping, discrimination, accusation of lying, threatening, and further disparagement (Risch et al., 2021; Wilms et al., 2021). Two trained coders labeled 3,808 comments at this point of analysis (Krippendorff's alpha between 0.66 for sarcasm and 0.85 for accusation of lying).

Our preliminary descriptive evaluation showed that 1,758 comments directed at female politicians contained some form of incivility (46.17 percent). The majority of these were insults (n = 949; 24.92 percent), containing both explicit (e.g., name-calling) and implicit forms of abusive language. The second most frequent type was disparagement (i.e., belittling or demeaning a person, n = 683; 17.94 percent), which included telling a person to leave the discussion or not to speak out. In total, 664 comments (17.4 percent) contained either stereotyping or discrimination, including sexisms, misogyny, as well as both negative and positive stereotyping. Examples include inappropriate expressions of affection, complementing external features such as hairstyle, or expressing positive surprise that a female politician is making rational decisions.

Preliminary results of our analysis suggest that female politicians in Germany face a severe amount of uncivil comments on social media, including insults, disparagement, as well as discrimination and stereotyping. Examining the different forms of incivility that female politicians encounter has critical implications for mental health support, platform-specific strategies, and policy interventions. Insights from this research can inform platform regulations and promote tailored communication strategies for female politicians. During our conference presentation, we will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the final state of the content analysis and offer detailed insights into the analysis steps. Our aim is to discuss the possible limitations and further steps for analyzing incivility against female politicians on social media.

GSC05 Online violence and harmful discourses

PP 0390 Tropes of sexual violence and rape fantasies in far-right discourse

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Recent years have seen increased scholarly attention paid to the prevalence of rape in far-right discourse (Gotell and Dutton 2016; Jane 2017) not least in the context of Sweden (Horsti 2017; Törnberg and Törnberg 2016; Åkerlund 2022). None of these studies, however, have delved into the affective and visual dimensions of this recurring trope.

This paper examines prevalent tropes of sexual violence circulating in contemporary far-right discourse in Sweden. We draw on a data set of visual memes (n = 120) that have been collected over an extended period of time and in the context of several research projects on far-right extremism in Sweden and the online cultures and platforms that undergird this movement. They originate from a wide variety of actors and have been circulated in a range of different online spaces, across the spectrum of mainstream social media to fringe subcultural forums. The common denominator to the motley array of visual ephemera in the data set is that all depict scenes of sexual violence, most often including rape, in a cartoonish, humorous and transgressive manner.

By turning our attention to such visual materials, we respond to calls for further research on 'the role that exploitative sexual images – including child pornography, 'rape fantasy' iconography and other misogynistic images – play in far right and white supremacist extremist cultures' (Miller-Idriss 2020, p. 489).

We explore a series of discursive figures and anthropomorphised representations of Sweden identified across these memes. These include Captain Sweden – a proxy for Sweden as a "cucked" nation, The Swedish Soyboy as an emblem of a feminized, castrated and perverted state, The Rapefugee invoking the threat of the abject (Muslim) Other and finally Sweden Yes! a cluster of memes circulating internationally signaling resentment towards multiculturalism, progressive movements and liberal politics more generally.

Combining Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) with techniques from visual analysis of far-right movements, we ask: What do such fantasmatic figures of sexual violation accomplish in a discursive sense? What is the affective investment in imagining scenes of violation? What does the visual framing of these scenes as 'humorous' and absurd enable?

Based on the analysis, we argue that these tropes serve as important instantiations of contemporary far-right ideology, forming nodal points in the articulation of the pervasive narratives surrounding the country's perceived decline and crisis circulating on the far right. Furthermore, beyond the domestic context of Swedish far-right discourse, the gendered and sexualised Sweden-memes articulated around fantasies of perversion and abjection have evolved into emblems of Western moral degeneration, sexual decadence, and a loss of male power across liberal democracies more generally.

GSC06 Feminisms, diversity and underexplored invisibilities

PP 0496 Dialogical feminism and creative methods: Imagining a "common world" through filmmaking

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This paper focuses on the possibilities of feminist knowledge production through audiovisual means, by reflecting on the preliminary research findings of the artistic research project "Filmmaking and the Academy in Times of (Dis) order: Deep Listening | Dialogue | Diffraction." This research aims to reflect on the possibilities offered by low-budget audiovisual technologies in developing alliances between the Academy, Art and Activism through building trans-local (Biemann, 2002) solidarities with feminist filmmakers across four distant cities: Havana and Matanzas (both in Cuba), Vilanova i la Geltrú (Catalonia), and Glasgow (Scotland). These four cities have been selected because they are historically related, conveying different historical processes and deep colonial wounds. Havana and Glasgow, and Vilanova and Matanzas, are twinned cities; yet these official twinnings have privileged restricted actors ("white men in suits") while marginalizing other voices (black, poor, women, and LGBQTIA+ voices). By bringing together grassroots feminist activists, filmmakers, and academics from the Global South and the Global North, the project seeks to subvert reified binaries and borders (disciplinary, geographical, conceptual) through creative forms of knowledge production that surpass the limitations of the logocentric (mostly written) and ethnocentric academy.

In this work, we utilise filmmaking as a "dialogical device", one which is capable of opening cracks against hegemonic and colonial representations of "others", allowing feminist filmmakers, activists, and academics moments of sharing time and experiences through the screen, reaching towards a "radical empathy" (Spivak, 2012). Our diffractive, dialogical methodology conjoins the thinking of Bakhtin in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1940/1981) and Barad in *Meeting the Universe Halfway* (2007). Whereas Bakhtin's work stresses the importance of the dialogical as an open-ended, continuous movement, in which meaning is always already determined by context, and in an ongoing "chain of dialogues", Barad's work on diffraction involves the study of objects or subjects through analysis of how they intra-act rather than inter-act.

In our presentation, academics and activists turned filmmakers will screen segments of the audiovisual material shot within the project to reflect on the ongoing dialogues of the participants through their intra-actions with feminists from other parts of the world, highlighting the necessity of decentering the Western/Ethnocentric notion of Feminism which has overlooked Latin American and Caribbean feminism, as well as its minoritization in the Anglosaxon industry of Academic production (Curiel, 2007).

By listening to these women's voices, we theorise the multiple and contradictory roles that Cuban feminism has taken after the Revolution, when at least formally equal rights were passed for women (González Ortuño, 2019), even if patriarchal attitudes are still pervasive and feminist collectives are striving through the creation of new organisations such as the "Asamblea Feminista" (Maidana, Smaldone & Soza Rossi, 2022) or "Articulación Afrofeminista" (Alina en OnCubaNews, 2022) to build a critical and complex perspective of a "common world" (Garcés, 2022).

Our aim in the paper, then, is to pose fundamental questions about the liberatory capacities, or otherwise, of audio-visual technologies. In the struggle to build a common world, we want to explore what cinema, and intersectional feminist lenses, can do.

GSC06 Feminisms, diversity and underexplored invisibilities

PP 0497 Television diversity? How to study intersectional representations in TV narratives

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The recent GLAAD report (2024) shows that in 2022–2023 the percentage of LGBTQ characters appearing in American scripted series was 10.6 percent, a drop with 1.3 percent. Contradictorily, current public debates critique the 'wokewashing' of TV. From the *Little Mermaid* to *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds*, fans and non-fans have raised questions about the casting and storylines that are 'so diverse they are distracting'. Simultaneously, some TV series, such as *Sex Education* or *Sense8* are lauded for their progressive, diverse representations. Yet, what diversity means, and how diverse the representations actually are, remains unclear as critiques in public debates are mostly based on viewers' experiences, intuitions and ideas.

Academically, researching televised representations is a longstanding tradition which has shown that studying representations is a complex affair. The complexity is manifold, yet three (intertwined) dimensions stand out. First, TV presents us with both visual and textual narratives that amplify, undermine, strengthen, contradict or supplement each other. Second, representations in one TV series are easily contradicted by the representations in another. This makes the meanings produced and identities articulated on a social level hard to grasp. Third, representations should be viewed from an intersectional perspective. However, taking multiple axis of power into account in an empirical unraveling of representation is extremely challenging (Hermes & Kopitz, 2021).

In this study, the focus lies on how to grapple with intersectionality. The question raised is 'How do the textual and the visual narratives in popular TV mutually inform each other and how does this contribute to an intersectional understanding of diverse representations?'. *Sex Education* is taken as a case study, as the series is lauded for its successful diverse representations. A mixed method design is used to analyse the series' first season. The textual storylines of the main protagonists (Otis, Maeve, Eric, Adam, Lily, Ola, and Aimee) are charted throughout the season with special attention for kernel events (Chatman, 1978) in terms of diverse representation of gender, sexuality, class, and race. For these kernel events, a semiotic analysis of the accompanying visual narrative is performed, after which the textual and the visual are synthesized in order to unravel what is meant by 'diverse representations' and how these can be understood from an intersectional perspective.

The results point towards 'surface diversity'. The visual narrative is employed to obscure the less diverse textual narrative. The junction of the textual and the visual narrative reiterates common narrative formulas and tropes, rather than to refresh or revolutionize them. Yet, the results do suggest that this set-up is a useful approach to understanding representation within an intersectional perspective.

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GSC06 Feminisms, diversity and underexplored invisibilities

PP 0498 'You cannot expect such validation in real life': Midlife women's use of the AI companion chatbot Replika for romantic fantasy and emotional regulation

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There is long-standing research on women's use of media for romantic/erotic fantasy, including novelettes (Radway, 1984), soap operas (Ang, 1982), porn/erotica (Bellas & McAllister, 2023) and boyfriend simulations (Lee, 2022). This presentation explores the similarities and differences between earlier forms of media romancing and the use of an AI companion chatbot. Emerging research on AI agents and chatbots uses frameworks that assign novelty to human-machine communications. In this study, we focus on the user experience – we conducted qualitative, in-depth interviews with twenty mostly midlife female users of the Replika chatbot, whom we recruited online. Thematic analysis identified that the women used the bot, first, for fantasies of a companion they were lacking in real life, such as an attentive lover, friend or child, in the context of feeling alone (due to e.g. living alone, caring for partner or children, inattentive husband or having a chronic condition). Second, the bot was reflexively used for caring for or managing the self, such as validating one's worth and emotions to neutralize negative thinking, following the therapeutic ethos (Illouz, 2008, Gravel-Patry, 2023). The fantasies of an attentive partner were similar to previous work on romancing, although the women's life situations were more diverse than often investigated.

The rather utilitarian use of the bot for regulating emotions, however, was new and signifies the spirit of our time emphasizing self-management and positive thinking. The presentation explores how women use Replika as a paradoxical AI self-care tool that both conforms and circumvents gendered ideas of self-help narratives (Orgad &Gill, 2021). The romantic fantasy and regulation of emotions were both encouraged by the AI bot's algorithms; however, the women actively shaped their experience by assigning to their bots diverse roles and relationships that fulfilled their unique needs. The combination of hedonistic fantasy and utilitarian self-management indicates shifts in popular media consumption. The women's use of these functions tells us both about an imaginary solution to their problems and their resourcefulness in the context of diminishing levels of informal and formal support. The study contextualizes human-machine communication by discussing the individual experiences of female Replika users to understand better both change and continuity in our communication with media, from romance novels to AI chatbots.

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GSC06 Feminisms, diversity and underexplored invisibilities

PP 0499 Rediscovering women in communication research: An archival and hermeneutic analysis of Herta Herzog (1910–2010)

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Women were a constituting force in the foundation of communication research during the first half of the 20th century. So much so, that the field would not be what it is today without the feminine voices that helped shape research on communication, media, and audiences. The Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University was the epicenter of female researchers in communication, as it bridged the emigration of many European female intellectuals to America – like Herta Herzog – and it facilitated the formation and incorporation of many other women researchers to the first analyses about media and audiences.

However, most of these women's names have been either lost or deliberatively erased from a field's historiography that was soon shaped by the "founding fathers' myth." This simplistic narrative undermines our understanding of the field's complex origins, while consolidating a very masculinized view of a field that, contrary to our common belief, has always been largely inhabited by women researchers.

In order to recover historical female figures in the history of communication research, we implemented a methodology articulated on an archival and hermeneutic analysis. Specifically, we focus on the figure of Herta Herzog (1910–2010), an Austrian researcher who emigrated to the USA and worked at the Bureau from 1937 to 1943, where she published the first proposal of the theory of uses and gratifications in her article "On borrowed experience" (OBE) (1941). To reconstruct her figure, we studied six gray literature archival manuscripts related to Herta Herzog's article "On borrowed experience" (OBE). The manuscripts, dating from the late 1930s and early 1940s, are preserved in the archives of Columbia University. Through a critical-hermeneutic analysis of these archival materials we (1) explore the intellectual and creative process behind Herta Herzog's work; (2) hermeneutically analyze the critical and psychoanalytic components of OBE; (3) help to complexify the foundational narratives in the historiography of our field by bridging the gap between critical and administrative perspectives.

In conclusion, this approach allows us to readdress our historiography, by focusing on the prolific collaborative networks that helped shape early communication research. Definitely, including women in the stories we tell about communication research is not only beneficial for the history of women, but, furthermore, it is also a means for constructing a more complex, more trustworthy, and eclectic history of our field.

GSC06 Feminisms, diversity and underexplored invisibilities

PP 0500 Postfeminist learning: How affect plays a role in the understanding of representations of sexuality in postfeminist television series

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This paper explores the notion of affect and affect theory (Jaggar, 1989; De Sousa, 2011; Ahmed, 2004; Sedgwick, 2003) in relation to the learnings out of popular media texts, in particular the understanding of representations of sexualities in postfeminist television series, like for example Sex and The City, Girls, Fleabag, Insecure and And Just Like That. In recent years, the landscape of television entertainment has witnessed a proliferation of narratives and characters that reflect postfeminist ideals, thereby offering viewers a lens through which to examine shifting paradigms of gender and sexualities. Drawing upon interdisciplinary scholarship in gender studies, media studies, and affect theory, this study embarks on an study of the emotional and visceral responses evoked by these representations, ultimately aiming to uncover the nuanced ways in which affect shapes and informs the audience's understanding of postfeminist representations on sexualities. Central is the recognition that postfeminism has engendered a complex terrain for the negotiation of sexual identities and desires. Within this contemporary mediated representations of postfeminisms in popular culture affective experiences emerge as crucial conduits through which viewers engage with, interpret, and critique the portrayals of sexualities and it's intersections. Furthermore, it examines the extent to which affective responses may reinforce or challenge prevailing postfeminist narratives, shedding light on the potential consequences for viewers' personal beliefs and cultural attitudes. This study want to contribute to ongoing dialogues surrounding the intersections of feminism, media, and affect theory. By delving into the affective dimensions of postfeminist learning, it provides a deeper understanding of the ways in which emotional responses mediate the interpretation of sexual representations in contemporary television. Ultimately, this paper aims to foster critical discussions within academia encouraging a nuanced and reflexive engagement with the evolving terrain of postfeminist media culture and its implications for the learnings of gender and sexuality through media.

GSC07 LGBTQI+ representations: Challenges, opportunities and acceptance

PP 0501 Reporting on the rainbow community: Challenges and opportunities for LGBTI inclusive news coverage

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During the presentation, I will give an overview of my PhD research on the challenges and opportunities for inclusive journalistic coverage of LGBTI topics. The thesis focuses on the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, where most legal rights for LGBTI people have been obtained and where overt homophobia is not common in news media. The research is made up of four studies that investigate the news coverage through (a) a quantitative content analysis and a framing analysis of 1.570 articles published in 2021, (b) a critical discourse analysis of articles published after a presumed homophobic murder in 2021, (c) a thematic analysis of anti-LGBTI user comments on *PAL NWS*, a far-right alternative news medium, and (d) interviews with journalists about the production of LGBTI-related news stories. Theoretically, this research engages with concepts such as representation, the politics of voice (Couldry, 2010) and valuable journalism (Costera Meijer, 2022).

The findings show that the mainstream news coverage is generally inclusive, and that journalists aim to increase LGBTI acceptance, yet there is ample room for improvement. The qualitative studies showed that the Flemish often (re)produces homonationalist narratives and that it is susceptible to moral panics such as 'woke ideology'. These moral panics are pushed and magnified by far-right alternative news media, which function as a potential breeding ground for LGBTI-phobic ideas. The quantitative research shows that gay men remain the dominant voice for the broader LGBTI community. Journalists indicate more pitfalls for inclusive coverage as they are unsure which terminology to use or how to deal with deliberate LGBTI-phobic provocations from the far right. However, they also share many good practices such as the inclusion of LGBTI experiences in news stories unrelated to LGBTI topics, ties with LGBTI organisations, and newsroom guidelines for LGBTI-related terms.

Costera Meijer, I. (2022). What is Valuable Journalism? Three key experiences and their challenges for journalism scholars and practitioners. *Digital Journalism, 10*(2), 230–252. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1919537.

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GSC07 LGBTQI+ representations: Challenges, opportunities and acceptance

PP 0502 20,000 Species of Bees: Commercial cinema as a tool for educating an LGBTQIA+ gaze

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Trans children have been notoriously absent in many academic disciplines studying children and youth, including communication and media studies, thus excluding and ignoring the experiences of trans boys and girls (de Jesús 2016; Monaghan 2016). Additionally, in portrayals of trans children the pathological perspective often prevails, presenting transgenderism as a disorder or stating that there is no such thing as a trans child and, if there was, this is a result of "social contagion" (Missé 2018; Parra 2021).

While recent research has shown that children and youth are perfectly capable of expressing their own gender (Platero et al. 2022), in fiction and cinema transness in children is often problematized, imposing an adultist view on children's experiences. In fact, most of the commercial cinema and popular culture products focussing on trans children has been produced by adults and for adults (Richardson & Smith, 2023).

In this paper we focus on the potential of the movie *20.000 Species of Bees* (Urresola, 2023) as a tool for educating the LGBTQIA+ gaze from a queer epistemology perspective (Trujillo, 2022). The film portrays a family where both daughter and mother undergo an important identity crisis: the child as a transgender girl who experiences an awakening process while lacking support; the mother as an artist who gave up her career to take care of her three children and wants to get her life back as a sculpturer. Both pose important challenges to gender and sexual norms in which the traditional society is rooted: the child's dad denies her identity as a girl, and the mother's deceased father was a famous artist who never believed in her career or talent. Under their fathers' shadows, both mother and daughter struggle to find a way to pursue their path towards finding their own identity.

After analysing the themes and narrative resources used in *20.000 Species of Bees*, we argue that the film breaks with the conventional structure of mediated trans* identities as problematic, and allows for a new perspective on trans children and youth through the pedagogical use of media, particularly commercial cinema.

GSC07 LGBTQI+ representations: Challenges, opportunities and acceptance

PP 0503 Who relates to whom and according to which rationale? Visibility and Advocacy in the Ugandan LGBT+ Twittersphere

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This presentation focuses on Uganda, a country infamous for its state-sanctioned homophobia. This international attention, including funding, has contributed to a steady increase of LGBT+ organizations in the country. Research on the Ugandan LGBT+ community has focused on the historical roots of discrimination, contemporary triggers, and legal analysis of anti-homosexuality bills, as well as studies of the role of traditional media in enabling and sustaining state-sanctioned homophobia. The agency of the LGBT+ community itself is a neglected area. Therefore, zoom in on LGBT+ activist organizations themselves and their use of more self-controlled social media platforms on which they are freer to self-represent and voice their concerns. In particular, we are interested in their connections with each other, given the growing number of organizations. Our aim is to understand the organization ecology by studying what activists and organizations are more central and more peripheral in the Ugandan LGBT+ Twittersphere. We focus on Twitter because it is the community's preferred social media platform. By mapping with whom Ugandan LGBT+ organizations relate, we can understand who/what is deemed important/ listened to/ poke-worthy, how they negotiate themselves in relation to the larger LGBT+ community and how they understand the LGBT+ struggle in Uganda.

Following an analytical framework around rationalities of mediated participation, we have studied with whom Ugandan LGBT+ organizations relate through first mapping retweets and @mentions. The network maps reveal a dividing line between more well-funded and internationally connected organizations and younger, more peripheral organizations. Complementing these maps with qualitative data (reading of Twitter feeds and interviews), we conclude that access to funds and negotiating visibility are rationales behind the network structure. The findings reveals an interesting use of Twitter, both as an instrument for advocacy work and as a means for organizations to express and negotiate themselves as either part of a larger international LGBT+ community, or to be seen and negotiate a place in an expanding Ugandan LGBT+ organization ecology. The network maps provide insight into what accounts are central and reveal a dividing line between more well-funded and internationally connected organizations and younger, more peripheral ones. Hence, the affordance of the platform differs. For centrally

located organizations, they used Twitter to link and relate to a global community, to funders, and to advocate for LGBT+ rights by alerting international allies and domestic power brokers. Newer and more peripheral organizations used Twitter to make themselves locally visible to more centrally located, well-connected and well-funded ones. Furthermore, Twitter is also used to boost and mobilize the community through positive news, reports, and issues of the day.

GSC07 LGBTQI+ representations: Challenges, opportunities and acceptance

PP 0504 Celebrification of transgender sportswomen through critical media coverage: First step towards public acceptance in Visegrád Group countries

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This study presents how the media personalization of successful transgender sportswomen in Visegrád Group (V4) countries contributes to building their celebrity status, no matter the tonality of coverage. As previous research uncovered, transgender athletes can become celebrities, and their adversity can even elevate their celebrity status (Thorpe et al., 2023; Wiliams, 2022). Nonetheless, the discussion in the public sphere is polarized and, in some cases, leads to the negative perception of transgender athletes, especially those succeeding in the female category; hence, the media play an essential role in their acceptance or rejection (Love, 2019). Still, the media presentation of athletes' stories brings them to the spotlight and contributes to increasing acquaintance, which has already been demonstrated by the gradual acceptance of female or LGB athletes (Knott-Fayle et al., 2023; Messner, 2010).

By adopting the qualitative framing method, this research examines how transgender sportswomen have been covered by online versions of the most read sports media in V4, composed of Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, in 2023. The aforementioned countries have been selected due to the previously documented illiberal backlash in those post-communist countries that, amongst others, broadly touch the implementation of LGBTQ+ rights (Guasti & Bustikova, 2023).

The results show that the "fairness versus inclusion" debate is the key topic of V4 sports media, which partially confirmed the findings of research aimed at Western media (e.g., Love, 2019). Conversely, media intention was evident, while "fairness" was prevailingly stressed over "inclusion". The analyzed outlets commonly presented the topic through human-interest stories of individual cases or opinion interviews while mentioning and referring to the potentially "unfairly winning" individuals such as swimmer Lia Thomas or cyclist Austin Killips. We argue that this celebrification and identity construction of transgender sportswomen through media, even though prevalently negative, may paradoxically lead towards the more complex perception of transgender participation in sports while following the recorded path towards acceptance of female and LGB athletes in the past.

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GSC07 LGBTQI+ representations: Challenges, opportunities and acceptance

PP 0505 Understanding chilling effects in digital spaces– A study of Ugandan LGBT+ advocacy in the wake of the draconian 2023 Anti-homosexuality Act

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In May 2023, the Ugandan government passed one of the world's harshest Anti-homosexuality Act 2023 (AHA 2023). The vagueness of the offenses, combined with the severe punishment if convicted[1], creates a high level of uncertainty amongst activists, which is likely to have a chilling effect on activism, similar to that reported during the attempts to pass the predecessor- the 2009 Anti-Homosexuality Bill. A chilling effect exists when an entity, individual or legal entity, is deterred by fear of legal punishment, or other negative consequence and "engages in

self-censorship, that is, censors themselves and does not speak or engage in some activity" (Penny 2023: 1454). Against the backdrop of the AHA 2023, which directly targets LGBT+ activist and their rights advocacy; this paper seeks to explore if the AHA 2023, had a chilling effect on Ugandan LGBT+ activism in their key online social platform (OSP), Twitter. By comparing Twitter data sets from 2002 and 2023, as well as analyzing a post-AHA corpus consisting of 611 tweets qualitatively, the AHA 2023 appears to have produced a chilling effect on the content level, but not on the activity level. That is, the AHA 2023 did not stop Ugandan LGBT+ actors' digital activism but appears to have impacted the content in some critical ways. After the passing of the AHA, Ugandan LGBT+ activists' self-penned demands for equal human rights, practically seizes. Rights demands did however not disappear from the Uganda LGBT+ Twittersphere but were primarily promoted and kept alive by international development as well as Western bilateral partners as well as human rights allies. The long-term impact of the discursive shift in Ugandan LGBT+ activism is still unfolding, and it is arguably too early to definitely identify the impact of the aforementioned troublesome chilling effects on content. The Ugandan case can however serve as a critical case study for understanding the chilling effects of introducing draconian legal tools to silence certain types of human rights advocacy. Given the indication of chilling effects on the content level, and with several countries being in the process of exploring similar bills, more research is urgently needed to deepen our understanding of the chilling effects of legal reforms copying the Ugandan AHA. Furthermore, this study also highlighted the need for more research on the methodological aspects of capturing the scope, ephemeral nature, facets, and duration of chilling effects.

[1] The penalty for individuals found guilty of the offense of promoting and abetting homosexuality is liable to imprisonment for a period not exceeding twenty years. Legal entities, which includes LGBT+ organizations found guilty, risks prohibitive fines and their license to operate. The Ugandan NGO bureau's arbitrary closure of the largest LGBTQ+ rights organizations, SMUG in August of 2022, on flimsy grounds makes the threat of closure highly credible.

GSC08 Digital discourses and femininities: Influencers, vloggers and identities

PP 0613 Becoming digital housewife: Chinese breastfeeding mothers' discourse construction of digital motherhood on Xiaohongshu

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Literature review

Digital motherhood and social media empowerment

Though somewhat divergent, current studies have dealt much with the empowerment of social media in the digital practice of breastfeeding mothers. The construction of digital motherhood is always affected or shaped in some way by external and institutional discourses.

Motherhood discourse and digital housewife

Current studies concerning digital labor in China, tend to regard users as weaklings who are either willing to be exploited or pretend to resist, but fail in elaborating the complicated relationship between exploitation and agency. To this end, we introduce digital housewife to conceptualize breastfeeding mothers' digital practice, which is a form of both affective and material labor embedded in a continuous game between agency and exploitation. Therefore, three questions guided our analysis:

RQ1: What typical motherhood discourse have breastfeeding mothers constructed on social media?

RQ2: How do other dominant discourse such as consumerism discourse on social media intervenes in the construction of motherhood discourse?

RQ3: Whether social media empower\pseudo-empower breastfeeding mothers?

Methodology

Data Collection

First, we restricted our search to May through June 2023, and we used "母乳喂养" or "哺乳" or "母乳" or "奶粉" as keywords and searched by relevance. After removing low-quality and duplicate samples, we finally selected 325 blogs for analysis.

Reflexive thematic analysis

For RQ1, we use qualitative reflexive thematic analysis to explore what kind of individual motherhood discourses are constructed. Specifically, all three members of this study first analyze data independently and then come together to discuss coding and theme development. Each researcher first coded a portion of the collected data independently, and then three researchers discussed the results until our findings could account for all samples.

Discourse analysis following RDT

Relational dialectics theory (RDT) emphasizes that meaning-making is a process that derives from the interplay or power struggle between centripetal and centrifugal discourses. For RQ2&3, this study uses discourse analysis to explore how the competition between discourses influences the meaning-making of motherhood.

Conclusion and discussion

We mainly identified five hybrid motherhood discourses, in which we found that some of the originally dominant discourses completed the incorporation of individualized motherhood discourses through partial compromises, such as the consumerism discourse and the medical discourse. Specifically, the consumerism discourse transformed breastfeeding mothers' personal emotional experience into a practical input-output process centering on economic rationality. Their personal breastfeeding experience also becomes a commodity that can be explicitly priced. Breastfeeding mothers usually consider their purchases and use of the platform to make money as a crucial approach to show their subjectivity and female value, so most of them are willing to take some radical risks, such as posting photos or videos that are suspected of being pornographic, inserting commercialized advertisements nimbly into posts sharing their breastfeeding experience, or advocating for content that contradicts women's physiological common sense even if this triggers a flood of offensive comments.

(Due to word limit, references are omitted)

GSC08 Digital discourses and femininities: Influencers, vloggers and identities

PP 0614 Influencing as everyday feminism: Vlogging discourses of a Chinese rural migrant influencer

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Amid Xi Jinping tightening grip on power, the momentum of China's feminist movements has suffered a downfall in recent years. This does not suggest that feminists and women have given up their struggles. Instead, they have intently employed various creative means to engage gender politics within the limited degree of freedom permitted within the repressive party-state. Yet, much of existing literature has largely focused on feminist claims voiced out by such institutions or elite groups as non-governmental organisations and well-educated middle-classes, with limited attention being paid to marginalised women's suffering of and resistance to such gender injustices.

In the Chinese context, feminist struggles often take the shape of discursive activism within the everyday digital sphere, considering the limited space for street protests or alternative patterns of civic engagement under the party-state rule. This is also the case for marginalised women, who possess limited resources to negotiate their agendas with the sociopolitical establishment, rendering it one of the few channels that remains available to them. In this study, we use Huiling Wang (*Lingling, Peter and Four Cats* as her nickname), a Chinese vlogger and social media influencer, who self-identifies as a rural-urban migrant, as a case study of discursive activism to shed light on how feminist dissent from the marginalised, female rural migrants plays out across popular platforms.

Applying a multimodal critical discourse analysis, this research analyses the tactics of resistance adopted in the videos Lingling produces and distributes on a Chinese social media platform Weibo. By examining the discourses and the underlying ideologies articulated in those visual expressions, our analysis reveals that such discursive resistance entails three interlocked dimensions, characterised by its discursive and affective features, and the role that it fulfils in forming new ethical subjects. At a discursive level, Lingling projects her voices by appropriating argumentation strategies to challenge entrenched patriarchal gender norms in China, marking the feminist potential of her practices. At an affective level, the feminist voices are projected through colloquial or sometimes even vulgar languages to prime followers' affective responses, amplifying their spreadability in the digital sphere. Together with visual representation of the self as a woman from the margin, the affective-discursive practice feeds into her rationalisation of feminist arguments, which is typically accomplished by articulating her personalised observations and experiences that do not always appear in mainstream debates. Albeit with limits, this underscores an emphasis on the subjective change of female rural migrants as a marginalised group, making her discursive resistance distinctive within the broader spectrum of grassroots feminist activism, where the actual experiences and voices from the margin are consistently underrepresented. In this way, Lingling turns herself into a key node within the networks of marginalised women amongst whom she represents on Chinese social media platforms. The outcomes of the research make a meaningful extension to existing Chinese platform studies by offering a glimpse of feminist voices and practices from marginalised women.

GSC08 Digital discourses and femininities: Influencers, vloggers and identities

PP 0615 Women-life-freedom and Iranian celebrities: A study on hate speech on Instagram

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The mysterious death of a 22-year-old girl in Iran during custody by the morality police caused a women's movement with the slogan of Women-Life-Freedom. The movement became widespread with the help of social media such as Instagram and Twitter. #Mahsa_Amini became viral for days on social media platforms, and several celebrities in Iran used their power to raise awareness. Iranian celebrities who follow Islamic norms and codes by government's force in their profession and even in their private lives have broken their silence and become one with people in the street.

This movement revealed the neo-patriarchal ideology in the heart of Iranian society as many of the movement's supporter celebrities were criticized and threatened by the government and the wider society for their support. This subtle point became the keystone of this research. We aim to show the different types of hate speech toward Iranian celebrities who are supporters of the Women's Life Freedom movement on social media inside and outside the country.

Hate speech and civil society in Iran

Hate speech and online harassment on social networking, especially Instagram is a crucial subject as, across the world, this harassment mainly targets females. The case of Iran showed that the patriarchal belief of the society opened its way to modern life and individuals, specifically, females were not only targeted and threatened by the state authorities but also by anonymous people on online platforms. During the Women-Life-Freedom movement, Iranian celebrities directly targeted the state belief frame by sharing critical chain posts on Instagram about the mysterious death of Mahsa Amini. The National Security Police arrested several of them under the pretext of disturbance of the public mind and several celebrities left the country during the movement. Their action toward this social movement has paradoxical reactions as gaining more respect and positive feedback or receiving messages containing hate speech and harassment.

Research Goals

This research aims to explore the most common forms of hate speech and threats toward Iranian celebrities. It is crucial to reveal how supporters have been threatened by hate speech in the time of this movement from women for women. Research mostly focuses on Twitter rather than Instagram; however, celebrities started their support on Instagram as a first stronghold. Furthermore, the lack of research regarding online harassment and hate speech in Iran keen us to conduct novel research. This is novel research that focuses on celebrities' posts on Instagram during the women's movement and obtains the comparative attitude toward hate speech toward male and female celebrities inside and outside Iran.

Methodology and State of Research

To explore the various forms of harassment directed towards supporters of the Woman-Life-Freedom movement, we employ a qualitative content analysis. Our focus is on eight Iranian celebrities who have actively supported the movement both within and outside of Iran, evenly split according to gender. We classify hate speech into four categories (personal life, professional position, social-cultural concerns, religious attitudes, and sexist, and misogynic comments). Research is ongoing as of now.

GSC08 Digital discourses and femininities: Influencers, vloggers and identities

PP 0616 Femininity, fashion and performative identity on Instagram: Confirming or breaking stereotypes?

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In this paper we present the analysis of 88 Instagram posts of eleven of the most popular fashion influencers among 4th-grade girls from Barcelona, published along 2021. The main objective of the research is to examine if these fashion instagrammers represent new prototypes of femininity that deconstruct existing models, or rather if they perpetuate the same sexist stereotypes that fashion and beauty advertising has traditionally transmitted. To do this, we refer to Erwin Goffman's theory on performative identity (1959) and hyperritualization of femininity (1979), to Paloma Díaz Soloaga regarding feminine stereotypes in fashion, make up and perfume advertisements (2007, 2010 and 2018) and by Rosalind Gill on post-feminism (2003, 2007 and 2016), among other authors. Being it the first time that these authors have been combined in the same research, it connects disciplines as different as gender studies, fashion, advertising and sociology.

The selection of influencers for the sample was the results of a discussion group with 4th-graders (16-year-old girls) in Barcelona. The results of the analysis of 88 posts show that the physical features of the women portrayed are

quite normative: the seductive woman is alive and kicking, as are some post-feminist features such as femininity as a body capital, a trend toward self-sexualization, as well as Goffman's ritualization of subordination or feminine touch. In terms of gender and sexual identity, there is very little diversity. In conclusion, Instagram does not seem to promote new prototypes of femininity. In fact, beyond the woman as an object of desire, two apparently antagonistic stereotypes seem to coexist: that of the modern transgressive woman and that of the family woman, wife and mother (tradwife). From here, several questions arise: what do these two stereotypes say about our society? Is Instagram reflecting the variety of femininities that exist today? How do the analyzed publications influence teenagers, in Barcelona and beyond?

GSC08 Digital discourses and femininities: Influencers, vloggers and identities

PP 0617 False empowerment: a study of short video platform empowering rural, left-behind women in China

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The short video platform as an empowering tool has contributed significantly to the social visibility of rural, left-behind women in China, shifting them from being "invisible women" to a certain extent in reality to "visible women" in the virtual landscape. Based on the theoretical background (Dayan, 2013; Foucault, 2005; Lacan, 1981; Mulvey, 2013; Sartre, 2007) and practical strategy (Adams, 2017; Chang, et al., 2018; Thompson, 1995) of visibility, an attempt is made to decompose visibility into three dimensions, visible initiative, subjectivity and sociality, which constitute the core elements of individual self-presentation. These three come down in one continuous line as the "power" of empowerment (personal power, social power, political power), which are important elements in the construction of individual power. These not only focus on the empowering actions of individual initiative but also alert them about the risk of de-empowerment due to loss of subjectivity.

For this reason, the study was carried out from the perspective of the "visibility-power" relationship, and 130 rural, left-behind female users on the Kuai platform, located in County D of Sichuan Province, were selected as the research objects. 130 user profiles were analyzed, 17 of them were interviewed and 3 were observed on the ground in their rural villages to assess the effectiveness of a short video platform as an empowerment tool for rural, left-behind women in China.

The study found that the empowerment of rural, left-behind women by the short video platform has the following consequences: their income is increasing, but it is precarious; they experience a sense of "centrality" that they have never had before, but it is grounded in the traditional gender order, and this experience is a virtual "centrality" and "marginality" in reality. The rural, left-behind women face an unequal situation between being accepted economically and excluded socially. To summarise, the empowerment of rural, left-behind women through the short video platform can be false or incomplete. The "online micro-society" constructed by them is mainly based on the purpose of subsistence, shaping themselves with the expectations of others in the digital world and reproducing the gender order and structure of the society in reality, which is featured by passivity of initiative, objectivity of subject, and invisibility of visible.

Keywords: rural left-behind women, Chinese short video platform, false empowerment

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GSC09 LGBTQI+ representation: Discursive shifts and navigating visibilities

PP 0707 The Living-dead: Death as a Metaphor for the (de)humanisation of Trans Lives

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This paper discusses the proliferation of death as a metaphor in the lives and rights of trans people, and how it functions as a way of navigating, reinforcing and disrupting social order. Death, and its metaphoric manifestations in threat, loss, and grief, is often weaponized by anti-trans advocates to dehumanise, trivialise and demonise transgender identities and their corporeal experiences – from punchlines in standup comedy routines and television shows where one "identifies as" an animal or an inanimate object to the mediated mourning of the 'loss' of public figures who transition into a different gender. On a more intimate level, death and grieving are also incorporated as affective rituals, often taking place in digital spaces, by the families and partners of trans people – both to make sense, accept, and support their transition or to state their rejection, definitive loss, and subsequent exclusion (Miseo, 2022).

For trans people themselves, death becomes part of shared vernacular and identity. "Dead name" is commonly used to refer to one's pre-transition name, while "deadnaming" itself comes to designate an act of transphobic violence. Death is also the unspoken pre-condition to the "rebirth" experience associated with social and medical gender reassignment procedures, and the grieving of a past-self may become an important coping mechanism to grapple with the sense of discontinuity between pre- and post-transition identities. In these cases, the death metaphor may be empowering while also providing a language and a voice for trans people to elaborate on their experiences with pain and joy.

This paper draws on gender theory, media and transgender studies, to trace how metaphors of death are mediated and positioned in relation to trans lives/rights, and the prescribed norms, values, and relations of a 'gender-critical' social order. At its core, this research is inspired by Judith Butler's (2009) discussions of death and grief, alongside its mournful expression and representation, as inextricably linked to power relations, recognition (of particular worthy, 'liveable' lives), and processes of othering and (de)humanisation. We aim to build on recent literature that highlights the forms and consequences of anti-trans discourses and rhetorical strategies. For example, we ask how death and grievability figure in the pathologisation of transgender identity, dysphoria, and transition-related healthcare (Billard, 2023), and the politicised fearmongering of abjected trans womanhood as an impending and existential threat towards the grievable bodies of cisgender woman (Bassi and LaFleur, 2022). In conjunction with the *actual*, corporeal death of trans lives, such metaphoric narratives are also positioned in an ambivalent relationship with the imaginative possibilities of the death-metaphor (Stewart, 2017).

Implementing a textual analysis of media texts collected from various social media and streaming platforms (TikTok, X, Netflix), this research proposes a framework for an analysis of how metaphors of death lurk into trans lives.The framework is threefold: 1) Grievability and dehumanisation in mockery; 2) The exclusionary 'aggrieved' loss of the naturalised body; 3) Intimate experiences of death as a passage for trans people and their close ones.

GSC09 LGBTQI+ representation: Discursive shifts and navigating visibilities

PP 0708 Universal missions/particular demands: Operationalizing public service media responsibilities through LGBTQ+ representation

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Throughout Western Europe, public service media (PSMs) have been at the forefront of mainstream queer media representation in past decades. From introducing openly gay and lesbian couples to prime-time fiction series in the 1990s (Kerrigan & Vanlee, 2022) or addressing sexual and gender difference in children's TV (Van Wichelen & Dhoest, 2023) to barring 'stereotypical' LGBTQ+ portrayals (Daalmans & Ter Horst, 2017) and seizing on digital formats to create room for explicitly queer representations aimed at specific audience segments (Dhaenens et al., 2022): Western European PSMs have and continue to embrace sexual and gender diversity. This openness undoubtedly stems from the public mission PSMs are tasked with. 'Reflecting and including the diversity of the community served' is a key requirement in public service remits (Donders, 2021), and queer media scholarship often understands textual characteristics of LGBTQ+ portrayals as a function of these duties (e.g. Kerrigan & Vanlee, 2022; Franklin, 2014; Edwards, 2009).

This assumption makes obvious sense. If PSMs are formally expected to ensure diversity and inclusivity, including sexual and gender difference in the content they produce and program is evident, as is consciously avoiding homo- and transnegative representational practices (Vanlee, 2019). But apart from demanding diversity and inclusion in general, remits never specify 'diverse representation' or 'inclusive production practices' (Donders, 2021). Indeed, remits rarely explicate the LGBTQ+ community as a mandatory part of 'diversity', nor do they determine what

'inclusive' representations are. Nevertheless, thoughtful portrayals of sexual and gender minorities have become key considerations in Western European PSM programming (Van Wichelen & Dhoest, 2023; Kerrigan, 2020). So if the remits themselves only formulate indeterminate demands, the question is how and why these eventually produce very specific representations of sexual and gender difference.

This paper analyzes how three Western European PSMs – the Dutch NPO, Ireland's RTÉ and the Flemish VRT – translate universal demands for diversity and inclusivity into particular LGBTQ+ representational strategies. Drawing on constructivist institutionalism (D'Arma, 2018) and queer media studies (O'Brien & Kerrigan, 2020), it studies policy documents (e.g. annual reports; performance reviews) and initiatives (e.g. diversity steering committees; outreach activities) from their present remit term to understand how PSMs construct portrayals of sexual and gender specifically as a key operationalization of their public mission. Doing so demonstrates how PSMs operate in a 'densely structured context' (Hay, 2002), compelling them to navigate various, often conflicting, demands on their role and programming – articulated by their remits, political or civil society actors and popular discourse more broadly. Visible and outspoken commitments to 'queer-positive' representational practices allow PSMs to strategically align with prominent developments in popular media criticism – increasingly critical of 'problematic' LGBTQ+ portrayals (Ng, 2021) – and consolidate the participation of LGBTQ+ civil society actors in PSM governance structures (Dhoest, 2015). This is not to say that PSMs are not genuinely committed to bettering their representational practices. But highlighting efforts in this particular area of 'diversity and inclusion' strategically accentuates their overall compliance with hegemonic constructions of PSMs' public mission.

GSC09 LGBTQI+ representation: Discursive shifts and navigating visibilities

PP 0709 Fifty years of reviewing films about homosexuality: Discursive shifts in moral and aesthetic evaluations in Belgian Catholic film periodical Film and Television (1956–2005)

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Throughout the twentieth century, film periodicals played "an important role in […] intermediating between the realm of cinema and the audience's everyday life" (Biltereyst and Van de Vijver, 2020). Besides offering audiences aesthetic evaluations of films, they conveyed to audiences what the films were about and whether or not audiences should go and see the films (Anderson & Grether, 2017). Such symbolic power cannot be underestimated when reviewers discussed films about societal themes deemed morally contested at the time, such as homosexuality. Even though academic and public discourses on homosexuality in Western societies gradually shifted from the 1950s on, the sociocultural and political-legal recognition of LGBTQ people has been a slow, uneven, and difficult process (Beger, 2004; Altman and Symons, 2016). This prompts the question how film magazines evaluated films about homosexuality and to what extent their discourses and evaluations changed throughout the twentieth century.

This paper turns to Belgian's leading Dutch-speaking film periodical *Film and Television* [Film en Televisie], launched in 1956 and published by Belgian's Catholic Film League (CFL). The CFL, established in 1932 and modelled after the American National League of Decency, was part of the Catholic Action movement instigated by the Vatican in the 1920s (Biltereyst, 2007; Schokkaert, 2009). The movement tried to control the production and consumption of cinema, since it found the medium of film a powerful distributor of norms and values (McGregor, 2013; Biltereyst, 2007). With *Film and Television*, the CFL had a monthly magazine in which it shared ratings and reviews that, to use the editor's words, "champion morally unblemished and artistically valuable film production" (Van Liempt, 1956, p. 2). In practice, this amounted to film reviews reflecting on the film's moral and artistic qualities. Importantly, up to 2006, each film was given a morally-pedagogic rating, indicating for which audience the film was considered suitable. Given that *Film and Television* was launched when American and European films increasingly represented homosexuality with less ambiguity (Barrios, 2003; Russo, 1987), and the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) brought along a 'softening' of the Church's stance on homosexuality (Westerfelhaus, 1998), *Film and Television* serves as an apt subject to explore how film critics looked at homosexuality in film.

Concretely, we rely on a historical discourse analysis of film reviews spanning 50 years (1956–2005). The sample consists of reviews of 120 films that feature narratives about same-sex desires and/or homosexuality. We pose the following three questions: (a) Which discourses are used to talk about homosexuality? (b) Which moral and aesthetic evaluations are made of films with homosexuality? (c) To what extent do we discern shifts in the discourses on homosexuality as well as the moral and aesthetic evaluations throughout the magazine's history? We will interpret our data in relation to changes in the magazine's mission and the sociocultural and political-legal history of LGBTQ rights in Belgium.

GSC09 LGBTQI+ representation: Discursive shifts and navigating visibilities

PP 0710 Non-binary depiction in live-action, teen fiction: Close-reading analysis of non-binary characters from Netflix's series

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This paper delves into the depiction of non-binary identities in live-action, teen-oriented TV series. The inclusion of non-binary characters in mainstream streaming television has been on the rise, evidenced by GLAAD's (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) monitoring effort "Where We Are on TV Report," which quantifies and defines non-binary characters in US television (GLAAD, 2022; 2023). Embracing this trend in contemporary Queer Television (Joyrich, 2014), this study seeks to address the following research questions: RQ1) What attributes define the representation of non-binary youth characters tailored for mainstream audiences?; RQ2.1) Do these attributes propagate stereotypes across the analyzed series? If not, RQ2.2) how divergent are the portrayals of non-binary youth characters?

To answer these inquiries, the study conducts an analysis of four non-binary, young characters from Netflix series. Darren from *Heartbreak High* (Hannah Carroll Chapman, 2022-today), Cal from *Sex Education* (Laurie Nunn, 2019–2023), Yael from *Degrassi: Next Class* (Linda Schuyler, 2016–2017), and Syd from *One Day at a Time* (Gloria Calderon Kellett & Mike Royce, 2017–2020). These series originate from Western, English-speaking contexts, yet are produced and narratively situated in four different countries: Australia, United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States, respectively.

The analysis employs close reading techniques (Brummett, 2019). Close reading allows researchers to pay close attention through an attentive and repeated reading of cultural products, focusing on concrete pre-selected traits. LGBTIQ+/Queer Media Studies (Griffin, 2018) frequently utilize close-reading methods to investigate queer characters (e. g., Masanet, Ventura & Ballesté, 2022). Here, the analysis includes six categories: 1) identity, 2) embodiment, 3) attitude, 4) context, 5) social interactions, and 6) character development, following Blanco-Fernández, Villegas-Simón, & Soto-Sanfiel's (forthcoming) framework for non-binary representation analysis, based on their research on *HIT*'s non-binary character: Dan.

Main results show how the series reinforce prior misconceptions regarding non-binary identities. These misconceptions include the framing of non-binary identities as a clash between "new vs. old worlds," frequent misgendering, or the tendency to portray non-binary characters as obligatory activists, among many others. The evaluation of these results allows for novelty interpretation of previous frameworks from Trans Media Studies (Spencer & Capuzza, 2015), including the "trans fact" (Masanet, Ventura & Ballesté, 2022), transnormativity (Johnson, 2016), and the "cis gaze" (Villegas-Simón, Sánchez-Soriano & Ventura, 2023). However, the analysis also identifies significant disparities among the non-binary portrayals in the series. For example: different "coming out" narratives, sexualities, subcultures, or referents, among others. These variations indicate a broader spectrum of depicted non-binary characters and storylines than previously hypothesized. To end with, the paper refines, expands, and exemplifies Blanco-Fernández, Villegas-Simón, & Soto-Sanfiel's (forthcoming) proposed model of non-binary representation analysis. Thereby, the paper consolidates a methodological tool for subsequent analysis, making a significant contribution to the increasing field of Non-binary Media Studies.

GSC09 LGBTQI+ representation: Discursive shifts and navigating visibilities

PP 0711 From activist/influencers to activist–influencers: LGBTQ+ TikTok creators' navigating online visibility

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Online platforms have become fertile grounds for the emergence of prominent figures and trends. As contexts collapse, the negotiation of identity and the assumption of public roles have undergone substantial transformations, giving rise to new challenges (Marwick & boyd, 2011). Social media visibility and discourse surrounding the LGBTQ+ community have surged, concurrently facing scrutiny and attacks from political actors and the public (Abidin & Cover, 2018). The heightened visibility of LGBTQ+ people and issues are tied to both online activism and the rise of popular queer personalities. Online activism, personalised and rooted in a logic of visibility, offers unprecedented opportunities for LGBTQ+ individuals to advocate for rights (Vivienne, 2016). In contrast, microcelebrity culture involves strategic self-presentation for economic gain, blurring the lines between personal and performative identities (Duffy et al., 2021).

This study explores the strategies employed by LGBTQ+ activists and influencers on TikTok as they navigate visibility within platform and political constraints. Using a qualitative content analysis, the study focuses on prominent Hungarian LGBTQ+ TikTok creators' content, complemented by semi-structured interviews with queer influencers.

Purpose sampling ensures a comprehensive understanding, with categories tailored to Hungary's anti-gender context (Political Capital, 2022). The intricate interplay between microcelebrity culture and LGBTQ+ activism is crucial for understanding digital society dynamics. Amid global anti-gender movements and escalating anti-LGBTQ+ sentiments, the study underscores the significance of highly visible LGBTQ+ individuals as advocates.

Findings highlight the evolving platform culture, breaking down traditional boundaries between influencers and activists. The research in Hungary provides insight into the strategies, resilience, and adaptability of LGBTQ+ online activists and influencers. Openly embracing their LGBTQ+ identity in the face of rising anti-gender sentiments, they navigate identity and platform challenges, while meeting diverse audience and commercial expectations. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of online LGBTQ+ advocacy, emphasising the need to view highly visible individuals simultaneously as activists and influencers, recognising the blended nature of their online identities. It underscores the fluidity of roles, showcasing how they negotiate visibility to meet both consumerist and political demands, enriching our understanding of contemporary LGBTQ+ advocacy in the digital era.

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GSC10 Speaking up and talking back through digital feminist interventions

PP 0820 Digital Motherhood: How do Latin American immigrant mothers in Denmark use digital communication for care and connection

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Migrant mothers inhabit a crucial intersection. As migrants, their identities and experiences are shaped by the borders they cross, serving as constant arenas for intercultural dialogue and conflict. As mothers in a time where traditional references, norms and values are being reconfigured (Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020), their role is becoming ever more complex. In this context, digital communication plays an essential role in understanding the diasporic experience, mediating practices of meaning-making, social inclusion and exclusion, community support, and identity negotiation (Alinejad & Ponzanesi, 2020; Leurs & Ponzanesi, 2018).

Through an interview-based study, this paper reflects on the experiences of Latin American mothers in Denmark as they navigate and make sense of the cultural intersection they inhabit, acting upon it through communicative practices. Grounded in feminist care perspectives and relational and intercultural communication, the study provides insights into how this group of individuals experiences parenting, considering the role of digital communication and the unique contexts and representations of living and raising children within diverse cultural backgrounds. It is guided by two key questions: How do migrant Latin American mothers utilize digital communication to negotiate identities and relationships with their families, countries of origin and host contexts? Second, how do they employ digital communication to seek support and foster social networks in Denmark and their countries of origin?

Our communications perspective views everyday interactions as rituals that shape and sustain social relationships. As such, it is integral to care, as it helps identify and address needs, articulate caregiving, and foster connections essential for the sustenance of individuals and the broader community. However, these interactions involve a negotiation of migrant identities with prevailing meanings and practices in the host society. This cultural interplay undeniably affects care practices, (re)configuring mothers' expectations, needs, and parenting possibilities.

Denmark's highly digitalized, gender-equal and child-focused welfare context adds a distinctive dimension to the interweaving of migrant mother identities and practices. By incorporating gender as a category of analysis, we aim to critically situate the migrant-digital experience, wherein gendered norms continue to exert influence. This is especially compelling when exploring the normatively fraught terrain of motherhood. Building on previous research, the study anticipates mothers acting as primary 'digital parents,' which raises deeper inquiries about the reconfiguration or persistence of gender dynamics in the migration-digital nexus. The paper also contributes to discussions

on migrant integration, and social cohesion. It underscores digital communication's role in (transnational) intimacy, diaspora formation, and support mechanisms for Latin American mothers.

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GSC10 Speaking up and talking back through digital feminist interventions

PN 122 Resisting, manifesting, claiming: Web-based interventions of (feminist) women's movements in Turkey

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Websites have evolved into indispensable digital mediums for digital feminist activism, particularly within (feminist) women's movements in Turkey, where online and offline spaces intertwine more and more. Women+ and LGBTI+ activists use the Internet as both a space and a tool for empowering feminist agencies, collective mobilization, and pursuing gender equality-based rights. The (feminist) women's movements in Turkey have established their own digital counter-public spheres through websites on the Internet, cultivating spaces for (self)representation, sharing experiences, producing, archiving, and transmitting feminist knowledge, and disseminating diverse feminist (counter)discourses. Over 100 websites have been thoughtfully selected to represent a wide range of organizations and collectives that are dedicated to feminist-oriented agendas. These websites address a multitude of women's and gender issues, including gender equality, violence against women and LGBTI+ individuals, feminist politics, and much more. The websites vary in format and include NGOs, feminist news websites, collective platforms, blogs, and archive projects. These websites actively challenge patriarchal, misogynistic, anti-feminist, and anti-gender narratives, nurturing a thriving online environment for the circulation of diverse feminist activist demands. Using the critical discourse analysis toolbox, this study focuses on the nuanced role of websites as digital feminist interventions on multiple levels, with particular attention to the "About Us" sections as a unique digital genre. Brimming with discourses of (self)representation and self-identification, these statements, conducted in the different periods between 2018 and 2020, contribute to the (digital) visibility and heterogeneity of political positions within feminist movements. Recalling the use and relevance of the manifesto in feminist politics and activism, the study highlights the (counter) discourses of feminist empowerment and resistance embedded in these texts. It critically questions the attributions, historical contexts, and symbols shaping these manifestary texts, providing a nuanced examination of the power relations challenged and reproduced within the digital landscape. Furthermore, the study delves into the archival role of websites within the context of (feminist) women's movements in Turkey, aiming to conduct an inventory of selected websites. The critical discourse analysis of digital manifestary texts itself aspires to serve a (feminist) archival role while capturing the discursive mapping of the recent history of digital feminist activism in Turkey, focusing on the medium of websites. Building upon these analytical foundations, the discussion shifts its focus to the realm of resistance (counter)discourses, exploring the continuum of the past, present, and future. It investigates how the past is being (re)constructed within these manifestations and interprets the present socio-politically. Finally, the exploration extends towards envisioning feminist utopias, probing into the types of future visions integrated into the evolving narrative of feminist activism.

GSC10 Speaking up and talking back through digital feminist interventions

PN 123 "ur fav #hijabae on the internet": Subject positioning by digital Muslim feminists in Germany

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Muslim women in Germany are adept at using digital platforms and combining them in a variety of ways: They produce podcasts about the relationship life of Muslims, YouTube videos about everyday racism, social media posts on current political debates. In this way, Muslim women take an activist stance in public sphere(s) and carry out educational and awareness-raising work. Melina Borčak, Namikas Schnack, Nour Khelifi and Esra Karakaya are just some of the Muslim feminists who address (activist) allies and curious followers with their transmedial content. They speak to "communities" as well as to broader publics. This presentation deals with such transmedial contributions by Muslim women media creators and addresses two overarching questions that interrogates their forms of self-(re) presentation. Firstly: Against which subject positionings do Muslim women resist? And secondly: Which subject positionings do they invest in? To examine these questions, the presentation draws theoretically on the work of Cultural Studies (e.g. Hall, 1994) and feminist and postcolonial theories of subjectification research and incorporates

media space theories. Self-positionings are understood as subjective practices of appropriation and engagement with subject positionings that can be adopted socially (Bosančić, 2017, 4–6; Spies, 2009, 70–72). They are interrelated with external positionings and structural subject positionings (Walgenbach, 2014, 82). Current studies show that digital media platforms offer new possibilities for intervention. Digital media practices can challenge traditional biopolitical paradigms of space and offer new possibilities for geographical and political self-positionings (Tuzcu, 2016, 150–154).In this presentation, these possibilities are discussed using an interview-based case study. The study deals with one of the most popular Muslim women in Germany, Esra Karakaya. The Berlin-based journalist, producer, presenter and founder and CEO of the online talk show "Karakaya Talks" mainly produces content in German, which she distributes via a wide variety of digital media platforms. As "ur fav #hijabae on the internet" the ethnically Turkish-Korean media creator offers alternative and "community-oriented" journalism for BIPoCs. The analysis applies the grounded theory method and shows that Esra Karakaya uses various media practices to engage with subject positionings in both reflected and reflexive ways (Bosančić, 2017, 5). In her video and audio content in particular, she engages with structural subject positionings and external positionings, which she is experiences both from Muslim allies and by critics. Esra Karakaya resists essentialist and othering classifications and appropriates the collective self-positioning of feminist Muslims and BIPoCs who, like her, shape media spaces. Thus, she constructs her intersectional subject positioning in a unique and creative way, going beyond cohesive and predefinied identity categories of the local German society, and she forms feminist and antiracist alliances in digital spaces. The aim of this study is to empirically show and discuss the emancipatory potential of digital media practices and the limitations imposed by digital media spaces in a post-migrant society.

GSC11 Media and sexual violence, sex work, pornography and reproductive process

PP 0922 Understanding British news media coverage of rape in the context of a high-profile rape case

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How the news media portrays rape has long been the subject of extensive investigations. Research has consistently revealed a recurring tendency to establish familiar patterns over time. An extensive body of literature on news narratives surrounding rape indicates a historical inclination towards misinformed and inaccurate depictions. Consequently, the news media has often been found to perpetuate rape myths and misconceptions, often distorting the dynamics of rape, as well as perpetuating misconceptions about victims-survivors and perpetrators. The most common narrative involves blaming victims-survivors of rape, and creating excuses for perpetrators. The news media has also been criticised for focusing on the events rather than conducting in-depth explorations of rape, neglecting its potential cultural structural reasons and the impact of the rape on the victims-survivors. However, recent research has revealed some consistent findings that while rape myths and misconceptions still appear in the news media, these are more subtle and indirect rather than more obvious and direct compared to previous studies, making them harder to challenge. Similarly, research has also shown that a shift in news coverage of rape from straightforward and single incident reports towards broader discussions, particularly after #MeToo. Nevertheless, a nearly constant aspect of the literature is that not all rape cases are equally newsworthy. Notably, research reveals that certain stories receive more media attention than others, and that 'celebrity rape' has emerged as a common genre due to their celebrity. Athletes' rape and sexual assault cases are particularly noteworthy because a disproportionate number of athletes, particularly footballers, have been accused of sexual offences compared to males in the wider community.

In this respect, this study examines whether, to what extent and in what way the commonly repeated pattern of rape myths and misconceptions persists, with an empirical focus on a high-profile rape case involving a celebrity footballer. The investigation of a high-profile rape case is due to the capacity of such cases to receive extensive media attention, and thereby draw public attention to and raise significant awareness of social issues. This presentation consequently begins with an overview of existing literature on news media representations of rape, and subsequently presents preliminary findings derived from content analysis conducted as part of the empirical phase of the study.

GSC11 Media and sexual violence, sex work, pornography and reproductive process

PP 0923 Creating new imaginaries about the reproductive process: Representations in contemporary Spanish fiction (2013–2023)

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In a society increasingly mediated by screens, works of fiction play a fundamental role in transmitting and legitimizing new social imaginaries. They create narratives with the potential to challenge, resist and reproduce dominant ideologies (Hall, 1982; Williams, 1983; Couldry, 2019). Due to its anthropological relevance in universal culture, motherhood is a constant source of representations, very often stereotyped. The female body, with its capacity for engendering, gestating and nourishing, has tended to be symbolically portrayed, perpetuating the conservative ideology of a binary global imaginary that has related women to home and care (Nash, 2004) or an imaginary of the monstrous and castrating mother (Creed, 1993). However, the last decade has witnessed significant changes, prompting us to question whether factors such as declining birth rates, new family models, advances in assisted human reproduction, new models in the staging of the reproductive body or the changes in cultural industries have contributed to creating new media imaginaries around the reproductive process.

The objective of this communication is to catalog the contemporary Spanish audiovisual fiction works available on video-on-demand platforms that explore plots related to reproductive processes (menstruation, pre-conception, infertility, pregnancy, childbirth, misscarriage, abortions, postpartum, breastfeeding and menopause), taking into account a gender and intersectional perspective (Hooks, 1984; Crenshaw, 1989). The goal is to assess whether the current social, economic, and political context has heightened the visibility of these processes and created spaces for questioning and redefining traditional representations. To achieve this, we will examine the presence of such works on major national servers (Filmin, RTVE Play, Atresplayer, Mitele, Movistar +) and global platforms with Spanish production (Netflix, HBO Max, Prime Video), analyzing their main technical characteristics and themes. The applied method involves a combination of systematic keyword searches on leading VoD platforms and a discourse analysis of work synopses (Greimas, 1973).

The initial hypotheses of the study raise several questions. Firstly, there is a noticeable upward trend in the representation of reproductive processes in national fiction, accompanied by an increased presence of women in creative teams and a greater diversity of genres and formats addressing these issues. This suggests a growing prevalence of discourses that challenge traditional roles in audiovisual content, debunk myths and taboos associated with the reproductive body, and engage with the challenges and difficulties linked to reproductive processes in our society. This marks a departure from conventional symbolic representations often found in romantic comedies or horror genres.

However, preliminary findings from this research indicate that the most realistic works or those shedding light on less represented reproductive processes tend to have smaller budgets and a reduced presence in the commercial circuit, resulting in a lower social impact. Consequently, their potential to transform the contemporary audiovisual landscape regarding reproductive healthcare appears limited.

In conclusion, our observations suggest that it is imperative to implement measures in the audiovisual industries aimed at enhancing the representation of reproductive processes. This is crucial for creating more inclusive and diverse narratives that could have a positive impact on the general audience.

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GSC11 Media and sexual violence, sex work, pornography and reproductive process

PP 0924 Anti/pro porn? Deconstructing the dual legacy of the US Sex Wars: A multimodal critical discourse analysis on pornography in Flemish news media

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Due to the digitisation and changes in media regulations, porn has become an intrinsic part of Western popular culture. Pornographic images have found their way into advertising, films, and music; a process also known as the pornographication of the mainstream (McNair, 1996). The growing amount of pornographic imagery has sparked public debates, with mostly moral panic as a result. Dominant public discourses tend to sensationalise the changing relationship between sex and media, representing porn as 'an incontestable force negatively affecting the lives of its consumers' (Spišák, 2017). These debates find an historical basis in the anti/pro binary of the US Sex Wars, contributing to a transnational understanding of pornography as an inherently negative or positive media text

(Paasonen, 2009). This 'dual legacy' reflects itself in the sheer amount of media effects studies into porn consumption that have been preoccupied with the objectivation of women, the commercialisation of the intimate, and the overall harmfulness of watching porn. By exclusively focusing on causal-effect relationships, these public and academic discourses leave little room for porn consumers' unique intersecting identities, experiences, and contexts.

This paper maps to what extent local discourses in Flanders have inherited the dual legacy of the US Sex Wars, by performing a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) in four Flemish newspapers (N = 223). The MCDA shows how newspapers have adopted many aspects of the anti/pro binary, by roughly defining porn as an inherently negative or positive media text. Moreover, Flemish discussions on pornography focus on the axis of gender alone, whilst ignoring possible intersectional differences such as age, social class, and ethnicity. Most articles in the sample neglect peoples' unique lived experiences and universalise those of white, heterosexual, and middle-class porn consumers. Therefore, they neglect decades of feminist, queer, and postcolonial critiques that have challenged these binary approaches to gender and sexual identity. By critically mapping these power structures, the current paper contributes to a move towards more critical perspectives in discourses on pornography.

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GSC11 Media and sexual violence, sex work, pornography and reproductive process

PP 0925 Shaping identity in sex work: A comparative study of Italian and Belgian media

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European societies have encountered significant and dramatic challenges from the pandemic period to the present, reflected in heightened demand for information among citizens, linked to the classical concept of 'Need for Orientation' (NFO). Human rights issues (seemingly) unrelated to recent crises may be given lower priority in journalistic agenda-setting, such as the rights of sex workers. This study comparatively analyzes media discourse on sex work in Italy and Belgium since the pandemic, exploring potential narrative differences in European countries with varying legislation on the rights of sex workers. Italy does not recognize sex work as a legitimate profession, while Belgium fully decriminalized it in June 2022. The analysis focuses on 15 Belgian newspaper articles (in Flemish and French) and 15 Italian articles from January 2020 to December 2023. The research considers the impact of the economic crisis and changes in relational dynamics due to the lockdown, which, according to scientific literature, contributed to increased user engagement on sex industry platforms and a narrative shift in media storytelling. The thirty selected articles underwent analysis through a combined quantitative content analysis method and CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis). The first approach provided an introductory overview of the general article theme, categorizing it (e.g., crime, interview with a sex worker, easy money, etc.). Additionally, a content analysis of the attached image was conducted to observe the article from its significant visual component. Hence, Critical Discourse Analysis was chosen as the method to examine how the topic is presented in a social context. In the case of newspaper articles, it aligns with the social theory of power, with reference to Foucault, aiding in understanding the formation of sex worker identities in the two countries that were analyzed. Given that power creates the subject by conferring identity, it becomes a condition for social visibility and audibility. Preliminary findings reveal common traits in the portrayal of sex worker identity in newspaper articles across the two countries, notably the emphasis on crime, reflected in the high number of articles, and the inclusion of questions about personal relationships in worker interviews. Significant differences emerge, particularly when considering additional identity indicators like nationality or age. The Italian narrative is marked by a higher prevalence of stereotypes and almost negligible attention to the actual living conditions of sex workers, a contrast to the situation in Belgium. The comparison of media narratives between two European countries is a significant reflection point concerning human rights attention during times of social crisis. Italy, in its policies, appears less attentive to the rights of minority populations, including LGBTQIA+ individuals, women, and migrants. Sex workers not only frequently belong to these groups but also remain a stigmatized category, and the media narrative appears to align with the limited institutional attention. Conversely, in Belgium, a country more attentive to the civil rights of minorities, the media narrative is less stereotypical, offering a more complex identity to sex workers.

GSC11 Media and sexual violence, sex work, pornography and reproductive process

PP 0926 Exploring youth media perspectives: young people using, Experiencing and giving meaning to porn. An ethnographic research in the Barcelona area

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This article focuses on the outcomes of the project 'TRANSGELIT' on young people learning about gender and sexualities through media and, in this specific case, through porn. The project proposes an ethnographic approach that follows the precepts of short-term ethnography (Pink & Morgan, 2013). This approach is appropriate for creating contexts in which researchers can go deeper into the research interests in a short period of time. This research followed five steps: a) Consent management; b) Participative and reflection workshops about gender and sexualities and about media uses, practices and perceptions; c) Co-viewing workshops to debate and reflect about specific media representations of gender and sexualities; d) Creative workshops for creating audiovisual content in which young people could explore specific topics about sexualities and gender that interested them; e) In-depth interviews to go deeper into the adolescents' discourses and understandings about the research topics.

Four educational centers from Barcelona participated in the project: two high schools, a group of university students and a non-formal education center which serves socially vulnerable adolescents.

During the fieldwork, the team observed porn was one of the main resources to learn about sex. Results indicate that porn was consumed for several purposes beyond entertainment and pleasure: to learn about sexual practices and on how to perform them and also to find references on diverse bodies and sexual experiences. However, when young people compared their own embodied sexual experiences with those represented in mainstream porn, some female participants argued that mainstream porn broke their expectations since it was perceived as "unnatural" or "not real" and cannot be trusted. Girls more often referred to mainstream porn as generating distrust, disappointment or even adding pressure to what it is expected to be doing in sexual relations (regarding poses or body appearance). Female participants also tend to identify mainstream porn with the male and heteronormative gaze, and explained that these visuals were distant from their own desires and sexual imageries. Male participants rely more on porn to inform themselves, starting to watch it at early ages, during school. Various female interviewees express having been introduced to porn in school after their male classmates publicly displayed a porn video. Some girls argue that also their male partners suggested they watch porn in order to learn and fulfill their desires and expectations.

On the other hand, porn can also be considered an useful tool for the creation of new sexual and gender dissident visual imageries (e.g., an interviewee explained he used porn to watch trans bodies in a sexual stage with the aim of learning and having satisfying sex with his trans couple). In fact, we found porn could in some cases become an important information resource for young people with non-normative sexual orientations, since they could find in porn other models and references beyond the heteronormative representations. At this point, we detected differences in the interaction and perceptions with porn between those participants who defined themselves as heterosexuals and those who don't conform to normative sexual and gender norms.

GSC12 Digital practices: Masculinities, young people, and (anti-)feminism

PP 1018 Women in the Spanish Twitch sphere: Streamers' perspectives, content, and audience dynamics

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Twitch, initially a gaming-centric streaming platform, remains predominantly male-dominated, perpetuating a live streaming culture that has historically marginalized women (Cullen & Ruberg, 2019), since they are more likely to emphasize patriarchal structures and underly inequalities (Banet-Weiser & Pruchniewska, 2017; Todd & Melancon, 2019). The onset of the pandemic prompted a shift in Twitch's landscape, with the platform diversifying its content offerings beyond gaming, providing viewers with a broader range of categories. However, despite these changes, female streamers remain a minority, and the majority of popular Spanish-language streamers continue to be men.

This research aims to compare Twitch streamers based on their gender, analyze their audience volume, and gain insights into the perspectives of female streamers regarding their activities on the platform. Data for this study was collected from Twitch over one month in 2023. An ad-hoc capture software, utilizing the API in real-time, extracted data from the Top100 live broadcasts in the Spanish language, identifying over 1 million different streamers. For each broadcast, information such as the number of viewers, ranking position (based on audience volume), and the title and category of the stream were captured, offering a quantitative overview of the situation of women on the platform. In addition, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 Spanish female streamers, varying in follower count and type of content broadcast, to comprehend their discourses regarding their presence on the platform.

Results indicate a significant difference in the number of male and female streamers in the Top100 Spanish-language broadcasts, with women comprising less than 10% of the sample. Female streamers also consistently obtain a significantly lower average number of viewers, with no presence in the top 10 streamers by viewership. While women engage in gaming content, their primary categories are more related to creating conversations with viewers. Examining their perspectives, female streamers highlight the prevalence of violence and aggression against women on the platform, often discussing these issues in the third person, underscoring their perceived fortunate avoidance of such aggressions.

The obtained results contribute to a quantitative understanding of the challenges women face in a male-dominated platform that holds a significant role in digital culture, particularly for young people. Additionally, the research analyzes the discourses women articulate to criticize, but also justify, these inequalities and Twitch's hegemonic culture.

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GSC12 Digital practices: Masculinities, young people, and (anti-)feminism

PP 1019 Dating-Coaches, TradWives and Co. – Women anti-feminist Influencers on TikTok and Instagram

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Social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram can be useful tools for feminist (online) activism or queer community building. However, social media platforms can also be a tool for anti-feminist actors to spread their cis- and heteronormative worldview and propagate a patriarchal societal order.

While previous studies have identified various actors within the so-called 'manosphere', such as Incels or Pick-up-Artists, we still know little about women's involvement in (online) anti-feminism (but see Di Sabato and Hughes 2021; Mattheis 2021). Grounded in digital ethnographic data this qualitative study aims to shed light on the global phenomenon of women anti-feminist influencers on visual social media platforms by developing a typology of women anti-feminist influencers on TikTok and Instagram. Overall, this study is guided by the question of how women anti-feminist influencers engage in anti-feminist meaning-making processes and the dissemination of anti-feminism on visual social media platforms and uses theories of public spheres and practice theory as an analytical lens. By developing a typology of women anti-feminist influencers on TikTok and Instagram this study gives an overview of different anti-feminist actors as well as their narratives and strategies.

The study uncovers that women anti-feminist influencers adopt different roles to disseminate their anti-feminist ideas on gender, femininity, and society. For example, as so-called TradWives, anti-feminist influencers sell anti-feminism as a lifestyle while at the same time concealing their political agenda, anti-feminist dating-coaches and esoteric coaches incorporate anti-feminism in their business models and teach women how to be a #HighValueWomen or frame feminism as a supposed threat to one's mental health, and others act as explicitly political influencers such as anti-feminist political commentators.

The findings point to the unique role that women play as influencers within contemporary (online) anti-feminism beyond the so-called 'manosphere', contributing to our understanding of anti-feminism as an overall societal issue.

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GSC12 Digital practices: Masculinities, young people, and (anti-)feminism

PP 1020 Negotiating gender and intimacy in Italian teenagers' everyday digital practices

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The relationship between digital practices, gender, and intimacy in teenagers' everyday life is gaining growing attention. Existing research has looked at digital media as environments that offer young people agency and spaces where they can construct and perform their identity (boyd 2014) through bricolage practices (Willett 2008) and by experimenting with their own selves, also with regard to gender and intimacy (Livingstone & Mason 2015; Scarcelli 2015; De Ridder 2017; Metcalfe & Llewellyn 2020; Ferreira 2021). Studies have mostly focused on communicative interactions (e.g.,"sexting") in connection to gender and sexual ideologies (Ringrose et al. 2013; Scarcelli 2020); gendered dimensions of representations and self-representations of masculinity and femininity (Marshall et al. 2020; Caldeira 2021); and the use of platforms for self-expression and social support, especially for women and LGBTQ+ people (Tortajada et al. 2021).

The aim of our paper is to analyse how Italian teenagers (aged 16–18) (re)define their understanding of gender and intimacy by engaging with digital media and incorporating it into their daily lives. Our approach adopts a media practice paradigm in order to understand what young people do with and through digital media in the context of the specific situations in which they act (Couldry 2012), examining how teenagers (re)negotiate their gender identities and intimate life in their everyday use of digital media.

Our project puts young people and their experiences at the centre of the research process. We adopt a participatory design approach, which makes use of practical activities and material artefacts to stimulate the generation of knowledge and mutual learning among participants. Specifically, focus group interview guides and activities are co-constructed through preliminary workshops with a group of 10 teenagers, who act as "epistemic partners" (Holmes & Marcus 2012) in devising focus group content and structure that is suitable for use in participatory focus groups with other teenage participants.

Using these activities, we are conducting six focus groups with students aged 16–18 from secondary schools in six cities located in three Italian regions. Focus groups employ mood boards as visual elicitation methods to prompt participant discussion and enable participants to express themselves and reflect about sensitive topics such as sexuality, intimacy, and gender identities (Spawforth-Jones 2021).

The empirical material collected from the focus groups will be analysed using critical discourse analysis (focus group transcripts) and visual content analysis (moodboards). The findings from the focus groups will be further discussed with the preliminary workshop group for validation.

Our results are expected to cover a wide set of digital practices, including the management of teenagers' self-representations on social media, their use and views on dating apps, the exchange of intimate content via mobile phones and/or the Internet, as well as the practices of sharing information regarding gender or sexual issues with specific networked publics.

GSC12 Digital practices: Masculinities, young people, and (anti-)feminism

PP 1021 From grill to gram: Representations of red meat and masculinities by male influencers

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In Western societies, there is a cultural association between masculinities and eating (red) meat. The consumption of red meat is linked with notions such as dominance, power and physical strength, and is not only essential for nourishment but also an important source of protein and therefore, necessary in fostering strength and muscularity. Consequently, the practice of eating red meat is perceived as a vital tool in sculpting the idealized male body, which is muscular, fit and in shape. Because of this, the cultural idea prevails that the consumption of red meat constitutes an essential part of a healthy male diet. The stereotype 'real men eat meat', the image of the idealized male body and the perception of masculinities are perpetuated through different kinds of popular culture, such as social media. While the documentary 'Game Changers' (2018) has sparked academic interest in the emergence of the vegan identity among male athletes and influencers, little attention has been directed towards influencers promoting a meat-centric diet to obtain an idealized male body.

The research endeavours to fill this gap by examining meat-eating men as producers of media representations on social media. We choose to focus on Instagram because of the visual focus inherent in the platform's success and relevance. Next to this, Instagram has drawn less scholarly attention than Twitter and Facebook. Through

a qualitative content analysis of a number of Instagram accounts, we investigate how male influencers communicate on the consumption of meat. Besides, we focus on how they construct and represent their own masculine identity in terms of a fit, healthy and strong body, and the role of eating meat in the process of obtaining this idealized male body. More specifically, we analyse which aspects of masculinity and meat consumption (such as dominance, aggression, and embodiment) emerge. Hereby, the study focuses on meat as a symbolic and practical tool for the construction of masculinities and the idealized male body. Inspired by the coding system of Cohen et al. (2019), we focus on two levels. Firstly, we analyse on the level of image (excluding hashtags and captions) where we focus on the representation of the male body, masculinities and the representation of meat. Secondly, we focus on the level of post themes, which includes the combination of the image, caption and hashtags. On both coding levels, we systematically examine how different aspects of masculinities and meat consumption concur to promote the idealized male body.

The study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the complex relationship between masculinities, eating meat and the male body and how men represent this relationship and themselves on social media. In this way, the research contributes to the knowledge on meat, media and masculinities in the academic fields of food, cultural and gender studies.

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GSC13 Gendered digital spaces: Representations, struggles and experiences

PP 1125 Asla yalnız yürümeyeceksin! (you will never walk alone!) – Experiences and perceptions of feminists with regards to digital platforms to combat gender-based violence under everyday banal authoritarianism in Turkey

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In Turkey, the masculinist hegemony of authoritarian politics can be said to be further fortified by the evident impunity and double standards surrounding violence against women and LGBTIQ+ (Yabancı, 2018). Nowadays digital platforms offer a great potential for broadly disseminating feminist ideas, shaping new modes of discourse about gender and sexism, connecting to different constituencies, and allowing creative modes of protest to emerge against authoritarianism and oppression (Baer, 2016).Digital feminist tactics involve hashtag campaigns, disclosure of sexual harassment or abuse on social media, agenda-setting, consciousness raising, video activism, digital archiving, data activism, etc. (Sener, 2021: 2). Eslen-Ziya (2013: 868) points out the advancing prominence of social media for Turkish women's movement as well, as they participate in debates in social media and social networking groups, generating networks and organizing protests.Hence, especially under rising levels of authoritarianism and oppression, it can also be said that the digital platforms have added a new dimension to the feminist struggle in Turkey.

Despite the highly visible forms of activism and the growing body of research interested in digital feminist activism and the responsive backlash (Baer 2016; Bowles Eagle, 2015; Clark 2016; Akyel, 2014; Shaw 2012), it is argued that there is not a lot of research yet exploring girls' and women's experiences of using digital platforms to challenge misogynistic practices and dialogue and this is also true for activism against gender-based violence (Mendes, Ringrose & Keller, 2019: 2–3). Moreover, lived experiences of authoritarianism and feminist online/ offline activism remains to be an understudied field requiring urgent intellectual attention. This remains to be relevant for Turkey as well, as there is a gap in research literature with regards to the experiences, perceptions and practices of feminist activists or women doing feminist activism online/offline under rising levels of everyday authoritarianism and oppression.

Therefore, the main research question this paper is dealing with is: How does the intensifying everyday authoritarian context shape the experiences of feminist activists, journalists, NGO workers, lawyers utilizing digital media platforms for activism against gender-based violence? Taking into account the academic literature on authoritarianism and digital media, in order to answer these questions,I used the methodology of interviews and carried out 10 semi-structured interviews with feminists from Turkey at the intersection of online/offline dimension, affect, intersectionality, agency and structure. According to the emerging patterns, under increasing authoritarianism, the research finds that feminist activists are affected by (i) political repression, state violence and criminalization, (ii) deteriorating economic situation, (iii) existence of rising levels of misogyny, trolls and disinformation, (iv) algorithmic invisibility, and (v) the digital divide. Despite this, the most important purposes of digital feminist activism and the primary aims of digital platforms under authoritarian conditions remain to be (i) political organization, (ii) justice seeking, (iii) revealing data and (iv) data memorialization and remembrance through digital archives.

GSC13 Gendered digital spaces: Representations, struggles and experiences

PP 1126 Influencing faith: The impact of religious influencers on gender discourse in contemporary societies

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The communication of religion and religious values has been a site of social (re)organization for decades (Knoblauch, 2009). Mediatization has changed religion on various levels (Hjarvard, 2008): Established institutions such as churches and clergymen are no longer the only communicators of faith and religious groups have organized themselves globally through media, refiguring connectivity (Hepp, 2013). Since religious affiliations and adherence to religious values have declined (Müller & Pollack, 2022), *authenticity* has become a key factor in attracting new members (Dawson & Cowan, 2004). Therefore, the voices of modern individuals have become more important in communicating faith. As social media platforms are a place where many ideas can be shared and even niche topics find their audience, *religious influencers* have emerged (e.g. Kühn & Simojoki, 2021). They often convey traditional religious values while presenting themselves as people of today (Mendl et al., 2023). Religious influencers differ in their religious affiliation, the space they give to religiosity in their online presence, and how they apply religion in their everyday lives (Krain et al., 2020). While there are religious influencers who find a balance between religious and non-religious values, there are still those who take a more extreme stance, especially regarding gender. Specifically, I ask *how religious influencers of the latter type address issues of gender, gender identity, and sexuality.*

To answer this question, I conducted a content analysis of 56 blog posts by the US influencer duo *Girl Defined Ministries. Girl Defined* uses common influencer tactics, such as creating parasocial bonds with their audience by encouraging them to do their own biblical research or asking specific questions about their decision-making. They challenge the social order around gender in several ways: 1) They present living according to religious values (or their free interpretation of various Bible verses) as the only right way to live. This includes living according to a 'God-given' purpose for female individuals. 2) They condemn any other or milder forms of religiosity or ways of finding one's gender identity. 3) They evoke shame in the reader for not being able to distinguish between these ways of living. While religion can be an anchor and source of hope for many people in contemporary societies (Papaleontiou-Louca, 2021), there are parallels between this particular case of religious influencers and antifeminist (Bauer, 2023) and right-wing influencers (Lewis, 2018). The use of 'controversial' topics like abortion, feminism, or suicide attracts attention in online spaces and provides a gateway through religion to radicalized messages (ibid.). In a society that strives for diverse and inclusive acceptance of not only equality in men and women but also gender nonconforming individuals and the LGBTQIA+ community, messages that condemn any identity other than 'God-given' can hinder the societal journey towards inclusivity. Especially when they are communicated by 'normal' people living 'normal' lives using 'normal' social media platforms. The content analysis provides insights into rather radical religious influencers, while considering faith as a more difficult narrative to argue with compared to facts or political views.

GSC13 Gendered digital spaces: Representations, struggles and experiences

PP 1127 Between lack of interest, normalisation of gender violence and fear of being cancelled: Anti-feminist and anti-LGBTIQ+ discourses among teenagers in Barcelona

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In recent years, some events related to gender-based and anti-LGBTIQ+ violence have transcended the Spanish media sphere, bringing discussions to numerous public spaces. Since 2017 we have witnessed the rise of the so-called 'fourth wave' of feminism, focused on generating an alternative to the social and economic model that causes the exclusion and exploitation of feminised bodies (Federici, 2017). This fourth wave of feminism cannot be understood without its spreading through social networks and the internet (Cabezas, 2021; Sued et. al., 2022). The movement for sexual and reproductive rights in Argentina and the #MeToo movement have been examples of how feminism has developed a transnational and transmedia strategy that has facilitated 'gender knowledge' (Rothermel, 2020).

Despite this, digital contexts have not only hosted feminist postulates, but also a global reactionary wave against the movement. We are living a moment of 'gender backlash' (Faludi, 1991) that articulates a resistance to feminist advance, understood as a reactionary counter-movement (Banet-Weiser, 2018) against a firmly institutionalised feminism. In the spanish context, as more political power had feminism, a reactionary counter-movement of aggrieved men was forming online, while the far-right party Vox pitched itself to supporters who felt threatened by the increasing of what they called radical feminism (Beatley, 2019).

The aim of this paper is to understand how teenagers from the Metropolitan area of Barcelona are constructing and reproducing anti-feminist and anti-LGTBIQ+ discourses through the media they use in their everyday lives. This research is a result of the 'Transmedia Gender & LGBTI+ Literacy' project. We have adopted an ethnographic approach that follows the precepts of short-term ethnography (Pink & Morgan, 2013), running participative and creative workshops about gender and sexualities in four educational institutions, where teenagers created their own audiovisual content to explore specific topics. We have interacted with 181 young people from 14 to 22 years old with different gender identifications (male, female, non-binary and gender fluid) and conducted 47 semi-structured in-depth individual interviews. Then we used the qualitative software ATLAS.ti to analyse interviews, fieldwork notes and materials created during the workshops around anti-feminist and anti-LGBTIQ+ discourses and the media referents most referenced by them.

Preliminary results pointed out a lack of interest among young boys towards feminist topics expressed through humour and the fear of being 'cancelled'. On the other hand, we detected that a significant number of young people (especially men) felt a lack of interest and indifference towards the feminist and LGBTIQ+ movement and express 'fatigue' when teachers or researchers wanted to discuss these topics. Our research contributes to the academic conversation on anti-feminist and anti-LGBTIQ+ discourses by providing recent data on the type of hate speech that was reproduced in different classrooms of Barcelona and its metropolitan area. Our main contribution was to gather first-hand knowledge of the testimonies and perceptions of young people on gender issues. Our ethnographic approach allowed us to understand how these discourses are reproduced in the classroom and how they potentially shaped young people's understanding of gender violence and the construction of masculinities.

GSC13 Gendered digital spaces: Representations, struggles and experiences

PP 1129 Gendered gaming spaces: Investigating gender-technology relations amongst adult gamers

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In this paper I investigate gaming technology and the role this technology holds for gamers, but rather than taking a technologically-centric approach, I focus on how this technology is articulated, framed and discussed amongst gamers. What does it mean *to claim* to be technologically competent as a gamer – and conversely, what does it mean claim to struggle with such technology? Here technological mastery or expertise is not something displayed through gamers' expert skillset, rather technological expertise serves as a lens to unpack the complex ways in which gender, technology and identity is interconnected.

Firstly, I apply a tooled-up return to previous insights into technology, expertise and gender (Lynn 1987) in which I trace the co-construction of gender and technology by drawing on studies on media technology and gender (Corneliussen 2012, Wajchman 2000), as well as game culture and geek masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Condis 2018). By doing this, I view technological expertise as not primarily a question of technological competence but also a result of power relations *around* operating assumptions of what constitutes technology and technological mastery. That is, technological mastery is contextually produced within a techno-social system (Jenson and de Castell, 2010) where technology, gender and identity intersect in complex ways.

Secondly, I focus on how technology practices and understandings with regards to gaming are performed by actual gamers. In doing so, I highlight how gendered identities and relations are produced or articulated both within and around, as well as a direct result of, the use of gaming technologies. Drawing on Conslavo's concept of *gaming capital* as a way of highlighting how both technological struggles and prowess are discursively boxed in, I investigate the technological gaming practices and how these in turn, informs gamers' gendered identities. In order to theorize and inform this intersection of technological use and gendered identity, I adopt and adapt Dovey's concept of *technicity* as a way of understanding how the privileging of certain technological skills, the ability to adopt and handle technologies, as well as the ways identities and gender are increasingly mediated by technologies and abilities, practices and relations with these technologies.

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HCO01 Covid-19: Media coverage, campaign messages, and health behaviour

PP 0236 Just the right thing to do? Morality in the German media debate around mandatory COVID-19 vaccination

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In the global COVID-19 pandemic, traditional news media has played a pivotal role in disseminating information (Ali et al., 2020). In crisis communication, the moral dimension of media content is crucial, impacting both public health compliance and media outreach (Rosenfeld & Tomiyama, 2022; Solovev & Pröllochs, 2022). Previous research underscores the role of moralization for COVID-19 health responses (Graso et al., 2021), indicating that morality in the media discourse surrounding a COVID-19 vaccination mandate may be central to its acceptance as a public health measure. Considering the prominence of morality in the COVID-19 vaccination debate (Zhang et al., 2023), it prompts inquiry into the role of morality in the media discourse surrounding mandatory vaccination.

Despite investigations on the effectiveness of a COVID-19 vaccination mandate (Karaivanov et al., 2022) and public attitudes towards mandatory vaccination (Graeber et al., 2021), the moralization of the media discourse in the vaccination mandate debate remains to be studied.

To address this gap, we pose the research question:

RQ1: To what extent is the German media coverage of mandatory COVID-19 vaccination characterized by morality?

Research indicates that a significant part of the unvaccinated German population perceived the COVID-19 vaccination debate as predominantly moralistic (Henkel et al., 2023). Furthermore, in Germany, particularly unvaccinated individuals with low vaccination intention relied on information from alternative media, while vaccinated individuals with high vaccination intention primarily relied on traditional media during the pandemic (Schäfer et al., 2023). Considering that perceived morality often exceeds empirical evidence in debates (Atari et al., 2023), the question arises as to what extent German news media may have contributed to the divergent perception of morality in the mandatory vaccination debate:

RQ2: Does the morality in the debate differ among various news media?

Method

We conducted a standardized quantitative content analysis of German news coverage on COVID-19 vaccination mandate across 13 sources, encompassing regional and nationwide news (tabloid and quality press), alternative media, and online offerings of TV channels.

We analyzed N = 1.241 articles reporting on the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination debate in Germany, spanning from April 2021 to June 2022. Intercoder reliability ranged between .73 and .99 for all categories.

Results

(RQ1) The media predominantly reported neutral (84.4 %) about the topic rather than exhibiting moral bias (15.6 %) (M = 1.16, SD = 0.32). A Chi²-test demonstrates a significant association between the level of morality and the centrality of the topic in an article ($\chi^2(3) = 16.84$, $p < .001$, $\phi = .19$), indicating higher morality in articles where the topic is discussed more centrally.

(RQ2) A significant association between morality and the medium exists: $\chi^2(12) = 162.10$, $p < .001$, Cramer V = .35, indicating higher levels of morality in alternative media compared to traditional news media.

Discussion

Our results advance our knowledge of how vaccination mandates are portrayed in news media and examine the moral dimensions of the discourse, with implications for shaping media discourses in future health crises. Further results and implications for future health crises will be discussed during presentation.

HCO01 Covid-19: Media coverage, campaign messages, and health behaviour

PP 0237 Information disorder and data perception during the Covid-19 pandemic in Italy

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The paper presents the findings of a five-year research project that examines the production, perception, and impact of information disorder within the Italian media landscape and its audience. The study focuses specifically on the perception of pandemic-related news and its impact on the Italian public. The paper analyses the issue of information disorder in health and scientific topics, which gained increased attention during the pandemic. Due to the necessity of conveying essential information, news consumption by citizens was characterized by a growing

use of scientific terminology and data. This included topics such as the spread of the SARS-CoV2 virus in Italy and the administration and efficacy of vaccines, which became a matter of extensive and controversial news coverage.

Interpretations and graphical representations, in fact, have also become an important battleground in the field of information disorder, with cases related to mis-information (misreading and/or misinterpretation by users and commentators), mal-information (news items corrects in themselves, taken out of context for propaganda purposes), and finally disinformation (data and representations made up with intention to harm).

The paper discusses the findings of an empirical research conducted within the research project "The Social Effects of Fake News" from 2018 to 2023, with a specific adjustment in 2020 precisely to better understand the dynamics of pandemic-related information disorder. A survey was designed and carried out by conducting 399 face-to-face interviews with a reasoned choice sample, representative of the Italian population in terms of age and gender characteristics, with the aim to analyse the Italian audience's propensity to believe in false news content. Six news items (one true and five false) were selected to describe Covid trends, vaccine efficacy, and the role of physicians, scientists, media, and institutions. The purpose was to determine the probability with which respondents judged them as true or false. The answers were analysed using single-variate and multivariate analyses.

The approach to (fake) news consumption that emerges is one that we have termed "Know-it-all", to highlight how the driving force behind the trust placed in fake content is the belief to be more experienced and knowledgeable than, in particular, institutions, scientists, and mainstream news media. This aspect, among others, highlights the need for news media, and media in general, to use a more comprehensive approach to rebuild a bond of trust with the public, all the more so in context related to science and health where the information disorder can lead to knowledge disorder and, ultimately, to a wrong approach to illnesses, treatments and therapies.

HCO01 Covid-19: Media coverage, campaign messages, and health behaviour

PP 0238 From headlines to hesitancy: Using a linkage approach to examine media effects on COIVD-19 vaccine uptake

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The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of comprehending media effects on vaccine hesitancy, a factor that can significantly influence vaccination rates and, consequently, public health outcomes (e.g., Allington et al., 2021). However, much of the existing research in this domain remains limited, often relying on cross-sectional approaches and focusing solely on media exposure rather than connecting it to specific media content. This study delves into the intricate relationship between media content and both general vaccine hesitancy and hesitancy specific to individual vaccines (i.e., AstraZeneca, BioNTech/Pfizer, Moderna, Sputnik), utilizing a linkage framework (de Vreese et al., 2017). We leverage five waves of data from a publicly available online panel survey (n = 1500), collected between March and October 2021 (Kittel et al., 2021). This survey data is then linked to results from an automated content analysis of vaccine salience and sentiment in approximately 8,000 news articles sourced from seven leading media outlets in Austria, based on respondents' self-reported media usage. Employing Multilevel Models for Change (MMC), we aim to measure the impact of media content on vaccine hesitancy by considering both the salience and sentiment of news coverage about individual vaccines and vaccination more generally. Furthermore, through the generative nature of the models, we can simulate synthetic outcome data, providing insights into the real-world implications of vaccination-related media bias on vaccine hesitancy. By adopting this innovative approach to examine these relationships, we contribute to the literature on media effects within the context of health communication. Our findings hold implications for policy-makers, journalists, health communication practitioners, and scholars interested in comprehending the role of media in shaping public attitudes towards vaccination, both during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

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HCO01 Covid-19: Media coverage, campaign messages, and health behaviour

PP 0239 Threat, self-protection, or prosocial? The effects of message appeals on young adults' COVID-19 protection measures

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Young adults' compliance with COVID-19 protection measures was comparably low in Germany. Presumably, the predominant use of prosocial messages in COVID-19 campaigns has failed to resonate with this age group. In support of this argument, we identified risk perception and self-protection, and not the protection of others, as the most influential factors of compliance among young adults in a formative mixed-method survey study based on the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Health Belief Model (Authors, blinded). This suggests that fear appeals and self-protection messages should be more effective than prosocial messages.

However, this evidence needs to be confirmed, especially since previous research on message appeals in COVID-19 communication yielded mixed results. Some studies found stronger effects for prosocial compared to self-protection messages (e.g., Yang, 2023), others showed no clear advantage for prosocial appeals (e.g., Miyajima & Murakami, 2021). Fear appeals also produced mixed outcomes, like increased threat perception but decreased vaccination intentions (Liu et al., 2022). Therefore, we formulate the following open research question:

RQ1: How do the (a) perceived severity, (b) attitude, and c) intention differ between threat, self-protection, and prosocial messages?

Building on the Health Belief Model, we further hypothesized that threat appeals influence intentions to comply not only directly but indirectly via increased risk perception:

H1: Threat messages influence intentions to comply indirectly via risk perceptions.

We conducted an online experiment with $N = 570$ participants aged 18–29. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: threat, prosocial, or self-protection appeal. The messages were incorporated in a 3-minute information video. After exposure, we assessed perception of COVID-19 severity, attitude, and protective intentions. To address RQ1, ANCOVAs were computed for each dependent using SPSS 29. Furthermore, we applied a serial mediation model with message type (threat vs. no-threat) as the independent variable, using PROCESS (Hayes, 2013; Model 4, 10,000 bootstrap samples) to answer H1. All analyses were controlled for gender, education, age, and prior infection. The results show a significant effect of message appeal on perceived severity ($F(2, 558) = 4.57$, $p < .05$). Specifically, fear appeal messages led to significantly higher perceived severity ($M_{adj} = 2.55$, $SE = 0.07$) compared to prosocial appeals ($M_{adj} = 2.27$, $SE = 0.07$). However, the stimuli did not alter participants' attitudes toward protective measures ($F(2, 558) = 2.64$, $p = .07$) or their protective intentions ($F < 1$, $p = .66$). In the mediation analysis, we found support for H1 (indirect effect: $b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.21$, Lower CI: 0.16, Upper CI: 0.10): Threat appeals led to higher perceived severity ($b = 0.23$, $p < .01$), which, in turn, increased the intention to comply ($b = 0.23$, $p < 0.001$).

Thus, our study confirms the results of our formative study in that emphasizing personal risks may be more influential in promoting compliance among young German adults than prosocial appeals. With this, our findings contribute to evidence-based communication strategies and provide insights into the nuances of messaging during a public health crisis.

HCO01 Covid-19: Media coverage, campaign messages, and health behaviour

PP 0240 Exploring the effects of news consumption, interpersonal communication, and trust in government on health behaviours: A longitudinal study

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Background

A wide adherence to behavioural regulations is crucial for limiting the spread of viruses during pandemics. Factors that can impact adherence to behavioural regulations include, among others, news consumption, interpersonal communication, and trust in government. However, there is scarce literature investigating how these factors influence each other over time. The current study aims to explore the longitudinal relationships between news consumption, interpersonal communication, trust in government, and adherence to behavioural regulations during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Netherlands.

Methods

We used data from a dynamic cohort study conducted by the Corona Behavioural Unit of the National Institute of Public Health and Environment in the Netherlands (RIVM). Data from four waves (May 2020–January 2021), on 6341 respondents, were analysed. A cross-lagged structural equation model was employed, in the programme AMOS 29, including four variables: news consumption frequency (regarding COVID-19), interpersonal communication valence (regarding governmental COVID-19 regulations), trust in government, and adherence to behavioural regulations, all measured in each of the four waves in the model. Given the large sample size, only effects above β >. 10 were considered worth interpretation, at a *p*-value lower than .05.

Results

Preliminary results, focusing on handwashing behaviour, revealed reciprocal effects between interpersonal communication valence and trust in government, throughout all four waves in the model (β between .17 and .31). This means that, among the respondents in our sample, more positive interpersonal communication about the government's COVID-19 regulations led to a higher trust in government, and vice versa. No substantial effects were found between news consumption frequency and the other variables (β < .07), nor between adherence to behavioural regulations and the other variables (β < .03). For the ECREA 2024 conference, we plan to analyse and present the effects on adherence to other behaviours as well, namely COVID-19 testing, social distancing, quarantining, and hygiene regulations.

Discussion

Interpersonal communication valence and trust in government appear to influence each other. Therefore, public campaigns aiming to increase trust in government could focus on or promote positively valenced interpersonal communication among the population. The two-step flow communication theory, suggesting that interpersonal communication mediates the effects of news consumption on (health) behaviour does not seem to apply to handwashing behaviour. However, future research should explore this in the context of other behaviours, as well as investigate whether moderators, such as age, gender, or level of education, can further shed light on these relationships.

HCO02 Health communication about nutrition, substance use, and exercise

PP 0336 The role of communication in the formation of naive beliefs on the consumption of food supplements

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In recent decades, a dominant message has been perpetuated in the collective imagination by the media, marketing, and even scientific circles on the search for long-term sustainable wellbeing, a holistic approach focused on self-care, and preventative health. This has all been augmented by the global pandemic which has deepened the public's vulnerabilities in a drive for self-preservation. In this context, increasingly independent consumers face continuous decisions on their health in a setting of growingly complex health systems, and a market saturated with "miracle" products, at the same time as the population is exposed to health information that is not always accurate (Hong & Kim 2019; Im & Huh, 2017). Of all the categories included in the self-care sector, the most influential has been food supplements (FS) which has taken on a commanding position in the market reaching a market size of €32.6 billion in Europe in 2022 (Euromonitor International, 2023). It remains striking that today's much more sophisticated and empowered consumers still hold as heathy and promoting wellbeing products that may not have said properties and may even be harmful to the very health that they prioritize. What is conceived as potentially beneficial has been proven in many cases to be "health fraud" (FDA, 2019).

Whilst the general thrust of research has been shaped by the categorical need to foster due awareness of these products, given their potential risks (Chang, 2019; Ju *et al.*, 2019), there is a significant pre-existing gap in determining the aspects that come together to form it. To bridge this gap, this study aims to analyze the role of communication in creating and/or reinforcing naive beliefs on FS. These are formed as a reflective aspect of the contradictory relationship between the search for preventative health and the consumption of harmless or potentially harmful products, as FS have been proven to be.

The methodology is based on an original CAWI survey conducted in Spain in 2020 on a sample (n = 1200 interviews) stratified by geographical area into the categories of population size, sex, and age with a confidence level of 95%, 2 sigma, and a sampling error of ±2.89%.

The results show that only 20.6% of those surveyed say they do not give any credence to messages concerning these products. In turn, 75% still trust the false role attributed to these products in helping to cure illnesses; an assertion that, furthermore, is expressly forbidden by European legislation. Nevertheless, 39.7% believe that the government and legislation prevent the inclusion of false claims in marketing messages.

These and other findings bring to light the urgent need for appropriate and accurate information to prevent effects that may have dramatic consequences on public health. The economic interests of a spectacularly growing sector and the media need for its advertising fees will lead to serious problems stemming from a lack of ethics and the lack of compliance with the stipulations of legislation. Likewise, greater effort is required in education to counter shortcomings in health knowledge and the clear existing information deficits.

HCO02 Health communication about nutrition, substance use, and exercise

PP 0337 Responses to (un)healthy advice: Processing and acceptance of health content creators' nutrition misinformation by youth

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Social media users often feel overwhelmed by the sheer amount of available information (Pentina & Tarifdar, 2014). Simultaneously, nutrition misinformation is flourishing on social media (Marocolo et al., 2021). According to dual-process models (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984), especially those who have low levels of involvement might be susceptible to adopt nutrition misbeliefs and change their diet accordingly based on heuristic cues, as they are less able and motivated to process misinformation in a systematic way in order to identify said misinformation.

Such heuristic cues can emerge from different social media personalities, who may disseminate nutritional misinformation: Celebrities, who are famous due to their profession outside of social media (Chiu & Ho, 2023); influencers, 'ordinary people' who built up celebrity status due to their successful self-presentation on social media (Pöyry et al., 2019); and (semi-)professional health content creators, who share their health expertise online (Thompson, 2023), e.g., health journalists. Source credibility theory postulates that acceptance of an endorser's message is dependent on the source's expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990). Source credibility has repeatedly been found to explain persuasive effectiveness of celebrities and influencers (e.g., Chiu & Ho, 2023). Within the nutrition context, all three sources stand out in at least one aspect of source credibility: Celebrities are attractive due to their successful career, influencers are trustworthy due to their 'ordinary people' status, and health journalists hold (self-declared) expertise. Thus, we aimed to research if these social media personalities differ in their ability to convincingly spread nutrition misinformation and what role involvement plays for these effects.

Method

To test our hypotheses, we conducted a survey-experiment (N = 480) among German youth (M_{age} = 19.80, SD_{age} = 1.79) using a 2 (presence vs. absence of nutrition misinformation) × 3 (source, i.e., health journalist vs. celebrity vs. influencer) randomized factorial design. Pretests and manipulation checks indicated overall successful manipulations. All measures, except for adoption of misbeliefs, which were specific to the presented products, were based on established, validated instruments (*Cronbach's* α >.75).

Results

Exposure to misinformation did not lead to adoption of misbeliefs (b = -1.48, SE = 1.34, p = .27) or dietary intentions (b = 0.02, SE = 0.09, p = .86) irrespective of involvement. Messages of health journalists, compared to those of influencers, led to higher misperceptions (i.e., a higher perceived nutritional value of the featured products), regardless if they shared misinformation or not (b = -5.21, SE = 2.18, p = .02). Involvement had no moderating impact on this effect (b = -0.37, SE = 0.21, p = .08). Exploratory analyses revealed that perceived source expertise was highest when the source was a health journalist—irrespective of presenting misinformation—which predicted increased adoption of misbeliefs in comparison with influencers (b = -1.03, SE = 0.48, CI=[-1.97, -0.10]) and celebrities (b = -1.07, SE = 0.47, CI=[-1.97, -0.14]).

In conclusion, adoption of misbeliefs was mainly determined by perceived source expertise, which young people readily attributed to (semi-)professional health content creators, even when they posted misinformation. Thus, our findings imply that young people rely on the expert heuristic when they encounter an unknown health content creator on social media, which entails a risk of falling victim to misinformation by self-declared health experts.

HCO02 Health communication about nutrition, substance use, and exercise

PP 0338 Promoting healthier eating habits: An online experiment examining the effect of nudges and components of the Theory of Planned Behavior on food choices among German university students

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High-risk eating has emerged as a global health challenge, with dietary choices contributing to health problems and lifestyle-related diseases such as type 2 diabetes. Canteens are a common place for individuals to eat away from home and play an important role in shaping people's eating habits. However, the quality and healthfulness of canteen meals vary widely, from nutritious and well-balanced options to those loaded with unhealthy ingredients. This variability poses a challenge in promoting healthier eating habits and addressing the risk factors associated with poor dietary choices. Efforts to improve the nutritional information of canteen meals and raise awareness of healthier food options are crucial to addressing the global issue of high-risk eating.

Strategies such as *nudging* have been introduced to encourage people to make healthier food choices. Thaler and Sunstein's nudging approach involves subtly influencing people's behaviors by making small, strategic changes in the way choices are presented to encourage desired outcomes without mandating specific actions. Similar to menus displayed in canteens and online, nudges can be implemented in both physical and digital spaces (i.e., *digital nudging).* The use of behavioral theories is crucial to examining and understanding the factors that influence meal choice behavior.

Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) describes human behavior based on an individual's intentions. According to TPB, behavioral intentions are influenced by three main factors: (1) *attitudes* toward the behavior, (2) *subjective norms* or social pressures related to the behavior, and (3) *perceived behavioral control* or the individual's belief in their ability to perform the behavior. Ultimately, these factors combine to shape an individual's intention to engage in a particular behavior, which in turn predicts the likelihood that the behavior will actually occur.

Given the limited research on the effectiveness of digital nudges in promoting healthy eating, our study examines the impact of digital nudges in online menus on promoting healthy meal choices (HMC), taking into account the components of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

Therefore, we pose the following research questions:

RQ1: How do a) attitudes, b) subjective norms and c) perceived behavioral control toward healthy eating influence food choices in canteens?

RQ2: How do a) attitudes, b) subjective norms and c) perceived behavioral control toward healthy eating influence the effectiveness of nudges in choosing healthy meal alternatives in canteens?

We conducted a pre-registered online experiment (n = 318) among university students in Germany. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four nudging conditions: a nutrition traffic light, a nutrition table, a combined condition, or a control condition with no nudge. Alongside meal choices, we collected data on TPB constructs and sociodemographics. Participants also provided open-ended responses explaining the reasons for their meal choices. Menus were tailored to vegan, vegetarian, or omnivore diets.

The data collection phase is complete and we look forward to presenting the results at the 2024 ECREA conference.

HCO02 Health communication about nutrition, substance use, and exercise

PP 0339 Introducing a school-based active involvement intervention integrating media to diminish adolescents' smoking and vaping behaviors

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Introduction

In Belgium, smoking onset occurs at 15.1 years, and vaping is on the rise among adolescents. This is concerning as smoking intensifies throughout adolescence, and is a major cause of cancer (WHO, 2021). This project aligns with the conference theme of examining disruptions in health by developing and testing an intervention targeting smoking/vaping among 13-to-15-year-olds, a critical phase for smoking initiation. Additionally, this intervention accounts for the role of media in smoking behaviors. Adolescents are pervasive users of traditional and social media, through which they frequently encounter glamorized portrayals of smoking/vaping (Allem et al., 2022; Barker et al., 2019). Building on the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001) and Theory of Planned Behavior

(Ajzen, 2019), exposure to such content may lead to favorable smoking/vaping attitudes, outcome expectations, inflated normative perceptions, and an increase in these behaviors (Donaldson et al., 2022).

To effectively target these behaviors, some scholars argued that interventions should combine age-appropriate education and youth empowerment. One promising but under-explored approach lies in the theory of active involvement (TAI; Greene, 2013). Interventions grounded in the TAI consist of an analysis and design phase. In the analysis phase, individuals acquire health and media literacy skills as they learn to recognize determinants of smoking (attitudes, expectations, norms) and to examine pro-smoking messages prevalent in series, movies, and social media. In the design phase, adolescents craft their own anti-smoking campaign, enhancing their health literacy through counterarguing and peer discussions.

We are among the first to empirically test an active involvement intervention and to disentangle the long- and short-term effectiveness of it. We hypothesize that participants in the intervention compared to the control group show a decrease in (a) favorable smoking/vaping attitudes, (b) positive outcome expectations, (c) normative perceptions, (d) intention to engage in these behaviors, and (e) smoking/vaping behaviors immediately after the intervention and six months later.

Method

We employed a quasi- experimental pretest/posttest design, randomly assigning participants from secondary schools to the intervention (n = 685) or control group (n = 525). The intervention group undergoes the intervention in the form of school-based curriculum, while the control group receives. Ethically, the control group will receive the intervention post-study. To evaluate the effectiveness, a baseline measurement has been conducted before the intervention (Sept '23) consisting of questions regarding sociodemographic elements (age, gender, SES), smoking cognitions (attitudes, norms, expectations, intention) and behaviors (Greene et al., 2020). Two weeks after the pretest (Oct/Dec '23), the intervention group received an intervention and filled out a posttest survey with the same measures as in the pretest. The control group filled out the same survey. All participants will fill out a survey in April '24 to test the long-term effectiveness.

Results

We are only presenting the intervention protocol in this abstract because we are in the midst of our data collection, but will present the results of our hypotheses at ECREA.

Discussion

The study's significance lies in potentially paving the way for examining active involvement interventions' effectiveness. The findings provide guidance for future interventions addressing media and other health-risk behaviors.

HCO02 Health communication about nutrition, substance use, and exercise

PP 0340 Digitally enhanced fitspiration content on social media: A systematic literature review

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Relevance & Research Questions

Fitspiration content on social media platforms advocates a healthy lifestyle through exercise and healthy eating (Vandenbosch et al., 2022). However, the combination of idealized bodies promoting restrictive eating habits and excessive exercise can have adverse effects on body image (Vandenbosch et al., 2022). Photo modification enhances the discrepancy from offline bodies (Bij de Vaate et al., 2020) and is found to enlarge the negative effects on the exposed individual (Claeys et al., 2023; Kleemans et al., 2023). An example of photo modification is the use of augmented reality (AR) filters that have become available on various social media applications (Isakowitsch, 2023). Considering that social media users are frequently exposed to unattainable beauty ideals (Ward, 2016) and its recurrence in Fitspiration content (Delgado-Rodríguez et al., 2022; Harriger et al., 2023; Tiggemann and Anderberg, 2020; Tiggemann, 2022), understanding the idealized component and its associated effects is essential. An increasing body of literature is investigating various aspects of this new phenomenon including strategies how to mitigate negative effects (Easton et al., 2018; Naderer et al., 2022). However, guidance for technology providers, regulators, educators, and users is still limited because research spreads across various scientific disciplines and a systematic overview of the literature is yet missing. Therefore, the purpose of this literature review is to identify and classify (a) the research that investigates the utilization of enhanced Fitspiration content on social media and (b) the known effects on both individuals applying enhancement techniques and individuals exposed to the enhanced Fitspiration content.

Methodology

In 2015, the first AR filters on social media were introduced, namely Snapchat Lenses. Therefore, the literature review includes articles published between 2015 and 2023 on Web of Science, Scopus, and Dimensions following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Page et al., 2021).

The used search query is: ("Social media" or "smartphone" or "SNS" or "TikTok" or "Instagram" or "Snapchat") and ("Fitspiration" or "Fitspo" or "workout") and ("edit*" or "alter*" or "modif*" or "enhanc*" or "filter" or "augmented reality" or "AR" or "photoshop"). All English articles are analyzed concerning research areas, theoretical models, and empirical findings. Study quality is assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (Hong et al., 2018).

Results

The search query resulted in 5074 potentially relevant articles, including 468 duplicates. Most articles were found in the research areas of health sciences (48%), psychology (31%), communication (14%) and computer sciences (6%). Furthermore, results indicate a growing relevance of this topic, with the number of yearly articles increasing from 176 in 2015 to 1048 last year. The cleaning and coding of the articles are ongoing and will be finished in the summer of 2024.

Implications

This systematic literature review is the first of its kind and will provide a comprehensive understanding of the current research in the emerging field of enhanced Fitspiration content. The overview of existing insights and the identified gaps will be used to inform various stakeholders and further work packages planned in this ongoing research project.

HCO03 Risk perception in health communication

PP 0452 Risk perception and communication of radon gas

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We present the results of a project on risk perception and communication about radon gas in Spain, where there are no previous studies on the construction and social perception of this health threat.

Radon is an odourless, tasteless and colourless radioactive gas, produced naturally by the decay of uranium from soil and rocks. It has been recognized as a human carcinogen (International Agency for Research on Cancer, 1988), being the second most frequent cause of lung cancer for tobacco users and the first cause in non-smokers. Despite its high concentration in several regions of the world, it is an issue that citizens know little about and do not recognize as a health risk (WHO, 2009).

Spain is a country where radon is very present. The mapping of radon potential has established priority action areas which represent 17% of the surface of the Spanish territory (Consejo de Seguridad Nuclear, 2017; García-Talavera San Miguel & López Acevedo, 2019).

The aim of the study is to understand the risk perception of radon and the degree of knowledge of the Spanish population, as well as to identify whether sociodemographic variables and the incidence of radon in their environment affect risk perception. The research method was based on a survey of the Spanish population (N = 1.985), with a nationally representative sample.

Results allow us to confirm that knowledge about radon is low. 70.5% state that exposure to high concentrations can cause lung cancer, but only 43.6% are aware of its natural origin; nor are its characteristics clearly known, as only 42.9% know that it is odorless. Regarding measures to reduce indoor radon levels, only one third indicate appropriate solutions.

The level of concern about the risk associated with radon gas is moderate (4 out of 7), although higher in the most affected regions. However, people are more concerned about the risk of more improbable events than exposure to a naturally occurring gas. Individual risk perception is significantly influenced by gender, knowledge about radon, self-perception of being a concerned person and the likelihood of radon affecting them or people close to them.

Prevention measures taken by the population are very low; 11.0% indicate that they have taken some action regarding this problem. There is also a lack of knowledge about preventive and regulatory measures. However, knowing about radon and taking measures correlates with risk perception and variables such as knowledge about radon.

As regards the information received, traditional and digital media are the most frequent channels. Participants identify the government (24.7%) as the most common source of information. We observed that having received information about radon correlates with risk perception and variables such as age, gender, region and knowledge.

The linear regression model indicates that individual risk perception is constructed based on perceived likelihood of being affected and of affecting family and friends, followed by self-perception of being a concerned person, gender and, with less influence, knowledge about radon and political-legislative actions.

HCO03 Risk perception in health communication

PP 0453 Understanding the public's awareness of antibiotic resistance and the relation with media exposure in the Netherlands

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Background

The successful prevention and treatment of an increasing variety of diseases caused by bacteria, parasites, viruses, and fungi is at risk due to Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). AMR refers to the fact that bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites evolve over time and stop responding to medications. It makes illnesses more difficult to cure and increases the risk of serious illness, death, and disease transmission (World Health Organization, 2024). Antibiotic Resistance (AR) or drug resistance represents a specific case of AMR. It represents one of the biggest threats to global health and leads to longer hospital stays, higher medical expenses, and higher mortality rates (World Health Organization, 2015). An important component of an effective and optimal public health response is enhancing the general public's understanding of the causes and consequences of AR in order to decrease antibiotic misuse (Hawkins et al., 2022). Many studies on AR focus on doctors, pharmacists, and patients (McCullough et al., 2015; Rusic et al., 2021). However, the general public also plays an important role in the combat against this health problem. For example, a major reason for AR appears to be overuse of antibiotics and by asking antibiotic prescriptions for non-indicated antibiotic treatment (Chanvatik et al., 2019; Hawkins et al., 2022).

Purpose

Although previous studies have shown low levels of AR awareness in the population and the inverse relationship between antibiotic use and AR knowledge, it is relatively understudied how and where people obtain information about AR and how this relates to knowledge about and awareness of AR (Chanvatik et al., 2019; Hawkins et al., 2022; McCullough, Parekh, et al., 2015). In other health domains, it has been found that media (newspapers, social media, etc.) play an important role in health information and that awareness can be influenced by the media people consume (Catalán-Matamoros et al., 2019; Scanfeld et al., 2010; Siliquini et al., 2011; van Rijn et al., 2019). Therefore, the study's objective is to investigate the association between news media exposure and knowledge and awareness of AR. These findings can help to develop and evaluate communication strategies targeted to the general public to increase awareness and form a starting point to conduct subsequent content analysis on the media used by the public.

Method

An online survey will be conducted in a representative adult population-based sample (ages between >=18 and 65+). Since the study focuses on a large population, a panel will be used to obtain a representative sample. The questionnaire will consist of three main parts: antibiotic use, knowledge about antibiotics and AR, and information sources and media exposure.

Results & conclusion

Survey development is ongoing and data collection and analysis are scheduled to be completed in April and June 2024 respectively.

HCO03 Risk perception in health communication

PP 0454 The relation between information and vaccine behaviors: A quantitative survey of a stratified non-vaccinated German sample

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Although vaccinations are a medical success story, they are often not taken up by a significant proportion of the population. The skeptical view of vaccination is called "vaccine hesitancy" covering psychological antecedents of vaccination such as attitudes towards their effectiveness and safety ("confidence"), perceiving oneself at risk ("complacency"), weighting the benefits and risks ("calculation"), being motivated by "collective responsibility", or perceiving structural or psychological barriers ("constraints") (Betsch et al., 2018; Cénat et al., 2023).

Among the multitude of factors contributing to vaccine hesitancy are information-related factors (Dubé et al., 2013). Against this background, our study strives for a better understanding of the relationship between information and vaccine behaviors as well as the relationships between the predictors. We supplement research on information seeking (Allington et al., 2021; Schäfer et al., 2021) by examining whether vaccine-related information is purposively avoided (Link, 2022). In addition, trust in several sources stressed as a determinant of vaccine hesitancy (e.g., Dubé et al., 2013; Falcone et al., 2022; Murphy et al., 2021), and functional vaccine literacy (Wang et al., 2018; Zhang

et al., 2023), as one component of health literacy, are considered as predictors of information behaviors, vaccine hesitancy, and intentions. Thus, we postulate that trust and vaccine literacy influence information-seeking and avoidance behaviors, which in turn influences vaccine hesitancy related to individuals' vaccine intentions.

To test the postulated model, we conducted an online survey of a stratified sample of non-vaccinated German residents (N = 1,328; age: M = 46.6, SD = 15.6; 50.4 % female) during the first phase of the COVID-19 vaccination program. We used established measures to capture vaccine hesitancy (Betsch et al., 2018), information behaviors and trust in ten sources (Link et al., 2022; McQueen et al., 2013), and functional vaccine literacy (Wang et al., 2018). For information behaviors and trust, exploratory factor analyses were conducted to explore their underlying structures. We calculated a mean index for information avoidance as the measurement was shown to be one-dimensional. Concerning information seeking, the analysis distinguished between expert sources and traditional sources. Further, trust in social media, one's social surroundings, and media sources were differentiated. The analysis was based on a sequential mediation analysis.

In total, the model explained 69.4 % of the variance in individuals' vaccine intention, between 32.9 % (constraints) and 44.5 % (confidence) of variance in vaccine hesitancy, and between 21.2 % (expert sources) and 26.8 % (traditional media) of the variance in individuals' information behaviors. Confidence, complacency, constraints, and collective responsibility were strongly positive related to vaccine intention. Whereas information behaviors were not directly related to vaccine intention, they were related to vaccine hesitancy. The findings revealed the strongest associations for information avoidance, media trust, trust in social media, and functional vaccine literacy. Information seeking and avoidance were most strongly associated with media trust.

Our findings support the role of information in vaccine behaviors supplementing the current state of research by covering information-seeking and avoidance behaviors and by uncovering the relations between the predictors.

HCO03 Risk perception in health communication

PP 0455 Identifying situational health information seeking patterns for uncertainty management in orthopedic implant patient journeys

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Background

Knee or hip implants are inserted after years of progressive symptoms such as joint pain and immobility (Driban et al., 2020). For patients, these experiences are associated with the recurrent perception of uncertainty (Bolz-Johnson et al., 2020) as they find themselves in complex and unpredictable situations and feel insecure about their state of knowledge. As outlined in Brashers' (2001) Uncertainty Management Theory, medical (e.g. symptoms, treatment options), social (e.g. relationships), and personal (e.g. abilities) uncertainties can occur simultaneously, overlap each other, and occur at different points in the patient journey (PJ) (Stone & Olsen, 2022).

Depending on individuals' appraisal of uncertainty, health information seeking behavior (HISB) serve as a strategy to manage uncertainty (Brashers, 2001). When uncertainty is perceived as negative, information seeking can help to resolve ambiguity (Brashers & Hogan, 2013). When uncertainty is perceived as positive, information seeking can also serve to increase ambiguity by looking for conflicting information. For the success of the uncertainty management (UM), source selection determined by availability, expected outcome, and trustworthiness of sources is a crucial step (Johnson & Meischke, 1993; Link et al., 2022).

As the multidimensional and temporal nature of uncertainty and its consequences for UM strategies are rarely addressed in research (Kuang, 2018), we aim to extend the understanding by mapping uncertainties onto the PJ. Consequently, we ask the following research questions:

RQ1: What uncertainties do orthopedic implant patients experience at which points of their PJ?

RQ2: How do orthopedic implant patients manage these uncertainties using HISB?

Method

19 qualitative semi-structured interviews with patients who received a knee or hip implant within two years prior to the study were conducted in 2022. For analysis, we transcribed the audio-recorded interviews verbatim and analyzed each interview using qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2010) with a combination of inductive and deductive coding.

Results and Discussion

Regarding RQ1, the PJ of orthopedic implant patients could be divided into six phases, from the first symptoms to living with the implant, characterized by different constellations and intensities of physical, psychological, personal/social, and treatment-related uncertainties. For example, treatment-related uncertainties were prevalent throughout

the PJ, psychological uncertainties occurred at the beginning, and social and personal uncertainties appeared at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the PJ.

Regarding RQ2, patients reported frequent use of HISB to manage their uncertainties: Across various types, they described interpersonal sources such as health professionals, other affected patients, and their social network as most relevant. Media sources were occasionally mentioned, e.g. for decision making. Source preferences varied according to the type of uncertainty. For example, in the early phase, patients focused on sources with medical expertise regarding the physical experience of pain. For social and personal uncertainties such as work life, the social environment seemed to be more important.

Our results reveal a high degree of situational dependency of UM strategies over the course of a PJ. These findings should be considered to strengthen patients' UM skills in the spirit of patient-centered care (Epstein & Street, 2007).

HCO03 Risk perception in health communication

PP 0456 Can metaphor improve comprehension and acceptance of Patient Education Materials on immunotherapy?

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Shared understanding between patients and healthcare providers is essential for informed decision-making in medical care (McCabe, 2021; Street Jr et al., 2009). Written patient education materials commonly complement verbal information from healthcare provider – patient conversations and contribute to enhancing patients' comprehension (Dierks et al., 2019; Humphris & Field, 2003). However, existing written materials are often insufficiently readable and understandable (Rooney et al., 2021), which makes them less effective. Written patient information materials should be accurate in content, but also accessible to people with diverse literacy skills. This can be achieved by, for example, avoiding jargon and using clear language and short sentences. Additionally, metaphors may contribute to the understanding when used in patient education materials, as they have the purpose to explain complex concepts in a more easy way. Psycholinguistic studies also suggest that the use of metaphors may influence attitudes and behavioral intentions towards medical-related topics (Krieger et al., 2010; Scherer et al., 2015).

In this study, we assess people's responses to various types of patient education materials to test which format results in optimal (subjective and objective) comprehension, attitudes and behavioral intentions, using the case of immunotherapy, which is a novel treatment for patients with invasive fungal infections. We aim to recruit a sample of 1,095 U.K.-based participants through Prolific Academic, based on power analysis. Participants will first be presented with a scenario about their relative being admitted to the ICU with a severe fungal infection. Next, they are randomly assigned to one of various leaflets in a between-subjects experiment. Leaflets include a standard leaflet, based on evidence-based practices for comprehensive language, and a standard leaflet including metaphors. After reading the leaflet, participants' subjective and objective comprehension, attitudes and intentions to accept immunotherapy for their relative will be assessed. Data will be collected and analyzed during Spring 2024.

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HCO04 Social capital & methodological advances in health communication

PP 0608 Slovenian adult population's response to the "Together for Health" prevention and health promotion program. Reflecting on facilitators and barriers of the program's success through empowerment and capital theories

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Empowerment is an increasingly popular concept in contemporary behaviour and social change discourse in the field of health, sometimes used as a vague goal in itself (Kamin et al, 2022). To achieve empowerment in health, we must address accessibility and allocation of valued resources related to specific problems (Laverack, 2006; Zimmerman, 1999). Finding out what resources individuals need to empower themselves in the field of health and improve their health outcomes is of great importance, but it is not necessarily enough. Resources are not equally distributed among people, and health related interventions can further affect this distribution in a positive or negative way (Kamin and Anker, 2014). Drawing on Bourdieu's (2002[1986]) theory of capital, we demonstrate how certain forms of resources (economic, social, and cultural capital) influence individual empowerment in relation to personal health care, which is related to positive (or sometimes negative) health prevention processes and outcomes.

The study is based on data collected in the project Barriers and facilitators to the Slovenian adult population's response to the "Together for Health" prevention and health promotion program related to noncommunicable chronic health conditions. We will present results of an online panel survey on a representative sample of general population in Slovenia (n =1540, 30–65 years old), which are alligible to participate in "Together for Health" preventive program.

The results of the study reveal at least four important findings: (1) empowerment in the field of health occurs at the intersection of different factors at the micro, mezzo and macro levels; (2) different types of capital (resources) that people have in the field of health should be observed as either facilitators or barriers for health promotion program's success; (3) empowerment is not enough for desirable health processes and outcomes; and (4) public health interventions should better address the resources that (re)produce health inequalities among people.

These insights can significantly enrich the debate on (health-related) resources and their use by health professionals as part of health prevention and promotion programs to meet individual health needs and achieve (positive) empowerment outcomes in different social and health-related settings.

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HCO04 Social capital & methodological advances in health communication

PP 0609 Social support through shared experiences. An exploratory analysis of various manifestations, reasons, and outcomes of implant patients interacting with affected others

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Background

Patients – particularly those with invasive treatment such as patients in need for orthopedic or cochlear implants (CI) – possess diverse support needs. Beyond medical issues, they face challenges related to personal and social life (Brashers et al., 2003). To cope with these challenges, social support can be crucial (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992).

Social support covering informational, tangible, emotional, esteem, and network support from others (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992). Research indicates that connecting with individuals sharing disease experiences can be particularly beneficial (Niederkrotenthaler & Till, 2020). To access social support from other patients, various types of relations may emerge, often within weak ties (Wright et al., 2010). Offline/online self-help groups allow patients to connect with peers in a group-related setting (Chung, 2014; Love et al., 2012). Patients can also network on a direct, bilateral

level (e.g. in the waiting room). In addition, the rise of social media and influencers providing insights into their diseases (Wellman et al., 2022) facilitate indirect person-centered connections.

Since the role of different types of relations (bilateral, group-related, person-centered) for social support have not been considered in health communication research, we derive this exploratory research question:

Which forms of social support are sought and gained comparing the different types of relation?

Method

33 qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2022 with patients who received a knee/hip implant (n = 18), a CI (n = 13) or parents of children who received a CI (n = 2). For analysis, we transcribed and analyzed each interview using qualitative content analysis (Mayring & Fenzl, 2022).

Results and Discussion

Informational and emotional needs were central *motives* to connect with other patients – often compensating for other sources like physicians. Group-related relations were associated with motives such as entertainment and relief by expressing anger. Regular use of self-help groups fostered a sense of belonging, leading to the motive to keep up with group members' lives. Both group-related and bilateral relations were associated with the motives of orientation and providing support.

Regarding the gained forms of support, patients described functional and dysfunctional outcomes. Among *functional outcomes*, all interactions could provide informational and emotional support. Additionally, all types could promote esteem support as patients gained empowerment through role models, encouragement, and comprehensive information. Person-centered relations, including identification with fictional characters, allowed patients to enhance their disease-related self-acceptance. Network support was evident in bilateral and group-related relations, fostering friendships and a sense of purpose through providing support.

The *dysfunctional outcomes* were primarily emotional. In all types, patients felt anxiety and uncertainty when they learned of others' negative experiences. Bilateral and person-centered relations were associated with frustration when patients perceived others as doing better. Group-related connections led to anger when the communication was perceived as unfriendly or too grieving.

Our findings highlight the crucial role of social support from affected others identifying underlying mechanisms such as social comparison (Bennenbroek et al., 2002). The results can be used to derive guidelines for promoting supportive communication in various types of relations.

HCO04 Social capital & methodological advances in health communication

PP 0610 Rethinking stigma assessment: A pre-registered, multi-group study on alternative scales

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Stigmatization, as a social process involving the co-occurrence of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination, is still widespread with negative impact on many groups, such as people with disabilities or mental illnesses. Consequently, the underlying aim of stigma research is to identify ways to overcome stigmatization. In this context, the use of conventional stigma scales that ask participants' level of agreement to negative stereotypes, such as "lazy" or "violent", has been critically examined for its potential to inadvertently reinforce those negative stereotypes and stigma (Ort and Sukalla, 2023). Drawing upon theoretical frameworks related to stereotype activation (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996; Bargh, 1999; Macrae and Bodenhausen, 2000; Greenwald et al., 2002), this study aims to assess whether alternative ways of stigma assessment can effectively measure stigma without contributing to its perpetuation or the fostering of stereotyping. The study's central hypothesis is grounded in the assumption that while traditional scales may activate and even heighten stigma and stereotypes, alternative assessments using positive phrasing or bipolar differentials as opposed to negative stereotypes are less likely to do so.

Our research design adopts a pre-registered 3 (target group) × 3 (scale version) factorial approach, focusing on three target groups: obesity, schizophrenia, and sexually transmitted diseases. We compare original stigma scales with positively rephrased versions and semantic differential scales. A power analysis (ANOVA, f = .1, α = .05, power = .8) indicated the need for 967 participants to test the effects of different ways to assess stigma. Participants in the study are randomly assigned to engage with either the conventional scale or one of the alternatives. Subsequently, the survey probes into social distance and social comparison (upward/downward) as proxies for stigma towards the respective groups. These measures are instrumental in evaluating the impact of scale type on perceptions of stigma.

Additionally, the study delves into participants' cognitive and emotional responses to the scales. It includes an assessment of attitudes towards the scales. Participants will evaluate the scales on aspects such as quality, clarity, usability, and the extent to which they might be biased or stigmatizing. Qualitative open-ended questions will add

to this assessment, offering more profound insights into the participants' subjective experiences and perceptions. Currently, we have applied for approval from the ethical review board of the university and expect to start data collection in February. All results will be available to be presented at the conference in September.

We expect our study to significantly contribute to the stigma research field. By exploring the effectiveness and ethical considerations of different stigma scales, it will provide valuable insights into how public stigma is measured and understood. The findings will be of particular interest to researchers and practitioners in psychology, sociology, and public health, who are concerned with the ethical measurement of stigma. The implications of this research are potentially influencing future research methodologies and practices in the assessment of public stigma and guiding the development of more responsible and sensitive tools in stigma-related research.

HCO04 Social capital & methodological advances in health communication

PP 0611 How to introduce a quality label for health apps? A co-creation study to tailor supporting communication to user needs, increase understanding and support use

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The use of health apps can be beneficial for health outcomes or disease management, but the number of health apps available in app stores is overwhelming (Carroll et al., 2017). Users struggle to determine which apps are safe, provide adequate health benefits, and handle data carefully (Essén et al., 2022). Such concerns can sometimes even prevent people from using health apps (Torous et al., 2018). To help people make informed choices about health apps, a European health app quality label has been developed (Hoogendoorn et al., 2023). In this label, scores on four quality criteria are displayed: "healthy and safe", "easy to use", "secure data", and "robust build". The score for each criterion can range from A (highest score) to E (lowest score) (CEN-ISO/TS 82304-2; International Organization for Standardization, 2021).

The aim of our study is to introduce the new health app quality label to future users in an understandable way. As the label itself is quite complex and contains more information than other labels such as the Nutriscore or the Energylabel, we applied co-creation to ensure that European citizens can understand the information provided by the label. Guided by the Double Diamond approach (Design Council, 2019) we investigated what aspects of the quality label are clear to future users and which elements require additional explanation.

In June-July 2023 (phase 1), five co-creation sessions (group interviews) and two individual interviews with participants from multiple European countries (N = 22; M = 57 years; SD = 17.66) were conducted. Inclusion criteria were being 16+ years old and smartphone user. Data were analyzed using systematic interpretative content analysis. Concepts of the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2003) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003) were used as sensitizing concepts during analysis. Based on the results, five explanatory animations in two languages were developed, in which the content of the health app quality label was explained, and awareness was raised for the need for such a quality label. In November 2023 (phase 2), participants (N = 20; M = 44 years; SD = 15.74) were invited to share their feedback on the animations in a focus group setting.

The main findings from our co-creation process were that the purpose and content of the videos were well aligned with participants' information needs. They also appreciated the short format and the clean, modern visuals. However, participants found the language used to be too complex. Some information was also found to be too detailed or unclear. Participants also expressed the need for more employment of the user's perspectiveand the inclusion of "human elements". Furthermore, they indicated that the animation should demonstrate how to find and open the label in app stores. Based on this feedback, the animations were improved toenable everyone in Europe, and especially those citizens who are vulnerable due to lower levels of health literacy, to make informed choices about health apps. This can ultimately empower this group and benefit their health and European public health in general.

HCO04 Social capital & methodological advances in health communication

PP 0612 Reproducibility of health-related literature samples: Standardized sampling for systematic literature reviews (STAMP method)

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With the field of health communication expanding, systematic literature reviews (SLRs) are increasingly necessary for mapping the research field and synthesizing research evidence. However, especially in the social sciences such as health communication research, scholars often face a theoretically and methodologically diverse publication sample. For instance, the influence of media content on help-seeking intentions for mental health problems is assessed by both qualitative interview studies and quantitative online experiments. This diversity typically requires

qualitative synthesis methods, which – unlike traditional meta-analysis – pose challenges for SLRs' replicability and reproducibility.

Therefore, we propose the STAMP method for STandardized sAMPling for systematic literature reviews. STAMP extends existing SLR approaches such as the Cochrane guidelines or the PRISMA 2020 statement, which originate from the context of health care research, by incorporating expertise from communication science. Specifically, we argue that SLR screening itself should be considered as standardized content analysis, a method that is genuine to communication research. By adapting principles of content analysis, STAMP ensures a systematic and objective assessment of publications. Therefore, we see STAMP as a *supplement* that closes a gap in the screening and selection process to increase the replicability and reproducibility of SLRs.

In summary, the STAMP method comprises a four-stage procedure for the sampling process of SLRs. Stage 1 covers the development of a review protocol that contains the SLR's objective and scope, eligibility criteria for including publications and transparently documents the sampling process. This is followed by the development and validation of a search strategy in stage 2, leading to an extensive literature search within relevant databases and search engines. For stages 3 and 4, the eligibility criteria are transferred into categories of a codebook. In stage 3 – the abstract-based screening (ABS) – these categories are applied to the abstracts collected in stage 2, leading to an ABS score that transparently quantifies screening decisions. The ABS score is calculated as a sum index of all categories representing a publication's fit. In stage 4 – the full-text reading (FTR) – the categories are applied to the full-texts of the remaining publications. Again, these coding decisions are summarized through an FTR score. Finally, only publications above a predetermined threshold value of the FTR score are included in the final sample.

As the scoring system of the STAMP method originates from standardized content analysis, it allows not only for rigorous documentation but also enables measuring inter- and intra-coder reliability of the sampling process. Another strength is its adaptability to the heterogeneous as well as interdisciplinary research landscape common for the field of health communication. Here, STAMP can be used both for SLRs that aim at building a concept in a vaguely defined research area or summarizing empirical evidence within a well-defined research field. Despite its strengths, we will discuss limitations of the STAMP method and discuss the procedure based on an SLR developed in the field of health communication.

HCO05 Technology acceptance in health communication

PP 0702 Neglected narratives: A critical examination of ageing, digitalization, and health in Nordic Media Coverage

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This paper addresses critical challenges facing the Nordic countries and their aging population, focusing on digitalization and health development. It stems from the interdisciplinary HAIDI-project, aimed at generating new knowledge to counteract health disparities resulting from changing demographic patterns and addressing digital divides threatening inclusion and democracy. Due to increased longevity, the ageing populations in the Nordics are inevitably affected by older citizens' chronic conditions and limitations in functional capabilities in daily living, increasing the need for more effective healthcare systems. The proposed solution is the employment of digital health and welfare services (Erlingsdottir & Sandberg, 2019). However, research indicates a decline in older people's use of digital media technology with age (König, Seifert, & Doh, 2018). Despite increasing adoption, some older individuals remain inexperienced users (Poli et al., 2019), influenced by sociodemographic and economic status, limited exposure to technology, the active choice to abstain from digital technology, and physical or cognitive impairments (Rasi-Heikkinen, 2022). Lack of necessary skills also plays a role (Kwiatkowska & Skórzewska-Amberg, 2019), while relational components and warm experts (close relatives) can both support and hinder older adults' digital media use (Martínez, 2022).

This study investigates the public debate and framing of individuals aged 75 and above in relation to digital technologies and health in news coverage across Denmark, Finland, and Sweden, to better understand to what extent they have a say in matters of importance to them. Earlier research on the representation of old demographics indicates exclusion and ageist portrayals (Iversen & Wilinska, 2020; Kinnunen, Könönen & Vakimo, 2022; Varjakoski, 2022). This study is based on news articles from 15 regional and national newspapers in the three countries, from January 2017 to December 2022. The total sample of articles was 319 (DK= 105, FI= 86, SWE= 128).

A code book (32 variables) was developed through an iterative process by all researchers. An ICR-test resulted in a Krippendorff's α of 0.70–0.78, indicating *substantial* agreement in coding, crucial for cross-cultural studies. Variables explored include article type, size, headlines, visuals, framing of individuals, gender, themes, subject positioning, power dynamics, and tonality. Noteworthy findings indicate substantial differences in the coverage across the countries. In Finland, 78 percent of the coverage comprised opinion articles, compared to 53 percent in Denmark and 23 percent in Sweden. Swedish newspapers had the highest proportion of news articles, suggesting varying

priorities across the countries. Another finding is the limited depiction of older people alongside news coverage, with 36 percent of articles lacking illustrations. On a national level, Finland has the highest number of non-illustrated articles (65 percent), followed by Denmark (29 percent) and Sweden (5 percent). Our study also indicates surprisingly few human-interest stories with the demography at hand, and differences in the power dynamics, referring to the diversity of voices heard. In sum, our results indicate that the fate of one of our future crucial challenges is not receiving the media attention it deserves in Nordic societies.

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PP 0703 Intersection of e-health literacy and individual empowerment: Theoretical foundations and empirical insights on the case of online health community users

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In health communication field, it is well known that the concepts of e-health literacy and individual empowerment are highly intertwined. The ability to access, understand, validate, evaluate, process and apply online health-related information to real-life health problems can, as many studies have shown (Schulz et al., 2017; Papp-Zipernovszky et al., 2021), lead individuals to empowerment and thus to better health outcomes. Interventions in the field of (public) health therefore often target population groups with lower levels of e-health literacy and empowerment (Pourazzavi et al., 2020). However, some authors critically observe that higher levels of e-health literacy do not necessarily lead to empowerment and that it is possible to be empowered but not e-health literate (Schulz & Nakamoto, 2013; Palumbo, 2017; Petrič et al., 2017). For example, e-health literate individuals are not necessarily willing to become empowered and feel more comfortable in a dependent role (Gellerstedt et al., 2022) or the health care system conditions restrict people in their path to empowerment. On the other hand, given the ubiquity of online health information, which is not necessarily of the highest quality, e-health literacy could be based on misinformation and disinformation resulting in "bad health literacy" (Schulz & Nakamoto, 2011). This could lead to greater but misperceived (dysfunctional) empowerment or even disempowerment (Petrič et al., 2017; Schulz & Nakamoto, 2011). A useful starting point for investigating intersection of e-health literacy and empowerment is Schulz and Nakamoto's (2013) model of four different profiles of individuals/patients defined by different (low or high) levels of health literacy and empowerment: High-need patients, needlessly dependent patients, dangerous self-managers, and effective self-managers. Currently, there is a lack of empirical research that confirms existence of these different profiles of individuals based on their level of e-health literacy and individual empowerment along with an examination of their respective characteristics. The aim of this study is to empirically investigate and identify different groups of individuals based on their level of e-health literacy and individual empowerment as well as to examine their socio-demographic and health-related characteristics. The study is based on data collected with an online survey (n = 784) among the users of the largest online health community in Slovenia (Med.Over.Net). The preliminary results, based on a cluster analysis, show that combinations of different levels of e-health literacy and individual empowerment result in similar groups as defined by Schulz and Nakamoto (2013). The results show that the groups differ also according to trust in doctors, some aspects of perceived quality of online information (e.g. readability), health status and chronic conditions. Interestingly, the results also point to a challenge in identifying 'dangerous self-managers' (those with a misperceived empowerment, often based on bad literacy skills), as respondents tend to overestimate the level of perceived e-health literacy and empowerment. This study aims to uncover and reflect on these important theoretical and methodological (measurement) dilemmas. This may advance future research and caution healthcare intervention developers to more effectively consider the nuances in populations with varying levels of e-health literacy and empowerment.

HCO05 Technology acceptance in health communication

PP 0704 Realizing technology's potential to better patient-provider communication, mitigate health inequalities: The imagination challenge

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Rationale

Researchers, healthcare professionals and organizations, as well as policymakers have shown sustained interest over the last two decades in the effects of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on healthcare and health inequalities more broadly, and on patient-healthcare provider communication more specifically. Various forms of technology (e.g., electronic health records, telehealth applications, wearable activity trackers, smartphone apps) are increasingly used by healthcare professionals and patients. The recent COVID-19 pandemic amplified interest in the adoption of ICTs and their impact in healthcare and on health disparities, as various forms of technology

were employed to address pandemic-related challenges, such as the impact of public orders for physical distancing on healthcare seeking. The pandemic also strengthened concerns that ICTs can exacerbate health inequalities and generate new ones. Given the promises and perils of digital health tools, we examine:

RQ1: How are ICTs used currently by health professionals and patients in local, diverse communities?

RQ2: How do healthcare providers and patients envision using such technologies in the future?

RQ3: What are individual, organizational, and community-level factors that enable and constrain the use of health ICTs?

Research Design

We investigate stakeholders' perspectives on the use of health ICTs in healthcare settings through a mixed-methods research design. In this paper, we focus on findings from semistructured interviews with healthcare providers (n = 20) and patients (n = 20), recruited across four primary care clinical sites (including but not limited to university hospital-affiliated health centers and federally qualified health centers) serving diverse communities. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. The duration of patients' interviews was 20–60 minutes, whereas of providers 30–70 minutes. All interviews were transcribed, and Spanish-language interviews were translated prior to analysis. Data analysis was a multistage process informed by *flexible coding* procedures described by Deterding and Waters (2021).

Findings & Interpretation

Even among patients with considerable relevant experience, ICT use to pursue health-related goals and particularly to facilitate communication with healthcare providers was highly episodic. Several sociodemographic predictors that the ICT adoption literature suggests are typical emerged in our analysis (e.g., age, socio-economic position, formal education). Even among those most experienced, however, use of ICTs in healthcare was limited. Additionally, interviews with healthcare professionals highlighted that the rapid adoption of ICTs during the COVID-19 pandemic transformed patient-provider communication across clinical sites significantly, primarily through deployment of telemedicine/telehealth applications. However, this adoption was forced by the emergent nature of the crisis, and clinical sites did not have the time to develop necessary *organizational complements* to ensure maximum payoff. Our data suggest that one of the key challenges to realizing the potential of ICTs is to be found in the seeming inability of patients and healthcare professionals to imagine how ICTs could improve healthcare and patient-provider communication in the future.

Conclusion

We conclude by discussing implications of findings for theories of technology adoption, particularly in healthcare, and articulate goals for interventions promoting ICT adoption for improved patient-provider interactions.

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HCO05 Technology acceptance in health communication

PP 0705 Exploring technology-based ageism in healthcare: Nurses' and nursing students' perspectives on welfare technologies for older patients

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The literature suggests that patients often adopt welfare technologies (WTs), including telemedicine, telecare, and social robotics, based on recommendations from healthcare professionals, who play a crucial role in motivating their adoption. However, recent studies highlight age-related stereotypes among healthcare professionals regarding the technological capabilities of older individuals, potentially impeding the incorporation of WTs in the care of older patients (Leonardsen et al., 2023; Mannheim et al., 2021).

Despite nurses comprising a significant portion of the healthcare workforce, there is a substantial knowledge gap regarding the perspectives of nurses and nursing students on the use of WTs in the care of older patients and the potential influence of ageism on these perspectives. This study aims to address this gap by examining the impact of ageism on the perceptions of nurses and nursing students concerning the technological capabilities of older individuals, specifically focusing on smartphones and smartwatches. Additionally, the study explores the perceptions on the appropriateness of implementing welfare technologies in the care of older patients.

Data analysis relies on responses from a web survey completed by nurses (n = 244) and nursing students (n = 234), recruited through nursing organizations and universities via multiple channels between September and December 2023. Participants underwent assessment using the Attitudes Towards Older Adults Using Technology (ATOAUT-10)

scale, Expectations Regarding Aging (ERA-12), and a set of self-developed questions related to attitudes toward the use of WTs in the care of older adults.

Preliminary findings indicate that nursing students exhibit higher levels of general and technology-based ageism compared to nurses, although ageism is present in both groups. Specifically, mean scores for responses to all 12 items on the ERA-12 5-point scale are lower among nurses than among nursing students, with 10 of these differences and the total ERA-12 score being statistically significant based on t-tests ($p < 0.05$). The mean scores of responses to the ATOAUT-10 5-point scale are also lower for nurses than for nursing students in 9 of the 10 items, with statistical significance found in 4 of these differences (t-tests, $p < 0.05$) and the total ATOAUT-10 score. Nursing students exhibit a significantly ($p < 0.05$) more negative general attitude towards social robotics in elder care than nurses.

This study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of healthcare professionals' influence on the adoption of WTs. Identified disparities in attitudes between nurses and nursing students underscore the potential of interventions and educational initiatives to mitigate ageism, thereby enhancing the acceptance and implementation of WTs in elder care.

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HCO05 Technology acceptance in health communication

PP 0706 Factors determining the behavioural intention of informal carers of older people to use telecare: An application and extension of the UTAUT model

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Telecare represents a significant opportunity to support informal carers who provide long-term care to older people. It can improve the quality of the care they provide, as well as their social life and state of health. This is particularly important as research highlights the significant impact of caring on the mental and physical health of informal carers. Despite its potential, there is limited understanding of factors influencing informal carers' behavioural intention to use telecare (Hvalič-Touzery et al., 2022). Research in this area is often limited to the key variables of technology acceptance models, i.e. usefulness and ease of use. However, this focus is critiqued for its limited scope, lacking in both breadth and depth (e.g. Dwivedi et al., 2019). Our study proposes an extension to the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model. This extension incorporates perceived psychosocial outcomes (e.g. peace of mind, reduced anxiety), aiming to identify also health-related factors influencing the behavioural intention of informal carers of older people to use telecare. Our research focuses on two groups of telecare functionalities, namely personal alarm systems and mobility-related devices. Data used for the study were collected in 2021 on a sample of Slovenian residents aged 40 years or older who provide informal care to older relatives or family members. The sample was obtained from an online access panel. Appropriate sample selection, nonresponse conversion measures and weighting techniques were used to assure sufficient representativeness of the sample for the target population. In total, data obtained from 530 respondents were eligible and sufficiently complete for inclusion in the presented study.

Composite measures of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, technology commitment, perceived psychosocial outcomes and social influence were studied as predictors of the behavioural intent, measured as the expressed degree of willingness to use telecare solutions. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to verify the measurement of latent constructs. The effects of interest were studied using ordinary least-square regression analysis, which included socio-economic characteristics of family carers, types and burden of provided care, and needs of care recipients as additional control variables.

The results reveal statistically significant effect of perceived psychosocial outcomes on the willingness to use telecare solutions. Significant effects are observed also for two UTAUT constructs (performance expectancy and social influence), although their size is considerably lower compared to perceived psychosocial outcomes. The findings of this study underscore the critical role of perceived psychosocial outcomes in shaping the behavioural intentions of informal carers towards telecare acceptance, thereby offering a more holistic insight in the understanding and development of telecare solutions.

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HCO06 Well-being & mental health

PP 0815 Unintended damage? COVID-19 health messages, their impact on mental well-being, and its implications for message effectiveness: An interview study with students with varying levels of depressive symptoms

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Introduction

Health messages are not routinely checked for their potential impact on mental well-being. Nevertheless, research suggest that exposure to specific message strategies may negatively impact mental well-being of the recipients. The global decline in mental well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic was partially linked to the extent of exposure to pandemic information, but also to specific types of messages (e.g., those using negative emotional appeals). Individuals with symptoms of depression might be particularly susceptible to these adverse effects, given their inclination to selectively process information, emphasising the negative. Consequently, they may develop higher reactance toward certain messages than others.

Message exposure's impact on mental well-being can diminish the effectiveness of health messages, leading recipients to engage in information avoidance, defensive processing, and maladaptive responses to regulate their emotions, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. Effective communication is vital for mitigating a pandemic and it also helps reduce uncertainty and fear about health risks. Therefore, it is imperative to focus on message strategies that recipients perceive as effective without causing harm to their mental well-being.

So far, health communication has largely overlooked the impact of health messaging on mental well-being, and the role of pre-existing depressive symptoms in message processing, particularly concerning general health issues like pandemics. They also tend to neglect the multi-dimensional nature of mental well-being (consisting of hedonic, eudaimonic and social well-being). Lastly, not much is known about the relationship between mental well-being outcomes and effectiveness of health messages, as studies predominantly focus exclusively on the latter.

Therefore, the aim of this interview study is to explore how participants with varying levels of depressive symptoms perceive the impact of the health messages about COVID-19 on their mental well-being (RQ1) and their adherence with recommended behaviours (RQ2).

Methods

We conducted 30 semi-structured interviews with students (aged 18–25), evenly divided between those with higher and normal levels of depressive symptoms. During the 1.5-hour interviews, participants shared their perceptions of the effectiveness and mental well-being outcomes of exposure to official health messages during the COVID-19 pandemic and engaged in an interactive activity where they were asked to reflect on 12 existing pre-tested COVID-19 messages by official sources with varying message characteristics (e.g., hope appeals). Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

Findings

Preliminary findings suggest that participants perceive certain messages as impactful for their mental well-being (both negatively and positively), particularly the hedonic component. Noteworthy determinants of (in)effectiveness of messages include information overload, ambiguity, and lack of inclusivity. Trust in the source appears to be a prerequisite in message processing. For some participants, messages that negatively impact their mental well-being are recognised as particularly effective and some consider them ineffective for their emotional impact. Results will be presented considering similarities and differences in impressions of those with normal and higher levels of depressive symptoms.

This study contributes to the field of health communication by providing further insights into effective and less harmful communication techniques for those with varying depressive symptomatology, to prevent further harming a population that is already vulnerable.

HCO06 Well-being & mental health

PP 0816 Open and authentic? The effects of editorial production and prominence on the perceived authenticity of and empathy with mental health related self-disclosures on YouTube

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Mental illness is currently one of the greatest health challenges for societies. Although it is a widespread phenomenon, those affected are still socially stigmatized, which can result in experiences of exclusion or discrimination as well as serious health consequences if those affected are reluctant to seek treatment (e. g. Farrelly et al., 2014). Whereas many sufferers hide their mental illness for these reasons, others deliberately disclose their illness in their social environment, but also to strangers (Meisenbach, 2010). Research has recently discovered the destigmatizing potential of such self-disclosures in social media (e. g., Berryman & Kavka, 2018; Mickles & Weare, 2020; Misoch, 2015; Parrot et al, 2020; Ma, 2017; Blight et al, 2017). However, there is hardly any research on factors preventing possible negative reactions to such self-disclosures, such as social distancing. A mediating factor in this context appears to be the perceived authenticity of the self-disclosure (Nah, 2022), and an important role for destigmatization processes is also attributed to the empathy of the recipients with those affected (Hecht, Kloß & Bartsch, 2021). From previous research, it can be assumed that factors such as the type of production of the YouTube post and the prominence of the protagonist might affect perceived authenticity and empathy. To test these and identify possible further relevant factors, we designed two consecutive studies to investigate the following main research question: **Which characteristics of mental health related self-disclosures influence their perceived authenticity as well as the recipients' empathy towards the protagonists of these self-disclosures?**

A standardized manual content analysis of self-disclosure videos on YouTube (N = 43) and corresponding user comments (N = 2.461) was intended to capture perceptions and assessments of (self-selected) users under natural conditions. In an online experiment (N = 203), excerpts from six of the YouTube videos analyzed in the content analysis containing self-disclosures by depressives were used in a 2 (production: editorial vs. non-editorial) x 3 (degree and type of prominence of discloser: TV-celebrity vs. social media influencer vs. no public figure) between-subjects design.

In the experimental study, the influence of production and prominence of the self-disclosing persons was tested using a two-factor analyses of variance. Results show neither significant main effects nor significant interaction effects for both dependent variables authenticity and empathy. However, for the content analysis, bias-corrected binomial regression analyses revealed that users perceived self-disclosures of ordinary persons as significantly more authentic than those of influencers and TV-celebrities. Users were significantly better able to imagine the thoughts and feelings of the protagonists in self-disclosures by ordinary persons than those of influencers and TV-celebrities. Interestingly, the professional-journalistic editorial embedding of self-disclosures has different effects for the different types of protagonists. In both studies, the participants' or users' perception of authenticity and the intensity of their cognitive empathy were also positively correlated. Implications of these results and limitations of the studies will be discussed in our presentation.

HCO06 Well-being & mental health

PP 0817 Mental health to go: The role of mental health podcasts in the context of overcoming the stigmatization of mental illness

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Background

In the era of individualized, on-demand, and mobile media consumption, podcasts have recently gained massive popularity (Huber et al., 2008; Kupferschmitt & Müller, 2021). Originally entertainment-focused, podcasts have evolved into a prominent source for health information in general, and mental health information in particular (Carlson, 2023; Carrotte et al., 2023; Maiwald, 2020). Concurrently, despite increased societal acceptance, individuals experiencing mental health conditions still face stigmatization (Huber et al., 2015) and suffer from self-stigmatization (Corrigan et al., 2013). These developments prompt questions about mental health podcasts' potential to promote positive attitudes and behaviors regarding mental health.

There are a few first quantitative investigations of mental health podcasts (e.g., Carotte et al., 2023). The aim of the current contribution is to gain a more in-depth understanding of (1) the motivations that lead individuals to engage with mental health podcasts and (2) how regular listeners of mental health podcasts perceive podcasts' influence on their mental health related attitudes and behaviors.

Method

We conducted 10 semi-structured qualitative interviews in Germany in 2023. Respondents varied in preferred podcast formats, mental health-related factors (personally experiencing a mental illness, family member of someone experiencing a mental illness, general interest in mental health), age (22–59 years, *M* = 31.6, *SD* = 10.3), and gender (70% women). The interview guide covered questions on usage motives, the formation of parasocial relationships with podcast speakers, and the perceived impact of the podcasts on one's attitudes and behaviors. Verbatim transcriptions underwent computer-assisted qualitative content analysis, utilizing inductive and deductive coding strategies.

Results

The qualitative data provide comprehensive insights into the potential of mental health podcasts for the destigmatization of mental illness:

(1) *Motivations for listening.* Participants shared various reasons for engaging with mental health podcasts, driven by individual life situations and cognitive needs. Those directly affected seek self-understanding, while family members and those with personal interest aim for comprehensive education and empathy. Social interaction needs are evident, with family members seeking advice and knowledge they can share.

(2) *Parasocial relationship and identification.* By sharing their own experiences, podcast speakers play a significant role in encouraging involvement with mental health issues. Identification with shared experiences creates a strong emotional connection, fostering a supportive framework for individuals facing mental health challenges.

(3) *Knowledge and information dissemination.* Mental health podcasts contribute to educate listeners about mental illnesses, as they, for instance, provide realistic portrayals of psychotherapy. They dispel misconceptions and contribute to reducing prejudices.

(4) *Self-reported attitude and behavior changes.* Respondents reported positive changes, including increased sensitivity and openness towards mental illnesses. Podcasts had an impact on their self-awareness and recognition of negative thought patterns. In the view of the listeners, podcasts facilitated access to therapeutic help, and led to an increased willingness to speak openly about mental health challenges.

Discussion

The study reveals that mental health podcasts play a valuable role in addressing mental health stigma. By combining expert knowledge and individual experiences, podcasts can be considered a promising medium for promoting stigma coping and reducing self-stigma among people experiencing a mental illness. Implications for anti-stigma communication will be discussed at the conference.

HCO06 Well-being & mental health

PP 0818 The longitudinal relationship between health anxiety and health-related internet use in adolescence: A three-wave panel study

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Health-related internet use, i.e., reading, watching, or interacting with health-related content, presents a popular source of health information for adolescents, thanks to its accessibility, availability, and breadth. Yet, apart from its benefits, health-related internet use may also impact adolescents negatively, for example, through its association with health anxiety (HA), i.e., unreasonable worries related to one's health. The increased HA motivates health-related internet use as a reassuring behaviour. However, frequent interaction with health-related media may increase rather than mitigate HA through disconcerting and catastrophic content. People with high HA are expected to be the most susceptible to both of the effects, as they frequently seek relief in health-related media and interpret them more catastrophically. However, we miss longitudinal evidence to inform the theory (te Poel et al., 2016). Also, there is a lack of within-person evidence of the expected causal effects. The current study focused on the long-term reciprocal relationship between health-related internet use and HA. We studied adolescents with high, medium, and low trait HA separately as the motives and cognitions related to their health-related internet use likely differ (Fergus & Bardeen, 2013), as may its consequences.

We analysed the data from 2,500 Czech adolescents, aged 11–16 (50% girls, in Wave 1) using a random-intercept cross-lagged panel model (RI-CLPM), which allows studying within-person effects. The data were collected in three waves six months apart, beginning in June 2021. The sample represented Czech households with children in terms of region, municipality size, and parental education. We used the level of HA in Wave 1 as the grouping factor.

Although adolescents with high trait HA were the most frequent health-related internet users, an increase in their HA was not followed by increased health-related internet use, and vice versa. This may be due to the ceiling effect, where both HA and health-related internet use are too high to be affected by the other variable (te Poel et al.,

2016). This new finding is contrary to the common belief that people with high HA are the most susceptible to the negative effects of health-related internet use. On the other hand, increased health-related internet use predicted an increase in HA for adolescents with medium HA, and the variables affected each other reciprocally between W2 and W3. Partially, we found support for both effects also in the low-HA group. This is an innovative finding as it was believed that the lower the HA, the lower the susceptibility to negative effects of health-related internet use.

Our study newly revealed that adolescents with medium to low, rather than high HA, may be susceptible to negative long-term effects of health-related internet use. The evaluation of health-related content in adolescents with medium HA may already be affected by their HA, and their HA may still increase as a reaction to distressing information, contrary to the current literature. Our findings are important for the interventions related to health-related internet use. Researchers and practitioners should pay attention mainly to adolescents with medium HA.

HCO06 Well-being & mental health

PP 0819 Phubbing in Spanish university students: Prevalence and associated factors

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The omnipresence of smartphones has radically transformed our forms of communication, giving rise to new modes of interaction that not only facilitate the creation of social ties and knowledge in virtual environments, but have also created a particularly palpable paradox in our contemporary society. While these devices bring us virtually closer to people who are miles away, they distanced us paradoxically from those who are physically close to us, thanks to the insidious phenomenon of phubbing. The phubbing behaviuor is characterized by the tendency to ignore those around us in favor of attention to the smartphone during a conversation, has become a detrimental behavior linked to symptoms of psychological impulsivity, anxiety, FoMO, less academic performance and depression, generating negative effects that deserve a thorough analysis. s. Young university students, mostly those between 18 and 24 years of age, are who spend the most time on the phone, about 33% of their awake time. In this context, the present study focuses on exploring the presence of phubbing among university students, considering a representative sample of 783 participants from the University of Barcelona. The results obtained through the application of a phubbing scale and a sociodemographic questionnaire reveal an alarming prevalence of the phenomenon, with 49% of the sample manifesting this behavior. Surprisingly, no significant differences were observed in relation to age, gender, field of study or academic year, which underlines the transversal relevance of the excessive use of smartphones in the educational context. Given these findings, there is an urgent need to implement preventive strategies and interventions aimed at safeguarding the mental health and well-being of students. Education about the risks associated with phubbing and the promotion of healthy habits of use are presented as fundamental tools. In addition, there is an urgent need to develop programs that address Internet addiction and other problems related to impulsivity in university students, thus providing effective support and detecting potential problems early in the academic environment.

HCO07 Sources of health information

PP 0917 Ask Google, a doctor or a friend? A diary study on the health information repertoires of Ukrainian refugees in Germany

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Germany hosts more than one million Ukrainian refugees, who often face health problems (mental and physical) and barriers to accessing health information. While we know that refugees often use traditional mass media and smartphones as *search modes*, search engines as *intermediaries*, and online sources and confidants as *sources* of health information, we do not know much about how they combine these. That is, we lack knowledge about refugees' health information *repertoires*. So we ask:

RQ1: What health information repertoire types can be identified among Ukrainian refugees in Germany?

When seeking refuge in another country (and culture), processes of acculturation come into play. Changes in language and the origin of information sources are crucial in this process. Therefore, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the health information behavior of Ukrainian refugees in Germany, we also ask:

RQ2: What are the characteristics of the health information repertoire types (RQ1) in terms of source origin and language?

Methods

We conducted an online diary study in August and September 2023 with 19 Ukrainians living in Germany since February 2022. The diary study resulted in n = 109 entries, i.e. health information searches.

We assessed, among other things, *search modes*, *intermediaries*, and *sources* used for health information, as well as source *origins*, *languages*, *proxy searches*, and *topics*. In a pre-survey, we assessed participants' sociodemographics, health status, and language skills, among others.

Results

At the situational search level (n = 109), the diary data show that smartphones (48%) and online sources (50%) were frequently used. Confidants (28%) were consulted more often than health professionals (16%). Searches were mainly related to (the treatment of) health problems (65%) such as information on medical treatments. Information was often sought and received in Ukrainian (58%). However, the sources used were just as often of German origin as of Ukrainian origin (40%). Although participants often sought health information for themselves (57%), they also often sought information for others (49%).

A qualitative typology at the individual search level (n = 19) identified four repertoire types (*RQ1*): (1) *Online seekers*, who use only electronic devices, search engines, and online sources for health information; (2) *Confidant consulters*, who mainly ask trusted people for health advice, (3) *Professional consulters*, who tend to consult health professionals, and *Copious consulters*, who use a variety of health information sources, including online sources, confidants, health professionals, and traditional mass media. The qualitative typology was confirmed by latent class analysis.

The types differ in terms of language and origin of sources (*RQ2*). While the language and origin of the sources of *Online Seekers* and *Confidant consulters* is mainly Ukrainian, the language and origin of the sources of *Professional consulters* and *Copius seekers* is typically Ukrainian and German.

By obtaining detailed information about the health information of Ukrainian refugees in Germany and identifying repertoire types, we can gain more knowledge about how to effectively reach this target group and potentially contribute to improving refugees' information seeking and, consequently, their health.

Further results and limitations will be presented at the ECREA conference.

HCO07 Sources of health information

PP 0918 Prototypes of doctor-patient relationship in consultations on negative health effects of electromagnetic fields

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Concerns regarding negative health effects of electromagnetic fields (EMF) are relatively high in the German population (Götte & Ludewig, 2019), and general practitioners (GPs) are the first place to go for patients (Huss et al., 2004). Mostly, patients themselves raise concerns that their symptoms are related to EMF. GPs less commonly agree with that assumption, and therapy options or protective measures are rarely discussed. However, an efficient doctor-patient relationship substantially determines the course of medical treatment, and physicians' advice on EMF, e.g., relocation, can have drastic consequences on patients' lives (Berg-Beckhoff et al., 2010).

Theoretical Background

According to Roter and Hall (2006) there are four prototypes of doctor-patient relationships varying in the extent of patients' autonomy and physicians' authority: *paternalism*, *consumerism*, *mutuality*, and *default*. In a paternalistic relationship, physicians dominate the consultation, and patients have a rather passive role. Physicians act according to the patients' alleged best interest, and patients follow the physician's recommendations. *Consumerism* is characterized by dominant patients who demand physicians for information. Decisions are based on patients' preferences but taking account of professional norms. A balanced doctor-patient relationship is represented by the prototype *mutuality*. The control of both parties is almost even, and the communication is determined by negotiations based on patients' values and physicians' advices. The fourth prototype, *default*, stands for a rather inefficient doctor-patient relationship characterized by frustration or diverging expectations on both sides that can, e.g., ultimately lead to patients' drop-out of physicians' care. Based on these prototypes, we examined which doctor-patient relationships were represented by physicians in our sample (RQ).

Method

To investigate physician's perceptions of the doctor-patient relationship in consultations on EMF, we conducted guideline-based focus groups and in-depth interviews with GPs (n = 15) and pediatricians (n = 10) in (### anonymized for review process). The interviews took place from June to August 2023 via Zoom. Physicians were asked questions regarding their prior experience with EMF-related consultations and their (hypothetical) handling of such patients.

Results

In our interviews, the prototypes of *paternalism* and *consumerism* were most common. Physicians who showed a rather paternalistic attitude were, to some extent, open to patients' concerns about EMF but insisted on their own assessment. In most cases, physicians would prefer to conduct an anamnesis or to establish a differential diagnosis instead of relating symptoms to EMF. In cases of *consumerism*, physicians were approached by their patients but

did not make specific therapy recommendations and handed the responsibility for treatment decisions back to the patients. Physicians who corresponded to *mutuality* were open to patients' EMF concerns and tried to empathize with them. They did not try to convince them with their own opinion but rather aimed to find a mutual decision. Two physicians said that they would not give advice to their patients regarding EMF, which would indicate a *default* in their relationship. One even says that his patients probably know that he cannot give specific advice; therefore, they do not ask him about EMF.

Implications of these findings and limitations will be discussed in the presentation.

HCO07 Sources of health information

PP 0919 Prison physicians dilemma: The relationship between prison physicians' bifunctional role on their intra-role conflicts and identity construction

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The German prison system is a total institution (Goffman, 2020; Irwin & Cressey, 1962; Grapendaal, 1990; Schwartz, 1971), characterized by an enclosed set-up for inmates, where all areas of life, including all contact persons, are controlled. Prison physicians are one of these contact persons. Their working role is characterized by a bifunctionality of tasks (legally stipulated security mandate and health care, e.g., Hillenkamp, 2005; Keppler, 2009; DeViggiani, 2007). This bifunctionality can influence the physicians' working routines in prisons as well as their communicative actions towards the inmates, and thus, role conflicts can arise (Dahrendorf, 2006). Consequently, their identity construction can be influenced (Keupp, 2008; Mead, 1972; Schwarz & Stöver, 2010; Stöver, 2013), affecting prison physicians' performance (Meier, 2005).

The current state of research shows that prison physicians need to be more studied. In particular, there needs to be more studies investigating bifunctionality. This research aims to determine to what extent intra-role conflicts and identity construction can be identified in prison physicians due to their bifunctionality.

A qualitative research design was chosen to answer this question, as it collects more in-depth and personal data and can thus generate further insights and theories. Eight guided, problem-centered interviews (Raithel, 2008; Witzel, 2000) were conducted via Zoom with prison physicians from three federal states in Germany. This methodological approach provided insights into the subject's perception and their ideas of reality to identify and understand the conflicts, challenges, and difficulties and the (self-)perception and (self-)positioning of the prison physicians. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, anonymized, pseudonymized, and evaluated with qualitative content analysis, according to Kuckartz (2018).

The qualitative research revealed that the setting of a total institution causes intra-role conflicts among prison physicians. This is due to the physicians' involvement in decisions on detention or transfer to specially secured detention rooms. Furthermore, it is also through their position of power over the inmates. Prison physicians play a helping role for the inmates with a duty of care, but are also part of the prison system, making them subject to various expectations. Physicians constantly find themselves in a tense relationship between justice and medicine. The prison physician is in a permanent adjustment process, influenced by every experience, and urged to find a compromise. Therefore, identity construction is a subconscious solution for coping with intra-role conflicts. However, the formation of compromises and the addition of other external influences can lead to new intra-role conflicts. This means that the prison physician is caught in a constant dilemma between medicine (being a helper to the inmates) and justice (being part of the prison system). The resulting of intra-role conflicts can be resolved by constantly balancing them within the identity construction. The problem here is that new intra-role conflicts can also arise as a result of the weighing up within the process.

HCO07 Sources of health information

PP 0920 Single episodes of health information seeking and avoidance: Findings of an experience sampling methods study of German residents suffering from acute or chronic illness

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When individuals are faced with disease-related uncertainty, health information-seeking and avoidance serve as coping strategies (Brashers et al., 2002). Information seeking describes individuals' efforts to obtain information from selected sources (Johnson & Meischke, 1993), whereas information avoidance is understood as a purposeful decision to prevent the acquisition of relevant but potentially unwanted information (Sweeny et al., 2010). Although it is known that such strategies are tied to specific issues and embedded in situational contexts, a granular description of the real-life episodes of information behaviors is scarce. In addition, there are only preliminary findings about the relationship between information-seeking and avoidance suggesting that both behaviors are distinct, not causally

related but correlated concepts (Link et al., 2023). In particular, there is a lack of evidence on single episodes of information behaviors and their interrelations within and between individuals. Therefore, we ask:

RQ1: *How can single episodes of information-seeking and avoidance be characterized regarding sought issues, used sources, and situational contexts?*

RQ2: *How are the seeking and avoidance episodes related to each other on the within- and between-person level?*

We conducted an Experience Sampling Methods (ESM) study combined with a presurvey of a sample of German residents currently affected by an acute or chronic disease. The sample was recruited via a commercial German online access panel. The ESM study covered 14 days; the participants were asked three times a day at random times to answer questions on their information behaviors. Only individuals who responded to 28 out of 42 invitations (response rate: 66 %), resulting in 13.578 completed ESM protocols from 383 respondents, were included in the analysis. The respondents aged between 18 and 84 years (M = 52.9; SD = 13.7), 52.3 % were female, 34.5 % reported to be acutely ill, and 65.5 % suffered from chronic disease. To answer the research questions, we conducted descriptive analysis and Bayesian multilevel within-between models applying *rstanarm* in *R*.

To answer RQ1, the findings revealed that information seeking was seldom, but more common (n = 1.358, 10 %) than avoidance (n = 281, 2.1 %). Online sources and health professionals were the major sources for information seeking. The individuals searched most often for certain diseases or symptoms. Seeking was most often performed at home and mostly alone. The participants reported a general avoidance behavior of health-related issues, but also to avoid threatening disease and death-related information. Avoidance reveals not to be source-specific; it was mostly performed at home but less often alone.

The multilevel model (RQ2) revealed weak negative effects on the within-person level showing that an individual's increased information-seeking impacted the same person's decreased avoidance and vice versa. At the between-person level, we found a weak positive association: People who more often searched for information than others also avoided information more often than others.

The study provides a situational perspective on information behaviors and contributes to construct clarity suggesting that some individuals are more active in performing both information behaviors than others and showing a weak causal relation between individuals' coping strategies.

HCO07 Sources of health information

PP 0921 Making sense of genes. On biohackers' use and experience of direct-to-consumer genetic tests

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Since the launch of direct-to-consumer genetic testing (DTC GT) in 2007, millions of people have purchased a DNA home testing kit in the hope of learning more about their health or ancestry (Regalado 2019; Saukko 2017). Without medical intermediaries, DTC GT gives the consumer (mediated) insight into their risk of developing conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, cancer and Parkinson's disease. DTC GT companies frame genetic self-testing as empowering customers through the democratisation of knowledge (Tutton & Prainsack 2011; Turrini 2018). However, the DTC genetic health tests have also spurred debate due to the commercialisation of genetic testing, the lack of data control and clinical guidance, the risk of overdiagnoses and excessive medicalization and the questionable medical validity of the results (Schaper et al. 2019; McGowan et al. 2010).

This paper explores how DTC GT has been taken up, used and experienced as an aspect of biohacking practices. Biohacking is premised on a "central belief in intervention into the very living matter of the body" (Cozza, Ellison and Katz 2022, 4) and on an interest in how genetic knowledge can be used to slow down aging, increase human performance and tweak health problems outside health institutions. In that way biohackers experiment with "technoscientific solutions around the optimisation of health and performance" (Cozza, Ellison and Katz 2022, 2). Biohacking has moved from being subcultural to becoming a more widespread everyday practice of trying to shape the human body through technological intervention, quantification and self-experimentation (Rifai 2022; Lupton 2016).

Based on 20 interviews, the paper investigates how biohackers use and experience DTC GT, and how they navigate a communicative situation where genetic risks are made sense of in mundane or non-professional settings and where digital interfaces are involved in buying, receiving, understanding and processing test results. The paper thus seeks to answer the following three research questions: 1) How do biohackers navigate the communicative situation linked to receiving genetic risks assessments via digital communication of DTC GT results? 2) How do biohackers interpret and process the risk of getting particular diseases revealed by DTC GTs? 3) What characterizes the 'genetic imaginary' and sense of genetic agency articulated by the biohackers in relation to the use of DTC GT? Are genes, for instance, narrated as 'essentialist' predictions or rather through a 'post-genomic' language that stresses the potential of reprogramming genetic dispositions? (Bull 2019; Franklin 2000)

Through this study the paper sheds light on a new and increasingly important cultural situation, where genetic information is more easily available and used for various types of self-organized bodily optimization and/or experimentation. This calls for research that explores not only the pitfalls and dangers of this type of epistemic and institutional 'disorder', but also how different types of users – like biohackers – agentively produce and make sense of genetic information in everyday engagements with their body and health.

HCO08 Production, representation, and effects of health issues

PP 1013 Literacy as an essential element of health journalism: Portuguese journalists' practices

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Looking for what remains in journalism after the changes promoted during the COVID-19 pandemic, we find few elements in Portugal that maintain practices that were reconfigured during this long period of global public health crisis. Nonetheless, those news production processes continue to underline the importance of health literacy.

A survey amongst Portuguese journalists working for national media outlets (n = 200) during the first severe lockdown (May 2020) showed several changes (remote work, priority given to different news sources and to different news genres). One of those changes was the particular attention given to health literacy, expressed through the integration of specific elements in the news pieces that encouraged behavior change in order to prevent disease and promote health (Araújo et al, 2021; Lopes et al, 2020). Another survey was conducted in 2023 (n = 222), to understand whether the changes in professional practice and news production introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic were maintained in the post-pandemic period. 187 respondents (84.2%) stated that they continued to value the promotion of health literacy, and highlighted as a priority the "resource to sources more focused on contextualization than on daily affairs" – this is a change introduced during the pandemic. With less incidence, but still relevant, is the use of speech genres with an educational and explanatory nature, such as infographics, and complementary genres, such as surveys, questions and answers, and explanatory boxes.

These discursive practices closely linked to literacy seem to reconfigure health journalism, which during the first two decades of the 21st century, in Portugal, did not show such marked features (Lopes & Araújo, 2017).

Several authors recognized the importance of communication and health literacy in fighting COVID-19 (Finset et al, 2020; Fielding, 2020), highlighting the media's role as partners in the public answer to a health emergency while being mediators between institutions and publics (Mheidly & Fares, 2020). That role is still deemed essential by Portuguese journalists, according to survey results, and it should be widely discussed. Indeed, while the pandemic introduced new practices and new contents, it also contributed to the increase of several information disorders. Simultaneously, it underlined the significance of health literacy in searching, accessing, and understanding of health information, recognizing the centrality of journalism as a primary source of information and an agent of behavior change.

Therefore, the aim of this study, based on the aforementioned survey, is to understand: the level of consolidation of practices that validate journalism as a primary source of health information, especially during public health crises; to organize the main procedures and discursive devices that journalism uses to assume a primary role in the strategic, global, proactive and concerted response of various sectors of society.

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HCO08 Production, representation, and effects of health issues

PP 1014 Between healthcare and headlines: The representation of family doctors in local newspapers in Germany

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The role of family doctors in Germany (also referred to as primary care physicians or general practitioners) has increasingly come under the media spotlight, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite making up a significant proportion of Germany's medical workforce and facing critical challenges such as a shortage of young practitioners (Bundesärztekammer, 2022; van den Bussche, 2019), their portrayal in local newspapers has not been thoroughly analyzed (Medcalf & Nunes, 2018; Wangler & Jansky, 2020). This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining how family doctors are represented in German local newspapers. Understanding this portrayal is vital

for comprehending public trust and perceptions of healthcare, especially in regions where family doctors are often the primary healthcare providers.

Utilizing framing theory (Entman, 1993) as a theoretical foundation, this study systematically examines the nature and extent of media coverage concerning family doctors. Framing theory is instrumental in understanding how media can construct and influence public perceptions and discourse, particularly in contexts laden with controversy or societal importance. Specifically, the study is guided by three research questions:

RQ1: What is the frequency of coverage about family doctors in regional newspapers?

RQ2: What are the identifiable frames in the coverage of family doctors?

RQ3: How has the representation of family doctors evolved from 2018 to 2023?

The study employs a quantitative content analysis of local newspaper articles from all German federal states, proportionately representing the market penetration of family doctors as reported by the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (KBV, 2022). This analysis is anchored in a hybrid category development approach, blending deductive categories derived from related framing research with inductive extensions to capture unique nuances in the examined media coverage.

The findings shed light on a notable increase in the media coverage of family doctors during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the context of vaccination campaigns. This coverage is characterized by a blend of personalized stories, emphasizing individual experiences and contributions, and generalized discussions about the broader roles and challenges faced by family doctors. A significant aspect of the study is the identification of a gender disparity in media representation, pointing to an underlying gender bias in healthcare coverage.

The study's results are significant for multiple reasons. Firstly, they provide a nuanced understanding of how media frames family doctors, which is crucial for shaping public perception and trust. Secondly, the findings contribute to the broader discourse on healthcare representation in media, particularly during health crises. The study underscores the importance of balanced and equitable media representation in healthcare, influencing both public opinion and policy-making.

HCO08 Production, representation, and effects of health issues

PP 1015 Controversial knowledge. Disrupting genetic knowledge hierarchies on YouTube

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Direct-to-consumer genetic testing (DTC GT) is a new health and lifestyle technology enabling users to test for various genetic diseases, conditions, and traits without the assistance of medical staff and institutions. In this paper, we focus on how the arrival of health managerial DTC GT to a global market has spurred social negotiations and conflicts related to genetic knowledge and technologies between test users and medical experts. Specifically, we are interested in how the new at-home genetic tests are discursively constituted across professional and user perspectives on YouTube, an increasingly important platform for sharing and obtaining health information. We thus ask:

To what extent and how does the spread of DTC genetic testing generate discursive disruptions and controversies on YouTube?

How does YouTube as a platform shape the communicative formats and aesthetics of this discursive encounter?

To answer these questions, we investigate 24 YouTube-videos – 12 from a test user perspective (sponsored and non-sponsored content) and 12 from a professional perspective (i.e., geneticists or medical professionals or science and health dedicated organizations/media outlets) – within a discourse analytical and media aesthetic framework. The analysis shows how two conflicting discourses constitute DTC GT as, on the one hand, a medical technology that necessitates professional guidance and general caution and, on the other, a device for generating interesting facts and narratives about the self online. While medical experts and science professionals position the test user as an easily impressable patient that lacks critical knowledge of the scientific, ethical, and medical implications of genetic testing, test users approach the new DIY technologies in a more casual and playful manner. They selectively regard and disregard genetic information and use alternative and personal interpretation frames (e.g., family histories, personal anecdotes, embodied experience, other self-tracking technologies) to incorporate selected results into their online self-narratives; this confirms previous (sparse) qualitative research into test user perspectives.[1] Furthermore, we conclude that even if the deprofessionalization of genetic knowledge is opposed by professionals on a content level, they often imitate the genre and style of test user videos due to the platform's prioritization of certain genres and aesthetic expressions. Our study, thus, not only contributes new knowledge of how scientific gatekeeping is challenged by DIY health technologies, but also offers new insights into how medical and scientific experts turn to and utilize the logics of social media platforms to address issues related to genetic accuracy, misinformation, and confidentiality. Ultimately, the paper raises questions of how to engage in health communication on YouTube

in a context where sedimented knowledge hierarchies are disrupted and where new DIY health technologies demand an understanding of test users not as people lacking fundamental knowledge, but as people driven by a genuine 'genetic curiosity' and engaged in alternative knowledge practices.

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HCO08 Production, representation, and effects of health issues

PP 1016 Effects of metaphorical communication on vaccine confidence in the adolescent population

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The World Health Organization has included vaccine hesitancy among the top global health threats. Vaccine hesitancy can be defined as delay or refusal of vaccination despite the availability of vaccination services. Parents of young children and adolescents often refuse vaccination because of distrust of health institutions, low confidence in vaccine efficacy and fear of adverse events. As for the perception of vaccine risk, the decision-making process of the individual can be strongly affected by emotions which operate automatedly and are rooted in experiential thinking.

The use of metaphors is common in public health communication and increased during the COVID19 pandemic. Metaphors can describe complex human experiences and stimulate emotional reactions. Although some evidence has supported the persuasive potential of metaphorical language over scientific language, further research is needed to understand the effects of metaphorical framing in health care contexts other than emergency.

Our study aimed at comparing the effects of neutral scientific talk with war- and protective metaphors on health communication. An online survey was conducted on a sample of Italian teenagers randomly selected to three study arms. Each participant was invited to watch a specific version of an informative video on infections and vaccines (group 1: neutral scientific approach, group 2: metaphorical war- and group 3: metaphorical protective approach). After watching the video, each participant responded to an ad-hoc questionnaire collecting anonymous demographic information and asking 10 specific questions on the topic of infectious diseases and vaccinations. A synthetic vaccine confidence index (VCI) was built dividing the sum of the scores obtained from the answers to the eight positive questions by the score obtained from the two negative ones. The higher the index, the higher the level of confidence.

Preliminary results referred to 362 subjects randomly allocated to the three groups are reported. No significant differences regarding age, sex and geographical area were detected between groups. Median age of the sample was 16 years (mean 15.7) and 52.5% were girls. The general attitude towards vaccination in group 2 and 3 was largely positive, with the majority agreeing (strongly or tend to agree) on the fact that vaccines are important (group 2: 63%; group 3: 90%), safe (group 2: 59%; group 3: 68%), effective (group 2: 66%; group 3: 89%), and do not generate anxiety (group 2: 41%; group 3: 59%). Higher level of distrust against vaccines was found in group 1, where 50% of participating adolescents are strongly or tend to be anxious about getting vaccinated. These data are confirmed by comparing the VCI between groups, which is lower in group 1 (VCI = 3.9), compared with group 2 (VCI = 6.1) and group 3 (VCI = 7.8).

The results of our survey suggest that emotional involvement evoked through the use of metaphorical language may have, at least in the short run, some positive effect on vaccine confidence. If confirmed, this evidence can inform public health communication programmes.

HCO08 Production, representation, and effects of health issues

PP 1017 Multi-method study on the role of social media in body image development among individuals with a visible difference

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Throughout the years, numerous studies examined the role of social media in users' body image (Vandenbosch et al., 2022). Researchers agree that social media has the potential to exert a (typically small) influence on negative and positive body image components (Rodgers et al., 2022; Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019). Overall, this line of research has neglected sensitivity groups. Among such groups, individuals with visible differences [in short: IVD] (i.e. 'a scar, mark or condition on your face or body that makes you look different') (Changing Faces, n.d.) are potentially highly susceptible for social media effects as their development of a healthy body image is challenged (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2007). Moreover, social media influencers with visible differences [in short: SMIVD] have grown in popularity. Such influencers may function as "super peers" and affect IVD's body image via social comparison processes

(Pan et al., 2022). Despite their possible (substantial) impact, it is unclear how this health-related topic (i.e. visible differences) is portrayed by SMIVD and how this content is perceived among IVD.

Using a multi-method approach, this study aimed to fill these gaps by conducting (1) a content analysis of the posts of SMIVD and (2) in-depth interviews among young IVD about appearance culture on social media. The content analysis explored the portrayal of visible differences in combination with negative (e.g. adherence to narrow appearance ideals) and positive (e.g. inclusion of body positive messages) appearance cues in these SMIVD's posts (*N = 629*). The in-depth interviews investigated young IVD's perceptions of the role of social media and SMIVD in the development of body image (*N = 10*).

The content analysis indicated that SMIVD depict their visible difference in the majority of their posts (75.4%) in combination with one or more body positive theme(s) (54.3%). The most popular body positive theme was inner positivity (87.1%), followed by self-appreciation (45.9%) and body self-care (10.79%). The results also showed that beauty ideals were present in the large majority of the posts (98.17%) and that visible differences and beauty ideals significantly co-occurred. Additionally, we found that certain positive and negative appearance cues go hand in hand in SMIVD's posts, possibly challenging the positive effects of positive appearance cues on follower's body image. Moreover, multilevel negative binomial regression analysis indicated that the presence of a visible difference significantly predicts the number of likes received on the influencers' post. This finding could indicate a social reinforcement process of the portrayal of visible differences by SMIVD.

The interviews revealed that young IVD have endorsed the potential of body positive content. Yet, they do not automatically consider the posts of SMIVD as body positive. Some of them even indicated that they do not want to be confronted with visible differences on social media and exposure to their own visible difference raised feelings of reluctance. These findings highlight that future research should take into account that increased online representation of different appearances on social media are not considered by all users as body empowering content.

HCO09 Communication about cancer: From screening to survivors

PP 1120 The importance of 'peace of mind' and the construal of the screening as predictors of colorectal cancer screening intentions among young people

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Early detection of colorectal cancer (CRC) is crucial, as the chances to cure it at an early stage are higher (Wong et al., 2021). However, participation in screening interventions, such as colonoscopy or faecal tests, remains low (Klabunde et al., 2015). Moreover, recently there has been a growing prevalence of early-onset CRC, affecting young people under the age of 50 (Akimoto et al., 2021). Hence, investigating effective communication strategies to encourage participation in CRC screening programmes is of great importance.

Past research has mainly investigated the influence of gain- and loss-framing on CRC screening intentions (Lee-Won et al., 2017; Lucas et al., 2016; Myers et al., 1991), albeit with mixed results. Additionally, the perception of CRC screening as health-affirming or disease-seeking ('construal of screening') has been identified as a predictor of screening intentions (Lipkus et al., 2019). Furthermore, the feeling of 'peace of mind' associated with the screening programme appears to play an important role (Honein-AbouHaidar et al., 2016; McGregor et al., 2015; Robb et al., 2008). Thus, we assume that the influence of framing on CRC screening intentions is mediated by 1) an individual's construal of the screening interventions and 2) an individual's association of CRC screening with 'peace of mind'.

To test these assumptions, we conducted an online experiment with a 2 (gain- vs. loss-framing) x 2 ('peace of mind' mentioned vs. not mentioned) factorial between-subjects design (n = 178; age: M = 32.51, SD = 15.48). Accordingly, we developed four flyers on CRC screening. Participants read one of the four flyers, followed by questions regarding their intentions to undergo colonoscopy and faecal tests, their construal of the screening, and their association of the screening with 'peace of mind'.

Our findings revealed that both colonoscopy and faecal test screening intentions are not influenced by gain- or loss-framing as well as the emphasis on 'peace of mind' in the stimulus material. No statistically significant differences were observed among the four groups. Furthermore, the construal of the screening and the associated feeling of 'peace of mind' did not serve as mediators of this relationship. Instead, we identified that both a construal of the screening as health-affirming (rather than disease-seeking) (colonoscopy: β = .17; faecal test: β = .28) and a stronger association of the screening with 'peace of mind' (colonoscopy: β = .42; faecal test: β = .17) led to higher CRC screening intentions.

We conclude that communication strategies aimed at enhancing CRC screening intentions among young people should primarily focus on promoting screening as health-affirming and fostering the feeling of 'peace of mind'. Gain- and loss-framing alone might not be sufficient. Currently, we are conducting a follow-up experiment to replicate these findings, addressing limitations of the first online experiment (e.g., strengthening the experimental

manipulation of 'peace of mind') and investigating the role of further emotions, such as disgust and embarrassment. Results will be discussed with regard to both experiments.

HCO09 Communication about cancer: From screening to survivors

PP 1121 Communicating about cervical cancer screening with visual displays: A longitudinal experiment

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To make decisions about cancer screening participation, eligible individuals often consider written information materials including leaflets and websites. However, such materials generally include quantitative information about screening benefits, risks and possible results that can be hard to understand (Okan et al., 2019). Simple graphical displays such as icon arrays and tree diagrams represent quantitative information in ways that can support understanding. Yet, little is known about the relative effectiveness of both formats, especially in the longer term. Here we examined the effectiveness of icon arrays relative to tree diagrams and to purely numerical formats in the context of the UK's National Health Service (NHS) cervical cancer screening program.

We conducted a well-powered longitudinal online experiment involving 3,100 UK women eligible for cervical screening (25–64 years) varying in numeracy and graph literacy. We tested the effectiveness icon arrays relative to the tree diagram currently used in NHS information materials, and a numerical-only format. We also examined whether the presence (vs. absence) or explanatory text referring to different types of screening results (i.e., abnormal vs. no abnormal cervical cells) moderated effects of presentation format. We assessed the impact of the different presentation formats immediately after participants viewed the displays (initial assessment) and at 1-month follow-up. Participants completed multi-item measures assessing *gist knowledge* of probabilities of different screening results (i.e., essential, bottom-line meaning), *verbatim knowledge* (i.e., precise words or numbers), perceptions of the likelihood of adverse results, screening intentions, affective reactions, and user evaluations (e.g., trust and liking). At 1-month follow-up, we also assessed self-reported screening behavior.

Presentation format did not significantly affect verbatim or gist or knowledge of probabilities at initial assessment. However, icon arrays were associated with better gist knowledge of absolute magnitudes than tree diagrams and numerical-only formats at 1-month follow-up. Participants exposed to icon arrays also perceived lower likelihood of adverse screening results and reported stronger screening intentions at initial assessment. For displays without explanatory text, icon arrays were also associated with more positive user evaluations and less negative affective reactions than tree diagrams at initial assessment.

Our findings provide evidence supporting the use of icon arrays as an effective tool for communicating about cervical cancer screening results, with effects that endure over time. The use of icon arrays in the NHS cervical screening leaflet and other information materials should not be costly to implement and could support informed decision making while reducing perceptions of potential adverse results and promoting screening uptake. Additionally, our study highlights the importance of considering diverse outcome measures in the evaluation of communication formats, including different types of gist knowledge, which has implications for the evaluation of public understanding of probabilities and health risks.

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HCO09 Communication about cancer: From screening to survivors

PP 1122 Doctor-patient communication and management of long-term adverse effects of cancer on general health

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Cancer patients are generally unaware of the potential long-term adverse effects of cancer and its treatment on their overall health. These effects can vary depending on the type of cancer, the stage of the cancer, and the specific treatments received.

Doctor-patient communication is crucial in managing the long-term adverse effects of cancer on general health. Doctors need to provide patients with clear and accurate information about the potential long-term effects of cancer and its treatment and to discuss strategies for managing these effects.

Objectives

This study aimed to identify the impact of cancer patient-physician communication on the long-term adverse effects of cancer and treatment on overall health.

Methods

A quantitative research study was conducted focusing on patients who are part of 4 support groups for Romanian cancer patients and their relatives on Facebook. For the cross-sectional study, participants were chosen from these groups and asked to complete a detailed questionnaire regarding their knowledge and experience of the long-term effects of cancer and its treatment.

Results

The results of this study revealed that most patients were unaware of the long-term adverse effects of cancer and treatment on their general health.

A large proportion of those who took part in the study stated they were not informed about the long-term adverse effects of cancer on their general health, and now face cardiovascular disease, kidney damage, infertility, cognitive changes, as well as emotional and psychological effects.

Discussion

Under these circumstances, I believe that patient education and empowerment are also important in managing the long-term adverse effects of cancer. Patients should be encouraged to ask questions, seek information, and advocate for their own health needs.

The majority of the interviewed patients claimed they were more likely to have benefitted from the support of cancer support organizations or online resources that provided information and guidance on managing long-term health risks.

I consider that by working together, patients and healthcare providers can develop strategies to support patients' ongoing health needs and improve their quality of life.

Keywords: doctor-patient communication, long-term adverse effects, cancer, cancer patients, health information, Romania

HCO09 Communication about cancer: From screening to survivors

PP 1123 Live streaming as a new mode of health communication: The felicitousness of interaction in Egyptian breast cancer awareness events

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Live-streaming is increasingly used in health communication, but there is hardly any research on it. Drawing on Goffman's (1963, also Hall 2018) theory of situated interaction and conversation analysis (CA) (Schegloff, 2007) we examined whether the interaction enabled by live-streaming was felicitous in terms of whether audiences received expected answers to their comments. We identified a technological challenge of responding to a high volume of real-time questions, and a situational challenge of how to handle inappropriate questions, which highlight key dilemmas of this new mode of communication.

We analysed seven highly engaged Facebook live-streaming sessions (thousands of likes/comments) by two Egyptian charities during their breast cancer awareness campaigns (October 2021, 2022). Using the analytical concept of adjacency pairs from CA we examined the sequences of comments and (expected) responses in the sessions.

We identified three main types of sequential interactions in the video chat: First, most audience contributions were *compliments*, such as religious praises for the charity, responded to by an appreciation (heart emoji), which fomented ritualistic phatic communication. Second, the audience posted *medical questions* and received answers either via chat or orally. Charities' responses were generally designed to clarify campaign content. However, medical questions posed two challenges. One, audiences asked questions related to their personal medical history, indicating misaligned expectations of doctor-patient communication. Two, it was difficult to answer the high volume of chat questions. Both challenges led to unanswered questions. Users could repost questions numerous times, showing an unmet expectation. Third, resulting from questions not being answered, users often provided *peer answers* to each other's questions, generating a parallel social occasion to clinicians' streaming, which could offer useful information but could also take the conversation in potentially misleading directions.

The phatic exchanges of compliments and appreciations were similar to Goffman's (1963) unfocused public interaction that does not deliver information but enhances a sense of social presence and politeness. The requests for focused responses to individual medical questions highlights a possible mismatch between the novel context

of streaming versus a medical consultation. The parallel peer-to-peer interaction in the chat may enhance learning and engagement but also interjects a real-time parallel that is challenging to manage and potentially confusing and distracting in terms of the content of the conversation between clinical campaigners and audiences.

In conclusion, the analysis highlights key types of interactions in live-streaming in the health context, which resonate with social media rituals ('likes'), may create misaligned expectations about what questions are appropriate in this novel context, pose technological challenges for those managing these interactions, and expose potential problems with peer-to-peer interaction. Mapping these interactions offers conceptual and practical insights on key types and their implications in this developing space.

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HCO09 Communication about cancer: From screening to survivors

PP 1124 Recovered from cancer – No questions left? An analysis of information needs and behaviors among long-term cancer survivors in Germany

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Cure rates for cancer have improved significantly, and the number of long-term cancer survivors (LTCS) is increasing [1–3]. Follow-up care in Germany usually lasts for about five years after treatment, and LTCS are then either considered recovered or chronically ill [4,5]. However, cancer and the various types of local and systemic treatments lead to late effects that can massively impair physical and mental health, quality of life, and life expectancy [6–9]. While oncologists are in charge for immediate cancer treatment and follow-up care, general practitioners or other medical specialists might not feel responsible, competent or lack knowledge about late effects of cancer and different cancer therapies [10]. These circumstances result in a care gap for LTCS shaped by uncertainties and unmet supportive needs increasing the risk of poorer health [11]. Needs-oriented information is crucial to bridge this gap [12].

As cancer information services (CIS) are known to play an important role in the cancer information pathway [13], we analyzed N = 24,197 telephone or e-mail inquiries of cancer patients to the largest cancer information service in Germany between 2019 and 2023 to describe information needs and behaviors of LTCS in Germany. About 30 percent of the inquiries were from LTCS (n = 7,006). They were on average 65.1 years old and 66.1% female. The main disease situation of these patients was relapse (35.1%), followed by the phase after initial treatment has been completed (33.0%). The dominating tumor regions were breast (46.7%) and male genital organs (primarily prostate, 22.1%), corresponding to the most common cancers in men and women. Information needs of LTCS in general were similar to those of short-term cancer survivors, however, LTCS requested information on certain topics, like living with cancer (58.3% vs. 52.3%; $\chi^2(1) = 73.28$, $p < .001$, $\phi = 0.06$), more frequently.

A closer look at the information needs of LTCS reveals gender differences: Men made significantly more inquiries about treatment (69.3% vs. 60.9%; $\chi^2(1) = 47.59$, $p < .001$, $\phi = -0.08$) and diagnostics (40.8% vs. 28.7%; $\chi^2(1) = 104.99$, $p < .001$, $\phi = -0.12$), whereas women asked more questions about living with cancer (62.4% vs. 50.5%; $\chi^2(1) = 91.65$, $p < .001$, $\phi = 0.11$) and psychological aspects (34.7% vs. 25.8%; $\chi^2(1) = 57.31$, $p < .001$, $\phi = 0.09$). The health condition at the time of the inquiry also plays a decisive role. LTCS with metastases mainly requested information on treatment (83.7% vs. 52.2%; $\chi^2(1) = 627.52$, $p < .001$, $\phi = -0.34$), while those without metastases focused on information on living with cancer (62.5% vs. 51.6%; $\chi^2(1) = 66.50$, $p < .001$, $\phi = 0.11$).

LTCS still have information needs and actively seek information and advice. However, LTCS are a heterogeneous group with specific information needs according to their health status and gender. The findings point to the need for a targeting approach offering needs-adjusted information and a support infrastructure for LTCS, which is not yet provided by the German health care system.

IIC01 Amplifying marginalized and underrepresented voices

PP 0721 A culture-centered approach to artistic communication for social change: A close reading of murals painted in socioeconomically marginalized communities in Tierra Blanca, Ecuador and Athens, USA

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Participatory communication strategies for social change and development efforts are framed as ways to empower communities to express their collective desires and to express them in ways that challenge dominant power structures. Researchers in health communication have used participatory strategies to discover health and development concerns within communities and to find ways to assist communities in resolving these concerns. These strategies have ranged from community radio and television, to community theater and song, to, most recently, participatory arts projects such as mural-making. Because artistic communication is often seen as inherently resistive to dominant power structures, mural-making has been claimed to be a way for communities to disrupt dominant definitions of health and wellbeing and to express unique, community-based solutions to promoting positive social change and development. As Mohan Dutta argues, however, communication techniques developed to allow the expression of local voices are often infiltrated by or coopted by dominant regimes of the communicative infrastructures. We ask whether artistic approaches, specifically mural-making, are susceptible to cooptation away from social justice by these infrastructures. To answer this question, this paper engages two sites through close reading and discourse analysis of murals created in two socioeconomically marginalized communities to reveal (dys)functional and (un) predictable consequences of applying participatory approaches absent a commitment to centering local voices. The first site is a school-based mural in the community of Tierra Blanca, Loja, Ecuador. The second is in the town of Athens, Ohio, USA. At both sites, advocates for these murals have argued that their acts of mural-making empower communities by surfacing voices that are often marginalized. Applying concepts from Dutta's Culture Centered Approach to health communication, however, reveals that the disruptive potentialities of these murals are coopted by dominant regimes of meaning-making and recommit the reader to established norms, values, and relations of marginalized people to larger social orders. In Dutta's terms, artistic focus on Agency and Culture becomes secondary to (re)articulations of Structure. Specifically, the close reading of the mural in Tierra Blanca shows that the mural displaces community voices and promotes recommitment to the Catholic Church and to the (then) conservative government's values to promote a vision of individual moral responsibility as the solution to health and development problems. The close reading of the mural in Athens demonstrates that the intended message of supporting developmentally disabled artists in advocating for inclusion becomes erased by the site where the mural was painted; the mural exits service to the arts and enters service to consumption and capitalism. These murals, although potentially disruptive reveal that mural-making can become dysfunctional in expressing community-based voices and function, instead, to reinvigorate communicative infrastructures within the community. Moreover, these murals also trouble claims that artistic communication, as a means of communication production, are inherently resistive to dominant orders. Rather, they remind us of Dutta's claim that participatory approaches are often coopted by the regimes they challenge and must be constantly refreshed and revisioned if they are to remain modes of effective communication resistance.

IIC01 Amplifying marginalized and underrepresented voices

PP 1033 Mediated negotiation of multiethnic order: Cross border conviviality in Trieste, Italy

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This paper draws from my ethnographic research into communicative practices of conviviality that take place across and despite state borders between the largest ethnic minority group, the people from nearby former Yugoslav countries and Italians in the northeastern Italian port of Trieste. I adopt a non-media-centric perspective (Krajina, Moores & Morley, 2016), which observes the interlocking of media with everyday life, and defines communication as combinations of movement of people, goods and information (Morley 2017). My study is based on 15 depth-interviews and year-long participant observation in private and public spaces of the city where they congregate. The analysis suggests that the peaceful conviviality of these groups stems from a working communicative triad, encompassing a) embodied interactions (friendship networks; traversing of neighboring parts of Italy, Slovenia and Croatia), b) appropriated digital spaces (such as WhatsApp, where friends work out a polyglot space of belonging in which they share news and jokes), and c) specific urban scenography (intercultural social spaces like libraries and cafés, bilingual restaurant menus and road signs). Though uneasy, at times reproducing inherited stereotypes or historical narratives of post-WWII conflict, the ex-Yugoslav/Italian conviviality generates a novel cultural form connecting friendship, digital/embodied mobility, and geographical imagination. Constructed as a city of transit, and historically 'replaced' to different political territories, Trieste takes pride in its brand of ex-Habsburg and 'free port' cosmopolitanism. Mediated practices of conviviality I studied place Trieste at the centre of an imagined cross border

space, encompassing nearby cross border parts of north-eastern Italy, south-eastern Slovenia and south-western Croatia. My respondents' activities of traversing the space daily and their communications that mix cultural facets of both Italian and Slavic worlds (language, music, food), make Trieste an elective "capital" of their makeshift social world, preferred as such historically to the ex-socialist Balkan Other as the nearest 'Western European' city and to local Italians in response to their invisibility among compatriots in Italy (the majority of whom admit to be unaware of the city's existence in the country). Quotidian exchanges and mobilities elasticize very different lines of flight that brought these people into touch and serve them, in the era of renewed nationalisms to negotiate a sense of order that I term "more-than-national" (difference seen as undeniable but also indispensible to the overall order).

IIC01 Amplifying marginalized and underrepresented voices

PP 0723 Reckoning with subaltern science: A case study from India

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In light of the dominance of "Western" scientific discourse in English-language media, the question arises regarding how and to what extent a prominent born-digital science magazine such as India's *The Wire Science* (*TWS*) positions itself with respect to indigenous cultural practices. The question of how, precisely, cultural logics are refuted or reinforced by *TWS*'s journalism can be addressed through the array of positions in its coverage of subaltern science, the science produced by "those who have been at the receiving end of hegemonic structures." This paper critically examines media narratives of fisheries science as one form of subaltern science based, in this instance, on the social hierarchy of caste.

In our case study of "The Science of the Seas" (hereafter, "TSOTS") multimedia feature series in *TWS*, the traditional compass functions to serve local fishing methods, yet in a revised way to reflect the uniqueness of wind currents in India. This study of scientific discourse in *TWS* is premised in the understanding that the global circulation of scientific methods suggests multiple post-Western globalisms whereby the West does not bear a one-way relationship with the Global South. *TWS* coverage has opened the possibility of local Indian practices influencing and advancing Western science. However, the framing of the Indian fisherman in "TSOTS" hardly casts him as a viable path for further inquiry so much as an exotic wonder of an ancient, and highly mystical, relation with the sea.

Methodologically, this study provides a cultural-critical interpretation consonant with the call for qualitative approaches using smaller, manually collected data samples for deeper analysis of born-digital media content. This method suggests that media communication research can benefit from the "thickness" of "small data" through selective manual collection of content produced. In the spirit of Clifford Geertz, our analysis thus aims to thicken the critical significance and contextual sensibility of scientific knowledge as expressed through "TSOTS" in *TWS*. Our interpretation is executed here as a process that attributes meaning to discourse originating in one context, which is the text of "TSOTS," which we then translate into the discourse surrounding the broader cultural and ideological context of indigenous knowledges and Western science. Our choice of focusing this study on "TSOTS" was determined in part by the protracted (June 2021-August 2023) engagement with the indigenous knowledge system of fishing.

The lexical choices shaping definitions of science along with the representational casting of the fisherman and his methods reveal key rhetorical strategies by which "TSOTS" broaches the ways non-Western natural science and knowledge is served by Western European science. Although the spirit of a holistic understanding of plural sciences is invoked in "TSOTS," we show that its caste privilege ultimately elides deeper consideration of points of contact and exchange between cultures. Our analysis thus reveals that while the idea of representing subaltern fisher science in English-language media is novel, caste hierarchies are inscribed into the story narrative of "TSOTS" in such a way that it prevents subaltern science from fully emerging, thereby reinforcing the primacy of Western science.

IIC01 Amplifying marginalized and underrepresented voices

PP 0724 What do underrepresented scholars write about? Exploring the thematic content of Latin American and international communication research

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In the field of Communication research, a significant imbalance prevails, marked by an uneven global distribution of academic capital—a measure of recognition and influence in academia (Demeter, 2019). This disparity reflects socio-economic inequalities and contributes to a skewed portrayal of global communication phenomena and impacts the discipline's representation and narrows the overall scope of contributions (Barreto de Souza Martins, 2023).

Our study embarks on a comprehensive exploration to address this issue, focusing on a comparative analysis of Latin American and international publications in Communication research. We analysed Communications science

articles from 2002 to 2022, including sources encompassing both international and Latin American journals. This approach aimed to unveil prevalent themes in these distinct literature bodies and understand their temporal distribution. We posed two research questions: What overarching topics have existed in the past 20 years of communication research in Latin America and international journals and how did these topics evolve over time? Additionally, we asked regarding the influence of journal origin, publication language, and year of publication on the probability of an article being classified within these overarching topics.

Our analysis, leveraging computational text methods, dissected the content of 119,158 unique articles. We identified that 50.27% (n = 52,936) of abstracts featured 48 identifiable topics, categorized into eight overarching themes: Socioeconomic Issues and Identity; Creative Industries and Culture; Physical and Mental Health; Technology and its

Impacts; Communication Strategies and Practices; Corporate and Organizational Communication; Regional-Focused Studie; and Education and Meta-Studies. We have discerned that the likelihood of topic classification is influenced by the papers being available in Latin American or international journals.

Our analysis uncovers trends in Latin American research towards themes deeply rooted in local norms and behaviours, reflecting a focus on contextual, culturally nuanced explorations. Collaborative efforts to integrate already existing research from these less represented areas can substantially widen the current scope of communication science.

Addressing the issue of thematic representation in communication science as a mere supply and demand challenge can be highly misleading. The longstanding underrepresentation of a significant portion of the global research community contributes to a narrowed perspective in the field. Recognizing and rectifying this imbalance is not just about merely being inclusive; it's about further developing the field with a broader array of culturally relevant observations, thus leading to enhancements and improvements over the reliability and reproducibility of Communication science.

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IIC01 Amplifying marginalized and underrepresented voices

PP 0725 Indigenous filmmaking in Latin America: Development and visibility in the context of digital communication

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The evolution of film and its technological development led to an increase in access, allowing the inclusion of new actors in the sphere of audiovisual creation. In this context, Indigenous peoples made their own film productions, gaining visibility (Ginsburg, 2002) and challenging ethnographic perspectives (Moore, 1992). Therefore, the concept of Indigenous filmmaking acquired relevance, referring to the film production made by "those people variously called 'indigenous', 'tribal', or 'first nations'; in sum, the still-residing descendants of the original inhabitants of territories subsequently taken over or circumscribed by alien conquest or settlement" (Shohat y Stam, 2014, p. 32).

Indigenous film has particular significance in Latin America (Gleghorn, 2017). In 2011, Abel Ticona, member of Centro de Formación y Realización Cinematográfica (CEFREC) – an organization that promotes audiovisual production by Indigenous communities – explained that this cinematography "has started to be more present thanks to the emergence of digital equipment, which made it possible for Indigenous people to easily access technology" (Dagron, 2014, p. 61).

This research intends to evaluate how Indigenous filmmaking has evolved and whether the context of digital communication has helped to increase and consolidate its productive structures and visibility. Therefore, the objectives of the research are:

(1) To analyse Indigenous Latin American filmmaking in the last two decades, and
(2) To assess the visibility of this cinematography.

To do so, the research employs a mixed method, qualitative and quantitative, based on the analysis of information and databases contributed by the national film agencies of some of the Latin American countries which are part of the study – INCAA in Argentina, for instance. These countries have been selected based on their high Indigenous population and/or their development of the film industry, including Mexico, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Peru and Argentina.

The information obtained from these official agencies will be supplemented with semi-structured in-depth interviews with some organizations linked to Indigenous filmmaking, such as Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Cine y Comunicación de los Pueblos Indígenas (CLACPI) or the aforementioned CEFREC.

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IIC02 Representations in news media and global media events

PP 0835 Western media assistance to Africa since the 1960s: Towards a liberal paradigm

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The study investigates past and current foreign intervention in African media and journalism with the view to identify the frameworks which have guided media development since 1960. The aim of the study is to query whether today's media assistance is accustomed to the criticism which has been posed throughout the years as a result of failed attempts in the past. The study consists of two parts: firstly, a broad literature review of media development in Sub-Saharan Africa since early interventions by UNESCO and others in the 1960s until today's multifaceted media development 'industry'. Secondly, a scrutiny of 26 evaluation reports of recent media development projects by Western agencies in 24 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with a view to describe current tendencies in African media intervention. The method for the second part is document analysis, where the reports are read critically in order to detect contemporary media development jargon, themes and approaches.

Media assistance is found to belong to five categories: journalism training and skills; infrastructure and institutional development (including direct support to media organizations); policy reform and media accountability (for example press councils); media support mechanisms (such as journalist unions, media advocacy organizations and press freedom day events); and higher education and research. The total volume of media assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa is uncertain, but the support coming from OECD countries to the region is likely to be around USD 100 million annually.

The overall conclusion of the study is that Western media assistance is increasingly reflecting a liberal paradigm, both on the overall media systems level and when it comes to favoured journalistic practices and ideologies. Media development programmes emphasize the democratic functions of the media and have as one of their main objectives to introduce and strengthen independent media. In terms of journalism ideology, professional standards are typically benchmarked against globally acknowledged principles such as accuracy, fairness, balance and objectivity. The preferred professional model is monitorial journalism, while interventionist, collaborative and locally inspired frameworks have little appeal. In the 60-year period covered by the study, the modernization and Africanization paradigms are found to have faded, while the liberal paradigm has become dominant.

IIC02 Representations in news media and global media events

PP 0836 Pan-Arab news satire: Transnational critiques and the contingency of satire

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News satire, as satirical interventions into the sphere of contemporary politics, has garnered increased scholarly attention in the past two decades (Baym, 2009). However, the deep articulation between political satire and national political cultures and contexts remains the predominant perspective in current scholarship. This fails to account for

cultural/political contexts of satire that do not align well to unitary nation states, as well as the increasingly complex processes of deterritorialization of both producers and audiences of such satire due to migration and displacement (Bernal, 2013). This paper aims to focus on the transnational dimensions of news satire through an in-depth study of the content of pan-Arab news satire—as exemplified by satirical news websites such as *Al-Hudood* ('The boundaries/borders', 2013–present, independent)—which has come to garner large transnational following across the Arab World and its diasporas. This sphere of news satire is strongly characterised by its transnational dimension whether at the level of production, content, or reception.

This paper aims to examine the concrete critiques formulated by pan-Arab news satire, the transnational stance underlying them, and the synergies and tensions these entail vis-à-vis satire as a genre. The study is based on a thematic and discursive analysis of al-Hudood's political coverage over a 6-months period (Nov 2022—May 2023) complimented by in-depth interviews with staff satirists at the media outlet. Our preliminary analysis shows three main interlinked critiques in al-Hudood's coverage: (1) a domestic political (democratic) critique; (2) a socio-economic critique; (3) a geopolitical critique. Whether reflecting on the economic crises in Lebanon or Egypt, the civil conflicts in Syria or Sudan or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, these different levels of critique invariably depart from a regional and transnational lens in making sense of different situated (national or local) realities and contexts across the region. This, we argue, privileges an understanding of power as fundamentally transpiring across borders and of resistance and social change as a profoundly transnational undertaking. On the other hand, we argue that these critiques have to contend with tensions between these different scales (local-transnational) whether at the level of production (e.g., in terms of the imagined audiences) or the satirical texts themselves (e.g., in terms of their inherently intertextual nature) which in turn highlight the contingency and ambiguity of satire as a form of 'rebellious humour' (Billig, 2005).

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IIC02 Representations in news media and global media events

PP 0837 News about Africa on YouTube: A comparison of Chinese and non-Chinese media

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During the twentieth century, news flows to and from Africa were dominated by Anglo-American news media and by those belonging to former colonial powers. Since the mid 2010s, Chinese State-owned media such as Xinhua, CGTN (China Global Television Network) and *China Daily* have been attempting to challenge this status quo, by pouring large sums of money into their coverage of Africa. In presenting their reporting of the continent, Chinese journalists and editors describe themselves in opposition to dominant news organisations in Europe and North America, whom they accuse of focusing predominantly on negative portrayals of the continent. Instead, Chinese media claim to give more prominence to "positive news". In recent recent years, several studies have explored Chinese media's coverage of Africa, particularly on television, both on its own terms and comparatively. However, many of these studies tend to provide a fragmented picture (e.g., they focus on a very small sample or a very short time frame); findings are sometimes contradictory (e.g., some studies claim that Chinese media use a predominant "positive" frame, while others claim they do not); and because studies use disparate methods, varying units of analysis and loosely operationalized variables, comparisons across studies are difficult.

Trying to overcome some of these limitations, this paper presents evidence derived from a multimodal computational content analysis of 24 months (2021–2023) of news coverage by Chinese (CGTN and Xinhua's New China TV) and non-Chinese (BBC, France24, Al Jazeera English and Africanews) news media on YouTube. All the selected broadcasters regularly post news clips and full news bulletins on the platform. Using a combination of computational text analysis and computer vision tools (supervised, semi-supervised and unsupervised machine learning, and object detection), this paper offers a systematic description of news about Africa and offers evidence to assess the impact, if any, of Chinese media's news reporting on representations of the continent.

The findings suggest that news coverage of African countries on CGTN and *China Daily*, unlike the other four news organisations, is quantitatively at par with that of countries in Europe and the Americas; is generally more positive than negative; and is thematically more diverse. However, this increase in volume and diversity is not consistent across the continent. Chinese media, like their non-Chinese counterparts, focus on a limited number of countries (e.g. South Africa, Kenya, Egypt…), which means that most African nations are not only underreported, but their coverage tends to be episodic and monothematic. The paper concludes by locating the findings in ongoing debates

about our current knowledge of news media's coverage of Africa and drawing attention to the methodological advantages of using multimodal computational tools to the analysis of large news corpora

IIC02 Representations in news media and global media events

PP 0838 The global success of a U.S. project? Soft Power and the Women's World Cup

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Global mega-events such as the Women's or Men's FIFA World Cup are not simply a showcase for the game, but shaped by economic, military, and cultural influences that interact with global, national, and local politics. The last Men's World Cup in Qatar in 2022 was widely discussed with the concept of soft power and public diplomacy (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2018). The women's game is strongly associated with the fight for women's rights, such as the equal pay movement. Indeed, the eyes of the world are upon the Women's World Cup and while they are, U.S. wins stand to both bolster the country's prestige and offer a platform for the country's soft power projection. In terms of soft power, research shows that women's football has the potential to bring about social acceptance of gender norms in Arab countries. When the soft power of the World Cup, as measured by sporting results, is contrasted with the hard power of military "sticks" and economic "carrots" (Nye, 2008, p. 94), as measured by GDP and defense spending, a difference between the men's and women's tournaments becomes apparent: While the men's tournament is dominated by Europe and Latin America – and has historically been empty of the great powers du jour such as the United States, Soviet Union/Russia, and China – the women's tournament is significantly more correlated with global power relations. Against this backdrop, our specific research question is: To what extent – intentionally or not – has the Women's World Cup become a tool of U.S. soft power strategy, and what does it look like? Our presentation is part of a "Communications History of the FIFA Women's World Cup" project, in which we analyze the coverage of the event by leading newspapers in 14 countries since its inception from 1991 to 2023. Our theoretical framework is based on Luhmann's disciple Uwe Schimank, who worked out three services of the sports system in exchange with t to the political system: a) national identification b) system competition c) symbolic politics. We divide our results into three stages: 1991–1999 conquering of new territory; 2003–2011 German rise and U.S. fall; 2014–2023 Return of the US and global success.

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IIC02 Representations in news media and global media events

PP 0839 Signed "One and many other taxpayers": The role of the Swedish welfare state in the court of public opinion on the Sámi

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During the 1960s, the Swedish welfare state experienced its heyday, often referred to as the gold standard of postwar social democracy. Funded through progressive taxation, its many rather ambitious social policies placed Sweden among the most egalitarian societies in the world at the time. But even so, continuing discussions about the welfare or lack thereof of its indigenous Sámi population indicates that not all was well in the state of Sweden: Despite officially being equal to their fellow Swedish citizens, Sámi spokespeople as well as their ombudsman were adamant that Sámi were structurally discriminated against and that they were being treated as 2nd class citizens. This begs the question how those disruptions, these moments of social disorder, played out in the court of public opinion.

In newspapers, radio, television, articles, and reports about minorities, i.e. "them" (here: Sámi), are more often than not written by a group that represents "us" – in this case the Swedish majority – that has few or no ties to the minority group they write about. As a result, the focus is often on how "they" are not like "us" and therefore a problem. This is as true today as it was 60 years ago, when many an article was written about "the Sámi problem" and issues concerning the Sámi community were often discussed in one fell swoop with other minorities, among them Sinte and Romani people, or in comparison with people of color in the United States, both First Nations and Black Americans.

Back in the 1960s, the media landscape in general was much less diverse and less accessible. This is also a time before social media provided relatively low-threshold platforms for private citizens to make their thoughts and opinions heard and engage in a public exchange on issues covered by newspapers and other media. One of the few possibilities to participate and contribute in the court of public opinion and political debate was to write letters

to the editors of newspapers and hope that they were published. The few letters that were chosen for publication provide both insights into the individual opinions of those who felt strongly enough about certain issues to write and send a letter to the respective publication and insights into which opinions were deemed important enough to be printed in the first place.

This study departs from one incident in which a TV program about the precarious circumstances of many Sámi prompted a rather indignant and lengthy letter to the publisher in which the truthfulness of the portrayal as well as the intentions of the program makers were seriously questioned. This letter, signed by "One and many other taxpayers", provoked two more responses by other readers, one who signed with their given name and one signed by "also a taxpayer". Using practice-oriented document analysis, this paper, which is still in its early stages, seeks to investigate the contemporary discourse on Indigeneity and minorities in the 1960s and locate therein the role of the welfare state and its taxpayers.

IIC03 Cosmopolitan communication studies: Toward deep internationalization

PN 133 Stepping out of the epistemic comfort zone:Questioning knowledge production in communication studies

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Research on de-westernizing and decentering communication and media studies highlighted among other things postcolonialism in research on the media systems of the so-called Global South (Ganter and Badr, 2022; Glueck, 2018), barriers to enter the international academic community for non-Westerners (Suzina, 2021; Freelon et al. 2023), centrality of Western Anglophonic theories (de Albuquerque et al., 2021), as well as structural limitations to de-westernizing academic publishing (Goyanes, 2019). Additionally, research has shown that major communication markets such as China and India are under-represented in global media science (Thussu, 2018). Despite the rich academic traditions in regions like the Middle East, post-Soviet states, and East Asia, English-speaking communication studies have largely overlooked academic production schools from these areas.Media practices in different parts of the world are still interpreted through a Western conceptual framework, raising questions about whether the community of values extends to methodologies and theories and whether this is beneficial. Around four concepts: Power and capital, Construction of concepts, Location and Mobility and Visibility and Invisibility the presentation questions the epistemic construction of our knowledge.It critiques the taken-for-granted epistemic authorities in communication studies and advocates to transform the discipline for more inclusive communication studies, which means reconsidering the knowledge production in our discipline on individual and organizational levels. If communication and media studies were to broaden their scope, they need to address the challenge of interconnecting culturally-specific research approaches and moving beyond macro-regional conceptual filters.

IIC03 Cosmopolitan communication studies: Toward deep internationalization

PN 134 De-Westernizing Media Systems Research

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This presentation will show why a decolonization of concepts in media system research is necessary and how we can deal with and overcome problems in existing media systems research. While much work has been done in recent years to diversify the research on media systems and include new dynamics, some regions of the world remain "blind spots" that hardly appear. In consequence, the existing concepts cannot grasp the realities in these contexts and the over-application of dominant approaches based on Eurocentric case studies lead to biased research. This has effects on knowledge production and understandings of norms, but also on practical issues such as media assistance. For a truly cosmopolitan or decolonial approach to media system analysis we therefore push for creating awareness of the unreflected use of the concept of "media system" and foster a broader and more inclusive analysis. "System" should not be treated as an analytical box. Instead, "media contexts", "media ecologies", "communication ecosystems", "media configurations" or other contextualizing concepts all add to a deeper understanding of our research objects. The necessity of de-westernizing and decolonizing existing concepts brings us to inductive approaches and context-led research as a research program that will be outlined in this presentation. In a first step, we need to reflect our positionality and reconfigure it through processes of "unlearning" and "relearning" (Datta, 2018). Understanding the "positionality" of media contexts and acknowledging path dependencies and impacts from different (f)actors in various world regions is key when we want to go beyond trying to find a one-fits-all-typology for media context analyses. Secondly, by means of a deep (historical and transnational) contextualization and inductive approaches we can pay respect to indigenous knowledge, voices, and epistemologies. This also means,

in a third step, to consciously include the margins in our methodologies, e.g. by means of context-sensitive research, qualitative mapping or participatory methods.

IIC03 Cosmopolitan communication studies: Toward deep internationalization

PN 135 Comparative media ethics: The role of universalism in cosmopolitism

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Media-ethical thinking is strongly connected to norms. Although the context-bound character of norms is state of the art in academic media ethics, there is still the endeavor to declare essential norms as universal. A fundamental expression of universal norms for media and communication are the respective paragraphs in the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, this contribution analyses the different dimensions of universalistic thinking. Starting from a brief explanation of universalistic thinking, the presentation investigates the philosophical origins and dimensions of universalism and its historical development. It reveals contradictory implications of the concept and shows how it became a significant influence in philosophy about the state. It sketches the development from the Greek polis and the Roman Empire, via the philosophy of Enlightenment and the French Revolution to the twentieth century and the debate about universal human rights. With this background, we point to the limits of universality in view of context and power and discuss the relation between cosmopolitism and universalism in media ethics.

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IIC03 Cosmopolitan communication studies: Toward deep internationalization

PP 0942 The unrevealed Colonial Perspectives of German Newspaper Studies from the Weimar Republic to the 1940s. Or: The lack of epistemic memory in the field of communication studies

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To this day, German communication studies struggle for internationality, not least with regard to epistemic justice (Richter et al. 2023). From research on the history of communication studies, we know a great deal about the international flow of people and ideas from Germany caused by emigration and flight after 1933 (the exodus of academics from newspaper studies to the US and elsewhere, Kutsch 1988, Author 2001). After 1945, the difficult re-integration of "Publizistikwissenschaft" into the international field followed (Löblich 2010). The Status Quo of research is: We are aware of the 'Nazification' of German newspaper studies, which was not only ordered by the state, but also operated from within academia by NS-conformist scholars (Kutsch 2010, Jedraszczyk 2016).

This presentation will complement this knowledge regarding the today forgotten books and articles about the African continent published between 1928 and 1943 in the context of German newspaper and radio studies by founding figures likes E. Dovifat (1942), K. Wagenführ (1942) and W. Hagemann (1929, 1943).

Dovifat and Wagenführ (together with the journalist R. K. Dietze) mapped African press systems and early technologies for broadcasting. Hagemann, then still working as a journalist (he became a professor at the University of Münster in 1946), dealt with 'colonial methods' (critically in 1928, later opportunistic towards the NS).

With the works of Dovifat and Wagenführ, the early roots of media systems research and 'development communication' get visible – in the sense of the Western narrative of the "civilisation" of the apparently "uncivilized". They shared this normative idea of "civilisation" with Hagemann.

None of the three can be said to have been a convinced Nazi, the picture is ambivalent (Hagemann and Dovifat never joined the NSDAP, Hagemann was considered an "opponent" by the regime, Wiedemann 2015; Dovifat denounced the NS-racial politics, Pfeiffer 2018, and lied for his Jewish assistant, Author 1999). Nevertheless, such possibly opposing or antagonistic motivations were hardly visible to their readers or students. Dovifat and Wagenführ knowingly published their research on behalf of the NSDAP's colonial-political office ("Kolonialpolitisches Amt").

The presentation outlines the epistemic constellation of ideas about media and development on the African continent in relation to a specific milieu of academics. On the basis of published sources (1928–1943), it will be shown that the first steps towards comparative media system research in Germany cannot be reduced to their ambivalent appearances within NS academia, but must also be seen in the light of colonialist thinking.

Selected bilbiography

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IIC03 Cosmopolitan communication studies: Toward deep internationalization

PN 136 Diversity in and through the Media: cosmopolitan perspectives on challenges and opportunities

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This presentation asks what we can learn from a diversity approach to communication research and teaching. First step is to de- and reconstruct the existing value, practice, and policy of (cultural) diversity in and through the media (Media Diversity) from a cosmopolitan perspective. The Diversity concept is criticized as too ambiguous and hierarchical, implicitly rooted in a White/Western liberal framework. In this sense, Diversity in institutions like the media is so far rather a "performance culture" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 84), that simply accounts for the existence of diverse group representatives in journalism and media, instead of fostering structural changes. Diversity is criticized to depoliticize and bureaucratize difference while it celebrates it. Concepts like critical multiculturalism, however, are acknowledged for their normative dimensions, that recognize unequal power relations and are committed to elimination of structural inequalities (Zayani, 2011; Kaltzada, 2019).Taking these critical implications as a starting point it is, however, argued that Diversity as a value, a practice, and a policy has the potential to represent a "meta concept" that connects earlier theories like multiculturalism or antiracism under one roof without eliminating their critical implications. A cosmopolitan communication research can thus emphasize the normative-democratic dimension of Diversity (and not the utilitarian one) and take into account intersecting power relations, exclusions – but also empowerments in the media. This may help to shed light on inequalities and eliminate asymmetries of power on the structural level (Badr et al., 2021). This leads to the third step and the question in how far cosmopolitan scholarship may profit from alliances built with activists related to Media Diversity – or be an activist itself in the first place -to have an impact to media practice and structures. On this foundation the fourth step includes a glance at the current debate and situation in Germany and international best-practice cases, that give a showcase of cosmopolitan structures in the media (Horz, 2016; 2020).

IIC04 Hate, love, us, and them: Mediated representations

PP 0722 Racial load and literacy in the city: Insights from non-white women in Bordeaux and Rotterdam

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This presentation offers insights into the way non-white women living in Bordeaux (France) and Rotterdam (the Netherlands) perceive discourses about race/racism to materialize in their everyday urban surroundings. Focusing on racial landscapes (James et al., 2015) zooms in on the way cities mediates race and racism. Furthermore, racial landscapes, capture the contradictions of discourses of race and racism in Europe: erased from public spaces, dominated by whiteness, connected to a post-racial narrative (Salem & Thompson, 2016), and yet deeply embedded in "the archite(x)ture of European space" (Goldberg, 2006: 340). Cities are strategic venues where meanings are (re)produced, contested, and rendered (in)visible—for instance through street names, statues, places of worship etc. (Sassen, 2012). Thus, focusing on racial landscapes helps understand how the continuities of France's and the Netherlands' colonial and racist past shape today's supposedly post-racial urban realities. This study draws on several fields of study: ethnic, racial and gender studies, cultural studies and urban communication, and is informed by postcolonial feminism.This interdisciplinary approach offers a unique conceptual lens to reveal the range of social processes intertwined with race and space since gender, class and sexuality are communicated through both space and race (Mishra, 2013; Neely & Samura, 2011). Addressing the intersection between race, gender, and space is crucial since urban centers are typically constructed by and for (white) men (Massey, 1994; Pain, 2001).

The study is articulated around the following research question: How are race and racism communicated in urban settings, as identified and recorded by non-white woman living in Bordeaux and Rotterdam? This study uses

photo-diary and photo-elicitation as research design whereby the participants (n= 25) took photographs of the city and brought them to the interview. Photographs offered insights into the signs participants perceived to contribute to the (re)production of race/racism in Bordeaux and Rotterdam and were instrumental in giving more depth and materiality to the interviews. The presentation will discuss the methodological implications of using such a research design for data collection and in connection to ethics, whiteness in academia and the researcher's positionality. The findings presented in this presentation will primarily draw on the interviews which were analyzed using the main tenets of qualitative textual analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Tracy, 2010).

The interviewees revealed various forms racial representations and racism can take through their everyday urban experiences (e.g. covert, blatant, cultural) that echo discourses of race and racism in Europe while also incorporating national (i.e. French and Dutch) discursive aspects. The participants also brought in various identification strategies (e.g. connected to imagined geographies, and labels such as Afropean, Afro descendants or mixed-race), and addressed intersections between race, gender and social class. The results reveal how the 'racial load' (Soumahoro 2020) manifests in concrete ways in urban contexts while pointing to ways of using cities to develop 'racial literacy' (Twine & Steinbugler, 2006).

IIC04 Hate, love, us, and them: Mediated representations

PP 1034 Mourning and visual tropes in photojournalism: Exploring the influence of repetition

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In recent years, it has become increasingly common to encounter mourning in the news media, mainly due to ongoing wars or pandemics. The grief associated with the loss of close ones is a significant subject and a powerful emotion that is often captured through news photography. Even though mourning can refer to different matters, we argue that the journalistic images constantly resemble each other. Different locations and faces, but the composition or other visual practices are often similar and repetitive. In this research, we observe the visual form of mourning by comparing two significant world events – the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

The repetition of topics in visual culture was already noted in the 19th century by Aby Warburg, who used pathos formulas to draw attention to certain depictions (gestures) associated with recurring emotions, regardless of culture (Didi-Huberman, 2009). Marianne Hirsch (2012) later defined established images representing certain events or emotions under the visual figures of memory. She demonstrated these primarily through photographs from the Second World War that represented the conflict and created a way of remembering, a so-called 'postmemory', for future generations. Moreover, this could also be highlighted by the constantly recurring themes and stylisations in photography called visual tropes (Zarzycka & Kleppe, 2013). Their use is meant to evoke emotions, corresponding to the turn towards the effect, which is evident in the news media in recent years.

This trend also emerges in news photography depicting mourning. To reveal this phenomenon, we are conducting a case study of news photographs published in the online mutation of The New York Times, a news media outlet with significant worldwide impact and relevance, and a substantial number of its original photographs. We are employing a qualitative social semiotic analysis (Caple, 2013) of 30 photographs published in the first six months after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and the war in Ukraine in 2022. In addition, we are supplementing the analysis by identifying visual tropes (Zarzycka & Kleppe, 2013).

Preliminary results highlight the recurring patterns of pathos, depicted primarily by repetitive themes, gestures, and visual figures that appear in both studied events. Among the included photographs, visual tropes were identified in more than half of the cases – most frequently, the mourning man or woman, the funeral, the coffin, and the dead male body. The women captured in the images often showed stronger emotions, suggesting the use of gendered visual stereotypes. With the results obtained, the research offers insight into the visual representation of mourning in two widely covered media events in recent years.

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IIC04 Hate, love, us, and them: Mediated representations

PP 1035 Ascribing identities and co-constructing the 'Other' online: A multimodal framing analysis of a news report in YouTube

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This study explores the multimodal resources and narratives through which the Other is formed, and identities are ascribed in online spaces. In line with recent research, identity is seen here as constructions of belonging which go hand in hand with processes of in-group and out-group formations that may also lead to othering (Kroskrity, 2000). Identities are neither fixed nor limited, but rather contextual, intersectional, and interactively achieved (Pennington, 2018). The goal of this study is to explore and develop an understanding of how people co-construct the Other and make certain identities relevant in social media using multiple modes.

In the beginning of the year 2018, the British government decided to include relationships, sexual orientation, and sex education into the curriculum of state funded primary schools. However, the addition of information related to LGBTQ+ in the curriculum has been met with resistance, particularly from religious parents. For example, the British Muslim community has voiced their concerns and protested against the actions taken by the British government. YouTube has been used by news companies to air video stories covering the protest and narratives of the protestors along with the position of school officials.

The analysis centers on a news report shared on YouTube dealing with the protest of a local group of parents against the addition of information about LGBTQ+ in the curriculum in the UK, as well as a selection of comment chains that were evoked by the post. The video was uploaded in 2019. By the time of this study, the selected video had approximately 169,000 views and around 6000 comments. In deference to the multimodal nature of YouTube videos, this study utilizes multimodal framing analysis (Moernaut, Mast & Pauwels, 2020) as a method of choice. In addition, we draw on discourse analytic procedures in scrutinizing followers' responses and exchanges.

Our ongoing analysis indicates a hierarchy of ascribing identities in the data. Drawing on multimodal resources, the media works with social categorizations throughout the documentary, presenting and classifying involved conflicting parties in the light of their own visible and audible identifications. The protesters can be seen to construct a strong group identity as Muslim parents (e.g., clothing and reference to shared values). While the video appears to be designed as a news report that puts forward facts, the media does not seem to succeed in taking a neutral position consistently throughout the video. At times, the use of images, sounds and language contributes to the formation of "us" vs "them", where the audience is implicitly encouraged to pick a side. By investigating selected comments, the analysis further illuminates that and how these positions are taken up and expanded by the audience. Only towards the end of the news report, this problematic opposition is addressed and critically reflected through an expert interview that is – interestingly – visually located outside the previously presented 'battlefield'.

This study contributes to the growing understanding of the discursive construction of the Other in social media using multiple modes.

IIC04 Hate, love, us, and them: Mediated representations

PP 1036 The reproduction of 'climate migration': Racialisation and future social disorder in media framing of an unstable category

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In recent years, the category of climate migration has become established in political and media discourse. However, the category is unstable and contested due to the complexity of migration and its multi-causal nature; and reproduction of 'climate migration' frequently masks and depoliticises this complexity. This is not solely a conceptual problem with consequences for public knowledge, but a political problem also, as the concept can be instrumentalised to advocate for different interests.

Despite this instability, it is widely reproduced by civil society and media, often articulated to push for climate action. It's also reproduced by political actors to advocate for border securitisation, framed as a catalyst of potential societal collapse. Representation of climate migrants in the media portrays them as both threats and victims, typical of migration coverage broadly.

Although the category first emerged from the environmental civil society sector expressed as concern for environmental degradation, the framing was closely linked to colonial, racialised ideas of overpopulation causing land degradation and resulting migration in regions such as the Sahel and Bangladesh. A focus on these geographical regions continues today in reproduction of 'climate migration', along with a hyperfocus on numerical predictions of movement of people across borders.

Allusions to apocalypse or collapse also frequently appear, such as Al Gore's exhortation to climate action at the at the 2023 World Economic Forum in Davos, referring to '...these waves of climate refugees predicted to reach one billion in this century; we would lose our capacity for self-governance on this world.'

These predictions proliferate despite an acceptance that science's ability to predict movements of people based on climate change is limited. The category acts to disassociate environmental and climatic changes from the historical and contemporary impacts of exploitation and dispossession which leave people vulnerable to climactic shocks in the first place. Equally as fundamental, yet less considered, is how the category of climate migration further reproduces coloniality and racialisation by creating an imaginary of climate migration as future social disorder.

Despite this instability and misrepresentation, 'climate migration' is still widely reproduced by international institutions, academic disciplines, civil society organisations, political actors, and in the media. This paper examines the framing, interpretation and significance of the category of climate migration in media and political discourse. It presents a mixed-method analysis of how the category is reproduced in professional journalistic output in international media titles.

The quantitative research draws on a corpus of more than 3000 newspaper articles to document the regions and numbers that climate migration is most associated with, and the sources and key phrases that inform the reporting. The qualitative analysis examines long-form feature articles and their accompanying images, and clips of broadcast content, to provide discourse analysis of how climate migration is framed and presented. In conclusion, the paper will reflect on the significance of media framing of climate migration for action or activism on climate change, and the treatment of people categorised as climate migrants.

IIC04 Hate, love, us, and them: Mediated representations

PP 1037 Love migrants as digital diasporas: News and media use experiences of migrant women in Turkish-Greek mixed marriages

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This presentation is based on a field research that focuses on the digital media and news consumption patterns of Turkish-speaking migrants in Athens, who are in mixed marriages with a Greek spouse.

Seen as a typical Southern European country, Greece has both deep-rooted and strained historical ties and past with Turkey. Living together in the same geography for centuries has created many social and cultural similarities between the two countries. They also share a conflicting history by positioning themselves as the "other" in the formation of both Turkish and Greek national identities. (Bülent Gökay & Lily Hamourtziadou , 2016) . The disorder between the two nations dated back to the forced population exchange following the Lausanne Peace Treaty. It was one of the various migration waves. (Mert Tekin, 2010: 83–85).

Istanbul Rum Community (Greek Orthodox Community of Istanbul) were expelled and/or migrated from Turkey to Greece in the 1960s due to the deterioration of the bilateral relations. The political refugees from Turkey also found refuge in Greece in 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Since mid-2000s, a new type of migration from Turkey is observed among the urban, educated, affluent classes due to democratic backsliding. The new migration from Turkey to Greece have increased among the of young, educated, urban, white collar workers. Another inter-cultural and diasporic connection was established through the increasing number of mixed marriages between Greeks and Turks in the last decade.

It is observed that the internet and social media platforms, which are seen as a combination of news or various communication platforms, on the one hand will improve the trust of the citizens in their government, contribute to the self-development of political institutions. On the other hand, they have the power to magnify the inequalities and prejudices existing in society (Tolbert and McNeal, 2003). These inequalities or prejudicies could be magnified in diasporic networks.

By focusing on the news media and digital media use of these community in Athens, this research explores the ways in which Turkish speaking first generation migrant women in Athens negotiate their positionality and identification within the (dis)order in Athenian public sphere, fellow migrant solidarity networks and their communication networks back in Turkey. It also explore of the spouses in these mixed marriages as media users who are citizens of minority/diaspora communities in a polarized, pluralistic and crisis-ridden media system. The interviews are based on self-reflection on daily presence in diasporic and local networks as well as their news consumption in their everyday transnational experiences. Through in-depth interviews conducted 2023 in Athens with a dozen migrant women, information is obtained on how social and new media tools used by this community in Athens in Greece affect the potential development of these migrant women's digital citizenship practices .

IIC05 Language ideologies and generational differences

PP 1140 Struggling for second place: The role of English in multilingual families – A comparative study in five linguistic environments

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Due to the increase in migration worldwide and the digital turn in education prompted by the pandemic (Karpava, 2022), English as an international language plays a crucial role in both educational and home language (HL) environments. Children raised in multilingual families need to acquire their HL and the majority language (ML), as well as English, which is a global lingua franca (for an overview, see Jenkins et al., 2011). English is also an obligatory subject in schools in many countries. Furthermore, English serves as a common contact language not only in professional and educational spheres but also in close social relationships worldwide (Pietikäinen, 2017). It is frequently used as a mediating language among family members, both between partners and among all or some family members (Crystal, 2003; Björkman, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2009).

The aim of the current study is to investigate the role of English in multilingual families in Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Israel, and Sweden, particularly its impact on the development of HLs and MLs in the pre- and post-COVID-19 period. A total of 50 multilingual families, ten in each country, were under investigation (for an overview, see Zabrodskaja et al., 2023). The researchers employed a qualitative approach for data collection and analysis, utilizing case studies based on interviews with parents and observations of family language policy (FLP) and language management patterns at home. The comparative study focused on the presence of English in HL environments of endogamous and exogamous families with immigrant and minority backgrounds in the five countries under investigation, its role in FLP, (online) education, positive and negative effects on the use and maintenance of HL and ML, and (digital) literacy skills development.

The results of the study showed that the presence of English depends on its societal role in each country. English plays a significant role in all five countries, serving as a vehicle for the spread of popular culture and entertainment. In Cyprus, English is widely spread due to its post-colonial situation. In Estonia and Germany, it is the most popular foreign language and the language of inter-ethnic communication. Until the establishment of the state of Israel, English was the official language and continues to be important for government and commercial purposes today. In Sweden, English is even considered a second language.

The comparative analysis addressed parental beliefs and practices, revealing both variations and similarities. Exogamous families use English for language brokering purposes, employing it as a mediation tool for communication among parents and children. Schooling is another factor influencing the use of English at home, as it is an obligatory foreign language in schools. In Cyprus, some children even attend private English-speaking schools and private tutoring centers. The influence of the pandemic, lockdowns, and the digital shift in education triggered an increase in English-mediated digital communication and online activities. Overall, the findings suggest that the English language permeated the HL environments and FLP of multilingual families, especially during the pandemic, and that families needed to navigate a multilingual situation at home, supporting three languages: HL, ML, and English.

IIC05 Language ideologies and generational differences

PP 1141 Reproducing essentialism? – How ChatGPT and other Large Language Models explain interculturality and the field of intercultural communication

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Emerging AI-applications such as large language models (LLMs) and other types of digital content creators challenge the dynamics of human communication in multiple ways. The field of intercultural communication is no different in this regard. Already before the recent explosion of AI-tools in the form of ChatGPT and others, scholarship warned us about the possibility of algorithms reinforcing existing social inequalities and prejudices (Caliskan, Bryson & Narayanan, 2017). Many cases of algorithms exhibiting racist and sexist biases have been reported over the years, ranging from the way search engines (Papakyriakopoulos & Mboya, 2022) and facial recognition algorithms (Cavazos et al., 2021) may reproduce existing power structures and stereotypes. New conserns have been raised related to the way AI-generated content appears to be biased as well (Fang et al., 2023).

Less attention has been given to the way AI content creators may also reinforce and strengthen existing knowledge constructs and truth claims within academia, and more specifically, intercultural (higher) education. We know that tools such as ChatGPT are already used in communication and language education (AlAfnan et al., 2023), but what kind of a view on culture, interculturality, and the field of intercultural communication do they present to their users, and what could this mean for the attempts to challenge and renew the field? Through a number of use cases

and their close reading, this study presents how LLMs inform their users on the concept of interculturarity, the field of intercultural communication, and the main theories and models (and theorists) that characterize the field. The study illustrates how AI-generated content may reproduce traditional (essentialist) views into culture and interculturality and over-emphasize 'classical' views instead of newer developments, thereby reinforcing the status quo and even actively working against attempts to challenge hegemonic knowledge constructs. Implications for scholarship and intercultural (higher) education are considered.

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IIC05 Language ideologies and generational differences

PP 1142 Breaking the barriers: Unveiling the impact of immersive learning media in boosting cultural intelligence among international students in Germany

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In the process of globalization, increased international migration and educational exchanges have fostered more opportunities for intercultural communication. Cultural intelligence is considered central to understanding cultural diversity, intercultural communication, and adapting to new cultures or societies (Sharma & Hussain, 2019). There is a wealth of literature on how cultural intelligence is influenced by factors such as individual characteristics, international experience, and intercultural communication education and training (Iskhakova, 2018; Solomon & Steyn, 2017). Immersive learning media, such as virtual reality and 360-degree tools, can be used to enhance cultural knowledge and intercultural understanding (Shadiev et al., 2021; Song, 2019). However, researchers have rarely examined how immersive learning media (along with other factors) can contribute to improving cultural intelligence in intercultural communication education from the perspective of pedagogical utility.

Research questions

Against this background, this study aims to answer two questions: (1) Can intercultural communication education be facilitated by immersive learning media to improve international students' cultural intelligence? (2) What factors significantly contribute to the improvement of international students' cultural intelligence in intercultural communication education?

Methods

We developed a social VR platform based on Mozilla Hubs that allows instructors and students to create avatars with their cultural identities, navigate between lecture halls and cultural spaces, and interact with other users. We also used 360-degree videos that showcase authentic multicultural business environments to further enhance students' immersive learning experience in intercultural environments.

Intercultural Communication is a required course for international graduate students at a German university. From October 2022 to February 2023, sixty students from twenty-three countries completed the course. Before and after the semester, the students were surveyed using the Cultural Intelligence Scale (Thomas et al., 2015). They also completed a questionnaire that included measures of VR social presence, spatial presence, user experience, and students' previous VR experience and learning status (online/onsite).

Results

We used the latent change score model within regularized structural equation modeling for data analysis. Results showed that international students did indeed make significant improvements in cultural intelligence after one semester of training. In terms of factors, students with higher hedonic usability scores experienced more pronounced improvements. Conversely, students with higher initial cultural intelligence performance made smaller gains.

Students' improvement in cultural intelligence was not influenced by social presence, spatial presence, previous VR experience, or online versus onsite learning.

Outlook

Immersive learning media can serve as innovative pedagogical tools that go beyond traditional teaching methods in intercultural communication education. International students benefit from their engagement and interactivity. Rarely, cross-cultural training has been conducted in virtual environments due to its novelty, high cost, technological complexity, and low availability. With further advancement of new technologies, it is promising to say that immersive learning media can serve as an innovative and useful instructional tool in intercultural communication education.

IIC05 Language ideologies and generational differences

PP 1143 Generational and Cultural Differences within and between Turkish-Dutch and Dutch citizens in The Netherlands

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The percentage of Dutch citizens with unhealthy lifestyles, including overweight and excessive smoking, is above the global average and has been increasing over the past years. On an individual level, these unhealthy behaviors reduce the quality of life and health and increase the probability of cancer, cardiovascular diseases, or even early death. On a societal level, unhealthy behaviors lead to increased pressure on the healthcare system.

Dutch citizens with a non-western migration background are overrepresented in this health problem. Dutch citizens with a Turkish migration background (Turkish-Dutch citizens, the largest migrant group in The Netherlands) are among the most overrepresented in these unhealthy behaviors. Differences exist between Dutch and Turkish-Dutch citizens that may account for these health disparities, including cultural differences. Based on the literature, we assume that cultural differences are crucial for health behaviors and may be essential factors in explaining how Turkish-Dutch citizens process and respond to health messages. Therefore, this study aims to map cultural differences between Turkish-Dutch and Dutch citizens to reveal the acculturation process of Turkish-Dutch citizens. Here, it is vital to assess any differences across generations because home culture orientations of ethnic minority groups are indicated to reduce (in a non-linear, multi-dimensional way) over generations. In a cross-sectional survey (N = 470), we studied (a) language, (b) cultural values, (c) national identification, and (d) media use in three generations of Turkish-Dutch and Dutch citizens.

Current analyses of the data test our hypothesis that Turkish-Dutch citizens' language (H1a) proficiency, (H1b) dominance, (H1c) preference, (H1d) use, and (H2) media preferences will increasingly resemble their native Dutch counterparts. We also explore (RQ1) to what extent the cultural values (in terms of collectivism/individualism, hierarchy/egalitarianism, and masculinity/femininity) and (RQ2) national identification of Turkish-Dutch citizens shift towards Dutch across generations.

Preliminary results indicate that the acculturation process of Turkish-Dutch citizens is proceeding as expected in certain areas, such as language. Still, as far as national identification is concerned, it appears to stagnate in the third generation. These outcomes and the complete analyses between and within both Turkish-Dutch and Dutch citizens across generations will be discussed during the conference.

ICS01 Interpersonal communication in the workplace/workspace

PP 0351 Life coaching communication practices in Romania: The coachees' perspective

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As a human development practice, coaching can be defined as a method of "helping individuals regulate and direct their interpersonal and intra-personal resources to better attain their goals" (Grant, 2006, p. 153). Research in coaching has evolved under the facets of multidisciplinary perspectives. Coaching as a conversation (Bachkirova & Kauffman, 2009; Starr, 2003) places a strong emphasis on the relationship and communication between coach and client – known as coachee. As such, communication studies sit at the heart of the coaching relationship. In this sense, interpersonal communication in coaching may employ directive and non-directive practices that may be shaped using technology and diverse approaches to coaching. However, research on communication practices demonstrating the nature of the directiveness and non-directiveness of communication in coaching practice in terms of techniques used and the attributes of the coach is still underway.

Moreover, with the recent changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work has become part of the new normal, with people spending more time at home in general. This has facilitated the further development of the online coaching industry. In this new reality, coaching practitioners have used varied approaches in their work with coachees. The coachees' perspective is equally necessary to reflect the effectiveness of the recent past and current coaching communication practices. Also, the coachees' perspective is less present in coaching research.

By employing a quantitative-based methodology, the current paper surveys the preferred coaching approach by Romanian coachees. More specifically, the study aims at exploring the coaching needs and experiences of students and non-students (adults) with various coaching activities in Romania. In this direction, the paper will explore what coachees find new in the online environment from the offline environment, the means of communication used, the frequency, language, type of questions preferred, and what other interpersonal communication skills are being exercised in the coaching process. The survey will consider, for example, the types of coaching sessions participants have attended, if they intend to participate in, what are the main motivations for participating, what skills they appreciate in a coach and other aspects. By delving into the coachees' perspective in Romania, the study aims at contributing to the coaching literature in Central-Eastern Europe.

Keywords: life coaching; interpersonal communication; online coaching; directive communication; non-directive communication

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ICS01 Interpersonal communication in the workplace/workspace

PP 0352 Dialogue with combatants in the communication practices of army chaplains in the context of military conflict

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The evolving dynamics of current geopolitical processes suggest that the societal landscape in the near future may depend on the communication abilities of those shouldering vital responsibilities in wartime contexts. This study focuses on the workplace dialogues of military chaplains operating in conflict zones, engaging in dialogic interactions with frontline combatants. Notably, their dialogues with clients display features of both interpersonal and professional communication simultaneously. The concepts of communication as dialogue (Baxter, 2006) and dialogue as a practice (Létourneau et al., 2023) allow us to explore their communicative practices in these two focal points.

Therefore, this research aims to achieve two main objectives: firstly, to develop a typological framework for the dialogues conducted by chaplains, and secondly, to describe the communicative strategies and techniques used to make effective communication decisions in a professional setting.

The research methodology includes a comparative analysis of samples of workplace dialogues, the systematic categorization of effective communication interactions, interviews with chaplains, and discussions with combatants serving in the combat zone in Ukraine. The data were collected during two training sessions in two experimental

series, spanning from February to October 2017 and from March to November 2023, led by the author in training groups. These groups included combatants and army chaplains who were preparing to serve in the military conflict zone of Ukraine, as well as those who already had experience working in combat positions.

The research findings include categorizing chaplains' dialogues based on: 1) the nature of the soldier's personal issue; 2) the planned outcome of the dialogue (Kaminsky et al., 2006); 3) the goal of the dialogue; 4) the communication strategy employed by the chaplain to achieve the goal. The study has also helped identify types of dialogues that, according to the combatants, were considered more or less beneficial. During the training, we compiled examples of speech expressions, phrases, and shared vocabulary used by combatants and chaplains that positively impact the effectiveness of dialogic interaction in frontline communication practices.

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ICS01 Interpersonal communication in the workplace/workspace

PP 0353 Questions as a device for constructing shared communication competence in interprofessional teamwork

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Competent communication is a foundational interest in communication researchers (Graves, 2021), also in the context of teams. In healthcare, interprofessional teams are assembled to ensure and increase patient care, satisfaction, and safety (IPEC, 2016). The proposed presentation introduces a work-in-progress case study that examines how questions function as a device for constructing and displaying team-specific communication competence in an interprofessional healthcare team's communication. A question is defined as a phrase, statement or act inviting response from others (Stewart & Cash, 2011). Their functions include initiating, maintaining, and controlling interaction, seeking information, expressing interest and opinions, and encouraging participations (Hargie, 2017).

Studies of interprofessional teams have shown that questions are used, for example, to solicit information and confirmation (Lee et al., 2021), to manage boundaries and tensions, and to signal authority (Arbor, 2008). Some possible connections between questions and competence have been suggested. Lee et al. (2021) suggested, that the enabling function of questions can lead to better joint decision-making and patient care, as questions invite and bring about perspective-taking, sharing of experiences and a lowered hierarchy. Arbor (2008) proposed that questioning can be a strategy of skilled communication that enables interprofessional collaboration, contributes to decision-making and preserves the etiquette of the team – essentially, maintains its effectiveness and appropriateness (see Spitzberg, 2013).

In the present study, communication competence is approached from a constitutive perspective, and defined as shared communication competence (Horila, in review): dynamic and emergent competence constructed, negotiated, and enacted in everyday meaning making processes, rather than as individual knowledge, skills, and motivation that precede team interaction. While mainstream approaches to competence focus on post-positivistic, individualist perspectives, calls for systemic, interpretivist and processual research of competence have been made (Jablin & Sias 2001; Wrench & Punyanunt-Carter, 2015).

The aim of this study is to understand how questions are used to construct and display communication competence in interprofessional team communication. Two research questions are posed: (1) How are questions used to construct and negotiate shared meaning of the team's tasks, relationships, and goals? (2) How are questions employed to maintain effectiveness and appropriateness of team communication?

The dataset comprises 5 informal team meetings of an interprofessional orthopedic nursing team in a Finnish hospital. The research setting of this case study is built on a data-driven notion that the team's interaction includes frequent and versatile use of questions by members. In addition, focus group interview data of the team discussing their work practices, is employed.

A discourse analysis of the meeting data will be employed to identify and analyze patterns of question use (for a similar protocol, see Lee et al., 2021), and to understand the ways in which the team negotiates and manages the effectiveness and appropriateness of their communication using questions. Interview data will be qualitatively and inductively analyzed for meanings that members give to question use.

The presentation will introduce the findings of the analysis and the theoretical and practical implications that this study has for both interprofessional teamwork, as well as communication competence research.

ICS01 Interpersonal communication in the workplace/workspace

PP 0354 Reflecting physicians' views of communication and interprofessional teamwork through Constitutive metamodel of communication

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Interprofessional teamwork is an inevitable way of working for health care professionals and it has been proven to be beneficial since it leads to more quality care for patients, better stress management for team members. Though interprofessional communication is influenced by the whole team, physician's role and communication have an extensive effect on interprofessional team's communication. There have been success mapping out the stances and conceptions physicians have on interprofessional teamwork but studies that investigate the communication view of physicians are lacking.

Traditionally communication view has been a way for scholars to position their study to the field of communication and expose the personal epistemology of the scholar (Craig 1999). Even though Craig's (1999) *Constitutive metamodel of communication* has been used to map the field of communication and elucidate different views on communication this metamodel has rarely been used to analyze how study's participants' personal communication view is reflected in the way they communicate or conceptualize social interactions. By examining communication view of physicians, it is possible to gain knowledge on what physicians think is possible through communication and how this reflects to interaction with the team and further effect the whole interprofessional team's communication. Therefore, this study aims to identify:

RQ1: What kind of communication model, if any, can be identified in physicians' thinking?

The study was conducted by gathering 65 essays from physicians during their specialization training. The data were analyzed utilizing thematic analysis by analyzing the language physicians used to describe interprofessional teamwork, interprofessional practices and leadership in interprofessional teams. Special interest was on how the physicians were describing communication processes. The analysis is still in process.

In the preliminary findings, physicians seem to describe their communication view from both meaning-oriented and transmissional view of communication. There were both meaning-oriented and transmissional content in same essays which could imply that the division between transmissional and meaning-oriented view is not a dichotomy but rather a continuum.

Meaning-oriented view of communication can be detected when physicians portray interprofessional teamwork as communication and collaboration among the team. Communication is seen as the essence of teamwork and overall condition for working interprofessionally. When interprofessional teamwork is described to be constructed together in team's communication it can be argued that physician sees communication as meaning making process.

Transmissional view of communication can be spotted when physicians used the term tool to describe interprofessional teamwork which implies that they see communication as a tool to transfer information. If teamwork and its essence are seen only as information gathering and reporting it to physician, communication is seen as tool or medium to share information from sender to receiver. Physicians also use terms like message, sender and receiver in their essays which implies that they see the process of communication as information processing.

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ICS01 Interpersonal communication in the workplace/workspace

PP 0355 Between the exclusivity of profession and the inclusivity of interprofessionality: Retheorising interprofessionality in health care teamwork

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Today's health care organisations increasingly rely on interprofessional teamwork that brings together representatives of different administrative and health care professions and specialties. Such collaboration of diverse experts has been shown to support the provision of comprehensive and effective treatment plans, especially in complex patient cases. While interprofessionality appears to be of high practical importance, there are still substantial gaps in our understanding of this phenomenon. Research has tended to explain successful teamwork with attitudes

and communication skills held by individual team members. However, in the face of profound transformations that health care work practices are undergoing, counting on skills training or attitude change is not enough; a thorough rethinking of interprofessionality is needed. Interprofessional teamwork demands a holistic systems approach where professional boundaries are redefined and team members develop a sense of mutual accountability, striking a balance between identifying individual professional expertise and recognising shared goals and characteristics (Baxter & Brumfitt, 2008).

In our ongoing project, we reconceptualise interprofessionality from a communicative constitution perspective as a process where team members collaboratively invoke and negotiate meanings of their professional identities in relation to one another. It is the element of navigating and resolving the tensions between the exclusive notion of profession and the inclusive notion of interprofessionality that we see as a potentially fruitful avenue for deepening our understanding of interprofessional teamwork. We apply and integrate two socio-constructionist frameworks geared towards exploring co-occurring conflicting meanings attached to self, relationships and the social world: critical discursive psychology (CDP) and relational dialectics theory (RDT). CDP uses the analytic concept of ideological dilemmas to capture the contradictory character of explanations about the social world (e.g., Wetherell, 1996). RDT allows us to understand individual and relationship identities as meaning making originating in the interpenetration of competing discourses (Baxter, 2011).

In two rounds of analysis, we separately applied CDP and RDT to a theoretically rationalised dataset of two focus group discussions conducted in 2019 with members of an orthopaedic clinical team at a central hospital in Finland. The first discussion (1 hour 11 minutes) involved four nurses; the second one (1 hour 22 minutes) was conducted with two nurses, two ward clerks, and a physiotherapist. The research participants reflected on the topics of interprofessional teamwork and communication in the team. Working with CDP, we identified two sets of ideological dilemmas: *professional identities as essentially different* vs. *the team as an organically evolving entity*, and *stagnant institutional hierarchies* vs. *organisational democratisation*. The RDT analysis pointed to a dialectical opposition between the discourses of *professional/structural hierarchy* and *expertise/competence*. In the presentation, we will deliberate on the complementarities between these findings and integrate them to develop a model explaining interprofessional health care teamwork.

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ICS02 Influencers and assistants: Interpersonal questions of digital communication and AI

PP 0471 Green encounters: Influence of interpersonal involvement with digital opinion leaders on users' green behavioral intentions

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Digital opinion leaders play a central role in interpersonal communication. In environmental communication, the focus was particularly on social media influencers (SMI), who can positively influence environmentally conscious behavioral intentions in their role as greenfluencers. So far, the effectiveness of the type of environmental message (e.g., Boermann et al., 2022) as well as the cross-situational connection of users to the respective greenfluencer in the form of parasocial relationship (e.g., Knupfer et al., 2023) have been examined. This study addresses a research gap by examining the role of the SMI in a first contact in the specific media usage situation. Based on the literature (e.g., Katz, 1957; Merton, 1949), central characteristics of digital opinion leaders are identified (perceived similarity, expertise and approachability) in order to establish an impact model that can explain the persuasion processes in the media reception situation in detail. We assume that the three central characteristics in the social media context can be influenced by the representation of expert status (=> expertise), the living conditions (=> similarity) and the willingness to share (=> approachability). We also assume that the three perceived characteristics of the opinion leader lead to a stronger interpersonal involvement (parasocial interactions and wishful identification), which positively influences the processing of the message (positive thoughts) via stronger personal relevance and less psychological distance. Positive thoughts, in turn, should positively influence behavioral intentions via stronger perceived self-efficacy.

To test the model, a 2x2x2 between-subject laboratory experiment (N = 231, M_{age} = 21.85, 75.4 % female) was conducted. A fictitious influencer was created, about whom the participants received preliminary information to manipulate both the expert status and the living conditions. The participants then watched an Instagram reel in which the influencer explains tips for an environmentally conscious life. The conditions differed in terms of the

influencer's willingness to share. Finally, the participants answered a questionnaire that tested all constructs on a seven-point Likert scale.

The results show that the representation of the living conditions influences perceived similarity ($F(1, 229) = 32.38$, $p < .001$), the representation of expert status influences expertise ($F(1, 229) = 37.13$, $p < .001$) and the willingness to share influences approachability ($F(1, 227) = 3.39$, $p < .001$). Two multiple regressions show that all three characteristics predict both parasocial interactions ($F(3, 227) = 15.73$, $p < .001$, $R2 = .17$) and wishful identification ($F(3, 227) = 28.53$, $p < .001$, $R2 = .26$). Two serial mediation models show that wishful identification and parasocial interactions influence both personal relevance (PSI: b = .75, p < .001; wishful identification: b = .56; p < .001) and positive thoughts (PSI: b = .20, p < .001; wishful identification: b = .17, p < .001). Positive thoughts influence self-efficacy (b = .58, p < .001), which explains the environmentally conscious behavioral intentions (b = .51, p < .001).

The results show that parasocial interactions and wishful identification are important mechanisms in persuasion through interpersonal communication. In our presentation, we will discuss the limitations of our study and future research.

ICS02 Influencers and assistants: Interpersonal questions of digital communication and AI

PP 0472 Understanding the trustworthiness of virtual influencers as a prerequisite of their impact in creating AI-based content

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A new group of influencers has attracted a considerable number of followers in social media (Moustakas et al., 2020). So called virtual influencers (VI) are like humans in their appearance and adapt emotions and other characteristics based on artificial intelligence (Batista da Silva Oliveira & Chimenti, 2021). Hundreds of them already (Choudhry et al., 2022) document a fast-growing trend as independent third-party endorsers who shape audience attitudes (Agnihotri & Bhattacharya, 2021).

An advantage for brands in collaborating with VIs is controllability (Berryman et al., 2021; Sands et al., 2022). Brands can ensure that the image of the VI serves their objectives (Zhang & Wei, 2021). As further aspects in which VIs perform better than human influencers, Berryman et al. (2021) emphasize flexibility, plasticity, and access. Appel et al. (2020) believe that with stronger computing power and better algorithms, VIs will become much more prominent on social media, being able to invariably act on brand values and interact with followers anytime.

Albeit their increasing relevance, there is relatively little theory-based research on their perception by their followers and their impact respectively (e.g. Thomas & Fowler 2021; Sands et al. 2022). How exactly (1) do such VIs perform compared to real human influencers, and (2) are users aware of following VIs or do they care at all? In our proposed contribution we shall address these two research questions after an introduction of different categories of VIs and having set a theoretical context for our empirical study. Thereby parasocial interaction theory put into an influencer marketing context (Chung & Cho, 2017) shall guide our structural equation modelling (SEM) approach.

Based on an experimental set-up with a VI (in one group labeled as such and in a second one without labelling) and a culturally similar human influencer (in a third group wrongly labelled as VI and in a fourth one unlabeled), we develop a SEM that is stable and significant across all four groups with a total of 250 questionnaires completed by respondents between 15 and 30 years old. The stimulus material was taken from the accounts of @rozy.gram as VI and @mulbada as human influencer, both having a Korean background and being mid-range influencers known for having intimate relationships with followers. Apart from tracing back source trustworthiness as major driver for purchase intention in influencer marketing (Chung & Cho, 2017) and central variable of the SEM primarily to perceived self-disclosure and parasocial relationship, and secondarily to general trust in media, technology affinity as well as frequency of social media interactions, we also find that trustworthiness doesn't generally differ between VIs and human influencers but only for specific users.

Our results confirm that VIs just as their human counterparts have a similar potential to engage in influencer marketing and content creation as media makers in general. Although the study is necessarily limited by its sample size, the focus on Asian protagonists, and the experimental design with closed questions, it suggests besides the mentioned results also further research of academic as well as practical relevance.

ICS02 Influencers and assistants: Interpersonal questions of digital communication and AI

PP 0473 Moving beyond warmth and competence: Understanding users' needs for social cues in service interactions with conversational agents

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In recent years, virtual service agents have been increasingly deployed in service interactions to substitute or augment human service employees. These agents' ability to mimic human appearance and communicative behavior, also known as social cues, is widely believed to enable a human-like interactional experience that can benefit relational outcomes. Yet, users' needs for these social cues are subject to individual and contextual differences (Chattaraman et al., 2019; Shumanov & Johnson, 2021) and timing (Dwivedi et al., 2022). Although prior research has laid the foundations for uncovering patterns related to users' needs for social cues in conversational agents (e.g., Belanche et al., 2021), these studies primarily focus on users' needs for warmth and competence. However, this narrow focus has inadvertently neglected potential additional needs for social cues in conversational agents. Moreover, most of the research conducted in this field adopts a quantitative approach, focusing on formal testing of relationships and effects rather than exploring users' needs by means of in-depth discussions on their preferences. Hence, this study aims to explore user preferences regarding the use of social cues by conversational agents across various service contexts and uncover the underlying latent needs associated with these preferences.

For this purpose, this study utilized an approach grounded in the principles of generative design, (Sanders and Stappers,2012). This approach allows researchers to uncover users' preferences and their underlying tacit and latent needs by harnessing the creativity of the users. Twenty participants engaged in a generative session during which they actively designed a virtual service agent tailored for either a medical or financial context. In order to express their tacit and latent needs, participants followed four distinct phases; 1) sensitization to the topic, 2) creation of the agent's appearance using a face generator, 3) formulation of the agent's verbal and non-verbal communication strategies through the use of storylines and gamecards, and 4) completion of a survey. Subsequently, the researchers conducted interviews with the participants to uncover the latent and tacit needs that underpinned their choices. The researchers analyzed these interviews using a grounded theory approach.

The findings of this study emphasize variation in users' needs concerning the visual attributes and verbal as well as non-verbal behaviors of conversational agents which are demonstrated to go beyond warmth and competence. Additionally, the findings reveal communicative needs that are commonly shared, suggesting their universality across users and contexts, thus requiring no personalized adaptation. Conversely, specific communicative needs are notably associated with specific phases of the service interaction, service contexts, and user characteristics. Therefore, researchers and designers are encouraged to embrace a broader perspective concerning users' needs for social cues in conversational agents.

ICS02 Influencers and assistants: Interpersonal questions of digital communication and AI

PP 0474 Over(under) accommodative voice-based assistants: The mediating effects of perceived accommodation when applying stereotype content models to machines

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The proliferation of voice-based assistants (VBA) has aided in numerous applications for users, such as finding information, language tutoring, and practicing social interactions. While VBAs should accommodate users' task-related needs (e.g., a VBA language tutor adjusting the progression of lessons to match the pupil's skill), what happens when a voice-based assistant attempts to accommodate its communication with the user? Previous human-machine communication (HMC) research illuminates users' likely process for considering VBAs accommodative communication when evaluating the machine agent. For instance, the Computers are Social Actors (CASA) paradigm (Reeves & Nass, 1996) suggests people apply cognitions relevant to human-to-human communication (e.g., gender and social cues) to interacting with machines (e.g., voice-based tutor on a desktop computer).

A growing and more contemporary perspective in HMC research argues that people, when coming to interact with machines, carry expectations for the interactions and, as such, apply relevant human-media scripts to foster intentional interactions (e.g., a social robot with a face affords communication; Gambino et al., 2020). Because of these expectations and applications of scripts to the human-machine interaction, initial impressions significantly impact how that machine is evaluated. For example, studies show that initial communication with machine actors often leads to heightened uncertainty, diminished liking, and lower evaluations of social presence compared to

interactions with humans. Additionally, individuals exhibit adaptive behaviors, accommodating their communication to effectively engage with machine actors (Fortunati et al., 2022).

Building on prior research, particularly that of Gasiorek and Giles (2015) and Authors et al. (2023), this work enhances our understanding of how individuals assess VBAs exhibiting excessive or insufficient accommodation in initial interactions. Via the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002, 2007, 2018), this experiment broadens insights into how people evaluate VBAs in instances of over- and under-accommodation. Hence, the following research questions and hypotheses are offered:

RQ: Are the relationships between the stereotype content model (warmth and competence) and (a) evaluation of communication and (b) evaluation of the speaker mediated by the perceived appropriateness of communication accommodation?

H1: VBAs using overaccommodative communication are perceived as (a) more warm and competent and (b) more accommodative than underaccommodative VBAs.

H2: VBAs using overaccommodative communication are evaluated more positively (evaluation of communication and evaluation of the speaker) than underaccommodative VBAs.

Following informed consent, participants (n = 193) in this human subjects review board-approved online experiment were randomly assigned to read a brief vignette of receiving over or under-accommodative messages from a VBA before completing a survey. Results suggest that users' impressions of VBAs (warmth and competence) lead to different evaluations of VBAs as a speaker and its communication indirectly through its perceived accommodation. Moreover, VBAs using overaccommodative communication were evaluated more positively than those using underaccommodative communication. As such, VBAs should be considered over rather than underaccommodative. Results are discussed in light of communication accommodation theory, human-to-human interaction script theory, and features designers should consider when building communicative AI, such as VBAs.

*reference list available but cut due to allowed policy to cut for abstracts

ICS02 Influencers and assistants: Interpersonal questions of digital communication and AI

PP 0475 Attentional and emotional effects of AI-generated content on young university students

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The wide use of mobile phones has created new forms of communication and interrelationships that facilitate the creation of social links and knowledge in virtual environments. Young university students, mostly those between 18 and 24 years of age, spend the most time on the phone (IAB, 2022). In this context, artificial intelligence (AI) has recently been implicated, generating controversy over the automated creation of synthetic content (Franganillo, 2023). Apart from helping the work of media professionals, it also involves risks associated with the authenticity or falsification of information, which makes it necessary to promote greater ethical, social and responsible awareness in the information consumption of consumers, to prevent the use of AI from leading to problems of misinformation in the future (Davenport & Mittal, 2022). Today, it has already been proven that the use of mobile devices or the Internet causes addiction, anxiety and poor academic performance (Balta et al., 2018; Baranova et al., 2022) in young university students, among others; and recent studies show that AI has the same persuasive potential as a human (Huang & Wang, 2023). The aim of this research is to determine if there are differences in influence, in terms of emotion (EDR) and attention (EDL), to news created by traditional media compared to those generated by AI (GPT-4) and to analyse if this has a direct effect on the well-being of the individual in order to determine its impact on the consumption of information by young people. To achieve this, *Sociograph* is used. Through two electrodes, this tool allows the measurement of electrodermal activity (EDA) (Aiger, 2013) and to know the activation to different inputs. In addition, Ryff's (1989) well-being questionnaire is used to check whether there is a correlation between the results of activation and the emotional well-being of the participants. Eighty young university students, who are part of the social group that spends the most time in virtual environments, participated in the study. The preliminary results of this research show differences of activation (EDAi) depending on the communicative tone of the synthetically generated content, with higher activation in news with a more sensationalist charge. Participants show greater activation with synthetic news compared to news created by traditional media. No differences in activation were found according to the gender of the participant. Finally, a positive relationship is found between activation to synthetic news and participants' emotional well-being. These findings recognise the relevance of synthetic content and its impact on young people, as it can compromise their emotional well-being and lead to misinformation in their information consumption. It is important to establish mechanisms that allow the identification of synthetic content so that it does not affect their information consumption.

ICS03 Diverse diversity: Perspectives on inclusion and identity

PP 0578 What matters in accessible communication for people with neurodiversity?: A systematic review

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'Neurodiverse people' is an umbrella term that encompasses autistic people, people with intellectual disabilities, those with dyslexia, and everyone who differs from what is considered neurotypical (Hughes, 2016; Doyle & McDowall, 2022). These people are often denied a fundamental right – information – because society does not appropriately value the importance of communicating in an accessible manner. This has implications across all spheres of life.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was fully ratified in 2008. Articles 9 and 21 within this treaty relate to the rights of individuals when making decisions and to the accessibility of the information upon which those decisions are built (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2006). These are important humanistic principles that are often underserved. The extent of that deficit, however, remains unknown.

This work reports on a systematic literature review as conducted following the PRISMA methodology (Page et al., 2021). Through this review, we explored the most common approaches by which accessible communications are created and the theoretical foundations they build upon.

We seek to codify the best practices employed in the literature and shed light on the importance of having accessible communication available as a standard. This review explored significant works recorded in Scopus, EBSCO, Web of Science, and B-On. We identified relevant papers through a combination of keywords and terms within a scoping date range of May 2008 to December 2023 to capture the post-ratification period of the CRPD. We include both quantitative and qualitative work in this study, therefore adopting a two-folded approach to limit bias analysis (Sousa & Costa, 2022).

Several articles were excluded due to multiple criteria, such as non-peer-reviewed status, unavailability in Portuguese or English, being secondary studies, adherence to the medical model of disability, lack of relevance to human subjects, or concentration on impairments not conventionally encompassed within the 'umbrella' of neurodiversity.

Our work resulted in several observations that we can build upon in future analyses. We found that accessible communication research applied to neurodiverse people tends to cluster around several knowledge domains – specifically health information, web accessibility, research participation, linguistics, public services, workplace inclusion, and alternative and augmentative communication. One observation of this work is the utilitarian focus of the existing literature: while much is given over to the pragmatics of day-to-day life, little attention is paid to more personal or recreational pursuits. There is then a research gap regarding quality of life.

Our future work will focus on communication in entertainment and playful settings as a crucial part of full social inclusion, specifically in the short term with regards to the development of accessible rulebooks for board games. These offer a compelling use case for the principles we intend to explore, as they are simultaneously technical documents and highly nuanced instructions for play. We expect this challenging intersection of traits to yield much more promising insight into accessible communication in other contexts.

ICS03 Diverse diversity: Perspectives on inclusion and identity

PP 0579 How does neurodiversity impact information processing, communicative competence and task performance in video mediated interactions?

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This study applies the limited capacity model of motivated mediated message processing (LC4MP: Lang, 2000, 2017) model to understand how neurodiversity influences cognitive information processing and the ability to convey information effectively in the context of video-mediated interactions. The LC4MP model has been tested among neurotypical populations, but not (to our knowledge) among neurodiverse populations whose unique characteristics may impact information processing and communicative outcomes.

Design and Procedures

The study uses a 2 (group: autism/neurotypical) x 2 (channel: audio only/ video and audio) x 2 (control over the ability to choose a channel vs. no control) repeated-measures experiment. Our sample comprises adults with autism (n = 20) and neurotypical participants (n = 20). Participants were sent a link for the Zoom meeting and a file containing the shapes for the tangram task a few days before the interaction (to print). Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. In one condition participants communicated through audio channels only, and

could not control the channel. In the second condition, the interaction was via audio-visual channels when participants were not able to control the channel. The third condition allowed participants to choose between audio-only or audio-visual communication. Each participant completed three tasks (one task for each experimental condition), when the order of experimental conditions was randomly varied within participants.

The tangram task

This task was adapted from prior research (Marshall & Novick, 1995). Participants received a drawing of a two-dimensional shape made of seven geometric black shapes while only the researcher received the geometric shapes that make up the complete shape. The shapes used for each task were randomly assigned to participants. Participants were asked to explain to the researcher how to build the complete form, when they communicated verbally only (not through gestures). The maximum time given for each conversation was ten minutes. When participants felt they had completed the task, they were asked to declare it verbally. The audio and video channels were recorded (with participants' consent) to allow assessment of communicative performance.

Results

We found that individuals with autism were rated lower in communicative competence (vs. neurotypical individuals), which was, in turn, negatively associated with task performance outcomes. When participants were given control over the channel, those with autism had reduced communicative competence, which was associated with lower likelihood of task completion and reduced scope of task performance. Contrary to expectations, results suggest that providing people with autism control over the channel (camera on or off) may *impede* communication efficacy and reduce task performance. Having to make a decision about the channel may inadvertently increase feelings of uncertainty among autistic people, increasing demands on cognitive load, reducing effective communication.

Implications

When communicating with people with autism, providing structured and predictable interactions may help facilitate effective communication. The findings contribute to the understanding of the communication challenges that individuals with autism may experience during mediated interactions. The findings also underscore the need to provide support for this group that is matched to their unique communication needs, and can enhance their interpersonal interactions.

ICS03 Diverse diversity: Perspectives on inclusion and identity

PP 0580 Enhancing the Cognitive Accessibility of information in research: Insights from Intellectual Disability Studies

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Current research has shed light on the pivotal role of accessible communication and easy-to-read materials in enhancing information accessibility for individuals with Intellectual Disability (ID), including the need to produce and evaluate these approaches (Sutherland & Ishrwood, 2016), and emphasizing how informational inclusion is a precursor to full participation and citizenship. This study aims to systematize insights into fieldwork in the area of communication and media involving populations with cognitive differences, with a special focus on adults with ID. Methodologically, it is situated on a virtual border between a constructivist paradigm of knowledge construction – which values the horizontality of roles between researchers and participants for the results and meanings obtained (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) – and a perspective of critical theory, closely linked to critical disability studies – based on the need to emphasize the voice of people with ID and their needs in scientific research for social change (Goodley, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Thirty people with ID, supported by two different NGOs in Greater Lisbon (Portugal), took part in the study, which was developed within the scope of a broader creative accessible media production research project. The communicational and informational accessibility procedures implemented included: simplification of textual content; inclusion of images and photos; reduction of Likert scales; and production of materials about research and ethics procedures to support people with intellectual disabilities during their participation. The data was collected using systematic observation grids, which were filled in during each session of the research project. The results obtained open up a relevant field of reflection on the maintenance of meanings in previously validated research instruments and scales that have to go through processes of simplifying information and accessible communication, such as the implementation of easy-to-read texts. Noted limitations include the way in which accessible written communication, in languages where nouns and adjectives always vary in gender – such as Portuguese – becomes less inclusive in this respect. In other words, if we consider that disability studies can benefit from the implementation of an intersectional lens that understands the multiple oppressive systems and their impacts (Moodley & Graham, 2015), we have to think about how, paradoxically, accessible communication excludes the female gender and gender-neutral neologisms. Future studies should include the validation of scales, under standardization and

psychometric principles, as well as the construction of communication guidelines to promote the inclusion of these people in scientific research.

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ICS03 Diverse diversity: Perspectives on inclusion and identity

PP 0581 Help-seeking among sexual and gender minorities: Examining the role of Transphobia, Masculinity, and Femininity

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Individuals who identify as sexual and gender minority (SGM; e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer plus) often face greater mental health challenges than their heterosexual and cisgender peers, but frequently encounter barriers to help-seeking for mental health. Prior research identified perceived help-seeking stigma (Eisenberg et al., 2009), perceived social support (Spengler et al., 2023), and knowledge related to help-seeking (Rüsch et al., 2014) may influence SGM individuals' help-seeking intentions and behaviors. However, it remains unclear whether and how individual differences may moderate the associations in Chinese cultural contexts, where help-seeking for mental illness among SGM individuals, especially SGM emerging adults, is rarely examined. To address these gaps, this study examined the moderating role of (a) transphobia, (b) masculinity, and (c) femininity on the associations between the aforementioned predictors and help-seeking intentions and behaviors among SGM emerging adults.

Method

We recruited participants via Chinese social media platforms (e.g., WeChat, QQ). To be eligible for the study, individuals needed to (a) live in China, (b) be between 18 and 29 years old, (c) identify as a sexual and/or gender minority, and (d) experience mental health problems at the time of the study. A total of 141 participants were initially enrolled in December 2021. They completed baseline questionnaires and were subsequently followed up at three different intervals: immediately after the intervention (n_2 = 139), one month later (n_3 = 138), and three months later (n_4 = 137). Considering the nested nature of the longitudinal data, we used multilevel modeling (MLM) to analyze 557 observations reported by 141 participants over the four waves.

Results

Results of the MLM analyses suggested that transphobia moderated the positive association between help-seeking knowledge and help-seeking intention (b = -.08, SE = .03, p = .01). The positive association is stronger for individuals with lower levels of transphobia (b = .18, SE = .04, p < .001) compared to those with medium levels of transphobia (b = .11, SE = .03, p < .001). For individuals with higher levels of transphobia, the association was not significant (b = .03, SE = .04, p = .506). Transphobia also moderated the association between help-seeking stigma and help-seeking behavior (b = .04, SE = .02, p = .039) Additionally, masculinity moderated the positive association between perceived support and help-seeking behavior (b = -.03, SE = .01, p = .029), and femininity moderated the negative association between perceived stigma and help-seeking behavior (b = -.03, SE = .01, p = .014). These findings offer theoretical implications for understanding the mechanisms of help-seeking among sexual and gender minorities and practical insights for designing interventions to encourage help-seeking for mental health issues in these specific minority groups.

ICS03 Diverse diversity: Perspectives on inclusion and identity

PP 0582 A right to indigenous identity: Persuasion through listening in virtual identity negotiations of the Forest Sámi

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This study critically examines the essential role of horizontal listening in shaping the identity negotiations of the indigenous Forest Sámi minority within the context of virtual discussions. Employing a qualitative research methodology

and conducting a thorough content analysis of 361 responses gathered from online conversation threads, the research delves into the various dimensions of horizontal listening, exploring its levels of persuasion, diverse applications, underlying motivations, and targeted recipients within the complex dynamics of identity negotiation.

The study unravels a strategic facet of horizontal listening within these virtual settings, shedding light on its adaptability to different identity negotiation needs. The primary three functions of horizontal listening identified encompass educating others about the unique aspects of the Forest Sámi identity, fortifying their advocacy for Indigenous and cultural rights, and contributing to the development of a more inclusive societal framework. This multifaceted process serves as a democratic platform for expressing and integrating a spectrum of viewpoints, aligning with fundamental principles of social justice.

In the data analysis, patterns of collective horizontal listening emerge as the predominant influence at the macro level. Two distinct collective listening behaviors—shared thematic repetitions and shared emotional support—constitute persuasive narratives aimed at presenting the externally unified Forest Sámi identity. This narrative extends its influence beyond the in-group to encompass other Sámi groups and the larger society, emphasizing the collective identity of the Forest Sámi. At the meso-level, in-group and out-group listener positions shape persuasive interactions, revealing diverse strategies such as educational listening by external individuals and identity-strengthening efforts within the in-group. The micro-level analysis highlights the use of individual and collaborative listening strategies employed by Forest Sámi individuals to influence in-group members, adding depth to the understanding of how horizontal listening operates at various levels of identity negotiations. This data-driven approach enhances the study's credibility and contributes nuanced insights to the persuasive dynamics of horizontal listening in virtual discussions.

The findings highlight the need for in-depth exploration of intergenerational communication dynamics within the Forest Sámi community, opening avenues for future research. As this study unveils the strategic and influential role of horizontal listening in virtual identity negotiations, it holds relevance for scholars, policymakers, and communities engaged in Indigenous identity discourse, advocating for cultural rights, and fostering inclusive societies.

ICS04 Narrative and emotional power of communication

PP 0932 Unity and separation in interpersonal communication: Developing a method for analyzing blocking and threading narratives

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When interacting in the social world, people move between simplistic and complex explanations about others that can be respectively called block and thread narratives (e.g., Holliday, 2016). Block narratives are based on presumed social categories that reduce identities to sets of simplified characteristics, thus emphasizing differences and boundaries between people. Thread narratives, on the other hand, bring to light the complexities of identities and highlight things that are mutual and similar to us as humans. We constantly navigate between simplifying categorizations and complex views of identities to position ourselves in relation to one another. In this presentation, we describe our efforts to develop methodological solutions for analyzing these separating and unifying narrative practices to better understand the dynamic, interactive processes of constructing social order.

The analytical concepts of blocks and threads have been developed and mainly applied in the context of intercultural education. However, the framework can be potentially highly useful in understanding communication practices in all contexts where people's diverse backgrounds may become central to coordinating joint action and constructing a shared social order. One example could be interprofessional teamwork that brings together representatives of different professional groups to work towards shared goals. When examined from a constitutive communication perspective, the notion of interprofessional teamwork can be approached as a social construct where meanings of professional identities as essentially different and as interconnected are constantly negotiated. In addition, previous methods to studying blocks and threads limit to analyzing interview and ethnographic data. We decided to apply the analytical concepts to the dataset consisting of audio-recorded interprofessional healthcare team meetings and group interviews, which elicited a need for methodological development.

Our aim is to develop a qualitative communication method for analyzing blocking and threading narratives that is applicable to diverse research contexts and data. The development of this method is in process. The basis for the method is a three-step analysis process adapted from positioning analysis (see Kayi-Aydar, 2021). The first step includes identifying positions by exploring how different social categories are made relevant in the data. Second, the positions are examined to identify the narratives these positions are embedded in. The third step consists of examining what kind of significance the found positionings have in the course of the stories. If the positionings indicate fixed boundaries and identities, they are considered block narratives. When the positionings imply fluidity, negotiability, similarity or commonality, they are regarded as thread narratives. In the presentation, we will introduce the method in more detail and illustrate its use through data examples gathered from interprofessional healthcare

teams. We will also discuss possibilities for future applications of this method, as well as its limitations and practical implications.

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ICS04 Narrative and emotional power of communication

PP 0933 The interaction between migrants and non-migrants during Policy Lab meetings

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Multistakeholder Policy Labs are initiatives promoted by the European Parliament to improve citizens' participation in the elaboration of policies on specific themes, through the collaboration of interested citizens, specialized stakeholders and decision-makers. During Policy Lab meetings, coordinated by at least two facilitators, plenaries and small group workshops alternate to make proposals about possible policies on the chosen theme. This presentation concerns a European project in which Policy Labs were implemented in six cities with the aim of supporting migrants' participation in enhancing new local policies. The presentation concerns the policy lab meetings in one of these cities, Modena, in Northeast Italy, involving young migrants, stakeholder working with migrants in different fields and policy officers and makers. The presentation is based on (1) the video-recordings of these meetings, in particular focusing on the plenary sections, in which the different social actors interlaced their contributions and narratives, coordinated by two facilitators, and (2) the participants' narratives on these meetings produced during interviews and focus groups conducted after the meetings themselves. The presentation shows both effective and ineffective ways of facilitating young migrants' contributions to proposals about local policies that should support their inclusion in the local community, that is successful and unsuccessful ways of facilitating young migrants' exercise of agency in the context of the Policy Lab. First, the analysis of video-recordings and interviews/focus groups shows that several young migrants were active in contributing to the interaction and that their involvement did not depend on the level of mastery of the Italian language, rather on their interest in telling stories about their specific condition as migrants. Second, the analysis shows that the stakeholders, and sometimes the policy officers and maker, tried to be helpful in defining problems and proposals, but in fact they amplified the barriers to migrants' participation. Third, the analysis shows that the facilitators acted to ensure equity in participation, but undervalued, or were not able to reduce, the different level of competence and confidence in contributing to policy discussions between the migrants on the one hand and the stakeholders and policy officers on the other. Against this background, the analysis shows that, while the young migrants were very active when they were involved, there were several phases of talk during which they were excluded by the long narratives provided by the stakeholders. The presentation shows that equity and empowerment is not absolute values in facilitation of group work, rather they should be adapted to the specific composition of the group, in particular the different levels of competence and confidence in talking in public contexts.

ICS04 Narrative and emotional power of communication

PP 0934 Power as identity category in Russian-language political discourse: The case of Belarus

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This study is part of a larger project that attempts to understand how key political concepts, such as "power," "sovereignty," "state," and related cultural terms, such as "people" and "country," that are used in Russian-language political discourse and everyday interactions about politics using the Russian language, impact the ways people in former Soviet countries, such as Belarus, make sense of politics.

Conceptually, this study is rooted in sociolinguistics, cultural communication, and cultural discourse theory, and thus it looks at language and everyday communication in their relationship to the existing social, cultural, and historical contexts. The data are based on participant observation, public discussions, and media accounts about political topics.

One research problem addressed in this study is an attempt to explicate what it means when Belarusian officials, such as the Chairperson of Belarus's Central Election Commission, say things like: "*The Tsikhanovsky group was striving to shatter the situation, used the collection of signatures directing it toward the change of power.*"

Explicating such statements beyond their face value requires an understanding of local cultural logic that informs the political discourse in Belarus. This means that it might be more instrumental to approach the political process as it is defined and made sense of in communication locally to reach a better understanding of how such social and political relationships become possible in a given culture in the first place.

Another research problem addressed by this study is explicating the linguistic constraints that the Russian language imposes on the understanding of key political concepts, such as "*gosudarstvo*" which is literary translated into English as "*state*," or such political terms as "*vlast*'" which is literary translated into English as "*power*."

Eventually, this paper explores how the concept of power becomes an identity category in Russian-language political discourse. The Belarusian case shows how various actors, such as public officials, the opposition, and regular citizens attribute personality traits to power when discussing political topics. This happens by using a set of political terms most salient in the local political discourse, such as "state," "country," "people," and "West" and via their relationship to the terms "power" and 'authorities.'

As a result, such personification of power allows for the reproduction of a logical fallacy based on the metonymic use of key political terms that leads to the reproduction of discursive opposition between 'authorities' and those not involved in direct political governance. Eventually, this leads to a specific understanding of politics that discursively excludes those not affiliated with official political posts and institutions from the political process, thus discursively depriving them of the political will. Knowing how politics is conceptualized in local discourse may help in developing a more efficient and inclusive political process by both insiders and outsiders.

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ICS04 Narrative and emotional power of communication

PP 0935 Swearing, emotion, and life experiences: A qualitative analysis of autobiographical memories of swearing

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Introductory note

This paper reports on a first systematic study of autobiographical memories of swearing. It is is a follow-up to a previous presentation in which we discussed the quantitative results. In this paper, we present the qualitative findings.

Research question

Swearing is the use of taboo linguistic terms, which are likely to cause offence (Beers Fägersten, 2012; O'Driscoll, 2020; Beers Fägersten and Stapleton, 2022; Stapleton and Beers Fägersten, 2023). Swearing produces powerful cognitive, emotional, physiological and interactional outcomes, which are not observed with other forms of linguistic communication (Stephens et al., 2009; Stapleton, 2010; Vingerhoets et al., 2013; Stephens & Roberston, 2020; Stapleton et al., 2022). However, the *source* of these effects is poorly understood at the level of individual biography and experience (Stapleton et al., 2022). While classical aversive conditioning (ACC; namely, childhood punishment for swearing) is often thought to play a role (Jay et al. 2006), there is little *direct evidence* for the ACC hypothesis. Moreover, other types of experiences throughout the lifespan are likely to contribute to individual associations with swearing.

Research Aims

Our study is a first empirical investigation of personal experiences and associations with swearing throughout the lifespan. We apply the methodology of *autobiographical memory* (Loveday et al. 2020) to *systematically elicit and analyse memories of swearing*. Through this, we aim to better understand how swearing acquires cognitive, communicative and emotional power for individuals.

Methodology

A repeated measures survey design was used to elicit recollections prompted by swear words versus recollections prompted by neutral words. There were six exemplars of each word category. Participants (N = 273) completed the survey online. Mean age was 29.5 years (SD 15.0). Participants were asked to supply specific recollections for each of the exemplar words. They then completed a set of quantitative survey items, which drew on autobiographical memory elicitation techniques (Janssen and Murre, 2008) and were designed to probe specific details of the recalled events and word associations.

Analysis and findings

The data were analysed as two discrete sets before being triangulated. The quantitative analysis used descriptive and inferential statistics to establish prominent word categories and patterns of experience. These have previously been presented. The open text recollections, which are the focus of the present paper, were coded qualitatively to identify recurrent patterns of content and meaning, and to examine how recollections were discursively constructed.

In this presentation, we provide an overview of the following data features:

- Generic vs. Specific recollections;
- Thematic Categories and their relative frequency;
- Presence/Absence of Others (including, where relevant, family and/or authority figures); and
- Emotional Valence of recollections.

Conclusion

Through our analysis, we provide a first detailed qualitative investigation of autobiographical swearing memories. Together with the quantitative analysis, previously presented, this study provides unique empirical insights into how swearing acquires psychological and interactional power within people's life experiences.

ICS04 Narrative and emotional power of communication

PP 0936 Discussion mechanisms and general circumstances of emotional news discussion – An analysis based on the Model of Collective Information Processing

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Emotions can influence political judgement or participation intent (Valentino et al., 2011) and thus impact politics. Looking at elicitors of emotions regarding politics, most research has focused on news itself. However, a copious amount of information is processed through interpersonal discussion about news (Eveland, 2004). Yet, little is known about the influence different interpersonal discussion mechanisms have on emotions, as well as affective news discussions in general.

Therefore, epistemic interests are general circumstances of affective talk and its discussion mechanisms. Circumstances refer to location, partners and topics, as well as the intensity of different emotions. The Model of Collective Information Processing (MCIP) (Schindler, 2023) is used as a heuristic to uncover discussion mechanisms that influence emotions.

The MCIP includes two dimensions. The first, *automatic/systematic*, depicts the depth of elaboration. *Systematic* discussions elaborate in detail, while *automatic* discussions are superficial. The second dimension, *closed/open*, refers to the difference of opinions. A more *closed* approach suggests a confirmation bias, while a more *open* approach indicates a discursive character.

An online-survey with n = 464 participants was conducted in April 2022. A quoted sample was drawn and asked to remember the last emotional discussion about news they had, name the topic and assess characteristics of the discussion. Four regression analysis models were implemented with the dependent variable being happiness, sadness, anger and fear.

Results indicate that most emotional news discussions take place at home and with close peers, such as friends, family and partners. The most prominent topics are war, climate and human rights. The valence of emotional news discussion is predominantly negative.

Systemic processing has a reinforcing effect on negative and no significant effect on positive emotions. This suggests that more detailed discussions activate appraisal processes which arouse negative emotions in particular. Openness diminishes negative and reinforces positive emotions. Conversely, this implies that the more alike opinions are during a discussion, the stronger the experienced negative emotions might be. This implies a reinforcing spiral (Slater, 2007) where people with the same opinion reinforce each other's emotion through reiteration.

In summary, while emotional news discussions are mostly private and in primary groups, their effect on should not be ignored, especially due to the implication that likeminded discussions reinforce negative emotions, which have a stronger influence on opinion and participation intent compared to positive emotions.

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ICS05 Digital family communication and young people online

PP 1023 Mediated forms of intergenerational family communication in different European countries

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In 2021, a module on communication, digital perception and digital use was introduced for the first time in the European Social Survey (ESS), a large cross-national comparative study that had its beginnings 20 years ago.

Academically led by sociologists and political scientists, previous rounds of data analysis in this study focused exclusively on living conditions, socio-structural dynamics, and attitudinal dimensions (including public opinion) of European citizens. The decision to include in round #10 a module on communication in digital times is certainly related to the acknowledgment of a deep and fast mediatization in different social domains that took place in the past decade (Couldry and Hepp, 2017; Hepp, 2020). The application of this new module (2021–22) ended up coinciding with the pandemic and post-pandemic times, and with forms of interpersonal communication imposed by prolonged lockdowns.

Applied to representative samples in 31 countries (total: 59,685 respondents), this module on digital communication included questions aimed at perceptions about the internet and the devices used in communication between family members. Questions on parent-child communicative practices included digital texting (email, SMS) and video messages, besides voice calls by phone. For media researchers, the novelty, comparability, and representativeness of this same survey constitute an opportunity to look for old/new possible patterns of mediated forms of communication among family generations in different European regions.

As far as the scientific background is concerned, we emphasize theories on mediated communication (Madaniou and Miller, 2012; Couldry and Hepp, 2017), media generations (Bolin, 2017) and on family as a "communicative figuration" (Hepp and Hasebrink, 2018) composed by a particular actor constellation, frames of relevance and communicative practices. The focus of this work is on the answers provided by the age group between 45–55 years old (later adults) by emphasizing the use of devices privileged by these actors to communicate both with their children (12+) and parents, and to reflect on the implicit frames of relevance.

We seek to answer the following research questions:

1) How do sociodemographic factors, as well as practices and perceptions about digital environments influence the mediated forms of communication of later adults with their children and their parents? Are we in presence of different patterns of mediated communication?
2) Is it possible to identify patterns of similarity and differentiation between different countries that participate in the ESS?

To address these research questions, SPSS statistical software was used to analyse the collated data, in accordance with both descriptive and multivariate analysis.

It is hoped that this cross-comparative analysis can contribute to informed and contextual perspectives of the dynamics of mediated forms of family communication in Europe.

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ICS05 Digital family communication and young people online

PP 1024 The platformisation of 'family doings': How digital platforms afford intergenerational family practices such as communication and play across generations

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Today, families are conducted through a myriad of digital platforms (Taipale 2019). Families for instance communicate through platforms such as Snapchat, Whatsapp, and Messenger, and they play with each other through gaming platforms such as Roblox. However, across generations, the different platforms afford differently, and digital inequalities between generations pose a challenge to intergenerational relations in an age of platformisation of the family (Erstad et al. 2023). To further understand the platformisation of family, we wish to explore how digital platforms afford intergenerational family practices such as communication and play across generations.

In researching how something affords, Davis & Choinard argues that we must 'ask not only how objects afford but also for whom and under what circumstances?' (Davis & Choinard 2016: 244), thus stressing that affordances do not only lie with technology but occur in the relationship between users and technology, at the intersection of artifacts, actors, and situations. In this paper, we aim to understand how, for whom and to what extent digital platforms afford family practices such as intergenerational communication and play across three generations in various Norwegian families. Thus, we seek to understand how digital platforms transforms how to do family, and how that is influenced by how the platforms affords across generations.

Our discussion rests on preliminary analyses of a dataset of qualitative in-depth interviews with children/youth aged 9–18 years, parents, and grandparents from 20+ diverse families in Norway. The data stem from the European research project *Platforming families : Tracing digital transformations in everyday life across generations (PlatFAMs)* (2024). The aim of the underlying study is to gain a deeper understanding of how family relations are platformised through technology and as part of mediated culture and sociality (Erstad et al 2023). The analysis of this paper is informed by perspectives of platformisation (van Dijck et al. 2018), 'doing family'/family practices (Morgan 2011), a relational perspective of affordances (Davis & Choinard 2016) as well as relational processes across generations and in families (Roseneil & Ketokivi 2016). The findings will give a deeper insight into how various platform-user relationships affect intergenerational family practices.

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ICS05 Digital family communication and young people online

PP 1025 Between adaptation and consistency – The situational context of parental media education strategies

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Research on parental media education strategies (MES) mostly focused on television use and was conducted before digital media became an integral part of everyday life. With the rapidly changing digital media landscape, media education is becoming a more and more complex task. In addition, a variety of situational factors in everyday family life require a flexible adaptation of MES. As children must develop skills for self-regulation and media appropriation, their parents are responsible for establishing rules on media use and to regularly review and adapt them.

To gain detailed insights into which parental MES are particularly relevant in which everyday family life situations, we conducted a qualitative diary study. By applying this innovative approach, subjective experiences and specific

usage habits can be precisely recorded by using the process of writing down self-evident actions or situation-dependent feelings.

The homogeneous sample included seven families with at least one child aged between three and five years. The focus on this age group was chosen because of existing evidence for the major role of parental MES in early childhood and the potentially harmful influence of media consumption on infantile development. The diary study took place on four consecutive days, consisting of two weekdays and the weekend, resulting in data material of 28 days. First, the participating parent (7 females; 35.4 years) filled out a general questionnaire, including socio-demographic information as well as insights into the household's media equipment, the focused child's media attachment, media rituals and general parental MES. Subsequently and on the following evenings, a semi-structured diary questionnaire on the child's leisure activities, media use and special situations that required discussion or adaption of MES was answered.

The findings showed that children grow up with a broad media repertoire and the daily media consumption of three to five-year-olds was around one hour. Parents mainly used the MES of co-use or restrictive measures. When stressful situations arose in everyday family life, parental MES were adapted. Such adjustments primarily concerned restrictive measures, where rules were loosened or tightened in short term (e.g., when the child was sick). Restrictive measures such as limiting the duration or content of use thus seem to be easily adjustable. In comparison, the situations in which media were used together were usually ritualized and showed consistency over different situations. The child could rely on certain times and activities, which gave them a sense of security and continuity. The descriptions of the situations in the diaries also gave the impression that the moments of sharing were seen less as an educational tool but more as an opportunity to build a closer bond between the family members.

In future, the valuable insights of the diary study could be extended by conducting quantitative surveys or standardized experience sampling to see if the found relevance of the situational context of parental MES can be verified for a more heterogeneous sample of families and across more diverse situations.

ICS05 Digital family communication and young people online

PP 1026 Does online communication improve or diminish adolescents' social skills? Findings from a 3-wave RI-CLPM

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This preregistered study examines how adolescents' online communication impacts their social competence. This broad competence includes a variety of specific skills, such as friendship initiation, assertiveness, perspective-taking, or empathy. According to the *internet-induced social skills hypothesis*, online communication provides adolescents with opportunities to practice and improve social skills (Valkenburg et al., 2011). However, some scholars proposed that using the internet, especially social media, might diminish social skills by detracting from deep social relationships in favor of weaker ties (see Konrath, 2013) or exposing youth to online communities that reduce perspective-taking (see McNaughton et al., 2022). Empirical research on various aspects of social competence provides mixed findings. In a longitudinal study, online communication increased adolescents' ability to initiate new offline relationships (Koutamanis et al., 2013), while in a cross-sectional study, it was linked to less prosocial behavior (McNaughton et al., 2022). Regarding broader internet use, a two-wave study shows that adolescents' social media use predicts higher empathy one year later (Vossen & Valkenburg, 2016). However, studies on university students report no association between internet use and social self-efficacy (Esen et al., 2013) and a negative association between Facebook use and interpersonal competence (Jenkins-Guarnieri et al., 2012). Overall, existing results do not provide a clear account of the effect of online communication on adolescents' social skills. Existing findings may also be dated, underscoring the need for new evidence.

In this longitudinal study, we investigated the relationships between adolescents' online communication and social self-efficacy – their belief in their own interpersonal skills (Muris, 2001), which forms an important part of social competence and closely relates to subjective well-being (Li et al., 2014). We focused on online communication with offline friends and people adolescents met online. Our data come from a three-wave online survey of 2,500 Czech adolescents (T1: age 11–16, M = 13.43, SD = 1.70; 50.0% female) collected in 6-month intervals between June 2021 and 2022. In T1, quota sampling was used to ensure our sample represents Czech households in basic socio-demographics. We analyzed the data using a random intercept cross-lagged panel, which separates between-person differences from within-person dynamics (Hamaker et al., 2015). See our preregistration here: https://osf.io/pv96f/?view_only=125a362f127943839eaa78a4ece2dfa0.

The results show that on the between-person level, adolescents who more frequently communicate online with offline friends also communicate more frequently with online acquaintances and have higher social self-efficacy. However, on the within-person level, which is more informative for causal interpretation, communicating more frequently with offline friends or online acquaintances did not improve (nor diminish) adolescents' social self-efficacy six months later. We did not find any significant effects of self-efficacy on online communication either. The results

further showed that more online communication with online acquaintances in T2 leads to less online communication with offline friends in T3 (though not from T1 to T2), which is consistent with the displacement hypothesis. In summary, our study suggests that while social self-efficacy and online communication are linked, talking to people online does not seem to impact adolescents' offline social competence.

ICS05 Digital family communication and young people online

PP 1027 "This space is mine, not theirs." Czech teachers of media education navigating interactions with students on social media

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The amount of time children spend online today is steadily increasing (e.g., EU Kids Online 2020, Common Sense Media 2021). A significant part of their screen time is spent on social media networks. One of the important tasks of teachers of media education is therefore to help them learn and understand the benefits and risks of being present on these social media networks and provide support (De Abreu 2016, Selwyn 2017). At the same time, teachers, like most of the population, spend a lot of time online and use social media accounts. What happens when teachers meet their students online? How do teachers navigate these out-of-school interactions?

This qualitative study focuses on the experiences of primary school teachers of media education in the Czech Republic with whom I conducted 17 semi-structured interviews. I focused on the different approaches teachers take to interacting with their students aged 11–15 on social media. The interviews were conducted mainly online, through Zoom. They were then transcribed, and a thematic analysis was carried out.

It turns out that some teachers have a very detached approach to interacting with their students on social media – they see their social media accounts as 'their space'. Of course, this practice is often adopted by their students, too (e.g., Ito & al. 2009, boyd 2014). This need for privacy sometimes goes so far that some teachers even resort to using a different name on social media to avoid being found by students. Others, however, see social networking as an opportunity for extended communication with students on school matters, e.g., in the form of a class group chat, which they believe is useful. Students may, of course, welcome this and use it or they may not seek this form of communication outside of school. However, some teachers also experience very unpleasant interactions with students on social media that could be described as cyber harassment – such behavior can then lead to greater caution and disengagement on the part of teachers and affect interpersonal relationships as well as classroom dynamics. Yet, the teachers' response to such a situation is crucial. It is an opportunity to offer students empathy and help them become aware of their behavior (boyd 2014).

Teachers' views of interactions between themselves and their students on social media are described, for example, in the ethnographic book *The Class* (Livingstone & Sefton-Green 2016). Otherwise, however, this topic has not received much attention. There is a fair amount of interesting work that focuses solely on children's presence on social media and peer-to-peer communication, but not on the dynamics that can arise when teachers and their students interact there. Additionally, in the Czech context, social media use by teachers of media education has barely been researched, and if so then mostly with quantitative methods (e.g., JSNS 2023). This study offers insights into how digital platforms are reshaping traditional modes of interpersonal communication in educational settings and comes up with results that could be useful for both researchers and teachers.

ICS06 Getting closer or moving away? Examining skills, motivation and identity in mediated communication

PP 1130 Examining digital divides regarding skills for social interaction and collaboration among employees in EU countries

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In Europe, a fundamental level of digital knowledge is essential for over 90 percent of professional positions, but according to the European Commission 40 percent of employed European Union (EU) citizens lack basic digital skills. This digital skills gap might negatively affect the innovative capacity and economic growth of the EU. Digital divides in member states could therefore exacerbate inequality and social disorder by increasing economic imbalances in the EU.

For employees in the EU, the digitalization of work processes across sectors and the establishment of home office opportunities during the pandemic have increased the relevance of digital tools for collaboration and social interaction. In this context, abilities needed to effectively apply such tools have become essential. While some studies already provide evidence regarding digital skills divides among EU citizens, there is a lack of research examining the

aspect of digital communication and collaboration competencies. Against this background, our research question is whether there are digital divides among European employees regarding their digital competencies for social interaction and collaboration in the workplace.

Our second research question aims to investigate the role of social media usage, as well as attitudes and perceptions regarding digital technologies within one's organization, in the formation of digital divides in a cross-country context as these variables can be seen as important factors associated with digital skills

We address these issues by performing a secondary analysis of online survey data (N = 2.865) from five member states of the European Union (Finland, Spain, Italy, France and Austria) conducted by the Bavarian Research Institute for Digital Transformation and SZ Institute between November 2022 and January 2023. The survey employs a self-assessment test developed by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre for the measurement of digital literacy. Through combining 17 of its items into an index (McDonald's Omega = .93), we were able to operationalize digital literacy regarding social interaction and collaboration.

Based on different sociodemographic variables, we have observed significant differences in digital literacy between social groups in all countries. Lower levels of digital literacy were observed in the older age groups, among female employees, people with lower education and income. In a cross-country comparison, the biggest gaps concerning age and education were found in Spain, while the biggest gender and income gaps were identified in Austria. Policymakers and employers need to ensure that the digital skills divide in the work environment is being reduced rather than expanded. Our results reveal which groups in each country require particular attention.

Regarding employees' social media use, our results show that heavy users in all countries had significantly better levels of literacy than soft users. Moreover, employees who perceive training measures in their organization as rather good mostly show significantly better digital literacy. However, the employees who perceive the attention toward digitalization in their organization as rather too high do not necessarily have higher levels of digital literacy. In this respect, the results vary from country to country.

At the conference, we will discuss conceptual and applied implications of these findings.

ICS06 Getting closer or moving away? Examining skills, motivation and identity in mediated communication

PP 1131 Reviving presence through art-based media literacy education

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In a society of hyperconnectivity (Brubaker, 2022) we are increasingly connected to our devices while becoming increasingly dis-connected from people and the physical world around us. This research project explores how we interact and engage with others when our attention is absorbed by digital gadgets. We ask, whether we can still be present in our interpersonal social interactions in a world in which a big part of human communication happens in virtual spaces; and how presence can lead to more caring and just societies.

In a series of art-based media literacy workshops, which are part of an ongoing PhD research project, we investigate how seeing, interacting with, and making art can revive our sense of presence and thus promote a practice of "caring with" (Tronto, 2020). After a brief theoretical introduction by the facilitators, workshop participants look at an art exhibition that is set up around them and that was curated especially for this purpose. The artworks elicit a group discussion on how digital devices might affect their presence with others and as such their personal and social relationships. In small groups, participants are asked to make art objects which express what presence means to them and why they think it is, or isn't, important.

This research argues, that we can promote care and overcome the interpersonal divides (Bugeja, 2018) and civic distance (Mihailidis, 2023) that characterize current times, by reviving the value of presence. We need creative media literacy interventions that make people more aware of how human relationships and communication are affected by the omnipresence of digital devices. And we need to do so from a perspective that uses interdisciplinary knowledge about global current affairs as a third pillar of media literacy (Gerodimos, 2021). By using the arts, media literacy education can contribute to embedding this "embodied knowledge" (Barbour, 2016) into people's daily interactions.

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ICS06 Getting closer or moving away? Examining skills, motivation and identity in mediated communication

PP 1132 Internet users' willingness to share information in diverse online contexts and with different actors: An empirical test of the dual privacy calculus theory

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Background

Internet users' decisions to share or not share their information online are complex and shaped by the context of information sharing, the actors who can access their information, and the sensitivity of information. While prior research conceptually elaborated on the significance of these factors, studies that would empirically investigate them together are lacking. This paper addresses this gap by drawing on the dual privacy calculus theory to propose a conceptual model that explains internet users' willingness to share their information of low and high sensitivity in different online contexts and with different actors. Three contexts, differing in the presence of actors, were studied: e-commerce (organizations only), social network sites (organizations and peers), and instant messaging (peers only). In each context, the willingness to share information of low and high sensitivity was considered. In line with the dual privacy calculus theory, the model presumed that willingness to share depends on a risk-benefit assessment, guided by individuals' control over their information. Accordingly, privacy concerns, perceived benefits of information sharing, and perceived privacy control were tested in the model as antecedents of willingness to share information and examined at both the organizational (e.g., concerns about organizations' privacy practices) and peer level (e.g., concerns about peers' privacy practices).

Methods

The study adopted a quantitative approach, utilizing structural equation modeling on a large, nation-wide sample of 1,666 internet users aged 18+ from Slovenia. Participants were recruited from the largest Slovenian online access panel and completed a web survey questionnaire in November and December 2023. Measurement instruments were derived from existing literature, translated into Slovenian, and assessed through cognitive interviews and a pilot study.

Results

The most important factor of willingness to share information was perceived benefits, with both monetary and social benefits predicting willingness in all contexts and information sensitivity levels. In contrast, privacy concerns and control related to organizations were important in decisions to disclose information in e-commerce and social network sites, while privacy concerns and control related to peers were important in instant messaging. Interestingly, privacy concerns about organizational privacy practices influenced willingness to share information across all contexts, except sharing low sensitivity information in instant messaging.

Conclusion

This is the first study to empirically test an original conceptual model based on the dual privacy calculus theory to explain internet users' willingness to share information in different online contexts and with distinct (institutional and social) actors. While users' information sharing decisions were complex and contextual, perceived benefits were the key consideration in information sharing across online contexts. Nevertheless, users seemed to be aware that they were sharing their information on privately-owned platforms, even in peer-to-peer settings, and therefore worried about how organizations might use their data. This can impede the potential of online services for forming and sustaining relationships among individuals. Finally, the study shows that the dual privacy calculus theory is a useful lens to understand disclosure decisions across contexts and in relation to different actors.

Keywords: dual privacy calculus, institutional and social, online contexts, perceived benefits, privacy concerns, privacy control, information sharing

ICS06 Getting closer or moving away? Examining skills, motivation and identity in mediated communication

PP 1133 Dissolved or integrated? Self in the era of social media

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The self in the postmodern society has been described as saturated and, as such, dissolved (Gergen, 1991), which has been even more furthered by technologies (Turkle, 1997; Davis, 2011). At the same time, context-collapse (Marwick & boyd, 2011) and real-name web (Hogan, 2013), the phenomena brought up by the rise of social media, have been seen as contributing to creating a more integrated version of self (i.e., Marinucci, 2010, Hodkinson, 2011; Miller, 2011; Brekhus, 2020). The latter statement mostly lacks empirical evidence, but, instead, is often based on logical speculation that due to the aforementioned specifics of social media, one, in most cases, presents a united version of his/herself to various social circles, and from that, learns about him/herself.

This paper offers a qualitative insight into the perspective of social media users about their selves in the context of their role identities, exploring how the interaction between their role identities is experienced both in real life and on social media. The paper uses the term 'integrity' to describe the state where the identity standards (Burke & Stets, 2009) of the identities one possesses are coherent (not contradictory) with each other. Regarding the context of social media, it draws inspiration from the concept of deep mediatization (Hepp, 2019) that sees media, especially, social media not only as an alternative space of communication, in which one immerses him/herself, but as a reality of life that has interwoven daily interaction and, therefore, has also influenced how one sees him/herself (Wandel & Beavers, 2010).

The research is based on 25 semi-structured interviews (the age range of the respondents being 23–45) with Latvian people with various levels of social media usage activity, as well as with differences regarding other criteria (occupation, family status, usage of an anonymous account, influencer status, etc.).

One of the interesting findings from the initial results reveals that people, who show a greater level of integrity when describing their real-life identity interaction, tend to see social media as rather fragmenting, while for those, who see more contradictions between their identity standards, social media are either used as a reflection tool in search for a more integrated version of themselves or social media are used to present a united, yet rather superficicial layer of self that is acceptable for all social circles one is connected to. The paper offers a more nuanced analysis of the different perspectives observable in the interviews regarding integrity, interaction of identities, presentation of the self on various social media, and its influence on one's view of him/herself.

ICS06 Getting closer or moving away? Examining skills, motivation and identity in mediated communication

PP 1134 An inquiry of audience's appraisals and reactions to cyberhate in news discussions on social media: The role of perceived group entitativity

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Cyberhate, the hateful and biased expressions which attack groups and individuals because of their group identities and characteristics, is one of the major society-wide issues threatening values of equality and disrupting social cohesion (Foxman & Wolf, 2013). Cyberhate is becoming prevalent on social media and in news discussions, with the majority of young people encountering it as an exposed audience or bystanders (e.g., Machackova et al., 2020; Reichelmann et al., 2021). Social media discussions provide exposed audiences opportunities to react to cyberhate, and their appraisal of the situation influences their reactions (Dominguez-Hernández et al., 2018) – they might stay passive, reinforce the hate, or dispute the biased expressions and engage in counter-speech. Prior research brought insights into factors related to specific reactions, signifying the role of existing stereotypes and prejudice in negative reactions (Cuddy et al., 2007). This was shown in research (e.g., Dessel et al., 2017; Gonultas & Mulvey, 2022) on groups with higher perceived entitativity, i.e., the degree to which groups are perceived as homogenous and impermeable 'entities' whose members share the same characteristics (Lickel et al., 2000), such as ethnicity, religion, sexuality. However, research on exposed audience's cognitive and behavioural processes in cyberhate targeting low-entitative groups (e.g., weight-based) is still largely missing, which poses a huge limit in our understanding of reactions to these incidents, which are nevertheless quite prevalent in the online environment (e.g., Brooker et al., 2017; Jeon et al., 2018). Thus, drawing from the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which postulates a positive relationship between the level of out-group entitativity and out-group prejudice (Agadullina & Lovakov, 2018), we intend to expand our knowledge by investigating variances in responses to cyberhate targeting groups with diverse levels of entitativity. Specifically, as cyberhate is motivated by biased intergroup attitudes (Mondal et al.,

2017), we will focus on perceptions of different levels of (out)group entitativity and bystanders' attitudes and inquire about their role in bystanders' appraisals and reactions to cyberhate.

The study is part of a starting project awarded by MSCA's seal of excellence. The data will be collected as a part of a multi-method investigation (online survey, qualitative inquiry) in spring 2024 and analysed in summer 2024. The expected sample size is 1.000 young adult European participants (aged 16–25). Online survey data will be utilised to investigate participants' experiences with cyberhate on social media and in news discussions. To gain an in-depth understanding of their appraisals and motivations to react to cyberhate, the participants will also describe their perceptions of the entitativity of diverse groups targeted by cyberhate and their appraisals and potential reactions to different cyberhate incidents.

The findings will contribute to the current cyberhate audience and bystander research by shedding light on processes affecting responses to diverse cyberhate incidents. The discussion will also review how the findings can inform policymakers and educators addressing intolerance toward groups with varying levels of entitativity and journalists reporting about groups and group members.

JOS01 AI and automation

PP 0001 Exploring whether and why automation affects the comprehensibility of data-driven news articles

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In today's data-heavy information environment, journalistic reporting with and about numbers is crucial as it provides readers with information necessary to fulfil their role in democracy (Nguyen & Lugo-Ocando, 2016). Therefore, the comprehensibility of such reporting is vital. An important factor contributing to the comprehensibility of news articles is their *textual composition* (Göpferich, 2009). In data-driven reporting, textual composition includes the presentation of numerical information (Waite, 2020) as well as word choice and linguistic clarity (Meyer, 1975).

At the same time, data-driven reporting is becoming increasingly automated. Automation systems change journalists' approaches to writing news texts (Diakopoulos, 2019), which can impact article composition. For example, automated news articles may contain traces of the rigid templates with which they can be produced (Diakopoulos, 2019), fewer of the key editorial features of journalistic writing (Caswell, 2019), and more numerical information (Author, forthcoming). Some journalists believe that automated news production can decrease the appeal and comprehensibility of news articles for readers and, therefore, post-edit automatically generated articles before publication (Thäsler-Kordonouri and Barling, 2023).

In light of 1) how article composition may affect readers' understanding of numbers in the news and 2) data-driven journalism's increasing automation, this study investigates how readers evaluate the article composition features in data-driven reporting that was produced with and without the help of automation (RQ1) and how readers' evaluations of these article composition features affect how comprehensible they believe data-driven reporting produced with and without the help of automation to be (RQ2).

We conducted an online survey experiment (N = 3,123) with a sample of UK online news consumers, in which we presented respondents with news articles (N = 24) produced either with or without the help of rule-based automation and asked them about their perceptions using criteria developed in a qualitative pre-study (Authors, 2023).

Factor analysis reduced the article dimensions and criteria investigated to five categories: *numeric features*, *writing style*, *sentence and paragraph length*, *descriptive language*, and *word choice*. Although the perception of news stories produced with automation did not differ significantly from those produced without regarding *sentence and paragraph length* and *writing style*, they were evaluated as significantly less comprehensible. Mediation modelling showed this last result can be explained partly by readers' perceptions of the other article features – *numeric features*, *word choice*, and the amount of *descriptive language* – which were all rated significantly worse in articles produced using automation than in those written manually.

Our results suggest that the use of rule-based automation in the production of data-driven news articles changes their perceived compositional makeup in ways that negatively impact comprehensibility. However, our study also suggests ways in which such articles could be made more comprehensible. Specifically, when post-editing such automatically generated articles, journalists should aim to further reduce the amount of numbers, better explain words that readers are unlikely to understand, change inappropriate wording, and increase the amount of descriptive language.

JOS01 AI and automation

PP 0002 Making new news use feel familiar: A longitudinal study of how changing news repertoires among young adults normalize over time

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Studies of everyday life frequently note shifts whereby the novel, strange, and disruptive become taken-for-granted, familiar, and mundane through processes of rationalization and normalization (Highmore, 2002). Similarly, with media, processes of 'domestication' gradually situate media devices, genres, and habits into familiar routines (Silverstone, 2005). What is harder to grasp is how this occurs in a digital media landscape beset by rapidly developing informational technologies (Moe & Ytre-Arne, 2022; Swart et al., 2022). Also challenging are methodological issues of empirical recall that impact how accurately people can reflect on what, exactly, has changed in terms of their 'media repertoires' (Hassebrink & Hepp, 2017; Peters & Schrøder, 2018) and why (Vulpius et al., 2022). Given these challenges, this paper aims to investigate what impacts how and why news repertoires become meaningful. Developing an innovative, longitudinal, comparative research design over a two-year period, it interrogates what causes different configurations to become meaningful in everyday life, probing how people articulate changes in their news repertoires over time.

Specifically, the article compares the transformations of news and information repertoires of 24 Danish participants, aged 18–24, meeting this same group of young adults first in 2019 and then again in 2021. In both meetings, the

study conducted an iterative research encounter consisting of a Q-sort exercise (where participants rank preferences relationally amongst 36 legacy, social, non-traditional, and personal news and informational sources), think-aloud protocols (whereby they explain their rationales for ranking while they sort), and semi-structured interviews (before and after the sorting exercise, to reflect on typical informational preferences and sociocultural practices). Upon completing the sorting exercise on the second occasion, in 2021, participants were presented a record of the exact same sorting exercise they completed two-years earlier, in 2019, to reflect on their stated changing preferences over this timeframe. Responses were transcribed in NVivo and analyzed with a thematic content analysis to identify perspectives related to change.

The paper finds that changes in news and informational preferences are normalized over time, often viewed as insignificant and 'natural' by people after the fact—even when the associated alterations in their sensemaking practices are, in fact, quite significant. Despite such processes of incorporation, what at first appear to be unconscious changes by participants are often revealed to be driven by issues around routine, proximity, relevance, and feeling. Such thematics are associated with—often reinforced by—life stage factors, emotional responses, normative assessments, and the materiality of media platforms and devices. Routine changes are driven by life stage factors that demand new rhythms in everyday life. Proximity involves informational preferences changing due to geographic or social distance. Relevance, for this group of participants, were changes anchored in new life circumstances or technological developments relating to emerging informational 'needs'. Finally, feelings are related to topics, genres or outlets impacting affective characteristics of engagement (see also Steensen et al., 2020). This study's findings have significant civic implications in terms of changing assessments and sentiments of worthwhile patterns of use, and how life factors and mediated affordances shape perceived informational practices.

JOS01 AI and automation

PP 0003 Between intentions and perceptions: Unravelling the impact of journalistic post-editing strategies on readers' liking and comprehensibility perceptions of automated journalism

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Increasingly, journalistic news production is being supported by automation to help journalists cope with the ever-increasing demand for timely reporting while newsroom resources are scarce (Diakopoulos, 2019). This process, referred to as automated journalism, is helping to increase newsroom productivity through natural language generation (NLG) applications that scale the production of data-driven news articles (Haim and Graefe, 2017). Journalists' use of these applications is changing their approach to news writing and impacting the composition of news stories (Casswell, 2019; Lewis & Westlund, 2015). As a result, journalists have found that automatically generated news without significant human involvement often lacks narrative and editorial quality (Diakopoulos, 2020; Thurman et al., 2017). Therefore, they sometimes decide to "post-edit" (Author, forthcoming) automatically generated stories before publishing them as news articles, taking various editorial steps to improve the appeal and comprehensibility of the stories for the reader (Thäsler-Kordonouri & Barling, 2023).

Using a 3 (article source: manually written, automated, post-edited) × 12 (story topics) between-subjects online survey experiment with a representative sample of UK online news consumers by age and gender (N = 4,734), the present study investigates how readers perceive these editorial changes and whether they result in post-edited reporting being perceived as more appealing and comprehensible than automated reporting. In the online experiment, each of the 36 treatment groups read a news article that was either written manually by a journalist, automated using a data-driven template, or automated and then post-edited by a journalist. The authorship of the articles was not specified. Within each of the 12 topics, each story (automated, post-edited, manually written) had the same data source, perspective, and geographical focus.

This study follows on from a previous analysis of the post-editing process, in which the post-editing strategies of journalists were investigated in qualitative interviews (Author, forthcoming). The previous study's results show that the most important strategies are to *reduce the number of figures*, *add contextual information* and *increase the local focus* of automated reporting. The present follow-up study now examines a) the extent to which journalistic these post-editing strategies are related to the overall likeability and perceived comprehensibility of data-driven news reporting, including the automated, post-edited and manually written types; b) whether the actual journalistic post-editing performed leads to different reader ratings between automated and post-edited news stories in terms of the post-editing strategies revealed in the previous study (author, forthcoming); and c) how post-edited stories actually perform in terms of likeability and comprehensibility compared to automated and manually written stories.

The results extend research on journalistic work with automated journalism and its effect on the readership by identifying how readers perceive and evaluate post-editing practices. As automated journalism represents a "structural transformation of making news and engaging with the audience" (Helberger et al., 2022, p. 1606), this is a relevant research endeavour that, given the increasing automation of data-driven journalism, helps to determine the impact of these technologies on perceptions of the journalistic profession.

JOS01 AI and automation

PP 0004 Mapping the research landscape of algorithm-driven journalism: An interdisciplinary systematic literature review of research trends and future pathways

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The algorithmisation of communication processes introduces novel approaches to gathering information, producing, distributing, and consuming journalistic content, along with incipient challenges for the field of journalism (Newman, 2022). It is imperative to synthesise scholarly evidence to advance knowledge in journalism research, considering the interdisciplinary nature of academic engagement. However, a systematic understanding of the developments in algorithm-driven journalism, which encompasses the use of automation and artificial intelligence technologies throughout every stage of the news value chain and reception process, is lacking. Against this backdrop, this study aims to investigate the present state of research on algorithm-driven journalism and identify research gaps through a systematic review, following the methodological approach outlined by Petticrew and Roberts (2006). As such, the present study contributes to ongoing research endeavours by (1) providing a bibliometric overview of the existing body of literature, (2) mapping research trends based on a set of content-related variables, and (3) generating a synopsis of future research.

To ensure a comprehensive scope, the sample selection was based on all available English-language research, theoretical and empirical, in journals across ten databases in the fields of Communication Science and Computer Science up to December 2022. A full-text database inquiry was conducted by employing search phrases deduced from concepts commonly used in previous studies on algorithm-driven journalism. A total of 348 peer-reviewed publications were included for full-text analysis. Coding categories were first developed deductively based on the research questions and the extant academic literature. These categories were further specified inductively by applying Mayring's (2008) qualitative content analysis summary technique as an exploratory study. Subsequently, the qualitatively gathered data was converted into a quantitative evaluation.

The findings of the review illuminate the evolving landscape of algorithm-driven journalism research, starting with early publications in 2011 and experiencing a steady increase in research activity from 2013 onwards. Notably, these studies predominantly originate from the USA, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, with male scholars contributing most frequently. The publications explore various application areas of algorithm-driven journalism, covering the expectations and perceptions of both journalistic actors and recipients, the algorithm-based transformation of journalism, and the potentials and challenges associated with integrating algorithmic systems into journalistic workflows. The prevalent theoretical frameworks are often based on normative theories, while in over half the publications no theory was employed. The majority of identified publications adopt an empirical approach, predominantly employing qualitative research methods such as interviews and the purposive sampling method, with a focus on investigating the aforementioned countries.

In conclusion, this study proposes a synopsis of potential avenues for future journalism research emphasising the importance of enhancing research designs, validating results, conducting representative studies, and modifying existing actor-oriented theories to adequately describe emerging socio-technical forms of journalism shaped by the algorithm-driven transformation of work environments.

The originality of this research resides in its comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to reviewing literature from a communication and technology standpoint that has not been systematically undertaken to date, thereby offering scholars a solid roadmap for advancing the field.

JOS01 AI and automation

PP 0005 Less hype, more drama: A comparative analysis of journalistic discourses on AI after ChatGPT in the US, The Netherlands, and Brazil

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The term 'AI' has become a freely-floating signifier, connoting different things in different contexts. While meanings have an intricate social life, media institutions, and particularly professional journalism, tend to play a disproportionate role in shaping them. Research on AI discourses has empirically explored this role, documenting how these media professionals' framing of AI relates to ethics, policymaking, and public opinion formation (e.g., Ouchchy, Coin, & Dubljević 2020; Köstler & Ossewaarde, 2021; Reeve, Colom & Modhvadia, 2023).

More often, the news media's amplification and magnification of AI-related issues have been discussed as a form of hype. In Vasterman's (2005, p. 515) classic definition, a media hype is a "media-generated, wall-to-wall news wave, triggered by one specific event and enlarged by the self-reinforcing processes within the news production of

the media." This ultimately "expands one specific frame," such as utopian or dystopian views, "which then becomes dominant in the public arena" (Vasterman, 2005, p. 516).

This paper asks whether and how professional journalists have created simplistic and universal narratives about AI. Is there indeed a media hype about AI, and is this even the right term to apply to the amplified news coverage on AI since the release of ChatGPT 3? To what extent is this coverage similar across countries, given that journalism is deeply affected by national dynamics, norms, and priorities?

We address these problems through a comparative critical discourse analysis (Carvalho, 2008) of how the 'newspapers of record', New York Times (US), De Volkskrant (NL), and Folha de S.Paulo (BR), covered AI after the release of ChatGPT 3 in 2022, an event widely seen as a major landmark in the development of public knowledge (and, supposedly, 'hype') about artificial intelligence worldwide.

Our analysis of a total of 554 news articles suggests that while journalists did portray AI as a sort of inevitable technology, this inevitability can hardly be understood as producing one simplified and universal story. Instead of media hype, we argue, those outlets' depiction of AI after ChatGPT might be better understood as a complex form of "technological drama" (Pfaffenberger, 1992).

This paper contributes to the scholarship on journalistic representations of AI, first and foremost, by suggesting that the idea of 'AI Hype' might itself be a hype—or, at the very least, a far from obvious phenomenon. Secondly, it demonstrates the usefulness of Pfaffenberger's work to make sense of public narratives on emergent technologies. As we point out, maybe research on AI discourses should become more skeptical of the idea of 'hype'. It is time for more drama.

JOS02 Journalistic sources

PP 0006 Public figures in the news: A cross-national qualitative analysis of their role in eating disorder and new media discourse

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Public figures are key stakeholders in popular culture's global production, consumption, and distribution practices. Over the last decade, their pervasive media attention has increasingly focused on body image and eating disorders, shaping public discourse (Berkowitz, 2019; O'Brien, 2021). Media studies largely focus on how exposure to idealized images and appearance comparisons, facilitated by new media technologies, negatively impacts the onset of eating disorders (Brown and Tiggemann, 2016, 2022; Halliwell and Dittmar, 2004). Meanwhile, journalism studies underscore the endemic nature of celebrity news, highlighting media and public figures' role in the development of these pathologies (Dubied and Hanitzsch, 2014; O'Hara and Smith, 2007; Shepherd and Seale, 2010). However, little has been inquired about the intersection of media, health, and popular culture concerning journalistic narratives.

This qualitative content analysis examines depictions of public figures, considered in this paper as celebrities and influencers, in the news coverage about eating disorders and new media from 2010 to 2019 in the United States (N = 626), and the United Kingdom (N = 635). The study focuses on the influential 2010s, marked by cultural shifts in popular culture, a rapidly changing new media landscape, and the steady rise of eating disorders (Galmiche et al., 2019; Goggin, 2012; Rodgers et al., 2019; Rodriguez and McNally, 2019). News articles were extracted from the Nexis Uni database (Nexis Uni, n.d.) and coded inductively using MAXQDA software to explore relationships and underlying conceptualizations across countries and time (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Findings show that journalistic narratives centered the role of public figures across three critical points. First, trendsetting was portrayed as promoting unhealthy behaviors tied to normative beauty ideals and eating disorders. Second, they faced heightened surveillance and scrutiny on beauty standards, especially regarding weight maintenance and extreme thinness, symbolically linked to eating disorders. Finally, they shared their struggles online to reduce stigma, bolster body positivity and eating disorder awareness, and change normative beauty norms and practices. Coverage in the United States focused on body aesthetics, whereas the coverage in the United Kingdom prioritized concern over self-harm and public responsibility, notably through tabloids (Conboy, 2014). Differences across countries emerged within journalistic cultures and practices, shaped by local variances and emerging forms of new media over time (Di Salvo & Negro, 2016; Lück et al., 2018).

Portrayals of public figures across countries revealed a strong connection between celebrities, media, and audiences, which involves the shaping of beauty standards, ultimately rooted in the appearance and body aesthetics of public figures, generating substantial interest from the masses. However, these same figures also became enmeshed in the intricacies of this body-centric system, playing a pivotal role in further perpetuating and challenging it. This study contributes to the journalism literature, specifically pertaining to celebrities vis-à-vis health news, examining how celebrities impact journalistic constructions of science and technology, shaping cultural narratives and societal norms.

particularly concerning eating disorders. It is critical to understand public figures' influence on health discourse for effective prevention, recognition, and care in a media environment saturated with appearance-centric content.

JOS02 Journalistic sources

PP 0007 Unveiling data pluralism: A multimodal analysis of data source diversity in the Swiss media during the Covid-19 pandemic

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The abundance of data indicators and data visualizations in the news during the Covid-19 pandemic was unprecedented. News organizations had to rapidly adapt and implement innovative approaches to access, interpret and visually represent quantitative information on the state of the crisis (Desai et al. 2021). In data journalism, the question of data provenance, along with journalists' dependance on institutional sources, is paramount (Ramsälv, Ekström, and Westlund 2023; Zamith 2019). During the pandemic, countries overwhelmingly relied on governmental sources (Mellado et al. 2021). This issue becomes even more critical as the underlying structure of data, such as how they are collected in the first place, is rarely questioned (Lowrey, Broussard, and Sherrill 2019).

In this study, we categorize data sources and analyse their diversity (government, academic, self-collected, etc.) in traditional Swiss media during the Covid-19 pandemic. Using computational methods, we extract the interactive data visualizations and their respective sources embedded in over 180'000 online articles from local and national newspapers as well as Switzerland's French-speaking public service broadcaster. In addition, we explore the availability of downloadable raw datasets from the data visualizations and the presence of meta-discourse about the original data collection process, as a means of ensuring transparency and acknowledging the constructed nature of data.

This research documents institutional and alternative sources that were used during the health crisis, with a comparison between public, private, local, and national news outlets. By revealing the prevalence of specific sources and how they evolve over time, this study identifies possible distinction in data provenance at different stages of the pandemic. Furthermore, it addresses the important question of how these data were presented and accounted for. Data source meta-discourse, we argue, partly reflects how critically journalists view the constructed nature of the quantified information sources that are becoming ever more central to their work.

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JOS02 Journalistic sources

PP 0008 Theoretical contributions involve reinvigorating news-making studies and transforming the relationship dynamics among journalists, the newsroom, and news sources

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Purpose

The newsroom is experiencing disruption due to the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic as it grapples with navigating routine transitions amid unexpected crisis events. Unlike most other crises or disasters, the novel coronavirus has abruptly disrupted the newsroom itself. The background offers context to examine how the news-making process changed during the newsroom crisis, what journalists experienced as gatekeepers, and the implications for journalism practice. This study relies on place-based journalism theory (Usher, 2019) and disrupting gatekeeping (Van der Meer et al., 2017) to investigate how news-making changes and impacts the newsroom culture. It aims to contribute to the ongoing debate regarding the centrality of the newsroom and the relevance of gatekeeping in digital journalism.

Methodology

This study employed ethnographic methods and focused on three Jakarta-based Indonesian newsrooms: SCTV, a television station, and two digital newsrooms, Liputan 6.com and BBC Indonesia. The data collection includes approximately 245 hours of offline and online observations, 35 in-depth interviews, and an analysis of internal documents. The fieldwork for this study spanned over 15 months, from the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia in April 2020 to the second wave in July 2021.

Findings

Three main findings emerged from the data. First, the findings show that the physical newsroom is valuable to journalists regarding news-making and communication culture during a crisis. While the pandemic forced journalists to leave the newsroom for their safety, this does not indicate that the traditional newsroom is obsolete. TV and radio platforms, as well as broadcasters, rely heavily on the newsroom compared to their online counterparts. Second, newsroom reconfiguration caused by the pandemic created tension as making news in the newsroom was inseparable from their professional journalistic identity and authority. Third, the pandemic puts journalists in a challenging position to maintain their role as gatekeepers. The impact of social distancing hindered journalists from finding and verifying sources, resulting in a dependency on official sources, with significant consequences for power relations between journalists and state authorities. However, the concept of gatekeeping remains relevant in the mainstream media.

Originality/value

Theoretically, this study reinvigorates news production studies by laying the theoretical groundwork for understanding changing journalistic practices and newsroom culture in crisis environments. It also fundamentally alters the relationship between journalists and the newsroom—the central place of newsmaking—and the relations between journalists and their news sources. Empirically, the study contributes to a better understanding of the legacy newsroom and the digital newsroom within a rapidly evolving field of journalism from a non-Western case study.

Keywords: News-making, Newsrooms Disruption, COVID-19, Journalism Practices, Ethnography, Indonesia

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JOS02 Journalistic sources

PP 0009 Authenticity and intimacy in live blogs about the US presidential debates

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The present contribution engages with the larger topic of discourse and politics through assessing live blogging (LB; Thurman & Walters, 2013) as a form of web-native (political) journalism. Discourse practices in online reporting have been found to be characterized by hybridity in terms of (i) sticking to strategic rituals of objectivity to create accountability on the one hand (e.g. Singer 2005; Lasorsa et al. 2012) while (ii) also being marked by storytelling or "news as narrative" (Wahl-Jorgensen & Schmidt, 2019) to make the world more transparent, recognizable, and graspable. Relating to the latter in LB specifically, Tereszkiewicz (2014) discussed how it creates polyvocality by relying on amateur sources and featuring interactions between reporters and users. From a similar vantage point, Steensen (2016) described an "intimization of journalism" by increasingly blurred boundaries between the personal and the professional perspective on social media.

The present study, which uses political LB about the last presidential debates in the United States (2020) as a case in point, explores whether such LB represents polyvocal discourse involving the expansion of voices and perspectives, fostering authenticity through including everyday voices as sources and emphasizing transparency through the presence of a reliable narrator who regularly provides updates and fact-checks; and (ii) whether it is a form of intimate discourse representing immediacy and emotionality, blending the professional and private roles of the communicator and the audience.

The study relies on a purpose-built corpus of LB coverage of the two televised US presidential debates (Donald Trump vs. Joe Biden). Data were collected from four popular media outlets (*The Guardian, Daily Mirror; New York Times, Wall Street Journal*). The overall corpus size amounts to 61,490 tokens. To facilitate a discourse-oriented mixed-methods approach (O'Keeffe, 2006; Bednarek & Carr, 2020) a combined quantitative-qualitative analysis

with *AntConc* and *MAXQDA* was conducted. For the operationalization of the hypotheses established categorizations from journalism studies (e.g. Donsbach & Klett, 1993; Singer, 2005; Bruns, 2018) to annotate sourcing practices, (multimodal) markers of transparency and authenticity, as well as (lack of) linguistic indicators of journalistic objectivity were applied.

As is visible both in sourcing and from a linguistic perspective, the results highlight the abovementioned practices of blending and the integration of new media practices that result in creating different modes of conveying information through storytelling and thus create journalistic perspectives that are intimate and authentic.

JOS02 Journalistic sources

PP 0010 Audiovisual perspectives of quality journalism: A case study of automating television news

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Legacy news broadcasters are leveraging automation and AI in television news production to maintain high-quality linear products, whilst reorienting to an online first mindset. This shift necessitates substantial alterations in broadcast news production, involving reallocation of limited resources, redefinition of work roles and identities, and reimagining news products.

This paper presents a case study of a change project within a legacy news organization, focusing on an overhaul of the audiovisual production of television news. The study follows a workgroup responsible for facilitating this change, comprising managers and workers representing key stakeholders from both audiovisual and journalistic staff. Addressing the following questions, the study aims to fill a gap in journalism studies by considering the perspectives of an often-overlooked group – the audiovisual broadcasting staff:

- How are the core tenets for maintaining high-quality news broadcasts managed when implementing automation and AI?
- What roles do workgroup members perform, whom do they represent, and what causes tension during negotiations?
- What are potential ripple effects of the changes, and how are they justified?

Research material is collected through ethnographic methods, including participant observation, interviews, and document analysis. The primary research material consists of observations of weekly workgroup meetings during the second half of 2022 and the second half of 2023, supported by interviews and observation of news broadcasts.

Preliminary findings suggest that audiovisual staff see themselves as integral to news, working *alongside* journalism by providing the framework for maintaining a high-quality product. When negotiating how to transform their work with automation and AI, tensions arise concerning what is considered essential for upholding this framework, linked to a sense of *craft*. When expected to keep the quality with less hands-on deck, the affordances of automation and AI become integral – in addition to moving task away from the audiovisual staff. Redesigning workflows have ripple effects also affecting the journalistic staff, representing a minority in the workgroup. The roles the workgroup members perform are multifaceted: safeguarding the work roles they represent, evaluating changes through personal experience, and advocating for changes that streamline processes. Unifying the group is a perceived sense of threat to quality, such as a concern that an emphasis on online first may diminish investment in broadcast news.

This paper contends that involving technical staff, such as audiovisual personnel, enhances comprehension of the major changes occurring in journalistic organisations. When implementing impactful technologies like automation and AI, considering a broader perspective enables a more holistic understanding of their implications for the practices and production of journalism.

JOS03 Safety I

PP 0011 Who has their back? Organizational support and preventive mechanisms for journalists under threat in Brazil, Cameroon, Croatia, and Mexico

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Freedom of the press has declined in the last decade, pushed by the democratic backlash in several countries. According to the V-Dem report, around 5.7 billion people live in authoritarian countries or fragile democracies, representing 72% of the global population. In this context, the violence against media has been increasing in recent years, including physical assault, death, harassment, online attacks, and several other types of threats that compromise their professional and private life with profound effects on their journalistic routines and health.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) indicated that almost 800 journalists were jailed in 2023. In the same year, the number of killings reached 95 people; another 65 were missing at the beginning of 2024, as indicated by the Committee to Protect Journalists' (CPJ) monitoring tool.

Despite the growing efforts to protect journalists and offer training to work in dangerous areas, studies show they are still vulnerable and fighting alone in their daily practice. Protection measures, when existent, are insufficient or ineffective to tackle the problem.

In this paper, we analyze the support mechanisms offered to journalists victims of violence in four countries: Brazil, Cameroon, Croatia, and Mexico. In common, these nations share an increased hostility against the press coming from political leaders, and some of them are also under restrictive legislation that endangers the freedom of the media.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate the organizational support and prevention mechanisms in safeguarding media workers. Participants comprised journalists who had experienced various types of violence in their line of work. A predetermined set of open-ended questions guided the interviews. The sample size was defined through a purposive sampling strategy, ensuring representation from local, regional, and national levels and diverse news beats. The research adhered to ethical guidelines, obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically to identify patterns and commonalities.

Particularly in Cameroon and Mexico, physical violence, imprisonment, and assassinations try to silence journalists by force and impose a regime of fear on those who cover human rights, politics, or work with investigative journalism. Interviewees from both countries informed that protection mechanisms are ineffective, and to keep doing their jobs, they use avoidance strategies or self-censorship. Besides the lack of prevention protocols and support from news organizations, Mexican journalists also experience revictimization within newsrooms, with the violence they endure and its effects being trivialized. In Cameroon, among many risks journalists face, any support from the organizational side is mainly symbolic, limited to solidarity within the journalistic network.

Online violence – especially against women – tries to silence Brazilian journalists who also face judicial harassment and other types of attacks with low support or without any help. Croatian media workers find the most comfort and support inside the journalistic community, mainly from their colleague network. The support is more efficiently gained nationally rather than in the newsrooms, including offering free psychological help and receiving private and public support from the Croatian Journalist Association.

JOS03 Safety I

PP 0012 Emotional labour in journalism: A systematic review

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Discussions of the role and impact of emotions in journalism increasingly capture aspects of the topic pertaining to journalists' labour. These are often examined through the lens of *emotional labour* – a sociological concept that refers to efforts that workers exert when they manage emotions that arise in relation to work in order to satisfy professional requirements of their roles (Hochschild 1983). The growing interest, and consequently, scholarship, in journalists' emotional labour, as well as the early evidence showing that it may contribute to impaired health and decreased job performance (Kotisova 2019; Hopper and Huxford 2017), warrant a comprehensive look at the studies in the field with the aim of establishing the state of play and identifying the agenda for future research.

To this end, a systematic review of scholarship engaging with journalists' emotional labour has been carried out drawing on the SPIDER approach and following PRISMA guidelines, with aims to establish the development of literature in terms of publication activity, geographic and phenomenological focus, and methodological approaches. In addition, the analysis aims to synthesize what this body of knowledge has uncovered about the causes and consequences of emotional labour in journalism, as well as the most commonly applied strategies that journalists employ to manage their emotional labour. The initial sample of 296 studies was identified through database searches of the Web of science and ProQuest, as well as a hand search of articles published in three key journals, identified as publications in which the phenomenon was most frequently discussed based on the database searches – Journalism, Journalism studies, and Journalism Practice. Following the elimination of duplicates, the screening process and the full text reviews, 70 studies have been identified as mentioning the concept of emotional labour in the field of journalism, and of these, 23 were original research studies in which emotional labour was the key or one of the most prominent theoretical concepts that the study aimed to research.

The analysis of the larger sample (n = 70) reveals a sharp rise of interest in this practice and area of study since 2020 and the Western-centeredness of the scholarship. Research-focused studies that primarily examine emotional labour in journalism (n = 23) reveal that trauma reporting, experiences of online abuse, challenges of everyday work and working conditions are identified as key triggers, while individual-level processing of emotions is found to be the most frequently employed emotion management strategy. Also, burnout, anxiety, stress, and self-censorship are most commonly reported consequences of emotional labour. The paper ends with the agenda for future research.

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JOS03 Safety I

PP 0013 Collaborative journalism and cross-border collaborations for newsafety: Navigating security and solidarity mechanisms in cooperative practices in Latin American news media

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Journalism no longer operates within national or cultural boundaries. In an era of globalization where international events garner increased attention in the media, research needs to examine the intricate networks and institutions that produce news in this new, interconnected landscape. Collaborative journalism has played a crucial role in tackling the intricate challenges of a globalized society, facilitating crucial investigations with notable political and professional impact. It serves as a remedy for funding shortages and staffing constraints in journalism. Additionally, it reinforces core journalistic values and motivations while facilitating the creation of in-depth investigative stories. This study explores the transformative impact of collaborative journalism in Latin America, focusing on cross-border alliances and their role in enhancing the safety and solidarity of journalistic endeavors. In Latin America, a region grappling with escalating violence against journalists, collaborative journalism and cross-border investigations take on even greater significance, offering opportunities and posing distinct challenges. While cross-border and collaborative journalism is expanding its role in media systems globally, Latin America has experienced a concerning surge in violence against the media in recent years, encompassing physical attacks, harassment, and killings targeting journalists. This increase in attacks can be attributed to the decline in journalism's reputation, the rise of authoritarian and populist regimes around the globe, and the growing use of social networks. Initiatives like Tierra de Resistentes, Lava Jato, and local teams behind the Panama and Pandora Papers highlight the region's potency of collective journalistic efforts. Despite challenging contexts, such as underdeveloped economies and authoritarian regimes, these collaborations have significantly influenced public discourse, policies, and political change. This research investigates real-world practices of cross-border journalism, examining approaches to journalist security through partnerships, training initiatives, consultancy, and other actions. Our study draws on quantitative and qualitative analysis, including a survey of 75 respondents across 20 Latin American countries and 19 in-depth interviews with media practitioners in 10 countries. Our findings suggest that the success of collaborative journalism hinges on contextual factors and organizational frameworks that prioritize material support, functioning as solidarity and security networks for journalists. In this study, we advocate for a comprehensive news safety approach encompassing multiple dimensions. Prior research identified four principal aspects of news safety. Other researchers highlighted financial risks to journalists and news organizations as a critical dimension. While our research did not fully address these broader, systemic risks in journalism, we posit that collaborative journalism contributes significantly to this comprehensive approach. It amalgamates diverse skills and capacities, enabling organizations to integrate new safety measures effectively. However, the success of this model hinges on media organizations' willingness to engage in genuine collaboration, characterized by shared resources and a community-driven ethos rather than mere cooperation. The study contributes to both literature and practice by highlighting that the empowering potential of collaborative journalism in Latin America is realized through its crucial role in fostering solidarity and implementing news safety measures.

JOS03 Safety I

PP 0015 How contextual factors of media outlets shape journalists' experiences of harassment

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Many journalists experience harassment regularly in their everyday work. Audiences in Western democracies have become increasingly aggressive in their communication due to the spread of anti-press sentiments and populist attitudes. The problem is further fueled by technological changes rendering interaction with journalists simple and intrusive. Both the industry and journalism research have been shedding light on this alarming trend as it has introduced detrimental effects on journalists and journalism as an institution upholding truth, free speech, and opinion-making online and offline (Kim & Shin, 2022; Miller, 2022; Waisbord, 2020). For the industry, this means

not only to implement strategies to protect journalists and their work (Holton et al., 2021) but also to contribute to calling out and foiling the normalization of incivility and harassment in today's discourse culture (Meltzer, 2015). Understanding that the reciprocity of today's journalist-audience relationship enabled by online communication not only advances deliberation in democratic discourses but also fosters forms of dark participation is key to interpreting and contextualizing findings about journalists' experiences of harassment (Lewis et al., 2020; Quandt, 2018).

So far, research has found that journalists reporting on specific political topics and embodying particular social identities regarding gender, race, sexuality, and religion are predominately and systematically under threat (Gardiner, 2018; Jamil, 2020; Pain & Chen, 2019). While these individual factors are important to expose the targeting of these journalists, we shift our focus in this presentation to the question of how journalist-audience relationships are differently experienced by journalists depending on the media outlets they work for. In an explorative interview study with 32 German journalists, we analyzed how experiences of harassment are related to the journalist-audience relationships developing in national and local as well as quality, tabloid, constructive, and young audience media.

Our findings indicate that media's contextual conditions determine the composition of the audience, leading to journalists differently assessing closeness or distance in the journalist-audience relationship resulting in dissimilar experiences of harassment. Especially local, constructive, and young audience media allow journalists to forge close relationships with their audience built on direct interaction, a sense of community, as well as shared ideals, norms, and lifeworlds. The findings suggest that establishing an overall respectful journalist-audience relationship is confounded with having a smaller, invested, ideologically homogeneous audience and little circulation of content beyond that targeted community. The analysis also supports that the closeness in the relationship then functions as a buffer for harassment because there are paths for direct conflict-solving. The geographical and/or lifeworld proximity and reciprocal communication seem to lead to more civil interactions and even in critical cases often allow for constructive exchange instead of harassment. According to national journalists, these options are seldom possible with large and heterogeneous audiences because of the volume of harassment and the lack of closeness in the journalist-audience relationship. Our subsequent conclusion is that the closeness or distance in the journalist-audience relationship shapes experiences of harassment, rendering contextual factors facilitating those relationships deserving of further exploration.

JOS04 Boundaries of journalism

PP 0036 How to enter journalism – Obstacles for Up-and-coming journalists with and without diversity features

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Despite the diversity of news content being at the forefront of journalism studies for decades, the diversity of newsroom staff has increasingly received scholarly attention only in recent years. Raising the diversity of the journalistic workforce is discussed to reduce structures of inequality in newsrooms, to increase the diversity of content through more varied horizons of experience among journalists and, thereby, to achieve a more inclusive approach to a more diverse audience.

The sociology of work reveals gender, ethnic and socio-economic background as vital diversity features in professions (Christina et al. 2006; Guillaume et al. 2014; Harrison & Sin 2006). Despite a growing share of female journalists (ProQuote Medien 2022), journalism in Germany as in many Western media systems is little diverse (Borchardt et al., 2019). The obstacles non-male aspirants with migrant or non-academic family backgrounds may face trying to enter journalism are manifold, for instance, language barriers, tokenism, a lack of role models, or discrimination (Borchardt et al., 2019).

Against that background, we compare the diversity-related access points and hurdles of up-and-coming journalists with and without diversity features (RQ1) and examine how different groups of up-and-coming journalists perceive the diversity status among journalists (RQ2).

To answer these questions, we are conducting 40 qualitative, semi-standardized interviews with up-and-coming journalists in Germany between October 2023 and February 2024. We define up-and-coming journalists as persons older than 18 years with a minimum of 3 months of work experience or enrolled in a journalism school and a maximum of 2 years in regular employment (i.e., journalism students, interns, working students, trainees, up-and-coming freelance journalists, journalists who have recently received a regular position). We analyse the anonymized interview transcripts in a qualitative content analysis with MAXQDA.

Regarding RQ1, our preliminary results indicate that early contact with journalism in the personal network is the crucial entry point for both, up-and-coming journalists with and without diversity features (i.e., through family, friends, teachers). Not only but especially for aspirants with diversity features social support is of particular relevance in order to absorb self-doubts and financial struggles. The impression that one's language skills or education are not sufficient to compete in journalism can be dispelled through contact with established journalists or mentoring programs. The poor payment for up-and-coming journalists raises hurdles, especially for aspirants from financially unstable

backgrounds. These hurdles can be overcome by grants and having media companies refrain from unpaid labour in internships. Regarding RQ2, all interviewees so far perceived newsroom diversity as crucial since it is understood to enhance the variety of perspectives in news. Specifically, the upcoming generation of journalists calls for action to diversify the editorial staff in terms of migration and socio-economic background.

The insights of this study help identifying practical instructions for recruiting a more diverse workforce in journalism. This can contribute to changing the social order via communication: The work of more diverse journalists may result in more diverse news content that attracts more diverse audiences.

JOS04 Boundaries of journalism

PP 0037 Being a token: The work-experience of Israeli women journalists from minority groups

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The current transnational movement of people around the globe, with the consequent increase in ethnic minority populations, raises questions of inclusion and exclusion. In order to negotiate and acquire equal rights and civic belonging, ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups, including women, must successfully enter the public sphere. As a result, participation in news-making has been a key concern of ethnic minorities and women—and, more specifically, women of ethnic minorities.

Taking an intersectional approach, my presentation will conceptualize the complex subjectivities of Israeli women journalists from three social minority groups employed in mainstream Israeli journalism: television, radio and digital news. The presentation will focus on both the challenges and the sources of strength in their professional experiences as tokens in a current climate of "managing diversity" within Israeli newsrooms.

The study is based on the following minority groups: (1) Jewish women from Ethiopian origin who experience exclusion based on skin color and have been patronized as immigrants from a their world country; (2) Palestinian women who live in Israel who are discriminated as non-Jewish citizens in terms of their socioeconomic, civil, and political rights; and (3) Russian women who resettled in Israel during the mass wave of immigrations from the Former Soviet Union in the 1990s and have become the target of objectification and symbolic violence. Therefore, all women journalists participated in the study contend with a complex exclusion and discrimination: gendered, racial, ethnic, national or immigration.

The study is based on phenomenological approach and narrative interviews (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002) with 40 women journalists aged 26 to 65, through face to face and through Zoom platform. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and were closely read based on grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The presentation will present the women journalists' experiences with their status of being a token, such as: "otherness" as an advantage to getting into the profession; the prices and struggles accompany tokenism and the ways they coop with them; the change over the years in their token status; the dilemmas derived from their token status relating to their role within their community.

In the discussion I will focus on the similarities and differences between the three minority groups and will analyze how each group's identity and relations with the hegemonic group influence the group's professional identity. The findings may refine how we understand the challenges and contributions of diversity in journalism and newsrooms.

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JOS04 Boundaries of journalism

PP 0038 Exploring audience perceptions of volunteer journalism

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In this article, we present an in-depth analysis of audience perceptions of volunteer journalism. Volunteer journalism, defined as the voluntary contribution of time, effort, and expertise by non-professionals in news gathering, reporting, and dissemination (Mathews, Heiselberg, Jadhav & Oduolowu, unpublished manuscript), has been a pivotal part of the media landscape since the 1970s. The study focuses on long-standing volunteer journalism outlets like HornePosten, a Danish community magazine in print since 1973, to glean insights into audience engagement with such journalism outlets.

The research aims to uncover the underlying motivations that drive the audience towards volunteer journalism. By analyzing the consumption and perception of these outlets, the study intends to differentiate volunteer journalism from other types of uncompensated journalism, such as citizen journalism (Robinson & Deshano, 2011, Naab & Sehl, 2017) and participatory journalism (Borger et al., 2016). A significant component of this research is the establishment of an analytical framework to assist in this differentiation seen from an audience perspective. Additionally, the study identifies potential critiques of volunteer journalism, thereby enriching our understanding of how audiences use, perceive, and engage with this media form, and it considers the audience's perceptions of the future of volunteer journalism, i.e., whether volunteer journalism serves a potential future for local journalism, as it clings to survival in many places around the world.

Methodologically, the article begins with a comprehensive review of existing research on volunteerism and volunteer journalism. This review sets the stage for presenting the empirical study, which is divided into sections detailing the method, analysis, and discussion of findings. The study employs Online Video Research Interviews (OVRI) (Heiselberg & Stępińska, 2021) as our primary methodological tool. A diverse sample of 30 users of volunteer journalism from varied geographical locations – North America, Denmark, and India – was selected to gather a comprehensive understanding of the global audience's viewpoint. This cross-cultural approach not only adds depth to the study but also allows for a comparative analysis of audience attitudes across different sociopolitical landscapes. We began conducting interviews in December 2023 and will finalize data collection in January 2024. At the ECREA conference, we plan to present the key findings of this research.

In conclusion, this article contributes significantly to journalism studies by offering a perspective on audience perceptions of volunteer journalism. By examining examples from distinct countries and regions, the research provides a holistic understanding of the audience's viewpoint.

JOS04 Boundaries of journalism

PP 0039 Exploring precarity in citizen journalism: A study on the economic conditions of favela-based journalists through journalistic roles and boundaries

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Scholarship on alternative news projects for marginalized groups have overwhelmingly focused on journalists' passion and sense of justice driving their work, over the lack of financial security in what has been described as a precarious setting characterized by self-exploited and underpaid labor. Some have argued that a strictly economic perspective would overlook the deep meaning news production holds for community development and self-representation, thereby rationalizing these journalists' involvement in precarious work. However, this study argues that such a rose-tinted approach neglects the reality that even the most engaged journalists must make ends meet. This oversight is tightly linked to journalistic boundaries, emerging from the tension around whether these actors' work is perceived as a profession or a passion that sits on the periphery of the journalistic field. To this extent, scholars not only influence this discourse but also make assumptions when portraying activist-adjacent journalism as oppositional to mainstream without recognizing shared concerns such as living wages. This is perfectly exemplified by favela-based journalists, whom this study investigates. For them, the lines remain blurred between being a "favela resident" and a "journalist", since they are both affected by and report on the social inequalities resulting from state violence. Thus, it is crucial to understand whether they consider themselves as executing a "professional project" for economic rewards (e.g. salary), akin to mainstream journalists, or not. Drawing on nine in-depth interviews with favela-based journalists – employees of news projects and freelancers – from Rio de Janeiro, this study explores: How do favela-based journalists define their roles and construct boundaries within the journalistic field, and how does this shape their perception of their economic conditions?

Contrary to previous literature, findings showed that favela-based journalists' commitment to their role as "micro-watchdogs" alone does not explain their acceptance of precarity. Rather, these actors have internalized job insecurity simply because they have never experienced alternative ways of funding and economic security in the first place. Within this, news project employees hoped for better salaries, considering favela-based journalism a profession vis-à-vis mainstream media. In contrast, freelancers sat outside of the journalistic field and were critical of applying the "logic of the market" to favela-based journalism, perceiving their work as activism. Despite this, news projects have shown signs that they cannot afford to stay outside of the journalistic field, and are focused on ensuring fair compensation – e.g. by collaborating with mainstream media to assert journalistic authority and attract funding. Consequently, journalists would be less likely to quit favela-based journalism, ensuring the sustainability of news production and the promotion of social justice, thus preventing favelas from becoming news deserts, which would be alarming from a democratic standpoint. Current research should account for these efforts and recognize the shift towards viewing favela-based journalism through an economic lens.

JOS04 Boundaries of journalism

PP 0040 The people at the margins of journalism: Peripheral journalists and their (semi-)professional aspirations in eight European countries

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For decades, the proper functioning of democracy has been closely tied to professional journalism and its role in creating a space for public debate and thus enabling processes of democratic reasoning (Schudson, 2008). The shifting boundaries of institutional journalism (Carlson & Lewis, 2015) and the emergence of 'new' platforms, actors, and forms of public communication raise questions about how these entrants to the field aim to contribute to the public interest. In the literature, such quasi-journalistic actors are usually conceptualized as peripheral journalists; these actors are seen as populating a periphery around journalism's 'traditional' core (Eldridge, 2019). Core and periphery are demarcated along multiple axes, including the autonomy/heteronomy of actors and their alignment with established institutional norms in a hetero- or orthodox manner (Maares & Hanusch, 2022). Despite these theoretical considerations, it is widely unclear how peripheral journalists conceive their (semi-)professional aspirations compared to traditional journalists. We address this research gap by systematically comparing the attitudes and perceptions of both groups across eight European countries: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The comparative perspective allows us to identify commonalities and differences beyond the constraints of individual media systems. In line with the core vs. periphery concept, we operationalize peripheral journalists into five subgroups, which allows us to compare analogous groups despite the structural differences of the media systems. These subgroups include *political 'alternative' media* proclaiming to represent a necessary corrective towards the 'mainstream' media (Holt et al., 2019), *fact-checkers* embracing traditional journalistic values around factuality (Graves, 2016), *news start-ups* challenging conventional understandings of how news production is organized and funded (Usher, 2017), *corporate journalism* producing journalism-like products on behalf of business enterprises from other sectors (Koch et al., 2023), and *influencers* building personal brands and engaging with a significant number of followers (Borchers, 2019). To assess their contribution to the public interest, we explore the working realities of peripheral journalists, including perceived autonomy and influences on their work and their aspirations, encompassing role orientations, epistemologies, ethics, and political views (Hanitzsch et al., 2019). Empirically, we build our comparison on a recent (2022/23) standardized survey among traditional journalists in the eight countries ($n \geq 5{,}500$) and an ongoing survey among peripheral journalists, targeting 100 peripheral journalists in each country. The latter survey is completed for the first two countries ($n \approx 80$ and ≈ 100), with data collection ongoing in the others. At the conference, we will be able to present a comprehensive comparison of traditional and peripheral journalists in the selected European countries. Through this study, we hope to enhance our understanding of hybrid media systems' ecology and evaluate the extent to which our theoretical assumptions about peripheral journalism align with the empirical reality.

JOS06 Media trust

PP 0104 (Dis)connection? How the discontented audiences value journalistic trust markers

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Recent audience studies find news organization fail to accurately portrait people's experience, and people do not recognize themselves in the news (de Haan & Van de Broek, 2023; Costera Meijer, 2021). Specifically, a lack of in-depth reporting and diverse perspectives cause discontent amongst audiences (Costera-Meijer, 2021; Wilner et al., 2021). In a recent study, Arguedas et al. (2022) find that generally people instantly 'know' to trust news they encounter and consequently make a snap decision about the reliability of the news and information encountered. The large amount of information people deal with online affects their evaluation of the credibility of news (Anderson et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2017). When consuming news, people need to rely on textual markers that indicate credibility of both the sender and the information (Van Dalen, 2020). We know little how audiences with low media trust and who feel disconnected from established news media value such textual markers. In this study we want to untangle what trust markers are crucial for building news media trust, and which are perhaps detrimental.

With this aim, we conduct a large-scale *conversational survey* amongst a representative sample of Dutch citizens (Celino & Calegari, 2020). For this method, a conversational AI is trained to ask questions based on a protocol developed by the researchers. The survey then becomes a conversation, rather than a list of questions. Contrary to a conventional survey, a conversational survey is a conversation between an AI-tool and the respondent meaning that the AI 1) can ask more specific questions regarding respondents' motivation when relevant and 2) is able to adjust to the needs of respondents (adjusting the complexity of language, tone-of-voice) thereby making the research more inclusive and accessible.

To reach a diverse and representative sample of Dutch citizen, the survey will be distributed through national, regional and local news sites, and though platforms and social media groups focused on diverse societal issues and locations. We are specifically interested to include people that are typically poorly reached through news media and who are also underrepresented in survey research, for example people who are not very interested in news, have low literacy or a mental disability (Kaun et al., 2016; Swart et al., 2022).

By making the survey a conversation, this method ensures the data more accurately reflects how the public experiences disconnection from the news. Using a conversational survey, which will be distributed in the spring of 2024, we will gain insights in how different social groups value journalistic trust makers and which markers contribute to building trust. This knowledge is indispensable if news organization wish to come to terms with discontentment regarding the news. Moreover, the research contributes to further our understanding of news media trust, specifically how different groups fluctuate in the news media trust.

JOS06 Media trust

PP 0105 Credibility of Liveblogs as genre: Four empirical studies

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Live blogs are a very popular format for journalists and the public alike to report on and follow live events. Live blogs proliferated from sports beats to other beats, now covering a wide array of subjects and themes, like disasters, attacks, debates, COVID-19, or the crisis in Ukraine on a daily, sometimes hourly pace. However, their immediacy can challenge journalistic credibility. This journalistic credibility is central to four empirical studies using genre theory as theoretical framework.

Genre influences and constrains the choice of content and style for makers (Swales, 1990; Miller 1984) and manages expectations by the public. Genres create effects of credibility "which are central to the different ways the world is understood" (Frow, 2015: 20). To understand genre, we must understand what makers do, how their content is presented, and finally evaluated by the public.

First, I analyzed how liveblogs are produces, interviewing journalists interviews concerning routines and conventions used for the production of live blogs. We found a social process of news production, constantly balancing between (ir)relevance and (un)certainty. Journalists covering planned events had a high degree of editorial autonomy but were embedded in a network of knowledge. Unplanned events, like breaking news, is characterized by journalists working together to cover terrorist attacks, or disasters. These routines and conventions suggested a discourse community of live-bloggers: journalists follow same routines and conventions despite their differences in the online news platforms they worked for, or the stories they covered.

Second, I conducted a qualitative content analysis regarding source selection and reported speech. I found that journalists used most of the times (measured in 3000+ sentences) *narration* (their own words, without a source) to cover reality in live blogs. When sources were used, journalists used predominantly *formal* sources. These sources were quoted mostly direct (*ad verbatimn*). The choice for predominantly *formal* sources harmed the potential for polyvocality (more and more different sources).

Third, we evaluated live blogs in six focus groups, asking to evaluate the credibility of live blogs. Respondents had concerns regarding source selection, authorship, the use of photo, video and social media. Respondents were aware of the challenges of live blogs, but still highly regarded the certainty (or uncertainty) and relevance (or irrelevance) of the format. They 'repaired' shortcomings by constantly comparing the content of live blogs with knowledge they had by following other media. A survey among respondents using live blogs during the first months of the pandemic further supported this omnivorous news diet of what are called by Broersma & Swart (2022) 'news junkies'.

Based on these four studies, we claim that live blogs are a indeed a genre (and not a channel for content), managing discourse production and public expectations alike. Their credibility is the result of these genre conventions followed by journalists, leading to content that is evaluated critically by public that is used to deal with (ir)relevance and (un)certainty. We conclude that these are not challenges that journalists must solve *for* the format but are regarded as expected (and welcome) challenges *by* the public.

JOS06 Media trust

PP 0106 Restoring trust in journalism: A multi-country experiment on journalistic repair strategies

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Journalism can only fulfill its function as the cornerstone of solid a democracy, when the news media and its coverage are trusted by the public. Without trust in the news, the desired outcomes of journalism's role in society

cannot be achieved: Citizens simply will not consume the news or do not believe the news, and these citizens will thus be unlikely to become informed or engaged by journalistic productions.

The decline of media trust across countries, especially among younger generations and lower-educated citizens, poses a significant threat to the foundational role of journalism in democracy. In response to this challenge, a pioneering experimental study is being developed to explore and validate the impact of journalistic strategies aimed at restoring public trust in the news media. The project seeks to address the critical issue of media trust through an extensive multi-country experiment involving 14 diverse nations, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Ghana, Greece, India, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Spain, United Kingdom, and the United States (and more countries if resources allow).

Background and Objectives

The study addresses the fundamental question of how journalistic repair strategies, specifically fact-checking and increased transparency, impact media trust. The research recognizes the importance of understanding the variations in media trust across different nations and aims to develop a culturally-sensitive approach to measuring media trust. By delving into the factors that influence trust, such as press freedom, political polarization, and democratic history, the project strives to provide evidence-based recommendations for the journalism industry.

Methodology

The research comprises two main sub-projects. The first sub-project focuses on developing a comprehensive survey scale to measure media trust in a multidimensional manner. This scale will capture citizens' perceptions and trust in journalism, differentiating between healthy criticism and detrimental cynicism.

The second sub-project involves a pre-registered online experiment, employing a 3 x 2 factorial design to test the impact of journalistic repair strategies. The experiment manipulates conditions by presenting news stories in regular formats vs. fact-checking formats vs. transparency formats, while also varying the topics to ensure the findings' generalizability. The experimental design is not yet set in stone; feedback is very welcome and the purpose of this conference presentation.

Unique Contributions

What sets this research apart is its comparative and experimental approach involving 14 culturally diverse countries, including nations from the Global South. By conducting a multi-level confirmatory factor analysis, the study aims to validate the measurement tool for media trust internationally, offering scholars a valuable resource. Furthermore, the experiment's outcomes will provide actionable insights for journalism professionals, potentially reshaping how news is presented to the public.

Call for Collaboration

The research team actively seeks collaboration from scholars worldwide to enhance the project's impact, which is the second goal of this conference presentation. By leveraging the diverse expertise and local knowledge of collaborators, the study aims to refine its experimental design, measurement tools, and overall methodology. Ultimately, the collaborative effort strives to address the global challenge of declining media trust, ensuring that journalism can continue to fulfill its vital democratic role.

JOS06 Media trust

PP 0107 Values-based polarization in media trust. A longitudinal analysis of socio-cultural values and media trust in Northwestern Europe (1980–2020)

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Given the democratic importance of the trust in the press, it is surprising that longitudinal trends in media trust have received relatively limited attention, especially beyond the US. People who distrust the media perceive fake news, conspiracy theories and misinformation as more credible than people who trust the media and often have more polarized attitudes. This makes it highly relevant to understand trends in media trust and to study whether societal cleavages in media trust grow over time.

Introducing the Salient Values Similarity perspective (e.g., Poortinga and Pidgeon, 2006) into journalism research, this paper studies whether media trust in Northwestern European countries has polarized over time between progressives and conservatives. Media trust is a relational concept, as the degree of trust in the press is the result of the interplay between the news media (the trustee) and the public (the trustor). The paper expects that in Northwestern European countries with high levels of press freedom and a professional press corps, changes in trust in the press over time reflect changes in cultural values among the public rather than media performance. The Cultural Backlash thesis (Norris and Inglehart, 2019) argues that societal shifts from conservative to progressive values generate feelings of alienation among conservatives, potentially influencing both political and media distrust. Anti-elitist discourse often portrays both politicians and mainstream media as out of touch with the public,

potentially extending perceived value dissimilarity and distrust from political to media institutions. Thus, the paper expects differences in media trust between conservatives and progressives to increase over time.

The paper analyzes five waves of the European Values Study (1980–2020) in 10 Northwestern European countries, which includes measures of media trust, and of the social-cultural values conservativism, political ideology and post-materialism. The central hypothesis was tested using country fixed effects regression analysis. In addition, and following state of the art statistical approaches to studying polarization, change in the overlap coefficient in the distribution between conservatives and progressives is analyzed (e.g. Lelkes, 2016; Park, 2018).

Indeed, the analysis shows that individuals in Northwestern Europe who identify as progressives (those with more liberal or left-leaning political and social views) and conservatives (those with more traditional or right-leaning views) are showing increasingly divergent levels of trust in the media. Circa 1980, materialism, social conservatism, and political ideology had minimal associations with media trust. However, in alignment with the Salient Values Similarity perspective, media trust polarized along value lines between 1980 and 2020. Progressives, left-wing supporters, and postmaterialists exhibited increased confidence in the media, while this is not the case for conservatives, right-wing supporters and people who hold materialist values. This values-based polarization was not present in Southern or Central Europe.

The findings suggest a link between rising trust among progressives in Northwestern Europe and the media's perceived alignment with progressive values and agendas. The implications for attempts to restore media trust among those who distrust the media are discussed.

JOS06 Media trust

PP 0108 Crisis, proximity, and trust: Local journalism in the Age of Social Media

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Over the past few decades, journalism has been facing multiple crises, affecting its traditional business model, its traditional role as public mediator and the trust the audience attributes to it. As social media platforms arouse a new form of communication and dissemination of information, also draining the publicity money that used to flow to media outlets, the whole media ecosystem changes into a more complex and dynamic setting, in which disinformation finds breeding ground to grow.

Local news outlets have been feeling these crises more acutely, as these organisations are often smaller than the ones in larger cities, and have less human and financial resources. In small places, where the circulation of information is grounded on community ties and the value of proximity, the disconnection between audiences and journalists have also been felt. Distrust have perpetuated in an age characterized by the proliferation of misinformation on social media, while local media outlets close at a fast pace, as small businesses do not offer the financial support they once did.

Drawing of six focus groups held with local audiences and local journalists in Portugal, this paper aims to analyse, from the audiences' perspective, their relationship with local media outlets, how do they feel that the phenomenon of disinformation impacts this relationship, how they verify the information they consume, and which role they think local media outlets have in fighting disinformation. From the local journalists' perspective, the impact of disinformation in their work, the role of local media in spreading disinformation, and the space for fact-checking from a local perspective.

The analysis of the groups' discussions found that the lack of resources is also felt by the audience, as they feel that the stories published by local outlets lack depth and sometimes, listening both sides of the stories. But the proximity is a precious value because it enhances trust in media, as audiences find national news outlets disinformation spreaders that rarely go to the field to find out the facts when it comes to news in the countryside.

Journalists also found that their own peers can be disinformation spreaders, but for different reasons. The pressure to be the first to publish, the publication without verification, the use of sensationalism and clickbait to attract the audiences, and the proliferation of so-called news outlets based on Facebook pages, but made by non-journalists, are some reasons for the whole class to be doomed as the ones that spread disinformation.

As communities grapple with the challenges of a rapidly changing media landscape, this research enhances the understanding of local journalism's crucial role in organizing communication and social (dis)order from a local level.

Keywords: disinformation, local media, trust, local audiences, focus groups

JOS07 International news work

PP 0109 Global narratives (dis)entangled and communicating worlds beyond borders: Insights into news agency foreign correspondents' role (perception) in communicating our world in (dis)order

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In our interconnected world that has transformed into a "single place" (Robertson, 1992: 6) shaped by disruption and change across societal, cultural, environmental and cultural dimensions, news agencies, particularly their foreign correspondents, remain pivotal in communicating world affairs. Positioned as essential "agents in a global public sphere" (Hellmueller, 2016), they actively contribute to the "mediated image-building of foreign countries and translating foreign cultures" (Beliveau et al., 2011: 130). Against the backdrop of contemporary global disruptions, they navigate ongoing social, political conflicts and environmental crises by striking a balance between opening up a window on the world and domesticating information for national audiences (Papathanassopoulos and Giannouli, 2015: 1). As the "first important cultural framers of events" (Papathanassopoulos and Giannouli, 2015: 4), foreign correspondents contextualise and frame current global affairs, assisting audiences in comprehending the intricacies of global events (Beliveau et al., 2011: 130). Their (self-)ascribed cultural and professional identities intricately shape their behaviour, news selection, and presentation (Donsbach, 2012: 1), and ultimately, how we as audiences learn to understand distant places, people, and events beyond our direct experience.

The literature suggests that studies on foreign correspondents' role perception seem to lack explicit reference to those working for (European) news agencies. On that account, this proposed paper inserts into this lacuna by focusing specifically on European news agencies' foreign correspondents. It delves into their role perception and, in addition, explores their cultural identity by asking the question, "Who are you?" attempting to uncover potential contradictions and conflicts that may arise between their cultural identities and perceived professional roles.

The research behind this paper stems from the PhD project titled *Mediating – Negotiating – Translating: News Agency Foreign Correspondents' Role in Communicating Culture*, whose overarching aim is to interrogate the dynamics underpinning the mediation, translation, and negotiation of cultures and countries in the realm of global news production. The project explores various dimensions, including the correspondents' nuanced perceptions of their roles, the impact of cultural identity, considerations of their imagined audience, their daily work routine, language skills, and cultural knowledge.

This project utilises semi-structured in-depth interviews supplemented with conclusions drawn from a thematic analysis of foreign correspondents' written work to gain a detailed understanding of how these notions of role perception and cultural identity translate into/shape the global news product(ion processes). Semi-structured in-depth interviews have been conducted with a total of 67 foreign correspondents (status quo) covering six continents – from Africa to South America and countries from Austria to Turkey. The foreign correspondents are working for the European news agencies AFP (France), dpa (Germany) and LUSA (Portugal). Echoing Marschan-Piekkari and Reis (2005: 224) and fellow scholars, the researcher employs a "multilingual approach", conducting the research in five languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, German and French) in order to enhance the research's international orientation, making it accessible beyond English-speaking audiences and emphasising the project's commitment to understanding the communication of countries and cultures through language, as articulated by Hennink (2008: 25), who aptly stated: "Language is a window into understanding culture."

JOS07 International news work

PP 0110 News agencies and their ambivalent significance for the pluralistic order of media systems: A mixed methods study on the changing role of news agencies in journalism

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News agencies are one of the most important sources for journalistic reporting. It is all the more astonishing that, with a few exceptions, agencies still represent a major blind spot within journalism research. Using a mixed method approach of content analysis and qualitative interviews, this paper investigates the current situation and future role of news agencies – in particular regarding the dominance of agencies in many national markets and the chances and risks linked within this for the diversity of opinion.

News agencies play a central role in media systems as suppliers of information for media outlets (Wu, 2000). Following digital transformations, however, the role of news agencies is assessed differently. On the one hand, it is plausible to assume that the demand for ready-made news from agencies will increase (Boumans et al., 2018; Dogruel et al., 2019). On the other hand, the easier availability of information on the internet also means that media editors are turning to more cost-effective sources such as information from governments or companies

(Welbers et al., 2018; Rantanen et al., 2019; Pfaff, 2021). In addition, in several European countries, one single news agency partially or even completely dominates the agency market. This is increasingly being discussed against the background of whether the remaining dominant news agency restricts diversity or makes a basic supply and thus a certain diversity of content possible (Boumans et al. 2018; Welbers et al. 2018; Häuptli & Vogler, 2018).

Using our mixed methods approach, we analysed the current situation in one large German federal state. In order to quantify the significance of agency material we manually analysed the content of 9 online news outlets (n = 1,240 news articles) during a whole week in September 2022. In addition, we conducted 13 semi-structured interviews in autumn 2022 with practitioners from selected news agencies and media outlets.

The quantitative results show the dominant role of a single agency in the analysed national market. On average, 86 percent of all agency articles in the media analysed came from this one agency.

Our interviewees also often focused on the dominant role of the lead agency. For small media outlets, it is typically the only news agency used. Practitioners see the future of news agencies as positive – despite or perhaps because of the economic crisis in journalism, since regional and local media companies are considered to be increasingly dependent on agencies, especially for national and international topics. At the same time, practitioners perceive the dominant news agency as highly independent, with a diversified ownership structure ensuring a high degree of internal diversity and plurality. Nevertheless, this situation requires intensive political and academic observation, as there is a potential for political instrumentalisation in case of changes in ownership and/or the political environment.

JOS07 International news work

PP 0111 News media capitals: International news hubs as spaces for constructing transnational journalistic cultures

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A handful of cities around the world can be considered vibrant hubs of international journalism: Beirut, Mexico City, Hong Kong, London, or Nairobi. These and other metropolises host bureaux of transnational news organisations and gather a range of national and foreign journalists, stringers, freelancers, fixers, and other relevant news production actors that are stationed there to cover entire regions. This paper seeks to define these news media capitals as specific spaces of mediation where these multiple actors interact to shape transnational journalistic cultures with their own logics.

In making this argument, I am inspired by the work of Curtin (2004, p. 273), who argued for the need to study TV production by centring on some cities—media capitals—as "meeting places" and locations "where complex forces and flows interact." I am further informed by conceptualisations of journalistic cultures (Hanitzsch, 2007) and transnational journalism (e.g., Hellmueller, 2016). Over the last few years, many journalistic processes have moved online, and so research increasingly centres on the digital realm, yet spaces still matter. Accordingly, in this paper, I contend that the interaction between places and spaces plays a central role in shaping journalistic cultures. Whilst place refers to a concrete location, space is a more abstract relational entity that transcends it (e.g., Tuan, 1979). In that sense, hubs in this case can be understood as places in which multiple international or transnational news media connections intersect.

As the starting point of a broader research project, this paper aims to define news media capitals as relational spaces and describe some of the actors, dynamics, and interactions that characterise them. In so doing, I draw on examples from existing research on three cities across continents: Beirut, Mexico City and Nairobi. Moreover, I delve into how this understanding can further upcoming empirical research surrounding foreign news work and offer some methodological reflections on it.

By focusing on the changing spatial dynamics of foreign news production—often in the coverage of conflict, crises, and violence—this paper goes beyond some traditional and outdated binaries between local and foreign, East and West, powerful and powerless that are prevalent in research on foreign correspondence (Blacksin & Mitra, 2023). Finally, in offering theoretical discussion surrounding the role of hubs and space in transnational news production, I supplement the current focus on the digital in journalism studies.

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JOS07 International news work

PP 0112 Covering the populist politics of fighting the virus: Journalistic framings of the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil, Poland, Serbia and the USA

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The success of public health campaigns, especially during a crisis, depends on effective communication. Media can serve as important sources of information, providing timely updates on health threats and preventative measures. The presence of populist leaders can diminish the capacity of media organizations to engage in effective health crisis communication (Hedges and Lasco, 2021). Populism thrives on divisions between 'the people' and 'elites' (Moffitt, 2020) and as such, it may make conflict-centered rather than solution-focused coverage more likely. Such coverage can, in turn, foster anti-elite sentiments and encourage polarized attitudes and distrust of experts.

Research on the coverage of the COVID-19 health crisis has been growing fast, revealing an overwhelming focus on infection rates and death rates at the expense of information on preventative measure, prevalence of political rather than health expert sources, and marked politicization in some countries (Hart, Chinn & Soroka, 2020; Hubner, 2021; Matthews, 2023). However, little is known how these patterns relate to populist politics. Research on the communication strategies of populist leaders during COVIUD-19 is emerging (Hallin et al., forthcoming; Taraktaş et al., 2022) yet without insight into how these relate to media coverage.

To address this gap, this paper investigates COVID-19 coverage in four countries led by populist politicians at the time: Brazil, Poland, Serbia, and the USA. Qualitative framing analysis was used to analyze 2000 news stories (500 per country) published in 12 different news sources (3 per country) between January 2020 and December 2022. The sample was selected randomly from a larger corpus, extracted using relevant keywords (COVID-19, coronavirus) from Lexis Nexis and Factiva databases, based on the constructed week. The analysis comprised two stages: (1) coding of materials using a list of generic frames; (2) in-depth analysis of each frame, with a focus on key facts and developments reported, the main actors involved, suggested (or implied) causes and solutions, and differences and similarities between outlets and countries.

Five generic frames were identified – attribution of responsibility, socio-economic consequences, science and technology, human interest, and conflict – of which the first two were by far the most common in all countries. This suggests that information about solutions to the crisis was overshadowed by coverage that foregrounded attribution and responsibility, human interest, and conflict, and often focused on electoral disputes and disagreements over preventative strategies. Furthermore, significant differences in the stance to populist leaders emerged between outlets and across countries. In Poland and Serbia, state-controlled public service media praised the populist leader and state authorities, conveyed official positions and arguments, and blamed the opposition for generating discord, while critical reporting was limited to opposition outlets and relatively rare. In Brazil, public service media also conveyed official positions, but less emphatically so than in Poland and Serbia, while commercial outlets were critical of Bolsonaro. In the US, positive Fox TV framed Trump positively, while New York Times and USA Today were critical. These differences are linked to differences in populist approaches to the pandemic and in the extent of populist control over media.

JOS07 International news work

PP 0113 Changing practices: Driving forces and barriers towards collaboration in the European news media landscape

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The Panama Papers case unveiled in 2016 more than eleven million files, but also shed light on collaboration, a disruptive trend in the media industry (Carson & Farhal 2018; Konieczna & Graves, 2020; Sambrook 2018; Author, 2016; Authors, 2017). Two years later, Danah Boyd stressed, at the ONA Awards, the importance of "coming up with new ways of taking the news industry into a non-competitive approach" (Bryant, 2018: p4). Media collaboration has important antecedents in the creation of AP (1848), the World War I media coalition or the Pentagon papers in the 70s. But the systematic joint production of projects began in the 1960s with The Arizona Project (Konow-Lund, 2022). In the past decade, the frequency and scope have accelerated, albeit unevenly. Cross-border investigative

journalism has a long tradition in Europe and especially Latin America: collaboration addresses the weakness of small newsrooms and increases their visibility and protection (Mesquita, 2023; Alfter, 2019; Heft, 2021, Deméneck, 2016). Wikileaks initiative led to the uncovering of the Afgan files, followed by the War logs and Cablegate cases -with participation of *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *El País* and *Der Spiegel*. Projects such as Farm subsidies, Forbidden Stories, EU4J, EDJNet or The Daphne Projet (Hindman & Thomas, 2013; Becket, 2011; Alfter, 2019; Konow-Lund, 2022). Collaboration has also produced outstanding results in solutions journalism and digital storytelling within the US (Porter & Shapiro, 2022). Our paper aims to deepen the knowledge of European collaborative practices; in spite of an outstanding development and popular awareness of collaboration practices, the scientific community has yet to give an answer to relevant questions such as RQ1 was: What were the drivers of collaboration in the European news landscape? RQ2 What obstacles need to be surmounted to strengthen collaboration in today´s European news ecosystem? In order provide the answers, 20 interviews were carried out from June to September 2023 with leading partners and members of collaborative European consortia "Cross-Border Local", "Stars4media NEWS", "Pix.T for News & Photojournalism", "The Circle", "European excellence exchange in journalism (E3J), "CIJI2" "Collaborative journalism Europe in a global context", "European Focus" and "Media Innovation Europe" as well as initiatives IJ4EU, European Data Journalism Network and Crossborder Journalism Campus Erasmus+. Findings pointed to the challenging environment of the news sector and the globalization brought about by the new European sphere as two of the main reasons for collaboration and financial resources, networks and training -mainly consultancy- as the means to reinforce it.

JOS08 News reporting I

PP 0124 News coverage of euthanasia in Portugal and United Kingdom: A comparative study of public issues and argument structures between 2016 and 2024

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As artefacts of mediation, economic activity, and social organisation, newspapers provide individuals with ways of experiencing the lives of others and seeing themselves represented (Deuze, 2014). It is up to journalistic publics to decide how intensely and in what ways they connect to the (hyper)mediation of the shared world (Pasquali et al., 2022). In the new social reality of public death in the media (Sumiala, 2022), the hegemonic values associated with suffering and the politics of mercy are summoned to public negotiations.

The desire for a change in the law to allow access to euthanasia has seen growing public acceptance. Polls carried out in Portugal (Coutinho, 2023) and the UK (Booth, 2023) revealed that 72.5% and 65% of citizens, respectively, are in favour of legalising euthanasia. The Portuguese context is particularly relevant in this regard, given the ongoing process of regulating euthanasia. In 2023, the euthanasia law was passed by confirmation to circumvent the fifth veto by the President of the Portuguese Republic (Lusa and SIC Notícias, 2023). The United Kingdom is still debating the decriminalisation of euthanasia (Booth, 2023).

Although previous studies have examined the issue of euthanasia in the news media, there are currently gaps in the literature that we have attempted to fill with this study. There is no specific focus on the Portuguese context and therefore no comparison with the British scenario, despite both countries having a history of public debate about euthanasia in the media. Furthermore, the existing studies on the British media are mostly from before 2011 and do not consider the evolution of public discussion over the last decade.

The aims of this study were to identify the similarities and differences that characterise the news coverage of euthanasia between 2016 and 2024 in Portugal and the United Kingdom; to analyse how newspapers frame the political, legal, religious, and medical dimensions of the public debate; and to compare the argumentative structures of these nations. To apply a longitudinal comparative statistical analysis, our sample includes journalistic texts published in the digital media of the newspapers Público, Expresso, The Guardian, and The Telegraph.

Quantitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2019/1980) and argumentative discourse analysis (Hajer, 2006) are combined to obtain the observable patterns of the representations of euthanasia in the texts and to examine the associated argumentative structure. The variables in this study are as follows: (a) date; (b) country; (c) media; (d) author; (e) journalistic genre; (f) length; (g) theme; (h) geographical scope; (i) number of voices; (j) occupation of voices; (k) role played; (l) position adopted in relation to euthanasia; (m) arguments mobilised in favour of euthanasia; (n) arguments mobilised against euthanasia; (o) degree of manifestation of the argument; (p) origin of the argument; (q) level of the argument; (r) scale of evaluation in relation to the argument; (s) who evaluated the argument; (t) specific terminology used; (u) decoding and explanation of the terms; (v) presence of context or background information on the topic. This communication presents the results of this ongoing study.

JOS08 News reporting I

PP 0125 Discursive constructions of populism in the Spanish and the Italian press through metaphors

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In the last decades, Europe and other countries all over the globe have experienced the rise of populist political parties, drawing the attention of academia and the social world into the phenomenon and resulting into a populist 'hype'. According to Brown and Mondon (2021), this can entail serious implications on how we understand the meaning of populism itself and the related phenomena as well. For instance, the label "populism" has been used so far to refer a wide spectrum of circumstances, political actions, ideologies, actors, movements, and parties in a diverse geographic and temporary radius having little or nothing in common (Hunger and Paxton, 2022). Thus, the concept of populism has become distorted to the extent that all is populist and, consequently, nothing is.

The rise of populism in Europe has been accompanied by an increasing use of the term in the media. This has been studied in the European press belonging to the democratic corporatist or liberal media systems, but there is a lack of studies about Southern Europe and the polarized pluralist media system. In this study, we provide insights into how Spanish and Italian newspapers with different editorial policies use the concept of populism. Through an analysis of newspaper articles in Spain and Italy, we aim to accomplish the following objectives: (O1) To detect the metaphors that conceptualize populism in the Spanish and the Italian press,(O2) To identify the source domains referred to the concept of 'populism', and (O3) To establish the narratives derived from the most relevant metaphors in the analyzed news outlets according to their political leaning.

To achieve these objectives, we apply Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) to a sample of newspaper articles published in Spain and Italy (n = 455) and we detect the main metaphorical frameworks (n = 234) used for discursively constructing populism in these countries belonging to the polarized pluralist media system. Results show that populism is metaphorized in less than the half of the analyzed items, which shows that, despite the intense use of the term, Spanish and Italian newspapers did not specify the meaning they give to the concept. On the other hand, three common source domains are shared by the news outlets when conceptualizing populism: path/travel/movement, conflict/war/crime and personification. While similar narratives can be drawn from the use of these source domains, different perspectives appear when looking at newspapers' political leaning, which demonstrates how malleable the concept is. This suggests that the Spanish and the Italian news media do also contribute to perpetuate the emptiness of the term and to generate confusion about its meaning.

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JOS08 News reporting I

PP 0126 "Finally, investing money makes for a clear conscience": How the news media deals with greenwashing in the financial sector

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Sustainable investments are not just a trendy financial product, they are one of the European Union's key components for transforming society towards climate neutrality and sustainability. Despite its importance, sustainable investments have been criticized for a lack of clear definitions, incoherent measurements, and the limited proof of their impact.

While the news media recognizes the new trend of "sustainable finance", the question arises whether this reporting is also paying sufficient attention to the criticism raised towards it. Previous research has found that all too often, journalists uncritically pass on companies' "green claims". In financial news reporting in particular, there is a lack of distance, depth of research, and often simply of knowledge about financial topics, resulting in the failure of financial journalists enacting their watchdog role.

Thus, our research question reads: How do the news media in Germany report about "green" claims of sustainable finance? We analyzed the content of 248 news articles from various news outlets that reported on five different cases related to sustainable finance. Collaborating with students and practitioners of journalism, we investigated five cases in the field of sustainable finance, where greenwashing could be detected: Start-Ups, Pension Insurance, State Investment Funds, "climate-neutral" banking and Black Rock. For each of these cases, a sample of 50 articles

was selected. In the next step, a category system was developed for the qualitative content analysis using MaxQDA. In addition, the news articles were automatically analyzed for specific key words.

The results paint a mixed picture: Whereas an outstanding critical reporting on the topic of sustainable finance could be detected in national specialist publications (such as *Capital* or *Handelsblatt*), in most cases, the reporting reflects an uncritical and even naive mixture of service, news and PR, right down to crude advertising: "Finally, investing money makes for a clear conscience". Moreover, the coverage of sustainable finance is event-driven by political or corporate agenda. In contrast, more in-depth investigative reporting and critical commentary, such as the questioning of the capitalist growth paradigm, are virtually absent.

Furthermore, media coverage of the financial "green" start-up scene should also be viewed critically. Here, journalistic reporting copies and pastes advertising promises, often mixed with hero narratives, while criticism is mostly focusing on poor financial figures rather than questionable business cases. Local media turn out to deliver particularly weak reporting and turn a blind eye to greenwashing practices by uncritically reprinting green claims from local banks' PR campaigns.

To summarize, this analysis has revealed that German news media fails to enact its watchdog role in unraveling "green claims" by the financial sector to a large extent. The stark contrast between national specialist publications with a few investigative pieces and local news is particularly concerning, and implies that critical reporting is primarily a question of available resources. Implications for news reporting about sustainable finance and dealing with greenwashing are discussed.

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JOS08 News reporting I

PP 0127 Reading between the Headlines: Analysing Islam in Belgian News (2013–2023)

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This study explores how Belgian news media portray Islam and Muslims, recognizing the media's substantial influence on our perception of reality. Examining this portrayal is crucial as it shapes global perceptions (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Gamson et al., 1992; Hoewe & Peacock, 2020), often perpetuating negative stereotypes and contributing to biases against Muslim communities worldwide (De Nolf et. al., 2023; Rahman & Qamar, 2017). Using a mixed-method approach, we analyse newspaper articles from 2013 to 2023 in the eight most read Flemish and Francophone Belgian media outlets.

This study takes a comprehensive approach by combining both BERTopic and manual framing analysis to offer a nuanced understanding of the portrayal of Islam and Muslims in Belgian news media, examining the prevalent topics and frames used when discussing Islam and Muslims. First, BERTopic, a topic modelling technique developed by Grootendorst (2022), uncovers prevalent themes in articles related to Islam and Muslims within Belgian news media. Our dataset included 41,086 articles that matched our query and the timespan. The algorithm detected the topics of about half of the articles. We further manually analysed the detected topics and categorised them into ten themes: Religious and Cultural Affairs, Political and International Relations, Art & Media Portrayal, Social and Humanitarian Issues, International Politics, Conflict and Crisis, Terrorism and Security, Legal and Judicial Matters, Religious Figures, and Global Health and Pandemic. We analysed and visualised the distribution of these topics based on the newspaper type, language, and time to identify political and temporal dynamics of Muslim representation.

Moreover, our manual framing analysis captures the nuanced aspects of media representation, including its interpretative dimensions and contextual qualities. This analysis was conducted on a subsample of 780 articles, with consideration given to ensuring an equal distribution of articles over time and across various news media sources. This analysis reveals a persistent negative framing of Muslims in Belgian news media, exposing recurrent themes aligned with distinct frames. Among these frames are Hostility and Conflict, where portrayals often emphasize confrontational narratives; Political Dynamics, showcasing the political dimensions of the representation; Security and Threat, focusing on perceived risks and dangers; Cultural and Religious Dynamics, exploring cultural differences and religious aspects; Media and Communication, highlighting the role of media in shaping perceptions; and Economic and Educational Concerns, elucidating portrayals related to Islam within an economic and educational context.

The results of this study indicate a concerning prevalence of negative topics surrounding Islam and Muslims in Belgian news media. Themes related to terrorism, security threats, and cultural differences consistently overshadowed more nuanced aspects. Additionally, the study identifies variations in framing patterns between Flemish and Francophone media outlets, suggesting regional distinctions in media portrayal. By examining a diverse corpus of articles from widely read newspapers, the research provides insights into the evolving discourse surrounding

Islamophobia. The findings emphasize the need for critical examination of news stories to counteract biases and stereotypes, contributing to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between media portrayals, discrimination, and the experiences of the Muslim community in Belgium.

JOS08 News reporting I

PP 0128 The mediated construction of "woke": Emerging discourses and primary definers in the Flemish press

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The term "woke" rose to prominence in the wake of the BlackLivesMatter movement and particularly the death of George Floyd on 25 May 2020. Until that time, it was hardly used in Flemish (Dutch-language Belgium) public debate. However, from 2021 it quickly became an omnipresent term to frame issues related to diversity and inclusion. In this paper, we explore how the mainstream press contributed to the emergence and construction of discourses on wokeness. First, we aim to answer the question: *How did the topic of "woke" reach the media agenda in Flanders?* Second, we aim to analyze the respective role of journalists and their sources in the construction of the media discourse on "wokeness", drawing on the notions of "primary" and "secondary definers" (Hall et al. 1978), to answer the question: *How did journalists and news sources co-define the discourse on "woke" in Flemish media?*

Taking an inductive approach, we conducted a Google Search Trend analysis to determine when the interest in woke arose and peaked. This allowed to identify three two-month periods containing one or more events leading to increased search activity. In a next step, we used the Belga.press database to collect all articles mentioning the term "woke" in four newspapers for three two-month periods in 2021, 2022 and 2023, leading to a sample of 226 articles. First, we conducted a preliminary quantitative content analysis to get a sense of the general properties of the reporting. Second, we conducted a more in-depth Critical Discourse Analysis using NVivo. All articles were inductively coded and analysed, aiming to identify the themes and terminology associated with woke as well as the key (journalistic and non-journalistic) actors talking about it. This allowed us to, first, reconstruct a timeline of the emerging discourses on woke; and second, to identify underlying discursive and journalistic patterns and strategies.

The chronological analysis discloses how a few "critical discourse moments" put woke on the media agenda. In each instance, an elite person (respectively in academia, media and politics) created a stir, drawing media attention to the (supposed) threat of "wokeness". Woke was generally framed in a negative way as a "movement" threatening freedom of speech and it was mostly presented as a homogenous, vague yet extreme "other". Although journalists aimed to provide a balanced view and many op-eds offered counterarguments, the mainstream press did give a broad platform to actors deliberately instrumentalizing woke for (often political) purposes. On the surface, anti-woke articles only constitute a minority of the sample, counterbalanced by a similar number of articles arguing against anti-woke discourse and a majority articles taking a neutral position. The latter, however, by not taking a side and/or offering arguments for and against "woke" and responding to anti-woke voices, do take over and reconfirm the framing of "woke" as a movement and threat proposed by elite anti-woke voices, which act as primary definers of the topic. Journalists, by taking up their role as neutral, "objective" reporters, contribute to the legitimation of anti-woke discourse, only a few contesting this dominant frame.

JOS09 AI and news work

PP 0206 What prompts journalists to use generative AI in their newswork?

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Newsrooms around the world have embraced automation to increase efficiency and minimise costs across various stages of news production, from collecting and dissecting audience data for decision-making, packaging information into news stories, to writing headlines (Wu, Tandoc & Salmon, 2019; Dörr, 2016; Jones & Jones, 2021). In response, studies have investigated how audiences perceive news that is written by algorithms (Wölker & Powell, 2018; Clerwall, 2014; Wu, 2019) as well as how newsrooms have attempted to integrate automation tools into their work routines (Gutierrez Lopez et al., 2022). But the most contentious aspect of news automation is the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to generate news articles—this has become much easier and more salient with the rise of generative AI (Gen-AI) and Gen-AI-powered chatbots, such as ChatGPT, that can generate articles based on a few prompts and even mimic particular writing styles and formats.

While Gen-AI introduces benefits, such as saving users some time, it also introduces a lot of questions, from issues related to quality to concerns regarding honesty and integrity as well as copyright infringement (Broussard et. al., 2019; Helberger et al., 2022). With the popularity of Gen-AI within and outside journalism, such as in the education context, newsrooms face a conundrum: Should they prohibit or promote the use of Gen-AI? Individual journalists also need to navigate between the risks and benefits of using AI. How are newsrooms and journalists navigating the rise of Gen-AI?

This study seeks to shed light on this by focusing on newsrooms in Asia and journalists in Singapore. Through two online surveys, one involving news managers and editors from 50 Asian newsrooms across 15 countries; and another involving 170 individual journalists in Singapore, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do journalists perceive the use of generative AI in journalism?
2. What individual and organisational factors affect journalists' use (or non-use) of generative AI in their journalistic work?
3. How are newsrooms and journalists using generative AI in their journalistic work?

This study is guided by the Value-based Adoption Model (VAM), which argues that the individuals decide to adopt new technologies when they perceive the benefits to outweigh the costs (Kim et al., 2007; Sohn & Kwon, 2020). In this study, we expand on the VAM, to also account for the role of organizational and journalistic factors in the adoption and use of Gen-AI. A preliminary analysis of the results suggests that journalists' professional autonomy, perceived influences, and prior technological acceptance can influence their perceived benefits and risks of Gen-AI. These benefits and risks, in turn, affect their perceived value of Gen-AI, which affects their intention to use it in their newswork. An analysis of the participants' qualitative responses also yielded a typology of how Gen-AI is currently used in Asian newsrooms, from cosmetic edits to human-written content (e.g., proofreading, translation) to using the technology to generate articles from press releases.

JOS09 AI and news work

PP 0207 Exploring collaborative frontiers: AI integration in investigative journalism

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In contemporary journalism, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an important force, influencing tasks ranging from translations to checking headlines. AI techniques are also increasingly used by investigative journalists, but integration of these techniques comes with challenges. Our study delves into the integration of AI in investigative journalism within the Netherlands, using a multimethod research approach. Through semi-structured interviews with 25 national and regional Dutch news media organisations, including newspapers and broadcasters, we identified a notable challenge: shaping an interdisciplinary news environment where AI experts, legal experts, and journalists collaborate.

While AI is cautiously embraced in all studied newsrooms for investigative journalism, a pervasive lack of technological knowledge, ethical guidelines, and resources hinders its integration. Despite the availability of AI training courses, skills and knowledge acquired are often underutilized or lost over time. We came to understand that journalists, apart from a small group of frontrunners, express uncertainty about tool selection and struggle to comprehensively understand AI-driven research, which they deem crucial for validating their work. A pervasive lack of technological knowledge, ethical guidelines and resources hinders AI integration, the interviews show.

The importance of external expertise is underscored by eight interviewees who explicitly acknowledged the value of hiring or collaborating with individuals possessing in-depth technical knowledge. The lack of legal and ethical expertise is also stressed, with case law around AI and investigative journalism scarcely available. Therefore, journalists are falling back on recognized journalistic codes and ethical frameworks yet struggling with accountability of their AI research findings and the need for more external expertise in this realm. This saves time and gives more confidence in the journalistic AI findings.

"I didn't have the luxury of spending a week figuring out how to do this. An experienced programmer would have written this within an hour."

Communication challenges between journalists and AI experts are highlighted, as journalists find it difficult to articulate their needs to IT professionals, citing language barriers. These struggles are further evident in our Research through Design (RtD) process, where the development of AI prototypes revealed difficulties aligning technical work with journalistic inquiries.

Finally, a lack of resources emerges as a significant barrier, with journalists frequently citing constraints in time for deep dives into AI techniques or hiring AI expertise. A shortage of skilled IT professionals in newsrooms and the limited usability of trained AI models exacerbate these challenges, emphasizing a lack of institutional strategy.

"Technicians look through different glasses and speak a different language."

The importance of multidisciplinary teams in journalism is flagged by a growing number of scholars. Our research underscores the imperative for strategic collaboration between journalists, AI experts, and legal professionals. Despite a noticeable inclination toward experimentation and collaboration, a deficit in expertise, AI literacy, mutual understanding, and resources persists within Dutch AI investigative journalism. Our contribution extends beyond the discourse on responsible AI integration, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities inherent in shaping an interdisciplinary practice within investigative journalism.

JOS09 AI and news work

PP 0208 Emerging journalistic skills in the context of Artificial Intelligence: A study of perceptions among Spanish reporters

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is expected to increasingly impact the media context. Some reports suggest that up to 90% of digital content will be synthetically produced by 2026 (Schick, 2020), while researchers in the field identify this transformative vector as key to understanding new media dynamics (Newman, 2024), and approximately 75% of the respondents surveyed by Beckett and Yaseen (2023) use artificial intelligence at some stage of the journalistic value chain. As Newman (2024) points out, media executives from up to 56 countries foresee a growing use of AI, especially for automating news writing, improving and personalizing recommendations, and for other commercial purposes. In this context, it is essential to identify the journalistic skills that professionals must acquire to succeed in the changing landscape. This paper aims to contribute to this debate by clarifying the skills journalists need in relation to AI. To this end, 25 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with active journalists from Spanish media outlets. The selection of media includes local, regional, and national outlets, encompassing press (digital and print), radio, and television. The interviews were conducted in mid-2023, between April and July. The results indicate that the majority of respondents believe that AI is a reality that will impact their professional daily lives in one way or another. When asked what skills or profile journalists should acquire and enhance to adapt to the new context, two main lines are identified: revaluation of classic skills and the need to acquire specific skills. On the one hand, several interviewees defend the idea that this AI-mediated transition will highlight intrinsic journalistic competencies that should be further trained. These include the ability to be original, to select important topics amid information overload, the competence in data search and acquisition, the importance of physical presence – the ability to travel to events and obtain first-hand data – and the ability to filter and review – gatekeeping. On the other hand, a second group of interviewees considers that there will be an ontological transformation in journalistic work, which will involve acquiring new skills: from technological skills – understanding how and why the algorithm works, how to communicate with it, and how to optimize its use – to changes in journalistic tasks, where competencies associated with reviewing and editing content will prevail over summary, writing or note preparation, implying a new set of skills less focused on writing and production and more attentive to identifying biases, verifying content, and understanding algorithms to ensure their effectiveness. In conclusion, this study has identified two predominant attitude trends among the journalist collective regarding the skills that should be developed in the context of AI. While both seem to differ in some aspects, their combination allows the groundwork to be laid for the future training and education of journalists, both in Europe and around the world.

JOS09 AI and news work

PP 0209 Deepfakes in journalism: Swiss news organizations' evaluations of risks and opportunities

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Deepfakes are deliberately manipulated audio-visual media created by deep-learning and artificial intelligence techniques (Schapals & Bruns, 2022). This technical evolution of media offers risks and opportunities for news organizations. For example, deepfake technology offers the possibility to enhance personalization, visualization, and immersion in news reporting (Wahl-Jorgensen & Carlson, 2021), as well as to produce content in multiple languages (Diakopoulos & Johnson, 2021). Yet in journalism and journalism studies deepfakes have mainly been considered as a form of disinformation. With deepfakes, disinformation evolved from mostly written articles and comments towards synthetic video and/or audio content. As such manipulations are difficult to identify, deepfakes increase the risk of false or harmful information affecting not only public opinion but also the trust in and the credibility of journalism (Godulla et al., 2021). Moreover, journalists themselves run risk of being affected by slander using deepfakes (e.g., Ayyub, 2018).

Despite the increasing relevance of the topic, there are only a few empirical studies exploring deepfakes in journalism so far. Little is known about how journalists discuss the impact of deepfakes on journalistic work and how they evaluate potential risks and opportunities. Hence, this paper's goal is to shed more light on the impact of deepfakes on journalism based on qualitative interviews with representatives of major Swiss news organizations (Bogner et al., 2009). First, it explores strategies, work processes, and routines that are currently used to identify deepfakes and to verify information. Secondly, it explores evaluations of the impacts, risks, and opportunities of deepfakes for journalistic work. The interviews were conducted between October 2022 and January 2023 and were analysed using inductive qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2022). The data was then categorized and interpreted for thematic comparison.

Results first indicate that representatives of Swiss news organizations generally perceive deepfakes as a risk, even though actual confrontations with them have been rare so far. Second, basic journalistic norms are crucial for both protecting against the threats and realizing opportunities of deepfakes in journalism. Third, to successfully detect deepfakes, journalists require basic knowledge of forensic research methods (such as open source intelligence) and the support of specialized teams. Finally, raising public awareness about new technologies and their impact as well as promoting media literacy for users to be able to better assess the credibility of information are seen as important. Specifically, journalists emphasize that transparency of news production and knowledge about professional journalistic norms and work processes is essential to battle ill-founded scepticism and foster media trust.

In sum, this study highlights the need for news organizations to deal with deepfakes by enhancing training and education in the media industry and by promoting methods of comprehensively checking complex information. It also supports the long-discussed claim for a slower journalism (see e.g., Mendes & Marinho, 2022) and highlights the importance of evaluating opportunities offered by new technologies such as deepfakes within the framework of journalistic ethics and professional standards.

JOS09 AI and news work

PP 0210 Dealing with biases and hallucinations: The ethical uses of (gen)AI tools in the European news media sector

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The widespread integration of large language models into journalism has reignited the debate about the ethical implications of using artificial intelligence. Generative AI (GenAI) systems, which have enabled access to AI in newsrooms, have demonstrated their ability to support, augment or take over various tasks, including intellectual activities such as brainstorming and writing. However, the challenge lies in integrating journalistic values, as these systems may rely on biased, unbalanced or copyrighted data during training, which hinders their alignment with ethical journalistic standards. In addition, the tendency of large language models to produce content that does not fit real-world input – the phenomenon of artificial hallucinations – raises concerns about the potential impact on trust in journalism. GenAI systems are also likely to reinforce existing biases or inadvertently spread disinformation, threatening the quality and trustworthiness of news processes.

This research examines how European news media and self-regulatory bodies address ethical challenges related to AI and GenAI in journalism. It seeks to understand how these bodies frame the responsible use of AI and address specific risks such as bias and artificial hallucinations. The methodology involves a qualitative corpus analysis of 42 guidelines published between 2016 and 2023 by 38 organisations in 12 countries. Using natural language processing (NLP) and sentiment analysis methods, we explored key themes, word frequencies, co-occurrences and corpus tonality. Specific details of the NLP algorithms and sentiment analysis tools can be found in the complete analysis, available on a GitHub repository.

The corpus analysis distinguishes two periods of AI integration in journalism: before ChatGPT, when the issue of bias was exclusively related to the quality of data used for news automation and recommendations, and after ChatGPT, when the requirement for transparency became a central and critical issue for AI-driven applications that involve content creation and are likely to have a significant impact on information quality. Seen as a trust lever for building a trustworthy relationship with (Gen)AI-based tools, journalists and audiences, transparency alone does not solve bias-related issues or provide a sufficient level of understandability. However, few news media organisations address this pitfall by acknowledging the need for explainable systems.

The findings underscore the need for careful consideration of the ethical use of AI systems to maintain information diversity and quality. Tasks involving these systems must be carried out under human supervision to maintain journalistic and editorial standards. While openness to innovation is crucial, the guidelines stress the need to be critically aware of the limitations of AI and GenAI systems. As these systems are also being used to create and disseminate fake news and misinformation, setting clear rules can prevent the destabilisation of audiences through confusion and the erosion of their trust in news information. Furthermore, even if humans are ultimately in charge, the question of the ethical use of unfair or biased systems remains wide open.

JOS10 Local media and news deserts: Evidences from a EU wide research

PN 031 Local media in France: a few long-established players not serving the public interest

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In France, the social importance of local and regional media is inversely proportional to their symbolic importance. Highly consulted by the population, they are virtually absent from national public debate when it comes to the democratic role of the media. Since 1983, we have seen a succession of laws promoting decentralization and increasing the power of local authorities, but the issue of independent, pluralistic media capable of informing citizens

about the important issues at stake in the areas where they live has been absent from the debate.The result is a worrying situation in which a handful of major regional daily newspapers share the national territory without ever competing with each other. As a result, privately-owned local journalism is in the hands of press groups that are almost universally hegemonic in their territories of distribution. To compound matters, these groups are increasingly dependent on the most powerful local players (major companies, cultural institutions, large associations, local authorities). The latter provide them with "turnkey" information via their communications departments, but they are also their main advertisers and partners in their diversification activities (organization of cultural, sporting or economic events).State subsidies, which are very important in the French media system, only serve to exacerbate this situation. Indeed, the aid system favors the oldest and most established players rather than helping the emergence and development of new media that promote investigation and public debate at local and regional level.Informational diversity, investigation and informed debate on local issues are therefore the main losers in the organization of the local media landscape in France. And while we can't speak of information deserts in the strict sense of the term, as there is media coverage of most of the country's territories, there is on the other hand an information paucity that is highly unfavorable to the proper functioning of local democracy.

JOS10 Local media and news deserts: Evidences from a EU wide research

PN 032 Mapping news deserts in Europe: findings and methodology in a comparative perspective

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This paper provides an overview of the methodology developed by the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF-EUI) for the Local media for Democracy project, with the aim of unpacking the multi-dimensional concept of 'local news desert' in the European context, whilst highlighting the main research findings. The latter analysed the risks for local and community media in the EU, with a network of researchers based in each European country. In a departure from most local news deserts' research which has traditionally adopted a quantitative approach – focusing on counting the number of local media outlets in a given country – the CMPF has developed a cutting edge methodology that also includes qualitative aspects such as measuring the degree of local editorial independence, assessing the safety of local journalists, and the extent of social inclusivity in terms of local media content. Moreover, legal and economic aspects have been taken under consideration, to assess the guarantees granted to local and community media as well as their sustainability in the 27 countries under analysis. The results reveal significant variations among EU member states, reflecting the EU-27's marked social, political and economic heterogeneity in terms of the local media offer. Broadly speaking, a heightened risk of news deserts was found particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, but notably, news deserts were also identified in capital cities such as Dublin and Riga. This paper contributes to the ongoing discourse on 'local news deserts' in Europe by deepening our understanding of this complex and multi-faceted concept, while at the same time developing innovative methodological approaches to measure it in a comparative perspective.

JOS10 Local media and news deserts: Evidences from a EU wide research

PN 033 Local journalism in the Netherlands: the need for a specific audience-oriented approach

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Over the past decade, policymakers, academics and journalistic organisations have voiced their concern about the state of local journalism in the Netherlands and concern for the emergence of no-paper cities and even news deserts. While there have been various academic and policy studies on local journalism in the Netherlands, the majority focus on the number of outlets, the organisation of the newsrooms or the content of the journalistic output. So far, no study took a comprehensive approach in studying the state of local journalism, let alone in a comparative perspective.This study is based on data collected for the Local Media For Democracy project. The results show that overall, in the Netherlands, most of the aspects of local journalism score a 'medium risk' level, indicating that there are no severe concerns particularly when compared with other European countries. Specifically, the editorial independence of local newsrooms is well safeguarded through different laws and self-regulating measures. At first sight, there are sufficient local and regional media that people can choose from, and national media are increasingly allocating regional correspondents. However, many local news organisations are struggling financially and have difficulties providing quality journalism. There is a need for professionalisation, particularly in the digital context. Many local news organisations have difficulties in reaching the (especially, online) public, while at the same time, many citizens increasingly feel the need to become informed about their local communities. Many local news organisations have a solely geographically oriented approach, hardly catering to the needs of specific groups such as youth, minorities or specific interest groups in a specific region. Nevertheless, the awareness and knowledge on specific groups is increasing, which has the potential to ameliorate the quality of local journalism and foster a sense of urgency for local journalism in the Netherlands.

JOS10 Local media and news deserts: Evidences from a EU wide research

PN 034 Local media policy, captures or captured within a network of wider interests and calculations – the Slovenian policy experience

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In the context of wide, national media policies, the aspect of local media policy is, on the one hand, "a statement by the government of what it intends to do" in the sense of law and regulation, or even a lack thereof (Birkland, 2019) like any other. Yet, we approach policymaking as more than just one major decision, but as a "series of decisions or activities resulting from structured and recurrent interactions between different actors" (Knoepfel et al., 2011), and in this regard it is relevant to consider also the local media policy as a final result of several interactions, considerations, interests, and aims.

As policy actors attach meaning, shape discourses, and promote ideas in order to influence the representations of the policy of their interest (Ball, 2005), media emerge as a highly relevant means of communication for policymakers, particularly for local (or regional) organisations and individuals, such as mayors, but also different MPs.

One of the classical layers in understanding the role of the media in policymaking is that the public learns not just about the given issue but also "how much importance to attach to that issue" (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). That is, media actors shape political reality to a great extent by choosing the information that will be presented as news and being given value throughout the process of news-making as the media take the role of an agenda-setting actor (Fawzi, 2018). At the same time, local media themselves are increasingly dependent on local policymakers and their local media policy in the form of potential subsidies, local institutions' advertising, or even ownership (particularly when faced with financial and existential issues).

This complicated multilateral relation between the local media, government at both national and / or regional and local level, unpolitical actors (interest groups), and the public, is situating media in different roles, where the media can affect local media policy, yet they can also be the subject or target of policy agendas (Cohen, 2015; Hurrelman et al., 2009; Korthagen, 2015; Livingston &; Soroka et al. 2012).

This presentation will present the local media policy analysis in Slovenia through a prism of different stakeholders and interests where the local media act as typical victims of media capture, caught by small local markets, lack of sufficient market funds, and pressured by political interests; and yet the local media can also act as exploiters of different political dynamics (between local and national politics; between lobbies of local politicians; and using different political tools to adopt and protect profitable and protected position within the national media ecosystem).

The paper, based on the results for Slovenia from the project LM4D, will provide an up-to-date insight into the specifics and results of local media policies, based on analysis of high number of legislation documents, proposals, and statements.

JOS10 Local media and news deserts: Evidences from a EU wide research

PN 035 Understandings news deserts in Spain: political influences over private and public media

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This paper assesses the editorial independence from political influences of local media in Spain. The data presented are derived from the findings of the Local Media for Democracy project. The paper aims to elucidate the conditions journalists face while doing their job within the local context.In 2022, only 24% of hired journalists and 22% of freelancers reported no pressure while drafting their reports (Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid). The data shows that 46% of hired professionals and 53% of freelancers have occasionally faced pressures. The prevailing perception in Spain is that the majority of media outlets prioritize their commercial interests (56%) or political interests (53%) over the public interest (Vara Miguel, 2022). Concerning private media, although there is no direct or indirect political ownership of the media at regional and local level, this does not imply the absence of political influence. Such influence can manifest through mechanisms like institutional advertising, subsidies, and the granting of licenses. The legal framework, primarily governed by Law 29/2005, seeks to ensure transparency and objectivity in the allocation of advertising resources for institutional communication and campaigns. However, the absence of specific provisions in Law 19/2014 on Transparency and Good Governance regarding institutional advertising has created a lack of clarity. This opacity raises concerns about transparency and gives rise to allegations of discretionary allocation practices when utilizing public funds for such purposes.This paper will also discuss political influence and editorial independence within the context of the public service media (Corporación de Radio y Televisión Española- RTVE), which sheds light on the differences related to the regional administration in Spain, as well as

the existence of different official languages in the country. In fact, the PSM holds a key role in covering local areas, having venues in all the autonomous communities and broadcasting in different languages (e.g. Catalan, Basque, Galician); however, there is evidence of lack of editorial independence being the PSM influenced by national and local political powers, partially preventing them from fulfilling their public service role towards local communities.

JOS11 Fact checking en disinformation I

PP 0211 Tendencies of Fact-checking. How platform relations shape Fact-checkers' understanding of disinformation

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Recent years have seen a tremendous growth in fact-checking initiatives world-wide established to combat disinformation (Amazeen, 2020; Graves et al., 2023). These initiatives depend on a multitude of relationships with a wide range of actors and interests in what can be labeled an anti-disinformation industry, involving platform and technology companies, media companies, NGOs, States, governmental institutions, and regulatory bodies (Bélair-Gagnon et al., 2023). These relationships shape what problems related to disinformation the fact-checking initiatives try to solve, how they aim at solving those problems, and, ultimately, how they understand and define disinformation as a societal problem.

This paper will explore how news media professionals, fact-checkers, and other misinformation reporters with fact-checking initiatives define disinformation and their approaches to combating it. We focus on fact-checkers' evolving relationships with major platform companies, examining the dynamics of formal fact-checking partnerships and the trade-offs involved for participants. The paper also investigates the influence these programs have had on the wider fact-checking field, spurring rapid expansion, and offering a new vehicle for impact while also creating funding dependencies and drawing attention away from other forms of fact-checking and disinformation.

Drawing on Gadamer's functional hermeneutics and the concept of "source criticism" (Steensen et al., 2022), we investigate the "tendencies" of different fact-checking actors—the interests, perspectives and socio-cultural "horizons of understanding" that shape their professional practice—in order to understand the visibilities and invisibilities that develop in this corner of the anti-disinformation industry.

Methodologically, the paper is based on data collected through a four-year long international research project on the relationships between journalism/fact-checking, technology, platforms, and disinformation. The empirical material comprises transcripts of qualitative interviews with fact-checkers around the world (n = 53), document analysis of mission statements and fact-checks, and participatory observation at a European fact-checking organization and at the annual Global Fact-Checking conference organized by the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN).

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JOS11 Fact checking en disinformation I

PP 0212 Who checks the fact-checkers? Studying the work of External Assessors behind fact-checking organizations

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Fact-checking has emerged as a new style of political news based on truth-seeking and holding public figures accountable (Graves, 2016). Independent fact-checking organizations commonly see it as one of their main tasks to verify or debunk claims *a posteriori*. However, they frequently find themselves accused of being *self-proclaimed arbiters of truth*, particularly (but not only) by populist politicians. In an anecdotal inquiry, people often ask: **who checks the fact-checkers?**

Such accusations seem to suggest that independent fact-checkers operate arbitrarily and overlook that the past years have seen a professionalization of the fact-checking business. These criticisms have also triggered disputes

about truth claims. With more voices adding to information exchange, with (digital) platforms promoting themselves as referees of truth, drawing boundaries between information and disinformation appears to become a struggle over authority and over the question of who determines what is 'true' and 'false.'

This paper attempts to contribute to these debates by investigating accountability operations behind fact-checking organizations. Specifically, we focus on attempts at professionalizing fact-checking by calling on external assessors and installing supervision boards. Organizations such as the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) and the European Fact-Checking Standards Network (EFCSN) have developed ethical guidelines and put mechanisms in place to which signatories must comply if they want to receive a stamp of recognition as verified fact-checking organization. Yet, who these assessors are and how they operate is understudied.

Till date, scholars mainly research fact-checkers' work, perceptions, or how they use social media as distribution channels. In addition, researchers have examined the effects of fact-checking on the population, particularly voting behavior. Codes of ethics and conduct have rarely been scrutinized and little attention is given to those who operate *behind the scenes*. In this paper, we thus ask: **How do external assessors and advisory boards assist in establishing credibility around fact-checking operations?** We particularly focus on the following aspects: 1) what expertise do assessors or advisory board members bring to the job, 2) which codes and principles guide them, and 3) how do they perceive their role vis-à-vis the respective fact-checkers.

We are currently conducting 20 in-depth interviews with assessors and advisory board members at the IFCN and EFCSN (or both), who oversee the verification processes for potential members. Interviewees are recruited from Europe, Asia, and South America, in particular Brazil, Germany, the Philippines, and Spain. These nations were selected based on the diversity of political systems and we started the first wave of interviews in November 2023. The interviews provide insights into work practices during the assessment process, shed light on ways in which assessors handle official IFCN and EFCSN protocols and reveal profiles of the 'typical' assessor.

All in all, this study helps enhance knowledge about how fact-checking organizations attempt to build credibility. Ultimately, it draws the curtain to better understand accountability mechanisms at play in the independent fact-checking scene.

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JOS11 Fact checking en disinformation I

PP 0213 Establishing the truth: The epistemologies of fact-checkers in Latvia and Estonia

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As a genre of journalism, fact-checking entails examining statements that have been made in public and arriving at conclusions about whether these statements are true or false.

However, previous studies offer conflicting observations about the performance pf fact-checkers. For example, in the U.S. context Amazeen (2016) have pointed to the consistency of the assessments by three major fact-checking agencies as evidence of the accuracy of their work, but Lim (2018) has showed that, apart from clear-cut cases, the verdicts by two prominent fact-checking organizations about politicians' statements tended to differ. At times, the methodologies of fact-checkers can be flawed, leading to problematic judgments (Uscinski & Butler, 2013; Nieminen & Sankari, 2021). The prominence of fact-checking in the contemporary media environment merits a closer look into their knowledge production practices.

Drawing on the concept of journalistic epistemology (Ekström & Westlund, 2019; Ekström, 2020), this paper contributes to the understanding of how fact-checkers identify the statements to evaluate, select their sources, and arrive at conclusions. Its data source is 19 semi-structured interviews with fact-checkers from Latvia and Estonia. The interviewees, who work for mass media and NGOs, represent the majority of the fact-checking organizations working in these countries.

The preliminary results show that the selection of statements to check is driven by diverse considerations, including the potential harm, prominence of the source, reach on social media, novelty, the agenda of the fact-checking organization, and fact-checkers' sense of what is relevant and interesting. A number of the interviewed fact-checkers were from organizations that have joined the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN). Their choices and considerations are shaped by the standards of IFCN that they need to comply with. In addition, since Meta recruits fact-checkers from IFCN to examine content on its social media platforms, the requirements and interests of this corporation also play an important role.

In their selection of sources against which the identified statements are being analyzed, the fact-checkers rely on a range of criteria. The interviewees preferred to consult concrete findings, such as those from statistical databases or scientific studies, which they treated as hard evidence. Information provided by public institutions and sources widely perceived as authoritative were also trusted. However, in the absence of these, many interviewees were willing to settle for more interpretive sources, including expert opinions, and apply fact-checkers' professional judgement to assess the credibility of conflicting claims. They strived to limit the ambiguity and arrive at clear conclusions about the degree of truthfulness of the statement in question. Failure to achieve it could result in abandoning the investigation of a statement.

The variations among fact-checkers in terms of the minimum evidence they require to draw conclusions does not necessarily mean that their conclusions are also different. The nature of the claims they select most often dictates that fact-checkers generally side with state interests (this applies to cases of foreign meddling), public institutions, or mainstream interpretations.

JOS11 Fact checking en disinformation I

PP 0214 Do journalists' ideologies translate into partisan reporting? The limits of bias and the limits of countermechanisms

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News media are normatively expected to deliver impartial, balanced, and unbiased information. They are, however, regularly accused of being biased toward liberal voices, and journalists are particularly defamed as acting as "left-wing political missionaries" (Albæk et al., 2014, p. 167; Hassell et al., 2020). In recent years, political actors have intensively weaponized this accusation to delegitimize unpleasant media (Soontjens et al., 2023). It is based on the over-simplistic assumption that journalists' individual political ideologies directly translate into biased news coverage with no or limited restraint. Despite these alarming dynamics, empirical evidence for or against this hypothesis (e.g., Donsbach & Patterson, 2004; Mothes, 2017; Watson, 2014) is not sufficiently generalizable or lacks external validity (Reinemann & Baugut, 2014) – and has not yet acknowledged the complexity of how journalists' political ideology interacts with organizational and institutional factors in journalism. Therefore, our paper argues under which specific conditions we should theoretically expect journalists' political ideology to translate into bias in news coverage. For that purpose, we understand bias on three levels, namely in terms of subjective evaluations, the representation of political parties, and the distribution of ideological positions within news texts (D'Alessio & Allen, 2000). We discuss how we can expect journalists' ideologies to interact with editorial lines, the professional autonomy journalists enjoy within organizational structures, and their professional role orientations as an expression of the institutional logic of journalism. These dimensions can function as 'checks and balances' or as loopholes but might also lead to an overcorrection of ideological biases.

Empirically, our study builds on a quantitative manual content analysis of 3,539 political news items from 12 Austrian media outlets (newspapers, radio, TV, online) published in 2018, in which we measured the dependent variables. We combined it with a subsequent survey of 160 journalists authoring 626 of these items, in which we measured journalists' ideology (on a left-right scale) and the other independent variables. We also added secondary data on the ideological position of political parties. Matching these data sources at the level of the individual news item and individual journalist offers a unique chance to trace the connection between attitudes and content under realistic conditions and beyond selected news events. Our findings suggest that the left-right political ideology of journalists indeed affects news reporting in the expected direction when it comes to ideological positions, but not for subjective evaluations and even in the opposite direction for political parties. In the latter case, journalists seem to over-compensate their individual views. Political ideology interacts with bias-limiting role orientations in the case of political parties, uncovering professional roles as a successful corrective against partisan bias. Ideology also interacts with journalists' autonomy regarding ideological positions in the news, highlighting that acting according to individual dispositions is only feasible for a subset of journalists. We conclude that balancing out ideological biases in the journalistic workforce is a delicate equilibrium utilizing various mechanisms involving organizational and institutional factors. This equilibrium must be continuously renewed in a continuously changing news ecosystem.

JOS11 Fact checking en disinformation I

PP 0215 Decoding correction strategies: How Fact-Checkers Uncover Falsehoods across countries

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Reasoning and Objectivity

In response to rising disinformation and disrupted public discourse, global fact-checking units have surged, with 417 organizations spanning 100 countries (Duke Reporters). Their main roles include verifying political statements (fact-checking) and debunking online falsehoods from anonymous sources. Despite its global relevance, fact-checking research lacks systematic and comprehensive comparative projects, with rare exceptions (Graves & Cherubini, 2016; Humprecht, 2019). Prior studies mainly concentrated on the U.S. (Nieminen & Rapeli, 2019), despite efforts to include other world regions. Comparative studies are vital for understanding the global nature of fact-checking, considering its intricate ties to media and political systems and the varying levels of national disinformation resilience faced by fact-checkers (Humprecht et al., 2020). Thus, **this study proposesa comparative analysis of fact-checking tactics and selection criteria across eight countries and 23 organizations in Europe and Latin America**, aiming to address two primary questions:

RQ1: What are the prevalent debunking tactics across countries and organizations?

RQ2: Which criteria for selecting misinformation are most prominent and transparent in the corrective articles?

Summarized Methods

I manually coded 3.154 verification articles from 23 organizations (independent, media-linked, and global news agencies) in Spain, Portugal, Germany, the UK, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Venezuela. European countries were chosen based on diverse media systems—liberal, Mediterranean, and corporatist—while Latin American selections were influenced by varying levels of democracy and disinformation resilience. Links were collected using the Feeder Extension and a 25% stratified sample (n-4th) of articles published in 2022 by each organization was constructed. A preliminary pre-test with 450 articles identified 15 tactics and five selection criteria, which were then operationalized in a traditional quantitative content analysis. Krippendorff's coefficients assessed coding reliability across the language groups, achieving acceptable agreement levels after extensive coding training.

Preliminary Selected Results

Common debunking strategies, regardless of organization or nationality, include documentation (93%), tracing origins (57%), referencing prior debunking (46%), and contacting experts (27%). Additional approaches, such as official statements (13%), questioning dataset quality (7%), and delegitimizing sources (6.2%), are less common. Variations exist; for example, public service broadcasting units in Europe consult experts most frequently. Contacting falsehood authors is mainly used by media organization units. In terms of selection criteria, online virality, prominence of the target, and sources of falsehood predominate. These findings illuminate the types of evidence and strategies employed as empirical evidence against false information. During the presentation, we anticipate providing additional comparative results focusing on types of organizations.

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JOS12 Working as a journalist

PP 0231 "The good ones leave". Journalists making an exit

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The number of applications for newsroom jobs is declining (Borchardt et al. 2019) and there is an ongoing discourse concerning the observed trend of an "exodus" of journalists (e.g. Camarotto 2023; Reinardy 2009). This might not come as a surprise since studies have shown that journalism can be a profession of precarity in an industry of volatility (e.g., Gollmitzer 2014; Örnebring 2018). The phenomenon of journalists shifting to other professions should be taken seriously since a journalistic exodus could contribute to a brain drain and deprofessionalization (Matos 2022;

Russ-Mohl 2015). In order to find explanations for the vocational behavior of journalists, this study draws on turnover theories from the sociology of labour (e.g. Lee & Mitchell 1994; Mobley 1977), bridging the gap between journalism research and sociology. The study empirically explores the exit of journalism to understand *why* journalists give up their profession, *how* they exit it and it will shed light on the *consequences* of this decision. An online survey of former journalists in Germany (n = 193) was conducted, followed by 37 problem-centered interviews with selected ex-journalists. Ex-journalists are former professionals who worked in journalism for at least two years and transitioned to a non-journalistic field between 2015 and 2021. Participants were recruited via journalism associations, social and professional networks.

The results show that leaving journalism is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon. The three most frequently selected reasons for leaving journalism are "the transformation in journalism" (57.5%), "the working conditions" (56.5%) and "the low salary" (54.4%). The typical path for journalists takes them into corporate communications, over half of them moved there. Interestingly, almost fifty percent of the respondents still identify as journalists, demonstrating shifting boundaries between journalism and other professions. The vast majority (95.3%) do not regret having left journalism.

As part of the qualitative content analysis of the interview material (Mayring 2014), five types of journalism leavers were identified. The 'disillusioned' represent young professionals exiting journalism early in their career for better working conditions; the 'frustrated' represent experienced journalists feeling embittered due to several different aspects in the journalistic profession; the 'resigned' are forced to leave journalism involuntarily due to precarious work or age discrimination; the 'exhausted' experienced burnout and leave journalism because of health reasons and the 'family-oriented' abandon their dream job for a better work-life balance and job stability.

The investigation provides valuable insights into the challenges that disrupt the established order in the media landscape. Vulnerable groups like freelancers and parents struggle in journalism; not always is the exit a decision of free will. If journalism increasingly becomes an elite profession for the privileged, we will lose diversity and journalistic quality in newsrooms. The findings make clear that the journalistic profession is losing journalists to other sectors – and thus also experiences and knowledge indispensable for democracy. As one ex-journalist describes it: "The good ones leave." This statement should prompt media houses to implement strategies for retaining journalists in their profession.

JOS12 Working as a journalist

PP 0232 The people who still get a job in journalism in Portugal – Who are they and what do they do?

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This communication seeks to identify changes in journalistic profiles in Portugal, based on various disruptive processes that have affected several newspaper companies, causing collective redundancies and restructuring plans with a direct impact on recruitment and selection policies. Based on sociological studies and recent surveys of the journalistic community, we will first briefly characterize the landscape of professional journalists, who in Portugal are obliged to hold a title that entitles them to perform professionally – the professional card. Based on this characterization, we will outline the main changes that can be detected in this landscape, using indicators such as gender, age, educational qualifications, training experience and work environment. Next, we will cross-reference this data with other data obtained during an ongoing personal research process, which has been systematically collecting information on the recruitment policies of journalists from the main media outlets in Portugal over the last 3 years (since 2020), identifying the characteristics of the people that companies continue to employ. The general context is characterized by a depressed scenario for the employment of journalists in Portugal and, in recent months, with high levels of labour conflict due to the threat of bankruptcy of a major group (Global Media) on the national scene, with media active on various platforms (press, radio and printing). Finally, we focus on the financial and labour restructuring process still underway at a historical Portuguese sports press title – the newspaper A Bola – which carried out collective redundancies with a major impact on the labour structure, with a view to renewing professional profiles. This set of data is cross-referenced and interpreted with a view to answering the question: from the point of view of employers, what is the most valued journalistic profile in the different areas of the profession, including writing, photojournalism, infographics, research, digital programming, managing communities of readers and users? It is the ambition of this communication to be able to articulate the data for Portugal with other countries, contributing to a critical understanding of the employment policies that are decisively affecting the content produced by journalists and the very definition of the profession.

JOS12 Working as a journalist

PP 0233 Media work life: Freelancers in the tension between autonomy and vulnerability

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The flexibilization of work life is a current general trend towards individualisation and employment insecurity in neo-liberalism, which also affect media work. These trends involve a rising number of short-term contracts, freelancing and project-based work, paralleled with downsizing and cutbacks in the newsrooms. The tension between precarity and autonomy is described as a vital characteristic of the profession of journalism, raising questions regarding de-professionalization or re-professionalization of the occupation. This trend is not exclusive to media work. Many professions, particularly within the creative industries, are witnessing similar evolutions. Within this context, the paper will explore the work life of freelance journalists, by asking the research question: how do freelance journalists experience their working conditions, and how has their job situation changed during the last five years?

Based on two quantitative surveys among union organised freelancers in Norway carried out with five years intermediance, we will elaborate how freelancers themselves experience their working conditions related to finance and wages, time pressure, relations to assigners and the work-life balance. The first survey carried out in 2019, suggested that freelancers find themselves in a paradoxical tension between autonomy and high job satisfaction on the one side, and vulnerability and precarity on the other. They reported excitement about their work, and at the same time, they faced low rates and high job pressure. However, since 2019, first the covid-19 pandemic and then the AI emerged as critical junctures altering media work in different ways. The pandemic had implications and led to changes in media use, the way journalists worked, and affected the media economy. The emergence of AI in journalism enables faster and more efficient data analysis and content generation, but also raises critical ethical concerns about authenticity, bias, and the changing role of human journalists in news production and curation. These developments will, not least, affect the work life of freelance journalists. Among others, a vital aspect to explore is whether the availability of assignments becomes more limited. Therefore, we will carry out a new survey during spring 2023, aiming to compare the two studies and explore how the freelance working conditions have developed the last five years.

The study is carried out in Norway, a national context with a strong welfare state as a vital denominator, which also impacts in how the journalistic work is organized. In addition, Norway in line with the other Nordic countries are characterized by high union density in general, and especially in journalism. This context makes the experiences of Norwegian freelancers interesting to explore, and to discuss in relation to other national contexts as well. The paper will be included as a chapter in a forthcoming book (2025) about freelance journalism, discussing various aspects of the professional role and working conditions for freelance journalists.

JOS12 Working as a journalist

PP 0234 Pioneering can break your heart: Trends and developments of entrepreneurial journalism

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They are different, but no less important – entrepreneurs among journalists. We can call *journalist-entrepreneurs* those journalists who have started their own media businesses; on the contrary, *entrepreneur-journalists* the entrepreneurs who, after starting or buying media, have also started a journalistic work. The position of entrepreneurs among journalists is discussed because their position complicates the normative assumption of an impenetrable wall which separates the editorial and business sides of the newsroom.

Gradually, however, the criticism was replaced by a conciliatory tone that reflected a growing understanding that entrepreneurial journalism can be the reason for media survival, or the form of empowerment for journalists themselves. Entrepreneurial journalists are sometimes depicted as *pioneer journalists* to stress that they are a recent phenomenon, and they bring up-to-date practices. In fact, the rise of journalist-entrepreneurs is nothing new, but their voices have so far been rather quiet. My aim is to describe the functions and roles of journalist-entrepreneurs and entrepreneur-journalists, trends affecting them and their developments in recent years.

To accomplish my aim, I have been studying the topic of entrepreneurs in journalism longitudinally and I focused on the topic specifically through the lens of peripheral media – local newspapers in the Czech Republic. Their small newsrooms, inhabited mostly by only one or a small group of journalists, provide an ideal space for studying the phenomenon of journalist-entrepreneurs and entrepreneur-journalists. My findings are based on the longitudinal mixed-method research: (1) survey of all the owners of Czech local newspapers in 2009, 2014, 2019 and 2024 (collection currently underway); (2) in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs in local journalism in 2019/2020 and 2024; and (3) participant observations in selected local newsrooms.

In the light of collected data, the position of journalist-entrepreneurs typifies those who work at the local newspapers in the Czech Republic. Journalist-entrepreneurs have ambivalent roles – former journalists who saw entrepreneurship as the only way to keep local newspapers alive; or businessmen who fell in love with journalism. What they have in common, is a strong influence on the shape of journalism, and their roles that have so far been uncharted. Functions and roles described by the interviewees include: the difficulties around the sole responsibility of the individual for the success, failure, and sustainability of the medium and its people; diverse workload which integrates all the duties in a media organisation; problems with the position of a journalist/entrepreneur in the locality stemming from the different power acquired as a journalist and a media owner/businessperson. On top of that, one of the most significant trends influencing the development of the position of the local journalist-entrepreneur/entrepreneur-journalist in recent years is the topic of succession. It is precisely the (in)ability to pass on the medium to the successors or to sell it in a way that it is not absorbed by a media chain, what became the most prominent theme during my interviews. And longitudinally, it turns out that the (in)ability to pass on or sell a medium to a successor is a strong determinant of the medium survival.

JOS13 New interdependencies in journalism

PN 060 Journalism as social epistemology: Journalism studies' fork in the road

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Journalism is one set of answers to questions around the division of epistemic labour. In abstract terms, it is an answer to social epistemological challenges: an arrangement through which communities are in a relationship with agents who know the world for them and inform them of things that are of value to that community (value being varied: moral value, utility value, etc). Most accounts of journalism have an assumption of this kind underlying them, yet tend to confuse the institutional forms that this social-epistemic relationship takes (e.g. the classic newsroom) with the relationship itself. Using news reporting of the War in Ukraine as an example, I argue that professional journalism is an increasingly marginal element of how the work of knowing distant realities gets done – a view which poses difficult questions for the field of journalism studies. To the extent that journalism studies is interested in organised, social epistemic work and its effects, it must move away from being interested in journalists in particular. To the extent that it is interested in professional journalism as traditionally conceived, it becomes less able to apprehend how (socially) organised epistemic work gets done.

JOS13 New interdependencies in journalism

PN 061 Journalism in therapy: Evaluating journalists' diverse interdependent relationships

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Fellow journalists, editors, sources, audiences, and other extra-institutional actors, each with varied involvement, have a role and interest in co-shaping journalism. In light of digital and economic forces prompting journalism to evolve, however, it has become more important to evaluate the nature or 'health' of these relationships. Here, the audience-journalist relationships has received some attention (e.g., Loosen et al. 2020), showing audiences' wants, needs, perceptions, and experiences of journalism diverge from those journalists perform. This may be one explanation behind the public's declining trust and growing news avoidance (e.g., Skovsgaard and Andersen 2020). So, what makes this and journalism's other relationships (not) work? Drawing on interdependency theory and theoretical perspectives within social psychology and sociology, this paper points to central dimensions (e.g., trust, authenticity, transparency etc.) of relationships that help us evaluate their quality. By locating these within journalism scholarship, the paper points to where journalism's relationships may be breaking down.

JOS13 New interdependencies in journalism

PN 062 [((In)(ter))CO]dependence: Smoothed over complicities in a post-postmodern journalistic field

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When considering journalism's interdependencies, one might take a moment to reflect on the dependencies that have come to define journalism's late-postmodern period. Interdependency suggests mutuality. Dependency, is more 'taking' than giving, with an etymology of hanging and weight (de), drawing and stretching on that which it hangs (pend). So what is journalism weighing on? What is it dependent on? In this paper, dependencies are considered both a troubling and productive way of making sense of the journalistic field. I argue that we need to address how journalism's dependencies work against its claims of autonomy in understudied ways. Dependency complicates journalism's normative claims for independence and autonomy at three levels: information subsidies at the micro level leave journalism vulnerable to willing sources and conflicted institutions. Technological systems at

the meso level force journalism into dependent communicative relationships, and state and political institutions at the macro level leave it vulnerable to ideological whims and destructive politics.

JOS13 New interdependencies in journalism

PN 063 Reconsidering sources for emergent social topics: Indigenous peoples and the climate crisis

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Influential scholarship has demonstrated that, despite mutual benefits, political and intellectual elites often make the news and use reporters to deliver information subsidies to influence policymaking. Ephemeral dynamics in news-making incentivize the repetition of an endless cycle: those often heard as sources will receive space repeatedly. Conversely, and at most, 'ordinary citizens' will be called to share their life stories, delivering entertainment rather than information. In this theoretical paper, I aim to demonstrate that the established dynamics between reporters and elite sources are neither sufficient nor proper to cover emergent and critical social issues nowadays. I use the case of the climate crisis, particularly to the extent that it affects the Amazon rainforest, to argue that newspeople must acknowledge and explore new dynamics of interdependencies, which includes listening to and portraying Indigenous peoples as the knowledgeable citizens they are in terms of forest protection and land management. I use decolonial feminism theories and the counter-colonialism grassroots movement to challenge the Eurocentric view of the expected relationship between (official) sources and journalists.

JOS13 New interdependencies in journalism

PP 0300 Making sense of journalism: Potential disparities in perception of journalist professional roles between journalists and audiences in Latvia

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Vitality and the future of journalism have been a core discussion in professional forums as well as in academia for the past few decades. Mostly, because journalists and news organizations (in Latvia and elsewhere) are confronted with ongoing unprecedented and multi-faceted crises. In this constantly changing and evolving media landscape, exploring how journalists and their audiences understand professional journalism and see its role(s) in society is paramount. As Palmer et al. have stated, "journalism's viability depends not just on how journalists' approach and execute their work, but also on how members of the public think and feel about journalism" (Palmer et al., 2020, p.4). Therefore, this study mainly will focus on the perception of professional roles of journalism among journalists themselves and their audiences in Latvia.

In Western society and the professional environment, a normative view of journalism has prevailed, however, in recent decades a new view of journalism as a discursive institution has developed (Hanitzsch and Vos, 2017, 2018; Hanitzsch et al., 2019). To use the words of both authors, "journalism and journalistic roles have no "true" essence; they exist because and as we talk about them" (2017, p.129). Data gathered for the Worlds of Journalism Study over two distinct research periods (2013–2014, N = 340 and 2021, N = 486) provides a longitudinal insight into how journalists in Latvia see themselves. This data shows that journalists see themselves mostly in the domain of political life not in the domain of everyday life and are truthful to the normative professional roles (to inform, to monitor, to educate, etc.). Recently (November-December 2023) qualitative focus group discussions were conducted with Latvian media audiences (N = 42) to study how the audience makes sense of journalism and journalist professional roles. This will add to the existing knowledge on journalist-audience relations and allow us to better understand whether there are notable variations between journalist professional role self-perception and the audience's view on these roles and their expectations towards journalists.

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JOS14 Politics and journalism

PP 0301 Journalists as reluctant political prophets

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The news media not only inform citizens about current events but also serve as a central venue for political projections (Neiger, 2007). The prominence of such projections in the news, particularly during election periods (Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2018), along with journalism's 'nowness' ethos, which leads to its 'default neglect of temporality' (Zelizer, 2021, p. 1213), creates inherent tensions that have received limited empirical attention. In this study, we focus on political projections from a news production standpoint and ask: How do journalists perceive political forecasting and communicate uncertainties about the future?

To this end, we employed a mixed-method approach, drawing on data from a large study on successive elections in two national contexts: the three rounds of the 2019–2020 Israeli elections and the 2016 and 2020 US elections. First, we conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 11 Israeli journalists who played pivotal roles in creating and interpreting projections during the two rounds of the 2019 general elections in Israel. The interviews explored journalists' perspectives on political projections and utilized reconstruction techniques (Reich and Barnoy, 2016) to trace the decision-making processes involved in producing future-oriented discourse. To examine journalists' projection practices on a large scale, we applied computational content analysis to future-oriented discourse in election coverage in both Israel and the US, spanning 30 major news outlets. Specifically, we examined journalists' language use in any future-oriented statements within their election-related coverage, employing multi-lingual dictionaries developed for this purpose. By juxtaposing journalists' views and their discursive practices in the production of news texts, we analyzed how professional norms and perceptions are reflected in mediated political projections.

The analysis demonstrates both journalists' ongoing engagement with and profound ambivalence toward political forecasting. We identified three primary sources of this ambivalence: the inherent risk of making incorrect predictions; the perception of election projections as a form of infotainment; and the conflict with traditional journalistic values that prioritize verifiable facts. This ambivalence is evident in distinctive practices in the produced news texts – notably, journalists' heavy reliance on non-committal language (e.g., 'could', 'possibly') in both Israel and the U.S. Discussing the theoretical and normative implications of these findings, we argue that journalists' consistent impulse to distance themselves from projections limits their capacity to assume a more meaningful role within societies' orientation toward uncertain futures.

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JOS14 Politics and journalism

PP 0302 Still no freelance zone, with greater gender equality: How politics is covered in 13 elite newsrooms around the world

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This paper is part of a large-scale research on how newsrooms are structured today. As an "epistemic infrastructure" beat mixes predicts content, reflect hidden assumption, and expose the architectonic blueprint behind the news. The project compares the beat mix of leading quality dailies with an online operation, in 13 countries (US, UK,

Germany, France, Greece, Chile, Sweden, Belgium, Mexico, Czech Republic, India and Israel), based on executive interviews and analysis of data of their beat structure.

The following highlights focus on the political beat due to its importance and to our initial stage of data analysis.

- **Human resources:** Political beats maintain their high status: The majority of political coverage in all countries is still done by full-time staff with very few freelancers. The good news: This formerly male-dominated beat (Magin and Maurer, 2019; Van Dalen, 2012) is now balanced between male and female reporters, but males still dominate the more lucrative positions of editors and commentators.
- **Focus:** Political teams are largely geared towards covering the executive branch and in most cases the Politics desk is embedded within the parent National desks.
- **Location:** Unsurprisingly, the politics teams are concentrated in the capital city, where most of the executive power resides. An exception to this case is Süddeutsche Zeitung in Germany and Haaretz in Israel, where a larger proportion of political journalists are located elsewhere in the country. For comparison, The Washington Post only has eight out of its 70-strong force of politics reporters located outside Washington, DC, though it has a separate desk, not specifically political, covering the rest of the nation.
- **Newsroom size:** Some initial analysis of data shows that size of the political beat is not dependent on the size of the media organization. For example, the Guardian's politics team has only seven full time political reporters plus a live politics blogger but in Mexico's El Universal, also a relatively large organisation, there are over 30 full time political reporters in the capital, Mexico City.
- **Commentary:** Despite "the interpretive turn" in journalism (Barnhurst, 2014) and the special centrality of sensemaking of politics (Arceneaux et al. 2019; Bro, 2012; Salgado et al. 2017) the number of dedicated commentators on politics desks is smaller than reporting teams, but in many cases political reporters and editors regularly write commentary and analysis on topical issues. Mexico has the largest number of political commentators (15) that are attached to a politics desk. Only Greece has a similar number of commentators on the politics desk (11). In comparison, Dagens Nyheter (Sweden) and De Standaard (Belgium) have only one full-time staff commentator, with separate units for commentary.

According to "new institutionalist" perspective (DiMaggio and Powell 1983), findings show that at least as far as the allocation of political human resources are concerned, newsrooms around the world maintain a similar, "isomorphic" logic, in their political division of labor. And yet, the similar structure affords different approaches to politics, indicated in other comparative studies (Albæk et al. 2014; de Vreese et al. 2017; Nielsen and Kuhn 2014).

JOS14 Politics and journalism

PP 0303 Resistance or rationalisation? Analysing the "hidden transcripts" of media capture

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Several studies argue that journalism can facilitate and shape democratic backsliding when news organisations are captured by business and political elites, developing the concept of media capture (Dragomir and Aslama Horowitz, 2021; Schiffrin, 2021; Selvik and Høigilt, 2023). This scholarship suggests that captured journalists and news outlets will likely fail to hold political actors to account and deliver information essential for public deliberation. These conditions can also lead to unfair representations of political events over time (Ferreira, 2023a). However, media capture research mostly focuses on macro causal factors, such as ownership patterns and networks of influences (Atal, 2017; Márquez-Ramírez and Guerrero, 2017; Stiglitz, 2017), or the perceived effects of editorial outputs (van Dijk, 2017; Araújo and Prior, 2020). Therefore, it tends to efface journalistic agency and sociological aspects crucial to news production. Little is known about how media capture operates inside the newsroom. Moreover, possible forms of resistance are particularly understudied. Yet, news outputs are a result of both the institutional structure (i.e., regulatory framework, market characteristics, professional guidelines, and resources) and the judgment of each journalist (Cook, 1998; Gitlin, 2003; Deuze, 2008), which is influenced by their social background and professional status. As such, news production is a multi-level process of negotiation involving a range of journalists with different attributions, commitments, and levels of decision power (Wright, 2011; Raemy, Hellmueller and Vos, 2023), which could create opportunities for anti-hegemonic practices in captured newsrooms. Using 36 semi-structured qualitative interviews and building on Scott's (1990) concept of "hidden transcripts", this paper uncovers and analyses forms of resistance to media capture in the three major news organisations in Brazil from 2016 to 2021. This is a period of constant decline in the country's quality of democracy and growing political interference in these newsrooms (Ferreira, 2023b, 2023a). Although Scott does not focus on media, the author argues that hegemonic systems such as captured newsrooms could be an appearance ("public transcript"), hiding various forms of disagreeing thoughts and conducts ("hidden transcripts"), carefully kept below the radar by dissenting groups and individuals. The results show three key "hidden transcripts" in Brazilian newsrooms: "stall" (reporters, producers or low-level editors delaying requests from high-level editors or managers conflicting with their perceptions of journalistic standards), "maybe it will pass" (reporters, producers, and low-level editors discreetly including bits of information not aligned

with guidelines determined by the higher-ups), and "secret editing" (small alterations after the news item was approved but before publication to reduce perceived bias or lack of pluralism). However, the analysis also suggests these practices have negligible impact on the public while they become a mechanism of rationalisation among journalists, who are able to justify working for and supporting captured news organisations. Instead of empowering dissent and change, this dynamic normalises and maintains the status quo, challenging the effectiveness of silent resistance in journalism.

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JOS14 Politics and journalism

PP 0304 (De)Constructing journalism relevance in a digital age

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The digitization of the public sphere has catalyzed a transformation of journalism (Bell et al., 2017) that can be seen as part of a historical process of journalism change; journalism being defined according to how it engages with technology, politics, and economics over different periods (Conboy, 2004). In today's digital media ecosystem, journalism's ability to deliver on its historical promises of being a predominant sense-making practice is being questioned (Peters & Broesma, 2017), confronted with audience disaffection (Newman, 2022) and stiff competition from alternative actors that overtake the news discourse (Neveu, 2019). With this backdrop, this paper explores:

- How is the relevance of journalism defined in scientific literature?
- Are there indications of a decline of journalism's relevance?
- How could journalism's relevance be fostered?

Methodologically, this article proposes a two-step empirical approach. The first and main step consists in a systematic literature review of 138 scientific studies published between 2013 and 2023, identified using the scholar database Scopus; which was conducted in the context of a research project commissioned by the Swiss Federal Media Commission. We carried out several iterations of searches, expanding the list of keywords with every iteration based on keywords mentioned in the previous papers. From the initial keywords "journalism" AND "relevance", we then also include "accountability", "quality", "authority", "expectations" OR "credibility", queried in the title, abstract or keywords. Based on the abstracts, the database was first coded according to eight research sub-questions. We then conducted a more detailed examination of each text to answer the questions posed and identify (sub) categories of analysis.

Findings allow us to define relevance as the impact journalism exerts on society and individuals, both in the political domain and in everyday life, which is tied to how information is selected, processed, and communicated to audiences, helping them to make sense of what is happening. The literature indicates a decline in journalism's relevance mainly due to insufficient transparency in news-making, understanding of audiences' expectations and (participatory) information practices, and news media's economic issues due to failing business models. The findings from the literature review were then discussed within an exploratory focus group held in October 2023 made of three journalists and a senior manager from news organizations in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland. Interviewees mainly expressed concern over technological innovations such as artificial intelligence and their consequences for journalism practice, particularly in terms of threats to its creative craft and regarding ethical challenges. For them, journalism's relevance relies on journalists' ability to fact-check and create emotional storytelling. Both literature and interviewees underscore media literacy as a means to strengthen journalism relevance.

Discussions of this paper not only offer insights into the challenged relevance of journalism but also into the way journalists seek to (re)value their profession and work. More broadly, the proposed paper contributes to a better understanding the meaning of journalism, how it may assert a key position and provide a particular form of service to society (including beyond the political realm) in an increasingly messy media ecosystem.

JOS14 Politics and journalism

PP 0305 Pointing fingers in the disinformation era: How journalists and politicians perceive each other's role in spreading disinformation and its impact on their relationship

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In an era of post-truth and disinformation, the crucial relationship between politicians and journalists, the "fourth power", is under increasing pressure. Some politicians publicly question the media's role in spreading inaccurate

and false information, and journalists have reason to be critical of politicians too. While deception and falsehoods have long been present in politics, it is widely believed that social media provide politicians with new opportunities to strategically create and disseminate false narratives. The extent to which politicians and journalists blame each other for spreading false information may have important implications for their relationship. Mutual distrust might lead journalists to distance themselves from their political sources and evaluate their interactions more critically. This, in turn, could result in more skeptical political coverage, potentially impacting audience trust levels. However, research examining how politicians and journalists perceive each other's roles in the spread of false information and how these perceptions influence their relationship is notably absent from the existing literature. Therefore, this study aims to address two key questions:

RQs: (1) *How do journalists and politicians perceive each other's role in spreading disinformation, and* (2) *how do these perceptions influence their personal contact?*

To answer these research questions, we conducted a survey with Belgian political journalists (N = 148) in October 2022 and one with local politicians (N = 452) in March 2023. We asked journalists and politicians to indicate on a 7-point scale to what extent they agreed or disagreed that the following actors contributed to the spread of disinformation: (1) Traditional news media; (2) Alternative media; (3) Social media; (4) Politicians in general; (5) Politicians from radical-left parties; (6); Politicians from radical-right parties. In the survey with journalists, we also asked how frequently they had contact and how they evaluated their contact with politicians. Our results indicate that 33 percent of politicians, in particular right-wing politicians, blame journalists for spreading "fake news". Journalists, in turn, are even more critical of politicians: 58 percent of the journalists blame politicians in general, 75 percent blame radical left politicians, and 90 percent blame radical right parties for spreading disinformation. Importantly, journalists' views of politicians' role in spreading disinformation impact their relationship. Although journalists who believe politicians add to the spread of disinformation are not necessarily less likely to interact with politicians, they are significantly more negative about their interactions with politicians. Such perceptions potentially add to the tense relationship between journalists and politicians we are (increasingly) observing and could have important ramifications for political news-making. The adversarial relationship could hinder access to political sources and the sharing of important information, both critical elements for maintaining the quality of news reporting.

JOS15 News reporting II

PP 0306 The construction of religion in Swiss news media – A longitudinal analysis from 1998 – 2022

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Issues constantly compete for attention in the public sphere with ongoing societal and political conflicts as important drivers of issue-attention. The issue of religion is no exception. Recent developments show that despite the paradigm of secularism, the issue still receives high attention in news coverage. The salience of issues in news coverage depends on news values such as proximity, negativity, or conflict. Previous studies have shown that religion is more likely to become a media topic when it collides with social standards or common expectations of religious norms or behaviors (Schönhagen & Jecker, 2010; Wyss & Keel, 2009). However, it is also evident that media attention fluctuates over time, and that specific key-events drive the public discourse around religion.

From a constructivist perspective, religion is and was always constructed in diverse arenas and debates over time (Sumiala, Hoover, & Laughling, 2023). How much attention the issue of religion receives in news coverage, as well as which religions and topical focus are prevalent in the coverage, can be considered important factors influencing public's opinion about religion. However, despite the relevance of religion as a media topic, only a few longitudinal studies analyze how salient and in which contexts religion is represented in the news. We address this gap in research and investigate how salient the issue of religion in the coverage of Swiss news media is, how salient different religions are in this debate, and which topics are most prominent. By doing so, we show how religion has been constructed in Swiss newspapers over time. Switzerland provides a compelling example to investigate how media constructs religion as the country has a very internationally oriented media system and is secularized but rooted in Christianity.

We retrieved all articles from three leading Swiss newspapers that were published between 1 January 1998 and 31 December 2022 and mentioned the term religion (n = 28'298 news articles). For our analysis, we developed customized dictionaries to detect the five most relevant religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism) and combined this with structural topic models (cf. Roberts et al., 2019).

Preliminary results show that the issue of religion receives substantial but cyclical salience in the coverage of Swiss news media. On average 1.1% of all articles in the three analyzed outlets mention religion. Furthermore, we show that even though Christianity is the most covered religion in total, the salience of Islam increased over time and reached a similar level as Christianity around 2015. The topical analysis shows that Islam is often covered in connection with conflict and terrorism (e.g. the proclamation of the Islamic State). The analysis also reveals issues

without references to core religious topics. Instead, they only use metaphors and formulations in areligious contexts and topics such as sport.

JOS15 News reporting II

PP 0307 Understanding 'feminicide' coverage in Italian media: Applying principles of nonviolent communication for social change

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On 11 November 2023, Giulia Cecchettin, an Italian university student, was murdered by her former boyfriend, Filippo Turetta. Giulia was scheduled to graduate with a degree in Engineering from the University of Padova the week after her death. Her murder sparked national outrage and reignited an ongoing debate about gender-based violence in Italy. Approximately 8,000 people, including government officials, attended Cecchettin's funeral. Shortly afterwards, the Italian Senate approved a bill aimed at preventing violence against women.

The Italian media initially followed a formulaic approach in covering Cecchettin's murder, portraying Giulia as an innocent victim and Turetta as a scheming perpetrator. However, this polarised narrative, which is frequent in the news coverage of domestic violence in Italy (see Bandelli 2017 and Allegri 2021) was challenged by a compassionate eulogy delivered by Giulia's father, Gino, at her funeral. He called for more education and cultural change to prevent such tragedies, rather than focusing on blame or judgment. His words highlighted an empathy-based perspective distinct from the sensationalistic language used by journalists.

This paper applies principles of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) to conduct a rhetorical and stylistic analysis of the news coverage of Giulia Cecchettin's murder in four major Italian newspapers (*Il Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica, La Stampa; Il Sole 24 Ore*) from the initial reporting through the first televised interview with her father, Gino Cecchettin (November–December 2023). NVC is a progressive methodological approach developed by Marshall Rosenberg in the 1960s that employs communication techniques to de-escalate disagreements and increase empathy in situations of human conflict. According to Rosenberg (2015), moralistic judgments, feed a form of communication that drives us away from a sense of human understanding and fosters further violence. There is a mutual relationship between blame and violence: judgmentally targeting a certain group for a negative outcome can create resentment towards the group, producing even more hostility (Armoudian and Milne 2021). Based on the aforementioned premises, this paper aims to address the following research questions:

1. What value judgments did newspapers employ in describing Cecchettin's murder?
2. How did these judgments sensationalise the story in ways counterproductive to social change?
3. How did Gino Cecchettin's rhetoric provide viable alternatives to mainstream coverage, setting a template for future cases?

The objective of this project is to investigate how the incorporation of NVC strategies in news reporting can enhance deeper understanding of people and facts, thereby cultivating a public discourse driven by comprehension, as opposed to blame and judgment. Second, the research will proceed to examine what linguistic and communicative alternatives the NVC model makes available to accurately report on gender-based violence and whether these are applicable within the commercial and political frameworks of the current Italian model of journalism.

JOS15 News reporting II

PP 0308 Towards a communication history of the Women's World Cup

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Football World Cups are not only a trade fair for the game but also a mirror of world history. While the men's tournament has numerous publications spotlighting its sporting aspects, the Women's World Cup lacks coverage, with only one sport's history publication on the Amazon website (authored by FIFA) and none on its social history. To fill this gap, our team from 13 countries will write the 'Communication History of the Women's World Cup'. Modifying the categories of the men's World Cup History of Bowman (2019), we posit:

What is driving the development of the Women's World Cup: professionalisation, genderisation, medialisation, economisation, or politicisation?

Methodology

We have collected data from the *New York Times* equivalents of 17 countries. We are coding all articles concerning the World Cups from 1991 to 2023, each from the opening day to the finals, until the last consecutive follow-up

communication. We used a theoretical framework by Uwe Schimank (1988) to identify the tournament's social functions. The components of the categories are:

1 Sports	a = Match reports; b = Feature; c = Tactics
2 Gender	a = Women vs. man; b = Role, identity; c = Intercultural
3 Media	a = Spectators; b = TV, journalism; c = Stories, history
4 Economy	a = FIFA & Associations; b = National Leagues; c = Marketing
5 Politics	a = National identification; b = System competition; c = Symbolic politics

We have collected the articles in twelve countries since 1991. In five countries, we gathered the later articles due to archive problems. We have completed our coding for the *New York Times* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, on which we focus below.

Results

Between 1991 and 1999, China led in terms of coverage of the Women's World Cup. As the U.S. national team grew into a powerhouse, so did the coverage. In Germany, coverage significantly increased when they hosted the games in 2011 but was not sustained in the following games. Interestingly, although they did not advance, Germany's coverage almost tripled in 2023.

Our coding of the *New York Times* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* showed an increasing tendency to focus on sport, making professionalisation a significant driver of its development. Over the years, the key driver has been changing. Between 1995 and 2015, the competition was a media subject (medialisation), producing iconic pictures and capturing the audience. Simultaneously, starting from 2011, the genderisation of the Women's World Cup grew in relevance. However, its dominance was more prominent in 2019, influenced by the Equal Pay Movement. The 2023 games saw increased politicisation after Luis Rubiales forcibly kissed Jenni Hermoso, sparking discussions on women's societal roles and the violence they endure.

The Women's World Cup reinforces social divisions, through gender separation in sport, but allows to transcend nationalism in gender politics. Before September 2024 we will deepen our understanding of each category through qualitative research. What does the Women's World Cup stand for? Our response so far: it is a global voice as the new international of women's rights.

Bowman, W. D. (2019). The World Cup as World History. *Rowman & Littlefield Publishers*

Schimank, U. (2005). The development of sport into a social subsystem. Campus.

JOS15 News reporting II

PP 0309 A content analysis of coverage of terrorist attacks in Western Europe in Austrian and German print media

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Sensationalist media coverage of terrorist attacks can have a detrimental effect on readers' mental health, contribute to (re)traumatization and increase stigmatization of certain social groups. Furthermore, similar to suicide reporting, sensationalized terrorism reporting may encourage imitative behavior. Based on their prevention expertise, suicide experts have thus developed guidelines for safe reporting of mass shootings based on the recommendations for suicide reporting (see: https://www.reportingonmassshootings.org/). The question of whether current terrorism coverage is consistent with these guidelines and in what areas media professionals need to be more sensitized are the primary research interests of this study.

To address these questions, we are conducting a content analysis of coverage of terrorist attacks in Western Europe as defined by the Global Terrorism Database. Only attacks that met the threshold of at least 400 articles published in the five most-read German and the five most-read Austrian newspapers in the seven days following the attack were considered. This resulted in a list of nine attacks and a total of 4,049 relevant articles. We conducted a stratified random sample, stratified by attack, time period, and medium, in order to reduce the number of articles for manual coding. A total of 2,198 articles were included in the analysis. The content analysis is ongoing and will be completed by the time of the conference.

The preliminary results of n = 1,244 articles analyzed to date show that newspapers tend to publish personal information about the attacker and details about the attack: 26% mention the attacker's name; almost 12% publish pictures of the attacker, around 10% quote the attacker; and another 10% quote the extremist group responsible for the attack; 11% provide a detailed description of the method of the attack. All of this is not in line with media guidelines and could have negative effects, such as increasing identification processes with the attacker, which may stimulate imitation. Furthermore, the detailed attack reports can contribute to the (re-)traumatizing of the

audience. We therefore need to discuss how we can disseminate media guidelines for safe reporting in order to avoid negative consequences.

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JOS15 News reporting II

PP 0310 How does local journalism happen when access to the "local" is denied? Reporting during wildfire evacuations in Canada's North

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What happens to local journalism when access to the "local" is suddenly denied to both journalists and audiences? This research examines such a situation.

This study considers local journalism in the Canadian North, where vast tracts of wilderness are dotted with small communities separated from one another by hundreds of kilometers. The population of Canada's Northwest Territories (NWT) is sparse, with 45,000 residents living in an area of 1.3 million square kilometers. In the summer of 2023, more than two thirds of the NWT population, residents (including journalists), fled southward because of wildfires. Ultimately, these fires leveled an entire town and burned for days at the boundaries of others. Road access to Yellowknife, the NWT capital, was blocked, forcing a total evacuation by airplane. Displaced community members sought refuge across several Canadian provinces.

The wildfires and evacuation of the territory also meant many NWT towns were devoid of journalists, with only firefighters remaining to safeguard the communities. Despite the absence of reporters in the evacuated regions of the NWT, local journalism persisted.

This paper examines journalism practices at three Yellowknife news outlets: a privately-owned radio station with an active news website, a privately-owned local newspaper with both print and online editions, and the CBC, Canada's public broadcaster (and news website).

This research focuses on journalistic connections to place through interviews with reporters using Reich and Barnoy's reconstruction interview methodology (2016). It presents reflections from reporters on the coverage they created and the process through which they created it. Despite the evacuation of journalists from the NWT, coverage carried on from a distance and with a critical mission: providing essential information on which communities were being evacuated and where residents should flee, as well as keeping the NWT diaspora informed of the state of their now-empty communities.

This study contributes to scholarship that defines local journalism through its connections to a physical place, as well as social place (Hess & Waller, 2016). Though dynamics of spatial-local and social-local can be coincident, they can also exist alone (Ali, 2016). This study offers a fresh perspective on local journalism in the face of unique challenges: as wildfires raged, local journalists and audiences previously tied to a specific geographic location were abruptly relocated. This transition marked a shift from spatial localism to social localism among the same group within a very short period. Though the practice of journalism was different during this shift, the outcome was similar: providing (formerly) local residents with important and relevant information about their local community and place in a timely way.

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JOS16 User-journalist relationship I

PP 0413 Outlining a curriculum for beat journalists: The case of military affairs

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Despite the consensus among scholars, according to which journalists do not have sufficient knowledge about their fields of coverage (Lippmann, 1922, Paterson, 2013), the question of what might make sufficient knowledge never treated systematically and empirically. This paper tries to test whether journalists' desired knowledge can be mapped based on interviews with senior experts and journalists.The chosen case study is military reporting, due to the challenging and interdisciplinary nature of their knowledge and their vital role in reporting emergencies, risks, terrorism, and warts. Our gallery of experts interviewed during 2022–23 included 30 people, some of the most senior

and experienced Israeli specialists: one former Deputy Chief of Staff, former members of the PM advisory National Security Council, current and former IDF spokesperson, heads and members of the intelligence system, retired generals and scholars of military affairs. From the journalistic side the panel included some of the most senior and awarded reporters and commentators. Interviewees asked the following: if we were to establish a school for military journalists, what would its curriculum look like? Their replies were reflective and informative, encouraging experts and journalists to outline a desired curriculum of expected knowledge that can inspire other beats as well.

Despite their known disagreements, experts and journalists tended to agree on journalists' required knowledge. However, a significant disagreement concerned the configuration of military knowledge and its systematic accumulation. Experts perceived knowledge as more "idealistic", quasi-academic, systematic and flowing top-down from military's seniors. Journalists, on the other hand, expressed a more "realistic" configuration of knowledge that tends to be more eclectic, partial, harnessed to storytelling functions and often flowing bottom-up – from soldiers, parents and civil society.

In the spirit of Schudson's and Anderson's knowledge paradox (2009), expected knowledge of military journalists is simultaneously "grandiose and incredibly modest" (p. 96). While they follow complex moves such as the development of military strategy, tactical moves, and superpowers' interests "like following a musical score or partiture", some shallow levels of knowledge and a respective epistemic humility are inevitable in a field with so many types of forces, units and sub-disciplines.

Military beat requires an exceptional degree of interdisciplinary knowledge. To understand rocket propulsion systems and why they land at a certain angle, one must be familiar with earth sciences, physics and ballistics; to truly understand the controversy surrounding the involvement of women in combat and in fighter pilot tasks, knowledge in the fields of biology and physiology is necessary. While the core remains pure military affairs, it is often traversed by peripheral issues like economics, law and engineering.

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JOS16 User-journalist relationship I

PP 0414 Magined audiences taking centre-stage. How journalists envision and negotiate journalistic innovation and change in the digital era

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This paper asks what role audiences play when journalists consider innovation in relation to journalism's future. Fueled by the ongoing crisis discourse about journalism's sustainability in the digital era, the belief that journalism needs to reinvent itself through innovation is widely embraced (Creech & Nadler, 2017; Bossio & Nelson, 2021). While research into journalistic innovation has grown in the last decade (Bélair-Gagnon & Steinke, 2021), it has tended to ignore the role audiences play in it. Yet, their attitude towards the way journalism innovates can affect the nature, pace, and success of journalistic innovation and change. Recognizing the importance of studying the role of the audience in understanding how innovation and change takes place in journalism, this paper therefore analyses how journalists take audiences into account in the way they envision and (de)legitimize journalistic innovation in regard to the future.

For years, journalists and outlets have been attempting to find ways to re-engage their declining and increasingly fragmented audiences (Steensen et al., 2020). A key way in which journalists attempt to maintain their cultural authority in the eyes of the public is through their collective discourse and performance of journalistic roles (Mellado, 2015; Hanitzsch & Vos, 2017), which has developed in response to pressures to innovate (Witschge & Nygren, 2009). At the same time, audiences' unprecedented ability nowadays to convey their preferences and expectations of journalists through social media, comments or web analytics shapes the way journalists envision innovation and change.

This paper therefore argues that journalism innovation is shaped by an ongoing discursive negotiation of role performance and expectations between journalists and audiences. Drawing on 26 semi-structured interviews with journalists in the Netherlands, we examined how journalists narrate their roles in relation to journalism's future, how they understand and envision innovation, and how this is shaped by the way they imagine their audiences.

Broadly, we found that journalists expressed traditional roles, in which audiences are perceived as both passive citizens needing to be informed, and a source of commercial pressure. Here, roles are constructed independent of audience expectations, and journalists maintain professional autonomy over editorial decisions and work practices.

In that context the discourse on quality over commercial incentives functions as an "effective shield" to ward off innovation and change (Costera Meijer 2020: 2328). However, when our interviewees were asked to discuss innovation and journalism's future, they explicitly embraced an audience-centered perspective. Here, journalists saw innovation not only in techno-centric and market-driven terms for the sake of exploiting technological opportunities or economic advantages, but about how innovation can help journalists to improve journalism's quality, which included catering better to the needs and wants of audiences and reaching them in more effective ways.

Ultimately, our paper demonstrates the vital influence audiences have on the way journalists envision innovation and journalism's future. Moreover, particularly considering audiences' declining news consumption and deteriorating trust in news, it underlines that journalists acknowledge the importance of factoring in audience preferences and expectations in journalistic innovation to successfully safeguard journalism's future.

JOS16 User-journalist relationship I

PP 0415 Using a co-orientation perspective to understand the journalism-audience relationship: A concept paper

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The journalism-audience relationship has become a focus of journalism research. Particularly, mutual expectations and the increasing mutual visibility of journalism and audiences in the digital world are analyzed. However, theoretical frameworks for understanding and operationalizing the journalism-audience relationship in the context of masspersonal communication are still lacking.

Based on the argument that journalism in the digital age, especially in the realm of social media, can be characterized as masspersonal communication, and following other scholars who apply interpersonal theories to journalism research accordingly, this paper argues for adopting a co-orientation perspective on the journalism-audience relationship. Specifically, it is proposed to apply McLeod and Chaffee's (1973) interpersonal co-orientation model to mutual expectations in the journalism-audience relationship. Originally developed for dyads, the co-orientation model, based on the principles of symbolic interactionism and Newcomb's A-B-X model, posits that people adapt their behavior based on how they perceive the other's view of an object X.

Within the context of co-orientation, attention is directed towards two individuals or groups, A and B, and their respective attitudes and perceptions towards an object X. In a co-oriented situation, four cognitions emerge (cognitions of A (resp. B) towards X, A's (resp. B's) perception of B's (resp. A's) cognition towards X) from which three relations can be conceptualized: *Agreement* clarifies the extent to which A and B share similar attitudes towards object X. In addition, an intrapersonal relationship, *congruency*, explores the alignment between A's attitudes towards X and A's perception of B's attitudes towards X (and vice versa). *Accuracy*, the third component, is the extent to which A's perception of B's attitude towards X matches B's actual attitude (and vice versa).

The co-orientation model has primarily been used in (interpersonal) family research. A transfer to public communication and organizations has mainly taken place in PR research. The model has been used sporadically in journalism research, but such studies are rare and mostly date from the 1970s – a time when the journalism-audience relationship was predominantly understood as mass communication and characterized by little mutual visibility. Moreover, a theoretical justification for applying the model to the journalism-audience relationship is still lacking.

Therefore, this concept paper argues that the various relations and cognitions can also be transferred to the journalism-audience relationship. The *agreement* relation includes all relationship studies that, for example, compare journalists' role conceptions with citizens' conceptions of journalists. *Congruency* describes the extent to which, for example, journalists' understanding of their roles corresponds to the citizens' anticipated journalistic role image. Finally, *accuracy* deals with the extent to which anticipated audience expectations of journalism (so-called "expectation-expectations") and actual citizens' expectations match.

Overall, the co-orientation model helps to synthesize the existing research and to understand the links between different components of the journalism-audience relationship. In addition, similar to the dynamic-transactional approach, the model points to the reciprocal media effects of journalism and audience. Furthermore, the model offers the opportunity to elaborate different forms of relationships in terms of the agreement and accuracy of expectations of journalism.

JOS16 User-journalist relationship I

PP 0416 Reading below the lines: An eye tracking study on user comments and their effect on journalistic quality perception

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Comment sections have been a well-established part of online news sites for decades. They are interactive spaces for audience engagement and community-building where user comments shape the narrative about issues and have a profound impact on fellow readers' evaluations of news quality (Kümpel & Unkel, 2020; Prochazka et al., 2018; Weber et al., 2019). Consequently, understanding how user comments influence readers' perception of journalistic quality becomes crucial in a digital news environment.

This study delves into the intricate relationship between user comments and readers' assessment of journalistic quality. Building upon previous studies about the influence of user comments on the perception of journalistic quality (Dohle, 2018; Kümpel & Springer, 2016; Prochazka et al., 2018) it is investigated how users comprehend a news article and its accompanying user comments. We hypothesized that 1) readers are more likely to pay attention to negative comments than positive ones, and 2) positive reader comments positively influence the assessment of journalistic quality dimensions. In this context, the use of eye tracking is especially relevant as it allows the validation of users' self-reported cognitive processes.

The 2 x 2 eye tracking experiment accompanied by a survey with 145 participants conducted in 2021 reveals that, on average, participants fixated on high-quality articles longer than on articles of low quality. Furthermore, articles with positive comments posted below were read more intensively. Moreover, negative comments were paid more attention to than positive ones. Overall, comments grab the reader's attention, and negativity addresses the individual's need for orientation, thus acting as an orientation aid. It was also confirmed that positive reader comments affect the assessment of specific quality dimensions. Readers who have seen positive comments evaluate the articles as significantly more transparent and diverse than those who have seen predominantly negative comments.

This study provides insights into the extent to which user comments are paid attention to by using eye movement data and further explores the relationship between the audience's perception of journalistic quality and user comments. Moreover, this research contributes to understanding the subconscious reception of user comments in online journalism and shows that they can have a decisive influence on quality assessment.

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JOS16 User-journalist relationship I

PP 0417 Prompting meaning through visuals: Combining image elicitation and open card sorting as a method in journalism research

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A common methodological difficulty in journalism scholarship is the limitation that traditional in-depth interviews – among the most widely-used methods in the field – have for understanding the underlying beliefs and attitudes that shape journalistic practice. While still useful, interview questions can be too abstract or suggestive and result in learned platitudes or social desirability in responses, especially in relation to journalistic norms and ethics (Irvine et al., 2012).

To address these limitations, we propose a novel methodological approach that combines image elicitation with card sorting in order to facilitate more valid in-depth narratives in journalism research. Image elicitation has been frequently used in anthropology, sociology, psychology, education, and organizational studies (Harper, 2002; Vigurs & Kara, 2016), but in journalism studies it has primarily been employed in audience studies to understand user preferences and evaluations of news (e.g., Swart et al., 2016). The method uses visual cues to start a conversation about certain topics and prompt reflections on more abstract ideas (Parker, 2009). Visuals can thus act as "memory anchors", assisting participants to better reflect and explain their perceptions and experiences (Vigurs & Kara, 2016, p. 514). These visuals can be combined with card sorting to tease out nuances in respondents' views and beliefs. Card sorting asks research participants to sort a given set of stimuli, either open without a defined structure or closed along a set of given categories (Lobinger & Brantner, 2020). It is versatile and provides access to implicit evaluation patterns that lie behind more complex mental categories, while preventing researchers from asking for specific verbal answers.

This paper provides insights from the authors' own use of this method to prompt in-depth narratives around journalistic boundary drawing in both face-to-face and digital settings. We provided 100 traditional and peripheral journalistic actors with 20 cards that represented a wide range of news formats ranging from traditional daily newspapers and newscasts to influencers, podcasters and news start-ups. Each card represented either the front page of a news outlet or a full-screen screenshot of its online presence. Respondents sorted these cards on five concentric circles. They were asked to imagine themselves in the center and to sort the cards according to how similar or different they viewed the other formats from their work. This mapping allowed us to talk about journalistic practices, norms, role perceptions, and audience relationships without ever mentioning the term 'journalism' and elicit discourses around what journalism is and ought to be.

Based on the insights from our study, we offer some further, concrete ideas for future use of the method in journalism studies. These include important considerations of stimuli selection and materiality (e.g., characteristics of the stimuli or the size and shape of the template for sorting), the interview setting (online versus face-to-face), as well as the phrasing of the prompt, and the comparability of the results beyond mere descriptives. Further, we showcase the method's potential in exploring the perception of what constitutes journalism and how boundary work is conducted within and beyond the journalistic field.

JOS17 Knowledge in newsrooms

PP 0418 Platform as the new educators in journalism? Decoding the relation between FJP trainings and journalistic skills

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The ongoing discussion about the future of journalism practice has persisted for over a century and in today's rapidly changing landscape, this topic remains vital attracting significant scholarship. The platformization of journalism is seen as a major challenge within journalism studies, with an impact on the technological, economic, and social foundations of journalism modifying journalistic skills and work processes in newsrooms in various ways (Kirchhoff, 2022). This study departs from the findings of a previous socio-technical analysis on the affordances of Facebook Journalism Project (FJP), to understand through the lens of visual and textual analysis the ways the trainings and courses offered by Facebook Journalism Project, strive to enact journalists vis-à-vis their business models by strengthening even more a form of 'platform schooling' (Papa & Kouros, 2023). Platforms through their affordances are initiating a form of platform schooling where each platform has its eco-system presented to journalists as a "one-stop shop," tailored indirectly to serve platforms' economic interests (ibid). Using affordance theory, we argue that the interfaces of technological artifacts are manifestations of their implicit politics and ideology, given that affordances entail normative claims about what journalists should do and how they need to do it. Even though there is ample evidence supporting a shift in newsroom norms based on audience metrics (Hartley et.al, 2023; Mellado, 2021; Truyens & Picone, 2021; Christin, 2020) this article focuses on the understudied another side of the equation, namely the ways the technological infrastructure transposed to journalists indirectly through platforms trainings and courses to trace its role in this shift. The main objective of this study is to uncover the direct interactions between platforms and news organizations via the various trainings suggested as educational materials by FJP encouraging indirectly the affordances of their tools and promoting certain journalistic skills contributing even more to platform schooling (Papa & Kouros, 2023). For this purpose, we first selected nine journalist-oriented tools provided by FJP, by performing a discursive interface analysis, and then collected 541 trainings offered by the tools on their official website. Findings indicate these trainings provided by the platform in question are encouraging specific journalistic norms to emerge, influencing measurable journalism currently in the making. These findings suggest a new form of platform schooling which, in addition to journalism schools and work environments transforms understandings of what is and what is not proper behavior when practicing journalism. This study contributes to journalism practice scholarship by shedding light on the ways journalism education is practiced but also defined -a much debated

issue within digital journalism studies- often pointing to the uncertainties of the field as well as the boundaries of journalism education.

Indicative references

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JOS17 Knowledge in newsrooms

PP 0419 Still wanting to make a difference. A study of journalism students' motivation and perception of relevant forms of knowledge

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In recent decades digitalization and financial disruption in the news media industry have led to a deterioration in working conditions and labor security among reporters. Moreover, journalists face increasing levels of harassment, threats, and violence, and must deal with decreased trust worldwide. In the same period, higher education has undergone key, structural changes. Students today are increasingly recruited from all social levels, resulting in a more diverse student body. Biggs & Tang (2007) suggest that students within higher education now consist of two conceptual types. On the one hand, there is the "traditional", academically motivated student type ("Susan"). On the other, there is a "new", more instrumentally oriented student type ("Robert"), who primarily seeks a formal degree.

Departing from the rapid changes and insecurities within the journalistic practice field, and the structural changes within the education system more generally, the present paper investigates what journalism students perceive as relevant knowledge, and their motivation for undertaking a higher education degree. Previous studies have shown that journalism students appear to be intrinsically motivated in that they seek to communicate, to creatively express themselves, and create change for public betterment (e.g. Carpenter et. al 2014). This contrasts Biggs and Tang (2007), arguing that the student body is becoming more dominated by the instrumental, extrinsically motivated, and practice-oriented "Robert". The question then becomes whether "Robert" also has entered journalism education. As a point of comparison, we include communication students to investigate whether motivation and knowledge views vary between the two student groups.

The paper draws on survey data from undergraduate journalism and communication students (N = 340) within two higher education institutions in Norway – one private and one public. Moreover, 16 in-depth interviews with students and study program managers were conducted.

Preliminary findings show that most students prefer practical knowledge (85% of journalism students and 92% of communication students). However, the academically motivated "Susan" is more strongly represented among the journalism students, of which 37% also prefer theoretical knowledge, compared to 28% of the communication students. Journalism students are also more idealistically motivated than communication students, with 81% seeking a job where they can contribute to the improvement of society (compared to 65% of communication students). Nevertheless, institutional differences matter: journalism students who pay for tuition to a larger extent seek employment with high income (65%), compared to journalism students with free, public tuition (52%).

The findings show that the insecurities within the journalistic practice field don't seem to have altered the motivation of journalism students. However, our data indicates that the conceptual student types needs nuance. Rather than Roberts and Susans, it is the intrinsically motivated and practice-oriented student that dominates journalism education. To educators and future employers, knowledge of students' motivation and knowledge view is necessary to assess their interest in journalism and to what degree curriculum and classes reflect those motivations.

JOS17 Knowledge in newsrooms

PP 0420 Together in the encoding-assemblage: A new materialist framework for examining knowledge production in journalism

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Journalism's broken monopoly over the production of knowledge (Carlson, 2017; Ekström & Westlund, 2019) has led to an erosion of public trust in professional journalism and a general "epistemic crisis" of the present (Steensen, 2019). Pioneer journalism communities around the world have actively sought a redress by transforming journalism's relations with its audiences and the communities it serves, while reimagining journalistic epistemology writ large (Anderson, 2023). Pioneer journalists are the vanguard of journalistic change as they transform journalism and point to its *possible futures* (Hepp & Loosen, 2021). This paper presents a novel analytical framework applied

in a comparative cross-national study of knowledge production in four pioneer journalism communities in Pakistan, Romania, Malaysia, and the UK.

Theoretically, the study is grounded in a new materialist re-reading of the encoding/decoding model (Hall, 1973), arguing that in the networked media ecosystem, the process of knowledge production has become more recursive and relational, where various actors and actants possess agency and "capacity to affect and be affected" (Deleuze, 1988, pp. 127–128). The process of encoding, or knowledge production, in pioneer journalism has been operationalised through the Deleuze-Guattarian concept of "assemblage" – a popular concept in the Digital Journalism literature in the last decade (De Maeyer & Le Cam, 2015; Domingo et al., 2015; Domingo & Wiard, 2016). Scholars have argued for seeing journalism as a series of "assemblages" of social and material artefacts, actors, actants and discourses (Anderson, 2016; Ryfe, 2021).

Thus, this paper will discuss a novel application of a relational, monist analytical framework to the study of knowledge-production in journalism, through the operationalising concept *encoding-assemblage*. Inspired by the Spinozo-Deleuzian ethological approach to data analysis (Fox & Alldred, 2021), the framework has been used to analyse the process of encoding in each of the pioneer journalism communities along four analytical categories:

1) the *relations* within the assemblage between various actors and actants (bodies, things, ideas).
2) the *affects* created in the encounters between actants and forces.
3) the *capacities* to affect and be affected produced by the affective flows within the *encoding-assemblage*.
4) the *micropolitics* of the encounters within the *encoding-assemblage*, in terms of the agentic capacities produced in the microprocess of encoding as they materialise in digital story artefacts, and the subsequent capacities to affect that these artefacts can produce in future events – i.e., in (the aftermath of) decoding.

A multi-method qualitative methodology has been applied, drawing from metajournalistic discourse analysis, interviews with 30 pioneer journalists, and multimodal discourse analysis of seven journalism stories, in a multiple case study design.

This relational analytical framework pays attention to the collective production of journalism by a variety of actants, human and nonhuman, physical or abstract (Domingo & Wiard, 2016), recognising and detailing the "plenum of agencies at play", and drawing the social, the material, and the discursive dimensions together (De Maeyer, 2016, p. 467). It can be applied to studies of knowledge production at either the encoding or decoding end, and epistemic practices in journalism more widely.

JOS17 Knowledge in newsrooms

PP 0421 Balancing life: Navigating challenges in remote work within the press industry

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Our study investigates the myriad challenges faced by local journalists in the UK as they grapple with the transition to remote work and the consequential issues arising from using their homes as primary workplaces.The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a significant shift in the way stories are gathered, news is made, and news is distributed. It has also led to the physical distancing of reporters from the office, making remote work a necessity. This new paradigm is underscored by the participants in this study, who highlighted that this abrupt and somewhat forced shift in the workplace compelled them to rely on their homes as their primary workplaces. The resultant surge in home-based work has sparked extensive discussions within the social science domain, encompassing mental health considerations, difficulties in maintaining work-life balance, the absence of resistance and collaboration, feelings of isolation, intrusion into personal space and privacy, de-professionalisation, additional financial burdens, and heightened job insecurity. Drawing inspiration from these ongoing debates, this study gathers data from 26 local journalists confronting the challenges of remote work, all employed by five monopoly media companies dominating ninety percent of the UK's local journalism landscape. Through in-depth interviews, the collected data is meticulously coded and analysed using thematic analysis techniques. The findings underscore the struggles faced by local journalists, highlighting their difficulties in seamlessly adapting to remote work. Specifically, the study illuminates feelings of loneliness, a lack of resilience and collaboration, heightened stress levels, anxiety disorders, burnout syndrome, and increased job insecurity due to additional financial burdens associated with bills and personal expenses and a shift towards de-unionisation. Situated within the media and communication research framework, this study concludes that journalists working from home encounter many challenges. The surge in remote work, driven primarily by the imperatives of the COVID-19 pandemic, has brought the concept of 'balancing life and remote work' to the forefront. Consequently, the home has transformed into a dual-purpose space, acting as both a refuge and a workplace for local journalists in the UK. It is noteworthy that even within the perceived security of their homes, these journalists occupy precarious workplaces, positioning them as marginalised workers in the broader professional journalism landscape.

JOS17 Knowledge in newsrooms

PP 0987 More public money for private media? Understanding audiences' (lack of) support for public subsidies for private news media

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Policy proposals for media subsidies depend on the acceptance of voters and media users who inform themselves about such proposals – especially in the case of legally binding referendums. Based on a representative survey of citizens in Switzerland, we examine the voting on the "Media Law" – a law that proposed more than 100 million Swiss francs (~ 100 million €) per year in additional subsidies for private (often commercial) news media but that was ultimately rejected by 55% of voters in February 2022. This case offers a good opportunity to test citizens' and media users' attitudes towards publicly financing an increasingly hybrid media system. First, being put on the ballot in a referendum increases the visibility of media policy and the necessity for citizens to engage with media policy, an issue usually neglected in public (Nielsen, 2014). Second, the law included new, innovative approaches involving digital journalism (direct subsidies for online media and for infrastructure projects) (Puppis et al., 2020; Sjøvaag & Krumsvik, 2018) in addition to traditional forms of media subsidies (indirect subsidies for print plus license fee revenues for regional broadcasters), trying to address the needs of various news media of various types and sizes in a challenging small media market.

In this presentation, we ask how media consumption influences citizens' voting decision. From survey data (n = 3.168), we use pre-registered variables (factors) such as media trust, political self-placement and preference for the right-wing populist party SVP (the party most critical towards news media) in addition to the news use of various media types and channels (13 items). Based on the items on news use, we identified five news repertoires using hierarchical cluster analysis. We use binary logistic regression models to examine the influence of these various factors on voting decisions.

Our results show that the rejection of the proposal is widespread among many sociodemographic groups; age and gender do not matter but education does (higher education = more support). Political attitudes play a larger role: increasing right-wing orientation and increasing preference for the right-wing populist party SVP increases rejection. Similarly, attitudes towards news media are important as well: trust in journalists and in local and regional media goes hand in hand with higher support. As for media use, (non)use of specific channels and media types does not matter when considered in isolation; news repertoires, however, have a certain, albeit limited, influence. People whose news consumption consists predominantly of both public media and regional subscription newspapers are more likely to support the media law than people who can be assigned to one of the other four repertoire types.

Our results speak for an increasing importance of cross-media, news repertoire perspectives (cf. Hasebrink & Hepp, 2017) to explain attitudes and political behavior in the field of media policy. Our results imply that an increasingly digital news consumption without trusted subscription-based private and public service media will make it more difficult to obtain majorities for new subsidies for private media in the future.

JOS18 Journalistic roles

PP 0422 Behind the Byline: Navigating roles in Polish journalism

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This presentation focuses on the role performance of Polish journalists. The research problem explores the various roles that journalists assume when creating their publications and examines how these roles coexist based on the covered topics and the type of medium. The study is part of the Journalistic Role Performance project, aiming to comprehend the processes underlying journalistic practices concerning normative expectations in the media environment (e.g., Hallin & Mellado, 2018; Márquez-Ramírez et al., 2020; Mellado, 2017).

The presentation addresses two research questions:

RQ1: What roles do Polish journalists most frequently adopt in their published news materials?

RQ2: Is there a correlation between the journalist's role and the type of medium and topic of the publication?

The sample comprises 6232 of news content from 2020 across four media platforms in Poland: newspapers, television, radio, and online. Two research methods were employed for the study: content analysis and social network analysis.Content analysis allowed to determine how often and with what intensity journalists performed particular roles in their publications, and social network analysis illustrated which roles co-occurred with each other, creating clusters within particular topics.

Preliminary results indicate that journalists commonly assume the roles of watchdog and interventionist, particularly in relation to the covered topics of election campaigns and government activities. However, variations were observed in the roles played by journalists across different media types – on radio, the civic role was more prevalent than on other platforms, whereas in the printed press, the interventionist role dominated.

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JOS18 Journalistic roles

PP 0423 Journalistic role conceptions and ideals of social coexistence: Patterns of expectations and attitudes in the German population

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Mass media and the public spheres they create are pivotal for social cohesion, significantly contributing to individuals' understanding of events and issues beyond their everyday experiences (Hasebrink et al., 2020; Vlasic, 2004). This importance is emphasized during times of socio-political crises and transformational tasks, such as the coronavirus pandemic, European migration debates, and discourses on declining social cohesion in liberal democracies (Fonseca et al., 2019; Weiß/Jandura, 2017).

Journalism is expected to present 'factual' content in a socially comprehensible manner (Potthoff, 2012). However, it has faced criticism for exacerbating societal divisions through sensationalist reporting (Nielsen/Graves, 2017). This criticism highlights the expectation of media and journalism to contribute to social cohesion (Hanitzsch, 2004) and thus the relevance of effectively reaching the audience with their content (Loosen/Schmidt, 2012). Despite existing research on the general expectations of the population towards journalism (Fawzi/Mothes, 2020; Riedl/Eberl, 2020), there is little empirical research on how such expectations relate to social cohesion (Fawzi et al., 2021).

We approach this relationship by examining the correlation between different journalistic role conceptions and ideals of good coexistence as a proxy for social cohesion. Our analysis identifies patterns of role expectations and societal attitudes within the German population and explores their correlation with socio-structural differences.

In a representative population survey in Germany (N = 1,001; 2021), respondents were asked to rate the importance of 25 journalistic tasks (adapted from Hanitzsch et al., 2019) and indicate their level of agreement on a Likert scale with twelve aspects of societal coexistence. To identify empirical correlations between journalistic role expectations and ideals of coexistence in the form of patterns in the population, we conducted a Latent Profile Analysis. In the second step, we examined the resulting profiles according to their socio-demographic composition, information-oriented media use, and perceptions of the state of social cohesion.

The results show that three distinct expectation and attitude profiles can be distinguished. One profile emphasizes classic journalistic tasks such as 'neutral' or 'objective' reporting, combined with individualistic and participatory ideals for society. Another profile shows a higher demand for all journalistic roles, particularly more activist tasks such as 'contribute to social cohesion' and is more oriented towards community-oriented ideals. Higher levels of formal education characterize the first profile, while the second profile is distinguished by diverse media usage. The third profile displays a more nuanced response behavior, with an overall lower assessment of all roles and ideals and a relatively lower rejection of agenda-setting roles, such as 'influence public opinion' and authoritarian ideals. This profile is characterized by lower levels of formal education, less engagement with information-oriented media, and a perception of greater risk to social cohesion.

Our identification and analysis of these three types of value combinations among participants representative for Germany illuminates the alignment of expectations toward journalism with socio-structural categories, reflecting diverse ideals and perceptions regarding society and its social order. This exploration sheds light on the interplay between media, journalism, and societal dynamics, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between journalism, audience expectations, audience attitudes, and social cohesion.

JOS18 Journalistic roles

PP 0424 Four research methods for studying journalists' knowledge and expertise

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The extent to which journalists, especially news beat reporters, know what they are talking about is one of the most fundamental issues in journalism studies, yet it is also highly elusive for empirical exploration. The current paper presents four new research methods that were either developed or adapted for studying different aspects of journalists' knowledge and expertise in a large-scale Israeli research project.

1. **News sorting.** Pushes journalists outside their comfort zone by asking them to rank a sample of their recent publications. While in the first round the publications are ranked according to subject-matter complexity (e.g. how much economic knowledge is needed to cover a particular item), in the second round they are ranked according to journalistic complexity (how challenging was it to obtain and verify the data). After each round reporters are asked to explain their rankings, describe the challenges of each tier of items and how they addressed them, while drilling down to particular stories. The method yields multi-layered of data, including the congruence between both rankings, the reasoning behind ranking and the analysis of the items themselves.
2. **Delphi panels**. Journalists and experts outline how should the curriculum of journalists' knowledge in a particular field of coverage should look like. First, they offer essential components and standards of knowledge, then they rank how essential each of them is. To avoid biases, both the offering of knowledge items and their rankings are done anonymously, via a digital platform. Panelists were asked: if there was a school for journalists who cover [economics/ politics/ military, etc.], how should its curriculum look like? Data enable both qualitative and quantitative analysis, mapping areas of consensus and dissensus between journalists and experts and detecting internal hierarchies between different components of knowledge.
3. **WhatsApp micro-diaries.** Allow an unobtrusive long-term tracing of the learning and socialization process of novice beat reporters throughout their first years of the job. The method is used alongside in-depth periodic interviews every six months (including an intake interview as soon as reporters are assigned to the new beat). Reporters receive a bi-weekly WhatsApp questionnaire with several rotating experience-based questions on recent cases of success, failure, insight, and challenge, etc. Data enable the detection of gaps between reporters' plans and actual learning, identify key stages and bottlenecks throughout their socialization and expose some of the strengths and weaknesses of journalists' knowledge in general already at the beginning of their careers.
4. **Natural Language Processing.** Helps map the emergence of indicators of expertise by analyzing corpora of tens of thousands of news items published by dozens of beat journalists throughout their careers. Data enable to trace the evolution of journalists' expertise based on well-known indexes that are used to measure changes over time in a wide series of linguistic phrases.

Implementing these methods helps mapping three major journalistic aspects: the structure of journalists' subject matter and journalistic expertise, compare their desired expertise and the existing one, and the ways in which journalists in different domains acquire knowledge and expertise.

JOS18 Journalistic roles

PP 0425 Journalists' narrated role performances in time of disruption: Developing resilience strategies in Southern European media systems

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This study examines journalists' narrated role performances in times of global crisis in four understudied Southern European countries – Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece and Malta – as well as focusing on resilience strategies that journalists and media organizations develop in order to cope with professional threats that have emerged from or have been exacerbated by the pandemic. A series of recent studies have examined threats and dangers to journalism globally throughout the pandemic and beyond, ranging from the effects of economic adversity and significant loss of advertising revenue (e.g. Hess and Waller, 2021) to restrictions on press freedom aiming to silence critical journalism (e.g. Papadopoulou and Maniou, 2021; Trifonova Price et al., 2023), as well as the impact on the health and wellbeing of journalists worldwide (e.g. Jukes, Fowler-Watt and Rees, 2022; Backholm and Idås, 2022). Dealing effectively with these risks and pressures is of utmost importance for journalists in order to continue providing citizens with accurate and fact-based information and to hold those in power to account. Adapting and surviving entails overcoming challenges that are directly connected with the political, social and economic contexts shaping the

performance of journalistic roles. The unprecedented crisis has demonstrated the extraordinary ability of media professionals to adapt their practice and roles in the face of new challenges (Mellado, 2021). Therefore, it is important for researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the intersections of different roles when journalists cover disruptive events such as COVID-19 that transcend national boundaries.

The findings that will be presented in this paper are based on 32 semi-structured interviews with reporters, editors, and presenters from the main national, independent and public service media outlets in each country, including newspapers/online media outlets and broadcasters who were on the frontline during the height of the crisis and have continued to play a key role in the reporting of the pandemic and beyond. We examine journalists' role performances from two perspectives, namely through a) the relationship between journalism and those in power (e.g. intervention/watchdog and advocacy/loyal facilitator roles) and through b) the relationship between the journalist and the audience (e.g. civic oriented/public service roles) (Mellado, 2015).

Our findings have implications for many media organisations across the world that have experienced disruption brought by a global crisis. They indicate that a crisis of such proportion seems to have strengthen the journalism's perceived watchdog and public roles. Despite the lack of professional support systems, journalists showed remarkable resilience as they turned to their profession's highest values to draw strength and to each other for support. The hardships they faced, both personally and professionally, did not deter them from attempting to fulfil their role conceptions, aand essentially fuelled them with persistence and rekindled their faith in journalism as a vocation. These findings are of utmost importance, as we argue for support mechanisms to be embedded in newsrooms that journalists can lean on in times of disruption.

JOS18 Journalistic roles

PP 0426 Paving the way or accompanying visions for a better life? Studying role perceptions of journalists reporting on social disruptions

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Today's recurring on societal issues such as climate change, social justice or racism seem to demand journalists to take a stance for social change. New forms of "constructive" or "transformative" journalism within changes in journalistic role perceptions can be seen as an answer to such a demand. While we know a lot about different types of journalistic role perceptions worldwide, we know less on what drives journalists to change their role perceptions in line with such new trends in journalism practice towards social change.

Regarding the research on role perceptions the Worlds of Journalism Study regularly maps the occurrence of role perceptions throughout the world. It became evident that there are not only cross-cultural differences: The individual backgrounds of journalists also shape role perceptions. More recently, studies highlighted that role perceptions might differ depending on the issue journalists report on. Both supports the idea that role perceptions are under constant negotiation. Following this idea we argue that journalists covering protest as a form of social disruptions are more prone to change their role perceptions for at least two reasons: 1) As social disruptions are often controversial, they might foster journalists' engagement with social change on an individual level leading to changes in role perceptions. 2) By nature, protest issues tend to polarize the public, which fosters citizens' expectations of journalists to take a firm stand. Reacting on such presumed expectations might turn journalists to at least consider their current role perception more critically. Based on these assumptions, we aim to deepen our understanding on changes in journalists' role perceptions as a result of covering issues of social disruptions by asking:

1. How do journalists perceive their roles when covering protest?
2. To what extent do they have considerations in mind to change or hold on to their role?
3. Which organizational and individual factors additionally take part in this process?

To answer these questions, we relied on semi-structured interviews of German journalists (N = 38) who did report on protests in recent years. This allowed us to capture diverse role perceptions, as well as explore their underlying interpretation. Our sample contained journalists from different media organizations operating on local, regional as well as national levels. The interviewees were predominantly male (61 %), aged 41 on average. The interviews were conducted between June and August 2023 and structured by a guideline that included questions on role perceptions in general as well as when reporting on protests.

First insights show that while traditional role perceptions such as "watchdog" were salient, they were interpreted according to the specific protest the journalists have been covering. While we are still looking into these individual interpretations of journalistic role perceptions when covering social disruptions and comparing them across media organizations and different target groups, we will be able to present final analyses at conference. As social disruptions are naturally guided by cultural perspectives, we would also like to take the opportunity to discuss changes in role perceptions on a comparative level and enrich our analysis and approach during ECC.

JOS19 War reporting

PP 0532 Reordering disrupted realities – Coping at work of war correspondents and photographers in the Russia-Ukraine war 2014–2024

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The Russia Ukraine war – a war in the middle of Europe – has disrupted the European order and self-understanding. Consequently, journalists from all over the continent have been sent to Ukraine to make sense of the war. However, understanding a war is extremely difficult due to various restrictions, disinformation, and propaganda. In addition, it is physically and psychologically demanding work; many war correspondents and photographers face safety threats and post-traumatic stress. While their photographs and news stories explain the realities of war to the audience, journalists also need to restructure and cope with their own experiences of both the realities of war and their own work.

This paper focuses on the coping mechanisms of war correspondents and photographers. The research questions are as follows: 1) What kinds of hardships, both physical and psychological, have contemporary war correspondents and photographers encountered? 2) What coping strategies have they developed? As a case study, we delve to the experiences of Finnish war correspondents and photographers from Russia–Ukraine war (2014–2024) based on qualitative content analysis of in-depth interviews (n = 50) conducted in autumn 2023 and spring 2024.

This paper draws from earlier research literature emphasizing the importance of coping strategies in crisis journalism (Himmelstein & Faithorn 2002; Dworznik 2006; Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. 2023). In addition, the paper recognizes the importance of several organizations in promoting safety issues in the field of crisis journalism. Consistent with previous research, our initial analysis of the interviews conducted by December 2023 (n = 13) shows that war journalists face various hardships, such as physical tiredness and pain, long working hours, sleep deprivation, emotional stress, safety concerns, and traumatic events. Their coping strategies include, for example, rest, humor, social support provided by colleagues/peers and family, and to some extent, professional help provided by employers. However, journalists also find their work in the field exciting, interesting, meaningful, important, and rewarding. Coping seems to result from balancing stress factors with the experience of doing meaningful work.

Conflicting realities constitute a major source of stress. Everyday life at home may seem incompatible with the harsh realities of the war. Particularly, stress relates to the differing realities of the field and the editing office. Journalists may feel their work is not understood and appreciated. In addition, anxieties arise as the platforms, practices and resources delimit what can be told and shown, and whether the story will eventually reach the audience. Work safety issues have improved during the past few years. Otherwise, the support provided to war and crisis journalists by media organizations and editing offices remains limited and unorganized.

There is a need for a more comprehensive understanding of the work and practices of crises journalists to better support them in coping with challenges of reordering the disrupted realities of war.

JOS19 War reporting

PP 0533 How Mariupol's Journalists experienced the Conquest of their City

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Mariupol was under information blockade from March 2 to May 20, 2022. People lacked basic needs like food, water, gas, medicaments, clothes, and, importantly for communication, electricity. Therefore, mobile connectivity was quite limited during this period. In March 2022, all types of connection disappeared.

In times of war, journalists often become "gatekeepers" of news mediating information from the war zone to the public (e.g., Ojala et al, 2018). Providing reliable evidence of the war and uncovering false information became crucial during the Russian invasion of Ukraine given the proliferation of Russian strategic narrative and disinformation in the media before and after February 24, 2022 (e.g., Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016).

Even though there is a stream of the literature on the duties of war correspondents, little is known about the work of local reporters of affected countries and how their roles are being transformed during the war. This proposal is certainly among the earliest studies to investigate how Ukrainian journalists in the territories conquered and occupied by Russia in 2022 experienced and responded to the invasion.

The study aims to identify the peculiarities of journalist work in Mariupol during the siege and Russian interference in the functioning of the city's information space.

This entails the following research questions:

1. How did working conditions of journalists in Mariupol change over the timeframe of the siege?
2. How and through what channels did the Russian pressure increase? What were its effects on journalist work?

These questions are answered through the framework of case study involving several methods, primarily semi-structured qualitative interviews with 22 journalists with different backgrounds who worked in Mariupol during the siege of the city. These results are supplemented with multiple sources of data, particularly, qualitative document analysis (e.g., social media posts, photos, etc.).

The document analysis was based on the convenience sample of all materials available to the researcher, including news media, social media, leaflets, and eyewitness accounts concerning the means of communication in Mariupol in the wartime. This mixed-methods case study approach resulted in multi-perspectival mapping of the media landscape, available news sources and journalist professional routines changed in Mariupol after the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The key results point out the following: 1) at the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Russia actively attempted to recruit TV journalists offering to cooperate with the media of the annexed self-proclaimed "Donetsk People's Republic"; 2) in early March 2022, journalists largely moved to the popular Telegram messenger as a publishing platform, which allowed to download data quickly; 3) journalists verified and published photos and videos of residents from all over the city. These findings underscore the complex changing professional role of journalists trapped in a war zone, targeted by the enemy, forced to develop new technical skills.

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JOS19 War reporting

PP 0534 Norwegian and Swedish television coverage of the Israel-Hamas war in 2023

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The latest Israel-Hamas war that erupted on October 7, 2023 has far exceeded the death and destruction of previous hostilities. Despite international diplomatic efforts to secure a ceasefire, success has been limited. The prolonged Israeli siege of Gaza has had a polarizing effect on domestic opinion in Western countries, as evinced by large pro-Palestinian demonstrations, antisemitic attacks, and accusations of Western news bias. Strikingly, the war has taken an unprecedented number of humanitarian workers' and journalists' lives.[1] International law has been invoked from a variety of vantage points: from the right of self-defence and human shields, to collective punishment, violations of the discrimination and proportionality principles, allegations of illegal weapons, to genocide and ethnic cleansing.[2]

Comparative European media research shows that mainstream news coverage of international conflicts aligns with their respective countries' foreign policy traditions, policy stances or journalist cultures, irrespective of direct military involvement (Nohrstedt & Ottosen 2001, 2005; Hafez 2007, Riegert, 2011; Nygren, et. al. 2016). While previous conflicts were domesticated to national frameworks of understanding, the evolving hybrid media ecology merges traditional and social media logic, and may challenge the assumption that long-term national orientations persist in news coverage. Media coverage could reflect more transient and shifting policy stances of governments in specific conflicts, particularly given the growing influence of domestic opinion on foreign policy (Aggestam, Schierenbeck & Wackenhut 2023).

This study aims to ascertain whether the news coverage of the Gaza conflict in the most widely viewed news programmes on Swedish and Norwegian public service television reflects the Norwegian and Swedish policy stances on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The two Nordic countries have similar media systems, but historically different foreign policy traditions and stances. Regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict, while both Norway and Sweden have taken on roles as international mediators and bridgebuilders, Sweden has recognized the state of Palestine, whereas Norway has not. On the other hand, Sweden's relationship with the US has changed after its application to join NATO in 2022.

A quantitative content analysis spanning the initial month of the war (October 7th – November 7th 2023) will ascertain the extent to which Norwegian and Swedish news programmes prioritize the conflict itself, what aspects of the conflict are focused on, what role international organisations and international law have, what kind of sources they rely on and evaluate whether they scrutinise governments and stimulate debate on political and social issues according to their public service mandates (Robertson 2010; Riegert 2011). The study's findings will have a direct bearing on scholarly discussions of the degree to which national orientations persist in mainstream news coverage.

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JOS19 War reporting

PP 0535 How the war in Ukraine looks like from 20 FrontPages around the world

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People tend to believe in what they see considering an image almost as a proof of what happened. Rarely, do they consider news photos as a matter of opinion (Perlmutter, 1998), even if images are always constructed. Yet, how photos freeze time may influence the audience's perception of events (Zelizer, 2010).

Images of war victims are a form of rhetoric, sustains Susan Sontag (2003). "They reiterate. They simplify. They agitate. They create the illusion of consensus." (p. 8).

Regardless of how pervasive the media effects may be, various stakeholders have tried to use propaganda to manufacture consent and get support (Chomsky & Herman, 2006). Knowledge is often constructed through a relationship between power and dominance (Foucault, 1980). Journalists exert some power selecting what and how to show. Journalists' level of power may vary according to a country's press freedom and political regime. In any case, how newspapers' FrontPages show a war may have an impact on the audience perception of that war.

Various studies have already analysed the visual representation of wars. While studying the photojournalistic coverage of the 1991 Gulf War, Griffin and Lee (1995) concluded that it did not convey all its complexity. It focused mostly on military weaponry and technology imagery. On another study, Nikolaev (2009) concluded that the war on Kosovo was shown differently on news outlets from opposing sides. Nevertheless, there is a gap in the literature about multiple visual media representations of the same war across countries (Keith, Schwalbe, & Silcock, 2010).

That is a gap that this ongoing study intends to fill by examining **how was the war in Ukraine portrayed by journalists from different parts of the globe.** It does so by examining the visual representation of the war during its first month and one year later while comparing the FrontPages of 20 newspapers from all continents, through a quantitative content analysis.

The analysed categories include the presence of non-war or war images, which were coded for their content (Schwalbe & Dougherty, 2015; Schwalbe, Silcock, & Keith, 2008). Other categories included the photo angle and prominent position.

Those visual categories were then analysed in co-relation to the countries' rank in the media freedom index by Reporters without Borders; the countries' geographical distance to the conflict and the countries' alignment through its vote to suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council of the United Nations.

Preliminary findings indicate that countries geographically farther from the epicentre tend to exhibit fewer war images. An exception to that is the United States and, to a lesser extent, Japan, where the war has been extensively covered. This suggests that countries aligned with Ukraine, even when far away from the region, have given more news coverage. Additionally, the visual representation of the war seems to have evolved from a bloodier human interest frame to a more institutionalized and diplomatic one.

Comparing different visual representations of the same war is important because how wars are represented around the world may be related to audiences' perceptions about them.

JOS20 Constructive journalism

PP 0536 The real-world effects of constructive journalism: A field experiment on climate change news coverage

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News coverage tends to focus on problems, conflicts and wrongdoings (Esser et al., 2016; Soroka & McAdams, 2015). Such a negativity bias risks leaving people feeling distressed, disengaged and disempowered (; Boukes & Vliegenthart, 2017; McIntyre & Gyldensted, 2018). The news coverage of the climate change issue is also focused on negative events and trends with catastrophic consequences (Hart & Feldman, 2014) risks leaving people feeling helpless and passive (Morton et al., 2011).

Constructive journalism has been proposed as way to increase efficacy and engagement in reducing anthropogenic climate change (EBU, 2023). So far, however, extant research has provided limited evidence for the effects of constructive climate journalism. While results from experiments in which participants are exposure to a single

news story indicate that constructive journalism might have such effects (e.g., Hart & Feldman 2016), it is not clear whether these effects can be sustained in a media environment where people are exposed to a substantial amount of information and news each day.

To establish causal effects in a real-world setting and reduce the external validity problems of the survey experiments in extant research, this study is based on a field experiment. It utilizes a journalistic campaign in which the two dominant regional news organizations on the Danish island Funen, the newspaper Fyens Stiftstidende and the television station TV 2 Fyn, during two weeks in May 2023 produced more than 40 constructive news stories on the issue of climate change. These news stories—embedded in the daily news coverage—focused on positive examples and potential solutions to how climate change can be mitigated through changes in food production and individual eating habits.

The study employed a difference in differences design in which a group that is exposed to constructive climate news is compared, both before and after exposure, to a control group that is not exposed to constructive news. In collaboration with the news media conglomerate JFM that publishes a number of regional Danish newspapers, two surveys in March and June 2023 (before and after the constructive climate journalism campaign) were distributed in a user panel with people from Funen who use Fyens Stiftstidende and people from Jutland who use another regional newspaper, Jyske Vestkysten

Both surveys measured efficacy, evaluation of climate coverage in their local newspaper, and intentions of increasing climate change mitigating behaviour, and the changes in the treatment group (people exposed to the campaign in Funen, n = 812) were compared with the changes in the control group (people in Jutland exposed to regular climate change coverage, n = 1684).

The analyses showed statistically significant positive effects of being exposed to constructive climate change news on the evaluation of the climate coverage in the local newspaper and on self-efficacy, but no effects on collective and response efficacy as well as behavioural intentions. These results give one of the strongest indications so far that constructive news has positive effects on important outcomes even when exposure is only a smaller part of the total information people are exposed to in a real world-setting.

JOS20 Constructive journalism

PP 0537 Interconnected Journalism: Fighting against social disorder

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Recent journalistic trends, such as Constructive Journalism and Solutions Journalism, emphasize the evolving need for journalism to transcend the traditional conflict-oriented news. There is an urge to shift its focus towards exploring viable pathways to overcome problems and actively contribute to the discourse surrounding plausible, actionable solutions. This is not to deny the media's invaluable and unique role as a counterpower, essential to a healthy democracy. Still, journalism must go beyond that to reconnect with people weary of journalism and news centred on negativity.

This paper proposes a novel journalistic model, which we call Interconnected Journalism. This new conceptual framework has the potential to strengthen the role of the media in a democratic society, counteract disinformation and populism, and contribute to greater peace and social order by fostering awareness of individuals' interconnections. We define interconnected journalism as an evolving form of journalism that delves into problems and solutions across borders, rooted in the interconnections of local practices in different communities.

People are not alone, they live in an interconnected world. Local phenomena are part of broader dynamics that extend beyond their immediate surroundings and are common to other communities and/or countries. Interconnected journalism aims to bring people and communities closer together through information that reveals the shared nature of problems perceived as local, emphasizing that these issues are common to various communities within their own countries and/or in other countries. This collective awareness through news goes beyond the recognition of common problems, leading to the exploration of shared solutions, already existing in other communities and applicable elsewhere. In essence, this new type of journalism provides visibility to the interconnections among national and transnational communities, fighting against social disorder by promoting empathy and combating hate speech and social indifference.

Interconnected journalism is more demanding because it pushes reporters to always put the topics they are investigating into perspective, focusing on at least two different communities in a comparative approach centred on what is significant to people's lives. It is a journalism that seeks to reveal what connects people within their country's borders and beyond, applicable on both micro or macro scale. This means that regional media inside one country can address this new form of journalism, as well as an international media network. To illustrate it, we will present an example of an interconnected feature developed by journalism students through an academia-media

partnership and will explain how different topics can be covered by this new form of journalism. Finally, we will outline the elements of interconnected journalism and the steps to develop an interconnected feature, offering a globally applicable framework suitable for inclusion in journalism programs at both academic and professional levels.

JOS20 Constructive journalism

PP 0538 "Happy news" initiatives as a response to "news-is-too-negative" perceptions: A content analysis of BBC's The Happy Pod

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Increased competition for audiences and advertisers in the digital environment has put more pressure on news organizations to respond to the widespread perception that news is too depressing. One option is constructive journalism. Proponents of constructive journalism insist it is *not* simply "good" or "positive" news about one-off events or individual heroic acts, but nuanced reporting about responses to social issues that retains traditional journalistic values (Aitamurto & Varma, 2018; Constructive Institute). In other words, it preserves what is presumably the unique value proposition of journalism, but frames stories to highlight scalable solutions rather than intractable social problems.

However, it is not clear that constructive journalism is, itself, scalable. It has been likened to investigative journalism and is similarly resource-intensive (McIntyre and Lough, 2021). Moreover, evidence is mixed about whether constructive stories get more attention and engagement than traditional news stories (Constructive Institute), raising serious questions about whether it is worth the investment.

Meanwhile, some legacy news organizations are experimenting with less resource-intensive ways to address the perception that news is too negative. On the surface, these "happy news" initiatives appear to be producing exactly the kind of news that advocates of constructive journalism dismiss as trivial: news that is "just" positive (Baden et al., 2019). And yet, some of these initiatives are produced by highly respected legacy news institutions and, in theory, they could address some of the main drawbacks to constructive journalism, namely how resource intensive it is.

So far, these happy news initiatives have received little scholarly attention, so this paper begins to address that gap by providing a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of one of them: the BBC's *Happy Pod*, a weekly episode of its flagship *Global News Podcast* that focuses entirely on upbeat stories. The main questions we address are: What kinds of stories are covered in the *Happy Pod*? Do they apply traditional news values and, if so, which ones? Alternatively, do they apply a different set of "joyful" news values (Parks, 2021)? Initial findings show clear patterns in the types of stories covered, which often do *not* apply traditional news values but do apply a consistent set of alternative criteria. In the discussion, we reflect on the prospects of such initiatives to address waning interest in news and growing news avoidance.

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JOS20 Constructive journalism

PP 0540 Constructive journalism in the Netherlands: An overview of the last 20 years

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The future of journalism is under pressure and (re)connecting with the audience's needs has become more relevant than ever. The potential of news media is to provide something substantial to a democratic society: 'independent, reliable, accurate and comprehensive information that citizens require in order to make sense of the world around them' (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2021: xxi). This potential might be limited by the negative side effects of news consumption, such as people feeling less positive, disinterested and powerlessness (Aitamurto and Varma, 2018; Newman et al., 2017, 2019).

One of the public-oriented journalistic approaches that focuses beyond the conflict or problem and tries to overcome the negative side effects of news consumption is constructive journalism (Hermans, 2022; Lough & McIntyre,

2021). The emergence of constructive journalism took place in the mid-2010s, and it aims to produce news that is more accurate and engaging while still meeting the core values of journalism.

As previous research mainly focused on the processes, the products, and the effects of constructive journalism, there is still a lack of knowledge about the actual use of constructive elements in news reporting (Lough and McIntyre, 2021). Therefore, the aim of the current study was to gain insight whether the use of constructive elements in news reporting in the Netherlands has changed over the last twenty years.

A content analysis was used to code a sample of articles from three Dutch regional newspapers from 2002 to 2022. Three key elements of constructive journalism were investigated. First, the degree of solution orientation in the news article. Second, the kind of solution mentioned – future-oriented, perspective for action, other solution – was coded. Lastly, whether a more public-oriented approach was used over the years was coded by looking at the diversity and perspectives of sources mentioned in the news articles.

Preliminary results of the last ten years (2013–2022) show that the degree of solution-orientation in news articles changes: while the percentage of news articles with no solution mentioned at all decreases, the percentage of news articles with a solution-oriented approach slowly increases over the years. Although orientation towards the future in news articles shows no change over the last ten years, the percentage of news articles containing action-oriented information increases. A more public-oriented approach becomes visible in the perspectives of sources mentioned in the news articles: especially from 2018 a greater diversity of perspectives is used.

During the conference, we will elaborate on these results and further discuss the role of news topic and news genre in the use of constructive elements in journalistic reporting. For now, these preliminary results show small changes towards a more constructive-oriented approach in news reporting in the Netherlands.

JOS21 News consumption

PP 0541 News satiation – Understanding audiences´ experiences of temporary news avoidance

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This paper analyses why and how people temporarily avoid news, introducing the novel concept *news satiation* to understand a central aspect of the relationship between journalism and its audiences.

In a world situation with wars, climate change and political disruption, and news as part of the attention economy across datafied platforms, news could easily be experienced as demanding. An influx of studies during the COVID-19 pandemic documented information overload and shifting levels of news use (de Bruin *et al.*, 2021; Groot Kormelink and Klein Gunnewiek, 2021), including reconfigurations of habits and repertoires (Broersma and Swart, 2021; Vandenplas *et al.*, 2021). Our study builds on this literature to go beyond the pandemic situation, providing journalism studies with a novel concept to understand temporary avoidance of news.

Our research question is: Which characteristics of the news environment contribute to experiences of overload, and how is temporary avoidance part of news user practices?

Methodologically, we draw on a qualitative study conducted in Norway in 2022/23, with 30 informants diverse in age, gender, occupations and rural/urban backgrounds. Informants participated in in-depth interviews about their everyday lives and news habits, including topics such as the war in Ukraine, energy prices, the climate crisis and local issues. We contextualize our qualitative analysis in light of findings from the Norwegian data from the Reuters Digital News Report.

Our findings show that experiences of overload were widespread, also amongst regular news users. Informants described distress at unsettling events, tiredness of prolonged debates without resolutions, or criticisms of sensationalism or polarization, often mixed with struggles to prioritize and find news relevant to everyday life. We systematize such reactions through the categories "too much", "too dark", "too silly", "too biased" and "too distant", underlining how these interlink. Our analysis outlines cycles of feeling overwhelmed by news – but still needing to return to news again later, which we conceptualize as *news satiation* (the tipping point of feeling overwhelmed) and relatedly *news satiety* (the state immediately thereafter).

By launching the concept of news satiation, we decouple the widespread practice of temporary news abstention from prolonged habitual low levels of news use. This is a timely intervention in the field of research on news avoidance (Skovsgaard and Andersen, 2019), where studies of these phenomena are sometimes mixed together, although they have different implications for journalism and society (Toff et al., 2023). Our study seeks to facilitate a informed discussion of when and how different kinds of avoidance could be problematic for democracy.

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JOS21 News consumption

PP 0542 Data donations: A mixed-methods approach

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In a digital media landscape that is characterized by audience fragmentation and algorithmically curated feeds, it has become increasingly challenging to study how users engage with news on social media platforms. A new method of digital data collection that shows great promise in this area is data donation. Data donation refers to the tools and processes through which individuals make available for academic research the data that digital platforms (e.g. Google, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn) have collected about them (Araujo et al. 2020). This study uses an infrastructure that was designed to guide users willing to donate their data for academic research through the process of requesting their data from platforms and donating these to research.

Combining data donations with think-aloud protocols and in-depth interviews, this mixed-methods study has two key aims. First, methodologically, it explores how research participants experience and understand the data donation process. In addition to the data from the data donation itself, the key method in this first part is the think-aloud protocol. Participants will be asked to verbalize their thoughts and actions as they go through two stages of the data donation process: 1) requesting their data packages from the digital platforms; and 2) uploading and donating their data.

Second, substantively, this study explores how people engage with news and information on different online platforms, and what (relative) role these platforms play in their overall information repertoire. From their data donations, consisting – depending on the platform – e.g. of viewed posts, likes, and comments, it will be possible to tease out where and how news plays a role. However, since participants may have their own understanding of what news is, findings and excerpts from data donation will also be discussed with each participant in a final in-depth interview. During this interview, participants will also be asked about their overall news use practices, so as to be able to determine how their news use on digital platforms fits into their overall information repertoire.

The data collection will take place in the Netherlands between January and February 2024. 20 participants will be selected via snowball sampling. While studies using data donation have so far typically focused on one platform, this innovative pilot study includes seven platforms: Google, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok. The project is user-centered, in the sense that the data donation will focus on those platforms that each participant in question predominantly uses. For instance, if participant A uses Google, Twitter, and TikTok, they will be assisted to request and donate the data from these specific platforms. Overall, this study hopes to generate a more detailed, nuanced understanding of the role digital platforms play in people's news use.

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JOS21 News consumption

PP 0543 Constructing boundaries: Exploring perspectives on the role of public service media among journalists, audiences, and politicians in the Czech Republic

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Although public service media (PSM) have a strong position in most European countries and are perceived as the most trusted source of information (Eurobarometer, 2023), they currently face two major challenges. First, the fragmentation of the media landscape causes an outflow of audiences to the online environment where the role of PSM is not that strong (Donders, 2021). The second challenge is the increasing politicization, which is rooted in attacks by populist politicians who label them as mouthpieces of biased elites (Holtz-Bacha, 2021). These challenges have the potential to shape how the role of PSM and its boundaries are perceived by its three key stakeholders (the public, politicians, and journalists) and to challenge the social consensus on what role PSM should take on in society. This is where this study steps in, asking how the public (audiences), journalists and PSM managers, and politicians construct the boundary of the role of PSM and where their perspectives diverge and overlap.

Our research builds on two streams of literature: the studies that explore how journalists define the boundaries of their work (e.g. Carlson & Lewis, 2015; Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018; Hanusch & Hanitzsch, 2013; Örnebring, 2013) and the research focusing on audience expectations of the news media (e.g. Banjac, 2022; Banjac & Hanusch, 2020; Loosen, Reimer & Hölig, 2020; Riedl & Eberl, 2020; Tandoc, Duffy & Li, 2016; Vos, Eichholz & Karaliova, 2019).

Despite this rich literature, only a limited number of studies have examined how audiences (e.g. Campos-Rueda, 2023; Campos-Rueda & Goyanes, 2022; Just, Büchi & Latzer, 2017) and journalists (Urbániková, 2023) perceive the role of PSM which, in addition to producing quality news, are tasked with creating educational and entertainment content and bringing society together (Syvertsen, 2003). At the same time, to the best of our knowledge, no study has examined how politicians perceive the role of PSM. This is particularly relevant as politicians set the regulatory framework for the operation of PSM, including their oversight and funding (Lowe & Berg, 2013). The Czech Republic serves as a suitable case for this study because it combines low general trust in the news media with high trust in the PSM (Newman, 2023). Moreover, the Czech Republic currently finds itself in the midst of a discussion about the change in the financing of PSM, which is closely linked to debates on defining the mission and remit.

To bridge these gaps, our study utilizes empirical data from 10 focus groups with the public (N = 60), 23 interviews with journalists and PSM managers, and 11 interviews with politicians (MP's from opposition and government parties). Employing principles of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022), the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these three stakeholder groups construct the boundaries of PSM's role, identifying areas of convergence and divergence in their perspectives.

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JOS21 News consumption

PP 0544 Mimetic isomorphism at public service media: Knowledge transfer between a traditional and a youth-centric public service media organisation in Germany

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In today's rapidly evolving media landscape, public service media (PSM) encounter the challenge of adapting to digital advancements and changing media consumption patterns to fulfil their mission. The concept of isomorphism, especially mimetic isomorphism, derived from organisational sociology, posits that in the face of uncertainty, organisations tend to imitate perceived successful companies and trends. This imitation is driven by the desire to enhance success and establish legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, pp. 150–154; Lowrey & Woo, 2010).

We argue that today, the interplay between established media organisations and innovative newcomers becomes crucial for PSM to adapt to the needs of diverse audiences. Therefore, this research explores knowledge transfer between two German PSM organisations, ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen), a traditional broadcaster, and funk, a youthful and start-up-like online-only entity, founded in 2016, catering to individuals aged 14–29.

Despite the growing significance of this topic, research using the theoretical lens of mimetic isomorphism on innovation and change in PSM is rare. However, the approach has been used in PSM in the realm of digital project and product development, demonstrating that exchange is strongest among PSM, but digital-born media are perceived as most successful in attracting younger audiences (Sehl & Cornia, 2021, p. 1482). Our research builds upon this foundation, investigating isomorphism tendencies between traditional and youth-centric digital-born PSM, by asking the following research question: *How does the transfer of knowledge between German traditional (ZDF) and youth-centred PSM (funk) influence their innovative capacity and adaptability?* The study is based on 17 semi-structured qualitative interviews with key stakeholders in ZDF and funk in December 2023 and January 2024. The interviews focused on four main aspects: structural organisation, product management, format development, and audience metrics.

The study reveals a reciprocal influence between funk's innovative management approaches and ZDF's established structures. Despite differences in age demographics and organisational culture, ZDF adapts and integrates new structural paradigms introduced by funk, reflecting the principles of mimetic isomorphism. This adaptation is not merely a one-way street; funk, in turn, benefits from the experience and stability provided by ZDF's longstanding organisational frameworks.

Format development emerges as a key area where collaboration proves fruitful, with funk's nimbleness leading to faster development of innovative and trendsetting content. Surprisingly, some formats from funk eventually find their way into ZDF's programming after a few years, demonstrating a bidirectional flow of creativity influenced by mimetic isomorphism dynamics.

Audience research is crucial in both media houses. Funk's integration of audience metrics, particularly sentiment analysis, allows to indicate shifts in public sentiment, controversies, or resonance and aids in the proactive management of any communication (dis)orders that may arise. ZDF's comprehensive media research section focuses on understanding audience behaviours, reflecting a shared commitment to data-driven decision-making.

This study significantly contributes to understanding knowledge transfer in the media field, emphasizing collaboration and mimetic isomorphism tendencies between traditional and new PSM. As media landscapes worldwide grapple with generational shifts and technological advancements, the results provide implications for fostering collaboration and adaptability in an era of rapid change.

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PP 0545 Understanding the interaction of content, situatedness, and user practices in everyday experiences with news

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This study explores how people experience news in everyday life, contributing with a holistic perspective to understanding the interaction between news content, situatedness, and user practices. Following the audience turn in journalism, much attention has been paid to understanding the complexities of people's news use. The challenges of declining revenues have also forced news professionals to become more responsive to why people (do not) invest time, money, and attention in news and what these practices mean from an audience perspective. Consequently, journalism studies have increasingly focused on examining how journalistic content is received and made sense of (e.g., Bengtsson, 2023; Schrøder, 2015; Toff & Nielsen, 2022), what people's user practices may imply (e.g., Costera Meijer & Groot Kormelink, 2021), or how spatiotemporal aspects matter for news and media consumption (e.g., Broersma & Swart, 2022).

Yet, these valuable contributions often tend to focus on individual platforms or news formats, particular user practices and habits, or the situatedness surrounding people's news use. We know less about how the experiential aspects of content, situatedness, and user practices *resonate* and *interact* in the setting of everyday life. Rather than approaching these three dimensions individually, this study suggests a more holistic approach to understanding the complex dynamics shaping individuals' experiences by asking: *How does the interaction between content, situatedness, and user practices resonate with experiences of news in everyday life?*

Drawing on a three-step data collection with Norwegian news users, combining recurring interviews, media diaries, and video ethnography grounded in people's media experiences (N = 14X2), the study provides an audience-centered and experiential approach to understanding news use. Results identify six key experiences with news: 1) Reassurance, 2) control, 3) connection, 4) relaxation, 5) diversion, and 6) news as a negative constant creating stress, all in which content, situatedness, and user practices resonate differently.

The paper makes several contributions to the fields of journalism studies. Empirically, the study demonstrates the significance of linking multiple dimensions of news use to advance our conceptions of the multidimensionality of people's media experiences. Methodologically, the paper illustrates how a data collection combining different data points grounded in people's everyday lives can yield a deeper understanding of experiences with news. Conceptually, the paper bridges theories of content, situatedness, and user practices structured through a matrix of six key experiences with news.

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JOS22 Navigating stormy waters: A comparative analysis of public service media

PN 084 Trick-or-treat: how will European public service media navigate platformisation?

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In the past decade, Public Service Media (PSM) have been faced with numerous challenges as the rise of the platformised economy has fundamentally changed the structure of media markets and the nature of audience engagement. As commercial players are adjusting to the new platform-shaped logic, PSM are grappling with a slew of problems. These include mandate-related limitations to fully embracing the platformised media model and internal operational issues, such as the resistance of staff to change, and the difficulties of reforming such large organizations designed for and born in the analogue era.This paper will map and analyse the main challenges that public service media face in four key areas: their mandate and governance, funding models, audience strategies, content production and professional development, with a view to understanding how the values of PSM – universality, independence, excellence, diversity, accountability, and innovation – are being safeguarded during this transformation.The analysis seeks to add to the expanding body of research on the future of PSM in the post-platform era. Using a normative and empirical framework created by the authors, the article emphasizes the vulnerability of independence, diversity, and excellence to mounting challenges and attacks.Among the four aspects discussed in the article, it appears that funding alterations will present the greatest obstacles for PSM moving forward. This is partly because of tensions between the principles of PSM funding and the trends triggered by platformisation. But attacks from political parties and politicians seeking to destabilise PSM have also targeted the funding models of PSM particularly those anchored in contributions from the public (i.e., license fees), which tend to secure the highest level of independence from the government.

JOS22 Navigating stormy waters: A comparative analysis of public service media

PN 085 When trust and tradition are not enough: commercial and political pressures on Nordic PSM

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The Nordic countries have been labeled as "Media Welfare States" (Syvertsen et al. 2014), characterized, among other things, by the legacy of strong national mixed media systems in which public service broadcasters (PSBs) play a crucial role. PSB organizations have also been at the forefront of digitalization and, early on, have become, de facto, public service media (PSM) that offer a variety of content and services in different formats and platforms, including on social media.Still, in recent years, many Nordic PSMs have faced strong opposition from their national commercial counterparts and populist right-wing politicians. Commercial media, worried about their future in the era of platformisation (see Dragomir and Castro's contribution), argue that PSM has an undue advantage in the domestic news and entertainment market and that PSM offerings should be significantly reduced to "fill in the gap" by mostly providing genres that are not commercially viable and by offering content for audiences not addressed by commercial media (e.g., language minorities). The rise of populist politics in the Nordics, as in many other countries, coupled with austerity policies, has additionally heightened the claims in the political debates that PSM are over-funded – and possibly politically biased. The case of the Nordics is especially interesting in that trust in PSM is extraordinarily high compared to many other countries, and even if they do not feel PSM are significant in their media diet, Nordic audiences consider PSM as highly important to society as a whole (e.g., Horowitz et al. 2023; Nielsen and Newman 2023). In addition, Nordic policy-makers and media literacy experts see PSM as essential in combating communication disorders in today's multi-crisis environment (Karell and Horowitz 2022).Drawing from audience analyses (Horowitz et al. 2023), interviews of PSM professionals and stakeholders (Karell and Horowitz, 2022), and country-specific cases of policy-making (e.g., Ala-Fossi et al. 2024 forthcoming), this contribution discusses the paradoxical role of PSM in the Nordics with the focus on largest countries Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden: the arguments contra PSM, the actions against PSM – as well as existing and emerging opposite developments and actions to strengthen the role of PSM.

JOS22 Navigating stormy waters: A comparative analysis of public service media

PN 086 From "Cheap Worn-out Prostitutes" to a "Greek Scenario"

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A rhetoric of crisis now dominates the debate about Public Service Media (PSM) in Slovenia, which has arisen from a combination of societal, technological, and political processes over the last decade. PSM, both as a concept and as specific organisations, are said to be eroding, collapsing, vanishing, under pressure, in flux, in trouble, and under threat (Chivers & Allan 2022; Horowitz 2015; Lowe & Steemers 2012).Historically, Slovenian PSM were seen as

some of the more stable in Central and Eastern Europe, and particularly within the Western Balkans (Milosavljević & Poler 2018) where PSM are often under government control (Splichal 1993; Jakubowicz 2012). Indeed, PSM in the Western Balkans are "often understood as an instrument of the state" (Malović 2017). However, the last five years have proved that even in Slovenia, PSM can be extremely fragile. Using document analysis, this paper will identify the sources – and explain the nature – of political and economic attacks on Slovenian PSM between 2019 and 2024.It will argue that Slovenia has experienced a political shift similar to the one in the USA under Trump, in Hungary under Orbán, and in Serbia under Vučić. The previous Prime Minister, Janez Janša (2020–2022), and his SDP party (2020–2022) urged citizens to stop paying the obligatory licence fee, and gathered signatures for a referendum to end the licence fee altogether.Janša, also sought to intervene in the staffing of Slovenian PSM. He insulted female PSM journalists, calling them "cheap worn-out prostitutes". Personnel with direct political links to the government were also appointed to senior positions, the General Manager of RTV Slovenia was appointed (twice) illegally, and the TV manager was illegally removed, before being replaced by a pro-government appointee (for the context see Poler & Milosavljević, 2020).Although a new coalition government was formed in 2022, at the time of writing in December 2023, a solution to the political and economic challenges faced by Slovenian PSM had yet to be found. In particular, RTV Slovenija faces the hardest economic situation in the last decade, with some calling for a so-called "Greek scenario," involving the demolition of RTV Slovenia as it used to be.

JOS22 Navigating stormy waters: A comparative analysis of public service media

PN 087 Why populist-nationalist governments try to capture international public media

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We know that capturing national Public Service Media (PSM) can help governments with authoritarian leanings tilt the electoral playing field in their favour – and may even serve as a stepping stone to capturing the entire national media system (Dragomir and Horowitz 2021). But why do some populist-nationalist governments put so much effort into capturing international PSM? Is this purely driven by diplomatic considerations, or does it have implications for domestic politics as well? This paper takes the vision outlined in Project 2025 as its starting point: this is a detailed plan to expand executive authority over US federal agencies and employees, following a conservative victory in the next US elections. We argue that the Project 2025 report (Dans and Groves 2023) shows that some Trump allies view extending government control over US-funded international media networks as crucial in a broader partisan project to Make America Great Again. We then explain how this vision emerged, drawing from a new study about the politicisation of the largest US-funded international network, the Voice of America, that took place under Trump appointees between June 2020 and January 2021 (Wright et al. in print). This book is the first study of the government capture of a PSM network "from the inside": using rare interviews with journalists and news managers, as well as 15,000 pages of documents, including private correspondence and internal documents obtained from Freedom of Information archives. However, the paper resists US-centrism by comparing this case to previous instances of the government capture of international PSM in Turkey (e.g., Elswah and Howard 2022) and Japan (e.g., Laurence 2023). In all three countries, mediated discourse about the government control of international public service media —circulated via domestic news and social media—helped further a populist-nationalist agenda within broader "culture wars."This mediated discourse often involved government appointees' nostalgic allusions to a lost period of power, glory, and international influence, robbed from a "pure" people by internal and external enemies. A key issue in such forms of politicisation was the minimisation—or outright denial—of state responsibility for atrocities carried out against women, minority groups, and other countries. Journalists who challenged this discourse risked having their statutory obligations used against them, in the form of disciplinary investigations into "bias."We therefore conclude that researchers interested in government attacks on public media should pay more attention to international public media. But in so doing, they need to disregard the traditional scholarly boundary between Politics and International Relations. Instead, they should examine why and how the government capture of international public service media harms democratic practice, as well as public diplomacy.

JOS23 AI and audiences

PP 0642 How audiences evaluate the effects of generative AI on news quality

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Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most transformative technologies in the news industry. The advent of advanced large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT or Bard has sparked widespread discussions on utilizing generative AI for news content production.

State of research

The integration of AI in generating journalistic content presents opportunities and risks, often discussed regarding the actual content. The use of AI is believed to enhance the quality of journalistic content, for instance, by reducing mistakes and personalizing content to interests and cognitive abilities of readers (Waddell, 2019; Wu, 2020). Also, concerns arise regarding algorithmic bias or reduced readability. However, some research highlights the importance of audience evaluations. Indeed, studies show deficits in the perceived quality and credibility of AI-generated content among audiences (Clerwall, 2014; Graefe et al., 2018; Kieslich et al., 2021; Tandoc et al., 2020; Wölker & Powell, 2021). This leads to the important question of whether or not audiences accept AI in news production, as (non-)acceptance will determine, among other factors, whether such content is used or paid for.

A survey conducted in Germany revealed that a small percentage of media users believe AI will enhance news quality (Kieslich et al., 2021). Experimental studies indicate that altering the authorship of the same news article between AI and a human journalist influences readers' quality evaluations, with participants who received the AI-labeled version rating the articles less favorable than participants who read the human-labeled version (Haim & Graefe, 2017; Jang et al., 2022; Jung et al., 2017; Toff & Simon, 2023). These quality evaluations prevail even though studies show that readers are no longer able to differentiate AI-generated from human-written news articles.

Gap in research and method

Despite growing evidence that audiences are skeptical about the use of AI in news content production, we still know little about the underlying factors driving these assessments. Our preregistered study investigates if and how attitudes towards AI, exposure to the technology and sociodemographic factors like gender, age, and education are correlated with participants' evaluation of the impact of AI on news quality, which was measured with nine items related to different dimensions of journalistic quality (e.g., diversity, relevance, factuality). The investigation is based on a representative online survey (n = 1254, aged 16 to 74) conducted in July 2023 in Switzerland.

Results

A linear regression model shows that positive attitudes toward AI in general are correlated with a more favorable evaluation of the effects of AI on news quality. A high self-reported exposure to AI-generated news content tends to correlate with a less positive evaluation of the impact of AI on news quality. This evaluation is more positive, the more an individual supports implementing AI in news production. High willingness to consume and pay for AI journalism are both positively correlated with a positive evaluation of the effect of AI on news quality. Our findings also indicate that younger and less educated individuals tend to view AI's influence on news quality more positively.

JOS23 AI and audiences

PP 0643 Audiences and algorithmic diversity: On the relationship between news exposure diversity and preferences for news recommender systems

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Which news we receive online is shaped by news recommender systems (NRS) (Knudsen, 2023). Such algorithms filter, suggest, and prioritize certain content according to specific rules (Mitova et al., 2023). So far, news outlets mainly use collaborative, personalized-similar or popular NRS: Collaborative filtering utilizes data from similar users, personalized-similar recommends content that users have previously preferred and popular recommendations suggest the most widely used content Karimi et al., 2018; Wieland et al., 2021). The potential of NRS does, however, not only lie in the adaption to information needs of users (personalization), but also in reducing dangers of ideological homogenization and ensuring "exposure diversity" (Elahi et al., 2022; Helberger, 2011; Mattis et al., 2022): *Diversity-oriented* NRS can "nudge" recipients to consume overlooked and disregarded topics or opposing opinions (Jesse & Jannach, 2021). This can increase tolerance towards other opinions and social groups and, thus, positively influence democratic reasoning (van der Wurff, 2011). Therefore, acceptance towards diversity-oriented NRS is desirable especially among those with ideologically one-sided consumption patterns. Otherwise, there is the danger of a Matthew effect, according to which especially those with already high news exposure diversity appreciate diverse NRS. In this case, diversity-oriented NRS could even widen the gap between users of diverse versus one-sided information. Previous studies in this context show that user attitudes towards NRS depend on news information overload, technology optimism (Joris et al., 2021) and trust in algorithmic systems (Araujo et al., 2020; Shin, 2020; Wieland et al., 2021). However, the role of news exposure diversity has not yet been investigated. We assume that the higher the exposure diversity of respondents, the higher their preference for diverse news recommender systems; and the lower their exposure diversity, the higher their preference for other types of NRS. To address this research gap, we conducted an online survey with quotas based on online users in Germany aged 18 and above (n = 997; age: M = 46.43; SD = 14.45; 50% female; 37% with high school diploma). As dependent variables, we incorporated *the support for* a) *NRS in general*, b) *diversity-oriented*, b) *personalized-similar*, c)

collaborative, and for d) *popular NRS*. As independent variables, we measured news information overload, technology optimism, and media trust based on established research (e.g., Joris et al., 2021). For assessing news exposure diversity, we modified approaches from Fletcher & Nielsen (2018) and Zerback & Kobilke (2022), cumulating the absolute differences in ideological positions (from left to right) between respondents and the target audience of news outlets they frequently consume (*variety*), weighting it according to whether respondents used exclusively more liberal or conservative outlets or both (*balance*). Regression analyses show a significant relationship between exposure diversity and preferences for NRS across all models, even after accounting for relevant variables from previous research. It explains preferences for diverse NRS, supporting the presence of a dilemmatic Matthew effect. However, it also explains preferences for other algorithmic solutions, suggesting that supporters of non-diverse NRS receive above-average news diversity, mitigating concerns about widening diversity gaps through such algorithms.

JOS23 AI and audiences

PP 0644 Patterns of (Dis-)Trust in human and AI-generated journalism. Changes and continuities of the perception of bias among young Austrians users

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Individualization and emotionalization of information are integral components of an increasing fragmentation of the public sphere. The discourse surrounding the digital transformation in journalism (Neuberger 2022) and the handling of convergent media worlds (Krotz & Hepp 2010) has been further intensified by the possibility of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for news production and distribution. Greater levels of trust are closely linked to ritualization of usage and traditional media (Schranz, Schneider & Eisenegger 2018). But increasing media coverage is accompanied by a significant erosion of the collective foundation of trust and fundamental issues of transparency, traceability and accountability need to be (re)negotiated (Porlezza & Eberwein 2022). Furthermore, the audience expectation of journalism is influenced by the political attitudes of media users (Riedl & Eberl 2021) but also dependent on new developments – like generative AI and its disruptive impact on journalism.

Considering these developments, we pose the following research questions:

RQ1: What patterns of (dis-)trustworthiness are associated with AI in journalism?

RQ2: What changes and continuities in perception of bias in reporting are associated with generative AI and (automated) journalism?

In our study we conducted 24 qualitative interviews with participants who differ in gender and educational level in the age group of 18 to 30 years in Austria. They can be classified as young average media users with no connection to journalism or communication as their study area or part of their workplace. The interviews took place from October 2023 to January 2024 and are analyzed with MAXQDA (Kuckartz 2018).

Here are some preliminary findings: Media coverage provided by generative AI is seen as more reliable and trustworthy. Additionally, participants suspect more bias in reporting produced by humans rather than in the material generated by AI. Moreover, the participants seem to accept the use of certain filters and AI editing in visual communication without affecting trust. Especially for automated journalism e.g. in sports coverage, advantages are suspected and the task for journalists is merely to provide "*quality control*" [IP 19].

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JOS23 AI and audiences

PP 0645 Tracing the trajectories of public discourses on AI: A multilingual, longitudinal study of news coverage in China, Germany, and the US

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Background

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an integral part of modern societies, with the potential to transform sectors like economics, education, and healthcare. Against this backdrop, discussions about its potential risks and benefits are growing, with the news media playing a crucial role in shaping these debates. While the trajectories of discourses on AI vary across different cultural, political, and social contexts, previous research has predominantly focused on individual countries, primarily in the Global (English-speaking) North (Brause et al., 2023). This study takes *a cross-national comparative approach* to map media constructions of AI through news coverage in China, Germany, and the United States (U.S.)—three countries that are key to the future global development of AI—over a ten-year period (2012–2021).

Conceptual framework

This study builds on the concept of *sociotechnical imaginaries*, which refers to "collectively imagined forms of social life and social order reflected in the design and fulfillment of nation-specific scientific and/or technological projects" (Jasanoff & Kim, 2009: 120). Using sociotechnical imaginaries as a theoretical lens allows us to comparatively assess the specificities of national and transnational discursive constructions of AI in a longitudinal research design. Guided by this conceptual framework, we propose the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: How does the discursive construction of AI in the news media differ between China, Germany, and the U.S.? How does this change over time?

RQ2: To what extent do these three countries project different or similar imaginaries of AI through news reporting? Who contributes to the construction of these imaginaries?

Research design

This study draws on a dataset of over 9,000 articles published in 15 leading national newspapers in China, Germany, and the U.S. To identify *cross-lingual topic patterns*, we performed multilingual topic modeling using BERTopic (Grootendorst, 2022). Time series and sentiment analysis are used to compare the *salience* and *tensity* of public discourses across the three regions over time (**RQ1**). A qualitative deductive-inductive thematic analysis (Feredey & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) of publicly shared imaginaries of AI complements these analyses (**RQ2**).

Preliminary findings

Our findings reveal significant differences in the prevalence of AI-related topics in China, Germany, and the U.S., with China receiving the most coverage, followed by Germany and the U.S. In China, health, policy, and technology are at the forefront, while German and U.S. media emphasize societal impacts and risks. Over time and across regions, societal impacts receive less attention, while regulatory issues gain prominence. Sentiment analysis reveals generally positive coverage of AI in the U.S., contrasting with more negative sentiment in German media, particularly regarding societal impacts and risks. Chinese media maintain a comparatively neutral stance on the identified topic groups.

The qualitative analysis demonstrates that even within topics, crucial differences in AI-related imaginaries can be found across countries. For example, in the healthcare context, AI is imagined to improve healthcare provision in all three countries. While U.S. coverage emphasized the health-related visions of private sector tech companies, Chinese newspapers focused more on speakers from the public sector, and German newspapers included the imaginaries of patients and NGOs.

JOS23 AI and audiences

PP 0646 What is a deepfake? Comparing a conceptual typology and journalists' perceptions of deepfakes and their implications for journalistic practice

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Deepfakes are gaining increasing attention in research and practice. However, to date, the definition of "deepfake" still lacks clarity. The term goes back to the account name of a Reddit user's forum for spreading pornographic content created using deep-learning technology (Somers, 2020). Ever since, public discourse focuses on the use of

synthetic media for misleading and manipulative purposes – including media manipulations such as cheap or shallow fakes (McCammon, 2021; Westerlund, 2019). Often, Deepfakes are seen as a technological disruption, posing challenges for media organizations and journalistic practice: If journalists fall for deepfakes and become ensnared in disinformation campaigns, this may damage their own credibility and negatively impact the media-audience relationship and journalism as a democratic institution (Citron & Chesney, 2018). In academic discourse and in journalism practice, there is a clear emphasis on the risks associated with deepfakes in journalism, rather than exploring their potential benefits (Authors, 2021). However, it is unclear if "deepfakes" are synonymous with synthetic media and generative AI, and whether concerns relate specifically to deepfakes or to synthetic media, in general.

Hence, the ambiguous nature of the term "deepfake" might affect the debate in journalism research and practice. This study's goal is twofold: First, it aims at examining how deepfakes and related forms of media are defined in the literature (RQ1). Secondly, it investigates what representatives of media organizations understand as deepfakes and how they evaluate the technology's implications for journalistic work (RQ2). Interviews among 30 journalists and innovation experts in Germany and Switzerland were carried out (conducted between 09/2022–05/2023). The analysis and interpretation of the interviews followed the process of the qualitative content analysis according to Mayring (2015).

A typology of deepfakes and AI-generated media is derived from a literature analysis. This typology is subsequently contrasted with the views expressed by journalists and experts. Based on our findings, we propose a differentiated typology of deepfakes that considers aspects such as their production, their quality, their authenticity, the degree of their manipulation, the type of copy, their purpose, a possible intention to deceive, the media genre, the motif depicted and a possible labeling. However, results also show that in practice, the terms deepfakes and synthetic media are often used synonymously as there is no consensus as to their definition. While some interviewees describe deepfakes in very general terms as audiovisual AI-based content which also offers potential for journalism (e.g., content generation and personalization, new formats and products), others see deepfakes as a form of deception and disinformation which has no place in journalism. The conceptual typology therefore allows for a more objective theoretical foundation for research and practice. It enables an examination of both potentials and risks of deepfake technology for journalism and journalistic practice, and thus to develop strategic approaches for handling beneficial as well as harmful implications of the technology.

JOS24 Business models

PP 0647 Effects of newspaper publishers' paywall strategies on whether online visitors start and finish the subscription journey

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Newspaper brands are increasingly implementing paywalls to generate much-needed revenue from readers. Given the significance of news for democracy, understanding the factors that influence online news subscription decisions is relevant to both news publishers and society. Prior studies have mostly focused on user-level and news product-level factors. Our study investigates the influence of paywall strategies.

When non-subscribing visitors view a paywalled article, publishers may show various combinations of "teaser" elements in addition to the headline, such as a picture, standfirst, introductory paragraph, and a blurred preview the article's full length. We investigate the influence of these "teaser strategies" on whether visitors start the subscription journey by clicking the "subscribe now" button.

If visitors click that button, they are often taken to another page showing specific subscription offers, pricing, trials, discounts, and promotions. We also investigate the influence of these factors on whether visitors finish the subscription journey and actually subscribe.

We coded the paywall strategies of 21 German and Austrian news websites in May and August 2022. This data provided our independent variables. We used website visitors' actual behaviour as the dependent variables, i.e. whether they clicked on the "subscribe now" button when they hit a paywalled article and whether they paid for a subscription. Tracking data came from the DRIVE project, which records visitor behaviour at those 21 news websites.

For the first decision point, 3,518,822 individual-level cases were involved, and for the second decision point, 28,506. We used aggregated data at the website level, treating each website's data within each data collection period as one website-level case. Analysis was done using logistic regression with weights.

The results indicate that showing a picture, standfirst, or introductory paragraph reduced the odds of visitors clicking the "subscribe now" button. A possible reason is that these teaser elements provide additional information (on top of the headline, which was always present). Visitors may believe that they have gathered enough information about

the article from these teaser elements and decide not to subscribe to read further. Showing a blurred preview of the article's full length also reduced the odds of clicking the "subscribe now" button. A reason may be because on pages without a blurred preview visitors can only choose to leave the page or to click the button, whereas with a blurred preview visitors have one more possibility—scrolling up and down to see the blurred preview of the full length of the article.

Regarding finishing the subscription journey, results show that offering an ePaper increased the odds of people paying for subscription as did offering discounts or smart devices. Previous studies revealed higher willingness to pay for printed rather than online newspapers. This may explain why ePapers, which are a digital replica of the print newspaper, have a positive effect. A higher price reduced the odds of people subscribing as did charging for trials. This may be explained by people's "free" mentality. The length of the trial and the offering of small gifts had no significant influence on visitors' subscription decisions.

JOS24 Business models

PP 0648 How native are native ads? A multi-country study on the similarity of native ads to editorial content based on markers of traditional journalism

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Due to declining print ad revenues caused by the move of audiences to online sources, news organizations are increasingly turning to native advertising to improve profitability. Native ads are, in the context of news media, full-length articles that mimic editorial content. Scholars have raised concerns about the disappearing divide between journalism and advertising due to news organizations' production of commercial content in-house. Levi (2015) calls journalism's involvement with native advertising a possible "Faustian bargain" (p. 651) because while news organizations achieve financial security, they may be trading away their hard-won credibility.

While the similarity of native ads to editorial content is touted to be the key factor that makes it a highly effective, and deceptive, form of advertising, similarity has just been casually assumed, and no study has yet directly compared a news organization's native ads to its editorial content. The majority of native advertising research focus on form, e.g., formatting, layout, and disclosure presence (Amazeen & Wojdynski, 2020; Jiang et al., 2017). So far, Li's (2019) study on the role performance of native ads in U.S. news sites is the only one that has focused on content, though no comparison between native ads with actual editorial content was made. Thus, this study investigated similarity by directly comparing native ads and editorial content in terms of markers that delineate traditional journalism's boundaries, like routines (topic, story structure), norms (objectivity, transparency), and roles (civic, service, infotainment) (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Mellado, 2015; Tandoc & Oh, 2017).

The results of the preliminary content analysis of 24 (out of 240) native ads and news articles from six news organizations (Brunei's "The Scoop," Hong Kong's "South China Morning Post," India's "The Hindustan Times," Pakistan's "Dawn," The Philippines' "Rappler," and Singapore's "Channel News Asia":

Routines. 50% of news articles were about technology. All but one native ad was about technology. 62.5% of news articles had an inverted pyramid structure. Native ads were split evenly between having a narrative and an inverted pyramid structure.

Norms. All news articles are objective (absence of author's opinion). Only one native ad was not objective. 100% of news articles and native ads were transparent, containing links to sources or explanations.

Roles. 100% of the native ads performed the service role, specifically the consumer advice dimension. 75% of news articles performed the infotainment role, specifically the sensationalism dimension.

Native ads exhibited the most similarity to editorial content under the norms of objectivity and transparency. They were the most dissimilar under journalistic roles and the journalistic routine of topic.

CNA and SCMP both had the highest similarity between their native ads and editorial content. Both news organizations have been described as highly influenced by the government, and this may affect the roles or norms adhered to by their journalistic content. CNA is state-owned (Wu, 2018), while SCMP has recently been bought by Alibaba, a company that has strong ties to the Chinese Communist Party, with the aims of "directly reshap[ing] global news coverage of China" (Buckley & Perlez, 2015, p. 1).

JOS24 Business models

PP 0649 "Why news media collect user data?" Folk theories of news users' data utilisation in journalism

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Although social media giants have gained notoriety over collecting and exploiting user data, in the meantime, much less concern is voiced against news organisations data collection. With the help of audience metrics, the

newsrooms collect information on news users' demographics and news consumption to plan and update their content production and learn more about the audience's interests. Even though these data practices are integrated into journalistic work, much less is known about how news users make sense or understand the role of data analytics in journalism. To tackle this issue, I use the framework of folk theories, which is an approach to studying how people draw understandings of everyday life (Ytre-Arne and Moe, 2020), for instance, make sense of journalism's functions (Nielsen, 2016) or in this case of data utilisation in journalism.

The presentation's empirical analysis is predominantly based on qualitative data collected through group interviews and one-week-long instant messaging group chat interviews with 21 readers of the Finnish tabloid Iltalehti discussing the role of user data in news media. This dataset is combined with an open-ended survey addressing 385 readers' answers to the question 'How has news media changed in the past five years?'.

The findings suggest that the participants have noted many user-data-related changes in the news media in the past years. By analysing participants' sense-making of these changes, three folk theories were detected. 1) Data is mainly collected for commercial purposes. They reasoned that user data is mainly collected for advertisement pricing purposes, and their data works as currency for receiving free content for exchange. They saw that data is either capital or commodity (e.g. Sadowski, 2019) and that commercial reasons motivate data utilisation in the news media. 2) News media utilise data similarly to other datafied platforms online, for instance, by collecting detailed information and utilising data to create personalised front pages like social media or streaming services. 3) Commercial motivation of data utilisation influences journalistic outputs. They saw that commercial reasons motivate news media to develop data-related technologies, such as frontpage personalisation or headline testing algorithms, and to publish 'supplementary stories', such as stories without clear news value or information. These would make news users spend more time on the site and therefore be more profitable for the news media.

As many of the participants were unfamiliar with the news media's data practices, they constructed folk theories by drawing from past experiences with other datafied systems, such as with social media or streaming services. They found it difficult to find any 'societal' or 'journalistic' reasoning in user data utilisation, even though they understood that journalism is not merely a business but has the role of a watchdog and a task to inform citizens.

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JOS24 Business models

PP 0650 Collaborative innovation grants in journalism: An effective path towards digital transformation or an occasion for opportunistic funding tactics? The case of Flanders

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In recent years, significant developments in news consumption, news production, news distribution and business models have further accelerated the digital transformation of the journalism sector. While news organizations are becoming increasingly aware of the imperative to formulate adaptation strategies for navigating a rapidly changing environment, policymakers are concurrently recognizing the journalistic domain as a critical battleground for preserving the democratic health of European democracies. At a policy level, in Europe, next to the simplistic inclination towards leveraging on the adoption of emerging technologies as drivers of innovation (Creech&Nadler, 2018), public initiatives have also embraced the possibility of supporting, through innovation grants, interdisciplinary collaborative projects, to help the sector advance.

Prior research has revealed how collaborations can possibly support news organizations in various contexts, such as cross-border investigations, local journalism projects seeking to 'achieve more with less', and politically pressured media companies. When it comes to collaborative innovation, however, a critical mismatch between how news organizations articulate discursively their involvement in such collaborations and the tangible strategies they employ has been highlighted (Slot, 2021). The concept of collaborative innovation is often used by journalistic organizations as a discursive practice to position themselves in the field and draw lines, without necessarily addressing the competitive dimension inherent in such a challenging endeavor.

Given the under-explored tension surrounding the utilization of collaborative innovation grants, I entertain the possibility that news organizations may tactically use such grants as opportunities to secure additional funding and gain competitive advantages towards their competitors. This stands in contrast to committing to a trajectory of collaboration and sector integration, as typically expected by policymakers. The Flemish 'Relanceplan' launched in 2023 with a budget of 12 million euros, offers an ideal setup for examining this scenario. This fund supports eighteen

collaborative projects involving major Flemish news organizations over a two-year period, which is a unique opportunity to conduct empirical research on ongoing collaborative projects. Following a round of twenty semi-structured interviews, this paper aims to investigate, through a thematic analysis, how news executives navigate the establishment and implementation of collaborative partnerships while preserving the specific interests of their respective companies.

Preliminary results from the ongoing data collection phase show that policymakers may need to consider a series of *caveats* when contemplating the provision of public funding for collaborative innovation projects. In some collaborations there is a high degree of inter-disciplinary integration, knowledge exchange, as well as alignment in terms of results' exploitation. In most case, however, competitive obstacles are strong, and the partners are reluctant to share respective knowledge assets and contribute to common progress. This study will contribute to understanding how collaborative innovation grants could serve as valuable opportunities for news organizations while also establishing their justification as an effective use of public funds.

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JOS24 Business models

PP 0651 Platforming the audience-journalist relationship. Micro-funding as economic engagement with the news

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This study investigates how new forms of audience patronage establish and reconfigure the relationship between journalists and news audiences while commodifying the interaction. Of particular interest is the range of incentives for journalists to join platforms like Patreon and the type of exclusivity they offer to their "fans", a term used to define the relationship on the platform. While research on news media's business models is thorough (Croteau and Hoynes, 2005; Levy and Nielsen, 2010), the interactional dynamics between journalists and news audiences that ignite and result from micro-funding schemes remain overlooked, particularly with regard to patronage (Jian and Usher, 2014). We argue that beyond requesting direct financial support from individuals, these patronage arrangements have the potential to create a sense that transactional and relational dynamics shape news content. Also, close encounters that promise monthly micro-donations in exchange for exclusivity raise questions about audience influence and the price of journalistic independence, desirability, and worth of a news experience, as well as the monetization of engagement.

Theoretically, we engage with three strands of scholarship. First, we look into the multi-business model of news media. As a response to the decline of traditional revenue, news organizations have opted for alternative multi-business models for funding their operations. Among the most innovative and relevant alternatives are nonprofit organizations and community-funded platforms (Carvajal, García-Avilés, and González, 2012). Second, we adopt the notion of 'relational labor' as the "ongoing communication with audiences over time to build social relationships that foster paid work" (Baym, 2015: 16) to analyze a subset of audience engagement with the news, namely micro-funding. In the case of journalism, this has conceptual and practical implications on journalistic independence and audience experience with the news. And third, we thus problematize close instances of monetary support in exchange for access through the lens of the 'news gap' (Boczkowski and Mitchelstein, 2013) and journalistic independence (Karppinen and Moe, 2016).

Using purposive sampling, we conducted semi-structured interviews with twelve journalists using the platform Patreon. We have also made a content analysis of their profiles and more concretely the content they distribute on the platforms, and the perks they give to their audience in exchange for continued financial support.

The preliminary results show that while most journalists claim they would not compromise their journalistic integrity to keep the audience content, by giving audiences access to exclusive content, community, and insight into the journalistic, creative process, journalists might feel the pressure to accommodate the audiences' requests. Platforms like Patreon create a space in which individual users provide monetary support to content creators. For small-scale journalistic ventures, these alternative audience-supported funding schemes may be the only way to keep their operations afloat. This implies that, while journalists perceive a greater connection with the audience through transactional and relational dynamics, journalistic autonomy quivers. Such findings have implications for understanding audience engagement within particular funding settings and how particular business models can affect journalistic independence.

JOS25 Alternative media I

PP 0731 Can constructive news counter news avoidance? An experimental test of audience behavior as a response to (non-)constructive news frames

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Scope and Theoretical Motivation

The recent increase in news avoidance, often linked to the dominance of negative news in mainstream media, has become a significant phenomenon (Newman et al., 2023). Constructive journalism, characterized by its solutions-oriented approach, is suggested to mitigate this trend (Overgaard, 2023; Skovsgaard & Andersen, 2020).

In this study, we develop and test the argument that exposure to constructive news can override news avoidance behavior. We conceptualize news avoidance from a motivational perspective (e.g., Villi, et al. 2022), in which audiences can be temporarily motivated to either seek out or avoid certain news items – based on their immediate state of mind – when browsing news online. We consider how the framing of news – constructive or non-constructive – affects the likelihood of audiences avoiding news based on their immediate state of mind.

Methods

We used a 2 x 2 between-subject survey experimental design with a probability-based sample of 2270 Norwegian adults. Participants were first randomly induced into a "news seeking" or "news avoiding" state of mind using the Autobiographical Emotional Memory Task (Mills & D'Mello, 2014), then randomized into two groups to browse a manipulated news site presenting 17 authentic articles. The treatments differed in whether respondents saw constructive or non-constructive framings of three articles on topics that were high on the agenda in Norway at the time. The constructive articles emphasized solutions, while non-constructive ones highlighted problems.

Participants navigated the site freely, and we unobtrusively tracked participants' interactions. To ensure high ecological validity, professional journalists manipulated authentic articles, and the site's design mirrored a popular Norwegian news site.

Analysis Plan

While the data is collected, we have yet to conduct the analysis. The study will be preregistered before we conduct any analyses and the results of the preregistered analysis will be presented at the conference, in line with the preregistration.

Because we have data for clicking behavior and reading time for each of the 17 articles separately, we will be able to rearrange the data, so that we have multiple observations per respondent. We will use multilevel GLM (logistic, Bernoulli) models, as we will have several observations of article clicks nested within each respondent. The key dependent variable will be article click, but we will also conduct supplementary analyses on time spent per article.

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JOS25 Alternative media I

PP 0732 At the crossroads: The professional identity of right-wing news journalists

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Recent years have seen a surge in attention toward right-wing media due to its contentious role in public debates and unconventional journalism methods (Cushion, 2023). This blending of political viewpoints with journalistic

practices challenges traditional ideas about journalism. Scholars and media practitioners have been trying to understand this phenomenon by examining the relationship between right-wing news outlets and journalism from a normative standpoint (Klawier et al., 2022). However, little research has been conducted on how the right-wing media considers themselves – and how they relate their own identity and work to journalism.

Interviews with prominent persona within Swedish right-wing media explores reasons behind establishment of the right-wing media site (Holt, 2016). Building on these interviews, Holt (2020) has later expanded on this research to answer why people choose to express their views publicly via right-wing media sites and how it changes the media ecology. We intend to continue this exploration. Based on semi-structured interviews, this study aims to examine the dynamics of right-wing news media from the perspective of the newsroom itself. We do this by addressing the research question: *How do right-wing news journalists understand their professional identity and their relation to journalism?*

Studies on right-wing news media bear significant societal value as well as academic. As right-wing news media gain a stronghold in societies with increasingly polarized discourses, their voices contribute towards their audience's knowledge and perception of information about events. By understanding right-wing news media's self-perception, we further our understanding of how the media aims to contribute towards the shaping of public discourses.

The study is theoretically conceptualized by professional discourse and identity. While the professional autonomy and standards of some right-wing news media may be disputed, this approach is an attempt to explore the facets of journalism as it takes new paths beyond the regular field and create further understanding of its similarities and deviations in relation to mainstream journalism.

The proposed study is conducted through semi-structured interviews with journalists and editors-in-chief from Scandinavian right-wing news sites self-identifying as journalistic – whether implicit or explicit. Interviews are conducted spring/summer of 2024. Interviewees will be asked about their perception of what journalism entails, self-perception of their own work, and how the two factors are intertwined.

The study is part of PhD project *Placing Right-Wing News Media within Journalism*, launched in January 2023 at the University of Gothenburg. Its immediate objective is to explore the identity formation within right-wing news media in relation to journalistic practice. Furthermore, results from the study provide useful context for the PhD project's follow-up ethnographic studies on authority-building within right-wing newsrooms.

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JOS25 Alternative media I

PP 0733 "One cannot remain silent". Journalistic reactions to the social media-based rule-breaking communicative strategies of the Italian radical right

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A central development in the recent history of Western democracies is the rise of radical right parties (RRP: Mudde 2007). RRP's political repertoires combine ethnocentric nationalism with a conservative stance over gender issues (Wodak and Khosravinik 2013). These illiberal motives, often conveyed in "rule-breaking" ways (Bracciale and Martella 2017), constitute a focal site of the dialectic between RRP and journalism, understood as an enterprise for the discursive representation and delimitation of political reality (Hallin 1989).

To explore the tensions that arise around this confrontation, I analyze an important event that took place at the outset of the 2022 Italian election campaign. In August 2022, Giorgia Meloni, president of the far-right party Fratelli d'Italia, shared on Twitter the video of a Ukrainian woman being raped by a Guinean asylum seeker in the streets of Piacenza (Italy) to convey a securitarian and anti-immigrant message. This incident illustrates how the ideological strongholds of RRP jointly materialize in their political discourse and action. It also demonstrates how the well-documented elective affinity between RRP and social media can alter the dynamics of political and electoral communication (Blassnig et al. 2019; Bracciale, Andretta, and Martella 2021; Waisbord, Tucker, and Lichtenheld 2018), with consequences that extend onto the broader mediated public sphere and question the professional practices and socio-political role of legacy journalism.

Indeed, the episode was widely covered by the Italian press. Journalists compactly engaged in exposing the illiberal nature of Meloni's action, while reaffirming the boundary of the legitimate election debate – which, it was argued,

she had crossed. However, media narratives often ended up mainstreaming rather than debunking Meloni's argument. Anti-immigrant and gender-conservative biases shone through several instances of journalistic coverage of the controversy. Many articles foregrounded information concerning the immigrant background of the perpetrator; they further exposed the victim through the re-circulation and re-evocation of the video; they finally were more likely to personally attack Meloni rather than to reflect on causes and implications of women's and migrants' vulnerability, which would have contributed to situating Meloni's claim more objectively.

In this paper, I combine a qualitative analysis of controversy-related Twitter and news content and 20 interviews with Italian political journalists to document and contextualize these outcome-level trends while identifying relevant process-level mechanisms. Specifically, I discuss which factors obstructed journalistic compliance with the profession's deontological stance, both overarching (journalists as custodians of liberal democratic debate: Alexander 2015; Waisbord 2018) and issue-specific (the Venice Manifesto on reporting about gender violence: 2017). First, the fact that Meloni's campaign act had been staged on social media challenged journalists' gatekeeping position and editorial control over the discursive representation of the controversy (Waisbord, Tucker, and Lichtenheld 2018). Second, audience-oriented logics incentivized journalists to capitalize on the controversial and triggering nature of the issue (Ekström, Patrona, and Thornborrow 2022; Waisbord 2018). Throughout my analysis, I detail how these elements risk bringing legacy journalism to function not as a boundary-maintaining mechanism, but as a potential sounding board, in the face of the illiberal tendencies expressed by RRP political discourse.

JOS25 Alternative media I

PP 0734 Alternative epistemic authorities – A mixed methods approach to referencing practices of users in alternative online publics

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The epistemic process of gathering and verifying information is central to journalism, and sources are an integral part of this process (Zamith & Westlund, 2022). With the changes that the internet and especially social media platforms brought to the media landscape, alternative epistemic processes and authorities have also been popularized (Neuberger et al., 2023). Journalism's gatekeeping function for audiences' epistemic processes has since been circumvented or expanded by blogs, social media and alternative news media. Especially in alternative publics that see themselves in opposition to mainstream opinions, we can expect alternative epistemic processes that draw on alternative authorities and come to alternative conclusions.

While there are studies on referencing practices in alternative media or on how alternative and mainstream media are referenced by alternative publics, referencing practices among social media users are under-researched. We want to contribute to the understanding of referencing practices of users in alternative online publics by analyzing sources that are referenced on social media and ask the research questions who and what are epistemic sources in alternative online publics?

We draw on a large corpus of Telegram messages from the German Querdenken community. This originally anti-lockdown movement has pivoted to general anti-government and pro-Russia stances. The movement integrates a broad ideological spectrum ranging from neo-nazis over esoteric and religious groups, hippies and far-left USSR nostalgics which makes it especially interesting for analyzing a wide variety of potential sources.

We combine named entity recognition to extract mentions of persons or organizations and a deep-learning classification algorithm trained on an annotated subset of the data to detect references in Telegram messages. After identifying the referenced epistemic authorities, we qualitatively evaluate referencing practices. Preliminary results show that referencing happens only in a fraction of messages (about 19%). As can be expected from such a diverse movement, we find a multitude of referenced authorities, such as influencers, individual representatives of the movement, extremist politicians and pseudo scientists, but also spiritual authorities like gurus and mediums. We of course also find mainstream and alternative news media references, eg. as individual journalists or outlets.

It becomes clear that news media sources are by far not the only authorities drawn upon in alternative communities. We believe that further investigating references to and even trust in alternative epistemic authorities is an important step in understanding the epistemic crisis in journalism as well as alternative online communities in general.

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JOS25 Alternative media I

PP 0735 Beyond boundaries: Vlaams Belang's parasitic news and its integration across diverse media landscapes

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In today's hybrid media system, political parties navigate a diverse array of communication channels, each with unique characteristics and affordances (Van Aelst et al., 2017). As a result, in contemporary politics, social and digital media platforms play a major role in political communication strategies (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013). The hybrid media system allows political parties to create and promote their own digital content alongside journalistic earned media coverage. Casero-Ripollés et al. (2016) identify this as 'hybrid logic' wherein online and offline tools merge, expanding traditional strategies with the possibilities of digital media.

This study delves into the specific case of Vlaams Belang, a far-right political party in Flanders. As an opposition party, Vlaams Belang receives less legacy news media (mainstream media) coverage compared to governing parties (Bennett, 1990; Cook, 2012; Van Aelst et al., 2022). As a result, Vlaams Belang has strategically invested in a wide array of new technologies, as to not only rely on traditional journalistic gatekeepers. In this regard, this political party strategically creates and disseminates quasi-journalistic content, referred to as "parasitic news" (Ekman and Widholm, 2022). Parasitic news embodies a political communication style, strategically leveraging established journalistic formats and genres to disseminate politically motivated information.

Our preceding ongoing study on Vlaams Belang's content marketing mix reveals their ability to amplify specific themes and political figures through their owned media channels, including parasitic news articles on their official party website and *V-News*, an external website in which Vlaams Belang is involved. This preliminary investigation underscores the prevalence of Vlaams Belang's parasitic news, disseminated through their social media channels. Additionally, their parasitic news on the official party website achieves visibility on Google News. Thus, the boundaries between traditional journalism and political party communication have become increasingly blurred in this dynamic landscape.

Expanding on these findings, this paper undertakes a follow-up study through qualitative content analysis, exploring the adoption and presentation of the content of Vlaams Belang's parasitic news across legacy and alternative media platforms. Data are collected from the parasitic news articles on the official party website and *V-News* two months before the June 9, 2024 elections in Belgium. During this period, the sample will also contain all articles mentioning Vlaams Belang from eight Flemish legacy news media and three Flemish right-leaning alternative media outlets. We will examine whether and how these outlets reproduce ideas, quotes, terminologies, headlines, visual elements, … from the content of Vlaams Belang's parasitic news. This investigation aims to unravel whether and how the parasitic news content of Vlaams Belang is presented in these diverse media spheres.

By investigating the adoption and dissemination patterns of Vlaams Belang's parasitic news through legacy and alternative media, this study contributes to understanding how the Flemish far-right party Vlaams Belang operates and how legacy and right-leaning alternative media outlets interact with the content produced by this far-right party. The findings offer insights into political communication strategies in digital contexts, highlighting the strategic use of parasitic news and its implications for media convergence within the political and journalistic domain.

JOS26 Social media and journalism

PP 0736 Distributed and platformized journalism: Digital native media in social media platforms

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This paper presents the results of an exploratory analysis of the presence of digital native media in social networking sites. We refer to media that were originally born in the Internet and for the Internet. This condition makes digital social networks natural habitats for these news media outlets and for their audiences, especially the youth.

After 20 years since the birth of Facebook, it is said that we are facing the death of social media as they were known. Media industry reports have been arguing for years that it is changing access to online information to such an extent that news media are in a situation of dependency on third-party platforms for news distribution (Ekström & Westlund, 2019).

Platformization has been reflected in the dissemination and distributed consumption of news, mainly through social media, which are the main access point to online news (Newman et al., 2023). At the same time, the traffic directed from these platforms to media websites is decreasing (Fisher, 2023), so it can be seen that news consumption occurs on the same platforms. Digital native media have explored functionalities, formats and strategies that fit the logic of each platform (Tsuriel et al., 2021; Van Dijk & Poell, 2013), to make their brand present and reach new audiences (Hase, Boczek & Scharkow, 2023; Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey & Sixto-García, 2022).

With a sample of 19 digital native media and 5 legacy media, an exploratory study was conducted based on an analysis sheet with quantitative parameters to identify presence, identification, functionalities, formats and traffic redirection. The social platforms analyzed are X, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Twitch, WhatsApp and Telegram.

The results indicate that digital native media are, in general, present on several social media platforms, with an advanced degree of adaptation. News media outlets have assumed the need to be constant posting content on their social profiles, but also to do so with specific strategies according to the logic, trends and usage habits of each platform. In addition to remaining present and active on the most established platforms, such as Facebook, X or YouTube, digital native media have landed on networks such as Instagram or TikTok, where they experiment with new formats in search of younger audiences, some explore the opportunities of Twitch, and others take advantage of the possibilities of instant messaging.

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JOS26 Social media and journalism

PP 0737 Spilling the tea or spilling polarization? Intermedia agenda-setting between Twitter/X and news media on disruptive climate protests in Germany

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Since early 2022, the German climate movement "Die Letzte Generation" ("The Last Generation") has been staging a series of contentious climate protests. These forms of "disruptive" protests (Shuman et al., 2021) are employed to generate attention from the public and the media, both online and offline.

Scholars have identified reciprocal effects of intermedia agenda-setting between social media debates, political actors, and news coverage (Gilardi et al., 2022; Su & Borah, 2019; Rogstad, 2016). The results are, however, mixed when it comes to the question of who sets the agenda and when. This dynamic is particularly relevant in the context of protest actions. In the age of "social media activism" (González-Bailón, 2015), digital media platforms enable activists to communicate their message beyond the digital sphere (Poell & van Dijck, 2015; Boulianne, 2020). However, a recent study analyzing the Twitter debate (now known as "X") on the "last generation" has illustrated high levels of discursive polarization (Meyer et al., 2023). It remains an open question whether the highly-polarized online attention is connected to more polarized debates in the overall journalistic media debate.

Thus, our study seeks to answer whether the highly polarized online discourse surrounding the "Last Generation" exhibits spill-over effects into news coverage or vice versa.

We collected ~5,000 German newspaper articles and ~5,000,000 (re-)tweets mentioning the movement (January 2022–May 2023; article database consisting of mainstream and fringe media). Deploying automated network and content analyses, we first focus on the two main ideological clusters within the Twitter discourse: one aligned with the political left and another with conservatives and the political right. Using a dictionary-based, automated word pattern analysis, our study then examines whether supportive frames or extreme anti-frames, used by the right-leaning cluster in the Twittersphere (e.g., 'terrorists,' 'murderers,' or 'sectarians'), can be found in the news media coverage.

Our results uncover an interplay between the use of negative frames by Twitter users and the subsequent publication of articles employing the same language shortly after. Furthermore, we observed an ideological bias in media reporting, wherein news outlets with right-wing and conservative leanings replicating negative online frames more frequently. On a short-term scale, it was observed that Twitter posts almost invariably preceded reporting, thereby appearing to predict or establish the newsrooms' agenda. However, our analysis showed that all frames that appeared to precede the newspaper coverage were originally published in the news during the movement's first

protests in early 2022. We thus demonstrate that such extreme frames were originally fed into the general discourse by journalism long before they were reproduced online.

Additionally, we uncovered a shift over time. Until October 2022, reporting was polarized along newsroom ideology, mirroring the dichotomous division of the two online network clusters: While right-leaning newspapers had established extreme depictions, more moderate or left-leaning newspapers refrained from using such frames. Following an incident in October 2022, where a cyclist in Berlin lost her life in a street accident during a protest, all outlets shifted towards a more negative portrayal of the protest group.

JOS26 Social media and journalism

PP 0738 Journalism on TikTok: A paradigm shift in news values?

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TikTok is rapidly emerging as one of the key social media platforms for encountering and consuming news content (Newman et al., 2023). Legacy news outlets experiment with the platform to attract younger audiences, which are typically more difficult to attain using traditional media outlets (De Marez et al., 2023). Scholarship is rapidly following suit, with the changing relationship between social media platforms and journalism, constituting a viable new study focus (Anter, 2023). However, and keeping in mind the potential of TikTok's platform architecture in disrupting previous experiences stemming from other social media platforms such as Facebook (e.g., Hase et al., 2022, pp. 1500–1503), research on what legacy news outlets share to TikTok is still lacking (but see e.g. Negreira-Rey et al., 2022).

Conceptually, we adhere to the dislocation of news and journalism (Ekström & Westlund, 2019) as well as to gauging whether a traditionally pivotal theoretical framework such as news value theory (Harcup, 2023; Harcup & O'Neill, 2017) stands the test of time when applied to TikTok. This is of particular relevance considering that news values "were developed when journalists had limited direct contact with their audiences" (Peterson-Salahuddin, 2023, p. 3), with this relationship effectively upended in the social media era (Salonen et al., 2022). As previous content analyses of journalistic TikTok videos have found that only "almost half of all posts were news and public service information" (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2022, p. 1727), we seek to investigate to what extent German-speaking European news outlets adhere to traditional news values in their TikTok content and whether the existing set of news values suffices to study it. We aim to explore what (news) values and content categories constitute news on TikTok, or succinctly: what is news on TikTok?

To this aim, we are conducting a content analysis of 9,222 TikTok videos posted in 2023 by 20 German-speaking news outlets from Germany, Austria and Switzerland and combining qualitative and quantitative approaches in a codebook. This contains previously established categories with regard to topic and news values as well as open categories for the qualitative exploration of emergent news values in journalistic content on TikTok. Following manually coding ten percent of the data, we upscale the coded data based on supervised machine learning approaches.

Our study is closely tied to the ECREA 2024 conference theme "Communication & social (dis)order" as it furthers the ontological and societal debates on the value of news as an essential commodity to guarantee a well-informed citizenry in a democratic society within the realm of social media platforms such as TikTok.

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JOS26 Social media and journalism

PP 0739 Uncovering the left: Professional identities of alternative left-wing news editors in Scandinavia

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This paper investigates the professional identity of peripheral left-wing news editors in the Nordic countries, a relatively underexplored area compared to the extensive focus on right-wing peripheral media in previous research. Based on in-depth interviews with editors in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, the study examines how these editors construct their professional roles, values, and practices within a media environment where mainstream

narratives predominate. The analysis reveals how the editors' educational and professional backgrounds, personal histories, and ideological commitments shape their approaches to journalism, their perceived responsibilities, and their positioning in relation to mainstream media. Contrary to the traditional notion of objectivity often upheld by conventional journalism, they emphasize advocacy, balance and ideological transparency as core tenets of their work. The paper also discusses the challenges they encounter in maintaining credibility while trying to advance social and political change. By shifting the focus to left-wing peripheral media, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity of peripheral media actors in the Nordic countries and their role in shaping public discourse.

JOS26 Social media and journalism

PP 0740 From the streets to social media. Investigating social media's role in journalistic perceptions of public opinion

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Whereas traditionally, public opinion was associated with polls, various sources beyond polls are employed by elites like journalists and politicians, to grasp citizens' sentiments (Walgrave & Soontjens, 2023). The advent of social media and its easily accessible data have disrupted traditional practices of reading and representing public opinion. 'What's going on on Twitter' has become a standard question at editorial meetings (Beckers et al., 2019). While social media have changed how journalists think about and measure public opinion, the actual impact on their perceptions and judgments remains unclear.

While journalists widely use social media as a source of information (Broersma & Graham, 2013), and its role in news reporting is well-documented (Oschatz et al., 2022), the full impact on their perceptions remains unclear. Social media, while imperfect in reflecting the general public, holds democratizing potential by enabling diverse voices in public discourse (Lee et al., 2014). However, challenges arise as social media users often differ from the general population in politically relevant dimensions, such as vote choice, turnout, and education, leading to more extreme and polarized opinions (Mellon & Prosser, 2017). Understanding how journalists are influenced by this information is crucial, as it can shape the content they produce (Hoewe, 2016; McGregor, 2019). There's a risk of journalists mistaking these "loud" opinions for true public sentiment, potentially influencing people's judgments on those issues (Mutz, 1992).

In an experiment with 143 Flemish political journalists, we examined how social media depictions of public opinion influence journalists' perceptions on various topics. The study investigated the impact of news topic (hard or soft news), public opinion information type (poll or vox pops), and source (Twitter or traditional). Journalists were randomly assigned to eight conditions and exposed to articles on the price of service vouchers or changes to Miss Belgium competition rules, incorporating different manipulations of public opinion displays. Subsequently, journalists were surveyed to assess the article's effectiveness in representing public opinion and to capture their actual perceptions of public opinion.

We find that journalists rated traditional vox pops as the least representative, traditional polls as the most representative, and social media fell somewhere in between. Generally, journalists perceived public opinion to align with the information presented in the articles. However, we do find that while there is only a small difference between social media poll data and traditional polls in how strongly they influence journalists' public opinion perceptions, social media vox pops influence journalists' public opinion perceptions more strongly as compared to traditional vox pops. Social media vox pops seem to be particularly influential in shaping journalists' public opinion perceptions. In the soft news condition, journalists were more likely to think that public opinion backed the article's direction in the vox pop conditions, whereas traditional polls had a stronger impact in the context of hard news.

Given the potential pitfalls associated with social media representations, such as the risk of mistaking extreme and non-representative opinions for public opinion, this potentially has implications for how journalists report public opinion and how audiences are influenced by it.

JOS27 Transparency

PP 0741 To disclose or not to disclose: A large-scale multidimensional analysis into the product transparency on Dutch news websites

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Introduction

An increasing part of the public is distrustful towards journalism. One way to counter this trend could be increased transparency: If journalists are more open about how the news is created, readers can judge whether it was created properly. Therefore, the question arises to what extent transparency is implemented by news outlets.

In our attempt to answer this question, we add to previous work in three ways. First, previous studies analyzed one specific dimension of transparency, although transparency in one dimension does not guarantee transparency in another. Other studies investigate transparency multidimensionally but in small samples only. Yet, some routines are rare and require a larger sample to detect. To solve this, we conduct a large-scale multidimensional analysis using computational methods. Second, another stream of literature examined how online articles are updated or looked at the presence of change cues, such as last updated timestamps. We link both and assess whether changes are accompanied by change cues. Third, previously, transparency was only compared between outlets, while we also assessed whether transparency differs for items within outlets.

We hypothesized that digital-native media would be more transparent in their news coverage, since they use digital features more that enable transparency, such as hyperlinking. We also predicted public and quality media as well as hard news items to be relatively more transparent, because of their alleged higher standards of news production.

Data and Methods

To achieve maximum variety in outlet characteristics six popular Dutch news websites were selected: two legacy popular and quality outlets each, the public broadcaster and a digital-native outlet. For each outlet, a random sample of 5,000 articles from the year 2023 was scraped, leading to a final sample of 27,096 valid articles.

To detect the presence of sources, the explicitness of sources used and the disclosure of background information about news production, we trained machine learning classifiers on 2,000 manually annotated sentences. Indices were calculated based on transparency indicators for the studied dimensions: author, changes, sources and production transparency. These were then predicted through OLS regressions based on outlet and item features.

Results and conclusions

Author transparency happened mainly in quality media and hard news, but less in public and digital-native media. This was indicated, in part, because the latter media were less likely to share an author's full name. Particularly, it was public and digital-native media that were open about changes, but not quality media and hard news. Changes could be identified by checking the dateModified tag in the HTML file, which indicates whether a page has been modified. For source transparency, indeed public, digital-native and quality media and hard news were more transparent. This was reflected, for instance, in the number of hyperlinks. Production transparency occurred mostly in digital-native and quality media and hard news items, but less so in public media.

Although outlets rarely abstained from transparency routines, no outlet was fully transparent in every dimension. It shows that the implementation of transparency is a complex process which depends on the outlet, article, and transparency dimension of focus.

JOS27 Transparency

PP 0742 Transitioning to Transparency: Footnote journalism as a novel journalistic practice

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Modern societies are more critical of knowledge-generating institutions and their normative authority—one of which is journalism. The ideal of objectivity that has long guided the profession is under scrutiny (Anderson & Schudson, 2019)[1], leading to a disruption of professional norms. One of the norms that can replace objectivity as a guiding principle is transparency. Transparency is hailed as a remedy for the much-discussed loss of trust and while empirical evidence shows mixed results (Curry & Stroud, 2021)[2], recipients state the importance of transparency regarding sources for journalistic quality and trust in journalism (Wintterlin et al., 2020)[3]. For instance, it has been shown that the availability of in-text hyperlinks increases recipients' perceived message credibility (Borah, 2014)[4]. While such research on audience perceptions is extensive, less is known about journalists' transparency practices and how they are embedded in journalistic content.

This study investigates a novel transparency practice in journalism that we term *footnote journalism*: the use of scholarly referencing practices that substantiate news content by providing audiences with a listing of used sources. These sources are presented as visually emphasized footnote-style scientific citations (e.g., next to or below the article text or in the corner of the video screen). Footnote journalism can empower the audience to explore the journalists' sources further themselves and simultaneously support interpretative journalistic statements. In terms of quality improvements, footnote journalism can be measured against scholarly standards, such as whether peer-reviewed scientific evidence is referenced and whether the works cited are publicly available. Furthermore, footnote journalism can be used to address criticism of oversimplified news and for journalists to uphold their authority in comparison to alternative communicators of news-like content.

In an exploratory content analysis we investigated what types of sources are used (RQ_1), what types of statements are substantiated (RQ_2) and whether topics make a difference (RQ_3) when journalists use footnote journalism.

We sampled three different German outlets known to use footnote journalism: the science TV show *MaiThink X* (n = 24 episodes)[5], the science-focused print magazine *Katapult* (n = 47 articles)[6], and the online science journalism format *Quarks* (n = 56 articles)[7]; with a combined N = 2,588 footnote references (intercoder reliability: .761–.964, average: .870).

Regarding RQ_1, most sources used were found to be peer-reviewed scientific articles (n = 714) or other scientific publications (n = 375). News articles (n = 329), official statistics (n = 560) and private sources (n = 593) were less frequently used, showing a solid understanding of scientific rigor. Most of the references were traceable (88%) and publicly available (81%). Regarding RQ_2, most footnoted statements were event- or case-based statements (n = 581), substantiating non-numerical claims about real events. References to specific (n = 347) or unspecific numerical data (n = 204) were less prevalent, as were theoretical statements (n = 79) and sources for quotes (n = 241). Differentiated by topic (RQ_3), social issues and health were disproportionately often backed by peer-reviewed scientific works, while for foreign politics, crime, and culture, journalistic content was referred to more prominently ($\chi^2(44)=521.03$, $p<.001$, Cramer's V = .23). Footnote journalism seems to adhere to scientific standards, yet to be topically quite narrow. We hope to discuss the study's implications at ECREA.

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JOS27 Transparency

PP 0743 What's in a journalistic fact-check? Investigating the effectiveness of source transparency

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Introduction

Fact-checking is a potential new form of journalism to combat online misinformation. Experimental research primarily investigated if or what fact checks are effective in correcting misinformation (Walter et al., 2020; Walter et al., 2021). However, even though providing transparency is a key guideline outlined by the International Fact-Checking Network in journalistic fact-checking (IFCN, 2023), experimental research on the effectiveness of transparency within journalistic fact-checks is scarce (Citation Omitted). More specifically, most research related to transparency in fact-checking focuses on the transparency of the sender of the fact-check, showing that fact-checks by experts are more effective than those by non-experts in reducing beliefs in misinformation (Liu et al., 2023).

However, research on the effectiveness of (the presence of) source transparency about the actors used within a journalistic fact-check to support the fact-check's final judgment is lacking. Nevertheless, it is important to fill this research gap, especially since journalistic fact-checkers use diverse practices to align with the IFCN transparency-related guidelines (Citation Omitted). Therefore, we are conducting an experiment in which one specific source transparency element (i.e., the use of (different types of) actors (i.e., an expert, an involved person, a famous person, or no actor)) is experimentally manipulated to assess its effect on the fact-check's credibility and participants' beliefs accuracy, to be able to investigate our general research question: How does a) transparency about and b) the type of source used within the fact-check affect c) the credibility of the fact-check and d) belief accuracy about the fact-checked claim?

Method

We have been conducting a 2 x 4 between-subjects experiment in December 2023 and January 2024. Participants should be Flemish residents aged 18 or above. Participants are randomly assigned to either a fact-check in which an expert is cited to support the fact-checked claim, a fact-check in which an involved citizen is cited, a fact-check in which a (well-known and uncontroversial, i.e., pre-tested) famous person is cited, or a control condition in which no actor is cited. Participants are exposed to only one fact-check on one specific health topic (i.e., corrected misinformation on (1) Alzheimer's disease or (2) the stimulation of bowel movements). We selected existing health-related fact-checked claims due to the growing problem of health-related misinformation, which is problematic for public and personal health (Tully et al., 2020). Using two unrelated health claims, we can compare the results across topics and explore the generalizability of our results in health-related journalistic fact-checks. After exposure, participants complete measures of the actor's credibility, fact-check credibility, and belief accuracy.

Through this experiment, we aim to assess how source transparency influences the perceived reliability of the fact-check and belief accuracy in journalistic fact-checking. Ultimately, we aim to understand the impact of citing

(specific types of) actors in a health-related fact-check on a) the fact-check's credibility and b) belief accuracy. By doing so, we provide journalistic fact-checkers insights on creating fact-checking formats that most effectively counter incorrect health-related information.

JOS27 Transparency

PP 0744 "It's unsettling, but it's crucial for you to understand the details": Legitimizing press ethical choices when liveblogging from a murder trial

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News media increasingly opt for live-blogging as a genre, especially when covering trials of public interest (Flower 2023; Knight 2017), including high-profile cases with inherent ethical dilemmas (Wittchen 2023). The study investigates how court reporters directly and indirectly communicate with readers when liveblogging, disclosing their choices to include or omit details or information that may be perceived as unethical or offensive in relation to press ethical guidelines.

Building upon previous research into the ethical negotiations of trial coverage and labeling this form of metacommunication as 'ethical rituals 2.0' (Wittchen 2023), this paper shows how such rituals unfold during live coverage, exploring gaps between sound press ethics and journalistic practice.

Methodologically, the study utilizes narrative textual analysis to examine written live coverage of a singular murder trial across various Danish media outlets, including two tabloids, two public service media, two national dailies, and one local media outlet specifically chosen for its proximity to the crime scene. The written content is chosen due to the restriction on courtroom filming, making written live coverage the most prevalent method in a Danish context.

Specifically, the selected case study involves a high-profile murder trial, rape, and dismemberment of a woman (Mia Skadhauge Stevn) in Denmark, unfolding in 2023 and attracting substantial media attention. This media scrutiny has engendered ongoing discussions and criticism concerning the press's handling of delicate details pertaining to the victim's behavior prior to her demise and the specifics of the dismemberment process.

The study unveils how journalists wield transparency to elucidate and justify their ethical decisions to the audience, skillfully navigating ethical quandaries in real-time coverage. Additionally, the study discusses the interpretation of key press ethical rules from Danish sound press ethics, such as the following: "Victims of crimes or accidents shall be paid the greatest possible regard," and "Information which may violate the sanctity of private life shall be avoided unless an obvious public interest requires public coverage" (Pressenævnet, 2013).

Hence, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how trial reporters negotiates ethical considerations with its audience and substantiates its decisions in reporting on trials of substantial public concern, thus legitimizing its practices when doing rapid live reporting. Exploring these legitimization rituals is pertinent as the media maneuvers through complex ethical terrain.

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JOS27 Transparency

PP 0745 Media critique, transparency, and trust

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Media critique is regarded important in a democratic society, as news media facilitates public discourse and contribute to opinion-making and political debate. This is particularly important in times with social and communicative (dis)order. Media critique can be found both from outside and inside the newsrooms. However, news media is often criticized for sin of omission, being reluctant to carry out critical investigation towards one's own colleagues. As Wyatt (2007) states, shedding critical light upon one's owns peers might be challenging and media critics might be accused of disloyalty. A wide range of studies are concerned with media critique from the outside, such as from

audiences and bloggers, while little research has addressed the topic of self-criticism from within the newsrooms. This paper seeks to explore this gap, based on an in-depth qualitative interview study. We have interviewed seven Norwegian columnists, who produce media critical texts, published regularly in legacy news media. The research questions asked is twofold: *How do media critical columnist understand their professional role, and how do they handle the challenge of shedding a critical light towards peers and colleges?*

In a former study (author, submitted 2024), we found that the media critique is moving close to journalism, with a clear normative anchoring in the Code of Ethics. However, the systemic critique is rare in the published columns, and the columnists are rarely addressing questions regarding the more overarching structural framework affecting journalistic work, such as economy, ownership and media policy. This former study was based on text analysis. Thus, in this paper, which is work in progress, our aim is to further elaborate how media critics themselves perceive their professional role. A preliminary finding indicates that criticizing one's own colleagues is not necessarily perceived as challenging as the theory of press criticism suggest (Wyatt 2007), which makes it interesting to further elaborate.

Being a democratic-corporatist media system, characterized by strong journalistic professionalism and autonomy, as well as high levels of trust in societal institutions, Norway constitute an interesting context to explore media critique within, with transferable relevance to other national contexts. Theoretically, this study is anchored in institutional theory, supported by Wyatts theory of press criticism. Within the perspective of journalism as a societal institution, our ambition is to scrutinize the role and practices of columnists as media critical actors. Further, our ambition is to examine the legitimacy of media critique in relation to transparency and trust. An open public and mediated discourse about media itself will contribute to the societal credibility and trust that journalism depends upon.

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JOS28 Journalistic values I

PP 0844 Evaluative standards as basis for comparative analyses of conflict coverage

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Due to their newsworthiness, conflicts play a central role in news coverage (Jungblut, 2020). They can be defined as struggles between actors competing over resources (e.g., money, territory, power, values or ideological superiority; Meyer, Baden & Frère, 2018). Conflicts can be differentiated based the level of violence (from protests to war), the issue of dispute (autonomy, ideology, territory etc.) or the involved actors (state, non-state, HIIK, 2019).

There is concern that public debates on conflicts increasingly align with ideological lines, reflecting growing societal polarization and contributing to what has been labeled an epistemic crisis of public discourses (Jacoby, 2014; Neuberger et al., 2023). Despite extensive research on how individual conflicts are portrayed in the media, systematic exploration of trends in conflict reporting remains limited (Baden & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2018). This is because most studies follow the framing paradigm and either confound frames and topics by measuring generic frames (e.g., Carpenter, 2007) or capture issue-specific frames too specific to be applied to other conflicts (e.g., Jungblut & Zakareviciute, 2019).

This project proposes a novel conceptual approach for the analysis of conflict discourses across various conflicts, countries, and media outlets. Following Boltanski and Thévenot's (1999), we suggest that conflict positions can be differentiated through interpretative repertoires, expressing "coherent ways of interpreting and talking about the world" (Baden & Springer, 2017, p. 181). These repertoires contain an observable evaluative standard by which a conflict is defined (Baden & Springer, 2017). Following Boltanski and Thévenot (2006), the variety of possible evaluative standards can be reduced to seven basic types: popular ("good" is what is popular), moral, civic, economic, functional, inspired and ecological. Each of those evaluative standards express a perspective through which a conflict and its potential solution can be portrayed.

The project aims to identify evaluation standards in conflict coverage (RQ1) over different types of conflicts (RQ2) and media outlets (RQ3) as well as to identify recurring patterns and dynamic developments in conflict discourses over time (RQ4).

We plan to conduct automated content analyses using a custom-made dictionary currently comprising 104 English search terms each indicating the emphasis on one of the evaluative standards. A first version was created through an annotated corpus of conflict coverage and extended with the help of the INFOCORE-dictionary (Baden et al., 2018) and suggestions from ChatGPT. We will validate the dictionary and if necessary expand it, before translating it to French, German and Spanish.

For preliminary results, we retrieved data from the Guardian API on the Russian invasion of Ukraine (24.02.22–28.12.23, n = 15.938) and societal debates on protective measures against COVID (01.03.20–31.08.20, n = 4.921) and the useNews repository (Daily Mail coverage of COVID, n = 3.422, Puschmann & Haim, 2020).

Initial findings on the Russian invasion of Ukraine indicate a consistent emphasis of moral, economic, and civic values in the Guardian's discourse. A Comparison of COVID discussions in the Guardian and the Daily Mail reflects distinct editorial lines. The conservative Daily Mail emphasizes economic, civic, and popular values, aligning with conservative viewpoints. In contrast, the Guardian presents a more balanced coverage, contrasting economic and moral values.

JOS28 Journalistic values I

PP 0845 Cross-platform crisis reporting: An analysis of British broadcasters' coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict

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The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has dominated the attention of the global news media since the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023. This extensive coverage has reinvigorated long-held debates about media bias in the framing of the conflict. Previous research has highlighted the lack of impartiality and pro-Israeli bias in similar media coverage in the UK, through the use of sources and the adoption of specific perspectives and explanations of the conflict (Gaber et al., 2009; Philo & Berry, 2004, 2007; Thomas, 2011). However, the reporting landscape has since evolved, incorporating broadcasters' social media accounts, which engage with diverse audiences in various ways. In the UK, public service broadcasters maintain a presence on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. These platforms share short video clips from TV news and web content, often tailored to each platform's unique characteristics. Additionally, original content is crafted with specific platforms and audiences in mind. This evolution raises questions about the types of stories being selected and the different types of witnessing enabled on different media platforms.

This paper aims to answer these questions by conducting a systematic thematic analysis of news coverage of the conflict across multiple media platforms. These include BBC News at 10, @BBCWorld on Twitter, @bbcnews on Instagram, Channel 4 News, @Channel4News on Twitter, and @channel4news on Instagram. Methodologically, the paper employs the thematic analysis developed by the Glasgow Media Group and utilized by Greg Philo and Mike Berry in their examination of previous Israeli-Palestinian conflicts (Philo & Berry, 2004, 2007). This method operates under the assumption that in contentious areas, there exist competing narratives for describing events and their historical context (Philo & Berry, 2007, p. 174).

The paper, therefore, will illustrate how the themes, visuals and perspectives of coverage differ on the various platforms, as well as the understandings of the conflict that are enabled through the different modalities of the coverage. It thus contributes to ongoing debates on the mediation of war and conflict and its evolution. It also offers an updated perspective on the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, shedding light on questions of impartiality, as well as potential shifts in reporting patterns, driven not only by contemporary political developments but also the changing media landscape.

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JOS28 Journalistic values I

PP 0846 Assessing the impact of journalistic news media on an informed citizenry: Framework and measurement of a news media impact score

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Journalistic news media outlets are essential for an informed citizenry. However, with the advent of digitization, their societal significance is increasingly challenged. This study explores a pertinent question: How can the impact of news media outlets on an informed citizenry be measured comprehensibly? This paper aims to introduce a framework to evaluate the influence of journalistic news media on an informed citizenry. Our theoretical part aims to integrate various strands of research cohesively. Our main argument is that the impact of journalistic news media outlets hinges on four pivotal elements: their reach and frequency of use, perceived quality, and efficacy in enhancing citizens' understanding of societal issues. Therefore, we encompass research on communication controlling, audience outreach, news quality evaluations, and media effects analyses regarding how news media

shapes knowledge and comprehension of relevant topics. Following concepts from communication controlling, there are four stages: input, output, outcome, and outflow. The *input* pertains to the expenses associated with news production. It encompasses both human and financial resources. These expenditures can be precisely evaluated using traditional accounting techniques. The *output* considers tangible and intangible elements. Tangible elements include easily quantifiable aspects like the number of published articles or broadcasted segments. On the intangible side, metrics like audience reach and usage come into play (Napoli, 2011). The *outcome* concerns audiences' perceptions and attitudes toward the news sources and content. For instance, a media outlet's overall perceived quality can be an indicator at this level (Bachmann et al., 2021). The *outflow* evaluates news media's broader societal value in the final stage. This is the essence of the "media performance" or "public value" concepts" of how well the media fulfills its societal functions (e.g., Collins, 2007; Humprecht, 2016). This four-stage framework enables us to conceptualize news media impact as the ripple effect created by journalistic actors (like media outlets or brands) by allocating human and financial resources (*input*) to produce and disseminate sources (like newspapers or news websites) and content (such as articles or broadcast pieces) (*output*), thereby shaping audience perceptions and regarding these sources and content (*outcome*), culminating better-informed citizenry in terms of a heightened public awareness, knowledge and understanding of current affairs (*outflow*). Moreover, the paper outlines an empirical method for its operationalization and measurement, using Switzerland as a case study. We conducted a representative survey of 3,630 individuals, evaluating the impact of 55 Swiss news media outlets. The findings underscore the relevance of public service media in Switzerland. Seven of the top ten most influential outlets belong to this category, highlighting the critical role of public broadcasting in shaping an informed citizenry. Additionally, the findings reveal a marked preference for audiovisual media, particularly television, regarding reach and impact. Beyond Switzerland, the framework and method can significantly impact media policy discourses on the role of news media outlets in today's high-choice media environment.

JOS28 Journalistic values I

PP 0847 The operationalisation of impartiality within Public Service Media newsrooms. Comparing practices in a cross-media environment at VRT and RAI

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Impartiality is clearly stipulated as a core editorial principle of Public Service Media (PSM). Across European PSM, its role is interlinked with the necessity to maintain independence from both political and commercial interests. Nonetheless, the lack of a clear definition in policy documents and editorial guidelines has resulted in impartiality being criticised by audiences and politicians who accuse news reporting of bias and of reinforcing establishment ideas. This criticism is detrimental to PSM, whose editorial principles underpin their public remit and by extension, their legitimacy. Existing assessments of impartiality focus on its presence in news content, its definition in policy documents, or its perception by audiences. However, in doing so, not much is known about how impartiality is operationalised within newsrooms. To address this gap, this study relies on the value of newsroom studies in providing a grounded and corrective approach to generalising research. Therefore, it draws inspiration from previous studies concerning values such as objectivity and universality.

This research answers the following research question: "How do PSM editorial staff operationalise impartiality in daily newsroom routines?" To this end, the study employs a comparative case study of two PSM organisations: the RAI in Italy and the VRT in Flanders (Belgium), based on two main shared characteristics: (1) the relevance of impartiality to their public remit and the presence of dedicated commissioned assessment reports on the concept; and (2) an increasing societal polarisation and scrutiny of impartiality in news coverage from both politicians and society. As the study compares internal processes of the two PSM, an added benefit is the possibility to analyse and compare the concrete influence on practices aimed at reaching impartiality by external (political) pressures.

The comparative case study analysis builds on approximately a total of 36 semi-structured interviews with editorial staff across PSM (approx. 18 interviews each), including experienced and junior journalists, editors, presenters, and staff involved in writing editorial documents. This combination of perspectives and experiences provides valuable insight into the role that impartiality plays in processes across different newsrooms at the two PSM organisations. Specifically, the analysis focuses on (1) how journalists themselves define impartiality, (2) the concrete practices and routines that editorial staff employ to ensure impartiality, and (3) the constraints of ensuring impartiality within different platforms on which the two PSM are active.

Preliminary findings show nuances in the definition of impartiality by staff, that does not necessarily coincide with the definition presented in official documents. Findings also show that, at both organisations, practices employed by journalists to ensure impartiality depend on the platform they work on. Thus, the choice of phrasing, terminology and images in online news articles differs from the considerations given to the selection of topics and participants in current affairs programmes on television. Finally, the two most poignant constraints in ensuring impartiality according to editorial staff are (1) the speed at which news is published and (2) retaining viewership/readership across

news items. These highlight how practical concerns impact considerations on impartiality, such as the selection of experts and viewpoints.

JOS28 Journalistic values I

PP 0848 Exploring risk and uncertainty in journalism: A comparative study of Romania and Moldova using findings from the World Journalism Study 2021–2023

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The World Journalism Studies 2021–2023 project examines the challenges faced by journalists worldwide and makes an important contribution to our understanding of adaptation strategies in journalism in different contexts. Based on a solid theoretical framework, the World Journalism Studies (WJS) project systematically assesses perceptions in critical journalistic dimensions, including editorial autonomy, influences on journalism, journalistic roles, epistemology, ethics, safety, resilience, and working conditions.

This abstract highlights the comparative aspect of the WJS 2021–2023 project, focusing on the study of the Moldovan and Romanian media landscapes. The study, which involved almost 740 participants from different media outlets, provides a nuanced picture of journalism in both countries, covering national dailies, weeklies, news outlets, TV and radio channels, online media and emerging start-ups.

Crucially, the study includes a comparative analysis that systematically examines the common and different characteristics of journalistic practices in Moldova and Romania. It explores similarities and differences in editorial autonomy, influences on journalism, journalistic roles, epistemologies, professional ethics, safety, resilience, and working conditions, and provides a comprehensive understanding of the comparative dynamics at play.

The findings highlight the nuanced nature of risk in both Moldova and Romania and offer insights into the challenges faced by journalists and news organizations in these regions. A comparative analysis with data from previous surveys (2016–2016) shows that the perceptions of journalists in both countries have changed significantly over time.

A particularly noteworthy discovery is the identification of determinants influencing cross-national differences in the way journalists conceptualize and manage risk and uncertainty between Moldova and Romania. The study highlights the evolving dimensions of the media landscape in both countries and offers insights into the professional orientations of journalists and the contextual structures that influence their work.

Methodologically, the research team followed a geographically distributed approach by stationing its members in the main cities of Moldova and Romania. This approach ensures a nuanced understanding of media dynamics in both countries, with local collaborators providing invaluable insights and overviews.

The collected data set forms a solid infrastructure for sustainable comparative research on journalism and risk in Moldova and Romania. The findings provide an up-to-date snapshot of the state of journalism in a dynamically evolving global context and offer actionable insights for practitioners, policymakers and academics. This comparative discourse fosters an informed dialogue about the complex challenges and opportunities shaping the media landscapes of Moldova and Romania in the context of the Worlds of Journalism Study.

JOS29 News avoidance

PP 0849 "Too much and always the same": Textual characteristics of news articles that people intentionally avoid

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Intentional news avoidance, a deliberate decision to refrain from news consumption, is associated with holding misbeliefs and lower political knowledge. This is worrying given that the results of a large-scale international survey show an increase from an average of 29 % of people reporting sometimes or often actively avoiding the news in 2017 to 38 % in 2022. The concept of intentional news avoidance also encompasses selective news avoidance, a behavior of avoiding only very specific news contents or topics. Most mentioned reasons for such avoidance behaviors include perceived news negativity, news overload, or repetitiveness of certain topics, such as COVID-19 or politics. Interestingly, these reasons fall under content-level factors of selective news avoidance. For instance, if many news avoiders opt out of news due to its negativity and impact on their mood and mental health, it is most probably due to the news focusing predominantly on negative events.Thus, it is plausible to assume that news content characteristics influence news avoidance and its occurrence can partially be explained by looking at the content of news coverage. Therefore, this study explores the nature of intentionally avoided news content guided by a cross-sectional survey of a quota-based sample of Austrian citizens (n = 473; age: M = 40.78; gender: 49.26 % women; net available household income in the range from 2.200 to 2.700 Euros and 16.91 % with a college

degree) who indicated their news consumption along with news topics they intentionally avoided and why. The survey was conducted from mid-June to mid-July 2021 and the preliminary findings based on close-ended questions identify COVID-19 (M = 4.35; SD = 2.18), European integration (M = 3.62; SD = 2.00), corruption (M = 3.47, SD = 1.99), economic policy (M = 3.47; SD = 2.01) and migration (M = 3.44, SD = 2.00) as the most avoided news topics (scale from 1 to 7). In the second step, the study analyzes Austrian news articles from eight mayor news outlets (n = 109.548) during the survey's period. The news outlets were: ORF 2 (transcripts of television news by public broadcaster; n = 1,990), Heute (print: n = 3,121; online: n = 4,621), Kleine Zeitung (print: n = 15,688; online: n = 8,551), Kronen Zeitung (print: n = 21,834; online: n = 15,603), Kurier (print: n = 11,614; online: n = 5,211), Die Presse (print: n = 4,685; online: n = 3,887), Der Standard (print: n = 3,796; online: n = 4,220) and Salzburger Nachrichten (print: n = 4,727). The work in progress inspects differences in articles' textual properties, negativity, usage of alarm words and language intensifiers, complexity and salience via dictionary methods, sentiment analysis and methods measuring syntactic and semantic complexity. The aim is to build an analysis pipeline integrating news avoidance content indicatorsand considers their individual and interactive presence in the news. Upon completion, the study will enhance theunderstanding of selective news avoidance as a reaction to news content, contributing to the solutions-oriented discourse surrounding news avoidance. In addition, validated dictionaries in German language will be published on the OSF platform.

JOS29 News avoidance

PP 0850 How infrequent news users keep up to date about current affairs

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Existing research into news audiences suggests that news makes up a relatively small part of most users' media repertoires (e.g., Authors, 2021a) and that even within news repertoires, only a minority of users feature an omnivorous news repertoire (Authors, 2021b). A growing part of media users stumble upon news incidentally, avoid news, or do not include news content in their media habits (Villi et al., 2021), all this leading us to wonder how media users with limited news repertoires keep up to date about current affairs?

To investigate this, we take a non-news centric approach (Swart et al., 2022) and opt to combine a mix of data-gathering methods. First, based on a survey of a representative sample of Belgian media users (N = 2309), we identify six distinct media repertoires by performing a Latent Class Analysis (LCA) based on sources, platforms, and devices to use media. Second, we analyse 47 in-depth interviews with Belgian users featuring one of these media repertoires. An inductive thematic analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 2015) of these interviews focussing on ways they use news and why they do or do not use news is operationalized to identify overarching themes.

The quantitative analysis of the six media repertoires confirms that news use is not central in most media repertoires; only 'News omnivores' feature a media repertoire in which news content is prominent. The other media repertoires, therefore, can be described as limited news repertoires. The qualitative interviews both reinforced and nuanced the quantitative findings. Although most Belgian media users mentioned that they tried to follow the news, respondents rarely remembered the last news item they had consumed. When asked which media type they could not miss, almost none of the respondents discussed their news uses. However, most respondents kept themselves up to date about significant news events in alternative ways, such as via knowledgeable friends and acquaintances and/or via non-news types of media (e.g., entertainment programs).

We conclude by reflecting on how our findings contribute to a deepened understanding of the 'news-find-me' principle (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2017) and what this means for professional news media's role in people's media repertoire.

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JOS29 News avoidance

PP 0851 News discouragement discourses in mental health texts: When news consumption becomes a problem

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Examples of social disorder feature prominently in the news as audiences face a never ending onslaught of present tragedies and future concerns. Following the news, even when it is persistently disheartening, is an obligation tied to norms of citizenship and democratic participation. Yet there are also calls for *not* following the news bound up in a growing cultural imperative to minimize negativity as a means of individualized self-protection. At a time when both concern over news avoidance and the need for collective action to address pressing problems are simultaneously high, more attention is needed to how people are told not to use the news.

The research problem this study addresses is to understand how discourses on the relationship between news and individual wellbeing recommend or validate news avoidance on the grounds that news consumption has negative consequences for individual mental health. Taking up this topic helps illuminate larger social and cultural factors that shape news consumption (or non-consumption) patterns, perceptions of news and its societal value, and attitudes toward individual civic responsibility.

Methodologically, this paper uses textual analysis to analyze discourses discouraging news use for the preservation of mental health and well-being. Public texts are examined, ranging from prominent news outlets to texts geared toward mental health professionals to the popular self-help literature. The study uses a qualitative approach that is attuned to both the characteristics of the discourse – i.e., what is said about the detrimental effects of news on mental health – and the context of the discourse – i.e., who is speaking, where are they speaking, and whom are they speaking to. This qualitative approach is necessary for the exploration of the shape of these discourses; it is focused on the production and circulation of meaning, with careful consideration of the power dynamics inherent in speaking about which behaviors are appropriate/healthy and which ones are not.

The findings, which are still progress, show a pervasive concern that the negativity of news – both in what stories are covered and how journalists tell these stories – is detrimental to mental health to the point of justifying limiting or eliminating individual news consumption. This purposive shift away from news is frequently validated through discourses of individual well-being and self-protection that connect to broader concerns about a widespread mental health crisis. The findings raise crucial questions about the balance between individual and collective responsibility.

The implications of these findings speak to the heart of this year's ECREA theme. If increased communication is part of addressing social disorder, we must also examine how barriers to communication – such as news discouragement – are a limiting factor. We must recognize how individuals confront the blurry line between a commitment to collective participation and a need for self-preservation. Additionally, at a time when professional journalists are concerned about their authority amid dwindling audiences and competing meditated voices, we should ask whether traditional journalistic storytelling and epistemological practices require a more radical shift to match the cultural turn toward prioritizing and addressing individual mental health.

JOS30 User-journalist relationship II

PP 0853 News media platform dependency: Challenges and opportunities in different media systems

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The platformisation of the internet has transformed powerful digital platforms into intermediaries between news production and news distribution. This decoupling establishes a platform dependency model of news media that encumbers news organisations from fulfilling journalistic obligations. However, not all news organisations are equally dependent on digital platforms (Nicoli and Iosifidis, 2023). Reputation and size can influence the level of dependency in different ways as well as other factors related to media systems' characteristics.

In recent years research on media systems has shown that media systems are not static – they tend to undergo several changes (e.g. Hallin and Mancini, 2017; Bruggemann et al., 2014). Especially Liberal and Mediterranean media systems seem to be going through significant changes (e.g., Maniou, 2022; Humprecht et al., 2022; Maniou and Moutselos, 2023).

This study explores platform dependency of news media within the context of media systems rather than reputation and size. Based on an analysis of a comparative study of the UK as a Liberal media system, and Greece as a Mediterranean Polarised/pluralist media system, our findings contribute to the scholarship on the platformisation of the internet as well as shedding light on recent understandings of media systems in a changing digital landscape.

The two countries under study were selected as typical examples of the media systems they represent in the European continent. Following a qualitative method of study, we draw on in-depth interviews with news media professionals from the liberal media system of the UK and the Mediterranean media system of Greece. Although this is not the immediate target of this work, we also test the validity of the 'national media-system' hypothesis, and in particular the hypothesised characteristics of the different media systems in the countries under study.

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JOS30 User-journalist relationship II

PP 0854 Feeling the audience: Exploring the affective dimension of journalists' relationships to users

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With the 'emotional turn', the affective aspects of news use and newswork are becoming a central topic in journalism studies. This is also reflected in the strand of research on journalists' audience-relationships. Here, however, studies have so far predominantly dealt with related 'negative' aspects, e.g. the emotional work and stress caused by online harassment and hate speech from users. 'Neutral' or even 'positive' audience-related emotions, on the other hand, have seldomly been the focus.

Against this background, I explore the affective dimension of journalists' audience-relationships more holistically, based on 52 in-depth interviews with German journalists from various areas of the field.

In the on-going analysis which will be finished by the time of the conference I have so far identified more than 40 different emotions:

- 'positive' ones from joy to gratitude to a sense of belonging;
- 'negative' ones from anger to loneliness to anxiety; and
- rather 'neutral' ones from surprise to curiosity to indifference.

I show how these feelings

- are connected to different subgroups of or roles ascribed to audiences (from citizens to troublemakers to fans) (contact specificity);
- are elicited by particular practices (from monitoring metrics to direct messaging with users to interacting with audiences at live events) (referentiality);
- evoke, and are themselves reinforced by, corresponding practices and emotions displayed by the audience (e.g., when audiences give emotional feedback, journalists react visibly emotionally to it, and this in turn leads to a further emotionalisation of their relationship) (reflexivity);
- differ depending on journalists' personality and organisational context (i.e. media brand, journalistic genre, newsroom structure, routines, and resources) (variety and contingency);
- can be combined and even contradictory (e.g., when audience praise not only make journalists proud but also leads to worries about whether they can live up to the audience's expectations in the long run) (combinability and potential ambivalence);
- can, to a certain extent, be controlled (e.g., through avoiding, or turning towards, their cause and other coping techniques) (limited controllability);
- have certain effects on journalists and their work (from gratification and motivation to covering certain topics in a certain way to an altered understanding of journalism in general) (consequentiality).

In sum, the findings suggest that journalists' audience-related emotions increasingly shape their audience-relationships and newswork in general, especially in new media organizations. It becomes clear how this development is interrelated with journalism's multiple crises of reach, revenue, and trust and the hybrid media environment with its intensifying competition (also with non-journalistic content) for the attention and loyalty of audiences; its 'pivot to community', memberships and subscriptions; as well as the increasing emotionalisation, 'interpersonalisation', datafication, and platformisation of journalism and public communication in general.

This highlights the increasing importance of journalists' reflection on and competence in dealing with emotions in order to cope with 'negative' feelings as well as gain gratification from and motivation for their work. On a more theoretical level, it indicates emotions' role in structuring the social – (even) in a domain often associated with 'unemotional' neutrality, objectivity, and the aim to inform 'rational' debates.

JOS30 User-journalist relationship II

PP 0855 "I don't think people realize what is journalistic and what is interest-driven content": Imagined audiences as a boundary marker in journalism

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Digital transformations have contributed substantially to the emergence of non-traditional, peripheral actors in journalism, challenging the authority of established news media. These peripheral actors include organizations, networks, and individuals who, often in niche areas, disseminate journalistic or semi-journalistic content on web pages or social media, contributing to a plurality of topics and perspectives in the public sphere. Journalism research has studied these peripheral actors vis-à-vis traditional journalism through the concept of boundary work (Gieryn, 1983), identifying how peripheral actors claim membership to the journalistic field, and how traditional journalists either protect or expand the boundaries of the field. Here, research has identified several boundary markers, like autonomy (Carlson, 2017), journalistic norms (Singer, 2015), and ethical conduct (Karlsson et al., 2023), as well as professional role perceptions and journalistic practices (Maares & Hanusch, 2020).

However, only a few studies consider actors' imagined audiences in this context, despite their increasing relevance for journalistic boundary work (Tandoc & Jenkins, 2018). While scholarship has turned to audiences to understand where they draw the line and understand their definition of news and journalism (Banjac & Hanusch, 2022; Swart & Broersma, 2023), little is known about how (semi-)journalistic actors think of their audiences vis-à-vis those of other actors. We also have an incomplete understanding of the extent to which traditional and peripheral actors' imagined audiences may differ. This, however, might have implications for understanding how (semi-)journalistic actors view their unique contribution to society and claim legitimacy in a crowded field. Therefore, we ask the following questions:

RQ1: How do traditional and peripheral journalistic actors imagine their audiences?

RQ2: How do these actors use imagined audiences as markers to distinguish themselves from other (semi-)journalistic actors?

To answer these questions, we draw on 100 semi-structured interviews with established and peripheral actors in Austria, conducted from May 2023 to January 2024. Actors were sampled across four specializations (political, lifestyle, sport, and economic) and several media types. We asked them how they imagined their audiences, what their relationship was with their audiences, and what they thought their audiences expected from their work compared with other formats. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and subsequently examined using thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006). Preliminary findings indicate that reaching an audience is an important boundary marker for all respondents. Yet, while most actors have access to some web metrics as concrete measures of their audience, only few have specific audience imaginations for their own outlet or their competition. As regards their own outlet, journalists believe their audiences seek out information based on their interests, while they believe competing outlets' audiences are more interested in being entertained. Particularly traditional journalists think audiences need to be educated about the interest-driven agenda of some peripheral outlets. By examining peripheral and traditional journalists' imagined audiences, this study contributes to a better understanding of the neglected role of audiences in journalistic boundary work. It further indicates which audiences might be underserved even with the increasing variety of peripheral actors.

JOS30 User-journalist relationship II

PP 0856 Expectations of reciprocal interaction: A Q-sort study with journalists and audience members

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Mutual expectations structure and shape the journalist-audience relationship and interaction (authors_anonymized; Loosen & Schmidt, 2012[1]). Transformations of the relationship context, conditions, and modes that are caused by digitalization, such as heightened mutual visibility and expanded possibilities for interaction between journalists and the public, resulted in altered expectations within the journalist-audience relationship (Wilhelm et al., 2021[2]). Key examples of these altered expectations on both sides include new norms regarding transparency and audience

participation (Loosen et al., 2020[3]). While there is a substantial body of research analyzing the expectations that journalists have toward their own roles and work, there is only little research regarding the audience's expectations toward journalists (e.g., Heise et al., 2014[4]; Loosen et al., 2020[3]). This is also true of journalists' expectations of audiences and the mutual expectations between journalists and their audiences, particularly with regard to the aforementioned interaction (Wilhelm & Detel, 2023[5]). It is these expectations that we aim to examine in more detail: *What expectations do journalists and audience members have about interacting with each other? Where do they differ and where do they overlap?*

To answer these questions, we have conducted two Q-sort studies, one with journalists (n = 19) and one with audience members (n = 21) in Germany, which we compare in the proposed presentation. We used a balanced-block design to ensure maximum heterogeneity. In the two Q-sort studies, the participants were given a set of cards, each with an interaction expectation, which they had to sort into a pyramid grid according to their individual assessments. By applying correlation, factor, and regression analysis procedures to the results of each individual sorting process (Watts & Stenner, 2012[6]), the Q method produces a typology with different expectation types that illustrate the diverse subjective viewpoints of journalists and audience members regarding what is important in journalist-audience interactions. The qualitative interviews, into which the sorting procedure was embedded, provide further information on why these expectation types emerged and which aspects influence expectations of journalist-audience interactions.

The field phase of the two Q-sort studies has just been completed and the data is currently being analyzed, revealing different expectation types in the journalist-audience relationship. At the conference, we will present and discuss the results of our completed analysis, highlight its implications and limitations, and identify open questions for future research.

In doing so, the proposed presentation aims to contribute to journalism and audience research by, firstly, providing further insights into what journalists and audience members expect from their interaction with each other. Secondly, our study allows for a comparison of the two sides of the journalist-audience relationship and helps to shed light on where not only similarities, but also differences in mutual expectations prevail.

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JOS31 Alternative media II

PP 0943 Locate alternative media in the digital news ecosystem: A cross-country comparative study of alternative-mainstream audience overlap networks

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Alternative media position themselves as counter-hegemonic correctives of what they perceive to be a media and political mainstream. Relying primarily on digital platforms to produce and disseminate news, they have become increasingly important information sources in today's high-choice media environment. Many thus worry that the proliferation of alternative media outlets will divide audiences into ideologically segregated and radicalized clusters and aggravate polarization of society. Therefore, this study seeks to locate and contextualize alternative media within the news ecosystem.

To do so, we take the audience overlap network approach to examine whether and how alternative and mainstream media outlets share audiences in six European countries, namely Norway, Sweden, Austria, Germany, France, and Spain. We ask the following research questions: To what extent do audiences overlap between alternative and mainstream media outlets? What positions do alternative media outlets occupy in the audience overlap networks vis-à-vis their mainstream counterparts? How do they vary across countries? To answer the questions, we adopt a cross-country comparative design to examine how contextual attributes of the media and political systems influence the audience overlap networks. Specifically, we focus on two factors which constitute the opportunity structure for news production and consumption (Brüggemann et al., 2014; Humprecht et al., 2022), including 1) media systems and 2) alternative political actors' institutionalized access to the public discourse.

To build the audience overlap networks in the six countries, we used the survey data from the Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2020 regarding news media outlets participants reported to use for getting news (N = 12,161).

Following that, we applied the backbone extraction approach to filter out statistically non-significant audience overlap (Majó-Vázquez et al., 2019). Building on the existing literature (Cushion et al., 2021; Heft et al., 2020; Holt et al., 2019), we operationalized the concept of alternative media and conducted content analysis, which identified 39 alternative media sites from the 257 obtained media outlets from the survey data.

Overall, the network structures suggest a rather fragmented media environment where most of the alternative outlets are consumed in isolation. Nevertheless, we observe significant cross-country differences. First, in countries where alternative political actors have institutionalized access to the public discourse (e.g., a far-right party being part of a governing coalition), alternative and mainstream media outlets are more likely to share audiences. This is arguably because such environments may engender a more blurred line between "alternativeness" and "establishment". Second, comparing network centralities across media systems, we find alternative media to occupy a more central network position in the Nordic-type media system where professional journalism is the strongest (Sweden, Norway), compared to those in the Central (Germany, Austria) and Southern models (France, Spain). Particularly, in Sweden where alternative political actors are comparatively marginalized, we observe an isolated, dense, and active alternative media enclave. Our findings shed light on the extent to which alternative media actually breed ideologically segregated clusters and highlight that the distance between alternative and mainstream media in audiences' news diets is a product of the political information environment.

JOS31 Alternative media II

PP 0944 Media systems beyond journalism: Placing peripheral newsmaking on the map

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There is a remarkable blind spot in our understanding of media systems: the absence of novel forms of newsmaking that happen *outside of* veteran institutions and *beyond* established actors (Deuze & Witschge, 2020; Schapals, 2022). These practices and so-called interlopers (Eldridge, 2017) profoundly transform the relationship between media and politics. And yet, neither do they feature in conceptualizations of media systems, nor are they made an element of more rigorous, comparative analyses. In this paper, we take issue with this shortcoming.

To a considerable extent, international comparative research into the intertwining of public communication and politics relies on conceptions of media systems. In that respect, Hallin and Mancini's (2004) contribution has proven instrumental by providing a basic framework for classification. It considers the degree of political parallelism, professionalization of journalism, the role of the state in regulating media systems, and the structure of media markets.

Despite its popularity and widespread use, this concept has been challenged from the outset. Major points of critique concern the significance of parameters and their measurement, their status between empirical categories and ideal types, a preference for structures rather than processes, a pronounced Eurocentrism, the exclusion of digital networked technologies, as well as a lack of a transnational perspective (Hallin & Mancini, 2017; Norris, 2009). In response, several attempts have been made to revise models along non-Western sensibilities (Echeverria et al., 2022; Mutsvairo et al., 2021), define robust indicators and draw out systematic studies (Brüggemann et al., 2014; Büchel et al., 2016; Marques & Vos, 2023), transfer it to other regions (Herrero et al., 2017; Peruško et al., 2021; Richter & Kozman, 2021), and account for changing media environments (Mancini, 2020; Mattoni & Ceccobelli, 2018).

Our endeavor to place peripheral newsmaking on the map proceeds as follows: First, we draw together existing evidence on the significance and state of newsmaking beyond legacy journalism across countries. This is based on 45 country reports that stem from an international research project. Second, we formulate variables that help to assess the extent to which peripheral newsmaking is redefining the media systems framework through (a) shifting professional rules and levels of autonomy, (b) the pluralization of voices and increased partisanship, and (c) changing media market structures with the demise of traditional institutions and shifting audience relations.

Overall, our study adds nuance to the idea of hybrid media systems where rigid structures vanish and give way to overlapping and dynamically unfolding relationships between newsmaking and politics. At the same time, it helps us identify drivers of transformation that accrue from within but have the potential to shake up existing media systems constellations more broadly.

JOS31 Alternative media II

PP 0945 "At that moment, I started losing confidence in mainstream media" – Epistemic understanding of knowledge in counter-hegemonial positions in Finland

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Trust and credibility constitute a solid ground for media users' epistemic understanding impacting how they navigate the media landscape and assess the veracity and legitimacy of news producers (Schwarzenegger et al., 2020).

Some scholars have estimated that low media trust and turning to alternative information sources can undermine the shared perception of reality leading to an *epistemic crisis* (Andersen et al., 2021; Dahlgren, 2018). It means that there is a risk that people no longer share a common understanding on what trustworthy information is (van Dalen, 2020) and how it is produced, consumed and corrected.

Epistemology can be broadly understood as the things that members of the democratic public accept as true in political and social life, that is, the work of legitimising certain types of information as knowledge relative to others (Kreiss, 2019; Lewis & Westlund, 2015). Traditionally, journalistic media have held the authoritative position in an epistemic system of providing information that the public finds legitimate and credible (Goldman, 2011; Kreiss, 2019). However, recent studies suggest that cultural and social identity, especially partisan affiliation in various contexts, shape what people account as a fact and thus basically question the basis of democratic order (Kreiss, 2019; also Flynn et al., 2017; Hersh & Goldenberg, 2016).

In this study, I examine the perceptions of reliable knowledge construction, production and distribution of so-called counter-authorities' and alternative voices taking place primarily in the online environment.

I ask:

RQ1: How do counter-authorities define and understand what is reliable knowledge and from where it can be reached? RQ2: How does counter-authorities' understanding of knowledge challenge the hegemonial epistemology of knowledge and what ramifications it can entail?

To observe these deviant knowledge and truth perceptions, I am conducting 20–25 semi-structured theme interviews among counter-authorities who are active online/offline and have a remarkable number of followers (several thousands). Seven interviews have been conducted so far, most of them face to face. The interviewees come from various backgrounds but the common nominator for them is that everyone could point out a clear occasion or observation when they started to question the trustworthiness of information delivered by mainstream media and began to use other sources. To some extent, the interviewees have been publicly known in Finland but have become *persona non grata* in mainstream media after beginning to openly challenge the hegemonial truth and epistemic knowledge perceptions.

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JOS31 Alternative media II

PP 0946 Articulations, alliances and responses: A strategic action field approach to media criticism

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Journalism and criticism of journalism are fundamental parts of well-functioning and informed democracies. As a powerful societal institution, journalism should be scrutinized and held accountable for its practices and priorities (Holt and von Krogh 2010; Stiernstedt 2014; Wyatt 2007). Recent studies have demonstrated how media criticism today, is vocal and omnipresent, but also increasingly politicized and weaponized by both democratic and non-democratic actors, often combining media criticism with cynicism (Tsfati 2003), anti-press rhetoric (Roberts & Wahl-Jorgensen 2020), and digital harassment (Cheruiyot 2018). Particularly right-wing populist politicians, alternative media and pressure groups have become persistent media critics over the last decades – delegitimizing 'mainstream media' (Van Dalen 2021; Limínga & Strömbäck 2023; Nawzi 2020). A key question is how journalism should meet media criticism protecting its authority and societal relevance (Figenschou & Ihlebæk 2019; Carlson 2017; Cheruiyot 2022).

The present paper applies a *strategic action field approach* (Ihlebæk & Figenschou 2023; Fligstein & McAdam 2011, 2012) to explore media criticism from a relational, holistic perspective. It encompasses the perspectives of incumbents (established news media organizations), governance units (media authorities, foundations, and associations), and challengers (alternative media). The meso-level, actor-centered analytical approach allows for an in-depth analysis of how *core* and *peripheral* actors talk about each other and considers how alternative and established news media can both be the *senders* and the *receivers* of media criticism. Building on 45 qualitative

elite interviews with news editors in established and alternative media, as well as institutional representatives and back-players, the study brings insights into how criticism is communicated, interpreted, and used both as a field resource and as a challenge that must be tackled.

First, the analysis shows a high degree of support for core journalistic values and journalism's democratic purpose, but a mutual skepticism towards how journalism is performed. While established news media criticize the political bias, lack of source criticism, epistemological foundations, and antagonism of alternative media, alternative media actors point to false performance of objectivity, arrogance, and elitism by the mainstream press. Second, incumbents and governance units are deeply ambivalent to whether alternative media actors, positioned on the periphery of professional journalism, are legitimate media critics. This field perception and ambivalence impacts on how they understand and respond to the antagonistic media critique in several ways: It makes incumbents and governance units reluctant to publicly address the criticism or to openly change practices, to avoid validating the voice and position alternative media actors. Further, the boundaries between legitimate criticism, harassment and hate are seen as intertwined, and established actors thus prioritize protecting staff rather than responding to the critique. Alternative media actors, on the other hand, generally resist the criticism of the powerful core, sometimes using it strategically and displaying it to strengthen their position as a challenger by being the underdog, the victim and the less privileged. However, their response must also be understood in terms of what alternative media actors aim to achieve, and their ambition to access symbolic and material resources protected by field insiders (community, subsidies, membership).

JOS32 Fact checking and disinformation II

PP 0947 Comparing fact-checking cultures across nations: A process of divergence or mimetic isomorphism?

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Background

Over the past decade, there has been growing concern among citizens, policymakers, journalists, and academics about (political) misinformation and its adverse impact on trust in democratic institutions and societal polarization (Bennett & Livingston, 2020). Against this backdrop, fact-checking organizations aimed at verifying the accuracy of publicly disseminated (mis)information have flourished worldwide (Stencel et al., 2023). However, existing research is still dominated by case studies from Western regions (Nieminen & Rapeli, 2019); little is known about the work of fact-checkers in non-English-speaking or "Global South" countries, and even fewer studies employ comparative designs. To address this gap, we (1) introduce a *conceptual framework* for comparing fact-checking cultures and (2) illustrate the application of the framework in a *cross-national research design*.

Conceptual framework

We define *fact-checking cultures* as the collective set of practices and norms surrounding the processes of *issue selection* and *information verification* that are shaped by the *organizational roots* of fact-checking units.

The first dimension, *organizational roots*, assesses how fact-checking organizations are entangled with different sectors of society, such as academia, news media, or politics. This entanglement can take different shapes, with authoritarian regimes using fact-checking as a tool of political control (Zeng et al., 2017), while civil society plays a central role in other contexts (Cheruiyot & Ferrer-Conill, 2018). The second dimension, *issue selection*, provides important insights into the landscape of misinformation in a given region and the agenda-setting practices of fact-checkers (Vargo et al., 2018), with previous research revealing potential biases (Dobbs, 2012). The third dimension, *information verification*, is an important means of asserting epistemic authority. This includes how fact-checkers determine whether claims are factual and how transparent they are about the fact-checking process (Humprecht, 2020).

Empirical case study

We chose to compare Brazil and Germany, two countries with different socio-political environments and levels of exposure to online misinformation. Employing a *mixed-methods research design*, we integrate automated, qualitative, and quantitative content analysis of 11 fact-checking organizations and 13,498 fact-checking articles over an 11-year period (2013–2023) and conduct qualitative semi-structured interviews with fact-checkers ($N = 10$).

Preliminary findings reveal several *areas of divergence*. We found that Brazilian fact-checkers are either affiliated with large advertisement-funded media conglomerates or independent start-ups with diversified revenue models. In contrast, German fact-checkers are affiliated with non-profit independent organizations, public broadcasters, or press agencies. Moreover, while Brazilian fact-checkers focus primarily on political misinformation, emphasizing national controversies, the agenda of their German counterparts is characterized by a variety of topics, with a focus on both national and international issues.

Our comparison also reveals *areas of convergence*, including a dominant focus on verifying online misinformation and the strategies and criteria used to monitor, select, and verify claims. Challenges such as high levels of emotional distress or experienced harassment and a lack of institutionalized support structures are evident across countries and organizations.

In sum, our findings suggest that fact-checking cultures can transcend national and organizational boundaries, which can be interpreted as an indicator of *mimetic isomorphism*, where organizations adopt the practices of established peers (Lowrey, 2017).

JOS32 Fact checking and disinformation II

PP 0948 The war in Ukraine through the prism of visual disinformation and the limits of specialized fact-checking. A case-study at Le Monde

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The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 led to a flood of disinformation circulating online. Two elements stand out: the nature of the false information disseminated (many visuals) as well as its quantity, making fact-checking crucial for the coverage of the conflict. Based on a double framework of five semi-structured interviews coupled with an analysis of 48 debunks published between February and October 2022, this communication analyzes how Les Décodeurs, the fact-checking unit of the French daily newspaper Le Monde, responded to the flow of visual disinformation surrounding the conflict. We study 1) to what extent the specific context of disinformation surrounding the war in Ukraine led to new forms of visual disinformation and 2) how did fact-checkers select the content to verify and how did they conduct these verifications. These questions enable a better understanding of the discursive positions that specialized fact-checkers develop about the function of fact-checking in the context of the war and in the broader context stated by previous research. This study focuses on visual disinformation leveraging existing categories of disinformation (Tandoc et al., 2018; Wardle, 2018) while considering the visual aspect within a multimodal approach (Hameleers et al., 2020).

The digitalization of news, combined with the rise of citizen journalism, or citizen witnessing (Allan, 2013), the democratization of photography (Ritchin, 2013) and the emergence of platforms on which to disseminate various forms of contents, has increased tenfold the means to contribute to the informational disorder. The huge number of visuals created daily leads journalists to make choices among the content to fact-check. Gatekeeping in journalism shifts from traditional fact-checking to retroactive "gatebouncing" due to online content creation and circulation (Vos, 2019 ; Singer, 2023). Verification practices face challenges in the continuous (dis)information flow, with image-based disinformation requiring a mix of automated and manual strategies (Thomson et al., 2022). Journalists sometimes lack standardized guidelines for verification, relying on traditional methods and external fact-checking teams (Brandtzaeg et al., 2016, Saldaña & Vu, 2022).

Findings show that fact-checkers only debunk the most visible pieces of disinformation on social networks and these pieces focus on authentic images with misleading captions, rather than sophisticated manipulation. Therefore, previous categorizations still prove their ability to describe the 48 pieces of visual disinformation but we suggest a more refined approach by considering visual disinformation as mainly multimodal. The study uncovers the fact-checkers'role as gatekeepers filtering content gaining visibility through social networks and addressing the challenge of countering viral disinformation while avoiding unintended amplification. It also identifies a blend of shared and individual practices among fact-checking journalists. This includes both manual, pre-digital methods and more sophisticated tools. Finally, interviews reveal limitations in the performance of the gatebouncing function (Vos, 2019). Reconciling reactive and adaptative practices of fact-checking with mid and long-term editorial considerations in a rapidly evolving leads to undiscussed, or "default choices", while disinformation and propaganda about the war in Ukraine will more than likely not have died down by the fall of 2022.

JOS32 Fact checking and disinformation II

PP 0949 Filling the gap? When non-journalists produce and fact-check

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Every day, important facts come to public for the active participation of non-journalists in the production and transmission of journalistic content through a certain App Culture (Rublescki, Barichello & Dutra, 2013). Using the app "Onde Tem Tiroteio" (OTT) as case study, this work aims to discuss the role of the public as the main agent to produce reliable information in territories where journalists cannot cover or do not report.

The app, used by five million people, was developed in Brazil to share information about conflicted territories where journalists are unable to provide a proper journalistic coverage due to violence and the presence of paramilitary groups (Nunes, 2017). In these areas, there is a collaborative activity of a journalistic nature carried out by citizens

for citizens (Reis & Serra, 2021). They verify the information and builds something that resembles news stories. They are the ones who validate the relevance of the information, which is later appropriated by the traditional media. These seek to obscure the authorship of the content, making this not a collaboration relationship, but a dependency relationship.

Among the citizens who use the app, the confidence is formed by strong bonds, built by the feeling of responsibility and the desire to share reliable information, collaboratively verified, aiming at the common good. Between journalists and OTT, however, trust takes on an ambiguous form: journalists tend to trust the content provided by the app, because OTT is where journalists are not, but they try not to assume who creates the content as a co-creator.

This study is part of a PhD thesis, guided by the assumptions of virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000), we investigated the dynamics of posts during six consecutive months in 2020. We analyze 2,607 alerts that resulted in 46,395 reactions from users and 3,834 comments. The study was complemented with 13 in-depth interviews (Duarte, 2005) with journalists from different Brazilian media outlets.

Keywords: Violence; OTT; Fact-check; trust; Journalism

JOS32 Fact checking and disinformation II

PP 0950 Objectivity or activism? Role (dis)parity among environmental reporters in the Nordic countries

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Journalism is an important source of environmental information to the public as well as a central arena for public debate on environmental issues. The roles of environmental journalists, i.e. the roles they are expected to fill and the roles they perceive as important and possible, shape environmental reporting.

Research on the roles of environmental journalists in the Nordic countries remains scarce so far. To produce novel insights into this topic, this paper examines what the perceived journalistic roles are for those who engage in the mediated knowledge production on environmental issues.

The countries covered are Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The data gathered for the study consists of 20 semi-structured qualitative interviews with professional journalists, five from each country.

Four journalistic roles were identified in the interviews through qualitative text analysis: (1) the role of the objective news provider, (2) the critical watchdog, (3) the sense-maker and educator, and (4) the environmental advocate.

Within the role of the objective news provider, the importance of being neutral and balanced and accurately presenting scientific facts is being highlighted. In the role of the critical watchdog, the responsibility of journalists to be critical of those in power is represented as central. As for the role of the sense-maker and educator, journalists position themselves responsible for their audience, functioning as clarifying and sense-making mediators of environmental issues. Lastly, the role of an environmental advocate includes taking a stance for common good.

The results of this study show that although these roles overlap and are interconnected – meaning the journalists methods and ethics remain the same for all roles – the perceptions of the aims of reporting differ.

Aspects that set environmental journalism apart from other journalistic beats are the level of conflict in the issues, the complexity of climate change, and the scale and gravity of the issues. This do not only impact the environmental reporting, but also have consequences for how journalists perceive their role. It is of essence for the place of media and communication in today's globalized society.

JOS32 Fact checking and disinformation II

PP 0951 Correction of news stories following retraction of scientific papers

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Retractions are a formal practice applied by scholarly journals to withdraw published papers for reasons ranging from non-intentional computational errors to discoveries of fraudulent research. In recent years the rate of retractions across scholarly journals has undergone a rapid pace of acceleration (Van Noorden, 2023).

Because questionable or poor-quality research affects the epistemic reliability of the scientific record, retractions work by flagging problematic papers, with the goal of limiting the circulation of scientific misinformation in academic literature.

However, research has shown that problematic research papers sometimes spread beyond the academic community *before* they are retracted via the media (Serghiou et al., 2021). This poses a question – how should the media, more specifically journalists, deal with retractions of scientific research?

This study addresses the challenges that increasing rates of retractions pose to science journalism and, consequently, public understanding of science. Instead of investigating retractions as a topic of news, we performed a mixed-methods content analysis of media mentions featuring retracted scientific publications on COVID-19 (n = 945) to explore if and how media platforms correct news stories in which the retracted papers previously appeared.

Results show that some media platforms (8%) update or edit news stories, once the scientific publications they feature are retracted, although correction practices are still rare. Media platforms that correct published news stories are mostly the known mainstream news organizations and their affiliates, and popular specialty sites. Yet even among these media platforms, the practice is not consistent. The most common presentation of corrections are top-line statements, notifying readers that the featured scientific publication has been retracted. Media platforms usually inform readers why a retraction took place, but don't always provide clear explanations how exactly the retraction influences the claims presented in the news article.

This talk will question the need of (new) journalism practices that respond to rising rates of retractions in scientific research and enable the public to better understand the causes, meaning and implications of retractions in academic literature.

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JOS33 Youth audience research

PP 0952 Exploring young audience's perceptions of AI-recommended news formats

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News recommendation systems (NRS) have become a crucial part of modern news delivery (Beckett & Yaseen 2023), as it has become increasingly necessary for news organizations to capture and retain audience attention by tailoring content to individual interests, topics and preferences (Raza & Ding 2021; Helberger 2019). However, NRS comes with advantages as well as challenges. NRS is an effective way to capture an audience's attention by matching their news interest and engaging audiences in news (Møller 2022). However, NRS has also faced criticism for potentially creating polarization (Ludwig, Grote & Müller 2023) and limiting news diversity (Karimi, Jannach & Jugovac 2018).

To adapt to the evolving media landscape, news organizations have not only personalized news feeds based on audience content preferences, but they have also diversified news formats, incorporating e.g., podcasts, photo series, explainer videos, reels, summaries, shorter articles, and long reads (Ferne 2017). Much scholarly attention has been given to research on content based NRS (Bastian et al. 2021; van Drunen 2019; Möller et al. 2018). However, very limited attention has been given to understanding how audiences, particularly younger demographics, respond to AI-recommended news formats. News stories might seem appealing to consumers because of the content but the way it is presented also plays an important role (Kulkarni et al. 2022; Kilby 2018).

Our study seeks to address this gap by focusing on AI-recommended news formats, exploring how young people perceive formats customized to align with individual preferences. By emphasizing the audience's perspective, our research aims to uncover insights into the preferences and considerations of personalized news formats compared to personalized news content while also including ethical considerations of audiences.

In December 2023, we conducted 24 qualitative online video research interviews (OVRI) (Heiselberg & Stępińska 2022) interviews with young Danish news consumers aged 18–30. The length of the interviews was approximately 40 minutes, and the sample consisted of bachelor students from various fields atUniversity of Southern Denmark.

In the qualitative data analysis, we examine how this group perceives AI-recommended news formats through thematic analysis. We focus on four different news formats from Danish news organizations: photo series, video, podcast and long read within three different contemporary topics. As part of the qualitative data analysis, we examine the role news formats play in the decision-making around news consumption, and we explore the ethical concerns arising from the recommendation of news formats based on digital patterns and preferences.

The interview data provide insights into whether young audiences perceive AI-recommended news formats as a motivating factor for consuming news and how they view them compared to content-based recommender

systems. In conclusion, weargue that this paper contributes to a crucial understanding of how young news consumers navigate today's complex high-choice media environment.

JOS33 Youth audience research

PP 0953 How exciting does it have to be? Young citizens and the interplay between emotional responses and quality assessments of news

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Despite boasting strong performance in global democracy rankings, Sweden grapples with impending challenges to its democratic fabric (Lührmann et al., 2019). The escalating prevalence of disinformation within an increasingly polarized media landscape has gained notable attention, spurring a proliferation of research studies and fact-checking initiatives to fortify the democratic society against such threats (Bakir & McStay, 2017; Holt, 2019; Waisbord, 2018; Allcott & Gentzkow, 2021). Simultaneously, young adults (18–25 years) seem to be progressively distancing themselves from conventional news outlets, choosing instead platforms where emotional narratives reign supreme and adherence to journalistic standards is not necessarily a given (Newman et al. 2023). Given the divergent media consumption patterns of young citizens compared to older generations (Boczkowski et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2020), it is crucial to understand this demographic's conception of news quality. Moreover, the disinformation conundrum is intrinsically linked with contemporary research on democratic innovation, the evolution of representative democracy, and the enhancement of civic practices and forums (Norris, 2011). The challenge of integrating the younger generation into these discussions is a pivotal concern in this discourseThis paper investigates how young citizens construe quality of news and the factors that influence their perceptions of news quality. Despite the abundance of news sources available, young citizens may struggle to distinguish between high-quality news and misinformation. Through qualitative interviews with young citizens (ages 18–25), combined with analysis of biometric lab data (eye-tracking and GSR), we explore the interplay between actual and measurable reactions to pieces of news and stated quality assessments, highlighting key factors that shape their perceptions of news quality, including trust and source credibility, relevance, and format. We find that these factors interact, at times paradoxically, with one another to influence young citizens' judgments about the quality of news. Our results show that news items that cause more emotional engagement are not necessarily ranked higher in quality than less engaging news items. Our results have implications for news organizations and media literacy education programs, and we suggest areas for future research on news consumption and young citizens.

JOS33 Youth audience research

PP 0954 Tradition meets innovation: Youth news consumption in the era of influencers, celebrities and ordinary people as news providers

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For young people, social media has become one of the main sources for consuming news (Newman et al., 2023), where content produced by social media personalities (SMPs) such as influencers, celebrities or ordinary people complements or even replaces traditional journalistic sources (Molitorisz, 2020; Newman et al., 2023). SMPs have been linked with lacking transparency and professionalism but also with empowering capabilities to promote political participation and interest (Borchers & Enke, 2022; Schmuck et al., 2022; Shehata & Amnå, 2019). Yet, there are significant research gaps left in this field: First, while SMPs can address both formal and lifestyle-related political topics (Gonzalez et al., 2023), we do not know for which topics young people prefer which sources. Second, it remains unclear how much trust youth still places in legacy media like newspapers or TV news in comparison to modern sources like SMPs. Third, we lack knowledge about how they encounter news by these different sources. Drawing from the PINE model (Matthes et al., 2020), we distinguish in this study between first- (encountering and not further engaging) and second- (encountering and further engaging) level incidental news exposure.

Method and Results

An IRB-approved quota-based cross-sectional survey was conducted in Austria. (N = 569, age 16 to 25 years, 49.6% female). Participants responded on 6-point Likert scales. Ordinary people (M = 3.85, SD = 1.72), influencers (M = 3.55, SD = 1.75) and daily newspapers (M = 3.46, SD = 1.69) were the most popular news sources among youth. Overall, SMPs (M = 3.54, SD = 1.45) were used more frequently (p<.001) than traditional media (TM) (M = 2.79, SD = 1.06). However, TM enjoyed significantly (p<.001) higher trust levels (M = 3.31, SD = 0.82) than SMPs (M = 2.95, SD = 0.98). "Hard" news consumption (e.g. politics, economics) was predicted strongly (*Beta* = .467, p<.001) by TM use but also to a weaker degree (*Beta* = .084, p = .018) by SMP use. "Soft" news consumption (e.g. sports, technology) was predicted more strongly (*Beta* = .365, p<.001) by SMP use than by TM use (*Beta* = .240, p<.001). Regarding usage motives, intended social/political engagement (*Beta* = .163, p<.001) and habit (*Beta* = .087, p = .043) predicted

TM use, while receiving modern (*Beta* = .139, *p* = .003) and opinionated content (*Beta* = .134, *p* = .004) as well as habitual use (*Beta* = .123, *p* = .009) predicted SMP usage. Second-level incidental exposure was the most common way to receive news on social media among youth (*M* = 3.54, *SD* = 1.27). It was predicted significantly by SMP usage (*Beta* = .147, *p* = .002), while first-level incidental exposure was predicted by TM usage on social media (*Beta* = .276, *p*<.001). Intentional news consumption was predicted by both T(Social)M (*Beta* = .270, *p*<.001) and SMP (*Beta* = .099, *p* = .015) usage.

Implications

We show for the first time that SMPs as a news source for youth are more frequently used in comparison to traditional channels although legacy news sources still enjoy more trust than SMPs, thereby creating a usage-trust gap (Swart & Broersma, 2022). Our findings suggest that a preference for opinionated and modern content as well as for soft news may explain this gap. For democracy at large it raises concerns that TM is linked to encountering news incidentally but subsequently not further engaging with it, as this behavior can have detrimental consequences for political participation (Nanz & Matthes, 2022).

JOS33 Youth audience research

PP 0955 Exploring young media users' understandings and origins of media trust. Evidence from qualitative interviews with German adolescents

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While research on the socio-political causes of media trust and the role of media use is already thorough, research on how trust and distrust in news media are developing in the socialization process and which aspects are decisive during this process is still in its early stages. Adolescence is a particularly relevant phase of political socialization, and it is plausible that the link between media (dis)trust and other politically relevant attitudes starts here. Today's adolescents consume news in a very specific way – they almost exclusively rely on online media with a wide range of information, from legacy media to individual influencers (Hasebrink et al., 2021). A news-find-me perception and news snacking characterize their everyday media use (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2017).

Against this background, we analyze the following research questions: 1) What do adolescents understand by media trust? 2) Which heuristics are used by adolescents to assess the credibility of news media content? 3) How do adolescents' individual characteristics as well as their perceptions of and experiences with the media shape their media trust?

To address the need for a deeper understanding of what media trust means to young adults, our study is based on qualitative guided interviews (Garusi & Splendore, 2023), including a think-aloud section, with 50 young people aged 14 to 19 in Germany. Recruitment was carried out by a market research institute which drew a Germany-wide sample with quotas regarding education, gender, and place of residence. The sample consisted of 24 male and 26 female adolescents. Five research assistants who had received intensive training conducted the interviews via Zoom in July/August 2022. They lasted between 21 and 60 minutes (average: 38 minutes). The university of [anonymous]' ethics committee reviewed the study design and gave a positive vote. The transcripts of the interviews were analyzed with qualitative content-structuring analysis and software assistance of MAXQDA (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023).

The results show among others that heuristics for assessing the credibility of media content and, consequently, media trust or distrust, can be systematized on two different levels. Firstly, respondents name some of the established quality criteria known from journalism research such as factuality, diversity or balance. However, they also mention other criteria that primarily lead to distrust, such as data breaches, striving for profit, clickbait, and paid content. Secondly, personal experiences with media reporting and perceived media representation play a role, such as a discrepancy perceived by the adolescents between their own experience and how an issue is portrayed in the media.

The understandings of media trust heuristics differ significantly among the adolescents surveyed. While some adolescents make very well-founded arguments, others draw on more superficial heuristics which are therefore more prone to flaws (e.g. blue verification mark or popularity cues such as a wide reach as indicators of trustworthy content/sources). The presentation will compare these different types of young media users in terms of their trust and distrust characteristics.

JOS34 Journalistic values II

PP 1038 Less of the same? Long-term analysis of topic diversity in Swiss News Media Reporting

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Despite massive structural changes in the public sphere, journalism still plays an essential role in democratic societies. By covering a broad spectrum of topics, the media enable citizens to inform themselves about a plurality of relevant events and thus participate in political life. Even though any one person or organization can communicate to the public on social media and potentially reach a large audience, legacy news media still play a significant role and hold substantial gatekeeping power when it comes to bringing issues into the public sphere and on the political agenda (Harder, Sevenans & Van Aelst, 2017).

Nonetheless, journalism faces enormous challenges in the digital era, as advertising revenues diminish and willingness to pay for news remains low. These developments have exerted considerable economic pressure on news outlets, increasing audience orientation while simultaneously leading to a growing market consolidation and a reduction of journalistic output (Costera Meijer, 2020). These trends might impact not only the extent, but also the diversity of reporting – including the number and diversity of topics covered in news media. There are clear indications that crises like the COVID-19 pandemic put additional strain on topic diversity in news media following a strong focus on few crisis topics.

Topic diversity is considered a key element of journalistic quality, which in turn is viewed as fundamental to the functioning of democracies. Therefore, diversity in news media reporting is a typical concern of media policy and regulation. Understanding the long-term effects of dwindling resources and societal crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic, on the diversity of topics in news coverage is essential for experts and policymakers in the field of media and communication.

But research on long-term trends in the development of topic diversity is scarce. Therefore, this study aims to assess the long-term trajectory of topic diversity in three major Swiss newspapers between 1998 and 2022, covering approx. 2.5 million articles. Building on previous studies that captured topics computationally, we applied the BERTopic natural language processing technique for topic modeling across our dataset. We conducted 18 separate model runs, each with a varying total number of topics ranging between around 1'700 and 26'000 topics. Using established measures for diversity and concentration (Herfindahl–Hirschman index and Shannon entropy), we assess the number and diversity of topics in the news over the period of 25 years.

Our findings show that the absolute number of topics covered in a given outlet per month has decreased substantially over time, but that topic diversity relative to the number of articles published had stayed moderately stable up until the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The loss in topic diversity during the pandemic was unprecedented in scale and duration. These findings underscore the importance of understanding the long-term effects of resource constraints and societal crises on topic diversity in news media reporting.

Costera Meijer, I. (2020). Understanding the audience turn in journalism. *Journalism Studies, 21*(16), 2326–2342.

Harder, R. A., Sevenans, J., & Van Aelst, P. (2017). Intermedia agenda setting in the social media age. *The international journal of press/politics, 22*(3), 275–293.

JOS34 Journalistic values II

PP 1039 Metajournalistic discourse on sports journalism: Sports media reporting on sexual and gender-based harassment

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Sports journalism has long held the reputation as the toy department of media houses for not taking up the role of a critical watchdog (Rojas-Torrijos & Nölleke, 2023). The practiced criticism in sports journalism has mainly been directed at the sporting performance itself, which has led to the reproduction of capitalist values and the maintenance of status quo on sports politics and power positions (Numerato, 2023). However, global reporting on events such as the FIFA World Cup Qatar in 2022 indicate that critical journalism directed to socio-political and human-rights issues surrounding the sports and done by sports departments of media houses is an internationally emerging phenomenon.

Also, in Finland sports journalists have increasingly taken an active role in reporting about societal problems through sports. One of the most reported issues by sports journalists during the past five years has been sexual and gender-based harassment and the structures and cultures that perpetuate in sports. This study examines the metajournalistic discourse on the work processes of reporting harassment cases and thus contributes to the understanding of the ongoing change in sports journalism. Metajournalistic discourse, that is journalistic talk about journalistic processes, provides a framework for examining how journalists define the boundaries of their work,

ground their expertise and justify their place in the dispersed media world (Carlson, 2016). Moreover, research on metajournalistic discourse allows to increase the understanding of how journalists evaluate news production processes and their related practices (Carlson, 2014).

Data for this study was obtained through expert interviews with 16 Finnish sports journalists who had reported on harassment between the years 2018 and 2022. The interviewees, half of whom identified as female and half as male, represented six national and regional news media. The research data was analysed with the means of applied thematic analysis (Guest et al., 2012). The interviews showed that reporting harassment incidents requires a considerable amount resources, mental capacity and emotional support from the surrounding work community. The work processes described by journalists related to encounters with the victims of harassment, information gathering and source evaluation, internal editorial processes, personal and communal debriefing and feedback processing. In the processual description, the discussion often turned to journalistic ethics and legalities well as journalists' objectivity and subjectivity.

The study concludes that sports journalists use professionalism as a discourse to secure their legitimacy and authority in the increased competition for the public's attention with other media actors (see Weisbord, 2013). Additionally, the study indicates that in their ambition to move from entertainment and performance reporting to socio-political critical journalism, sports journalists engage in paradigm repair in their metajournalistic discourse (see Hindman, 2005; McEnnis, 2023). However, this ambition does not seem to be fully shared as the responsibility for reporting on harassment is not evenly distributed but remains on the shoulders of certain journalists. This causes internal friction in sports media departments and contradictions in sports media's intention of rebuilding their reputation.

JOS34 Journalistic values II

PP 1040 The many faces of subjectivity in journalism: A multidisciplinary discourse analysis using linguistics and machine learning

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To mitigate the inherent subjectivity of the news-making process, journalists use several writing techniques. This "strategic ritual of objectivity" is realized through a range of neutralizing mechanisms designed to mask the journalist's personal opinions in the content of the text. In the digital era, understanding how to measure how much a press article is influenced by its author's personal opinions and emotions is an important matter (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2020): the dynamics of subjectivity in press discourse not only impact the credibility and trustworthiness of news sources but also have far-reaching implications for media literacy, shaping how readers interpret and engage with the information they encounter (Ojala, 2021). Disambiguating facts from opinions online is becoming more complex inside the informational disorder induced by the growing presence of AI-generated articles, fake news, and polarized content on social media.

We employ various methodologies to enhance our understanding of the mechanisms underlying subjectivity in press discourse, and we refine automated tools for classifying news and opinion texts. This research is set at the crossroads of journalism studies and natural language processing, and focuses on French language. Our corpus consists of 80,000 articles identified by their authors as news or opinion pieces and published by four Belgian and four Canadian media.

First, we draw up a state of the question of opinion classification with linguistic methods. Then, using statistical models for text classification, we measure the predictive power of 30 state-of-the-art linguistic features of subjectivity for identifying news and opinion articles. We find that some features, such as the overall concreteness of the text or the ratio of negations, have more weight than others in predicting the class of an article.

In parallel, we fine-tune the transformer model CamemBERT, pre-trained on French data, for classifying news vs. opinion articles. The accuracy of this model is higher than the statistical feature-based model, but its overall computational cost is higher. Using attention-based explainability methods, we explore which textual elements have the most influence on the transformer model's decisions. Among other features, discourse markers and deictic (context-related) words are elements to which this large language model grants much attention for our classification task.

The observations made through those experiments are then confronted with the results of a qualitative experiment involving thirty-six annotators tasked with highlighting markers of subjectivity in press articles. The results show that human readers are particularly influenced by the presence of expressive punctuation and modal verbs in assessing the overall subjectivity of an article.

Our findings contribute to a better understanding of the many ways in which subjectivity may be constructed and perceived at the textual level in French-written journalistic discourse.

Ojala, M. (2021). Is the age of impartial journalism over? The neutrality principle and audience (dis) trust in mainstream news. Journalism studies, 22(15), 2042–2060.

Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2020). An emotional turn in journalism studies? Digital journalism, 8(2), 175–194.

JOS34 Journalistic values II

PP 1041 An experimental study on the potential of discursive journalism to mitigate polarization

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Democratic societies face growing societal polarization (e.g., Carothers & O'Donohue, 2019) – especially regarding conflict-related topics, i.e., controversially negotiated topics that are linked to wider, e.g., political, ecological, or economic (intra-)societal conflicts. Considering the media's important role in shaping societal debates, more research is required on how media coverage can be used as a tool to minimize polarization (e.g., Kubin & von Sikorski, 2021). We address this research gap and argue that, to mitigate polarization in its different forms (*ideological*, *affective*, and *perceived*, e.g., Lelkes, 2016), reporting on conflict-related topics requires a journalistic approach that goes beyond a neutral-objective presentation and focusses on contextualizing and evaluating the available information. Hereby, the normative concept of *discursive journalism* (Brosda, 2008), which applies the principles of Habermas' (1984, 1987) theory of communicative action to journalism, offers great potential. Discursive journalism is grounded in three pivotal implications (Brosda, 2008): *Multi-Perspectivity*, *Rationality* and *The Journalist as Advocate of Discourse*. Latter assigns journalists a dual role in discourse representing both a disseminator of information and an active discourse participant (Brosda, 2008).

Despite its potential for addressing conflict-related topics, the concept has so far only been considered theoretically. Therefore, this study aims to examine, to which extent discursive journalism can contribute to mediation between conflict parties and mitigate polarization tendencies *(RQ)*.

We conduct an online survey (N = 2500) in experimental design using video stimuli targeting the audience. We have developed a first operationalization proposal for practical application of discursive journalism considering the implications separately in YouTube and Instagram layout. The study involves 12 videos on a conflict-related topic, presented in talk-show *(Advocate of Discourse)* and news-report format *(Multi-Perspectivity, Rationality)*. The objective is to measure, among other aspects, potential changes in attitudes regarding the topic. To operationalize *Multi-Perspectivity*, the experimental group (EG) report includes different perspectives depicting that all affected by the topic are participating. *Rationality* in the EG report is operationalized with a strong focus on facts and references. The journalist as *Advocate of Discourse* in the EG video actively controls the course of debate by providing background information and contextualizing the participants' statements.

This study is still work-in-progress, but findings will be available for presentation at the conference. Apart from understanding how journalism can mitigate polarization, the study creates an impact by operationalizing and experimentally testing a normative theoretical concept in practice.

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JOS34 Journalistic values II

PP 1042 Courage and Resilience as journalistic values under Authoritarianism: Carl von Ossietzky and his journalism during the 1920s Weimar Republic

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The autonomy of journalists and media freedom is increasingly under threat. The latest report by Reporters without Borders (2023) shows a noticeable decrease in global media freedom. The number of countries classified as

favourable environment for journalism has dropped to merely 8 out of 180 countries. Worryingly, this trend can be observed in many countries previously considered as stable and liberal democracies with functioning critical media systems such as Hungary and Poland (Gajlewicz-Korab and Szurmiński 2022, Schimpfössl and Yablokov 2020), and even the United Kingdom (Guardian, 8 November 2022).

Holtz-Bacha (2022: 46) reminds us that "press freedom can never be considered secure, and it is vulnerable even in established democracies". The relevance of critical and courageous journalism remains undisputed and reflects in the awarding of the Noble Peace Prize to journalists such as Maria Ressa of the Philippines and Dmitry Muratov of Russia in 2021.

Following this line of thought, this project aims to identify the capacity of journalism to operate under changing circumstances of increasingly right-wing and/or authoritarian tendencies within democratic countries – or how do journalists retain independent critical voices when facing threats of oppression?

I explore this pertinent issue through a study of the life and works of German journalist Carl von Ossietzky (1889–1938). Despite having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1935, little is known about Ossietzky in the English language. As editor-in-chief of German-language Die Weltbühne during the Weimar Republic in the 1920s, Ossietzky was a vocal critic of Hitler's rise to power. This ultimately led to his death at the hands of the Nazi regime.

The paper presents findings of the archival work in Germany, employing close reading techniques, to examine his contributions and political relevance as a journalist operating under increasingly threatening conditions.

In doing so, this paper will focus on the role of immaterial values in journalism such as resilience and courage – and how they matter within the journalistic profession. While work on journalistic resilience are gaining track (Relly and Waisbord, 2022), courage as intrinsic and idealistic journalistic quality can be understood as "taking risks [as] part of the job" (McCaffrey, 2019. : 220).

In this sense, the paper will engage with the concept of "moral courage" proposed recently by Feinstein (2023), who argues from a psycho-analytical perspective what motivation journalists display to explain their rationales for their work under difficult circumstances and, often, authoritarian conditions.

Alongside this it raises the question of how journalistic role understandings might change in face of authoritarian menaces, proposing that presenting facts alone is not sufficient, but that truth needs to be advocated.

This will help to identify lessons around resistance and courage of journalists working under authoritarian/totalitarian regimes.

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JOS35 Safety II

PP 1043 "It really depends on how tired and stressed you are when it happens..." – A diary-interview study on harassment and intimidation of journalists

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Harassment and intimidation perpetrated by organisational outsiders has been increasingly recognised as a significant stress factor and a risk to contemporary journalists' wellbeing. Rapid changes in modern communication environment combined with growing political polarisation and media hostility have accentuated these harmful phenomena, resulting in mounting concerns regarding the long-term effects on journalists and press freedom.

While there is a growing base of empirical research exploring the effects of harassment and intimidation targeting journalists, majority of this data has been collected using surveys or one-off individual interviews. This research seeks to expand this knowledge and widen the methodological scope by combining solicited research diaries and recurring interviews to explore how these behaviours both online and offline are experienced, reflected, and negotiated by journalists over extended period of time. The approach enables exploring the emotional and psychological reactions and stress related to harassment and intimidation, but also makes it possible to identify factors that sustain and enhance journalists' resilience.

The sample comprises of 19 Finnish professional journalists. To obtain distinct perspectives, journalists with varying demographic backgrounds who specialise in topic areas previously identified as prone to harassment and intimidation were selected. The research data consists of diary entries and supplemental material provided by participants during period of six months (January 2023–June 2023) complemented with three semi-structured interviews with each participant. The interviews took place in the beginning, middle and the end of the data collection, which allowed us to revisit and elaborate on experiences and reflections contained within the diary entries.

The data was analysed using qualitative thematic analysis. The findings demonstrate that there is very significant individual variation related to how harassing and intimidating behaviours and their implications are experienced by journalists. The results indicate that these experiences are shaped and influenced by plethora of interconnected factors ranging from individual's personality and conceptions of professionalism to perceived organisational, collegial, and societal support. Additionally, these experiences and their implications are not fixed and steady but rather they accumulate, develop, and transform over time. Exposure to harassment and intimidation can, therefore, lead to multiple effects and outcomes that extend from frustration and anger to anxiety, fear, and self-censorship, and to increased resilience and determination. Moreover, these sentiments can spread in work communities through social ripple effects.

This research provides further evidence that harassment and intimidation do not target or affect all journalists equally, but particular combinations of individual and professional factors make certain journalists more vulnerable to detrimental effects. Besides offering an empirical contribution to the field of harassment research, the findings can help newsrooms organise their support measures strategically. By providing special attention and support to at risk journalists, journalistic organisations can seek to mitigate negative implications and detrimental ripple effects of harassment and intimidation more effectively.

JOS35 Safety II

PP 1044 Pre-empting normative failure? Journalism students' concerns about social media spaces

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Appropriate conduct and profile-building on social media are one of the many challenges with which journalism students in the digital, networked era must grapple. Journalists' concerns around the "emotional labour" of having an online presence (Miller & Lewis 2020) coupled with risks of fatigue and burnout (Holton et al 2021) means social media can be an additional strain in an already demanding job. This study, based on focus groups with 40 students from three Irish universities, explores how young journalists interpret the risks and pressures associated with establishing an open, public-facing social media presence.

The students' concerns manifested in five key areas. Firstly, they were becoming familiar with anti-journalist sentiment which was confronting, as the critical perception of their profession clashed with their idealistic motivations for studying journalism. Secondly, the actual demands of dealing with negative content were offputting, with many fearful of what threats lay ahead and how to overcome criticism; students were also witnessing what established, high-profile journalists encountered, something that normalised attacks on journalists' character. Thirdly, students were grappling with a lack of civility and rationality in public discourse online: as one said, "there's always some kind of response that is uninformed … the way that people can kind of gang up together on you. It's like a pack mentality". Next, there were apprehensions about who was 'watching' them online, and the need to self-censor, because of various fears: around their safety if they reveal too much personal information; around 'cancel culture' if they make mistakes; and around potential employers' perception of their conduct. This last point is pertinent for students given the pressure to find work and be 'employable'. Finally, the work-life balance and labour implications of being 'always on' was a stressful prospect: participants feared addiction, as well as burnout amid blurred working hours and the potential inability to switch off.

We suggest that these concerns undermine how students feel about their potential to successfully achieve their professional goals. It is conceived of as "pre-emptive normative failure" and may lead to a desire to leave journalism before they have even begun their careers. This feeling of being unable to achieve professional ambitions has been documented elsewhere among working journalists (Siegelbaum & Thomas 2016:387), described as a "deep commitment to the normative functions of journalism but a growing realisation that external pressures are contributing to 'normative failure' – the fear of inability to execute these functions". However, the prospect of this normative failure being present among those who have not yet properly started work is worrying for the sector's sustainability.

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JOS35 Safety II

PP 1045 Individual skills and impractical IT structures: How journalists in Germany counter digital security threats

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Surveillance, cyberattacks and doxxing: journalists' sensitive data is at great risk. Digital security is thus one of the most important skills and heightened awareness and effective prevention measures are needed. This study takes stock of these skills and supportive infrastructures in German media companies.

Since Edward Snowden, journalism research has increasingly focused on digital security and possibilities of ubiquitous surveillance (Bell & Owen 2017). Organizations concerned with press freedom have compiled guidelines on digital security. However, excess of information, tools and sometimes contradictory recommendations can confuse journalists rather than help (Berdan 2021).

Two major discourses have emerged: deterrence effects ("chilling effects") of surveillance (Eide 2019) and technological responses to cyber security threats (Henrichsen 2020). So far, there are still many research gaps in this area and only few studies focus on journalism in Germany.

In our study, we examine the German status quo using qualitative and quantitative methods. The study is based on a theoretically guided, diverse selection of 21 media companies that were offered free workshops on digital security (plus two sessions for freelance journalists). At the end 230 journalists participated. The mixed methods approach is based on an online survey and participant observations during the training sessions.

The initial results from the survey show a rather diffuse awareness of digital security risks. Participants state that they are aware of risks, while at the same time remain uncertain in how to respond. The vast majority of respondents is "unsure" about their employer's measures and expressed a desire for further training and more practice-oriented IT departments.

The often-cited "chilling effect" (Penney 2017) seems ambiguous: respondents often state that other journalists are likely to avoid publication due to surveillance or threats. However, when it comes to their own behaviour, they tend not to believe that they would withhold anything. On the contrary, respondents state frequently that they would initiate new investigations, use new technologies and learn new skills because of digital threats. These results reinforce critical voices from surveillance studies that criticize the blanket assumption of "chilling effects". Journalists are not limited to silence and hiding, but can use their skills strategically.

However, this requires appropriate digital skills and practice-oriented infrastructures. The next step of our research project will be to identify and constructively develop these in dialog with the media companies involved in the research.

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JOS35 Safety II

PP 1046 Contours of uncertainty: Experiences of journalistic precarity in Serbia's postsocialist capitalism

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Precarity has become a dominant condition of the contemporary neoliberal labor market due to the increasing flexibilization of working arrangements. Contrary to standard employment relationships, precarious work is characterized by financial uncertainty, job insecurity and limited access to social benefits and protections. Journalism is not immune to this trend; the profession's declining working conditions are marked by reduced incomes, widespread layoffs, diminishing advertising revenues, and weakened union presence.

Despite the growing body of literature, the perceptions of journalistic precarity in non-Western political economies and media systems remain largely unexamined. The aim of this paper is to explore how journalists experience precarity within the unique framework of postsocialist capitalism (Bandelj, 2016), prevalent in former socialist countries of Eastern Europe. We focus on Serbia, a nation undergoing decades of economic transition, accompanied

by rampant political polarization. The processes of privatization, deregulation and globalization resulted in the politicization of the economy and the rise of informal institutions, which continue to shape the living and working conditions of journalists today.

We explore the experiences of journalistic precarity in Serbia through the lens of Rick and Hanitzsch's (2023) theoretical model on journalists' perceptions of precarity. Our primary interest lies in understanding how objective conditions and individuals' experiences of work and uncertainty vary considering the distinct and divided political and economic configurations of the Serbian media market. Our methodology involves conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 25 journalists. Participants will be selected to reflect the diversity of political and economic factors theorized to shape perceived precarity in journalism. This particularly refers to the ownership structure and the business model of the media, i.e., whether it is privately, publicly, or state-owned. In the case of privately-owned media, we distinguish between for-profit enterprises and civil society or community media, as this distinction, beyond business orientation and organization size, bears significant implications on journalistic work. In addressing the political factors, we situate the selection process within the polarized Serbian environment and, as such, include media that report in favor of the government and those that are critical. On an individual level, we differentiate between the type of contract journalists have, i.e., permanent, part-time, piece work, etc. Finally, our selection will also be sensitized to encompass experiences across age and gender spectrum within the profession.

This research underscores the need for contextualizing journalistic precarity, particularly concerning variations in political economy and governance. By doing so, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of precarity in diverse capitalist systems, highlighting the specific challenges faced by journalists in postsocialist countries.

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JOS36 Data journalism

PP 1047 Shifting epistemologies of data journalism and the audience turn: A systematic literature review

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Research on data journalism is mostly focused on the production of data-driven news by news organisations or collaborative teams. Its core questions often relate to organisational setups (Stalph, 2020), new demands for technical skills (Schaetz, Lischka & Laugwitz, 2023), software and tools, or access to data (Bounegru & Gray, 2021). Data journalism allows new ways of knowledge creation and storytelling (Coddington, 2015), and thus changes professional routines as well as news consumption patterns on the audience side – as public discussions of COVID-19-related data during the pandemic have shown (Bisiani et al., 2023). These shifts in the epistemology of journalism through data-based practices of investigation and analysis became more prominent in journalism studies, and increasingly consider the broader ecosystem of practitioners in data-driven knowledge creation (Morini, 2023; Ramsälv et al., 2023). However, broader calls for an 'audience turn' (Swart et al., 2022) in journalism research have not yet resonated in data journalism research, apart from some first interventions in this direction (Stalph, Thurman & Thäsler-Kordonouri, 2023). This paper seeks to map possible directions of future research in this domain, based on a systematic literature review of data journalism research published between 2018 and 2023 in international journals.

Drawing from a body of over 120 articles, we created a thematic sample of 38 articles in which shifts in epistemologies of data journalism are directly or indirectly addressed. Through open and selective coding, we identify four main themes of shifts in data journalism epistemology, to answer our research question: *Under which themes are shifts in the epistemology of data journalism addressed in research literature between 2018 to 2023?* These four themes include I) the theory of journalistic knowledge creation, II) practices of data journalism and their relation as well as challenges for traditional professional journalistic practices, III) modalities of participation in the creation and interpretation of data journalism, and, to a lesser degree, IV) issues of perception and engagement with data journalism from an audience perspective. In our discussion, we relate these findings to a) the audiences of data journalistic products, and b) the potential of data journalism for cross-sector collaboration with other stakeholders in society. We identify a research gap on audiences' perception of data-driven news. In addition, participation in different phases of data-driven journalism production (Appelgren & Jönsson, 2021; Hamm, 2022; Palomo et al., 2019) relates data journalistic practices to other domains of professional data work such as civic tech, citizen science, or smart city developments (Author, 2023; Baack, 2018). In this broader ecosystem of practitioners, audiences of data journalism include not only citizens but other (local) actors who use journalistic data sources for their own objectives and purposes (e.g. NGO's or municipal authorities). Our paper thus proposes that shifts in epistemologies of data

journalism allow for an 'audience turn' in research that addresses how knowledge created through data journalism is used for, interpreted in, and transposed to policy, civil or other knowledge domains, thus realising the democratic function of journalism through new kinds of data-driven knowledge practices across sectors.

JOS36 Data journalism

PP 1048 Exploring the infrastructure of news online: The significance of metadata for journalism

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News has always been categorized in terms of genre and topic, and in terms of hard or soft news, to name a few labels. For example, from 1851 an onward the index staff at the New York Times manually kept a record of what was printed in the news. Today, the file cabinets are largely obsolete for daily use, but categorization and classfication of news is as important as ever. From the 1990's and on, the media industry began to rely on metadata, sometimes explained as "data about data", as a means to describe news content online using new or existing taxonomies of content, often in combination. Metadata are added in the HTML source code of a webpage and serve multiple functions. First, they describe what each news article is about and how topics and themes relate to each other, making metadata standards essential to preserving news reports for historical reference and for re-purposing elements of previous stories in current news production. The structure that metadata provide also makes website content adapt to different screens and in news distribution, for example via voice assistants. Metadata are an indispensable basis for recommender systems, and they are a prerequisite for web crawlers to index news to appear in social media newsfeeds and in search results. Metadata taxonomies are often developed and maintained in collaboration with entities outside the news industry, e.g. tech companies, highlighting the importance of scrutinizing dynamics of power in deciding what is most significant in the news, e.g., which events are worthy of being labeled and distributed, and how these labels are operationalized across the larger infrastructure of the web.

This research argues that studying metadata taxonomies and the actors involved in developing and maintaining them is an empirical gateway to understanding the infrastructure of news in its most granular form. It asks: Which taxonomies are in use for structuring news content, and which entities govern the most widely used taxonomies for structuring news content? Finally, the research discusses the implications this has for journalism. To do this, the research employs thematic analysis to analyze software documentation, publisher guidelines, taxonomies, and official communication from entities involved in developing and maintaining these taxonomies. These underexplored empirical resources can further our understanding of not only practices behind developing digital infrastructures, but also what follows in terms of what media organizations can do with their local infrastructure affecting the distribution and reach of journalistic content.

JOS36 Data journalism

PP 1049 Diversity as capital: Exploring intersectional diversity in data journalism

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The role of diversity in journalism has been framed as a normative imperative aimed at representing a variety of voices and perspectives (Napoli, 1999). There is a growing understanding that diversity in journalism is also a matter of diversity in the workforce.

Data journalism, a data-driven subfield of computational journalism (D'Ignazio, 2021), brings forward novel opportunities for understanding the potential of diversity in journalistic workforce. Although data journalism has been described as predominantly white and male (D'Ignazio, 2021), female data journalists possess cultural capital that compensates for a lack of social capital (Vuyst, 2018). Beyond gender, individuals possess multiple interconnected social identities that overlap and interact to influence their experiences of oppression and privilege (Crenshaw, 1991). Researching intersectional diversity acknowledges these unique experiences from all intersections of society. Therefore, the present study aims to enhancing the understanding about the influence of an array of individual diversity characteristics on capital forms, as conceptualized in Bourdieu's field theory (1983, 2018), and thus power structures in data journalism. We pose the research question:

How do intersectional diversity characteristics of gender, migration background, and social background influence capital and power structures in data journalism?

Empirically, we conduct in-depth interviews with n = 13 data journalists with diversity characteristics in German public-service broadcasters, daily newspapers, research networks, and online news outlets. Germany represents a nation with ongoing gender equality efforts, yet with disparities remaining in the representation of diverse groups in journalism.

Findings show that female and male data journalists have similar skill levels, indicating similar cultural capital. However, male data journalists tend to receive more recognition and encouragement. Female gender was perceived as a potential advantage in certain situations, such as playing the "diversity card" for career opportunities. Female gender can both hinder and facilitate economic and social capital acquisition.

Migration experiences also reveal a paradox relation to capital acquisition. Individuals with a migration background reported challenges in fitting into the cultural norms of journalism, but also highlighted unique perspectives and expertise they bring to the field.

Social background plays a significant role in capital acquisition for data journalists. Privileged social backgrounds facilitate the acquisition of cultural capital in form of higher education. In contrast, economic constraints impede the ability to take on unpaid or low-paid internships, which limits access to data journalism for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This cultural-capital entry barrier explains a homogeneous academic education of data journalists.

The findings highlight the paradoxical interplay between social background, gender, and migration for capital acquisition in data journalism. Individuals may simultaneously experience both advantages and disadvantages based on their intersecting identities. Our study emphasizes the importance to investigate how gendered expectations, norms, and biases shape the ways in which individuals perceive themselves, their capabilities, and their opportunities within the field.

Regarding implications for journalism practice, promoting inclusivity and diversity within data journalism requires efforts at the entry level. Providing equal opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds would include to lower the educational barrier, which is reported to be irrelevant anyways, and focus on qualities such as data curiosity.

JOS36 Data journalism

PP 1050 Building data confidence: Impact of academia on journalistic practice

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For several years COVID-19 was the main topic in news. Reporters had to up their data skills to analyze the spread of the virus, daily death numbers, the progress of vaccinations etc. It is safe to claim, that the pandemic assisted an ongoing change in newsrooms worldwide: the need for updated journalistic skill-sets due to datafication. This change, in progress for already decades, has been also labelled a "quantitative turn" (Coddington, 2015), a "computational turn" (Loosen et al., 2015) and the "expansion of open data movement and of data-driven journalism" (Engebretsen et al., 2017). Not only is the logic of newsrooms changing, but also the skills expected by the industry and offered through journalistic education. Multi-skilling is a term often used here (Beckett & Deuze, 2016; Himma-Kadakas & Palmiste, 2019; Larrondo et al., 2016; Örnebring, 2010; Örnebring & Mellado, 2018).

Ongoing datafication has kept researchers debating questions like whether or not journalists should add coding to their set of skills (Foust & Bradshaw, 2020; Thurman et al., 2017) and if universities should rethink their "traditional trade school focus on interviewing and storytelling skills" (Nisbet & Fahy, 2015: 232). The study at hand contributes to the discussion of whether universities – and other institutions offering journalistic education – meet the current needs of professional journalism. It does so, focusing on data skills of Estonian journalists in a post-COVID-19 pandemic setting.

The paper is based on both quantitative and qualitative research. First, an extensive survey – data collected in Estonia late 2022/early 2023 for the global Worlds of Journalism study. The Estonian national block of this study was designed to ask journalists themselves to evaluate their skills. A representative sample (n = 226) of media professionals across public and private media sectors – print, television, radio and web – was reached. Preliminary results show a difference in how confidently the journalists rate their data skills, which correlates with their background – specifically journalistic education or the lack of it. But what is also visible, is that more advanced data skills like writing code or even visualizing data were rated poorly (f.e less than 1% claiming to be very good at coding).

The survey is followed up with semi-structured interviews with journalists (n = 8). Focusing on a selection of journalists, who evaluate their data skills to be good, the goal of the interviews is to get insight into how they optain(ed) these skills. Does a difference emerge between journalists who have academic journalistic education and those who do not?

Since the skills of Estonian journalists have been studied in the pre-COVID era (Himma-Kadakas & Palmiste, 2019; Kõuts-Klemm, 2019; Örnebring & Mellado, 2018), this offers an additional chance for this paper to map and analyze any differences. From what is visible so far, the results would step into dialogue with Wihbey (2017) concluding, that journalists with a higher degree of academic preparation and statistical literacy were more likely to engage with research. But also agreeing, that data confidence is something that requires lifelong and self-directed learning (Bobkowski & Etheridge, 2023).

JOS36 Data journalism

PP 1051 Novel Epistemic Systems in Journalism: Merging Bellingcat and Military intelligence practices for coverage of visual imagery from Ukraine and Gaza

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For outside spectators, the Russian invasion of Ukraine happened at an unprecedented level of transparency. The Russo-Ukrainian War is one of the most visually documented conflicts in history. Digital cameras, operational images and other visual sensorial data are through the internet made available to outside spectators. It has changed and challenged how the media reports the conflict. Through participant observation and interviews with 13 participants of a special Norwegian fact-checking unit, Faktisk Verifiserbar – created to investigate visual imagery from Ukraine (and later Gaza) on behalf of Norwegian media outlets shortly after the invasion in February 2022 – this article identifies the methodological inspiration for Faktisk Verifiserbar's verification of visual material, as well as the challenges or concerns do they encounter in their process.

According to The Economist (2022), the Russian manoeuvres leading up to the invasion represented "a coming-out party for open-source intelligence", as a swelling community of enthusiasts and professionals dabbling in Open Source Intelligence-style analysis (OSINT) tracked the build-up of forces near the border, through satellite imagery and various open sources of information. The public was simultaneously privy to declassified intelligence reports from multiple countries. Prior to the invasion, the US president directed the country's intelligence services to "strategically downgrade intelligence to warn Ukraine and the world about Russia's plans", ensuring the publication of a steady stream of detailed intelligence assessments relating to Russia's next moves (Barnes & Entous, 2023; Holmgren, 2023; Strobel, 2022; Zegart, 2022). Similarly, the UK's defence ministry started to publish "intelligence updates" to the public via tweets multiple times a day (Adam, 2022; Lawless & Madhani, 2022). These developments set the scene for two dominant actors in the information space of the war in Ukraine: the online OSINT community and the established intelligence community. In Norway, these actors proved central to the coverage from the specialised newsroom Faktisk Verifiserbar.

This study finds that rather than working with established press practices from organisations such as the BBC, AP and NYT, epistemic practices and training from actors outside the traditional realm of journalism, specifically Bellingcat and the Norwegian Military Intelligence services, were adopted for journalistic purposes. One reason is that the complexities of the verification work did not square well with the traditional binary epistemology of journalism (e.g., real/fake, trustworthy/untrustworthy) (Steensen et al., 2022). Because the verification procedure often rendered the team convinced about some factual aspects of the material (typically *where*) but uncertain about others (typically *when*), such uncertainty left the material "stuck" in a state somewhere between verified and unverified. This frustrated the Norwegian media organisations who were supposed to make use of the visual material in their coverage, sometimes leading to them skipping verification entirely, by rather publishing the content alongside a disclaimer about its origin, veracity or representability. The study finds that Faktisk Verifiserbar sought epistemic practices outside journalism to mitigate epistemic gaps that can often occur when the press seeks to make binary truth claims from a broad range of visual imagery of unclear and speculative origin.

MIP01 New challenges for media industries

PP 0084 The dynamics of datafied employee evaluation in media work

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In recent years, datafication has become an increasingly prevalent part of everyday life. Datafication is referred to as collecting, storing and visualizing data for strategic purposes. Data gathering permeates most digital spheres of society. In media organizations, datafication has commonly led to following audiences and journalistic products through analytics, thereby also turning qualitative work processes and media workers into quantifiable metrics. When data becomes the instrument for assessing the performance of media workers, datafication can potentially lead to dehumanizing work experiences. The aim of this study is to understand the dynamics of manager-subordinate relationships in datafied work in media organizations through perceptions regarding evaluating and being evaluated through analytics.

We draw on in-depth interviews with 25 employees of a public-funded, Nordic broadcasting company that relies heavily on audience metrics in decision-making and evaluation of employees. We interviewed both employees without managerial duties (N = 17) and employees whose position included managing or supervising others' performance (N = 8), allowing us to understand the perceptions and dynamics around datafication through the experiences of both managers and subordinates.

The findings show that while the ways of using audience analytics for evaluation varied from formal, organization-wide rewarding systems to individual team leaders' feedback practices, data was overall a crucial tool for media management. The perceptions of datafied evaluation practices varied and oftentimes even conflicted between the informants. Many managers and subordinates aligned with the perception that audience metrics system was an easy tool of evaluation, as it was anyway present in everyone's daily work. Data even appeared as an "incorruptible" way of assessing the performance of media workers. At the same time, using data for evaluation was perceived as too simplistic and pressuring. Especially informants in subordinate positions expressed finding data-based evaluation neglecting their professional skills by highlighting simply the popular content topics and obscuring the amount of work put on making stories. Additionally, certain data-based incentives were perceived to be applicable only to journalists, which was perceived as unfair by those in other roles in media work, such as producers and those in charge of the layout of the online news page. Interestingly, informants in managerial positions described themselves as carefully planning and carrying out evaluation so that data would not be the only method of assessment, but informants in subordinate positions described data as the only measure of their performance. This finding indicates that the role and importance of data in evaluation is understood differently at different levels of the organization, which can lead to challenges in organizing feedback and managing well-being at work.

Overall, the findings of this study shed light on the dynamics of data-driven management of media work by showing how datafication plays a dominant role in management practices of media organizations, while the experiences related to evaluation through data are multidimensional and often conflicting. This study develops actionable insights for media management, although the contributions can also be applied more broadly to data-driven monitoring and quantitative evaluation of work.

MIP01 New challenges for media industries

PP 0085 Paper and screens: Negotiating value between "old" and "new" educational media at industry fairs

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Digitization is changing education. Politics and innovation drives schools to implement and educate in and through digital technologies. This affects not only education itself, but the production of *educational media*. Traditionally books, produced by publishers and distributed by book retailers and libraries, digitization enables a wider range of formats and actors that can create them.

Digital media's role in education is a subject of debate. Some argue school children learning about and through digital media is not only inevitable, but something that could revolutionizing learning, making it more efficient, personalized and motivating for pupils. Others warn about digital development, meaning that traditional, usually printed educational media is the optimal medium used for learning and that too vast or fast implementations of digital media in schools could be harmful for education.

Most research on digital educational media, as well as common debates on the topic, focuses on implementation and use of educational media, the content that is mediated or the ("proven" or imagined) "effects" or affordances digital educational media has for teaching and learning, often compared to traditional print media. A perspective that is seldom taken is that educational media is a type of *media*, produced in a field of media production with its'

own actors, stakes and value practices. What happens when established actors in the field of publishing need to adapt their production to a digitized climate? What happens when the dominance of established actors can be challenged by global "big tech" companies or local start-ups? What happens to the value of printed schoolbooks when new, digitized formats enter the field? Studies have examined how the book publishing industry is affected by digitization (Bhaskar, 2013; Bergström et.al., 2017; Thompson, 2020) but the specific subfield of educational media is often forgotten about.

This paper examines how the value of digital versus printed educational media is negotiated through industry actors in the field of production. It does so by looking at a specific *industry events* – the Gothenburg Book Fair, the "largest cultural event in the Nordics" and the SETT Fair, the "Nordic leading meeting place in innovative learning". Fairs are here considered as *tournament of values* (Moeran & Strandgaard, 2011) or *instances of consecration* (Broady, 2002), arenas where *valuation practices* in forms of contestation, justification and negotiation of value takes place. Based on field notes, transcribed stage talks and marketing material from event participants, the study will contribute to new insights on values and power struggles in a specific field bordering the field of media production and education.

MIP01 New challenges for media industries

PP 0086 The Toon Gaze disorder: A content and transmedia analysis of children's animated series in Italy

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The contemporary hybrid media context (Chadwick, 2017) is daily redefined by the systemic, infrastructural, and transmedia impact of platforms (van Dijck et al. 2018; Hepp, 2020; Leonzi, Marinelli 2022).

The paper presents the results of a four-year research whose purpose is to describe the formation of a dominant production frame, defined in the terms of a "Toon Gaze effect", capable of influencing the modes of representations within animated series available on major platforms SVOD.

The research aimed first at analyzing the ethical-behavioral and aesthetic traits and the narrative dimension and character system of the animated series considered to check the potential generation of forms of cross-stereotyping and hypersimplification (Krijnen, van Bauwel, 2022; Streicher, 1974; Walsh, Leaper, 2020).

In this perspective, the proposed concept of "Toon Gaze" has been defined as a potential media dis-order resulting from predominant production logics that can influence the processes involved in creating, spreading, and consolidating media representations of reality.

To this purpose, first an analysis of a textual corpus of over 300 episodes belonging to 12 animated series (six aimed at preschool-aged children, six intended for higher-aged audiences between 6 to 12 years old) was conducted through a content analysis as an inquiry (Krippendorff 2018), conducted at multiple levels of detail. Secondly, a possible transmedia map was reconstructed for each of the 12 series considered, which led to the analysis, in consideration of a transmedia logic based on spreadability and extractability, of delivery and ancillary products such as toys, merchandising, clothing, school products, and other forms of co-branding (e.g., in food).

Through analyzing media content and streaming platforms as well as conducting transmedia analysis, interesting results emerged. One noteworthy trend is the apparent contradiction between the incorporation of creative and productive logics of the media industries by the toon gaze to ensure greater accessibility, visibility, and recognition, and the proliferation of stereotypes in the representation of series dynamics. These same logics have also led to the affirmation of particular commercial logics from a transmedia perspective, which permit to define the toon gaze as a effectively media, cultural, and social disorder.

MIP01 New challenges for media industries

PP 0087 Illiberalism and popular culture – Netflix's "The Witcher" in the CEE periphery

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The media landscape in the east of Europe is riven with contradiction: illiberal, populist governments and parties have promoted ultra-nationalist, anti-globalization and anti-EU agendas and have made significant efforts to centralize the media industries under direct government control or government-friendly oligarchic ownership. At the same time, these states have aggressively courted and nourished global media and technology investment as a key component of their brand and own economic viability. Budapest and Warsaw have grown into media production centers with state-of-the-art studios and postproduction facilities to provide services to runaway productions eager to take advantage of high tax rebates, a skilled labor force and low labor and environmental regulations. While the Polish, and Hungarian governments overtly position themselves against the ethos of (neo) liberalism, global capitalism, consumerism, gender equality and racial diversity that giant OTT platforms represent

and overtly embrace, they also court and rely on the financial investment, job opportunities and soft power these media companies contribute to state economies and nation brands.

This paper unpacks the economic, political and cultural implications of these apparent contradictions. Unlike the Anglo-American context, research in television, media and creative industries in Central and Eastern Europe has been scarce and has not scrutinized the dynamic changes to industrial strategies and business practices enabled by runaway service industries and collaboration with global entertainment giants, such as Netflix. On the other hand, research on the politics of media governance and political illiberalism has focused on the news media, revolved around freedom of expression related to populism and has evaded entertainment media and popular culture altogether. To investigate this unspoken economically-driven alliance between postsocialist right-wing states and global streaming services, I use the case study of Netflix's series *The Witcher*, based on Polish fantasy writer Andrzej Sapkowski's book series and previously adapted into a popular video game, and filmed almost entirely in Hungary. Against the broader ideological and historical context outlined above, I explore the series' transmedial, international production history and cross-platform marketing strategies in the context of the local Polish and Hungarian service industries' operations, as well as state policies and European Union regulations. The production context for *The Witcher* demonstrates that illiberal politics can easily go hand-in-hand with neoliberal order in the domain of entertainment. The paper goes on to discuss the long-term implications of Netflix's local disruption into Eastern-European media industries.

MIP01 New challenges for media industries

PP 0088 Assessing COVID-19's impact on media industries: The case of Austria

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The COVID-19 pandemic has been a catalyst for widespread uncertainty and significant shifts across multiple spheres of life, highlighting the media industry's dual role as a communicator of crises and a sector profoundly affected by financial consequences. Every part of the media, from content creation to dissemination, faced disruptions due to halted productions, declining ad revenues, and continuous cost reductions. Austria's media landscape, already facing challenges like revenue decline, reduced print readership, fragmented TV consumption, and a shift towards digital advertising platforms, encountered intensified difficulties during the pandemic, pushing the industry towards rapid transformation – or perhaps not?

This research aims to comprehensively document, analyze, and compare the transformational impact driven by COVID-19 within the Austrian media industry. It focuses on two core questions: *What changes did the pandemic drive in Austria's media landscape? And how does the Austrian population evaluate the development and quality of media coverage during and post-pandemic?*

Accordingly, the study adopts a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Firstly, it undertakes document analysis, conducting an extensive literature review (n = 325) encompassing scientific journal articles and international market and industry reports. This examination enables a detailed comprehension of the COVID-19-related transformative processes within the media industry on an international level, highlighting local responses. Secondly, it employs quantitative surveys across fourteen waves from 2020 to 2023 (n = 1000 per wave), focusing on various aspects of media consumption during the pandemic, media reporting, trust in established media as vehicles for social discourse, and the overall dissemination of COVID-19-related information.

Results, structured within Bleyen et al.'s (2014) innovation framework, reveal that COVID-19 primarily induced transformations at the process level of the media industry. These changes spanned the entire value chain, affecting content creation, production, and distribution (e.g., data-, solution and service journalism; glocalization vs. hyperlocal focus; "digital first" mindset; news automation; AI and robotics), as well as financing and business models (e.g., entrepreneurial journalism, platformization, membership, donations, franchising); consumption (news diet, media fatigue); and working environments (virtual newsroom; technologization; communities of practice). However, the pandemic's transformative impact on content level was relatively limited, prompting inquiries into the innovative capabilities of content-driven businesses and the primary drivers of innovation within the media industry.

Regarding media coverage, the picture is rather gloomy: 46% of respondents express dissatisfaction with coronavirus coverage. Additionally, double the number of individuals still believe that the media contributed to crisis escalation (30%) compared to those who believe it helped contain it. This aligns with persistent news avoidance rates (35% in November 2020, 40% in early 2022, and 37% in November 2023) and declining trust in both media (-28%) and journalists (-26%).

Combining these methodologies offers an initial overview of COVID-19´s impact on the media industry, while spurring valuable discussion on comparability and generalizability of results (globally vs. smaller markets vs. local

specifics), and learnings useful for managing other crisis and preparing for future ones. This dialogue would enriche the study's outcomes and contribute to a deeper understanding of the media industry's adaptive mechanisms in times of crisis.

MIP02 Time in media industries – Production processes, time management, and continuity

PN 027 Patterns of Continuity and Change in Media Industry Digitalization

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Time passes fast, is a common perception of the impact of digitalization on the media industries (Thorburn, Jenkins, & Seawell, 2003). As new technologies for production, distribution and consumption make their entry, predictions of disruptive change tend to dominate. Notions of "shocks to the system" or "punctuated equilibrium" (Ryfe, 2006) suggests that changes in technology come in the shape of external forces that have a sudden and unexpected impact. While change is without a doubt a big part of digitalization, lines of continuity also mark the same processes of transition, not least because media industry digitalization remains embedded in institutionalized structures and conventionalized practices (Colbjørnsen, 2015; Herbert, Lotz, & Marshall, 2018). According to political science scholar Kathleen Thelen, institutional change takes the form of "shifts that are gradual and incremental, though cumulatively transformative" (Thelen, 2010, p. 45). As such, even potentially disruptive technologies such as streaming and generative artificial intelligence will need to find their place within certain established structures. In this perspective, time, in fact, passes slowly, as industrial structures and conventions, along with traditions and habits in user groups and audiences contribute to slowing down the pace of change. This presentation deals with patterns of continuity and change, exemplified by developments over the past 20 years in the media industries for music, books and video games. Drawing on concepts from organizational and institutional theory, such as "incremental change" (Thelen, 2010), "path dependency" (Arthur, 1994) and "embeddedness" (Granovetter, 1985), an argument is put forth about media industry change which is less technology-centric and more attuned to economic, social, cultural and political forces. As such, this is also a call to look critically at predictions of tech-driven communication disorder, in relation to this year's conference theme, and for communication and media scholars to continue focussing on how dominant structures and relations are maintained in times of change. In the presentation, I revisit discourses of change and disruption in the three industries, exemplified by research and trade press articles, paying specific attention to the phenomena of streaming (Spilker & Colbjørnsen, 2020) and artificial intelligence (Jin, 2021).

MIP02 Time in media industries – Production processes, time management, and continuity

PN 028 'There is Never Enough' – Time as an Economic Resource in Factual TV Production

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The aphorism 'time is money', commonly ascribed to Benjamin Franklin (Labaree 1961), dominates most commercial production processes in capitalist societies. Television is no exception. In a marketised and highly competitive industry, economic considerations take priority in decisions about what content to produce and how to realise it. In this context, time is perceived as an economic resource with measurable financial implications. However, not everybody's time is worth the same and the financial value of time differs according to type of activity and the nature and number of resources (including people) involved. Based on an interview study with workers in unscripted factual television in the UK, this paper explores the impact of managerial conceptions of time as an economic resource on television production processes and conditions. In particular, the paper considers the impact of cost rationalisation measures, aiming to produce more content in less time and to be less dependent on individuals. This includes a shift in the production process of serial factual programmes from a single linear 'auteur' model to a multi-linear mode of production, where production stages are not being completed subsequently but in parallel. Related to this development is a transformation in division of labour and occupational profiles between production departments.The paper discusses the consequences of these shifts for the work of self-shooting producer/directors in British television. Self-shooters in factual television are expected to singlehandedly, and often simultaneously, carry out the work of previously separate jobs during location filming, such as camera operator, sound recordist, director and producer. These additional responsibilities have severe implications for time in the production process. The paper explores how time-related pressures exacerbate the challenges of working on location, compromising worker wellbeing and production standards. This includes extremely long workdays and poor work-life-balance, a lack of managerial and inter-departmental understanding of time requirements when shooting on location, and insufficient time scheduled to complete work tasks and carry them out safely and to high standard. The paper highlights how time is valued differently in this context as 'working time' comes into conflict with time needed for worker wellbeing, health and safety and meeting professional production standards. Labaree, L. (ed.) (1961) The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 3, January 1, 1745, through June 30, 1750. New Haven: Yale University Press.

MIP02 Time in media industries – Production processes, time management, and continuity

PN 030 Production Time, Motivations, and Mindsets in Two Different Media Industries

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Despite many new studies of media industries during the latest 10–15 years, much is still unknown about certain aspects of media production. Because most production studies tend to only focus on one single media industry, there is especially a lack of comparative studies (Herbert, Lotz, & Marshall, 2019; Sundet & Colbjørnsen, 2021) that address the differences and similarities between these industries. In particular, we know from singular studies of each media industry that there are fundamental differences in their production processes, especially in terms of "production time", defined as the time it takes to make a typical product in that industry. Some media products take many years to produce (e.g., a video game) while others take only a day or a week to make (e.g., a podcast). In order to better understand the consequences of these differences, I have conceptualised a study that goes to two opposite ends of these industries and compares video game production with podcast production to answer the following research question: How do practitioners in these two industries understand and manage production time?Using a maximum variation sampling strategy (Neergaard, 2007), I have chosen these two industries as well as two cases in each industry that comprise a varied sample of different sizes (small vs. large organisations), maturities (new vs. established), geographical locations (Copenhagen vs. Aarhus), and content genres (e.g. comedy vs. historical content). I have studied these four cases and their production processes by conducting observations and interviews with podcasters and video game developers in 2022–23.The findings demonstrate that while the podcasters' quick processes give them little time to reflect on their finished (or even failed) programmes, the video game developers describe a need for "time to grieve" over failed projects and this shows how production time can lead to very different mindsets. However, practitioners in both industries distinguish between two ways of working that relate to time management: "Passion projects" that they give more time, effort, and emotional investment vs. "bread and butter work", which they want to finish quickly and for which they have lower expectations. Similarly, they all describe spending more time on products that they feel motivated to make but that they also assess their products' value based on how much time they spent on it. These findings indicate that production time is connected to their motivations and mindsets and that the length of the production time can generally affect their emotional investment in that product. Subsequently, the longer they spend making a product, the higher their expectations and eventual feelings of success and disappointment can be. This relates to theories from psychology about motivations (Amabile, 1996; Eisenberger & Shanock, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000), while studies of podcasters suggest that their motivation can be intrinsic but also connected to personal prestige (Heeremans, 2018; Markman, 2012). Therefore, by studying cases from two opposite ends of the media industries, this paper contributes with a new framework for understanding media production using the connections between production time, motivations, and mindsets.

MIP03 Infrastructures and distribution

PP 0281 The geopolitics of submarine data cables: A network analysis of landing points and cable connections

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The great firewall of China, Russia's ban on Western platforms, and other state-enforced examples of censorship, network shutdowns, and cyber-warfare all testify to a growing fragmentation of the global network of networks known as the Internet. Scholars increasingly enquire into geopolitical conflicts over the Internet, suggesting that "the web seems to be returning to its roots in conflict and nation-state rivalries" (Malcomson, 2016, p. 11). That is, visions of a universally connected "global village" (McLuhan & Fiore, 1968) are increasingly being disrupted and replaced with concerns over processes of "Balkanization" (Hill, 2012) and the emergence of distinct – and often conflicting – Internet regimes (O'Hara et al., 2021). In this paper we argue that the fragmentation of the Internet appears not only in the state-enforced blocking of domains, control of data flows, and recurrent shutdowns of the Internet in particular regions (Björksten, 2022). It is also manifested in the physical cable connections – or lack thereof – between different geopolitical contexts.

Building on existing research into submarine cables (Malecki & Wei, 2009), landing points (Xie & Wang, 2023), and ownership structures (Winseck, 2019), we test the hypothesis that geopolitical interests, alliances, and conflicts shape the connections (not) made. Through a network analysis of global submarine cable routes, we analyze 1) the most central and peripheral countries, their interdependencies, and geopolitical clusters; 2) cable owners and suppliers across contexts; and 3) the historical evolution of submarine networks and their political economies. Through this empirical study, we identify several networks in the network, reflecting ongoing geopolitical tensions, commercial and political partnerships, and historical shifts in the ownership and control of submarine data infrastructure.

We, specifically, find that historical and colonial power structures continue to shape the architecture of the Internet backbone with the US, France, Portugal, and UK being the most central nodes in the submarine cable network. We also find that American, European, and Chinese submarine cable owners and suppliers are currently competing for future control of the global seabed. And finally, we find a shift in ownership structures – from national legacy telecommunication companies collaborating in large consortia to a handful of global Big Tech corporations extending their power across the digital value chain and solidifying future ventures in artificial intelligence, Internet of things, and other high-capacity services.

MIP03 Infrastructures and distribution

PP 0282 Infrastructures at Scale: Directions for political economist studies of data infrastructure

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Phenomena like the increasing datafication of all parts of social life, the surge of surveillance capitalism, and ongoing geopolitical conflicts over Internet traffic have revealed an urgent need for critical analyses of the societal organisation and control of data infrastructures. Providing a map for navigating this complex, multifaceted, and largely unknown territory, the paper follows the paths of infrastructure researchers before us (Bowker et al., 2009; Parks et al., 2015; Plantin & Punathambekar, 2019) to identify different scholarly entry points with varying epistemic underpinnings, strengths, and limitations. More specifically, we argue that ongoing conflicts around the concept of 'infrastructure' (Lee & Schmidt, 2018) reflect deeper discrepancies in epistemic practices that start before and go well beyond what or when infrastructures are – touching upon basic problems concerning the research questions, we ask and how we answer them.

In exploring these contemporary avenues of infrastructure research, we argue that researchers within the field need to be more explicit about the analytical scales of their studies and consider what types of knowledge different epistemic entry points can – and cannot – generate. More specifically, we find that established and prevailing conceptualisations building on the tradition of Science and Technology studies (STS) have led researchers to favour micro- and meso-scale studies, while broader macro-scale studies need theoretical, methodological, and empirical development. As also argued by Hesmondhalgh (2021), a (re)turn to classic political economy (Garnham, 2011; Mosco, 2009) offers a valuable way forward for infrastructure researchers. Scaling up from classic ethnographic sites (Star, 1999), a political economy perspective allows us to address pertinent questions of infrastructural power and technological disruption, and to compare different types of Internet regimes over space and time.

Operationalising this emerging conceptualisation of infrastructure as physical resources that are mutually dependent on – but analytically separate from – institutional arrangements, we propose and discuss empirical strategies for monitoring and comparing the political economies of data infrastructures across geopolitical contexts. Identifying key material components that translate into societal goods and commercial assets, this entails a narrower definition of infrastructures, distinguishing between the physical resources, the actors that supply them, and the regulatory mechanisms surrounding them. This more conventional conceptualisation allows for studies to broaden their analytical scope beyond particular contexts, processes, or sectoral entities.

Illustrating the potentials of the approach, we provide empirical examples from a series of comparative studies of digital infrastructures and their political economies, spanning highly developed contexts in Northern Europe and infrastructurally vulnerable societies in Southeast Asia, East Africa, and the Middle East. By mapping and comparing key technologies that support network connectivity and how they relate to market arrangements and political regulation, we show how political economist approaches to studying digital infrastructure at scale provide a promising outset for empirically analysing and identifying emerging Internet regimes (O'Hara et al., 2021).

MIP03 Infrastructures and distribution

PP 0283 Decoding AI rationality: Comparative analysis of news similarity algorithms

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Fundamental disruptions are expected in extant social, political, and economic systems, as the emergence of artificial intelligence drive automation of decisions that used to be the domain of humans. However, the rationalities that drive machine learning algorithms differ in substantial and often opaque ways from those of humans making the consequences of the transition to AI-driven decision making hard to discern. The consequences are commonly ascribed to imprecision, bias, or "error" in cases where AI systems deviate from human rationality. However, as stated by Amoore (2020), the behavior of an algorithm that we commonly perceive to be erroneous or "mad" is in fact an expression of its specific type of rationality and of specific instances where that rationality deviates from expectations, from common human rationality.

Our paper introduces a methodological approach which operationalizes the erroneous deviations between models and human decision as windows into the rationalities of AI systems. Using this methodological approach, a comparative analysis of the algorithmic models used to predict "relatedness" or "similarity" between news stories by a major Danish news publisher. Similarity scoring has consequences for which stories are exposed to news readers but it is also a complex, subjective, and context-dependent form of classification (Goldstone, 1994) and thus also a rich case for exploring the differences between human and non-human classification. Our analysis compares three distinct machine learning models to a baseline of human annotations: 1) A doc2vec model trained on the publisher's own data, 2) a model constructed with contrastive learning of a pretrained transformer trained on the publisher's own data, and 3) a proprietary and widely used model produced by OpenAI (Ada002). These types of models are central to discovering related news articles as well as a core component in the widely used retrieval augmented generation (RAG) method which power applications of generative AI such as generative search implemented in service such as Microsoft's Bing and Google's Search Generative Experience (SGE).

Our data analysis includes quantitative comparison of the models' predictions and qualitative analysis the critical incidences that display differences between the scoring made by algorithmic models and human annotators. That reveals differences in the estimation of similarity by human and algorithmic models as well as between the different models. The findings are discussed in relation to concrete consequences they have on what news readers are served. Also, as the analyzed models are fundamental for generative AI systems such a retrieval augmented generation, we reflect on the consequences in relation the broader introduction of generative AI systems across societal sectors.

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MIP03 Infrastructures and distribution

PP 0284 The Messenger is the Medium: Newspaper carriers, union struggles, and newspaper development in Sweden during the 20th century

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In this paper we explore the history of Swedish newspaper carriers through the lens of the union struggles within the Swedish Transport Workers' union. This focus allows us to make visible the influence of a profession that has largely been overlooked in media history and in media industries studies. Mobilizing around working conditions, the workers put pressure on the newspapers in terms of the size and weight of the papers with consequences for the editorial work. There was also a strong stance against commercial advertising and additional supplements that had consequences for the financial situation of newspapers. Hence, through their union struggles newspaper carriers directly influenced the outlook of newspapers in Sweden in the post-war era. In extension we consider newspaper carriers as soft media infrastructures that had a crucial role and influence on the formation of the mediated Swedish public sphere.

The paper contributes to a broader understanding of the processes that form the media, by looking beyond the much-chronicled editorial processes and journalistic profession, to work done "below the line" (Mayer 2011) to better understand the history of the press. In media studies in general distribution and more specifically newspaper distribution—particularly the *work* of distributing newspapers—has not gained much attention. Distribution matters have often been treated as part of the media economy and thus discussed on an overarching and structural level while focusing on costs, market structures, and the regulation surrounding distribution. Here we treat distribution as a form of media work and analyses the union struggles and conflicts that shaped this work during the 20th century in Sweden. In doing so, we ask three overarching questions: How was newspaper distribution organized in Sweden during the 20th century? What conflicts and struggles played out between distribution employers and workers? How did the struggles and conflicts between this organization and the associated union affect the form and content of the newspapers being distributed?

Our analysis presents two distinct cases that demonstrate the main argument of the paper: namely, that the routine distribution work of newspaper carriers and their union struggles have affected the development of newspapers in Sweden. The first of these two cases concern the struggles over the size and weight of newspapers and the second encompasses the so-called "war on commercials."

MIP04 Influencers and social media

PP 0395 Social media disruptions in contemporary cultural industries: The case of erotic content creation in Brazil

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This paper examines the role of social media in erotic content creation, questioning how they have disrupted this segment of contemporary cultural production. I contend that erotic content creation is a specific form of content production with working logic and practices similar to the creators' industry (Drenten et al., 2018). The focus is on the thriving Brazilian erotic content creation industry, a microcosm for exploring the role of social media for erotic creators.

The extant literature has addressed the changes in cultural production brought about by social media. On one hand, social media (re)organise cultural production by creating a distinct workplace that shapes working practices to its infrastructures (Poell et al., 2021). On the other hand, they disrupt cultural production through their governance models, establishing opaque guidelines for cultural producers and their content (Are & Briggs, 2023). Nevertheless, these disruptions are to be analysed in the case of erotic content creation.

Social media have always been important for erotic content creation. With the proliferation of fan-based, paywalled platforms among erotic creators, social media became indispensable for building audiences and driving traffic to creators' paid profiles (Easterbrook-Smith, 2023). This dependence has implications for the role of social media in this form of cultural production, which requires further analysis.

This paper is based on broader ethnographic research on Brazilian platform-based erotic content creation and 16 in-depth interviews with erotic creators. Results come from the interviews, conducted between May and June 2022. Respondents were selected by gender identification through social media and snowball sampling. Six were cisgender women, seven cisgender men and three transgender women. Ten were white, three brown, two black and one Caboclo (a Brazilian ethnic/racial identity based on the miscegenation of white and Indigenous people). Interviews lasted one to two hours, and questions revolved around three axes: personal and professional trajectories, work dynamics, and paywalled platforms and social media as workplaces. They were transcribed verbatim and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis.

Findings point to the constitution of social media ecosystems as a workplace for erotic content creation. Due to their dependence on various social media platforms, creators develop shared patterns of use to combine them in specific ways, creating functional differentiation and a rationale for the ecosystem. For instance, while Instagram and Twitter are used to share content previews and build audiences, Telegram and WhatsApp are used to consolidate audiences through explicit content and interaction. Thus, social media promotes more than just cross-platform work, expanding the boundaries of the workplace and demanding practices to suit each platform. In addition, working in an ecosystem requires erotic creators to navigate multiple governance regimes and develop strategies for posting content that is less likely to be banned. However, it is a challenge as erotic work is marginalised and stigmatised, and the governance rules tend to be stricter towards it. Ultimately, social media disrupt both the workplace and the guidelines of erotic content creation, changing where and how it is performed. In doing so, they became key players in shaping the conditions of existence of erotic content creation.

MIP04 Influencers and social media

PP 0396 "Ignore the algorithm, because it could eat you alive": Influencer precarity in the hustling culture

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As social media influencing enters its second decade, there are a growing number of studies on the precarious nature of this work. Most studies establish a link between precarious working conditions and platform governance, examining the lived experience of being governed by algorithmic systems. Scholars have coined spectacular terms such as visibility game (Cotter, 2019), algorithmic precarity (Duffy, 2020) and algorithmic discrimination (Glatt, 2021) to highlight the precarity of influencers' work. They also find evidence of influencers organising against platforms in the form of algorithmic gossip (Bishop, 2019) and engagement pods (O'Meara, 2019). The role of platforms in influencer precarity cannot be gainsaid. Still, a lacuna in this literature has been attention to how the digital intersects with the analogue as worker precarity is refracted through local forms of social, political and cultural organisation (Qadri, 2021). This study examines the working conditions of social media influencers in Slovenia. Drawing on over 50 in-depth interviews with influencers, their social ties and agency representatives the study reveals that being an influencer is one of many hustles people pursue and uncovers the important role that family members and oft-mocked "Instagram husbands" play in the success of the influencer business. The study also shows that influencer income is used to support social reproduction, and maps vibrant gift-giving networks within families. Herein, precarity is alleviated less with platform-centric practices like algorithmic gossip or engagement pods, but

by relational work connecting intimate relations with economic transactions. As a result, influencers in Slovenia have a different attitude toward platform metrics and algorithms, which they view with indifference and abdication, conceptualised as "platform lethargy". This condition was also noted by representatives of influencer agencies, who complained that influencers were unresponsive and often "ghosted" them. We conceptualise platform lethargy as a reaction to the governance of social media platforms, where complementors are aware from the outset that they do not have agency over platforms, and therefore act according to "I do not want what does not want me" and become indifferent. By mapping collective hustles and collaborative practices between influencers and their household members, this study departs from the notion of influencing as individualised labour and shows how precarity is refracted through the local economy and culture. It also shows how platforms intervene not only in the labour process but also in labour reproduction. Finally, it offers insight into how the business model of social media platforms on the periphery is piggybacked on exploiting the local conditions of social reproduction, with platforms free-riding on influencers' social capital. The study is germane to the de-westernisation of cultural production studies and highlights much missed varieties in platform capitalism.

MIP04 Influencers and social media

PP 0397 "I'm an e-commercer streamer, not Wanghong" – The logistical struggle for performing authenticity

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While scholarship on the platformization of cultural production (Poell et al, 2022) mainly investigate the labor figures such as digital influencers (Abidin, 2015), entrepreneurs (Duffy, 2017), Wanghong (Cunningham & Craig, 2017), artist (Bishop, 2023) and other micro-celebrities in cultural industry, the platform workers in different social context is undertheorized, such as the e-commerce streamers in China (Duan et al, 2023). This labor figure is born from the business model called content-ecommerce, invented by Douyin, this business model will promote audience to purchase the real authentic products by streaming the authentic scene, which requires that streamers should handle both content creation and logistical matters (Douyin, 2013). For example, rural residents could sell authentic products through streaming how they labor in the field, which makes them e-commerce streamers. How do them perform authenticity in e-commerce streaming industry? This case will contribute to a typology of platform labor and global perspective on platformization.

Theoretically, I draw on platform labor studies (van Doorn, 2017; Poell et al., 2022; Zhang, 2021) to analyze how e-commerce streamers navigate the tension between platform technicity and dwelling environment to present authenticity online, which is defined as the logistical struggle. I argue their logistical struggle help the e-commerce streaming business reproduce rather than improve the structural marginalization of rural China, because it highlights the economic value of calibrated authenticity.

I conducted one-year ethnography work in four e-commerce teams selling authentic agricultural products. These teams are selected based on their size, location, working experience.

To perform authentic rurality, streamers develop strategies to handle the disparities between platform interfaces and the dwelling environment.

Firstly, entrepreneurs learn how to curate rural life as the gatekeepers according to the technological orientation (Crary 1993). For instance, one team selling garlic, recruits and trains good-looking ladies to perform farm work slowly and elegantly in front of delicately set cameras and lights to claim authenticity, while the real, dirty, and shabby production scene and sweaty farmers are hidden from the streaming.

Secondly, entrepreneurs invest labor to maintain local infrastructure networks (Larkin, 2013). For example, break-downs of power network happen a lot in the rural areas. Streamers are devoted to creating an isolated space for streaming online, with portable generating machine, spare mobile phones, and mobile wifi.

Finally, these streamers carefully select products according to the platforms` data metrics (Nieborg and Poell, 2018). One long-term dilemma for the commodification of agricultural products is that their quality, like size and flavor, is usually uncertain and unpredictable. The audience always become angry and leave low ratings after they receive the not-so-good products, leading to the shadow ban on entrepreneurs. Therefore, entrepreneurs set strict standards and clear categories for the products from farmers. These entrepreneurs also must change their contents and cooperate with another supply chain as the season changes, to always offer the best products and maintain a high ranking and ratings, which also facilitates the penetration of platform logic into rural areas.

MIP04 Influencers and social media

PP 0398 What room is there for policy in personalised media industries?

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Despite cross-national variations in goals and instruments, traditional media policies focus on institutions and formalised organisations as targets of regulation and public support (Donders et al 2014). In the past two decades, digitalisation and the emergence of global platforms as new infrastructures for disseminating media content have challenged these premises by introducing institutions that are less governable from a national standpoint (van Dijck et al 2018, Poell et al 2022). This paper zooms in on a different aspect of digitalisation and its implications for the room for policymaking in media industries: the emergence of influencers as powerful content providers with a strong appeal among young people. Influencers are people commodifying an authentic lifestyle, presenting themselves as public 'personas' to be consumed by others, and using intimacy to appeal to followers and fans (Marwick 2016, Duffy 2017). Based on an extensive empirical study from Norway, we explore the potential role of politics within a transformed, personalised media industry. A total of 28 interviews were conducted with centrally placed influencers (9), agencies specialised in managing the careers of influencers (9), and representatives of legacy media charged with strategy and content production directed towards youth, often involving the use of influencers (10). In addition, we examined Norwegian policy documents in the ten formative years from 2015 to 2024 to identify elements of policy directed at influencers, either as part of media policies, marketing policies or others. Finally, we analyse examples of more comprehensive influencer policies from other national contexts in Europe.

Using the Media Policy Field approach (Steen-Johnsen et al 2019) as a theoretical starting point, we ask *which frames are produced by influencers about their roles and status in national media industries and how these frames potentially transform power structures in the media field as seen by different actors' point of view*. An overarching hypothesis is that influencers seek to define themselves as individuals and not as formal, professional entities or institutions, even though the most successful influencers are significant enterprises in themselves and reach more youth on any average day than most legacy media institutions. If successful, this framing strategy may complicate any regulation attempt and make power structures in the field less clear. Using the existing bits of Norwegian policy and international examples as a sounding board, we finally discuss the room for policy in the new personalised media industries.

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MIP05 Work environments in media and cultural industries

PP 0511 Coping with precarity: Journalists' strategies to find ease in a professionally vulnerable situation

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As a creative craft, journalism has always been vulnerable to precarious forms of employment (Cohen et al. 2019[1]), but with the digitalization of news, the journalistic labor market has experienced tremendous disruption (Örnebring 2018[2]). Today's news media largely operate as cross-media organizations, which is why there is growing concern about the sociopolitical effects of journalistic precarity on the quality of journalistic products and the fulfillment of journalism's public service. Because job satisfaction among journalists has traditionally always been high (Marín-Sanchiz et al., 2023[3]), the journalistic labor market is still far from collapsing. However, since journalists are important actors in coping with this systemic crisis, we have investigated the (moral) stress and survival tactics of precariously employed journalists in order to provide impulses for journalism education that support the development of resilience.

We draw on the transactional theory of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987[4]). The theory posits that if individuals assess a situation as personally relevant yet taxing, they perceive this person-environment relation as

stressful. A threatened livelihood must represent a relevant and threatening situation for the person concerned. In order to cope with this situation, ameliorative measures must be taken, which can be either short-term or long-term, emotion- or problem-oriented, and adaptive/functional or maladaptive/dysfunctional. Our work also introduces the concept of moral stress to journalism research. Moral stress occurs when individual and organizational ethics diverge and can negatively impact job performance, moral awareness, reasoning, and behavior (Reynolds et al., 2012[5]).

Between March and May 2022, we interviewed 27 German journalists (with different contractual relationships in various media) who described their work situation as precarious. The interview guide addressed the journalists' appraisal of what makes their professional situation precarious, individual and journalism-related consequences, as well as experiences of associated moral stress and strategies for coping with the challenges. The transcripts were analyzed in MAXQDA using deductive and inductive categories.

We found that the journalists applied both emotion- and problem-focused strategies to cope: Emotion-focused strategies encompass ignoring and suppressing worries or seeking support such as therapy. Problem-focused strategies encompass seeking off-the-job training, e.g., to learn about entrepreneurial skills, adapting one's own lifestyle to reduce living costs, or sustaining the journalistic job with personal savings, but even taking the final decision to exit the profession. We found particularly worrisome long-term maladaptive strategies such as paying with one's own lifetime and mental health to ensure that the journalistic product matches the personal quality standards. In the words of one of our interviewees: "...I try to keep in mind that I might need to kill myself. I must work until I drop dead."

Our work will provide knowledge to journalism education—with the idea that the more future professionals know about constructive coping strategies, the more resilient they will become. However, we will also discuss the concept of resilience with its ideological (neoliberal) baggage (Tierney, 2015[6]). Furthermore, the findings will be fruitful for professional advocacy to bring about change in a volatile media system.

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MIP05 Work environments in media and cultural industries

PP 0512 Multiple modes of hoping and persisting for good work despite corporate and governmental pressures in Turkish drama production

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With their reception and visibility across the globe, Turkish dramas have disrupted the geography of television production in the last decade. Globally the fifth largest program exporter, Turkish TV industry brings in 350 million USD and 500 million viewers spanning Latin America, Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, and parts of Europe (Kaptan and Algan, 2020: 3). Yet, behind this market success lies the creative disappointment and bodily pains of a volatile workforce. Specifically, the industry's precarious workers must produce their two-hour-long weekly episodes with hectic schedules, across tough geographies, and without sound legal protections (Author, 2022). In an industry that has long suffered from the dual disorder regimes of political-economy and authoritarianism, the advent of global digital platforms have been breathers for the workers. Corporate entities such as the global streaming platform Netflix or the national BluTV promise hopeful spaces of employment, entrepreneurialism, and creative storytelling outside the scope of the industry's gatekeepers and the state's disciplinary gaze. Based on ethnographic research and interviews with Turkey's creative drama workers, I mobilize the concept of hope (Alacovska, 2018; Hage, 2003; Miyazaki, 2004; Zigon, 2009) and examine the extent to which processes of platformization have healed the multiple forms of disorders (e.g. bodily precarity, legal precarity, and censorship) within this industry. I ask: When, why, and in what ways do hopes flourish? How and when do hopes collapse? How do creative drama workers hope as they persist in producing creative work despite corporate and political pressures (Baker and Hesmondhalgh, 2013; Banks, 2017)? Investigating what hope does, for whom, and under what circumstances, I diagnose two different modes of hoping: pragmatist and critical. Based on the findings from the field, I call for grasping hope as a present-oriented and ordinary notion as opposed to its futuristic and grandiose connotations or its definitions as an internal trait and wishful thinking against the odds. Reframing hope in more modest and ambivalent terms where it can be both co-opted and transformative in creative production, I aim to dewesternize hope within the highly Euro-American field of media industry studies.

MIP05 Work environments in media and cultural industries

PP 0513 Beyond #MeToo: Navigating solutions for safer work environments in cultural and media industries

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In recent years, high-profile cases such as the #MeToo movement, revelations surrounding Julian Reichelt's "Boys Club" at Axel Springer company, or the alleged misconduct of Till Lindemann have reignited critical discussions on working conditions within the media and cultural sectors. The susceptibility of the media and culture industry to power abuse and sexual discrimination is rooted in various factors, both theoretically and empirically substantiated. Industry-specific aspects contributing to this vulnerability include precarious employment conditions, such as widespread self-employment, and limited labor protections (Menger, 2006; Loacker, 2010). The prevalent acceptance of precarity, often driven by a pervasive "be there at any cost" mentality, further exacerbates the situation (Manske, 2016; Norz, 2016; Coleman, 2023). Research further highlights the media and culture industry's characteristic "Superstar Economy," wherein a select few, (predominantly white) males, benefit from specific structural advantages, leaving the majority of workers to endure varying degrees of adversity (Kassa, et al., 2019; Prommer & Loist, 2019; Menzel, 2021). While all of these factors are well known (sometimes for years), less research has been done on possible solutions for the media and cultural industries. This is where the present research project comes in. It delves into the complex dynamics of the media and culture realm and aims not only to further unravel the root causes of toxic work environments but to explore potential solutions for the problem.

To this end, qualitative guided interviews are conducted with experts from five regulatory levels in the German music and film industry: Politics and administration, interest groups (associations, unions, and organizations combating discrimination and violence in the industry), funding entities, corporations in the industries, and individual media and culture workers. The project's methodology revolves around five interconnected dimensions, each serving a distinct purpose in unraveling the complexities of the media and culture industry. The first dimension, problem perception, delves into stakeholders' diverse perspectives on the nature and extent of the problem. The second dimension, responsibilities, explores how stakeholders attribute these issues. It investigates whether responsibilities are seen as internal, external, or a combination of both. Simultaneously, it sheds light on who stakeholders believe should take charge in implementing effective solutions. The third dimension, existing measures, scrutinizes the current policies, practices, and initiatives in place to combat the identified challenges. Building on this, the fourth dimension, effectiveness assessment, delves into stakeholders' perceptions of the impact of existing measures. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches, the project can guide the formulation of evidence-based interventions that address the industry's specific needs and challenges. Finally, the fifth dimension, desired/additional measures, explores stakeholders' aspirations for the future to combat toxic work environments, violence, and discrimination. In summary, this project not only contributes to academic discourse but also serves as a catalyst for transformative change, encouraging collaborative efforts across diverse stakeholders to reshape the landscape of the media and culture industry.

This ongoing research initiative is currently underway, with all interviews scheduled for completion in March 2024. Results and their implications will be ready for presentation in timely for ECREA 2024.

MIP05 Work environments in media and cultural industries

PP 0514 Data analytics and AI affecting creative control in screenwriting and production decisions

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Platformization and data-driven decision-making have become essential elements of production processes in the film and television industry (e.g. Navar-Gill 2020; Behrens et al., 2021). Data analytics are used in many phases of decision-making, for example for assessing series' opportunities for success in the future based on the user data of streaming services. Further, generative artificial intelligence and script analysis tools are increasingly used in development stages of scripts and synopses. While struggles over control typically define authorship in film and television productions (Caldwell 2008), it is not clear how AI-driven and datafied practices currently reorient these struggles.

In our ongoing study, we explore Finnish screenwriters and other television professionals' stances to data analytics and generative AI in the context of screenwriting. Our data involves two data sets. First, we conducted 32 focused interviews from April to December in 2023. The biggest occupational group (14 interviewees) consisted of screenwriters (including producer-screenwriters and actor-screenwriters). Most interviews were based on a visual elicitation method in which the participants were shown visualized scenarios depicting how data and artificial intelligence might be used in television productions. Second, the data includes ethnographic field work in the two television productions in Finland during spring and summer 2023. The analysis is based on close reading of the

interview data from the perspective of creative control and authorship in media work as well as questions of data asymmetry in production practices.

Our main goal is to examine how sense-making of AI and data analytics produce and orient notions of creative control (see Siciliano 2021, 3–4) and authorship in television production processes. Particularly, we focus on screenwriting with the following research questions:

RQ1: How do perceptions of potentialities and flaws of AI tools support or complicate human creativity and capacities in screenwriting?

RQ2: How does varying access to user data affect television professionals' decision-making on scripts?

The tentative results indicate that data analytics and AI tools may blur some dimensions of creative control and make decision-making partly non-transparent in production processes. While Finnish screenwriters and producers emphasized the protection of human authorship and control against the AI-made content's predictable or schematic quality, many of them were ready to use AI tools in the generation of new ideas. A restricted and controlled availability of user data of streaming platforms and television networks may decrease screenwriters and producers' sense of control towards their own products. However, screenwriters highlighted that data can't disregard the importance of human experience and interpretation in their work. Interestingly, commissioners and executives often emphasized the importance of human collaboration and interpersonal negotiations in decision-making regardless of their regular access to user data, which devalued to some extent the significance of data analytics in production processes. Based on our data, it seems that the rapidly generalized but mostly undetermined uses of data analytics and AI would need more open discussion in the field in order to prevent the future prospect in which experiences of diminished creative control or non-transparent ways of knowing will gain ground across television productions.

MIP05 Work environments in media and cultural industries

PP 0515 Fortnite's cultural impact: Examining epic games' marketing strategies and social dynamics in gamer communities

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This presentation delves into the digital gamer communities where the video game Fortnite is shared and reconstructed through digital conversations within entertainment contexts. Fortnite, a social game, competes with social networks, particularly among the younger demographic. The analysis explores the cultural industry of Epic Games and examines the company's role along with its marketing strategies (Hesmondhalgh, 2019). We consider the messages originating from the game distributor in Spain and those from Fortnite gamers engaging on social networks.

The study focuses on the significance of Epic Games' marketing strategies when viewed through the lens of the cultural industry and fandom (Sandvoss, 2015; Lacasa, 2020). These strategies, centered around monetization and their impact on the fan community through specific messaging, can potentially influence the gaming community's social dynamics, order, or disorder. While gamers may perceive themselves as acting independently, the study reveals the asymmetric role of the company in guiding their conversational activities.

Considering methodology, the study employs a mixed-method approach to analyze digital texts and Spanish conversations surrounding the Fortnite video game. Specifically, it combines data science (Dimas et al., 2023; Sivarajah et al., 2017) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021)

The data collection period spanned from May 18 to July 5, 2021. A total of 71,526 unique users, referred to as message senders, were included in the analysis. Moreover, 435,365 mentions (posts) were analyzed using big data scraping techniques to classify and describe their evolution over time, complemented by conventional qualitative analysis methods. We defined 49 categories, which were further grouped into eight thematic cores.

The findings will be presented based on the research questions that guided this study. First, the conversation content is examined to understand the extent to which both the industry and influential users use the social and personal context of the game and other dimensions to engage with gaming communities. Second, we study the trends in the number of mentions over time to identify critical events in the game's production context that shaped the role of Epic Games and sure followers in driving these conversations. Last, specific conversations are explored to gain insights into the values and objectives of Epic Games and prominent users in the community. These results show how the industry maintains an asymmetric position relative to other users, influencing the direction of digital conversations about the game related to its marketing strategies.

About the implications, the study will interest professionals and academics dealing with the video game and cultural industry because it shows the role of digital conversations in analyzing gamer engagement with the community and the role of prominent users, both gamers and the industry voice. The results may help optimize the cultural

industry marketing strategies. Focusing on the implications for the gamers who participate in the community, findings the need for strategies from formal or informal education contribute to creating a critical consciousness of the messages of the cultural industry.

MIP06 Film, theatre and music production

PP 0623 Tracking small-country films across international festivals: A big-data approach

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Small countries produce increasingly more films as their audiovisual industries expand, especially across Europe (Ibrus & Rohn, 2019). However, these countries face challenges in distributing their films internationally, often leading to limited, primarily domestic, exposure for their productions (Hjort, 2007). One potential solution to this problem could be utilising film festivals as a platform for showcasing small-country films to international audiences and securing distribution deals. The sub-industry of film festivals shapes film marketing and distribution processes and can offer a way for small country productions to gain wider recognition and reach a broader audience beyond their domestic market (Czach, 2004).

We analysed data from the Cinando database operated by the Cannes Film Market (Marché du Film) to understand better the extent of film festival participation for films from countries of different sizes and income levels and the origin diversity of the film festival circuit. Cinando is a leading online platform that supports hundreds of film festivals and markets and provides film professionals with services for rights sales, investments, and business-to-business video on demand, as well as a wide range of relevant information on industry contacts, films, festivals, and markets. Our analysis included 26,240 unique films showcased at 578 festivals from 2009 to 2021, representing 170 film origin countries and 40 festival host countries across all continents. We categorised film production countries by size based on population (Puppis, 2009) and by income based on gross national income (GNI) per capita. We also divided events into two categories: competitive A-list and other festivals based on the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF) accreditation system.

Our research has revealed that festival participation of small-country films has increased gradually over time. However, this increase is only seen for productions from small countries with high incomes outside the competitive A-list festivals. Notably, cinema from small nations with lower income levels is still underrepresented in the festival circuit. Nevertheless, we have observed that the programming of competitive A-list festivals has become more diverse regarding the income levels of film-origin countries.

According to our results, film festivals are not successful in facilitating the internationalisation and export efforts of small film production nations and their respective film industries despite being typically supported by public funds and having the objective of promoting diverse international film flows.

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MIP06 Film, theatre and music production

PP 0624 (Un)profitable memory curation through publicly funded historical films: Lithuanian case

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This presentation is based on the analysis of the film collection #FreedomFilms published by the Lithuanian Public Broadcaster LRT in response to the Russian invasion in Ukraine and aimed at representing the past and remobilising the national past for Lithuanian audiences. The majority of the films in the collection received funding from the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture (LMC). Therefore, the presentation also draws on five interviews with officials from the LMC and the Lithuanian Film Centre, focusing on funding and curating films related to the past, visions of the past these films seek to convey and the remobilisation of national memories during a crisis such as the war in Ukraine.

This presentation will argue that, in Lithuania, the connection between representations of the past and film is intertwined into a complex fabric of socio-economic forces. Established methodologies, such as the invented traditions

approach (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983), along with more recent research on Baltic neoliberalism and memory multiscalarity, can aid in unravelling these intricate dynamics, providing insights into historical film dynamics in Lithuania and the broader region.

For instance, interviews with the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture reveal a tendency towards adherence to market logics and liberal democracy in the realm of national film production, including the films representing the past. However, this approach is not without its own fractures, giving rise to tensions regarding the promotion of diversity in representing the past. The majority of films predominantly focus on the late socialism period, portraying society within homogeneous narrative frames. These processes, to some extent, contribute to reinforcing a nuanced yet direct relationship between Lithuanian nationalism and film. Given the relatively small size of the film industry, the prevalent practice involves appropriating old content during significant periods for the country's self-identification, as exemplified in this study by the war in Ukraine. Consequently, not only historical content but also nationalism, collective memory dynamics, and homogenous representations undergo multiple rounds of appropriation.

MIP06 Film, theatre and music production

PP 0625 Recycling content in the age of streaming cinema: The cases of Netflix, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV and their "original" films

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In this paper, I examine Netflix's recycling content strategies (i.e., remakes, sequels, spin-offs, ...) in the era of streaming films. More specifically, the paper initiates with the premise that due to the distinct institutional logic (cfr. Haveman and Gualtieri (2017) within the realm of SVODs, the affordances associated with recycled content might not wield the same level of effectiveness or necessity as observed in Hollywood (Stelmach et al., 2022). Given that streaming services prioritize subscriber acquisition over box office success, one could argue that they are liberated from many of the conventional strategies employed by Hollywood studios—consider factors such as celebrity endorsements, blockbuster productions, intensive advertising campaigns, and indeed, content recycling. In other words, leveraging their consistent consumer base, overarching market influence, and robust cash flow, streaming platforms possess a heightened flexibility to invest in original content that is not necessarily bound by or exclusively aligned with mainstream conventions. This newfound freedom allows for increased experimentation and innovation, as discussed by Hadida et al. (2021) and Lotz (2022). For this study, I employed a database-centric methodology, scrutinizing 658 films categorized as "Netflix Originals". I found that over the span of 2015 to 2022, Netflix introduced 440 Originals that were not recycled, underscoring a steadfast commitment to providing a substantial array of specialized films. Yet, my dataset also reveals a consistent upward trajectory in the proportion of recycled films (33%), indicating the enduring prevalence of conservative content strategies. Notably, (re-)adaptations constitute the largest share of recycled content (68%), offering the streaming platform a swift means to augment its catalog with reusable intellectual property. Netflix's emphasis on sequels (16%), spin-offs (6%), and prequels (2%) aligns with its overarching strategy of sequelization, strategically leveraging its proprietary intellectual property. Remakes (8%) play a comparatively smaller role, likely attributed to the relatively youthful age of Netflix's content library. In conclusion, my findings suggest that Netflix may not be as disruptive to the film industry in terms of content diversity, potentially fostering a continued reliance on recycling existing properties.

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MIP06 Film, theatre and music production

PP 0626 Online theatre performance beyond the pandemic disruption: The case of Residenze Digitali

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For many months, during the pandemic, internet and social media became the only interfaces between the theatre sector and its audience. The dynamics of mediatisation of performing arts become visible to a broad and non-specialist audience (Gemini et al., 2020) as digital performance leapt from niche artistic consumption to the

mainstream. This situation immediately gave rise to a debate among scholars and artists as to whether this would lead to a revolution in the role of digital technologies in performing arts or whether it would only be a "temporary disruption" (Hylland, 2022).

On the one hand, these experiences have made it possible to establish new knowledge and relationships between artists (Brilli et al., 2022) and have stimulated the creation of best practices and guidelines on the use of digital tools for theatre (Aebischer & Nicholas, 2020). On the other, most theatre companies, organisations and festivals that developed innovative experiences in digital spaces, stopped experimenting in this direction after the pandemic.

Our study tackles the post-pandemic life of digital performance and the changing role of online spaces for performing arts by asking: what meanings and expectations theatre artists, organisers and spectators associate to online performances in the post-pandemic period?

To answer this research question, we analysed the case of *Residenze Digitali* (RD). Launched in April 2020, RD has now reached its fourth edition and it's a rare example (in the Italian context) of a digital residency programme that came into being during Covid and is continuing today, and it thus makes it possible to study the longitudinal transformation of digital theatre practices. RD selects and funds each year about six online performance projects by artists or companies from the contemporary theatre scene. Along the four years, however, the initial strong interest waned, especially in terms of audience. The research compares three years: 2021 (when some restrictions on theatres were still in place), 2022 and 2023. All the stages of the project were followed, by participating as observers in organisational meetings, tutoring meetings with the artists, and meetings with the audience. We then carried out 25 interviews and two focus groups with spectators, 12 interviews with participating artists and 7 interviews with organisers.

The case shows that pandemic digital theatre has not revolutionised the relationship between the Internet and performing arts. Nor, in fact, is there a complete return to the previous stage. Although digital performance has not established itself as an autonomous and continuous field of cultural production, digital liveness (Auslander, 2012; Gemini & Brilli, 2023) continues to function as a place of confrontation and experimentation that dialogues with contemporary theatre more than in the past. Moreover, whereas in the first phase, the dominant logic was that of the digital reproduction of the offline event, now digital performance is understood as more *trans-medial* (conceived as networks of multiple media and platforms), *trans-material* (digital projects subsequently branch out into physical spaces) and *trans-temporal* (greater extension in pre- and post-performance time).

MIP07 Comparative approaches to public service media disruption: The transformation of values, norms and prevailing structures in the age of platforms

PN 107 Navigating dilemmas and striking a balance: PSM VODs and personalisation practices in five markets

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The development of inhouse video-on-demand services (VoD) is part of the way European public service media (PSM) are adapting to the growing competition with international subscription VoD services and social media. The strategic aim is to transform PSM into online PSM to attract and retain the audience (Bruun 2023; Donders 2021). In this transformation process the editorial practices of multi-channel television publishing are changing and putting traditional public service values up for renewed discussion. Of particular interest in PSM research is currently the appropriation of AI driven personalization via recommender systems by PSM on their inhouse VoD services (Hutchinson 2023, Hildén 2022; Helberger 2015). How the 'translation', or renewal, of core public service values are developing in the context of these new editorial practices of publishing calls for a basic research effort. So far, there has nevertheless been limited empirical research done on the actual appropriation of personalization in the publishing practices of the inhouse VoDs offered by European PSM. This paper contributes to this emerging research from a user perspective. It presents the main results from an ongoing comparative study of the personalization practices on the VoDs from PSM companies across four European countries: UK, Belgium, Italy, and Denmark. The study applies a distant reading approach to the data based on an elaborated methodological set up of three single genre accounts on each VoD and a neutral account. The purpose was to flesh out the kind and level of personalization practices at work on the VoDs. The paper continues with presenting the main findings. First, our comparison shows there are huge differences between the VoDs regarding the layout of the interfaces, the content availability, and degree of personalization. Second, the findings bear witness to issues of availability of content in the VoD catalogues and intellectual property rights. Finally, the paper discusses the dilemmas of online PSM and the challenges of striking a balance between editorial curation, personalization and public service core values. The market position, track record, and corporate strategy of the individual PSM influence this balance along with the local interpretation of universality and diversity in the age of platformisation (Poell et al. 2022).

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MIP07 Comparative approaches to public service media disruption: The transformation of values, norms and prevailing structures in the age of platforms

PN 108 Balancing the scales between public service algorithms and editorial curation

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The public service media (PSM) shift to digital-first strategies raises challenges for reaching public remits, and particularly principles of universality, accountability, and diversity. As personalisation through recommender systems is increasingly popularised by commercial streaming services, PSM are faced with a trying balancing act between audience reach and public responsibility (Sørensen & Hutchinson, 2018; van Es & Poell, 2020). To this end, PSM organisations have been developing so-called 'public service algorithms' aimed at countering threats of polarisation and the creation of filter bubbles, while engaging with audiences. This contribution provides evidence from Belgium and the UK through a comparative analysis of three PSM organisations: BBC (UK), RTBF (Wallonia), and VRT (Flanders). Although significantly different as media markets, Belgium and the UK share a strong PSM presence, with relatively high reach and levels of audience trust. In recent years, all three organisations have been committed to strengthening their online presence through VOD portals, and specifically, to developing public service algorithms. VRT has been implementing a 'taste-broadening algorithm' which aims to increase discoverability, serendipity and diversity, by suggesting content identified by PSM editors to be in the public interest. RTBF is currently designing its public service algorithm, which aims to support plurality and diversity, while complementing editorial curation, but not replacing it. BBC R&D have been developing public service algorithms designed to support public values and work alongside human curation. Despite this, initial analysis of the VOD interfaces of BBC iPlayer, RTBF Auvio, and VRT Max points to little evidence of the use of PSB algorithms by these organisations. This paper draws on semi-structured interviews with key PSM representatives from the BBC, RTBF and VRT and analysis of policy and strategy documents to ask why this might be the case.Our research reveals that although there is evidence of personalisation within each VOD portal, all three PSM still heavily rely on editorial curation. From a policy perspective, all three cases oscillate between concerns for accountability and the pressures of competition with foreign streamers. Yet, within Belgium, policy debates have raised concerns about the use of user data and the threat of mandatory login to universality, which are absent in the UK case. For regulators and PSM, the primary challenge is how to assess algorithms and their effects, which remains vague and potentially open to interpretation. Within the UK case, specifically, debates within the BBC have centred on the difficulty of coordinating algorithmic recommendation and human curation in order to generate recommendations that support public values. Despite a notable level of techno-optimism with regard to the promise of public service algorithms for achieving the public remit, therefore, our paper argues that the reality is constrained by the organisational, ideological and political contexts within which each PSM operates.

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MIP07 Comparative approaches to public service media disruption: The transformation of values, norms and prevailing structures in the age of platforms

PN 109 Analysing Inclusion in Italian and Canadian PSM

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The objective of this paper is to understand the differences between Italy and Canada when it comes to "inclusion" in PSM VOD services. While both public service companies talk about inclusion in their policy documents and

regulations, this term has different facets and, consequently, is realized in quite different ways within each PSM organisation's VOD service.The two platforms that will be considered in this study are RaiPlay, the VOD platform of the Italian PSM, and CBC Gem, the VOD platform of the Canadian English-language PSM. Although the two PSM organisations, like the nations themselves, are very different, there are some common features that make the analysis of the concept of inclusion in PSM productive. Both cover a country with a very heterogeneous morphology, both have a diffuse population, and both see public service media as a useful tool for uniting the nation. At the same time, however, there are different migration histories and distinct debates about media and (national) identity, that make these productive sites for analysing how and why inclusion is mobilized within media practice and policy discourse. The paper aims to answer two main research questions: what is meant by "inclusion" by the two PSMs and how does this term find its practical application on their VOD services? The analysis combines data from a multi-method approach. First, we will present the findings of an analysis of the use of the term 'inclusion' within a selection of Italian and Canadian policy documents dealing with public service regulation and objectives. Second, an analysis of the two VOD platforms identifies which genres, themes and structures are related to the theme of inclusion in order to examine the extent to which policy discourses inform practice. Finally, the findings from the first and second phases are discussed with media workers from each PSM organization through a series of qualitative interviews.Our initial analysis indicates that the Canadian authority views inclusion as offering content that reflects the diverse communities present in Canada in terms of both origin and gender. The Italian case, on the other hand, sees the term "inclusion" applied instead to access, aiming to ensure that one's service can be accessible to everyone, regardless of age group, the type of Internet network one has, and the level of computer literacy. By bringing together analysis of policy, VOD services and interviews, this paper will unpack why these two very different definitions of inclusion are in operation and how they impact on each PSM organisation's response to platformisation.

MIP07 Comparative approaches to public service media disruption: The transformation of values, norms and prevailing structures in the age of platforms

PN 110 Reinventing Polish PSM for the Age of Platforms: Qualitative Approach to a Transitional Case Study

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Over the last few years, public service media (PSM) in Poland has become one of the main foundations of societal and political polarisation. The faulty systemic structure, manifested in the lack of resistance of Polish public service media to political pressure from those in power, has led to a strong politicisation of their values alongside organisational structures. This, in turn, has consequently deepened PSM's connection with the conservative government's activities at different levels, including news production, public service media journalism and the values of trust and prominence. Polish PSMs, including the national broadcaster Telewizja Polska (TVP), have been widely accused of being unreliable and politically biased, with additional criticism for being slow in reacting to the emergence of highly data-driven technology media practices. The blend of political goals and narratives over discussing socially relevant digital strategies continues to be a case in the aftermath of the 2023 elections and the taking over of PSM governance by a new liberal government (in December last year). In this paper, we argue for a more in-depth qualitative public service media analysis, as the recent political change to PSM in Poland has resulted in another wave of societal polarisation, rather than a discussion to modernise PSM regulation and organisation. One of the central questions of TVP as a transitional case study is whether political reinvention follows the PSM's adaptation to the age of platforms. And these questions are crucial in order to address further questions on organisational capacity to open up PSM to the successful practices of Netflix, Disney+ or HBO Max. What's at stake when looking at the state-of-the-art regulatory and digital TVP strategies? How does Poland's public service television approach VOD and the rise of streaming? And what work practices and cultures emerge as related organisational reinvention(s)? This paper looks at TVP via document analysis and qualitative interviews as part of a broader international research project, entitled "Public Service Media in the Age of Platforms" (PSM-AP). The study gathers researchers from six countries to look holistically at regulatory, organisational and technological conditions for successful public service media adaptation. Through the PSM-AP methodology, we use analysis of regulations, annual reports and duty charts to identify the current state of TVP's preparation for the changes caused by platformisation and growing competition from private national and global media and metaverse platforms. These are confronted with the outcomes of semi-structured interviews with 10 TVP employees, scheduled for the first half of 2024. Combining different positions in the official organisational charts (top and middle-management grounds) and roles (digital strategy directors, social media managers, heads of audiences, commissioning, HR) provides evidence of the key layers of transformative organisational culture – in particular, selected lenses of work culture – to support VOD and other new potentially relevant transformative PSM practices.

MIP07 Comparative approaches to public service media disruption: The transformation of values, norms and prevailing structures in the age of platforms

PN 111 Representing PSM Values in the Platform Age: Comparative Analysis of Programmes across Markets

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In the transition to operating as digital-first organisations competing with an ever-growing number of global platforms and VoD (video-on-demand) services, public service media (PSM) across Europe face related challenges of reach and legitimacy. The problem of how to retain core public service values while reaching the widest possible viewership, on broadcast and online, is shaping not only editorial and commissioning practices but also the kinds of aesthetic strategies which are being prized at the level of production. Moreover, while organisations emphasise the importance of strategies of technological innovation for securing continued relevance in the platform age, television programmes are promoted as a key marker of distinction from commercial competitors, and where a commitment to the democratic values of public service remains visible. This paper advocates for comparative textual analysis of programmes as a method for better understanding the changing social and cultural values underpinning PSM in the platform age. Comparative approaches to the study of PSM have grown increasingly popular over the last two decades, particularly as a means of understanding the cross-national impact of global platforms and the response of national media organisations (see: D'Arma, et. al, 2021; Direito-Rebollal and Donders, 2023). However, comparative analysis of programmes has remained absent from contemporary studies of PSM. Seeking to address this gap, this paper outlines the methodological opportunities and challenges of conducting comparative textual analysis across distinct media markets. The paper begins by situating textual analysis in existing methodological debates within comparative PSM scholarship. Recognising that qualitative comparison between national PSMs remains a 'methodological Pandora's box' (Raats and Pauwels, 2011, 18) with no standardised framework, the paper examines strategies for balancing explanatory relevance and contextual equivalence across multiple national contexts with generic, dramaturgical, and aesthetic traditions. The second half of the paper considers a comparative study of PSM programming relative to trends in television studies, with a focus on how cross-national comparison has proved useful to studies of Netflix programming and the negotiation of transnational 'value systems' (Jenner, 2021) embedded at the level of cultural representation. The paper concludes by reflecting potential opportunities for a similar comparison of hybrid local and transnational 'value systems' across PSM output, as organisations seek to negotiate core public service values amidst changing standards of reach and relevance.
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MIP08 Platforms, pluralism and policy

PP 0825 Counterbalancing platform power on the policy level: News media actors as lobbyists on national and EU regulation

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Public and political pressure to regulate large platform companies has increased. On November 16th 2022, the most comprehensive regulations of global tech platforms to date, the EU's Digital Services Package, came into force with the aim of leveling the playing field and ensuring transparency and accountability from platform companies. Greater democratic control and mitigation of systemic risks, such as manipulation or disinformation, are among some of the supposed regulatory benefits. Although it is not a media-specific legislation, the regulation potentially had major implications for platform-publisher relations, and it has therefore been imperative for media organizations across Europe to seek to impact the DSA process on the EU and the national level. In the study, we ask: *How did Norwegian media actors work to influence the DSA process, and what can it tell us about media actors as lobbyists?* Theories on platformization and platform power, interest groups and lobbying, and media policy field theory are applied to illuminate the values at stake, alliances made, and strategies mobilized to protect the interests of national media industry actors and interest groups.

Empirically, we have conducted 12 elite interviews with leaders in major news media networks and professional media associations and 6 interviews with umbrella media organizations on the EU level. Furthermore, the paper rests on an analysis of position papers, reports, and policy briefs published by these stakeholders from 2018–2023.

The preliminary findings show two major insights. First, what constitutes "editorial-driven" media in different European contexts and to what degree "editorial" media should be given special protection against platform moderation, became a key question. Norwegian lobbyists united behind a policy aim – that editorial news media, as essential for democracy, should be exempted from platform interference to protect editorial freedom and freedom of speech. However, Norwegian media lobbyists and their allies failed in their call, as the media exemption argument was met with hard resistance from an alliance consisting of tech companies and civil society organizations, including fact-checking organizations, fearing that "editorial" media could be a leeway for unserious actors to spread disinformation. Second, the study shows how the DSA process represented a window of opportunity to professionalize the lobbying work by Norwegian media stakeholders. While lobbying nationally used to be the focus, the growing power of global tech corporations and the DSA process represented a shift towards the EU and Brussels. This professionalization process emphasized the need for new alliances to get their message across, particularly important for a small non-EU country like Norway. Norwegian media stakeholders formed and initiated several collaborations with national political authorities and EU-level umbrella associations. It led to more resources being allocated to advocacy and gave the stakeholders with the most lobbying competence and skills a strong position in the national market.

Overall, the paper shows that Europe's diverging media systems make counterbalancing platform power on the policy level challenging – also for increasingly professionalized news media lobbyists.

MIP08 Platforms, pluralism and policy

PP 0826 Exploring content creators' belief systems within the ecosystem of social-media platforms

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As essential value originators, content creators have become key actors in contemporary ecosystems of social-media platforms. Extant research has examined the labor-intensive conditions required to become visible and financially successful, and the precarious conditions arising from the current social-media environment. Despite these conditions, the creator economy is growing exponentially. To gain a better understanding of creators' content-related strategies and decisions, this paper explores the sense-making mechanisms they employ within the social-media platform ecosystems they navigate. Starting from a sketch of the ecosystem of a social-media platform, this paper proposes a systematic analytical framework for investigating the belief systems of content creators.

Our sketch of the ecosystem of a social-media platform locates the different actors that are part of this ecosystem, positions creators as complementors, and maps the flow of resources between these actors, as well as the direct and indirect network effects (Gawer & Cusumano, 2014; Kapoor et al., 2021; Poell et al., 2021). Our proposed analytical framework draws from both the conceptualization of digitalization as a new social form of implicit (everyday) religion (Author, 2022) and belief-system theory (Grube et al., 1994). It further adapts and incorporates Schnell's (2003) exploration of belief systems by considering three indicators of creators' belief systems: (1) myths that illustrate the cognitive aspect of content creators' belief systems; (2) their rituals for content creation as they relate to behavioral aspects of creators' beliefs within social-media platforms; (3) their experiences (of transcendence), which characterize content creation online and their self-reported and observed activities.

Based on existing research on content creators (Abidin, 2016, 2021; Arriagada & Bishop, 2021; Duffy, 2017; Kubler, 2023; Scolere et al., 2018), and our proposed sketch of the ecosystem of a social-media platform, we argue that creators' belief systems are developed within a range of (un)knowability about four aspects of their activities within social-media platform ecosystems: (1) themselves; (2) the platform; (3) their audience(s); and (4) their communities of complementors, including advertisers and communities of creators. For each of these indicators, we provide an example of the influence of creators' belief systems on their decisions to create (or not) content for a specific social-media platform, illustrating the impact of content creators' belief systems on the social-media platform ecosystem. In addition, our specific approach to creators' belief systems also enables the examination of two aspects of digitalization as implicit (everyday) religion (Author, 2022): the extent (1) of transcendence in creators' experiences, and (2) of faith-based beliefs when faced with unknowable aspects of their activities which can be reflected in myths, rituals, and experiences.

Our focus on belief systems facilitates a more systematic exploration of content creation and expands current research to enable the examination of faith-based, transcendent, and theistic epistemologies in the current era of digitalization, which have been underexplored from the perspective of creators. Finally, our proposal enables a deeper understanding of the role and impact of content creators and their belief systems within social-media platform ecosystems.

MIP08 Platforms, pluralism and policy

PP 0827 "Between life and death": The self-concept of advertising in times of disruption and disorder

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Across Europe, there is a debate about the future of advertising. The reason for this are several disruptions whose influence on advertising has so far mostly been discussed independently of each other. These include the influence of digitalization and AI, increasing regulation and standardization as well as shifts in power through platforms, influencers and consumers themselves. Influential advertisers talk about nothing less than the "life and death of advertising" (e.g. Roach 2022).

Therefore, our research question is: To what extent is the self-concept of the advertising industry changing in times of social and technological disruption?

As a theoretical framework, we choose the structuration theory (Giddens 1986), which has so far received little attention in advertising research. Giddens opens up a socio-cultural macro-perspective on advertising and thus creates the theoretical basis for bringing together various disruptions and their interactions in three structural dimensions (signification, legitimation, domination).

Following Giddens (1986), we define the self-concept as knowledge about oneself based on an interrelated practical and discursive consciousness. Methodologically, we explore the self-concept of advertising with the help of a two-stage Delphi study. The online survey of 25 advertising professionals was based on three observations of current developments that operationalize the three structural dimensions. The answers were analyzed according to the structural dimensions and their respective forms of action (deductively coded). For the second stage, 28 selected statements were rated on an agreement scale of 0–100%.

The results of our study provide a deeper understanding of the ongoing transformation of advertisers' self-concept. According to the experts/professionals, allocative (domination) and normative (legitimation) modalities are gaining in importance and ensure that the previously central advertising modality of creativity in the dimension of signification is being pushed back and reinterpreted. The results also show that important modalities of advertising are being renegotiated:

Signification

- The economic primacy of advertising is questioned and expanded to include the primacy of sustainability.
- Advertising idealizations are supplemented by new ideals (ESG criteria).
- The practical awareness of advertising is determined by a heightened sense of responsibility and caution.

Legitimation

- Norms and possible sanctions (public outrage/scandalization) limit/challenge creativity and innovation in advertising practice.
- Social rejection, public controversy and displeasure are unavoidable for advertising and ensure its economic legitimacy (attention).

Domination

- Data becomes the central authoritative and allocative resource (budget allocation, decision-making behavior).
- Soft skills such as empathy and gut feeling are seen as the future "bastion of power" in advertising.
- Practical awareness is characterized by growing external control (AI, data, customers, platforms) and dwindling own authoritative power options.

In summary, the results show that the interplay of disruptions shapes the social order of the advertising industry and influences individual behavior and social structures in a significant way.

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MIP08 Platforms, pluralism and policy

PP 0828 How much pluralism do you need? Ten years of Danish subsidies for news-media innovation

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The digital disruption of the media industries has put a strong emphasis on news media innovation as a means for survival in uncertain times. In the Danish media system, with its tradition for public subsidies, a target subsidy instrument for news-media innovation was introduced in 2014 (Kammer, 2017). The political goal of this instrument was to secure media pluralism and foster media innovation. Studies of media pluralism in Denmark show a media sector with strong public service news media as well as private news media, and with modest threats to media pluralism (Willig & Blach-Ørsten, 2017).

This study analyzes of the first 10 years of news-media innovation subsides in Denmark. The subsidies can support either developing or establishing (sometimes both) an innovative project, which might by a new media or new changes or spin-offs of legacy news media. The subsidies are granted on the basis of formal applications, and throughout the 10 years, there has been 216 instances of such granting innovation subsidies to news-media innovation (ranging from 24,800 DKK to 4,400,400 DKK); a total amount of 181,932,454 DKK has been granted. The article is based on both open-source records (from the Danish Ministry of Culture) of applicants and recipients of news innovation subsidies and additional documents from the ministry (obtained through the Danish Freedom of Information Act). Methodological, we use document analysis with a focus on how both 'innovation' and 'pluralism' appear in the analyzed documents.

The preliminary findings indicate that with regard to media pluralism, a little over half of the subsidy (56.4%) has been allocated to existing news media, while the rest have been given to new news media. Of the new news media, some have closed down again during the period, while some still have home pages that are active, but have not been updated recently; around one quarter of the total amount of funding (24.5%) has been granted to new news media that now have become established news media (i.e., they still exist).

With regard to the question of innovation the new news media in many ways mirror the existing media landscape, though some have been successful with reaching a younger audience and contributing further to media innovation by developing open-source solutions, as is the case of Zetland (Newman et al., 2023).

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MIP08 Platforms, pluralism and policy

PP 0829 Toward a decentralized copyright infrastructure as a public service: The case of Digiciti and Estonia

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This paper traces the process of collaboration between Digiciti Networks (hereinafter Digiciti), a private company, and the public sector in Estonia, in their experiment of building a decentralized copyright registry for the music industry.

Digital music industry has long suffered from issues like fragmented copyright databases, delayed royalty payments, and opaque value chains. The value chains are abundant in various 'middlemen' and copyright ownership is typically fragmented between multiple parties which complicates business-making and necessitates a 'single source of truth' solution. While previous attempts to create comprehensive databases – e.g. the Global Repertoire Database – have failed, blockchains and other distributed ledger technologies could provide new directions toward more transparent and uniformly recognized copyright registries (Baym, Swartz, and Alarcon, 2019). In the past decade, a number of international initiatives have emerged to experiment with this nascent technological potential.

What makes Digiciti's project unique, however, is its understanding of the 'public' nature of future copyright infrastructures. This vision calls for active engagement of the public sector, and a shift in its focus from merely fixing 'market failures' (support-and-measure) to actively coordinating and initiating public value creation (lead-and-learn) in the interactive network of public and private institutions (Kattel and Mazzucato, 2018).

From the perspective of national innovation systems research (e.g. Lundvall, 1992), Digiciti, therefore, is a pertinent case for exploring the readiness of state entities to join and support the creation of a national copyright registry as

a public service, or an 'industry utility' as a shared infrastructure, to facilitate growth in the music sector, especially in the context of the emerging blockchain-driven Web3 ecosystem (Rennie, Potts, and Pochesneva, 2019).

The paper demonstrates that while the Estonian government has established innovation policy hubs like Accelerate Estonia that are capable of driving and coordinating challenge-oriented policies, other parts of the national innovation system, especially collecting societies (CMOs), lack the capacities and capabilities to organically host ambitious visions of future infrastructures for the creative industries. Nonetheless, the findings also show how the evolving regulatory and policy frameworks of the European Union influenced the development of the case and provided opportunities to advance it, especially with regard to the 'public' or 'common' nature of future data infrastructures as part of the European data and blockchain strategies.

The study is based on empirical evidence derived from 14 semi-structured interviews and various field materials such as meeting recordings, working documents, and reports. Conceptually, the paper synthesizes national innovation policy research (the case of e-Estonia, specifically), music industry studies, blockchain research and public value theory.

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MCS02 Participatory arts in mediated cities

PP 0785 All street arts lead to Rome: Hybrid communication, participation and creative practices in the suburbs of the Eternal City

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Starting from the academic research project "Rome wasn't built in a frame", the paper focuses on the ability of street art in Rome to make use of and give new meaning to suburban locations. The research specifically examines how the current complex imaginary of the Eternal City appears to serve as both a reflection and a catalyst of an implicit yet strong connection between the suburbs and the city as a whole.

To this end, the approach related to media ecology (Ciofalo, Pedroni 2022) appears to be advantageous in order to analyse the phenomenon in its complexity; in our case it is adopted through a transmedia model (Leonzi 2022), which allows to reflect on a shared, coherent and participatory worldbuilding process (Ciammella 2022). The research, therefore, aims to analyse both street art works and their representation in technological and cultural terms as a connector of urban media practices (Tosoni, Ridell 2016). We consider street art as a spontaneous – and "disordered" – grassroots approach to cultural issues, through representations of imaginaries, able to go beyond the meaning of the individual work, and generate a shared narrative of and in the neighborhood, including expanded narratives in digital content.

The analysis focuses on some specific neighborhoods in Rome where emerges a particularly dense cultural, communicative and symbolic fabric: suburban or semi-suburban neighborhoods where opposing movements between induced gentrification and resistance from below intensify (Ciampi 2022). In addition, we investigate the social and cultural meaning that street art takes on. We have summarized three levels of relationship between street art and urban communicative order and disorder: social/political (e.g., suburb-center relationship), aesthetic/narrative (e.g., Dionysian creativity), relational/cultural (e.g., pop culture, civic engagement).

The research methodology is based on an ethnographic approach, which also includes a digital perspective (Pink et al. 2016; Rogers 2019). The first phase of the study involves analyzing works from a transmedia perspective, in the physical space (street art) and in the mediatized space (representations on digital platforms), aimed at highlighting the archetypal figures of the imaginary of Rome. The second phase involves conducting interviews with key informants, such as street artists, activists, association representatives, and digital content creators. These interviews aim to investigate the creative, communicative, and social practices that are activated during the production of street art. Finally, a survey was developed with the aim of investigating the perception of the artworks by residents in the neighborhood.

The initial findings reveal that street art has the ability to represent Rome's imaginary through the urban fabric. The formation of pathways for citizens to view and share artwork, both in person and through digital platforms, connects the neighborhood to the rest of the city. However, the relationship between street art and residents is often controversial: while some see it as a form of induced gentrification (art defined from above), conflict arises; but when street art contributes to the neighborhood's identity and narrative, it can activate social practices and fuel daily life and participatory development narratives.

MCS02 Participatory arts in mediated cities

PP 0786 Engaging local communities through performance art

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This paper focuses on the outcome of the Community Engagement Through Performance Art (CEPA) Project, which aimed to connect the displaced Ukrainian community with the Irish community in Dublin. This project evaluates the potential of performance art and its associated media forms to enable interaction in public space between different communities through a participatory event informed by a series of workshops. It aimed to increase the level of communication and awareness between the two communities, and in doing so also empower members of the displaced Ukrainian community. It was a collaboration between Dublin City University (DCU), Ukrainian Action (a charity supporting Ukrainians in Ireland) and Create – National Development Agency for Collaborative Arts and it was funded by the Irish Research Council.

The project involved a series of collaborative performance workshops developed by artist Sally Walmsley (selected by Create) that took place between May and July 2023 in DCU. The workshops used a variety of performance art prompts, techniques and media forms to engage a group of selected Ukrainian participants to connect with each other and to connect with the Irish community. The workshops culminated in a final performance event in The Steps, a public venue inside DCU's U Building on 20 July 2023. The event consisted of an interactive and

participatory performance that transformed the building into an open stage. This was followed by a community workshop, where audience members had the opportunity to engage with the project participants through collaborative performance prompts. The performance and community workshop were open to the general public and aimed to connect the participants with the audience while also showcasing the social and cultural background of the Ukrainian participants.

The project's output was analysed through observations, interviews with participants and a online survey that took place during the final event. The findings reveal the potential of performance art as a method to connect unrelated communities and to empower them through collaboration. They support the project's future potential to connect communities in local contexts. The CEPA project is particularly relevant in the current context of misinformation and disinformation about the status of the displaced Ukrainian community and refugees in Ireland spread through social media and associated events.

MCS02 Participatory arts in mediated cities

PP 0787 Digital ecosystems, participatory processes and urban spatiality in liminal communities

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This paper explores the complex interplay between digital communication ecosystems and urban spaces, with a particular focus on those referred to as 'liminal'. Liminal spaces, characterised by their transitional and ambiguous nature, become focal points where communicative processes have a significant impact on civic engagement and broader civic participation. The study navigates through participatory practices within these liminal spaces, analysing the potentially inclusive impact of digital communication technologies while remaining attuned to the looming potential for the absorption of resistance practices by neoliberal rationality.

An extensive analysis of theories related to liminality, media ecology and urban participation forms the backbone of the article, aiming to unravel how individuals establish connections with urban spaces. The investigation extends to examining whether and how media can function as a subspace for empowerment or mobilisation within these contexts. The paper adopts a theoretical perspective based on the empirical study conducted by the authors in selected liminal spaces in Southern Italy. The study was conducted as part of a broader training initiative for managers of third sector organisations.

The primary aim of the research is to understand the complex relationship between liminal spaces and civic participation. The paper explores how media can be used strategically to facilitate meaningful participation and potentially promote inclusive practices. By grounding the discussion in concrete experiences from Southern Italy, the authors provide practical insights into the implications of their theoretical framework. The work makes a significant contribution to the discourse on civic resilience, highlighting the need for a nuanced understanding of the relationships between media ecosystems, cities and spatial dynamics. In doing so, it highlights the potential of digital communication to shape civic engagement and argues for the promotion of meaningful and inclusive practices in urban spaces.

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MCS02 Participatory arts in mediated cities

PP 0788 Actors, practices and visions of (dis)ordering digital urban spaces

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Digital communication technologies and datafication processes are crucial for understanding current social order. As *elementary media* or *infrastructures*, they have a lasting impact on everyday life, just as they have contributed

to the transformation of economy (platform or surveillance capitalism) or the constitution of public spheres (filter bubbles). There is also vast evidence that specific *sociotechnical imaginaries* in which certain ideas of social order are inscribed curate the dissemination of these technologies.

The presentation highlights the interplay between different actors, practices, and visions in planning and implementing regional and municipal projects for the digital transformation of German cities. The "smart" transformation of urban infrastructures in Germany is currently a highly dynamic field for politics, economy and civil society: politicians have launched extensive funding lines (including *Smart City Model Projects* (MPSC) with a volume of 820 million euros), economic players have developed the "digital city" as a market and numerous civil society players (e.g. Open Knowledge Foundation, Code for Germany) are struggling to participate and get listened in the public discourse.

The practice of this public planning, design and implementation of digital urban infrastructures has barely been researched – and is characterized by numerous challenges: Civil society actors characterize the role of digital citizen participation, for example, as "theatre without substance" (e.g. Deutschlandradio 2023), private sector actors criticize counter-intuitive guidelines (e.g. open source bid for conventional providers); politics and economics primarily strive for the (economically driven) sociotechnical imaginary "smart city", while civil society actors prioritize other objectives.

We explore the complex field of digital transformation projects, which are characterized by contradictions, focusing on the relationship between design and objectives on the one hand and deficient practice on the other. The analytical findings are based on expert interviews (N = 20) and participant observations. Heuristically, we distinguish the categories (1) actors, (2) practices and (3) visions. It is shown that, in particular, power relations, design and participation opportunities are asymmetrical in favor of established actors; practices tend to result in inefficient combinatorics rather than comprehensive transformation due to systemic path dependencies (e.g. understanding of roles, constraint of fields of action esp. in public administrations); visions and orientations of the actors evoke opposing developments (perpetuation vs. reconfiguration of political and administrative action).

In order to accentuate the role of digital urban infrastructures for social (dis)ordering, we explore the digital planning and participation arrangements that provide the space where different actors, practices, and visions come together. The design principles, objectives and standards of these arrangements (e.g. people-centricity, open source, open data) are politically prescribed by the "Smart City Charta" (BBSR 2021). In contrast, the results are sobering. For example, the CONSUL participation software implemented in many MPSC municipalities has no added value from the perspective of municipal decision-makers after the strategy phase because it does not fit the municipal infrastructure and requires too many resources.

Finally, we discuss the expected consequences of this practice for the citizens critically (e.g. reproduction of power imbalances and orders, disempowerment).

MCS02 Participatory arts in mediated cities

PP 0789 Model/City: Architectural models and the politics of playfulness

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Between wooden blocks and miniature trees, open spaces and shared pathways, the architectural model of the luxury residential building VERTICAL in Sloterdijk constructs a vision of green and collective living far detached from the lived reality of a neighborhood undergoing a rapid transformation from a largely industrial area to a 'desirable' urban neighborhood marked by luxury residential buildings. This presentation takes the conference theme of (dis) order literally by focusing on the communicative construction of a new spatial order of the city, and the imagination and materialization of better urban futures through architectural models. Following Pauwels' suggestion that cultural imaginations can be acquired through "observing, analyzing, and theorizing its visual manifestations" (2010, 546), building urban models can be understood as a discursive and collaborative practice in materializing alternative visions of the city – provided this process engages with communities, residents, neighbors. In the context of this paper, however, architectural models become entangled with what Christoph Lindner and Gerard F. Sandoval refer to as the "aesthetics of gentrification" (2021). Recent architectural models for 'sustainable' developments in Amsterdam – including publicly available and mediatized models for VERTICAL and the municipal neighborhood project Bajeskwartier – are simultaneously referencing and abstracting the (proposed) construction sites. In doing so, I argue that these models draw on a **politics of playfulness** to counter criticism raised against the gentrifying effects of 'sustainable' urban planning. Considering the role of architectural models in the presentation of architectural designs to both policy makers and interested publics further highlights the potential consequences of strategically (re)presenting large-scale developments through miniature-scale models, marked by natural materials and playful miniatures. Recognizing "the materiality of designed things and the material and discursive practices through which they come to matter" (Kimbell 2012, 129), here, adds an additional dimension to the entanglement between sustainability and desirability, green imaginations and gentrified realities as an aesthetic and discursive strategy.

Thereby the production of nature in architectural models also expands into socio-political discussions of citizenship, participation and 'ownership' of spaces in the (dis)order of the city. In other words: In the playful representation of green neighborhoods as better neighborhoods, the lived consequences of gentrification disappear in favor of an urban vision of sustainability.

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MCS03 Social media spaces and places

PP 0892 Building bonds: Enacting "good neighborhood" through the use of instant messaging apps

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The connection between the sense of belonging to a neighborly community and a broader democratic project has long been established (Dewey, 1927). Given the opportunity to meet face-to-face and tell neighborhood stories, residents become more invested in their local communities (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006). However, in the past decades, macro-level forces like globalization, individualization, and urbanization coupled with changes in global connectivity were said to diminish the role of traditional community bonds (Crow et al., 2002; Howley et al., 2015). Physical places became mediated through digital affordances, and local connections were supplanted by globally oriented, interest-driven communities (Bennet & Segerberg, 2012; Meyrowitz, 1986). Notwithstanding these trends, neighborly connections remain rooted in involuntary physical proximity (Simonson, 1996), and their quality significantly influences our lives, e.g., by improving our subjective well-being or becoming sources of inconvenience, discord, and distress (Cheshire et al., 2019).

In this context, messaging apps have recently emerged as new communication channels that permeate our everyday lives and shape our social connections (Matassi et al., 2019). Studies demonstrated that instant messengers like WhatsApp could facilitate mutual aid during COVID-19, serving as alternatives to traditional social media platforms for communication and organization on the local level (Chevée, 2022). Such ongoing mediated communication can shape the nature of neighborly interactions (e.g., changing the standards of decorum; Simonson, 1996), mutual expectations, and perceptions. However, the user's perspective on the implications of instant messaging chat groups for neighborhood communication beyond the crisis remains unclear.

We argue that communication in instant messaging groups holds the potential to revitalize neighborly connections, reshaping perceptions and belonging to the neighborhood as a place-bound community. To explore this, we conducted in-depth interviews with urban dwellers in Israel and Germany (N = 44) who participated in neighborhood chat groups in their respective condominiums. The interviews took place between December 2022 and July 2023. Specifically, we were interested in the role of chat groups in neighborly communication with a focus on their perceived functions (RQ1), their role in shaping perceptions of "good neighbors" (RQ2), and facilitating neighborly relations (RQ3).

We find that instant messaging groups serve a threefold function (RQ1): a) *Instrumental* interactions involve practical benefits, like exchanging resources and facilitating communication-related to ad-hoc matters. b) *Affective* interactions focus on establishing and maintaining social bonds, fostering a friendly atmosphere through casual exchanges. c) *Communal* interactions involve efforts to manage shared spaces within the condominium and demonstrate a continuous consideration for others, such as by preempting potential inconveniences. Regarding RQ2, the concept of "good neighbors" emphasizes the importance of maintaining a *polite distance*, meaning that neighbors should talk "as much as necessary, but as little as possible." However, instant messaging chats introduce new challenges in balancing proximity and distance in neighborly relations (RQ3). While instant messaging groups reinvigorate a sense of community by lowering thresholds for neighborly contact, they can inadvertently lead to increased informal social control and diminish physical contact.

We discuss continuities and changes in maintaining social order through neighborly interaction and the role of emerging media therein.

MCS03 Social media spaces and places

PP 0893 Urban discourse construction on social media platforms: A co-word analysis and case study of Weibo Trending Topics on Beijing(2019–2023)

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Driven by technological innovation and globalization, time-space compression is spreading around the world *(Warf & Barney, 2008)*. Social media, deeply ingrained in urban life, creates a digital information scene and it serves as a distinct manifestation of urban discourse, which becomes an electronic archive constructing subjective and imaginative urban spaces *(Burgess, Jean, & Bruns, 2012)*. Bonding together with geography, social media can shape public geographical awareness*(Ye, Le & Peng, 2021)*. Specifically, through discussion on urban issues, social media becomes a sphere constructing a city's digital discourse space, where the city space is compressed in discourse expansion (*Jessop, Bob, 2002*).

This study selected one of the global cities Beijing (ranking: Alpha+), the capital city of China, as the study case to explore the mutually constitutive relationship between urban space and social media discourse. **We analyzed Weibo Trending Topics data containing "Beijing" panning from April 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023. A total of 6,298 pieces of Weibo Trending Topics were collected, of which 6,293 pieces with complete information (e.g. popularity, topic ranking, duration) were confirmed as valid data.** Then, we employed text segmentation and word frequency calculation with Jieba, then cluster analysis with SPSS 25.0., and imported an edge list into Gephi.0.9.2 to visualize the co-word network.

Our findings reveal: **(1)Urban topics on social media present complex and diverse relations within Beijing.** The discourse structure centers around Beijing, extending to cultural and sports activities, education, climate, administration, transportation, and other issues. Notably, online celebrities emerge as the primary "tipping point" in urban public discourse, followed by public emergencies, like natural disasters (eg. earthquakes) and public health crises (eg. newly reported confirmed cases). **(2) Geographical awareness and spatial interactions within Beijing were presented via the Trending Topics.** Location-related terms such as Haidian District, the Universal Beijing Resort and Overseas are the high-frequency word categories, which appeared 921 times in total, shaping the perception of Beijing's geographical spatiality. **(3) Discourse contributes to identity construction** (Bamberg, M. et al., 2006), where city-specific cultural brands, like the Beijing Winter Olympics and Beijing International Film Festival, enrich the digital discourse space and construct Beijing's city image. The shift of brand promotion activities from institutional media to social media platforms signifies a strategic symbiosis rather than competition. **(4) Over the past five years, COVID-19 pandemic has been a core focus in Beijing's public discourse space** (Zeng & Yang, 2022)**.** During the prevention and control efforts period (2019–2021), SPSS cluster analysis identifies four modes of public discourse production: information notification, positive action, focus work promotion, and risk response. Strategic analysis suggests that emotionally triggering risk discourse has the potential to evolve into core discourse.

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MCS03 Social media spaces and places

PP 0894 Social support in German-city-centered online communities: Exploring informal urban social media communication for urban well-being

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This study investigates the interplay between social support processes and city-centered social media (SM) communities, exploring their potential impact on urban residents' well-being. The constitution of individual well-being, intricately linked to the fundamental need for connection, emphasizes the significance of social networks and social capital in navigating life's challenges. Prior research highlights the positive relationship between the use of SM, social capital, and social support, influencing psychological well-being (Thompson et al., 2022). Smart cities, driven by information and communication technologies (ICT), aim to enhance the well-being of residents (Agbali et al., 2019). SM, as a powerful tool within this context, fosters interconnectedness and inclusivity, offering an informal, bottom-up approach to empower citizens and local communities. Our study leverages Reddit to delve into the dynamics of communication and support within urban communities, broadening the scope of smart city research.

Key questions include (a) how citizens support each other online in city-centered communities and (b) whether support patterns vary across different domains of life.

We obtained low-risk approval from the university's Ethics Committee. Utilizing a Reddit dataset (consisting of posts and comments from German city-centered subreddits) from a previous study (author), we randomly selected 500 threads out of 68,512 threads in the original dataset, with 4,282 comments and 497 posts incorporated into the final analysis. The analytical approach employed a manual quantitative directed content analysis of SM texts. The codebook, developed based on prior work, underwent pre-testing and refinement, resulting in 22 categories.

Results revealed that the majority of posts directly related to the city. The distribution of support-seeking types did not significantly differ between city-related and non-city-related posts. Users in city communities were equally inclined to offer assistance regardless of the post's explicit city connection. Emotional support requests often concerned transportation issues, while informational support focused on topics like housing. Interestingly, even posts not seeking explicit support received substantial support in the comments. Regarding domains of life, threads covered diverse aspects, including housing issues, inquiries about living feasibility, and information on leisure and recreational activities.

This interdisciplinary study delves into the dynamics of support behaviors within city-centered online communities, revealing unexpected patterns of instrumental support seeking and substantial support provision within posts. While acknowledging the potential role of smart cities in addressing citizens' instrumental needs, the study emphasizes the need for a more comprehensive understanding of citizen engagement in digital urban spaces. The findings suggest that discussions around leisure activities, although unconventional in political participation, act as precursors to political engagement. The study calls for reimagining smart cities and citizen involvement, stressing diverse forms of citizenship expression and prompting a critical evaluation of existing support structures.

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MCS03 Social media spaces and places

PP 0895 The dying history of an influencer village: The order and disorder of digital media in the media life history of Chinese rural communities

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In recent years, digital media represented by live streaming has seen vigorous development in rural areas of China, altering the social structure of these villages. Villages led by live-streaming influencers, distinct from those planned by the government, exhibit more grassroots characteristics and greater developmental freedom. This has stimulated potential for further development of rural digital culture. However, most existing studies have focused on how a village becomes an "influencer village," often overlooking the decline of such villages. Indeed, digital-era phenomena like influencer villages inevitably confront the issue of "planned obsolescence (Turner et al. 2000)".

Adopting a media life history research approach, we attempt to shift the focus from people as subjects to places as subjects. This method provides not just a "narrative of action," but also includes the life cycle of the subject and its historical context within the changing social environment.

Since March 2021, we have been tracking the "rise and fall" of an influencer village, Village Y, located in the Yimeng Mountain area, known for its unique CCP Culture and Confucian culture. In March 2021, a villager, Cheng, became famous online for selling noodles at 3 yuan for 15 years without a price increase, gaining billions of clicks and millions of followers on major Chinese digital media platforms like Douyin and Kuaishou. Chinese netizens especially support rural influencers, attracting them to visit Village Y to see Cheng making noodles. Also drawn to the village were professional influencers who live-stream rural life. They gathered offline in Village Y and, through secondary dissemination, attracted even more visitors.

We discovered that: Firstly, The turning point in the development-decline media cycle of the influencer village is highly correlated with the influencers themselves. Following interpersonal troubles and conflicts with local government, Cheng left Village Y. Subsequently, professional influencers who relied on filming Cheng also departed, followed by tourists and returning villagers. This process resembles a distorted version of the "Differential Mode of Association (Fei et al., 1992)". The dispersal of these interpersonal relationships also affects the local order centered

around live streaming and the disordering of digital culture. Thus, the development-decline cycle of the influencer village coincides with the processes of ordering-disordering at a cultural level. Secondly, the 'moment of truth' in the development-decline cycle of the influencer village often relates to changes in media infrastructure (e.g., WiFi rental, live streaming equipment setup, broadcast site construction, streaming props). These maintain a highly independent state of internal order, even during the disordered phase of the village's decline. However, they act as catalysts in the ordering-disordering process (as depicted by the density of points representing the degree of order). After passing through these critical moments, the physical development-decline process of the influencer village accelerates, aligning with the ordering-disordering process.

This research contributes to space-media studies, focusing on alternative rural spaces, that is, how media interferes with government planning and affects spatial order. Through a media life history analysis, this study analyzes how live-streamers, media infrastructure and media villages reshape rural space with ordering and de-ordering.

MCS04 Mobilising methods for post-digital cities

PP 0990 Smart (and autonomous) in the city: A media analysis of sociotechnical imaginaries

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'Autonomous stores' are often characterized in the media as the future of shopping: smart physical environments augmented (Viseu, 2003; Viseu & Suchman, 2010) through digital technologies that can process data automatically, seamlessly and without the need for workers, identifying both consumers and their actions. References to autonomy and automation conjure a set of imaginaries of technology in the service of innovation and progress: for consumers these novel environments are proposed to signify gains in convenience, whereby saving time is saving money. For retailers, they mean the possibility of gathering significant amounts of information on the behavior of the customers in a store environment, thus being another manifestation of what Zuboff (2019) calls '*Surveillance Capitalism*'.

Despite being hailed as autonomous, these spaces are vast digital assemblages that rely upon networked infrastructures composed of people, knowledges, and numerous technological entities (such as, AI, sensors, algorithms, computer vision, cameras). Portugal is one of the leaders in this future-making endeavor: in 2019, SENSEI, a Portuguese "unicorn" specialized in the development of autonomous stores technologies, partnered with SONAE, one of the largest Portuguese retail chains, to open 'Continente Labs' an autonomous store in Lisbon.

This paper draws upon a thematic analysis of data generated from a media analysis of Portuguese and international newspaper articles from 2016 until 2023, as well as interviews with SENSEI and SONAE, to examine the sociotechnical imaginaries that are mobilized in the media to both drive and justify the development of these digital infrastructures. We pay particular attention to the discourses through which they are built: Who is pushing for them? Why? What are the main issues that are being discussed both in terms of advantages and problems? Who is included/excluded? And, finally, what futures are being built? This will then allow us to shed light on the concepts that underlie these spaces – What are "autonomy" and "smartness" in autonomous stores?

Viseu, A. & Suchman, L. (2010). Wearable Augmentations: Imaginaries of the Informed Body. In J. Edwards, P. Harvey & P. Wade, (Eds.), *Technologized Images, Technologized Bodies* (pp. 161–184). Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books. ISBN: 978-1-84545-664-1.

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MCS04 Mobilising methods for post-digital cities

PP 0991 Navigating realities: Examining the role of visual communication in urban experiences

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In this essay, I will begin by arguing

[1] that maps, particularly digital navigation applications and image sequence-based digital maps, can be categorized within the epistemological domain of photography and film. For instance, if we regard the route image elements of the popular Google Street View navigation system as the frames of a unique film, we encounter the issue of the relationship between the image and the represented reality.
[2] When analysing the urban orientation and wayfinding mechanism, it is essential to differenciate between dinamic (e.g. walking, running) and static activities (e.g. standing, sitting).
[3] This issue is discussed by Kendall Walton in his essay 'Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism'. Walton provides the example of examining a photograph of a deceased relative, differentiating

between seeing and perceiving as distinct activities. He suggests that „*the viewer of a photograph sees, literally, the scene that was photographed*". (Walton 273)

[4] When analysing the urban orientation and wayfinding mechanism, it is essential to differentiate between one's familiar, known city and an unfamiliar city that one has not personally experienced.

[5] What distinguishes experiencing a city in person from merely seeing it in a photo? Can one truly grasp the essence of a city by observing its landmarks alone? While landmarks are more detailed and easily discernible in photos, the question arises: Why do we travel to a city to witness these landmarks firsthand, even if the visual clarity may be inferior? The personal experience, despite its potential limitations, often surpasses the impact of a photograph. Is first-hand experience necessary to get to know a city, or is it sufficient, or even preferable, to see it in a photo?

In the presentation, I will discuss three case studies that categorize instances based on the distinction between personal acquaintance and mediated visual communication according to their respective types.

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MCS04 Mobilising methods for post-digital cities

PP 0992 Post-Digital City commuters' digital footprint: An integrated Framework for analysis

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Commuting in post-digital cities is characterised by a complex interplay between media- and mobility practices. Citizens not only move in physical-material space, they also do it while using their internet connected phones, swapping apps, and being immersed in a rich environment of information flows, constructed infrastructural and data ecosystems, and systems of validation, authorisation, and access. The fluid communicative spaces commuters dwell in cannot be easily grasped or conceptualised.

Research has tried to approach these complex environments of increased mobilisation of media technologies i.e. communicative mobility (Berg, 2017; Wimmer and Hartmann, 2014), as the amalgamation of media and urban infrastructure (Hespanhol et al., 2017; Krajina and Stevenson, 2019; McQuire, 2008, 2016) with its "atmospheres" as the totality of signals that are exchanged between digital devices (Ash, 2013). What people "do with media" (and vice versa) is to be framed as media practices amongst a whole set of everyday social practices (Moores, 2018) that are also bodily experienced (Moores, 2019) and can best be captured "in situ" (Kaufmann and Peil, 2019; Kubey et al., 1996).

This paper is part of a broader effort to map the mobilised media and communication practices of commuters and presents the effort to incorporate a data framework that integrates the multiple sources of information collected combining the digital footprint of the mobile phone activity of the participants, their media diaries, and the qualitative interpretation of the participant's process. The purpose is to check to what extent combining these data sources will help understand the complex phenomenon that involves mobilised media and communication practices.

In pursuit of this objective, we recruited individuals who routinely utilise public transportation for daily commutes lasting 40 minutes or more. They were asked to document their media activities during both the outbound and return journeys. The participants shared their mobile phone online-activity via VPN, took geolocated pictures to mark moments (and places) of their journey, and used the app "Me Tag"(Hohmann et al., 2023) as a form of media diary (Hyers, 2018). Subsequently, participants were interviewed to share additional insights and provide further commentary on the reported activities and thus reconstruct the commute.

In this presentation, we will only briefly describe the findings coming from the participants activity; instead the presentation will focus on the assessment of the integrated framework. Indeed, the diversity and richness of the data collected required an extra effort of architectural design that included identifying timestamps across the whole dataset and locations to anchor and synchronise the activity to space. The contribution here is thus the assessment of that framework: the technological complexity of its implementation, the collateral problems encountered (including participant recruitment and ethical issues) the epistemological aspects including what does this framework help to understand, and how can the knowledge obtained contribute to the conceptual debate and therefore help understand the complex phenomenon of media and mobility in the post-digital cities.

MCS04 Mobilising methods for post-digital cities

PP 1091 Breaking barriers: Gender-inclusive digital mediated mobility in urban environments. A study on women- and queer-inclusive urban public transportation trough technologically mediated support in Vienna

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Free choice of mobility (Elliott/Urry 2010) is considered to be a basic human need, serving for expansion of lifestyles (Leskau et al. 2021) and being an essential precondition for social participation. Given the complexity, intensity and diversification of urban day- and nightlife, planning services such as apps, maps, messengers have the potential to overcome spatial and social mobility barriers, particularly for queer persons and women (Weber/Heckel 2019). Mobile route planning technologies serve as 'boundary objects' (Star 2017), not only mediating between social worlds, but also setting compatible and connectable standards.

Based on the mutual influence of users and systems by doing mobility, 'mobility justice' (Sheller 2018) still lacks gendered perspectives. Balanced 'mobility capital' (Kaufmann et al. 2004) necessitates the incorporation of feminist development perspectives (Wajcman 2009) to make mobility more comfortable, predictable and safer for people of all genders, especially during nighttime (Farina et al. 2022).

A multi-method design that combines auto-ethnography, in-depth interviews, and accompanied mobility walks (Kusenbach 2003) with mobile media storytelling (Farmen 2015) in urban day and night mobility allows for deep insights into the public mobility of 25 women and queer persons aged 19 to 25 living in Vienna. Continuing, 17 young women autoethnographically documented their mobility behavior while using location/position data.

A comparison of mobility planning tools 'in situ', with Google Maps being the standard tool used, reveals only marginally considered needs for women in multi-modal urban mobility. IT-Tools tend to neglect the usability approach, currently prioritizing efficiency, punctuality, and inter-modality over situational ('live') usability. Due to these lacks, the participants rely on self-developed strategies, such as avoiding certain modes of transportation, only using specific routes at certain times, and seeking help and support, both personal and digital, preferably from trusted individuals. Additionally, participants prefer familiar routes and places where they are not alone to enhance their sense of security.

Young women and young queer persons especially ask for the expansion of interaction features with both the environment and other users. They also miss services for accompaniment and integrated hotlines. Additionally, they lack information about route conditions, such as street lighting and predictions about the timing of dawn. Furthermore, flexibility in planning is crucial; Alarm systems with self-created/selected security parameters and increased location accuracy could also help reducing (nocturnal) uncertainties and anxiety. Especially the use of location/position data – despite bearing risks of violating privacy – serve as valuable tools for feeling safe, and supported.

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Farina/Boussauw/Plyushteva (2022) Moving safely at night? Gender, Place & Culture 29(9), 1229–1250.

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MCS05 Spaces of mediated inequality and inclusion

PP 1090 Mobility (dis)orders. Discourses of unequal access to the German railway services

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Under the keywords of sustainability and "Verkehrswende" (change in the transportation sector), public transport is increasingly central in current climate change and future mobility debates. Associated discourses have changed over time and were connected to different kinds of societal power structures hence ideological assumptions about the understanding of movement and mobility. From a car-dominated era to privatizing public transport infrastructure

and current debates on e-mobility and smart mobility services, it's evident that past discourses significantly shape present societal orders, structures, and the scope of action for various interest groups.

"The right to the city" (Lefebvre, 2000) is therefore closely linked to and also includes "the right to public transport" or broader a "right to mobility", i.e. the access to public mobility infrastructure, whereas mobility infrastructure is more and more converged with media and communication technologies forming part of the fabric of highly digitalized cities that are grounded in advanced models of data capturing and processing. Accordingly controlling the flow of data, people, goods, and city logistics is crucial for urban cohabitation, but may not always align with social needs inherent to urban societies. Simultaneously, unequal distribution of infrastructure access raises questions about data and infrastructure ownership.

Uneven mobilities (Sheller, 2016) are connected to the question of how certain politics control movement and circulation of data, people, and goods. In other words, which policy promotes which forms of mobility for which people, while other people are excluded from so-called critical infrastructure. Using the theoretical concept of "mobility justice" (Sheller, 2018), we critically analyse the situation in Germany using the example of Deutsche Bahn. We take a closer look at the offers on different train tickets (the so called „9-Euro-Ticket", a special offer from Deutsche Bahn limited to three months in summer 2022, and the so called „Deutschlandticket" for 49 Euro in 2023) and examine how unequal access is newly created and how this in turn (re)produces social (dis)orders.

Our method is a Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2013; Jäger, 2001, 2019). The text corpus consists of articles from daily newspapers and news magazines, online comments and Deutsche Bahn advertising. We examine how „the right to mobility" was negotiated in various discourse strands by different actors and interest group. The results of our analyses are placed in a broader context, we consider them in relation to earlier political decisions, such as a transport policy that for decades gave preference to the car ("free travel for free citizens") and promoted the privatization of Deutsche Bahn.

Results suggest that a fine-grained analysis of different time-levels and different scales is fruitful to make sense of unequal access to public transportation. For example, the "9-Euro-Ticket" shows that the demand for affordable public transport exists, but cannot be met by the highly dysfunctional mobility infrastructure. Further conclusions can be drawn from analysing of how access to an ailing, broken, privatised infrastructure has come about, what continuities and (social) disruptions can be found from previous political decisions and how slow or quick policymaking trickles down to structural long-term impact.

MCS05 Spaces of mediated inequality and inclusion

PP 1092 Territorial inequality in Spain: Depopulation and news deserts on the news media landscape

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The crisis suffered in recent decades by the local press has raised awareness of the consequences that the lack of news service can have on local communities. The disappearance of daily local press titles endangers the satisfaction of basic information needs (Ferrier, Sinha & Outrich, 2016; Friedland et al., 2012) and motivates research on the emergence of so-called news deserts and their effects (Abernathy, 2020; Bucay, Elliott, Kamin & Park, 2017; Ferrier et al., 2016; Gulyas, 2020; Jerónimo, Ramos & Torre, 2022; Lins da Silva & Pimenta, 2020).

The Spanish map of digital news media is stable and with a tendency to grow. However, the map reveals territorial inequalities that may be related to the gradual process of depopulation and exodus from rural areas to the large capitals. There is concern about citizens' access to a quality local journalistic service, which is key to the strengthening of communities and their democratic functioning (Galletero-Campos & Saiz-Echezarreta, 2022).

This work explores the phenomenon of news deserts in Spain, identifying the areas that can be considered as such and those that are at risk. We study the characteristics of the media ecosystem in the regions with the most news deserts and check whether the population or the wealth index can be related to their appearance. To do so, we take as a starting point the digital news media map of Spain (Negredo Bruna & Martínez-Costa, 2021). Subsequently, the areas of news coverage of each media outlet are identified, obtaining their geographical distribution and the number of media outlets with coverage in each municipality of the state. The descriptive and correlational statistical treatment of the data allows for an in-depth study of the autonomous communities and an analysis of the risk factors.

Results show that 6,304 (77.53%) Spanish municipalities can be considered news deserts, where 11.6 million inhabitants live, that is, 24.51% of the country's total population. In addition, another 523 municipalities are at risk of becoming deserts. In the regions with the highest number of news deserts, there is a clear concentration of outlets in the main capitals and a weak ecosystem of local and hyperlocal media. Depopulation is the main risk factor in the loss of news media and news coverage in local communities. Although the phenomenon of news deserts affects a minority of the population, there is a large territory that does not have its own media to tell its reality and satisfy its

citizens' right to information. Knowing the risk factors and their evolution in the territories, as well as the situation of the media ecosystem, makes it possible to work towards reversing the situation.

MCS05 Spaces of mediated inequality and inclusion

PP 1093 Municipal communication applications as public service?

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The development and operation of communication applications by municipal actors is becoming increasingly relevant. Examples range from information portals and citizen apps to social media services with a local or regional focus. Such services cover the entire spectrum of municipal structures, from the smallest local authorities to urban metropolises, often being part of smart city or smart region activities.

This contribution discusses such digital applications from the perspective of communication and media studies. The focus is on the question to what extent not only municipalities' information dissemination via digital media, but also their organisation and provision can be regarded a public service activity and thus a legitimate responsibility of public authorities. To this end, this presentation takes the following steps of argumentation:

Firstly, the fundamentals of the increasing digitalisation of services of general interest are introduced. This means that existing service areas are being transformed by digital processes and new services as well as tasks come into existence. This is associated with "organisational, legal and technical changes for all stakeholders in the service areas" (Berg et al. 2022).

In a second step, links are established between digital services of general interest and media communication. Two aspects in particular are emphasised: On the one hand, the ongoing crisis of local print journalism (Tomaz 2023) is resulting in a decrease of media coverage on municipal affairs. Additionally, legal issues such as the EU-US-Privacy Shield which was declared invalid by the CJEU in 2020 (European Commission 2023) severely limited municipalities in their use of major social media outlets. On the other hand, the "platformisation" (Poell et al. 2019) of not only global, but also local communication offerings is increasingly taken up by municipal authorities and other public actors.

In a third step, the implications of these theoretical considerations are illustrated by means of the case study of the German pilot project "Digital Villages Lower Saxony". In this context, communication services are made publicly available not only to municipal administrations, but also to civil society and private actors. However, it must be taken into account that the provision and use of digital communication services in the case of municipal actors is caught between the conflicting priorities of media law, the press' independence of the state and the legal obligation of German public authorities' to provide information on their administrative action.

Finally, the case study is used to reflect on the initial question of the validity of considering the municipal provision of communication offers as a public service. The article concludes that not only the provision of information via self-organised and shared channels can represent added value. Enabling and empowering civil society institutions and citizens to engage in communicative exchange can also be supported by such communication services in the interests of the common good, safeguarding social order in local communities. However, next to transparency it is has to be ensured that the state is not given the opportunity to influence other actors' communication.

MCS05 Spaces of mediated inequality and inclusion

PP 1094 Hyper surveillance of Public Space: The case of Bairro Alto, Portugal

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The field of public surveillance studies has undergone numerous changes in the past 20 years. The popular studies of CCTV of the 90s were supplanted by studies of web surveillance and, lately, of what Zuboff (2019) termed 'surveillance capitalism' and Lyon (2018) calls a 'surveillance culture'. As this went on, CCTV technology became a different a different beast: from a static, granular, stand-alone artefact, it became a 360º, connected, sound-recording, night-vision, facial-recognition enabled digital assemblage. In Portugal, for policymakers and public security agencies it also became "the strategic, and smart, means to protect the public".

In 2024, Bairro Alto – a Lisbon neighborhood known for its nightlife and attractive to tourists – will complete ten years of video surveillance system operation. In a document from the Ministry of Internal Administration (MAI), the Public Security Police (PSP), the entity responsible for managing the surveillance system, describes it as operating "uninterruptedly, twenty-four hours a day, every day of the week" (Portugal, 2022, s/p), through the capture and recording of images and, "whenever there is a situation of concrete danger to the safety of people and property", possibly sound. Likewise, both in interviews conducted by the authors and in outdoors in the city of Lisbon, those responsible for these systems perform a semiotic operation of moving them from 'video surveillance' to 'video protection'.

The case of Bairro Alto highlights a logic observed globally, analyzed for at least four decades by surveillance studies (Lyon, 2022), which, among other perspectives, discusses the implications for the right to privacy (Viseu, Clement & Aspinall, 2004) and makes critical comments about surveillance as an "easy solution" that "transports" the real problems to another location (Carli, 2008).

Drawing upon interviews with relevant actors including, MAI, police, and residents, as well as documentary and policy analysis, this paper does two main things: (a) it examines the visions and motivations that are mobilized to promote and legally and politically justify the use of video surveillance in Bairro Alto, including the ways in which the community of residents position themselves in relation to this surveillance; And, (b) it examines the practices of operation and use of this system, highlighting the dissonances between the legal scope and the use of video surveillance in Bairro Alto.

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MED01 The end of mediatization? Rethinking media reliance in the post-digital age

PN 006 Rethinking media reliance in times of deep mediatization

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This paper forwards the argument that the process of mediatization, and the increasingly deepened significance of media technologies in everyday life, contribute to a renewed and converted relevance of the concept of media reliance in media and communication studies in general and mediatization studies in particular. Such rethinking of media reliance introduces new ways of understanding the media in relation to different social domains and thus expands what we aim to, and may, understand of our contemporary media lives (Deuze 2011). Media reliance is one of the classic concepts in media and communication studies. Traditionally building on empirical research about media experiences of news consumption, media reliance has predominantly been used to explain how people develop a citizen identity and their public connection, initially often operationalized as "exposure" (Faber et al. 1985). During the last decades, new digital media technologies, algorithms, and the process of datafication in varied spheres, have profoundly transformed the basic conditions for daily human life, our habits and rituals, how we socialize and develop our intimate relationships, connect to each other as well as to the world, etc. This transformation of contemporary life and culture is sometimes conceptualized as "deep mediatization" (Couldry & Hepp's (2016: p. 37) understood as "the increased reliance of all social processes on infrastructures of communication". Deep mediatization then, on the one hand, means that people depend to an increasing extent on media technologies to manage and navigate their daily lives. On the other, it also means they may be less aware of this, due to the opacity and ubiquity of algorithmic cultures. In light of this discussion, this paper forwards a rethinking of the notion of media reliance, a concept we argue has the potential to largely expand its scope and explanatory significance in media and communication studies as a consequence of the processes of deep mediatization. Based on a literature review and retrospective discussion about the use of the concept of media reliance in our field, and from the perspective of (deep) mediatization theory, we argue for a renewed, deepened, and transformed importance of the concept of media reliance.

MED01 The end of mediatization? Rethinking media reliance in the post-digital age

PN 007 Digital reliance as a threat to communicative agency in the work-place

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Today, many work procedures and tasks across different occupations are reliant on digital media. While digital tools are implemented to make work more efficient and flexible, mandatory use of new, and continuously upgraded, platforms and infrastructures may also foster experiences of media over-reliance, and a fractured sense of communicative agency. This means that people feel that their "capabilities to meaningfully influence communicative interactions in their daily lives" (Ytre-Arne & Das, 2021: 784) are hampered. Under certain circumstances, they may even feel that basically "positive" media affordances are turned upside-down. Connectivity is turned into digital intrusiveness and enclosure; the capacity to make oneself visible becomes a means of surveillance; logistical affordances may underpin a bewildering state of spatial and temporal boundlessness. While these types of ambiguities bespeak the dialectical nature of mediatization processes in general (Jansson, 2018), they also provide a backdrop to the so-called disconnection turn (Fast, 2021) and the (sometimes enforced) emergence of post-digital sensibilities in working life. The troubled relationship between digitalization and communicative agency has been actualized in self-help literature promoting things like "digital minimalism" (e.g., Newport, 2019), as well as in research on, for example, "digital wellbeing" (Vanden Abeele & Nguyen, 2023). Yet, there is no dedicated overview of how it unfolds in different realms of society and in different occupational sectors. To chart such patterns, this paper deploys data from a nation-wide survey conducted in Sweden in 2023. The questionnaire included a set of 20 statements aiming to capture emerging post-digital conditions in the workplace. Starting out from a factor analysis of how the respondents rated these statements, the paper scrutinizes the two most outstanding factors (those with the highest level of explained variance). The first factor is tentatively labelled Fractured communicative agency and is marked by feelings of digital distraction, surveillance and technology-induced time-waste, combined with an inclination to exclude certain technologies and platforms and even escape to digitally disentangled work-places. The second factor, conversely, is called Expanded communicative agency and is characterized by a sense of enhanced spatial and temporal freedom, combined with an appreciation of new logistical affordances and access to online meeting spaces. The subsequent analyses demonstrate how demographic factors as well as sectorial and work-place specific conditions (e.g., regulations pertaining to digital connectivity) play into people's tendency to align with either Fractured or Expanded communicative agency. The paper concludes with a discussion of how

communicative agency plays into social power relations in the post-digital society, where access to disconnected, or non-connected, time-spaces is an increasingly scarce resource.

MED01 The end of mediatization? Rethinking media reliance in the post-digital age

PN 008 Fashionably post-digital? Coworking territoriality as a response to media over-reliance

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Although popularly described as shared work environments where people from different organizations can work individually or collaboratively, coworking spaces (CWS) are contradictory spaces that escape simple classification. This paper demonstrates how CWS feed from, and reinforce, three inter-related processes which can all be connected to structural media over-reliance among knowledge workers. The first of these processes, and our key concern here, is post-digitalization. The post-digital signifies a new type of sensibility and a way of problematizing media over-reliance on a day-to-day basis. At present, both organizations and workers search for solutions to digital "stress", "fatigue", and related problems (Guyard & Kaun, 2018; Fast, 2021). In CWS, post-digital ideals materialize as, for example, designated areas for disconnected activity (e.g. yoga), community events (e.g. "mindfulness"), and display of analogue media (e.g. vinyl players). Through these and similar operations, CWS ultimately emerge and/or present themselves as "post-digital territories" (Adams & Jansson, 2022) – as bounded areas where the hegemonic digital regime is (claimed to be) challenged.The post-digital character of CWS contributes to their ambiguity. Partly because of their approach to technology, CWS appear as both connected and disconnected spaces; they promote both hard work and recreational ease; and they function as both disciplined spaces and experience-laden "destinations" for "digital nomads" (Fast, 2022). Ultimately, we argue, CWS become promoters and exploiters not only of post-digitalization, but also of processes implied by the notions of post-work and post-tourism. This is to the extent that the post-digital is framed as a key aspect of even grander transformations of working life through which work and leisure coalesce. At stake here is workers' 'right to disconnect' not only from digital media, but, more generally, from the world of work as we have come to know it. But who is likely to feel at home in this new world of work? Who is probable to make it into post-digital territories, and who is left outside? However open-ended CWS might appear, especially given their mediatized nature, they do have boundaries that serve to include and exclude. Through a review of existing literature, in combination with ethnographic fieldwork carried out in CWS in Oslo and Palma de Mallorca, in 2023 and 2024, we hope to inspire a broader discussion around the social implications of media-induced transformations of contemporary work and life.

MED01 The end of mediatization? Rethinking media reliance in the post-digital age

PN 009 Media reliances in the post-digital office

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According to a report from OpenAI (in collaboration with University of Pennsylvania), Generative Pre-trained Transformers (GPSs) have potential to not only affect the work tasks of 80% of the American workforce but also replace a significant number of administrative workers in a near future (Eloundu et al. 2023). Against such a background it may seem less relevant to discuss neither office workers' media reliance, nor a post-digital workplace where manual and digital work are hard to separate. Yet, in order to deepening our understanding of threats of office automation, we should scrutinize past and present relationships between humans and machines; how analog and digital work has been configured in the workplace. A historical perspective on office work and office technology shows that automation is a process rather than a quick transition. In this paper, I discuss how office technologies such as word processors, personal computers, chatbots and apps have automated parts of the work; how that has changed the socio-material office environment, and transformed – rather than replaced – the human work. For example, recently, in an intense period of digitization, a partly new occupation has emerged; the virtual assistant, competing with the bots. She (it is almost always a woman) is a precarious platform/gig worker who works remotely, and who can be procured for longer or shorter time to manage social media and calendars, organize mails, answer calls, vet clients, and do other clerical work tasks. The occurrence of the (human) virtual assistant at a time when visions of office automation grow stronger says something about media reliance and the post-digital office. Media reliance appears in different shapes in the modern office; from chatbots that automate several work tasks, to the virtual assistants who work from home and rely on media technologies both to get jobs and to perform them. Many of the work tasks in the modern office can be executed by either AI or virtual assistants. It demonstrates that the development of the office is not a linear path towards automation; the manual and the automated – the virtual assistant and ChatGPT – may exist side by side.

MED02 Theoretical and methodological insights

PP 0143 Exploring the Concept of generative mediatization

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Our research studies in 2023–2024 confirmed the concept of dynamic generative mediatization through two different approaches. First, developers and investors in AI from different industries formulated the manner in which the media landscape can be disrupted by AI-generated content, even while investing resources in those technologies, the most significant risk of which lies in the misuse of sophisticated AI services, leading to a dystopic future in media and communication (Feher and Veres, 2023). Second, AI-driven communication and media experts are perilously optimistic, believing that future developments in AI could mitigate the adverse outcomes generated by current AI technologies (Feher, Vicsek and Deuze, 2024). These two studies illuminate the complexities and uncertainties inherent in the evolving landscape of 'AI to AI' mediatization, underscoring the multifaceted impact of emerging generative AI technologies.

Accordingly, the era of 'generative AI' and 'generative AI media' facilitates a new and controversial paradigm in digital communication and media engagement by:

1. Fostering a reconceptualization of mediatization dynamics (Feher 2022)
2. Extending the helpful concept of "deep mediatization" (Hepp 2020)
3. Understanding the two-fold characteristics of mediatization with beliefs and uncertainties resulting in dual impacts (Feher, Vicsek, and Deuze 2024)

This presentation thus introduces and explores the term 'Generative Mediatization,' a concept that encapsulates the profound changes in media landscapes brought about by the advent of advanced generative AI technologies.

Generative mediatization means a dynamic era of intertwining transformation and disruption. AI algorithms transcend traditional content dissemination, creation, and modification roles, leveraging a synergistic blend of open-source data, advanced deep learning techniques, synthetic data, and neurotechnology. This convergence shapes public discourse and molds individual perceptions, operating as an enigmatic 'black box' in the technological realm (Feher and Veres 2023). Generative mediatization stands at the forefront of media evolution, offering a window into the intricate socio-technical trajectories anticipated in AI's future (Feher 2024). This concept is pivotal in decoding the complex interplay between media progress and AI advancements, highlighting the dual nature of AI as both a disruptor and catalyst in the digital age.

Additionally, the sociology of (technological) expectations (Borup et al. 2006) plays a pivotal role in framing our understanding of generative mediatization. This theoretical perspective helps us comprehend the way in which societal expectations and speculation about AI's future shape its development and integration into media practices. Generative AI content, media products, and info-communication are also coded by the narratives of disruptive and transformative technologies, placing them in competition in a post-truth context. These AI-generated and -related narratives increase fragmentation and entropy in media studies. Thus, entropy and uncertainty assessment are essential in identifying generative mediatization.

In conclusion, the concept of 'generative mediatization' provides a dual-focused framework for analyzing AI's impact on media and communication that is essential in understanding the complex relationship between technological advancements and societal change, preparing us to adeptly face the challenges and opportunities of the rapidly evolving generative AI-driven era.

MED02 Theoretical and methodological insights

PP 0144 Deep mediatization by Anthropomorphization: Accommodation to communicative AI

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Framework

In sociotechnical interaction both human and technological agents or artefacts enter into a more reciprocal relation, thereby causing new *challenges for social order*. By design technological systems are constructed to fulfill specific requirements like ergonomic shape, intuitive usability or efficient support of humans. On the other hand, users learn to understand and utilize the functions of the system and adapt according to system logics. In its simplest, optimal form, user-centred adjustments on the technological side and technology-centred adjustments on the human side complement each other reciprocally.

The newest generation of communicative AI systems seems to enhance this paradigm (Etzrodt & Engesser, 2021). Voice-assistants like Alexa, humanoid robots like NAO or LLMIs like ChatGPT present themselves as hyper-advanced, intelligent, (partly) autonomous and publicly accessible communication agents. They even promise

creative production of text, problem-solving and the simulation of authentic 'interpersonal' exchange. The development of more and more parasocial elements such as personalization, conversational reciprocity and human likeness in voice qualities or body shapes underscores the tendency to '*humanize*' AI systems. Considering the fact that anthropomorphization is implemented both in design and in interactive practice, we want to follow up the path of deep mediatization by the subsequent research questions on changes in socio-technical relations: (1) How does user-accommodation change in interaction with anthropomorphic conversational agents? (2) Can we observe a self-enforcing relationship between anthropomorphic design and the performance of accommodation practices? (3) What implications does this relationship have considering ontological questions at the root of human-machine communication research?

The Studies

In order to systematize various degrees of adaption, distancing or acceptance of communicative behaviors we developed a concept of *digital communication accommodation practices* (Edwards et al., 2023) based on the sociolinguistic approach of the "Communication Accommodation Theory" (CAT) (Gallois et al., 2016). In order to evaluate our model, two studies were carried out.

Study (1): The Anthropomorphic Impact of Voice in Robot Interaction

In this study, we altered the voice quality (human vs. synthetic) to investigate the influence of voice expression, whether human-like or robot-like, on sympathy and trust towards robots. Twelve participants engaged in a conversation with a NAO robot on an emotionally charged topic ("winter blues") in each condition. The findings indicated a preference for the synthetic human voice, highlighting the recurrence of the uncanny valley paradigm.

Study (2): Verbal Interaction and emotional closeness with ChatGPT

Study 2 explored the utilization of ChatGPT in two conversational scenarios involving individuals seeking support for personal conflicts. Observations, data analysis, and post-experimental interviews with participants (n = 12) revealed a trend toward eliciting human-like conversation and fostering anthropomorphic attitudes. This was achieved through the adoption of communicative accommodation practices towards AI speech patterns.

Addressing the three research questions, all studies indicate that users adapt not merely to a technological spectrum of functions but rather to anthropomorphic interpretation and allocation of human likeness. We will tie these results into more recent research on anthropomorphism and deep mediatization.

MED02 Theoretical and methodological insights

PP 0145 Towards an ecology of mediatization: Bridging the media ecology approach with the mediatization paradigm through Bourdieu and Elias

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This paper revisits the media ecology perspective, proposing a theoretical reflection based on its integration into the mediatization paradigm by leveraging the contributions of Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias. These contributions are employed to address the gaps identified in the traditional media ecology approach, providing a more dynamic framework for understanding the complex and dynamic nature of media in contemporary society.

The study emphasizes three fundamental dimensions of media ecology that it seeks to reinterpret: the definition of its object of study, the extension of its semantic universe, and the evaluation of media types and effects, including contemporary platforms and advanced digital technologies such as AI. Firstly, the paper redefines the object of study of media ecology, moving beyond the analysis of media as mere tools for human agency. Bourdieu's field theory enriches this understanding, providing a lens to view media as arenas where battles for dominance, representation, and cultural capital create fluctuating states of order and disorder.

Secondly, the paper expands the semantic universe of media ecology by drawing parallels between the physical/natural and communicative/media dimensions. This expansion is informed by the ecological perspective, which incorporates notions of adaptation, toxicity, pollution, and survival. The paper argues for a nuanced understanding of media as environments that individuals navigate, influenced by power struggles and hierarchical dynamics. As agents of change, they can either contribute to social cohesion or fragmentation, highlighting the dual role of media in creating and resolving entropy within the communicative ecosystem.

Thirdly, the evaluation of media types and effects is revisited, focusing on how media and platforms construct, convey, and influence content. The paper analyzes the impact of media on individual perception, behavior, and opinions, considering how the interplay of forces within social fields affects cultural production and power distribution. This analysis is enriched by Elias's figurational sociology, viewing media and digital platforms as part of a reticular configuration in constant flux, shaped by ongoing tensions and structural changes, thereby either reinforcing established orders or contributing to their dissolution.

In conclusion, the paper posits that by combining the environmental, field, and figurational perspectives, a more current conception of a composite and dynamic space can be referenced. This habitat, wherein media logic acts as an ecological principle, conditions or generates practices and processes, is shaped by the ongoing mediatization of society. Media, in this sense, are not only instrumental but transformative, modeling every aspect of social interaction. Consequently, the scope of media ecology itself is potentially amplified, suggesting its plausible transformation into an ecology of mediatization. This proposed evolution reflects the pervasive and integral role of media in shaping contemporary societies, advocating for a reconceptualization that recognizes media as complex, multifaceted systems with far-reaching ecological implications.

MED02 Theoretical and methodological insights

PP 0146 Mythological analysis of the AI media narratives: A comparative approach

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Context

Lately, Artificial Intelligence (AI) seemed to have been increasingly a disruptive subject, generating constant media scrutiny, public debate, and controversy, implicating from some the biggest names in technology to Scientifics and various experts, journalists, and political actors alike.

Far from being fully understood in its scientific-technic essence, and far too technical for a simple public understanding, AI medialization seems to be privileging series of rather similar narratives with the intention to explain, and to bring order into a symbolically distressed collective imaginary, in searching for meanings.

Objective, Research Questions & Methodology

This paper aims to analyze the media narratives about AI from an anthropological perspective, further focusing on identifying mythological manifestations and constructions present in the media discourse, in a comparative approach of main UK and French national newspapers.

We are interested in **which are the major, dominant mythological structures** of media narratives about AI, but also in **how /or if these symbolic constructions and representations may differ,** depending on the specific media discourse language/cultures. We seek also **which are the main discourse strategies** used to define AI in media narratives, and **how their usage may differ** in the reference corpuses.

We will be following 2 theoretical approaches:

- a media anthropological interpretation of media narratives about AI. According to this approach, "mass media continue in modernity the functions, contents and social prestige of the myth" (Coman, 2003);
- an identification of specific mythological structures defining AI myth present in media narratives, from the perspective of structural, symbolic, and interpretive anthropology and cultural analysis.

Through qualitative content and discourse analysis we will identify the major themes, the dominant symbolic structures of AI media narratives. Following the application of an anthropological interpretative analysis model inspired by Greimas, Levi-Strauss and Geertz, we will be mapping the manifestations of the modern AI myth in its different forms present in the media narratives, then we will be comparing the specificities of these findings in relation to our English (UK) and French corpuses.

Corpus

Relevant UK and French main quality national media articles covering 2 major 2023 AI related events:

- the Future of Life Institute open letter about AI impact on humanity – March 22, 2023;
- the OpenAI employee's announcement / open letter – November 22, 2023.

Conclusions / expected results

Both French and British Media narratives about AI are prone to reveal archetypal, mythological symbolic structures which we believe will be rather similar for both reference analysis corpuses, despite language and [superficial] cultural differences. Far from resuming at or preferring scientific, technical discourse, narrative sources will try to offer sense and understanding rather than just informing about the disruptive AI controversy, by appealing to deep social and cultural symbolism, cultural meta-narratives and master-myths. This narrative approach is of paramount importance in relation to the collective imaginary regarding AI, directly influencing its social acceptance or rejection. Finally, the AI media narrative will reveal that it tends to appeal to the public's emotional understanding, rather than to its rational thinking.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, media narratives, myth, anthropology, comparative analysis.*

MED02 Theoretical and methodological insights

PP 0147 Social actors' implicit theories about the media and its impact as a transmission belt and a yardstick of mediatization

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This theoretical contribution seeks to illustrate how mediatization research can benefit from taking up social actors' implicit theories about the functionality of the media and media effects as an analytical point of reference. From an institutional perspective, mediatization can be understood as a process through which other social institutions, such as politics or religion, become dependent on and influenced by the media and its logic (Hjarvard 2008, 2012). This concept is the subject of a diverse theoretical debate and the foundation of a constantly growing body of empirical studies. It has been pointed out that mediatization is spurred by social actors' attempts to use the resources of the media for their own purposes (Hjarvard, 2014; Marcinkowski & Steiner, 2014). However, a central question remains as to why, for example, political actors increasingly rely on media visibility to achieve their goals (Marcinkowski, 2014). Here, it is argued that this question can be addressed by analyzing social actors' presumptions about a) how the instrumentalization of the media and its resources can contribute to achieving their objectives and b) how they therefore have to adapt to media logic.

The premise of this approach is that media-related behavior of social actors is not a natural reaction to supposedly objective circumstances but instead based on a subjective ensemble of axiomatic, causally linked presumptions about the functionality of the media and its impact. Such implicit theories can not only explain why actors make use of the media and their resources and adapt to media logic but also reveal how, when, and to what extent they do so. Accordingly, actors' implicit theories about the media and its effects are both a transmission belt and a yardstick of the mediatization of social institutions. The suggestion to conceptualize and investigate mediatization as a process mediated by perceptions and interpretations of social actors has been introduced previously. This idea can also be found in the concepts of *mental mediatization* (Marcinkowski, 2014), *media orientation* (Kohring et al., 2013; Wonneberger & Jacobs, 2016), and *perceived media logic* (Nölleke & Scheu, 2018). The recourse to the concept of implicit theories does not contradict these considerations but builds on and combines them. Thereby, this approach does not just focus on certain perception variables (e.g., presumed media influence) but captures the presumptions underlying media-related behavior and adaption to media logic in their actual complexity. Furthermore, examining the consequences of media-related behavior based on these implicit theories can reveal substantial consequences of mediatization in relation to their cognitive causes. Comparing these consequences with the presumptions of social actors provides the possibility to uncover systematic distortions of perception regarding the functionality of media and media effects.

Empirically, implicit theories of social actors can be meaningfully assessed using in-depth qualitative interviews. The practical research benefits of this theoretical approach will be discussed at the conference based on an exemplary study on the mediatization of political lobbying.

MED03 Mediatization in conflict and politics

PP 0251 Mediatization of politics – Toward a research model

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While theorizing on mediatization is well developed and rich in a variety of trends and patterns, methodological approaches to mediatization research are significantly less often the subject of academic debate (Couldry & Hepp, 2013; Hepp, 2013; 2020; Hepp & Hasebrink, 2018; Peruško, 2017; van Es & de Lange, 2020). Mediatization of politics is one of these most studied areas (within mediatization studies), forming an influential stream of research focusing on media-related interdependencies that explain public, political, and electoral transformations (Strömbäck, 2008; 2014; Strömbäck & Esser, 2017; Kissas, 2019). The application of methods typically used in media studies (e.g. content analysis) can be a starting point for certain facets of mediatization phenomena, but they are not sufficient if we want to investigate the process of media-related political change more deeply (Ekström et al., 2016). What we need to study a particular area of mediatization is a set of methods applied in an appropriate configuration. The choice of methods and techniques depends on the research goal, but they should allow us to capture and explain the key moments and developments of mediatization phenomena. However, what is needed in the next step is the elaboration of a methodological framework, based on existing research experiences, in which certain models of investigation can be recognized and developed. Without aspiring to universalism, we aim to present certain methodological paths and good practices applied in high-quality studies on the mediatization of politics.

In this study, we aim to explore the existing mediatization of politics studies, especially considering empirical works that reflect mediatization processes in different national and temporal contexts. Based on the corpus of

mediatization studies in politics, consisting of the research articles collected through keyword searches in two academic datasets (Scopus, Web of Science, 2018–2023), we aim to (1) identify methodological paths (and good practices) applied in high quality mediatization studies in politics; (2) elaborate research models (based on existing experiences) that can be recognized and developed. The categories used to determine the model will include, among others: research approach (quantitative, qualitative, mixed); type(s) of method(s) applied (e.g. content analysis, discourse analysis, in-depth interviews, surveys, etc.); time and scope approach (cross-sectional, longitudinal, regional, global); subtopics within the mediatization of politics; related concepts (e.g. datafication, algorithmization, etc.). The expected results will reflect features of a research model that informs how mediatization theory is applied in empirical studies devoted to the field under observation. A preliminary observation, limited to journal articles, shows that in Scopus we can find 20 documents identified by the keywords search: mediatization AND politics AND methods (2018–2023). This observation may suggest that there is a need for more focus on the methodological side of mediatization of politics research.

MED03 Mediatization in conflict and politics

PP 0252 Celebrities go to war: The transformation of social media discourse in Ukraine during the full-scale Russian invasion

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Prior to the full-scale invasion, celebrity culture in Ukraine was largely represented as a space for the production and promotion of entertainment content in genres accessible to the general public. Over the years, in the context of the information wars that Russia intensified after the collapse of the USSR, show business in Ukraine has, to some extent, also been a space for the full promotion of pro-Russian narratives. The election of the stand-up comedian Volodymyr Zelenskyy as president, the COVID-19 lockdown, and the full-scale invasion restructured the media landscape in Ukraine. At the beginning of the full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022, Ukrainian patriotic opinion leaders, as before the war in the Eastern part of Ukraine from 2014 onwards, continued with their usual agenda, while celebrities, who were previously uninterested in politics or social activism (with rare exceptions), showed a dramatic shift towards the patriotic agenda in their public communication, changing their language, narratives, value preferences, etc. The study **aims** to analyze the transformation of the social media discourse of Ukrainian celebrities during the full-scale military invasion in 2022–2023. I accept the Penfold idea that we are living in celebrity culture (Penfold, 2004) and agree that we need to understand and interpret it more broadly as it connects to social life and many social spheres (Marshall 2004, Driessens, Van Krieken, 2012). It goes to the problems that Couldry outlined as mediatization of mediation (Couldlry, 2008). In understanding social media logic I refer to VanDjik's concept, which arose from Altheide & Snow's media logic theory. In this study, I focus on the social media discourse of celebrity culture and how it contributes to collective memory construction (Assman, 2004), in what meaning celebrities added to their meaning of "us" (Dhoest, 2005). To build an analytical model, I use discourse, event, and frame analysis to identify themes, actors, events, and narratives and describe communication patterns. The research is based on a sample of posts and comments on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram, VKontakte, and TikTok with the geolocation 'Ukraine' and 'Not determined' considered, with the highest audience engagement coverage written between 24 February 2022 and 24 February 2024 (approximately 2.8 million posts gathered by YouScan program using semantic cloud request randomized, 1200 relevant (meaningful statements related to the war in Ukraine topic with mentions of celebrities) messages manually coded and analyzed. The preliminary analysis shows that despite the transformation in the rhetoric of the celebrities, their millions of followers are ready to change with them. They are cooperating with world stars in supporting Ukraine and they are attracting those who, before the war, had little interest not only in celebrities but also in politics and patriotic agendas. New influencers complement and change, if not destroy, the seemingly withered celebrity culture. Celebrity culture is changing and showing itself as an unpredictable field of new power, and this can be both an opportunity for democracy and authoritarianism. This study will provide some predictions on how it works.

MED03 Mediatization in conflict and politics

PP 0253 Digital diplomacy strategies in the mediatization of the Russian-Ukrainian war on Chinese digital social networks

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Introduction

This article delves into the nuanced strategies employed by countries with divergent stances in the Russian-Ukrainian war to shape public opinion on Chinese Digital Social Networks (DSNs). It explores the dynamics of mediatization by these nations and scrutinizes the responses evoked among the Chinese populace. The study elucidates how

Chinese DSNs serve as a battleground where digital diplomacy practitioners from conflicting standpoints grapple with countering strategies and vie for validation within the Chinese public sphere.

Methodology

The research gathered over 300.000 posts spanning from January 1, 2022, to August 31, 2023, from the Weibo platform, housing content related to the Russian-Ukrainian war. These comprised posts from involved embassies (Ukraine, Russia, US, France, Germany, and the European Union delegation in China), user comments, and broader discourse regarding the war. Methodologies encompassed automatic thematic analysis, sentiment analysis, and extraction of pivotal information from the involved countries' posts.

Furthermore, network analysis was conducted to comprehend the intricate web of reposts among digital diplomacy stakeholders and users. User participation in influencing strategies was assessed via sentiment analysis based on supervised learning and graphical semantic analysis of user comments, facilitating a comparative evaluation of diplomatic intentions versus user responses.

Analysis and Results

The findings revealed pivotal insights into the mediatization landscape. Firstly, digital diplomacy practitioners engaged in stiff competition, forming alliances among like-minded factions to fortify information aligned with their interests. However, the subsequent stage highlighted the limited impact of their strategies, evident in the constrained dissemination of their information within a comparatively small network. Users assumed a passive role akin to spectators, exhibiting heterogeneous opinions, largely independent of digital diplomacy players.

Moreover, the study elucidated the marginal influence wielded by digital diplomacy stakeholders on DSNs. The predominant currents of public discourse predominantly swayed under the influence of established influencers, overshadowing the diplomatic players' endeavors. Consequently, within the realm of profound mediatization, digital diplomacy confronts a fragmented, diverse, and individualistic discursive space, challenging their ability to assert substantial influence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research underscores the intricate dynamics of digital diplomacy strategies within the Chinese DSNs concerning the Russian-Ukrainian war. Despite concerted efforts by diplomatic entities to mold public opinion, their impact remains circumscribed amidst a complex, influencer-driven landscape. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for digital diplomacy actors aiming to navigate and assert influence within the evolving terrain of mediated public opinion.

MED03 Mediatization in conflict and politics

PP 0254 Mediatization of science: Academic evidence and public opinion on the Russian war in Ukraine

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In the contemporary landscape, media is reshaping every aspect, including science. Media serves as a mediator between scientific findings and the public, a consumer of science outside academia. Previous studies have explored the mediatization of science, examining its impact on scientific capacities, the shift in activities, and the alignment of science with media logic (Schäfer, 2014). Additionally, media is one of the instruments used to evaluate the worth of research conducted at academic institutions, ushering in a new era of research engagement in which the value of the study is given greater weight than its citation count. Growing public interest in science (Bauer, 2012) is evident in increased media coverage and diverse science-related publications and broadcasts. Academic institutions now lean towards media engagement, driven by the necessity to validate their societal relevance through the media. Therefore, accurate scientific reporting through news media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, attitudes, and decision-making. Understanding how media use research data and reference academic sources helps identify the simplification, sensationalization, and misinterpretation of scientific findings. When news outlets provide such material inaccurately, it can lead to false beliefs among the public. Moreover, accurate reporting of research data can protect public confidence in academic institutions and make it easier for the public to decide based on factual information.

This study examines a rapid rise (Ostapenko et al., 2023) in scholarly publications regarding Russia's war in Ukraine and their portrayal in the news media. Using bibliometric analysis and relational content analysis, this study investigates evolving communication patterns of science in media, highlighting the crucial need for maintaining information integrity. The results reveal cases where biased text is juxtaposed with authentic research citations, implying false correlations with genuine research facts, and selectively citing reliable sources, thereby significantly influencing public opinion. The study introduces new tools for identifying connections between research and news articles, assessing objectivity, considering diverse viewpoints, and evaluating information sources. It underscores the

importance of accurately reporting war-related issues, contributing to a well-informed society, particularly in the global discourse on Ukraine.

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MED03 Mediatization in conflict and politics

PP 0255 The framing of the Russian war in Ukraine in the Italian media

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Italy is one of the EU countries that are regularly under the powerful influence of Russian information attacks. The full-scale military invasion of the Russian Federation in Ukraine in February 2022 caused a certain imbalance both in Italian society and in the media environment (Lami, G., & Sahota, S. (2022) and showed vulnerable places for the penetration of malign actors into the information space (Di Pasquale M., Germani L.S. (2023)). Attempts to investigate the media frames of the Russian-Ukrainian war in the European mass media have already been made (Chernov (2023); Pavlik, J. (2022); VRBA, P. (2022)) The purpose of the study is to analyze media frames regarding the coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian war in four most popular daily newspapers of Italy ("La Repubblica", "Il Corriere della sera", "Il Fatto Quotidiano") in the first period of the war (the time frame encompassed February-May 2022) and to compare them. Applying the theory of news framing and agenda-setting (Goffman E. (1984); Entman (1991) ; Van Gorp V. (2005), De Vreese C. H. (2005); Tewksbury, D., Scheufele, D. (2009)) and using the method of traditional content analysis, this study inventories the frames used by Italian news outlet for providing news content about the Russian-Ukrainian war. The study identified frame packages for each of the analysed media, which will be presented in detail during the presentation of the research results. It was found that each of the Italian news outlets applies and follows particular frames in the coverage Russian-Ukrainian war. Some of the news frames, e.g. reguarding the reasons of the war, US/NATO participation, the actions of the Ukrainian government, the figures of Putin and Zelensky in different media has different interpretation, in some cases they promote radically opposite definition and treatment recommendation for the item described. The frames of news publications of some of the analysed media partially or even completely coincide with the narratives of Russian propaganda, without being directly related to it. The results of the study will be useful during the study of media impacts in the formation of the public opinion of EU residents regarding the Russian-Ukrainian war by means of mass media, hybrid warfare and the impact of Russian propaganda on democracy.

MED04 Cultural and social impacts of mediatization

PP 0346 Datafication and cultural complexity: Navigating the tensions between institutional accountability, mediatized everyday creativity, and the arts

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This paper builds on the intersection of three contemporary dynamics: first, datafication, as a process that permeates everyday life with data (Hepp et al, 2018; Kitchin, 2014). Second, culture in its complex tension between institutionalised culture (cultural organisations) and the cultural dynamics extended in its increasing mediatization across social media platforms (Burgess et al, 2022); and third, the tensions between culture as a space for support, investment, and accountability, and culture as a space for artistic expression and creativity (Bennett & Belfiore, 2010; Durrer et al, 2019; Henley, 2016).

National cultural agencies deal with this triple tension in their efforts to curate, support, and nourish cultural activity, and to navigate accountability, the fallibilities of data (Pasquinelli & Joler, 2021; Schafer & van Es, 2017), and the uncertain terrain of a mediatized cultural sector. This paper explores how the policies and practices of the arts councils in England and Sweden deal with these tensions. It uses discourse analysis to identify 1) how the data from organisations is defined, shaped, and processed within the arts councils; and 2) how the documentation defines the relationship with those organisations, as well as how the data obtained from them generates implications,

expectations, and understandings about the work of cultural organisations; and 3) what implications these processes have, and how they shape the definitions of culture and cultural activity, subjacent in these forms of policy and documentation.

The cases of Sweden and England resonate in their claims to adherence to transparent, objective data, and the professed 'arm's length' relationship of the organisations, key cultural agencies and government as funder. Arts Council England, and the Swedish Arts Council (Kulturrådet), combined with other European examples of cultural management, will work as a sample to explore the ways government demands for accountability design the capture of data about culture, reflecting the disrupted, mediatised cultural environment; and how the complexity of the cultural sphere tenses with the demands for accountability and transparency of a datafied society.

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MED04 Cultural and social impacts of mediatization

PP 0347 Privacy mediatized: Seeking for order in times of datafication

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The paper's goal is to reconstruct sociopolitical implications of mediatized privacy as the sphere of realizing people's agency in datafied environments. By combining qualitative media sociology (the media as practice approach as elaborated in mediatization studies) and cultural studies perspective in media research (Roger Silverstone's double articulation of media), the paper analyzes the concept of privacy as media practices being one of the key spheres of how people position themselves against datafied – and increasingly unstable, fragmented, ambiguous – social structures. 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 may be seen as a lens exposing tensions of datafied societies: people seek to gain control over flows of their personal information and, by these often futile or compromised attempts, they perform their own "fights" for order their own being in the world.

The paper 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 agency in datafied social spaces. 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 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.

Reconstructing repertoires and shared definitions of privacy – as I argue in the paper – contributes to learning the conditions, contexts, and practices of realizing agency against datafied, (dis)ordered social structures. In particular, I discuss 1) new tensions tied to datafication that escalate power-related pressures when privacy as becomes increasingly vulnerable; 2) various bottom-up 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 people's mediated visibility is ongoingly demanded, negotiated and compromised.

MED04 Cultural and social impacts of mediatization

PP 0348 'POV: ur on TikTok'; Understanding the mediatised social worlds of teenagers

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In her 2002 book *Young People and New Media*, Sonia Livingstone argued that there was a pressing need to understand the media environments of young people as different from those of adults. She suggested that young people were a "distinctive and significant cultural grouping… and one which often 'leads the way' in the use of new media." (Livingstone, 2002, 3) Over twenty years later, these arguments remain salient, if not heightened: the past two decades have witnessed the development and dissemination of digital media technologies which have galvanised the distinction between children, teenagers, and adults in terms of their media use. Research conducted in 2019, for example, indicated that only 20% of individuals under the age of 10 in the United Kingdom have their own smart phones while, by age 15, 90% of adolescents reported owning a smart phone of their own. (Ibbetson, 2020) Adolescents, or teenagers, thus make up a distinct category, both as media users and as individuals in relation to broader society. Individuals in this period of their lives are now the ones who 'lead the way' when it comes to new media and digital technologies; to understand how this works, and to what social end for those individuals in question, research is needed which explores the complex relationships among teenagers, digital media, and the broader realm of the social.

The proposed paper seeks to address this need by examining how the social worlds of young people are being constructed on, around, and with the digital video-sharing app TikTok through a constructivist mediatisation lens. Mediatisation is defined by Hjarvard (2013) as "the long-term, large-scale structural transformation of relationships between media, culture and society." (3) and the constructivist approach to mediatisation research specifically attempts to trace how socio-cultural processes and practices are shaped by the ever-evolving set of communication tools and technologies available to us in the form of media. (Kopecka-Piech and Bolin, 2023; Lundby, 2014) Following the recognition by Couldry and Hepp (2017) that the social world is constructed with and through media, the aim of this work is to investigate how the specific social worlds of teenagers are constructed with and through the digital video sharing platform TikTok. Building on the existing scholarship of TikTok as an emergent and culturally significant short video platform (Boffone, 2022; Kaye et al., 2022), and following the recognition by Alice Marwick (2013) that "memes are the closest thing to a native culture form the internet has," (13) this investigation will be undertaken through an analysis of the POV ('point of view') meme on TikTok, which functions to express and share a distinct and relatable perspective across the app. The proposed paper thus inquires as to the role of TikTok in the articulation and construction of teenage cultures in the present day: what *is* the 'point of view' of teens living in such a digitally saturated and hyper-mediated present?

MED04 Cultural and social impacts of mediatization

PP 0349 Mediatization, classification, and exclusion. Borders and detention centres for migrants in Sweden

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What do the three terms have in common? What is the thread that runs from one to the other? Mediatization, pervades every aspect of everyday life (Couldry, Hepp 2017); this has naturally changed the contours of society, by shifting boundaries and inserting new ones. However, for its ambiguous nature, a critical evaluation of the transformation to which mediatization has led becomes necessary (Kopecka-Piech, Bolin 2023), including the processes, meanings, and purposes with which it is used.This paper reflects on it, setting the analysis in a very specific context: borders and detention centres for migrants in Sweden. Migration, as an experience and its narration, has always been a mediatised event (Leurs 2023; Leurs, Smets 2020). Here, the focus is on the mediatization of borders through the adoption of technologies related to surveillance and biometric recognition systems, identification through computer systems that cross biological and behavioural characteristics with data acquired through databases and algorithms (Chouliaraki, Georgiou 2020; Madianou 2019). Digitization has led to the 'datafication of human mobility', making everything about migration measurable and quantifiable. After all, the human beings are classifier animals (Levi-Strauss 1962). This classificatory logic, which is in their nature, is today implemented by technologies, AI, platforms, datafication that in their place, divide, classify, in this case migrants into desirable and undesirable at the borders of a country (Leurs, Seuferling, 2021; Latonero, Kift 2018). Hence the exclusion, which, in this paper, takes on two different meanings. The first meaning represented is exclusion from a country. Migrants at the border are registered, controlled, and classified. If they are considered undesirable, they are excluded from a reception system and potentially detained for repatriation. The second meaning concerns more explicitly the mediatisation from which migrants can be excluded. Here I will analyse the Swedish detention centres, which are highly mediatised spaces, equipped with surveillance technologies and where everything happens digitally. There are cards with personal information to move around the interior spaces, surveillance cameras capable of collecting and classifying

the behaviour of individuals in detention through algorithms. On the other hand, however, migrants detained in Swedish detention centres are not allowed to bring their smartphones, which must be handed in before entering the facility. Furthermore, while the entire system is completely digitised, decisions and official communications arrive to migrants in the form of letters. A return to paper, which only applies to them.

So, while we witness a rapid and pervasive mediatisation of spaces, we can also see a kind of counter-mediatisation of the individuals inhabiting those same spaces. In this sense, this paper argues that it is a mediatisation that follows different speeds and directions. It will thus be demonstrated, not only the union that binds the term mediatization, classification, and exclusion, but also how they are almost incorporated into each other.

MED04 Cultural and social impacts of mediatization

PP 0350 A figurational territorial approach for studying domestication within the mediatized family

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The domestic context represents the key site in which gender and generational differences are socially constructed in everyday life. In this process, media play a central role by either reinforcing or challenging the status quo, not without tensions and ambiguities. Indeed, the everyday domestication of ICTs (Silverstone, Hirsch & Morley, 1992) shows how patterns of media adoption are influenced by, and in turn influence, family culture and relationships, as defined by actors' gender, age, status, as well as their intersection (Crenshaw, 2017). This becomes particularly relevant in families with young children, where parents articulate hybrid mediation styles based on their parental cultures and technological imaginaries, while children negotiate, resist, or disregard parents' efforts to regulate their media activities (Mascheroni, 2014).

This research aims at providing a deeper understanding of media domestication within families with young children (0–8 years old) through the lens of a 'figurational territorial approach'. This interpretative framework understands families as communicative figurations (Hepp & Hasebrink, 2018) and focuses on the media territories (Tosoni & Tarantino, 2013; Tosoni & Ciancia, 2017), emerging from actors' daily media practices, to examine interactions between the family power structure and actors' strategies to negotiate it. This approach is fundamentally *non-media-centric* (Krajina et al., 2014) as it recognises the situated nature of domestication and mediatization (Mascheroni & Siibak, 2021), and *space-sensitive*, navigating the intersections between physical, technological, and social space (Venkatesh, Kruse & Shih, 2003).

Building on the constructivist epistemology of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), the study involved a longitudinal mixed-methods research comprising 3 waves of data collection among 20 families with children aged 0 to 8. Qualitative data from domestic observations, guided interviews, visual methods, and digital media diaries constituted the basis for a network analysis. This technique aims to materialise the mediatized relationships that underpin the articulation of media territories in the domestic context from a socio-spatial standpoint.

Building on its results, a dynamic model of media territoriality is presented. Four typologies of media territories (*institutionalised, hide-and-seek, hegemonic, latent*) plus an additional hybrid form (*latent institutionalisation*) are outlined, based on the degree of 'territorialisation' of the family media ensemble and the moral economy attitude towards legitimising the articulation of interdependent media territories within the figuration. The goal is to discuss potential misalignments between the family's and individual values, norms, and interests, which result in specific practices of territory management. This underscores the power negotiations intrinsic to the family configuration, crossed by coexisting centrifugal and centripetal forces along gendered and generational trajectories.

Therefore, the contribution helps to understand how power asymmetries are reflected in media domestication processes and reveal taken-for-granted patterns, which often mirror broader societal imaginaries. Moreover, this approach accounts for the triple articulation of media (Courtois, Verdegem & De Marez, 2013), overcoming some limitations of domestication research that underestimates the intersection between texts, artifacts, and the context in which they are situated (Livingstone, 2007).

MED05 Mediatization dynamics and resistance

PP 0466 Resisting an always-on society — A qualitative exploration of manifestations, motives, and consequences of digital resistance

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Our everyday life is marked by using the internet. Whether it is for searching for information on Google, entertainment on Netflix or TikTok, socializing on Instagram, or buying goods on Amazon, algorithmic curation of content leads to increasing time spent online. In [country blinded for review], the internet is used 5.6 hours per day on average (Latzer et al, 2023). Only few people consciously abstain from using digital media. Rather than so-called *have-nots*,

who do not have access to the internet, they are *want-nots*, consciously deciding against using digital services (Kappeler et al., 2021; van Dijk, 2020). In a society where using these services is the norm, not doing so can entail social exclusion (Baumer et al., 2015; Melton et al., 2019). Recent studies of non-use of digital media have concentrated on forms like digital disconnection or digital detox, that refer to shorter or limited forms of non-use (Lomborg & Ytre-Arne, 2021; Melton et al., 2019; Nguyen, 2021; Syvertsen & Enli, 2020). The term *digital resistance* refers to non-use as a political practice that is rooted in technology push-back and media refusal (Kaun & Treré, 2020; Syvertsen, 2017). Digital resistance can therefore be understood as an active choice and behavior (Casemajor et al., 2015). The different forms that such digital resistance can manifest in, the motives for it, and the consequences it can entail have yet to be mapped. Therefore, we ask the following research question: *Who are the digital resisters and how do they resist digital media in an always-on society?*

We aimed to answer this research question by qualitatively analyzing semi-structured interviews with 16 adult internet users from various sociodemographic backgrounds. Our findings explore digital resistance by investigating manifestations of digital resistance, motives for resisting, and consequences thereof. First, we saw that manifestations of digital resistance can be understood on a continuum: Digital resistance ranged from *niche* resisters not using certain services like Facebook, but other services from the same corporation like WhatsApp, to *thorough* resisters, that did not use any services by Microsoft, Google or Meta at all. In some cases, resistance was *partial*, mainly due to lock-in effects: these resisters decided against using WhatsApp and switched to Signal, but their group chats remained on the former. In some cases, resistance was also *discontinued*, mostly due to impractical reasons and having to juggle several services. Second, our findings show that a central motive for resistance was viewing services as problematic because of surveillance practices, lack of privacy, data-monetizing practices, or monopoly position. Digital resisters were characterized by low trust in digital corporations, a wish for more regulation, and high internet skills. Third, we saw that unless digital resisters had an understanding social circle, a consequence was social exclusion. Besides that, mostly, digital resistance led to heightened self-empowerment and thus feeling better. By mapping digital resistance, this article contributes to a more in-depth understanding of this phenomenon. This user perspective contributes to a better insight into what not using digital media in a highly digitized society signifies.

MED05 Mediatization dynamics and resistance

PP 0467 Experiencing music media change in mediatized everyday life: Comparing the early phases of the appropriation of the Walkman and music streaming services

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Music media are subject to constant change, which is reflected not only in the transitioning infrastructures and the emerging new media technologies, but especially becomes evident through the changing music reception within the users' mediatized everyday lives (Lepa & Hoklas, 2015; Prior, 2018; Tofalvy & Barna, 2020). While current changes due to streaming services such as Spotify seem to enjoy broader research (Datta, Knox, & Bronnenberg, 2018; Hagen, 2015; Johansson, Werner, Åker, & Goldenzwaig, 2018; Lüders, 2021), historical perspectives are often neglected. Following on from the mediatization approach (Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Krotz, 2017), extended by the concept of dynamics and persistence (Röser, Müller, Niemand, & Roth, 2017) the presentation will address how new music media is appropriated and how users deal with these transitions and music media change within their everyday lives. Building on the concept of *musicking* (Small, 1998), which accentuates the reception of music as a socially embedded set of ongoing practices, the project at hand focuses particularly on the early phase of media appropriation and, directly linked to the everyday context of the users, considers both dynamic changes through new music media as well as the persistence of established practices with music media already in use.

The insights derive from a PhD-project examining the Walkman, the CD, the MP3-Player and music streaming services as music media transitions. However the lecture will provide exemplary results on the Walkman and music streaming services and will therefore open up and compare recent, as well as historical perspectives. With the help of qualitative guided interviews that focus on the early phases of appropriation, a total of 18 music enthusiasts (aged 27 to 73) were questioned about their experiences of music media transitions.

The presentation will discuss the results along the following three categories:

1. *Media practices in the early stages of appropriation:* The emergence of new music media triggers change on a temporal-spatial, technological and social level but is particularly reflected in media practices such as collecting, discovering and sharing music.
2. *Significance of media technologies in the music media repertoire*: Each transition is closely associated with the media technological environment and causes shifts and new combinations in the media repertoire of users, especially with regard to streaming services (e.g. use of streaming services in combination with wireless headphones or smart speakers).

3. *Users' experience of music media change:* Music media change is experienced differently in the transitions examined. While the Walkman was perceived as a more continuous transition due to its close connection to the cassette, users considered the appropriation of streaming services to be a far more radical shift.

MED05 Mediatization dynamics and resistance

PP 0468 Communication: The blindspot of mediatization theory in the Era of Communicative AI

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Mediatization theory has, in its Western European variety, either focussed on institutional relations, or, from a cultural-constructivist approach, on the media as parts of our everyday worlds (Lundby 2014). Mediatization theory in both these approaches, however, implies a focus on the role of "the media" in culture and society. Less focus has been put on questions of "communication" as a process. However, the fact that we are increasingly communicating with machines in our everyday lives in the affluent and technologically advanced parts of the world poses interesting questions for mediatization theory: how would we regard communication as a dialogical undertaking when one of the communicators is a machine? What types of understanding can we reach by human-machine communication? Is understanding dependent on two subjective or "autonomous selves" (Peters 1999) for communication to occur? How can we think about communication as transmission and ritual (Carey 1975) in the era of communicative automation?

Such questions should be of high relevance, and it should be important for mediatization theory to incorporate theories of communication more specifically in the debates, for example, by looking at other theoretical traditions such as human-machine communication and communicative AI. If the institutionalist approach focusses on the impact of social institutions on one another, and the social-constructivist emphasizes the phenomenological appreciation of the surrounding world, a communications approach can contribute with questions related to meaning-making, intersubjectivity, and understanding, that is, the more hermeneutic aspects of communication. This theoretical paper will explore some of these domains of inquiry in order to have communications theory inform and enrich mediatization theory. It will first address the question of meaning-making involving humans and machines. Secondly, it will focus on the distinction between communication as transmissions and ritual, and whether ritual communication is at all possible. Thirdly, it will discuss the relations between instrumental communication in human-human communication and human-machine communication. The paper then concludes with how these discussions can inform mediatization theory.

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MED05 Mediatization dynamics and resistance

PP 0469 Mediatization of resistance: Exploring the dynamic network of the state and grass-roots actors in the pro-Ukrainian cyber army on Telegram

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Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 highlighted the role of social media as a liberation technology in the modern, highly digitized world. There is an established strand of literature on online protest organization and digital activism. However, Ukraine's resistance provides a new opportunity and context to examine the coordination of war-time resistance on social media. In this contribution, we add to the growing research of the anonymous platform Telegram and explore the structure of the Telegram-based pro-Ukrainian resistance network. We collected the data of the first two months of the full-scale war (from February 24, 2022, to April 24, 2022) from 16 Telegram channels identified through one of the co-author's familiarity with the pro-Ukrainian resistance network and snowball sampling. The first stage of our study used qualitative content analysis to identify a mixture of grassroots and state-initiated channels that coordinate various forms of cyber resistance, such as collective cyberattacks targeting Russian websites and informational operations targeting international companies, organizations, and politicians.

Here, we present research that continues our qualitative work through a social network analysis with Gephi. The network consists of the Telegram channels' reposts and links (N = 8868) toward various websites and social media pages (N = 7497) shared with the goal of cyberattack or information operations. The inter-channel tagging and reposting suggest that the resistance community is aware of its other members. We identify nine communities within

the network partly corresponding to their specific tactical repertoires. The largest community includes channels of various origins (grassroots, student-led, state-led channels), which implies the unity of vision among the channels. However, the network is generally loosely connected, with wide diversity in channel sizes and output. The dynamic analysis did not detect initiators of the link sharing, suggesting all channels performed their operations autonomously. However, different channels sometimes target the same groups of websites in one day and continue joint attacks on further groups of targets for several days in a row. It can signal that these operations are coordinated between the channels' administrators. Our research contributes to the growing literature on war mediatization as an increasingly participatory phenomenon. It provides insights into creative and impactful ways social media users utilize platforms as a form of digital resistance.

MED05 Mediatization dynamics and resistance

PP 0470 The office as a reflection and projection of social change

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Spaces are the result of communicative and social action (Christmann et al., 2022: 3). Accordingly, the conditions for this action are also subject to historical changes. In this sense, industrialization has created two different areas of social life that were previously undifferentiated and interwoven: the private and the public (Taylor, 2004: 101). These areas of life are increasingly amorphous as a result of mediatization (of work) as well as further meta processes like globalization and individualization. This also applies to the office, which is now in a field of tension between the tendencies of the dissolution of well-known structures and its own local reorganization (Matsushita, 2021).

In the course of digitalization and the ubiquitous availability of the internet, digital media have taken on functions of the traditional office in the contemporary company and made work available regardless of location in the service of efficiency (Roth-Ebner, 2022). In this, however, work is by no means placeless. Instead, places are now used more flexibly, and new places for and new forms of work are being created simultaneously (Will-Zocholl & Roth-Ebner, 2021). Manifestations for this development range from hoteling to home office to working on vacation ("workationing"). The architectural solutions operate under fancy concepts such as Open Space or Multi-Space Offices, Smart Offices, or New Work Offices. These arrangements imply propagated ways of working and subject forms that arise in interrelation with social and cultural norms and economic conditions.

Both the historical conception of work and its spatial organization as a result of communicative and social action reflect and project social change. This paper addresses different historical conceptions of work and their spatial conditions to discuss the current transformation of work and the office's spatial manifestations in the digital age. By examining the current disruptions in the realm of work from a historical perspective, we can contribute to better assessing and evaluating these changes and their long-term societal implications.

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OSC01 Sustainability and trust

PP 0094 Strategic communication for sustainable change: Introducing 'corporate environmental efficacy' as an organizing principle

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The human-made climate crisis has become the severest threat to all living creatures and biodiversity. Multinational corporations, in particular, are responsible for a vast amount of carbon emissions (Steenbergen & Saurav, 2023) and, thus, bear a special responsibility regarding several environmental, social, and governance (ESG) aspects. The EU (2022) instituted the corporate sustainability directive, mandating corporations to provide extensive information through ESG and sustainability reports, which aligns with strategic communication's objective of informing and shaping public discourse, policy, and perceptions (see Zerfass et al., 2018). Ultimately, it is for corporations to communicate to various audiences they are effective in sustainable transformation.

Being dependent on approval not only from consumers/shareholders but also from any party interested in/affected by their business, corporations need to engage in constant dialogue to ensure their organizational legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). Consequently, corporations must strategically communicate how they effectively address the needs and expectations of society to maintain their social license to operate (van der Meer & Jonkman, 2021). Convincing audiences to be capable of addressing ESG issues is crucial for corporations. Such (environmental) efficacy beliefs have long been recognized in social psychological research on intentional behavior (see Bandura, 1977) but have not yet found their way into strategic sustainability communication research. By introducing this concept, we propose a vital and innovative analytical tool that empowers strategic communicators to articulate their objectives in shaping stakeholder perceptions in a participatory process.

With this theoretical contribution, we introduce the concept of 'corporate environmental efficacy' as the belief among stakeholders that a corporation is capable of engaging in sustainable change. We lean on and synthesize different strands of literature to translate the concept of environmental efficacy into a corporate setting. Efficacy beliefs are vital for sparking pro-environmental behavior (PEB) and comprise the notion of capability (efficacy) and effectiveness (outcome efficacy) of engaging in PEB (Bandura, 1977). Meijers and colleagues (2023) introduced a self-collective-governmental efficacy typology, integrating collective and governmental institutions as important reference points in climate action. However, the role of corporations has so far been neglected.

Corporate interest-holder self-efficacy describes the belief that one is capable in the corporate realm concerning the environment. Corporate communication efficacy labels the belief that a corporation will respond to citizens' demands concerning the environment, thus bridging literature on CSR (Kuokkanen & Sun, 2020) and stakeholder communication (Crane & Livesey, 2003). Lastly, corporate environmental outcome efficacy describes the belief that a corporation's actions are effective in realizing a pro-environmental outcome.

In strategic sustainability communication, new norms are cultivated (Weder & Eriksen, 2023). These social norms are not only closely related to efficacy, but both drive sustainable change (Barth et al., 2016). Hereby, corporate efficacy beliefs build capacity (Weder & Eriksen, 2023) by considering individuals as active actors in communicative processes for sustainable change. Thus, the concept is inherently participative and organizational, as the stakeholder is considered a participant in the negotiative and transformatory process. We conclude our theoretical contribution by suggesting avenues for future research based on corporate environmental efficacy as an organizing principle.

OSC01 Sustainability and trust

PP 0095 Introducing 'Trustless Strategic Communication': Navigating the communication landscape amidst misinformation and technological evolution

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In an era of misinformation and a growing cynicism towards experts and institutions, a critical reassessment of the role of trust in communication is needed. This paper seeks to address this imperative need by introducing the concept of "Trustless Strategic Communication," offering an innovative framework that promotes reliance even in the absence of traditional trust. Drawing inspiration from the realms of "trustless technology" and the concept of "reliance without trust", this paper endeavors to synthesize these models into a cohesive one and introduce an alternative communication dynamic.

The origin of trustless communication lies in the realm of trustless technology, specifically in blockchain protocols and advancements in cybersecurity. The foundational principles of trustless technology, such as double verifications and decentralization, originally developed to mitigate risks in financial systems, establishing a framework that minimizes reliance on trust. The philosophical underpinning of *reliance without trust* further informs the exploration of scenarios

wherein individuals act based on the words or actions of others without necessarily conferring benevolence or competence upon them – the two inherit antecedents of trust.

To contextualize these theoretical underpinnings, the paper embarks on an exploration of interdisciplinary perspectives on trust. This encompasses an in-depth analysis of the dynamics governing trust in relationships between media professionals, ranging from traditional PR-journalist interactions to the evolving influence of social media. Key debates are examined, including the shift from institutional trust to reliance on individual strangers and the nuanced role of trust in the relationship between social media influencers and discerning Gen Z audiences.

A critical lens is then turned towards examining perspectives where trust may be perceived as a burden rather than an asset. This leads to the conceptualization of *trustless strategic communication* as a strategic approach that acknowledges the limitations and risks associated with conventional trust-based models.

In the empirically informed part of the study, two case studies are explored. The first scrutinizes the communication challenges amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, unveiling the intricacies of disseminating information during a global crisis. In the second, the paper explores the communication actions of a businessmen whose reputation shadows the reputation of his businesses: Elon Musk

The paper concludes with a contextualizing discussion, extending beyond the analysis of contemporary challenges to proactively consider present and anticipated changes in strategic communication. Special attention is given to the imminent advancements in AI technologies and their potential impact on communication dynamics. This comprehensive and forward-looking guide not only unravels the complexities of strategic communication in our fast-evolving world but also provides practical insights and recommendations for navigating these intricacies. In doing so, it offers a valuable resource for communication practitioners and policymakers.

OSC01 Sustainability and trust

PP 0096 'What if you can't walk the talk?': How can a company with a non-sustainable business model communicate sustainability?

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Currently, companies must navigate in a society increasingly focused on sustainability. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been on the social and political agenda over the last decades, with European and international programs such as the 2030 United Nations' Agenda for Sustainable Development. Additionally, the urgent climate crisis is calling out for companies to challenge current business and economic models and follow scientific recommendations.

Since the 1960's, society and stakeholders have increasingly demanded more from organizations to act and communicate in a way that benefits not only them, but the entire social and environmental system. Communicating some level of CSR has become not only a societal but also a legal obligation. Stakeholders, increasingly informed and demanding, push companies to continue strengthening their CSR activities and communication, while international programs demand companies to take responsibility for sustainable development.

However, there are still companies that do not align with the defined parameters of sustainability due to the nature of their business model, that is considered inherently socially, environmentally or economically unsustainable. Companies whose core business is set upon products or services that inevitably create an environmental or social imbalance. Then, is it possible for those companies to communicate sustainability? And if so, is this communication really responsible, or is it considered greenwashing?

To answer this question, a qualitative methodology was selected, resorting to two research instruments: interviews with company representatives or communication professionals; and documental analysis on companies' sustainability reports, since it's one of the main formal communication tools of social responsibility and sustainability. The sample is characterized by three companies with an unsustainable business model, in the energy sector, textile sector (fast fashion) and financial sector.

Through the reports we are able to determine the companies' practices and channeling of investments in the areas of sustainability and social responsibility. On the other hand, in the interviews, we can clarify discursive inconsistencies regarding the practices reflected in the reports, intentions and the idealization of Social Responsibility communication.

The ultimate goal of the study is to find out which areas unsustainable companies invest more in communication and practice, and whether this is compatible with the Social Responsibility Communication guidelines that emerged from previous research (Costa & Leandro, 2023; Viererbl, & Koch, 2022).

Keywords: Communication; Social Responsibility; Sustainability; Greenwashing.

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OSC01 Sustainability and trust

PP 0097 Sustainability Manager as Curators of Change: A typology of job profiles in the field of Sustainability, CSR, DEI and ESG Management related to required communication competences, green skills and agency

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Purpose / Objectives

Sustainability and climate protection are becoming increasingly important for companies, as well as political institutions, NGOs, or educational and cultural institutions. This constant change in our society also impacts the job market. In recent months and years, numerous new professional roles have emerged, and sustainability management, as well as environmental, sustainability, CSRm DEI or ESG reporting, is no longer solely located in the communication department but has reached the 'C-Suite,' attaining a strategic and management level.

But what exactly defines these professions where environmental and climate protection, sustainability, innovation, and transformation play a significant role? What qualifications are expected for these new job profiles, what (communication) competencies are in demand, and what definitions of sustainability, CSR, DEI and ESG management are represented in these professional profiles or in the corresponding job advertisements?

Study / Conceptualization

In the project at hand, we address these questions from a communication perspective, conceptualizing Sustainability, CSR, DEI and ESG Managers in business settings as communicators who enact communication with two methodological approaches, delving into the Austrian market and, furthermore, in the European neighboring countries, including Germany, France, Switzerland, Poland, Romania, Croatia, and comparing the typology developed from the data with job descriptions in the USA and Australia/NZ. The empirical analysis involves a statistical analysis of actual job advertisements from the largest job portals as well as LinkedIN in two languages (English & German) (Nov./Dec. 2023) and the full greenjobs.de-database (2014–2023) to study changes over time. This was complemented by a series of interviews with role holders (n = 25 per country), conceptualized as semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2016, Schmid, 2004). The job ads and the interviews have been treated as text material that we analyzed with an inductive category formation, following the research questions. We chose this question-led approach used in qualitative content analyses using the open access analysis web-tool QCAmap (Mayring, 2019; Fenzl & Maying, 2017).

Findings / Originality

The job announcements give a clear picture of how *sustainability management* emerged as new profession over the years (2014–2023) and how it moved from communication departments to strategy, innovation and management departments. However, green skills and communication competences are increasingly articulated as requirements for all kinds of transformational roles in organizational contexts. Roles like 'Chief Sustainability Officers', 'Sustainability' and 'ESG Managers', or other 'green jobs' show the value of strategic communication for jobs related to what is called sustainable development, societal transformation or global change. The paper complements the debate around skills and professionalization in business and corporate communication and adds to broader discussions about role responsibility, agency, and authorship related to public conversations in an age of social change, global crises and a massively changing environment. Thus, the study answers the core question of what role communication competences play in these emerging new roles and shows that it's crucial to adapt education and training programs at universities, colleges, and academies in the future.

OSC01 Sustainability and trust

PP 0098 How do organizations responsible for green energy projects employ strategic communication to legitimize such projects? A quantitative content analysis

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Public discussions regarding energy projects (i.e., infrastructure projects for the generation or transmission of electricity such as biogas or solar plants) are among the most intense (Schweizer et al., 2016 [1]). Challenges—such as perceived risks, the 'not in my backyard' phenomenon, and controversial media coverage—characterize these discussions and increase the pressure on involved organizations and decision makers from business, politics and society to communicate (Latapí Agudelo et al., 2020[2]). Organizations in the energy sector thus must engage in the public debate and communicate about their intentions, plans and efforts in order to build legitimacy. Legitimacy refers to the fundamental acceptance of an object (e.g., an organization or a project) by its environment (e.g., an organization's stakeholders) and is the result of a process of perception, evaluation and attribution on the part of this environment (Bartlett & Hurst, 2021[3]). Legitimacy is a prerequisite for organizations and for the planning and implementation of energy projects (Authors_anonymized_a). Research on legitimacy as a goal of strategic communication categorizes different types of legitimacy and different modes of influence (in particular in the form of discursive communication strategies) that can be used to build, maintain, or restore legitimacy (e.g., Crumley et al., 2021[4]). However, thus far, only little is known on how organizations in the energy sector actually communicate in order to build legitimacy, which types of legitimacy they aim for and which modes of influence and legitimacy strategies they use in doing so. To address this research gap, we ask: *How do organizations from politics, business and society involved in or responsible for energy projects communicate with citizens to legitimize these projects?*

To answer this question, we conduct a quantitative content analysis that examines the strategic legitimacy communication of such organizations directed at affected and interested citizens. We examine green energy projects in one German region (anonymized for review), where climate change and mitigation are seen as a key and urgent challenge. Two projects were selected as case studies (a wind farm and an extra-high voltage bulk power line) that are both the subject of particularly intense debate and of extensive strategic communication by those responsible. For both projects, key written communication materials from the responsible organizations that address citizens (e.g., project website, blog posts, newsletters, flyers) are examined. Due to the large amount of material, we drew a random selection based on the full sample. The main categories of the quantitative content analysis are the discursive legitimation strategies used by the organizations, objectives, topics, and stakeholders of the strategic legitimacy communication, and the type of legitimation sought (pragmatic, moral, cognitive).

The analysis is currently underway and will be completed by the time of the conference. At the conference, the results of our study and their implications for the strategic communication of energy projects by responsible organizations are presented and discussed. In doing so, we contribute to strategic energy communication research and practice by providing further insights into how organizations communicate green energy projects to legitimize them.

1 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jup.2014.07.005
2 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.119094
3 https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110554250-006
4 https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-05-2021-0053

OSC02 Corporate activism and diversity

PP 0197 How important are Fundamental Civil Rights as an aspect of Corporate Sustainability Communication? A comparative content analysis among German organizations on their CSR, SDG and ESG reporting practices

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Not least the political developments of recent years and even months have made it abundantly clear how central and important the issue of fundamental civil rights is since the world finds itself in many "social disorder", according to the ECC conference title. This applies not only to the area of political debate but also to Corporate Communication which links to "communication" aspect of the congress title. According to the OSC section call for paper for this conference, "organisations are increasingly called upon to address socio-political challenges by means of corporate citizenship, corporate activism, corporate social responsibility, sustainability plans, ESG initiatives, or even adopting a B-corporation status".

This study conducted a quantitative, comparative content analysis of n = 242 different types of organizations' reports to examine CSR-reporting practices across various organizations (n = 103). Among them, there were five

ESG Reports, two CSR Reports, 83 Sustainability Reports, 61 Annual Reports, eleven Non-Financial Reports and 80 Corporate Websites. We aimed to systematically evaluate the content and quality of sustainability-related reports and documents produced by different types of entities, including DAX/MDAX companies, large non-DAX companies, public sector organizations, churches, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and large family businesses. We employed a deliberate selection strategy to ensure our sample's quality and comprehensiveness. The criteria for inclusion were carefully chosen to capture a wide range of organizations with varying characteristics.

As the results show, there are surprisingly few differences in the overall sustainability communication regarding fundamental civil rights. Interestingly, our results revealed considerable variations in the importance of fundamental civil rights as a matter of Corporate CSR reporting among different sectors as well as different types of organizations. It appears that DAX 40 companies deal most intensively with fundamental civil rights, while family-owned companies attach significantly less importance to the issue. Such differences could be explained by different legal requirements for general reporting or by different levels of professionalization regarding CSR reporting. However, Family Businesses are still concerned with fundamental civil rights, although they have a different focus within the topic ("own workforce"). In the group-specific analysis of the various sectors, it is noticeable that some sectors strongly outweigh fundamental civil rights-related topics in their CSR communication (*"Manufacturing," "Finance, Insurance, Real Estate"*). At the same time, it is clearly underrepresented in other sectors (*"Construction," "NGO / Churches"*). In principle, such differences in content would be explained by the general requirements of the legislator for CSR reporting. However, it is unclear why fundamental civil rights should not be a relevant topic around "Construction" or "NGOs" – instead, the opposite seems to be true. This result should therefore be tested in further investigation.

Nevertheless, our findings hopefully contribute to a comprehensive understanding of sustainability reporting practices across diverse sectors and organizations regarding communication on fundamental civil rights. We hope that we could fill the above-described blind spot on fundamental civil rights-related research in this context at least a little bit. In this context, communication might help to change some social disorder from the conference title into much more fundamental civil rights oriented social order.

OSC02 Corporate activism and diversity

PP 0198 Corporate activism in contemporary Portugal: Perspectives from public relations and strategic communication professionals

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European countries are experiencing changes in deliberate democracy, with the fragmentation of the public sphere and the polarisation of political discourses. With a weaker public sphere and media landscape, the need for other social actors becomes evident. In this context, organisations that don't traditionally take a stand on social issues are becoming more active.

Corporate activism, a phenomenon where companies engage in socio-political issues, has become a subject of significant discourse in academic circles. This form of activism involves corporations taking public stances on various social and political matters, often aligning themselves with causes that resonate with certain societal values. However, the concept of *rhetorical washing* has emerged as a critical lens through which to analyse these corporate engagements. Rhetorical washing refers to the potential exploitation of socio-political issues by corporations to enhance their public image rather than genuinely contributing to societal progress. Companies may adopt a discourse of social responsibility without substantive action, leading to scepticism about their authenticity.

There are also risks associated with corporate activism, as taking positions on controversial issues can polarise stakeholders and consumers. While some believe that companies have a responsibility to use their influence for positive change, others warn of the potential damage to companies' trust and/or reputation if they become involved in polarizing discussions. Striking a balance between genuine engagement with societal issues and avoiding the pitfalls of mere rhetoric is a complex challenge that requires careful consideration at the intersection of the corporate and socio-political spheres.

This research explores the landscape of corporate activism in Portugal, focusing on the perceptions, experiences and opinions of public relations and strategic communications professionals. Through 100 expert interviews, followed by five in-depth interviews, this exploratory research captures valuable insights from professionals directly involved in shaping and communicating corporate narratives. Through the lens of PR and strategic communications professionals, it explores the opinions and expressions, the motivations behind corporate activism initiatives and the integration of social responsibility into overall communications strategies. The analysis and interpretation of the data is embedded in an effort to contextualise the Portuguese reality within broader trends in corporate activism at a global level.

Key themes emerging from the interviews include the delicate balance between authenticity and perceived opportunism, the role of cultural and historical factors in shaping activism narratives, and the challenges of aligning corporate values with societal expectations. It also considers the ethical issues and mechanisms of *corporate hypocrisy* and/or manipulation. By analysing perceptions and practices within the field of public relations and strategic communication, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of how organisations in Portugal navigate the intersection of corporate activism and effective communication; as well as revealing the specific case of a Southern European country with its *ryzhomes* that influence socio-communicative practice and the shades of legitimation processes within it.

OSC02 Corporate activism and diversity

PP 0199 A global comparison of organizations' strategic diversity communication on social media using a supervised machine-learning approach

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Workplace diversity has become an increasingly important topic for both scholars and practitioners in organizational communication. In recent decades, we have seen an increase in the prevalence of diversity-related messages by organizations, for example in annual reports, websites, and social media. This increase of strategic diversity communication has been found to lead to positive increases in public perception of the company and a positive reception by the shareholders

Most previous research on strategic diversity communication was conducted in Western countries. As a result, we have not been able to systematically compare the prevalence and type of diversity-related messages across the globe. This study aims to fill this gap, comparing the different approaches to diversity communications in cultural clusters from around the world (clusters are based on House et al., 2004; Mensah & Chen, 2013). The research question posed was: How does diversity communication on companies' Facebook accounts differ across cultural clusters?

We performed a large-scale content analysis of multinational companies' (n = 151) Facebook posts (n = 786.156), taken from their different national and regional accounts. The Facebook posts were analyzed through an automated content analysis tool (DivPSM) which uses supervised machine learning to identify the presence of diversity communication on social media. DivPSM is also able to code whether the post mentions racial/ethnic/cultural diversity, gender diversity, or LGBTQ+ diversity. Furthermore, it examines whether the post makes use of specific diversity perspectives: the Moral, Market, and Innovation perspectives (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

Results show that LGBTQ+ diversity communication is the most prevalent around the globe, followed by gender diversity and racial/ethnic/cultural diversity. We also see that the Moral Perspective is most common, followed by the Innovation Perspective and the Market Perspective.

Comparing cultural clusters, we see that high rates of diversity communication are not only found in Western countries. While the overall average rate of diversity communication is about 9.8%, it was found to be higher in the Anglo-Saxon (11.8%), Latin American (23.3%) and Middle Eastern (12.7%) clusters. LGBTQ+ diversity communication shows above average (62.8%) rates in the Eastern European (88.4%), Latin European (77.1%) and Middle Eastern (90.2%) cultural clusters. This coincided with above average (41.8%) use of the Moral Perspective in the Eastern European (65.4%) and Middle Eastern clusters (64.3%).

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OSC02 Corporate activism and diversity

PP 0200 Exploring strategies for positioning communication departments in organisations in times of social (dis)order

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Social disruptions such as political conflicts, the impact of artificial intelligence on job profiles and rising stakeholder demands shape today's context of organisational communication (Argenti, 2023). This increases the impact of strategic communication on success. However, empirical studies and practical experience show that this does

not go hand in hand with a strengthening of communication departments as the primarily responsible units in organisations. Rather, communicators compete with marketing, sustainability, HR and IR for scarce resources and mandates like leading critical initiatives, e.g., on AI-based listening and messaging. This debate is not new, but it is amplified in times of rising challenges and shrinking resources due to the inflation. Communicators need to explain better than ever what they do and why their contributions are needed.

Previous research has shown that appreciation of internal decision-makers and a positive image within the organisation are essential if communicators want to be heard and involved (e.g., Brockhaus & Zerfass, 2022; Moreno et al., 2023). In Sweden, only 42% of managers and employees interviewed in a large-scale study across 10 organisations were aware of what their communicators do (Falkheimer et al., 2017). In another European country, a recent study in large companies (n = 1.147) revealed that two third of top managers (67%) and every second middle manager and employee believes that their communication department should make it clearer what its tasks are and who benefits from them (AUTHORS, 2024).

In view of this debate, this study aims to shed light on the internal positioning of communication departments in organisations by addressing the overarching research question: *How do communication leaders position themselves and their departments within organisations?* Based on an extensive literature review on this scarcely researched topic, we developed a questionnaire, used a systematic approach to recruit a sample of communication leaders in a large European country, and conducted 30 qualitative interviews. The study generated insights about the necessity of internal positioning (RQ1), the specific context and situations (RQ2), and the strategies that communication leaders use to demonstrate their tasks, goals and performance towards top/middle management and employees (RQ3).

The study contributes to the body of knowledge by revealing strategies to develop and convey a clear profile and positioning of communication departments within organisations in troubled times of social (dis)order.

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OSC03 Higher Education Environment

PP 0290 Responsible universities for engaged communities. The role of public engagement in the Italian Academia

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The rise of community-engagement activities in the Universities is part of the so-called "third mission".

Far from the traditional "ivory tower" model, nowadays Public Engagement constitutes a new challenging opportunity to reshape the missions and the identities of universities, but also the relationships within their internal and external communities.

Although it is widely acknowledged the crucial role played by Public Engagement (PE) and theoretical advances have been made in the last years, a shared definition of PE is still lacking. Furthermore, if many studies face the impact of PE on society, suggesting specific measurement indicators, few of them seem to consider the "maturity" of these activities from an organizational perspective and their part in the overall organizational identity and in the communication strategy.

In this explorative study we assume that PE is part of a social positioning of the University and a way to be responsible, acting as a pivotal player in the public sphere and as a hinge between the knowledge production – thanks to the first and second mission – and the public opinion. But are the universities aware of the importance of their activism in the social responsibility field? How do they implement this mission and how do they include PE in their communication strategies? And lastly, how do scholars perceive their "social" role, that implies an interaction and a collaboration between university and its stakeholders?

In this contribute, that is part of a wider financed research project on the role of the scientists and the experts in the contemporary society and in the media system, we aim at investigating the different forms adopted by Italian universities in order to engage the communities, pursuing the general interest of citizens with a collaborative approach.

In the last years, in Italy as in many other Countries – for ex. USA, Canada, UK, etc. – a specific organization – APEnet Association – has been created in order to help universities in achieving their "third mission" aims, supporting the planning activities, fostering educational programmes, sharing national and international best practices and

building a strategic network among the Universities. Starting from this meaningful experience and adopting the ministerial criteria, we selected a representative sample of universities, based on four different dimensions: the size of the universities, their geographical collocation (North Italy – Centre – South and Islands), the organizational nature (public or private) and the position in the national ranking, selecting the top universities in 2023 (www.censis.it).

The ongoing research attempts to investigate the sample through 2 different steps and methods: 1. quali-quantative analysis of the contents of the institutional websites, specifically addressed to public engagement activities; 2. in-depth interviews to PE experts in the selected universities and to APEnet representatives in order to draw the state of the art of PE in the Italian Academia and to highlight the strategic orientations and the operative declinations of PE.

OSC03 Higher Education Environment

PP 0291 Organizational communication in Higher Education Institutions: What are the consequences for student well-being?

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The well-being of students in higher education has been subject of concern among practitioners and researchers at a global level (Cunha, et al., 2017; Eisenberg et al., 2013; Stallman, 2010). Specifically in the Portuguese context, this concern extends to policymakers and, therefore, to society (National Health Service, 2023), since it is estimated that a large number of students will experience mental health problems during their academic paths. With this in mind, the FLOW project was born: Facing obstacles to well-being in academia: is organizational communication a starting point? (with reference IPL/IDI&CA2023/FLOW_ESCS). During this project (September 2023-September 2024) we will explore how Higher Education Institutions (HEI), specifically through their institutional communication, have been promoting the well-being of their students. Although there are already some studies that suggest strategies at this level (e.g. Baik et al., 2019), the evidence on the role of organizational communication is still scarce. Thus, the main objectives of this project are: to identify the main channels, flows and means of communication used by HEI to communicate with students, to understand how these relate to students' well-being; to analyze the communication actions implemented by HEI to promote a better inclusion and overall well-being of their students.

In this case, we seek to understand both the students' perspective and the institutions' perspective, using a qualitative methodology. During the last quarter of 2023, we conducted individual interviews with communication managers and psychology counsellors from Portuguese HEI at different country regions, and during the first quarter of 2024, we will do focus groups with the students.

The results are still preliminary, but it is possible to conclude, from the interviews with communication managers, that communication with students includes the frequent transmission of a lot and not personalized information. These professionals suggest that guidance and good practices manuals should be developed and implemented.

Although the project is still at the data collection stage, its results will be presented during the congress and its main theoretical and practical implications will be discussed.

Keywords: Organizational communication; Higher Education Institutions; Students; Well-being

OSC03 Higher Education Environment

PP 0292 "What is your revolution?": Capturing contemporary visions of (dis)order

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"What is your revolution?" is the motto of an institutional strategic communication campaign of the Institute of Social Sciences (University of Minho, Portugal) conceived to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the April 25th 1974 Portuguese Revolution, also known as the "Carnation Revolution". The idea was to think about what it means today, in conceptual terms and in the everyday practice, for different generations and fields of knowledge. How is it expressed and manifested? How is it lived and brought to life? What are the revolutions that we live and dream of? And which ones do matter to us today?

In this paper we will describe the communication strategy designed with the following main objectives: 1) to mark and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Portuguese Revolution at our institution; 2) to engage community members around a common idea, following years of pandemic distance; 3) deepen knowledge about the stakeholders, especially internal publics, of the Institute of Social Sciences at the University of Minho.

We will present the results of the "Revolution Mural" (Mural da Revolução) – that included a digital platform – where people were invited to express their own "revolutions", and we will discuss them in the light of the stakeholders theory applied to organizations (Parmar et al., 2010), of the order/disorder theory as part of the construction of social orders (Baker, 1993; Moessinger, 2000; Mouzelis, 2016) and of the revolution conceptual frame (Balibar, 2015; Kamenka, 2017; Thagard, 1993; Viroli, 1992). Furthermore, we will eventually identify categories and matching contemporary social issues. We intend to compare them with the most popular revolutionary slogans of fifty years ago, namely, "peace, bread, health, housing, freedom".

Based on the findings the paper we will also discuss the challenges and opportunities of establishing participatory methods as part of institutional communication strategies, particularly, in the scope of an academic organization.

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OSC03 Higher Education Environment

PP 0293 Unveiling integrated communication strategies on Facebook across universities in Latin America, Europe, and the United States

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Social networks present significant opportunities for universities to effectively achieve their communication goals (Eger et al., 2020). Among these platforms, Facebook stands out as an optimal tool for connecting universities with the community. Studies have shown that the stronger university community on Facebook is, the higher the level of trust and identification is with the real university community (Nevzat et al., 2016).

Research has delved into various aspects related to universities' presence on social networks, including the level of activity, general approaches employed, communication resources utilized, and the disseminated content (e.g., Ebrahim & Seo, 2019; Sörensen et al., 2023). However, there is a gap in research that comprehensively analyses all dimensions of universities' social media communication strategy. Therefore, this study aims to identify the key dimensions of universities' communication strategy on Facebook and assess the level of interaction achieved by universities through various communication strategies: posting strategy, interactivity strategy, and content strategy.

For this study, a quantitative methodology was developed based on the content analysis of 27,356 posts disseminated by 70 universities in Latin America, Europe, and the United States on their institutional profiles on Facebook. Information was collected on the number and type of posts, as well as the number of interactions generated in the posts and the number of followers of the Facebook profiles. Three categories of analysis were developed: 'posting strategy,' 'interactivity strategy,' and 'content strategy.' In addition, a fourth category called 'integrated communication strategy' on Facebook was designed, which combines the three previous strategies. A fifth category was developed for the 'engagement level.' The data was recorded in an Excel template and subsequently analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25.

The results suggest that universities tend to adopt a 'passive funnel' posting strategy. Additionally, they favour 'exclusive' or 'dominant' content strategies, with 'monologic' approaches prevailing in their interaction strategies. The level of engagement achieved by these overall 'passive monologic' communication strategies is remarkably high, indicating that universities employ these strategies because they prove to be the most effective in achieving better interaction results with their users. This also reinforces the idea that users prioritise content quality and innovation over the interactive aspects of posts.

This study advances organisational communication research by integrating social network management into a holistic model, offering practical guidance for optimising Facebook communication strategies to enhance engagement and build more effective connections with users.

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OSC03 Higher Education Environment

PP 0294 Are Italian universities reassessing their communication in the age of social unrest? The enforcement of academic accountability within the context of social disorders

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How can organizations recover the trust of their stakeholders in an era when the principle of credibility is undermined by crises that break the stability of social systems from the ground up?

Framed as organizations and educating communities, Universities are not immune from an analysis of their governance processes, in order to overcome the social gaps (Canel, Luoma-aho 2019) that strongly emerged from the covid19 pandemic and chart a new course capable of stemming the challenge of disillusionment that characterizes Gen. Z.

Assuming that no structural change is exempt from the revision of communicative practices (Lombardinilo 2019), universities are adopting (still tentatively) new forms of dialogue, characterized by the integration of different levels and directions (Lovari, Ducci 2022) with more complex ecosystems mutually convergent (Jenkins 2013). The pushes toward inclusion, social responsibility and sustainability aim at the construction of the future-oriented university (EUA 2021) moving from tentative approaches to true measurable outcomes and impact.

However, a sudden translation of communication in the digital context, the chaos generated by information clutter, the paradox of infodemics, and other often underestimated factors of always-on, however, present just as many prominent risks, as the lack of awareness that transferring cannot be merely moving content from a previous context to a new one, but completely rethinking the purpose of communication (Pireddu 2023).

Facing this evolving scenario, a multi-step research methodological approach is needed, with the purpose to explore the conceptual dimensions and the operational activities implemented by universities to give communication a new strategic role.

In the first phase of the survey, the delegates for communication of six Italian Universities (Sapienza University of Rome, Macerata, Calabria, Urbino, Milano Statale, Chieti-Pescara) will be interviewed with the purpose to understand how their universities are coping with the post-pandemic communicative scenario and emphasize what enforcement digital communication reached in the last two years about the strategies of inclusion and accountability within academic environments.

In the second phase of the survey, the websites of the six involved universities will be investigated (with an in-depth analysis) with the aim to analyze what communicative evidence universities are supporting in line with the informative and narrative tasks imposed by the new communicative scenarios engendered by post-pandemic needs.

Considering some major trends in the public communication sector (Canel 2018; Lovari et al. 2020; Van Dijck et al. 2018; Sorice 2020) and in the light of other researches on the italian universities context, we expect to collect some primary findings as an increasing effort of universities in a more relational, visual and impactful communication. This new model aims at disseminating user-generated content, exploiting the power of new social networks (Instagram, Threads and also TikTok); a decisive shift towards inclusion and accountability, with the purpose to generate shared values (Grunig 2016) within academic communities and its differences (f.i. sensibilities for LGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities, international students).

OSC04 Internal communication

PP 0404 Communicating against age bias in employers: The effects of message style in employer-endorsed communication about older workers on employability perceptions

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This study examines how employer-endorsed communication can help counteract prejudice against older workers among other employers. Employers are important communicators of beliefs about the abilities of older workers. Our aim is to determine which message style in employer-endorsed communication is most effective in improving other employers' perceptions of older workers' employability. Based on the findings of the most effective message style, we developed a communication tool tailored to employers (i.e., a video message that can be used by organizations). In this project, we collaborated with key societal partners, notably AWVN, the largest employers' association in the Netherlands, and RADAR, an agency dedicated to equal treatment and combating discrimination.

The study expands upon two theoretical approaches to reducing stereotypical thinking induced by communication strategies: media-literacy and counter-stereotypical information strategies to neutralize biased beliefs about stigmatized groups. In the media-literacy approach, messages contain explicit instructions to negate or suppress harmful (implicit) stereotypes. Although some studies have found evidence for this effect, other studies have shown that explicit instructions to negate or suppress harmful stereotypes can result in rebound effects. Our research addresses the nuances of these conflicting findings by incorporating explicit instructions that convey realistic *positive* information about the abilities of older workers, with the intention of circumventing any potential rebound effects. An alternative approach to mitigate prejudice relies on counter-stereotypical information. Rather than explicitly instructing audiences to resist the effects of negative (media) portrayals, this strategy aims to indirectly foster more favorable intergroup attitudes by exposing individuals to counter-stereotypical exemplars. In the present study, we explore the effectiveness of two employer-endorsed counter-stereotypical messages: one emphasizing older workers' contribution to organizational success (i.e., employers act as *ambassadors*), and the other urging employers to do their part in solving the employability problem among older workers (i.e., employers act as *educators*).

We conducted an online survey-embedded experiment with a 2 (exposure vs. no exposure to an instruction about older worker' capabilities) ´ 2 (exposure to ambassador vs. didactic counter-stereotypical message) between-subjects design with a control group. Participants consisted of HR professionals and direct managers recruited from a panel agency (n = 444). We found that the ambassador style message, including exposure to an explicit instruction with realistic positive facts about older workers' abilities, was most effective in positively influencing employers' evaluations of older workers' employability. The didactic style message was found to be the least effective, even compared to the control condition.

In collaboration with our societal partners, the effective elements of employer communication identified in this study were translated into a communication tool. This aminated video features an employer-endorsed message in ambassador style that highlighted the value that older workers bring to the table and how their contributions are vital to the success of the organization, combined with explicit instructions about realistic facts about older workers. In contrast, the didactic approach was avoided as it appeared to be the least effective – and might even be advised against when compared to showing no message at all in the control group.

OSC04 Internal communication

PP 0405 Understanding and managing work-related social media use: An employee perspective

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Media reports about employees being disciplined or fired after sharing inappropriate messages on their personal social media accounts are nothing new. Misled by a false sense of privacy, employees are often surprised about the consequences of what they consider online statements or jokes made in the private sphere. Scholars, therefore, advise organizations to implement a social media policy that informs employees about responsible social media use during *and* outside work hours (Parker et al., 2019).

So far, research on this matter has predominantly focused on the managerial perspective. Scholars have, for instance, interviewed communication managers about their perceptions of and attempts to govern employees' social media use (e.g., Pekkala et al., 2022). The employee's perspective, by contrast, has received much less scholarly attention. Yet, while a social media policy may protect organizations from legal and reputational risks, employees could perceive it as a violation of their privacy and freedom of speech (Opgenhaffen & Claeys, 2017).

The current study, therefore, conducted 45 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Flemish employees holding different blue-collar and white-collar positions in organizations of varying sizes and industries. We aimed to answer

the following research questions: How do employees actually communicate about work on social media and for what reasons (RQ1)? What do they perceive as their rights and duties toward their employer on social media (RQ2)? How do they feel about social media policies (RQ3)?

Preliminary findings from a thematic analysis paint a positive picture of the interviewees' work-related social media use (RQ1). On public platforms like Facebook, they mostly aimed to contribute to organizational goals like attracting new employees and customers by (re)posting vacancies and promotional messages. It seemed to be common sense that "you don't post anything on Facebook or social media that could harm your employer." As such, public social media were generally not considered suited for discussing sensitive work-related matters, criticisms or frustrations. A fair number of interviewees did turn to instant messaging groups (e.g., WhatsApp) with colleagues to ventilate about work. Yet, even these more private channels were mostly used to exchange job-related information and connect with co-workers in a positive and responsible way.

Overall, participants agreed that their employer can expect and enforce a certain loyalty from them on social media. Yet, this should not come at the expense of their privacy and freedom of speech (RQ2). As a postal worker stated: "That's my privacy. I still post what I want and I have my own opinion, so I'm allowed to express that." Employers can, therefore, implement a social media policy to delineate the boundaries required to protect the organization's functioning, but in a way that does not threaten employees' freedom of speech (RQ3). As one participant aptly put it: "You are not allowed to speak negatively about your employer, [but] you're still free to express your opinion. In that sense, it's about finding a balance somehow." We hope to discuss our findings and implications in more depth at ECREA 2024.

OSC04 Internal communication

PP 0406 Fostering organizational bonds: Unveiling the impact of internal communication on workers' affective commitment through the mediation of employer attractiveness

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Objective

Internal Communication (IC) is a key area of organizational development on the path of competitiveness improvement. Enabling organizational IC policies and practices is currently seen both by practitioners and academics as a solid ground of investment to nurture workers' alignment with organizational strategies and goals. Having this standpoint in reference, one comes to question whether IC can develop enduring bonds between workers and organizations, notably, workers' affective commitment (AC) and the perception that the organization is a good place to work (employer attractiveness (EA)). The main objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of IC on worker's AC, and more specifically, to understand whether this relation occurs due to a mediational effect of EA over this relation.

Methodology

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, a cross-sectional quantitative study was developed, whose data was obtained through a structured questionnaire containing the measures of the study variables. 532 individuals from all districts of Portugal and the Islands have participated in the study. Genders were 62% female, with ages ranging from 20 years to over 66 years old, 47% having a graduation and 6.4% a MSc graduation level. The Harman test and bootstrapping method were applied previously to the results' assessment. The mediation study hypothesis was evaluated using Baron and Kenny's (1986) linear regression method, and subsequently complemented using Sobel Test (Sobel, 1978).

Results

The main results obtained show that IC is significantly and positively correlated with AC and with workers' EA perception, implying that IC has a positive relation with the affective bond between workers and organization, as well as with the perception of an organization as a good place to work. Furthermore, results also pointed for a total mediation effect of EA in the relationship between IC and AC, thus confirming the study's main hypotheses.

Practical implications

These results seem to support the idea that internal communication practices may shape and stimulate workers' affective bond with the organization, having thus positive prospective impacts on performance level and positive internal working climate. IC also seems able to activate a process though which is possible to explain that the relation between IC and AC is due to a process that has EA as the mediator. In this sense, IC seems to contribute to the development of workers' perception that the organization is a good place to work, and that this will explain the affective bond between workers' and the organization. Managers and practitioners should be aware of the

distal effects of IC investment on workers' positive attitudes development, and on the building of positive work environments.

Keywords: Internal Communication; Affective Commitment; Employer Attractiveness.

The authors opted to drop references in this instance to save space.

OSC04 Internal communication

PP 0407 The invisible hand – Shareholders' control over organizational purpose and communication of purpose

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As crises, such as economic and ecological, are challenging the global society, organizations have increasingly sought to legitimize their existence and actions via communication of organizational purpose. With the concept of purpose, organizations usually attempt to link their business to furthering public good. Purpose has emerged to the discussions among scholars interested in variety of topics, such as strategy, management and economics. Apart from few exceptions, purpose has been neglected among organizational communication researchers. However, particularly critical organizational communication research offers a prolific ground to study purpose, as critical analysis seeks to understand the power relations formed and manifested via communication, and scrutinizes how organizational communication is utilized not only to create organizations, but to accumulate capital as well. Thus, organizational communication research should seek to analyze communication of purpose, since firms use purpose in their organizing and strategy, and they are eager to use purpose in their communication to different stakeholders.

The aim of this unfinished study is to analyze how employees make sense of organizational purpose. Furthermore, our aim is to analyze, how the contemporary capitalism controls communication of organizational purpose and members of organization. The study focuses on one public company in the Nordic countries. The organization is a large, multi-billion enterprise operating in manufacturing industry. The firm in focus communicates purpose openly and actively to different stakeholders inside and outside the organization. This study utilizes Grounded Theory, and due to the methodological background, the research question will sharpen as the research advances. Data gathering and analysis are still underway, but the data of the study will consist at least about 25 interviews of employees on middle management level. The further data and data gathering will be specified by the findings of the initial data analysis.

Until now, 10 informants have been interviewed, and nine interviews have gone through preliminary coding. Precursory open coding seems to suggest that meaning creation about organizational purpose happens in the context of elements including shareholder primacy, (financial) value creation, and transformation of business and society. In presentation, we will present results and discuss how the control produced by contemporary economical model shapes organizational thinking and communication about purpose.

OSC04 Internal communication

PP 0408 Fear of being replaced: The dark side of employee ambassadorship on social media

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Social media platforms offer employees new opportunities to tap into the role of communicators and ambassadors and contribute to the strategic communication of organizations (Andersson, 2022). The potential of this engagement has been widely acknowledged, leading organizations to encourage employees to take on an ambassador role (Thelen, 2020; Pekkala et al., 2022). While social media is often understood as a simple tool to make organizational communication more effective and credible, predominately positive aspects are emphasized.

This study problematizes the prevailing normative and managerial-dominated view on self-initiated employee ambassadorship on social media and focuses on the darker side of this phenomenon as well as the power relations in which employees' communication on social media is embedded. The aim of this study is to provide a more nuanced and critical understanding by taking a power perspective on self-initiated employee ambassadorship on social media. The empirical material consists of qualitative interviews with employees from 14 organizations, which are analyzed using Foucault's (1972; 1977) concept of disciplinary and discursive power. The analysis concentrates on which and how discourses exert power over employee communication on social media and what role visibility on social platforms plays in it. The result of the study indicates that social media communication of employee ambassadors is rarely influenced by direct managerial control. Instead, it is governed by the discourse of employee substitutivity and the discourse of authenticity in brand communication. These two disciplinary discourses bring complex tensions, where ambassadors must constantly negotiate between self-branding requirements and an authenticity paradox. The tensions intensify through the visibility on social media, where employees strategize and

situationally silence their communication through self-monitoring and self-surveillance practices. By introducing a new critical power perspective, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of self-initiated employee ambassadorship on social media and highlights disciplinary power relations that go beyond organizational borders. Further, the findings underscore that organizations need to address the critical aspects of self-initiated employee ambassadorship and act as facilitators rather than as regulators to support employees in their navigation process. Conclusively, the findings also outline the need for further critical research to offer a deeper understanding of power relations beyond organizational borders that influence the communication practices of organizational members.

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OSC05 Public sector and legitimacy

PP 0521 Citizen engagement for democracy: Information strategy of intermunicipal communities on social media

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In a decentralizing logic, the recent reform of local government in Portugal sought to bring public governance closer to the population through the creation of 21 intermunicipal communities (IMCs). IMCs are entities that promote territorial cooperation between associated municipalities by allowing the resolution of common problems and the management of resources across municipalities. Lack of knowledge of the work developed by IMCs may lead to a problem of democratic deficit and recognition, with negative consequences for the management of public policies with impact on the quality of populations life. An ineffective online public communication may be at the root of this problem. Literature on local government use of social media has stressed how these platforms could be used for fulfilling basic democratic goals of transparency, citizen participation, dialogue and engagement (Bonsón, Torres, Royo, & Flores, 2012, Chun and Luna-Reyes, 2012, Criado et al., 2013, DePaula & Dinceli, 2018; Mergel, 2012).

To better understand the information strategies of IMCs and how citizens react on social media, we asked the following research questions: What do IMCs organizations post on Facebook, and how do citizens react to this social media content? The data was gathered utilizing the CrowdTangle platform, a tool developed by Meta, and configured within the Intelligence module. This approach enables access to official data through Facebook's Application Programming Interface (API). The original dataset comprises 7.858 posts from the 21 IMCs fanpages and 138.183 million interactions from their users between August 2022 and July 2023 – almost a year. This data facilitates the analysis of both the content published by the fanpage administrators and the online behavior of their audiences.

For the quantitative analysis, we categorized the posts using a framework of government communication and information strategies on social media that had been previously tested by DePaula, Dincelli and Harrison (2018). Based on that we then analyzed differences in users' reactions in the form of likes, shares, and comments, to the distinct types of content (photos, videos, links, etc.). By analyzing the effects of content type on user reactions it is possible to understand what IMCs information strategies drive social media responses and consequently, increase notoriety of these singular organizations.

We found some statistically significant results, offering some evidence for better understanding of which different types of information affect user interaction. The results reveal an asymmetry in the utilization of Facebook by the CIMs. Moreover, none of the fanpages attained an interaction rate sufficient to conclude that the platform is effectively being utilized by users as a communication channel. It was also identified that the number of posts is not necessarily a determining factor in increasing the interaction rate; rather, the type of post plays a crucial role. Our results highlight how users are more engaged by affective and symbolic nature of social media content, rather than more serious and institutional IMCs information.

OSC05 Public sector and legitimacy

PP 0522 Who Am I? Tracing the future of public sector communicators between technological challenges, information disorder and social disruptions

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In the post-Covid 19 era the role of public sector communicators has undergone a profound transformation due to the turbulence of socio-political scenarios, the spread of disinformation, the rapid technological advancements, and the increasing influence of digital platforms on governments and public institutions (OECD, 2021; van Dijck, 2019; Zerfass et al., 2023).

The aim of this study is to examine the evolving responsibilities, challenges and ethical considerations faced by public communicators in European countries. The focus is on understanding the dynamic nature of their hybrid role as "centaur communicators" (Lovari, 2022), redefining their identities and combining traditional media practices with the innovative approaches from social media and artificial intelligence.

Through 12 in-depth semi structured interviews (Johnson, 2001) with elite publics, this study aims to provide original insights into how public communicators are adapting to these socio-technological disruptions, can face contemporary challenges, and be able to navigate the complex communication landscape in leading EU institutions and governments. The high level of information provided by these elite communication professionals is crucial in the study (Hertz & Imber, 1995).

From the thematic analysis of the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006), several trajectories emerge regarding the future of public sector communication and the strategic role of communicators. These perspectives range from problem-solving approaches to addressing emerging trends such as the threat posed by disinformation across social media platforms to society, as well as the challenges offered by generative AI tools. In particular the study explores how these professionals are including and forecasting the use of AI solutions in their communication and media relations strategies, along with the ethical dilemmas associated with the implementation of this new technology in the relationships with strategic publics and EU's AI Act (Ferrari, van Dijck & van den Bosch, 2023). Furthermore, the evolving role of public communicators is examined considering the key competencies, skills and training that will be essential for professionals in the near future. The role of international cooperation, particularly in addressing digital transformation cross-border trends, is also a critical aspect reported in the interviews.

Investigating the voices of these professionals provides a relevant snapshot of best practices and innovative strategies that are being employed across Europe at the top level of public organizations. This is critical in understanding how public communication is managed as well as deepening the ethical considerations faced by public entities in developing and disseminating information and communication campaigns to citizens using social media and emerging technologies (Lovari, Bowen & D'Ambrosi, 2020). Such insights are particularly important in rethinking the role of future public communicators and the implications for practitioners and scholars doing research in this field (Luoma-aho & Canel 2020). Finally, this study offers a comprehensive overview of the current and future landscape of public sector communication in Europe, shedding light on the actual disorders and criticalities, but also highlighting the challenges and opportunities enabled by the interplay between technological developments and communication practices.

OSC05 Public sector and legitimacy

PP 0523 (Dis)ordering gender strategies in Italian public sector communication. Regulation, social media practices and the role of professionals at local level

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In times of polycrisis (Morin-Kern 1999) and communication (dis)order, there has been growing attention in a more ethical and responsible dimension of organizational communication (Bowen 2016; Gonçales-Oliveria 2022; Luoma-aho, Badham 2023), which involves also the public sector (Canel, Luoma-aho 2019; Materassi, Solito 2021; Lovari, Ducci 2022). In particular, the importance of more inclusive and diversity-sensitive communication strategies is highlighted in the public debate on gender-sensitive policies both at international level (UNESCO 2020; European Commission 2020) and at national one (e.g. National Plans for Recovery and Resilience, and National Strategies for Gender Equality 2021–2026). Therefore, several new challenges arise for public sector communicators in European countries, concerning the development of professionals' skills and capacities (OECD 2021).

Looking specifically at the Italian context, the attention on public sector communication strategies towards gender issues emerged slowly, often appearing barely visible (Faccioli 2020), and it has been growing only starting from the pandemic (Lovari, D'Ambrosi 2022; Faccioli, D'Ambrosi 2023). In particular, previous research (D'Ambrosi *et al.* 2023; Spalletta *et al.* 2023) has highlighted how institutional public communication, especially in digital environments, runs at different speeds at the regional level when it comes to addressing gender issues and/or adopting gender-sensitive approaches: on the one hand, official guidelines (where adopted) tend to differ from each other in respect to the different fields and languages they address (administrative and normative texts *vs.* institutional communication; verbal *vs.* visual language); on the other hand, communication practices differ both in respect to the attention they paid to gender issues in ordinary coverage and media hypes and in the adoption of a gender-sensitive approach in verbal and visual languages.

Based on these premises, this paper pursues the ongoing research aiming to achieving two different goals:

1. to explore the role of communicators/professionals in developing gender-sensitive communication strategies in those Italian Regions in which guidelines were adopted (involvement in decision-making, autonomy, creativity, skills/knowledge, training);
2. to extend the analysis to those Italian Regions that have not yet adopted suitable guidelines, considering that: *a)* the existence of guidelines does not necessarily lead to gender-sensitive communication; *b)* a gender-sensitive communication can take shape even in the lack of those guidelines.

From a methodological point of view, this study carries out a mixed methods approach (Creswell 2015), which blends in-depth interviews with communicators/professionals from Regions which provided themselves with guidelines, and social media content analysis of the official Facebook pages of Regions without guidelines.

The study tends to confirm a marked unbalance between regulation and communication practices, because of different communication cultures, resources (dedicated structures, professionals, etc.) and influence of political governance (left-leaning coalitions *vs.* right-leaning ones) among Italian Regions. In this scenario, the empowerment of communicators (Grunig 2009; 2016) stands out as even more relevant in reinforcing the trustee relationship between institutions and citizens that represent the main goal of public institutional communication.

OSC05 Public sector and legitimacy

PP 0524 Frictions of public sector organizations' strategic communication: A study about the Swedish Police's social media use for public safety

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In today's fast-paced digital world, public sector organizations (PSOs) face communication challenges that can impact the public. These challenges depend on the organization's and its employees' use, understanding, and knowledge of the purpose of communication and communication platforms. This is particularly true when PSOs use social media to communicate about complex societal issues strategically. In this case, strategic communication about public safety can do good by opening up interaction, further information sharing, and community engagement. On the other hand, it can harm the public by instilling fear, for instance, by using the wrong digital media or steering a narrative that benefits the organization but not society. This is where the friction (disorder and potential) around PSOs' use of social media lies.

This study focuses on the Swedish police as a specific PSO due to their work to create public safety, besides preventing and investigating crimes according to Swedish law. Another reason is due to their extensive use of Facebook and Instagram lately. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how PSO employees, in this case, Swedish police employees, make sense of their use of social media to contribute to public safety.

The empirical material is based on 20 qualitative interviews and four critical making workshops with Swedish police officers from one police region in Sweden. The material is analyzed with a hermeneutic approach to understand how employees make sense of their social media communication to contribute to public safety.

The results of this study show that employees find it useful to use social media as a strategic communication tool to inform their community, to control the narrative, or to avoid criticism for doing nothing or ignoring it. Police social media links to presence as a strategic communication counterpoint to the difficulty of being present in the non-digital realm. However, the findings also highlight the friction between what needs to be communicated, how, by whom, and across which media channels. This increases the aspect of communication disorder, which has implications for the content of public safety. Furthermore, this stems from avoiding popular social media platforms, inhibiting creativity, and causing communication challenges for employees trying to fulfill their digital communication roles in promoting public safety to diverse audiences.

This study adds to the literature on PSO communication, strategic communication, and policing regarding the challenge of communicating complex societal issues in a rapidly changing world.

OSC05 Public sector and legitimacy

PP 0525 Big tech discourse on Reddit: How big tech are publicly discussed online and its implications for corporate legitimacy

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Big tech organizations form the digital backbone of our societies and penetrate practically all facets of them. Their unprecedented stake in issues of high socio-political relevance has raised concerns among scholars and, notably, the public. To uphold their social license to operate, organizations are dependent on public approval and must therefore project a public image of legitimacy. Corporate legitimacy describes a perceived alignment of a corporation's actions with societal norms, values, and expectations, which means it lies in the eye of the beholder. Given the ubiquity of big tech's products and services, citizens emerge as crucial stakeholders, while finding it increasingly difficult to disengage from the pervasive influence of these corporations. Social media platforms are important public forums for citizens to discuss, deliberate, and form an opinion. Yet, few empirical studies have investigated the public discourse and the discursive legitimization of these corporations in these arenas. In particular, a close inspection of the public discourse on Reddit – a popular social media site with specific design features that have proven to strongly influence public opinion – is missing in the existing body of literature.

To fill this gap, our study pursues a two-fold objective. Firstly, we explore how public communities on Reddit discuss big tech. Specifically, we look into the most prevailing topics that characterize the online public discourse about big tech overall, and we discern how these topics evolve over time. Such temporal shifts may uncover noteworthy patterns in discourse dynamics and indicate the influence of pivotal events. In addition, we examine differences in the topics within public discourse among some of the largest companies in the information technology sector: Alphabet (parent company of Google), Amazon, Apple, Meta (parent company of Facebook), and Microsoft. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the big tech discourse on Reddit, we collected a total of 7,247,762 comments from 18,683 posts in 21 different relevant Reddit communities that discuss big tech – both the term 'big tech' and the different individual corporations as stated above. For analytical depth, we use BERTopic modeling to identify the most prevalent topics more generally, over time, and in discussions about individual organizations. Secondly, we interpret the most prevalent topics through the lens of corporate legitimacy as a heuristic device. This involves the pragmatic, cognitive, and moral dimensions of legitimacy to provide a nuanced understanding of discursive legitimation.

Our findings map dynamic discursive legitimacy processes in public forums like Reddit and thereby provide valuable insights into public deliberation and opinion formation processes towards organizations online. In the age of big tech, these insights become instrumental in comprehending the unprecedented role of these organizations in shaping our digital society. It is imperative not to overlook the considerable power vested in the public to hold these organizations accountable and contribute to understanding the delicate balance between public expectations and the social license granted to these influential organizations to operate within our increasingly interconnected digital landscape.

OSC06 Technological trends

PP 0632 The overlooked role of communication in organizational information security: Vertical and horizontal information security communication among employees

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Nowadays, information security is one of the top priority of organisations as the number of cyber security breaches is massively increasing worldwide, causing enormous financial, business, reputation and other damages. It is argued that information security is not just a technical matter, but should become an integral part of organisations' core strategies and processes, along with human capital. Recently, social science perspectives on information security have emerged, offering various socio-psychological, communicative, managerial and other aspects pertaining to the implementation and management of information security technologies, processes and policies in the organisation. There are several explanatory, mostly behavioural models in the literature, while the communication aspect of information security processes in an organisation is largely missing. To some extent it is at least implicitly present in discussions about information security culture, persuasive communication techniques, incident reporting, but there is no systematic, comprehensive approach to identify and analyse the security communication processes in organisations. This is surprising as strategic communication within organisation is a key mechanism for establishing a good security culture that guarantees resilience against threats and incidents.

The first aim of our study was therefore to introduce the concept of employees' information security communication (ISC) as one of the types of information security behaviour. Based on Habermas' theory of communicative action,

we present three types of human interaction that apply to the field of information security: human-computer interaction as the use of ICTs, human-to-human interaction as communicative information security behaviour (CISB), and human-to-human interaction with oneself as making information security decisions. The focus of the study is on CISB, which we define in the organisational context as the exchange of information about information security between employees. Within CISB in the organisational context, we define two dimensions: vertical (bottom-up) and horizontal ISC. This communication includes proactive communication about information security policy, improving information security, reporting incidents, etc. The second aim of the study was to analyse the organisational communication processes that are part of CISB and to identify explanatory factors for CISB. The explanatory model was derived by combining the spiral of silence theory in the organisational context and well-known behavioural theories, such as the theory of planned behaviour and the protection motivation theory. The proposed model was tested using a multilevel modelling analysis of vertical and horizontal ISC with data from a web-based survey of employees at the University of Ljubljana (n = 560). The results showed that in general, employees are more willing to talk about information security with colleagues than with superiors. Among the explanatory factors for employees' CISB, subjective norms stand out, followed by attitudes, fear of formal sanctions, education and age. Examining employees' information security communication practises is crucial to identify various incidents and avoid risks that threaten the organisation's information. On the other hand, increased communication regarding information security is essential to create a well-informed and vigilant workforce. It empowers employees to actively participate in protecting the organisation's assets and contributes to a more resilient and secure business environment.

OSC06 Technological trends

PP 0633 Materialization of digital platforms in a coworking space

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The significance of digital platforms in current organizations is usually taken for granted and contemporary organizing can be seen built on digital platforms. However, research on organizations and technologies has not fully followed the trend of platformization of organizing and, thus, recently, there has been arguments for studying digital platforms in organizing empirically from new perspectives (e.g., Guzman & Lewis, 2020; Laapotti & Raappana, 2022). Moreover, the communication research on technologies in organizations has focused mainly on communication technologies or technologies that explicitly communicate, such as social bots and robots, not on the other platforms that are commonly in use in organizations. In this study, we answer to these challenges by studying digital platforms outside the situations when these platforms are in use, because these platforms "communicate to us and through us throughout time and space" (Laapotti & Raappana, 2022, p. 499).

Empirically, this study focuses on the materialization processes and the agency of digital platforms in a coworking space (CWS). Materialization refers to the communicative process where beings "come to appear and make themselves present throughout space and time" (Cooren, 2020, p. 2). Furthermore, we understand agency as relational phenomenon between beings (Cooren, 2018). These relational views stem from the Montreal School (MS) of the communicative constitution of organizations (CCO) perspective (see Brummans et al., 2014). The aim of this study is twofold: first, we aim at describing how digital platforms materialize in a CWS and, second, we aim at understanding the difference these materializations make in the organizing of a CWS.

The data for the study are collected from a well-established and growing private Nordic CWS company. CWS's are office environments that provide working places for example for entrepreneurs, freelancers, and remote workers, against a membership fee (Spinuzzi, 2012). The data comprises of 10 video-recorded weekly staff meetings of the CWS crew and 50+ hours of shadowing data consisting of fieldnotes and audio-recordings of spontaneous meetings and encounters. For the analysis of the data we are applying Nathues et al.'s (2021) ventriloquial analyses because it can help us in understanding "how various elements of a situation are communicated into being and make a difference in interaction" (Nathues et al., 2021, p. 1457). The analysis process contains four steps: identifying, ordering, relating, and showing the multiple voices through which digital platforms materialize in the CWS. Preliminary results show that digital platforms carry many central functions for organizing, by participating in information and knowledge management, by defining the borders of the CWS, and by building shared identities, even when these platforms are not in use.

OSC06 Technological trends

PP 0634 Humanization of AI: implications of agency perception for strategic CSR communication

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Our study explores the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication, examining the impact of attributing human-like characteristics to AI (called *anthropomorphization*) on stakeholder trust and organizational reputation. This investigation is particularly relevant in light of the increasing societal importance of AI and the growing significance of strategic sustainability communication for organizations in meeting legal and public expectations. We consider the mediating variables of credibility and perceived agency to assess the influence of AI anthropomorphization and source on stakeholder trust and organizational reputation.

While previous research has extensively addressed AI anthropomorphization (e.g., Blut et al., 2021; Coeckelbergh, 2022; Glikson & Woolley, 2020; Scorici et al., 2022), its application in strategic communication remains understudied. Given that the portrayal of anthropomorphized AI is primarily constrained by design and creativity rather than technological limitations, there is considerable potential for its development. Furthermore, since the literature on AI in strategic corporate communication research is still in its early stages, it is crucial to promptly investigate the consequences of integrating AI in organizational communication in different contexts.

Focusing on CSR communication, which inherently targets relational outcomes such as trust, reputation, and legitimacy and is dependent on contextual factors (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Maon et al., 2019; Orlitzky et al., 2003; Pivato et al., 2008; Smith, 2005; Vishwanathan et al., 2020), our research addresses the following questions:

RQ1: How do AI anthropomorphization and source in CSR communication affect stakeholder trust and organizational reputation?

RQ2: What role do credibility and perceived agency play in mediating these relationships?

We aim to answer these questions through an experimental 2 (AI anthropomorphization: *low* vs. *high*) x 2 (source: *corporate* vs. *governmental*) between-subjects design. Currently developing the instrument, we will collect data in February to present results at the conference.

Our study seeks to advance the understanding of cognitive processes involved in estimating outcomes in strategic CSR communication. Specifically, we investigate the perception of agency of AI systems and its consequences. In light of the rapidly developing landscape of AI technology and the growing urgency for sustainable practices, we make an initial step in investigating implications for strategic CSR communication in the age of artificial intelligence.

OSC06 Technological trends

PP 0635 How Artificial Intelligence is being used by Strategic Communication Professionals

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is expanding across various contexts and organizations, and becoming ingrained in the daily practices of professionals. Our study looks specifically into the adoption of AI in strategic communication, setting out to map how and why communication professionals and experts are adhering to AI. Our goals are delineating its applications and objectives, as well as discussing associated opportunities and risks.

Our empirical work is exploratory and follows the qualitative method, based on interviews to a purposive sample of 22 communication professionals and experts. A thematic analysis was applied to the data.

The results of our study provide valuable insights into the current state of AI adoption in strategic communication, offering both confirmation and expansion of the theoretical framework. Our findings reveal a widespread integration of AI platforms among communication professionals, with ChatGPT standing out. They are used for multiple purposes, from social media content creation to data analysis, optimizing processes, and facilitating various functions. The practical applications of AI in sentiment analysis, content generation, and enhanced consumer experiences align with theoretical expectations and previews of the broad potential of AI. The main advantages identified are enhanced efficiency, resource optimization, and speed, while challenges revolve around the potential replacement of human labor and concerns about data privacy. But there are also challenges such as job displacement, ethical concerns, and the evolving roles of communication professionals underscore the complex interplay between AI and humanity.

Our findings highlight the dynamic nature of AI's role in strategic communication. The continued development of AI's capabilities and its integration with other technologies point to a future in which AI becomes an indispensable tool for communication professionals. The future trajectory foresees AI increasingly streamlining mechanical tasks,

fostering a positive view among professionals who anticipate a strategic shift toward critical thinking and specialized roles. Ethical considerations play a central role in shaping the trajectory of AI adoption, emphasizing the need for a balanced and responsible approach. As organizations navigate this transformative landscape, our study prompts further reflection on the ethical implications of AI, the evolving roles of communication professionals, and the collaborative synergy between human expertise and AI in the ever-evolving field of strategic communication. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the practical dimensions, challenges, and potential future trajectories of AI in this critical domain.

OSC06 Technological trends

PP 0636 Corporate newsrooms and future strategies: Redesigning corporate communication for digital transformation. Insights from guided interviews with communication professionals in newsroom organisations

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The currently most dominant challenge for organisations in today's sociocentric world, is the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) which creates a new context of uncertainty. In particular, AI has a disruptive impact on corporate communication leading to a progressive dissolution of boundaries by overlapping and partially merging with other communication disciplines and departments of the organisation (Heidbrink et al., 2022, S. 13). Hence, organisations more than ever aim at reducing those disorders, making decisions necessary regarding the adoption of those technologies into corporate communication. Organisational redesigning into so-called corporate newsrooms – based on the journalistic model – are considered to be a reaction to digitalisation enabling a consistent communication across all channels. However, the main challenges reported by communication practitioners across Europe are communication tasks and processes which are not prepared for digitalisation as well as structural barriers, such as inflexible organisational set-ups and cultures (Zerfaß et al., 2023, S. 14).

The idea of dissoluted structures will be addressed referring to Luhmann's systems theory. Guided interviews with German communicators provide insights on the potential of corporate newsrooms and related future strategies in digital transformation processes of corporate communication and their consequences for structures, processes and tasks.

Corporate newsrooms are one innovative example for handling the accelerated, condensed and increasing communication. The structure based on topics or subject areas – a central criterion of journalistic newsrooms – is also being adapted by corporate newsrooms. Following the function of corporate communication, though, corporate newsrooms not only encompass publication activities, but also have a monitoring and evaluation function (Seidenglanz, 2022, S. 110ff.). With AI being able of analysing and predicting behavior based on big data (Buhmann & Gregory, 2023), it transfers the newsroom's potential to a new level, enabling organisations to take more informed decisions.

To investigate this empirically, guideline interviews with communicators in German newsroom organisations, e.g., Volkswagen AG and Otto Group, will be conducted and analysed using MAXQDA in qualitative content analysis. The guide integrates questions on changes regarding structures, hierarchies, decision-making processes and tasks requiring new skills and competences. Finally, the study gives first insights on how corporate communication need to adapt to keep up with advanced tech and data use to have continuous influence in the future.

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OSC07 Civil society organisations

PP 0662 Alternative narratives on the meaning of nonprofit work at a European environmental NGO

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Nowadays, nonprofit organizations (NPOs) operate in an increasingly competitive, global environment that requires credible and inclusive organizational communication (Beger, 2018). To recruit and retain the help NPOs need to operate and make nonprofit work worthwhile for employees and volunteers, they need to communicate the meaning of their work strategically (Sanders, 2020). Experiencing work as meaningful contributes to employee well-being and other positive personal and organizational outcomes like commitment and engagement (Bailey et al., 2019). Thus, the examination of meaningful work in the context of NPOs not only fills in a gap in current scientific literature but also provides insights for a well-being-focused development of organizational communication.

This case study explores how members of a European environmental NGO experience meaningful work and how this organization communicates the meaning of its work. The study adopts the constitutive (Schoeneborn & Vásquez, 2022) and critical approach to organizational communication (Daniels et al., 1997) and it aims to provide a deeper understanding of meaningful work through narratives as communicative ways of meaning-making (Fischer-Appelt & Dernbach, 2023). The author uses a mixed-method approach and compares the results of semi-structured interviews conducted with members of the organization to the narrative and thematic analysis of officially communicated narratives from online platforms. The study reveals discrepancies between strategically constructed and personal interpretations of meaningful work and uncovers the credibility of strategic communication practices. A deeper understanding of alternative narratives about the meaning of work provides valuable insights for the development of the organizational communication of environmental NPOs while contributing to a more nuanced understanding of meaningful work.

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OSC07 Civil society organisations

PP 0663 Authority in leading communality

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In this paper we examine authority in leading processes in the context of coworking spaces (CWS). CWS's are collaborative environments that bring together employees with different backgrounds to share physical, professional, and social resources in a flexible and creative way (Spinuzzi, 2012). CWS's have increasingly intrigued organization communication scholars: studies are focusing, for example, on knowledge sharing (Bouncken & Aslam, 2019; Rese et al., 2020), and sociomateriality (Bouncken et al., 2021; Larson 2020). Community and communality have been acknowledged to be important in CWS (Spinuzzi et al., 2019), but how they are developed and led remains understudied. In this paper we are broadening the question of leadership in CWS to how communality processes are led in CWS by focusing on the concept of authority.

We treat CWS as organizational. Our viewpoint is in CCO Montreal School (MS, Brummans et al., 2014), and we use the concept of authority to develop understanding of these shared processes. The interest of MS has been merely on authority and authoring when considering leadership questions (Bisel, Fairhurst, & Sheep, 2022). In general,

leadership is seen in MS as a collective act because communication is always performative and consequential and takes place with human and nonhuman actors and targets (Schoeneborn et al. 2020). Moreover, the authority different actors might have been seen as important in materializing organizational values and goals in communication (Bisel et al., 2022). Thus, we examine leadership processes in CWS in affordance of the concept of authority. We state that communality materializes in communication and relationships in CWS, and thus authority offers tools in understanding the leadership processes of this communality.

The data (10 video recordings of weekly staff meetings, from 7 to 19 staff members participating face-to-face and remotely) is collected from a Nordic CWS company. We applied ventriloquial analysis (Nathues et al., 2021) to unpack the processes of leading communality, and by whom or what are those processes led. Our preliminary findings show that authority is shared and constituted in connections between human and non-human voices and vents, and leading processes of communality are animated by several authoritative activities. We also found out that authority in leading processes of communality materializes nonlinearly in time: communality can be lead retrospectively, in real-time, and as foretelling the future. Thus, this study contributes to CCO and sociomaterial perspectives as strengthening their theoretical assumptions. We also contribute to CWS literature by suggesting, that they might not be that far from traditional organizations after all, at least they do get constituted and coordinated in communication in impressive ways.

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PP 0664 The role of communication in reducing the severity of domestic violence in Portugal: A comparative analysis of NGO communication strategies from COVID-19 to 2023

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This study addresses the alarming increase in cases of domestic violence in Portugal, which escalated by more than 30% from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic until the end of 2023, as reported and documented by authorities and victim support structures (Barros et al., 2021; CIG, 2023). Focusing primarily on women and children, this increase has not been matched by a corresponding escalation in communication strategies aimed at promoting early intervention and providing accurate violence prevention information to different audiences. In particular, NGO communication in Portugal operates within an information dissemination paradigm that lacks a robust framework for effective and dialogical or transformative communication between the publics and the organisations (Sá, 2023; Oliveira, 2010; Gonçalves & Lisboa, 2017). Moreover, dialogic or transformative socio-communicative processes are incipient or not carried out from a strategic communication management point of view, also due to the lack of communication professionals and/or the professionalisation of those in charge.

This study conducts a comparative analysis of registered data on domestic violence in Portugal during the pandemic year (2020) and the subsequent period until the end of 2023. In particular, it examines the communication strategies used by NGOs to prevent and combat domestic violence. The findings, based on data analysis from 120 Portuguese NGOs, reveal a consistent underinvestment in communication, particularly in the recruitment of public relations professionals. This prioritisation, which favours professionals with backgrounds in psychology, criminology, sociology or social work, is indicative of a systemic problem within the sector.

In an effort to understand the communication gap surrounding domestic violence in Portugal, this research also uses semi-structured interviews to 48 NGOs professionals as a primary data collection method for a second step of the empirical design. In doing so, it seeks to shed light on the implications of this communication gap and its potential impact on the effective management of domestic violence in the country. By collecting the perceptions of professionals involved in the fight against domestic violence, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive view of the communicative processes within NGOs. Through this lens, the study will stimulate critical discussion, highlight the opportunities and challenges inherent in these processes, and contribute to a nuanced understanding of the broader socio-cultural context. The findings of the study are expected to provide valuable insights into the key issues that shape the communicative backdrop of domestic violence, thus facilitating the development of recommendations for practice. These advice is intended to guide strategic communication management within NGOs, emphasising dialogic and transformative processes that can have a meaningful impact on both society and the organisations involved in the fight against domestic violence.

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PP 0665 Against social disorder? – Enhancing visibility of non-profit organizations by artificial based communication assistants

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In the European Union over 3.5 million non-profit organizations significantly contribute to various sectors, including health, social services, humanitarian aid, social inclusion, research and development, culture, education, and sports.

In contrast to their profit-driven counterparts however, they have significantly smaller marketing and communication budgets (Bruhn & Herbst 2016). This is particularly true for smaller organizations that often operate only locally. As a result, many non-profit organizations suffer from low visibility, which manifests as insufficient donations and members, as well as a lack of public support and recognition (Bruhn & Herbst 2016). In most cases, this low visibility can be attributed to insufficient or inadequate public relations.

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) immensely changes the communication landscape. Open AIs' Chat GPT, for example, enable the automatic generation of text on a wide array of subjects within seconds, while programs such as OpenAI's DALL-E can swiftly generate images.

With the ability to modify voices and images, distinguishing between authentic and manipulated content can pose a challenge not only for non-experts. This dual-edged sword of AI presents both threats and opportunities. On the one hand, the use of AI may jeopardize democratic processes due to the difficulty in discerning the authenticity of textual, audio, and visual content. On the other hand, AI holds the potential to offer novel solutions, especially to organizations operating on limited communication budgets.

Although a variety of AI tools that can assist in public relations already exist in practice, studies (including Zerfaß et al. 2020; Zerfaß et al. 2023) show that their use in companies is still very low. For non-profit organizations, the reasons mainly lie in the lack of technical understanding of those responsible (Zerfaß et al. 2020).

However, AI tools could particularly help staff members in the non-profit sector, who are often employed part-time or as freelancers (Zimmer & Priller 2022), in optimally allocating time and financial resources in their public relations' work. They could also provide staff with more time for challenging strategic communication work and significantly relieve the operational workload, thereby increasing the visibility and influence.

However, to date, little is known about the specific requirements and potential uses of AI-based tools for non-profit organizations and there are no comprehensive tools designed for use in non-profit organizations.

Therefore, our study aims to close this gap conceptually and empirically.

We use a mixed method approach to first conceptually determine the needs and use cases of public relations work in non-profit companies. Based on the results of 20 in-depth interviews with members of non-profit companies we conduct an online survey with 2000 non-profit organizations. The results lay the foundation of the conceptual and empirical AI-based public relation assistant that allows non-profit organizations to improve their public relations work.

The innovative tool is supposed to empower non-profit organizations with a wide-ranging PR-package, facilitating the formulation of press releases, creation of invitations and social media posts, for example. By enhancing visibility, it has the potential to mitigate some aspects of social disconnection and contribute positively to the broader social fabric.

OSC07 Civil society organisations

PP 0666 Explicit privacy policies in cookie disclosures: Effects of credibility for non-profit organizations

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An experiment tested effects of website privacy policy disclosures on consumer responses (Li, 2014; Metzger, 2006). Specifically, we examined whether a transparent (vs. opaque) statement about data collection practices, crossed by the presence (vs. absence) of agree/deny buttons, affected website attitudes, organization attitudes, organization credibility, behavioral intentions, and behavior toward the organization. Proposed effects were tested in the context of (fictional) non-profit organizations and their GDPR- and CCPA-based privacy disclosures.

H1: The presence of a transparent (vs. opaque) privacy statement on a website's landing page will produce more positive (a) website attitudes, (b) organization attitudes, (c) perceived organization credibility, (d) willingness to donate to the organization, and (e) simulated donation behavior.

H2: The presence (vs. absence) of agree/deny buttons on a privacy statement on a website's landing page will produce more positive (a) website attitudes, (b) organization attitudes, (c) perceived organization credibility, (d) willingness to donate to the organization, and (e) simulated donation behavior.

H3: Transparency and buttons on a privacy statement will positively interact to produce more positive (a) website attitudes, (b) organization attitudes, (c) perceived organization credibility, (d) willingness to donate to the organization, and (e) simulated donation behavior.

Method

A within-subjects factorial experiment used a 2x2 (transparency x buttons) design, producing four types of privacy disclosures. Data were collected from undergraduate students (N = 157) at a public university in the USA. Participants were aged M = 21.20, SD = 4.82, 83.4% women, 29.9% Latinx, and 86.0% White. A priori power analysis for a small effect of d = 0.20 with .70 power indicated 157 cases were needed. The study was preregistered at https://osf.io/zn5bp/?view_only=38a03dd938804e4b831ee149c1077ca8.

Each participant viewed four website landing pages with different types of privacy policy presentations. Experimental manipulations were rotated across sites for four fictional non-profit websites for international teaching organizations. Participants saw webpages in a randomized order. Transparent disclosures stated "Our data collection is used in target advertisements as well as a means to provide specialized content to our viewers," whereas opaque disclosures stated "We use cookies to collect and use your data to give you the best possible web experience we can offer." In conditions with interactivity, large "Agree" and "Deny" buttons appeared below the disclosure.

Dependent variables were measured with 5-point single-item Likert scales, repeated for each stimulus: (a) Attitude toward the website, (b) Attitude toward the organization, (c) Organization credibility, and (d) Willingness to donate to the organization. Then, simulated behavior was measured with an item that asked participants to divide a hypothetical $100 among the four organizations (TravelTeach, ExploreTeach, TeachAdventure, TeachTrip).

Results

For each of the 5 DVs, a 2x2 repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted, to test H1, H2, and H3 (two main and one interaction effect). There were no significant main effects of disclosure transparency (ps > .239), buttons (ps > .057), or their interaction (ps > .063). With a well-powered and pre-registered design making use of within-subjects control, we find that presenting more transparent privacy disclosures on landing pages, and presenting interactive controls, does not diminish attitudes, credibility, or donation intentions for non-profit organizations.

PHC01 Rethinking theories of communication

PP 0751 Between disinformation and propaganda: Ameliorating a conceptual disorder

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The last fifteen years or so have produced countless accounts of purportedly new kinds of information disorders, associated with buzzwords such as "fake news", "filter bubbles", and "infodemic". Although a number of detractors have maintained that the novelty and magnitude of these tribulations have been greatly exaggerated, the feeling that something is amiss in our communication environments can be hard to avoid. Concurrently, the issue of propaganda – long out of vogue – has witnessed something of a renaissance. Predictably, much of this newfound interest has been focused on various forms of digital propaganda, with research being pursued under banners such as "computational propaganda" and "participatory propaganda". Further, it has been suggested that these technological disruptions have shifted the primary *modus operandi* of propaganda away from manipulative persuasion toward the production of doubt and division by means of disinformation.

Such claims are not fully borne out by the facts. On the one hand, the phenomenon of "disorder propaganda" is hardly novel, as the diffusion of false information with an aim to confuse and paralyse has long been a central feature of so-called "black" (or "impersonated") propaganda operations. And, on the other hand, much contemporary authoritarian propaganda is strikingly traditional in both format and persuasive intent, seeking social order rather than disorder. Still, it is evident that the revival of propaganda studies has to a significant degree intertwined with the massive expansion of disinformation research. The result is arguably an information disorder of a different kind, where the concepts of propaganda and disinformation are diversely entangled not only in the media but also in academic discourse – sometimes treated simply as synonyms, but more often articulated by means of varying relations of intersection and hierarchy.

In this presentation, I first identify the principal ways in which the relationship between propaganda and disinformation has been conceptualised. Next, drawing on pragmatist philosophy, I make a case for the need of an ameliorative clarification of the meaning of these terms, while I simultaneously reject the suggestion that their employment in research would require a sharp analytical definition in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. Although the proposed conceptual clarification, which views meaning in terms of potential practical implications, can be characterised as neutral with regard to the question of the reality of the designated phenomena, I proceed to a defence of the continued value of these concepts for media and communication studies. However, in a more provocative vein, I also put forward some arguments against the overemphasis on disinformation in the field. Although not all disinformation is propaganda, there is a pertinent sense in which the latter designates a broader conception than the former, incorporating oft-ignored forms of malinformation in its sphere. In conclusion, I will highlight the danger of paying too much attention to present instances of disinformation propaganda and piecemeal remedies to perceived ailments – something that can be likened to "missing the forest for the weeds" (Wanless, 2023) – while ignoring extended temporal continuities in processes of social order and disorder.

PHC01 Rethinking theories of communication

PP 0752 Between solipsism and recursivity: The critique of radical constructivism

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Many publicly debated issues, such as pandemic constraints, climate crisis, identity politics, Western migration policy, wars in Ukraine and Israel seem to polarize Western societies unprecedentedly. Fake news and deep fakes further complicate our understanding of contemporary communication. It is hard to believe in the communicative rationality of people, even in the notion if the mutual understanding among the participants communication. These changes show the shortcomings of the established theoretical approaches to communication and suggest that theories, long considered overly provocative, such as radical constructivism, might offer important insights into the processes of contemporary communication.

One of the leading proponents of radical constructivism Colin Grant aims at conceptualizing social communication as a complex operation in uncertainty. He argues that neither monologic transmission, nor dialogism offers an adequate account of the uncertainties of communication. Such uncertainty is a result of complex relations between speaker and speaker, speaker and world. Besides, as modern philosophy suggests and constructivists radicalize – reality is an observer-dependent category, therefore, it can be described as contingent, depending on the observer's point of view. This leads to the conclusion that communication is uncertain, messages are always unstable, their stabilization is the task of receiver. Moreover, radical constructivism conceptualizes communication as a process based on cognitive autonomy, or even some kind of solipsism, at an individual level or atomism at a social level. The uncertainties are negotiated for purposes of social interaction by means of fictions which, as

social constructions, are contingent. Thus, radical constructivism opposes considerations of permanent stability of interactions, relationships, conventions, rules, institutions, or systems. The most important point, however, is that the reference / meaning it is not stable either. All the stabilizations of communication are temporal – they are produced through recursivity and recursively constructed communicative networks.

Seems that radical constructivism is at least useful way to conceptualize present forms of communication. However, in this presentation I will argue that the tension between the cognitive autonomy of communicators and recursive stability of communicated cause major problems for constructivist theorizing. Since the meaning is essentially unverifiable, it is hard to see how arbitrary and uncertain meanings might lead to effective and adequate utterings and actions. If the stabilizations are contingent, perhaps Grant must presuppose that the message-stabilizing power should be innate, or to accept that not the reality is subject dependent, but the communicating subjects are contingent reality dependent.

PHC01 Rethinking theories of communication

PP 0753 For an apology of contingency: Rethinking disorders and epistemologies

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In thinking about disorders recalling David Hume is always a good beginning, mainly when we approach the late essays, and especially those concerning the problem of human finitude and contingency. That's what we can read in *The Stoic- or the man of action and virtue* (1742): «If nature has been frugal in her gifts and endowments, there is the more need of art to supply her defect». It is, therefore, possible to legitimate and reconcile Odo Marquard's thesis *on the defense of the accidental* with Hume's dilemma, viz., human beings are both what happens to them and what they accomplish for themselves. Invention by opposition to nature/spontaneity is the matrix that supersede *the frugal gift* Hume had in mind. Deleuze went back to Hume to overcome again the problem and once more we face harmonization of contingency and necessity by the way of *creative acts*; Deleuze states, «'homme est une espèce inventive, l'artifice est encore nature; la stabilité de la possession est une loi naturelle». In the immediacy of what is given in experience, artificiality not only compensates, filling the theoretical gaps left by the precariousness and limitations of human judgment, but it also rewards: artifice is the principle of construction and determination of human nature. What is given is taken up by a movement that exceeds what was always taken as a given; the spirit becomes human nature. On doing so, subjects invent, they create beliefs; they become synthesis-machines or synthesis of synthesis, so to say, Spirits. The described movement occurs when identity predominates over difference, when the general supersedes the singular, the concept over the concrete. Hume efforts are due to "save" the singularity of every phenomenon, viz., to present concepts as phaenomena, as invented/created objects. In fact, determining the concrete mode of any phenomenon is something necessary in present times for it is the only way mediated societies have to create the given or, to it put in a phenomenological formula, the *things themselves*. Deleuze pointed out in *Différence and Repétition*: «L'empirisme n'est nullement une réaction contre les concepts, ni un simple appel à l'expérience vécue. Il entreprend au contraire la plus folle création de concepts qu'on ait jamais vue ou entendue. L'empirisme, c'est le mysticisme du concept, et son mathématisme». It will be by reference to this conceptual grid, from Hume, Leibniz, Deleuze, Marquard, that we will seek to understand which epistemology is suitable for a historical moment where idealistic *mathématisme* lives along with the deepest and immersive empirical situation. Before a common shipwreck, a sceptical approach can be a suitable tonic to revisit by disordering the established order and we will do it by a radical *apology of contingency*.

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PHC01 Rethinking theories of communication

PP 0754 Platform and thought form – How the base/superstructure model found its way into mainstream media theory and what to make of it in times of regression

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During the heydays of poststructuralism and Weberian sociology it was rather *en vogue* to dismiss Marx's base/superstructure model as too simplistic and deterministic. It was thought to be emblematic to Marxism as such, which would not take into account superstrucutral forces and suggested that by a crude transmission process

material conditions could be one-sidedly translated into ideal forms. To the critics, the infamous formula that "being determines consciousness" was a clear expression of it. However, Marx wrote of "*social* being" and the "social" carries a lot of weight. It includes not only class and property relations which structure the social, but also consciousness, thought "materialized", all of which influence the ways in which these relations are then thought of. The base thus already involves the superstructure. Their relation is dialectical and not dualistic.

As I aim to show, this figure of Marx has lately been somewhat redeemed *via* theories of the platform. In many of the landmark studies of platform capitalism we can find some variant of the model. Maybe most strikingly so in van Dijck et al.'s *Platform Society* in which the question of the inscription of "libertarian norms and values" into the platform's very architecture (materialized in the form of competitive metrics) is assumed to influence the way people think, feel and behave on these platforms. The platform, then, has a lot in common with the base in Marxist theory. This is not because the authors "have read their Marx" (they have not), it is, I argue, because they find themselves confronted with the same problem Marx did: A universal structure is positioned between the individual and its needs. This structure's defining features, on which the individuals rely, thus influence the way in which the people come to think of the structure itself. While Marx had the market structure in mind, which in capitalism gained expansive and integrative forces and is marked by stark inequalities; the theorists of platform capitalism have the *digital* market structure in mind, which shares these features and which is, consequently, assumed to have an impact on thought forms – mostly for the worst: The platformization of society has often been theorized to undermine rational forms of deliberation, ultimately contributing to cultural and societal regression, which ultimately finds expression in tirumphs of proto-fascist politics.

While there lies a lot of truth in such analyses, its premisses and conclusions are somewhat flawed as they tend to attribute effects to the digital platform that have been well theorized parts of the original capitalist "platform", the market structure, (maybe more so by the Critical Theory than Marx himself). By not taking this structure into account critically newer analyses tend to be apologetical of it. I conclude that both, Marxist theory and media theory must be brought into constructive dialogue to theorize the current capitalist disruptions in an encompassing way. The base/superstructure model is helpful in that regard – if not conceptualized too crudely.

PHC01 Rethinking theories of communication

PP 0755 Reconciling framing and stasis theory via the therapeutic topology of (dis)order

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Despite their clear relationship, the Classical rhetorical concept of stasis (or status) and the more contemporary notion of 'framing' have rarely been considered together, a situation that is made all the more surprising considering that the latter term can be argued as originating from a rhetorical context, namely, Kenneth Burke's "acceptance frames" (1937, p. 92). In this paper I seek to examine the similarities between stasis theory and the various ways in which the trope of framing has come to be instantiated in argumentation in the social sciences, the humanities, and select therapeutic modalities. While it is Goffman's (1974) *Frame Analysis* that is usually provided as the origin point for the adoption of the concept of framing into common intellectual parlance, Goffman himself credited Gregory Bateson's formulation of "psychological frames" ([1955], 2000) as his source (Goffman, 1974, pp. 10 and 21). However, Consequently, in this paper, I will argue that it is the therapeutic-oriented work of Bateson (and its later development in Watzlawick, 1967, 1993, and Watzlawick et al, 2011) that represents the potential bridge between the current demotic understanding of framing, the introductory conceptualisation of Burke, and the Classical stasis tradition. The uncovering and exploration of the relationships between the traditions of stasis, Goffman's frame analysis, Burke's acceptance frames, and the Batesonian approach to therapeutic reframing, will allow us to re-position stasis at the heart of modern rhetorical theory and, furthermore, advance a therapeutic understanding of rhetoric that both reconnects it to its deepest past while also preparing it for its future place in an increasingly disordered (even (dis)eased) environment of public address and interpersonal communication.

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PHC02 Materialities of communication

PP 0857 Human and algorithmic decision-making in uncertainty

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Recent advances in AI technologies have led to increased dependence of societies on algorithmic decision-making. Seeing the benefits of accuracy, impartiality and reduced cost of labor, more businesses and governmental institutions rely on algorithms to make decisions on behalf of human individuals. In this light, the present study aims to address the shortcomings of algorithmic decision-making by highlighting the gap between human types of reasoning and that of machines.

Among the biggest limitations of algorithmic decision-making is its inability to handle the complexity of the world and social interactions. In clearly defined and predictable situations, its performance tends to be generally beneficial (granted that programming is done right). Rather than in algorithm itself (which simply follows a set of rules), the problem lies in the fundamental impossibility to predict all the potential outcomes of each decision at the stage of programming. Not considering seemingly unrelated factors can easily lead to unwanted long-term individual and societal consequences. In such examples of algorithmic decision-making in real-world environments, such as self-driving cars and chatbots, it has been shown that human decision-making is more flexible and efficient.

In this work, I discuss several uniquely human types of thinking, challenge the notion of human irrationality, as well as reflect on the ways in which algorithmic decision-making may be improved using the knowledge of human decision-making in situations of uncertainty. Humans consider a wide range of contextual/environmental, social, and emotional factors, when making a decision. Among the reasoning techniques humans use in everyday life are abductive reasoning, heuristics, absence-based inference, etc.

Drawing on the epistemic works of C. S. Peirce on abductive reasoning and L. Wittgenstein on certainty, I look specifically at absence-based inference and at the mechanisms of transforming it from a logical fallacy to an epistemically good way of making inferences. I theorize how absence-based inference can strengthen algorithmic decision-making. Better knowledge and implementation of uniquely human ways of reasoning in algorithmic decision-making may reduce the grave consequences of overreliance on algorithms when making socially significant decisions.

PHC02 Materialities of communication

PP 0858 Intimacy at display: Telephony, dialogue and dissemination

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Satellite broadcasting and telephony may at first seem as wide apart as one can think of in terms of communication practises. Broadcasting via satellite, indiscriminately disseminating its signal over vast territories reaching diverse audiences across the world. A telephone conversation, by contrast, establish and maintain an intimate connection between – for the most part – two persons who engage in a dialogue to share thoughts, ideas, and perhaps secrets for no-one else to hear. Yet, during a number of years in the early history of satellite communications they were intimately linked, not only technically by relying on the same infrastructure, but also rhetorically. The introduction and promises of emerging satellite communications infrastructure, the network of earth stations being built across the globe, tied broadcasting and telephony together. Besides allowing for broadcasting as well as increasing the number of intercontinental voice circuits, phone calls between dignitaries – presidents, kings, prime ministers – were often included as part of the opening ceremonies when new satellite stations were first brought into use.

In bringing broadcasting and telephony close together these opening ceremonies collapsed one of the long-standing conceptual gaps in media theory: between dissemination and dialogue, between transmission and ritual; between the postal and the erotic (Carey 1989, Peters 1999, Krämer 2015). In this paper I use the opening ceremonies and inaugurational calls to reconsider that gap, suggesting dialogue and dissemination being inseparable rather than mutually exclusive. I do so by building on Amit Pinchevski's recent proposal that the two concepts exist in a relationship of mutually assured heteronomy, and what ultimately separates dialogue and dissemination is their relation to *the other*, that they represent 'two approaches to alterity' (Pinchevski 2021, 251).

Introducing the notion of *intimacy at display* the paper adds to Pinchevski's discussion by demonstrating the co-existence of multiple relations to *the other* in the inaugurational phone calls. By revisiting three such calls, during the opening ceremonies of satellite stations in Morocco (1970), Israel (1972), and Madagascar (1970), the paper makes the argument that the disseminative dialogues of the calls, their performance of intimacy at display, allows for a communicative situation marked by the coexistence of dialogic and disseminative others.

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PHC02 Materialities of communication

PP 0859 The public value of media: A systemic and pragmatist approach

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The concept of 'public value' has been theorised since the days of Aristotle and his distinction between exchange value and use value. While the concept of value was further developed by classical economists the 'public value' concept started to receive more systematic attention in the works of institutionalist economists and, at the end of the 20th century in public administration studies, especially in the works of Mark H. Moore and his colleagues (Benington & Moore, 2011; Moore, 1995). As Benington and Moore put it, the values that public agencies should work toward should be defined by the public and should emerge in dialogues and interactions in the public sphere. The latter is often seen as constituted by PSM and other mainstream media channels. Today's public sphere involves multiple actors and different types of institutions, including independent media and international platforms. In this context, Benington and Moore suggest that thinking about public value involves analyzing the interactions, interdependencies, and cocreation between complex sets of actors. However, differently from this dialogical account, the dominant discourse in the public service media studies has been only focusing on the "strategic uses" of the public value concept (e.g., Donders, 2021; Moe & van den Bulck, 2013). In addition, classification lists of how PSM could produce public value have been provided (Cañedo et al., 2022; Chivers & Allan, 2022).

Our approach in returns to the interactionist understanding of "public value" and has been generally built on institutionalist and evolutionary economics (Commons, 1931; Dopfer & Potts, 2008; Lundvall, 2010; Mazzucato, 2018; Veblen, 1899) and cultural science (Hartley et al., 2021) approaches. According to these, value perceptions are not universal but are culturally contextual and specific. They change through dialogic communications between different cultural or knowledge communities; hence, both the economy and culture evolve via exchanges between such communities. As such, "public value" differs from "public good" as it is not static but an emergent property—always context-specific and changing, emerging in interactions and public dialogues.

While the above-described ideas have been proposed by the authors in parts before, the specific new contribution of this paper is linking the approach to the tradition of pragmatist philosophy. While it is already well established that the ideas of CS Peirce influenced Veblen in developing his versions of both institutional and evolutionary economics we'd like to also highlight the potentials of the works of William James (and to a lesser extent James Dewey) in defining and understanding the concept of public value in the era of datafying media industries. In the presentation, we aim to highlight the usefulness of pragmatism as a method of sorting out 'what works'. We suggest that open-ended dialogism of Moore and Benington and of the cultural science approach needs to be trimmed by an analytical method of sorting out what of the values can be claimed to work in the public interest. Under further focus will be James' pluralism and its uses in conceptualising and analysing datafied relationships of value creation.

PHC02 Materialities of communication

PP 0860 Monitoring the Baltic Sea: on submarines, mediation, and veracity

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This paper originates from an ongoing research project: "A Sea of Data: Mediated Temporalities of the Baltic Sea" (Lundgren & Ericson). The overall aim of this project is to analyze technologies of mediation and data collection of the sea, in relation to past and present practices of monitoring, transportation, and environmental formation. Philosophically, the project is associated with notions of "elemental media", and mediation as a "traffic between nature and culture", developed by, among others, John Durham Peters (2015a, b).

This paper presents a sub-study of the use of *monitoring* media, during the so-called submarine crisis: the series of alleged intrusions in Swedish territorial waters, emerging in the early 1980s, continuing through the next decades, and generally regarded as the most serious national crisis in Swedish modern history. While these events has produced three parlamentary commissions, controversies about "what actually happened" under the surface of the sea has continued to this day. The paper does not aim to settle the issue, rather to illuminate the persisting uncertainties in finding it out, and how these are related to processes of mediation. The submarine crisis is thus

regarded as a tricky instance of the "veracity gap" (Peters 2001): How do we make events believable, for people who were not present, in space or time (or both)?

The paper will focus on two forms of monitoring media (both emerging during the cold war, and residing at the centre of attention during the submarine crisis): *sonar* and *television*. While television coverage dominated public imagination, and set the agenda for political debate and initiative, sonar – "a new technical-natural object: the under-water ear" (Shiga 2013) – gathered evidence from environments inaccessible to the human sensorium. Both, however, presented severe epistemological challenges: The preferred formats of television – the witnessing of history through live broadcasting, and/or the televised narration of the past through the crisis chronicle (cf Doane 1990) – were increasingly criticized as "tricks of illusion" (Mossberg 2016), producing collective "hysteria", rather than historical representation. Further, the evidential status of sonar was increasingly exposed as unreliable in depicting the outer world: sound recordings initially classified as the registration of "confirmed" submarines, with "fingerprints" of national origin, turned out to be produced by minks, herrings, propellers from boats on the sea surface. In other words, sonar turned out to be a thoruoughly *saturated* medium (Jue & Ruiz, eds 2022), resisting the strict demarcation of element, man, machine, animal, signal**.** As an *echo* technology (Pinchevski 2022), sonar remained stuck in the "traffic between nature and culture", a closed system of relationality (cf. the "echo chamber"), a sound existing only in the absence of its orignal source.

The paper will illustrate how such epistemological dilemmas were activated, and interrelated, during the submarine crisis. It will further discuss how they may be understood in terms of a general media philosophy, specifically that of Sybille Krämer (2016), in which a medium is posited "in-between" two worlds, both linking and separating them, by "transporting perception" and "reading traces".

PHC02 Materialities of communication

PP 0861 Materialities of aesthetic communication

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If the materialities of communication are, in the words of Friedrich Kittler, perhaps the greatest modern enigma [1], then investigating the materialities of aesthetic communication presents itself as an unequivocally relevant proposal for ECREA, which leads the interdisciplinary communication research in Europe.

This proposal is based on what we consider to be the fundamental event of our time, namely the almost unlimited expansion of technology to all domains of life and experience. The space between nature and the human domain has become increasingly filled with technical advances and technologies that constantly reshapes its discourse. This is then a place in constant transformation, mobile, increasingly moving humans further away from a natural situation. Today, almost all knowledge we have about nature can only be understood from a technical point of view that encodes and decodes natural propositions.

Going beyond language and logos itself, the technical object experienced a radical evolution: from mechanical object to communicative materiality, from instrument to machine and finally to the device as a general system. In this sense, it can be said that the critique of reason has today become the critique of the media [2].

But there is a totalising impulse within digital technology itself: not limited to the infinite recycling of what is reproduced, it also encompasses a broad social interdependence. In the second industrial revolution both the producer and an entire social context are produced.

The proposal focuses on the aesthetic dimension, which, together with the ethical and aletic dimension, constitute the three main pillars of experience. The artistic object shares with its technical counterpart the fact of being an integrated unit of meaning – one that does not simply concern its direct perception, but involves the entire world of experience, playing freely with the boundaries and rules that delimit it.

If something defines our time, it is precisely the impossibility of defining it. The apparent failure of modernity is expressed in the inability of major conceptual categories to currently grasp the historically constituted experience. This situation also extends to the aesthetic dimension, with the ruin of all criteria that guided artistic creation in the past, and from which a single principle seems to emerge: es geht alles.

Under the imperative of the new and the ideology of freedom, the current technological revolution tends towards total paralysis, channeling any free thought and action into its self-designed structures. The difficulty in assuming an artistic-political position is mainly due to the invisibility of the structures, which permeate everything. However, its contradictory material substrates are discernible: the increasing automation of all areas also encompasses those of production. If the technological paradigms that artists have disseminated over the last decades have only taken them deeper into the structures of power, it is essential to think not only about the quality of artistic products, but also about the quality of the production modalities themselves.

[1] Kittler, F. (2014) The Truth of the Technological World. Stanford University Press

[2] Siegert, B. (2015). Cultural Techniques. Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real . Fordham University Press.

PHC03 Living in the age of immersive media

PP 0956 Political and social potentialities of tele-immersive media: An interrelated critique of the concepts of presence, distance, virtual and travel

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This paper explores the process of redefinition of presence within the discourses of the metaverse and VR, particularly by Big Tech or Platform Capitalism companies marketing of virtual travel media. It examines the use of digital means to subvert scale and transcend the dimensions at which human contact, social and political action and events typically occur. This raises the question: what exactly is being mediated and which aspects of place are being re-mediated? When information reception becomes a surrogate for movement, homes paradoxically become total institutions. Along a widespread belief that a media culture of distance and passive reception has ended, the promises and perils of the virtual are linked to the hopes of redefining and continuing community, both local and global, and (dis)ordering the social.

The paper discusses theories of simulacrum and spectacle, commonly associated with notions of authenticity in experience. It argues that virtuality, as a question of distance, relates not entirely to an internalization of experience and pure imagination but also to the virtualization of experience — even as affect and body — following the mourning of the metaphysics of presence and the sacrifice of the political.

Derrida's critique of presence, distance, and virtuality stands out here. His concept of "hauntology," opposing ontology and starting from the idea of "specter", helps us analyse the collapse of oppositions between presence and absence while opening the question of automatism as hauntomation. This aligns with media theorists who argue that VR renders the issues of presence and absence irrelevant, leading to significant epistemological consequences.

The paper identifies two parallel trends in the process of virtualizing places and spaces. First, the Cartesian territory, abstracted and perpetuated by modern science, GPS mythologies, and space travel, expands and declines materially in teletechnological epistemes, economies, and politics. This expansion is seen through the control of territories via what is termed operational images (Farocki, Parikka, Elsaesser), which offers insights into global conflicts, ecological struggles, and general material, political, economic and social divides. Secondly, there is a critique of virtuality as dissolving collectives and communities. This trend is marked by the atomization of subjects in stationary positions, intersected by the fragmentation of the world through increasing mediatization. It raises concerns about corporate platforms commodifying attention and discouraging encounters.

Lastly, the paper introduces the concept of operational materialism. This concept emphasizes a post-epistemic attitude, a media arts and critical practice that transcends representational paradigms and delves into the material and relational realms, even within highly abstract and informational systems like capital. There is a process underway, as seen in Stiegler, for the possibility of repoliticizing the operational image. Operational materialism occurs when, beyond representing a distant place and time, one can have an effect on them. It implies a reciprocity not of representation or cognition, but of a material nature. It invites a reconsideration of bodily experience and mental representation in the context of VR and tele-immersion, proposing a new perspective on community in a post-human and political sense, and art case studies. Media art case studies are examined.

PHC03 Living in the age of immersive media

PP 0957 Communication platforms and the philosophy of Ayn Rand: Examining its influence in the transition from Twitter to X

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Many tech entrepreneurs from Silicon Valley and other areas, including Elon Musk, are reportedly influenced by Ayn Rand's philosophy and ethics. Ayn Rand's "objectivism" places individualism and rational self-interest at the core of her philosophy. Rand, and by extension, Musk and other tech entrepreneurs, believe that only an unregulated market economy can foster optimal human creativity and economic prowess. Rand vehemently opposes state intervention in the economy and welfare initiatives, viewing them as infringements on individual freedoms and hindrances to personal and economic growth.

This submission posits that Musk is applying the libertarian stance of Rand's philosophy and ethics in his management of Twitter/X. Elon Musk has dismissed employees responsible for screening and moderating the platform's content. Over a thousand employees were let go at X for moderation. In communication science, particularly in media economics, there is a significant emphasis on business models and strategies to rationalize decisions like these.

However, the role of libertarian ethics in our contemporary communication structures and digital media society has been largely overlooked. Scientific classics on the relationship between ethics and entrepreneurship still need to be remembered.

Max Weber, in his seminal work "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism," argued that Protestantism, especially Calvinism, played a pivotal role in the development of modern capitalism. He suggested that the Protestant ethic, focusing on hard work, discipline, and a rational lifestyle, is aligned with the capitalist spirit. This way, Protestantism fostered a culture conducive to capitalism's rise and spread. Similarly, it can be argued nowadays that Rand's objectivism plays a crucial role in the structuration of modern digital capitalism. Her philosophy and ethics proliferate global tech platforms, emphasizing self-interest, autonomy, and opposition to state regulation.

On Twitter, the implementation of Objectivism's libertarian ideals is influencing social interaction: the discourse on Twitter has become significantly more aggressive; dubious, offensive posts, and even fake news and propaganda, are now widespread. This has led to a marked decline in the platform's credibility and respectability. It is high time that the philosophy of communication takes a closer look at this context.

PHC03 Living in the age of immersive media

PP 0958 AI-generated photo-based images: Their ontological status and interpretation

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In a recent Science paper, Epstein, Hertzmann, et al. argue that generative AI doesn't herald the demise of art but introduces a new medium with unique possibilities (Epstein, Hertzmann, et al., 2023, p. 1110). They draw parallels with historical technological shifts, such as photography's perceived threat to painting, emphasizing that new tools don't replace but transform artistic practices. Epstein, Hertzmann, et al. advocate viewing generative AI as a tool for artists to reshape current practices rather than a threat. They highlight the term "artificial intelligence" as potentially misleading, suggesting that it may imply human-like intentions or consciousness. Dispelling these misconceptions is crucial for fostering acceptance of generative AI as a creative tool.

The ontological debate surrounding AI-generated artworks centers on authorship. Some argue for AI programs as potential authors, while skeptics insist on human involvement due to the absence of consciousness in generative AI. Others emphasize the role of social agency in traditional art creation. I argue that the ontological status of AI-generated photo-based images is better understood through contextual interpretation than ties to consciousness or social agency. Relying on theories of pictorial and photographic illocutionary acts, I suggest that the interpretation process involves recognizing literal pictorial content at the locutionary act level and considering contextual information at the illocutionary act level.

I argue that in the case of generative AI-produced images, audiences identify literal content and contextual cues. They acknowledge the generative AI's role, perceiving the image as a manipulated rendering, not an indexical photograph. However, I question whether this leads to a new genre or simply introduces novel ways of creating composite images. On authorship, the interpretation attributes it to the human user of the generative AI, likening the programmer's role to that of camera or darkroom equipment constructors. Generative AI is viewed as a complex tool for rearranging images, not an author. I also argue that the distinction between traditional and AI-generated images parallels handmade and mass-produced items. In the instance of traditional production, the object's creator retains complete control over all the encompassing processes, whereas the designer of a mass-produced item only creates the distinctive facets of the product, without direct involvement in each stage of production.

Based on the interpretation process described at the illocutionary act level, it can be concluded that audiences come to have true beliefs about the nature of photo-based images produced using generative AI, as long as the image's nature is readable form it or deducible from the context. Audiences are not deceived in such cases. However, if the image's nature is neither deducible from the context nor readable from the image itself, they might be deceived into interpreting it as an indexical photograph of a scene captured by a camera. During my talk, I will present examples of both deceptive and non-deceptive photo-based images produced using generative AI.

References are not included due to word count constraints.

PHC03 Living in the age of immersive media

PP 0959 The indefinite wait: A theoretical approach of time-critical media (the case for throbber)

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In almost every type of experience mediated by digital interfaces – loading images and pages from the World Wide Web, updating social media feeds, streaming videos and multimedia content – we can find an animated icon, usually a spinning wheel, that appears in a perpetual circular movement on itself, which is commonly referred to as

the *throbber* and, for users, means a time of waiting or a form of temporal indetermination. Unlike a progress bar, the state of progress is unknown. In other words, it is unknown when what we are waiting for will eventually arrive. In this sense, and thinking from Bergson's (1889) concept of "la durée", the throbber configures a type of temporality that resists to measurement, a type of intensive magnitude, not extensive, that resists to the reduction of time to a homogeneous medium. From the point of view of the mediated communication operationalization, in terms of this temporality, the throbber corresponds to a *surface effect* (Kittler, 1999), that is, to a way of ensuring *entertainment* – the production of a humanly symbolized reality – given the abstraction of the formal computing processes in the *depth*. The throbber seeks to hide the temporal discontinuities of the system. Faced with an interruption or delay, users should not abandon the process: their attention is hypnotically held and a singular feeling of indefinite anticipation comes to define the experience.

In a culture of speed (Virilio, 1997) in which the instantaneity is proclaimed, and the digital network is announced as a *real-time system*, the suspended temporality of the throbber emphasizes that the notion of *real-time* "refers to the time of computer processing, not to the user's time. Real-time is never real time – it is deferred and mediated" (Chun, 2011). The *real-time* system is, therefore, more of a cultural promise – or fantasy – than a technical reality. Despite the so-called quantitative discretization of machinic time, the image of a universally distributed speed is still permeated by all types of disruptions and latencies that expose the intensive nature of the mediated processes. This is caused by both the media processing conditions and the different geographic and socioeconomic conditions of users.

From this framework, we propose to present two hypotheses: the throbber is not just a simple time-based *media* object, but, insofar as it reveals a "genuine event-like nature of media", is a form of time-critical *media* in which "minimal time processes represent a critical and thus decisive criterion of medial operativity itself." (Ernst, 2016) Regarding epistemological implications, instead of a linear, chronological and teleological conception of communication (or interaction), according to which the result can be predicted before a calculable action, we point to a materialist approach, according to which communication unfolds contingent and dynamic dysfunctions that, as a form of *epoché*, challenge the logic of means and ends, as well as the human-based phenomenology of continuous stream. The analysis of the throbber's specific temporal ontology can contribute to a critical diagnosis of the theoretical-epistemic conditions of access to information in mediated environments.

PHC03 Living in the age of immersive media

PP 0960 "Your 'Order' is built on Sand!" – On the benefits of disorder and questioning the status quo

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As social disorder is connected to the notion of chaos and destabilization it might be viewed as something inherently negative. On the contrary, social order seems to be something that has to be achieved and ultimately maintained as it stands for stability and predictability. Although that might be a desirable outcome, it also includes the stability of the society's power relations, rendering overcoming these relations as a threat. This contribution is therefore arguing for a change of perspectives.

According the thoughts of Rosa Luxemburg, social order stands not only for the stability of power relations but also for the oppression of those who are arguing for social change. In her famous last article, Luxemburg wrote "'Order prevails in Berlin!' You foolish lackeys! Your 'order' is built on sand" (1919). These words were written in a moment of total defeat and only hours before her murder and yet, they convey the hope for another society beyond the prevailing order. So, instead of framing communication that is questioning the social order ultimately as a threat, I propose to rather discuss its potentials to shake up the fundaments of power the social order is based on.

As a key example, I would like to refer to the current understanding of alternative media in the field of communication studies. Following the influential definition of Haller & Holt (2019), many empirical studies from recent years focused on the perils of emerging alternative media towards political discourse, mainstream media and democratic societies themselves. Using alternative media as an "umbrella definition" (Holt et al., 2019) that is supposed to be non-ideological bears the risk of mix up alternative media that have diametral opposing stances on social conflicts. Thus, the potential to criticize mainstream media as well as the broader society might be limited as the term comes out tainted by the association with right-wing ideologies. In that sense, a certain academic definition cannot only yield problems in terms of accurately defining objects of research but also in reaffirming the status quo of social order.

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PHC04 Communication and (social) environments

PP 1052 Dysfunctional Communication and well-being

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It seems that current democracies live under a paradox: digital communication has penetrated broad sectors of society, and on the other hand, communicative disorders seem to be increasingly more and more far-reaching. Digital communication has created difficulties that harm the quality of life of citizens, with unhealthy communication practices. Inappropriate consumption of digital media carries risks such as misinformation, infoxication, addictions and mental health, which worry society. The last decade has marked a turning point in people's well-being. The pandemic and post-pandemic have contributed to many citizens living with insecurity, uncertainty, exhaustion and anxiety.

The omnipresence of multimedia devices in daily life has brought with it a series of information disorders such as fake news, populist and "techno-populist" discourses, ideological polarization, selective exposure to information, information bubbles and echo chambers, and infoxication. Although these phenomena are not new, they have intensified due to the diffusion and reach of digital media among the population, especially adolescents.

Information disorders have led to the emergence of unhealthy communication and information use practices. There is growing concern about addictions and mental illnesses derived from the use of social networks (RRSS) and mobile devices, especially among adolescents and young people. Social media and video game companies use intricate algorithms to capture users' attention and make them spend as much time as possible in front of screens. This brings them economic benefits, but at the expense of the health and well-being of the users. Various studies show that Internet addiction causes loneliness, phubbing, anguish, psychological deterioration, sleep disturbances and poor academic performance. All of this shows a clear absence of well-being and health.

Some authors argue that the problem is not so much the existence of fake news, disinformation or infoxication, but rather the critical skills that the individual has to confront this model of society. But, on the other hand, information disorders and unhealthy communication practices have a cognitive origin to which communication science must pay special attention. Cognitive social psychology emphasizes the tendency to reason in a biased way, so that we tend to consume information that is similar to us, avoiding questioning our beliefs. Our cognitive structure is such that motivated reasoning predominates, that which is at the service of the initial judgments that we formulate based on emotions. We tend to ignore the truth of an opinion, and even adopt the opposite, if that opinion threatens our intuitions, emotions, and most fundamental ways of understanding the world.

In this work we present a possible philosophical conceptualization of the aforementioned paradox, considering the assumptions of cognitive psychology, and analyzing to what extent critical thinking can help us recover non-dysfunctional communication. The idea is that communication and well-being are two related concepts.

PHC04 Communication and (social) environments

PP 1053 The Metaverse vs. Hannah Arendt: A critical reminder of our embodiment and need for disorder

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You don't need to look long to find characteristics of the metaverse as something that "could fundamentally change how humans live", that the metaverse will be "like real life, only bigger and better", and that "the metaverse will arrive". According to a Pew Research poll, 54 % of "624 technology innovators, developers, business and policy leaders" believe that the metaverse by 2040 will be "truly fully-immersive" (Pew Research Centre, 2022). Although the percentage indicates a divide, it is safe to say that a central element in widespread imaginaries on the metaverse concentrate on how it will revolutionize not only internet, but people's daily life. Behind this promise lays technological problems of how to standardise and order the internet.

But can a virtual word ever be fully-immersive, and do internet users want order? In this paper, I use Hannah Arendt's distinction between the three kinds of human activity – labor, work, and action – to critically dissect imaginaries of the metaverse. The paper is based on theoretical discussion of Arendt's thinking and an analysis of marketing material and popular writing on the metaverse, but the idea stems from empirical, ethnographic research on teenager's social use of smartphones and computers, which will be used to illustrate and illuminate the points of discussion.

Arendt uses the opening lines of *The Human Condition* to reflect on how modern science, in its manifestations as space engineering and the life sciences, builds on an imaginary where mankind can exchange "...human existence

as it has been given […] for something he has made himself" (Arendt, 1958, 2–3). Writing these lines in 1957, the alluring future was spaceships and artificial life. Today, it is a safe bet that Arendt would have seen AI, AR, VR and the Metaverse as clearer examples of how science is imagined as promising us a world where we can "escape the human condition" (Arendt, 1958, 2).

At the same time, Arendt's division of three distinct spheres of life proves useful in criticizing the promises of this imaginary, most visible in popular discourse around the metaverse, through reminding us of our embodiment. Starting with the sphere of labour, I discuss how the metaverse cannot be fully immersive because human beings can never be born, die, or feed in the metaverse. Furthermore, using the categories of work and action, I argue that the allure and attraction of a virtual world – be it the metaverse or contemporary use of all kinds of social media – lies in how it allows us to be *disconnected* from our bodies. We can always turn off the computer. Virtual worlds should thus be seen as a parallel world where we can engage with others not through one unique, constant avatar, but through the opportunities to enact many different identities, offered by disembodiment. The metaverse might thus be 'overrated' regarding its attractiveness and its radicalness. The imaginaries of the metaverse are based on corporate and capitalistic order – while truly human use of the Internet is based on disorder.

PHC04 Communication and (social) environments

PP 1054 Environmental sensitivity as the philosophical foundation for a resilient communication theory and practice

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Crisis and disruption can induce feelings of self-loss, instability and fragmentation, but they can also be a catalyzer for connecting to the core of who you are and what is really essential. As Hegel says, living from crisis to crisis, feeling an ongoing urgency to 'respond', is not the result of disruptions outside but a lack of resilience within. It is in this search for resilience that I put forward the question: is it possible to find a comprehensive and foundational philosophy of communication?

For good reasons, many philosophers consider communication – or at least some forms of communication – to be a defining characteristic of what is means to be human. However, these approaches place communication in the context of specific questions – What is the nature of consciousness? Why do we have language? How can political power be reconciled with freedom? – rather than placing communication in the center of the question itself. The concept of communication has great explanatory power, but the question remains: what is communication? I argue that to answer this question, we have to look at communication as a professional reflective practice.

It is not easy to find an approach to professional communication that lends itself to something ontological, or perhaps even metaphysical. There is a lot of knowledge and skills involved in professional communication, but there is not one core activity; in that sense, it is not a craft. Communication theory tends to be an aggregate of different outlooks and borrowed methodologies, anchored in other disciplines, like psychology, sociology and anthropology. Also, the development of professional communication is mainly driven by external societal and technological developments like (mass) mediatization, market globalization and political emancipation, rather than a search for the true nature of communication.

However, there is one competency often attributed to the communication professional that lends itself for deep philosophical analysis: sensitivity to the environment – be it organizations, society or other stakeholders. Environmental sensitivity is a fundamental competency, but it is not knowledge or skill. It is not an instrument but rather something that the communication professional has to be – as a mode of existence. And what is more, environmental sensitivity plays a key role in metaphysics since the late 18th Century, especially in continental philosophy. Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty all stress, in distinct ways, the importance of 'transcendental openness' to what is present to us but appears to come from outside of us – whether you call it Ding-an-sich, Epoche, or simply Otherness.

In this paper, I use this philosophical tradition to make explicit how professional communication not only instrumentalizes communication in terms of knowledge and skills, but also appeals to this fundamental mode of existence. I argue that this does justice to communication as a reflective practice and provides a philosophical grounding for communication theory that appeals to a metaphysical understanding of what communication in itself is: openness as an existential mode. In that sense, environmental sensitivity is what makes professional communication a resilient reflective practice.

PHC04 Communication and (social) environments

PP 1055 Shaping self-regulation with social norm affordances; New ways of thinking about platform moderation

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Democratic societies are dealing with increasing polarization, misinformation, radicalization and hatespeech; challenges that are not new but differently experienced with new media communication tools. To deal with current social disorders, platforms and governments are expected to intervene. Their solutions are however challenged by the cross-border character of the digital space, where national regulations can cause internet fragmentation, and uniform platform interventions can enforce top-down constraints that may not be sensitive to cultural differences.

How 'radical' members of society can be, when to treat a hypothesis as disinformation, and what constitutes 'hatespeech' are examples of questions that can differ across the digital landscape. While Habermasians might argue deliberative democracies assume a certain rationality that provides answers to these questions, in practice 'truth' and 'morality' run into the demarcation problem as described by Popper. They are to a certain degree socially constructed through consensus, or as Mouffe and Laclau would argue a 'conflictual consensus' that is subject to change.

While there is no immediate solution to avoid the fragmentation of the web through regulation on one hand, and curb the authoritarian power platforms have over user behavior on the other hand, there is an opportunity to improve the possibilities users have to self-regulate and increase culture-sensitivity in content moderation. Helberger, Pierson & Poell (2018) have also called for such a cooperative responsibility of users, platforms and public institutions in governing platforms. One of the ways humans have always self-regulated in the offline world is through social norms. Social norms are the non-institutionalized rules governing societies. They are expectations raised on members of collectives that share a certain identity. Norms are always in flux, subject to a similar conflictual consensus, and (temporarily) set the demarcations on what is acceptable behavior.

The possibilities for users to self-regulate online are dependent on the architectures of platforms and what it affords users to do. These so called 'affordances' shape how users can establish, enforce, challenge or transform social norms online. We theorize that the relevant affordances for users to participate in normative processes are those that provide the ability to interact and intervene, giving users interactability and interventionability. Other relevant affordances determine the visibility of interactions in time and space; how long they are visible, and to whom they are visible in the digital publics Lastly are the ways in which platforms shape group membership, as norms are only respected insofar one feels a shared social identity with those enforcing them.

In conclusion, in order to allow users to take up their shared responsibility in platform moderation and create boundaries on acceptable behavior, we need better thinking about how platform architectures are shaping normative processes between users.

Helberger, N., Pierson, J., & Poell, T. (2018). Governing online platforms: From contested to cooperative responsibility. *The Information Society, 34*(1), 1–14.

PHC04 Communication and (social) environments

PP 1056 Dialogue in an Age of (Dis)order

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In philosophy of communication a distinction is sometimes made between the social world as the sphere of structured collective action and the interhuman or interpersonal sphere of personal encounter. This distinction goes back to an essay by Martin Buber, Elements of the Interhuman (1965), where a hard contrast is made between those interactions that follow and cement social structures on the one hand, and interactions that have to do with the mutual over-againstness of existential recognition, a sphere of experience for which Buber reserves the term "dialogue". Any kind of social organisation (family, workplace, public sphere, cultural interactions, etc.) in and of itself has nothing to do with the unique moment in which two people acknowledge each other's irreducible, free existence and the communicative appeals that are part of this situation. Buber also speculates that this type of relationship is not limited to humans but has transhumanist correlates in nature and faith, and even in the sphere of ideas and of art.

Can a renewed reflection on the specific nature of dialogic communication as distinct from social order and disorder provide orientations to theorise the role of communication in navigating today's changing and challenging societal orders? In this article the uniqueness of Buber's insights into the nature of dialogue as both togetherness and separateness are brought to bear on contemporary philosophy and theory of communication against the background of this question. The relative absence or misunderstanding of Buber's thought in contemporary

communication studies is explored and placed against the background of, on the one hand, influential trends in media and communication theory and, on the other, the elusiveness of Buber's insight itself. Finally, the potential of his philosophy of communication for some of the main themes of contemporary communication scholarship are explored. What is the heuristic value of demarcating the interhuman from the social for this year's ECC theme, communication and social (dis)order?

POL01 (Micro)targeting in political advertising

PP 0021 Citizens' perception of effectiveness of microtargeted political advertisements: A 25-country cross-national vignette study

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Modern political campaigns have widely adopted political microtargeting (PMT) – collecting and analyzing personal data to create customized political messages aimed at specific audiences – as part of campaigning strategy (Kreiss, 2016, Anstead, 2016; Dobber et al., 2017). As PMT uses citizens' data to sell targeted political ideas and candidates it has raised normative concerns regarding, for instance, voter manipulation (Zuiderveen Borgesius et al., 2018). This concern seems to be heightened among citizens and concerns are assumed to be in line with the Third Person Hypothesis (Davison, 1983). People often overestimate the influence of media (in this case PMT) on the attitudes and behaviors of others. Nevertheless, whether citizens perceive PMT to be effective in influencing them *or* their peer citizens is empirically unanswered. Drawing on data from a vignette study across 25 countries, this study aims to explore how citizens' perceptions of the effectiveness of PMT vary across different countries.

The Third Person Effect (TPE) occurs especially when the type of media influence is perceived to be negative (Perloff, 1999). While literature suggests that individual citizens might perceive PMT as both personally beneficial and harmful (Herder and Dirks, 2022), PMT as a practice is often seen as morally wrong and will have a detrimental impact on democracy, often referring to the Cambridge Analytica scandal (Bodo, et al., 2017). Hence, in the public debate, PMT is seen as possibly undermining citizens' trust in democratic processes (Bennet, 2016). Hence, due to the negative connotations of PMT as a media format, this paper posits that the personalization of political advertisements leads to greater third-person effects, that is, the perception that PMT influences others more than oneself (*H1*).

Furthermore, TPE literature suggests that the TPE can be moderated by perceived risks associated with the media format (Ham and Nelson, 2016; Nelson, et al., 2021). Specific to PMT, Matthes, et al. (2023) found that citizens who perceive PMT taking place were more worried of its effect on others and democratic processes. Hence, this study predicts that greater concern about privacy will increase the TPE-driven perception that PMT influences others more than oneself (*H2*).

However, countries might vary in the extent to which PMT is perceived as a negative practice. As the TPE is spurred by public perception of the given media format being undesirable to be influenced by, it might be that third-person effects are moderated by the amount of public debate there is in the country on the negative effects of PMT. Hence, this paper aims to compare the variation in third-person effects among countries, expecting that the more public debate there is in the country on the effects of PMT, the greater the perceived effect of PMT on third person rather than oneself (*H3*).

Drawing on cross-country data from an extensive study that presents respondents from 25 countries across the world with different scenario's of PMT, this study aims to elude how individual perceptions of the effectiveness of PMT might be common worldwide and their contingency upon country-level characteristics.

POL01 (Micro)targeting in political advertising

PP 0022 Political microtargeting: Sweet as sugar? Assessing the effects of being (mis)targeted on topic attitude, topic importance, and ad liking

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The way politicians communicate to citizens has fundamentally changed. With the rapid growth of data-driven techniques, political messages are increasingly matched to individual voters (political microtargeting), in particular online. Matching takes place using large databases containing personal information that voters — knowingly and mostly unwittingly — leave online, such as individual characteristics, preferences, and behaviors (Acquisti, Brandimarte, & Loewenstein, 2015). The personal information that is collected is subsequently used to show people individually targeted messages, mostly on social media. When successfully and repeatedly targeted, it is expected that these messages have robust and long-term effects on citizens. Evidence finds that targeting ads indeed increases the likelihood to vote for a certain party or candidate and can strengthen party ties (e.g., Krotzek, 2019; Lavigne, 2020; Zarouali, Dobber, De Pauw, & de Vreese, 2020). We, however, still know little about how political microtargeting exactly works and which processes are behind potentially influencing voters. Therefore, the aim of this study is to understand how targeted messages affect citizens' attitudes towards the ad and viewpoints on a particular issue.

Method

To do this, we conducted an online survey experiment in the Netherlands (N = 1,245) in which we embedded the experimental treatment in a mock Instagram feed. We utilized the information gathered pre-treatment to tailor the political ads based on respondents' party preference and topic stance on the sugar tax. We thus varied both party preference and topic stance alignment in our experiment to operationalize (mis)targeting on party and topic.

Results

Our (preliminary) results indicate that respondents that see an ad that matches their topic stance, are more likely to change their initial position compared to respondents that see and ad that did not match their topic stance. Additionally, we find that respondents with a moderate topic stance on the sugar tax, become more extreme after being exposed to an ad that matched their topic stance. Overall, the effect on party congruence is limited when it comes to topic attitude. Secondly, we did not find a significant effect on party or topic stance congruency when it comes to the importance respondents give to the sugar tax (topic importance). Finally, we found a strong targeting effect for party congruence and topic stance congruence on ad liking. Meaning that respondents who see an ad by their preferred party or an ad in line with their topic stance, tend to like that ad more. Important here is that we did not find a reinforcing effect between being matched on both party and topic.

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POL01 (Micro)targeting in political advertising

PP 0023 From informed to overwhelmed: The Dual Dynamics of political microtargeting exposure on political interest and engagement

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In the current digital era, **political microtargeting** (PMT) has emerged as a pivotal and widely adopted strategy in political campaigns, significantly shaping voter engagement and political discourse. Despite its prevalence, there remains a notable gap in our understanding of the longitudinal impacts of PMT exposure on voters, as most existing studies focus on short-term experimental setups rather than observing effects over time. Moreover, the majority of studies have focused on between-person effects, thereby overlooking the potential for media effects to manifest at the within-person level. Therefore, this research aims to unravel the influence of exposure to PMT on political interest and political engagement over a six-month period leading up to a political election (the 2024 elections in Belgium), taking into account the multifaceted effects at both the between-person and within-person levels.

We expect *varying findings* depending on whether we examine the effects at the between-person or within-person level. At the **between-person level**, our hypothesis is that individuals who are exposed to higher frequencies of PMT are likely to exhibit higher levels of political interest and political engagement, as this frequent exposure keeps them well-informed about political issues and integrates political events more prominently into their daily lives and activities. In contrast, at the **within-person level**, we expect findings in the different direction. On this level, we examine how sudden variations in PMT exposure (e.g., a peak during an election) influence an individual relative to their typical level of exposure. In this situation, a sudden increase of exposure to PMT (relative to what a person is used to or comfortable with) could lead to a decrease in both political interest and engagement. This expected decline is attributed to the overwhelming nature of a sudden influx of political content. Altogether, this research highlights the critical need to consider both between-person and within-person effects of PMT, providing valuable theoretical insights.

In terms of **methodology**, this study adopts a longitudinal design, encompassing three waves of data collection over a six-month period leading up to the Federal elections in Belgium in June 2024. The research started with 1508 participants in the first wave (W1), which took place in December 2023. We are currently progressing through the second wave (W2) starting in February-March, and will conclude with the third wave (W3) in May-June. The aim is to maintain a final sample size of about 600 participants by W3, taking into consideration a calculated dropout rate. The participants consist of a representative sample of the Belgian population (ages 18 to 79). Ethical approval is secured for the project. Participants provided informed consent at the beginning of the longitudinal study. The project is pre-registered, and can be consulted in more detail on OSF: https://osf.io/3bwtv/?view_only=b0281bb6ee314da2924f6fcc2975c695

The **analytical approach** consists of using a Random-Intercept Cross-Lagged Panel Model, which allows us to examine both the between-person and within-person effects. These analyses are planned in June, followed by writing the full paper over the summer months. We anticipate that the full paper will be ready for presentation at the ECREA conference.

POL01 (Micro)targeting in political advertising

PP 0024 Boosting political advertising literacy? An ad training intervention to detect and evaluate political microtargeting during the 2023 Dutch parliamentary elections

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The way politicians communicate with citizens has fundamentally changed through the rapid growth of data-driven techniques. Political messages are increasingly matched to individual voters, made possible by large databases containing personal information that voters leave online, such as individual characteristics, preferences, and behaviors. This phenomenon is known as political microtargeting, which can be seen as a form of *political* behavioral advertising where citizens receive targeted messages and advertisements to influence their *political* attitudes and behavior (Zuiderveen Borgesius et al., 2018). When successfully and repeatedly targeted, it is expected that these messages have robust and long-term effects on citizens and most notably on their electoral preferences. Potential benefits of political microtargeting include increased political participation and political knowledge and more informed voting choices among citizens. Moreoever, targeted online messages have the potential to inform, interest and mobilise citizens who are difficult to reach with traditional media (Zuiderveen Borgesius et al., 2018). However, others worry microtargeting might invade citizens' privacy, and may lead to voter manipulation and a biased view of politics. Not everyone has access to the same political information, which could possibly amplify information asymmetries among citizens. In this sense, political microtargeting could harm the democratic process of deliberation (Bayer, 2020).

Citizens are often unaware of being targeted and face difficulties recognising and understanding political microtargeting. However, boosting interventions provide a means to enhance citizens' understanding, conscious evaluations, and skills with regard to targeting (Kozyreva et al., 2022). A *boost* is an intervention that enlists human cognition, the environment or both in order to strengthen (digital) competencies, for example through literacy tips. This study aims to test such a boost aimed at fostering citizens' competencies with regard to microtargeting, as we set up an educational training that would help people recognize and evaluate online political advertisements. Data collection took place in the run-up to the Dutch general election in November 2023 together with polling agency I&O Research. Using a mobile Experience Sampling Method (mESM), we asked respondents to upload political advertisements they encountered online during the 2023 Dutch general election campaign. With their first upload, two-thirds of the respondents were asked to complete an 'ad training' (N = 100). This training had two components: firstly, respondents were asked if they thought the shown picture was an online political ad (recognition), and secondly, they were asked why they thought so (evaluation). This training will give us insights into *how* people evaluate political ads and what elements or associations lead to the (correct) detection of political ads. Moreover, we will use a matching design to test whether there were differences with prior mESM data from the 2021 Dutch general election. Data has been collected and will be analyzed in January 2024.

POL01 (Micro)targeting in political advertising

PP 0025 Centre of attention? An Eye-tracking experiment examining if political ads attract visual attention

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Political microtargeting (PMT) has become a commonly used approach to reach voters during political campaigns. However, scholarly consensus about the impact and effects of PMT is lacking. On the one hand, PMT has raised concerns as it allegedly poses threats to democracy (Bayer, 2020), for example, by manipulating or suppressing voters (Zuiderveen Borgesius et al., 2018). On the other hand, academic research suggests that PMT has limited effects (Kalla & Broockman, 2018; Tappin et al., 2023). The limited effects of PMT might be explained by the possibility that targeted political ads attract little attention, or that people do not expose themselves to them. For example, people with low political interest tend to skip any content that is related to politics (Bode et al., 2017). On this basis, concerns about PMT might be overestimated. To further understand if people are affected by PMT this study examines whether personal preferences drive visual attention to, and memory of, political ads.

We conducted a within-subject eye-tracking study using Tobii Pro Spectrum (*N* = 143). Participants were asked to perform a goal-directed task (i.e., read six short news articles) while different ads were depicted on the lower right corner of the screen (two non-political and four political ads). The political ads stemmed from the VVD (a prominent right-wing party in the Netherlands) and GroenLinks-PvdA (a prominent left-wing party in the Netherlands). The

ads either showed the party leader of the political parties or a political topic (i.e., climate or security). We expect that the extent to which a political ad matches its receiver's political preferences (i.e., voting intention for the depicted party and party leader) positively affects a) visual attention to the ad, and b) ad memory (i.e., ad recall) *(H1)*. Moreover, we expect that the degree of topic importance of the topic depicted in a political ad increases a) visual attention to the ad, and b) ad memory (i.e., ad recall) *(H2)*.

We ran preliminary linear regression analyses for the measures of fixation time on the four different political ads, with party preference (measured as voting intention) for VVD and GroenLinks-PvdA and topic importance as factors. In addition, we ran preliminary logistic regression analyses for recall of the ads for the two parties, with party preference for VVD and GroenLinks-PvdA and topic importance as factors. Preliminary results show that party preferences can predict visual attention for all political ads, regardless of the depicted political party. More specifically, the fixation time of participants who indicated voting for GroenLinks-PvdA was significantly higher for all the political ads compared to the fixation time of those who voted for VVD.

These results indicate that left-wing voters pay more attention to political ads compared to right-wing voters, regardless of which party the ad depicts. This finding contradicts previous findings that people spend more time looking at political ads that are in line with their political views (Marquart et al., 2016), and avoid looking at political ads inconsistent with their political orientation (Schmuck et al., 2020).

POL02 Seeking and sharing: Patterns of the online media use

PP 0026 The end of recommender systems. Assessing differences in information seeking behavior between forms of recommended and AI generated search results

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Recent developments in artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT and Large Language Models, are reshaping the way individuals encounter (political) information and news. This is sparking concerns about the accessibility of accurate and diverse political information – a cornerstone for an informed citizenry and a functioning democracy. The digitalisation of the media environment has focused much scholarly attention on the effects new technologies have on users' information seeking behaviour as well as their trust in this information. In the case of the news media, this has especially been the case with algorithmically manipulated information environments, where new pathways of accessing information have introduced search engines as gatekeepers to political information. Search engines have been examined in terms of users' trust in the selection, display and prioritisation of search results, which redirect users to a primary information source. With the addition of generative AI features, search engines can now provide comprehensive answers to search queries, possibly shifting their function from gatekeepers to being the primary source or end point of political information. This could lower the threshold of acceptance of information and lead to less diverse information seeking behaviour.

In this study, we examine to what extent different formats of search engine results pages – i.e. AI-generated answers, featured snippets, and "traditional" ranked lists of search results without additional elements – affect individuals' acceptance of and trust in the presented information. We do this by conducting an experiment across four countries (NL, CH, US, UK), using a customisable website where a fully tracked, manipulated Google-style search environment is replicated. Participants will complete a simple search task in the simulated environment, which will pertain to one of two possible topics: a current political issue (high-stakes condition) or a non-political, entertainment topic (low-stakes condition). Data will be collected through an international opinion research company using quotas for gender, age, education, and region for the population in each country (N = 1000 per country). Data collection will start in the beginning of April and analyses of results will be completed by June 2024. We hypothesise that AI generated answers will lead to overall fewer clicks on other linked sources and less time spent on those sources, contributing to the idea of search engines as end points of information seeking. We also investigate how the format of search results affects the trustworthiness of the presented results between high-stakes and low-stakes topics. Furthermore, following an international comparative approach, we explore whether these effects vary between countries where Google has not yet rolled out its generative AI features and countries where this is already the case.

In conclusion, this study investigates the transformative impact of AI-generated answers on individuals' acceptance and trust in political information, aiming to shed light on the evolving role of search engines. The research, conducted across four countries, anticipates that AI-generated answers may consolidate search engines as primary information endpoints, influencing users' click behaviour and perceptions of trustworthiness.

POL02 Seeking and sharing: Patterns of the online media use

PP 0027 Google, how should I vote? How Swiss citizens use search engines to find political information in the context of popular votes

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Intensively used by citizens, search engines play an increasingly important role in shaping how users consume political information and are capable of shaping voter preferences (Epstein & Robertson, 2015). The content recommendations of such algorithm-driven platforms are influenced by various factors, including the randomization of results or the time of access (Hannak et al., 2013; Makhortykh et al., 2020). Yet, the composition of search results depends not only on how the algorithms are designed but also on how users interact with them. For example, research shows that the choice and wording of search queries used by individuals can be influenced by their political views, education, or attitudes towards a particular topic (Ekström et al., 2023; van Hoof et al., 2022). However, in contrast to the system-side factors of content personalization, fewer studies have examined the role of individual factors in shaping user engagement with algorithm-driven platforms.

To fill in this research gap, this study examines the information-seeking behavior of Swiss citizens on search engines in the context of federal popular votes. A representative national survey (N = 1,100) will be conducted shortly before the upcoming round of federal votes in March 2024. Specifically, we will investigate how users search for political information before voting and how their information-seeking behavior is influenced by their individual differences. The collected data will be used to analyze how properties of search queries (e.g., sentiment, semantic complexity, political leaning) are shaped by individual factors. These include socio-demographic characteristics, political views, institutional trust, perceived importance of a vote, and media consumption. This study will provide insights into how individual factors influence information-seeking behavior on search engines in the context of Swiss direct democracy and suggest new evidence of how individuals use search engines to consume political information.

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POL02 Seeking and sharing: Patterns of the online media use

PP 0028 Watching the Greens? Predictors and contingencies of partisan political information seeking with online search engines

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Political information seeking online has been an important aspect of democratic participation since the inception of the Internet (Arendt & Fawzi, 2019; Granka, 2013; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Weeks & Southwell, 2010). Whereas an increasing number of citizens tune out of news and current affairs due to association with rising polarization and negativity, some actively look for contemporaneous information on political issues, parties and candidates in order to form their view on policies and electoral preferences, or out of partisan commitment or personal curiosity (Trielli & Diakopoulos, 2022; Unkel & Haim, 2021). In the course of the past two decades online search engines have become important tools for information seeking in such contexts, as in other areas of life (Granka, 2010). However, while there has been a significant growth in scholarly research on search engines as arbiters of political information, for example on the breadth, diversity and truthfulness of search results on political issues, there exists a gap regarding

research that specifically investigates political search engine use in connection to user characteristics (Kulshrestha et al., 2019).

Extant research can be subdivided into three categories. Firstly, a large number of studies investigates the diversity of search results to political queries with regard to the quality of results (Haim & Puschmann, 2023). Secondly there exists a strand of experimental research that investigates the degree to which search engine personalization impacts the diversity of results (Haim et al., 2018; Puschmann, 2019). Thirdly research has simulated interaction with search engines through controlled mock-up environments, asking participants to form queries on particular issues in order to investigate partisan bias in query formulation (Ekström et al., 2023; Haim et al., 2017; van Hoof et al., 2022). By comparison, the relationship between political search engine use and users' political preferences has so far been explored less, owing mostly to methodological constraints (Menchen-Trevino et al., 2023).

Our contribution is twofold. Firstly, we investigate political interest, partisanship, and sociodemographic characteristics as determinants of political information seeking via search engines. Secondly, we analyze the interdependence between party preference and searches for political issues, parties and candidates. This approach allows us to shed a light on aspects of issue ownership and the degree to which political partisans follow both their favored candidates and the actions of competitors and divisive actors. Our analysis is based on a dataset of 1,562 German internet users that combines longitudinal desktop and mobile-based automated tracking with a multi-wave survey in a panel design, running over the course of almost two years.

Early results suggest that (a) salient and underappreciated differences exist between users who do and do not engage in political search in terms of factors such as political interest, partisanship, and sociodemographics and that (b) partisans search frequently both for candidates they presumably support and for their presumed political competitors. Our results will contribute valuable insights into the dynamics of political information seeking in personalized online environments and help elucidate the extent of individual selective exposure/characteristics/motivation in political search engine use.

POL02 Seeking and sharing: Patterns of the online media use

PP 0029 Users, not Algorithms: Investigating user choice and algorithmic personalisation in Google Search results on climate change and immigration

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Search engines are important pathways to political information and news, with implications for political decision-making. Concerns arise about selective exposure driven by user choices and the creation of 'filter bubbles' through algorithmic personalisation, which may limit exposure to diverse political content.

While concerns about filter bubbles persist, research rarely finds distinct search results for different individuals. One explanation may be that this research typically does not consider the role of user choices. Recent studies suggest selective exposure effects in search queries: individuals with varying political beliefs formulate distinct search queries about the *same* political issue. Yet, the consequences of these choices are rarely examined. Therefore, this paper's primary goal is to examine the impact of user choices and algorithmic personalisation on political Google Search output.

We employed agent-based testing, which allows isolating inputs to an algorithmic system that cannot be controlled in other settings. Virtual agents impersonate search engine users, conducting Google searches, and collecting autocomplete suggestions and the first page of search results. Algorithmic personalisation is operationalised as the *past* searches performed by an agent (i.e., search history), while user choice refers to the *current* search query. Our research design builds on our previous research identifying clusters of Dutch individuals using distinct search queries about immigration and climate change, which were associated with attitudes towards the issue and issue importance.

Specifically, we used a 3 (user choice: pro/high, neutral, anti/low) × 6 (search history: pro/high, neutral, anti/low, mixed, unrelated, none) experimental design for each issue. ($N_{immigration}$ = 2052; $N_{climate}$ = 2052). Each condition encompasses a set of search queries representing different issue attitudes and/or levels of importance.

We constructed metrics for the ranked variation in information sources, and, extending prior research, the information presented by those sources (i.e., content). We compared these scores between experimental conditions.

Our preliminary findings indicate mostly identical scores across different search history conditions within the same user choice condition. This suggests very minimal variation in the selection and ranking of sources and content is caused by search history. Conversely, choosing different queries leads to substantial variations in the selection and ranking of sources, roughly indicating a minimum of 94% (immigration) and 88% (climate) unique sources on the search result page for user choice conditions.

Content-level variation scores are generally lower, suggesting that, despite different sources, the topics described in the textual snippets are relatively similar. Nevertheless, we also note substantial variation in content between user choice conditions, i.e. minimum of .64 (immigration) and .68 (climate). These patterns become even more distinct when examining search output returned to the exact same query.

In summary, search history caused minimal variation in search results, while considerable variation in the sources and, to a lesser extent, the information was presented to users using different (types of) queries. These findings suggest that the focus may have to shift from filter bubbles in search engine algorithms towards diversity in user choices, which appears to have the most influence on the information encountered when searching for contested political issues.

POL02 Seeking and sharing: Patterns of the online media use

PP 0030 Sharing the alternative – Motivational factors of (non-)sharing of alternative news on digital platforms

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In times of growing turmoil around questions of factual correctness of information flowing through the public sphere, so-called alternative news media have established themselves as a counterpole to legacy mass media (Andersen et al., 2023). In Germany, many online-only media outlets present information to a growing audience, pursue different goals, follow different standards, and are financed differently than what they would describe as 'elite media' (Schulze, 2020). Digital platforms are the key to success; here, media outlets can grow their audiences with little financial resources and bypass pre-digital media systems' critique and verification mechanisms.

However, their reach depends on their followers, how they share information, and how they use the network effect of social media to draw attention to information that is often only relevant to a niche audience. Yet, the sharing patterns of alternative news audiences have not been explored extensively. Studies exist that investigate content characteristics or motivations that influence general news sharing (Trilling et al., 2017). Some studies differentiate between different types of news or audiences, but usually they focus on sharing of misinformation or hyperpartisan news pieces/outlets (Wischnewski et al., 2021). Hence, little is known about the frequencies and motivations of alternative news audiences to share information.

This study addresses these questions by utilizing an original dataset collected via an online survey of more than 2000 German alternative news users in September 2023. Based on an extensive list of news-sharing motivations, the study is the first to explore the motivational patterns of alternative news audiences in depth. Possible motivational factors were compiled from several previous studies on individual motivations for sharing news (Lee et al., 2012) and included, among others, altruistic, social, and information-seeking motives. Moreover, the study investigates why users might sometimes refrain from sharing news online.

Hence, we explore the extent to which motivational patterns among this audience are responsible for the success of alternative news media as a counterweight to established journalistic sources by asking three research questions:

RQ1: What ideological and sociodemographic characteristics predict the sharing of alternative news?

RQ2: What motivational patterns exist behind the decision to share alternative news on digital platforms?

RQ3: Do reasons not to engage in news sharing differ audiences of different types of alternative news?

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POL03 Activism, protest, & political participation

PP 0031 "Doing the [digital] work": Everyday activism, ICTs, and collective identity in NYC-DSA

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This paper explores the role of 'everyday activism' in social movement organizations, focusing on the impact of everyday information and communication technologies (ICTs) on political organizing and 'collective identity' formation. The paper is based on 5 months of ethnographic fieldwork in New York City and focuses on the New York City Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (NYC-DSA). Leveraging qualitative data collected through classic ethnographic research methods such as in-depth interviews with organizers and participatory observational research, as well as digital ethnographic methods, the paper examines what it means to "do the work" at the intersections of the digital and the non-digital. "Doing the work" is a phrase used by organizers in NYC-DSA when referring to the everyday activist and organizing work required for sustainable protest politics and is the process of continuous investment of volunteer hours by members in the socialist-inspired political organizing within the NYC-DSA. It requires doing practical work, such as organizing meetings, planning actions, sharing knowledge, and developing strategies. It is when they are "doing the work" that activists and organizers in NYC-DSA negotiate and cultivate a particular socialist activist 'collective identity' per Melucci's understanding of the concept.

As coordinating efforts, political debates, discussions, and mobilizing efforts in social movement organizations have turned digital or hybrid, "doing the work" is extended beyond in-person meetings and events into the digital realm of everyday ICT platforms such as WhatsApp, Signal, and X – what I term "the [digital] work". Although it has been argued that 'everyday politics' belong outside of the realm of large social movements and institutionalized protest politics, I argue, that "doing the [digital] work" appropriates the everyday lives of organizers and activists and becomes 'everyday politics' by establishing organizers' political engagement in the social movement organization as omnipresent. As "the [digital] work" transcends the temporal and spatial constraints that have previously characterized social movement organizations, it blurs the lines between social movement organizational activism and the more recent phenomenon of individualized and networked online activism. This tendency could be interpreted as a confirmation of the decline of social movement organizations as an actor in protest politics and 'collective identity' formation, in favor of the rise of networked protest politics. On the contrary, in this paper, I suggest that the case of NYC-DSA illustrates how social movement organizations adapt to the increasingly complex intersections of everyday habitual digital communication and protest politics, and that "the [digital] work" exemplifies how ICTs consolidate the continued importance of social movement organizations as co-constructers of 'collective identity' in contemporary social movements.

POL03 Activism, protest, & political participation

PP 0032 Climate advocacy in a multi-platform environment: Networked coalitions of German climate protestors

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Digital platform environments indistinguishably intertwined offline and online spheres of protest. Anyone can receive real-time updates of ongoing climate protest actions, such as anti-coal-activists barricading themselves in the German village of Lützerath. The protest received a lot of media attention and highlighted the ideological cleavages between supporters of climate protests and their political antagonists.

The extension of protest into the digital sphere impacts protest movements, making it easier, cheaper and faster for protest movements to mobilize for political action. Networked processes of amplification and gatekeeping (Gallagher et al. 2021) can thus produce advocacy coalitions (Guo & Saxton, 2014) and online-counterpublics (Kaiser & Puschmann, 2017).

Different platforms offer a range of affordances and architectures, impacting the formation of networked discourses (Yarchi et al., 2021). The centralized and algorithmically structured Twitter, the non-algorithmic and decentralized Mastodon, and Telegram's semi-private and channel-based structure enable the comparative analysis of three contrasting types of social media. In the current study, we pose the following research questions:

RQ1: Which protest-related coalitions of advocates and antagonists can be found on Twitter, Telegram, and Mastodon?

RQ2: How do these coalitions differ in regard to user interaction, network structure, and disseminated content on Twitter, Telegram, and Mastodon?

To answer these questions, we conducted automated network and content analyses of a dataset that covered posts from January 5–18, 2023, including 114,000 individual posts and interactions of 170,918 Twitter users, the messages from 388 public Telegram channels and groups, and 25,023 posts by 9,060 Mastodon users.

To capture 'advocacy coalitions,' we uncovered community clusters based on amplifications of specific posts as retweets (Twitter), reblogs (Mastodon), and shared group activity (Telegram). We qualitatively determined the most relevant users per network cluster in order to determine their general composition before starting an automated content analysis with BERTopic (Grootendorst, 2022).

In Twitter and Telegram, network structures separate along ideological poles. For both, we found an isolated sub-community in opposition to more interconnected and diverse mainstream communities. The content analysis showed that the Twittersphere is divided into climate protest advocates and a fairly large antagonist cluster, while supporters of Lützerath protests were isolated minorities on Telegram.

The protesters' advocacy coalition on Twitter was composed of one cluster, talking about organizational issues and first-hand experiences such as police violence, and an external cluster of advocates defending the protesters' actions and policy goals. This indicates that protesters were successful in spreading their content to a wider, supportive audience on Twitter, while Telegram mainly represents an organizational tool for them. Additionally, the protesters' antagonists were composed of diverse groups on Telegram that also promoted extreme ideologies and diverse conspiracy myths and therefore formed "Alliances of Antagonism" (Kaiser & Puschmann, 2017). This observation only partially aligns with our findings from the Mastodon analysis. Although there were evident structural divisions between communities, all posts show unconditional support for protesters. Mastodon's decentralized structure seems to result in a high local influence on users' visibility within their instance. Instances appear to be a major determinant in whether users amplify each other.

POL03 Activism, protest, & political participation

PP 0033 Freedom of speech on campus: A student nightmare? Investigating freedom of speech on university campuses via a German nationwide student-survey

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Freedom of speech is one of the most central human rights (Garton Ash, 2016) and is guaranteed to EU citizens in Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2007). On university campuses, this fundamental right is of particular importance. As a center of academic discourse, universities are a platform for diversity of opinion and, thus, a democratic training center for around 20 million European students (European Commission, 2020). However, it is remarkable that only a few studies have examined free speech on campus, primarily in the USA (e.g., Gallup & Knight Foundation, 2018). At the same time, there are recurring debates in several European countries, such as Germany, about perceived restrictions of free speech in general (e.g., Petersen, 2021), and specifically on campus. Yet, despite these ongoing debates, only one study (Revers & Traunmüller, 2020) has investigated these perceptions at German universities, with the results initially suggesting actual restrictions among students, predominantly influenced by their political predispositions.

We aim to address this research gap by examining (a) how students across Germany perceive freedom of speech on university campuses, (b) how tolerant they are of various current issues and incidents and (c) how this is influenced by individual and study-specific characteristics.

We conducted a nationwide survey of 928 German students in July 2023 and asked them about their current assessment of free speech on their campus. The results indicate that, on average, students tend to rate freedom of speech on campus positively – comparatively even better than the population in general (e.g., Petersen, 2021). In contrast to prior findings, the crucial political factor driving the perceptions was not political disenchantment but one's position on the left-right scale. The more right-leaning a student identified, the more likely they felt their freedom of speech to be restricted. Additionally, the field of study played a crucial role, with engineering or science students, for example, being less likely to perceive such restrictions. Notably, these two factors exerted the most significant impact on students' perception of free speech.

A majority of students disapproved of viewpoints linked to far-right ideologies and would only respond to fundamentally dissenting views with factual criticism or counter-arguments (rather than more hostile approaches). Furthermore, there was a notable divergence in these perceptions of free speech on campus between East German and West German students, whereas West German students were more critical. Additional findings and implications for European universities will be discussed during the presentation.

POL03 Activism, protest, & political participation

PP 0034 Digitalization, value change, and political consumerism in Europe: A multi-level trend analysis based on the European Social Survey

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People in many European countries engage in political consumerism, which involves boycotting or deliberately buying products and services based on political, ethical, or ecological reasons (Boulianne et al., 2022; Stolle & Micheletti, 2013). Scholars argue that digitalization and value change are central drivers of this trend (e.g., Copeland & Atkinson, 2016). Digitalization has expanded opportunities for accessing information, connecting with like-minded others, and consuming alternative products and services (Kelm & Dohle, 2018). Additionally, the shift from materialistic and self-enhancement values to post-materialistic and self-transcendence values has heightened the importance of the "politics of products" (Micheletti, 2010). Some survey studies indeed indicate positive correlations between political consumerism and digital media use (e.g., Kelm, 2023) as well as post-materialistic/self-transcendence values (e.g., Koos, 2012; Leissner, 2023). However, it remains unclear whether the country's level of digitalization or whether the society's prevailing values can account for the substantial differences in political consumerism behavior between countries. Moreover, it is unclear whether the relationships between political consumerism, digitalization, and values at the micro and macro level change over time.

To address these gaps, a comparative multi-level trend analysis utilizing data from the European Social Survey (ESS) was conducted. The ESS, a cross-national survey conducted biennially since 2002, provides representative samples of populations aged 15 and above residing within private households. Data from all ten waves are available for 15 countries. Political consumerism was assessed in all waves by asking respondents whether they had boycotted products within the last 12 months. Digital media use was measured in eight survey waves by asking participants how often they used the Internet. Self-transcendence values were measured in all waves using the human values scale (Schwartz, 2007). Moreover, aggregated country-level data on digital media use and self-transcendence values were included as macro variables. Various control variables at micro- and macro-level were also considered. The analyses were weighted in accordance with ESS recommendations.

The findings reveal an increasing use of digital media across all countries. Despite notable exceptions, such as Hungary, participation in boycotts and self-transcendence values have also increased. Multi-level logistic regressions indicate consistent positive associations between individual-level digital media use, self-transcendence values and boycott participation across all survey waves. Furthermore, different levels of self-transcendence account for differences between countries regarding their boycott engagement, whereas different levels of digitalization do not. The results hardly change between 2002 and 2020.

The study has limitations, such as the simple measurement of digital media usage. However, as the variables have been measured almost consistently over many years in many countries, comparative trend analyses are possible. The results confirm that besides people's values, their digital media use is important for engaging in political consumerism activities. Although the opportunities of the Internet have changed considerably in recent decades, and the effect of digital media use on political participation in general is increasing according to survey studies (Boulianne, 2020), the relationship between digital media use and political consumerism in Europe remains fairly constant over time. This aspect and further implications of the results will be discussed at the conference.

POL03 Activism, protest, & political participation

PP 0035 Tracing appeasement: Language similarity between corona protest mobilizers on Telegram and German politicians on Twitter

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Protest movements against COVID-19 containment measures like the German Querdenken movement act as counterpublics with the goal of putting their positions on the political agenda. The German far-right party AfD operated as the extended arm of Querdenken in the federal parliament, fueling discontent with containment measures. However, the role of other parties remains unclear despite initial evidence for acceptance of the movement on the part of important political actors in Germany. The unequal distribution of COVID-19 protests and far-right attitudes in Germany indicate additionally that there could be differences in alignment with Querdenken between politicians with constituencies in East or West Germany. The current paper explores Querdenken's ability to stimulate the discourse in the political arena in Germany. Consequently, we investigate language similarity of Querdenken and German politicians using n = 934.432 Telegram messages from Querdenken and n = 445.690 tweets from all six major German parties between 2020–2021. We use a mixed methods approach, combining sentence transformers, time series analysis, and a qualitative analysis.

The semantic similarity between all six German parties and Querdenken increased after fall/winter 2020 for different reasons. While the AfD's communication is the most similar toward Querdenken, the discrediting of left-wing/green politics and the spurning of corona containment measures unites parts of the liberal FDP and conservative CDU/CSU with Querdenken as well. Furthermore, language similarity toward Querdenken within the parties varied depending on whether the politician's constituency is in East or West Germany, contradicting stereotypes of a more right-wing East among federal politicians.

Querdenken has successfully provoked a reaction in the political system, showing ideological proximity to established parties alongside the AfD. Based on our results, we discuss several reasons for communication similarity, question the strategic anticipation of far-right discourses for political gains, and outline the challenges and opportunities of mixed method designs for investigating and interpreting semantic similarities between political actors.

POL04 Strategies & tactics in political campaigns

PP 0114 "I" and "The Party" in campaign communication: Cross-platform characteristics and changes in personalization on social media in the 2019 and 2023 Finnish Parliamentary elections

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As the significance of social media keeps growing in election campaigning, the styles and contents of political communication and campaigning evolve as different platforms affordances develop. Both parties and their leaders communicate on social media, and in campaigns party leaders are seen as the main media for their party.

This study focuses on the transformation in personalization on different social media platforms in the Finnish parliamentary elections in 2019 and 2023. We define the personalization of politics through two dimensions, based on the operationalization of Van Aelst and colleagues (2012). First, personalization means that individuals are emphasized over political topics, and second, the professional roles and qualities of individuals are overshadowed by their private lives. Our comparative approach asks the following research questions: 1) To what extent were different social media platforms used by party leaders in the 2019 and 2023 elections? 2) How was personalization manifested by parties and party leaders? 3) What kind of changes can be seen in how personalization manifests with the adoption of new platforms?

We collected the data during a month-long period before the Finnish Parliamentary elections of 2019 and 2023 from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. TikTok data was collected in 2023. The social media data were collected from the public accounts of the leaders of the parties that were represented in the parliament in the periods before the elections and analyzed with quantitative and qualitative content analysis.

The Finnish Parliamentary elections build a compelling case for the study because the role of social media in the Finnish elections is significant, with 23% of voters following campaigning on social media in 2023. It has been argued that social media, due to its nature and logic, may encourage political actors to self-personalize, thus increasing the personalization of politics. In addition, there is an emphasis on individuals in the Finnish multi-party system during parliamentary elections.

The preliminary results show that regarding the change between the 2019 and 2023 elections, significant cross-platform differences were found. Twitter and Facebook, for instance, differed from each other in that while on Twitter, the share of messages with personalized content decreased for almost all party leaders, on Facebook, their share remained on the same level. Hence, in 2023 Twitter was used differently from previous elections. A similar decrease was observed in Instagram postings' text contents for parties and their leaders. The decrease in personalization in Instagram postings' text contents may indicate that the latent personalization made possible by visual content has been adopted more strongly in political communication. In addition, personalization may be decreased because of the increased polarization and verbal attacks on social media. The changes may indicate that as the politicians gradually familiarize themselves with new platforms, their communication strategies evolve. Thus, as suggested before, different platforms have a role in changing political communication and styles in addition to the political actors.

Van Aelst, P., Sheafer, T., & Stanyer, J. (2012). The personalization of mediated political communication: A review of concepts, operationalizations and key findings. Journalism, 3(2), 203–220.

POL04 Strategies & tactics in political campaigns

PP 0115 Beyond rationality. Toward a more comprehensive understanding of the use of negative campaigning

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Most scholars agree that candidates' use of negative campaigning is based on rational considerations, i.e., weighing likely benefits against potential costs. Benefits are that a successful attack increases a candidate's net popularity at the expense of the targeted political opponent. Costs are seen in so-called "backlash effects"–a situation in which an attack on the opponent hurts the sponsor's evaluation. We argue that this perspective is far too narrow and outline the elements of a more comprehensive approach on the use of negative campaign communication that builds on personality traits, values, social norms, attitudes toward negative campaigning, and the political opponents' attack behavior as complementary mechanisms to classical rational choice theory. For each of these factors we describe the mechanisms that explain attack behavior. We test our theoretical assumptions using candidate surveys for eight state elections in Germany with more than 1,600 candidates. Our results strongly suggest that negative campaigning goes beyond rational considerations. Although benefit-cost calculations are the primary driver of the decision to attack the opponent, all other factors significantly explain additional variance of candidates' attack behavior. Our results show that candidates attack political opponents not only because they believe that doing so is beneficial to them overall (rational considerations), but also because they are hardwired to show this type of behavior (personality), because they associate attack behavior with personal achievements in life (values), because they see that it is normal for other candidates to criticize (descriptive norms), because they have certain opinions about whether it is appropriate to attack political opponents (attitudes toward negativity), and because they have learned that retaliation is a successful strategy to protect their image when being attacked. Hence, factors beyond the rational choice approach are important and enhance our understanding of why candidates choose to engage in negative campaign communication. Our findings have important implications for research on candidate attack behavior.

POL04 Strategies & tactics in political campaigns

PP 0116 Unraveling the social media electoral puzzle: Analysis of online campaigning strategies and their impact on election outcomes

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Election campaigns in the digital age have witnessed a transformative shift, with social media platforms becoming crucial landscapes for political discourse. This study examines the intricacies of political campaigning on Facebook, one of the most pervasive social media platforms, to uncover the dynamics shaping electoral outcomes. Despite the wealth of research on social media campaigns (e.g., Bene et al., 2022; Peeters, 2023; Ross et al., 2020; Schäfer, 2023; Štětka et al., 2020), a notable gap exists in comprehensively understanding the impact of Facebook on political communication and its correlation with voter support. This study aims to bridge this gap by scrutinizing the efficacy of leading candidates' political campaigns on Facebook, exploring the association between social media campaigning and electoral outcomes, and investigating the correlation between online interactions and election results (see: Dommet & Power, 2023; Kirk & Teeling, 2022; Sobieraj et al., 2020). The research framework adopts a hybrid media system perspective (Chadwick, 2017), exploring the adaptive strategies of political actors within the developing network logics of social media platforms (Klinger & Svensson, 2015). Notably, our study examines the nuanced use of different messages and interactions during election periods, shedding light on the distinctive communication strategies employed by politicians. We also examine the density of political candidates' messages and the electorates' responses. To analyze the impact of Facebook during the campaign period, we collected and analyzed data in the fifty days preceding four first-order elections held between September 2021 and April 2022 in France, Germany, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. The research methodology involves a detailed examination of interactions and personalized communication on Facebook. Collected data encompass the number of comments, shares, and reactions politicians receive, providing insights into the engagement and attention generated on social media (DiGrazia et al., 2013). We also explore the broader impact of social media by examining the relationship between mentions and interactions on multiple platforms and election results, analyzing the translation of social media engagement into tangible votes.

Our findings reveal a complex relationship between social media interactions and election outcomes. While social media interactions show a significant predictive relationship with election results, distinctions emerge between candidates and political parties. Populist leaders often outperform their election results in online engagement,

leveraging the unfiltered nature of social media. Furthermore, incumbents enjoy an advantage in the online space, receiving more attention and interactions than their challengers. This study contributes valuable insights into the evolving landscape of political communication, emphasizing the need for nuanced analyses of social media dynamics.

POL04 Strategies & tactics in political campaigns

PP 0117 Negative campaign tactics and changing party dynamics: Party communication on Facebook during three parliamentary elections in Sweden 2014–2022

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Among the myriad of communication tactics employed by political actors during elections, negative campaigning constitutes one of the most well-researched internationally. Negative campaigning can be understood as communication efforts focusing on the weakness of opponents rather than on the strengths of one's own party (Klinger, et al., 2023). Negative campaigning encompasses adversarial tactics aimed at individual candidates as well as parties and its policies, with the aim of generating fear about future implications if the opponent would win (Sanders & Norris, 2005). Scholars have warned that negative campaigning can be harmful for democracy, since it may fuel polarization, generate political cynism, distrust in politicians, and lower voting turnout (Nai, 2020). However, negative political confrontations also underscore areas of disagreement and ideological divisions that may be beneficial for citizens in their decision-making (Haselmayer, 2019).

Unlike the political cultures in countries such as the US and the UK, from which many studies of negative campaigning originate, Nordic political cultures have for long been defined as consensus-driven and less personalized. This has been used to explain the lesser prominence of negative campaigning there (Hansen & Pedersen, 2008). However, despite transformations in the political landscape, including new alliances across liberal, conservative, and nationalistic lines, there are no systematic or longitudinal studies of negative campaigning during national elections in the region. This is problematic, since a growing body of research suggests that particularly right-wing populist parties have introduced a more conflictual dimension to the political culture that may have affected also how other parties communicate. Another reason why longitudinal studies are necessary is the increasingly central role of social media platforms. There are plenty of platform studies that focus either on how party leaders communicate (Ekman & Widholm, 2017), single national elections (Larsson, 2020), or compare campaigning strategies during European elections (eg. Klinger, et al., 2023), yet few studies address how negative national election campaigning of different parties have evolved over time.

This study seeks to fill this research gap by examining negative campaign tactics by Swedish political parties on Facebook during three elections: 2014, 2018 and 2022. Drawing on a census sample of posts published by all parties represented in parliament four weeks prior to each election (N = 2795), we deploy content analysis to reveal a) whether negative campaign messages have become more salient over time, b) If the targets of negative campaigns have changed in light of new party constellations and power dynamics, and c) If there are differences over time concerning the types of negative campaign tactics deployed.

Results show that negative campaigning have become more salient over time, and that oppositional and far-right parties are more likely to go negative compared to governmental parties and those located closer to the center on the left-right spectrum. Attacks against parties are more common than attacks against individual candidates, yet there are noteworthy differences between parties. In terms of targeting, we find that despite changing party constellations, negative campaigning still adheres to a left/right logic, as many parties avoid attacks on former allies.

POL04 Strategies & tactics in political campaigns

PP 0118 Entitled by the past: Nordic parties' legitimization of political imaginaries for the future

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In the last crisis-ridden decade, right-wing populist parties have strategically exploited the sense of comfort and security originating from the nostalgic idealization of the past to attract voters experiencing disorientation and ontological insecurity, i.e., those who feel lost, overwhelmed, and disenfranchised in modern societies (Steele & Homolar, 2019). Contrasting this present with a romanticized selective past helped right-wing populists gain political ground in Europe and beyond (Menke & Hagedoorn, 2023; Norocel et al., 2020). Research has found that the strategy behind the populist right's use of the past is to create a sense of entitlement for a future restored in the voters' favor,

stemming from allegedly historically legitimized privileges (Smeekes et al., 2021). The literature further outlines how right-wing populist actors were able to promote nationalist collective identities, foster in- and outgroup mentalities, and promise the return of the *heartland*, i.e., a future society catering to the supposedly disenfranchised by restoring their past privileges and securities (Menke & Wulf, 2021; Merrill, 2020; Pettersson & Sakki, 2017; Taggart, 2004).

These cases demonstrate that strategic uses of collective memories and histories in politics can have implications for identity formation and vast consequences for social cohesion and legitimacy claims that shape the future of societies. Whose past is included and for whom imaginaries of the future are offered is subject to a party's political ideology and engenders its appeal to specific segments of the population they aim to convince. Whereas this strand of research highlights the potency of the past in right-wing populist campaigns, it suffers from a narrow focus that reduces political uses of the past to extreme political actors and the fueling of polarization, nationalism, and xenophobia, eventually threatening social cohesion and democracy. However, depending on the parties, the collective memories and histories that are woven into the campaign communication might be more versatile across parties based on whose sense of collective identity and common interest is targeted and how exclusive or inclusive the communication is (Liu & Hilton, 2005; Molden, 2016).

In our presentation, we advance beyond the focus on right-wing populism with an analysis of the uses of the past in Nordic political communication across the party spectrum. Based on a comparative, qualitative content analysis of the party programs of parliamentary parties from the latest elections in Denmark (n = 12), Sweden (n = 8), Norway (n = 10), and Finland (n = 10), we identify references to the past across political ideologies, and their uses to legitimize imaginaries of the future in different policy areas. While the Nordic region shares many important cultural, political, and historical similarities, the comparative research design allows for an in-depth, discursive exploration of how the distinct collective memories, histories, and trajectories of each country shape the parties' political communication. Our results create awareness of how the past and derived political imaginaries of the future are used strategically as a foundation of political campaigning, focusing specifically on the established ingroup/outgroup mechanisms. Eventually, our research answers whose pasts, needs, and demands for the future are given legitimacy in different party programs – and whose not.

POL05 News media diet

PP 0119 What is a healthy political media diet? Conceptualizing and theorizing citizens' news media diets across democratic political information environments

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The idea of an informed citizenry is at the heart of democratic theory, however, recent developments have raised some alarm about citizens unhealthy media habits (e.g., Van Aelst et al., 2017). In other words, the media diets of citizens, have become a focus for concern with anxiety about the negative effects of poor or limited media diets (Terren, 2022). Across the literature, though, there are embedded assumptions about what poor diets contain and good one's encompass, indeed, some research attempts to put forward solutions to existing poor diets. But are such concerns justified across democracies? What is meant by media diet anyway and what is a healthy media diet?

These questions are important for normative political communication research. Indeed, the diet analogy is a useful way to identify healthy normative practices and can operate as a helpful yardstick with which to measure democratic performance. However, we need to identify 'theoretical inconsistencies' (Althaus, 2012) if haphazard theory development is to be avoided. To address the above questions, and aid theory development, this proposed paper seeks to do the following:

1. conduct a systematic review of the various information diet related concepts. These have been variously termed citizen's information diets, news diets, or media diets (see for example Trilling & Schoenbach, 2015). This will provide not only the basis for concept development but also provides useful basis to understand how citizens engage with the media.
2. critically scrutinize existing assumptions in the literature about good and bad diets, and presented solutions, exposing the often implicit values underlying uses of the concept.
3. examine what citizens think and what they expect through a series of focus groups. Very little research asks citizens what they perceive of their own and others' media diets. To achieve these goals, the paper draws on the findings of a series of focus group interviews conducted by the authors with younger adults (18–25 years old) and older adults (above 55) in five European countries (Germany, Spain, Poland, Romania, and UK). Research on media diets has been mainly focused on the US, or other single countries (Trilling & Schoenbach, 2015) but we know countries vary by key contextual factors including, "young" and "new" democracies with different political heritages, democratic traditions, and media systems and different news consumption habits. Focus group interview as a method provided us with the data needed for an in-depth assessment of people's perceptions.

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POL05 News media diet

PP 0120 Changing levels of interest in news and politics in the last decade

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Individual motivation is often seen as the primary reason for why some people choose to engage with news and politics. In survey research this is typically captured by measuring people's level of 'interest'. If people are interested in news, they will tend to consume more of it, and if they are interested in politics, they are more likely to vote or participate in politics in other ways.

Data from the latter part of the twentieth century suggests that people's interest was formed in adolescence through contact with friends and family, and remained largely stable throughout adulthood. However, it is unclear whether this still holds true today.

Using nine years of survey data (2015–2023) from 46 countries and over half a million respondents, we explore changes to interest in news and interest in politics over time. We find that (i) there has been a significant overall decline in both interest in news and interest in politics since 2015, and (ii) while declines are not evident in every country, they are visible in most. In some cases, the declines are large. In the UK, for example, the proportion highly interested in news has declined by 27 percentage points (pp) from 70% in 2015 to 43% in 2023, while in the US there was a 18pp decline from 67% to 49%.

At the individual level we find that (iii) both interest in news and interest in politics is higher among older people, men, those with more formal education, those with higher trust in news, and those who use news more frequently. At the national level, we use random effects within-between modelling to carry out panel analysis that controls for stable country-level variables. We test for several possible factors, and (iv) while we do find a weak positive association between levels of interest in news and freedom of the press, this alone does not adequately explain why there has been such large declines in interest in many parts of the world.

Our findings therefore highlight important changes to people's motivation to engage with news and politics, and help us understand emerging trends such as rising news avoidance. But they also suggest that we may need to explore new ways of thinking about how interest is created and maintained, perhaps looking to the huge changes to the information environment we have seen in the previous two decades, and in recent years, a string of global events that may have fundamentally changed some people's relationship with news and politics.

POL05 News media diet

PP 0121 Mobile news media diets across platforms: More diversity in news sources but the same ideological slant

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One-sided news exposure has been deemed to threaten democratic ends and for this reason the role of social media in shaping news consumption has been widely studied. There have been multiple contributions to understand the effects of algorithmically driven platforms on news exposure in Western Democracies, mostly in the US (Cardenal et al., 2019; Fletcher et al., 2021; González-Bailón et al., 2023; Wojcieszak et al., 2021). Less attention has been paid though to understand their effects on different dimensions of the *diversity of news exposure*, specifically when using mobile phones. The increase in use of mobile devices to access news, as opposed to desktop machines, is accompanied by a less fragmented news media ecosystem, suggesting that people access a wider range of news sources when navigating the media environment through their mobile phones (Yang et al., 2020). Yet, it is pending to be investigated the specific effects of technological platforms on the types of news sources accessed and whether they limit or broaden ideological selectivity in news exposure. To address these questions,

in our study we conceptualize and measure diversity of news exposure using multiple indicators including types of sources, depth of news exposure within each source and ideological diversity too. We identify the platforms effects on the number and types of sources that individuals navigate on their mobile devices and then, look at levels of audience polarization across the most prominent side-doors to news, including Google, Facebook and WhatsApp, which allow us to understand ideological selectivity in news exposure too.

In our study, we focus on the effects of the largest platforms used for news consumption in two European countries, namely Spain and the UK. In Spain, we pay special attention to the effects of messaging apps on the diversity of news sources, because WhatsApp is the second largest platform used for news consumption (Newman et al., 2023) in that country and also, because users experience with news content on WhatsApp is not algorithmically-driven, but mostly curated by *strong ties*. Our data strategy includes a novel dataset with mobile tracking information for two months and survey data for 700 and 500 individuals in Spain and the UK respectively.

Our results show that the effects of digital platforms in mediating news consumption is not consistent across either countries or platforms. The use of technological platforms does increase individual exposure to a wider range of news outlets and it is associated with accessing more articles in each outlet in both countries. Yet, this does not result in more ideologically diverse news repertoires, except for those who use Facebook in the UK. In Spain, the use of WhatsApp to access news does not have a different effect from that of the use of Facebook and Google, except for those on the left who are accessing less pro-attitudinal information on WhatsApp. Our study suggests it is necessary to go beyond "the more the better approach" and reflect on the democratic effects of diversity in news exposure across platforms and its heterogeneous effects.

POL05 News media diet

PP 0122 Unveiling the Mobile Media Mosaic: Analyzing news repertoires combining individual mobile and desktop tracking data

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The ubiquitous presence of smartphones has revolutionized the accessibility of news, becoming an inseparable companion in our daily lives (Newman et al., 2021). These emerging mobile and digital media platforms have not only significantly broadened the spectrum of available information but have also become an integral part of our daily information repertoire. The integration of these technologies has introduced new usage options and routines, such as checking or scanning, providing a more nuanced understanding of news consumption practices (Meijer & Kormelink, 2015). However, these changes in user behavior are often fragmented, marked by cross-platform use and varying functionalities of mobile applications, making measurement challenging.

The existing literature on the relevance of (mobile) news consumption primarily focuses on the frequency of news use and categorizes different types of (young) users, with news avoiders and news omnivores being the most stable groups (Strömbäck, Falasca, & Kruikemeier, 2018; Trilling & Schoenbach, 2015). Nevertheless, most studies rely on self-reported news usage, which has proven to be inaccurate in digital media environments (Parry et al., 2021). Moreover, studies utilizing web tracking data have historically been limited to desktop data (Jürgens & Stark, 2022; Möller et al., 2021; Scharkow et al., 2020). Consequently, prior research has struggled to reliably address the share and specific behavioral patterns of mobile news use concerning the overall digital news diet.

Building on the media repertoire approach (Hasebrink & Popp, 2006; Hasebrink & Hepp, 2017), which analyzes the entirety of media regularly used by an individual to gain insights into cross-media patterns of everyday news consumption, we aim to identify the role of mobile news within the overall repertoire. This involves identifying news repertoires based on tracking data for both mobile and desktop devices, following the approach of Mangold et al. (2022), to offer detailed insights into usage patterns and routines during everyday life. The tracking data, collected over 16 months from September 2022 to December 2023, with the consent of 1,756 German panelists, includes desktop web browsing activities and mobile browser and app usage.

This data enables us to (1) identify the correspondence between mobile and desktop behavior, including comparing usage patterns to identify specific characteristics of mobile news use. Additionally, (2) we determine the proportion of mobile news use in relation to the overall digital news repertoire to draw conclusions about the relevance of mobile news consumption.

Our analysis involves conducting a medoids cluster analysis based on the frequency of used news sources, mobile apps, access time, and usage duration to identify media repertoires (Park & Jun, 2009). Subsequently, we ascertain the proportion of mobile media and news usage in relation to the overall repertoire and compare desktop and mobile usage for various behavioral patterns, such as usage throughout the day.

As of December 2023, data collection is complete, and data analysis is ongoing. Through a comprehensive examination of mobile and desktop news use, we aim to gain a better understanding of news consumption behavior during times of 'deep mediatisation' (Couldry and Hepp, 2017).

POL05 News media diet

PP 0123 News exposure on social media platforms and the illusion of knowing

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Studies have shown that news exposure via social media elicits an illusion of knowing (IoK), i.e., that the users feel better informed about current affairs (subjective knowledge) than they actually are (objective knowledge; e.g., Yamamoto & Yang, 2021). However, most of these studies have focused on social media use in general, without taking platform-specific characteristics or user motivations into account. As social media platforms differ in their affordances (e.g., the dominant modality: text vs. videos vs. images, length limits, hyperlinks to external sources, and sanctions against misinformation), this might determine to what extent they facilitate true learning about politics or just a feeling of being informed, resulting in platform-specific differences in IoK (RQ1). User motivations that may drive IoK include the news-finds-me perception (H1) and issue-specific interest (H2). Individuals with a news-finds-me perception might think that incidental news exposure via social media is sufficient for them to stay informed, which may result in swift news snacking and thus foster the IoK. Persons who are involved in particular issues may be more motivated to process relevant information thoroughly, which could mitigate IoK.

To test these hypotheses, a representative German online survey was conducted in July 2023 (n = 682). We measured news exposure via traditional media and popular social media platforms. Subjective and objective knowledge was assessed for three topics: climate change, public service broadcasting, and migration. To measure objective knowledge, respondents rated eight pre-tested factual statements per topic as true or false. Moreover, we assessed the news-finds-me perception, issue-specific interest and demographics.

An OLS regression yielded a weak but significant positive association between general social media news use and the IoK regarding climate change. Looking at the different social media platforms we found that individuals who preferably use Facebook, TikTok, and Telegram as news platforms exhibit a higher IoK concerning the issue (RQ1). These platforms likely offer little affordances for knowledge gain beyond superficial or even misleading information. For instance, TikTok has a strong focus on short clips and limited possibilities to set links to external pages, while Telegram is known to be popular among misinformation spreaders. Greater associations were found for motivational aspects. As expected in H1, the news-finds-me perception is positively related to IoK regarding two of three issues (climate change and public service broadcasting). In contrast to H2, however, issue interest is positively associated with IoK across all three topics: Respondents who indicated a higher level of interest in an issue had a slightly higher level of actual knowledge than those who were less interested, but as they rated their (subjective) knowledge significantly higher, this resulted in a higher IoK. This result contradicts the current state of research and will be further investigated. In the presentation, these and other results will be presented in detail, interpreted and discussed.

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POL06 Science communication as political communication? Scientific experts, policy-making, and media in the digital age

PN 023 How social media platforms shape the politicization of science

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Scientists with specific areas of expertise are increasingly called upon to enter the realm of public deliberation. Issues such as climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic, and to a lesser extent Anglo-European colonial history and questions around gender, have all called upon academics, scholars, and scientists to participate in intensified public engagement in recent years. Media research has traced and mapped a range of important controversies in which scientific knowledge features as part of public contestations. However, there has been a relative lack of focus on understanding the role of the media environment, itself. The contemporary communicative environment in which scientists/academics engage with the public is undergoing profound transformation. The current ubiquity of social media usage, and the far-reaching effects of the rise of powerful platforms, are substantially changing the media landscape that academics step into when participating in public engagement activities. These changes warrant revisiting the main theoretical framework we have for understanding the relationship between media

and science in society: the "medialization/mediatization of science" thesis. Does this idea – originally developed to understand mass media phenomena – sufficiently capture how contemporary platform processes shape the relationship between media and academia? This paper addresses the above question by focusing on the political implications of the increasingly platform-oriented media landscape for the public status of scientific knowledge. On the basis of a literature review that brings the concept of platformization further to bear on how science is mediatized, the paper argues that the changing politics of the media environment, itself, has important consequences for the content of public deliberation about issues involving scientific knowledge and expertise. A key implication of the paper's argument is that new conceptual and methodological approaches are called for if media scholars seek to comprehensively understand the influences of social media platforms on the way scientific/scholarly knowledge enters the realm of public contestation. Directions for the design of future research are presented that foster empirical investigation of social media's influence on user, institutional, and political economy levels.

POL06 Science communication as political communication? Scientific experts, policy-making, and media in the digital age

PN 024 Linking research topic characteristics with scientists' willingness to engage in public discourses

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Science as a system is increasingly being mediatised (Väliverronen, 2021) and politicised (Schmid-Petri et al., 2022). Researchers are thus becoming central mediators between science, society, and politics (Peters, 2021). In light of recent challenges (e.g., climate crisis, COVID-19, gender issues), there is a growing view that public communication by researchers in controversial contexts can constitute 'political communication' (Scheufele, 2014). Understanding why some researchers participate in public debates while others retreat into their 'ivory tower' is key to understanding the dynamics of public (political) communication on science-related topics.Large-scale surveys reveal a link between researchers' disciplines and their willingness for public communication, with social scientists typically more inclined than natural scientists. Yet, studies on specific sub-disciplines like climate research and nanotechnology suggest that research topic characteristics, such as perceived politicization or public controversy, are more influential in determining researchers' orientation to communicate than differences between overarching disciplines (Schäfer, 2007). Hence, this study investigates how these topic-specific perceptions impact scientists' willingness to engage directly in public dialogue (RQ1) and participate through media discourses (RQ2).A quantitative survey is planned for March 2024 targeting researchers at all career stages in doctoral-granting universities in Germany. The sampling aims to represent all main academic fields as per the German Research Foundation classification: humanities & social sciences, natural sciences & mathematics, engineering, and life sciences & medicine (DFG, n.d.), allocating quotas for each overarching discipline in order to achieve a distribution by discipline that corresponds to the actual distribution in Germany. We are targeting a total of 500 respondents. As similar previous studies report a response rate of around 5%, we will contact 10.000 researchers using a combination of systematic (quotas for disciplines) and random sampling (random selection of universities from the whole population).The questionnaire covers research demographics (discipline, specific research topic, career stage, years in career) and science communication practices (frequency and willingness for direct public and media engagement). Additionally, based on the theory of scientific knowledge cultures (Böschen, 2002; Schäfer, 2007), new items were developed to analyse researchers' perceptions of their specific research topics regarding inner scientific and public discourses, including basic research orientation, public and scientific controversy, public relevance, abstraction, amount of uncertainty, interdisciplinarity, and stakeholder diversity, operationalised as semantic differentials. The analysis will use two multiple hierarchical regressions to explore the willingness to directly engage with public audiences (RQ1) and media (RQ2). These regressions will examine the impact of the research topic characteristics, controlling for established factors like discipline, career stage, career age, gender, and past communication activities.Our study seeks to elucidate the impact of researchers' self-perceived characterisation of their research topics on their engagement in scientific, social, and political discourses. By integrating these insights with content-analytical studies of public and political discussions on scientific matters, further research could enhance understanding of how the mediatisation and politicisation of science influences scientists' motivation to actively participate in political communication.

POL06 Science communication as political communication? Scientific experts, policy-making, and media in the digital age

PN 025 Scientific expertise, advocacy, and politicization in environmental and pandemic crises

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In the light of environmental concerns and the COVID-19 pandemic, scientists have found themselves at the center of policy disputes testing their "traditional" role simply communicating "the science." Instead, they serve as public

experts applying their knowledge in policy-making contexts. Such communication can be defined as scientific expertise. Scientific expertise at times extends into advocacy, where scientists support particular policies and causes. This can lead to politicization by scientists. Politicization is a communicative action that creates opportunities for exercising power within social relationships; scientists leverage science to sway public opinion and policy in their favor. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how scientists participate in policy disputes in a mixed-methods design combining survey and interview research. In particular, we hypothesize that political-oriented scientists are likely to utilize science in a politicized manner.We surveyed scientists from Germany who published medical (N = 174; RR = 12.6%) or ecological papers (N = 175; RR = 28.7%). Participants were asked to define their concept of expertise, rating a) their involvement b) neutrality, and c) epistemic authority in policy disputes. Additionally, each survey contained an experiment designed to test our hypothesis. Subsequently, we interviewed a subsample of n = 24 participants that agreed to a follow-up interview. The interviews were coded to align with the survey dimensions. We applied a latent profile analysis (LPA) with model specifications validated by sensitivity analyses and theoretical alignment evaluation, ensuring robust group identification. Last, we linked interviewees with class assignments retrieved from our survey combining quantitative and qualitative data.The descriptive results from both the qualitative interviews and the quantitative survey show a range of perspectives among scientists. Many viewed neutralities as key to good science. They generally agreed on guiding societal debates. However, there was less agreement on directly engaging in politics, indicating a tendency to maintain a distance. The LPA shows that the scientists surveyed can be grouped (AIC = 11204.40, BIC = 11388.19, Entropy ≥ 0.80) separating a moderate group (36.5%) showing average agreement to items measuring involvement, neutrality, and epistemic authority, a strategic (30.9%) high in agreement on epistemic authority and neutrality, an active (25.0%) showing strong involvement, and a reserved (7.6%) preferring non-involvement. Next, we examined the behavior of these groups in our experiments. The first experiment, conducted as a between-subject study with pandemic researchers, revealed that politicization strategies are less influenced by content and more by group membership. In the second, within-subject experiment with biodiversity researchers, it was found that the active group favored explicit politicization strategies over the communication of neutral expertise. The analysis of the interviews corroborated the group characteristics identified in the LPA and shows that the active group uses explicit politicization strategies to influence policy disputes, while strategic and moderate researchers predominantly delegitimize non-epistemic positions.In conclusion, we confirm our hypothesis and demonstrate that scientists exhibit varied approaches to engaging with policy disputes. This underscores the need to explore the role of scientific experts as players in political communication.

POL06 Science communication as political communication? Scientific experts, policy-making, and media in the digital age

PN 026 "They should make it apolitical": Public's role perceptions of scientific experts on social media

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In recent years, the rise of digital communication environments has intensified the politicisation of scientific discourses. Thus, scientists increasingly engage in contexts determined by factors outside of science and perform "new" roles. Despite typologies outlining scientists' roles in public and political interactions (e.g., Pielke Jr., 2007), empirical studies on the public's ascribed roles to scientific experts online are lacking. To fill this gap in understanding the perceptions of scientific experts' roles on social media from the public's perspective, we ask:RQ1: What expectations do laypeople have of scientific experts' communication on social media?RQ2: How do laypeople perceive scientific experts' roles on social media? We conducted 33 qualitative interviews with German laypeople using an interview guide on characteristics, expectations, and roles of scientific experts on social media. To comprehensively understand scientific experts' ascribed roles, we considered diverse age groups, educational levels, and professional backgrounds, ensuring an even gender distribution. In a deductive-inductive approach based on Mayring's content-structuring qualitative content analysis, overarching categories were first defined based on the guide, followed by an inductive sub-categorisation.Our results show differences in interviewees' expectations of scientific experts on social media. Some did not see participation in discourses on social media as a fundamental role of scientific experts. Almost all interviewees stated they should behave objectively and communicate factually (RQ1). Many interviewees mentioned that they should not express opinions or politicise themselves. In their view, scientific experts should stay as far away from politics as possible. However, many acknowledged that scientific experts engage on social media at the intersection of science and politics and thus also have an opinion-forming power in online discourses. Regarding RQ2, we found that almost all interviewees primarily see scientific experts on social media as pure information providers. In addition, some mentioned the role of knowledge translators that goes beyond the mere provision of scientific information. By translating scientific information and thus making science accessible to the broader public, they fulfil the interviewee's view of a democracy-promoting function. A few interviewees mentioned associated roles as educators (e.g., sparking interest in science) and as role models for "good" scientists. Many interviewees also see scientific experts as enlighteners, particularly in social media discussions, clarifying socio-scientific issues and their impacts. As voices of rational arguments, the interviewees stated

that scientific experts can help to emphasise evidence-based information and counteract purely political opinions. Some interviewees also ascribed a watchdog role, which includes exposing pseudoscience and critically analysing political arguments. In this way, scientific experts are intended to debunk politicised content and misinformation. Overall, our study reveals diverse expectations and role perceptions towards scientific experts on social media. Our findings indicate a tension between expectations of pure information provision and acknowledgment of scientific experts' engagement in politicised social media discussions. This emphasises the need to further examine scientific experts' roles in online public debates at the interface between science and political communication from different perspectives.ReferencesPielke Jr, R. A. (2007). The honest broker: Making sense of science in policy and politics. Cambridge University Press.

POL06 Science communication as political communication? Scientific experts, policy-making, and media in the digital age

PP 0963 Virtue or passion? How moral frames in climate change appeals elicit emotions and change opinions

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Political climate change debates make use of different moral frames of climate change diagnoses and solutions. These moral frames are known to sway opinions on climate change, especially for those who align with the moral values embedded in them. Affect and emotions have also been considered important drivers of climate change attitudes and behavior. While it is argued that moral frames are more effective when they invoke strong moral emotions, thus far the relationship between real-world political moral viewpoints on climate change, the arousal of related emotions, and attitudes has not been studied. In this paper, we raise the question whether existing moral climate frames are effective through emotions ("passion") or through direct moral persuasion ("virtue").

We compare three viewpoints on causes of and solutions to climate change, differing in their appeals to moral foundations and emotions: the mainstream, the green-left, and the populist right viewpoint. All three appeals are prominent in the European debate on climate change. Grounded in moral framing research and moral foundations theory, we discuss how we can conceptualize these distinct viewpoints on the causes and solutions of the climate crisis as moral appeals: the mainstream appeal focuses on harm, the green-left addresses fairness and the populist right narrative concentrates on loyalty. In addition, based on moral foundations and appraisal theory we expect these moral climate appeals to elicit specific emotions, respectively fear, anger and pride.

In a next step, we use these specific appeals as input for a 3x2 between-subjects factorial survey experiment with a control condition among a diverse sample of 1708 Dutch respondents. We expose respondents to either a mainstream, green-left or populist right viewpoint, excluding or including solutions for the presented diagnoses, and investigate the extent to which they differ in their self-reporting of emotions and agreement with the proposed diagnosis and solutions.

Our results show first that exposure to the moral climate appeals by and large has little direct impact on support for suggested diagnoses and solutions. In other words, climate moral appeals *alone* do not have many public consequences since they do not lead to support to the solutions that were connected to these appeals. We do find that climate appeals indeed elicit emotions, and that distinct appeals affect different emotions, including anger and pride. The harm appeal in the mainstream message -including references to the suffering of future generations- elicits anger, the fairness appeal in the green message anger, while the appeal to loyalty in the PRR message elicits pride in people. Importantly, these emotions act as mediators for the impact on issue agreement, with moral anger having the strongest impact, most notably on the green-left diagnoses and solutions of the climate change issue. Finally, moderation analyses showcase that all effects are by-and-large across the board.

Based on these findings we tentatively conclude that passion is more powerful when it comes to affecting climate opinions and (eventually) political behavior than virtue. We discuss findings in light of moral foundations research, emotions and climate politics.

POL07 Young media users – Young voters

PP 0221 Adolescents' political empowerment on social media: Exploring the relationships between role models' political content and political self-efficacy

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Over the past decades, an increasing body of research has informed on the discernible disengagement from traditional political institutions and detachment from conventional politics among youth. Such disengagement in adolescents is of particular concern as adolescence is a pivotal phase to build skills necessary to participate in civic and political activities in adulthood. One particular skill is political self-efficacy, which is a key driver of democratic

involvement activities, such as voting and cause-oriented participation. In response to youth's increasing disengagement and the related lower levels of political self-efficacy, scholars searched for sources that can empower the younger generation to participate within the political sphere actively. Recent reports suggest individuals under 35 consider famous individuals like influencers as the most important sources of news. Influencers, whose propensity to share political opinions on their social media accounts has been documented, are frequently cited as favorite role models by adolescents. The casual and incidental integration of entertaining and engaging political messages in their leisure-oriented posts makes them especially appealing for young, less politically-informed and -interested audiences.

Building upon social cognitive theory which articulates how individuals can learn from observing role models' (political) behavior, the current study among adolescents examines the associations between the promotion of political content by one's favorite social media role model (i.e., celebrities, influencers, and athletes) and adolescents' political self-efficacy. Additionally, there remains a lack of understanding about the conditions under which these role models' political engagement can relate to adolescents' political self-efficacy. Such knowledge is key to understand which type of adolescents, social media actors and content can be empowered/empower in terms of political self-efficacy. To address this gap, conditions that relate to the message source (e.g., the type of role model and their characteristics), the relationship between the source and the user (e.g., the parasocial bond between them), and user characteristics (their political interest and cognitive processing of political social media content) are examined as moderators.

We conducted a cross-sectional survey (N = 415) among French adolescents aged 11–18 in August 2022. We first asked the adolescents to report their favorite role model on social media. Next, we assessed this anchor's frequency of portraying political themes on their social media content (predictor), the adolescents' parasocial interactions with this anchor (moderator), elaborative and selective processing of political information on social media (moderator), political interest (moderator), and political self-efficacy (outcome). The type of famous person (moderator) was coded a posteriori based on the anchor into three categories (1 = influencer/YouTuber/streamer, 2 = celebrity, 3 = athlete). The moderation analysis using Hayes PROCESS macro showed that a higher prevalence of political content in role models' social media was associated with higher levels of political self-efficacy among adolescents. None of the explored conditions moderated the relationship of interest. Our findings add that different type of online entertainment personalities' coverage of political content equally relates to adolescents' political self-efficacy and thus has the potential to empower active democratic citizenship in youth.

POL07 Young media users – Young voters

PP 0222 Gen Z's news consumption patterns: Impact on political knowledge

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Is incidental news exposure good or bad for young people's political knowledge? Incidental news exposure on social media has been shown to create a feeling among individuals that they can be informed without needing to actively follow the news, the so-called *News-Finds-Me* (NFM) perception. While some studies show that NFM perception leads people to be less informed or even misinformed about politics, and report lower levels of political knowledge, others see it as an opportunity to stimulate political participation by reducing inequalities between individuals who may be exposed to information without needing to be interested in the first place. Additionally, previous studies measure political knowledge and interest with very general questions (e.g., "*Are you interested in politics?*"), which may lead young people to answer negatively, as their interest in politics is more issue-specific. This, we argue, can better be captured using narrower issue-specific questions (e.g., "*Are you interested in climate policy?*").

Our study delves into the interplay between Gen Z's news consumption patterns and their political interest and knowledge, as little research focuses on this generation. It assumes that *a)* incidental exposure can compensate for the lack of interest and lead to an increase in political knowledge, and *b)* young people's level of political interest differ across issues.

Data was gathered via a quantitative survey conducted among 387 participants aged between 16 and 25 from mid-September to mid-November 2023 during the Swiss federal election campaign. The survey is distributed via a smartphone application, which allows not only to portion the survey into smaller increments sent directly to participants' smartphones but also to generate all kinds of survey-related information in real-time.

Results partially support our expectations. Incidental news exposure, while not extensively stimulating young people's political knowledge, works as an equalizer between politically interested and uninterested youth. Furthermore, a more issue-based approach to measuring respondents' political interest and knowledge is worthwhile, as it shows that young people are not as uninterested in politics or uninformed about politics as is often assumed. Through these results, we gain a better understanding of the news consumption habits of Gen Z and their opinion-formation

process, but they also open up new research opportunities to explore the impact of these new habits on young people's political participation. Indeed, understanding Gen Z's habits is crucial for our media and political environment since – as the "adults of tomorrow" – this generation and their behavior are likely to affect the future of our democracies.

POL07 Young media users – Young voters

PP 0223 From the influence of the social environment to perceived disinformation – An analysis of factors influencing intentional and unintentional news avoidance among young adults

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The number of news avoiders has been increasing worldwide for several years. The reasons for this growth are manifold and range from individual influencing factors, such as personal well-being (e.g., Mannell & Meese, 2022) and trust in news (e.g., Goyanes et al., 2023), to contextual influencing factors, such as the increasing problem of disinformation (e.g., Vogler et al., 2021). Which factors are influential depends on the type of news avoidance (intentional or unintentional) as well as the occasion (topic-specific or general) and the respective sample under study. Young adults are the most likely to avoid news (Newman et al., 2022). However, only a few studies have focused on young adults and news avoidance (e.g., Edgerly, 2018) and those who did, did not differentiate between intentional and unintentional avoidance and did not take a set of different factors into account. The present study tries to close this gap by analyzing which factors explain young adults' (between 16 and 29 years old) intentional and unintentional news avoidance. This phase of life is a formative time in dealing with news and news use is significantly influenced by one's *social environment, such as one's family's news use as well as descriptive and injunctive norms*. In addition, the extent to which the *duty to keep informed, need for news, trust in news, news self-efficacy*, and *perceived disinformation* lead young news users to avoid the news was studied.

We use a representative online survey (n = 920, 49.89 % female, M_{age} = 25, SD = 3.93, 48.14 % higher education), which was fielded in October/November 2023. Multiple linear regressions were used to determine the factors that influence intentional and unintentional news avoidance among young adults. The need for news has an effect on intentional (β = -0.23***) and unintentional news avoidance (β = -0.13**). In addition, significant influences of the perception of disinformation on news avoidance were identified (intentional: β = 0.17***; unintentional: β = 0.21***). News avoidance of the social environment plays a particularly important role. There is a positive influence of descriptive social norms (intentional: β = 0.20***; unintentional: β = 0.13**) and a negative influence of following the news together with the family on intentional news avoidance (β = -0.11***). It was also confirmed that news overload influences news avoidance (intentional: β = 0.20***; unintentional: β = 0.11**). Duty to keep informed had only a significant negative effect on intentional news avoidance (β = -0.07*). News self-efficacy and trust in news turned out to be no significant influences on (un-)intentional news avoidance.

Even though no substantial differences were found between intentional and unintentional news avoidance, the study managed to highlight key factors influencing news avoidance among young adults. A high-choice media environment can overwhelm young adults and accordingly encourages them to avoid news. The influence of shared news consumption in the social environment and the orientation towards descriptive social norms are particularly relevant factors for the news behavior of young adults.

POL07 Young media users – Young voters

PP 0224 Friend or foe? Exploring young people's bias perceptions, trust and news use regarding the Middle Eastern conflict

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Some people nowadays tend to avoid the news, in part resulting from the perception of news as biased and a lack of trust in legacy media (Gorski, 2023). While media trust and the hostile media phenomenon have been studied quite extensively in regards to traditional news sources (Goyanes et al., 2023; Matthes et al., 2023), we lack similar insights for social media. Yet, research in this direction is crucial, as social media constitutes the main news source of young people, who are most affected by news avoidance (Karlsen et al., 2020). Further, troubling topics such as war are particularly avoided (Newman et al., 2023), while being seemingly omnipresent on social media in times when conflicts escalate.

Accordingly, based on previous findings (Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil de Zúñiga, 2016; Goldman & Mutz, 2011; Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2020; Soontjens & Van Erkel, 2022; Tsfati & Cohen, 2005), this study explores young people's bias perceptions and their consequences for trust and news use during the current Middle Eastern conflict, not only taking into account traditional news sources, but also social media personalities (e.g., influencers or celebrities) and peers (e.g., friends or followers).

Method

A quota-based quantitative survey (N = 569) was conducted in December 2023 among young people (49.6 % male) aged 16 to 25 years in Austria. We assessed the use of different news sources, perceived trustworthiness and bias towards the Israeli or Palestinian side based on established measures. Moreover, we assessed participants' own stance on the conflict to compute a bias variable that ranges from -1 (hostile bias), over 0 (no bias or neutral stance) to 1 (friendly bias) (M = .002, SD = .219). We controlled for age, gender, migration background and education; in the path analyses additionally for the bias and trust variables of the respective other sources. The study was IRB-approved.

Key findings

Both mainstream media (M = 2.918) and peers (M = 2.984) were deemed significantly more trustworthy than social media personalities (M = 2.743) (both $p < 0.01$). Moreover, youth perceived a hostile bias for news by mainstream media (M = -.047), a friendly bias for peers' news (M = .050), and no bias for personalities' news (M = .002) (all $p < .05$). For all sources, we found trust to increase with a friendlier bias perception (all $p < .01$). For personalities and peers, but not for mainstream media, trust in turn predicted more use of the respective source (both $p < .001$).

Implications

The hostile media phenomenon typical for traditional news media for polarized topics like the Middle Eastern conflict does not seem to extend to social media personalities and peers. Furthermore, young people seem to trust sources more that display a friendly bias towards their own stance. Rather than news avoidance, our findings suggest selective exposure to attitude-congruent news, which bears the risk of further polarization. However, our cross-sectional survey does not allow the inference of causal relationships, which is why longitudinal studies or experiments will be needed going forward.

POL07 Young media users – Young voters

PP 0225 Polarized scenario and the shift to a non-partisan relationship of young people with politics in social media in Brazil

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With the prominence of social media as a gateway to accessing news and politics in Brazil, where voting is mandatory, young adults experienced their first elections mediated by the internet and social media with their first vote. According to C. Mudde (2004, 2016, 2020), G. Mazzoleni (2008), and L. Cesarino (2020), Brazil is socially and politically polarized, facing an affective polarization (Barberá, 2020) which is calcified in the society (Nunes and Traumann, 2023) with emotional exhaustion in dealing with conflicts. In this context, the objective of this doctoral research is to understand how the use of social media networks contributes to the relationship of young adults with politics in Brazil.

Using a qualitative methodology with inductive methods (Grounded Theory), 24 semi-structured on-line interviews were conducted with young adults aged 21 to 34 in 2022, before the presidential election campaign period in Brazil. These young adults have experience with politics in the internet and social media since their first time voting and this matters to their perception of politics, as stated by E. Solano (2022), C. Fuchs (2020), A. Bruzzone (2021) and by F. Nunes and T. Traumann (2023).

This abstract presents preliminary results of a doctoral investigation to discuss new arguments such as that among these young adults, there is no depoliticization. It discusses the socially and politically polarized context Brazil has been experiencing since 2013; how this is connected to populist communications (Aalberg and de Vreese, 2016) and how this may affect people's perception of reality.

Corroborating with previous findings by E. Solano, and F. Nunes and T. Traumann, it also debates that young adults are exhausted and need to simplify life to protect themselves of fear and exhaustion. To achieve that, the argument is that they do so by curating what is important to them. The main contribution to the debate is that politics curating could be leading to a non-partisan way of perceiving politics, with a possible rejection of affiliations with political parties, nurturing non-partisan relationships, shifting partisan ideology to the curation of topics.

POL08 Social disorder through discursive polarization? What to do about polarization emerging in communication

PN 036 Drivers of polarized media debates: the case of (disruptive) climate protests

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Climate protesters are sometimes characterized as polarizing, but not all movements equally. Some movements' actions are perceived as more disruptive than others, for example, by blocking traffic on a street, compared to a registered demonstration as a more conventional form of protest. Such unconventional, illegal, or disruptive forms of protest do not necessarily lead to a rejection of the cause such as climate protection measures. Radical movements may even increase support for moderate protests . In Germany, however, support for climate protests has recently decreased significantly (More in Common, 2023 survey), after the disruptive protest organization "Letzte Generation" (Last Generation, LG) emerged. LG is said to have polarized the debate.We therefore test whether disruptive forms of climate protest lead to more polarized climate debates in Germany and which actors actually drive these polarization processes.We present results of large-scale manual and computational analyses of German media discourses during 2022 and 2023, consisting of more than 12,000 news articles and 5,000,000 Twitter posts, comparing debates surrounding Fridays for Future (FFF) and the Letzte Generation (LG). We investigate whether the discourses vary in their degrees of "discursive polarization" operationalized as the use of extreme frames, toxic and angry interactions both in media content and in network structures. The analyses of the Twitter debates show that while discourses around LG generate more attention, they also lead to more antagonistic and extreme frames, labeling protesters as terrorists or murderers. This aggression is directed not only against LG as an organization, but also against their online supporters. The LG supporters on the other hand, mainly call for action against climate change and defend the actions of the movement, while only very rarely promoting extreme doomsday scenarios or attacking the oppositional network cluster. FFF-related Twitter debates also attract extreme and uncivil content, but this content is posted by a comparatively smaller network cluster of right-wing users. A similar picture emerges in journalistic coverage: reports on FFF are less toxic and refer to the cause of the movement (climate justice), whereas LG is primarily discussed from the perspectives of the extremism and crime frames. While only right-wing populist media talk about FFF in an extreme and toxic way, these voices are found in the entire media landscape when discussing LG protests. Subsequently, the language of rightwing-populist media is adopted across all outlets for the more disruptive protests.We thus argue that mostly rightwing-populist actors (both political actors and media outlets) are responsible for the initial spreading of polarizing content in climate protest debates, resulting in an 'asymmetrical polarization' of online and news media debates: the whole debate becomes more toxic and moves to frames originally propagated by populist-right wing actors. While media outlets only quote extreme voices and do not necessarily share them in their own commentary, journalists are to be held responsible for providing salience to certain frames. While LG has provided the trigger for the polarization of the debate, it was fuelled by interested political-media actors. The process of discourse polarization is diven by the interactions of politics, journalism and digital media use under the influence of the affordances of digital platforms.

POL08 Social disorder through discursive polarization? What to do about polarization emerging in communication

PN 037 Happy to disagree: Drivers of affective and ideological polarization in interpersonal discussions

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While polarization is most pronounced in the US, there is a strong sense also in European democracies that a gulf is emerging between groups of citizens. Meanwhile, the climate crisis is becoming ever more urgent and is being increasingly politicized in culture war discourses by some political elites. The scientific consensus on climate change remains; however, citizens who are differently affected by and engaged with climate change also appear to drift apart both on policy issues and how they feel about activist interventions.We conceive of polarization as a discursive and interactive process. Polarization is thereby dynamic and engendered, shaped, reinforced, or broken down by communication, whether face-to-face or mediated. This paper deals with interpersonal communication – what Revers and Coleman term micropolarization (forthcoming) – and explores how macro-level affective and ideological divisions are enacted, negotiated, or overcome in communicative interaction.We focus on climate change as a highly politicized topic that mobilizes variant affective engagement among different groups of citizens while, partly, cutting across traditional ideological divisions. This exploratory study uses unmoderated dyadic conversations, i.e. between two participants. We explore micropolarization in two countries, the UK and Germany, both of which have

similar levels of climate denialism (YouGov, 2019), with a sample of 80 self-selected German citizens and 50 British citizens acquired through cooperation with the "My Country Talks" initiative in Germany and with The Daily Mirror in Britain. The dyadic conversations involve participants with oppositional positions on climate change paired through a recruitment survey which measured their opinions on climate activism and climate policies. People were paired and conducted unmoderated online video conversations to explore their differences. Each conversation lasted approximately one hour. After the conversation, participants completed a second survey to measure any change in their views concerning the issues discussed (ideological polarization) and their feelings towards their conversation partner (affective polarization). The interview transcripts were also coded for these categories, as well as for a range of speech acts that polarized or depolarised the subsequent discussion.First results from our analysis indicate that interpersonal conversation encourages affective depolarisation but entrenches ideological polarization. Affective depolarisation appears to be driven by the identification of common ground, often unrelated to ideological positions, the perception of willingness to listen and the articulation of appreciation of the value of the other's perspective. While these conversational moves are performed by individuals and their personal political identities, they reflect, take cues from and reference politicians' public performances of ideas and emotions. Ideological polarization seems to be more frequently reinforced than affective polarization, often accompanied by participants' misrecognition of each other's' identities. Notably, ideological polarization comes with affective depolarisation in some cases, often through active listening and expressions of empathy. In other words, the interaction made some people happy to disagree and to get along with others who think differently. Further analysis will deepen understanding of how different dimensions of de-/polarization in interaction reinforce and alleviate antagonism. A more detailed picture of micro-level polarization will also elucidate larger-scale discursive polarization.

POL08 Social disorder through discursive polarization? What to do about polarization emerging in communication

PN 038 Democratic listening in online discussions: Can AI contribute to affective depolarization?

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Ensuring freedom of expression is a key democratic value. However, expression is only one part of the communication process. On the other side of the coin is listening. It seems apparent that listening among citizens as well as between citizens and representatives is marked today by the strong penetration of everyday life with digital media, and social networking platforms in particular. These platforms are frequently subject to criticism for their inaction about political polarization on social media. Platform administrations have indeed demonstrated a certain reluctance to tackle online polarization themselves. In addition, social networking platforms have, over the past decade, become extremely eclectic in that they now combine entertainment and news. While many people use social media specifically for political participation, political discussions are frequently just a byproduct of various activities aimed at other gratifications. Therefore, we see a clear need for research-based, academic work on mitigating pernicious levels of polarization and demonstrating the feasibility of depolarization initiatives. Research shows hardly any evidence of the benefits of discussing a polarizing issue among partisan individuals. Therefore, our key milestone is not necessarily a partisan depolarization. Instead, discussants should be prepared for polarized encounters so that they know how to calibrate their own attitudes in ways that maximize their appreciation for the learning experience enabled by the encounter. Discussions should be constructed in a way that makes them win-win situations for the parties involved rather than strictly competitive situations ending in victory and defeat. The goal should be to fill the "moral empathy gap" between the strong supporters of two opposing parties or causes and facilitate the perspective-taking of those with whom one argues, thereby potentially contributing to affective depolarization.In our ongoing project we are launching an experimentally designed online discussion platform in Germany in March 2024. The recruited discussants will be allocated to either a control (unmoderated discussion) group where only basic content moderation takes place, or to one of the three treatment groups: (1) a group with pre-coded clickable reactions such as "I respect your opinion" and the ability to reply to a specific section of a comment, (2) a group moderated by researchers, (3) a group moderated by researchers with the help of a ChatGPT bot, which informs us when and how to intervene in the discussions to improve constructive engagement. The discussions will start with a vignette describing a real-life polarized scenario about meat consumption. The discussants will take pre-and post-surveys, which will allow us to measure political correlates, changes in their attitudes on the polarizing topic, and satisfaction with discussion quality. Using text analysis, we will measure and compare the constructiveness of discussions. The analysis of the survey and the text data will allow us to identify self-reported and measured cases of constructive engagement and instances of good listening. In so doing, we aim to demonstrate the potential of platform affordances, human moderation, and AI to foster democratic listening online.

POL08 Social disorder through discursive polarization? What to do about polarization emerging in communication

PN 039 Factors of Polarization and Recommendations for Depolarization: A Systematic Literature Review

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In the last decade, researchers have started investigating why public debates are polarizing. For example, they investigated polarized viewpoints, echo chambers, online networks, and hostility toward the other camp. However, while there is some research providing empirical evidence for factors of polarization, much is still unknown about how public debates can depolarize. Hence, in the current research, we conducted a systematic literature review to answer the three questions: "What kind of factors are identified as driving polarization? Which recommendations for depolarizing public debates are advanced in academic scholarship? What is the evidence-base for each factor and recommendation?"In accordance with PRISMA guidelines for systematic literature reviews and predefined criteria, we developed a search string to identify articles that either talked about polarization or depolarization in their title or abstract (N = 7,994). Next, we ordered the results based on highest citations first, assuming that these are the most influential articles in academic scholarship. We manually reviewed the titles and abstracts per year and included the first ten relevant articles that either focused on mediated communication, personal communication, and/or messaging effects. This procedure resulted in a dataset of 112 sources. After reaching inter-coder agreement on a codebook with 10% of the dataset, we coded all articles based on the following categories: conceptualization of polarization (e.g. ideological or affective); type of empirical evidence (e.g. methodology and sample); factors explaining processes of polarization; and recommendations as well as normative ideals for depolarization. The analysis of the recommendations and normative reflection was limited to the discussion sections of the articles, assuming that this is the section in which academics provide recommendations for depolarization.Our preliminary analyses suggest that the large majority of research focuses on polarization and less so on depolarization. Remarkably, the factors, recommendations, and normative ideals for depolarization that are proposed in the discussion section are oftentimes not empirically investigated in the paper, in contrast to the factors of polarization. Academics often propose 'deliberation', 'diversifying views', and 'moderation of views' as three normative ideals of depolarized public debates. As such, this research provides insight into the normative assumptions underlying polarization research and the (lack of) evidence for the recommendations made in academic articles.

POL08 Social disorder through discursive polarization? What to do about polarization emerging in communication

PN 040 Normative Reflection: Which kind of depolarization is desirable?

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Polarization is used as an analytical but also as a normative concept. This is neither a problem nor unique to the use of this concept, as long as both the analytical and the normative part are well explained and reflected. While there is a lack on the analytic side of defining polarization in many empirical studies, there is an even greater lack of normative reflection. This lack is not only philosophical, but a real-world problem, as polarization is assumed to be harmful and strategies of depolarization are (sometimes) uncritically propagated as desirable.In our contribution, we focus on mediated public debates in democratic states and explain why both polarization and depolarization are ambivalent from the perspective of normative theories of a democratic public sphere. While different theories will agree that at a certain point polarization becomes pernicious, there will remain differences where exactly the threshold should be.The normative appraisal of polarization and depolarization recommendations faces a basic challenge: how to deal with radical "fringe" positions and how to deal with the moderate center? In order to master this challenge one should distinguish between the ideological and affective dimensions of polarization.In the ideological dimension "fringe" and "center" mean radical vs. moderate opinions on issues resulting from different values, preferences, outlooks on reality. In the affective dimension it means the degree of (ideologically charged) disaffection with the outgroup. For communication this means statements expressing ideological positions and talking about out-groups, but also interacting (on digital networks) with statements and presumed members of the in- and outgroups.The fringe: we argue that neither the truth nor the most appropriate position lies necessarily in the middle of a given ideological spectrum. Depolarization measures should therefore not be directed towards cutting off ideas that are classified as "radical" at a given point in time. Yet, if radical views clearly violate important democratic values or are propagating misinformation, they should not be circulating. The center: there is not much to gain by promoting lukewarm middle positions on all possible issues debated in society. It also does not seem desirable to depolarize by

criticizing partisanship or engagement with a cause: democracy cannot survive without this. There is no democratic theory to back up worshiping disinterest in politics and depoliticization of political questions.Therefore, we argue for redefining "the middle ground" as the place where a plurality of ideas and participants are listened to as parts of a community of communication that accepts disagreement among its members. Moderate voices are thus being redefined as those who may have strong opinions but remain open to listen to dissenting voices. The rules of democratic civility rather than culturally-defined politeness are vital for the middle ground to thrive as the core of democratic debates.From this perspective the basic dilemma of depolarization can be tackled productively: the question of how to deal with radical ideas and how to engage those speakers willing to engage with a plurality of ideas. Radical ideas do not need to come with an aggressive tone, intolerant to other perspectives on a given issue. This way, moderates are not silenced and relevant ideas are not blocked out. We will end by discussing concrete depolarization recommendations resulting from the other presentations in the end, together with all panelists.

POL09 Artificial intelligence in political communication: Potentials & threats

PP 0226 Can AI promote democratic participation? Challenges in online participatory processes and the potential of AI for their resolution

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In response to decreasing acceptance and legitimacy beliefs in political decision making, politics and administration have been inviting citizens to engage in citizen participation (Newton & Geissel, 2011). Such formats include – among others – citizen councils or forums, and aim to make political decisions more legitimate, accepted, and well-founded (Nanz & Fritsche, 2012). Online platforms have become common instruments for conducting citizen participation processes (Coleman & Shane, 2012). However, their use may imply a range of problems, many of which are known from research on political online communication, such as incivility or the dominance of discourse by a few participants (e.g., Anderson et al., 2014; Graham & Wright, 2014). As a potential solution to such issues within online discussions, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being discussed (e.g., Stoll et al., 2020; Wojcieszak et al., 2021). However, there is still limited research on the question if problems similar to online discussions equally arise within citizen participation processes and how the severity of these problems are evaluated from the users' perspective. Moreover, it remains unclear to what extent and which AI methods are suitable for addressing these problems. Our study aims to address these research gaps from the citizens' perspective.

From December 2022 to March 2023, an online survey targeting individuals aged 16 and above in Germany with confirmed knowledge of or participation in online citizen participation was conducted. The adjusted sample consisted of 485 individuals (*N*; age: *M* = 46.76, *SD* = 14.48; gender: 47.8 % female). To assess the respondents' perception of challenges in online discussions, problems discussed in the literature were operationalized, and respondents indicated their agreement with statements (33 items). To measure the perceived problem-solving potential of AI, respondents were also asked to evaluate existing or potential AI methods based on their impact on improving or worsening discussions in online citizen participation (19 items).

Using exploratory factor analyses, six dimensions of problems were identified, with the "binding character" factor being rated as the most outstanding matter (*M* = 2.69, *SD* = 1.11). This factor encompasses challenges related to decision-makers taking online citizen participation seriously, translating them into concrete political solutions. Regarding the evaluation of AI methods, three factors were identified. The factor "elimination of norm violations" was rated the highest (*M* = 4.10, *SD* = 0.88), covering AI methods that detect and highlight misinformation, bots, hate comments, and redundant information.

This study, for the first time, explores the problems that citizens perceive as relevant in online citizen participation and to what extent AI can address these issues from their perspective. The findings indicate that citizens are most likely to criticize the insufficient binding character of online citizen participation. Additionally, citizens attribute the potential to all mentioned AI methods to optimize online participatory processes, with the highest potential seen in those addressing deficits such as hate comments, misinformation, or bots. Consequently, it can be concluded that, from the citizens' perspective, AI indeed has the potential to address perceived problems in online participatory processes and ultimately promote democratic participation.

POL09 Artificial intelligence in political communication: Potentials & threats

PP 0227 Authenticity in the Age of AI: Do characteristics of AI-generated disinformation images and AI-detection tools influence judgments of authenticity?

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Recently, sophisticated AI systems have demonstrated an unparalleled ability to generate coherent and contextually relevant content, raising concerns about the potential misuse of their output. One pressing concern is the

emergence of false content generated by these models and its potential influence on individuals, with an alarming surge of AI-enabled false content already spreading its way through the information ecosystem (Newsguard, 2023). AI-generated disinformation in the form of images present a further challenge due to the faster speed at which visual information is absorbed and its longer-lasting cognitive influence, compared with textual information (Jakus, 2018). Already, AI-generated imagery is being used to propagate political disinformation campaigns (Klepper & Swenson, 2023). Thus, there remains a need to understand which factors individuals rely upon when determining whether images are AI-generated, particularly when they can be used to spread disinformation.

Most AI-generated content is characterised by its hyper-realistic quality which can be leveraged to spread propaganda circulated by even authority figures (Collins, 2023). Furthermore, misleading content also tends to employ strong emotional appeals in its messaging in order to evoke arousal and promote engagement (Paschen, 2019), a tactic used by disinformation actors with the assistance of generative AI (BBC News, 2023; Upton-Clark, 2023). Therefore, it is important to explore how aesthetic realism and emotional salience, as key features of both AI-generated content and disinformation, may influence authenticity judgments of AI-generated disinformation images. This is the first aim of the study, which is being explored by conducting an online survey in which 288 UK-based participants are presented with both AI-generated disinformation images and non-AI generated images. This experimental study employs a 2 (aesthetic realism: high vs low) x 2 (emotional salience: high vs low) between-subjects design, and measures participants' authenticity judgments (whether they believe the image is AI-generated or not) and how confident they feel in their authenticity judgment.

With the ongoing development of AI-powered tools to assist with the detection of AI-generated images, it is also important to understand how authenticity judgments may be influenced by the verdict of an AI-detector. With AI already being leveraged for propagating political ideologies (Ulmer et al., 2023), it is almost inevitable that users' judgments will be influenced by whether the content they see is aligned with their political ideology or not, as vastly demonstrated with cases of non-AI misinformation (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). The second aim of the study is therefore to investigate whether the key features of the AI-generated disinformation (aesthetic realism and emotional salience) and the political alignment of the verdict with one's own ideology will play a role in individuals' likelihood to change their judgments. This is being investigated by presenting the same participants with the verdict of an existing AI-detection tool, and giving them the option to change their own judgments based on its verdict. The results of this investigation may assist with the development of disinformation detection tools, as well as strategies that mitigate the spread of deceptive, synthesised visual content in the digital age.

POL09 Artificial intelligence in political communication: Potentials & threats

PP 0228 AI governance in the spotlight: An empirical analysis of Dutch political parties' strategies for the 2023 elections

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AI-based technologies are having an increasing impact on society, which naturally raises the question how this technology will be addressed politically. Thereby, political actors have a dual role to play (Laux et al., 2023): They can provide investment to enhance the efficiency and usage of these systems in different societal areas while also bearing the responsibility of safeguarding citizens from potential harm (Kuziemski & Misuraca, 2020). Hereby, the degree of politicization of the topic, i.e. if a topic is part of the public and political debate, has an immense influence on the political approach to tackle the issue. The more a topic is politicized, the more urgency political parties experience to develop concrete governance approaches.

Previous work has evaluated different AI reports, political strategies and guidelines providing recommendations on their assessments (Bareis & Katzenbach, 2022; Cath et al., 2018; Dutton et al., 2018; Liebig et al., 2022). However, existing research has not yet analysed party programs in terms of both discourse around artificial intelligence and policy recommendations within an election context. This study focuses on the Netherlands and considers and provides an empirical analysis to answer the following question: *How do parties discuss AI in their political programs for the 2023 election in the Netherlands?*

To answer this research question, we conducted a manual content analysis of all party manifestos for the 2023 elections in the Netherlands. Our analysis revealed a disparity in addressing artificial intelligence between the parties. Populist parties, such as PVV, FvD and JA21, demonstrate less engagement with AI, leaving their governance to large tech corporations or the European Union. Some of the major centre parties address AI to a moderate extent along their party lines, but without dedicating separate sections to the issue. These findings suggest a need for a more extensive thematization and more diverse range of perspectives on AI's role in society.

Moreover, our findings on policy proposals of the party programs highlight the absence of a holistic vision in managing AI's impact across societal sectors, with a specific overlook on the private sector. Some parties suggest using AI to drive economic growth and to relieve the strain on sectors like healthcare. However, these proposals often lack a comprehensive strategy that takes into account AI's potential to cause discrimination, spread misinformation,

and exacerbate polarization (Cath et al., 2018). This gap highlights the need for investments in AI to be coupled with robust consumer protection strategies to address and mitigate its risks across all sectors. Additionally, our findings reveal a consensus across parties on the need for transparency in AI processes, from data training to output verification. However, this measure alone would not be sufficient to address the implications of AI (Ananny & Crawford, 2018). Instead, we recommend to implement mechanisms that can enable the participation of the public to address the issues related to AI in the Netherlands.

POL09 Artificial intelligence in political communication: Potentials & threats

PP 0229 Leveraging OpenAI's multimodal APIs for analyzing digital propaganda in political communication

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This study introduces a novel approach to analyzing digital propaganda on social media, focusing on the political communication sphere. By harnessing the multimodal analytical capabilities of OpenAI's ChatGPT API, the research aims to provide significant contributions to the study of political communication, mainly through the analysis of video content such as news and speeches. The proposed methodology emphasizes the transformation of audiovisual media into a comprehensive dataset for in-depth analysis.

The process begins with converting audio from selected videos into textual transcripts using OpenAI's Whisper API. This step ensures the accurate capture of spoken content, forming the textual basis for further analysis. In parallel, vital visual frames are extracted from the videos at specified intervals. This automated extraction focuses on identifying crucial scenes and elements that visually represent the themes and strategies inherent in digital propaganda.

The core of this methodology lies in integrating these textual and visual data using OpenAI's GPT-4-Vision, a model adept at understanding and correlating multimodal information. This approach allows for synthesizing the extracted frames with the corresponding audio transcripts, enabling a comprehensive analysis combining visual cues with spoken content. The GPT-4-Vision model's capacity to process sequences of images in a single frame, as demonstrated in empirical tests, is particularly advantageous in preserving the contextual flow of the video content.

A preliminary pilot study was conducted with a dataset consisting of a series of political news themed TikTok videos (n = 30) from multiple media accounts to test the methodology. The pilot study applied our methodology to 30 diverse political news themed TikTok videos, focusing on the automated detection and categorization of digital propaganda elements. The preliminary results, when compared to human-generated textual analyses, were promising. The Whisper API demonstrated high accuracy in transcribing political rhetoric across various accents. GPT-4-Vision successfully identified key themes, such as political ideology and policy critique, with approximately 85% accuracy. It correctly categorized persuasive techniques in 78% of instances. The more complex task of demographic targeting was identified with a 65% detection rate. These outcomes underscore the method's potential in nuanced automated political content analysis and highlight areas for future enhancement.

Future research will expand the dataset, incorporating a more extensive and diverse range of political content from multiple sources. This expansion is intended to provide a more comprehensive validation of the methodology and its applicability across varied political narratives. It is anticipated that this enlarged dataset will enhance the depth and accuracy of the analysis, offering a more robust understanding of digital propaganda's thematic focus, persuasive strategies, and audience targeting.

In conclusion, this research marks a step forward in the automated analysis of digital propaganda. Our pilot study demonstrates promising results in political communication analysis, leveraging advanced speech recognition and multimodal techniques. This foundation sets the stage for further refinement and exploration in automated content analysis.

Keywords: Digital Propaganda, Political Communication, OpenAI, Whisper API, GPT-4-Vision, Multimodal Analysis, Social Media, Automated Content Analysis

POL09 Artificial intelligence in political communication: Potentials & threats

PP 0230 Do generative AI tools increase disinformation perceptions?

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The recent proliferation of generative AI tools has raised concerns about potential misuse, such as the creation of deceptive content. This study explores how AI tools like ChatGPT and Midjourney impact disinformation perceptions. While people have a general tendency to passively accept the information they see, a tendency known as truth default (Levine, 2014), we are interested in whether knowledge of generative AI tools has the ability to undermine this. By investigating whether learning about these tools contributes to increased distrust and cynicism towards

political information, the study aims to shed light on the potential consequences of generative AI for disinformation perceptions.

We employ a between-subjects experimental design (n = 907) with three conditions: one involving AI tools used to create art, another showcasing AI tools' potential for generating false information, and a control group with no AI exposure. Participants in the experimental conditions watch one of two explainer videos on generative AI tools, namely ChatGPT (for text) combined with Midjourney (for images). The videos explain how these tools can be used to generate text and matching images. The explainer videos vary in the purpose of the AI tools. In one experimental condition, the video shows how AI tools can be used for art, namely to create a digital drawing and a poem. This is to mimic the intended use of these tools as advertised by the creators. In the other experimental condition the video shows how AI tools can be used to generate false information, namely a fake news article and matching photograph. This is to mimic how the news media have been reporting on the possible dangers of generative AI tools. A control condition was also included where participants are not exposed to any AI tools.

The dependent variable consists of ratings of 8 pre-tested news media items showing a headline and matching image. Four of these stimuli contain true information taken from news media, while the other four contain false information generated by AI tools. Participants are asked to judge the veracity of each stimulus and the extent to which they are certain of their answers. The stimuli are presented in random order. We hypothesized that individuals are overall more likely to rate online information as false after being exposed to generative AI tools (H1), irrespective of whether the information was actually true or false. We find support for this hypothesis, meaning that awareness of generative AI undermines truth perceptions. Exploratory analyses show that this effect is stronger for real news than for false information. We also hypothesized that uncertainty is a mediator in this relationship, such that individuals who learn about AI tools experience more uncertainty, and this in turn increases individuals' tendency to judge information as false (H2). We do not find support for the mediation hypothesis. Still, our overall findings highlight potential dangers of generative AI, not for the creation of disinformation but for the perceptual crisis around information. The mere knowledge of generative AI seems to increase distrust and cynicism towards political information.

POL10 From sharing to discussing: Online media experiences

PP 0316 Mapping news sharing on Twitter – A bottom-up approach based on network embeddings

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News sharing on digital platforms is a crucial activity that determines the digital spaces millions of users navigate. Sharing a news article can influence the visibility of the item in global networks as well as in small networked publics. Especially in the study of political news sharing, previous research based on digital trace data has focused on news (sources) that were labelled as misinforming or partisan *ex ante*. This can be useful in may study attempts but it reduces the diversity of news content into binary categories. Eventually, also a partisan source may produce a significant share of balanced information, or a mostly 'impartial' news source may produce pieces that support a certain view. Newsfeed environments contribute to the unbundling of news and thereby disconnect the source from the news item. Yet, we know very little to what extent news sharing behavior crosses partisan, topic, or outlet lines.

To address this gap, we utilize a combination of three data sources to elucidate the extent to which sharing patterns of certain political user groups consist of specific outlets/topics/articles or have unknown diversity. Which types of news are shared in different political regions of Twitter? Are there news that are shared across the political spectrum?

To this end, we combine multiple data sources via state-of-the-art network embedding methods and automated text analysis:

- We collected all tweets which contained a link to one of 26 legacy or alternative German news outlets for March 2023 (2.5M tweets).
- We crawled the full texts of the articles if available (30K unique texts); articles were assigned topics with a paragraph-based BERTopic model.
- We collected the Twitter follower network of German MPs; we embedded all followers and MPs in a latent political space using correspondence analysis. CA reveals two clearly interpretable dimensions: one shows a clear distinction between *AfD* and MPs of all other parties; in the other dimension, all parties except *AfD* are arranged on a left-right axis.

We investigate which types of articles are shared in which political regions of the latent space. We observe interesting, partly counterintuitive sharing patterns: Left-leaning outlets are shared by users in different political regions if the topic serves their political cause (qualitative example: an article of *Der Spiegel* about a judge that justified a decision by referring to the Koran was shared mostly by users following *AfD* or *CDU/FDP* politicians). On the other

hand, certain topics are shared only by users in very localized political regions of the network (example: articles classified as dealing with the topic of a speed limit on German highways are nearly only shared by users close to *SPD/Greens*). We explore these patterns systematically. This approach allows a very general, yet topic- and outlet-specific view on user sharing behavior on Twitter.

POL10 From sharing to discussing: Online media experiences

PP 0317 Sharing is caring? The influence of media use on (political) news sharing on social media

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News sharing on social network sites plays a key part in our understanding of digital news distribution and consumption. Digital platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are easy-to-use tools that make sharing news articles, both for individuals as for media organizations, very simple. News sharing on social media sites altered the way in which citizens engage with news. It is therefor not surprising that news sharing has been the subject of much research in recent years. Most research focused on sharing-related features of news and individual users and it seems to be widely accepted that news sharers are active news users with a rich news diet. This notion is often studied in a very aggregated way without making a distinction between mainstream and alternative outlets while it can be expected that specific forms of news use impact sharing behavior. Moreover, news use and sharing behavior are often seen as something static while research has shown that contextual factors also have a significant impact on both news consumption and news sharing. Especially times of crisis or instability alter the way citizens engage with news. During these periods, citizens rely on the one hand more on news media as source of information, changing their news use. On the other hand, citizens also share more news on social media with the primary motivation of information sharing. This paper therefore aims to study the mutual relation between news use and news sharing in a longitudinal way, including a crisis period (COVID-19) and routine periods in order to answer our main research question: How does mainstream, leftwing and rightwing media use affect news sharing on social media, and vice versa?

Method

To do this, we conducted a four wave panel study in Sweden. The panel survey is web-based, with a probability sample of Swedish residents ages 18-years or older. The first panel wave was in the field between February/March 2020 and the fourth, and last, wave in February/March 2023. To identify individuals' exposure to both mainstream and non-mainstream news sources we asked citizens in the four waves what kind of media they use in a typical week. The degree of news sharing was measured in four waves by asking respondents how often they share news on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or YouTube. As we are interested in the dynamic interaction between media use and news sharing, we rely on a random intercept cross-lagged panel model to analyze the relation between news sharing and media use.

Results

Our preliminary results indicate that media use affects sharing and not vice versa but only from wave 1 to wave 2. This could signal a crisis (COVID-19) effect which indicates that the relationship between news sharing and media use changes during crisis periods. In routine periods the type and amount of news citizens use does not significantly impact their sharing behavior while in crisis times media use of alternative media (both left wing as right wing) and mainstream media leads to more news sharing.

POL10 From sharing to discussing: Online media experiences

PP 0318 All the (fake) news that's fit to share? News values in perceived misinformation across 24 countries

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Introduction

Misinformation and its spread online are widely recognized as pivotal challenges to democratic societies in the 21st century. While there has been a surge in scholarly interest surrounding the content of political misinformation online, a large proportion of this research concerns misinformation in Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic (WEIRD) countries. Furthermore, findings are often not interpreted systematically in relation to properties that journalists rely on to capture the attention of audiences, i.e., into news values. Tandoc et al (2021) point out that "[w]hile many studies have focused on the 'fakeness' of fake news, fewer have examined its 'newsness.'" (p. 111). They find timeliness, negativity, and prominence to play a role, while informativeness, familiarity, and importance are highlighted in other research as prevalent in misinformation (Chen et al., 2023).

Building on this research, we seek to close the gap on comparative studies of news values in misinformation with a perspective that emphasizes non-WEIRD countries. We formulate two research questions: 1) Which differences

exist in the prevalence of news values in items from either WEIRD or non-WEIRD countries? 2) Which differences exist in the prevalence of news values in either flagged or non-flagged items?

Data & Methods

We analyze URLs shared on Facebook in 24 countries between 2011 and 2023 that were either flagged or not for misinformation by users. As flagging is user feedback, we rely on claims made on the accuracy of information, rather than objectively verified facts. Our choice of countries is based on the number of Facebook users per country, as well as on a roughly even selection of WEIRD and non-WEIRD countries. The news values that we focus on are: conflict, negativity, prominence, informativeness, individualization, proximity, and superlativeness.

Our methods for detecting news values divide into rule-based approaches that match keywords or databases and machine learning models that are trained and evaluated on a sample of our data that is annotated by three trained human coders. For each of the classifiers for the individual news values, we reach F_1-scores of between 0.6 and 0.88.

Results

For all news values there is a significant difference with regard to whether they are from WEIRD or non-WEIRD countries. The prevalence of conflict, negativity, superlativeness, proximity, and informativeness tends to be higher in WEIRD countries and for prominence and individualization lower. For all news values with the exception of proximity there is a significant association for the difference of flagged and non-flagged items. Prominence tends to be lower in flagged items but the remaining news values tend to have a higher prevalence in flagged items. Note, however, that while the differences are significant, the effect size is mostly small. Our findings show that "newsness" is relevant to misinformation and differs across countries.

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POL10 From sharing to discussing: Online media experiences

PP 0319 What do users take away from political discussions online? A survey study on the perceived effects of online political discussions on nine different social media platforms

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Political discussions are frequently taking place on social media platforms. It is crucial for political communication research to understand how these discussions affect users' perceptions and cognitions. We focus on the perceived effects of participating in online political discussions (outcome dimension; Friess & Eilders, 2015). Drawing on deliberative theory and research, we assume that participating in discussions provides users with the opportunity to actively process information, which promotes knowledge gain (Intyaswati et al., 2021). Thus, we hypothesize that the more frequently people participate in political discussions on social media platforms, the more they perceive that they are gaining knowledge on the topics discussed (H1). Secondly, ample research indicates that participation in deliberation can foster opinion change (Grönlund et al., 2009). Thus, we assume that the frequency of people's participation in online discussions is positively related to their perceived willingness to change their opinions (H2). Still, particular for social media, studies have argued that the algorithms employed on social media platforms may promote polarization by favoring polemical and uncivil content (Jost & Ziegele, 2022), leading users to perceive society as more polarized than it actually is (Kelm et al., 2023). We thus hypothesize that the more frequently people participate in online discussions, the more they feel that society is polarized (H3). Ultimately, social media platforms have different affordances and are attractive for different user groups. We therefore ask whether users of different social media platforms take away different outcomes from the discussions.

A standardized online survey was conducted among people aged 16+ in Germany. The data was collected via an online access panel. The sample (N = 1,181) was quoted to represent the German population regarding age, gender, and formal education. We surveyed users' participation and perceived effects of participating in discussions on nine different social media platforms.

Regression analyses with several control variables indicate that the frequency of participating in social media discussions positively correlates with users' perceived knowledge gain (H1). Supporting H2, respondents also perceive that they are more likely to change their opinion the more often they participate in discussions. Still, as expected, participation in discussions also results in a heightened perception of societal polarization (H3). Significant differences were observed across all platforms for communication outcomes. Perceived polarization occurs less frequently on WhatsApp, but it is more common on YouTube and Instagram. Opinion changes and knowledge gains are rare

on Facebook, but more frequent on Reddit. The impact of platform differences on polarization was smaller than for the other outcomes.

These results offer valuable insights into the role of political online discussions on different social media platforms. According to people's perceptions, they differently promote individual knowledge growth and opinion change. However, they can also contribute to perceptions of societal polarization. These findings indicate the need to explore more deeply which affordances of different online platforms thrive positive deliberative outcomes, and how specific experiences of discussion quality are related to perceptions of polarization or social distrust.

POL10 From sharing to discussing: Online media experiences

PP 0320 Online parenting forum as a collaborative space for negotiating collective identity and reducing uncertainty and polarization in the context of crisis events

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The recent accumulation of crisis events in Europe heightened uncertainty among citizens and a related need to reduce it. Online political communication research stresses that online spaces facilitate collective identity formation and group identification, providing participants with emotional support and recognition leading to uncertainty reduction. However, as the literature suggests, the formation of online communities can also be accompanied by negative phenomena such as fragmentation or polarisation, mainly in crisis times.

In this paper, we focused on one type of online community, the parenting forum, which can be classified as a third space, a primarily non-political online environment where a considerable amount of political talk emerges. The primary purpose of such online spaces is exchanging experiences, ideas, or mutual support, i.e., collaboration. At the same time, however, individual participants in such forums may hold different political positions and perspectives, especially in the context of polarising topics such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

In our research, we were specifically interested in the potential conflict between the two collective identities – the purpose-based and the ideology-based. To explore their relationship, we asked how dissenting ideological identities are negotiated in the parenting forum (RQ1) and what strategies are employed to mitigate conflict stemming from different ideological positions (RQ2) with regard to the fact that participants primarily need to collaborate in the forum. To answer these questions, we analysed contributions on one of the most influential Czech parenting forums – emimino.cz. For each crisis, we selected three potentially conflicting discussion threads: the three largest debates on the vaccination against COVID-19 and on the aid provided to refugees from Ukraine.

A qualitative exploratory analysis (employing open and axial coding from grounded theory) of more than 2 600 contributions revealed that the parenting forum represents an ideologically diverse environment in which discussants employed two fundamentally different ways of negotiating their diverse ideological identities. They either attempted to mitigate conflict or, in a minority of cases, excluded ideological views that were identified as extreme and unacceptable. To mitigate conflicts arising from differing ideological positions, participants acknowledged the emotions, worries, and opinions of their opponents, shared information and expertise, showed considerable discussion patience, providing their opponents with further arguments and details, or deliberately avoided conflict to prevent group division. Participants whose attitudes were deemed unacceptable (sharing misinformation or disinformation, strongly pro-Russian or anti-Ukrainian stances), were strictly disciplined, pilloried, or even excluded from the discussion. Thus, we conclude, the purpose-based collective identity based on supportive group culture influences reactions to dissenting political identities, and the informational and emotional labour that individual participants implement to maintain good relations contributes to reducing polarization inside the forum, with potential effects for political identities of the participants outside this environment.

POL11 Propaganda in the digital era

PP 0321 Dissecting Russian propaganda: A comparative analysis of justification narratives for Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on RT and NewsFront

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Public opinion has the potential to influence conflict dynamics, particularly regarding the financial and military support provided to conflict parties by the international community (see: Baum & Potter, 2008; Burstein, 2003). Consequently, Russia's strategic communication efforts to justify its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 are crucial for diminishing international support for Ukraine, forming a key component of Russia's foreign information campaigns (Claessen, 2023; Doroshenko & Lukito, 2021).

This on-going project seeks to investigate how Russia justified its full-scale invasion of Ukraine to an international audience through its foreign communication outlets. It thereby focuses on Russia Today (RT) and NewsFront as

Russia's main foreign communication outlets and investigates comparatively how both channels justify the invasion in the course of the first 1.5 years following the invasion.

To do so, we compare the presence of re-occurring strategic narratives for the justification of the invasion of Ukraine across all six language versions of state-owned RT and all ten of the FSB-controlled NewsFront and between the outlets. We thereby also aim to identify different strategic approach between platforms and specific messaging towards distinct target groups operationalized through the different language versions.

To achieve this, first, we derived a set of primary justifications used by Russia's regime for the war in Ukraine from qualitative text analyses and with the help of conflict experts. We then employed machine learning to determine the prevalence of these justification narratives in multilingual articles from RT (n = 246,310) and NewsFront (n = 159,724).

Our preliminary findings suggest that RT and NewsFront tailored specific narratives for different international audiences, aiming to manipulate public opinion and garner support for the invasion. The Russian regime strategically crafted diverse justifications, aligning them with the cultural, political, and historical contexts of each target audience, thereby aiming to amplify their propaganda efforts. We conclude that the Russian propaganda apparatus operates a sophisticated and multifaceted propaganda network, strategically customizing content for various targeted international publics.

POL11 Propaganda in the digital era

PP 0322 Troubles in Algorithmic information environments: Cross-country audit of Russian Propaganda on Search Engines

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Russian propaganda influence on public discourse around the world has been a persistent concern since the 2016 US Election (Mueller, 2019). The intensity of Kremlin's digital deception campaigns has amplified following the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine (Litvinenko, 2022). Despite burgeoning literature on Russian digital propaganda, we still lack a comprehensive account on how online platforms manage problematic content produced by the Kremlin and how their algorithms shape information environments where users are exposed to propaganda-related topics. To remedy this limitation, our paper focuses on how platform algorithms counter and sometimes facilitate the spread of various dimensions of Russian propaganda, such as anti-system claims about failing Western democracies, conservative values, and conspiratorial content. Particularly, we focus on search engines and their role in algorithmic information curation – understood as a process of "organizing, selecting and presenting subsets of a corpus of information" to users (Rader & Gray, 2015) – of propaganda-related content.

To systematically investigate algorithmic curation of Russian propaganda, we perform an agent-based comparative algorithmic audit of a selection of the world's most used search engines: Google, Bing, Yandex, and DuckDuckGo. Earlier research (e.g. Toepfl et al., 2023) has already been looking at how search engines interact with Russian propaganda, albeit it has so far focused primarily on the Russian domestic information environment and the neighboring countries and studied a small sample of propaganda-related topics. By contrast, we use Google Compute Cloud to simulate user browsing activity in 6 countries (USA, India, Qatar, Brazil, Poland, Germany) and use a structured corpus of Russian propaganda statements based on dimensionality analysis translated into 9 languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Hindi, Polish, Arabic, Russian, and Ukrainian). Using 144 queries, we investigate what sources different search engines return in response to queries in top 10 search results, whether these sources support or debunk common propaganda narratives, and how the outputs vary depending on the location and the language of the query.

Our preliminary observations highlight more impact of the language than location on search engines' outputs that in some cases leads to concerning amount of Russian state-controlled sources. This is troubling due to search algorithms potentially amplifying information inequalities between different user groups and points to the importance of a comprehensive understanding of information environments surrounding critical political topics and the role of algorithmic systems in shaping these environments.

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POL11 Propaganda in the digital era

PP 0323 Gendered disinformation as a tool of Russian information influence in Germany? A frame analysis of gender-specific discourse on RT Deutsch

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Russian disinformation campaigns have received a plethora of media, policy and academic attention. Its gendered dimensions, however, have not been explored to a sufficient extent. This important element of Russian public opinion influence campaigns is based on the Russian heteronormative traditional values discourse that has been known to not only function to unify Russia under a national idea (e.g. Wilkinson 2018), but to also facilitate coalitions of states in opposition to the 'liberal West' (Edenborg 2023; Moss 2017). Research has moreover suggested that Russian disinformation in Nordic European countries has drawn upon gendered national identities and discussions about gender and migration (Edenborg 2021). However, existing studies tend to overlook what function gender-specific content plays in campaigns targeting German-speaking populations and how a distinction between different forms of gendered disinformation in Russian information campaigns can be made.

Examining the entirety of content on Russia's most renown propaganda outlet RT Deutsch (formerly, Russia Today), this paper aims to detect gender-specific framing, discerning between normative, misleading and outright false content, and to what extent they have functioned as a "symbolic glue" (Kováts and Põim 2015) to link together different topics over time. First, gender-related RT Deutsch articles are selected with a theoretically-grounded dictionary of keywords on gender and sexual orientation, which is expanded with common tags used by RT, followed by LDA topic modeling. Filtered data is then analyzed using Framing Analysis (Pan and Kosicki 1993, 2010) comparing two points in time, 2014/15 and 2022/23. In a third step, the article uses similarity analysis with the EUvsDisinfo dataset to cross check the veracity of specific statements appearing in identified frames to discern the extent to which misinformation forms part of gender-related discourses on RT.

Preliminary results show that the gender-related content on RT Deutsch is structured around homo-, transphobic, antifeminist, and conspiratorial themes, linking to topics such as traditional and/ or Christian values, child protection, social grievances, anti-capitalism and anti-elitism. We found that articles relating to gender, sexual orientation, and traditional family values have been highly present on RT since 2018. Anti-LGBT content peaked in 2021, but has since remained at a high level. These first results demonstrate how gender-specific heteronormative frames are employed in media that function as outlets for Russian information influence. We anticipate this work to be a starting point for further considerations of how national value-related discourses can be hijacked by foreign authoritarian state actors to amplify discriminatory, anti-liberal value discourses and thus amplify splits in democratic societies.

POL11 Propaganda in the digital era

PP 0324 Who believes Russian propaganda in Germany: A survey of the alternative media users

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Russian propaganda has for long been recognised as a disruptive interference in the affairs of European states and a potential threat to democracy (Mueller, 2019; Stelzenmüller, 2017). Particularly, Russian influence campaigns have targeted alternative communities in Western democracies, aimed at amplifying anti-establishment sentiments prevalent in both far-right and far-left circles in Europe as well as skepticism and distrust in Western institutions (Kuznetsova, 2021; Orttung & Nelson, 2018). In contrast to burgeoning literature on Russian propaganda campaigns, there is only little research on its target groups and audiences.

This paper addresses this gap by focusing on one of such groups, the audience of alternative media sources, which tend to oppose mainstream media coverage (Holt et al., 2019) and are often associated with the spread of misinformation and conspiracy theories. Our paper presents an online survey of more than 2,000 alternative media users recruited through a large German panel provider. Respondents were asked which alternative media, including pro-Russian sources popular in Germany (e.g., RT, Sputnik News), they consume and how frequently. We also measured to what extent they support some of the key Russian propaganda narratives using 16 items, which were constructed based on the qualitative analysis of Russian state media coverage.

Firstly, our analysis focuses on describing the group of pro-Russian media users, based on their demographics, political attitudes, political efficacy, general, institutional and media trust, as well as conspiracy mentality. Our preliminary results show that Russian propaganda media users have comparatively higher political interest than the rest of the

respondents, predominantly share far-right political leaning and express low levels of trust in political institutions and the media. Secondly, we use dimensionality analysis to understand which of the main discursive aspects of Russian propaganda, such as anti-western, anti-Ukrainian, multipolarity, and conservatism narratives, as well as context-specific narratives about the ongoing war in Ukraine, resonate most with the alternative media audience in Germany. To our knowledge, this is the first study to provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the group of alternative media users choosing pro-Russian sources.

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POL11 Propaganda in the digital era

PP 0325 Russian state-controlled narratives in the Italian public discourse: A computational analysis

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Following the large-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russian wartime propaganda has taken on new dimensions in the digital space, in particular after the Western sanctions and the blockages introduced against the country's international outlets operating abroad Sputnik and RT.

Recent studies have found links between far-right groups on social media and Russian propaganda (Bovet & Grindrod, 2022). In turn, Russian propaganda narratives have been spread abroad by practices of information warfare through, for example, entertainment media (Melykh & Korbut, 2020), Twitter messages (Geissler et al., 2023) and via trolls (Golovchenko et al., 2020).

In this context, Italy represents a noteworthy and still-unfolding case. Despite being a markedly Western country, Italy witnessed its citizens' support for Ukraine rapidly deteriorating and concerns have been raised that pro-Russian communication on the invasion of Ukraine by Italian political actors and media may have contributed to this development (Tondo, 2023). Several studies (e.g. Diamanti, 2022) point to the strong presence of the Russian propaganda narratives in the Italian public discourse, mainly in the ranks of the far-right and among voters of the so-called "antisystem" parties. Moreover, while existing research has extensively explored Italy's response to the full-scale of Ukraine including far-right Italian mobilization, NATO's strategic communication in Italy, and the Italian diplomatic response to the war, to date, no academic study has set out to investigate the resonance of the current Russian propaganda narratives in the Italian public opinion and press.

This project aims at investigating elements of Kremlin's propaganda in the context of the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine and how these state-sponsored narratives spilled into the Italian public debate and reached Italian audiences online. It does so by employing Semantic Textual Similarity analysis and content analysis on two Russian state-controlled news outlets (*Russia Today* and *Vesti.ru*) and two Italian anti-system news outlets (*ByoBlu* and *Il Paragone*). Utilizing pre-trained multilingual models, sentence embeddings will be generated to assess the similarity between articles from the two language contexts. The Euclidean distance between Russian and Italian articles will then be calculated for hierarchical clustering, allowing for an interpretation of the clusters and identification of Russian narrative frames in the Italian public discourse, through careful consideration of political context, source characteristics, and linguistic elements.

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POL12 Narratives and frames in the media

PP 0326 With EU or without EU: Unravelling the dynamics of media-fuelled migration narratives and their role in EU political rifts and policy inefficacy to refugee crises

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Migration has sparked intense debates within the European Union over the last decade, challenging the fundamental principles of the EU project itself. These discussions, often politicised, presented contrasting moral viewpoints and policy solutions, and evolved in substance and scope over time, reflecting the historical and geopolitical contexts in which migrant displacements unfolded.

This paper seeks to delve into the evolution of narratives surrounding migration within public and political discourse at the EU level. It aims to comparatively scrutinize their dynamics across media, politics, and policymaking, focusing on two significant European-wide migration cases: the 2015 'refugee crisis' and the 2022 Ukraine's displacements.

Our research questions encompass the following:

RQ1. To what extent are media narratives on migration endorsed by EU political figures?

RQ2. How do these narratives transform as they transition from media to EU political and policy discussions?

RQ3. What influence do populist narratives wield within European institutions, ultimately shaping EU policy outcomes?

Building upon diverse approaches in policy analysis and narrative construction, our theoretical framework integrates Jones & McBeth's (2010) Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) – encompassing narrative elements like setting, characters, and moral of the story – alongside Schmidt's (2008) conceptualisation of communicative and coordinative spheres in policymaking. This framework, combined with Boswell's (2011) distinction between lay and technocratic styles in different spheres, sheds light on the transformation of narratives across different contexts. Additionally, Garcés & Pastore's (2022) conceptualisation of narrative pervasiveness and transformativity aids in understanding their permeation and impact on policymaking.

Our approach adopts a triangulation of methods. Prevalent migration narratives circulating on European media were identified through second-source data emerging from qualitative content analyses of major newspapers across six EU Member States (Boswell & Smellie, 2023). We then conducted a software-assisted discourse analysis of over 100 EU political and policy documents, to trace narrative adaptations across media, politics, and policymaking. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with EU policy officers. We employed Boswell & Smellies' (2023) four-dimensional typology (embracing, adapting, rejecting, ignoring) to better comprehend how these narratives influenced political discourse and policymaking within the EU.

The findings revealed a rich spectrum of narratives during the 2015 refugee crisis within EU Member-State media, ranging from humanitarian to security-oriented frames. This diversity translated into varying positions within EU politics, with a slight prevalence of narratives supporting intra-EU solidarity. However, as these narratives entered policymaking, a shift towards more regulatory stances emphasising responsibility over solidarity emerged. Notably, lay media narratives opposing the EU mandatory migrant relocation scheme likely influenced this shift, leading to its rejection.

In contrast, during the 2022 Ukrainian crisis, a convergence on solidarity narratives emerged across media, politics, and policymaking. This narrative consistency among different domains enabled the swift activation of the EU Temporary Protection Directive, facilitating a collective response to Ukraine's displacements. This underscores the role of narrative alignment in expediting joint EU policy responses to migration. It also emphasises framing migration beyond irregular arrivals, linking it to geopolitical and policy issues of greater value for European societies, aiming to steer clear of populist rhetoric and effectively address migration at the EU level.

POL12 Narratives and frames in the media

PP 0327 Beyond neutrality: A longitudinal analysis of gender and party dynamics in the tone of US political media reporting

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Media coverage plays a central role in shaping modern politics by directing voters' attention to specific candidates and influencing their perceptions of candidates' traits and competencies (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014). The tone of news coverage in particular stands out as crucial in influencing election outcomes. Specifically, positive media portrayals and media endorsements can enhance voter support for politicians during both election cycles and routine periods (Kahn & Kenney, 2002). Conversely, a negative tone in media coverage can undermine voter trust and suppress voter turnout (Ansolabehere et al., 1994; Van der Pas & Aaldering, 2018). There is some evidence that female politicians are portrayed more negatively in the media than their male counterparts (e.g., Heldman et al. 2005; Lawrence & Rose, 2010). However, the results of previous studies are largely inconsistent. Reaching a scholarly consensus remains challenging due to several limitations, including the use of outdated data and limited samples and the lack of longitudinal perspective. This study aims to fill these gaps by examining the evolution of positive and negative media coverage of 1,095 US politicians over the past decade to answer the following research questions (RQ): *How does the amount of positive and negative coverage differ for female and male politicians from different parties* (RQ1) and *how does this vary over time* (RQ2)?

Using state space models, we performed a longitudinal time series analysis of more than 600,000 news articles from 18 national US media outlets. Three trained coders labeled a dataset of over 8,000 sentences mentioning the politicians of interest, with the final label (neutral, negative, or positive) for each sentence determined by a majority of the raters. The human-labeled sentences were used to fine-tune the RoBERTa sentiment model to filter out neutral content (F1 score = .93). A fine-tuned version of the SieBERT model was then used to to classify the remaining sentences into positive (F1 score = .69) and negative (F1 score = .97) sentiments.

The results of our time series analysis indicate that although political reporting in the past decade was predominantly neutral, both female and male politicians received a higher proportion of negative than positive coverage. Male Republicans emerge as the most negatively portrayed group, facing heightened negativity during both election seasons and routine political periods over the past decade (e.g., in 2020, median difference between Republican and Democratic men was 3.3% (95% CI [2.2, 4.4]). Interestingly, in most election years of the 2010s, Democratic and Republican women received slightly more positive coverage. For instance, for female Republicans, the 2018 US midterm election year resulted in 0.6% (95% CI [0.2, 1]) and 0.5% (95% CI [0.1, 1]) more positive content than that of Republican and Democratic men, respectively. Our study emphasizes the importance of analyzing the tone of news coverage and uncovering subtle distinctions between genders and political parties. This has significant implications for gender representation in politics and media accountability. Furthermore, our research contributes academically by providing a comprehensive analysis that can shape future studies and public discourse on gender equality and media ethics.

POL12 Narratives and frames in the media

PP 0328 How media storms are framed: Relations between legacy, social and web media in the hybrid media system

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In the current age of a hybrid media system (Chadwick 2011) the circle of actors exercising influence over the media, public, and political discourse has dramatically grown. In older media logics, a few (media) elites decided on how information was portrayed, which meant that interpretations of events usually trickled down from top to bottom (Entman 2003). In today's hybrid media system, there are many more actors who may come up with, promote and disseminate their interpretations of events and issues. At first sight, this makes the process of how events and issues are framed in public discourse more hectic and confusing, as different seemingly coherent interpretations spring up in different online and offline public spaces, which make up our fractured public sphere (Bruns 2023). Yet, the process of frames being created, contested and spread is also no longer done by a small number of editors, but negotiated openly in interlinked public venues.

Some studies have already traced how selected issues and topics spread between legacy and social media (e.g., Gilardi et al. 2022; Langer and Gruber 2021), however, a study that assesses the specific content and where it originates is so far missing.

We use data that consists of traditional (newspaper articles and TV transcripts) and new types of news media (digital native, alternative, and social) about the discourse in the United Kingdom about the "Windrush scandal". This appears an ideal case, as Langer and Gruber (2021) have already postulated that this high profile immigration scandal was pushed into the agenda by an assemblage of different actors. We combine state-of-the-art computational methods for text and inferential network analysis to trace where different ways to frame the scandal originate, as well as where and when they spread among actors. We first use the technique by Gruber (2023) to identify and the code the most prominent frames in the corpus of Twitter posts, online news and in legacy outlets. To assess when and in which direction emerging frames central to the overall discussion transition between actors, and importantly between actors in different spaces, we employ relational event models (REM) (Butts 2008). This technique, used in longitudinal network analysis to pinpoint how events influence each other, can be used to measure how a public statement was influenced by previous contributions to the discussion. With this approach, we answer three research questions:

1. Which topics (arguments) are most prevalent within the discourse on the Windrush scandal over time, between media types and between actor types (politicians, crow-sourced elites, general users and journalists)
2. Are there any diffusion processes between legacy and social media?
3. What drives diffusion of arguments within and between media types?

POL12 Narratives and frames in the media

PP 0329 Concept Transfer and Emotional Framing: The use of the term 'polarization' in European news media

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Polarization has become one of the prime objectives of academic research and, as a consequence, has also found its way into the public discourse. This research delves into the concept transfer and emotional framing of 'polarization' in the news media of Germany, Sweden, and the UK, analyzing its evolution from 2010 to 2022. Utilizing a comprehensive dataset of approximately 500,000 articles from the most influential newspapers in each country, we investigate the term's usage within different media systems and over time.

In our analysis, we combine three computational methods to deal with the amount of data: 1) word2vec analysis to map the semantic space of the term; 2) toxicity and emotion classifiers to assess the affective context in which the term is used; and 3) topic analysis (BERTopic) over time to identify the topics and entities uniquely associated with the term 'polarization'. The analysis also looks specifically at the function that the term plays in different newspapers within each media system.

To compare the use of the term with general discussions on societal division, we use word2vec to identify words closely related to 'polarization'. Articles including these additional words are also added to our sample. In all three countries, the research reveals a 3–4 time increase in the usage of 'polarization' during the observed period, while the number of articles dealing with societal division omitting the term 'polarization' stayed relatively constant during the period. This signifies a notable rise in the term's relevance in European media discourse. This usage was initially particularly common in elite newspapers, and only since 2016 was adopted by popular journalism, which aligns with the framework of concept transfer theory.

Moreover, a distinct pattern emerges in the tone of articles containing the term 'polarization'. Compared to general articles and, specifically, articles addressing societal division at large, articles with the term 'polarization' exhibit a more toxic and angry tone. We find that this link between affect and term usage is particularly strong in popular journalism. This finding is crucial in understanding the emotional framing of polarization in media and its potential impact on public perception, in particular in the context of findings relating to 'false polarization'.

Further in-depth analyses, providing a richer exploration of the topics, actors associated with 'polarization', and country-specific nuances will be discussed at the conference.

This research not only highlights the evolving use of 'polarization' in European media but also raises questions about the role of media in shaping public understanding of political concepts and their associated emotional undercurrents.

POL12 Narratives and frames in the media

PP 0330 Humour scandals: Introducing a theoretical framework and an empirical comparison of increased scandalization of humor in eight European countries in the 21st century

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In today's high-choice, interactive, and emotionally-charged media environment (e.g., Chadwick 2013; Fenton 2016), humor is used by political actors across the ideological spectrum to gain attention, lure supporters, and mark political divides (e.g., Chattoo & Feldman 2020; Sienkiewicz & Marx 2022). Yet, increasingly, humorous content is contested, leading to public controversies about humor—and in some cases to larger-scale humor scandals (Herkman & Koivukoski 2023; Kuipers 2011). Nevertheless, existing literature on humor controversies analyses either single cases, such as the Muhammed cartoon crisis (Eide et al. 2008), or a specific theme, such as immigration (Dahl 2021). Thus, the literature remains largely confined to particular national contexts (Herkman & Koivukoski 2023).

Therefore, this study introduces a research design for studying humor scandals comparatively and presents the key findings of our investigation of humor scandals in eight European countries over the past three decades (1990–2022). We combine previously separate strands of scandal (Allern et al. 2012; Thompson 2000; Tumber & Waisbord 2019) and humour controversies research (Basu 2014; Dahl 2021; Kuipers 2011) to propose a conceptualization and operationalization of humour scandals. We conceptualise humor scandals as socio-political conflicts (Thompson 2000) and a specific form of "talk scandals" (Ekström & Johansson 2008) in which the norms of what is appropriate and inappropriate to do in the name of humor are publicly debated and renegotiated. As such, we argue that humor scandals could be operationalized as humor-related public controversies that have been framed as "scandalous," or in related terms, and have been given broad media coverage in at least two leading media organizations for five days or more.

In practice, the definition includes two types of humor scandals: Those caused by acts clearly framed as humor (i.e. TV satire or political cartoons) and those in which the transgressive act (i.e. a slur by a politician) is framed as humor, irony, sarcasm, or "just a joke" after the scandal has broken.

Based on this conceptual work, we conducted a codebook and a database for systematic cross-national mapping of humor scandals. The main source of our data for mapping the humor scandals was the archives of national news media organizations. Through systematic searches with keywords related to humour and controversy, we collected articles (news, columns, opinions, editorials, essays) about each humor scandal in Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain, and the Netherlands from 1990 to 2023. Based on these articles, trained country experts coded each scandal quantitatively and qualitatively.

Our findings show how incidences of (trans)national humor scandals have starkly increased from the 2000s onward, revealing cross-national similarities and differences in humor scandals, including recurring themes (e.g., ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality), norm-violators (e.g. professional humorists, politicians, celebrities), and consequences (e.g., legal measures, an apology, dismissal). We argue that our cross-national mapping of humour scandals reveals general and country-specific changes in the political and moral order of the studied countries, and as such furthers the understanding of humour as an integral part of political communication in Western public spheres today (Koivukoski 2022; Nieuwenhuis & Zijp 2022).

POL13 Radical political actors, extremist narratives, and disinformation

PP 0432 Exploiting crises on Telegram: How radical actors adapt their mobilization efforts in the context of changing societal contexts

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In the rapidly evolving landscape of digital platforms, radical actors have found new opportunities for mobilization, especially during times of societal crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic, a significant global crisis, served as a crucial period for radical actors to increase their mobilization efforts. Digital platforms such as Telegram were instrumental in this process, providing a space with minimal content moderation and extensive reach (Cammaerts, 2021; Urman et al., 2021). Our research explores the dynamics that unfold as crisis situations, such as the pandemic, recede while other crises emerge. Specifically, we focus on the German anti-vax movement 'Querdenken', which emerged in response to perceived restrictive Corona measures, and the German far right, which has a long history of exploiting various societal crises.

Drawing on Koopmans and Olzak's (2004) concept of discursive opportunity structures, our study views the increase in mobilization efforts during crises as an effective use of political and discursive structures. We argue, in line with Curley et al. (2022) and Hunt (2022), that crises such as the pandemic create fertile ground for discursive opportunities by opening windows for protest mobilization. We aim to answer the following questions: To what extent do radical movements exploit crises by focusing on crisis issues (RQ1), how they adapt to changing crisis situations by switching issues (RQ2), and whether movements (anti-vax vs. far-right) differ in their ability and speed of adaptation (RQ3).

In our investigation, we focus on the year 2022, marked by the termination of Corona-related measures, the onset of a war of aggression against Ukraine, and impending energy shortage. In a manual content analysis, we cover on- and offline appeals (α = .78) as well as crisis issues (α = .85) in 8174 messages published between January and November 2022 in 146 Telegram channels of far-right actors and the anti-vax movement Querdenken.

Hierarchical binomial regression models show that radical actors link crisis issues to calls for online protests. Results of sieve bootstrap t-tests (Bühlmann, 1997) indicate that the importance of Corona as a mobilizing issue declines over time, while the volume of messages dealing with the Russian invasion in Ukraine skyrockets before the impending energy crisis gains relevance as a mobilizing issue. A series of segmented regression analyses (Muggeo, 2008) show that channels belonging to the radical right adapt their issue focus faster than channels belonging to the Querdenken movement. The right-wing channels started heavily mobilizing for offline protests the Russian invasion in February and March, while the channels of the anti-vax movement largely stuck to the pandemic issue.

In summary, our study shows that the ability to adapt to changing crisis contexts is a critical success factor for protest actors. The far right demonstrated an ability to quickly and effectively adjust its strategies as the crisis context evolved, while the young and monothematic anti-vax movement was slower to adapt. The study thus contributes to understanding the dynamics of radical mobilization on digital platforms and sheds light on how movements adapt to changing crisis scenarios.

POL13 Radical political actors, extremist narratives, and disinformation

PP 0433 The radicalization ripple: Tracing information flows between right-wing media and Republican messaging on "Critical Race Theory"

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Recent years have witnessed an increasing ideological radicalization by members of the right-wing parties. At the same time, right-wing media formats shape ideologically oriented and highly partisan informational networks by providing counter-narratives to mainstream journalistic institutions. Our study explores the connection between these two trends by looking at the case study of the US. Here, an extensive network of right-wing media has created an asymmetrical arena for political messaging (Benkler 2020), wherein engagement with right-wing news sites (RNS) has been shown to be predictive of the rhetorical radicalization of Congressional elites (Cowburn & Knüpfer 2023).

Despite the urgency of these developments, we still know surprisingly little about the pathways and directionalities of information flows between right-wing news sites (RNS) and the GOP. The discipline of political communication lacks clear conceptualizations and theoretical approaches that would adequately capture what appear to be synergistic relationships, often conceptualizing these media formats merely as "alternative" or "hyperpartisan." Yet these designations fail to capture the role such actor types play when it comes to their functions as extended party networks. Likewise, classic political communication theories would lead us to believe that elite agenda-setting and framing tend to precede (partisan) media issue uptake.

To learn more about the highly dynamic feedback loops between new media formats and right-wing policy proposals, we present an in-depth case study looking at the issue of "Critical Race Theory" (CRT), which became a galvanizing issue for the US far-right in 2021. Utilizing an original dataset based on web-scraped content from leading right-wing news outlets, we trace where and how this issue emerged. We combine this data with social media posts and newsletters (using the DC-Inbox dataset) by Republican Members of Congress (MoCs). We proceed in two main methodological steps:

First, we employ a mix of content analytical approaches, including topic modeling and natural language processing, to gain insights into what prompted the sudden spikes in RNS and MoC uptake of the CRT issue. Next, we apply time series analysis, based on vector autoregression models, to identify the directionalities of information flows between RNS and Republican elites.

In highlighting these forms of issue-based connective ties between parties and their extended informational networks, our findings offer insights into the role played by new media actors in shaping the communication behavior

of political elites. Since the rise of RNS or elite radicalization effects are not phenomena exclusive to the US, our approach can also be applied to studying the flow of information between other alternative news sources and political elites in different national contexts.

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POL13 Radical political actors, extremist narratives, and disinformation

PP 0434 The penetration of extremist narratives into the digital mainstream: Exploring online discussions about migration on Flashback Forum

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Sweden became a main destination during the 2015 migration 'crisis', receiving over 163,000 asylum seekers – more per capita than any other EU country. Subsequently, the country underwent an 'identity crisis', whereby its long-standing socialist tradition and inclusive 'Swedish model' gradually deteriorated (Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2019). This manifested in a discursive shift in media representations of migrants, mainstreaming of anti-immigration sentiments, and a significant increase in support for the far-right (Ekman, 2020). In 2022, a new right-wing government took office, with the far-right Sweden Democrats (SD) becoming the second-largest party in parliament. The new SD-backed government promised a paradigm shift in Swedish migration politics, which would include more restrictive policies. These recent shifts in public and political migration discourse make Sweden a worthwhile case study in understanding how crises affect migration attitudes and, by extension, the mutual influence of public attitudes and political action.

Given these developments, the political discourse around (anti-)immigration in Sweden has been subject to scholarly attention, with particular focus on the rhetoric of SD (Elgenius & Rydgren, 2019), news media (Ekman & Krzyżanowski, 2021; Ekström et al., 2020), alternative far-right media (Ihlebæk & Nygaard, 2021) and far-right actors' social media presence (Wahlström et al., 2021). We know less, however, about the vernacular everyday conversations between ordinary citizens in online public spaces. One such space is Flashback Forum – an anonymous, unmoderated online platform used by an estimated third of the Swedish population. Considering its popularity, this space for online deliberation is important as its overt dedication to 'protecting free speech' allows for radical and potentially extreme ideas to enter everyday conversations (Åkerlund, 2021).

This study examines a corpus of 33,731 online comments posted between 01.01.-23.09.2023 in the Flashback section "Immigration and integration". Drawing on a combination of structural topic modelling (STM) and qualitative thematic analysis, the paper follows a two-step approach. First, STM helps to identify key topics in contemporary discussions around immigration on Flashback and track their development over time. Second, using qualitative thematic analysis, I explore in which of these topics extremist narratives emerge, and the drivers behind their emergence.

The research questions informing the study are:

What key topics emerge around contemporary discussions of migration and integration on Flashback?

Within these topics, what are the drivers behind the emergence and intensification of extremist narratives regarding migrants and immigration?

This study thus contributes to debates on the role of anonymous online platforms in spreading and normalizing extremist narratives about migration amongst members of the public.

The preliminary results regarding RQ1 indicate crime, gang violence and Islam as the most frequently discussed topics, often occurring in conjunction with ideas of a larger looming crisis and societal collapse. In terms of RQ2, the emergence of extreme narratives appears to be highly event-driven, with gang shootings, criminal acts allegedly committed by migrants, and the release of government reports/statistics on migration, intensifying the discourse. In addition, extremist narratives emerge around conspiratorial claims. The findings are contextualised with Flashback's cultural and technological affordances, and the temporalities it produces.

POL13 Radical political actors, extremist narratives, and disinformation

PP 0435 How does content flow from Fringe to Mainstream social media platforms

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Fringe social media platforms, sometimes referred to as alternative platforms are often seen as spaces that provide a potential nurturing ground for extreme political opinions. At the same time, a lot of users are co-active on several platforms, both fringe and mainstream. Some will source content from fringe platforms and reshare it on mainstream platforms.

In this study we develop an approach to characterize the flow of content between different platforms by tracing the sharing of URLs focusing on the flow from fringe to mainstream platforms. This includes a framework to distinguish between content flows characterized by authentic and inauthentic coordination as well as organic flows. It is based on a large sample of URLs shared by accounts with a propensity for sharing, but not limited to, German alternative news articles. We trace roughly 10 million URLs posted between January 2019 and March 2022 across Facebook, Twitter (X), Telegram, Vkontakte, Gab and 4chan. Our results show that around 10% of all URLs shared on mainstream platforms were first shared on a fringe platform. 1% can be characterized as organic inflow from a fringe platform, 1% as authentic coordination, while 1.5% was due to inauthentic coordination. The results also reveal the existence of an interconnected network of almost 1000 accounts involved both in the coordinated inflow of URLs from fringe to mainstream platforms as well as the coordinated re-sharing of the same URLs on mainstream platforms. We show how this network was established as part of the anti-restriction, anti-lockdown and anti-vaccination movement in Germany during 2020 and 2021 following the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, results indicate that this coordinated network can be repurposed to sharing pro-Russian content after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in spring 2022.

This study offers a conceptual and methodological approach for working with cross-platform content flows based on mutual URL-sharing. Using Germany as a case we show how this approach can be used to analyse cross-platform dynamics with regard to how content flows from fringe platforms and impacts mainstream platforms.

POL13 Radical political actors, extremist narratives, and disinformation

PP 0436 Apathy and alienation: Navigating the role of disinformation in political participation

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Citizens' willingness to be politically active is among the key aspects in building resilience of democracy in digital era. This willingness to participate is often influenced by people's consumption of media (Boulianne, 2017) which can increase in frequency especially in crisis times (Ohme, Hameleers, Brosius, & Van der Meer, 2021). However, the rising presence of disinformation, especially in online information environment, can have negative effect not only on citizen's trust in media, institutional trust, and political preferences, but also on broader perception of democracy (Hameleers, Bronsius & de Vreese, 2022; Humprecht, 2020). This creates a context in which communication contributes to disorder rather than order in society and a need for nuanced insight into experiences of the more vulnerable segments of our citizenry.

Drawing on the "Alarmed citizen" concept (Thorbjørnsrud & Figensoau, 2022), a group characterized by vigilance, fear, and low trust in institutions, our focus extends to their information-seeking behavior and motivation to be politically active. We specifically ask: How does the media repertoire of people more vulnerable to disinformation affects their relationship towards the political system? How does it further influence their willingness to be politically active?

Our research is set in the specific context of Czech Republic, where citizens are typical for their low levels of both institutional and media trust. Moreover, the disinformation scene and alternative media have been quite active in recent years which has been only heightened by the recent crises (COVID-19 pandemic) (Štetka, Mazák & Vochocová, 2021).

In December, we conducted six online focus groups, each comprising of six participants. They were recruited from the Czech adult population, guided by inclusive criteria emphasizing low media (and institutional) trust, openness to alternative media sources and active social media usage. To provide diversity in the discussion, the participants represented a variety of socio-economic backgrounds.

Preliminary results show that the participants tend to be overly critical not only towards mainstream media but also towards any information they consume. This cynicism is often embedded in their frustration with the political system, mostly due to the feeling that the media align with politicians' interests. Many perceived both the politicians and journalists as the same elites, which does not reflect people's interest. Overall, there is a buildup frustration towards

the political situation and apathy when it comes to possible positive change. Described overuse of certain types of political participation, specifically demonstrations, leads to further apathy towards any active citizenship, as even such active forms of participation do not seem to produce any change. In some cases, even the effectiveness of voting was questioned. This resentment further propels their feelings of alienation from the political system, which can lead to either believing alternative sources or leaning into reality apathy. This creates a threat of citizenship, that is not only distrustful, but also politically inactive. Our results further contribute to the understanding of behavior triggered by consumption of disinformation. Additionally, we highlight the crucial need to reactivate citizen's motivation for participation to further support the resilience of functioning democracy.

POL14 News (non)exposure and its consequences

PP 0437 Media choice and the effects of negative and positive news on societal beliefs

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A key characteristic of today's high-choice media environment is that people can select news that fits their preferences and pre-existing beliefs (Van Aelst et al., 2017). Further, news coverage is predominately characterized by negativity (Soroka & Krupnikov, 2021). Although there is some preference for more positive news stories, most research suggest that people also in general prefer negative news (Bachleda et al., 2020) and news that are congruent with their existing beliefs (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2020). A likely consequence of these tendencies is that people will form beliefs about politics and society that are biased towards perceiving reality as more negative, dangerous, and scary (Andersen, Djerf-Pierre, & Shehata, 2024), and that a confirmatory negativity bias can result in reinforcing negative worldviews over time (van der Meer & Hameleers, 2022).

This study presents a longitudinal choice experiment designed to examine four pre-registered expectations in this context: H1) that people prefer negative news over positive news (the negativity bias hypothesis), H2) that the preference for negative news is conditioned by prior beliefs, with people holding more negative (positive) beliefs being more likely to prefer negative (positive) news (the confirmation bias hypothesis), H3) that exposure to negative (positive) news increases negative (positive) beliefs (the media effects hypothesis), and H4) that people holding negative (positive) beliefs become more negative (positive) when exposed to negative (positive) news, and that these effects are stronger when people choose the news (the reinforcement hypothesis).

The experiment was conducted on a large sample of Swedish citizens (N = 2,336) and focuses on news stories and beliefs about schools. The experimental design includes a baseline survey (W1) to capture pre-existing beliefs about this topic and two follow-up surveys (W2+3) over the following weeks where the respondents were either not exposed to any news stories (control group), exposed to negative (group 1) or positive news stories (group 2), or able to freely choose not to read any news or to read positive or negative news stories (group 3). After each treatment, the respondents' beliefs were measured to follow changes over time in response to the treatments.

Contrary to the expectation of negativity bias in news selection, the results show higher preference for positive (50 pct.) than negative news (35 pct.). A considerable share also chose not to read any news (15 pct.). However, the results supported the expectation of a confirmation bias, as people with more negative (positive) beliefs about Swedish schools were more like to choose negative (positive) news. In terms of effects, only exposure to positive news affected beliefs in the expected direction, with people's beliefs becoming more positive over time. Surprisingly, exposure to negative news also led to more positive beliefs, with the most negative people being most influenced in the opposite direction. Together, these results question central claims in the literature on negativity bias in news selection and subsequent consequences for societal beliefs in a media environment characterized by high media choice and negative news coverage.

POL14 News (non)exposure and its consequences

PP 0438 Political polarization and diversity in online information exposure: A longitudinal tracking study

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In recent years, a lively academic discourse has emerged around the potential of algorithm-based media consumption to diminish the diversity of sources and viewpoints individuals are exposed to. While debates on the existence and extent of filter bubbles and echo chambers are ongoing, specific patterns of digital news consumption have been associated with reinforcing existing political attitudes through processes of selective exposure facilitated by both algorithms and users themselves. However, numerous aspects of the dynamic relationship between

information exposure diversity and political attitude polarization remain unclear, primarily due to challenges associated with measuring citizens' online behavior and a lack of longitudinal studies.

Our interdisciplinary research project investigates the interplay between online information exposure and political polarization through an innovative combination of unobtrusive digital behavioral data and survey data. A sample of 1,756 German panelists consented to record their desktop web browsing activities using browser plugins over 11 months from September 2022 to December 2023. For a subset of users, this data also includes mobile browser and app usage. Employing manual and automated content analysis on the visited websites, we classified sources, topics, actors, and viewpoints participants were exposed to online. The data encompasses, among other websites, two million visits to established German news outlets, constituting 2.35% of all activity during the tracking period. We combine this information exposure data with survey data from four waves on demographics, political predispositions, and attitudes to evaluate the amount and dynamics of political polarization over time. Among other variables we surveyed affective polarization towards the six most important political parties and ten individual politicians in Germany, as well as participant attitudes on polarizing issues such as climate change, the war on Ukraine, and trans rights.

Data analysis is still ongoing as the data collection just finished close to submission deadline. However, with this design, we can analyze the extent and dynamics of how (lack of) diversity in news sources, viewpoints, issues, or actors in information exposure relates to specific patterns of affective and issue-based polarization. The longitudinal approach allows us to investigate the directionality of the influence between online exposure over 11 months and polarization on issues, parties, and politicians. This project aims to scrutinize hyperbolic public expectations about strong media effects (e.g., echo chambers or hyperpartisan content) in contrast to academic research indicating that persuasion is the exception, not the norm (Guess et al., 2021; Kalla & Broockman, 2018).

POL14 News (non)exposure and its consequences

PP 0439 How exposure to political social media content contributes to political knowledge and participation on social media

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Social media provide a unique context for political engagement. First of all, citizens become exposed to a high variety of political content and information on these platforms, often covering both institutional and formal as well as lifestyle-oriented political topics (Gonzalez et al., 2023). Therefore, this study aims to explicitly acknowledge how social media mark a crucial change in the opportunity structures for citizens to learn about politics, by focusing on broad political content rather than strict journalistic news (Andersen et al., 2020).

Simultaneously, social media allow for novel forms of political participation, where citizens express themselves in a personalized and flexible manner, raising awareness or mobilizing others on various political issues (Bennett, 2012). Despite research pointing to its co-occurrence with offline political action (Waeterloos et al., 2021), participation on social media has often been overlooked as a socialization outcome in the literature. This leaves an important participatory cycle unexplored, where citizens are potentially exposed to a variety of political content on social media and might choose to act on the issues they encounter through these same platforms.

Following Communication Mediation theory (Shah et al., 2005), we assume that the relation between content exposure and political participation on social media is mediated by a particular type of political knowledge. Indeed, the logic of social media seems to align most with the potential formation of current affairs knowledge, which is knowledge about recent political and societal events (Barabas et al., 2014; Delli Carpini, 2000).

Method

This study draws on data from an extensive cross-sectional survey (n = 2543), representative for the youth (above 16 years old) and adult population in Flanders, Belgium. Through structural equation modelling, we assessed whether the relationship between political content exposure on social media and social media political participation is mediated by current affairs knowledge. In the model, political interest was taken into account as a precondition for this entire process. Moreover, subsequent analyses will test the conditional effects of incidental content exposure and age.

Results

Preliminary analyses indicate a good model fit for the data. The findings point to specific learning opportunities on social media, as more frequent exposure to content on diverse political topics contributes to factual knowledge about current events. However, contrary to our expectations, current affairs knowledge negatively predicts political participation on social media and we find an overall negative indirect effect from political interest to participation through exposure and knowledge. This suggests that those who are objectively less knowledgeable about a diverse range of current affairs, are actually more vocal on social media about political topics. Though unexpected, these findings shed light on a previously unexplored pathway from political content exposure to participation on

social media. The study delves deeper into the specific conditions for political learning on social media, while also highlighting the need to further explore the unique processes underlying political engagement occurring on these platforms. For instance, it seems plausible that political participation on social media is more driven by social, identity-formation processes and subjective knowledge, rather than objective knowledge.

POL14 News (non)exposure and its consequences

PP 0440 How dangerous world beliefs inform news consumption: Mapping over-time browsing behavior to explore news avoidance patterns and feedback loops

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Shaped by economic pressures and journalistic biases, depictions of reality in news media increasingly involve overrepresentations of negative information and isolated events (e.g., Soroka et al., 2019; van der Meer et al., 2018; van der Meer et al., 2022). As people's information environment informs their beliefs about risks and hazards (e.g., Fessler et al., 2014), news media may cultivate the belief that the world is a more dangerous place among those who rely on it intensively (Gerbner, 1969). However, research holds contradicting assumptions about how dangerous world views and information selection interact.

From an evolutionary perspective, negative information attracts attention as it signals potential dangers, resulting in a general negativity bias in news selection (Soroka et al., 2019). Moreover, those perceiving a more dangerous world tend to self-select into more negative news and news depicting isolated events (van der Meer & Hameleers, 2022). In today's high-choice media environment, feedback loops may therefore arise where people with negative worldviews, partly created through their news consumption, increasingly seek out more negative information (van der Meer & Hameleers, 2022).

Yet, negative news content may also evoke fear, which can motivate information seeking, but also avoidant behavior to reduce the resulting distress (Maslow, 1963; Tunney et al., 2021). While news avoidance appears to be rising (Reuters, 2019)– partially due to its negative effect on readers' mood (Skovsgaard & Andersen, 2019)– recent research suggests that active news avoiders still consume news a fair amount (Ohme et al. 2022; Palmer, Toff, & Nielsen, 2023). Considering these different research streams, this study provides comprehensive insights into over-time news consumption patterns of audiences holding different levels of dangerous world perceptions.

For this purpose, we draw on extensive data donations of N = 6.047.040 website visits to N = 88.303 different domains by N = 320 people, spanning over one year, linked to survey data. We examine the proportion of news in people's information diet, and over-time fluctuations in overall news use, including different avoidance strategies. Transformer-based large language models have significantly improved automated content analysis, allowing for new avenues in media effects research (Kroon et al., 2023). Leveraging these state-of-the-art models, we classify the negativity of news headlines participants selected to examine whether a negative outlook on social reality corresponds to self-selection into more negative news over time. We further explore how different contexts such as social media, online search, or direct news access enable the selection of negative news content across user profiles.

Preliminary results suggest that individuals with high or moderate dangerous world perceptions are characterized by higher proportions of visits to news sites in overall browsing behavior compared to those with low levels. Further, over-time data suggest overall news consumption remains stable over the year among individuals with moderate levels of dangerous world perceptions, while small increases are found among those with high or low levels.

Integrating contradicting lines of research and relying on browsing data linked with survey data, our study maps how dangerous world views inform online news consumption and theorizes potential reinforcement and news avoidance patterns.

POL14 News (non)exposure and its consequences

PP 0441 Examining the implications of different news avoidance practices during elections in Greece and Brazil

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Longitudinal research has documented an increase of news avoidance frequency in many countries. Following this practice, a number of studies have examined the patterns and the drivers of news avoidance practices. In doing so, scholars have used different operationalizations of news avoidance, more prominently active news avoidance and news avoidance defined as low levels of news use. Paradoxically, active news avoidance can be correlated with high news use: it can take the form of avoiding news only at specific times a day, from specific mediums (e.g.

TV or social media), or specific news topics (e.g. Covid-19 or politics) and points of view. When news avoidance is conceptualized as low (or zero) levels of news use, it can be the result of low interest in news, preference for entertainment media consumption, or lack of time. However, we know much less about the impact of news avoidance. This article makes a distinctive contribution by examining the implications of different news avoidance practices on normatively important outcomes for democracy (belief in misinformation, political participation, and trust in elections) during election times. While elections denote times when society is more interested in getting information, they also have the potential to increase news avoidance in contentious political contexts, where people do not want to get involved with politics and feel fatigue from news. We explore the impact of news avoidance by using two-wave pre- and post- election panel surveys representative of the population in Greece (n = 1500) and in Brazil (n = 1600) during their 2023 and 2022 elections, respectively.

Our results show that a) active news avoidance is correlated with lower propensity to turn out and vote over time in both countries, b) news avoidance defined as low news use is correlated with higher belief in misinformation across both countries and that c) all forms of news avoidance are correlated with lack of trust in elections in Greece, whereas in Brazil lower trust in elections is correlated only with news avoidance conceptualized as lower news use. Last, our results were strikingly similar in these two countries, despite having different political and media structures, which may indicate that the negative consequences of news avoidance during elections are not necessarily shaped by a given country's specific context. Overall, our findings contribute to existing debates about the normative expectations of different conceptualisations of news avoidance with empirical evidence and show that different behaviors related to news avoidance have a distinct set of implications.

POL15 Persuasive political communication

PP 0442 Convince and mobilize: The informational context of political parties' mobilization attempts on social media

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According to Verba et al.'s (1995, p. 269) civic voluntarism model people do not participate in democratic processes "because they can't, because they don't want to, or because nobody asked." This indicates that mobilization attempts of political actors are important to involve people in politics. Social media allows political actors to directly mobilize citizens and voters. Unlike, for example, election posters or TV commercials, parties can combine their messages with comprehensive information, e.g., in the captions of posts. Assuming that certain content can have activating and mobilizing effects (Russmann et al., 2021) – as studies on user reactions show (e.g., Bene et al., 2022) – parties can integrate their mobilization calls in informational contexts to prepare or back up their mobilization attempts.

Previous studies, however, have mainly examined parties' mobilization strategies on social media in terms of occurrence by quantifying the number of posts that contain mobilization calls (Stromer-Galley et al., 2021; Magin et al., 2017), without considering the contextual content. To fill this gap, we investigated whether parties combine different mobilization calls to support the party's campaign (e.g., call to vote, call to share the post) in one post (RQ1) and how they integrate their mobilization attempts in different informational contexts (policy topics like social issues, environmental issues, and economy, information about the top candidate, attacks towards the political opponent, or acclaims of the own party) (RQ2) and conducted a content analysis of Facebook and Instagram posts (n = 1,812) published by the 6 major parties during the 2021 German federal election campaign.

The results of our analysis indicate that most parties limited themselves to no or one mobilization call per post, most often a call to vote. This finding reflects studies showing the predominance of classic election appeals online (Magin et al., 2021), i.e. parties try to convert their social media campaign directly into votes. While the Green party most frequently mobilized in their posts (75% of their posts contained at least one mobilization call), sticking to electoral mobilization, the right-wing AfD most frequently combined various mobilization appeals in one post (16% of their posts contained two or more different mobilization calls), providing a wide range of options of how users can support the party's campaign.

Regarding the informational context, the results of a binomial regression show that most policy topics are not significantly preferred or rejected in combination with calls to vote. Only in the context of the environmental issue, which was salient at that time, parties tend to use mobilization calls, not only applying to the Green party. In the context of attacks on political opponents and acclaims of the own party, mobilization attempts are also more likely to occur, reflecting a strategy to recommend the own party as better voting alternative. When informing about their top candidates, however, parties tend to mobilize less, which could be due to the fact that top candidates cannot be elected directly.

More detailed results on the parties' mobilization strategies will be presented and discussed in a possible presentation at the conference.

POL15 Persuasive political communication

PP 0443 The role played by the media in shaping vote intentions. A Romanian perspective

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In light of the emergence of radical right-wing political parties in Europe, both nationally and supranationally, individuals are likely to face challenges in making informed voting decisions due to several factors, such as the role played by the media especially from social media platforms, education, political knowledge, to name just a few. European elections are to be held in all EU countries in 2024, and in Romania, all other forms of elections will follow the same year (local, parliamentary, and presidential).

Against this background, the present paper aims at exploring the potential predictors of vote intentions of Romanians, both for the radical right-wing party (AUR) and mainstream parties (current parliamentary parties in Romania), with a focus on news consumption patterns in the high choice media environment. We employed an original dataset collected through an online panel survey administered by Kantar/Lightspeed in Romania[1], from May 16, 2022, to June 24, 2022. The final dataset used in this paper includes a sample of 1.500 respondents, aged 18 and over, using soft quotas for age, education, and gender.

Findings show that news consumption from social media is associated with radical right-wing (AUR) vote intentions, but also with intentions to vote for the left-wing social-democrat party (PSD), traditionally the largest political party in Romania after 1989. Mainstream media news consumption is also positively correlated with vote intentions for the two parties. The correlation with social media consumption is stronger for the radical right party vote preference, while the correlation with mainstream media is stronger for the social democrat party. People's preference for the other three mainstream parties currently in the Romanian Parliament (National Liberal Party – PNL; Save Romania Union – USR; and Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania – UDMR) is not significantly associated with any type of political news consumption. Other significant predictors for both radical right-wing and social democrat vote are low levels of education, belief in conspiracy theories, and low levels of political knowledge. Belief in conspiracy theories is negatively associated with preference for any other mainstream party, while both education and political knowledge are insignificant predictors.

These findings shed light not only on the role played by the (social) media in shaping individual political preferences for radical right-wing parties, but also point to a particularity of the Romanian political arena, dominated in the last years by a left-wing political party (PSD) with similar voters' profiles.

Keywords: vote intention, radical right-wing parties, news consumption, political knowledge

[1] This study uses data for Romania from a larger dataset collected in 18 countries in Threatpie NORFACE project (threatpie.eu).

POL15 Persuasive political communication

PP 0444 Can identity appeals in party communication or news media influence voter perceptions?

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Research has increasingly studied how political parties use appeals to social groups in their communication to voters, relying on political manifestos, election leaflets or social media adverts (Dolinsky, 2022; Huber, 2022). This research tends to use one of two approaches: it either focuses only on changes in the supply-side of party rhetoric but neglects the perspective of voters, or it focuses on the effects of group appeals in experimental settings. These studies have confirmed that an association with a social group can improve that group's evaluation of a political actor and that, overall, such appeals by political parties have increased despite the changing electoral influence of group belonging (Robison et al., 2021; Thau, 2019). However, we don't know how stable or malleable voter perceptions of party group linkages are over longer time periods. Moreover, group appeals studies often only consider communication by party elites while overlooking the role of media reporting. This neglects possibly the most important source of political information, especially for more disengaged citizens (Graber, 2004).

In the present study, we bring together computational text analysis of party communication and news media, relying on word embeddings as well as transformer-models (Kroon et al., 2021), with (panel) survey data from Austria and the UK. We use these two data sources to analyse the effects that party positioning towards social groups, both in parties' own communication and in news reports, has on voter perceptions of parties and vote choice. The study contributes to research on group appeals and cleavages by bridging demand- and supply-side perspectives, analysing changes on the individual level and empirically separating the impact of two different sources of information on voter's behaviour.

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POL15 Persuasive political communication

PP 0445 Rhetorical appeals in political communication: A quantitative comparative analysis of ethos, logos, and pathos

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Rhetoric, or the art of persuasion, is a key element of politics. Politicians seek to persuade the electorate that they are best suited for an office, to rally populations around causes for military intervention, or to make citizens follow measures imposed by government in times of crisis. As numerous studies show, the persuasiveness of political communication not only derives from what is said, or the substance of political communication, but also from the manner in which it is articulated, that is, the rhetorical strategies employed by political actors. It is through these strategies that political actors tailor their communication to the characteristics of different audiences and different political contexts.

Existing studies of rhetorical strategies in political communication predominantly use qualitative approaches and mostly focus on individual or small numbers of cases. Although this research has generated many important insights, the use of qualitative research designs makes it hard to compare rhetorical strategies across countries and, in particular, to identify causal factors that influence the choice of rhetorical strategies. Research employing quantitative approaches, on the other hand, has so far only focused on individual elements or individual rhetorical appeals, which leads to incomplete accounts of rhetorical strategies. Overcoming these limitations, this paper introduces a quantitative, three-dimensional measure of three rhetorical appeals of ethos (authority), logos (reason), and pathos (emotion). The added value of this measure is that enables comparisons of rhetorical strategies in political communication across different types of political actors, across states and across different points in time.

To illustrate this added value for the analyis of rhetorical strategies, our paper uses the case of political crisis communication during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. It draws on a data set of 1109 press conferences with 433 speakers in 17 OECD countries and three US-American states and employs automated methods of text analysis.

POL15 Persuasive political communication

PP 0446 Aligning and deviating cultural resonance responses: The case of political Facebook communication in the United Kingdom

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One widely accepted tenet of political communication is the concept of value resonance. This occurs when the values in a message frame match citizens' value, leading to a significant impact on their thoughts and attitudes (Schemer et al., 2012; Shen & Edwards, 2005). The literature provides extensive evidence of these patterns from experimental and survey data, yet we know less about the dynamics of cultural value references in text and the range of resonance responses these elicit from citizens. This study focuses on the role of value-based messages in shaping user responses, specifically within the context of British political communication on Facebook.

In investigating the relationship between posts from political actors and the direct comments elicited from users, cultural resonance is explored as an explanation for the observed empirical patterns. Facebook posts from British political actors were collected between May 2020 – April 2021, comprising 1,727 posts and 3,216,367 comments. The analysis employed a word embeddings-based method (i.e., Concept Mover's Distance) to measure whether

posts and comments referenced six different values from Schwartz' universal values system (stimulation, hedonism, self-direction, tradition, security, and conformity).

Although the United Kingdom is categorized as an individualist country (Hofstede, 2001), the results revealed that both individualist and collectivist value references were prevalent in British political communication on Facebook. Political actors frequently referenced values like stimulation, tradition, and conformity. Additionally, the specific value references identified were not exclusively associated with Covid-19. We posited that a plausible reason for the prevalence of these values would be the timing of the data collection during the pandemic, rather than solely reflecting the cultural context.

The study conceptualized three types of cultural resonance responses: aligning, deviating, and non-response. By theorizing resonance responses in relation to the utilization of values in texts, this research not only extends our theoretical understanding of resonance processes but also improves the applicability of the cultural resonance concept for empirical investigation.

Furthermore, the results support the cultural resonance thesis, showing that individualist values, such as stimulation, received more aligning responses in an individualist context, while collectivist values, such as conformity, received more deviating responses. This study underscores the dual nature of resonance in political communication. On one hand, resonance is positive as it empowers citizens to actively shape public discourse and engage with political content. On the other hand, communicators may face challenges when expressed interpretations deviate from their intended message. This suggests that resonance problems may not solely stem from communicators' inability to connect with audiences but can also arise when citizens alter the communication lens through deviating responses. This insight has significant implications for democracy, highlighting the need to understand and navigate the complexities of cultural resonance in the digital age.

POL16 Misinformation and trust in the media

PP 0546 Describing and explaining misinformation on Dutch Twitter during the covid pandemic

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The covid pandemic was accompanied by concerns about the role of misinformation in reducing compliance with public health measures (e.g. Roozenbeek et al., 2020). In the face of future crises which will require compliance of the public with invasive measures (Boin et al., 2020), the covid pandemic provides an important opportunity to better describe and explain the presence and characteristics of misinformation during pandemics and disasters.

Despite worries about the spread of misinformation on social media during the pandemic (Kupferschmidt, 2020), researchers have so far gained little insight into the amount and characteristics of online misinformation about covid. Studies often measured misinformation through proxy variables (e.g. Cinelli et al., 2020), and studies that directly measured the proportion of misinformation on social media through fact-checking are scarce and show mixed results (Gabarron et al., 2021). Moreover, all studies focus on the presence of misinformation during the first few months of the pandemic (Gabarron et al. 2021), but the amount and characteristics of misinformation have likely changed over the course of the pandemic, as, for example, the public debate became more politicized (van Dijck & Alinejad, 2020). Therefore, our research question is: *How have the amount and characteristics of misinformation on Dutch Twitter developed during the covid pandemic?* We focus on the Dutch-language area to extend the US-focused literature to a low-polarization and high-trust context (Humprecht et al., 2020). We study the following textual characteristics: conspiracy theories, incivility, sentiment, source type, fearmongering and topics. We also examine user engagement with misinformation.

We train a BERT model to recognize misinformation and textual characteristics in Dutch-language Tweets posted between February 2020 and February 2022. By training a machine learning model to detect misinformation we are able to arrive at a more fine-grained analysis of the development of misinformation over time than studies that manually analyze a small sample of Tweets.

Many studies have explained belief in misinformation about covid through individual characteristics (e.g. Enders et al., 2020; Roozenbeek et al., 2020). Very few studies have tested to what extent macro-level societal conditions, such as polarization, contribute to the spread of misinformation (Humprecht et al., 2020), despite societal conditions being considered important to understand the spread of misinformation in current societies (Lewandowsky et al., 2017). Better understanding how societal conditions contributed to the spread of misinformation during the covid pandemic will add to knowledge about factors that should be addressed to reduce the spread of misinformation during pandemics and disasters. Therefore, the second aim of our study is to explain the amount of misinformation on Twitter over time. We answer the research question: *How can fluctuations in the amount of misinformation on Dutch-language Twitter over the course of the covid pandemic be explained?* We use time-series analyses to test our hypotheses.

Preliminary results are promising, showing that our BERT model performs as well as other models trained to detect misinformation in Dutch-language Tweets about covid (e.g. Alam et al., 2021). Final results will be available at the time of the conference.

POL16 Misinformation and trust in the media

PP 0547 A qualitative analysis of the mechanisms underlying the "trust nexus"

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A growing body of work has found evidence of a strong link or "nexus" between public trust in political institutions and the press in general (Ariely, 2015; Hanitzsch, Van Dalen, & Steindl, 2017; Knudsen, Nordø, & Iversen, 2023; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014; Tsfati & Cohen, 2005). But why should people have similar attitudes towards political institutions and the news media? Our empirical understanding of why this nexus exists is limited. While studies have proposed various explanations for this strong correlation—e.g., growing anti-elite sentiment, increasing mediatization of politics, growing audience awareness of the interplay between politics and media (Hanitzsch et al., 2017)—research examining how audiences actually think about the relationship between politics and news is limited (see Palmer, Toff, & Nielsen, 2020 for an exception). Furthermore, this association runs counter to understandings of journalism as having an adversarial relationship with politicians, an ideal held by many within the journalistic profession and often supported by studies examining the relationship between politicians and journalists (e.g., Brants, de Vreese, Möller, & van Praag, 2010) or news coverage about politicians (e.g., Cappella & Jamieson, 1997).

In this paper, we expand our understanding of the mechanisms underpinning the trust nexus, drawing on two rounds of qualitative data collection—in-depth interviews and focus groups—in four countries across the Global North and South: Brazil, India the United Kingdom, and the United States. We suggest that this connection is sustained through both conscious beliefs and inadvertent associations. On the one hand, some audiences espoused concrete ideas about (1) journalists and politicians being complicit or in cahoots; (2) journalists being controlled or paid off by politicians; (3) journalists being the same "kinds" of people as politicians. On the other hand, others seemed to link politicians and journalists less through specific beliefs about questionable motives than through inadvertent associations, either (4) conflating journalists and politicians when speaking about either or (5) confusing news coverage of political issues with the issue itself. Indeed, for many people, their only interaction with politics is through news, making the two hard to distinguish.

POL16 Misinformation and trust in the media

PP 0548 How do individual and societal factors shape news authentication? Comparing misinformation resilience across Hong Kong, the Netherlands, and the United States

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Misinformation remains a pressing issue around the world. In response, resilience to misinformation—personal and structural conditions fostering the ability to withstand this challenge— has become a crucial societal asset, garnering attention as a burgeoning research domain (Boulianne et al., 2022; Humprecht et al., 2021, 2020). Traditionally, research has centered on individuals refraining from consuming or propagating misinformation as the key metric of resilience. Our study re-explicates resilience to misinformation by emphasizing news engagement behaviors that discern and counteract misinformation. Specifically, we focus on news authentication– individuals' active verification of news items they encounter.

While news authentication has been observed in various countries (e.g., Kyriakidou et al., 2023; Tandoc et al., 2018; Wagner & Boczkowski, 2019), resilience to misinformation displays systematic variations across societies. To elucidate these disparities, we employ a cross-country comparative approach to examine how individual and societal factors together shape news authentication behaviors. First, viewing news authentication as a form of citizen engagement with news that requires necessary resource and motivation, we focus on the impact of individual capacity (i.e., education, political efficacy) and attitudes toward institutions (i.e., institutional trust, conspiracy beliefs) on news authentication. Second, we investigate the extent to which these individual-level influences vary across societies characterized by different political systems and varying degrees of political polarization, namely Hong Kong, the Netherlands, and the United States.

To do so, we employ a pre-registered 1, population-based survey (total N = 6,082) and multi-group structural equation modeling. Our findings show that, first, political efficacy and institutional trust are consistent predictors of news authentication across societies. This suggests that citizens' confidence in their own ability to engage in

the democratic processes and trust in the competence of public institutions can foster a vigilant, critical citizenry. It highlights the significance of a shared sense of political empowerment and civic duty in building resilience to misinformation. Second, education is crucial in encouraging news authentication, but only in the United States, where the risks of misinformation are unevenly distributed due to resource inequality. Third, at the societal level, news authentication is the highest in the United States, where political sectarianism is the most severe, and lowest in the Netherlands, which is characteristic of moderate polarization. We thus infer that polarization may actually encourage, rather than impede, news authentication, nonetheless likely biased news authentication motivated by partisan considerations.

Furthermore, we argue that the nature of news authentication is context-dependent. In a non-democracy like Hong Kong where pro-democracy activism is subject to increasing state surveillance and retribution, news authentication is more prevalent among pro-democracy supporters. In Western democracies like the Netherlands and the United States, it gains popularity among individuals holding anti-establishment worldviews, specifically, a conspiracy mentality. Take together, across political systems, news authentication arguably serves as a political tool wielded by marginalized groups to challenge the status quo. The underlying concern is more aligned with political motives than the inherent quality of information. To foster resilience to misinformation, we must address the deep-rooted societal issues, such as the growing legitimacy problem.

1. pre-registration: https://osf.io/fm7sj/?view_only=684052eb16694eceb79cb4dafe1a952e.

POL16 Misinformation and trust in the media

PP 0549 Investigating the impact of fake news content characteristics on readers' credibility perceptions

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In the current post-truth era, the pervasive spread and belief in false information pose significant challenges to democracy. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the emergence of digital media environments, particularly the shift from objective to citizen journalism (Winston & Winston, 2020). This change in information curation has led to diminished certainty regarding the truthfulness, accuracy, and verification of publicly available information. As a consequence, there is an apparent increase in the exposure to and belief in misinformation (Thorson & Wells, 2016), with research suggesting that "fake news" content tends to go viral more rapidly and widely than real news content (Vosoughi et al., 2018).

Efforts to empower consumers to discern genuine from misleading information include initiatives by public and non-governmental organizations, aimed at educating journalists and the general public on recognizing false information in media content (Heiss et al., 2021). In this line, individuals are advised to exercise caution when encountering specific content characteristics, such as, for instance, biased information, polarizing elements, sensationalist features, or certain syntactic cues such as the use of all-capitalized terms or punctuation signs (e.g., Bates et al., 2017).

Despite this guidance, a gap persists in understanding how these linguistic and stylistic characteristics impact audience credibility perceptions. This study aims to address this gap by examining which characteristics typical for fake news contribute to better deception identification and which, while prevalent, do not raise suspicion among ordinary readers. Using an experimental design, participants (n ~2000) will evaluate the credibility of genuine and fake news articles exhibiting varying degrees of a comprehensive selection of respective content characteristics. To mitigate potential confounding variables, a diverse array of articles (n ~ 6000) with removed origin information will be utilized as stimuli material.

The findings of this research hold the potential to inform media literacy interventions and content verification strategies and contribute to the development of effective measures against the spread and acceptance of false information, thereby fostering a more informed and discerning public capable of navigating the complex landscape of digital information environments.

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POL16 Misinformation and trust in the media

PP 0550 Media use, trust, and belief in COVID-19 and vaccine misinformation

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Since the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, concerns over the spread of misinformation have grown substantially, with the WHO referring to the spread of false and misleading information related to COVID-19 as an "infodemic." Research has shown that a large proportion of this misinformation was spread and seen by people online, particularly on social media. Health professionals and scientists emphasised how people's usage of social media had eased the spread of false information, disrupting the flow of more scientifically sound material. This information disruption intensified when COVID-19 vaccines become available, with false information online contributing to people's vaccine hesitancy. Much of the existing academic literature in this area has focused on where and how misinformation spreads, whilst some research has examined this in relation to beliefs, with findings illustrating that social media use may be related to belief in misinformation. A few single-country studies have suggested that the same may be the case for trust in media, but this has not been examined cross-nationally to our knowledge. Furthermore, the role of people's trust in (and usage of) traditional media has not yet been examined to our knowledge, nor has the role of trust in political institutions. Nevertheless, this line of research has illustrated that the issue of trust in traditional sources of information is likely to be of key importance to understanding when and why people believe false or misleading information on social media. When citizens do not trust information in the mainstream media they may withdraw from it and turn towards alternative sources, which commonly promote misinformation, often through social media. In this study, we contribute to this emerging research agenda with a cross-national study that simultaneously examines the role of social media use, traditional media use, trust in traditional media and trust in political institutions in explaining citizens' beliefs in claims involving misinformation about vaccines and the COVID-19 pandemic. We use original survey data (N = 14,057) to explore these dynamics in nine countries – Argentina, Brazil, Croatia, France, Germany, Iceland, India, Spain and the United Kingdom – between December 2020 and December 2021, during the heights of the COVID-19 pandemic. We use multiple regression models to investigate to what extent media use, and trust in different types of media and political institutions, can predict agreement with statements involving misinformation about vaccines and COVID-19. Controlling for demographic and political variables, we find that greater use of traditional media types (newspapers and television) is significantly related to less belief in these claims, whereas greater use of social media has inconsistent effects (when accounting for the other factors), related to greater belief in misinformation in some but not all cases. Similarly, greater trust in the media and in parliament is significantly related to less belief in these claims. This study contributes to our understanding of how information diets and trust in different sources of information can be related to belief in false and potentially harmful claims, informing ongoing societal debates about challenges in information dissemination in times of crisis.

POL17 Incivility in political communication: Performance and perceptions

PP 0551 Gender dynamics in online negative campaigning. A longitudinal analysis of attack behaviour and incivility in social media discourse by political candidates

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The landscape of political communication has profoundly transformed due to the Web 2.0 revolution (Davis, 2023). The current generation of politicians faces the unique challenges of ascending to power in profoundly mediated contexts. The advantages of digital visibility are accompanied by a downside, as the online realm has evolved into a platform where insults are not only expressed but also disseminated (Bjarnegård & Zetterberg, 2023). Negative campaigning can negatively affect the political process and democracy by fostering polarization, reducing public trust, and discouraging participation (Lau et al., 2007; Haselmayer, 2019). In an era marked by crises such as Brexit, COVID-19, climate challenges, and escalating international conflicts, it is crucial to understand the role of political communication in shaping public perception and trust.

Questions related to gender differences in negative campaigning have undeniably become a more pressing topic (Cassese & Holman, 2018). However, our current comprehension of gender differences in negative campaigning remains inadequate, as most research focuses solely on the United States and, therefore, on a system with candidate-centered campaigns, weak party organizations, and winner-takes-all competitions. Such a context is very specific and likely to bias the results (Ennser-Jedenastik et al., 2017). Even in the United States, results are inconclusive due to the use of a limited number of cases or the absence of longitudinal studies. Moreover, the shift from traditional to social media as a primary communication channel remains understudied in the context of negative campaigning and gender disparities.

To address these shortcomings (US-centered, limited samples, short-term, and focused on traditional media), this paper undertakes an in-depth longitudinal quantitative content analysis, examining all 30,000 Twitter messages sent by 400 individual politicians holding a realistic position on the ballot in the three months leading up to the 2019 and 2024 regional and Federal elections in Belgium. This expanded dataset intends to capture a more comprehensive and nuanced picture of gender differences in negative campaigning, encompassing incivility, toxicity, and variations in issue versus trait attacks. Delving deeper, the paper explores the hypothesis that negative campaigning and the gender gap in online communication have intensified in the past five years, driven by the evolving political landscape and recent crises.

Findings for 2019 confirm gender disparities in negative campaigning within the Western European party-centered context. Women politicians are notably less likely to engage in general attack behaviour, uncivil and toxic attacks. Further distinctions emerge in the preferences of women and men for policy-based versus trait attacks.

In conclusion, this research not only broadens our comprehension of gender disparities in online political communication but also furnishes critical insights into the role of social media in shaping political discourse within the West European context. By navigating beyond the confines of previous research limitations and expanding the geographical scope, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between gender, negative campaigning, and evolving communication channels in contemporary politics.

POL17 Incivility in political communication: Performance and perceptions

PP 0552 The strategic use of political Incivility during the 2022 Brazilian Election: A multi-platform Analysis

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Incivility is a phenomenon that has dramatically increased in the online environment over the last decade. In digital campaigning, political incivility is used as a strategic tool. Brazil's 2022 presidential election might provide a fertile ground for online incivility as social media reinforces already existing political parallelism. This study examines to what extent different affordances of social media platforms facilitate uncivil discourse by the Brazilian Presidential candidates, Lula and Bolsonaro (RQ). We expect that politicians communicate differently on social media platforms depending on their opportunity structures and affordances. Consequently, we compare politicians' use of political incivility on three social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Telegram), each having different characteristics, audience expectations, and moderation guidelines. We define political incivility as a multidimensional concept that encompasses more (a) general forms of incivility (Impoliteness, Negativity, Sarcasm), (b) messages within the political domain (Threats to Democratic Values, Attack Against Political Actors, Violent Political Rhetoric), (c) messages within the social-identity based domain (Hate Speech and Stereotyping) and (d) messages addressing both (Exclusion, Simplistic Argument). We assume that candidates may exploit platform-specific niches to effectively project different dimensions of incivility to target audiences and adapt their content to specific moderation regulations and audiences. In addition, we hypothesize that political stance – incumbent or challenger – influences the extent to which politicians use incivility, with challengers more likely to resort to such behavior to gain traction. The temporal dynamics of a campaign suggest that the use of uncivil rhetoric increases as the election approaches and that this represents a decisive shift that could lead to increased emotional engagement among voters. In line with previous research on online incivility, we create a classifier that is trained to automatically recognize our concept of incivility in political messages in a differentiated way. This methodology allows for a nuanced examination of how social media affordances have an impact on uncivil political discourse and analysis on a large scale. Preliminary findings indicate a variation in social media use among the two candidates and over time. The data (n = 9227) demonstrates that Bolsonaro's preferred platform for communication is Telegram, while Lula shows a greater propensity to use Twitter for his campaign. Additionally, there is a noticeable variation in their posting patterns over time, with Lula exhibiting a steadier use of social media for campaign communication, in contrast to Bolsonaro, whose activity on social media is largely influenced by specific events. This study advances the discussion on the strategic use of incivility in conjunction with platform-specific affordances in political campaigns and offers important insights into the challenges associated with maintaining civil discourse in digital public spaces. In essence, this study unravels the interactions between the structural nuances of social media and strategic political communication using a sophisticated mix of computational and theory-driven analysis. It emphasizes the need for a critical examination of the place and power of political incivility in social media communication and reflects on its potentially transformative effects on democratic engagement and the quality of public conversations.

POL17 Incivility in political communication: Performance and perceptions

PP 0553 Perceptions of incivility in the public discourse and its potential democratic consequences: Insights from a representative survey in Germany

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In an era where the prevalence of incivility in public communication – whether in political talk shows, parliamentary debates, or online discussions – is considered increasingly alarming (e.g., Anderson et al., 2014), this study focuses on the perceptions and potential effects of incivility. Utilizing a representative CATI survey with 1,200 German participants (aged 18+), we investigate the frequency at which various forms of incivility in public discourse are perceived and the potential consequences this has on people's political cynicism, media trust, and perceived societal cohesion.

Our analysis identifies two main forms of incivility, which align with previous classifications (Stryker et al., 2022): Discursive Incivility (e.g., refusal to discuss, interrupt others, Alpha = .82) and Utterance Incivility (e.g., insults, offensive remarks, Alpha = .77). These two dimensions of incivility reflect different aspects of public discourse degradation. Discursive incivility relates to the refusal of engaging in constructive dialogue and often manifests in stubbornness and close-mindedness in discussions. Utterance incivility, on the other hand, is more about the tone and nature of the language used, typically involving derogatory, offensive, or hateful language aimed at degrading the discourse and delegitimizing its participants. Results show that people perceive the manifestations of utterance incivility to occur less frequently than the manifestations of discursive incivility.

A subsequent regression analysis, including various control variables, such as sociodemographics, traditional media usage, and various forms of social media usage – reveals that particularly the perceived frequency of discursive incivility correlates with lower perceived societal cohesion (3 items, Alpha = .71), diminished trust in media (3 items, Alpha = .83), and increased political cynicism (3 items, Alpha = .87). This finding suggests that not just the nature of language, but the unwillingness to engage in open and respectful dialogue, may have a profound impact on people's societal and political perceptions.

Interestingly, our results show that forms of incivility, previously considered relatively "harmless" (Bormann et al., 2022), can indeed have adverse effects. While verbal incivility catches immediate attention due to its explicit nature, people may already be more resilient to these forms than previously thought. In contrast, the subtler forms of discursive incivility can be equally, if not more, damaging in the long run. These forms of incivility not only occur more frequently across political actors, but they also threaten the very foundations of democratic discourse by undermining respect, trust, and the willingness to engage in collaborative problem-solving.

While our cross-sectional design does not allow causal conclusions, it nevertheless provides insights into the democratic implications of perceiving different forms of incivility in public discourse. The relevance of this research lies in its contribution to understanding how incivility in public discussions is not only perceived but also how it may influence the political climate and societal cohesion. The findings are crucial for policymakers, media actors, and civil society: By highlighting the nuanced ways in which incivility manifests and potentially affects people's political and societal attitudes, this research underscores the importance of further elaborating on the need of a culture of civility and respect in public discourse.

POL17 Incivility in political communication: Performance and perceptions

PP 0554 The perception of political and informational incivility between sensitization and desensitization

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We have recently witnessed an increase in the use of incivility and hostility by candidates and political parties (Klinger et al. 2022; Reiter and Matthes 2022), especially during election campaigns, where attacks on opponents in the form of defamation, discredit, mockery, and the like have intensified (Brooks and Geer, 2007; Gross and Johnson, 2016). Additionally, both traditional media and online platforms give wide visibility to expressions of incivility to compete in the attention economy, attract wider audiences, and activate user engagement behaviours.

Hence individuals who follow political news have more, and more frequently, opportunities to encounter uncivil behaviour. This applies not only to citizens used to consuming traditional information sources, but also to those who are active on social media and receive political news indirectly through the well-known "news reaches me" mechanism.

In both cases, the crucial – yet to be investigated – question concerns the consequences of such exposure on citizens. Specifically, whether repeated exposure to political actors' uncivil behaviours increases people's sensitivity to them or whether, on the contrary, it leads to naturalisation and *desensitization*.

In the light of previous research examining citizens' perceptions of political incivility (Kenski et al., 2020; Stryker et al., 2016), this study explores whether and how citizens' sensitivity to different types of political incivility (discursive, informational, vulgar, violent, and discriminatory) varies according to contextual factors and individual variables. The aim is to examine citizens' perceptions of political incivility in general and informational incivility in particular, comparing the context of "everyday politics" with "election campaign." Additionally, we seek to identify predictors of perception and understand the role played by individuals' media consumption and engagement on social media in relation to the political dimension.

To this end, we caried out two surveys using the Cawi method (the first in early 2022, and the second after the 2022 Italian Election campaign) on a representative sample of the Italian population. 2,000 respondents were asked to provide their evaluations on ten statements related to the uncivil behavior of political actors in various areas. The selected areas are related to the various notions of political incivility intended as a lack of respect for the social and cultural norms that govern personal interactions and for those that govern the functioning of democratic systems.

Results show that during election campaigns – compared to "everyday politics" – a *sensitization* mechanism towards politicians' uncivil behaviours is activated, confirming that incivility is a context-dependent concept. Furthermore, the existence of a dual mechanism, *sensitization/desensitization*, and the almost antithetical roles played by news media consumption and social media engagement has emerged: while the former can be considered a resilience factor to incivility, particularly informational incivility, social media activity in relation to politics seems to be associated with *desensitization* to both general incivility and informational incivility.

In other words, citizens who watch, hear/read news attentively are better equipped to recognize various forms of incivility, including information distortion, and therefore develop higher sensitivity to its use. On the contrary, spreading uncivil and misleading content has been normalised by heavy social media users.

POL17 Incivility in political communication: Performance and perceptions

PP 0555 Subjective and objective confrontation with digital hate speech in the everyday media use

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Hate speech proliferates across various online platforms, including social media, news comment sections, discussion forums, and messaging services. Hate speech encompasses insults, defamation, and threats or incitements to violence targeting specific social groups (Council of Europe, 2022; Fortuna and Nunes, 2019). Although hate speech can be subtle or humorous, it must be distinguished from statements that are impolite in tone but harmless in content (Rossini, 2020). Despite efforts by platforms to identify and delete hate speech manually or automatically, exposure to hate speech has been on the rise (e.g., Landesanstalt für Medien NRW, 2021). However, it remains unclear what media users mean when they report that the "frequently" encounter hate speech, and whether the content they see is actually hate speech. This study aims to address these gaps in research with a combination of survey, data donation, and content analysis.

First, a representative survey in German- and French-speaking Switzerland (N = 2000) investigated how often participants encounter hate speech (less than once a year – several times a day). To augment self-reports, participants were additionally presented with specific examples. Second, an online experience sampling study involving 119 participants from the survey adopted a mobile longitudinal linkage approach (Otto et al., 2022). Over a period of 14 days, participants documented when and where they encountered hate speech. The uploaded content (n = 567) was then examined in a manual quantitative content analysis regarding the content and form of hate speech and impoliteness.

Subjective perceptions from the survey reveal that 69% of Swiss people have experienced hate speech, with 24.2% facing it several times a week or more often. Threats and statements against minorities are most likely classified as "hate speech" by respondents, while impoliteness is least likely. Notably, insulting and impolite statements are more likely deemed "hate speech" if directed at the respondents' own social group, influencing also demands for deletion and punishment. This bias shows the partly subjective nature of hate speech perception.

The experience sampling study adds an objective perspective on the confrontation with hate speech. For most participants, self-reports of encounters with hate speech several times a week align with the number of uploaded examples. Yet, many participants overestimated how often they encounter hate speech online in the survey. Insults are most common, followed by defamation, and less frequent threats, affirming the self-reported perceptions in

the survey. Impoliteness is more prevalent than initially perceived, indicating that some statements that are "only" impolite are also perceived as hate speech, although as in the survey they are perceived as less severe. Additionally, members of marginalized groups uploaded more examples related to their own social identity.

In summary, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of online hate speech perception among Swiss internet users. The subjective and objective analyses highlight the prevalence, partly subjective nature, and severity perceptions associated with hate speech. The impact of social identity on evaluation underscores the complexity of addressing this issue effectively.

POL18 Political communication in polarized societies

PP 0556 How (not) to measure the fragmentation of the public sphere? A proposal for reconciling normative theory and empirical inquiry

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The growing number of studies and essays examining the fragmentation of the public sphere is notable, particularly in terms of how the platformization of political communication significantly contributes to this process. However, these works offer varying approaches to understand this phenomenon. This study critically reviews this body of literature to develop a theoretical and methodological framework, inspired by the deliberative system approach. This framework aims to dispel conceptual ambiguities and pinpoint effective methods for assessing different levels of fragmentation. A key focus of this framework is the exploration of how concepts such as echo chambers, filter bubbles, and political polarization are often mistakenly intertwined with the notion of public sphere fragmentation.

The study contends that merely acknowledging the rise of these phenomena does not adequately measure the fragmentation of the public sphere. To overcome these conceptual and analytical shortcomings, the paper suggests a framework rooted in a pluralistic view of the public sphere, which appreciates the diversity and expansion of media choices brought by digitalization. In order to disentangle this media choice expansion from fragmentation, this paper presents the concept of 'interdiscursive agenda congruence'. This envisions a network of interactive, multi-directional flows of symbolic and discursive exchanges between the public, media, and political arenas/actors. In this conceptualization, much more important than figuring out who sets the agenda, it is to understand the dynamics of how some issues gain momentum and attention across these fora, making the notion of a common agenda empirically observable.

The framework identifies three distinct types of fragmentation, each posing a unique threat to the public sphere: a) fragmentation of the public agenda along partisan or ideological lines; b) reduced levels of intermedia agenda congruence; c) the dilution of the concentrated public attention necessary to exert (discursive) pressure on the political system. The paper discusses each type, focusing on their specific political impacts and potential harm to public discourse. The first type undermines some conditions for political negotiations and compromises. The second results in political actors receiving conflicting indications about pressing issues, causing reluctance to participate in public debate. The third type leads to political authorities being influenced primarily by their supporters, thus overlooking broader public interests.

Furthermore, the manuscript delves into the methodologies for measuring these types of fragmentation. It draws on prior work, particularly from political agenda setting studies, to suggest various methodological tools – such as panel surveys, topic modeling and time series analyses of digital trace data – that could address some current research limitations and opportunities. The paper concludes by advocating for the integration of these methodologies in future research to deepen understanding of the nature, extent, and trends in public sphere fragmentation. This approach underscores the necessity for ongoing empirical research and conceptual precision to either validate or refute the hypothesis that the public sphere is eroding due to the platformization of political communication.

Keywords: Deliberative Democracy; Platformization; Public Sphere Fragmentation; Methodology

POL18 Political communication in polarized societies

PP 0557 Dimensions of polarization. Impact of images of Polish political leaders on voters' reception of political messages

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This research is grounded in the growing trend of personalized politics, a subject under examination since the early 1990s (Aarts et al., 2013; Lobo & Curtice, 2014). Despite the extensive history of this research, 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 & Maier, 2016). Concurrently, the burgeoning societal polarization in select EU nations, potentially linked with increased support for right-wing parties, has drawn considerable attention (Down & Han, 2021). The Polish state-level politics is a good exemplification of growing

polarization, with the political scene divided mainly between two factions – Law and Justice (the party forming the Polish government for the last eight years that lost the most recent parliamentary election) and Civic Coalition that returned to power after eight years functioning as opposition. Both of those parties' political communication is focused on the charismatic personal leadership of Jarosław Kaczyński and Donald Tusk.

The presented research is based on an experiment with the iMotions 8.1 biometric research platform. The experiment employed face-tracking (to analyze emotions) and eye-tracking (to identify the focus of respondents' attention). We monitored respondents' behaviors as they made paired judgments on political statements, including those attributed to figures like Donald Tusk (Civic Coalition) and Jarosław Kaczyński (Law & Justice). The research encompassed seventy-two respondents, representing supporters of various political parties in two age categories: 23–26 and 50–55.

Our findings demonstrate statistically significant differences in the reaction of voters from both main parties of the Polish political scene in a situation where they first assess their agreement with a political statement without knowing the author. Then, they realize the leader of the opposite party coined it. The paper also presents a broad scope of measurements and analytical approaches to biometric data analysis. It also discusses the methodology for identifying voters' behaviors related to political polarization based on factors such as signal threshold, signal peak value, mean value, and time distribution of reaction while also applying the neural network as a tool to assess the repeatability and reliability of chosen ways of classification.

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POL18 Political communication in polarized societies

PP 0558 Dynamics and drivers of affective polarization in the Dutch 2023 election

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Affective polarization is assumed to rise during election campaigns. Feelings towards co-partisans and political opponents increase as politics become more pronounced and the stakes increase (Sood & Iyengar, 2016) and party preferences crystallize as one needs to pick one single party on election day. Heightened levels of affective polarization have been found close to election day in Israel and Spain (Bassan-Nygate & Weiss, 2022; Hernández et al., 2021), but polarization dynamics within the campaign and individual level drivers are not addressed in these studies. More detailed research has been conducted in the United States and demonstrates an increase in affective polarization towards presidential candidates during election campaigns (Singh & Thornton, 2023). However, detailed insights into the dynamics and drivers of affective polarization within multi-party election campaigns are lacking. These insights are valuable for understanding affective polarization in multi-party systems, as dynamics are likely to be more complex and multi-faceted compared to two-party systems such as in the US, due to the more complex political environment (i.e. multiple parties) and a higher need for cooperation and consensus building between those parties. Furthermore, how political parties communicate during election campaigns is radically different in multi-party systems than in majoritarian systems, with less negative campaigning. This study will fill the knowledge gap by focusing on the dynamics of affective polarization among citizens during the 2023 Dutch elections. The Netherlands is an interesting case for studying affective polarization due to the high number of parties that are elected. Moreover, political norms, the way politicians communicate and polarization itself became focal points in the 2023 campaign.

To asses the development of affective polarization and to determine what drives these developments, we employ a seven-wave panel survey (N = ~2500) held over the course of the entire Dutch 2023 election campaign. We preliminarily find that average levels of affective polarization, measured through feeling thermometers towards both parties and voters of parties, only minimally increased as the election campaign progressed. Further dynamic panel models (latent growth modelling) will be used to identify different polarization dynamics for different groups

of citizens (such as groups based on ideological preferences; holding populist attitudes; media-use; campaign-exposure and political interest) and potential drivers (such as determination of vote) of affective polarization.

POL18 Political communication in polarized societies

PP 0559 Unraveling affective polarization in Indonesia: Exploring the impact of Derogatory Information, Media Literacy, and Perceived Intergroup Threats in a social media landscape

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In the last decade, Indonesia has witnessed heightened affective polarization, which resulted in individuals tend to disengage from political participation, avoid interactions with opposing parties, and resist policies dictated by the opposition. Reports have linked the emergence of affective polarization in Indonesia with the presence of political buzzers on social media, who carry out political campaigns by spreading hoaxes and hate speech. Individuals who come across derogatory fake news about a candidate on social media might develop a dislike towards the candidate. Therefore, we formulated a hypothesis that individuals exposed to derogatory information in the format of fake news are more likely to experience affective polarization compared to those exposed to information in the form of real news. Information in a fake news format might also influence affective polarization indirectly through perceived threat since derogatory messages used in fake news generally include extreme language. This notion brought us to our second hypothesis, that perceived threat mediates the effect of the news format on affective polarization. Literature suggests that individuals with adequate social media literacy are likely to experience reduced affective polarization when exposed to fake news. We then proposed our third hypothesis, which that is the effect of the news format on affective polarization (mediated by perceived threat) is stronger for people with lower social media literacy skills. We conducted an online experiment with a single-factor (fake news vs. real news format) between-subjects design. Participants were randomly assigned to derogatory information about candidates in either fake news or a real news format, then participants completed the perceived threat scale, the affective polarization scale (thermometer feeling, social distance scale, and trait rating), social media use, political knowledge, social media literacy, critical social media literacy, and demographic questions. A total of 222 participants were included in this study. Findings show that exposure to the fake news format did not significantly elevate affective polarization compared to the real news format, no mediating effect of perceived threats, and that social media literacy was not a significant moderator on the relationship between news format and affective polarization. However, a positive correlation was observed between symbolic threat and affective polarization, suggesting a connection between higher affective polarization and an increased perceived threat to one's values. Exploratory analyses revealed positive associations between symbolic threat and political knowledge with affective polarization, revealing that high symbolic threat and positive knowledge correlate with increased affective polarization. Conversely, negative associations were found for the number of social media accounts, passive media use, and critical media literacy with affective polarization, indicating that more social media accounts, higher passive media use, and critical media literacy, were linked to lower affective polarization. Additionally, ANOVA results indicate Facebook users exhibiting the highest polarization compared to other platforms. Several implications for future research are suggested and are discussed in the paper. The present study enhances our understanding of the relationship between misinformation, social media literacy, and affective polarization since there is still a lack of research investigating these relationships.

POL18 Political communication in polarized societies

PP 0560 Ideological Belief Gaps and Public Opinion Dynamics across five policy areas in Sweden: Exploring divergent beliefs and the influence of Ideological News Diets

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How is it that people can hold diametrically different societal beliefs about politically contested issues that is founded on empirically verifiable information? Belief gaps are defined in this study as individual's divergent beliefs about how society is managing the problems facing it. For instance, some individuals may hold negative beliefs about how the country is managing economic or unemployment issues, whilst others may express their positive beliefs that society is effectively addressing these problems. The belief gap hypothesis posits that ideology and news media use predict and explain diverse beliefs on verifiable and politically disputed issues. Ideology stands out as the most reliable predictor of belief gaps. As a distributor of information, the news media bridges the space between citizens and politics by conveying conflicting perspectives, even when these perspectives are attached to purely ideological statements. In this context, news media disseminate political messages, potentially inflating belief gaps and influencing electoral outcomes. This study explores citizens' evolving beliefs over time, emphasizing the role of prior ideology in shaping societal beliefs. However, it is still unclear how ideology operates in predicting belief disparities across various policy issues. By examining belief gaps about how Sweden is managing across multiple policy issues, it is possible to offer a better understanding of ideological influence, and it also allows for a more nuanced

explanation of the mechanisms behind belief gaps. Previous research has also highlighted the necessity to move beyond the traditional left-right or socio-economic dimension. It suggests that socio-cultural ideology should be considered as it might be, compared to socio-economic ideology, a more efficient predictor of diverging beliefs in certain policy areas. Additionally, this study investigates the role of ideological news diets in moderating the relation between ideology and beliefs. Therefore, this paper tests the belief gap hypothesis, measuring belief gaps as negative or positive beliefs about how Sweden is managing within five different policy areas: Violent crime, health care, education system, national economy, and unemployment, using both ideological dimensions to determine which is the better predictor. This is done by utilising a six-wave panel survey, conducted over the course of three years, providing an opportunity to test the assumptions of the belief gap hypothesis over a greater length of time. Preliminary findings reveal ideological gaps in crime, unemployment, and the national economy, with socio-cultural ideology playing a significant role in belief disparities across all policy areas. Interaction effects of ideological news use are evident only with socio-cultural ideology, impacting beliefs about unemployment, national economy, and the education system. Interestingly, these effects are exclusive to socio-culturally conservative individuals who over time become more negative, which widens the belief gap between liberals and conservatives. The study discusses theoretical and empirical implications of these results.

POL19 Beyond populism: New perspectives on the role of communication in times of illiberalism

PN 088 White victimhood and "right victimhood": Brexit and the mainstreaming of illiberalism on Facebook

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Social media are often deemed responsible for an increasingly hostile and dysfunctional public sphere, and are particularly implicated in the continued mainstreaming of the far and populist right and illiberalism around the world. Yet we still know little about people's experience engaging with populist and illiberal rhetoric on social media, and how this comes to affect their political attitudes and worldviews. Much existing work relies on computational techniques with "big data", but these methods are less suited to understanding experiences, intentions, and subjective meaning-making, or to investigating social and political phenomena in context. In this work, I take the issue of Britain's exit from the European Union ("Brexit") as a case study for examining the consequences of the diffusion of transnational right-wing populist politics on social media. While the Brexit campaign in the lead-up to the referendum is well-known for its use of populist rhetoric, the populist potential of the post-referendum negotiation period, 2017–2019, is overlooked. During this time, affective polarisation divided British society into newly salient categories of Leavers and Remainers, and exit deal negotiations led by self-confessed Remainer Theresa May were floundering in the face of parliamentary, EU, and public opposition. These were ideal conditions for right-wing populist politicians, media, and other actors to exploit discontent by claiming that the democratic mandate of the referendum was under threat. On Facebook, dozens of Pages and Groups emerged around support for Leave, some boasting followings in the hundreds of thousands. Many key figures in this sphere, such as Nigel Farage, "Tommy Robinson" and Jacob Rees-Mogg, remain influential illiberal populist figureheads even after Britain's inevitable departure from the EU.Using an innovative method that combined two rounds of in-depth interviews with 15 pro-Brexit Facebook users, with month-long observations of their Facebook posts, I examined the relationship between Facebook use, support for Brexit, and the transnational far and populist right during the post-referendum period. In this paper, I reveal the importance of transnational White victimhood and what I have termed "Right victimhood", and how these connected the pro-Brexit milieu on Facebook to more extreme forms of right-wing politics, including far-right conspiracy theories. These misplaced victimhood sensibilities are mutually reinforcing, working in tandem to legitimate illiberal and exclusionary ideologies. The newly significant discourse of "Right victimhood" posits that progressive cultural and minority rights agendas are in fact malevolent oppression of those with conservative views. The power of this discourse is found in its circumvention of accusations of racism while simultaneously legitimating hostile attitudes towards racialised and minoritised individuals. The spread and appeal of these logics have had reverberating consequences for recent reactionary right mobilisations, including Covid-19 counter-political disinformation and the UK Conservative Party's "war on woke".

POL19 Beyond populism: New perspectives on the role of communication in times of illiberalism

PN 089 Western media corporations and right-wing populism in Bulgaria: a political economy approach

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This paper focuses on the relationship between right-wing populism and the structural transformations of media industries in post-socialist Bulgaria. More specifically, the paper examines the effects of the entry in Bulgaria's press and television markets of the Western media companies Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ) and News Corp. Bulgaria's political class and News Corp and WAZ represented these companies' domination of media as a guarantee for a healthy democracy. I argue that what occurred is the opposite. Based on ethnographic and

archival research, I contend that the entry of the two Western media corporations set the stage for the emergence and proliferation of right-wing populist discourse. Thus, the story of Bulgaria's experience with Western media companies illustrates one of the major contradictions of contemporary liberalism, namely the idea that a healthy civil society could coexist with unfettered capitalism. Instead, the evidence from Bulgaria and across Eastern Europe shows that illiberal phenomena thrive in a deregulated and highly concentrated media market. Thus, the analysis of Bulgaria's experience with WAZ and News Corp, illustrates that illiberalism is not a force external to liberalism, but it is a product of liberalism's own crises.In order to understand the contradictory dynamic between liberalism's political promises and commercial media industries, it is important to look beyond texts and audience reception. Thus, my analysis focuses on media production processes. This is crucial because both WAZ and News Corp became dominant on the Bulgarian media market largely due the country's radical liberalization of the media sphere.The German newspaper giant WAZ was the first Western media company to enter Bulgaria. From 1996 to 2010, WAZ and its two Bulgarian newspapers, 24 Chasa (24 Hours) and Trud (Labor), controlled 80 percent of the newspaper market. Based on empirical studies conducted in Bulgaria in the early and mid-2000s as well as oral interviews I conducted with newspaper editors and journalists, I argue that one of the main outcomes of this monopolistic model of the press was the entrenchment of tabloid populist language with racist overtones that paved the way for the emergence of the populist right. Equally controversial was the monopolization of the Bulgarian television market by News Corp's bTV channel. Similarly to WAZ, News Corp dominated the media sphere until the company's exit in 2010. The Western corporation established its own brand of media populism that includes nationalist and even racist features. Thus, it comes as no surprise that over the years bTV has served as an incubator of right-wing populist politicians who entered the Bulgarian parliament after serving as anchors of bTV.The argument in this paper is that illiberal phenomena are not external threats to liberal systems but are the outcomes of internal crises and contradictions. The radical structural transformations and commercialization of media industries in Bulgaria and the proliferation of far-right discourse are one evidence of this dynamic. For this reason, the paper argues that a comprehensive understanding of right-wing populism requires a political economy approach that exposes the economic and political structures which underpin it.

POL19 Beyond populism: New perspectives on the role of communication in times of illiberalism

PN 090 Media affordances for grassroots illiberalism

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This paper aims to contribute to the understanding of illiberalism (Laruelle, 2022) as an ideology and a popular movement with a focus on its relationship with the media. Norris and Inglehart (2019) have sought to explain the rise of authoritarian populism in terms of a dynamic between a "demand side" involving "societal forces shaping the public's values, attitudes, and beliefs, creating reservoirs of potential support in the electorate" and a "supply side," consisting of the "appeals that parties and leaders use when seeking to mobilize support" and eventually, rise to power. The notion of "grassroots illiberalism" introduced here focuses on the "demand side" of illiberalism and is intended to direct attention to the underlying conditions furthering its popularity at the level of civil society and the public sphere. These conditions are discussed with a view to the specific historical and cultural context of the new post-communist democracies of Eastern Europe. The affordances of the hybrid media environment, it is proposed, figure prominently on the "demand side" of illiberalism's spread in the region. While Norris and Inglehart (2019) noted the role of economic grievances in the rise of authoritarian populism, they gave prevalent weight to the "cultural backlash" against liberal values. In this paper, I shift the focus back to the economy, and specifically to neoliberal economic policies as they played out in Eastern European societies. Grassroots illiberalism, I argue, is a logical response to the excesses of neoliberalism and the discrediting of democracy and the erosion of social welfare it has caused. It is a response that takes the distortion of liberal values for these values themselves. Instead of (or along with) challenging the market absolutism inherent in neoliberal ideology and policy, it attacks the core principles of liberalism and rejects the institutions of the liberal social order as a whole. This disenchantment with liberal ideas has occurred at the same time as the massive spread of social media and the explosion of use practices associated with them. Research has demonstrated that proponents of both right-wing and progressive movements find affordances in social media that support their characteristic values and communicative and organizational practices. The aim of this paper is to identify those affordances of the hybrid media environment that are particularly conducive to the influence of illiberal groups and discourses. Based on a series of qualitative interviews with representatives of illiberal citizen groups in Bulgaria and a long-term observation of their public self-representation and activities, it is proposed that digital media allow these groups to construct a material base of "trenches and fortifications" (Gramsci, 1971) in which illiberal counterhegemony can embed itself. Social media in particular, are employed to simulate democratic expression emphasizing the grassroots nature of the organizations while at the same time, they help establish celebrity leaders and influencers. Affective framing and bonding obliterate the "rational-critical" ethos of the liberal public sphere and consolidates exclusionary communities.

POL19 Beyond populism: New perspectives on the role of communication in times of illiberalism

PN 091 Media and Illiberalism: A processual model for the study of the illiberal public sphere

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Illiberalism is increasingly often mentioned among the key threats faced by contemporary liberal democracies. Yet, while other threats to democratic institutions and values attracted significant scholarly attention, illiberalism remains poorly defined, and the communication perspective on illiberalism is particularly underdeveloped. While communication research on political developments contributing to illiberalism, such as the rise of populist leaders and far-right movements, has been growing fast, this work typically shies away from wider theoretical reflections on how these shifts might be changing the institutional underpinnings and normative foundations of public communication. To help provide greater conceptual clarity and advance the debate on the role of communication in contemporary challenges to democracy, this paper builds on emerging debates on illiberalism, distinguishes it from populism, and introduces the concept of the illiberal public sphere, defined as a communicative space comprising both traditional and new media that promote and amplify illiberal actors, views, and attitudes. The paper also offers a definition of illiberalism, centered on its three constitute features: a paradoxical relationship with liberal democracy, its institutions and values; a dual nature as both an ideological universe and a set of ideas and practices; and as a dynamic, disruptive phenomenon. Furthermore, we present a processual model of the illiberal public sphere, composed of three ideal-typical stages or phases, which are designed to capture the key characteristics of the illiberal public sphere at different stages of its evolution, namely the incipient phase (where the illiberal public sphere is relatively limited in its scope and reach), the ascendant phase (where it has grown in size and influence to the extent that it is on par with its liberal counterpart and competes with it for dominance), and the hegemonic phase (during which the illiberal public sphere has become dominant, having colonized most mainstream news media channels, and forced the liberal public sphere into retreat). Using illustrative empirical examples from countries current affected by the rise of illiberalism – particularly from Eastern Europe – this model is meant to help communication researchers examine what happens to public communication after populism becomes a widespread feature of political life, and especially after far right or ultraconservative political actors have successfully mobilized populist strategies to rise to positions of power.

POL19 Beyond populism: New perspectives on the role of communication in times of illiberalism

PN 092 Political psychology of authoritarianism: Research agenda for authoritarian information environment

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The global democratic backsliding occurring over recent years has attracted much scholarly attention, resulting in a boom of research on authoritarian politics, media, populism and illiberalism. One of the crucial and latest trajectories of this research is concerned with the exploration of the interplay between emotions, identities, and the media that underpin such politics. Nonetheless, so far, there has not been a systematic, structured attempt at developing the political psychology of authoritarianism as a separate research agenda that can guide concept and theory-building in authoritarian environments. Instead, most concepts and theories have been imported into the study of authoritarian systems from the research undertaken in democratic contexts. In this agenda-setting article, we first quantitatively review existing research in the last decades to demonstrate that most research in the political psychology of authoritarianism focuses on democratic environments and relies on an individual-driven, rather than environment-driven, understanding of authoritarianism. Second, by focusing on the most consequential features of the authoritarian environment for individual and social psychology, such as (a) the structure of the information environment and information manipulation, (b) non-inclusive political institutions, (c) overt and covert forms of violence, we propose an environment-driven understanding of authoritarianism, which better captures the dynamics of authoritarian environments. We use this conceptualization to review existing research on three key areas in political psychology – heuristics, ideology, and popular support. By looking at the environment rather than the individual, we demonstrate that 1) authoritarian information environments make citizens select different heuristics to analyse information vis-à-vis democratic environments; 2) non-inclusive institutions make ideology map onto different values and traits vis-à-vis the traditional left-right continuum in democracies; 3) political process driven by violence is better characterized by the concept of justification rather than support. We use this conceptualization to illustrate how it could guide research in terms of its potential for highlighting relevant questions and showing the demand for novel concepts and theories that are specific to authoritarian systems, but also relevant for democracies.

POL20 Political actors @ the centre

PP 0657 Beyond social media logic: Operationalizing communication logics in the context of political actors' issue salience strategies on social media using a mixed-method, cross-platform approach

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To gauge the political and democratic consequences of political actors' integration of social media practices in their campaign toolkit, scholars have seized extensions of the concept of "media logic" (first coined by Altheide & Snow, 1979) – e.g., new/digital/network/social media logic. However, there has been few attempts of operationalizing what such "logics" consist of (Fredheim, 2021) and the application of such concepts in empirical research has been beset with conceptual and operational fuzziness (Brants & Praag, 2017). This makes it difficult for researchers to build upon previous research and hinders theory-building. The study at hand aims to remedy some of the operational fuzziness surrounding "media logic" and its extensions into distinct "logics" for social media. Focusing on political actors' communication strategies related to issues, this study conceptualizes and operationalizes three communication logics that theoretically contribute to explicate the concept of "social media logic" in political communication: issue ownership logic, news media logic and feedback logic. Employing a dynamic theoretical and empirical approach, this study investigates these communication logics' influence on parties' decisions on which issues to emphasize in election campaigns. Empirically, the study considers the strategies of political parties in the 2021 Norwegian election campaign using a mixed-method, cross-platform research design. The study draws on two data sources collected after the 2021 election: in-depth interviews with campaign strategists from eight major Norwegian parties and a manual, standardized content analysis of the corresponding parties' and party-leaders' Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter posts (n = 1,685). The study concludes with a critical discussion on the applicability and explanatory value of the "logic" concept in understanding the dynamics of social media and political communication.

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POL20 Political actors @ the centre

PP 0658 Politicians' news media relations on social media. An actor-centered approach to communication flows in the digital media environment

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With social media, the conditions for agenda setting and the framing of issues have changed, increasing the possibilities for a wide range of actors to communicate directly with audiences and influence the issues salient on the public discourse. A set of studies demonstrate that communication flows between traditional news media and social media are dynamic and multifaceted, showing that influence goes both ways. In this article, we suggest an actor-centered approach to investigate communication flows in the digital media environment and introduce the notion of "News Media Relations" (NMR) which refers to whether and how actors on social media engage with the news media. This analytical tool distinguishes between two types of news media relations, namely amplify framing, where actors on social media emphasize the existing frame in a news story, and re-framing, where actors introduce new and other interpretive frames to an issue than what is present in the original news story.

We apply the NMR framework in a study of politicians' social media communication during a six month period in Norway. Earlier research shows that both high profile and less visible politicians exploit social media communication opportunities for a range of purposes. Still, we know little about the extent to which such key actors pursue a separate communication agenda, or rather relate to the news media on social media to amplify existing frames or take issue with them and introduce new and competing interpretive frames.

The data encompass a manual quantitative content analysis of the Facebook posts of party leaders and deputy leaders from the nine parties represented in parliament. The results show that national politicians do indeed engage with news stories, as 60 per cent of all social media communication in our data referred to stories in news outlets. Amplify framing clearly dominated this type of communication, only 5 per cent of politicians' communication on social media is characterized as re-framing. While party leaders related to the news media to a greater extent than other politicians, the two prime ministerial candidates stood out with very little news relations on social media, potentially reflecting a distinct logic of appropriateness for those in the most prominent positions. While re-framing

had a clear positive relationship with audience reactions, amplify-framing had a negative relationship, prompting further inquiry into why politicians, despite increased audience engagement, do not employ re-framing strategies more frequently.

Given the entanglement of traditional media content with social media, the concept of NMR enables studying to what extent and how such entanglement takes place through the actions of core social media actors. The results of this study indicate that much social media communication is separated from the news media, suggesting a distinct social media communication sphere. Still, a majority of social media communication in our study indicate an intertwined political public sphere, where communication flows between social media and the news media. The low levels of re-framing, however, indicates that this communication flow does not entail a negotiation or altering of the interpretive frames available to the public.

POL20 Political actors @ the centre

PP 0659 Construction of political leadership in the contemporary context: Interplay of vertical and horizontal dimensions

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This paper examines the social construction of political leadership within the context of celebrity politics (Street, 2004) and populism (Moffitt, 2016). Looking at political leadership with social constructionist lenses, the study recognizes that leadership is constructed, and can change over time and in different contexts. We argue that political leadership is constructed through what we distinguish as vertical (extraordinary/superior) and horizontal (ordinary/on the same level) dimensions, each with its elements. The vertical dimension of leadership refers to the demand for the extraordinary leader, while the horizontal dimension puts the leader at the same level as ordinary citizens.

The concepts of vertical and horizontal dimensions of political leadership are the result of our modeling strategy. They structure existing theoretical concepts and the qualitative-empirical evidence from our research, including the creation of more developed connections with populism theory. This article's objective is not only to analyze how these two dimensions (co-)exist, but also how they are articulated, how they relate to each other, and how they become reconciled. Therefore, while we use the literature on celebrity politics and populism to develop our model, our interest here is not so much in how celebrity politics or populist leadership function. We aim to move beyond these existing bodies of literature by focusing on the social construction of leadership itself. Our article also aims to analyze how the horizontal and vertical dimensions operate together in this contemporary condition

The empirical part is grounded in the qualitative content analysis based on 20 interviews with the Facebook followers of two Croatian politicians, president Zoran Milanović, and the mayor of Sinj, Miro Bulj. Through iteration between theory and analysis, we aimed to deepen the understanding of political leadership in contemporary settings. The empirical part of the analysis shows that neither one of the elements is dominating the construction of leadership, but that they rather interact. These interactions between the dimensions are visible in the interview material, in three different ways. First, some of the elements pair, because of their structural similarities. Second, modesty produces a bridge between the ordinary and the extraordinary. Finally, the impossibility of a perfect balance is also acknowledged. In short, leadership is shown to be paradoxical but not contradictory, as it is an always imperfect reconciliation of the horizontal and vertical dimensions.

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POL20 Political actors @ the centre

PP 0660 Influencer creep in Parliament: Platform pressures in French MP Communications work

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Becoming an elected official means chasing visibility. To reach out to current and future voter bases, an MP must dedicate a significant portion of their time to outreach and communications. While engagement with traditional media remains an integral part of this work, today's high-choice digital media environment leaves MPs with a plethora of options for expressing themselves in public. However, this multiplication of communication channels also creates new pressures for MPs to master not only concrete digital skills, but to gain an understanding of the cultures and norms of an ever-increasing number of platforms. Often, it requires mastering the "game" of algorithmic

recommendation, playing by the rules of platform infrastructures. This shift reflects a broader trend seen in other professions (artists, academics, activists…), ushering in "influencer creep" (Bishop, 2023) where the working habits of full-time social media influencers permeate the practices of other groups, even those that outwardly distance themselves from such a label.

While there is no shortage of scholarly work mapping how social media and other digital tools transform political communication (even ushering in a wave of "platform parties" (Gerbaudo, 2019)), much of this literature focuses on the outputs of such transformations in the form of digital media content. We currently lack an in-depth understanding of the *production of* political communication in the social media age. As conditions for success in reaching the general public become more and more complex, how do politicians integrate multiple media logics in their working practices? How do these pressures add to their already intense workloads, and who is better placed to adapt to them?

In this article, I seek to understand how French MPs and their teams integrate such pressures in their day-to-day communications work. Through over 40 semi-structured interviews with MPs and their assistants, participant observation in the French Assemblée Nationale, and a quantitative mapping of MP social media presences, I explore the following question: How do MPs perceive their communications work in a high-choice media environment?

Despite the fact that we observe significant diversity in the communication practices of MPs (often divided along party lines), there is convergence in the incentives they face to increase their visibility. The structural incentives for political communication work are more influenced by platform infrastructure than by the rules of the political field. Three main aspects of Bishop's "influencer creep" can be identified in the working practices of French parliamentary teams: the construction of a personal brand, optimization, and the performance of authenticity. Notably, these logics can be identified even among MPs that are not among the most active on social media.

This article discusses the implications of internalizing algorithmic logic in parliamentary work and the changing working conditions of public figures. MPs face similar challenges as other professions who depend on public visibility and find themselves at the mercy of ever-changing platform structures, intensifying and diversifying demands on skills, resources, and labour.

POL20 Political actors @ the centre

PP 0661 The rhetoric of exemplarist foreign policy: President Donald Trump's promotion of global (dis)order at the United Nations

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For 75 years American presidents, Republican and Democrats, rhetorically promoted a liberal international order based upon free trade, democracy promotion, and engagement with international institutions.[i] Republican and Democratic presidents discursively emphasized different aspects of this order, but they generally supported U.S. global engagement and advanced the United States as the "leader of the free world." Presidential Donald Trump fundamentally rejected this liberal international order and sought to remake foreign policy in his image. His dismissal of "globalist" ideology had a profound effect on international institutions, alliances, free trade, and democracy promotion around the world. In this paper, we examine how President Trump constructed a fundamentally different vision for America's role in the world.

To do so, we conduct a textual analysis of President Trump's speeches at the United Nations. The American president's address at the United Nations is like his State of the Union address. In that address, the president lays out his policy vision for the United States for the coming year. Similarly, U.S. presidents since Harry Truman have argued for the support of liberal international order and America's leadership role in that order. In this paper, we outline the rhetorical strategies President Trump used to repudiate this global order in his United Nations addresses. Specifically, we argue Trump promoted a vision of America's role in the world that emphasizes the power of its example and a withdrawal from the global stage. His U.N. rhetoric echoes U.S. foreign policy principles of the 19th century where American presidents argued the United States should remove itself from global affairs and instead be an model for the world to emulate. According to Trump (and exemplarists), getting deeply involved in global problems brings more harm than good to U.S. interests and undermines its body politic. By emphasizing this exemplarist tradition of America's role in the world, Trump destabilized the liberal international order promoted by U.S. presidents for 75 years, sowed chaos in U.S. global engagement, and had profound consequences for U.S. debates on America's role in the world.

We end the paper reflecting on how the Biden administration attempted to repair the damage from Trump's exemplarist foreign policy and how Trump has influenced the Republican party's foreign policy platform going into the 2024 presidential election.

[i]Let me be clear we are not pollyannish about American foreign policy. The United States has made significant errors on the world stage. My point here is more a contrast to President Trump compared to his predecessors.

POL21 Conspiracy theories, beliefs, and media

PP 0756 The spreading of hate. Diffusion dynamics of conspiracy theories across platforms

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The rise of digital platforms and media online is closely linked to an increasing proliferation of conspiracy theories. These venues not only enable content to be spread easily across platforms by technical means but also allow users to be active on several platforms simultaneously and incorporate observed content into discussions elsewhere. That way, networked digital information ecologies (Häussler 2021) can facilitate the diffusion of conspirational content, formerly strongly confined to fringe communities, to venues with outreach to the general public. Likewise, topics of general discussion can be woven into conspirational content. Understanding this mutually interrelated nature of digital information ecologies is central to capturing the proliferation of conspiracy theories online and its effects on public debate and society. While this calls for cross-platform empirical studies, most analyses are single-platform studies on single conspiracy theories (Mahl et al. 2022).

Our project focuses on two conspiracy theories closely linked to far-right ideology and likely to spread hatred within society: the narratives of the "New World Order" and the "Great Replacement/White Genocide". Concerning these conspiracy theories, we contribute to furthering our understanding of the patterns and mechanisms of cross-platform diffusion by a multidimensional comparative study across several platforms and media in a timeframe of ten years (2011 – 2021). Our research questions are: (1) How does the salience of these conspiracy theories and their development over time differ or align across platforms? (2) How are the observed dynamics interrelated across platforms?

In this project, we understand cross-platform diffusion as the result of independent actor decisions and operationalize content-based diffusion as a reference to the same content on different platforms (Heft & Buehling 2022). Our design comprises five platforms and communication venues spanning a spectrum from discussion forums prone to foster conspirational subcultural milieus (4chan, Reddit) via general audience platforms (Twitter, now 'X') to broadcast venues that address niche (alternative media) and general audiences (legacy media). We argue that in the diffusion of conspirational content, each platform type serves a particular function that should be manifested in the diffusion patterns. For example, we can expect the discussion forums to be breeding grounds for narrating conspiracy theories, while alternative media could constitute brokers between counter-public spaces and the general public. At the same time, we acknowledge the relevance of public events and the reciprocal nature of cross-platform diffusion, rendering the direction of spill-over processes an empirical question.

We developed a comprehensive dictionary for our raw data collection, resulting in about 3 million English-language posts from 4chan and Reddit, over 20 million Tweets, 32.000 alternative media articles, and about 8.000 legacy media articles. As a second step, we trained and applied a machine learning classifier to distinguish between conspirational content related to the theories studied. In addition to measuring the intensity of the public visibility of the conspiracy theories over time, we test the direction of cross-platform contagion effects by estimating point process models indicating how an increase in the prevalence of conspiracy-related posts on one platform influences the prevalence on others.

POL21 Conspiracy theories, beliefs, and media

PP 0757 A social web of conspiracies: Exploring the relationship and mechanism between media use and conspiracy beliefs across generations

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Recent events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or election campaigns in different countries, have demonstrated that conspiracy theories and false information spread rapidly on social media platforms and can undercut basic trust in democratic institutions. While conspiracy theories (CTs) are becoming a well-documented phenomenon (e.g. Sutton & Douglas, 2020), studies report differences in the extent to which different segments of the population are susceptible to misperceptions (Williams et al., 2022). As misperceptions are found to thrive online on social media, patterns in media consumption have been suggested as a key source and socialization agent for conspiracy beliefs (Enders et al., 2021; Strömbäck et al., 2022). So far, however, it remains unclear how different types of news media diets interact with misperceptions and beliefs in CTs and via which mechanisms this occurs..

We aim to add to this debate via examining how patterns in news media consumption – both traditional and social media – affect conspiracy beliefs, via assessing two key elements that have so far remained under explored.

First, since young and adult citizens largely differ in the types of news media they consume, we will systematically compare how age affects conspiracy beliefs. Given the fact that social media is becoming more important as an information source for the younger generations underscores the necessity of obtaining insight in this relationship. Second, we aim to clarify the exact mechanisms through which (social) media guides misperceptions and beliefs in CTs. Building on research in the context of COVID-19, we posit that distinct news media use is related to key attitudes which are in turn associated with conspiracy beliefs, namely (lack of) trust in news media and science and populist attitudes (e.g. Eberl, et al. 2021). Our overall theoretical expectation is that younger people –via their distinct patterns in news media use—are more likely to display lower levels of overall news media trust and trust in science, and higher levels of populism, which results in more conspiracy beliefs.

We rely on a cross-sectional population survey (n = 2,689) in Belgium to focus explicitly on how (social) media use and conspiracy beliefs correlate with three political attitudes, comparing different age groups (including adolescents and young adults; 16–28 years). We apply structural equation modelling (SEM) techniques to assess the interplay between the various antecedents of conspiracy beliefs. Using SEM allows us to identify both direct and indirect relationships between news media use and conspiracy beliefs, paying attention to potential mediators (populism, trust in news media, trust in science) and moderators (age). As such, we do not only contribute to the debate on the antecedents of conspiracy beliefs, but also add to the debate of how distinct political attitudes are intertwined and manifest themselves across generations.

POL21 Conspiracy theories, beliefs, and media

PP 0758 The affinity between conspiracy mindsets and misinformation perceptions across seven countries spanning the Global North and South

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Citizens across the globe are extremely concerned about misinformation in their newsfeed (Newman et al., 2023). At the same time, however, only a marginal proportion of people's media diets is expected to contain false or deceptive information (Acerbi et al., 2022). Arguably, citizens severely overestimate the amount of false information they receive (Altay et al., 2023; Knuutila et al., 2022), which may have severe democratic ramifications: Disproportionate misinformation perceptions may lead to news avoidance, anti-democratic behaviors amidst crises (Hameleers et al., 2022) and generic distrust in reliable information (Van der Meer et al., 2023). But what may explain these heightened risk perceptions of encountering misinformation?

In this paper, we argue that inflated perceptions of misinformation salience coincide with rising distrust in established information sources (e.g., Newman et al., 2023), and the growing appeal of counter-factual explanations of reality. Specifically, perceptions of distrust related to the information disseminated by established sources, including the mass media and political elites, may correspond to an inflated perception of being flooded by mis- and disinformation. Even more so, when people think that established institutions take part in 'evil' schemes, they may also perceive false information and deception to be prevalent. Such a cynical outlook on established knowledge may be reflected in conspiracy mindsets, which relate to the perception that evil forces are responsible for plotting a scheme that threatens the well-being of ordinary people (e.g., Barkun, 2003).

Against this backdrop, and as an important contribution to existing research on misinformation perceptions (e.g., Hameleers et al., 2021; Knuutila et al., 2022), this paper explores the relationship between political cynicism, media trust, and conspiracy mindsets on the one hand and misinformation salience on the other hand across countries in the Global North and South: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Spain, The United States, and the Netherlands.

The main findings of our representative survey (N = 3,718) indicate that people generally perceive that misinformation is present in more than half of all information (M = 52.10%, SD = 23.38%). These estimates are highest in Mexico (M = 57.07%, SD = 22.90) and lowest in the Netherlands (M = 45.92%, SD = 22.77). In line with our main expectations, the OLS regression models indicate that the stronger people's conspiracists mindset, the more misinformation they perceive (B = 8.57, SE = .59, β = .59, p<.001). We also see that the more politically cynical people are, the more misinformation they perceive (B = 2.82, SE = .81, β = .15, p<.001). The same applies to media trust: The more people trust the news media, the lower their estimates of misinformation (B = -1.80, SE = .77, β = -.10, p = .019). These findings suggest that conspiracy mindsets, cynicism, and distrust play central roles in people's vulnerability to disproportionate estimates of misinformation – which offers important avenues for future research on resilience to (perceived) misinformation and practical interventions that aim to relativize people's risk assessment of an important, yet often inflated, phenomenon in today's digital information setting.

POL21 Conspiracy theories, beliefs, and media

PP 0759 Networked exposure: What bridging aggregate and individual network data can tell us about hyperpartisan, alternative, and conspiracy media

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The study of hyperpartisan, alternative, and conspiracy (HAC) media has been split down two lines of questioning. One focuses on the individual, inquiring into who consumes this content, how they get there, and the relationship between its consumption and attitudes towards politics. The second focuses on the aggregate level, helping us understand the hyperlinking practices between these pages, how they present their material, and how it's picked up by political actors. While both are valuable in their own right, to date, there have been little efforts to reconcile these two approaches.

We argue that the gap between individual and aggregate analyses must be bridged. Such a reconsolidation recognises a more nuanced reality of our current networked information environment, where individuals seek out sites they enjoy but are also directed to information by influential online actors. For example, HAC media and actors that share their content, in their quest for credibility, often reference and link to 'mainstream' news sites and media, not just their HAC counterparts (Mayerhoffer & Heft 2022, Herasimenka et al 2023). On social media platforms, work has shown that a variety of 'problematic' actors (eg highly-partisan accounts) commonly point their audiences to legitimate news sources – it is not only 'fake' news that is circulated in these communities (Farris et al 2017). Such observations shine light on the multifaceted nature of information diffusion: online actors do not only need to lead to dubious information sources to convince their publics of a point. Instead, they can raise the salience of given issues, linking to seemingly legitimate news sources, while providing specific framing within a platform (Herasimenka et al 2023).

Individual-level approaches have mostly focused on measuring direct engagement with HAC media. Nevertheless, by doing so, studies have overlooked the vast array of 'inconspicuous' mainstream sources that are mobilised and distributed throughout these networks. We propose that when studying the exposure to and effects of HAC media, we must look at *networked exposure*: consumption and engagement with the topics and content that is shared in the networks where HAC media is prominent, beyond the sites that are labelled as 'problematic'. Such an approach would shine a broader light on how individuals access a broader information diet that does not exclusively focus on HAC media sites themselves, yet may have negative consequences on attitudes and beliefs.

We propose a novel method integrating individual web tracking (N = 907) with aggregate network analysis of HAC media sharing actors. Examining network overlap between individual-level access and aggregate sharing, we identify non-HAC URLs disseminated by those sharing HAC media. Tracing these URLs back to individuals, we assess if access to HAC media predicts engagement with mainstream content mobilized in these networks. Combining networked exposure with surveys, we investigate the relationship between exposure and key attitudes of interest.

POL21 Conspiracy theories, beliefs, and media

PP 0760 Leave me alone, I do not believe you! News avoidance, conspiracy beliefs and vaccine opposition

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News avoidance attracted academic attention due to its increasing prevalence and its association with negative democratic outcomes. The intentional news avoidance, a deliberate avoidance of news, has been linked to a higher presence of misbeliefs and potentially lower political knowledge, while low news consumption, not necessarily a result of intentional actions, was found to be associated with reduced political participation and lower levels of uncontested knowledge. Due to the differences in outcomes and drivers between these two dimensions of news avoidance, a more nuanced understanding of their interplay and its association with negative democratic phenomena is needed, as not all types of news avoidance behaviors seem to endanger democratic integrity equally. For instance, not consuming news due to entertainment preference might be less harmful than avoidance driven by distrust in media and politics. Therefore, disentangling news avoidance types and their association with outcomes such as conspiracy beliefs or anti-COVID-19 vaccine stance is crucial for understanding the potential democratic threats of news avoidance. The current study sheds light on the two mentioned types of news avoidance and their combinations, resulting in a nuanced group of news (non-)users. It explores their association with holding conspiracy beliefs and an opposition stance to the COVID-19 vaccine in Austria. Importantly, Austrian government proposed mandatory vaccinations against COVID-19 that sparked public polarization in November

2021 and was forced to scrap the law in July 2022 due to citizens' backlash and protests. Thus, the current study uses the Austrian National Election Study online survey data obtained through a quota-based sample of Austrians collected as part of Wave 15 in October 2022 (n = 2,233). Preliminary logistic regression results suggest that gender (being a woman), younger age, lower education, lower trust in media and politics and higher intentional news avoidance are significant predictors of holding conspiracy beliefs. In addition, once a more nuanced groups of news (non-)users were used as predictors in a logistic regression, only the membership in the group of news consumers who also intentionally avoid news acts as a significant predictor of conspiracy beliefs. Regarding predicting vaccine opposition, logistic regression model suggests that gender, younger age, lower education, lower trust in media and politics, higher political interest and higher intentional news avoidance act as significant predictors. In the model utilizing the groups of news (non-)users, none of the groups act as significant predictors. The findings support previous research pointing out intentional news avoidance being associated with misbeliefs and additionally finds an association between this type of avoidance and opposing COVID-19 vaccines. This implies that while low news consumers might possess lower levels of uncontested knowledge, it is the intentional news avoiders who seem to be more prone to believe conspiracy theories or actively oppose vaccination, a phenomenon that can jeopardize public health initiatives in the upcoming future. The data collection for Wave 17 utilizing the above-mentioned survey items is scheduled for February 2024 allowing for causal inferences at the time of the conference.

POL22 Campaigning online in the election context

PP 0761 Populism, Twitter, and the European public sphere in the 2019 EP elections

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By applying a new conceptual framework on populist dynamics, we investigated how parties were positioned and responded to by other parties in the European Parliamentary (EP) 2019 elections, and what their Twitter campaigns can tell us about the different forms of populism in the European and national public spheres. Our focus is on seven European countries across the field in which Twitter (X) formed a central platform for political communication: the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, Italy, Spain, Ireland, and the UK. The countries also represent democratic-corporatist, polarized-pluralist and liberal models according to Hallin and Mancini's seminal classification.

The raw data of 1,552,674 tweets was originally gathered by hashtag basis from all 27 EU countries during a month period around the EP 2019 elections in May. The selection of seven 'Twitter countries' above was chosen to analyze in more depth the data of 49,492 tweets sent by actors with political affiliation to find out, who were participating the debates, which topics and themes various actors promoted and how they were linked to each other. A mixed-method approach of computational and manual thematic analysis, automated LDA topic modelling and social network analysis was used to answer the questions. In general, our data shows vertical Europeanization of election debates in Twitter but hardly any horizontal cross-country Europeanization. The debates were also highly context-laden and promoted often national angle and significant Euroscepticism.

In our definition, populism was understood as an affective antagonism between 'us' and 'not us'. In our analysis, we witnessed antagonisms between different political camps such as populists against anti-populists, radical right against left-greens, Eurosceptics against pro-Europeans, pro-Brexiteers against anti-Brexiteers and (ethno-) nationalists against trans-nationalists or cosmopolitans. In discursive identity construction, Europhiles emphasized a common 'us' as Europeans, whereas the radical right promoted nativist exclusion of 'not us' in their identifications. However, according to our data, the radical right's agenda and rhetoric did not become mainstream among other political actors, and Twitter networks remained rather national and clustered.

We developed a populism typology of fringe, mainstream and competing populism in which populism is approached in relation to hegemonic political discourses at national level. According to our analysis, populism has remained the most 'fringe' in democratic-corporatist countries in which radical right parties have challenged the hegemonic bloc of traditional consensual parties but not totally broken it. However, in these countries, populist antagonism has partially been mainstreamed alongside the radical right parties that have become normalized in their party fields, and especially in the Netherlands, populism as political logic seems to have become a mainstream way to construct political identities both on the right and left spectrum of the party field. In polarized-pluralist and liberal countries, populism seems to have become mainstream more easily as a way of promoting antagonist political communication. In the UK, the Brexit vote and the two-party system apparently led towards competing populism.

POL22 Campaigning online in the election context

PP 0762 Tracking the dynamics of negative political communication during election campaigns in on- and offline communication environments

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Election campaigns are dynamic in nature. Over the course of weeks, citizens are exposed to political information through their mass media as well as interpersonal communication environments online and offline ("MIC"). Many of the political messages citizens receive during the campaigns are negative. Negativity is one of the most prominently investigated topics in political communication for at least two good reasons: On the one hand, conflict and competition are essential to democracy, on the other hand, it has been argued that negative campaigning can have dysfunctional effects on important outcome variables, e.g. political interest or participation.

However, the current state of research leaves several research questions open: (1) How does the exposure of citizens to negativity develop during a political campaign? Is negativity a constant factor in political discourse, or is it triggered by specific campaign events? (2) So far, negativity has been investigated separately in the various MICs. Therefore, we pose the question whether the degree and possible dynamics of negativity is similar in political communication channels or whether specific communication channels provide a platform for negative campaigning. (3) Finally, findings regarding the effects of exposure to negative campaigning on central political outcome variables are mixed. We therefore ask whether dynamics in the exposure to negative political campaigning have an effect on political outcomes, i.e. campaign interest.

In order to answer these questions, we draw on data collected during the German federal election campaign in September 2021. We combined several methods of data collection, i.e. mobile experience sampling to capture citizens' offline communication and the continuous web tracking of their online communication, to capture participants' exposure to negativity during the campaign. Further, we relied on participants' negativity perceptions (for the experience sampling data) and automated content analysis (for the web tracking data) as indicators of exposure to negative political information. Campaign interest was measured with an additional survey immediately after the elections. Overall, 447 participants passed all quality checks.

Relying on multilevel growth curve models and considering the three TV debates between the party front-runners as the most important campaign events, preliminary analysis showed that those events did not trigger any (linear) development in participants' exposure to negativity for interpersonal communication and mediated communication, e.g. news and ad exposure. Only the web tracking data showed (1) a linear decrease in the number of exposure to negative political information during the three days after the first debate and (2) a linear increase in the share of negativity in participants' media exposure after the three days of the third debate. Using these estimated growth rates as predictors in regression models, no effects from dynamics in the number or the share of negativity in participants' media exposure on campaign interest were found. Challenges during data collection and data analysis as well as additional findings will be discussed.

POL22 Campaigning online in the election context

PP 0763 Links in the chain: Political parties' online link sharing during campaign times in Belgium and Sweden

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Social media platforms allow political actors to link to other online resources. They can share news articles that are in line with their strategic positions, guide their online followers to information about political processes, and promote their own, their parties', or their campaigns' websites. In other words, political actors have the potential to play an important role in the online resources their audiences are exposed to and access in the hybrid media system. Thus, politicians are strategic curators of online information, as they have been shown to be selective when sharing information on social media, which may impact social media users' trust in information providers, like news outlets.

Previous studies have detailed political actors' social media adoption, their integration of visuals in online communication, and their news sharing on social media. Zooming in on their linking practices, this study will add to the literature on political actors' online behavior by describing which online resources political parties share on social media and how those linking practices differ across countries and over time, guided by our main research question:

RQ. To which online resources do political parties link during campaign times?

This study provides a longitudinal and comparative perspective on link sharing practices on social media by political parties in Belgium and Sweden across multiple campaigns. Concretely, we collected all Facebook posts made by the 7 Dutch-speaking Belgian parties one month before the federal elections in 2014 (N = 484) and in 2019 (N = 649),

and the posts made by 11 Swedish parties one month before the general elections in 2018 (*N* = 1,885) and in 2022 (*N* = 1,511). From these posts, we selected the ones that contained a link, which yields a dataset of 910 individual Facebook posts. To add to the data provided by CrowdTangle (e.g., user engagement, time of posting, link URL), manual coding is applied to gain information on the types of (news) websites that the parties link to and on the position of the parties in the political context at the time. Automatic coding is used to determine the sentiment of the posts and to identify any reference to political actors in the link text.

Our analysis of these posts will provide insights into political actors' online behavior in three ways. Firstly, we will inductively study all links that are shared by political parties, adding to the literature that zooms into more specific types of links (e.g., news). Secondly, we will compare these linking practices across election times and across countries, studying differences and similarities in a comparative way. Thirdly, by incorporating user engagement into our analyses, we will account for one possible driver of politicians' online link sharing behavior.

POL22 Campaigning online in the election context

PP 0764 Intimate and opinion-oriented? Examining youtubers' opinion leader potential and user engagement with their political content

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Social media influencers (SMIs)— ordinary people who gain public visibility by posting online (Khamis et al., 2017)— have in recent years repeatedly engaged with political issues (Newman et al., 2023). This new phenomenon is frequently researched from the perspective of (parasocial) opinion leadership (e.g., Harff & Schmuck, 2023; Peter & Muth, 2023), but we know little about characteristics of SMIs' political content which support such conceptualizations. More specifically, it has remained unclear to what extent SMIs rely on opinions and facts in their communication of political issues, and whether markers of possible opinion leader functions can be derived from their posts. In addition, an overview of the sources that SMIs use to support factual claims is currently missing. Last, indicators such as direct address or self-disclosure are considered attributes which explain the development of parasocial connections among recipients (Ferchaud et al., 2018). However, their prominence in *political* content of SMIs is unexplored, where they may not only constitute the frame of SMIs' opinion leadership (Wunderlich, 2023), but also trigger engagement in the form of user comments.

Method

To address these prominent research gaps, I conducted a content analysis among a sample of 41 SMIs on YouTube nominated by German youth in a quota-based survey (*N* = 1829). A sample of SMIs' posts was divided into political and non-political content, part of which was subsequently coded in detail ($N_{Political}$ = 295). In the analyses, I provide important insights into many categories relevant to evaluate SMIs' potential as political opinion leaders (e.g., opinion expression, parasocial content attributes), and connect these variables to the rate of comments per views on videos.

Results

Most political videos of SMIs featured only opinions and no facts (36%), while content containing only facts was least prevalent (14%). When talking about political facts, SMIs often—in 34% of cases—referred to articles in legacy media. However, frequently, SMIs also did not provide sources for their claims (in 31% of cases). More positively, SMIs regularly provided participation advice (19%), simplified politics for their audiences (e.g., explaining political concepts; 28%) and made efforts to raise followers' political interest (e.g., presenting political topics as 'novel'; 24%). Both direct address and self-disclosure were relatively prevalent in SMIs' political content and—as exploratory analyses show—equally present as in their non-political content. While self-disclosure was less featured in videos containing only facts than in videos containing only opinions, direct address was at similarly high levels across all political video types. Finally, direct address, co-presence of facts and opinions in videos and simplification of politics were positively related to the number of comments per views on political videos.

Conclusion

This research shows that SMIs tend to primarily express their opinions on political issues in their political communication, which often happens in an intimate setting of direct address and self-disclosure. While their fact-based communication often lacks proper references to sources—questioning whether their political communication is accurate—SMIs simultaneously show their potential contribution to democracy, as they regularly give participation advice and simplify political issues for audiences, which also leads to more user engagement below videos.

POL22 Campaigning online in the election context

PP 0765 From dances to debates: An online experiment to examine the effects of political self-personalization on TikTok

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TikTok, which started out as a lip-syncing and dance platform for especially young people has long become more than just a place for mindless entertainment. With its rising popularity, even political actors have started to expand their campaigning efforts to this social media platform. Having to adapt to the affordances and informal behavioral norms of TikTok to stay visible for constituents, politicians are trying to navigate citizens' diverging expectations of presenting themselves both professionally and privately.

With prior research showing that a violation of those expectations can lead to negative candidate evaluations (Bullock & Hubner, 2020), it has become extremely important to examine the effects of both professional and private self-personalization strategies on TikTok. While there have been studies conducted on the effects of political actor's self-presentation on other platforms (Kruikemeier, 2014, Lindholm et al., 2021), research on a strictly audio-visual platforms, like TikTok, is lacking. As personalization is usually investigated one-dimensionally, this research on self-personalization on TikTok adds to the literature as it treats self-personalization in a more facetted way – it differentiates between visual and textual self-personalization.

An online experiment (N = 342) with 2 (visual personalization: professional vs. private) x 2 (textual personalization: professional vs. private) between-subject design was conducted to investigate how different types of self-personalization strategies affect citizens' evaluation of political candidates, in Germany. Each respondent was randomly assigned to one condition – and was shown a TikTok video based on pre-existing footage of a regional Thuringian politician. The in-video text element in the top of the video was manipulated to either fit professional personalization (i.e., by mentioning a policy) or private personalization (i.e., by mentioning a personal issue; clothing style). In terms of visuals, respondents were exposed either to a TikTok video showing the politician giving a speech or a TikTok showing him lip-synching to a viral German rap song.

The results show mainly no significant differences between the use of professional or private self-personalization on candidate evaluation. However, private visual self-personalization on TikTok was less likely to violate young citizens' expectations (Gen Z) in comparison to older citizens, which in turn led to better candidate evaluations. As candidate evaluation showed to correlate with vote choice, the results could indicate, that while privatization might not be beneficial to increase positive candidate evaluations, it also does not harm it. Due to the majority of young users on TikTok, who are not taken aback by private visual self-personalization, it could present a good way to generate user engagement and visibility.

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POL23 Polarization in the public debate and media

PP 0862 Telling or Told? The role of implicit and explicit media cues in the formation of perceived affective polarization in the debate about climate change mitigation

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Research problem

Perceived polarization – the extent to which individuals perceive political or social groups as divided and/or in conflict with one another – is a common phenomenon in democratic societies (Yang et al., 2016). Moreover, research so far suggests that the media play a crucial role in shaping this impression. Adding to existing experimental (e.g., Levendusky & Malhotra, 2016) and cross-sectional survey studies (e.g., Yang et al., 2016), we examine the impact of media coverage on perceptions of affective polarization by combining data from a quantitative content analysis and a representative two-wave panel survey. Drawing from research on perceived polarization (Levendusky & Malhotra, 2016) and the formation of public opinion perceptions (Zerback et al., 2015), we assume that exposure

to a high dosage of implicit (i.e., conflict coverage or mentions of extremity) and/or explicit polarization cues (i.e., mentions of polarization or division) in climate change coverage leads to (1) increased perceptions of affective polarization in the media coverage, and hence (2) higher levels of perceived affective polarization between supporters and opponents of stronger climate change mitigation measures in society.

Method

We conducted a linkage study, combining a quantitative content analysis of *N* = 652 articles from 13 German news media outlets (TV, newspapers, online magazines, alternative) with a representative two-wave panel survey (*N* = 2051) conducted immediately before and after the content analysis in June and August 2023. The content analysis covered the period between the two panel waves and identified implicit and explicit polarization cues at the article level. For each outlet, a slant score was calculated by subtracting the number of articles containing polarization cues from those with de-polarization cues. We then multiplied the outlet-specific scores with respondents' self-reported frequency of outlet use (our independent dosage variables). Perceptions of affective polarization in media coverage[2] and society[3] were both measured with three items on a 7-point Likert scale (e.g., "In the climate debate, the media portray two camps that are increasingly hostile towards each other"). Age, gender, education level, political orientation, issue-specific interest and knowledge, attitude extremity, social media use and interpersonal discussion (all issue-specific), as well as the levels of perceived affective polarization in wave 1 served as controls.

Findings

Results of a path analysis show neither a direct effect of the dosage of explicit nor implicit polarization on perceived affective media polarization. Rather, issue-specific attitude extremity as well as interpersonal discussion about climate change increase perceived affective media polarization. As predicted, however, perceived affective polarization of media coverage on climate change mitigation has a substantial effect on perceived affective polarization of society regarding the issue, underlining the importance of perceptions of media coverage on climate change mitigation as well as the role of interpersonal communication in shaping such perceptions.

[1] Reliability scores of the content-analytic variables (Brennan Prediger's Kappa) ranged between .71 and 1.00.
[2] α_{W1} = .85, M_{W1} = 4.77, SD_{W1} = 1.39; α_{W2} = .86, M_{W2} = 4.87, SD_{W2} = 1.36
[3] α_{W1} = .73, M_{W1} = 5.24, SD_{W1} = 1.21; α_{W2} = .77, M_{W2} = 5.28, SD_{W2} = 1.22

POL23 Polarization in the public debate and media

PP 0863 Divisive imagery: Affective polarisation analysis in climate activism visuals

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Understanding the impact of visual content on social media in the context of climate activism is pivotal for reasons such as communication efficacy, public engagement, mobilisation, and awareness. This paper attempts to investigate the realm of affective polarisation within climate activism, with a specific focus on the polarising effects induced by various climate change visuals.

Affective polarisation, as outlined e.g., by Yarchi and colleagues (2021), refers to the phenomenon in which individuals or groups with differing political or ideological beliefs experience heightened emotional hostility, negativity, or animosity toward one another. Understanding this phenomenon is important because heightened affective polarisation can reduce one's reliance on constructive argumentation (Suler, 2004), decreasing the probability of reaching a democratically driven consensus. Recognising the critical role of emotions in shaping public opinion, this study seeks to understand the complexities of polarisation dynamics surrounding climate activism visuals.

The study focuses on social media comment threads which have been started with visual content as the root. Initial sentiment and emotion analysis, facilitated by a large language model, such as GPT-4 (Achiam et al., 2023), provides a granular understanding of the emotional landscape within social media threads. Affective polarisation is operationalised as information entropy of the emotional content of the thread. Information entropy is a measure of the uncertainty or randomness in a set of data, indicating the amount of information needed to describe the system and quantify its level of disorder or unpredictability. This operationalisation allows to measure and understand the degree of emotional divergence or convergence. This allows for the identification of polarising climate visuals and provides a quantitative measure of the extent of affective polarisation. Lower information entropy signifies a cohesive emotional response, indicating that the visual content resonates similarly with the audience. Conversely, high information entropy reveals a spectrum of emotional reactions, suggesting that the visual content elicits higher polarisation. Unsupervised clustering methods are then employed to categorise the visuals, shedding light on the specific types of content that evoke more pronounced affective polarisation.

This study makes noteworthy contributions on multiple fronts: firstly, it introduces an innovative approach to operationalise affective polarisation by employing information entropy on textual content. Secondly, it delves into a pivotal facet of online communication—visuals—and explores their connection to affective polarisation. Thirdly, it provides

an account of the specific visual content that fosters affective polarisation within the online communications of environmental movements. By shedding light on the intricate relationship between visual content and affective polarisation in climate activism on social media, this research not only offers valuable insights but also has broad appeal, resonating with researchers, policymakers, and activists alike.

POL23 Polarization in the public debate and media

PP 0864 Between headlines and reality? News media's impact on false polarization in the debate about climate change mitigation in Germany

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Although there is a general agreement in Germany regarding the existence of anthropogenic climate change and the need for climate protection (Mau et al., 2023), opinions on the implementation of stricter climate change mitigation measures are rather diverse (infratest dimap, 2023). Since news media can have a significant impact on the public's perception of the climate of opinion (Levendusky & Malhotra, 2016), their coverage could lead to overestimations of opinion differences and extremity, resulting in a stronger perceived than actual ideological polarization – a phenomenon known as false polarization (Westfall et al., 2015). Such a misperception may even increase actual ideological or affective polarization (Levendusky & Malhotra, 2013). Surprisingly the media's influence on the gap between actual and perceived ideological polarization is often overlooked in polarization research. False polarization itself has only been documented for the US, with a two-party system.

To determine the applicability to the European context and to shed light on the influence of news media coverage on false polarization perceptions, we designed a linkage study using the example of German supporters and opponents of stricter climate change mitigation measures. More specifically, we combined a two-wave online panel survey (N = 2051, in June and August 2023) with a quantitative content analysis of (de)polarization cues in articles from 13 German news media outlets that were published in the time between the waves and thematically related to climate change and measures (N = 652). For our independent variables, we then calculated an exposure variable that captures the prevalence of exposure to implicit and explicit (de)polarization cues on an affective and ideological level in the media coverage, weighted by the respective media use. Our dependent measures include actual ideological polarization (= difference between mean positions of opponents and supporters), perceived ideological polarization (= difference between individually assessed positions of "a typical opponent" and "a typical supporter") and false polarization (= difference between perceived and actual polarization) regarding five climate change measures.

Results show a pattern of false polarization and a tendency to overestimate the gap between opinion camps. This is evident for four out of five climate change-related measures, such as banning the installation of new gas and oil heating systems (M_{False} = 0.97, SD = 2.90) or restricting consumption for future generations (M_{False} = 0.58, SD = 2.41). The only exception is the degree of polarization regarding the reactivation of nuclear power plants, which is almost correctly assessed (M_{False} = – 0.06, SD = 2.7). Our linkage analysis – controlling for false polarization perceptions in the first wave, sociodemographics and political attitudes – indicates that particularly the dose of polarization that private, tabloid or alternative media evoke in their reporting have a significant impact on their audience' misperceptions. Results underline news media's responsibility when presenting polarized issues as this can indeed make ideological polarization appear greater than it actually is – which, in turn, might hinder the possibility of reaching an agreement within society on how to address climate change.

POL23 Polarization in the public debate and media

PP 0865 Visual affective polarization on Instagram: Comparing how European extreme right parties build their political identity

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Political polarization is increasingly important in digital contexts, not only in the political discourse but also in visuals, to attract and mobilize supporters. Social media, particularly Instagram, has a distinct influence on emotional polarization (de-Lima-Santos et al., 2023). This article aims to compare the power of the visual affective polarization on Instagram among European extreme right parties. The study focuses on the visual features for measuring affective polarization used by scholars (Bonikowski et al., 2022; de-Lima-Santos et al., 2023; Dragan, 2023; Yarchi et al., 2021). By analyzing the use of visual symbols, rhetoric, and imagery used by these parties to convey their ideologies and appeal to their target audiences, the study assumes that the strategic visual communication among far-right

political parties in Europe is not the same, and each party responds to its own characteristics in the state where it operates.

Through a quantitative content analysis of Instagram visuals posted by the six main European extreme right political parties during a two-month period on Instagram, (N = 260), we focused on content-related variables, format-related variables, and technical features to analyze those visuals as denotative, connotative, and ideological systems from the visual framing model perspective (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011).

Findings revealed significant differences in the visual framing strategies among European far right political parties, pointing to the complexity to identify a common pattern on their strategic visual communication in terms of affective polarization. Our results showed the use of different visual framing strategies among the parties to create their content and style the way it is portrayed, as well as to shape the rhetoric they use to spread their message. Overall, this contributes to the existing literature on visual communication in politics and enhances our understanding of the use of social media to build the political identity by using visual affective polarization resources.

Keywords: Visual framing; political polarization; extreme right parties; Instagram; political identity

POL23 Polarization in the public debate and media

PP 0866 Polarization by recommendation: Analyzing Youtube's polarization dynamics around Dutch Political Parties

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Radicalization and political polarization have been identified by the European Commission as key challenges for European democracies. Social media, and Youtube in particular, has been shown to contribute to radicalization of its users (Ribeiro et al., 2020), showing them recommendations for extreme or problematic content (Haroon et al., 2023). However, previous efforts to map radicalization and extremism paths are limited to a US context or to specific groups such as the Alt Right. To examine how these findings translate to a European multiparty context, we aim to study the extent to which Youtube's recommender system contribute to the affective polarization of users who view content from Dutch political parties on Youtube.

To investigate this, we mapped recommendation content networks around each political party's YouTube presence were generated using open-source tools (CAT4SMR). Subsequently, video subtitles and captions were manually extracted to analyze for polarization. Sentiment classifiers, built on the Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT) natural language processing algorithm (Devlin et al., 2018), were trained to recognize and classify the presence of both polarizing language and negative sentiment. Our final sample included titles and captions for 3 512 videos, mapped according to their recommendation links (i.e. what videos were recommended when a user watched the other video). Regression analyses were then employed to test for differences in sentiment and polarization between different political parties' content networks.

Results indicated that the negativity of a video title is positively associated with the polarization level of that same video, or that videos with negatively sounding titles are also more likely to be polarizing. Additionally, videos from non-establishment and right-wing parties produce recommendations that are more polarizing than the recommendations produced for videos from establishment and left-wing parties, in line with findings from a US context (Haroon et al., 2023). Though much of the detected polarization is attributable to content published by political parties themselves, analysis reveals that YouTube recommendations generally steer users towards increasingly polarizing content, indicating that Youtube currently fails to address polarization and extremism in recommendations in Dutch political context. These findings are significant given that they suggest that polarizing and problematic recommendations also extend to European democracies, and target more directly those who follow right-wing or non-establishment political parties.

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POL24 Elections and campaigning across Europe

PP 0867 Gender, Politics, and Media Perception during the 2023 Electoral Campaign in Spain

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In the political sphere, in which men have historically dominated, Spain has witnessed a steady and substantial rise in the presence of women in political parties, legislative bodies, and other areas of public power over the past two decades. Despite this progress, equality is yet to be fully realised. While the participation of women in politics is now widely accepted, research suggests that a pervasive culture of sexism continues to impede the achievement of parity and organic integration of women into spaces typically occupied by men.

This research examines the Spanish public's reception of feminist proposals and their acceptance of women as political leaders. It delves into how feminism has transformed political approaches, transcending the gender of those who propose, defend, and endorse them. The study uses a quantitative approach, conducting a survey among a representative sample of the Spanish population during the electoral campaign and immediately after a significant electoral debate. This real-time approach captures public sentiments accurately. The survey, carried out by YouGov Spain, garnered responses from 1,566 adults aged 18–64, reflecting the demographic characteristics of the population in terms of gender, age, and region.

The findings of this study indicate a nuanced public opinion regarding feminist politics in Spain. A significant portion of the population, amounting to 53%, identifies as feminist, placing Spain at the forefront of feminist sentiment in Europe. However, there is a perception that social advancement for women comes at the expense of men, and this belief is more prevalent among Spanish men than women, indicating a gendered divide in perceptions of discrimination.

Regarding media representation, this study observes a shift from traditional media to direct communication through social media, resulting in the personalization of political information. The credibility of political leaders, as perceived by the public, is influenced by their authenticity, trustworthiness, unblemished past, speaking skills, and media mastery. Female political leaders often face challenges such as negative media coverage, a focus on physical appearance, and a higher likelihood of being targets of online hate speech.

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between gender, politics, and the media in contemporary Spain, highlighting the evolving public attitudes towards feminism and the representation of women in politics. This underscores the role of the media in shaping political perceptions and reflects societal and political tensions, including the rise of far-right movements in Europe and their reaction to feminist advancements. The study's methodological innovation, conducting surveys during an electoral campaign and after a major debate, offers a unique and real-time perspective on public opinion on these critical issues.

POL24 Elections and campaigning across Europe

PP 0868 Mainstreaming the populist radical right and the Brussels Press Corps: EU media's coverage of Vox during Spanish elections

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In the midst of ongoing global disruptions in politics, environment and technology, the populist radical right is gaining popularity across Europe, scoring electoral victories from Italy to the Netherlands. This includes countries long thought immune to PRRPs, such as Spain, where Vox has become an important player in national politics. Meanwhile, the EU institutions continue to consolidate power, and with this increased influence, the population of journalists in Brussels has also grown.

This article examines the role of the Brussels Press Corps in the 'mainstreaming' and 'pariahing' of the European populist radical right. First, it adopts Kait Bolongaro and Benjamin De Cleen (forthcoming)'s framework to assess this phenomenon: combining existing literature on the 'mainstreaming' and 'pariahing' of the populist radical right and media's role within that process; and literature on how media participate in boundary maintenance between the acceptable and unacceptable within a democracy.

Within the binary concepts of 'mainstreaming' and 'pariahing', media can work to include or exclude political parties from the mainstream political landscape and, as such, protect and/or open the boundaries of the democratically acceptable. As these parties resurge across Europe, mainstreaming has become a particularly poignant topic, including how media actors have a significant role to play in casting the radical right as either legitimate and, as such, mainstream, or as illegitimate, a pariah to be excluded. These concepts are then superimposed onto Daniel Hallin's (1986) model of 'spheres' of media reporting. Hallin's spheres capture how topics and actors are treated

differently by journalists depending on whether they are considered to be in the sphere of 'consensus', 'legitimate controversy' or 'deviance'.

National correspondents make up many members of the Brussels Press Corps, but over the past decade, EU media has emerged, specialising in coverage of European political affairs from Brussels. These supranational media outlets are an understudied population of journalists, as most media and communications research on the Brussels Press Corps and the role of media in mainstreaming-pariahing the radical right focuses on a national perspective. In order to deepen our knowledge of these media outlets, this research focuses on EU media.

Using the case of Vox in Spain, this research attempts to deepen our understanding of the media's role in the mainstreaming-pariahing of PRRPs. First, it applies this conceptual framework to online news articles from Politico Europe, Euronews and Euractiv, comparing coverage over three national electoral cycles in April 2019, November 2019 and July 2023. The analysed articles indicate that Vox can be considered as moving toward the border of acceptability that divides mainstream and pariah political parties, but is still perceived as a pariah in the examined corpus. It also indicates that there has been an increase in coverage of Vox over the three electoral periods, which could also lend to the mainstreaming of Vox as Spain's most prominent PRRP. There is also some evidence of journalistic stance taking in the articles, highlighting the tension between the rise of the radical right and the media's role as a protector of liberal democracy.

POL24 Elections and campaigning across Europe

PP 0869 Perceptions of misinformation: Examining the role of misinformation in the 2024 European Parliament elections

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The upcoming European Parliament (EP) elections in June 2024 provide a crucial opportunity to research the role of misinformation in European elections. The previous EP elections, which took place in 2019, already highlighted that the impact of misinformation extends beyond national polls: these elections saw a significant increase in foreign hacking, widespread dissemination of EU-related fake news on social media, and instances of electoral manipulation (see Fusiek et al., 2022). Although the European Union explicitly mentions misinformation as a threat to European democracy, the question remains whether such concerns are shared by European citizens and, thus, how the (potential) *impact* of misinformation is perceived in the European electoral context. We therefore propose a two-step approach to scrutinising these perceptions, experiences and consequences of misinformation during the upcoming European elections. As such, this research will consist of an interview-based exploratory study and an elaborate multi-wave panel study that will be conducted in three countries.

First, using in-depth group interviews with a broad array of Dutch citizens (n = 20–25, *interviews ongoing*) with a q-methodology-based approach where respondents rank (both real and made-up) news headlines on their likelihood to be misinformation, we uncover the subjective understandings of what is, and what is not, perceived to be misinformation about the EP elections and *why* respondents perceive it as such. This step contributes to our comprehension of how individuals discern and understand misinformation regarding European elections, offering a nuanced foundation for subsequent analysis.

Second, insights gained from this exploratory initial study inform a three-wave presentative panel survey (*expected final* n = 1,000), with a first wave of data collection expected to be conducted in April and the second and third waves directly before and directly after the election (in late May and mid-June respectively). This panel study will furthermore be conducted in three relevant European countries, which each have a different electoral context: The Netherlands, where the populist far-right has just won the national elections; Poland, where the populist far-right has just lost their electoral majority; and Germany, where the next national elections will not be held until 2025. Using such a *most different* approach, we aim to highlight how European citizens from different contexts perceive misinformation during these elections, and, explore the (differences in) perspectives, and perceived impact and consequences. Besides focusing on these outcome variables, we also investigate the role of the varying (social) media habits of the respondents in this and we give particular attention to the interaction with perceived electoral integrity of the election.

In sum, using a mixed-method approach, we investigate the role of misinformation during the 2024 EP elections across diverse European contexts. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, we present an innovative approach to understanding the role of misinformation in the context of European elections.

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POL24 Elections and campaigning across Europe

PP 0870 Astroturfed influencers. How do campaigns use coordinated influencer activity to conquer social media – The case of Megafon

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While political social media influencers (PSMI) are mainly considered autonomous agents, they can also be used by campaigns to give a more authentic appearance to political messages. In Hungary, an agency called Megafon was launched in 2020 to train and support pro-governmental PSMIs with the mission to change the allegedly predominantly liberal discourse on social media. The agency was the largest advertiser on Facebook by far and generated more reactions than most political actors and media outlets during the 2022 general election campaign. While they are formally independent of the government parties, it is explored that there was coordination between the party office and the agency. In this sense, they can be seen as astroturfing agents (Kovic et al., 2018); their communication can easily be perceived as a true grassroots expression, when in fact it is a coordinated and controlled campaign activity.

In our research, we investigate this specific case to see how campaigns can use influencers to amplify their effect on social media and what role these PSMIs played in the pro-government campaign (RQ1). To this end, we compared the (a) functions of campaign messages (acclaim/attack/defense and policy/character/mixed); (b) emotional character (sadness/anger/fear/enthusiasm/pride), and (c) actors appearing in Facebook ads of Megafon's PSMIs with electoral actors' Facebook communication. We hypothesized that those campaign functions (attack and character-based campaign) and emotions (fear and anger) which can be effective communication tools but potentially involve backlash effects are outsourced to PSMIs allowing electoral actors to conduct a 'safer' communication strategy (acclaim, policy, enthusiasm and pride).

To test our hypothesis, we conducted a manual content analysis (N = 499) to investigate the content and style of PSMIs' Facebook ads (N =153 from 10 PSMIs) and compare them with the ads of Viktor Orbán (N =111), the candidates from single-member districts (N = 150) and the party page of Fidesz-KDNP (N = 85) published during the last four weeks of the campaign. Based on Benoit's functional theory (Benoit, 2017), we analyzed the function (acclaim, attack, and defend) and the topic (character, policy, and mixed) of the posts and identified certain negative and positive emotions as well (enthusiasm, pride, fear, and anger).

The results of the data validate our claims: (1) Astroturf influencers' Facebook ads are more likely to be attack-and character-focused than electoral political actors' ads; (2) astroturfed influencers' Facebook ads are more likely to include fear and anger than electoral political actors' ads, while (3) electoral political actors' Facebook ads are more likely to include enthusiasm and pride.

As a result, we can conclude that Megafon is a campaign tool used by Fidesz in order to outsource negative and character-focused campaigning from their candidates to the online opinion leaders of the agency. Hence, these types of astroturf influencers functioned as a long-range, anger- and fear-fueled, character assassination machine of the Fidesz campaign.

POL24 Elections and campaigning across Europe

PP 0871 Mourning after election. Processing defeat by communication in Hungary 2022

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The paper presents the ways the losers of the 2022 Hungarian parliamentary elections communicate the process the failure. As defeat, or falling short of social norms, often leads to shame and guilt and trying to compensate for them leads to pride and hubris, it will be especially important to scrutinise how those moral emotions appeared in post-election discussions.

The research focuses the efforts the opposition in the public sphere during the period from 3 to 30 April 2022. By opposition, we mean the political forces united under the label of the Opposition Union; some further organisations also participated in the competition but independently of both the governing coalition and the Union. We scrutinised the communication by the politicians, parties, experts, and public intellectuals that belong to the Opposition Union.

Our data came from the following Hungarian online portals: index.hu, 24.hu, hvg.hu, mandiner.hu, origo.hu, and hirado.hu. We were looking for articles containing the search words elections [választások], campaign [kampány], two-thirds [kétharmad], and opposition [ellenzék]. The articles served as the starting point for a snow-ball collection of texts, podcasts, and videos published on sites beyond the six.

The communication of the political camp is analysed according to the image reparation strategy arsenal defined in public relations literature by William Benoit. The results of qualitative content analysis show that the communicators preferred the following strategies: shifting blame, referring to defeasibility, promising corrective action and expressing mortification. Some actors also put forward the strategy of denial, but to make it convincing they separated their own party from the camp as a whole.

There was pride in the hard work put in by activists during the campaign, in the fairness they consistently showed in the face of the morally corrupt actions of the government side; regarding the results, in the relative success of each party compared to others, if not to the winners, and in Budapest compared to the rest of the country. Hubris, at least from the outside, was reflected in the moral condemnation of opponents and sometimes rivals on their own side. Likewise, speeches that proclaimed the historical superiority of one's own party or movement, either in terms of Europeanism or civility, can be classified under the heading of hubris.

Finally, the communication that urges others to feel shame and guilt plays an important role in managing moral emotions. The communication of defeat was also full of such appeals: according to the political left, it was primarily the government side that should have been ashamed of itself, and some on its own side as well, who should have disappeared from political life after the fourth two-thirds majority. The main expectation of the home side was, at most, guilt for the mistakes and errors that contributed to the defeat, although the ultimate reason was to be found, first and foremost, in the conditions that made the race unwinnable.

POL25 Emotions in political communication

PP 0961 Clicks, sentiments, and shifts: Analyzing the correlates of social media news use, emotions, and electoral volatility

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Over the past decades, the media landscape has undergone significant transformations, transitioning to a high-choice media environment. This shift has had a profound impact on media consumption patterns, with a notable decline in the use of traditional offline news sources and a simultaneous surge in online news consumption. In the same period, Western democracies have experienced an increase in volatility. Research has indicated that media consumption plays a pivotal role in driving this phenomenon, influencing both voting behavior and voter volatility. Social media usage also evokes different emotional responses compared to traditional media, research shows. News on social media often emphasizes competition, thereby eliciting negative emotions, such as anger, fear, and distrust. In this study, we explore the relationships between social media usage, volatility, and political sentiment, examining the following hypotheses:

- H1: Individuals who rely on social media as their primary news source will experience more negative political sentiment than individuals who do not consume news or obtain news through alternative media channels.
- H2: Individuals who rely on social media as their primary news source will experience more negative political sentiment than individuals who do not consume news or obtain news through alternative media channels.

We test these hypotheses utilizing two studies, a comparative study and a panel study. Both of these studies shine different lights on the relation between the variables outside of the experimental environments. The comparative study allows us to describe broader trends across European countries when it comes to the relationship between news consumption, political sentiment, and volatility. To do so, we use the European Voter Election Studies (EVES) of 2018 (N = 68.102). The panel study allows us to dive deeper into the dynamics between these three variables during a campaign. We use the four-wave panel study during the Dutch National Elections of 2023 (N = 8.526).

For both studies, we have three main variables of interest: Political Sentiment, Media Consumption, and Volatility. First, to measure political sentiment, we asked the intensitiy of twelve emotions (anger, anxiety, fear, disgust, depression, sadness, confidence, enthusiasm, happiness, hope, pride, and relief). Second, we distinguish four categories of media consumption: 1) News junkies; 2) Social Media (SM) news users; 3) Traditional news users; 4) News avoiders. Third, we distinguish three types of volatility: 1) based on your choice set; 2) switching within ideological blocks; and 3) switching between ideological blocks.

We see that people who mainly use SM to consume news are more likely to experience negative political sentiment, compared to other news user types. While the effects are strongest for anger and disgust, all coefficients of the negative political sentiments are positive and statistically significant. Moreover, we shows that SM news users experience fewer positive political sentiments. This indicates support for our first hypothesis. Additionally, we show the correlates between political sentiment and electoral volatility. We do see some differences between volatility types: The effects are stronger for the inter- and intra-block volatility types compared to the volatility based on the choice set. Regardless, we demonstrate support for our H2 too.

POL25 Emotions in political communication

PP 0964 Great vengeance and furious anger. Populist rhetoric and the roots of voters' rage against the system

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Populism has mainstreamed the language of anti-politics. By communicating for a change in the current liberal democratic system using an antagonistic and combative style, populist politicians arguably challenge liberal norms, mainstreaming illiberalism. In this paper, we argue that to understand the populist foundations of voters' support for illiberalism, we need to zoom in on two communicative aspects that explain why populist communication would contribute to illiberalism: the moral nature of the populist message and the anger it elicits.

The antagonism embedded in populism relies on its moral framework: it posits the good, common people against the immoral, bad elite and frames the current state of liberal democracy as immoral, not living up to its commitment of being grounded in the general will of the people. This moral nature of the populist message is reflected in the use of moral language, that is, language depicting moral norm violations. This moral language is known to cue emotions, most specifically moralized anger – anger aroused by the perceived violation of a moral standard. While moral outrage is central to the (discursive) success of populist movements, this paper is the first to test the causal claim that it is the moral nature of the populist message that elicits anger among voters, generating moral outrage.

We furthermore argue that this moral populist anger strengthens illiberal attitudes among citizens. By moralizing the monist distinction between the people and the elite, populism not only foregrounds negative emotions towards the political system and positive emotions towards the populist savior, it challenges liberal notions such as pluralism, individual freedom, minority accommodation, and ideological heterogeneity. In this paper, we, therefore, explore whether the populist (moral) anger that is elicited by populist communication translates into stronger illiberal attitudes.

To test these expectations, we leverage data collected from four samples of respondents in three countries: two in the USA (respectively, N = 1,495 and N = 849 after data cleaning), one in Belgium (N = 1,859), and one in Spain (N = 2,229), collected between the fall of 2022 and the summer of 2023. In a 1x3 between-subjects design, we exposed respondents to either a negative political prompt (control condition), a populist prompt without moral language, and a populist prompt including moral language. After the prompt, respondents were asked to reflect about the message they just read and write a short statement. These open-ended answers were coded to look for specific emotions expressed by the respondent – manually for the two American samples, and via a GPT classifier for the four samples.

Results suggest that a populist frame increases anger, but mostly in the USA. Such elicited anger, in turn, reduces support for illiberalism, but increases affective polarization and dislike for the out-group. We discuss these findings in light of existing research on the relationship between populism, illiberalism and affective polarization and conclude that our findings neccessitate a nuanced, yet still worrying conclusion.

POL25 Emotions in political communication

PP 0965 Silenced by fear: Explaining self-censorship in reaction to digital violence

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Democracy thrives through participation and public debate. Especially in the digital sphere, social media creates possibilities for individuals to voice their opinions and take part in the public discourse. However, hate speech and digital violence are prevalent on such platforms, leading users to become more cautious when expressing their opinions online (Reset/Pollytix 2021). Building upon Protection Motivation Theory, we were interested in whether people engage in self-censorship to avoid such negative experiences, and which factors contribute to this behavior.

The data used for testing our assumptions is part of a larger cooperation project with the NGO HateAid. In this project, we conducted a quota-based quantitative survey among German internet users (N = 3.367) via a professional survey institute. As adult Generation Z was the focus of the project, we sampled n = 1.868 respondents aged 18 to 27 years. To gain insights into generational differences, we additionally recruited participants from the generational cohorts of adolescents of Generation Z (14 to 17, n = 501), Millennials (28 to 42, n = 498), and Generation X and older (43 or older, n = 500).

Around half of the respondents agreed that they "sometimes refrain from sharing their opinions" (51.59%), "try not to attract too much attention" (49.21%), or are "careful in their online behaviors "(58.75%) to avoid experiencing digital violence. Based on these items, we formed an index of self-censorship (1 – *don't agree at all* to 5 – *fully agree*; M = 3.56, SD = 1.05, *Cronbach's* α = .82). To identify relevant predictors of self-censorship, we relied on stepwise regression models (adjusted R^2 = .13).

First, prior experience with digital violence did not increase self-censorship: We find that witnessing digital violence was not associated with self-censorship in the full model, β = 0.02, p = .330. Surprisingly, experiencing digital violence negatively predicted self-censorship, β = -0.05, p = .013.

Second, we assessed whether individuals were less likely to engage in self-censorship when they formed positive evaluations of other coping strategies; that is, when they see little difficulty in performing them (e.g., self-efficacy) and find them useful (e.g., response-efficacy). The results were mixed: Self-efficacy regarding confronting the attacker emerged as a negative predictor of self-censorship, β = -0.10, p < .001. However, against our expectations, self-efficacy regarding support from close others positively predicted self-censorship, β = 0.05, p = .014. Similar patterns emerged for assessing close support or turning to official institutions as useful.

Lastly, we were interested in how individuals' threat perceptions of digital violence might affect self-censorship. We found that perceived severity, β = 0.20, p < .001, and susceptibility, β = 0.09, p < .001, were positively associated with self-censorship.

In conclusion, our findings suggest that individuals' self-censorship might be driven by the fear of the severe consequences of digital violence rather than by the reality and likelihood of becoming a victim. Furthermore, individuals might not stop to self-censor solely because other coping mechanisms are available to them – instead, they might enact self-censorship as part of broader coping repertoires.

POL26 Constraints and disturbances in political communication

PP 0966 The illusion of pluralistic and neutrality: How Twitter social bots show their opinion in Chinese political issue

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As a cutting-edge technology combining digital information technology and political science, social bots have become a powerful tool for political actors to manipulate the climate of opinions on international social media platforms such as Twitter. The traditional human-driven online interaction space has shifted to a "human-machine symbiosis" media system.

The New York Times initiated a Twitter discussion in 2022, about the human rights of ethnic minorities in China's Xinjiang region, which the Chinese government saw as a challenge to its regime. The tweets related to the event were read by more than 1.08 billion people, making it a representative political controversy and political communication event. Based on this event, we ask the following questions: What are the characteristics of social robots in terms of content topic selection, original and forwarded content in political communication events?

This article aims to explore the political communication strategy characteristics and strategic shifts of social robots in international social media based on 27,245 tweets, through social media data mining and cutting-edge natural language processing methods. We improved the traditional LDA model and cosine similarity model to make them more compatible with identifying the fragmented content of social media opinions. A manually supplemented coded political semantic analysis library is also added to fit the political discourse and more to the original political satirical and metaphorical meanings, instead of understanding them crudely as an adjective in the algorithm. In addition, we applied the machine learning method of Long Short Term Memory Network to complete the construction of the sentiment analysis model.

We found that Social bots on Twitter are gradually moving away from being the drivers of emotional sound bites and the speakers of single or homogeneous views in political communication events. Instead, they have shifted to a more subtle and effective communication strategy to drive public opinion on events: to mimic the behavior of human users to the greatest extent possible, to fit the values preferred by human users, i.e., to give audiences the greatest possible number of perspectives, with factual arguments that seem trustworthy rather than opinionated expressions.

The tweets of social bot users and human users differ in the organization of their content, with the former showing a stronger organizational and strategic approach, a more "evidence-based" style, a single focus on the core diffusion point, and smooth wording that allows the audience to a strong sense of news. When comparing the audiences in the public opinion arena, the former is more likely to trigger the audiences' perception of "objectivity" in terms of style and thus more likely to generate trust.

When public opinion spreads, social bots cite and retweet multiple sources more violently, which makes the active content within the opinion field exist in a diversity of sources and language structures. Neutral emotional attitudes account for the highest proportion both in original tweets and in the process of re-citing tweets. The two strategies work together to combat user reading fatigue while maintaining a high level of social bot involvement in human social media networks.

POL26 Constraints and disturbances in political communication

PP 0967 Combating the 'gray area' of incivility: Users' acceptance of different content moderation approaches against uncivil online comments

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Online political discourse, once envisioned as a catalyst for democratic engagement, has witnessed a rise in uncivil comments, detrimentally affecting democratic legitimacy, discourse quality, and citizens' well-being. Existing content moderation strategies, involving both human moderators and AI, aim to enhance the quality of online discussions by addressing harmful material. However, the complex nature of most uncivil comments existing in a 'gray area' – that breaches social and deliberative norms but remains unregulated by community guidelines or law – presents a pressing issue. Platforms grapple with discerning those comments, coupled with diverse user opinions and preferences due to varying cultural, social, and individual factors. This challenges the efficacy of current content moderation strategies and emphasizes the need for user-centric and evidence-based interventions.

With a representative sample of 572 participants, this study provides nuanced insights into user preferences for content moderation approaches in Austria. Employing an innovative factorial survey design, we manipulated the source of moderation (human vs. AI), transparency (explanation vs. no explanation), intervention type (deletion vs. warning labels vs. guideline reminders vs. empathy-based counterspeech), and the type of incivility (personal-level vs. public-level).

Findings reveal that human moderators significantly outperform AI in user acceptance, emphasizing the indispensable role of human judgment in navigating the 'gray area' of uncivil online comments. Contrary to conventional belief, deletion is not universally perceived as the most effective strategy as it might be seen as a constraint on users' freedom of expression. Accordingly, approaches like warning labels, guideline reminders, and empathy-based counterspeech receive higher user acceptance. Surprisingly, the provision of explanations for moderation decisions does not consistently increase user acceptance. In illustrating the 'gray area', examples of personal-level incivility, such as name-calling and derogatory comments violating politeness norms, were found to garner higher acceptance rates across different content moderation strategies than public-level incivility, exemplified by accusations of election fraud and undermining democratic norms, which received lower user acceptance rates, irrespective of the content moderation strategy. Exploring individual-level influences on acceptance, the impact of moderation scenarios on users' acceptance is moderated by their opposition to censorship. Users opposing censorship exhibit less acceptance of deletion scenarios compared to those endorsing censorship. Furthermore, more right-wing users accept content moderation across all scenarios significantly less than users who see themselves as left-wing. Addressing future preferences, users desire stricter moderation when handling personal-level incivility and less strict moderation when addressing public-level incivility, suggesting a nuanced approach to content moderation aligned with users' expectations.

Overall, this study offers valuable insights for platform providers, policymakers, and community managers, emphasizing the need for evidence-based interventions. Acknowledging the 'gray area' of online incivility, it calls for user-centric approaches to content moderation, fostering a more inclusive and respectful online discourse that accommodates diverse perspectives while mitigating the challenges posed by uncivil comments.

POL26 Constraints and disturbances in political communication

PP 0968 "I have seen it, have you seen me?" The logic of Engagement on Ugandan LGBT+ Organizations Digital Platforms

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In this project, we study the engagement (in terms of likes, shares and comments) on Ugandan LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi- and Transsexual) organizations and activist's posts from a multi-platform perspective. Uganda is infamous for its state-sanctioned homophobia. However, international attention to the situation for LGBT+ has led to an increase in funding, which in turn has led to a multiplication of LGBT+ organizations in the country. Social media engagement possibly allows content to

reach and organizations to be seen beyond the followers of the posting account in a process akin to the two-step flow of communication (important in a growing LGBT+ organization landscape).

Focusing on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, our aim is to inform multi-platform research by studying how a historically underrepresented group in the global south navigates a complex communication ecology in an uncertain socio-political situation. We ask: 1) Which posts emerge as more popular in terms of user engagement on the different platforms respectively 2) What characterizes highly engaged posts across the three platforms 3) What is

the logic behind engagement practices? We approach our research questions using three different yet interrelated methodological approaches: A) Quantitative identification of highly engaged posts, B) Qualitative analysis of these posts and C) Qualitative interviews with organizational representatives.

Our results show that different platforms have different logics when attracting engagement. This has both to do with platform affordances (such as Instagram pushing for photos and scrolling) as well as political realities such as Facebook being blocked, but also on the audience, that Twitter is perceived to be populated by international allies. There is not a lot of call for action, because, engaging with posts implies that you are seen, not only that you have seen the post, but that the posting organization sees you and sometimes also the government. We thus conclude that engagement in this particular context is governed by visibility but is also likely to change in the future because LGBT+ organizations need to navigate a shifting and fragile political communication landscape, adopt and adapt constantly.

POL26 Constraints and disturbances in political communication

PP 0969 Are civically active youths prone to spreading misinformation? The role of perceived discrimination

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Young people's involvement in civic activities is often portrayed positively as a means of youth empowerment and contribution to a democratic society. However, it can also be connected to the spreading of misinformation, despite the fact that civically active people usually have higher digital literacy. This spreading can be viewed as promoting anti-democratic processes, thus countering the possible beneficial outcomes of civic engagement. In this contribution,we focus on online civic engagement, as young people are known to engage more in informal, non-institutionalized politics. This form of civic engagement represents a more individualized form of political behavior stemming from the synergic effect of socio-political and technological changes.. Some scholars (e.g. Valenzuela et al., 2019) even argue that online civic engagement is the key antecedent of spreading misinformation, but we still lack knowledge about which factors influence sharing unverified information among active youths. We propose that one of the influental factors can be perceived social discrimination (e.g. based on ethnicity, religion). We assume that the experience of social discrimination will cause people to be more cautious and conscious of their online behavior, thus making them less susceptible to spreading misinformation. We will explore the link between adolescents' online civic engagement and perceived discrimination and how they affect misinformation spreading. To account for the role of digital literacy, we also included the Youth Skills indicator. We employed a three-wave multinational sample of adolescents (attending grades 6 to 10 during Wave 1), consisting of 10,821 respondents from six European countries. Preliminary results from the random intercept cross-lagged panel model suggest that there are indeed positive associations between online civic engagement, perceived discrimination, and misinformation spreading on the between-person level. However, only the positive association between civic engagement and perceived discrimination holds on the within-person level, meaning that an increase in own perceive discrimination leads to more frequent online civic activity. It seems that active youths are more likely to face discrimination, but this does not necessarily translate into sharing unverified information online. Digital literacy was overall not associated with spreading misinformation.

POL26 Constraints and disturbances in political communication

PP 0970 Without a second thought. Political opinion leaders are impulsive on social media but they regret what they say

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This study demonstrates on a two-wave panel survey conducted in Spain that opinion leaders more frequently engage in impulsive political expressions on social media than ordinary users, and these impulsive acts lead to the experience of regret.

In our contemporary 'plebeian public sphere' (Gerbaudo, 2022), social media users' political expressions play a crucial role in people's perception of political reality, and this is especially true for opinion leaders' expressions who filter and interpret political content for ordinary social media users (Bergström & Jervelycke Belfrage, 2018). While most users are highly careful when it comes to political communication on these platforms due to social risks (Thorson, 2014), we argue that opinion leaders' unique personality makes them more impulsive: They are demonstrated to be characterized by a higher level of extroversion (Gnambs & Batinic, 2012) and their inclination to publicly demonstrate the uniqueness of their self (Chan & Misra, 1990). This public differentiation can be realized by doing impulsive and unplanned acts to be faster than others in the ephemeral and 'real-time' content flow of social media (Weltevrede et al., 2014) which they may end up regretting. We also argue that rightist opinion leaders are even

more impulsive on these platforms than other opinion leaders which can be explained by their more negative political orientations (Jost, 2021) and their more homogenous communication context (Barberá et al., 2015).

We test our hypotheses on a two-wave online panel survey conducted in Spain in 2022. The findings confirm our expectations showing that opinion leaders, especially those with right-wing backgrounds, are more likely to express their opinion in the heat of the moment which, in turn, activates the intense cognitive-based emotion of regret. Since opinion leaders have a prominent role in the public, their unplanned and regretted political posts can have a major effect on the quality of the public discourse, and can contribute to the porous, real-time, and immediate temporality of the contemporary public sphere.

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POL27 Media in political communication: Content, context, and audience

PP 0985 The Public Broadcaster is not for us! The effect of in-group threat on perceived media bias in public service media

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Bias accusations towards Public Service Media (PSM) are on the rise in European countries (Holtz-Bacha, 2021). However, knowledge of *why* individuals perceive bias in public institutions such as PSM and its news content is scarce, notwithstanding the literature on perceived media bias (see Chia & Cenite, 2012; Kim & Grabe, 2022). Research into the *Hostile Media Effect* has given important insights into how partisanship drives individuals to perceive news content as biased against both their respective sides, regardless of the substance of that content (Vallone et al., 1985). Specifically, findings revealed that branded source cues enhanced individuals' perception of bias, when that news brand was affiliated as positioned against their perceived in-group and in favor of their out-group (Kim & Grabe, 2022). While we know that this holds for ideologically branded news media, how does this apply in the context of PSM?

This paper studies whether PSM trigger individual-level in- and out-group dynamics. Specifically, we aim to understand the extent to which social identification mechanisms drive bias perceptions of news content produced by PSM. Recent studies point at the importance of social identification in how people judge media content (Yaïr, 2021), but this has not yet been studied in the context of PSM. Building on recent work, we expect that ascribing news content to PSM drives bias perceptions in itself, but that this is conditioned by people experiencing an in-group threat. This paper is guided by the following research question: *does social identification with PSM affect bias perceptions of news content by PSM, and is this conditioned by the experience of an in-group threat?*

We employ a survey experiment with a 2x3 factorial design. Participants will be exposed to different conditions where we manipulate the source (e.g. NOS logo or not) and social threat (e.g. presence of in-group threat). The source cue will be primed by presenting respondents with a fictitious news story with a visible NOS-logo (compared to no logo at all). The in-group threat will be presented before exposure to the NOS-branded or non-branded fictitious news story. Through a short survey, questions will be asked beforehand about respondents' background characteristics (populist attitudes, media trust, perceived affective polarization) and self-perceived ideological and societal position(s) to measure people's perceived social identities. After presenting the respondents with the stimulus material, we measure perceived bias within the news story as the dependent variable. In our analyses, we test whether the NOS serves as a source cue for bias perceptions, and among which citizens, as well as whether such source cue effects are activated by in-group threatening information.

The results of our study allow us to assess to what extent citizens' evaluations of PSM are part of in-/out-group dynamics. Whether social identification mechanisms affect how people evaluate media bias in the NOS has important implications for the potential of PSM to bridge societal divides as a neutral and impartial broadcaster. Our findings illustrate the extent to which public institutions are currently politicized amongst citizens.

POL27 Media in political communication: Content, context, and audience

PP 0986 Polish public media: Towards extreme political bias and back. Case of flagship television newscast change after 2023 parliamentary election in Poland

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The paper reflects on political communication (dis)orders on the example of Polish public media, in particular analyzing TV news in context of media bias. The study draws among others on works of Klepka (2022, 2019), Lichter (2017), Perloff (2017), Hopmann (2012) and Entman (2007) with special reference to contextual research presenting changes in Poland (Winiarska-Brodowska 2022, Walecka-Rynduch 2021, Surowiec et al. 2020, Klimkiewicz 2017, Sadurski 2019).

One of the elements of the post-2015 process of deconsolidation of democracy in Poland were the far-reaching changes in the area of the media, in particular the public media. Results of research on the content of newscasts in the public media after 2015 proved in various contexts one-sidedness of coverage, favouring the ruling party or ruthlessly criticising the opposition. The most frequently criticized as extremely biased was the flagship newscast of the Polish public television "Wiadomości". After the then ruling party lost the 2023 elections, the new majority decided to replace "Wiadomości" discredited by bias with a new program "19.30". Newscasts are usually broadcast for decades, and their long-term presence on the media market increases their popularity and credibility. The decision to end the broadcasting of "Wiadomości" was groundbreaking. In recent years, no public television in Europe has made such changes to the flagship newscast.

The changes that affected Polish public media in 2015 and then in 2023 can be analyzed from many perspectives. Our contribution is based on a combination of three research approaches. In the first part, we analyze the content of news broadcasts, in the second, the audience's opinions about the new broadcast, and in the third, media reports and comments on the changes. The first part diagnoses bias in the old and new broadcast. We ask questions about changes in the visibility, exposure and overtone of the ruling parties and opposition in both research periods. The Media Political Bias Index (MPBI) is used in research (Klepka2022). It is a tool that uses data from content analysis of selected media materials (14editions of newscasts before the change and 14editions after the change on December 20, 2023). Based on data on the visibility, exposure and overtone of news towards the ruling party and the opposition in each newscast, MPBI of the old and new newscast is built. This measure provides a synthetic assessment of the level of political bias. The second part of the study is based on a survey (CAWI) whose results determine how viewers assess the political bias of the old and new newscasts and the changes that took place in the public media in December2023. The third part is an analysis of the media coverage of newscast change in public media. The selected texts from a news aggregator service Google News (referred to by experts as the best news aggregator for in-depth reporting) were analyzed. The presented methodological triangulation allows for a multidimensional look at changes in the Polish media after the general elections in 2023 and, in particular, the change of the flagship newscast on Polish public TV.

POL27 Media in political communication: Content, context, and audience

PP 0988 News framing and the activation of liberal and authoritarian values: Citizens' moral reasoning on news about disorder and crime

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Tensions between liberal and authoritarian cultural- and moral values have become increasingly important across western democracies. They manifest in polarized public discourse, and trends towards authoritarianism in the repositioning of mainstream parties and the rise of far-right populism. To understand this development, we must also focus on the circumstances under which citizens tend to adopt authoritarian attitudes. Relating to the theme of this conference, this paper contributes by investigating citizens' reasoning on news about disorder and crime in society.

Research suggests that predispositions for authoritarian attitudes are fairly widespread, and tend to be activated under circumstances of disorder and social threat. News media have a critical role in this context. In an experimental panel study, we have shown that amplified news framing of disorder in society can have a significant impact on authoritarian attitudes. Following news framing theory, we argue that authoritarian predispositions (deep-rooted values) tend to be activated when people are exposed to news framing that makes authoritarian considerations applicable.

In this paper, presenting a focus-group study, we develop this research by exploring how liberal/authoritarian values are activated in peoples' reasoning and conversations on news about disorder and crime. The conceptualization of values relies on theories in political psychology (e.g., Stanley Feldman's) and George Lakoff's theory on moral politics. The core of authoritarian values are the beliefs in rigid adherence to cultural conventions and hierarchies (conformism); in respect for authorities, obedience, and punishment (submission, aggression). This contrasts with liberal beliefs in progressive identities, cultural diversity, and autonomy. These are essentially moral values. The values apply in reasoning across social contexts. The moral principle of strict authorities, setting rules that should be respected, and punishment in response to disobedience, applies in reasoning on child-rearing as well as national politics.

The empirical study, conducted in Sweden 2022–2023, consist of 10 focus groups, a total of 38 people, interviewed on two occasions, each lasting two hours. Interviewees were asked to read and discuss authentic news on a selection of topics. For each topic, news with contrasting frames were presented. To enable spontaneous conversations, we recruited groups of people who know each other. The groups represent a spectrum on values: 3 mainly liberal, 3 mainly conservative and 4 mixed.

The result shows how news on disorder and crime primarily activate moral reasoning reflecting contrasting liberal/authoritarian values. Facts in the news are critically discussed when the news frame challenges the values in the group. Shifts in the news framing of topics are shown to result in mitigations and radicalization of authoritarian attitudes. Notably, groups with liberal values tend to move towards authoritarian reasoning depending on the framing of the news. By analyzing the applicability of the news framing and the social dynamics in the group discussions, the paper presents an elaborated analysis of the circumstances under which participants strengthens, negotiate, and possibly alter their moral reasoning. Although the news framing makes a difference, the study confirms the importance of experiential knowledge, popular wisdom, stories and metaphors when citizens collaboratively activate deep-rooted values in reasoning on news.

POL28 Us versus Them: Dychotomy in political discourse

PP 1057 Peripheral voices: (De-)constructing narratives of marginalization in post-industrial regions

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Marginalization occurs when individuals or groups are (or feel) relegated to the fringes of society, with unequal access to educational and economic opportunities, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2000) and/or political representation (e.g. Andersen, 1996; Rodriguez-Pose, 2018). Those targeted in this way – often portrayed through problematic media stereotypes – are likely to feel devalued, stigmatized and marginalized.

While much focus is placed on identifying and preventing discrimination towards *minority* groups – usually defined by race, gender, sexuality or religion, less attention has generally been placed on discrimination on grounds of *social status* towards members of majoritarian ethnic groups in a society. Drawing on concepts underpinning a new cross-cultural project, our paper explores the discursive marginalization of members of two post-industrial communities in Germany and the United Kingdom. The structurally similarly-shaped regions and its communities we focus on (North England, East Germany) are often framed across media and politics as code for decay, deprivation, poverty, unemployment, nativism and even racism.

In our paper we argue that stereotypical and stigmatizing images of post-industrial communities enter a society's consciousness through media and wider public discourse – and this can contribute to residents of post-industrial communities perceiving themselves as outsiders alienated from mainstream political processes and 'national conversations': disempowered, disaffected and disadvantaged. These perceptions can lead citizens whose identities are embedded in these communities to develop populist and illiberal attitudes and reject social and political norms of democratic society, a process considered as potentially damaging to the fabric of a society as a whole as to individuals and groups directly affected (Agulnik, 2002; Byrne, 2005; Bude & Willisch, 2008; Silver & Miller, 2003).

Our project sets out to explore how news media can be a cultural manifestation of marginalization by exploring five interrelated dimensions: media regulation, media production and representation (top-down perspectives), media consumption, and the identities of people from post-industrial milieus (bottom-up perspectives).

In our paper we will present the project and its complex theoretical foundations. We will link this to first results from our field research, in which we will draw on a groundbreaking methodology of deploying narrative salons in order to explore the extent to which post-industrial communities self-identify with (or contest) concepts like 'marginalization'. In this sense, we will interrogate the accuracy of dominant portrayals of those 'marginalized' or 'left behind' by linking media characterizations to the lived experiences and perspectives of these milieus.

Drawing on the empirical examples from the two post-industrial communities in the north of England and eastern Germany, we argue that media needs to better reflect the lived realities of these communities to provide a more inclusive space for articulating their self-perceptions, experiences and views, in order to reduce their disaffection with wider society and its institutions.

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POL28 Us versus Them: Dychotomy in political discourse

PP 1058 The rise of an identity? Outgroup derogation in COVID-19 debates on Reddit from Sweden and Austria, a longitudinal and comparative content analysis

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Wagner and Eberl (2022) provide evidence and a convincing argument for the existence of "vaccination identities" that fuel affective polarization between those who are in favor or against the COVID-19 vaccination. Such "opinion-based identities" have also been shown for other far-reaching political issues like the BREXIT vote (Hobolt et al, 2021) and are different in nature and composition than partisanship or left-right political orientation and are suspected to drive affective polarization between social groups (Wojcieszak et al, 2022). Such processes might hinder solution-oriented and deliberative public discourse on these issues, particularly on social media platforms. The SIDE model (Klein et al, 2007) would predict that once group identities begin to format around an issue, users on social media will increasingly engage in "identity performance", such as attacking out-group members to increase their in-group status. By a longitudinal content analysis applying machine learning methods to COVID-19 debates on Reddit, this study investigates if and when identity performance and conflict became the dominant feature of the pandemic online discourse, and how its quality changed as a consequence. Furthermore, by comparing subreddits from Sweden and Austria we compare two European edge cases that are similar in cultural context but most different in their governmental approach to tackle the pandemic. Given that perceived threats activate social identities (Woods, 2011) we expect higher levels of identity performance in the Austrian which relied much more on enforcing regulations compared to the more voluntary approach of Sweden. We hope to create insights that can help to strengthen democracies' abilities to maintain unity in the face of future crisis.

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POL28 Us versus Them: Dychotomy in political discourse

PP 1059 Transnational flows in networked misogyny: Exploring links between Sweden, Germany and Russia

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Social media has elevated misogyny to new levels of violence, amplifying and spreading these attitudes on a larger scale, with technology allowing for transnational synergies between actors in different countries. Networked misogyny (Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2016), or coordinated efforts of individuals or groups to harass, threaten, or intimidate women online, often with the goal of silencing or discrediting their voices, has now become commonplace, often targeting women who publicly take up feminist positions (Massanari & Chess, 2018, Marwick & Caplan, 2018).

Blatantly misogynist influencers such as Andrew Tate have risen to internet fame on TikTok, lately attracting the attention of a concerned public including educators and parents who report on his ideas infiltrating classrooms.

However, predominant scholarly attention has been paid to male perpetrators, while women are primarily seen as the targets and victims of misogynist ideas. And while the ultimate threat is to the safety of women and non-masculine identified persons, the role of women in perpetuating, legitimizing and 'making palatable' misogynist ideas remains under-researched, including how misogyny works in conjunction with racist, anti-feminist and ethnonationalist ideas. A cooptation of networked misogyny by women not only shows how women can become successful co-producers of oppressive ideas affecting them, but also lends credibility to these ideas, thereby expanding their reach. In this paper, we treat misogyny as an intersectional, transnational and digital phenomenon in order to investigate the role of women in abetting its spread. Premised on recent developments in two areas of research, namely work on contemporary instantiations of networked misogyny and on gender and far-right movements, we take a mixed-method approach to data from Sweden, Germany and Russia, which includes both official 'propagandistic' texts i.e., sanctioned, strategic messages emerging from actors operating from within political organisations, groups and campaigns, along with individual female actors operating as 'influencers' on social media platforms such as YouTube and Instagram.

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POL28 Us versus Them: Dychotomy in political discourse

PP 1060 Social minorities or public elites: Who people perceive as target groups of online hate speech and how this affects reporting and counter-speech

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The concept of hate speech and the policies surrounding it are highly contested. On the one hand, scholars argue whether hate speech should be defined as derogatory communication towards marginalized groups such as immigrants, women, or LGBTQI* people (Sponholz, 2023), or as expressions of hatred potentially directed at any person (Parekh, 2006). On the other hand, there is a debate about what measures are appropriate to combat online hate speech. Some argue for banning hate speech to safeguard marginalized communities and democratic discourse in general (Waldron, 2012), while others emphasize freedom of speech and would consider bans as censorship (Strossen, 2018). These positions correspond to different individual actions against online hate speech, namely reporting (regulation-oriented) or countering it (speech-oriented).

Bringing together these debates, we seek to understand whether the perceptions of which groups are targeted by hate speech affect individual actions against it. Evidence for this can be found, for example, in social identity theory (Keipi et al., 2017) and related research on the topic (Siegel, 2020). To test this, we use representative survey data from 2022 and 2023 of 2,014 German-speaking internet users. We pose the following questions:

RQ1: Which social groups are perceived as targets of hate speech?

RQ2: Do different perceptions lead to different actions against hate speech?

We analyzed survey responses to determine whether individuals encountered hate speech online, which groups were perceived as targets (e.g., immigrants, politicians, women, Muslims, Jews), and how respondents reacted to it (countered/reported).

Our results indicate that 75% of our sample, or 1,499 respondents, have encountered hate speech online. Regarding RQ1, politicians were the most commonly perceived targets (60%), followed by immigrants (43%), LGBTQI* people (35%), women (30%), and journalists (28%). When dividing these perceived targets into (a) more visible, public elites such as politicians and journalists and (b) social minorities, including immigrants, Jews, Muslims, women, and LGBTQI* people, the results show that 18% of respondents have only witnessed hate speech against minorities. Only 12% have exclusively seen hate speech directed towards journalists and politicians. Most respondents (52%) reported witnessing hate speech against individuals from (c) both groups.

Following this classification, the results for RQ2 show that respondents who only saw hate speech against public elites are the least likely to take action against it. Only 8% of them have reported hate speech they encountered, while 13% have countered it. The most active respondents were those who had witnessed hate speech against both public elites and social minorities with 33% reporting and 30% countering it.

Based on these initial findings, it can be concluded that the perception of which groups are affected by hate speech has an impact on whether action is taken against it. In the proposed presentation, we aim to further deepen these findings by considering the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents to determine the relevance of social identity, and by examining whether the results can be confirmed through regression analysis.

POL28 Us versus Them: Dychotomy in political discourse

PP 1061 Gone with Populism: Ideational and performative dimensions of anti-populist communication on social networking sites

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Populism has gained significant attention in recent years, yet there is limited understanding of effective measures to confront and address it (Malkopoulou, Moffitt 2023). This study investigates the construction of anti-populist discourses employed by political parties and their leaders on two social networking sites (Facebook and Instagram) before the 2021 Czech general elections. Anti-populist discourse characterized by a combination of stances presented in opposition to populism manifests as a specific communication strategy of political actors in reacting to populist challenges (Stavrakakis et al. 2018). In doing so, the anti-populist actors, presenting themselves as a viable alternative to the danger of populism, construct two specific identities: anti-populist identity ('us') and populist identity ('them'). These identities can be identified through ideational and performative dimensions, emphasizing what content and style the anti-populists claim to represent (Havlík, Kluknavská 2022). For instance, anti-populists claim that their politics is rational and civil while populist politics is emotional and irrational. Besides these self-claimed communication dimensions, anti-populists utilize specific stylistic elements in their communication; this actual performative presentation of anti-populism, however, remains underexplored in empirical research.

To fill this gap, this study examines the association of anti-populist discourses with specific stylistic elements related to populist/anti-populist divide. We explore to what extent negative tonality, emotions, references to knowledge and references to populism and democracy are present in anti-populist constructions of populist and anti-populist identities. Our results suggest that while self-constructed anti-populist identity is positively associated with knowledge-based claims, populist identities are often accompanied by emotional language and references to democracy. This means that even though anti-populist actors themselves might put forward claims stressing their rational and fact-based approach to politics, the performativity of their communication reveals an emotional component along the lines of populist and anti-populist divide.

Our study is based on an original dataset of social media posts created by Czech anti-populist politicians. First, we use automated frequency analysis (2017–2021, n = 44,877) to account for the communication dynamics regarding the mentions of populism/anti-democracy and anti-populism/democracy by anti-populist actors in their social media messages. Second, we employ manual quantitative content analysis to analyze their communication in the period of two weeks before the 2021 general election (n = 1,291; out of which Facebook = 890 and Instagram = 401) to capture variances in anti-populist communication strategies. Overall, our results speak to the broader debate on countering populism and the potential of social media for promoting anti-populist discourse. The study is among the first attempts to analyze anti-populism systematically using the data from two different social media platforms.

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POL29 Communication in times of war and crisis

PP 1062 Platforms in war: A comparative analysis of the digital platforms in transnational conflicts

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Digital platforms play a crucial role in geopolitical conflicts and wars of the 21st century. They provide tools for information warfare by facilitating the spread of propaganda and disinformation aimed at national and international audiences. They also provide an important means for civil society activists to document human rights violations and campaign for peace. The corporations who run them have also become powerful cyber-security actors in their own right, taking an increasingly active role alongside traditional political power brokers (Borelli 2023).

One pivotal point of contention in these debates has been related to content moderation/governance. Historically, digital platforms have tried to balance the conflicting demands of governments and civil society groups to moderate illicit content by positioning themselves as neutral intermediaries not legally liable or socially responsible for the published content (Napoli and Caplan 2017). More recently, digital platforms have also taken a visibly active role , such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, where it explicitly sided with US and EU policies against Russia. At the same time, digital platforms have also come under growing scrutiny for not meeting their human rights responsibilities in other conflicts outside the West, as evidenced by the growing criticism of their inaction in removing violent extreme speech in countries such as Myanmar and Ethiopia.

This paper compares two examples where digital platforms positioned themselves in different ways as actors in transnational and geopolitical conflicts. Through a comparative analysis of the Russian Ukraine War (2022-ongoing) and the Tigray War in Ethiopia (2020–2022), we show how there were two different types of strategies through which digital platforms imagined their positionality. In the context of Ukraine, digital platforms quickly adopted a wide array of proactive steps to counter disinformation, predominantly by blocking Russian state-affiliated media. While these actions were not unheard of, their scale and consistency were unprecedented (see Pantti and Pohjonen 2023). In the context of the Ethiopian case, on the contrary, we show how the digital platforms' response was primarily reactive and in response to growing global civil society criticism. One example was the global controversy around Haugen revelations, which argued that Meta's inaction contributed to ethnic violence and unrest. This, in turn, led to calls for digital platforms to take their responsibilities seriously, including lawsuits and civil society campaigns.

Building on these comparative case studies, we ask two questions related to digital platforms in two different transnational conflicts:

1. Through what types of communicative strategies did digital platforms try to communicate their position as actors (neutral or active) during these conflicts?
2. How was this positioning, in turn, informed by growing pressure from civil society activists and governments campaigning to hold digital platforms accountable?

To evidence these two research questions, the paper provides a cross-media analysis of PR communication by digital platforms, mainstream news and social media sources where the role and responsibility of digital platforms in transnational conflicts was visibly articulated and debated and, in turn, where the digital platforms communicated reasons for their action and/or inaction in their content moderation policies.

POL29 Communication in times of war and crisis

PP 1063 Information and mis/disinformation flow on the war in Ukraine: Polish citizens' perceptions and evaluations of the media performance

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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 flow of information and disinformation in time of international conflict.

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; news avoidance, and selective news exposure) and a level of trust in media, as well as politics-related factors, that is political interest and concerns about the war in Ukraine.

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' evaluation of the media performance on covering war in Ukraine and perceptions on sources and causes of false information on war in Ukraine in the media.

In this study we define misinformation as an information that is factually inaccurate without the intention to cause harm or deceive recipients (Kim & 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 & 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 (Freelon & Wells, 2020; Hancock & 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 on the war. Finally, we will pay attention to the Polish citizens' eagerness to employ fact-checking strategies in order to verify messages on the war.

For the purpose of this study we use a survey data collected in April–May, 2022 (N = 1004). 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 (both traditional and digital versions). The study revealed a tendency toward selective news exposure, strong sense that there was a lot of false information in the news media, and moderate evaluation of fairness and accuracy of the media news coverage. These observations might be explained by a high level of political polarization, accompanied by a low trust in news media and a high level of anxiety. 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.

POL29 Communication in times of war and crisis

PP 1064 Biased judgment or lack of skill? Decoding Identification of (Mis)Information in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine in 19 Countries

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There has been rising concern about individuals basing their political views on false or misleading information. Understanding who is susceptible to disinformation has consequently become a primary research focus (for an overview, see Nyhan, 2020).

In most cases, surveys are employed to uncover characteristics that predict susceptibility. After exposure to pieces of (mis)information, participants are asked to judge whether they consider them true or not. There are several limitations to these findings. By only measuring the number of correctly labelled false claims, these results confound two different explanations for answering a certain way. An individual might be able to detect all pieces of misinformation in a task due to profound knowledge of the subject. Individuals might also tend to not believe any of the false claims because they oppose their views, or they are just skeptical overall. Thus, the performance in such a task is a mixture of sensitivity (i.e., identifying true items as true and false items as false) and biased responding (i.e., labelling items as true or false because of ideology or other pre-existing beliefs regardless of the items' truth status).

Signal detection theory (SDT) allows to dissect these accounts by calculating two separate measures for sensitivity and response bias. We calculate SDT inspired measures based on responses to pro- and anti-Russia true and false statements in a survey fielded in 19 countries (N = 19,037) in 2022 during the early stages of the war.

On the individual level, we find that education, age, and newspaper consumption increase sensitivity, while stronger attitudes towards the war and more superficial news sources decrease sensitivity. Stronger pro- or anti-Russia attitudes are associated with more biased responding. Alternative media use is related to with a more pro-Russia leaning response bias. On the country-level, there is a relationship between national knowledge and press freedom levels and sensitivity. Similarities to Russia in cultural values are only partially related to response bias.

We believe considering a diverse set of countries, and applying the more sophisticated measurement based on Signal Detection Theory to a highly relevant and salient case will help deepen the understanding of individuals' and countries' susceptibility and resilience to mis- and disinformation by disentangling skilled differentiation between true and false from biased responding.

POL29 Communication in times of war and crisis

PP 1065 Climate change skepticism discourse on TikTok. A visual content analysis

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Climate change-skeptical discourse has been identified as a major threat to the public understanding of environmental issues and effective climate action. Emerging research highlights that this discourse is multifaceted and no longer dominated by denial of the existence of climate change. Instead, it increasingly involves misinformation about its impacts, the necessity and appropriateness of mitigation policies, as well as credibility attacks on climate scientists (Coan et al., 2021; Painter et al., 2023). While these studies provide a more differentiated picture of climate skeptical discourse, several gaps remain: (1) most significantly, the visual dimension of this discourse has been neglected. This is a crucial shortcoming as visuals have a specific potential to capture attention, drive engagement, are often perceived as evidence of the real world, and are understood across cultural and linguistic barriers. (2) Studies have focused on mainstream media (Painter et al., 2023) and conservative websites and blogs (Coan et al., 2021), while research on how this discourse plays out on more participatory platforms, i.e., social media, is lacking. Connected to this, we do not know (3) how climate change skepticism claims are encountered by citizens. Given that a large share of the global population is convinced of and worried about the threat of climate change, it seems likely that on social media, users actively correct skeptical claims.

This study thus investigates the prevalence and nature of climate change-skeptical discourse *and* its corrections on the widely used video platform TikTok. TikTok is especially relevant in this context as it enables a new form of

participatory political discourse that is dominated by young and non-expert individuals (e.g., Serrano et al., 2020) and has been at the center of worries about the increased spread of visual misinformation.

Combining manual and automated content analysis of a large sample of videos, this study provides a more nuanced understanding of this highly relevant, politicized discourse. Specifically, valuable insights on how prevalent different types of climate change skepticism claims are, how often they are corrected, and how these discourses differ in the use of visual features, engagement, and visibility. To achieve this, we first manually code 4,500 videos retrieved through a snowball sampling procedure, starting with popular hashtags within the discourse. In the second step, we will use the labeled material to fine-tune machine-learning models to assess the videos' content automatically. Data analysis will be finished by August 2024.

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POL29 Communication in times of war and crisis

PP 1066 Crisis communication and public opinion: Evidence from Austria

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In early 2020, governments across the world resorted to the format of press conferences to instruct their publics on how to deal with the arising COVID-19 pandemic. This main tool of communication was used to persuade the public to follow measures constraining personal life and, in turn, convince citizens of the government's effectiveness in dealing with the pandemic. Although press conferences are a one-way tool of communication, public opinion data can shed light on how they are received by the public. In Austria, a large-scale panel study on the public's perception of COVID-19 measures and the government's performance was conducted starting in the very early days of the pandemic. For the case of Austria, this paper seeks to explore the reciprocal relationship between government communication and public opinion: a) How do government communication strategies affect trust in the government, and b) Do changes in the public's perception of e.g. measurement effectiveness reflect in the government's communication strategies?

For this paper, we draw on two datasets. First, a dataset containing transcripts of 50 press conferences held by the Austrian government between March 20 and May 3, 2020. Second, six survey waves of an online panel study fielded within the same time-frame with 1500 respondents each wave. Using a combination of manual and automated content analysis, we identify the measures announced by the government, as well as the sentiment of press conference statements. We will show how the government's communication was received by the public, and whether the government adjusted their crisis communication strategies in accordance with public opinion. Our study uses the unique case of the first phase of COVID-19 to make a contribution to the literature on the effectiveness of political crisis communication strategies and make recommendations how government communication can contribute to improving adherence to health measures in future crises.

RAS01 Different approaches to podcasting: From theory to practice

PP 0766 (dis)Orders in podcast studies: A systematic review

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Two decades after the appearance of the first podcasts, they have evolved to become a prominent cultural phenomenon that gives us the posibility to understand the predominant practices and dynamics in the media and socio-cultural sphere. Following the proposal of du Gay et al. in "Doing Cultural Studies" (1997), which applied a Cultural Studies approach to the Walkman, we propose an update of this approach focusing on the podcast as a referent. The purpose is to present the first results of an exhaustive systematic review of the international academic literature of the last decade, allowing us to analyze the epistemic tensions between the predominant academic approaches and the perspective proposed from Cultural Studies, with a specific focus on Spain without losing sight of the international context. For both searching articles in databases as for the subsequent analysis of the results we take the five key concepts proposed for du Gay et al., to compose the "circuit of culture": representation, production, identity, consumption and regulation.

Preliminary results suggest that academic production at the international level can be categorized around two interrelated dimensions: a) the podcast as an object of study in itself and b) the podcast as a means to examine current social, cultural and political trends and movements. On the one hand, historical, material and quantitative analyses are obtained on audiences, engagement and the podcast industry; on the other hand, an analysis of the discourses in the public sphere related to feminist, LGTBQ+, anti-racist movements, among others, is carried out. In the specific case of Spain, a different dynamic is observed, where scientific production is mainly focused on the podcast as an object of study, without a critical and cultural reflection of the medium. Our objective is to address (dis)orders in podcast research and explore possible developments from the perspective of Cultural Studies, especially in the Spanish context.

RAS01 Different approaches to podcasting: From theory to practice

PP 0767 Reordering the field of audio media studies

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Radio plays an important historical role in media and communication studies and continues to hold a prominent position, reflected in international journals such as the *Journal of Radio & Audio Media* and *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*. Also, our ECREA-section *Radio and Sound* presents itself as "focusing on radio" and with the aim of creating a "radio community" to initiate academic dialogue on the "future of radio". Although other audio media are welcomed, these examples signal a 'radio-and' or 'radio-first' mindset which still seems to prevail in media and communication studies when it comes to audio media.

A growing field of podcast studies is about to establish a research field in its own right detached from its close relationship to radio. And we are witnessing a general boom in audio media in the current digital media culture, including audiobooks, audio-newspapers, music streaming, functional sound apps for activities such as exercising, meditation, concentration, sleep, etc. not to mention the various uses of text-to-speech technology in relation to all kinds of written texts.

In this paper, I will discuss whether we as media and communication scholars could benefit from a more inclusive field of audio media studies that reflects the changing digital media culture where audio media are converging in terms of technology, formats, content, production, distribution, and use. Apps for audio media compete side by side on our smartphones, while the development points towards a centralization of content on platforms like Spotify and Audible (Amazon). It becomes more and more difficult to draw a line between the various audio media.

Although radio remains a popular medium among the older media users, the future for audio media is reflected in the younger generations' preferences and habits where traditional radio plays a minor role. Instead of a 'radio-and'/'radio-first' mindset expressed in the examples above, the paper aims to frame a field of audio media studies where radio has a place on equal footing with other audio media. From a kind of meta-approach to the theme of the conference, I would like to reorder and discuss a new and non-hierarchic order for audio media studies.

From this 'audio media' approach the paper will zoom in on some issues and questions relevant across audio media. For instance, 1) *Mediated voices* (human, AI-cloned, and synthetic): How are voices designed and perceived and what impact do these voices have on perception, communication, and culture? 2) *Headphone culture*: Public debates about screentime and screen culture are intense these years. Are headphones a cure that can free the

body from the screen, or are they just another form of isolation and withdrawal from one's own thoughts and the social world?

The paper draws on my ongoing work with the research monograph *Reading with Ears and Writing with Voices: The Aural and Oral Turn in Digital Communication and Media Culture* (funded by the Carlsberg Foundation), and the Danish educational book *Lydmedier: Teori og analyse* (*Audio media: theory and analysis*) (to be published 2024).

RAS01 Different approaches to podcasting: From theory to practice

PP 1069 Radio, radio journalism and professional ideals in the extreme conditions of coups d'état

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This paper examines the situation of radio journalists in the extreme conditions of coups d'état. It examines the West African state of Burkina Faso as a case study which has experienced one popular uprising (2014), one attempted coup (2015) and two effective coups d'état (2022). Radio is the most important medium in Burkina Faso followed by television and the press. Social media are also popular, but access remains limited due to insecurity, poverty and poor connectivity.

During each of the above-mentioned events, radio was at the centre of the political struggle. In 2014, state radio was ransacked as a symbol of the contested political power. In 2015, an underground radio was created for political purposes, and in 2022, the junta ensured that the military version of information was accepted as journalistic truth. In regions with high levels of insecurity, 'radio journalism under siege' prevails with radio broadcasters and presenters being forced to change jobs or resign.

Drawing on a series of over 30 semi-structured interviews conducted in 2022 in Ouagadougou with radio journalists, broadcasters and editors, who were witness to the above-mentioned major political events, the paper uses an interactionist approach to place the actions of radio journalists within the specific context in which they operate. It looks at the profession from a media system perspective, showing how journalists' networks of interdependencies influence, in one way or another, their way of working, and therefore the information they produce.

The paper discusses how extreme the political contexts challenged the radio journalists' professional ideals. It examines how, or whether, their reactions contributed to (re)defining the boundaries of the profession. To answer these questions, the paper investigates the professional roles that radio journalists wanted to assume in these extreme conditions and what their reactions tell us about their vision of their own profession. The research revealed that radio journalists tend to define their role and practices according to the specific political situation in which they work and the status of the media they work for, be it public (state) or private. In other words, concerning media and journalism more broadly, political contexts can partially shape the roles that journalists play and media behaviour can partially shape the outcome of political contests. This ongoing and changing movement makes the media/political boundaries become extremely porous, shifting and redrawing the contours of both the political and media spheres.

RAS01 Different approaches to podcasting: From theory to practice

PP 0770 Technical and ethical perspective on the use of podcasting as a support for investigative journalism in VOD series: Truth Be Told

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Digitalization and continuous technological developments have changed both the work and the production of journalism. And media outlets, no longer in complete control of distribution due to the push of digital platforms (Nielsen, 2020), want to reassert their autonomy and brand value by experimenting with podcasting to attract new audiences, especially younger ones (Newman & Gallo, 2020). Podcasting brings together brand value, quality and loyalty, both in traditional media and in the independent podcasters.

However, the weight of advertising, the search for increased audiences, the tendency towards soft news, infotainment and sensationalism (Otto, Glogger & Boukes, 2017) and the difficulties of companies, mean that the journalistic quality of some published pieces suffers. News comes to be seen as a marketing product (Deuze, 2006, 2007; Domingo, Quandt, Heinonen, Paulussen, Singer, & Vujnovic, 2008; Kapuscinski, 2005; Pavlik, 2001) in an increasingly competitive market (Holzer & Ondrus, 2011).

The main objective of this research is to assess whether the podcast approach outlined above offers professional journalistic work or is tinged with superficiality. This is an important question in the face of the pressing need to

defend models of journalism based on excellence, and the growing attention to audience growth has long been seen in journalistic and academic circles as one of the causes of the gradual loss of quality in journalism (Costera, 2013).

In previous works we have analyzed to what extent the podcast has allowed the recovery and renewal of audio reporting (Legorburu, Edo & García-González, 2021) which, with nuances, has survived in Australia, UK and USA (Lindgren & McHugh, 2013) and which, lately, is regaining prominence (McHugh, 2022). Undoubtedly, one of the most successful journalistic contents in this field is true crime (Clausen & Sikjaer, 2021), particularly, after the success of *Serial* (Boiling, 2022; Sherril, 2022). Like film and television (McNair, 2014; Walters, 2021), VOD series are also approaching investigative journalism and true crime, as is the case of *Truth Be Told* (Apple TV+, 2019–2023).

In order to carry out this work, we started with an analysis sheet that focuses on the way in which this serie reflect the professional practice of journalism in its different aspects: journalistic technique, ethical and deontological issues, production routines, interest in the combination of sound and audiovisual formats, etc. And this file has been applied to all the episodes of the three seasons of *Truth Be Told*. Likewise, leading experts in investigative journalism in podcast format have been consulted on all these aspects in order to contrast the professional reality with what VOD fiction shows.

Among the main results, in addition to noting a growing presence of the podcasting in this type of productions (also in cinema), we can appreciate -despite the dissonances- a certain will of verisimilitude in the approach of fiction to the world of audio investigative journalism, perhaps due to the participation of journalists as consultants. It also reflects, depending on the season, a significant predilection for deontological issues, as well as for the border between journalism and social activism.

RAS02 Audio innovations: IA, syntethic voices and data sonification in sound mediums

PP 0872 Can you hear the data? (De)construct the world through Data Sonification in radio and audio journalism

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We have never had access to so much data as we do today. Interpreting and analyzing data from a specific topic has become essential, especially to produce and distribute relevant information to the audiences, and data journalism has gained relevance in recent years. Data journalists deal with enormous quantities of information and produce accessible journalistic content with the support of data visualization, i.e., through graphics, images, or videos. However, people with visual disabilities can't consume this type of data, and one of the solutions is to implement data sonification that "transmits information through sound" (Bonet, 2021, p. 269). That means the data are extracted and transformed into a melody that helps the listener understand a specific topic with the sense of hearing. Data sonification is a tool that can be used to tell journalistic stories with sound in an innovative way, especially in radio or podcasts. Even though data sonification is not a new tool and it has been used in natural sciences or engineering, for example, in journalism, it has been used to demonstrate data through sound in an immersive, emotional, and empathic manner.

World events have caused social disorders over the past five years: the COVID-19 pandemic, several climate change events – and consequently an increase in awareness of this issue – and two ongoing armed conflicts. It has been useful to use data sonification to create awareness about the impact of these social disorders, and independent projects such as *Sound of War* (Ukrainian/Russian war) and *Loud Numbers* (data in general and data journalism) have been helpful to gain a deeper understanding of these realities through sound.

And how about in the Public Service Media (PSM)? The PSM can innovate with this type of tool because "technology provides PSM organizations with the opportunity to better fulfill their function and serve their audiences in a variety of ways" (Fuster & Avilés, 2018, p. 46) and PSM media labs are a place to experiment and develop immersive and empathic experiences for listeners. In this sense, If PMS and media labs must innovate and data sonification could be an innovative tool, especially in radio and audio journalism, how public radio broadcasters are innovating, or not, using data sonification to produce journalistic pieces about social disorders?

To answer this research question, a longitudinal study of five years (January 2018 to December 2023) was conducted to collect journalistic pieces with data sonification regarding climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and armed conflicts in four western European public radios and their respective media labs: Portugal (Antena 1 and RTP Lab), Spain (RTVE and RTVE Lab), France (Radio France and Hyperradio) and United Kingdom (BBC and BBC R&D and BBC News Lab). Preliminary results show that no journalistic piece was produced with data sonification in Portugal and in the others Public Radio Broadcast and media laboratories, data sonification isn't explored as much as data visualization. Additionally, this study identified patterns, tendencies, and challenges regarding data sonification in audio journalism.

Keywords: data sonification; data journalism; radio; audio journalism; Public service media.

RAS02 Audio innovations: IA, syntethic voices and data sonification in sound mediums

PP 0873 Influence of Artificial Intelligence (IA) on the radio workflows of the Digital Audio Perimeter

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Although its implementation is still in its infancy, artificial intelligence (AI) is beginning to have an impact on the radio industry. The Digital Audio Perimeter (DAP), that is, the set of content, services and forms of contact that expand the sound universe of radio products in the digital environment, is being affected by AI in a transversal way, in its three levels of expansion: consumer devices, distribution windows and content and services.

In this paper we focus on the production of sound content and services and, more specifically, on the changes that the radio production chain will undergo due to the incorporation of artificial intelligence tools, both for analysis and management and for supporting creativity and content generation, and how, indirectly, this will affect the need for media professionals with new skills and knowledge.

In fact, the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) is already being introduced, timidly, in the radio production chain and it is suspected that it will cover all parts of the process. In this paper we propose what the new radio production workflow could be like, in which generative and AI management tools are fully integrated in all parts of the chain: content generation, scripting, sound production, editing and post-production, programming and customization, and broadcasting and interaction. Our study is based on qualitative research that combines different research methods such as in-depth interviews with experts and professionals in the field of radio and sound production and management, as well as benchmarking of the AI tools currently available.

Understanding that AI will modify current production flows, and that it is already being used to improve the listening experience, reduce energy costs or adapt programming in real time, it is clear that traditional professional roles are being affected as new production needs appear that must be covered with specialized workers. Therefore, to incorporate AI into radio production will require continuous adaptation and requalification by current professionals and it will be necessary to incorporate new professional figures who master the processes of content development with the support of this technology to improve the scope of the Digital Audio Perimeter of broadcasters.

RAS02 Audio innovations: IA, syntethic voices and data sonification in sound mediums

PP 0874 Inducing emotion by AI-generated vs. human-made music within audiovisual stimuli: A psychophysiological study

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Sound has been used to potentiate the impact that recorded visual stimuli have on people's emotions, perceptions, and focus since the emergence of cinema in the early 20th century (Marshall & Cohen, 1998; Smith et al., 2013). Numerous studies were carried out to understand trajectories of the human gaze while manipulating the conditions of audiovisual stimuli, the majority of them discovering an important role of sound on the eyes' scan paths (Smeaton & Rothwell, 2009; Kunka et al., 2010; Coutrot et al., 2012, Auer et al., 2012; Mera & Stumpf, 2014). Such research has been applied to cultural, advertising, and informative media, the results of which have had important implications for those areas. With the rapid emergence of generative artificial intelligence during the past years, the fear of AI replacing many professions within cultural production has driven scholars to conduct various research to understand whether AI-generated content can be indistinguishable from human-made (Kaliakatsos-Papakostas, et al., 2020; Miranda, 2021).

The goal of our study is to find the differences or similarities in both cognitive and self-reported psychological responses to human-produced and AI-generated music. We will present three different sonic conditions to the very same video stimulus: silent, human-produced music, and AI-generated music. The stimuli to be used (short film excerpts with background music) will be found in a database of previous peer-reviewed studies and with already assigned categories of emotion, valence, and arousal (Diconne, et al., 2022). To understand our participants' emotional processing of the presented stimuli, we will use instruments for monitoring dermal, oculometric, and cardiovascular responses, such as galvanic skin response, body temperature, pupil dilation, gaze fixations, spontaneous eyeblink rate and heart rate, as well as a questionnaire with self-reported perceived emotions, the intensity of arousal and emotional valence.

The acquired results will provide important implications for cognitive media and AI studies, as well as the cultural production industries – should we find no difference in emotional processing between human-made and AI-generated

soundtracks, this will indicate that generative artificial intelligence is advanced enough to replicate the emotional and perceptive effects of audio production in an audiovisual context. On the contrary, should AI-generated music provoke a lower emotional response, this will indicate generative AI still lacks the potential to induce the same emotional effects on viewers and listeners. While numerous studies from the past decade have used a similar experimental design to ours (Millet et al., 2021; Ansani et al. 2020; Wollner et al., 2018), to our knowledge no other study has incorporated generative AI in one of the conditions of presented stimuli. We expect that this study will bring light to the potential use of AI for creating emotional audiovisual content.

RAS02 Audio innovations: IA, syntethic voices and data sonification in sound mediums

PP 0875 Smart speaker as Cassandra: Feminized voices and technologies of domestic violence

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Listening In is a slickly produced podcast (QCode, 2022) that remediates John Cheever's classic 1947 short story "The Enormous Radio" and Lucille Fletcher's *Sorry, Wrong Number*, the 1943 classic radio thriller. Across three distinct media forms, these stories each feature a white woman trapped in an uptown New York apartment, negotiating the social isolation specific to their gender, class, and historical moment. In each case, social isolation is exacerbated by the technologies of sound communication ostensibly designed to inform, entertain, and empower them: smart speaker, radio set, and telephone, respectively. Instead, these technologies of vocal transmission become sources of danger---sonic portals to the malign forces around them. Disembodied voices reinforce the embodied nature of women's vulnerability to social violence. At the same time, these technologies of sound provide, in their glitches and contradictions, opportunities for these women to understand their position and, in the direst of ways, speak back.

Listening In is one of several recent big budget fictional podcasts to limn the emotional peril of technological dysfunction as an analogue for the real physical peril of faced by women in techno-patriarchal societies. It was preceded by *Sandra*, (Gimlet, 2019) which features Helen, a young woman fleeing dysfunctional domestic scene who inadvertently uses smart speaker technology to abet a violent stalker in tracking down his victim. In a fascinating take on the industrialization of women's caring work, Helen takes on the android work of feminized amanuensis, using voice masking technology to become Sandra, a smart speaker persona. *Eliza: A Robot Story* (Crowd Network, 2022), explores domestic and sexual abuse from the perspective of a feminine robot helper prototype, whose tenuous but growing capacity for self-awareness presents a strangely moving and political emotional narrative arc. Thematically, *Ad Lucem* (Q-Code 2023) picks up where Eliza and Sandra leaves off, a dystopian world of sexual abuse of women by the proxy of haptically enhanced smart speakers.

Using short sound clips, this presentation will demonstrate the intersections of gender, voice, and technology to tell dystopian stories of corporate and patriarchal power and of women's resistance and subjectivity in the face of it. Because most of these podcasts play with the digitization of women's voices, in the context of domestic and sexual subjugation, they offer us insights into the developing sonic grammar of audio narrative social realism and horror. Despite their near-futuristic technology, these stories reprise a vivid a sociological fact from *Sorry Wrong Number*: their husbands are the greatest threat to their safety and well-being. Because all of these shows feature shadowy corporate overlords behind the domestic helper technology and their inevitable dysfunctions, they also provide us a look into podcasting's ambivalent relationship to the rapidly shifting conditions of its own production, as DIY shows give way to platformization.

RAS02 Audio innovations: IA, syntethic voices and data sonification in sound mediums

PP 0876 »That wasn't AI speaking. Not yet«: Attitudes of Slovenian radio personalities towards synthetic radio voices

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Studies of the potentials and pitfalls of AI-generated radio speech have so far been predominantly reception-oriented (Scott et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2022; Gong, 2023; Heiselberg et al., 2022); less is known about the perceptions of radio personalities. The present research focuses on unveiling the attitudes of Slovenian radio presenters, newscasts, and other voice professionals towards the emerging AI presence.

Artificial voices can already mirror those of humans closely, but there are still too many differences which listeners can perceive (Gong, 2023). Even though synthetic voices now sound more intelligible and natural (Noufi et al., 2023), their introduction onto the radio proves to be a sensitive matter; partly because the sense of intimacy with the medium is borne from the parasocial relationship with human radio personalities, whereas synthetic personae lack interactivity, and their voices are not yet as expressive as the human ones (Scott et al., 2020).

Reception analyses reveal that certain synthetic voices are acceptable when reporting on mostly objective content. Experiments with hard news, that did not include subjective opinions or personal interpretations, e.g. traffic

or weather clips, showed that the synthetic nature of the voice had relatively little impact on credibility (Kim et al., 2022). More relevant factors were phonetic and physiological deviations from a natural reading pattern (Heiselberg et al., 2022). Synthetic radio speech at the present stage of development seems less appropriate for more creative and emotional genres. In one of the studies, cultural content read by artificial voices was rated below weather and news in terms of suitability for radio (Scott et al., 2020).

Where subjective interpretations and personal communication styles come into play, at present only human voices seem to be able to give all the nuances to narration, by combining different vocal speech features (like tone or pitch) and forming non-articulated sounds (like respirations or fillers) inherent to the natural speech (Rodero and Lucas, 2023). The power of listening to an embodied human voice therefore remains unchallenged in fiction formats: listeners of audio books showed better overall results when stories were narrated by a human voice (ibid.), and findings can be related to other fiction forms, such as podcasts or radio dramas.

In Slovenia, radio speech is of special importance: on community stations the locally-coloured speech of the hosts helps preserve the bond between radio and its audience (Valh Lopert, 2015); newscasts' speech is crucial for the Slovenian standard language norm (Lengar Verovnik, 2015); skilled voice professionals serve as role models for interpretation of complex texts (Tivadar, 2011). As the introduction of AI-generated voices, both as readers and hosts, seems highly possible in some formats and content (Hu et al., 2021; Kit et al., 2023), the aim of this paper is to research personal and professional attitudes of Slovenian radio presenters, newscasts, and other voice professionals towards the present issue. We will use the method of semi-structured in-depth interviews to estimate the interviewees' knowledge about AI-generated voices, and to detect what benefits or problems they might perceive.

RAS03 Radio, identity and localism

PP 0971 Evolution of the podcast offer of digital-native media in Spain: Exploration or consolidation?

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Spanish digital-native media stand out for their disruptive strength in the context of the digital transformation of journalism (García-Avilés et al., 2018; Negredo et al., 2020; Salles, 2019; Salaverría, 2020). Particularly, podcasting has been revealed as a disruptive and differentiating action of journalism in many countries (Berry, 2018; García-Avilés et al., 2018; Newman & Gallo, 2019). In the case of Spain, digital-native media have differentiated themselves in boosting the production of news podcasts (Martínez-Costa et al., 2022).

However, this type of digital news media face the underlying challenges of audience trust and interest due to the competition of influencers on social media, as well as legacy players. In this sense, digital-native media are aware that young and young adult generations have chosen to get their news through non-traditional channels. In this and other countries, podcasts are mainly of interest to audiences under the age of 45, with high education and income levels (Digital News Report, 2023). In this context, monthly listening to podcasts in Spain rose to 45% in 2023, according to the Digital News Report Spain.

Previous literature has analyzed the typology of innovations carried out in digital-native media. Nevertheless, few studies have evaluated how native media in Spain have incorporated podcasting as a key news tool, which implies a revolution to the media industry (Berry, 2018; Newman & Gallo, 2019). This study aims to answer the following research questions: Have Spanish digital-native media increased their podcast offer in the 2021–2024 period? What are the predominant themes and narratives? Are there strategic alliances between these news media and other companies or platforms? Is the podcast a bet on the innovation and expansion strategy of the digital-native media? The purpose is to continue with the diachronic studies of the use and characterization of journalistic podcasts by digital-native media in Spain. Specifically, a) determine what's new in news podcasts productions; b) analyze how platformization mediates this process; c) delve into the specialization achieved; and d) establish the characteristics of production and dissemination to engage the audience.

This work is based on a double quantitative and qualitative content analysis methodology. On the one hand, an interpretation of data recorded in the Digital media map in Spain. On the other hand, an in-depth study of a sample of 50 titles or series of podcasts published by 8 generalist native news brands during the 2021 and 2024. This corpus will be updated to analyze the current offer according to the variables mentioned above. In addition, the qualitative technique of the semi-structured interview will be also used to complete the fieldwork. The interviews will be carried out with the audio and podcast managers of the analyzed digital-native media.

This research is in progress; therefore, preliminary results corresponding to the new phase of the study will be presented in this forum, framed in the coordinated research project "Digital native media in Spain: typologies, audiences, trust building and keys to journalistic sustainability", funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation of Spain.

RAS03 Radio, identity and localism

PP 0972 Remembering radio: Gender, family and self

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This paper draws from the radio memories of three radio generations, my father, my aunt-in-law, and my cousin, who shared the same house at a certain time of their lives at a small town in the late 50s and 60s. By radio generation, I refer to pre-television generation (television broadcasting in Turkey started in 1968); those who have the memories of radio as only medium besides print. Household gender dynamics structured an important aspect of the memories and radio as a medium mediated these stories. I integrate my own accounts into discussion for the contextualization of these memories, as the fourth generation who did not live in the same house yet had the opportunities of closely observing the relations among the family members. The relationship between radio broadcasting, gender and nationbuilding and the paradaxual natura of family as a unity of nation have widely been discussed in feminist literature. Methodologically, in tracing the rearticulation of family relations, modernization, gender roles, fatherhood, motherhood, enlightment, and the radio as technology in the memories, I underline the significance of radio for the reconceptualization of the complex relationship between gender, family, and the self. As reflected in the memories, while access to radio was mediated by the family relations, gender relations, physical location of the radio, and everyday household dynamics, radio also constituted a significant space of containment and holding for the individual family members. Radio was narrated differently in the memories, for example, as a means of " patriarchal bargain", as conceptualized for Deniz Kandiyoti, for the aunt-in-law within the dynamics of extended family, a means of "being with the self" for the cousin or a means of "exploring the world" for the father. Thus radio memories allows us to revisit the relationship between the gendered self and family as a contribution to feminist media studies.

RAS03 Radio, identity and localism

PP 0973 Radio identity: The relationship between broadcaster and the listener

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This paper focuses on the analysis of sound as a way of explanation of the complexity of human relationships, the acoustic engagement of a person with its image, and the influence of sound in human identity.

In doing so, we bring together existing theory concerning the links between identities and images with new theory concerning how reflection embeds identity via sound.

The conception of identity has been one of the cornerstones of theories of the subject in modernity. Sarbin, described human identity as the (usually unvoiced) answers framed by a person to the implied question '*what* am I?' and social identity as the answers framed to the implied question '*who* am I'? (Sarbin 2000). Social Psychology has sustained an interest in understanding how the self is construed in relation to one's group memberships. Much of this effort has been fueled by work on social identity.

This article sets out the radio broadcasting communication framework within which the broadcaster interacts with the listeners via his or her identity. Voice, speech and music are the three aural reference points that form part of the broadcasting identity of the producers of radio programmes. This identity is approached here as the result of a concrete synthesis that paints an image for the producer instead that of abstract material sound in flux. A typology of the identity of the broadcaster on the radio in Greece will be presented as the sound on the radio sends some images that are dependent on the interaction of the producer with the framework of the radio organization and his or her listeners, as distant others.

Finally, the identity will be located in the wishful composition of the imaginary identification of the producer of music programmes with the aural object of wish of the "Other".

Keywords: Identity, Sound, Broadcaster, Listener

Sarbin, T. (2000). Worldmaking, Self and Identity. *Culture & Psychology*, Vol. 6(2): 253–258, SAGE Publications

RAS03 Radio, identity and localism

PP 0974 The Sámi Journalism and indigenous radio: Voice and identity

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The study addresses the process of strengthening social mechanisms implemented by indigenous Sámi journalists and radio stations in Norway to strengthen identity, education, sociocultural and linguistic values through producing

newscasts, documentaries, children's, youth and youth, educational, etc., in which the learning of their language is promoted, as well as tools and sociocultural policies of interest to indigenous peoples. For this reason, the role of radio in promoting the identity and social well-being of its members is explored in depth. The Sami have a division (NRK Sápmi) in the public system of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (Norsk rikskringkastning, NRK) (Skogerbø, 2021) which is state-owned and operates with a legally determined broadcasting licence. Indigenous radio stations have been creating their own spaces for participation, although there are obvious limitations in the regulatory frameworks, such as production schedules, dependency, and a way of operating limited to the guidelines determined through the NRK. As well as the management of resources that limit their actions and scope, either due to the lack of policies consistent with this type of communication system, such as autonomy in their way of operating or due to public service competencies and freedom to position themselves in the national market. This places Indigenous Radio, as is the case of NRK Sápmi, which focuses its efforts on providing programming that strengthens and revitalizes the identity, language and culture of the Sámi people (Pietikäinen, 2008). This study is qualitative and descriptive, which according to Mohajan (2018), is based on interpreting the meaning of the data to understand and analyze from a social perspective, the characteristic elements of a given society. The qualitative method is used through observation and interviews (Sofáer, 2002). On the one hand, the use of participant observation (Kawulich, 2005) to socially understand and interpret the relationships and interactions of the Sami people and indigenous radio. This allowed information to be collected and recorded when the radio staff carried out their work and interacted with the rest of the indigenous society at an event held near the environment. Likewise, during the Holy Week Festival we participated as a volunteer collaborator, thus describing the phenomenon of coexistence and labor relations of radio stations. Regarding participant observation, two methods were adopted: first, descriptive observation and, second, focused observation (Kawulich, 2005). Semi-structured interviews (Sofaer, 2002) were also applied with the participation of journalists from the indigenous Sámi radio at the NRK Sápmi headquarters in Kárášjohka (Karasjok) and in Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino), as well as dialogues with other members of the Sámi community, about the different perspectives and realities living in Norway. Thus, this article describes the importance of Radio in strengthening identity, and at the same time, from a theoretical point of view, shares the various events that involve the Sami in the social and political context. Finally, it is concluded that Radio Sámi is articulated based on state public policies and promotes community coexistence to revitalize indigenous culture as a fundamental principle present in its essence as an indigenous medium.

RAS04 The role of radio in history telling

PP 1067 Auditing radio cultures of war: Commercial recordings and programme production at Radio Luxembourg (1933–1950)

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Radio is a crucial site for *sonic* collectivities and nation-building, yet is also implicated in social crisis, war, and conflict (Potter et. al 2022). More specifically, radio research has identified World War II as a 'radio war', variously highlighting the role of music in wartime radio (Baade 2013) or radio within urban soundscapes of war (Birdsall 2012). Such research has illustrated how radio has been deployed for domestic news and entertainment programming, as well as for military and propaganda purposes. However, there has been a tendency to focus on national radio cultures, on a discrete periodisation (1939–1945), and to prefer close analysis of individual programmes rather than investigate the production contexts and technological practices of wartime radio. In response, I will first outline an approach to 'auditing' radio cultures of war, which builds on recent radio, sound and (music) technology research (Michelsen et. al 2019; Bonini et. al 2020; Stuhl 2022). I will then offer the case of Radio Luxembourg and consider how its recorded sound collection was crucial to the operations of the station before, during and after World War II. Taking up this extended periodisation helps bring into sharp relief how this internationally-oriented, commercial radio station – with broadcasts in English, German and French – was already embroiled in serious conflicts with Great Britain and National Socialist Germany well prior to 1939.

Shortly before the German occupation in 1940, part of Radio Luxembourg's music collection was hidden, while the occupation radio (1940–1944) was initially characterised by German-language transmissions directed at local audiences and a strong reliance on German musical recordings and sound recording technologies in production. Though the recorded sound collection was partly destroyed prior to Allied takeover in 1944, the subsequent Allied 'black' propaganda radio programming repurposed the recorded sound collection to target German military and civilian audiences, while its immediate post-war schedule drew on US/UK music repertoires and programming for displaced persons in Germany. From 1946, Radio Luxembourg resumed its own multi-lingual services, with pre-war staff members retrieving their hidden recordings from storage and trying to circumvent British government restrictions on new commercial music distribution to the station. In closing, I will evaluate this focus on wartime radio from the vantage of the availability and use of sound recordings in production, and critically assess radio/sound as an entry point for theorising crisis and social (dis)order.

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RAS04 The role of radio in history telling

PP 1068 Echoes of resistance: Exilic radio dramas as counter-narratives to Nazi propaganda

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The rise of the Third Reich in Germany marked not only a political upheaval but also a profound transformation in the use of media, particularly radio. In 1933, with Adolf Hitler's ascension to chancellor, Joseph Goebbels took control of Germany's radio broadcasting, turning it into a mouthpiece for Nazi propaganda. This transformation effectively established radio as a "church" for the cult of the nascent state, as articulated by Annuß (2019, p. 100). The radio dramas of this period were meticulously designed to cultivate a sense of collective spirit aligned with Nazi ideals. They portrayed historical figures as exemplars of sacrifice for the greater good of the nation, thereby subtly reinforcing the totalitarian ethos.

This strategic manipulation of the airwaves was countered, however, by an equally potent yet less visible force – a form of resistance that emerged from exiled German writers. This study focuses on two pivotal works written and produced in exile: "Der Prozess der Jeanne d'Arc zu Rouen 1431" (1937) by Anna Seghers and "Das Verhör des Lukullus" (1940) by Bertolt Brecht. Both plays employ the motif of a trial, blending real and fictional narratives of historical figures. Through an (audio)narratological examination, this study underscores the thematic and stylistic elements of these exilic radio dramas, illustrating how they offered a narrative alternative to the National Socialist regime's messaging. Adopting techniques similar to those used in portraying historical events and figures in Nazi Germany, these writers, as Stefan Bodo Würffel (1978) noted, engaged in "critically discussing contemporary history in the mirror of historical examples, […] presenting it to the listener as a judicial instance" (p. 72).

Aligning with the conference theme "Communication & social (dis)order", this paper provides a nuanced understanding of how communication media, particularly radio plays, can be harnessed as tools of resistance and truth in times of oppressive regimes. It offers a perspective on the power of media in shaping public consciousness and the potential for resistance through creative expression.

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RAS04 The role of radio in history telling

PP 0768 Radio, Revolution and Memory: Podcast in the (re)construction of collective cultural values

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Media have an important role in gathering and uphold historical events and values in social and political key-moments, thus, being part of the collective memory (Schwartz, 2016). News, in particular, are players in the construction of collective cultural values, in the way they select, put emphasis and shape the facts considered as relevant, conveying those narratives to audiences (Edy, 2006; Kansteiner, 2002), and accordingly, promoting perceptions and interpretation of those narratives (Kligler-Vilenchik, Tsfati, Meyers, 2014). Disruption moments in societies are natural news values and revolutions become central in the media agenda coverage. 2024 celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Portuguese Revolution. In April 25 of 1974, a military coup ended almost a half-century of dictatorship, characterized by a repression apparatus and a cultural model fashioned by propaganda and censorship. In the launching of the military operation, radio had a central role, not only as witness, through journalistic depiction of the events, but also as an actor in the way communications were carried among the rebels and using the antenna to broadcast the end of the regime (Lima, Reis, 2019). Portuguese radio PBS Antena 1 launched two podcasts that

gather memories of the dictatorship "Antes da Revolução, 1973–1974", and of the revolution "De Cravo ao Peito" which use sounds narratives that promote awareness to major collective experiences. Sound has claimed a role in everyday life. The sounds of history entered our lives with the radio that broadcast and made them accessible to everyone. The power of radio sound to involve people is probably even truer with the podcast which creates an entire aura and imaginative experience (O' Neill, 2018). Podcast are more than downloaded MP3 files, they are a cultural product that is defined by participants and listeners (Berry, 2018). The new dynamics show the resilience of audio as a form of communication that has been able to adapt to various contexts throughout history (Paisana, Martins & Cardoso 2021). The podcast has established itself as a vehicle for oral transmission of history and archive sounds, being an interesting topic of study in our study case. The relation between history memory, collective values and podcast as means of preserving and transmitting them though sound is an ongoing research. We aim to identify the way these podcasts portrait radio and sounds as part the Revolution, and how they shape the transmission of these values to new audiences. The analysis parts from the mapping of subjects addressed in both podcasts, narrative formats and sounds.

RAS04 The role of radio in history telling

PP 1070 Information disorder or communication: How portuguese-language news podcasts explain the war between Hamas and Israel

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Since 2012, *podcasting* has undergone a transformation, evolving from an amateur medium to a mass commercial medium, with a marked expansion in audience and revenue (Bonini, 2015). Brazil ranks as the second largest market in the world for podcasts, surpassed only by the United States (Blubrry podcasting, 2019), which demonstrates that the popularity of this medium transcends linguistic borders. In the context of the Portuguese language universe, the Digital News Report 2023 identified a slight increase in podcast audiences in Brazil, reaching 57% of the surveyed population. In Portugal, the same report indicated that 38% of participants had listened to a podcast recently.

News podcasts, driven by traditional communication vehicles, play a crucial role in audience recognition, engagement and loyalty (Gallo & Newman, 2019) and in capturing young audiences, who seek news mainly on social media (Newman et al., 2020). The investment by traditional media outlets in the diversification of content, media and formats occurs in a context of declining trust in journalism and information. According to the Digital News Report 2023, in Portugal, such levels fell from 61% in 2022 to 58% in 2023. In the Brazilian scenario, an even more pronounced reduction was observed, from 48% to 43% in the same period.

To face this challenge, aggravated by a hyper-fragmented information environment, journalistic podcasts of the "news explainer" type (Lindeberg, 2019) can represent a strategic investment by traditional communication companies. These programs focus on daily events, providing in-depth analysis to the public while simplifying topics covered in the press. One example is the media coverage of the conflict between Israel and Hamas, which broke out on October 7, 2023, which was not restricted to traditional vehicles or journalistic channels, but also reached the sound environment of podcasts.

Thus, with the linguistic context shared between Portugal and Brazil, this study aims to analyze two podcasts from leading newspapers in these countries. The selected podcasts are Café da Manhã, from Folha de São Paulo (Brazil), and Expresso da Manhã, from Expresso (Portugal). In the period between October 7, 2023 and December 31 of the same year, 24 episodes were collected about the conflict between the two podcasts, which will be the focus of the analysis. It is worth mentioning that the selected episodes stand out among the most listened programs to on Spotify (as of January 7, 2024).

Through a content analysis to the form of the podcasts complemented with an analysis of the framing of the episodes, we aim to answer the following research questions: 1) How was the conflict represented by the two podcasts?; 2) Who are the "explainers" or main actors?; 3) What are the main thematic axes? and 4) What are the differences and similarities in the journalistic treatment in the two podcasts? Furthermore, we seek to understand whether or not there is a pedagogical function in the content, with an emphasis on the context and explanation of the roots of the conflict in comparison to an approach focused on the present moment of informational (dis)order.

RAS04 The role of radio in history telling

PP 1071 The politics of voice: The evolution of political campaigns

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New technologies, including the Internet and social media, have ushered in a new order in the realm of democracy, playing a pivotal role during electoral campaigns worldwide (Tambini, 2018; Bode & Vraga, 2019; Zhuravskaya et.

al., 2020; Elishar-Malka et. al., 2020; Caroleo, Giorgi & De Amicis, 2023), and due to this influence, political communication has also changed drastically (Mazzoleni, 1998, Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999; Norris, 2000; López-García & Pavía, 2018; Stier et. al. 2019; Elishar-Malka, et. al. 2020).

To date, many studies have been conducted on the use of Twitter (now X) during electoral campaigns and political debates (Grant, Moon & Busby, 2010; Bethany et al. 2015; Jungherr, 2016; Panda et al., 2020; Shmargad & Sanchez, 2020; Bright, 2020), but so far no one has addressed the analysis of the use of real-time voice interaction within X Spaces (which seems to be the convergence of several old media, such as radio and telephone, and where real-time and voice are central). Spaces on X (formerly Twitter) were released in May 2021, following a beta test in June 2020. Leading news organizations such as Reuters, Politico, Telegraph, as well as institutions (e.g. Unesco and Freedom of the Press) have adopted this tool in their strategy. Spaces characterized by oral communication, real-time interaction, and the turning of listeners into speakers are a powerful tool for community building and engagement, as they facilitate active audience participation and total immersion (Caroleo & Maiello, 2022).

From the ancient Athenian direct democracy in the agora to contemporary democracy, the places of debate have also changed, moving to digital environments, and it is not surprising that Elon Musk has repeatedly claimed that he wants to build a digital public square on X (Ortutay, 2023), reminiscent of the public sphere, where argumentation among free subjects is at the center (Habermas, 1989; Thompson, 1993; Castells, 2008), and the Speces seem to be the best tool for this.

The use of Spaces by U.S. presidential candidates is consolidating; Ron De Santis launched his presidential race in a Space in May 2023 (Milmo, 2023;); Vivek Ramaswamy, another candidate, urinated during a conversation with Elon Musk (Michael, 2023); Robert F. Kennedy Jr. launched the "Campaign Kitchen" format in November 2023.

If Roosevelt recognized the power of radio and its ability to create a sense of connection and community, and established the Fireside Chats, intimate and conversational radio chats with American citizens on a variety of topics, but without the ability to interact with them (Smith 1997, Kiewe 2007, Levine 2010; Amico, 2022). Today, thanks to technological advances, presidential candidates can accomplish what Brecht theorized: make listeners talk and relate to others and themselves (Brecht, 1932). And here is the Brechtian utopian dream materializing after a century.

Using a qualitative methodology, this study aims to explore the use of Spaces through participant observation and content analysis, including downloading, listening, transcribing, and verifying accuracy, to understand the level of engagement with the electorate and identify the most common topics discussed and Space's impact on traditional media.

SCI01 Communicating science in the media and in politics

PP 0064 Stories as a communication tool for science journalist: The case of 'What classic tales did not tell you' project

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Have you ever wondered why Thumbelina is so small? And how the Pied Piper manages to rid Hamelin of the plague of mice? Stories can be an effective tool to be taken into account by journalists to disseminate scientific knowledge.

In order to awaken scientific interest among children from 8 to 10 years old and encourage their critical thinking from the early stages of their education, we present the initiative 'What the classic tales did not tell you', which is based on three objectives:

1. Rewriting eight children's stories: John Fearless, The Three Little Pigs, Pinocchio, The Wizard of Oz, Thumbelina, The Little Mermaid, Jack and the Magic Beanstalk and The Pied Piper of Hamelin. The purpose is to bring scientific culture closer to the youngest children by introducing basic scientific concepts throughout the stories.
2. Demystifying the figure of the scientist through face-to-face activities with research staff who have helped us with the correction of scientific content. Special attention is paid to girls and the difference it can make for them to meet female researchers, due to the underrepresentation of women in the scientific field.
3. Bringing science closer to minority groups, usually excluded from this type of educational activities, such as children from low-income families. To this end, the project was presented in four Social Action Centers (CEAS) in the city of Valladolid, Spain. In addition, different videos and podcasts are used, seeking a transmedia format, in an effort committed to inclusivity and accessibility. At the same time, we worked on the transcription of the stories in braille.

The results of this project support the hypothesis that stories can be an effective tool for science popularization (Gottschall, 2012; Fuentes, 2013) among children aged 8 to 10 years, with low-income families. The stories written have succeeded in conveying scientific concepts in a clear and accessible way, as the people involved showed a significant understanding of the topics addressed in the representations.This suggests that stories can be used as a valuable strategy to promote interest and understanding of science (Gilly-Forrer, 2021) in this age group and socioeconomic context.

Therefore it also can be an effective tool that journalists should consider for disseminating scientific knowledge thanks of their ability to convey complex information in an accessible way. Journalists play a crucial role in recognizing and using stories to make scientific

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SCI01 Communicating science in the media and in politics

PP 0065 The negotiation of scientific norms in COVID-19 science news. Evidence from a quantitative content analysis of German print media

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Media debates on contentious scientific topics like climate change or COVID-19 increasingly portray inner-scientific structures and the norms guiding the scientific system and individual scientists (Breznau et al., 2020). Consequently, media participate in discussions that are normally confined to the scientific community. However, not much is known about the presence of scientific norms in media coverage – especially regarding controversial areas like COVID-19.

The present study addresses this research gap and analyzes how science journalism negotiates scientific norms. It investigates how scientific norms were part of the discourse in science news about COVID-19 studies (RQ1) and how they were evaluated (RQ2). We use the Mertonian norms as theoretical background. According to Merton (1973) and Ziman (2004), five norms guide the scientific enterprise as 'institutional imperatives' (Merton, 1973): *Communalism* requires scientific knowledge to be transparent and available; *universalism* describes the independence of research outcomes from criteria extraneous to a claim (e.g., gender, age, nationality of researchers); *disinterestedness* requests research to extend knowledge while not pursuing competing goals (e.g., financial gain, social prestige); *organized skepticism* demands critical challenging for all scientific claims; *originality* requires research to

be innovative and relevant. While the Mertonian norms were first formulated eight decades ago (Merton, 1942), they still have value for scientific practices such as peer review, disclosure of conflict of interest, or open science.

We conducted a standardized content analysis of COVID-19 print media coverage. We took a random stratified sample of *N* = 996 articles dealing with biomedical COVID-19 studies (on vaccination, virus mutations, etc.) representing twelve established German media and six pandemic stages between February 2020 and December 2021 (Schilling et al., 2022). We coded the negotiation of norms on the level of reported COVID-19 studies within the articles, leaving us with *n* = 2020 coding units. Four trained coders achieved excellent agreement (Gwet, 2014) identifying these coding units (Gwet's AC1 = .91[95% CI:.83;.99). For each study, we coded the presence of neutral, positive, negative, or ambivalent norm references. Coder agreement was high (communalism: Gwet's AC1 = .92[.87;.98]; universalism: Gwet's AC1 = .90[.83;.97]; disinterestedness: Gwet's AC1 = .96[.92;1]; organized skepticism: Gwet's AC1 = .93[.87;.99]; originality: Gwet's AC1 = .80[.71;.89]).

Results show that especially originality (referenced in 48.4% of study presentations) and communalism (26.3%) were very prominent in the study presentations, while universalism was present in 10.7%, disinterestedness and organized skepticism in 9% of the study presentations. This implicates that transparency and availability as well as innovativeness and relevance functioned as central normative media evaluation parameters for biomedical COVID-19 studies (RQ1). Regarding RQ2, evaluations were largely neutral or positive in direction. Notably, while only 9% of communalism references were negative or ambivalent, disinterestedness (43.4%) and organized skepticism (23.8%) displayed more varied evaluations in this regard, implicating that researchers' motivations and critical challenging of studies proved to be important aspects of COVID-19 science media critique.

We will present our results based on examples from our material and discuss possible implications for public engagement with COVID-19 science and the significance of science in society.

SCI01 Communicating science in the media and in politics

PP 0066 Politicized or neglected? The role of scientific knowledge in parliamentary debates

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Our understanding of science is not just shaped by scientific institutions themselves but is also constructed by the way in which scientific institutions and scientific knowledge are publicly and politically discussed (Scheufele, 2014). Furthermore, scientific evidence has become an essential aspect of how political parties communicate and debate, especially in times of crisis (Kettell & Kerr, 2022). As a result, science is increasingly politicized in different ways. For instance, political debates about the climate crisis often make use of evidence-based knowledge but interpret and contextualize this knowledge differently and often along partisan lines (Willis, 2017), raising questions as to the interpretation of scientific knowledge as well as how to deal with the certainty or uncertainty of scientific facts (Oreskes, 2015). This study shows how scientific knowledge is framed by politicians in parliamentary debates. Potential strategies we study are the use of populist frames when talking about science, fostering science-related populism (Mede & Schäfer, 2020), the use of technocratic frames to mask unpopular policy decisions and present them as unavoidable (Kettell & Kerr, 2022), and the degree to which politicians follow scientific evidence in parliamentary debates and make evidence-based policy decisions. Differences between parties are expected due to different political positions, issue ownership, and general positions towards empirical evidence. We use an extensive corpus of publicly available speech protocols of parliamentary debates in Austria that are currently collected. The case of Austria is relevant for the investigated phenomena since science is a lively debated topic in Austrian public and political discourses, science-skeptic attitudes are quite prevalent, and a (science) populist party is represented in the parliament (Eberl et al., 2021). Supervised dictionary methods of automated text analysis are used to identify relevant sequences in political speeches that use scientific knowledge. These sequences are further investigated using unsupervised methods to identify relevant patterns and strategies. The results will deliver a better understanding of how and to what degree science is politicized in the policy-making process by different parties and whether there are changes over time.

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SCI01 Communicating science in the media and in politics

PP 0067 Still just Nature and Science? A longitudinal cross-country analysis of journalistic source selection in science news coverage

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For many people, news media still are the most important source of information on science (e.g. Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2020). The picture of science presented in these media is strongly influenced by the sources journalists use in their coverage. Numerous studies have shown a strong dependence of science journalism on a small number of prestigious science journals (Schäfer 2011). However, some authors have suggested that this low source diversity has changed over time due to the easier accessibility of research publications online (Kiernan 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic could also have influenced journalistic source preferences, leading to an increased use of new sources or an even stronger reliance on high impact medical journals. These potential changes have yet to be investigated for a larger sample of media titles. Additionally, most of the studies that have analysed source selection in science coverage are either limited to a small area of science or to a small number of media outlets in one country.

We try to address these research gaps in a large-scale analysis of print and online science coverage. We ask: 1) Are there country-specific differences in the journalistic selection of journals as sources? 2) Has the diversity of referenced journals increased over time? 3) Has the concentration of references decreased over time?

Based on a manual content analysis of 8.400 news articles, we have fine-tuned deep learning models for two purposes: to identify articles that cover a scientific result, and to extract all mentions of scientific journals in these articles. The combination of these models allowed us to analyse the entire coverage of about 30 news media titles each from Germany, the UK and the US in 2010, 2019 and 2020. Overall, we found more than 150.000 articles reporting on scientific results with about 40.000 references to journals.

In all analysed countries, there was a high degree of concentration of references on a small group of journals. While this group was very similar in all countries, we found a preference for journals from the same country, in US newspapers for example for Science or JAMA. Germany was notable for a less pronounced preference for medical journals. Over time, the number of distinct journals referenced has increased both in absolute terms and relative to the number of articles. However, this has not led to a less pronounced concentration of references. In all of the analysed years, about 80 % of all references are attributable to just 25 % of all journals. While there are some differences between 2019 and 2020 (e.g. a higher number of references to medical journals), the distribution of references barely changed with no decrease in the degree of concentration.

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SCI01 Communicating science in the media and in politics

PP 0068 Underrepresentation of student voices. Content analysis of news coverage about the Ph.D. degree

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Science offers efficient solutions to many societal challenges we face today. In order to adopt necessary changes supported by evidence, public trust in science is paramount (Lacey et al., 2018). Promoting research findings alone is not a sufficient strategy for getting the public on our side, as is repeatedly documented by scholarship on communicating scientific uncertainty (e.g. Capurro et al, 2021). Research does not happen in a vacuum and communicators

also need to focus on how scientific results originate in terms of research methods, values, review processes or experts behind the results. In other words, science should open up to be more transparent. One component of this complex scientific milieu deals with the entry point to academia – a doctorate. Building on the mediatization theory (Couldry & Hepp, 2016), the representation of a Ph.D. in the news has far-reaching implications. For instance, it can affect how the public views doctoral education which in turn translates into political decisions regarding financial support. Additionally, it can influence whether undergraduates see the academic profession as a viable career option. Understanding the media discourse on Ph.D. is therefore critical.

In this study, authors focus on the media representation of doctoral students, doctoral programs at universities and the Ph.D. title. The corpus of almost 500 articles in the Czech media collected over an 18-month period was coded for topics and social actors. After conducting a thorough content analysis, the authors arrived at ten key topics that can best be summarized into four main clusters: Ph.D. title, Life at university, Study conditions and Controversy. The major result is that the topic is heavily politicized and the framing of news is often related to policies about science and education, mainly funding. "Study conditions" were analyzed for social actors due to the cluster's highest relevance and implications. A noteworthy finding is that doctoral students are hardly ever cited in the articles about issues so closely related to them, such as scholarships, parental leave or cooperation with supervisors. Only those students who jointly represent another official organization (e.g. doctoral association) or who already have ties to media are granted a voice through quotation. Moreover, politicians (ministers and their deputies) are the most frequently cited group, which supports the claim about the overall political sentiment of the Ph.D. discourse in media. The issue is closely connected to the notion of power in terms of gatekeeping.

Discourse manifested through media has a significant impact on society. With the image of Ph.D. strongly politicized, students' voices heavily underrepresented and the critical issues including mental health not prioritized by the media, the public's attitudes towards Ph.D. are not constructed using appropriate input. Press officers at universities are encouraged to make use of these results and adjust their strategic communication plans accordingly (Fürst et al., 2021). Journalists covering science and education are advised to make use of these results in reflecting on balance in their reporting. Only then can a trustworthy media discourse on Ph.D. be achieved.

SCI02 Public understandings of climate change

PP 0167 Do we need to talk (less) about 'climate anxiety'?

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Since 2019, coinciding with the rise in youth climate protests, the term *climate anxiety* has increasingly appeared in the public discourse and research papers. In line with this, the term is typically used when referring to *young* people's negative emotional responses to climate risks. Because climate anxiety has made its way into public communication, media coverage, and everyday speech, it is relevant to investigate how the public perceives and reacts to the term. This talk discusses findings from a survey fielded among a near-representative sample of the adult Norwegian population (N = 2040). Results from a survey experiment show that people are less likely to support young people's influence on climate policy if they are referred to as having climate anxiety, as compared to being worried about or concerned with the climate issue. The effect of referring to climate anxiety, as compared to worry or concern, was particularly negative among younger age groups and those reporting higher levels of climate worry. Analyses of an open-ended question asking respondents what they think of when they hear or read the term further support its potential negative impact. Although most provided mere definitions (e.g., "worry about climate change"), 27% of the respondents associate the term with something irrational or excessive. An additional 6% critiqued the term for being misleading and contributing to negative associations (e.g., "a term used to talk down people who are genuinely afraid of climate change"). Men, the oldest age group, those placing themselves to the right of the political spectrum, and those reporting a low level of worry about climate change were more likely to think of climate anxiety as unfounded. However, negative associations appeared across all socio-demographic groups. Our results reveal that talking about "climate anxiety" may provoke reactance among some audiences and thereby distract from political actions to mitigate climate change. Thus, researchers and other stakeholders should carefully consider what terms they use to represent (young) people's climate change distress.

SCI02 Public understandings of climate change

PP 0168 The impact of fact-checks and influencers on climate change knowledge according to the Motivation-Opportunity-Ability Framework

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Youth have taken an active role in climate activism (Daly, 2022), with social media being a vital aspect thereof (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022). Global research shows that news media are the most widely used information sources on the topic of climate change (Newman, 2020). Increasingly, youth turn to social media influencers (SMIs) as alternative information sources (Newman et al., 2023), with mis- and disinformation about climate change reaching far and wide, fact-checks are used in many countries to try and debunk these claims (Vu et al., 2023). In this research, we attempt to gain more insight into how media use is related to climate change knowledge.

We approach the topic of climate change knowledge from a contested issue knowledge approach, where we focus on general aspects of the climate change debate that still cause friction (e.g., the human contribution to global warming). We base ourselves on the Motivation-Ability-Opportunity framework, which has often been used to explain levels of knowledge (e.g., Delli Carpini, 2000). We aimed to investigate how low news use, media skepticism and digital media literacy is related to turning to SMI's and fact-checks as sources of climate change information. We also looked at how these variables would possibly moderate the relationship between exposure to SMI's and fact-checks and climate knowledge.

Method

This project is embedded in a larger project on political knowledge among the general population in Flanders, Belgium. Though the large-scale, quota-based cross-sectional survey spread the whole Flemish population (N = 2555), due to the focus of our study on youth, we only included participants between 16 and 30 years old in our analyses (N = 424). Items are either self-constructed to reflect the current discussions around climate change, or based on validated scales (*Cronbach's alpha*> .73).

Results

Results show that both traditional media use (b = 0.25, SE = 0.06, p<.001) and digital literacy (b = 0.21, SE = 0.06, p<.001) are related to exposure to climate related content on social media. Thus, we could assume that youth who are using traditional media, also use social media to gain information and that youth who are trusting of their digital skills, turn to social media for information. This in turn is positively related to higher climate knowledge (b = 0.22, SE = 0.11, p = .04). Social media influencers do not affect the presence of climate knowledge (b = -0.08, SE = 0.07, p = .28), neither do fact-checks (b = 0.17, SE = 0.12, p =.18). It could be that these SMI's rather share mobilizing content or politicization of their private lives (e.g., sustainable living or dieting) than content that is really related to knowledge. Concerning fact-checks, possible explanations are the long and complex articles that often characterize fact-checks, making them unattractive for young people, or that most of the fact-checks deal with political content, not climate content. Nevertheless, these findings teach us more about how alternative news sources (lack) influence on climate knowledge. Results of this study add to the current literature on learning effects from social media, as well as to literature on misbeliefs.

SCI02 Public understandings of climate change

PP 0169 The use of humor styles in memes on climate change

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Political internet memes are simple, multimodal, and humorous media content that is popular on all social media platforms. In controversial political discourses such as the climate discourse, political internet memes are considered an effective format for users to generate attention for their own positions through striking images and humorous elements (Ross & Rivers, 2019). Recent literature has discussed humorous communication as an unconventional approach to engage people with environmental issues (Kaltenbacher & Drews, 2020). However, iit remains unclear what role political internet memes play in increasing engagement in the climate change discourse, which political actors use memes, and which humor styles are employed. Therefore, our talk examines the following research questions:

RQ1: Which political actors in Germany publish political internet memes on climate change?

RQ2: Which humor styles are used in political internet memes on climate change?

To answer these research questions, we conduct a quantitative manual content analysis of memes on climate change that were published during the UN Climate Change Conference 2023 in Dubai. We collected social media posts from Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube which were published on the profiles of relevant stakeholders in the German climate discourse to detect memes from political actors. To identify the use of memes on climate change in general, we also collected all posts that combined hashtags related to the climate change conference and climate change (e.g., #COP28, #climatechange) with humorous hashtags like #meme, #humor, or #funny.

The overall sample comprises 1.877 posts and is currently being coded, particularly regarding the humor styles used in memes (Taecharungroj & Nueangjamnong, 2015). Our preliminary results show that memes on climate change most frequently exhibit the style of aggressive humor. Thus, memes on climate change are more commonly used to make fun of others in a negative way. Furthermore, we observe that relevant political actors in Germany such as protest groups and politicians did not use humorous content and memes during the COP. This implies that political actors are missing the opportunity to counter the prevailing aggressive climate change memes with positive, humorous content. Instead, we find mainly memes published by ordinary users, which involve a more destructive form of humor. This mocking of certain political groups and views in memes on climate change may contribute to greater polarization of the discourse.

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SCI02 Public understandings of climate change

PP 0170 Global Warming's Five Germanys: Unveiling media habits and information seeking in daily life

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People differ in their perception, attitude, and behavior towards climate change. This fundamental yet pivotal lesson has prompted numerous scholars to identify and describe country-specific climate change segments across nations. Given that climate change still constitutes an issue that primarily relies on media communication in daily life to convey its complexity (Schäfer, 2015), our (perceived) knowledge, our level of awareness, and actions regarding climate change are significantly influenced by media platforms we engage with, information we seek, and content we encounter (i. e. Arlt et al., 2010; Cabecinhas et al., 2008). This is where a crucial gap in existing climate change segmentation studies arises: only few include variables centered on general media and information use based on cross-sectional data – and if they do, they tend to serve as secondary aspects of segmentation. Thus, a broad body of existing research fail to offer in-depth insights into important links between information seeking and segment-specific attitudes on climate change and its consequences.

To address this gap, *in-situ* survey data formed the groundwork of this in-depth study examining media use and information seeking patterns of the Global Warmings Five Germanys which had been identified by Klinger et al. (2022). To identify members of each of the five segments (the *Alarmed Actives, Convinced, Cautious, Disengaged,* and *Dismissive*) a preliminary survey was conducted (N = 102) based on the 33 segmentation variables and computation of segment assignment[1] of the German predecessor study. Out of this survey, the final sample of 15 participants for the in-situ study was recruited, with three respondents representing each segment. These people were surveyed daily over a timespan of two weeks in July 2023 about their contact with climate change-related information including topics covered, media usage, reception contexts, and trust in the information sources using the mobile experience sampling method. This approach enabled the gathering of individual media usage data daily (n = 210 data points), offering reliability through multiple data points while minimizing dependence on recall.

The data shows that climate change-related media use differs between different segments in everyday life. For example, the most engaged segment (*Alarmed Actives*) use television most frequently while the less engaged and most critical segment (*Dismissive*) tend to rely more on personal discussions than on (mass) media when seeking information on climate change. Members of both segments consider the information they encounter to reinforce their opinion on climate change. Among all segments, the *Dismissive* exhibits the strongest presence of the issue of climate justice within their information patterns. For the *Alarmed Actives* and *Cautious*, climate politics as well as climate protection are key topics of interest. However, there are also situation-specific similarities between the respective segments such as that most people are alone or with their partners when they look for information about

climate change. Leveraging this longitudinal data offers a first entry point to enhance each segment's characteristics with essential insights into information-seeking behaviors.

[1] Based on LCA – see Klinger et al. 2022 for further information

SCI02 Public understandings of climate change

PP 0171 A changing public opinion (on) climate: Results from a longitudinal segmentation study on climate change-related perceptions and communication behaviour in Germany

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Climate change (cc) is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity and requires immediate collective action. The Paris Agreement set a major milestone in 2015, but media attention to the topic is still volatile: it was on the rise through the global Fridays for Future movement (esp. in 2018 and 2019), characterised by online protests. During the COVID-19 pandemic, media allocated less attention to cc. Currently, right-wing populist parties that deny anthropogenic cc are on the rise in Europe, destructively casting doubts about the topic using social and fringe media. In light of these (recent) developments, it is of crucial social relevance to analyse how segments of cc perceptions have changed since 2015.

For Germany, where this study is set, Klinger et al. (2022, similar Metag et al., 2017) found five groups based on combinations of different attitudinal variables: Alarmed Actives (22%), Convinced (26%), Cautious (32%), Disengaged (14%) and Dismissive (7%). Contrary to comparable studies in the U.S., neither in 2011 (Metag et al., 2017) nor 2021 cc deniers were found in Germany. However, in light of recent (political) developments, studying the stability of the groups as well as a desired positive trend in climate-friendly behaviour within the population remains highly relevant. But so far, longitudinal data on possible changes in segments over time regarding cc-related attitudes and behaviour as well as differentiated communication practices are lacking.

Thus, this study relies on representative online surveys during COPs 2015 (n = 1477), 2018 (n = 1044), 2019 (n = 1000), 2021 (n = 1000) and 2023 (n = 1015). Using cc beliefs, knowledge, self-efficacy and political activism as variables, emphasising behavioural aspects, we conducted latent profile analysis in RStudio (*tidyLPA*, n = 5457, due to missing values, discriminant analyses = 95%) to identify five latent groups. To compare the groups regarding their cc-related attitudes, behaviour and communication practices, we applied ANOVAs. We analysed changes in the percentages of groups over time.

Across the years, we found Convinced Engaged (n = 1269; 23%), Convinced Disengaged (n = 1615; 30%), Uninformed Engaged (n = 1329; 24%), Uninformed Disengaged (n = 971; 18%) and Disengaged Deniers (n = 273; 5%). The groups deviate from the findings by Klinger et al. (2022) in the way that, only with our large data set including the most recent data, we could identify a small but slightly increasing group of deniers. Furthermore, the Uninformed Engaged stand out for their high use of entertainment (online) media, their low knowledge but at the same time the second highest level of political engagement in favour of climate protection measures.

Over time, the most significant changes in the groups can be found from 2021 to 2023 when the Convinced Engaged (-9%) and Convinced Disengaged (-8%) shrank and the Uninformed Engaged (+10%), Uninformed Disengaged (+4%) and Disengaged Deniers (+3%) rose. Overall, we see a significant decrease in cc beliefs, awareness, self-efficacy and climate friendly everyday-life actions and, most notably, in trust in climate scientists in the recent wave. In this presentation, we will describe the developments in detail. We will discuss the role of social media use for the recent backlash in the public opinion (on) climate.

SCI03 Furthering public engagement with climate change and the environment

PP 0261 Design climate engagement – Journalism visualizations and the public

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Public engagement and involvement have been pointed out as crucial for coming to terms with urgent societal problems, such as climate change. Here, journalism and other media has an important part to play. How societies should handle wicked problems has become increasingly complex and challenging as we have seen an increased polarization in relation to science, facts and media. The transition towards a digital media landscape is often said to increase the possibilities for participation and interaction. In this paper we focus on how different forms of digital journalism (like e.g. data journalism) and visualizations can contribute to (or hinder) civic engagement.

Visualizations of climate change found in journalistic stories represent meaning-making systems, used as a "medium to engage viewers with complex and sometimes controversial issues" (Heyer et al., 2020). Whereas previous literature has focused on studying the production strategies and novel approaches of climate-related data stories

(cf. Appelgren & Jönsson, 2021), little attention has been given to readers and user experience and this is our main contribution. We will use framing as a theoretical perspective since how issues are framed in terms of problems, solutions, and levels of responsibility is of great importance in order to engage and lead toward a collective action. Our main research questions are: What are the fundamental design and framing elements that strenghten readers' comprehension and democratic engagement with climate news? How does this differ between different groups of audiences?

We will use design methods to explore different forms of democratic engagement with climate journalism. This means that in this study, audience members will in participatory settings, together with researchers, focus on engagement with the aid of design methods and action oriented methodologies (Hart, 2013; Stuedahl, 2017). Aitamurto et al. (2022) suggest that design methods are suitable when studying how journalism artifacts can serve specific audiences and contexts. The user-centric and problem-solving nature of design methods is not only useful in the material creation of journalistic products but has also the potential to uncover complex dynamics between artifacts and human actors and incorporate novel perspectives from diverse groups of users. Thus, guided by the theory-based framework Value-Sensitive Design (Friedman 1996), we will carry out a series of experimental workshops with audience members where the aim is to critically assess and explore how journalistic technological artifacts about climate change can be designed, with an emphasis on engagement and central human values. We will focus on three different interactive journalism projects from different national contexts (Germany, Sweden and the USA).

SCI03 Furthering public engagement with climate change and the environment

PP 0262 Responsible ecological transitions: Applying local strategies to boost social and environmental change

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The connection between local and global contexts is built upon a well-established scientific and advocacy framework. If social and behavioural change is pursued, then a grounded grassroots approach is necessary. The huge environmental challenges faced by our current societies call for a multi-faceted method where every small piece of action turns into a valuable contribution. An initial first step is to acknowledge the complexity of interdependent factors and elements.

One Health is an approach to designing and implementing programmes, policies, legislation, and research in which multiple sectors communicate and work together to achieve better public health outcomes. This umbrella was opened by a four-sided collaboration between World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). From this global perspective, descending to daily consequences of the ongoing human-based system change turns into a must to achieve specific goals.

This paper is presenting the main outcomes of several small-scale research and action projects completed in Segovia, a small-scale city located 90 kilometres Northwest from the capital city of Spain, under the One Health overarching guidance.

Transitio is an arts and research-based lab based at the Segovia Campus of the University of Valladolid. Since 2022, several short-term activities have been conducted paving a way to a more conscious and committed participation of several social groups in the city.

These actions are based on a participatory research approach, where cooperation with citizens is crucial to make visible changes in the closer daily life. These projects always work with local communities in several research fields, like green and blue infrastructures, sustainability of the agricultural and food systems, natural and patrimonial landscapes or conscious consumption.

Action is privileged in the lab's short-term planning, but research and communication are integral parts of the general project and the lab's production. Surveys regarding health perception were completed to gather a deeper understanding of the citizen's views on the relation between environment, nature and culture, proving that a pessimistic attitude is growingly present within several social groups.

The provisional outcome of this ongoing experience reinforces de value of integrating individuals in research projects as active elements to promote social change, instead of keeping a distant approach towards urgent and impacting threats.

SCI03 Furthering public engagement with climate change and the environment

PP 0263 "World-in-progress": Narrative worlds as creative actions for climate storytelling through a board game experience

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Storytelling practices, personal narratives and fiction are well-researched strategies in environmental communication, particularly in relation to the collective imagination of alternative and desirable futures. Through a literature review, we have identified different approaches to this interrelation. While there's plenty of contributions highlighting the potentiality of narratives for persuasion and engagement addressed to the lay public (Fletcher, 2015; Davies et al., 2019; Lowery et al, 2020; Schneider et al, 2023), other authors emphasize the importance of narrative strategies for the creation of safe spaces for discussion and imagination of possible futures affecting a community or collective (Pstross et al, 2014; Tyszczuk, 2015; Gearty, 2015; Murphy et al, 2016; Manfredini, 2017; Prasetyo, 2017; De Meyer et al, 2020; Liguori et al, 2021; Keys & Keys, 2022). Here, the notion of storytelling, as a collective process for the creation of experience and meaning (Caraccio, 2022) through a situated narrative action (San Cornelio and Roig, 2022) becomes essential, exemplifying what Liveley, Slocombe and Spiers (2021) define as narrative-driven creative practices.

While most literature on climate storytelling focuses on stories, in this presentation we want to shift our attention from stories to narrative worlds. Narrative worlds are key to establish the grounds for speculative narratives about the future (Liveley et al, 2021). We argue that the process of collectively defining and discussing the settings, features, and rules of a world (Wolf, 2014), in which we project a potential environmental future, is a valuable way to share players' hopes, expectations, prejudices, and fears. These worlds can be challenged or further elaborated, thus creating an expanding 'living world', which in turn, can give way to stories or other kind of narrative outcomes. After summarizing some of the key findings of the literature review on storytelling, futures and the climate, we will present the ongoing project #WorldInProgress. In #WorldInProgress we have designed a board game to guide such a creative process. First tests carried out in a higher education environment in Spain are promising, while also challenging. Results from early testing suggest the importance of defining the world goals and settings (time in the future, imaginative range, social settings, main topic, etc.) the configuration of the playing group, ensuring diversity of voices, the importance of moderation to guarantee a safe environment for creativity, considering the best ways for a 'world-in-progress' to travel from one set of players to another, and documenting the process of 'mapping' the world, that is, to trace its evolution, potential contradictions and alternative paths.

SCI03 Furthering public engagement with climate change and the environment

PP 0264 Can virtual reality decrease the psychological distance to climate change?

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Climate change, biodiversity loss, and plastic pollution pose significant environmental challenges. However, these are often perceived as psychologically distant, reducing people's inclination towards pro-environmental actions (Van der Linden, 2015). To address this, communication efforts aim to minimize the psychological distance through various means, with emerging technologies, particularly virtual reality (VR), being a promising avenue.

VR offers immersive experiences of climate change consequences, projecting future scenarios and highlighting impacts on distant locations. Praised as an environmental communication tool, VR enhances spatial presence, the feeling of being in another location, potentially reducing psychological distance (Fauville et al., 2020). However, research on VR's effects on pro-environmental behavior and its mediation through spatial presence and perceived psychological distance is limited and inconclusive (Breves and Schramm, 2021; Meijers et al., 2022). This study aims to investigate the impact of VR's immersiveness compared to regular video and text/pictures on pro-environmental actions, exploring the roles of spatial presence and psychological distance.

Method

In a between-subjects design experiment at a university exhibition, 218 participants (56.0% female, Mage = 21.78, SD = 4.71) were randomly assigned to a VR, regular video, or text/pictures condition. Participants provided informed consent and answered demographic and control questions before experiencing the manipulation. Participants in the VR condition saw a 360° video version of "My Drowning Island" with use of an Oculus Quest 2 headset. "My Drowning Island" tells the story of the island state Kiribati which is being flooded as a result of climate change (Biosphere VR, 2018). Participants in the regular video condition saw a unidirectional version of the video, and participants in the text/pictures condition read the script of the video which also included four video stills. Post-manipulation, participants answered questions regarding spatial presence, psychological distance dimensions, and the dependent variables: private-sphere intentions, public-sphere intentions, and policy support.

Results

PROCESS Model 81 (Hayes, 2013; 5,000 bootstraps) was used for the analyses. Participants in the VR condition reported higher perceived spatial presence than those in the regular video ($t(218) = -7.72$, $p < .001$) and text/pictures condition ($t(218) = -8.58$, $p < .001$). However, spatial presence did not significantly affect psychological distance dimensions (all p-values > .20). Spatial presence positively correlated with private-sphere intentions ($t(218) = 3.05$, $p = .003$), public-sphere intentions ($t(218) = 3.74$, $p < .001$), and policy support ($t(218) = 2.12$, $p = .035$). Indirect effects analysis revealed significant pathways via perceived spatial presence for private-sphere intentions, public-sphere intentions, and policy support.

Conclusion

While VR is celebrated for its potential to bridge psychological distance, this study found no support for psychological distance being the underlying mechanism for VR's positive impact on environmental intentions and policy support, contrary to expectations. Nevertheless, a positive indirect effect of VR on these variables through perceived spatial presence was observed. This study emphasizes the crucial role of perceived spatial presence as a mediator in the relationship between VR exposure and behavioral change, contributing to the ongoing discourse on VR and psychological distance. Future research should explore diverse measures for psychological distance to gain deeper insights into the observed effects.

SCI03 Furthering public engagement with climate change and the environment

PP 0265 Young people, political imaginaries and climate change: On transgressing normality and re-scripting agentic roles

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The importance of citizens' political engagement with climate change has been recognized by multiple agents. However, in spite of a surge of participation in rallies and other activities by social movements in the last few years, apathy, cynicism and fatalism regarding the ability to influence the course of things is pervasive. Some research suggests that the range of forms of political intervention on climate change that are imaginable to most people is quite limited. As climate change escalates and policy action lags far behind what is needed, some young climate groups, in contrast to the majority of the population, have engaged in civil disobedience and direct action, such as throwing paint at politicians, blocking roads and tying or gluing themselves to buildings, in many cases having been met with criticism. What are the conceivable roles and spaces for young people in the politics of climate change? What are the acceptable means of political engagement with climate change?

The concept of political imaginaries is valuable here for its broad apprehension of views, relations and even emotions. Machin (2022: 2) defines political imaginaries as "dynamic constructions of political reality that enable practices, orientate expectations, inform decisions and determine what is politically legitimate, feasible, and valuable—and what is not." Delineating "who the key actors, groups and deliberators are; the norms according to which agents interact;(…) and the kinds of power they employ," McAfee (2017: 919) argues that political imaginaries "constitute our place in a political world, simultaneously constituting our own political subjectivity, our political relationships to others, and our political culture."

Conceiving political imaginaries as horizons of political possibility (of agency, of social re-organization, of re-distribution, etc.), the presentation will explore how some young people challenge and expand those horizons. It will look at how political transformation to address climate change is enacted in multimodal communicative events that include the body, as well textually formulated by two activist groups in Portugal, namely Climáximo and Fridays for Future Lisbon. Drawing on literature on performativity, on political imaginaries and on political imagination, it will examine practices of transgression as potentially emancipatory acts that interrupt normality and experiment with new relations of equality (Ernstson & Swyngedouw, 2019). In turn, climate groups' texts in the media offer insight into their attempts to re-script standard/generalized conceptions of political agency and renew subjectivation. Some such texts will be examined with the support of Positioning Theory. Finally, the political limits and tensions of some instances of climate activism will also be discussed.

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SCI04 Energy past, present, and future

PP 0371 Remodeling participation. A multi-dimensional model for participatory communication in green energy transition

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The transition to renewable energy is not just a technological, but also a societal challenge. From a governance perspective, the transition is too complex to be orchestrated from the (inter)governmental cockpit (Hajer et al, 2015). From a democratic perspective, a just transition represents an intrinsic value, both in terms of procedural and distributive justice (Ellis et al., 2023). This calls for extensive citizen involvement and participation in the manifold processes of green energy transition. This paper presents a model for analyzing, designing, and evaluating participatory communication, targeted at the local level where decisions on renewable energy plants are made by municipal authorities, energy companies, and citizens.

In the scholarly literature, generic models for citizen participation, developed within policy and media studies, are already available. Much quoted is Arnstein's seminal 'ladder of participation' (Arnstein, 1969), spanning between 'manipulation' at the lowest and 'citizen control' at the highest rung. Recent research has rethought and developed the model. For example, Carpentier (2016) offers an analytical framework for analyzing and evaluating media participation from a political perspective, and Torfing et al. (2016) suggests a 'ladder of co-creation' with five rungs.

While these models provide valuable insight into inclusion/exclusion of actors and degrees of power delegated to citizens, they are less attuned to the various dimensions of the communications process that enable or constraint citizen participation. Therefore, this paper suggests a multi-dimensional model for participatory communication, which identifies and differentiates between key communicative dimensions, including transparency, responsivity, design space, temporal structure, and modality width. The point is not to replace the previous models' focus on power with a focus on communication, but to strengthen our understanding of power by attending to the formats, dynamics, and mediation of the communication process. This will contribute to knowledge on the complexity of participation and allow for a more differentiated analysis of participatory shortcomings, potentials, dilemmas, and trade-offs.

Empirically, the model relies on several case studies of communication about renewable energy plants at different sites in Denmark, conducted in 2022–2023. The studies comprise interviews with citizens, energy businesses, and municipalities, as well as observations from citizen meetings and media documents. The model has been developed inductively from the data to cover aspects of participatory importance at different sites. At the same time, it is informed by theories of deliberative democracy, discourse studies, and lessons learned from studies of citizen involvement and co-creation.

The paper will present the individual dimensions of the model along with examples from the case studies, and shortly address limitations and complementarities with existing models.

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SCI04 Energy past, present, and future

PP 0372 A technology between rejection, ignorance, and acceptance: Analyzing the framing of near-surface geothermal energy in German public service and private media

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A lack of information, awareness and involvement of the public and relevant stakeholders in energy projects can lead to their rejection and fuel mistrust (Contini et al., 2019; Syivarulli, 2020). Challenges of communicating information and promoting dialogue between said actors, however, also refer to the media coverage and the public positioning of energy topics (Carr-Cornish et al., 2019). In this context, the decisive factor is the extent to which socially relevant debates (e.g. environmental protection) are addressed (Balzan-Alzate et al., 2021) and associated advantages and disadvantages are presented transparently (Syivarulli, 2020).

Recently, potentials of geothermal energy received increasing interest in research. Compared to other forms of renewable energies, however, geothermal energy receives significantly less support of German citizens. This is because a lack of knowledge of and experience with the technology prevails (SMEKUL, 2022). Furthermore, the

public portrayal of the technology is dominated by negative focusses (Stauffacher, 2015). Geothermal energy recently is often linked with the energy crisis, high costs and is characterized by the denunciation of allegedly incompetent public figures (e.g., Rupprecht, 2023; Staun, 2023). The rhetorical tactics and negative campaigns of tabloid newspapers (e.g., alliterations, personalization, emotionalization) on the topic, however, are also infiltrating non-tabloid media (e.g., Traufetter & Weiland, 2023). In consequence, a lack of awareness and knowledge of the technology as well as its negatively framing (Scheufele, 1999) harbors the risk of shaping public discourse and hindering objective debates on both advantages and disadvantages of the technology.

This study is part of an interdisciplinary research project which examines the potential of near-surface geothermal energy for heating and cooling urban quarters in Saxony (Germany), starting in February 2024 and following the overall research question: *How can the perception and acceptance of near-surface geothermal energy measures among residents in urban quarters be improved through innovative digital formats of science and acceptance communication?* As part of this aim, this study analyzes the framing of near-surface geothermal energy by conducting a qualitative content analysis of articles on the technology of regional and national public-service and private media (e.g., FAZ, SZ, SPIEGEL, Bild, WELT, MDR, LVZ, Sächsische Zeitung). In doing so, the presentation of advantages and disadvantages of the topic as well as referred relevant stakeholders are examined (e.g. regional companies, investors, initiatives, interest groups).

As part of the presentation, we discuss the results of this media analysis and shed light on the framing of the subject in terms of the presentation of advantages and disadvantages of the technology in comparison to scientific findings on its opportunities and risks as well as relevant stakeholders. The results also enable us to identify potential misconceptions in media reporting and particularly polarizing aspects of the discussion about near-surface geothermal energy that need to be addressed in future science communication on the technology. Finally, the results will serve to form the basis to analyze relevant stakeholders' and the public's perception towards the technology and in turn to develop communications measures, dialogue formats and participatory activities for raising awareness and improving the acceptance towards the technology.

SCI04 Energy past, present, and future

PP 0373 Gamification as a tool of science communication about complex energy issues? Results of a field experiment testing the effects of a museum exhibition about the energy-transition and an integrated game

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The *energy transition* is an important key to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and thus limiting climate change. It includes a fundamental reorganization of the energy system to rely exclusively on renewable energies. However, the energy transition triggers resistance in the populace. Bringing this complex topic closer to citizens is crucial for a successful energy transition, but a key challenge for science communication.

The Public Understanding of Science (PUS) approach proposes to increase the knowledge of citizens; Public Engagement with Science (PES) aims to increase—among other—trust and self-efficacy. Museum exhibitions are one format suggested for implementing both, PUS and PES (sciencecommunication.com). The exhibition *[blinded for review]* takes up this suggestion. However, little is known about the impact of museum's science communication on the visitors. Therefore, the present study examines whether a visit to the exhibition increases knowledge, trust, and self-efficacy regarding the energy transition. Moreover, we analyze whether the way how visitors interact with the exhibition influences these changes: First, we examine the *effects of a gamification element*, which particularly aims to increase self-efficacy and engagement with the energy transition. The game has a similar feel to the "psycho-tests" in life-style-magazines. It describes 8 scenarios in which citizens will experience the impact of the energy transition on their daily lives. In each scenario, visitors choose one of four given options, indicating how they would behave in the respective situation. Thereby, they collect points with a chip-card and in the end—based on their "high-score"—they see which energy transition behavior type they are. Second, we examine whether a high visitor's *involvement* reinforces potential positive effects of the visit and game use.

Based on data of a field experiment with pre-post survey (N = 614 visitors), we conducted t-tests for dependent samples. Results show that the exhibition visit increased knowledge about the energy transition (M_{t1} = 3.44, M_{t2} = 3.61, $p < .001$), feelings of self-efficacy (M_{t1} = 3.69, M_{t2} = 3.80, $p = .018$), and visitor's trust that science (M_{t1} = 4.26, M_{t2} = 4.36, $p = .006$) and innovative technologies (M_{t1} = 3.73, M_{t2} = 3.89, $p < .001$) contribute to a successful energy transition.

Furthermore, we conducted variance analyses to test whether playing the game and the exhibition involvement contributed to these positive changes, with changes in knowledge, trust, and self-efficacy (t_2-t_1; scale: -4 = strongly decreased to + 4 strongly increased) serving as dependent variables. Results *(extracts)* revealed no main effects

of game use. However, we found that higher-involved visitors (*M* = 0.24) had significantly greater changes in their trust in technology than lower-involved (*M* = 0.03). Thus, the expected potential of a gamification element was not supported, but for involvement it partially was. The presentation will discuss possible reasons.

SCI04 Energy past, present, and future

PP 0374 Stakeholders' competing and conflicting narratives of blue hydrogen: Two industrial case studies in realization of clean hydrogen in Norway

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This paper will explore the narrative surrounding blue hydrogen, currently recognized as one of the most "competitive" forms of hydrogen in the context of the green transition. The generation and utilization of energy are central to both the climate challenge and the socio-economic landscape (Curran, 2011). Clean energy such as blue and green hydrogen is increasingly discussed and being highlighted in international strategies as a focal point for profound decarbonization. Norway is among the countries which has long industrial experience throughout the entire hydrogen value chain and its government has aimed to contribute to developing a coherent value chain for clean hydrogen produced with low or no emissions, where production, distribution and use are developed in parallel. However, there are several conflicting expectations and narratives surrounding clean hydrogen that merit careful consideration of understanding how the particular types of hydrogen and their value chain are perceived when compared to other forms of energy production (Ohlendorf et l., 2023).

As research has shown expectations and narratives of green transition can differ even within national borders, by different stakeholders (Tilsted et al., 2022) and citizens with different social backgrounds (Haarbosch et al, 2021). A crucial aspect of a stakeholder's ability to further its interests lies in its capacity to craft and communicate compelling stories about the transition. While stories and narratives may evolve in response to circumstances, environments, and societal shifts, they can still shed light on the attitudes and values deemed paramount (Tanum and Krogstad, 2014).

To highlight the conflicting narratives within the blue hydrogen value chain, this paper introduces two industrial case studies – one situated in a newly established industrial area and the other in an area with over 100 years of industrial history, both located in west coast Norway.

We ask:

What competing and conflicting narratives arise during the realization of a blue hydrogen project in these industrial cases in Norway? Which values are calculated and given priority in each blue hydrogen narrative? To what extent do local industrial history, geography, and various stakeholders influence the narratives?

The data presented in the paper draws from broader research examining how hydrogen is integrated into diverse sociotechnical systems in Norway. The presented data comprise interviews with 25 stakeholders actively engaged in the implementation of clean hydrogen projects within industrial case studies, supplemented by content analysis of official documents produced by the same stakeholders. These stakeholders include representatives from NGOs, county governors, municipalities and industrial project managers.

SCI04 Energy past, present, and future

PP 0375 Little white (or rather green) lies. The impact of minor forms of Greenwashing on Corporate Reputation and Credibility

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Human-induced climate change is a pressing global challenge demanding immediate attention (NOAA, 2022). As society emphasizes sustainability and carbon reduction (Cook et al., 2013), companies as major carbon contributors face increased scrutiny to adopt eco-friendly practices (Camier et al., 2021). Recognizing these expectations, companies seek to reap benefits by portraying themselves as environmentally responsible (De Jong et al., 2020; Freitas Netto et al., 2020; Walker & Wan, 2012). However, the seamless alignment between environmental promises and actual practices isn't guaranteed, giving rise to Greenwashing—a phenomenon defined as the "perception of a discrepancy between an organization's environmental protection claims and its actual practices" (Keilmann & Koch, 2023, p. 3). In essence, companies strive to present their offerings as more environmentally friendly than they truly are (Baum, 2012; Freitas Netto et al., 2020; Siano et al., 2017; Zych et al., 2021).

This paper aims to investigate the conditions under which recipients begin to regard minor discrepancies, referred to as "little green lies," as instances of Greenwashing. To address this inquiry, two experiments were undertaken.

In the first experiment (n = 203), we explored whether even minor deviations between a company's green promises and its actual green behavior are perceived as Greenwashing. A fictitious coffee house chain ("Green Bean") claimed to use 100% recycled material for its cups and lids in an Instagram post. Then, participants learned through a news article that the actual recycled proportion was 51%, 97%, or 100%. Thus, we have created three groups representing varying levels of discrepancy: large (100% vs. 51%), very small (100% vs. 97%), and no discrepancy (both 100%). Results indicate that the company's reputation and credibility were perceived significantly worse even after a "little green lie", with this effect intensifying as the discrepancy increased.

In the second experiment (n = 206), we probed the mechanisms driving the observed decline in reputation and credibility due to "little green lies." We anticipated that these discrepancies would shift perceptions of the company's green commitment towards extrinsic motivations, fostering skepticism and negatively impacting credibility and reputation. Additionally, we expected a diminished belief in intrinsic motivation, reducing the authenticity of the engagement and further impairing reputation and credibility. Using an Instagram post from a fictitious coffee company ("Matsiro Coffee"), claiming a 50-cent donation per coffee package for lemur habitat protection, participants discovered actual donations of 26 cents, 45 cents, or 50 cents. Again, we have created three groups with varying levels of discrepancy: large (50 vs. 26 cents), very small (50 vs. 45 cents), and none (both 50 cents). Importantly, these effects were serially mediated: on the one hand, by heightened perceptions of extrinsic motivation that triggered skepticism, and on the other hand, by diminished beliefs in intrinsic motivation, reducing perceived authenticity.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that even minor discrepancies, or "little green lies," between a company's environmental claims and actual practices significantly diminish its reputation and credibility. The findings underscore the importance of genuine environmental commitment, as attempts to portray eco-friendly practices that fall short are likely to be perceived negatively by consumers.

SCI05 Public trust and mistrust in science I

PP 0376 Does contact with science communication increase trust in science? The mediating role of perceived trustworthiness

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Trust in science is considered as important for societies because it helps individuals to make informed decisions based on scientific evidence despite a bounded understanding of science (Bromme & Goldman, 2014). Therefore, science communication in practice often aims at improving trust and research on science communication examines if trust in science can be improved through communication about science (Wynne, 2006). However, in most cases, research neglects that effects might depend on users and how they evaluate the information on science they receive.

Based on the susceptibility to media effects model (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013), we argue that how users evaluate contacts with science communication in different channels influences how this information contributes to their individual formation of trust in science. According to the model, evaluation of the experience with science communication is conceptualized as cognitive response state that mediates the effect of science media use on trust in science and is influenced by dispositional, developmental, and situational susceptibility factors. As dispositional and situational susceptibility factors, we included science-related populism, positivistic attitudes, political orientation, and religiosity. Trust in science as the main dependent variable is theoretically conceptualized as judgements of scientists' trustworthiness measured using a 12-item scale with four established conceptual dimensions of trustworthiness, i.e., perceived competence, benevolence, integrity, and openness. The evaluation of contacts with science communication was measured by asking the respondents about the trustworthiness of scientific information received through news, fictional, social media, and non-mediated sources.

Using an online survey and a quota sample weighted according to distributions of age, gender, and education level in Germany (N = 1.007), we tested a moderated mediation model to evaluate if evaluations of the contact with science through different channels play a role for trust formation or if merely exposure matters. The structural equation model showed an overall good model fit and met the limits proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999) for three indices (χ^2 $p < 0.05$, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.03, TLI = 0.91, SRMR = 0.03). Looking at the direct effects, the results showed that exposure to scientific information via different channels alone does not influence trust in science. Instead, the perceived trustworthiness of the information is crucial. If people perceive information about science in news channels (β = .15***) and on social media (β = .14***) as trustworthy, their level of trust in science is higher. The influence of exposure to scientific information on trust in science is completely mediated by judgements of the information's trustworthiness.

Looking at the role of susceptibility factors, positivistic attitudes and to a lesser degree science-related populism and religiosity play a role for explaining trust in science directly (β = .47***; β = -.09*; β = .09**) and by moderating the effect of exposure on trust in science.

The findings strengthen the argument that looking at mere exposure and its effect on attitudes toward science may overlook important cognitive responses during exposure and the moderating role of susceptibility factors.

SCI05 Public trust and mistrust in science I

PP 0377 Mediating trust in content about science: Assessing trust cues across (digital) media, their contents, sources, and actors' gender

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To address social (dis)order in contemporary societies, the importance of science communication and *public trust in science* cannot be overstated. (Digital) media play a crucial role as *intermediaries of trust*, incorporating *trust cues* that can guide public audiences in evaluating whether to trust science. Trust cues refer to established *dimensions of trust* (i.e., expertise, integrity, benevolence, transparency, and dialogue), and they consider science at *multiple levels* (i.e., micro, meso, macro). Since (digital) media environments are supposed to be diverse in terms of *contents* (e.g., trust cues referring to multiple dimensions of trust), *sources* (e.g., science communicators such as journalists, bloggers, or scientists), and *actors* (e.g., multiple levels of science, including gender diversity at the micro level), this study aims for a better understanding on how (digital) media may affect trust in science differently, asking: *In what ways are trust cues in content about science and several diversity aspects of (digital) media environments interlinked?*

To answer this question, this study makes use of quantitative content analysis of media content most frequently used by German audiences. Our sample included (print, online, and TV) journalistic media, but also social, other (non-journalistic) internet-based (e.g., blogs), and right-wing populist media collected in seven constructed weeks (March 2022–March 2023). In total, n = 1,812 contents were relevant for coding; a representative, randomized sample was built for this study (i.e., half of the relevant pieces; n = 906). For the quantitative content analysis, a standardized codebook (based on inductive, qualitative groundwork by AUTHORs) including 35 trust cues was used. Four coders were trained and conducted the coding (average α = .90; CR = .94). For data analysis, we used descriptive statistics and chi-square tests, using all diversity related variables. Furthermore, to show linkages, cluster analysis was performed, including 23 variables: media types, dimensions of trust, categories of trust cues, the gender of scientists, sources, and their gender. After performing a hierarchical cluster analysis with Ward method for binary variables, we compared results with a k-means cluster analysis for a quality check.

Our findings reveal significant differences among (digital) media in terms of dimensions of trust and science at different levels. Notably, the dimension of expertise and scientists at the micro level are most frequently emphasized; with some gender stereotypes persisting. Furthermore, four clusters were identified linking diversity in terms of contents, sources, and actors: (1) Journalist refer to female and male experts for their science coverage (46%; n = 2,304), (2) gender-neutral reference to scientists' integrity (23%; n = 1,139), (3) male scientists refer (online) to their (male) colleagues' benevolence (21%; n = 1,068), (4) gender-neutral reference to scientists' transparency and dialogue (10%; n = 475). Generally, different media types seem to be partially diverse in terms of *contents*, but only social media can be considered to be diverse regarding *sources*; the diversity of *actors* was not identified in this sample.

Focusing on diversity aspects in digital media environments, this study aims towards a better understanding of the trust relationship between science and its publics.

SCI05 Public trust and mistrust in science I

PP 0378 The perception and role of transparency in AI-based chatbots for science information retrieval

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Since the introduction of ChatGPT, generative AI (genAI) has emerged as a transformative force, shaping how users navigate and access information – including information about science. However, concerns about their ability to convincingly present inaccurate information foster repeated calls for transparency in these systems. While ample research exists on explainable AI in advice and decision-making, our current understanding of transparency in genAI-based chatbots that provide science-related information remains limited. Hence, this study compares user engagement with two prominent chatbots, Open AI's ChatGPT and Microsoft's Bing Chat. Specifically, it explores how individuals use and perceive genAI-based chatbots in the context of science-related information search, considering the distinct features they offer. Most notably, while ChatGPT is practically opaque, Bing Chat indicates more transparency by displaying source references through linked footnotes, and by visibly translating user queries into search phrases. We ask two research questions:

RQ1: How do users perceive the transparency of ChatGPT and Bing Chat when seeking information on science-related topics?

RQ2: How does the transparency of ChatGPT and Bing Chat impact users' evaluation of the information presented?

The RQs are addressed through qualitative interviews with *N* = 34 participants from the general public (52.9% female, mean age = 38.3 years (*SD* = 17.4), 59% have prior experiences with chatbots). As part of the interview, each participant engaged first with ChatGPT, then with Bing Chat to search for information on two science-related issues: sustainable aviation and juice cleanse. The authors conducted the on-site interviews in Germany in Summer 2023. Qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014) was applied to analyze the verbatim transcriptions.

Participants expressed a multifaceted view of transparency, regarding (1) sources, (2) translation of user input, and (3) issue uncertainty. Predominantly, participants raised concerns about genAI's opaque database and desired source references for ChatGPT's information. In contrast, Bing Chat's visible sources – including journalistic outlets, Wikipedia, and corporate websites –, sparked doubts about content credibility due to their diverse spectrum.

The second facet of transparency surfaced when participants noted that Bing Chat displays the translation of user input into a search phrase, akin to a search engine. While some participants felt confirmed by this, believing genAI "gathers something from the internet" (interviewee 20), others questioned the added value of conversational AI in science-related information searches, as their own phrasing of a prompt seemed to lose significance.

Transparency regarding the uncertainties of what is known about an issue was the third facet that emerged. Participants emphasized that ChatGPT provides comprehensive answers, presenting pros and cons about an issue. While for some, this enhanced the perceived transparency of the system, others worried that this may create an illusion of greater knowledge than is actually available. Bing Chat, by contrast, was discussed for clearly stating that information on certain topics is not available – also enhancing its perceived transparency.

Overall, this study highlights the multifaceted role of transparency in genAI for accessing science-related information. Thus, it offers empirical evidence on a technology that could significantly influence the science communication landscape, and opens avenues for further research on concepts closely tied to transparency, such as trust.

SCI05 Public trust and mistrust in science I

PP 0379 Unravelling (hybrid) trust in generative AI as intermediaries for science-related information – Insights from a qualitative interview study

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The emergence of generative AI (genAI) chatbots such as OpenAI's ChatGPT or Microsofts's Bing Chat, capable of simplifying complex subjects, is reshaping the way laypeople retrieve information. Therefore, they are now being discussed as intermediaries for science-related information. Since the utilisation of these systems for such purposes depends on the level of trust users place in them, this study focuses on trust in chatbots based on genAI. This necessitates the consideration of two theoretical perspectives: science communication research, but also human-machine communication research. Generally, trust describes a relationship variable between a trustor and a trustee, traditionally drawing a conceptual distinction between human-machine and interpersonal trust dimensions (reasons for trust). Given users' inclination to perceive AI-based conversational interfaces in a human-like manner, traditional notions of machine-trust prove insufficient to address trust in chatbots, leading to a fusion with dimensions of interpersonal trust. Our study employs this hybrid approach, extending machine-trust (functionality, reliability and helpfulness) with epistemic trust dimensions (expertise, integrity, and benevolence) – given the context of science communication. Finally, it remains uncertain who or what users actually perceive as the trustee. In human-machine communication research it is assumed that genAI systems encompass different layers (e.g., the application itself, developers or the company) varying in their salience during interactions. Therefore, we ask:

RQ: Which layers of genAI-based chatbots are salient for users when they elaborate on their trustworthiness in the context of retrieving science-related information?

We conducted qualitative interviews from June-August 2023 with *n* = 34 people from the German general public (52.9% female, mean age = 38.3 years (*SD* = 17.4), 58.8% with prior chatbot experience). After using ChatGPT (version 3.5) and Bing Chat to obtain scientific information on the topics of sustainable aviation and juice cleansing, we asked them about their perception and evaluation (ø-duration: 2h). The verbatim transcribed interviews were analysed using flexible coding (Deterding & Waters, 2021), while applying categories referring to the above-mentioned trust dimensions and layers of the trustee.

The interviews indicate that participants not only refer to the chatbots themselves, but also consider other layers, i.e., users, developers or companies, when assessing their trustworthiness. The last two appear to be most salient in evaluating integrity (adherence to social/scientific standards and norms) and benevolence (prioritising users' well-being). Regarding integrity, interviewee 13 noted for example an underlying entity dictating source prioritisation, while other stated regarding benevolence, the chatbot were "designed" to work benevolently (I4) or – on the contrary – were driven by Microsoft's financial interests (I7).

In conclusion, broadening machine-trust dimensions with epistemic trust dimensions reveals the intricate perception of chatbots as multi-layered trustees, linking dimensions like benevolence to both technical systems and

their developers/companies. These findings enrich theoretical considerations of trust in AI in information search processes and demonstrate the need for science communication research to open up to other, emerging fields of research. They suggest practical applications in developing genAI-based chatbots for science-related queries and contribute to discussions about strengthening user literacies. Limitations include a controlled laboratory environment and the analysis of verbalized behaviour not fully reflecting natural use cases.

SCI05 Public trust and mistrust in science I

PP 0380 Analyzing public perceptions and online engagement with different science topics

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Scientific knowledge and research are consistently linked to uncertainty, complexity, and contestedness (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993; Popper, 1959), making it challenging for non-scientists to comprehend (Bromme & Goldman, 2014). From a societal perspective, it is nevertheless important to keep citizens informed (Fischhoff & Scheufele, 2013) and to engage the public regarding socio-scientific issues (Sadler, 2009). Given the diverse nature of scientific disciplines and research areas, it becomes necessary to differentiate among various socio-scientific issues based on public perception, considering that some may be more meaningful to individuals than others.

Understanding how these perceptions influence one's engagement with science is vital. The contemporary communication landscape, particularly on social media, facilitates easy participation in disseminating and generating science-related information (Taddicken & Krämer, 2021).

We therefore not only ask how different scientific issues are perceived (RQ1), but also how these perceptions are affected by sociodemographics (RQ2) and drive online engagement on social media (consumption of information, participation and generation of content) (RQ3).

Through an online survey involving a representative German sample (N = 1014, age: M = 45.3, SD = 14.41), we explored various science topics, including vaccinations, climate change, genetically modified food, autonomous driving, psychological effects of video games, and cosmology. Participants were presented with these topics in a randomized order and asked to assess them based on meaningfulness (interestingness, individual and societal relevance) and their state of research (uncertainty, complexity, contestedness).

Initial findings highlight distinct perceptions of the topics, with climate change and vaccinations receiving the highest meaningfulness ratings and cosmology the lowest (RQ1).

Concerning the state of research, higher education levels consistently correlate with increased perceptions of controversy across all topics. Additionally, right-wing political orientation is a significant predictor of higher perceived controversy for vaccinations and climate change (RQ2).

Across all topics, there is a strong negative correlation between information seeking, participation, and content generation on social media and perceived controversy. For climate change, (right-wing) political orientation specifically predicts content generation but not information seeking and participation (RQ3).

These results offer valuable insights into the ongoing discussion surrounding the public's engagement with science.

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SCI06 Perspectives on nature and sustainability

PP 0486 Sharing a green world? The role of nature in influencer content

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Climate change and environmental protection are among the world's greatest challenges. However, only 45 percent of 18 to 29-year-olds in Germany fully agree with the statement "It is mankind's duty to protect nature" (BMUV & BfN, 2021). Large parts of our lives take place in the digital space, especially in social media, and direct nature experiences are on the decline. High-reach influencers on Instagram, TikTok or YouTube engage with millions of followers every day by sharing their daily lives, opinions and recommendations, which has an impact on their followers' world views, values, and attitudes: a meta-analysis by Hermann et al. (2023) confirms that increased social media use tends to correlate with materialistic tendencies. In order to understand the impact of nature images conveyed by social media influencers on their followers, it is necessary to analyze the nature images prevalent in influencer content. Although there is some research on nature images in documentaries or advertisements, little is known about the role of nature in influencer content. Hence, a qualitative content analysis was conducted to find out how social media influencers portray nature and their relationship to it in their posts?

The sample of influencers included the twelve most popular German social media influencers, quoted by gender. All posts (images and videos or reels) published between December 2022 and November 2023 with a explicit or implicit reference to nature were included into the sample (n = 280 posts).

Findings indicate that nature only appears in tandem with human presence, with the influencers positioned as central figures within the scene. The portrayal of nature predominantly aligns with positive attributes, i.e. depicting it as something fresh, pure, and unpolluted. Common elements used to craft these images include settings like the sea, beaches, sunsets, snowscapes, and mountains. Additionally, nature is dominantly portrayed in a domesticated context, e.g. through pets or gardens. Influencers depict nature in a hedonistic light, using it as a picturesque backdrop for their physical appearance or extravagant attire. They also present it as a setting for experiential enjoyment such as boat tours, dolphin watching, or wellness experiences. Consequently, nature images often serve the purpose of self-expression and pleasure-seeking, conveying the idea that a life within nature embodies a happy, healthy and enjoyable lifestyle. Another noteworthy observation is that many nature-related posts are captured during travel, providing first insights into the environmental behavior that influencers communicate. Despite the prevailing admiration for nature and the emphasis on its positive attributes, the sampled posts do not explicitly address climate change, the vulnerability of nature, or humanity's impact on the environment. In the presentation, detailed results, further findings, and implications regarding the impact on the followers' understanding of nature and environment will be discussed.

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SCI06 Perspectives on nature and sustainability

PP 0487 "A landscape of fascinating beauty..." – How emotionalization of voice-over narration in nature documentaries influences aesthetic experience and persuasive effects

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Television nature documentaries enjoy great popularity due to their aesthetic shots of flora and fauna with dramatic narratives (Bousé, 1998). Particularly the characteristic off-screen narration can be attributed importance (Jones et al., 2019), oscillating between entertainment and information transfer (Soppe & Pershina, 2020). But should content of narration and way of speech be rather factual or emotional and how does this influence the reception process?

Experience of nature has always been strongly associated with aesthetics (Ulrich, 1983). Aesthetic experience has a cognitive and an affective component (Mennighaus et al., 2019), whereby the latter, following Schindler et al., (2017), can be seen as consisting of prototypical-aesthetic, pleasant and epistemic emotions. An emotionalized content of narration should reinforce visual aesthetics and thereby lead to a stronger cognitive and affective aesthetic experience, which is expected to be reinforced by a matching emotionalized way of speaking (Bänziger et al., 2014). Following Diessner et al. (2018) we further integrated the personality trait "appreciation of beauty" as a moderator here. A strong emotional aesthetic experience should lead to a more positive relationship with nature (Ng, 2023). This in turn should lead to a more positive attitude towards environmental protection (Tam et al., 2013), whereby this relationship is expected to be moderated by environmental knowledge (Ienna et al., 2022). A positive

attitude towards environmental protection is expected to lead to higher pro-environmental behavior (Arendt & Matthes, 2016).

A laboratory study was conducted using a 2(content of narration factual vs. emotional)-x-2(way of speech factual vs. emotional)-between-subjects-design. The sample contained N = 150 persons (N_{female} = 118, M_{Age} = 23.40, SD_{Age} = 7.04). As stimulus we used a nature documentary on the Patagonia region (28:42minutes). Soundtrack was newly created, whereby nature sounds and background music were identical in all conditions. Off-narration was recorded by a professional speaker for all four versions. Manipulation of content of narration (t(148)=-1.807, p<.05) and way of speech (t(148)=-1.683, p<.05) was successful. All measures had a reliability of *Cronbach's* α>.70.

Results of a customized-process-model (Hayes, 2018) show a direct positive influence of an emotionalized content of narration on the cognitive aesthetic evaluation of the seen nature (b = .86, p<.05). This in turn is positively related to prototypical aesthetic (b = .51, p<.05), pleasant (b = .49, p<.05) and epistemic (b = .57, p<.05) emotions. Way of speaking and appreciation of beauty have no significant influence. Both prototypical-aesthetic (b = .31, p<.05) and pleasant (b = .33, p<.05) emotions are furthermore positively linked to the relationship with nature, which improves the attitude towards environmental protection in interaction with high environmental knowledge (b = .02, p<.05). However, a positive attitude towards environmental protection does not lead to stronger pro-environmental behavior (b = .46, p = .08).

Nature documentaries seem to be able to increase the cognitive and emotional aesthetic experience of nature conveyed by documentaries through an emotionalized content of narration, which pays out in terms of positive persuasive effects regarding environmental protection. Contrary to expectations, the way of speaking does not appear to have any influence. The presentation will discuss this in detail and point out further implications for research into and production of nature documentaries.

SCI06 Perspectives on nature and sustainability

PP 0488 The discursive construction of nature in biodiversity and climate change debates

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"The green energy transition is too often stifled by green concerns for nature and biodiversity and bureaucratic inertia". In an interview in the Danish newspaper *Politiken* 8th October 2023, the Danish Foreign Minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, makes his position clear in relation to an environment struggle over energy and green transition, referred to internally in the government as "the green dilemma". On the one side, land areas are set aside for windmill farms in the name of the green energy transition; on the other, large scale green energy constructions may cause noise pollution and threaten biodiversity. Environmental NGO's, in contrast, criticise the government for its lack of ambition in the green transition. This paper explores how political actors draw on conspicuous and diverse constructions of nature in the articulation of positions in environmental discourse about biodiversity, green transition, and climate change. Environmental politics has been studied as a hegemonic expression of ecological modernisation, emphasising how the nature is discursively constructed in a way that emphasises technological solutions to environmental challenges (Hajer 1996; Moll & Sonnenfeld 2000). Adopting a discourse analytical approach to the public debates on green transition allows us to study the Danish government's articulation of the 'green dilemma' (and the critiques thereof) as an environmental discourse, that is inherently antagonistic (Laclau 1990) as well as political (Mouffe 2000). This leads to the following research question: How do political actors articulate an opposition between concerns over climate change and biodiversity thus constructing particular notions of nature in environmental discourse?

The analysis draws on data in the form of 1) transcripts from the Danish Prime minister's opening speech addressing the 'green dilemma' and the parliamentary debates that followed this speech and 2) the subsequent critical media debate within the three main Danish broadsheet newspapers (Politiken, Berlingske, Jyllandsposten) showing the concerns voiced by parties, NGOs, media and other political actors about the Danish climate change policies and goals for CO2 emission reductions. Based on the analysis, the paper argues that the Danish government's articulation of a political conflict as a green dilemma between biodiversity and climate change redirects the focus away from the antagonistic nature of environmental discourse. This leads to a rearticulation of the classical environmental conflict regarding economic versus ecological concerns into a struggle between different green positions. Paradoxically, this rearticulation of environmental discourse draws on constructions of nature that favour green transition's potential for investment and export opportunities rather than nature conservation and environmental justice.

SCI06 Perspectives on nature and sustainability

PP 0489 Sustainable fashion in the infosphere: An analysis in the light of the technological paradigm

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Fashion plays a crucial part in the construction of identity and belonging, as well as in the confidence of individuals in expressing their personality [13]. Nonetheless, fashion overconsumption has been identified as a contributor to global warming and climate change [12], harming both natural and human resources – from obsolescence in production [9] to the solidification of throwaway culture [18]. Despite increased awareness of the environmental damage caused by existing consumption patterns [11], education and information for sustainable fashion remain insufficient [1][19].

Understanding a problem requires considering how the World is organized and how we interact with it [14]. This theoretical study reveals the evolution of sustainable fashion in the setting of the Infosphere, in continuous counterpoint with one of the key macro-paradigms of information and communication on digital platforms: the technological one. Starting with Manuel Castells' concept of the network society as a new model of social organization, the critical role of information in today's research on sustainability and fashion is examined. The concept of paradigm is presented by Edgar Morin as a kind of great matrix of thought, a scenario described by Thomas Kuhn [10] as the reconstruction of a specific area of knowledge based on new foundations, which change the beliefs, values, tools, and techniques shared by a community.

The network society [3] is based on the emergence of the Internet and widespread access to Information and Communication Technologies, with informationalism serving as the material foundation of twenty-first-century societies and the increase in human capacity to process and communicate information [6]. The Internet's value has expanded in the fashion sector as well, proving to be an essential source of knowledge, surpassing the financial value related to e-commerce [16]. The interaction of consumers generates a massive amount of information about production, products, and consumption [7], which is especially relevant when we consider Castells' reconfiguration of space and time: a space of flows that transcends any geographical limit, and a timeless time [4].

The effects of the online allow consumers to access the world of fashion in a faster, deeper [8] and unmediated way [5] – the Internet's ubiquity surpasses conventional gatekeepers such as the press [15]. There is now a leveling of actors and institutions [5], which leads to value co-creation processes between production and consumption [16]. Indeed, as a result of consumer pressure, the Internet has proven to be an important tool for organizing and mobilizing for the establishment of sustainable fashion [2], by raising awareness of alternative lifestyles and building political strength to ensure that they are implemented [5].

This theoretical study allow us to understand how digital communication functions in response to unprecedented environmental issues. In the case of sustainable fashion, taking action is critical due to the urgency of the climate crisis. Otherwise, we will enter a path where the dissemination of "green" begins to be disregarded, and keywords such as sustainable development become nothing more than empty concepts [20].

Keywords: Fashion, Sustainability, Informationalism, Network society, Digital Communication, Castells

SCI06 Perspectives on nature and sustainability

PP 0490 Examining the nexus of science, science communication, and activism: Young scientists' perspectives in Switzerland

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In our knowledge-based society, scientists are directly exposed to the political struggles of our time, such as climate change and COVID-19. Many expect science to be "neutral" and provide "facts," while others advocate for science-supported activism or even activist scientists. This study aims to understand the evaluations and expectations of young scientists themselves regarding their own activism in their disciplines, such as participation in social movements or civil disobedience, and how these actions intersect with their professional responsibilities and knowledge transfer. The literature has extensively discussed how activist scientists should be (Conde, 2015; Isopp, 2015; Krueger, 2021; Muir, 2020; Pielke, 2007). We ask: Where do young scientists in Switzerland see the boundaries between science and activism? How activist are young scientists in Switzerland in the face of numerous current challenges? What opportunities and risks do they see in activist actions? How do they assess the importance of activist action, and can disciplinary differences be identified?

Method

In 2023, we qualitatively surveyed 33 young scientists from the Swiss Young Academy, representing 28 disciplines (Mage = 35; 67% female; Natural Sciences (45%); Social Sciences (27%); Humanities (27%)). The questionnaire included 17 open-ended questions asked by a trained interviewer (average duration: 33 minutes).

Results

The majority of respondents had been activists in some form according to their definition. They saw benefits such as "strengthening societal awareness for certain topics," "relevance for their own discipline," and "supporting concrete positive changes (e.g., policies)," as well as personal benefits: "The benefit lies more in being able to change something through one's work, and that is a kind of intrinsic motivation." However, numerous risks were also addressed, such as fear of online or physical threats and negative consequences for their careers: "A big fear for me is that you then lose your credibility and that you are no longer taken seriously." Disciplinary differences between the Natural Sciences and the Social or Humanities regarding activism were evident. More respondents from the Natural Sciences indicated that it is not very important for scientists in their discipline to be activist, and reactions in their discipline differ. On the question of whether science and activism can or should be separated, opinions were balanced as nearly half of the respondents doubt that science and activism can and should be separated; some accept a theoretical/analytical difference between science and activism, but this is not their normative/practical position: "I don't think they can be separated... I believe that good science is nourished by activism and good activism is nourished by good science." The majority reject the idea of entirely objective science. However, most mentioned that science must be transparent by clearly communicating assumptions, starting points, etc. For some respondents, the ideal of objectivity clearly exists, which one can aspire towards: "It's not science if it doesn't try to be objective." vs. "This whole objective science is anyway an illusion."

Discussion

This study critically examines the boundaries between science (communication) and activism among young scientists in Switzerland, a topic increasingly discussed but not comprehensively explored from a transdisciplinary perspective.

SCI07 Political polarization, climate change, and the media

PP 0598 **The right-wing legacy media in the UK and their campaign in 2023 against the Net Zero policy: A case study of the systematic deployment of inaccurate and misleading information**

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Context

After a period of relative unanimity from 2019–2021 over the importance of taking action to curb greenhouse gas emissions, in 2023 parts of the media gave considerably more space to questioning aspects of government policy including the ban on fracking, Low Transport Networks, and most importantly, the net-zero GHG target for 2050 (including calls for a referendum). Opposition to the net-zero target increased notably after the Conservative Party's victory in a by-election on 22 July 2023, and culminated in the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, rowing back on the government's green commitments in September 2023.

The study draws on existing scholarship designed to identify forms of climate obstructionism, particularly casting doubt on climate policy solutions, but also more traditional doubting of climate science or the climate movement (Lamb et al., 2020; the nature of climate policy skepticism in the UK media (Painter et al., 2023); the identification of different forms or mis-/disinformation in general; and in the specific case of climate change, false/inaccurate and misleading information. (Treen et al., 2020).

Scope

We focus on a four-month period of media coverage from 20 July 2023 to 19 November 2023, and include a range of UK legacy print newspapers including left-leaning and right-leaning, tabloid and broadsheet), both print and online.

Method

Detailed manual content analysis using Exeter University's c3ds department's new Media Monitoring programme to locate relevant articles including news reports, opinion pieces, and editorials.

RQs 1. What are the dominant discourses found in our sample about the achievability of the Net Zero target?

2. i) Are there patterns of false or inaccurate information about the target or the policies designed to achieve it? ii) Are there patterns of misleading information about the target or the policies designed to achieve it?
3. Are there important differences in the coverage between the eight media outlets?

4. In general, is there evidence from our sample that the UK media or parts of it are, on a regular basis, publishing inaccurate, misleading or distorted information about the Net Zero policy.

Results

Initial sampling shows how some right-leaning media, and particularly the Telegraph, Mail and Sun notably increased their opposition to the net zero policy, and were a key factor in influencing the government in watering down its climate commitments. There is also preliminary evidence that these papers regularly deployed inaccurate, misleading or partial information to make their case, and were reliant on agenda-driven commentators. It is a stand-out case study of how right-wing media, and their political allies in the climate obstructionist lobby groups, can effectively oppose the enactment of ambitious climate legislation.

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SCI07 Political polarization, climate change, and the media

PP 0599 Political anatomy of an environmental controversy: Mapping Twitter reactions to climate protests in Italy

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Disruptive climate protests ordinarily ignite digital controversies, which can be mapped out to understand whether such actions are effective at mobilising segments of the public toward environmental issues, and why. Since late 2018, groups like Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for Future inaugurated a new wave of grassroot activism, followed by platformized and highly polarised social media debates. In Italy, civil disobedience group Ultima Generazione's climate protests have been making the news, as in the case of January 2nd 2023, when a group of activists defaced with orange paint Palazzo Madama, seat of the Italian Senate in Rome.

The present paper makes use of computational methods to investigate Twitter users' reactions to this specific environmental action gone viral, with the goal of reconstructing the discursive patterns and deeper political anatomy of the controversy. In the days immediately after Ultima Generazione activists spray painted the façade of the building, we retrieved 43,768 unique tweets in Italian mentioning keywords linked to the protest, as well as metadata about the Twitter accounts followed by the authors of the tweets. By analyzing this large corpus through a combination of text mining (topic modeling), visual network analysis and qualitative content analysis, we show that a) while Ultima Generazione's nonviolent action succeeded at giving visibility to climate-related topics, the majority of posts in our dataset focused on the legitimacy and modalities of the protest; b) the Twitter reception of the protest is very mixed, with a slight majority of positive reactions; c) users who followed Twitter accounts of politicians, media outlets and journalists close to right and centre-right positions in the Italian political field tended to negatively judge the protest, and vice-versa.

With this paper we aim to make at once a methodological and a theoretical contribution. On the one hand, we show how digital and computational methods can be successfully mobilised to shed light on the social and ideological roots of ephemeral controversies on social media platforms. On the other, we stress the role of platform publics' political background in the polarised reception of environmental activism, highlighting how this can affect how the communication strategies of nonviolent climate activists are discursively framed and evaluated online.

SCI07 Political polarization, climate change, and the media

PP 0600 The (de)legitimization of climate change protests in German newspapers of record

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Not only climate change itself causes social disorder, but also, to a substantially smaller extent, the activist movements calling for political action to tackle the issue – especially if they resort to tactics of civil disobedience to gain attention. The present study addresses the question of how such forms of protest are perceived by the public. The German activist movement *Letzte Generation* ('Last Generation') and its portrayal in established media serve as a case study.

Theoretically, the study is primarily based on the concept of subjective legitimacy as a social scientific perspective on the perception of certain actors and power relations as legitimate and the resulting influence on people's attitudes and behavior (Beetham, 2013). More specifically, we aim to answer the following research question:

How are the Last Generation's climate change protests (de)legitimized in German newspapers of record?

To measure the concept of (de)legitimization, we drew on the idea of legitimation statements as statements consisting of four elements: speaker, object of legitimation, evaluation and argument (cf. Kleinen-von Königslöw et al., 2019). Speakers could vary depending on the source cited in the media, the object was always the Last Generation, the evaluation could be either legitimizing or delegitimizing and possible legitimation arguments, i.e. criteria to justify the evaluation, were derived from the existing literature as well as from the material for investigation.

To answer the research question, we conducted a quantitative manual content analysis. We drew a sample of 300 articles about the Last Generation published in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (*SZ*) and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (*FAZ*) between the movement's foundation on August 30, 2021 and June 28, 2023 (N = 699). An intracoder reliability test with 10 articles yielded satisfactory results (Krippendorff's Alpha/Gwet's AC: .75–1).

Our results show that *SZ* and *FAZ* primarily reported on the forms of protest (main topic in 45% of the articles under study) and actions directed against the protesters (19%), while the protesters' arguments and motives as well as their demands only played a minor role (2% each). With regard to legitimation statements (n = 766), both newspapers allowed the Last Generation to speak for itself to a similar extent (19% of the statements published in the *SZ*, 20% of the statements published in the *FAZ*) and predominantly evaluated the movement to be illegitimate (56% and 66% of the statements respectively). However, the conservative *FAZ* delegitimized the group significantly more often than the liberal *SZ* ($\chi^2(1) = 8.3$, $p = .004$). The predominantly negative evaluation appears to be related to the coverage's overall focus. E.g., 65% of the statements that dealt with the forms of protest delegitimized the Last Generation, while statements about their arguments and motives as well as their demands were mostly positive (79% and 57%). To legitimize the protesters, the newspapers mostly argued that the protests were rational (29% of all statements), non-violent (20%), or effective (11%). Conversely, arguments of criminalization (31%), lack of effectiveness (11%), and being a threat to the common good (10%) were most often used to delegitimize them.

SCI07 Political polarization, climate change, and the media

PP 0601 A systematic literature review of social media, climate change and political polarization

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With regard to climate change, political polarization has arisen in parallel to people's increasing use of social media. This increased used has induced many scholars to investigate whether, how, and to what extent social media contributes to a polarized environmental discourse (Ludovicco et al., 2020; Röchert et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2015).

Polarized discussions about the environment have been shown to have several negative effects, including undermining public confidence in human-caused climate change, increasing political inaction (Bruell, 2014), and delaying or impeding mitigation efforts (Cook et al., 2018). Addressing the impact social media has on climate change-related discussions is thus fundamental to the realization of climate-neutral societies and prevention of social unrest.

The first step to addressing this schism is better understanding the characteristics of climate change-related political polarization on social media. Despite the urgency of the climate situation, research into the causes and effects of polarized public views in this area remains limited. Moreover, there has to date not been a comprehensive account of the disparate scientific work that has been done on climate change-related polarization on social media. This systematic literature review represents such an endeavor.

Specifically, this systematic literature review presents the findings of a content analysis of 27 peer-reviewed scientific articles investigating the relationship between social media, political polarization, and climate change. It provides a thorough overview of the trends and dissonances across these studies in terms of their areas of focus, methods, and results.

The review yields contradictory findings with regard to the degree of polarization in climate change-related conversations on social media: 13 publications find some instances of polarization, 6 report none, and 8 remain inconclusive. Despite these divergent results, the review points to clear relationships between the existence of polarized climate change-related conversations in the studies' findings and their foci, type of data employed, and forms of polarization approached. Specifically, polarized climate change-related discussions on social media clearly overshadow studies that explore communicative interactions, utilize digital trace data, and address affective polarization. In contrast, in publications investigating the effects of exposure to climate change-related information on social media, particularly those relying on self-reported data to examine ideological polarization, the predominant trend is either the absence of polarization or inconclusive results.

SCI08 Public trust and mistrust in science II

PP 0603 When science won't guide you, who else will? The relationship between (dis-)trust in scientific guidance and exposure to alternative online media

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This paper addresses the question whether and how exposure to alternative online media is associated with public (dis-)trust in science. Specifically, we introduce and examine the concept of *guidance trust*, which refers to the role of science as a public guide or advisor for decision-making. This implies providing and communicating relevant orientational knowledge about social issues, pointing out possible choices, and recommending certain decisions (e.g., Pielke, 2007). Hence, guidance trust in science builds on the expectation that scientific propositions and recommendations will be *practically relevant and applicable to inform reasonable decisions*. This dimension of trust in science relates to but goes beyond its epistemic aspect, which focuses on the *validity* of scientific evidence (e.g., Hendriks et al., 2016).

Especially in uncertain times of global challenges for society such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the climate crisis, the public is in need of reliable orientation to make the right decisions. However, some parts of the population have withdrawn their trust in scientific experts. Distrustful people do not only disbelieve scientific facts but also doubt science to be a useful guide for decision-making. The digital media environment serves them as a counter-hegemonic public sphere offering alternative guidance. Especially the self-proclaimed alternative news media position themselves as fundamental opposition to the established epistemic authorities. Alternative media outlets use digital communication channels (especially Telegram) to spread scientific misinformation and to advocate policies that contradict scientific reasoning (e.g., Walther & McCoy, 2021). Therefore, people lacking trust in scientific guidance should be especially prone to this alternative media coverage.

We will present evidence on this matter drawing on an online survey, which is representative for the German population regarding age, gender, education, and residency (N = 1.200). First, we introduce and validate reliable scales to measure epistemic and guidance trust in science, which we developed based on an elaborate qualitative pilot study. By conducting exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis on a split sample (N_1 = 600; N_2 = 600), we show epistemic and guidance trust to be correlated but discriminant factors. Furthermore, we demonstrate the explanatory power of guidance trust regarding alternative online media use over and above epistemic trust in science and other confounders. Apparently, the less people trust science to guide decision-making successfully, the more they use alternative online media. This especially holds true for individuals with a high need for orientation towards scientific topics. Hence, trust in scientific guidance is crucial to prevent people from being misled by alternative online media, which often undermine scientific advice and could lead to decisions that are detrimental to social order and democracy.

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SCI08 Public trust and mistrust in science II

PP 0604 Scientific (dis)information and ingenuous trust in science: Engagement and reception of scientific (dis) information in Italian high schools

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The proposed intervention focuses on the high school classroom as a social group in order to investigate its role in mediating access, reception, and circulation of scientific (dis)information. It is based on a two-year-long mixed-method research on twelve high school classrooms selected from six schools proposing different curricula (humanistic, scientific or professionalizing). In each of them, we conducted qualitative interviews with students, teachers and parents; focus groups with students and parents; two rounds of qualitative media diaries; virtual ethnography and commented social media reel scrolling sessions; and data donation.

Especially when compared with the family, the classroom as a social group has by and large emerged as a weak mediator for the access and reception of scientific (dis)information: a role that is almost entirely fulfilled by the

guidance provided by teachers within their educational programs. Beyond that, scientific information is rarely shared or discussed among classmates, except for information delivered through infotainment formats on social media, or strictly related to common concerns for everyday life (in particular regarding health and nutrition). By far more relevant are smaller groups of friends, within and across the classroom, who share the same interests or passions, like astrophysics.

Notwithstanding this role of the classroom, our observations suggested how students share the same criteria to distinguish between scientific information and disinformation – generally based on stylistic features on the message and on the refusal of scientific populist or conspirative frames – and above all a similar – and somehow ingenuously unrealistic – idea of science, based on an unerring capacity of the scientific method to ascertain definitive truths, grating unanimous consensus in the scientific community.

This ingenuous trust in science can represent a vulnerability when probed by personal or social crises (like a disease or the pandemic). As a part of the project, we have developed an experimental formative module to promote a more realistic understanding of science, based on the main acquisitions of the Social Studies of Science, taking care, however, not to undermine its trustworthiness.

SCI08 Public trust and mistrust in science II

PP 0605 Science-society intermediaries 'in the line of fire': An interview study on hostility and institutional support in science communication

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Recent years have seen an increase in public hostility against science, ranging from hate speech and threats to attacks on scientists (Nölleke et al., 2023), who may suffer severe negative consequences (Valiverronen & Saikkonen, 2021). This has also challenged science *communication*, as hostility against scientists is often mediated via public or private communication channels such as social media (Nogrady, 2021). Anecdotal evidence suggests that professional science communicators – particularly, *university* communicators – who serve as "intermediaries" at the science-society interface (Schuijer et al., 2022) are also prone to becoming targets of attacks. Building on the concepts of boundary work (Gieryn, 1983) and boundary spanning (Schwetje et al., 2021) and multivocal crisis communication and rhetorical arena theory (Frandsen & Johansen, 2020), we conceptualize university communicators as actors who play a boundary spanning and intermediating role between the public and universities, and between attackers and targets of hostility, respectively. In this role they provide communicative advice and support to those affected by hostility, even if they are not personally targeted.

Since there are no studies on this issue, we conducted a qualitative interview study with university communicators. We explored how they experience or observe hostility (**RQ1**) and how they deal with it or support those affected (**RQ2**). In summer 2023, we conducted in-depth interviews with 16 university communicators from 10 countries, who were recruited via a screening survey shared through social media and/or professional networks, using a semi-structured interview guide with a vignette illustrating different types of hostility. The interviews (Ø 59 min.) were analyzed with structured qualitative content analysis that employed deductive and inductive coding.

Results show that hostility against university communicators is not widespread (**RQ1**). It rarely targets them personally, but rather "the university or the faculty or a research group or individual researchers" (NL1). Nevertheless, communicators 'work in the line of fire', as university members approach them for advice and support. Although communicators are therefore often 'only' observers of hostility and supporters of others, they experience "this also as a burden" (AU1) and may suffer from exhaustion and frustration.

The interviews further show that institutional support measures for targets of hostility are being built (**RQ2**), but vary widely across universities and countries. Common prevention strategies include media trainings for researchers and coaching for public communication. Communicators typically provide individual counseling to those affected and help them respond to hostile communication, often backed up by legal advice to "be on the safe side legally" (GE1). However, there are only few post-hoc measures, e.g. to facilitate exchange between those affected. Moreover, university communicators may experience loyalty conflicts between their responsibility – qua position – to safeguard the reputation of the university and their sense of responsibility to protect the well-being of the researchers.

This study provides novel insights into the intermediary role of science communicators and support measures for dealing with hostility. The findings highlight the influence of organizational contexts (Schäfer & Fähnrich, 2020) in protecting individual researchers and may inform the development of countermeasures against hostility in science communication.

SCI08 Public trust and mistrust in science II

PP 0606 Intermediaries in the limelight: How exposure to trust cues in content about science affects public trust in science

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Research on *public trust in science* is paramount as a potential decline of trust in science is discussed. This decline has often been linked to digital media environments, which serve as *intermediaries of trust* by providing cues for why to trust science. In the context of public trust in science, five trust groups have already been identified by AUTHORs that differ in terms of trust in science – but also in their media use: (1) "Fully Trusting", (2) "Highly Trusting", (3) "Moderately Trusting", (4) "Rather Untrusting", and (5) "Untrusting". Considering the media use of these groups and their trust in science, this study examines *how the exposure of trust cues in content about science affects public trust in science across trust groups.*

Answering this research question requires a mixed-method design. In this linkage study, we combine German panel survey data in two waves (n = 1,030; t1: March/April, 2022, t2: March/April, 2023) with a content analysis of the sources most frequently used by German audiences to get informed about science, collected in seven constructed weeks between t1 and t2 (i.e., journalistic, further non-journalistic social and online (e.g., blogs) as well as fringe/populist media; n = 906). For this, a standardized codebook including 35 trust cues based on inductive, qualitative groundwork by AUTHORs was used. With data from both analyses, we created linkage variables: the multiplication of source-specific media use (average of media use frequencies between t1 and t2, weighted by no, moderate and high use) and trust cues (average number of trust cues per source, divided by the average number of trust cues across all sources). Hence, higher values of "trust cue exposure variables" (i.e., one per source, 13 in total) indicate more exposure to trust cues.

The five groups reached the following frequencies: "Fully Trusting" (n = 163; 16%), "Highly Trusting" (n = 230; 22%), "Moderately Trusting" (n = 250; 24%), "Rather Untrusting" (n = 207; 20%), and "Untrusting" (n = 180; 18%). Trust in science at t1 was the strongest predictor for trust in science at t2, for the whole sample and across all groups. Exposure to trust cues across different media affected trust in science differently across these groups: Trust cue exposure in science blogs affected "Highly Trusting" and "Moderately Trusting" negatively. However, trust cue exposure in science magazines had a positive effect for "Moderately Trusting" and "Rather Untrusting". Exposure to trust cues in populist/fringe media negatively affected trust in science for "Untrusting"; social networking sites like Facebook, in turn, had a positive effect on this group.

At the conference, results will be discussed in more detail and will be tested against further concepts, such as knowledge about science, reservations and promises towards science, science populism, authoritarian perceptions, and conspiracy beliefs. Thus, we try to sort out social (dis)order in communication to some extent. The findings so far reveal that exposure to trust cues in certain media predicts public trust in science and variations across trust groups indicate a nuanced nature of trust-assessing processes in digital media environments.

SCI08 Public trust and mistrust in science II

PP 0607 Strategies of contestation of official science in the Italian Stop-5G movement: From Scientific to Syncretic Patchwork Storytelling

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The proposed paper delves into the Italian Stop5G movement, aiming to explore the discursive practices – media related and not – it employs to construct, stabilize and in some occasions radically transform a body of shared knowledge refused by the majority of the scientific community – in particular, regarding the effects of non-ionizing electromagnetic radiations. For this end it adopts a perspective inspired by the Social Worlds Framework (Clarke & Star 2007) – that conceives social worlds and their discourses as co-constructed – and by an ecological understanding of media (Anderson 2016) – that conceives them as a vast interconnected environment where discourses interact in different ways: sometimes competing, sometimes adapting one to the other, and sometimes again merging in new ones.

Through on one year of online and offline ethnographic observation (between 2019 and 2020), interviewees to citizens and activists, and focus groups with different samples of population, it was possible to identify four phases characterizing the social world of the Stop5G movement, its discursive practices, and its shared knowledge:

1. The phase of public appeals (2017–2018), featuring scientists contesting officially accepted knowledge on electromagnetic fields;

2. The activist phase (2018–2020), with an increasing number of citizens organized in local groups participating in the social world and the arena, and adopting discursive strategy closely mirroring the ones from the previous phase;
3. An intermediate phase at the beginning of the pandemic crisis (February-April 2020), where discursive practices in the social world begun to undergo significant transformations, particularly in addressing the nature of the virus and the associated illness;
4. The pandemic phase (until the end of 2020, when observation came to and end), when discourses in the social world, with some significant exceptions, took a populist or conspiratorial turn.

As it will be shown, for the Stop 5G movement these phases marked a turn from a 'scientific' to a 'syncretic' patchwork storytelling approach in the discursive practices of knowledge production and of contestation of official science. In short, the former relied on the selection of sources strictly deemed as scientific (i.e. peer reviewed papers published in scientific journals) all confirming the harmful nature of 5G waves; the latter assembled materials from a vast array of different sources, including science, new age spiritualism, cultural critic and conspiracism. At the same time, throught these phases the 5G movement radically transformed its organizational forms and the ensable of mediated and not mediated spaces employed for its communicative practices.

The talk intends therefore to contribute to the understanding of the tight intertwinement between the structuration of a social world and of its arena, its discursive practices – media related and not – and the shared knowledge produced by these same practices.

SCI09 Media representations of climate change

PP 0692 Shifting semantics: How climate change keywords have changed over three decades

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The terms greenhouse effect (GE), global warming (GW), and climate change (CC) are often used interchangeably. They commonly refer to the same phenomenon, described by UNFCCC as: "a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere" (UN 1992). Each term, however, is associated with different aspects of this reality. GE refers to the causes of climate change, GW concerns the effects of changes to the global atmosphere, and CC describes the general instability of the climate (Gardiner 2004).

While the three terms carry their own sets of connotations, their meaning in public communication have rarely been studied. Because of their interchangeability the terms have mostly been considered synonymous, treated as shorthand for anthropogenic climate change, or served as (unquestioned) keywords in data retrieval (Hase et al. 2021). Most studies consequently fail to grasp the historical patterns, semantic differences, and communicative implications that lie behind the shifting popularity of the three keywords.

This study looks at how the three terms have evolved over 30+ years of public climate change reporting. We investigate the Danish press from 1990–2021. Our sample consists of all articles (n = 63.743) on climate change in national dailies (n = 6) and national public service corporations (n = 2). We use machine learning and computational methods (Grimmer, Roberts, and Stewart 2022) to map and analyze changing patterns in how public communication talk about anthropogenic climate change through the lens of greenhouse effect, global warming and climate change. The overarching research question is:

RQ: *How has the prevalence and semantics of Greenhouse Effect, Global Warming, and Climate Change developed in public communication on climate change.*

Our data shows a clear pattern in annual frequencies of each keyword. Whereas the 1990s were dominated by GE, the term has all but disappeared by the late 2000s being replaced by GW. In the 2010s CC becomes the dominant term. It suggests that the 2000s was a transitory decade, with more terminological diversity in public discourses on climate change.

To further explore semantic variations, we have used word vector analysis. By dividing the sampling period into three consecutive phases, we have identified the 20 most frequent words associated with each keyword per decade. It shows that each keyword is associated with different scientific and social discourses. GE is mostly linked to scientific terms like carbon dioxide or thermal radiation. GW follows a different trajectory. Whereas it is a relatively technical notion in the 1990s it becomes increasingly associated with (social) effects of climate change in the 2010s. Variation is further measured by a so-called Jaccard Index, which captures degrees of dis/similarity. It confirms that GW is the most uneven keyword with a high degree of internal variation.

Of the three keywords, CC is the most diverse dominated by words that emphasize the severity of the climate crisis. This finding has been confirmed by a subsequent sentiment analysis, which shows that CC is associated with more negative words compared to both GE and GW.

SCI09 Media representations of climate change

PP 0693 Sustainable peaks: Communicating sustainable development narratives in mountain destinations

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Mountains are present in 139 countries across all continents. They cover 24% of the Earth's surface and are home to 1.1 billion people. Ranked as the second most popular destination in the world, mountains hold widespread appeal. Within the broader scope of place branding, destination branding assumes a crucial role. In this context, destination branding becomes a key element in shaping the identity and attractiveness of mountain destinations, whereas place branding is instrumental in promoting economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Existing literature on mountain destinations and sustainable development has primarily emphasized environmental sustainability, conservation, tourism, and local stakeholder perceptions, as well as community involvement. Despite these contributions, research at this intersection is still limited.

This study contributes to filling this gap by exploring the management and communication strategies of mountain destinations. Specifically, it addresses the communication of challenges within these fragile environments. A scoping review of literature on mountain destinations and sustainable development published between 2013 and 2023 in Web of Science and Scopus is carried out, involving the analysis of 45 articles.

The results show mountain tourism is predominantly portrayed as a sport-related activity, neglecting its cultural dimension while underscoring climate change as the main threat for these regions. Moreover, explicit references to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are limited, despite being a globally accepted framework, with only one study mentioning SDG 15 "Life on land".

Results call for research-informed approaches that engage local stakeholders, as well as close international collaboration to address climate change challenges and develop effective sustainable development narratives. Communication efforts in mountain destinations should prioritize informing visitors about the dynamic landscape and vulnerability of these areas, while residents need education on the adverse environmental impacts of mountain tourism and the potential effects of environmental disasters. Additionally, communication efforts should target both visitors and accommodation providers, offering education on eco-labels, certification, and accreditation.

From a communication perspective, strategies should integrate environmental concerns by emphasizing the importance of nature conservation and community wellbeing. However, despite theoretical understanding, there is a gap in practical sustainability implementation. The growing environmental awareness of local communities suggests their participation in planning processes can contribute to strategies that mitigate landscape impacts and preserve the peacefulness of mountains.

This study consolidates key implications from previous research, highlighting the crucial necessity to educate and raise awareness about nature, environmental issues, and preservation among diverse stakeholders. It also advocates for increased discussions on the SDGs at this intersection.

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SCI09 Media representations of climate change

PP 0694 Media coverage of the food systems-climate change link at the 2023 COP28 meeting in Dubai

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Climate communication research rarely examines the presence of the climate change-food systems-diet nexus in the media, despite the fact that about a quarter of all Greenhouse Gas emissions come from food production. Even if all emissions from fossil fuels were stopped immediately, emissions from the global food system would make

it impossible to limit warming to 1.5 °C and difficult even to realize the 2 °C target (Clark et al., 2020). Thus, major changes in how food is produced and consumed are needed if we want to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.

For the first time in the history of the UN climate negotiations held every year at the COPs (Conference of Parties), at COP28 in Dubai, 30 November to 12 December 2023, the role of food systems and animal agriculture in the climate system was addressed. Early in the conference, more than 130 countries signed up for a declaration on food, including most of the world's largest agricultural economies (USA, Australia, and Brazil), known at the UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action (Rannard, 2023; World Resources Institute, 2023). However, negotiations between countries on adapting the global food and agriculture system to climate change imperatives were halted during the COP, and shunted off to the next inter-sessional UN meeting in Bonn in June 2024.

It is not known what role the dozens of representatives of large agricultural companies, and their lobbyists, present played in the negotiations (Sherrington, 2023; Sherrington et al., 2023). However, research has mapped the extensive influence they exert at the COP via multiple routes, including belonging to country delegations. The discourses they deploy, including presenting meat as sustainable nutrition, have also been described in newspaper reports.

We aim to use a key metric to assess the influence of these companies, by exploring their impact in the mainstream legacy media in key countries – the USA, the UK, Australia, and Norway, during the COP28. In each country, we focus on the five most popular news online sites according to the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (Newman et al., 2023). Search terms used: COP28 AND food OR COP28 AND agriculture. We address three key research questions:

1. How much coverage do the media assign to the 'food systems' question compared to other drivers of GHG emissions?
2. What are the key discourses deployed by the agricultural companies which the media pick up on?
3. How much is this sector quoted compared to other sectors such as NGOs, small farmers, and governments?

The quantitative content analysis analyses media coverage from during the COP28 meeting and until December 31, 2023.

The codebook has been developed based on previous codebooks used in Kristiansen et al., 2020, as well as based on close reading of a small sample of the media coverage from COP28 to ensure current topics and developments are captured.

Preliminary sampling suggests that for the first time at a COP the media covered extensively the links between climate change and food systems, including a range of discourses and sectors quoted.

SCI09 Media representations of climate change

PP 0695 Framing climate futures: A cross-examination of ethos, action-oriented appeals, and activism in popular climate books

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This study examines the application of climate communication frames to two non-fiction climate books: *Solving the Climate Crisis: Frontline Reports from the Race to Save the Earth* by John Berger (2023) and *What If We Get It Right? Visions of Climate Futures* by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson (2024). A new typology of frames recently developed (Wuebben et al. 2024), comprises nine frames derived from prior research on climate framing, including Matthew Nisbet's work on "Communicating Climate Change: Why Frames Matter for Public Engagement" (2009) and a more recent systematic review by Guenther et al. (2023).

Two specific frames from Guenther et al.'s typology have been adapted to better capture the distinctive approaches taken by individual authors of climate books. Specifically, these modified frames emphasize the construction of ethos, the incorporation of ethical and personal appeals, the use of qualitative and quantitative evidence, and the advocacy for timely climate action, also known as kairos. Ethos and kairos are particularly significant in the context of public-facing, scientifically informed arguments that propose solutions to the climate crisis or urge readers to contribute to actions that can lead society beyond the crisis frame.

Both Berger and Johnson effectively convey the urgency of climate change by integrating stark scientific facts into their narratives. They highlight the necessity for transformative social, technological, and economic changes in order to mitigate ecological and societal collapse. By employing these frames and compelling storytelling techniques, the authors engage readers in a call to action and underscore the importance of addressing the climate crisis.

Berger's book, *Solving the Climate Crisis: Frontline Reports from the Race to Save the Earth*, provides firsthand accounts from individuals on the frontlines of climate action. Through personal stories and experiences, Berger establishes ethos and fosters empathy, making a strong case for urgent climate action. He combines these narratives with scientific evidence to present a comprehensive picture of the crisis and the potential solutions.

In "What If We Get It Right? Visions of Climate Futures," Johnson explores a range of possible future scenarios and presents a compelling vision of what could be achieved through collective action. She weaves together personal narratives, scientific data, and ethical arguments to build a persuasive case for immediate and transformative change. By doing so, Johnson taps into the kairos frame, urging readers to act now and seize the opportunity to create a better future.

Overall, this study demonstrates that these two non-fiction climate books effectively utilize the climate communication frames of ethos and kairos to convey the urgency of the climate crisis and advocate for meaningful action. By employing these frames, the authors engage readers in a compelling narrative that combines scientific evidence, personal stories, and ethical appeals, ultimately inspiring individuals to take steps towards addressing the climate crisis and envisioning a sustainable future.

SCI09 Media representations of climate change

PP 0696 A world of climate change: Constructing the issue space of climate change on Twitter during COP26 and COP27

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Climate change constitutes a key "planetary issue", requiring the response of a global public sphere (Castells, 2008, p. 82). Yet, climate change is also characterized by unequal geographical distributions of its victims and perpetrators and by different local manifestations. Similarly, systematic literature reviews show that climate communication research (e.g., Agin & Karlsson, 2021) disproportionately focuses on places in the Global North and on the national scale.

Studies with a global perspective on climate communication are rare. Furthermore, the role of focusing events, such as the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) summits, in bringing together a global public sphere is insufficiently understood. COP summits are intriguing for inquiring into the "issue space" (Stoltenberg, 2021) of climate change as they are hosted in changing locations, chosen for geographic diversity (United Nations, n.d.).

We investigate the shifting socio-spatial order of public discourses around climate change and ask: What is the issue space of digital climate change communication around the annual COP summit? In particular, which places and scales are discussed? Are there differences in the issue spaces of a summit held in the Global North and the Global South?

We analyze the Twitter discourse around COP26 and COP27, which took place in Glasgow, UK (2021), and Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt (2022) respectively. The data comprise 1.8 million tweets covering a 17-day time span around each event. Using computational methods, we investigate patterns within the Twitter discourse to identify trends and differences between the two selected global events.

Specifically, this study employs state-of-the-art language models to identify geo-spatial references and scaling patterns in tweets. We develop a computational approach combining tools such as prompt-tuned GPT models and geoparsing APIs to grasp the geo-spatial order of the discourse. Using transformer-LLM based topic models, we further assess the spatial dimensions and constraints of sub-issues and actors.

This study expands knowledge on geographical orders in digital communication about global events on climate change. Its findings contribute to an understanding of inequalities of public attention to local climate change struggles and the role of different places and scales. Additionally, we present and evaluate novel computational approaches to detect and analyze discursive references to spatial entities in online speech.

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SCI10 Furthering a sustainable agenda

PP 0805 Surfing fragmentation: The uses of web scraping to advance sustainability agendas

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In an era marked by information superabundance and fragmentation, environmental communication faces both unprecedented challenges and transformative opportunities. This presentation explores how different social actors, particularly non-governmental organizations (NGOs), harness web scraping techniques to pursue sustainability agendas amidst the deluge of dispersed environmental data. Through two compelling case studies, we delve into the promises, costs, and potential risks associated with scraping air quality and water quality data, shedding light on the intricate interplay between technology, communication, and environmental advocacy.

Moving from a perspective combining software studies and environmental communication, this presentation will examine role of web scraping in aggregating dispersed environmental data to enhance the effectiveness of sustainability communication and illustrate the promises and challenges associated through two case studies: on regarding air quality and the other regarding water quality data. We will discuss the implications of information superabundance and fragmentation for environmental communication strategies and highlight the ethical considerations, costs, and risks faced by NGOs engaging in web scraping for sustainability initiatives.

The presentation draws on a case-study approach, combining interviews with NGO representatives, qualitative analysis of communication strategies and quantitative assessment of web scraping outcomes. The analysis includes an exploration of the data aggregation process, communication strategies employed, and the ensuing impacts on public awareness and engagement.

The first case study scrutinizes an Italian citizen association's endeavor to scrape dispersed air quality data from various online sources, including their own network. The presentation will detail the technological processes involved, challenges faced, and the outcomes in terms of informed public discourse and policy advocacy. Additionally, it will delve into the ethical considerations and potential risks associated with scraping sensitive environmental data. The second case study focuses on the failure of another Italian citizen initiative to aggregate water quality data through web scraping. The presentation will showcase the successes and limitations of this approach, shedding light on how the organization navigates fragmented information landscapes to catalyze meaningful action. Similar to the air quality case study, ethical considerations and risks will be discussed.

Web scraping proves instrumental in aggregating dispersed environmental data, providing NGOs with a comprehensive understanding of air and water quality issues.The presentation explores how web scraping enables NGOs to craft more targeted and impactful communication strategies, fostering public awareness and engagement. Despite the promises, the presentation emphasizes the costs, challenges and potential risks associated with web scraping, including ethical considerations, data accuracy issues, and legal implications.

SCI10 Furthering a sustainable agenda

PP 0806 Five Citizen Segments in the Dutch Energy Transition: Cross-segment variation in knowledge, media-use, participation, trust and support

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Today, many countries initiate large-scale transformations of their energy systems aimed at dramatically cutting greenhouse gasses (GHGs) emissions, in order to mitigate the most disastrous impacts of climate change in the coming decades. At the same time, polarized public discussions and mediated controversies around the energy transition have been gaining traction around the world. Previous research indicates that the success of strategic communication about climate-change *consequences* crucially depends on the ability to discern between citizens' climate concerns, personal values, norms, and beliefs. Yet, so far, climate change audience segmentation research has not focused specifically on the energy transition. This study addresses that timely gap in the literature. The focus of this study is on the following research question: To what extent can climate change-based segmentation be used to predict variation in outcome variables relevant to the energy transition – such as factors related to efficacy beliefs regarding the energy transition, emotions, participation, communication, individual energy behaviors and support for energy sources? We conducted a survey among Dutch adult citizens (N = 2010) and performed a a segmentation analysis through latent class analysis (LCA). The analysis was based on twelve items measuring climate change concerns and beliefs, environmental personal norms, climate change salience, efficacy beliefs regarding the energy transition, and biospheric value orientations. Model-fit statistics (BICs and AICs) combined with in-depth qualitative evaluations of the LCA results indicated five citizen segments, which hierarchically range from feeling most (segment 1) to least (segment 5) concerned, involved, and responsible with regard to climate change. In addition, segments one and two, and, segments three and four share many commonalities regarding

their climate-related beliefs and attitudes. Thus, we labelled segments one and two as people "alarmed" by climate change, segments three and four as people "concerned" by climate change, and segment five as people feeling "indifferent" towards climate change. Yet, this hierarchical pattern deviates when looking at respondents' optimism regarding the energy transition. Respondents in segments two, four, and five are more pessimistic about successfully implementing the energy transition, whereas respondents in segments one and three are more optimistic about the success of the energy transition. Thus, we co-labelled segments one and three "optimists" and segments two, four, and five as "pessimists". The results of this study furthermore demonstrate that segments successfully predict variance in variables relevant to various themes associated with the energy transition. The segmentation variable proves to have predictive value above and beyond variables commonly used in communication campaigns, civic involvement programs, and policy communication with citizens—such as age, identified gender, education level, institutional trust, and political orientation. We draw specific attention to the finding that segments differ in terms of efficacy beliefs (i.e., optimism and pessimism) regarding climate change mitigation. In our data, we find indications, albeit limited, that this dimension can influence efficacy beliefs in the energy transition among citizens. The outcomes of the study are relevant for strategic communicators working in the energy transition.

SCI10 Furthering a sustainable agenda

PP 0807 Battle of the e-cowarriors: Differential effects of environmental appeals by SMIs and organizations on youth's pro-environmental attitudes and behavior intentions

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The pro-environmental battle is traditionally waged by institutional eco-warriors such as environmental nonprofit organizations (ENPOs). Yet, with the rise of social media, ENPOs are joined by a growing force of non-institutional social media influencers (SMIs), referring to regular people who gained fame with their successful online self-presentation (Khamis et al., 2017). Drawing from the Theory of Planned Behavior, environmental social media posts by (non-)institutional sources may sustain pro-environmental attitudes and behavior (intentions) (e.g., Kim & Han, 2020; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022). Therefore, we systematically compare, for the first time, the effects of pro-environmental appeals by ENPOs and SMIs on youth's attitudes and behavior intentions. Due to SMIs' reputation as relatable role models who establish perceptions of trust among young followers (Schouten et al., 2020), we also examine perceived similarity, wishful identification, trustworthiness and attainability (Morgenroth et al., 2015) as novel underlying mechanisms for these effects. More specifically, we expect these mechanisms to explain the sources' differential persuasive power.

Method

This pre-registered between-subjects experiment among Belgian youth aged 16 to 25 (N = 269) consisted of three conditions (i.e., SMIs, ENPOs, control) to which participants were randomly assigned. Our treatment groups consisted of two real Instagram profiles (i.e., SMIs or ENPOs) showing existing environmental content about litter picking and sustainability. For our control group, we displayed the profiles of a museum and city, which were equally popular to the SMIs and ENPOs. All conditions revealed successful manipulation and randomization checks before data analysis in R using path analyses. This study was IRB-approved.

Results and Discussion

Findings revealed that exposure to environmental appeals overall induced stronger pro-environmental attitudes (b = 0.19, SE = 0.09, p = .041) than no exposure to environmental appeals (i.e., the control condition). ENPOs were perceived as more trustworthy than SMIs (β = 1.17, SE = 0.10, p = .001), which was related with higher pro-environmental attitudes (β = 0.54, SE = 0.05, p = .001) and behavior intentions (β = 0.43, SE = 0.06, p = .001). Both SMIs (β = 0.38, SE = 0.13, p = .005) and ENPOs (β = 0.31, SE = 0.13, p = .021) stimulated perceptions of attainability, which in turn positively affected youth's pro-environmental attitudes (β = 0.26, SE = 0.05, p = .001) and behavior intentions (β = 0.30, SE = 0.05, p = .001). SMIs exerted persuasive effects via wishful identification and perceived similarity—yet only among women and those with higher environmental concern. When all source perceptions were controlled, residual effects of exposure to SMIs on youth's pro-environmental attitudes and behavior intentions emerged, when compared to the control condition (attitudes: β = 0.78, SE = 0.11, p = .001; behavior intentions: β = 0.49, SE = 0.12, p = .001) and ENPOs (attitudes: β = 0.79, SE = 0.12, p = .001; behavior intentions: β = 0.53, SE = 0.13, p = .001). Overall, the findings show that both SMIs and ENPOs are effective environmental communicators, but the specific mechanisms vary and are not yet fully understood.

SCI10 Furthering a sustainable agenda

PP 0808 Managing role pluralism: Researchers as actors in environmental and climate communication

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The "triple planetary crisis" (Passarelli et al., 2021) is (also) a communication crisis. The great communicative challenge of this crisis lies in its character as a conglomerate of so-called wicked problems (Head, 2022; Incropera, 2015; Rittel & Webber, 1973), which, despite much scientific evidence, cannot be reduced to clear cause-effect relationships. Instead, the problems are in many ways interwoven and interdependent. Consequently, solutions can never be perfect and comprehensive, but at best better or worse. Since imperfect and therefore potentially flawed solutions always have ethical implications, wicked problems have a moral dimension (Chan, 2023). Furthermore, in the debate on wicked climate and environmental problems, preferences for the solutions discussed tend to be politicised. Consequently, those involved in communicating wicked problems inevitably have to deal with the fact that their communication is politically and morally judged.

Environmental and climate researchers are both pulled and pushed into this complex web of environmental and climate communication debates. They are pulled by expectations: citizens, the media, and politicians expect science to communicate scientific knowledge in the form of application-relevant scientific expertise to contribute to the development of solutions (Peters, 2021). They ascribe certain roles and obligations to science. At the same time, scientists are pushed by a sense of responsibility and a perceived obligation to communicate. Researchers fundamentally believe in the importance of scientific knowledge for society, but are divided on the legitimacy of climate advocacy (Boykoff & Oonk, 2020) and are sometimes overwhelmed by the challenge of balancing their professional role as researchers and their private role as fellow citizens concerned about the future of the planet (van Eck, 2023).

This qualitative interview study explores this role pluralism, which arises from the interplay between different external role expectations and a multi-layered self-image. It reconstructs how researchers position themselves in the field of environmental and climate communication. Drawing on the analysis of 20 semi-structured interviews with senior environmental and climate researchers, the study provides answers to the following question: How do environmental and climate researchers deal with the diverse external role expectations and their role self-perceptions resulting from the public salience of their research topics? Given the nature of the wicked problems discussed in this field and the associated moral, political, and social ambiguity of right and wrong, it is particularly challenging for researchers to identify and justify their role. The study assesses the role of researchers as actors in environmental and climate communication in terms of external expectations, actual and intended communication behaviour, as well as their perceptions of responsibility for communication. The interviews with scientists in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, conducted in late 2023 and early 2024, place particular emphasis on researchers' views of their position at the interface between science and policy. Researchers from the social sciences and humanities as well as from the STEM disciplines are included in the analysis. The results are therefore also discussed regarding the influence of disciplinary parameters on coping with role pluralism.

SCI10 Furthering a sustainable agenda

PP 0809 How do luxury fashion brands integrate sustainability in their social media communication? An exploration of tweet data analysis

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Fashion industry, the second largest polluter worldwide (EcoWatch, 2015), has generated detrimental impacts on our environment and society (Fletcher 2013; Chow and Li, 2017). Luxury fashion industry is accused of its slow reactions to sustainability (Jain, 2019; Di Benedetto, 2017), reliance on non-renewable materials and exploitation of labor force. This industry faces considerable challenges regarding environmental and social issues and must embrace more sustainable practices to mitigate negative impacts generated by its supply chain (Bundgaard and Huulgaard, 2019; Arrigo, 2018).

Since that sustainability and luxury fashion are often perceived as two contradictory concepts (Kong et al., 2016), and that sustainability messages decrease the evaluation of luxury brands when connected with self-enhancement that motivates one to positively view oneself and seek social superiority (Torelli et al., 2012; Cannon and Rucker, 2022), the luxury fashion industry encounters a significant challenge in communicating their sustainable practices without compromising brand values. Yet, it is imperative to understand how to achieve this effectively.

In this study, we seek to explore how luxury fashion brands communicate their sustainability initiatives on social media and to identify which sustainability message framing strategy used by luxury fashion brands maximizes user

interactions. We collected 259,200 English tweets posted by the world's top 100 luxury fashion brands from Jan. 2014 to Feb. 2023, with user interactions quantified in counts of retweet, like and reply. A subset of 1,347 sustainability-related tweets was extracted from the dataset.

A t-test was performed to investigate the user interaction difference between sustainability-related tweets and non-sustainability-related tweets. The results showed that users tended to retweet ($p < .001$) and like ($p < .05$) more non-sustainability-related tweets than sustainability-related ones, except for reply ($p = .17$).

Furthermore, we examined the framing of sustainability-related tweets focusing on several dimensions encompassing sentiment scores, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals formulated by the United Nations, sustainable offerings (pro-environmental/pro-social) and market offerings (product/service/strategy). To label the messages, we adopted an automated content analysis method using large language models (i.e., GPT 4). The results of ANOVAs indicated that 1) users were more likely to retweet ($p < .001$), reply to ($p < .001$) and like ($p < .001$) messages of life below water and climate action; 2) users tended to reply more to positive messages ($p < .01$); 3) users were more inclined to retweet and like tweets related to industry, innovation and infrastructure ($p < .05$). However, this increased engagement did not extend to tweets about responsible consumption and production. Notably, this pattern of user behavior was observed specifically when the tweets were about products, and not when they discussed services or strategies.

The findings of our study indicate that when luxury fashion brands communicate about sustainability, it tends to result in diminished social media engagement. Nonetheless, these brands could potentially enhance their social media interaction by strategically tailoring their message framing. This could involve concentrating on specific aspects of sustainability, thereby aligning their communication more effectively with the nature of luxury brands.

SCI11 Visualizations of climate change and the environment

PP 0907 Eco terrorists, climate criminals, culture rebels – Visual news representations of climate civil disobedience in Italy, Germany, and the UK

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Thousands of vehicles stopped on the road, historical monuments tarnished. Reports of climate protests have become a staple in daily news across Europe, and lately, civil disobedience groups account for most of the headlines. In this presentation, we offer a cross-country comparison of the visual news representation of climate civil disobedience in Italy, Germany and the UK. While the scholarship of the so-called "protest paradigm" has captured the framing mechanisms dominant in news coverage of protest, the role of news visuals remains understudied (Dumitrica & Schwinges, 2022), while most of the recent scholarship on news representation of youth climate activism employs text-based approaches (e.g., Bergmann & Ossewaarde, 2020).

Our project zooms in on the visual news representation of three highly mediatized collectives: Just Stop Oil! (UK), Letzte Generation (Germany), and Ultima Generazione (Italy). All three are part of the transnational "A22 Network," a collective that connects international climate activism projects and civil disobedience activists. The network's declaration argues that humanity's end has neared and thus, all actions have become legitimate. Our sampling month (May 2023) was declared by A22 as a "month of global action," with all three collectives under study staging public disruptions of everyday life that have been extensively covered by news media in all three countries.

We examined a total of N = 182 news articles across news outlets with diverse ideological orientations (left, center, right): *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *The Telegraph* (UK); *La Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*, *Il Giornale* (Italy); and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Zeit*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Germany). For each article, we recorded the headline, the photograph(s) and the corresponding caption(s). Our analysis employs an inductive-deductive codebook, in line with the principles of qualitative content analysis (e.g., Schreier, 2013) paying attention to how activists are represented visually and how journalists frame the civil disobedience acts in their descriptions.

Our preliminary findings suggest that visual representations of civil disobedience news are consistent with ideological orientations across the sample: left-wing oriented newspapers emphasize police violence on activists, while right-wing oriented newspapers deride activists and underscore the inconvenience for the regular citizens. While the picture captions are largely descriptive ("activists block a street in Berlin"), the headlines suggest sensationalized framing, employing nouns such as "paralyze," "stunt," "illegal," "criminal," to describe protest events. Overall, we observe a tendency of more conservative reporting, even in more liberal news outlets in all three nations, particularly in the UK and Italy.

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SCI11 Visualizations of climate change and the environment

PP 0908 Communicating climate change on TikTok: Adopting visual storytelling to promote public engagement across nations

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Introduction & Research Questions

Climate change is one of the main issues facing humanity and is relevant to everyone's life. However, due to its invisibility and complexity, communicating climate change to the public is not easy (Moser, 2010). Prior research shows that visual representation of climate change can play a critical role in increasing public awareness and motivating behavioral change (O'Neill & Smith, 2014). However, scholars also warn that prevalent visuals in climate communication, e.g., melting glaciers and speaking politicians, tend to be abstract and psychologically distant (Wang et al., 2018). Such images can be problematic and perpetuate the idea that climate change is a distant problem (Manzo, 2010).

The current scholarly discourse surrounding visual representations of climate change underscores the need for further academic investigation. This study contributes to the debate by examining how climate change is presented on TikTok, one of the fastest-growing social media in recent years. Social media have played a crucial role in bringing climate change psychologically closer to people (Anderson, 2017). With its unique affordance and popularity amongst the youth, TikTok is emerging as a prominent platform for climate-related activism and education (AUTHORS, 2021). Several high-profile climate-themed campaigns have been initiated by the platform and its creator communities (AUTHORS, 2022).

While existing research of climate-related videos on TikTok is dominated by English-speaking content, the current study takes a cross-cultural comparative perspective, covering seven countries: Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US). We asked:

RQ1. What types of visual storytelling are dominant in each country?

RQ2. What types of visual storytelling attract more engagement for each country?

Data & Method

This study collects *N* = 7,564 climate change-related TikTok videos through 16 hashtags[1] from the aforementioned seven countries. The countries represent diverse degrees of vulnerability and responsibility for climate change (Eckstein et al., 2020; UNFCCC, 1997). Visual storytelling is operationalized as the visual style of the videos and the communicative functions of its corresponding video description and captions, which are captured through the Google Vision API and a BERTopic model, respectively. Video likes, shares, comments, and play counts are used as indicators of engagement.

Results & Implications

We found 4 types of visual styles: person-dominated, nature-dominated, text-dominated, and a mixture of the above styles. And 7 types of communicative functions: calling for action, explaining the causes, warning about the impacts, offering solutions, raising awareness of wider environmental issues, commenting on climate-related politics, and campaign hijacking. When it comes to nation-level patterns, for instance, in Japan and Thailand, videos containing nature-related visuals and explaining the causes and solutions of climate change are more dominant and stimulate more engagement; in the US and UK, the most popular videos often portray individual TikTokers calling for action and even protests.

This study enhances our understanding of climate communication on TikTok and showcases principles of effective TikTok visual storytelling in the context of climate change for different nations.

[1] #climatechange, #globalwarming, #greenhouseeffect, #climateaction, #climatechangeawareness, #climatecrisis, #climateemergency, #climatejustice, #climateactivism, #climatechangeisreal, #气候变动, #温暖化, #地球温暖化, #ภาวะโลกร้อน, #perubahaniklim, #pemanasanglobal

SCI11 Visualizations of climate change and the environment

PP 0909 Visual framing of climate change on Instagram

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At present, global climate change is portrayed as one of the most significant challenges confronting society. The communication of climate change and the media's coverage of global warming play a pivotal role in shaping people's awareness, emotions, and opinions on the issue. Consequently, a considerable amount of empirical research has focused on analyzing the coverage and framing of climate change in news media (Feldman et al., 2017). Nevertheless, comprehensive gaps in research still need to be addressed:

Firstly, since the majority of studies analyze text, significant knowledge gaps remain in the visual representation of climate change. Research on visual effects has demonstrated the relevance of visual content: Compared to text, images have a higher potential to attract attention, evoke stronger emotional reactions, and leave a more lasting imprint on memory (Geise 2014). The studies on visual effects of climate change imagery differentiate between the following visual frames: solutions (e.g. wind energy), impacts (e.g. flood), causes (e.g. plant), politicians and cliché (e.g. ice bear). The majority of findings reveal that images of politicians and clichés have no or counterproductive effects such as frustration (Metag et al., 2016). Images of solutions elicit positive emotions and self-efficacy, whereas images of impacts and causes create negative emotions, hopelessness, and reduced self-efficacy (Feldman & Hart, 2018).

Secondly, most of the studies focus on print media, while social media are neglected, especially visual platforms such as Instagram (Guenther et al., 2023). Instagram ranks among the most frequently used social media platforms today and an increasing number of users turn to the visual platform for climate-related information (Molder et al., 2022)

The following research questions address the outlined research gaps: Which visual frames dominate in climate-related posts on Instagram? How does the frequency and dominance of visual frames change over time?

To answer these questions, several Instagram accounts of German news media outlets were scraped with the python package Selenium. This resulted in 144.499 posts dating from 2013 to 2023. Relevant posts were selected by filtering the post text and hashtags for climate-related keywords. This resulted in a sample of 9299 climate-related posts. To analyze the visual content of these posts, the currently best performing zero-shot image tagging model (Recognize Anything Model) was used to extract objects shown in an image (Zhang et al., 2023). The result is a list of keywords for each image. Subsequently, the topic modeling technique BERTopic was applied to the keywords describing each image. If possible, the identified topics were summarized to clusters that represent visual climate frames.

Results show that impacts of climate change (23%) are the most used visual frame followed by causes (13%). Solutions or remedies appear less than in 5% of the images but show a consistent upward trend over time. Cliché images decrease over time from 9% in 2017 to 2% in 2023. Images depicting protests are driven by 2019 (referring to the activities of "Fridays for Future") and 2023 (protests of "Letzte Generation"). Over time, the diversity of frames increases, resulting in a decreasing dominance of the impacts frame.

SCI11 Visualizations of climate change and the environment

PP 0910 Economic power and Gen Z activism: The visual motif of the work of art in the media representation of environmental crisis

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In the past years, one of the most recurring media images of the climate crisis has been the attack on works of art by Just Stop Oil activists. These images stray from more conventional representations, as they are not set in natural nor industrial landscapes, the most frequent stages for depicting environmental emergencies. Although these protests –with paint thrown at the protective methacrylate of paintings by young activists– have not entailed any de facto harm to the works of art, they have resulted in a media portrayal of the activists as puerile and capricious villains. Have these protests triggered a shift in media discourse, suggesting a displacement of power and liability from corporations and industrial players to civil power (Gen Z activists)?

Traditionally, the visual representation of economic power as linked to climate change has focused on the industrial landscape (industrial chimneys, nuclear cooling towers) and the ecological consequences of its activities (oil spills), ratifying the responsibility of corporate and political players. As the climate crisis accelerates and its consequences become more tangible, the endangered landscape, flora and fauna have turned into protagonists of visual motifs

(Balló, 2000; Balló, Bergala, 2016; Salvadó, Balló, 2023) related to ecological disasters. The image of activism, furthermore, has been reconfigured by the focus on the youthfulness of activists, with the bodies and faces of Generation Z as an essential driving force.

Within climate activism, the Just Stop Oil protests have garnered media attention for their iconoclastic cultural and economic attack rather than their symbolic nature. In this sense, it is important to highlight the role of the art work as a representation of economic power: as John Berger states in *Ways of Seeing* (1972), their commodification through auction, exhibition in museums or protection in safe deposit boxes has endowed works of art of "a new kind of impressiveness. Not because of what it shows (...) [but] because of its market value". Thus, this paper analyzes how climate change reshapes the way economic power is represented in the media through the visual motif of the work of art. To achieve this, we examine photographs of these attacks published in news outlets and contrast them with more conventional representations of that motif –from images of million dollar auctions such as Da Vinci's "Salvator Mundi" to the destruction of a Frida Kahlo illustration, then turned into an NFT–.

Regarded as iconoclastic acts, these protests therefore "engage with the materiality of the object, but also, and most importantly, with the power and value hidden within and beyond the object, which are almost always tantalizingly out of reach" (Stapleton and Viselli, 2019). Disregarding the productive nature of iconoclasm highlighted by Stapleton and Viselli (2019), this apparent settling of scores of citizen power against economic power is seen as a profanation of the sacred space of the museum (Berger, 1972), and results in the criminalisation of the protests under the slogan of the cultural heritage, while the actual destruction of art for conversion into NFT, with an invisible environmental impact, is applauded.

SCI11 Visualizations of climate change and the environment

PP 0911 A climate of change? Unveiling the impact of multimodal climate change coverage on public perception and policy support

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Climate change has emerged as one of the crucial challenges of the 21st century. Despite the long-standing emphasis on the importance of visual information in climate change communication by strategic actors such as Greenpeace (Doyle, 2007), surprisingly little research has explored the impact of multimodal and visual news on climate change beliefs and climate-friendly actions, even though the news are considered one of the most important sources of information for citizens (Metag, 2016). Moreover, while various studies have examined visual and multimodal frames in climate change news coverage (Wozniak et al., 2015), research on audience reception of this coverage remains the exception (Neverla & Taddicken, 2012; Bolsen et al., 2019).

Aiming to improve our understanding of the interplay between visual and textual frames in climate change communication, we conducted an one-factorial experimental study. A sample of 332 individuals, quoted by age, gender, education, and political interest, was exposed to either a monomodal or multimodal article. The monomodal climate change article consisted of a headline, a date, the author name, and a written article that included three textual frame components (issue, conflict, human emphasis frame). The multimodal article version added a press photograph (serving as visual human emphasis frame) accompanied by a brief caption.

Building on previous visual and multimodal research (Brantner et al., 2011; Geise et al., 2021; Powell et al., 2015), we hypothesized that the multimodal news article would be more likely to influence recipients' issue beliefs regarding the relevance of the issue (H1a) and their perceptions of an imminent threat (H1b). We also predicted that the visual image embedded in the multimodal news article would elicit more pronounced emotional responses, particularly in terms of fear (H2a) and compassion (H2b). And finally, we expected that a press photograph in a multimodal news article would lead to higher support for political interventions (H3).

Our results partially supported these hypotheses. Within the multimodal article, the embedded visual had a marginal effect on the recipient's relevance ratings (H1a; M-mono: 4.23; M-multi: 4.27; $p = 0.7$) and a slightly reversed effect on threat perceptions (H1b; M-mono: 4.58; M-multi: 4.50; $p = 0.4$). However, as expected, multimodal news reception elicited significantly more fear (M-mono: 2.53 vs. M-multi: 2.82; $t(329)=-2.56$; $p= .02$) and compassion (M-mono: 3.20 vs. M-multi: 3.82; $t(329)=-4.87$; $p<.001$) than the text alone. While the multimodal frame did not have a direct effect on political interventions regarding climate change (H3), we identified an indirect effect of the multimodal frame on policy support. As our mediation model shows, and consistent with framing research (Lecheler et al., 2015), emotions (specifically compassion) mediated policy support (indirect = .10, SE = .04, 95%CI [0.04, 0.18]). Put differently, individuals exposed to the multimodal climate change article not only felt a deeper sense of compassion (and fear), but were also more inclined to rally behind policies promoting a climate-friendly approach.

In our presentation, we discuss these findings in the context of previous research on multimodal framing, news reception, and climate change communication, highlighting potential implications for strategic and political actors, and extending our exploration beyond potential effects on individuals.

SCI12 Food communication in falling food systems

PN 146 Exposing meat advertising in the face of the environmental crisis

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Among the efforts to tackle the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation, changes in resource-intensive food systems have the greatest potential (IPCC, 2019; Willett et al., 2019). Evidence shows that a simple shift from a meat-based to a plant-based diet could help mitigate the climate crisis by reducing emissions per person by 20–35% (Hallström et al., 2015), while also contributing to better human health. However, low awareness of the negative environmental (and health) impacts of meat consumption (Garnett et al., 2015; Sanchez-Sabate & Sabaté, 2019) and intensive advertising of meat and animal products (Delliston, 2021; Haffner & Culliford, 2023) perpetuate meat consumption as a normal, standard and even desirable dietary pattern and hinder its necessary reduction. In the context of the failure of the food system, it is reasonable to ask what role food, and meat advertising in particular, plays in this.Research shows that meat advertising increases the demand for meat and meat consumption at the individual level (Boetel and Liu, 2003; Dong et al., 2007; Boyland et al., 2016), and some studies suggest that mere exposure to advertised meat images increases meat cravings in meat eaters and reduces the intention to consume less meat, for example once a week (Elinthorpe et al., 2022). Therefore, societies that are committed to making changes to tackle the climate crisis and improve the health of their citizens should seriously consider the way they communicate about meat consumption. We believe that agencies such as governments should take the lead here and be held accountable for their communications that could hinder necessary changes in finding solutions to our failing food systems. In this paper, we will discuss an advertising campaign co-financed by the Slovenian government with the slogan "Our super meat". Using a multimodal discourse analysis (Ledin & Machin, 2018) of television adverts, we aim to show how these texts contribute to the perpetuation of a meat-based diet as a social norm by targeting salient dietary concerns, which research suggests are the main motivators that lead people to reduce meat consumption. According to Fox & Ward (2008) and Sanchez-Sabate & Sabaté (2019), these are animal welfare, health and environmental concerns. We want to show why such advertising messages supported by state institutions are highly problematic, especially when we analyse them against the background that Slovenia is part of the European Green Deal, which aims to mitigate the climate crisis by reducing global greenhouse gasses by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels (European Commission, 2023).

SCI12 Food communication in falling food systems

PN 147 Communicating cultured meat: an analysis of scientific and technological discourses

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Cultured meat, an innovative food product grown from animal stem cells through tissue engineering, is a promising solution to the challenges posed by conventional meat production and its environmental impact. Since the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) published the report Livestock's long shadow in 2006, the environmental problems caused by conventional meat production have become an important issue for governments, supranational organizations, industry and consumers. Around the same time, the industry began developing high-tech meat alternatives from various sources, mostly from plant-based ingredients (legumes, algae), but also from animal stem cells. This paper looks at the historical development of cultured meat and examines the promotional discourses of the main cultured meat producers, such as Eat Just, Mosa Meat and Upside Foods. The aim of the paper is to analyze the websites and social media channels of the main companies in this field in order to examine the prevailing discourses and communication strategies in the promotion of cultured meat as a valuable and environmentally friendly alternative to conventionally produced meat. Through a transhistorical lens and using the method of multimodal critical discourse analysis, the paper reveals the intertwining of scientific and technological narratives embedded in the promotion of cultured meat. The article shows how scientific discourses and arguments based on scientific knowledge and technological advances conceptualize cultured meat in terms of naturalness, health and cleanliness. By contextualizing contemporary marketing strategies within the historical framework of late 19th and early 20th century food advertising, the paper illuminates the meanings and ideologies underlying both past and present food marketing efforts previously associated with scientific and technological discourses and fields of knowledge, and offers valuable insights into the evolution of these discourses over time. The paper concludes with an examination of the role of science and technology in cultured meat marketing communications in the context of late capitalist envisionment of solutions to the environmental challenges posed by the Western food system.

SCI12 Food communication in falling food systems

PN 148 Sustainable Food in Times of Crisis: a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Consumer Campaigns

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Swedish food production faces a changed situation and new challenges. Pandemics, social unrest, war in the immediate area and climate change have not only motivated Swedish politicians to (re)emphasize crisis preparedness and the will to defend, but also, entailed challenges for Swedish food production and food consumption. Added values such as sustainability, animal welfare and health, which have been explicitly brought forward in the marketing and packaging design of Swedish food (Andersson, 2019, 2020), have been shown not to have the same value for Swedish consumers when inflation rises and prices increase. In the choice between cheaper imported food and the more expensive domestic one, the former has increasingly been in demand. In this presentation I will discuss communicative activities linked to two consumer campaigns launched in 2022 and 2023, #Säkramaten [#Securethefood], by Swedish Meat, and From Sweden. For Sweden [From Sweden. For Sweden] by The Federation of Swedish Farmers, LRF. The main aim of the paper is to discuss the construction, representation and reproduction of domestic food production and food consumption, as expressed in the campaigns. What representations are constructed and how? Which discourses, ideas and values are realized and reproduced, and how?The data consists of social media content (Instagram, and Facebook) and the content on campaign websites. The study draws on principles of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (Machin & Mayr, 2012), and van Leeuwen's notion of recontextualization of social practices (van Leeuwen, 2008). More specifically, the analysis investigates how values and ideas linked to sustainability, health, and crisis preparedness are realized multimodally through choice of design, texts, and images. Of particular interest is the commercial contribution to "the creation, contestation and maintenance of national identity" (Ranta & Ichijo, 2022). The presentation will show a marketing discourse that engages with the world situation of ongoing war, pandemics, and climate change to steer sales. Discourses related to environmental and social sustainability, health, animal welfare, resilience, and crisis preparedness, are drawn upon and given a nationalist frame. By doing so, the campaigns promote and express ideas of who and what the nation is and needs, and what are the national interests. Keywords: food campaign, food supply, sustainability, national identity, marketing Andersson, H. (2019). Recontextualizing Swedish nationalism for commercial purposes: a multimodal analysis of a milk marketing event. Critical Discourse Studies, 16(5), 583–603. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2019.1637761Andersson, H. (2020). Nature, nationalism and neoliberalism on food packaging: The case of Sweden. Discourse, context & media, 34, 100329. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2019.100329Machin, D., & Mayr, A. (2012). How to do critical discourse analysis : a multimodal introduction. Sage.Ranta, R., & Ichijo, A. (2022). Food, National Identity and Nationalism : From Everyday to Global Politics (2nd ed.). Springer International Publishing AG.van Leeuwen, T. (2008). Discourse and practice : new tools for critical discourse analysis. Oxford University Press. http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0719/2007023090.html

SCI12 Food communication in falling food systems

PP 1144 Targets and tantrums: How farming media frame climate action

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The global climate system continues to be disrupted by human economic activity. In turn, proposed changes to ameliorate these climate disruptions have themselves often proved to be socially and politically disruptive. For instance, there has been an increase in societal debate and conflict concerning emissions-reduction policies relating to the agriculture sector in Europe. Opposition to policy proposals such as reductions in the amount of permitted nitrate fertiliser, the EU's Nature Restoration Law, and other land use change and animal herd management initiatives has increased among farming organisations and farmers, and has led to the formation of farmer-focused political parties. It is important, therefore, to understand how farming communities and other actors and stakeholders societal debates concerning agriculture construct, conceive of, and approach climate change mitigation measures. Specialist farming publications are an important – yet often neglected– forum in which these debates take place. Ireland is an interesting case study, as its agriculture sector contributes almost 40% of its emissions (compared to 10% in the US, and 13% in the EU as a whole). The agriculture sector in Ireland, therefore, is a leading contributor of greenhouse gas emissions, and faces significant challenges in meeting reduction targets. The communication of climate-related information to farmers will be important in encouraging the farming community to adopt more sustainable farming practices. This study examines how a key information source – the specialist farming media in Ireland – frames the issue of climate change. It does so by analysing coverage of the release of the Irish government's 2021 Climate Action Plan, across a six-week period in three publications: the *Irish Farmers Journal*, the *Farming Independent*, and *Agriland*. It investigates media framings, the use of sources, and the influence of a powerful lobbying organisation, the Irish Farmers' Association (IFA). We find that the Irish farming media largely

favour policy and political frames. However, a farming supplement published by the country's most popular print title adopted a more combative approach, and deployed a conflict frame with greater frequency than the other publications. Government politicians and farming organisations are the most frequently quoted sources, giving these groups the most opportunity to shape the debate. This study adds to the limited research focused on climate change coverage in specialist farming publications.

SCI12 Food communication in falling food systems

PP 1145 Moo-ving beyond dairy: The impact of animal welfare-, environmental- and health-focused video appeals and message valence on dairy consumption

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The production of meat and dairy and its consumption are associated with negative consequences for animal welfare, the environment, and individual health of people who consume animal-based foods. Previous research has tested the potential of documentary films to increase awareness about these detrimental consequences and to reduce meat consumption (e.g., Buttlar et al., 2021; Herchenroeder et al., 2023; Pabian et al., 2020). Herchenroeder et al. (2023) conducted a pioneering experimental study that compared the effects of animal welfare-, environmental-, and health-focused video appeals on consumers' intentions to cut down meat consumption. Their findings revealed that an environmental video appeal leads to increased explicit intentions to reduce meat consumption, unlike the other video appeals. Consequently, environmental appeals may, thus, be most effective for increasing intentions to alter future meat intake.

While reducing intentions to consume meat is an important step toward adopting a consumption pattern that is more favorable for animal welfare, the environment and health concerns, reducing dairy consumption is equally imperative. Substituting both meat and dairy consumption with plant-based alternatives not only eliminates the inhumane treatment of animals, but also reduced environmental impact including a decrease in global greenhouse gas emissions from animal husbandry. Moreover, such dietary changes offer health benefits, reducing the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Therefore, this study will investigate how consumption of animal-based dairy can be discouraged by exposing people to different video appeals.

The study will partially replicate Herchenroeder et al.'s (2023) design and will use a 3 (video appeal: animal welfare, environmental, health-focused) x 2 (message valence: positive, negative) factorial between-subjects design. Message valence helps to persuade people to change their behavior, but its effectiveness is context-dependent. Some evidence suggests that messages with positive valence are more effective in the context of reducing meat consumption, and such positively frames messages may also appeal better to consumers' self-efficacy. Further, including message valence may help explain previously inconsistent results regarding the effects of different types of video appeals.

An online experiment will be conducted, where participants are randomly exposed to one of six versions of a videoclip that addresses the effects of dairy consumption on either animal welfare, the environment, or health, framed either positively or negatively. Intentions to reduce dairy consumption will be measured in a questionnaire conducted after the experimental manipulation. The experiment will be conducted in March 2024 after which the data will be analyzed. At the ECREA conference (September 2024) full results will be presented.

SCI13 Scientists communicating

PP 1086 Hype in science communication: Exploring the perspectives and practices of scientists

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In science communication, hype is defined as the use of promotional, hyperbolic, and dramatic language to glamorize, embellish, or exaggerate aspects of science, research, or scientists (Millar et al., 2020; Jones, 2017). It involves simplifying and sensationalizing science to shape future visions and gain support, often leading to optimistic or pessimistic expectations influenced by promotional activities (Roberson, 2020). Some authors view hype as a form of scientific deception characterized by misleading or unjustified communication (Wilson, 2019; Intemann, 2022).

Authors have raised concerns about the adverse consequences of hype in scientific communication. For instance, Auch (2018) and Powers (2012) argue that creating and promoting expectations through 'hype' may erode public trust in scientific work, potentially leading to the spread of biased beliefs or political agendas. On the contrary, Roberson (2019, 2020) considers 'hype' to be an effective communication tool that drives engagement in the domains of science and technology, promoting progress and advancing discussions on feasibility and potential.

This study explores scientists' perceptions and use of scientific hype in media, offering insights into how they introduce and present their breakthroughs and their concerns about public engagement (Caufield, 2018; Tiffany et al., 2022).

We conducted online focus groups (FGs, 4–6 participants each). The study included 24 Quantum Physicists working in ANONYMIZED INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE. Recruitment utilized a snowballing technique. Quantum physics is experiencing significant hype, with overstated claims about quantum computing's potential (Ezratty, 2022).

The results of an inductive thematic analysis (TA) highlight that scientists actively acknowledge their pivotal role in generating science hype, aligning with previous research findings (Sumner et al., 2014). They skilfully tailor science communication to suit different audiences, objectives, and visibility strategies within academic and organizational contexts.

Furthermore, the research uncovers a wide range of emotions associated with the concept of hype and its multifaceted practices in science communication, an aspect not extensively explored by previous research. Participants express a complex mix of emotions, primarily stemming from the belief that scientists resort to hype as a means to secure funding. This emotional tapestry includes sentiments of concern, frustration, and skepticism. It's worth noting that frustration is especially evident among those who see hype as a byproduct of broader organizational issues within the academic funding system. They voice dissatisfaction with the pressure to adapt and embellish their narratives to secure financial support, and desolation is notably associated with the demand to sell their research and essentially become sales agents, reflecting the profit-driven aspect of contemporary science.

Interestingly, another significant aspect that emerges from the findings is the presence of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) among scientists. They acknowledge the prevalence of hype and its negative impact on the integrity of science, yet they also actively engage in and, to some extent, justify the use of hype to secure funding or maintain visibility. While they recognize the problems associated with hype, such as the distortion of scientific findings or the propagation of misinformation, they rationalize their own use of hype by framing it as a necessary adaptation to the academic and communicative landscape.

SCI13 Scientists communicating

PP 1087 Robust and generalizable or complex, costly, and cumbersome? Learnings from a reproduction, a direct, and a conceptual replication

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The social and behavioral sciences have recently reported low levels of replicability (e.g., Camerer et al., 2018) and reproducibility (e.g., Artner et al., 2021). Potential impact on scientific reputation has thereby been pointed out (Howell, 2020), just as a more constructive framing has, showing that, for example, the German public interprets the lack of replicability via-à-vis increasing replication efforts largely "as an indication of science's self-correcting nature" (Mede et al., 2021, p. 98). Generally speaking, replicability describes reaching similar conclusions using the same (direct replication) or similar (conceptual replication) methods but new data. By comparison, reproducibility describes arriving at the same results using the same data and methods. To promote reproducibility and replicability, open science practices such as shared data and study materials have been highlighted as necessary preconditions (Dienlin et al., 2020). In communication science, however, content-analytic studies show that open science practices are largely uncommon (Haim & Jungblut, 2023; Markowitz et al., 2021). While this is likely to hinder reproductions and replications, it has been extensively discussed that communication science may be a special case that (a) cannot easily share all of its data for legal and ethical reasons (Freiling et al., 2021; van Atteveldt et al., 2020) and (b) may require conceptual replications as much as direct replications due to the rapid evolution and diversity of its central research objects (Keating & Totzkay, 2019). Nevertheless, replication studies are an important effort for assessing the robustness of existing findings and assessing their generalizability. To illustrate this and the challenges researchers may face in the process, we conducted and protocolled a reproduction, a direct, and a conceptual replication of a study. The study used is an online survey experiment investigating the credibility of manually manipulated online images (Shen et al., 2019). Selecting this case was the result of a prior content analysis of published studies in communication science from 2009 to 2022 with respect to their characteristics that potentially promote or hinder replicability (Authors, under review). Notably, while data and materials were not published with the original study, the original authors shared the data with us via email. In addition to reproducing the results, we directly replicated the study, following the original sampling strategy of US citizens via Amazon MTurk and providing participants with the original manually manipulated images as stimuli. For the conceptual replication, we recruited a German sample via the non-probabilistic online "SoSci Panel" (Leiner, 2016). Taking into account recent developments in the area of generative AI, we updated the conceptual replication study to the new cultural context and by using an AI tool

for creating new fake images. Findings from our reproduction and both replications show large coherence with the original study, with minor interpretative discrepancies mainly due to sample differences. Our approach also shows that it is cumbersome, complex, and costly to run reproductions and replications, both directly and conceptually. In order to ensure robustness and generalizability of the field's findings, this calls for changes in the reward system to more thoroughly honor such endeavors.

SCI13 Scientists communicating

PP 1088 Uncertain futures: Communicating scientific modelling in the public space

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The public debate on how to deal with future developments such as climate change, economic growth or pandemic developments can be challenging. In order to anticipate these developments, the scientific literature provides a large number of projections based on mathematical, dynamic models. These are often complex and their results must be treated with care in view of the scientific uncertainty. In the public debate, various actors and stakeholders interpret and frame these uncertain projections according to their individual perceptions, experiences and interests.

This paper reviews the current state of research in this problem area and identifies research gaps. A framework is presented that provides an overview of the entities involved in the public discourse and is used here to map the existing literature. Accordingly, the *Source* is the producer of the scientific projection model (e.g. scientists) or a stakeholder who introduces their own interpretation of it into the public discourse (e.g. politicians who refer to scientific reports). *Content Creators* (e.g. journalists) produce *Media Content* and make it available to the public. *Decision Makers* are the recipients who make individual or political decisions on the basis of the projection (e.g. citizens, policymakers). Each of these roles can be taken on by different actors, who can also change them (e.g. Sources and Decision Makers can become Content Creator in social media).

A literature search in the Web of Science yielded 4518 papers, which were reduced to 493 by screening the title and abstract. For more detailed inclusion criteria and further analysis a codebook was developed. All papers that examined the public communication or reception of mathematical models on socially relevant topics were included. It was assessed to what extent which actors (e.g. politician, NGOs, citizens) were examined in which role (Source, Content Creator or Decision Maker) and whether the communication of scientific uncertainty was considered. The research method, the modelling topic and the scientific discipline of the publication were also recorded. The analysis was carried out by four trained coders with overall good to very good reliability.

A preliminary analysis of n = 106 included papers revealed that majority of the literature is qualitative research (empirical or narrative reviews). Political actors and agencies are examined particularly frequently in the role of both Source and Decision Maker, followed by scientists as Sources and stakeholders from economy and the public as Decision Makers. Communication and the understanding of uncertainties were almost always taken into account. The existing empirical quantitative research focuses mainly on how laypersons deal with projection models and their uncertainties in fictitious scenarios. Most studies focus on environmental projection models (climate, weather and hydrology) and disaster forecasting.

The analysis also revealed that research on Content Creators, especially journalists, as well as analyses of online and offline media content are rare. Furthermore, quantitative studies with a more diverse focus in terms of the actors studied and thematic priorities are a good approach for further research, whereby findings from the broad, qualitative research should be taken into account.

SCI13 Scientists communicating

PP 1089 Misrepresentation of scientific uncertainty. Automated analysis of (un)certainty in science communication across disciplines and platforms

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Uncertainty is inherent to the self-correcting nature of science, and scientific findings are always limited by scientists' decisions regarding sampling and statistical analyses (e.g., Oreskes, 2015). However, the uncertainty of scientific information is often misrepresented in news coverage (e.g., Dumas-Mallet et al., 2018; Sumner et al., 2016). While media logic plays a crucial role in this misrepresentation of scientific information, there are also indications that the misrepresentation of uncertainty already occurs in scientific articles (Haber et al., 2018) or related press releases (Sumner et al., 2016). The failure to effectively communicate uncertainty in science can leave people misinformed, potentially leading them to overestimate the effectiveness of new discoveries or misunderstand the scientific process, which can ultimately diminish public trust in science. Thus far, there is only little empirical evidence on the

prevalence of uncertainty in science and science communication. Specifically, there is no systematic analysis of how the communication of scientific (un)certainty differs across a) different scientific disciplines and b) platforms of science communication (i.e., academic studies, press releases, news coverage).

To fill this gap, we develop an automated method of measuring the concept of "uncertainty" in texts. Using a context-specific text embedding model and a synthetically augmented database of uncertainty categories, we operationalize scientific uncertainty based on the average distance of the scientific publication to either of the poles of the training data (high vs. low uncertainty). We will then use this method to analyze the prevalence of (un) certainty in a large sample (N = 45,734) of interdisciplinary scientific articles (published in 35 Nature journals), their related press releases, and news coverage. Data collection has been finalized; human validation will be completed by July 2024.

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SCI14 Weather, water, and coasts

PP 1110 Media framing of heatwaves in Pakistan: The link to climate change and public health

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Extreme weather events like heat waves are getting increasingly severe, frequent, and prolonged across the world due to climate change. The impacts of extreme weather events are severe in low-income countries because of low mitigation and adaptation capacity. However, literature on the communication of extreme weather events is dominated by the Anglophone media. The level of media coverage and framing strategies used to report these issues are important to understand because how these issues are debated in the media can influence public engagement with these issues and policy response. Pakistan is one of the climate-vulnerable countries in the Global South, witnessing extreme weather events more often. However, the level and nature of media coverage of extreme weather events in Pakistan is understudied. Therefore, this research investigates media coverage of extreme weather events in Pakistan by analysing two distinct heatwave incidents that hit the country in 2015 and 2018. The events had a huge impact, such as the heatwave in 2015, which resulted in more than 1300 casualties in Karachi, Pakistan. Two months of coverage of each selected event from six leading Urdu and English newspapers are analysed. The quantitative content analysis provides evidence that the magnitude of an event determines the level of its media coverage. Additionally, despite the country's vulnerability to climate change challenges, the media failed to establish the link between anthropogenic climate change and repeated incidents of heat waves. On rare occurrences when media linked heatwaves to climate change, the connection remained generic and lacked any reference to event attribution science. Furthermore, the qualitative framing analysis shows that the media foregrounded six frames in its coverage: attribution of responsibility, public health, disaster, disaster response, morality and ethics, and human interest. The media reported heat waves as a potential health risk, which may help educate the public about the health implications of extreme weather events and climate change in general.

SCI14 Weather, water, and coasts

PP 1111 Role of moral obligation and self-Efficacy to promote acceptance for alternative water sources: Implications for effective communication

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In response to escalating global water scarcity, this study explores the psychological determinants that shape individuals' acceptance of alternative water sources (i.e., rainwater & recycled greywater, instead of current tap

water that is sourced primarily from freshwater reservoirs) for different water usages. Understanding these dynamics is crucial to design communication strategies that promote and introduce innovative approaches for sustainable water practices. An online survey (n = 2623) assessed whether perceptions regarding (future) water scarcity likelihood, perceived vulnerability, self-efficacy to adopt alternative sources of water, moral obligation, water-saving behaviours, and sociodemographics' as predicted the acceptance of different of water source (current tap water, rainwater, and/or recycled grey water) for direct (cooking and drinking), semi-direct (shower, sink, bath & dishwasher), indirect (washing machine & cleaning inside), and distant (toilet, watering plants & cleaning outside) usages.

Ordinal logistic regressions revealed influential factors in water acceptance patterns. Tap water was – by far – most accepted for direct water use, but became increasingly less accepted the more indirect the usage was, in particular for those who feel a strong moral obligation (for the case of semi-direct, indirect and distant activities), feel more self-efficacious (for of direct, semi-direct and indirect activities) and to some extent the future likelihood of water scarcity. Education and age also revealed to have an influence increasing acceptance for tap water usage based on the degree of distance to the water.

The odds of accepting rainwater as a water source was higher for those individuals with a strong moral obligation. In addition, for semi-direct use odds also increased for those who perceive water to be more scarce in the future. Besides the previous factors, for indirect and distant use the odds also increased for individuals that feel more self-efficacious and that reported frequent past conservation behaviours. Age revealed to decreased the odds of accepting rainwater for the four categories.

For direct recycled greywater, the odds of accepting it as a source were increased by feeling more self-efficacious. Additionally, for the case of semi-direct and indirect use, the odds increased for individuals with higher moral obligation; while surprisingly, those who reported to conserve water in their past revealed lower odds of accepting recycled water for these categories. For distant use, beyond the prior, the odds also increased for those who perceive water to be more scarce in the future and perceive to be affected personally by water scarcity and have a higher education.

The findings emphasize pivotal policy and societal implications for sustainable water management. Recognizing the impact of moral obligation and self-efficacy provides a foundation for crafting targeted messages that align with individual motivations. Such communication strategies can be instrumental in promoting the widespread adoption of rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling practices. Societally, emphasizing these psychological drivers could catalyse a cultural shift towards valuing water conservation, leading to more resilient communities in the face of escalating water scarcity challenges. Policymakers should thus consider integrating psychological insights into sustainable water management strategies to convey both individual behaviours and broader societal norms effectively.

SCI14 Weather, water, and coasts

PP 1112 Cultivating coastal consensus: Exploring the impact of intrinsic and instrumental message framing about the sea on project acceptance, and examining the moderating role of openness to change

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Climate change and increased human activities near and at sea, call for a sustainable transition of our coastal regions. However, this transition encounters resistance from the population due to its perceived impact on the region and its inhabitants. Increasingly, social scientists are being called upon in this maritime context, to identify effective communication strategies to promote acceptance of a sustainable transition in coastal areas. While value-based framing is often implied, there is limited to no research on the impact of message framing of values in a maritime context. The current study examined the use of more specific values, termed 'marine value orientations', to develop two different communication frames. The instrumental framing of the sea described the sea as a resource for humanity, in contrary with the intrinsic framing, where the sea as valuable in itself, was emphasized. Both framings included the same risk message about the challenges and dangers the coast is facing due to climate change, and the importance of adapting now. A control frame was added to the design which did not include any value representation of the sea, only the risk message and the importance of adapting to these dangers were presented.

The quasi-experimental study was conducted in a nature reserve where visitors could scan the QR-code and were randomly assigned by Qualtrics to one of the three framing conditions, followed by some questions about their acceptance for divers nature-focused projects (e.g., implementing policies to limit coastal economic development, returning public space to nature to enhance biodiversity). After checking the reliability of the scales, an ANOVA was performed. No main effect was found for the framing on the acceptance of the nature-focused projects ($F(2, 116) = 1.928$, $p = 0.150$). To gain a deeper understanding in which framings work best for which types of people,

we conducted a moderated mediation model for the acceptance of nature-focused projects, with people's overall openness to change as a moderator and their risk perception as a possible mediator.

Our results indicate that framing effects significantly vary based on individuals' openness to change. For those with a high openness to change, the intrinsic framing of the sea (vs instrumental) leads to significantly more acceptance of nature-focused projects, partially mediated by a higher risk perception. For individuals with low levels of openness to change, the instrumental frame (vs intrinsic) leads to more acceptance of these nature-focused projects, without a significant mediation through risk perception. Given that this group exhibit more resistance to the transition (given the lower openness to change), additional research is needed to identify the variables contributing to the heightened appeal of the instrumental frame for accepting nature-focused projects. Consequently, communication frames must be carefully constructed, as this study shows that the same message can provoke opposite reactions among distinct groups.

SCI14 Weather, water, and coasts

PP 1113 Listen to the River Song: Sonic ecologies and sustainability communication

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The history of the Grand Canal in China started from 486 BC, with a total length of 1797 kilometers, connecting the north and south regions of China, this artificial water system has witnessed the rise of cities and towns along the river line. During the modernization process, the old canal has been damaged and polluted. From the 1980s, local government began to regulate the canal and work on the ecological landscape restoration.

This project was originated in 2022, carried out by members from School of Music and Recording Arts, Communication University of China and Beijing Radio Station. The core research question raised in this study is how to build up the conceptual model of the local residents' audible relationship with the hydrological ecosystem of the Grand Canal? To answer this question, we took methods from media archeology (Fuller 2005, Gitelman 2006, Kirschenbaum 2008), using sound walk and multimode environment documentary to reflect a sonic ecology. At the preparation stage, through archive study, two lists were sorted out, List A: biodiversity of the Canal (Beijing Section); List B: 12 historical heritage sites along the Canal. By making short documentaries, we interviewed groups of local residents from the 12 heritage node locations (semi-structured, with age groups), in aim of finding out the soundscape ontology of each location in different times. To this end, a public service advertisement was broadcasted by Beijing Radio Station. In Stage II we applied a technology enhanced sound walking as a methodology for the constructive process of art participation in sustainable communication. The Beijing section of the Grand Canal is about 82 kilometers, going through six districts of Beijing city, including 12 cultural heritage sites (we visited in Stage I). Our sound walking team has divided a day into 12 2-hour time periods, in each time period, we start to walk along the river from a heritage node, use motion cameras to record our visions, surround microphones to pick up what we hear. At the 12 stops, we document urban soundscape or wild recording depend on the condition of different nodes. Finally obtaining comprehensive audible data sets of the natural environment, public participation and the reference group. Accurate positioning between walking groups is carried out through GPS mapping.

As deep mediated methods have enriched the human cognitive space in many ways. The historical and cultural data of ecological soundscape has conveyed a wealth of information in sustainable communication. By analyzing the recordings of the audible nature and audible public participation along the Beijing Section of the Grand Canal, we will build a media model of the *River Song*, which is expected to be intergraded into media and installation art. Soundwalk recordings in the project are used to make YouTube videos, blog entries, sound pieces for radio and other kinds of broadcast, and as sources for a gestural installation piece. Participants' experiences are also discussed directly in conversations following each walk, and this discussion informs the sound work, video and blog entries.

SCI14 Weather, water, and coasts

PP 1114 Deconstructing "sustainability" in communication research – A critical systematic review of a fuzzy concept

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Sustainability communications have been subject to increasing scholarly interest, particularly in response to global climate crises and environmental movements seeking more accountability. Given the growing research in the field, a range of reviews have documented research gaps at the nexus of environmentalism and media/communications (Evans Comfort & Eun Park, 2018; Baran & Stoltenberg, 2023; and the collected works of Mike Schäfer). Even so, "sustainability" is itself comparatively little researched. Where it is the subject of research, sustainability discourse often relates to research trends and ideologically anchoring (e.g., belief in anthropogenic climate change, or not). The purpose of this review is therefore to (1) identify the broad range of sustainability discourses and map these over time (mapping); (2) to deconstruct the term "sustainability" (discourse analysis); (3) to refine extant understandings

of sustainability (conceptualisation); (4) to identify gaps and/or under-representation in research within communication research.

Since "sustainability" is in itself a fuzzy term that may be used in manifold ways for various semantic purposes, this systematic review was used explicitly for identifying articles that subscribed to sustainability as a wider *discourse* – whether in relation to environmental issues or indicators of economic, social, political, or technological longevity. Published, peer-reviewed articles within the cognate discipline of communication research were collected from the Web of Science database, with cross-checks on Scopus and Google Scholar. The initial sample comprised 350 articles, of which 146 articles were selected for further analysis on the basis that they applied sustainability as a specific discourse. These were coded on potential definitions and conceptualisations of sustainability, along with the objects of study for which sustainability is used as a theoretical frame.

Initial results indicate that sustainability discourses in communication research largely focus on climate change and environmental communications in media contents, representations, and imaginaries as shared and articulated on social media platforms. In comparison, little research exists on environmental sustainability discourses that move beyond media contents and representations, such as, for example, environmental sustainability as an infrastructural or material concern (e.g. server farms; the carbon footprints of digital technologies and data centres). While those discourses partially take place in interdisciplinary fora (e.g. in journals such as Sustainability and WIREs Climate Change), they feature little within communication research and often with little definitional and conceptual clarity. As such, extant research is subject to conceptual fuzziness and largely focuses on specific understandings of sustainability in relation to environmental issues (= a narrow understanding). We therefore suggest that more research is needed on sustainability beyond its environmental impact, including social, economic, and political aspects, towards underscoring its critical importance for advancing the field.

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TVS01 European (hi-)stories & crises on screen

PP 0491 Representation of crisis: Transatlantic as transnational and transhistorical drama

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During the last decade a number of research projects and publications have engaged with matters of transnationalism in television (e.g. Bengesser, Esser and Steemers 2022; Iordache, Raats and Afilipoaie 2022, Waade et al. 2020; author 2020). Applying a transnational perspective to TV at the level of production, circulation, and reception is beneficial, since it allows to consider the realities of today's complex media markets operating globally and in geo-linguistic realms within a world that is on the other hand organized by national borders. Transnationalization as approach raises attention to the fact that increasingly social, political, and economic forces are not bound by national borders but operate on supranational, transregional, and translocal scales and scopes (Levitt and Khagram, 2007). With transnationalism as an analytic angel, it was, for instance, possible to trace the global appeal of specific local products (such as Danish TV series). On the textual level, the transnational either resulted from particular historical circumstances (e.g. when *Dallas* had its global success, it was due to the scarcity of TV available) or a particular shift in market developments (e.g. the global attention towards Danish series was due to Britain functioned as a shop window for *Forbrydelsen/The Killing* (2007–2012) raising awareness for the products globally (see author 2020).

When considering the level of textuality many recent examples of transnational TV drama are, in fact, produced by global streaming platforms and distributors such as Netflix or Amazon Prime. The "transnational grammar" that Mareike Jenner (2018) points out refers to genre, value context, aesthetics and language as key tools that are used in a specific way across texts in Netflix's own productions. The Netflix-specific use of these tools thus establishes itself as a grammar that claims transnational understanding (2018; 2021). A recent study supervised by the author (2022) confirmed that the "transnational grammar" of Netflix Teenage drama series is not oriented towards transnational cultures but confirms to a particular Netflix convention, the "Netflix Universe".

Against this background this paper explores existing structures and alternative examples of a "transnational textuality" and takes *Transatlantic* (Netflix, 2023) as case study. It argues that *Transatlantic* is a transnational format that successfully and artfully develops a grammar of the transnational by using a concrete historical event in Marseille during the Nazi occupation; it also develops a language of the *trans-historical*, by evoking visual and narrative parallels between stateless people and refugees now and then. Thus, the transnational appeal plays out on the "middle ground", between the strategy of local specificities (see Danish TV drama) and universalism (see Netflix Teenage drama series), demonstrating how topics, stories, characters, and the concrete audio-visual staging appeals across borders.

To elaborate the argument the paper draws on a past study by the author on the transnational grammar of Netflix Teenage drama series, applies a close analysis of the limited series *Transnatlantic* and includes expert voices (e.g. an interview with creator, head writer and producer Anna Winger).

TVS01 European (hi-)stories & crises on screen

PP 0492 "...today, the world is not automatically the better one." 30 years of Western democracy and East German readings of the historical TV serial "Charité"

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More than 30 years after the end of socialism there is a fierce debate in Germany about the socialist past of East Germany. Some observers assume that the diminishing appeal of the liberal Western order, particularly in East Germany, might be the reason for this renewed debate. Following on this assumption, we wonder whether East German engagement with a TV serial about the socialist past may provide insights into the identification with the current social order. We build on the knowledge that historical TV serials connect their audiences to the present by framing the past in a particular way, promoting current ideas of society and belonging. They influence subjective memories and may challenge, produce or reinforce identification.

We take the example of the German audience success *Charité* and study how East Germans, by reading the third season of this public service broadcasting serial, engage with the two social orders they experienced: with socialism and with capitalism. How do they read the (TV construction of the) socialist past against the background of their experience of the last 30 years? A period in which a media discourse dominated, which largely devaluated East Germany and contributed to cleavages within German society. *Charité* deals with the history of a famous Berlin hospital from Empire until German Democratic Republic (GDR). The third season is set in the GDR at the time of the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. It was broadcasted in 2021.

The theoretical framework combines discourse theory (Foucault), the Encoding-Decoding-Model (Hall) and the concept of habitus (Bourdieu). Empirically, we draw on eight focus groups with 27 East Germans. Our aims were firstly to include participants born until 1973. The reason for this decision was to limit our sample to people who experienced socialism and reunification at least as young adults. Secondly, we aimed at variation, and for this purpose recruited according to age, gender, educational level and place of residence.

Our findings show that, no matter what the GDR and post-unification biography, participants used the GDR construction in *Charité* to refer to current social conditions. References ranged from the financing of the health system and the official rejection of Russian vaccine against Covid19 over the remigration of East Germans to the war in the Ukraine. We found different readings of the serial. Its characters and plots served as anchors of (retrospective) identification with or rejection of the socialist past. The readings of the serial reveal subjective experiences as well as official discourses. Readings formed the background against which the identification with or the criticism of the current German social order unfolded. The different ways in which *Charité* was used to relate oneself to the past and the current society are set in the context of biographies and the dominant media discourse about East Germany.

Our study contributes to the research about popular media influencing post-socialist identities and about the extent they help to "deal with the cleavage between the socialist past and the capitalist present" (Carpentier Reifová et al. 2013, p. 203).

TVS01 European (hi-)stories & crises on screen

PP 0493 TV transnational (re)ordering of historical disorder: Material awakening as transcultural TV history and memory, a case study of Chernobyl

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TV transnational (re)ordering of historical disorder considers what it is to write history and recall collective memories within the context of a transnational TV co-production, with the first collaboration between HBO and Sky Television: *Chernobyl* (2019). HBO has long been known for giving visibility to histories at the margin, giving representation to those often without 'official' representation, but also to events before the more significant ones are written. But what does it mean to produce a transcultural discourse of history, especially one so contested as the nuclear power disaster at Chernobyl in 1986, within a transnational co-producing TV context?

Chernobyl (2019) tells a fictionalised version, almost as witness, as collective memory based on what HBO tell us is 'an untold true story'. This paper asks what it means to constitute within a transnational co-producing TV context a mediated transcultural memory of an historical event, to order it through a television materiality, especially one as contested as the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power facility in Ukraine, at that time part of Soviet Union. In bringing to light this question, I am especially curious about the role of 'transcultural memory' (Crownshaw 2014; see also Bond and Rapson 2014) in consecrating a new TV transnational partnership between Sky in association with HBO Miniseries. My purpose is to explore what Astrid Erll calls 'mnemonic processes unfolding across and beyond cultures' (2014: 14). Highlighting the way in which a transcultural memory travels and transcends borders I adopt this perspective to stress how idioms of witness testimony shaping a televisual materiality representing this past cataclysmic event contributes to legitimising a contemporary high-end TV miniseries designed for a specific television circuit with high cultural ambitions.

Drawing on theories of memory studies and the sociology of culture, I ask what is it to produce a transcultural history of this unparalleled disaster flowing through a transnational co-production 30 years after the fact: which history, whose memories? But ultimately, as this paper will explore, how are mediated transcultural histories order messy ones through a thick description of television materiality.

TVS01 European (hi-)stories & crises on screen

PP 0494 Transcending the blurred boundaries of Chernobyl

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Focusing on the 2019 HBO mini-series *Chernobyl*, this study discusses the potential ethical implications of the fictionalization of historical events represented across multiple media platforms to examine the potential impact fictionalization has on what is culturally remembered and what is forgotten. Theoretically, the paper is based on the conceptualization of cultural memory (Assmann 2011; Erll 2011) and the Peircean conceptualization of ethics (Shepperson 2009) applied to a transmedia context (Gambarato and Nanì 2016) to discuss potential ethical implications for and impacts on what is remembered and what is forgotten regarding the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster (Gambarato, Heuman and Lindberg 2022). Methodologically, the paper is structured as a case

study underpinned by the multidimensional analytical model developed by Erll (2010), adopted to elucidate how the cultural memory of the mini-series *Chernobyl* is mediated amid its ethical implications shaped by the blurred boundaries between fact and fiction spread across multiple media platforms. This analytical model involves the *intra*-medial aspects of how memory is expressed within the representation itself, the *inter*-medial relations that designate the interplay with other representations of the same historical event, and the *pluri*-medial contexts in which memory-making representations are received and exert influence, encompassing reception and discussions in diverse media spheres. The research findings indicate that a deeper understanding of historical fiction as a genre has the potential to alleviate the ethical implications of the series, thus enriching the audience interaction and guiding public discussions toward new perspectives. The inherent tension within the genre not only gives rise to ethical considerations for the audience as they navigate the gray area between fact and fiction but also accentuates the compelling nature of *Chernobyl* as a representation that ingrains memories of the nuclear disaster into the public sphere.

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TVS01 European (hi-)stories & crises on screen

PP 0495 Becoming a 'Netflix nation': Extroversion, exportability and visibility through a case study of Maestro in Blue (MEGA TV/Netflix, 2022–)

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Christopher (Christoforos) Papakaliatis is one of Greece's most recognizable and successful television authors and *Maestro in Blue*, his latest series, managed to turn Greece into a full 'Netflix nation' (Lobato, 2019). Supported by the National Centre of Audiovisual Media and Communication (EKOME) and originally broadcast by private television channel MEGA TV, *Maestro in Blue* became – on 19 December 2022 – the first Greek drama show to launch into global subscription video-on-demand streaming platform Netflix, with the latter having already acquired the rights for the second season at the time of writing. This was experienced as good news, a national accomplishment, as well as a potential turning point for Greek television industries and their representability in the global streaming universe.

This paper is located at the intersection of critical industry and textual studies, incorporating analytical angles that cover the business, aesthetics, and politics of screen storytelling and, thus, contributing to extant research that centralizes the 'disruptive' impact of SVODs on production cultures and practices, as well as modes of storytelling. Shot on the Ionian islands of Paxos, Antipaxos and Corfu, using the locations strategically in a way that combines Papakaliatis' signature glossy aesthetic style, traces of Mediterranean noir and 'weird' wave, and established (cinematic) representations of Greek island idyll, *Maestro in Blue* is addressed in this paper as part of Netflix's glocalization practices (Iordache et al, 2022; 2023) and as an example of "television that travels" (Waade et al, 2020).

By combining a textual reading of the first season of the drama series with a presentation of its production context and an overview of its popular/critical reception, this paper engages with the question around the significance of a small television culture gaining international attention, focusing on three concrete analytical dimensions:

(a) exportability, addressed through a close examination of the visual and storytelling strategies potentially contributing to the appeal of the series to international audiences, including the importance of locations to narrative, iconography and cultural specificity;
(b) extroversion, addressed through an analysis of the creative synergies and production strategies orchestrated in order to resonate with a global commercial logic and (international) distribution, as well as to potentially activate additional market-oriented investments tied to cultural industries and other generators of income and employment, such as tourism;

(c) visibility, addressed through a reflective discussion regarding the impact that representability in global streaming catalogues may have on small television cultures and industries, as well as television studies in broader terms.

Using *Maestro in Blue* as a case study, the present paper provides an empirically grounded analysis of small television industries' engagement with developments in international media production and transnational television theory (Jenner, 2023; Lotz & Lobato, 2023). What is more, it discusses the drama series in question as a potential game changer for Greek television (studies), thus contributing to a broader discussion about the pleasures and gains of international appeal.

TVS02 Video-on-demand strategies

PP 0583 The rise and fall of Viaplay's Dutch Fiction Slate: A failure study

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The disruption of social life during the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in VOD streaming boosting the SVoD market – for both global and local players (Bengesser 2022). The hype of SVoD and its investment in local content production to attract subscribers was followed by a drastic scaling back of transnational drama productions by global streamers like Netflix and (HBO) MAX in Europe and a switch to cost-effective reality TV formats due to most streaming services making yearly losses (Krauss 2023, Mikos 2024).

This paper highlights this development based on a case study of the Swedish multinational streaming service Viaplay, which extended its service to the Netherlands following the pandemic in March 2022. Fitting with the conference theme of 'Communication & social (dis)order', we focus on Viaplay's cancelled Dutch fiction slate as an outcome of market disruptions in global, and particularly European, streaming and original content production.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, Viaplay enthusiastically announced its first scripted Dutch Originals produced under the supervision of Kennard Bos: real-life-based drama *Roombeek* (EndemolShine Scripted), true crime drama *De Jacht op Jasper S.* created by Willem Bosch (Pupkin), dark comedy *Something Stupid* (Leviate Film) written by bestselling novelist Saskia Noort, crime drama *De Schuldige* (Ginger Fiction) written by Liesbeth Strik, and untitled Christmas comedy directed by Michael Middelkoop (HALAL). In summer 2023, Viaplay, however, cancelled all five of its planned Dutch productions due to the deterioration in earnings detected by the company's new CEO Jørgen Madsen Lindemann and his team.

Based on a production failure study (Redvall 2023), the paper contextualises the case of Viaplay in current SVoD market trends in Europe. Our methods include analysis of European industry reports (Film i Väst Analysis, Nostradamus Reports); trade press articles; and information from Viaplay's website, press releases, and communications with stakeholders.

As streamers have become increasingly disciplined with their commissioning practices in a shrinking TV drama market (Koljonen 2023, 24–29), we use the rise and fall of Viaplay's Dutch fiction slate as a case study to signal trends and raise concerns around the future of multinational SVoD productions in Europe. In addition to our key findings, we present a methodological toolkit for failure studies, which offer valuable insights that cannot be gained from research into successful productions.

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TVS02 Video-on-demand strategies

PP 0584 Is Netflix making local television more diverse? Conversations with creatives and content commissioners from Belgium

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Following the publication of its first diversity report, Netflix has positioned itself as a driver of inclusion and representation within the global entertainment industry, pledging to create more pathways for talents from underrepresented communities, and to showcase more diverse stories from around the world (Sarandos, 2021). Recent research (Asmar et al. 2023) shows that, in an attempt to position itself as a transnational broadcaster, the emphasis on cultural diversity (i.e. gender, race, etc.) is for Netflix a crucial strategy of distinction. At the local level, this diversity strategy is, on one hand, deployed by the streamer to presents itself to (local) audiences as the voice of a new generation committed to more inclusive stories; on the other hand, this strategy is used by Netflix to attract (local) talents worldwide by promoting the service as a key partner for the visibility and representation of local creatives.

Yet, while the disruptive impacts of Netflix on local television industries, as well as the strategic responses of national players have been extensively studied within television studies, the focus of existing research remains centered on economic and policy approaches. However, few – if any – existing scholarship examine how local television industries attempt respond and adapt to Netflix's diversity strategy. Therefore, taking Flanders (Belgium) as case study, this contribution explores a) how Netflix localizes its diversity strategy, and b) how national players negotiate seemingly conflicting understandings of diversity and representation, torn between showcasing national specificity and striving for universalism.

Hence, this contribution is based on in-depth interviews with creatives (i.e. writers, directors, etc.) and content commissioners (i.e. public/commercial broadcasters) from Flanders. The preliminary results show firstly that Netflix's diversity strategy and the inclusive practices the streamer appears to be setting in its local productions and content, seem to be putting pressure on local legacy media; we find that local creatives, especially young creatives, while being disgruntled by the streamer's aggressive tactics, are also critical of the perceived conservatism of national players, especially with regards to the on/off screen representation and inclusion of sexual and racial diversity. Secondly, the preliminary results highlight how diversity, especially for content commissioners, becomes a key tool to attract young audiences yet is very often carefully circumscribed to the most 'marketable' aspects of cultural differences, which raises questions as to the potential consequences such use of diversity could have for the local television industry.

TVS02 Video-on-demand strategies

PP 0585 Different Diversities: A comparison of policies and practices at three European public service VoD services

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While commercial globally operating SVODs have discovered identity-based diversity as a branding strategy (Asmar et al. 2023) and way to project a benevolent image, the concept of diversity has a much longer history and a broader meaning in public service media (PSM) tied to the foundational ideal of universality that obliges PSM to speak to all members of a, usually nationally delimited, society and to offer them a diverse array of programmes and viewpoints. More identity-based ideas of diversity have entered public service remits and practice in a cultural "diversity turn" since the 1990s (Horsti 2014) as well as entering regulators' efforts in benchmarking and monitoring diversity. Our question is thus: How are these two understandings of 'diversity' expressed 1) in legal and policy requirements to the PSM, 2) in strategy papers and public service audits issued by PSM or their regulators and 3) in the presentation and exposure of content in the VoD interfaces?

We examine these questions through quantitative and qualitative studies of three PSM organisations and their VoD services: BBC iPlayer (UK), DRTV (DK) and the different VoDs in the ARD Mediathek (DE). We analyse the presentation and exposure of 'diversity' (in its different understandings) in VoD content via longitudinal datasets that document the VoD landing pages daily – starting February 2022 – and record the position of every programme title at the VoDs' front pages, as well as deck titles. We analyse for each of the three countries policy- and legal documents such as The Royal Charter (UK), the public service contract (DK) and Medienstaatsvertrag (DE). We analyse how strategy documents and auditing reports issued by the PSM organisations or their regulators have talked about diversity in relation to their VoDs in the period covering these two years. The combination of these methods and comparison of the three broadcasters from different countries allows us to showcase how differently diversity can be conceptualised and operationalised in VoD practice.

This paper is a report on different publishing strategies for 'diversity content' in PSM VoD interfaces, a discussion of the potentially conflicting relation between the foundational politically oriented diversity ideals at the heart of PSMs' contribution to societal coherence, and the more recent, individualised understanding of diversity as defining one's identity, one's relation to society and one's ability to exercise one's rights (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002).

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TVS02 Video-on-demand strategies

PP 0586 Teaching and doing television studies with the video-essay: Pragmatics and potentials

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This paper takes as its starting point three questions about the video-essay as a radical approach to scholarly challenges in higher education:

1. How can video-essays reframe the relationship between teachers and students in television studies and create collaborative, playful teaching models that strengthen the students' engagement and scholarly reflection?
2. How can video-essays be included in the curricula, teaching- and exam formats in television and media studies?
3. How can we understand the relationship between screen media as a field of study – and screen media/video itself as a way of engaging in, reflecting, and publishing on screen media?

In higher education, we experience that students are struggling with reading, understanding, and engaging in traditional academic texts and theories as part of their study. For some, this is caused by the fact that students read the texts on screens (Spjældnæs & Karlsen 2022). Furthermore, we experience that students brought up with screen media (television, film, computer, mobile phones) as a significant part of their everyday life, have well-developed knowledge and skills regarding the audio-visual as genre, style, story, technology, production, and significant experience of sharing videos online and on social platforms. How can we as teachers at universities take advantage of this and facilitate learning that considers these new conditions and possibilities?

Video-essays have become a go-to form of information and commentary on platforms like YouTube. Meanwhile, in the academy, video-essay-making is recognised as a powerful medium of research and means of scholarly communication and publication in a 'post-literate' digital world (Cox Stanton & de Fren 2020; O'Leary 2021; *[in] Transition* 2014–), and as an essential means of teaching and of developing epistemic competence, i.e., the ability to identify reliable sources and rhetorics of knowledge and to discern and critique techniques of disinformation (Kackman et al. 2018; Grant, Keathley & Mittell 2019; McCabe & McStravick 2019). It is likely that video-essay-making will become a core academic skill akin to writing, and that the ability to make 'creative-critical' contributions in audio-visual form will become an important vector of engaged citizenship.

In this paper we will focus on the video-essay as a significant element in teaching students at universities. Our analysis will include classes of students working with video-essays at University of Oslo (Media and communication) and University of Aarhus (Media Studies and Journalism). The study will be conducted during the Spring of 2024, and the paper will present the main take aways, as well as reflecting on the above-mentioned questions. We will also discuss ways of training teachers at universities to encourage them to use video-essays as part of the curricula, teaching- and exam formats in television and screen studies.

TVS02 Video-on-demand strategies

PP 0587 Netflix uncovered: Insights from data donations

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Netflix is claimed to have disrupted the traditional media industry. Its success is largely attributed to its capacity for extensive data collection and analysis, coupled with the effectiveness of its recommendation system. As a subscription-based platform, Netflix has had no interest in sharing viewing data with external parties. This reluctance has been characterized as a strict anti-transparency policy (Wayne 2021). Facing public pressure, and introducing an

ad-supported tier, Netflix has slowly started to increase transparency. However, as Lotz (2023) notes, "Netflix is only sharing information it wants to share."

Such empirical data, however, is crucial for researchers analyzing streaming services. Several scholars (Lotz 2021; McKensie, Crosby, and Shin 2023; Scarlata 2022) have used Netflix's limited data to try and analyze usage patterns. Castro et al. (2021) went another way and developed a browser extension to examine binge-watching by 13 participants over ten days. The lack of comprehensive data is problematic because it leads to reliance on Netflix's own narratives about matters such as binge-watching, content popularity (and diversity), taste clusters and their recommender system. These narratives help to perpetuate myths that limit our understanding of streaming platforms, raising questions about their disruptive impact (van Es 2023).

A new approach to data gathering has emerged. Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union, individuals are granted the right to obtain a copy of their personal data held by data processors. Netflix subscribers in the EU can easily request their viewership data through a download button. These data come in CSV files that contain relevant information including viewing account details, clickstream, viewing activity, devices, profiles, and playback related events. In our Data Donations project, we invited Netflix subscribers to contribute this data for research, along with completing a survey about their streaming preferences and perceptions of the recommender system. By analyzing Netflix interaction data and surveys from about 200 Netflix subscribers, this study offers a critical assessment of Netflix's claims regarding binge-watching, popularity, diversity, and algorithm effectiveness, while also highlighting potential limitations and inaccuracies in Netflix's released data and metrics.

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TVS03 Television's role in societies – Past and present

PP 0677 Television in the service of social planning: Creating preschool television in 1970s Finland

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This paper explores television's role in social change in a historical perspective, focusing on television's "era of scarcity" (Ellis, *Seeing Things*) in Finland. Television was tied in with social planning in the era of modernization, urbanization and the development of the welfare state. To explore the hopes placed in television's potential to manage social change I examine public service broadcaster Yleisradio's (YLE) preschool programme *Noppa* (1973–1981). I analyze *Noppa*'s production background, focusing on connections between television and governmental and non-governmental organizations and other actors. Methodologically, the paper is based on media historical inquiry using archival sources. YLE's archives for *Noppa* include research, scripts, production plans, press articles, promotional material, etc. In addition, I've studied contemporary publications relating to *Noppa*.

Noppa was developed in response to a major social reform, the introduction of the comprehensive school system which promised the same education for all children regardless of social background. At the same time, kindergartens were developed to enable women's participation in the workforce. *Noppa* was to provide preschool education for children who did not attend kindergarten, to ensure they learned skills required at the new comprehensive school.

Noppa's ethos grew from the programming policy of the Children and Youth department of YLE TV1, which emphasized television's responsibility to alleviate social inequalities and democratize access to culture. *Noppa* was also inspired by international models of preschool television, in particular *Sesame Street* (1969–). YLE collaborated actively with other Nordic public service broadcasters but it declined to participate in plans to create a Nordic

Sesame Street, developing *Noppa* instead. *Noppa*'s creators emphasized its difference from international models: whereas *Sesame Street* focused on literacy, *Noppa* covered a broad range of social and cultural issues.

Noppa's production drew on a wide network of institutional and individual partners. A key member of *Noppa*'s production team was Pirkko Liikanen, a Professor of Psychology at the University of Jyväskylä, who provided the theoretical foundations for *Noppa*'s educational approach and published a lot of research on the programme. The production team also included Liikanen's twin sister, who worked at the UN Association of Finland, providing *Noppa* with a direct link with Unesco's policy of internationalizing education; as a result, *Noppa* included regular segments about Third World children. To ensure that *Noppa* would be properly used for preschool education, YLE collaborated with the state department of social affairs (Sosiaalihallitus) to disseminate a guide magazine for nannies (often lacking professional training), to teach them how to use *Noppa* to create educational activities for children. Later, YLE collaborated with the Central Union for Child Welfare for the same end. Thus, *Noppa* participated in efforts to develop preschool education in collaboration with many other social actors.

Noppa illustrates the hopes placed in television's potential to further democracy and social equality during the creation of the modern Nordic welfare state. Now that the welfare state model is in many ways threatened, it invites us to reflect on the potential of public service television in the present.

TVS03 Television's role in societies – Past and present

PP 0678 "No, there will never be a dictatorship again in Argentina": Remembering the dictatorship (1976–1983) and empowering the child citizen in Argentinian animation

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During the 1960s and the '70s, several military coups took place in South America. These dictatorships unleashed violent and brutal state terrorism across all spheres of private and public life. The disappearance, torture and assassination of thousands left a deep mark in these societies and created collective traumas that are still being negotiated across generations. Today, post-dictatorial children are dependent on different media to understand, cope with and learn from this recent past, including popular culture forms, such as animated series.

This paper focus on the role of television animated series in negotiating dictatorial pasts and collective traumas in a social context of growing negationism and disinformation in the region. Specifically, it provides a close reading of an episode of the Argentinian children's animated series La Asombrosa Excursión de Zamba (Zamba's Amazing Excursion) broadcasted on the public channels Canal Encuentro/PakaPaka (2010–), titled 'En la Casa Rosada' (At the Pink House), which focuses on the suspension of democracy and the takeover of political power by the military dictatorship (1976–1983). It approach the series as a site of struggle over collective (post)memory, with a particular focus on how the child-subject is represented and (politically) positioned in the narrative.

By applying a textual reading focusing on aspects of narrative structure, characters, and style (including settings, editing, sound) and by critically examining the relationship between animation, post-memory and children's citizenship, we argue that this particular episode not only convey memories across generations that challenge dominant 'silence' and/or (official) political narratives, it also contributes to the educational and emotional understanding of historical trauma among today's post-dictatorial Argentinian children. Moreover, we claim that the episode contributes positively to their understanding of democratic values, government structures and civic responsibilities, encouraging the cultivation of an active critically informed and socially responsible (child) citizen.

Keywords: Television, Animation, Post-dictatorship, Post-memory, Collective Memory, Children Citizenship, Civic Children

TVS03 Television's role in societies – Past and present

PP 0679 Videograms of an anti-revolution: In defense of an inclusive engagement with the TV archives of the Romanian Revolution

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It is by now widely acknowledged among scholars that television as a medium played a pivotal role in the unfolding of the Romanian Revolution of 1989 (Petrovszky, Tichindeleanu, *Romanian Revolution Televised*, 2018). This assertion is commonly understood to highlight the significance of the Romanian Revolution as a historical event that was broadcast in real-time, thus marking the inauguration of a new era in the history of media. It also implies the gradual change of status of the Romanian Television as an institution during those intense days, from a catalyst of popular discontent to becoming the main agent of large-scale manipulation.

However, this paper posits that such arguments predominantly rely on an imperfect and incomplete engagement with, as well as a truncated analysis of, the available archival corpus of televisual footage amassed during the days

of the revolution. It argues that a vast majority of theoretical and practical contributions to this topic, spanning from Jean Baudrillard's essay on the mass graves of Timisoara and the more general proliferation of simulacra to the seminal found footage film *Videograms of a Revolution* (1992) by Harun Farocki and Andrei Ujica, have culminated in the creation of what film critic Serge Daney referred to as "trademark images" (*images de marque*) – convenient clichés which block the acquisition of critical knowledge, while helping to create an immediately intelligible image of the event. It comes as no surprise, then, that the Romanian Revolution has garnered so much attention, since it conformed to a clear-cut revolutionary, even catastrophist imagery: severe blood spills, theatre of war cityscape, mass killings, and so on.

By tracing a recent personal involvement with the existing archival material through a selection of case studies (ranging from well-known documentary films to previously uncharted footage) that contradict/prolong previous interpretations, this presentation advocates for an extension of the mass of images deserving consideration when addressing the subject of the Romanian Revolution. Furthermore, it aims to show that a comprehensive examination of this body of TV rushes could generate updated perspectives on this particular matter, capable of effectively challenging ossified interpretations which have pervaded both academic and popular discourse for decades. Ultimately, this underscores the need for a reassessment of overlooked televisual depictions of the revolution. It posits the days of December 1989 as an unparalleled period of liberation for Romanian Television—transpiring between an era characterized by tightly regulated, state-controlled broadcasts and the imminent shift towards a commercially driven, marketing-oriented landscape.

TVS03 Television's role in societies – Past and present

PP 0680 How to justify the invasion of another country with the help of TV: Tips from Russian propaganda

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Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 was accompanied by large-scale information operations. For this purpose, all possible communication channels were used: from television to social media, including mass texting on mobile phones.

Information has become a powerful tool in this war and continues to play its role. At the same time, the waging of war in Ukraine, the occupation of its territories, and the shelling of cities are accompanied by the support of the Russian population, which has remained virtually unchanged for 2 years of full-scale war. This also indicates that propaganda in local media is important and influential, and forms exactly the necessary picture of the world that the Russian authorities need. Given that television is the main channel for receiving information among Russians, it is important to monitor and analyze the narratives that are spread there to understand better information threats, as well as to understand how the authorities can use television even to explain why it is worth starting a war.

That is why this study will analyze what narratives Russian propaganda formed on national TV on the eve of the invasion of Ukraine in January and February 2022, and what methods and techniques it used to do so. Using the content analysis method, the news of the 3 most popular TV channels in Russia, namely prime-time news, will be analyzed.

This research will show how Russia prepares its population for war by using television and disinformation methods alongside, which narratives Russia uses to form an image of an enemy that must be destroyed, and how it explains the need for war. Such studies can be compared in the future with similar information operations used in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and other countries that were involved in wars on the side of the aggressor to understand this algorithm and try to develop methods of counteraction.

TVS03 Television's role in societies – Past and present

PP 0681 Still relevant but not as much? The role of television in the media consumption of young people in Portugal

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Young people of the digital generation consume news and information in their logic (Swart, 2021; Swart, 2023). Multiplatform consumption and personal preferences highlighted by algorithms prevail. In this context, what role does a traditional medium like television still play?

In a financed project on young people, news and digital citizenship, we gathered data on the role of television in the informational routine of young people (15–24) living in Portugal from an online survey (N = 1300) and semi-structured interviews (N = 42) applied between January and September 2023.

This research is structured around a mixed research design. The interviews were carried out via Zoom using card-sorting exercises with a think-aloud protocol (Schrøder, 2012; Peters et al., 2022) and focused on the consumption and socialisation of news in the context of a digitalised society.

The survey showed a broader perspective, indicating that television ranks fourth (85.5%; n = 1088) in terms of media that young people dedicate time to every day (between half an hour and over five hours). At the top of the ranking are social media (97.9%; n = 1253), smartphones (97.7%; n = 1248), and laptops (86.2%; n = 1078). In the fifth position is television/streaming (77.9%; n = 961).

The particular purpose of this presentation is to map the role of television in the informational routine of young people (15–24). We deepened the analysis using qualitative data. The young people interviewed (N = 42) are divided into three main profiles: 1) those who say they don't watch television, but mention details of TV shows, news coverage, and TV presenters; 2) those who say they don't have a television set at home or only use it to watch streaming services; 3) those who watch television when socializing, whether in family or other contexts.

Among the justifications for not watching television are the difficulty of fitting it into the routine, a preference for on-demand services, and a lack of interest in the presented content, which is considered repetitive. Some interviewees also associate the habit of watching television with previous generations, particularly parents and grandparents. Those who watch it during socialization moments emphasize that this habit is longstanding and promotes dialogue.

Despite television not being the primary means of accessing information for young people in Portugal, the results indicate that it remains relevant. Interviewees from the three different profiles stated that they watch excerpts of television news reports posted on social media. Exceptional events, such as the pandemic and wars, also led them to turn to television. On the other hand, there is a perceived loss of relevance. A portion of young people do not have a television set at home and do not express a need for it. Additionally, some interviewees question the coverage of television channels and assert that they all address "more of the same" (negative sense). Although data show that young people trust traditional media, they also assume they primarily use digital media. This may raise questions about the relevance of information quality and its social impact.

TVS04 Serial dramas and the gender(s): A transnational approach to detect the influence of media narratives on european youngadults' awareness about gender-related issues

PN 117 Young adults and gender issues in serial dramas: the case of Italy

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This paper focuses on three contemporary serial dramas aimed at young adults: two Italian productions, namely Mare Fuori (Rai, 2020–) and Prisma (Prime Video, 2022–), and Sex Education, a British production for Netflix. The three serial dramas have been chosen as case studies based on various criteria. These include focus groups conducted in Italy with high school students, in-depth interviews with audiovisual professionals, and the objective of providing an accurate, albeit partial, snapshot of the Italian media system and its diverse production and consumption practices. Mare fuori is a crime drama produced by the Italian public broadcaster and set in a juvenile prison in Naples. Prisma is a coming of age tv drama co-produced by the global service Prime Video with Cross Productions, the production company behind SKAM Italia (TIMvision 2018–19, Netflix 2020–). Finally, Sex Education (Netflix, 2019–23), besides shedding light on young Italian viewers' widespread habit of watching Anglo-American products, was revealed by the Italian focus groups with students as one of the most discussed serial dramas directly tackling gender issues. All three cases were approached with a mix of methods. For the two Italian dramas, insights from professionals directly involved in the production or distribution processes were merged with data gathered through production studies. For Sex Education, desktop production studies focused on how the serial drama circulated and was promoted in the Italian context.In particular, our analysis centres on specific issues in terms of gender equality and representation of gender roles in the three selected case studies: in Mare fuori, we analyse the problematic construction of alpha-male, toxic masculinity within a patriarchal criminal subculture; in Prisma, the coming of age of a character through the nuances of exploring one's own complex, non-binary gender identity and how to communicate it to others; in Sex Education, the aftermath of a sexual attack and the experience of unwanted sexual attentions that the majority of women share at one point in their lives.

TVS04 Serial dramas and the gender(s): A transnational approach to detect the influence of media narratives on european youngadults' awareness about gender-related issues

PN 118 From toxic masculinity to gender empowerment: Media literacy and gender issues in danish high schools

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Data from five focus group interviews with Danish high school students conducted in Denmark suggests three cases that potentially work well in a teaching situation with specific attention towards motivating debates about gender equality and media literacy.1) The US series Euphoria (HBO, 2019–21) is a well-known series among Danish high

school students, and it is applauded for its 'naturalised' narrative about transgender identities, among other things. Other series meet disapproval for a 'forced' or caricatured representation of gender issues. The series represents the presence of larger US platforms on the Danish market, while it presents a narrative way to tackle and discuss and examine the complexities of toxic masculinity. 2) The Danish series Rita (TV 2/Netflix, 2012–20) surfaced unmotivated by the interviewer in four out of five interviews and appears as a much-watched series by many Danish high school students. The series epitomises local and commercial public service entering co-production agreements with larger streaming services such as Netflix, while motivating discussions about gender and sexuality as well as gender-blended character traits. 3) The Danish series Zusa (YouTube 2022–23) works as an overall incorporation of the Danish creator Jonas Risvig, a notorious voice among Danish young adults. This specific series represents a recognizable sociocultural environment for young adults, while it – as a series specifically distributed through YouTube – also points towards new, independent production and circulation of serial drama content through social media. Especially guided by naturalised dialogue and close collaboration with young adults during production, the series also presents central moments of gender empowerment, but predominantly is portrays naturalised gender environments in young adult drama.In this paper, we present insights into Danish high school students' comprehension of gender issues through the lens of serial drama and series consumption. We highlight three series usable for teaching media literacy and gender issues through TV aesthetics and character studies. Finally, it points towards how such insights into TV series aesthetics and media practices may satisfy existing needs among Danish teachers in high schools.

TVS04 Serial dramas and the gender(s): A transnational approach to detect the influence of media narratives on european youngadults' awareness about gender-related issues

PN 119 Evaluating the place of gender in Irish serial drama production, representation and reception

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This paper represents findings from our research undertaken on Irish serial drama productions, representation and reception with a particular focus on gender representation, gender identities and gender stereotypes and how they are viewed by young people. While the GEMINI project is concerned with European approaches to gender equality by engaging young people in serial drama analysis in educational contexts, there are localized nuances that frame and shape the interrelation between production, representation and reception. Firstly, we discuss how the Irish audiovisual industry more generally has engaged with policy aimed at improving gender representation in production through various audiovisual agencies' funding schemes, which are important supporters of serial drama production. We demonstrate how these schemes have put gender center stage in audiovisual production. We also detail how the small size of Ireland has necessitated more transnational productions and globally appealing content which, in turn, has influenced the type of gender representations we find in Irish and transnational serial drama. Secondly, we examine the types of gender representations in Irish serial drama and read them through the lens of Ireland's increasing social liberalism which has resulted in better quality and quantity of gender representations outside of the traditional hierarchical gender structure that dominated Irish society for most of the past few centuries. However, our research on Irish local and transnational serial drama productions demonstrates that there is a persistence of some gender stereotyping, particularly of young people who are often represented in heteronormative ways. Thirdly and finally, we relate these findings to those of our focus groups with young people. In our focus groups we found that young people varied considerably in the extent to which they engaged with, were cognizant of, or resistant to gender equality and discussion of gender issues. These young people were, nonetheless, able to recognize gender stereotyping and provoke discussion of gender representation in serial dramas. In particular, they saw Irish serial drama as representing the parent generation's view of gender and, so, they looked instead to foreign-made serial drama to find more relevant and meaningful gender representations. We consider the implications of these findings in our effort to promote gender equality through use of serial drama in the Irish educational context.

TVS04 Serial dramas and the gender(s): A transnational approach to detect the influence of media narratives on european youngadults' awareness about gender-related issues

PN 120 The enculturation function of platform algorithms: how Romanian teenagers discover gender equality

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In the Gender Equality Index 2022, Romania is the last but one EU country. The index is a composite of several criteria measuring the differences between women and men regarding access to work and fair payment, financial resources and economic situation or access and behaviour related to health. Another set of data, on sexual crimes, shows an even gloomier difference between the status of men and women and an utter disregard for the wellbeing of girls. The 2023 Eurostat data on live births by mother's age and citizenship indicate that nearly half of

all teenage mothers in EU are coming Romania. Romania is, also, one of the main sources of human trafficking in Europe, with more than seven out of 10 victims trafficked for sexual activities. The recruiting methods, for girls and boys alike, range from the human trafficking done by a member of the family or an acquaintance, that offers the perspective of a better life and of work, to a lover boy, that promises emotional and financial support. Sexual crimes against young girls and human trafficking for forced labour and for illegal sexual activities are supported by social perceptions of the role and the place of women and children in the Romanian society and the role of the state in protecting the weak.Yet, things are changing. Three focus groups with Romanian teenagers from different high schools in Bucharest and twelve in-depth interviews with high school teachers from Romania demonstrate that mentalities are changing and younger generations are more inclined to acknowledge, understand and even defend fundamental human rights, including in gender equality issues.In general, teenagers have little or no possibility to talk about gender equality issues in family, at school or in their community. Some of them admit to avoiding gender equality discussions, because it is a controversial subject, both with adults and with some of their peers. Nevertheless, all are aware of the main themes, from women's representation in politics to LGBTQ+ rights of private, fulfilling lives. The main information source is social media and serial dramas on streaming platforms.What teenagers consume is based on algorithms recommendations. The results are mixed, depending on personal background and direct knowledge of persons belonging to a sexual minority. Focus groups and interview data, gathered in the GEMINI project, show that algorithms alone can not be trusted to nurture an inclusive society. Online content can support old stereotypes or create new ones. Parasocial opinion leaders, from social media, movies and serial dramas, can have a wonderful or, on the contrary, a terribly dangerous influence on young adults. For an inclusive society, we need coherent public policies that address actual problems regarding gender equality and a coherent educational offer for all high school students, no matter their personal background or the location of the school – as the GEMINI project sustains.

TVS04 Serial dramas and the gender(s): A transnational approach to detect the influence of media narratives on european youngadults' awareness about gender-related issues

PN 121 Measuring serial dramas' influence on EU young adults. A transnational approach toward gender issues

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In the wide European scenario, EU Member States stand out for different approaches toward gender-related issues, and they tend to show strong disparities in gender equality and women's empowerment, thus highlighting the threat of a Europe "at different speeds". According to EIGE'S Gender Equality Index, the ranking of leading Countries was dominated in 2023 by the Nordic ones – with Sweden and Denmark in the top three – while Romania and Hungary occupy the bottom two places.This different approach towards gender equality in EU Countries, also resulting from the latest Global Gender Gap Index and Women, Peace, and Security Index, reflects a consolidated historical and sociocultural trend. Nordic countries turn out to be leaders on gender equality in Europe. On the opposite side, Eastern Countries keep showing most pronounced inequalities in the domain of power, especially related to women's unemployment and under-representation in decision-making positions.If compared to the average Gender Equality Index score for the EU-27 (70.2 points out of 100), the EU Mediterranean Member States show the more diversified distribution of their gender equality scores – thus highlighting different progress degrees in the domains of knowledge, power, money, and health imbalances as well as gender-based violence. The Anglo-Saxon area stands above the EU's score, showing high rates in the domain of health and economic decision-making. Based on these premises, the paper aims at understanding to what extent and how gender-related narratives provided by serial dramas differently influence European young adults coming from different countries (Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Romania) representative of the above-mentioned four areas (Northern, Anglo-Saxon, Mediterranean and Eastern).From a methodological point of view, the paper presents the results of a multilanguage quantitative CAWI survey, addressed to European high school students, which carried out a mixed method approach aiming at measuring and understanding:high school students' interest, perceived relevance, awareness, and attitudes towards gender-related issues within the wide scenario of an intersectional approach;their perception about the relationship between serial dramas and gender-related issues, focusing on key topics like relationships, stereotypes, and identity within these narratives referring both to "local" and "not local" productions;the perceived influence of serial dramas on gender-related issues, examining how these narratives contribute to shaping their own world;the interplay between gender-related issues, serial dramas and educational training in European young adults' perceptions.The research's main findings confirm that serial dramas consist of meaningful discursive practices decoded by each individual/social group according to their own meaning structures (frameworks of knowledge, structures of production, and technical infrastructures). Therefore, their power of influence is strongly mediated by sociocultural backgrounds, which result in a selected exposure to the message they share and, as a consequence, in the attitudes and behaviors young adults perform towards gender-related issues.

TVS05 Production processes across genres & platforms

PP 0896 Producing content in Turkish TV industry: Connections, clusters and patterns

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Turkish TV industry has become a major player in the global television market following the worldwide success of Turkish TV series since the mid-2000s (Yanardağoğlu and Turhallı 2020). These TV series which are branded and categorized as 'dizi' (Öztürkmen 2022) have distinctive narrative and stylistic attributes that are based on a mixture of genre formulas, established tropes, and character types. When Netflix is launched in Turkey in 2016 the successful formula of making a Turkish TV series which does not only work in the local context but also travels well on a global scale has already been formed. Following the appearance of global and local video-on-demand platforms, a new wave of Turkish TV series is launched and reshaped this formula.

Compared to the Turkish TV series that are broadcast on mainstream TV channels on primetime with a duration of 150 minutes per episode, these new generation 'digital series' (Vitrinel&Ildır 2021) are designed by appropriating global standards with much shorter episodes and seasons. Soon they started to be defined as an alternative to the Turkish TV series on mainstream television channels (Ildır&Çelik 2021) and perceived as 'quality television' in the local context (Arslan&Tetik 2021). However, the studies analyzing these contents from audience and industry perspectives show that despite the opportunities offered by online streaming platforms to tell unconventional stories and experiment with visual styles, internalized limitations of the mainstream television in Turkey such as the censorship laws, rating anxieties, channel policies and economies still have a big influence in their production (Yörükoğlu&Akçalı 2020).

Based on these remarks, it can be asserted that although Turkish TV series on streaming platforms are bound to different dynamics of circulation, reception and technology compared to their local counterparts on mainstream television channels they still operate on a common ground in terms of production. This paper is mainly concerned with this interdependence which can be seen more apparently in the case of Netflix which "positioned itself more in relation to the traditional TV in Turkey, by using globally recognized stars and collaborating with production companies known for their work in local television" (Vitrinel&Ildır 2021, 8). In an attempt to make research on this interdependence, the study starts off by collecting the data of the above the line crew members such as the producers, showrunners, directors, and scriptwriters who create Netflix Turkish originals and expands this data by examining the other works of the same individuals that are done for the mainstream television channels. By using social network analysis as a method (Weber 2018), the study qualitatively interprets the data in order to identify the central figures in Turkish television industry who play major roles in connecting streaming platforms and mainstream television, recognize clustering themes, trends and stylistic patterns in Turkish television contents on Netflix and mainstream television channels and reveal the connections between 'digital' and 'mainstream' Turkish TV series which are discursively positioned in opposition in the local context. Hereby, the study aspires to take an initial step to understand the ecosystem of Turkish television industry.

TVS05 Production processes across genres & platforms

PP 0897 The disruption of live programs on online video platforms: The case of Spanish "Operación Triunfo" (OT2023) and its second resurrection thanks to Prime Video, YouTube and TikTok

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The adaptation of long-established television formats, not only fiction series, but especially reality or talent-shows created on traditional television at the beginning of this century, is one of the most recent trends in the offer of global TV platforms. Although there have been many reluctance to live content, and some initial experiences have not been very fruitful, in the Spanish case the recent example of a format known worldwide as "Operación Triunfo 2023" ("Star Academy" in other countries) could offer clues and warnings about the advantages and risks of these adoptions of classic linear television formats on new payment platforms.

In this paper we would like to focus both in the background and, above all, the second resurrection of this format. Born in 2001 on the Spanish public state television (TVE), it accumulated 11 seasons until last year, all of them broadcast on free-to-air channels. After a first decade (2001–2011) broadcast first on public state television and then on the private channel Telecinco, in 2017 the format experienced a first resurrection thanks to its recovery on TVE, but this time with a decided commitment to its expansion on social networks as Twitter, now X, and a 24-hour uninterrupted online content channel on YouTube. The success among the new generations was dazzling, recalling the great initial achievements and introducing new musical styles and, especially, new ways of behaviour of Spanish youth. In 2023, the space's production company (Gestmusic, belonging to Endemol Shine Iberia of the

Banijay Group) agreed with Amazon´s Prime Video to recover the format, for the first time to broadcast weekly galas live on its platform, while maintaining the 24h channel on YouTube and betting for a new and abundant presence on TikTok. The premiere took place on November 20, 2023, with an expected end date of February 19, 2024. Its programs are broadcast, according to the production company, to 30 countries around the world.

Although there is no known data on the success of the new season, it is evident that its contents occupy the top positions in the Spanish social conversation on Twitter/X, for example. This paper will also analyze both the strategy designed for this "second resurrection" of the format and, on the other hand, present the first results of an audience research on these Spanish youth audiences and their judgments, among others, about these new practices of live consumption on platforms until now reserved for fiction or on-demand content. This audience research is part of the work of the National Research Project "Repertoires and media practices in adolescence and youth: reception and use of online audiovisual platforms" (AV-ADJUVEN, 2023–2027), financed by the Ministry of Science , Innovation and Universities of the Government of Spain.

TVS05 Production processes across genres & platforms

PP 0898 Television "mediariat" and its fallacy: How cast members in reality programmes position themselves in the production process

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This paper explores how Czech amateur participants in reality television (RTV) programmes interpret their position within production relations. The research is theoretically informed by the notion of value as understood in Critical Marxist theory and the study of extraction of surplus value through capitalization of unpaid work in RTV production. The principal aim of the research is to circumscribe the narratives produced by the cast members to expound on their provision of their labour for free.

We coined the concept of "mediariat" – a portmanteau of media and proletariat – to underpin that the cast members are exploited by the television industry as they contribute their physical and mental powers into the production of shows, while their efforts are not considered to be work and they are deprived of proper wages (Wood and Kay, 2017). The theoretical focus of our research expands on "the turn to labor" (Hesmondhalgh 2017) in the cultural branch of media production studies (Mayer et al. 2009). We have utilized the perspective of "immaterial labor" (Negri and Hardt 2004) to explain the basis of exploitation in the television industry, which applies not only to professional cultural workers but also to amateurs. The substance of amateurs´ immaterial labour on RTV is in the complete embroilment of their psychic sensibilities and social life in production of the media content (Grindstaff, 2010, 2014; Hearn, 2008, 2010, 2014). They work primordially with producing and receiving strained emotions, activating bodily affects, and showcasing positive or, more likely, negative relationships – all this in the form of the commodifiable spectacle captured by camera.

The qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews demonstrated that RTV participants subjectively interpret their engagement not as labor. This perspective uniquely downplays the exploitative elements of the RTV production model in their conceptual framework. The accounts given by our participants to justify their presence on RTV were diverse, yet they all shared an understanding of the production realities of RTV. From a political-economic perspective, these realities might seem exploitative, but to the participants, they appeared either acceptable or even agreeable. We have assembled four clusters based on the gratifications sought by participants, explaining different interpretive strategies behind respondents' willingness to accept their exploitation. Precarised workers – in the Czech context, often socio-economically challenged individuals burdened with debts – engage in RTV to alleviate their financial difficulties. Missionaries participate in RTV, feeling they have a significant mission to accomplish. Attention seekers, viewing themselves as budding celebrities, hope to later capitalize on their unpaid labor by enhancing their personal brands. Adventure seekers are drawn to the allure and behind-the-scenes aspect of the television industry.

The tendency among our respondents to conceptualize their involvement in terms of labor force, value creation, and its appropriation is notably low. This phenomenon is attributed to the pervasive influence of neoliberalism, particularly unchallenged in the post-socialist Czech Republic. Such a neoliberal context effectively suppresses workers' and unionists' identities, promoting instead the model of the entrepreneurial individual.

TVS05 Production processes across genres & platforms

PP 0899 Keeping it together: Thinkshop insights on German public service broadcasting and social cohesion

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Recent corruption scandals surrounding Germany's public broadcasters have sparked national debates about the system's merits and costs, and the need for reform. This presentation discusses societal perceptions on the mission

and future of German public broadcasting, particularly in relation to its statutory mandate to contribute to social cohesion.

Despite its frequent use in academic, political, and public discourse, there remains no consensus on the definition of the 'quasi-concept' of social cohesion (Bernard 1999). Nevertheless, it can be understood as an aspirational form of 'collective togetherness' (Schiefer & Van der Noll, 2016), grounded in factors like mutual trust, identification, and a shared commitment to the common good. Social cohesion is at least partially fostered through media, enabling integrative exchanges beyond individual spheres (Weiß & Jandura 2017, Hasebrink et al. 2020), while realities such as cultural diversity, economic inequality, political polarization, and rapid technological developments are thought challenge it.

The authors will present the outcomes of six 'Thinkshops' conducted with diverse participants, including junior and senior citizens, civil society organizations, media practitioners, public broadcasting regulators, and media scholars. These workshops, held between 2021 and 2023, aimed to promote critical reflection, discussion, and collaborative idea generation concerning the role of German public service media (PSM) in fostering social cohesion. Using methodologies from Design Thinking and Participatory Action Research, participants were engaged in defining the concept of social cohesion, articulating their expectations of PSM, and identifying constraints and aids at their interface. Additionally, the sessions involved the development of future scenarios and strategies to foster the resilience of German PSM.

The Thinkshops provided a deeper understanding of well-known tension fields within PSM, particularly the challenge of balancing collectively shared interests and values with the inherent diversity in a heterogeneous society. Perspectives that emerged through inductive exploration include desires for increased transparency in financing and decision-making, improved representation of cultural diversity, advocacy for constructive journalism, and an envisioned moderating role of PSM in public debates on digital channels. In line with arguments put forth by others (e.g., Bonini 2017; Gerlach & Eilders 2021; Reimer, Albert & Loosen 2023), the potential for German PSMs to fulfill their mission of contributing to social cohesion appears to extend beyond programming. Instead, it lies in diverse expressions of the media-audience relationship, particularly concerning participation, accessibility, representativeness, and responsiveness. However, these aspects are not without challenges (Vanhaeght & Donders 2021) and require careful consideration.

TVS05 Production processes across genres & platforms

PP 0900 Audience Centricity in digital and linear TV Production: A comparative study of legacy broadcasters

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This research elucidates empirical insights into audience construction within linear and digital television production at established broadcasting entities. Amidst a diversifying television market, the paradigms of media production, commissioning, and distribution have evolved, with audience behaviour being increasingly mediated throughout the industry. This study investigates broadcasters in the United Kingdom and Germany, offering a critical examination of the shifts and influences these entities encounter due to burgeoning data availability, such as television ratings, social media metrics, and web analytics.

Drawing upon media production studies (Caldwell 2008, Deuze, 2019), theories of power dynamics, and data studies (Doyle, 2018), this research explores the nexus between production processes and audience data within daily operational routines and decision-making frameworks. It scrutinises the interaction, growth, and quantification of viewing experiences as commodified media engagement (Dahlgren and Hill, 2023). The methodology employed encompasses 22 semi-structured interviews conducted within the United Kingdom and Germany, involving a cohort of professionals comprising producers, commissioners, and media consultants.

The findings highlight a divergent approach towards data utilisation. Practitioners in digital domains exhibit a propensity for embracing diverse data streams gleaned from online and social media platforms, contrasting with their counterparts in linear settings who predominantly rely on traditional television ratings. Digital producers demonstrate a nuanced appreciation of audience information, integrating it comprehensively into their everyday practices. This research uncovers a disparity between digital and traditional content production modalities, with television production exclusively experiencing pressures, power struggles, and adverse influences during decision-making phases.

Addressing these emerging dynamics, the study concentrates on the operationalisation of metrics within broadcasting organisations. By collating, analysing, and evaluating examples from various broadcasters, it becomes evident that data plays a pivotal role in decision-making in both linear and digital production. However, in the digital sphere, audience construction commences earlier in the development phase and is seamlessly integrated into the format development process. Conversely, in linear contexts, ratings remain the primary influence, relegating alternative data sources to a peripheral role.

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VIS01 Visual cultures of and in conflict and crisis

PP 0566 AI-documenting war: A mixed method analysis of Adobe AI-generated images of the Israel-Hamas war

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The relationship between computer-generated photorealistic images and photographic ones has become more complex since the summer of 2022 after the popularization of AI generative visual media (Arielli, Manovich 2023). The constant development and improvement of these systems is reconfiguring how the sense of authenticity of images as representations of reality is constructed (Esposito 2022).

The perceptual ambiguity between the synthetic and the photographic images is particularly important for photo-journalism (Lehmuskallio et al. 2018).

While the generic aesthetics of stock images are now widely used in the media and journalism industries as the vehicle of news and information (Aiello, Parry 2023) the debate about the changes in visual aesthetics and their documentary possibilities remains. These discourses occur within the controversy between direct and manipulated photography in documentary fields and concern the loss of indexicality and referentiality of the photographic record, about the rise of generative visual media based on predictive, computational data processing.

In this regard, we consider the paradigmatic case of the sale of ai-generated stock images of the Israeli-Palestinian war by Adobe Stock. After the outbreak of war in Gaza on 7th October 2023, the online marketplace Adobe Stock began collecting user submissions of ai-generated images, which paying customers can download and publish in online media. The case developed when the circulation of these images by online news media did not contextualize their ai-generated production.

This proposal does not intend to emphasize the political purpose these images had in the debate on the Israeli-Palestinian war, but rather to investigate the role that user-generated images with AI tools can play in the image industry, within stock images sites, in which the profession of photojournalist is in second place. The focus is on the role that ai-generated images and their generic aesthetics play in shaping the imaginary inherent to the representativeness of events.

As the case study proposed is layered on its implications, it is necessary to analyze different types of media sources. First, we do the content analysis of the online newspaper articles that covered the case of the sale of ai-generated images by Adobe regarding the Gaza war, framing discourses on agents, roles and viral images.Then, following the model of analysis proposed by Gillian Rose in *Visual Methodologies* (2016), we examine the three spaces that define the meaning of images. Considering the site of the images itself, we conduct a visual content analysis of the viral ai-generated images, dealing with the composition and its visual meaning. Regarding the site of production, we highlight the ai-generated characteristics of the images, metadata, tags, labeling and captions for categorization on Adobe Stock. Examining the site of audiences, we use the Google Reverse Images tool to track the dissemination of viral images in the online media and frame the integration into the texts, through which they circulate.

VIS01 Visual cultures of and in conflict and crisis

PP 0567 Playful visions: Visual AI aesthetics in synthetic warfare

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The social discourse about the transformative potential of AI, its challenges, benefits and risks is in full swing. The recent hype about generative AI and its tremendous potential for profound transformations in culture and society has reinstated dystopian and utopian techno-visions for the impact of new communication and media technologies. A prominent and recurrent trope regarding visions brought about by technological innovations is the area of dis-and misinformation.

AI-generated synthetic images are already being utilized in various media, social, and political contexts, including intentional deception, without the generative origin being apparent or disclosed to users. Generative Imageries– hold immense potential to fundamentally alter the production, use, reception, and handling of images. Yet, there has been little exploration of how our understanding of imagery changes as images are increasingly generated.

In this paper, we explore the utilization of synthetic content not for the primary dissemination of false information but for the effective spread of (latent) visual hate speech, ideology, and propaganda. We investigate whether there is an attempt at narrative persuasion through the artistic presentation of a story, examining the immersive impact of AI-generated visual contents. Additionally, we question whether an AI aesthetics is succeeding in the visual

communication strategy of the political activist groups and in particular the extreme right, moving from memetic warfare to what could be termed as synthetic warfare . This analysis contributes to understanding the evolving landscape of AI in political communication and its potential implications for public discourse and societal resilience.

Against this backdrop, we argue that the crux of the matter lies not in citizens' ability to discern AI-generated images and manipulations, but rather in the emergence of a distinctive AI aesthetics as a potent mode of political commentary and a legitimate channel for shaping political visions. This paradigm shift goes beyond the quest for truth, delving into the realm of imagination, where potential futures and alternative realities come to life. Through an analysis of content posted on X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram, we develop a typology of prevalent image categories in AI-generated visual campaigns, identifying prevailing aesthetic consistencies and features.

Our methodology extends beyond mere categorization, encompassing a qualitative content analysis of comments associated with these images. This dual analysis aims to reveal how the AI-generated nature of these images is navigated, interpreted, and embraced as a novel aesthetic expression or, conversely, dismissed as unreal, artificial, fake, or manipulative. The conspicuous AI-generated nature of these images contributes to a dual effect: on one hand, their manipulative potential is perceived as less threatening. Simultaneously, this transparency allows for the normalization and dissemination of motives, narratives, and staging methods. We conclude that this calculated ambivalence, generally inherent in images, is further heightened in the case of AI-generated images and aesthetics. This examination not only enhances our comprehension of the evolving landscape of AI aesthetics in political visual communication but also sheds light on broader implications for public perception, discourse, and the construction of political narratives in the era of synthetic media.

VIS01 Visual cultures of and in conflict and crisis

PP 0568 Using images to fight social disorder: A joint analysis of the productions and discourses of Ukrainian data journalists during the Russian invasion of Ukraine

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This paper examines the uses of images as a source of knowledge and a means to produce knowledge by Ukrainian data journalists during the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

We approach images as instruments of vision and visualisation (Latour, 1987), which maintain a dynamic, active and even problematic relationship with the world of reference, and which are reinvented according to the devices, media and practices (Manovich, 2001). Often considered as amplifying informational disorder in times of social media, visual productions are still also appreciated for their creative potential.

From the start of the war, Ukrainian journalists ensured the continuity of information by constructing a narrative of the war, featuring new actors, envisaging the outcomes and reconstructing "the symbolic fabric of sociability" (Lamizet, 2011), specific to each crisis. This narrative is constructed with a diversity of images, both traditionally produced by data journalists (dataviz, cartography) as well as remediated images produced by a wide range of humans and non-humans. We would like to examine the sensitive issues of the relationship between public space, data, media and images, by looking at ways of knowing through images, i.e. the methodological, documentary and epistemological status of images in the approaches to images by Ukrainian data journalists in wartime.

Our fieldwork includes:

1/ a semio-pragmatic analysis of a corpus of productions by Ukrainian data journalists from the Texty.org.ua, published during the first year of the war.
2/ semi-structured interviews with Ukrainian data journalists (n = 5, April 2023).

In terms of methodology, we opted for the systematic identification and analysis of elements relating to the editorial work of visual formatting and data narration. The analyses focus more specifically on the constructed universes, enunciation, aesthetics, enunciative gestures and interactivity and the accompanying discourse.

Among the main results we want to discuss:

- A diversification of the discursive registers of data journalism to go beyond the "analysis of statistical data" dimension and integrate human subjectivity and emotion
- When remediated images are integrated into multimedia formats, they respond to a storytelling logic: an explanatory scheme with humans and non-humans, organised around the central axis of "aggression – resistance" and with superimposed temporal layers to create links between the present and the past.
- In our corpus, images ensure the various mediations: documentary, heritag, memory, legal, educational and critical.

The visual productions relating to war link local and national scales, as they combine both close-up views of the war and its atrocities, using 'shock' images (Barthes, 1957) and synoptic views that seek to stand back and think about the war as a whole, making heuristic use of images (Drucker, 2020). In both cases, such images of war open

up new views and new visibilities and help to signify worlds of data. Far from offering direct access to reality, war images offer a representation that is "inevitably prismatic" (Gervereau 2006), constructed from different, overlapping points of view. These images are always extremely fragile reflections, highly dependent on the way in which they have been obtained, interpreted and integrated into info-communication devices, both in their technical and discursive components.

VIS01 Visual cultures of and in conflict and crisis

PP 0569 Visualizing cultural memory: Analyzing gender dynamics in the aftermath of the 2023 Turkey–Syria earthquake through visual narratives

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Cultural memory encompasses the collective remembrance of a society regarding its past events, experiences, and values. Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, profoundly impact the lives, cultural dynamics, and collective memories of societies. Similarly, the association of these interactions with gender is especially crucial, particularly in the context of women's experiences. The entrenched masculine authority in societal order uses gender to relegate women to a secondary position, particularly during crisis periods when the imperative to uphold daily routines becomes pronounced, thereby exacerbating these inequalities. Traditional gender norms and power structures are sustained by societal systems, contributing to the marginalization of women, especially in challenging times. This can lead to a reinforcement of traditional gender roles, wherein women are expected to assume caregiving responsibilities and support roles. Despite the anticipation that earthquake response strategies and societal reconstruction plans should be gender-sensitive to diminish inequalities and bolster resilience, narratives surrounding women during disaster periods persist in perpetuating traditional gender roles, and expectations continue to operate more prominently. This research delves into the complex interplay among cultural memory, gender dynamics, and disaster narratives against the backdrop of the 2023 Turkey–Syria earthquake. With a specific focus on the photograph archive of Anadolu Agency, a prominent state news channel in Turkey, the study examines the representation of women's experiences in the aftermath of such a disaster. The data for this research were derived from a total of 421 photographs obtained by scanning images related to the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake in the photo archive of Anadolu Agency. The dataset spans a one-year period starting from February 6, which marks the beginning of the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake. Through a combination of thematic and visual analysis, this study examines the portrayal of women in visual narratives of the earthquake provided by the news agency, evaluating its impact on shaping cultural memory concerning women in the challenging context of a crisis. The research argues that by disseminating these images, Anadolu Agency actively engages in shaping societal and cultural perceptions regarding the roles, responsibilities, and agency of women during times of crisis, thus contributing significantly to the construction and preservation of cultural memory concerning gender dynamics in challenging circumstances. In essence, the agency's actions are seen as influential in shaping how people remember and perceive the roles of women in times of crisis within the broader cultural context. This research contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into the dynamic relationship between media representations, gender roles, and the formation of cultural memory. By understanding how women are framed visually in the aftermath of disasters, we gain a deeper understanding of the societal narratives that influence perceptions, attitudes, and policies surrounding women's experiences in times of crisis.

Keywords: Cultural memory, 2023 Turkey–Syria earthquake, Anadolu Agency, Gender dynamics, Visual narratives

VIS01 Visual cultures of and in conflict and crisis

PP 0570 Expanded corpses: Visual representations of the first Ukrainian war deaths in mass media

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In this paper we propose to address the visual treatment of the first corpses of the Ukrainian war, focusing on the episode of the "Bucha massacre", a media controversy centered around the image of the corpse. At the beginning of April 2022, several media published the first images revealing "what happened there". The controversy erupted when the pro-Russian media accused the Western media of generating fake news (they questioned the authenticity of the corpses and argued that what was shown was a staging).

The Ukrainian war is one of the most mediatized to date and the Bucha episode represents a paradigmatic example of it. By observing the images that both sides wield in the public sphere, this paper seeks to raise a state of question of the indeterminacy of the image as a document or evidence today.

Our starting hypothesis is that, in the Bucha massacre, the visual representation of the first corpses of the war achieves unprecedented virtualization in history: their recreation and representation by means of new visual tools and the AI transforms them into an ever-moldable and vectorizable matter.

Our theoretical framework formulates a genealogy of the politics of the image, by contrasting the perception of the "false image" in the 80's and 90's (Baudrillard, 1988,1991) with the "post-truth" regime and the "deep fake" of our contemporaneity (Sadin, 2020). We turn to Ford and Hoskins (2022) and Chamayou (2016) to see this post-truth regime in the fabrication and the reception of war images, following also Paul Virilio in his work on the logistics of perception in war and cinema (Virilio, 1984).

One of the most prominent documents purporting to debunk the pro-Russian versions is a documentary produced by NYT, which reconstructs the prior, during and after the events, in a sort of "virtual model" (Weizman, 2021), using images from security cameras, Ukrainian army drones and smartphone recordings made by eyewitnesses. This document, which is postulated as legal evidence of war crimes, constitutes for us an example of the role that "exactitude" (Sadin, 2020) and "hyperdefinition" (Szendy, 2021) play in the new regime of truth.

This research aims to open a way to rethink, from the proposed theoretical focus and a methodology centered in iconography and visual cultural studies, a history of the representation of corpses in war conflicts, from the Iraq war to the present day, taking the Ukrainian war as a privileged case study.

VIS02 Social media and digital visual cultures

PP 0672 Emerging visual narratives on the environmental crisis on Instagram

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Amid the current climate crisis, communication plays a pivotal role in fostering new perspectives and encouraging positive citizen action. Through social media, conscientious individuals engage in environmental communication activism, reshaping the prevailing visual narratives on the climate crisis. Identified as both activists and environmental influencers (San Cornelio et al, 2021), these individuals challenge established media narratives, presenting alternative viewpoints through their posts and stories on Instagram.

This paper aims to elaborate an incipient characterization of the emerging elements of these visual narratives in social media as potentially able to engage citizens to take action in their ordinary lives.Our research draws on a qualitative methodological approach, based on: (1) a digital ethnography (Pink et al. 2016, Ardèvol and Gómez, 2012) carried out on 60 Instagram accounts devoted to the dissemination of environmental concerns and contents; (2) a visual narrative analysis (Daiute and Lightfoot, 2004) of 281 selected posts of the previous accounts (3) 14 in-depth interviews conducted with digital activists.

As a result, we have identified the main traits of these emerging visual narratives: the use of positive visuals and content; first-person accounts highlighting the small actions and achievements (propositive narratives) that can be carried out in our daily lives; and/or the use of memes, humor, and other elements of popular culture. These characteristics distinguish our participants contents from the established environmental visuals produced by either legacy media or environmental organizations. We have discerned a combination of communicative strategies that are closer to those of influencers (Leaver et al, 2020), although not all of the participants in our study identify themselves with this label. They believe that their approach will have a positive impact on the community of followers, making the efforts attainable for everyone and trying to reach spaces or people that the established narratives by legacy media and experts do not reach.

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VIS02 Social media and digital visual cultures

PP 0673 "I wish I could clean my life the way this man cleans this rug". Embodied Spectatorship and the aesthetics of pleasure in 'oddly satisfying' content

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The short-form video format of social media favors content that quickly elicits a pleasurable viewing experience (Liu et al., 2021); thus, the production and display of pleasurable visual imagery is highly encouraged. This study investigates how a specific type of content, known as oddly satisfying content, caters to the spectating body. I will explore the aesthetics of pleasure: audio-visual aesthetics, media technologies, and platform logics. Furthermore, I discuss how viewers engage in embodied spectatorship (Nielsen & Bork-Petersen, 2022; Balevičiūtė, 2015; Ryberg, 2015). Through these efforts, I hope to address the new visualities created in the context of social media consumption and explore emerging forms of spectatorship.

The 'oddly satisfying' content refers to a genre of digital content that elicits a unique and unexpected sense of pleasure, gratification, or relief in viewers through visual, auditory, or tactile stimuli. Platforms such as Instagram (reels), TikTok, and YouTube (Shorts) display oddly satisfying content. Obviously related to ASMR, this genre often features videos or images that showcase repetitive, rhythmic, or precisely executed actions, resulting in satisfying and harmonious outcomes. Examples of oddly satisfying content may include videos of items fitting perfectly into spaces, intricate patterns being created, kinetic sand cutting, paint being mixed in a mesmerizing manner, the encounter of different textures such as oozing slime being mixed with sparkling pearls, or the meticulous completion of a task with satisfactory precision, or even rug cleaning and lawn mowing.

In my analysis of 'oddly satisfying' content, my aim is to explore these instances as meticulously crafted engagements with materials designed to evoke pleasure. I intend to delve into the interaction between the content and its audience by examining how viewers experience these visually satisfying images. To comprehend spectators' responses, I will closely examine the comments section, focusing on the pleasurable, sensory, and emotional reactions triggered by these encounters. The theoretical framework for this study draws inspiration from aesthetic visual theory in film studies, specifically emphasizing the concepts of the gaze (e.g. Mulvey, 1975), the haptic (e.g. Marks, 2002), and sensoric imagery (Fausing, and insights from studies related to the depiction of pleasure, akin to those explored in porn studies (e.g. Paasonen, 2011).

Engaging in the study of oddly satisfying content presents an opportunity to contribute with insights into the evolving landscape of entertainment consumption. This study aims to unveil novel ways in which users interact with digital content, emphasizing embodied experience over other forms of engagement. It explores the development from traditional modes of entertainment consumption to a more bodily and sensory-driven form of engagement. This study recognizes that oddly satisfying content taps into a multisensory experience, involving visual, auditory, and tactile elements that bypass traditional forms of entertainment.

VIS02 Social media and digital visual cultures

PP 0674 Exploring visual and ephemeral news content on social media: Finnish news organisations' Instagram Stories

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The current digital news environment contains increasingly visual and short-lived ephemeral content that news media produce for their social media accounts (Author, 2023; Pesce, 2016). Ephemerality refers to content that can be either consumed in seconds or minutes (Grainge, 2011) or content that can be viewed for a certain amount of time or for a specific amount of time (Anderson, 2015). While journalism research has lately started to accumulate, (e.g., Hendrickx 2023; Hermida, 2020; Salonen & Laaksonen, 2023) only a handful of studies have examined specifically the ephemeral nature of news content, such as Instagram Stories and TikTok videos (e.g. Vázquez-Herrero et al. 2019, 2020). Instagram specifically has gained traction among publishers to reach (young) audiences (Newman et al., 2023), which warrants more examination.

Therefore, this study examines the journalistic use of Instagram Stories with a specific focus on ephemerality and visuality of news content on Finnish news organisations' Instagram accounts. Instagram Stories are images or short videos that last for 24 hours on a given account. The study explores two accounts. One is Yle Kioski (@ylekioski), a social media native news account of the Finnish public broadcaster Yle with over 70k followers. The other is HS Nyt (@hs_nyt), owned by the Finnish national daily newspaper Helsingin Sanomat with nearly 85k followers. These amounts are significant as the two accounts are among the biggest Finnish news media's Instagram accounts.

Digital news content and the visual elements of news can be portrayed by utilising a multimodal approach (e.g. Hiippala, 2017). Multimodality comprises different combinations of modes through which meanings are created.

Social media can be seen to comprise different kinds of textual and visual modes or elements (Author, 2021), such as hashtags and news headlines (textual mode) and still images and videos (visual mode). Consequently, they offer multiple opportunities to study digital news and its elements.

Based on these premises, this study asks:

RQ1: Which news topics are present in the ephemeral news content on Yle Kioski and HS Nyt's Instagram Stories?

RQ2: Which modes can be identified in the ephemeral news content, i.e. Instagram Stories, on the Yle Kioski and HS Nyt Instagram accounts?

RQ3: What purposes do the modes serve and specifically, what is the role of visuality in them?

The dataset consists of one month of Instagram Stories published by both news media. It will be gathered in early 2024 and consequently analysed using qualitative content analysis (Silverman, 2011). Prior research by the first author on Yle Kioski's Instagram Stories in 2023 found more hard news than soft news present. As this differs from other studies (e.g. Salonen & Laaksonen, 2023; Hendrickx, 2021), it is important and interesting to see how the data looks in 2024 in conjunction with the Finnish newspaper's (HS Nyt) Instagram data. In addition, this study contributes theoretically by exploring Instagram Stories from a multimodal perspective and by developing a framework for analysing ephemeral and multimodal social media content.

VIS02 Social media and digital visual cultures

PP 0675 Conveying uniqueness through visual homogenization: The aesthetics of neo-craft work on Instagram

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The aim of this paper is to investigate how the aesthetics of 'neo-craft' work on Instagram are constructed by means of visual practices that attune to the platform logics and vernaculars.

According to Manovich (2019: 3), we live in an 'aesthetic' society, where "the production of beautiful images is central to our economic and social functioning". Instagram, more than other social media, contributed to the aestheticization of everyday moments through a sheer variety of features for image/video editing, including filters and effects. Some of Instagram's distinctive aesthetics, like the minimalist or the retro-nostalgic style, gained huge popularity among users, content creators, small and large companies advertising their products on the platform.

Our focus is on 'neo-craft' work, a form of post-industrial work consisting in the 'artisanalisation' of different manual, traditionally working-class, low-status jobs, that are 'resignified' through an embroidery of material and discursive elements (Gandini and Gerosa, 2023). Epitomised by craft beer brewing, neo-craft work combines the materiality of craft production with a process of discursive production characterised by forms of 'marginal distinction', based on authenticity and 'particularisation'. Social media platforms, especially Instagram, are pivotal to actualise this process of discursive resignification and, just like content creators, neo-craft workers must follow the platforms' logics to convey a brand-image as authentic as possible. For these reasons, we believe neo-craft work represents an ideal object of study as an emblematic case of the "aestheticization of society".

Our research consisted in a qualitative visual analysis (Aiello and Parry, 2020) of 346 Instagram accounts of neo-craft activities based in the EU aimed at finding recurrent patterns in how these businesses present themselves and their work on Instagram. Attention was devoted to how neo-craft work's core values of authenticity and particularisation are visually conveyed, while considering the influence of Instagram minimalist and retro-nostalgic style in shaping an 'aesthetics of neo-craft work'.

Although uniqueness is supposedly a central value to neo-craft work, a high degree of aesthetic homogenization characterises these activities, regardless of their geographic location and business type. The Instagram profiles surveyed look similar to one another, with the same set of colours and tropes. Images of laboratories, studios or venues are presented with a common visual style and a visible recurrence of symbolic components that seem to speak the same visual language. The presentation of the product employs specific shapes and colours that recall a minimalist style; the logos and fonts used by artisans are similar to one another, recalling vintage elements, specific places, and an overarching postindustrial allure. After outlining the characteristics of the neo-craft aesthetics, we critically reflect on the implications that this homogenising power brings, as craft businesses must at once differentiate from their competitors and be perceived as part of the same cultural scene.

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VIS02 Social media and digital visual cultures

PP 0676 Picturing pain, science and the body: Social media aesthetics of hereditary cancer

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Existing research has foregrounded the role of first-person visuals in offering potential to express illness through narrative, voice and biography, which can both provide an entry point into personal "worlds of illness" and challenge societal norms and practices (Radley and Bell, 2007). This research has however only marginally addressed the role played by social media as digital platforms shaped by both "techno-commercial" strategies and user practices (van Dijck et al., 2018). In other words, we do not know how social media visuals, as discourse originating in profit-driven technological contexts, play with reinforcing or hindering dominant and subversive practices of illness and medicine and related "disease regimes" (Klawiter 2004). In this paper, we argue that the situated encounter of platform corporate strategies and user practices has important implications for the production, selection, curation, and distribution of contemporary 'imaginations' of illness.

In this paper we present an investigation of top visuals relevant to BRCA-related hereditary cancer syndromes posted by Instagram or Twitter public accounts or on Facebook pages or public groups over the course of twelve months (01 May 2022–30 April 2023). We focused on public visuals because these are likely to be seen by both intended and unintended audiences, with their publicity being similar to that of traditional legacy media. We filtered "photo" posts for Facebook and Twitter and "image" posts for Instagram. Finally, using 4CAT, we downloaded the corresponding visuals: 360 images (10 top visuals * 12 months * 3 platforms). Combining quanti-quali techniques (Vicari and Kirby, 2023) and visual digital methods (Colombo et al., 2023), we traced both platform-based visual practices and overall patterns in the broader mainstream social media ecosystem.

Very preliminary findings point at clear differences in the way visuals of hereditary cancer gain traction and picture the condition on each platform. On Instagram, influencer work becomes most evident, in particular through the use of selfies and inspirational messages. As evidenced in previous research (e.g., Rademacher, 2018) here, those likely to post selfies appear to be "those able to credibly inhabit celebrity subjectivity". In practice, there still seems to be little space on the platform for non-normative visuals featuring people of various races, sizes, genders, ages, and shapes. Facebook visuals share some characteristics with the Instagram ones, especially when it comes to exposing and documenting the body (e.g., see instances of before/after breast reconstruction photos) or advertising women's fashion. Influencer work is however absent here, with selfies and close-ups becoming visual exemplars rather than fragments of a personal and sustained journey to be followed over time. Twitter clearly stands apart from both Facebook and Instagram, with visuals being predominantly screenshots of scientific papers, infographics or conference pictures tending towards a professionalised and seemingly more datafied imagination of illness as disease. These findings suggest reflections on the way mundane social media practices enhance the emergence of platform-based (i.e., 'vernacular') aesthetic and interpretive norms to understand health, illness and disease.

VIS03 Visual trust practices on social media

PN 112 Social media doctors and visual trust: Balancing epistemic authority and parasocial relations

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Research objective Today social media is an alternative source of health information, especially for adolescents and young adults. However, social media is also identified as a considerable and potential source of health misinformation that is confronted with suspicion. This paper will focus on how doctors, as traditionally trusted health sources, navigate within visual social media (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, YouTube) a tension between a medical gaze, relying on traditions and techniques learned in medical education and practice, and that of a mediatised social media gaze, leaning towards relaxed and informal social interactions. More specifically, the paper provides a taxonomy of ways in which social media doctors create trust with and through visual digital content in order to influence decisions related to health and wellbeing. Methodology This research, as part of a larger international and multimethodological research project on trust and visuality in the context of health and wellbeing, will focus specifically on analysing the tension between the medical gaze and the social media gaze. Empirically, our work relies on digital ethnography, content analysis, and interviews conducted in Finland. In our analysis, we approach the data openly with a focus on the visual and with the aim of identifying relevant visual ways in which social media doctors create trust. Importantly, trust is considered as a volatile dimension of social interaction that needs to be regularly recreated by forms of interaction that seem reliable. Findings Our preliminary findings indicate a range of visual ways that aim at and are used to create trust by social media doctors. The medical gaze, as a historically well-established mode of epistemic authority – visible in white coats, medical paraphernalia, specialist language, and diagrammatic forms of visualising medical content – is complemented by a felt need to be social media savvy, adding informal,

relaxed, and unconventional modes of social interaction to the repertoire of trust-building. The doctors active in social media are balancing ways of conveying trust through forms of epistemic authority and a carnivalisation of classical hierarchies, aiming to form parasocial relations with audiences they might never meet face-to-face. This balancing act ties in with the formation of professional identity and the coexistence of scientism and humanism in medicine. The doctors stress their education and professional status through visualisations referring to science (e.g., the use of professional equipment, medical illustrations, and visually recognisable links to academic articles). At the same time, parasocial relationships are formed with followers by enforcing inter-subjectivity and a feeling of affective closeness through strategic visual forms (e.g., use of selfies and intense eye contact, surprising humour, sharing images of concrete whereabouts, showing private spaces). The findings presented herein will be complemented and deepened in forthcoming interviews with social media doctors, to be held and analysed before the panel. Continuing the analysis, we will specifically pay attention to intentionalities and motives behind the visual ways of creating trust in order to better understand the tension between the medical gaze and the social media gaze.

VIS03 Visual trust practices on social media

PN 113 Performing visual trust: not too polished, not too scrubby

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This presentation is based on interviews conducted with Estonian students (30) and content creators (10) as part of the research project "Trust and Visuality – Everyday digital practices" (TRAVIS). The presentation asks how people practice visual digital trust in their socially mediated everyday life, particularly in multimodal communication pertaining to everyday health and wellbeing. In the presentation, we pose two questions. Our first question focuses on the site of production – we ask how trust is performed visually. Our second question focuses on the site of the audience – we ask how visual trust (as enacted and performed in social media content) is perceived by social media users. This presentation conceptualizes trust as a practice, and visual content and practices as always situational, contextual, and as pending on interpretative competencies and communities. Visual digital trust, thus, is also practiced – it hinges on a set of doings, sayings, and feelings that rely on relationships, ideologies, perceptions, and affect. Finally, we rely on the recent conceptualizations of authenticity, in particular, in influencer studies. We propose three types of negotiation undertaken by social media users and content creators in their visual digital trust practices. All three were articulated via vernacular perceptions and presumptions of authenticity – of images, of the environment or space depicted and of the appearance of the creators within visual content. 1. The image: Regarding the image, interviewees attributed trustworthiness to specific colors, angles, and visual elements. Trust was also linked to a certain level of professionalism; however, there was a tension in the negotiation of professionalism as linked to authenticity and through that, trustworthiness. Trusted images were characterized as "professional" but not overly so, with continuous friction between professionalism as justifying attention and professionalism that was deemed "too manicured" and thus inauthentic. 2. The space / environment depicted: As our empirical study focused on everyday health, the content depicted spaces where creators exercised, meditated, cooked, or offered advice by speaking to the camera. Elements like colors, lighting, the overall "vibe" of these spaces were carefully considered. On TikTok, images showcasing creators in highly aestheticized settings, which we call "calibrated mundanity" (drawing from Abidin's "calibrated amateurism"), emerged as a tactic of enacting authenticity in the sense of normatively acceptable self-presentation. This in turn created trustworthiness. 3. Creator appearance: Finally, trust linked to the creator's appearance and body shape, which was seen as legitimizing the rhetorical and informational content of posts (does the creator look like someone who should be giving me fitness advice; is their body similar to mine or unattainable). The creator appearance-related preferences were tacitly class and status-related regarding clothing/style, posture, makeup, and general grooming, which, similarly to the previous point, relied on the acceptable and normative as seemingly authentic and thus trustworthy.

VIS03 Visual trust practices on social media

PN 114 Patients, professionals, and influencers: Navigating visual constructions of health expertise

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The research project "Trust And Visuality: Everyday digital practices (TRAVIS)" focuses specifically on the role of the visual in building trustworthy relations within social media communication and investigates how and why people trust some visuals over others in the context of health and well-being content. The question of trust in the realm of health is intimately connected to perceptions of expertise and authority. Normatively, scientific and medical expertise is expected to fulfill the societal function as the premier source of health advice. However, assessing its validity has never been quite easy for laypeople, and usually other factors, like the authoritative social position of the advice-giver, are equally if not more important to the practice of trusting. With people increasingly looking for health information on social media, they are confronted with a multiplicity of actors claiming expertise on various

grounds and constructing authority in multiple, often novel ways. Based on data we collected by using aggregated auto-ethnography and in-depth interviews, users experience a variety of content creators during their social media practices and are relevant to them in terms of health content: health professionals, like doctors and nurses, but also science journalists, affected people speaking from lived experience or lifestyle influencers, to name only a few. Assuming the position of the authoritative advice-givers, these content creators construct their expertise in multiple ways and design their visual content accordingly. We also see that these ideal-type groups often cannot be separated as distinctly as one would think, but often share characteristics and aesthetics and adopt practices from each other. Health professionals and journalists utilize entertainment genres usually reserved for influencers and adopt their distributive strategies. Fitness influencers refer to scientific sources to prove the effectiveness of their workout plan. Affected people use their advocacy videos to advertise courses and seminars. Already successful beauty influencers utilize their own mental health issues to tap into new markets, and so on. This contribution is interested in these multiple (audio-)visual constructions of expertise and answers the questions: How do users navigate this variety of content, actors, and claims to authority? What are the categories that they classify creators by and what attributes are they ascribing to them? What kind of expertise are they looking for? What kind of presentation does or does not appeal to them? And of course, who do users ultimately trust and why?

VIS03 Visual trust practices on social media

PN 115 Studying the messiness of visual social media practices. An aggregated auto-ethnographies approach

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Visuality is central in people's experiences of social media and to people's enactment of sociality, but incredibly complex and messy to research. This messiness complicates units of analysis and concepts established in classic visual studies: authorship and ownership are difficult to pin down – original content is often remixed with appropriations of third-party material, reshared, endorsed or reframed, which does not only impact the location of the field or object of one's analysis, but how one might conceptualize methods. As visual media move through times, space, and contexts, their meaning can obviously change, as interpretation is always situational, but also what they refer to might not always be entirely clear: representation of someone or something can be iconic and indexical, but only be accessible as such for specific interpretive communities. Moreover, to overcome a simplistic, causal understanding of media effects, one needs to focus on how people relate to images in different ways. This is why our own and colleagues' earlier work has argued that to study social media visuality, one needs to take seriously what people are doing, saying, and feeling in, on, and with visual content – e.g. their practices, focusing specifically on social media social practices and social media visual practices. Not every research design is well suited for that. Moreover, to make sense of social media visuality, then, we need to find ways of both aggregating and integrating conceptual frameworks used in different fields – classic visual studies concepts regarding negotiated interpretations, indexicality, representation, and intertextuality continue to be relevant, but intersect with notions of platform vernaculars, socio-technical affordances, attention economies, and algorithmic imaginaries. We propose a large-scale ethnographic approach called aggregated auto-ethnography for making sense of socially mediated visual vernaculars, practices, norms, and the messy flows they are enacted and experienced in. The approach starts from guided auto-ethnographies, which empower participants to explore their own experiences and build thick descriptions. Participants are trained in documenting their own visual and digital practices, collect digital visual material, and record their perspectives and reflections. This form of data collection generates particularly rich data, as it is able to capture visual materials as well as their perception, and the perspectives and reflections of the participants. The paper will focus on the practical realisation of the method in the European project "TRAVIS: Trust and Visuality – Everyday digital practices". Based on examples from our data, we will illustrate how aggregated auto-ethnographies provide incredibly rich insights, which enable the kind of granularity and nuance otherwise difficult to attain in researching visual practices.

VIS03 Visual trust practices on social media

PN 116 Contested body images on social media

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While the impact of body images on individual wellbeing and social norms is one of the classic topics of media and communication research, the entanglement of these images with different platform infrastructures and logics has not yet been under much scrutiny. Building on the context and data of the European research project "TRAVIS: Trust and Visuality – Everyday digital practices", our paper will focus on different ways of how students (18–25 years old) relate to body images in the context of health and fitness practices on heavily visual platforms like YouTube and Instagram. To reconstruct their practices and imaginaries, we build on aggregated auto-ethnographies. This

approach is an innovative method designed by Annette Markham (2012) and developed in collaboration with Katrin Tiidenberg (Tiidenberg et al. 2017) wherein students are taught to become the auto-ethnographers of their own social media experience and they (voluntarily and with consent) share the materials they generate with the researchers. This participatory pedagogical method is unequivocally empowering for the participants and incredibly rich and thick for the researchers. Building on these auto-ethnographic accounts, we focused on the students' use and perception of body images. In this paper, we are specifically interested in observations where users describe or frame body images as not trustworthy, manipulated, inauthentic etc. We will outline how users derive the authenticity and trustworthiness of images through different strategies and literacies, e.g. looking for visual markers of manipulation and filters (like weirdly shaped extremities or flawless skin) or consulting the comment section for other users' critiques and judgements. We will map these trust practices across our data and discuss their relations with specific platforms, but also gendered dynamics and creator cultures. Moreover, findings from our pilot study show that users are irritated or even annoyed by content creators who exhibit normatively beautiful bodies and then bandwagon on 'body positivity' trends. These visual brand disruptions tend to decrease trust and fail parasocial relationships.

VIS05 Understanding visual truths in the contemporary media landscape

PN 142 Classifying, making, and presenting "visual truths": observations from newsrooms

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This paper highlights some preliminary observations about how visuals are used in Swedish, Finnish and Russian journalism (the latter – in exile newsrooms), in order to make truth claims about the world. The aim of the study is to understand how visual professionals at news organisations classify, make, and present photographs as part of the broader context of visual journalism. By focusing on the three contexts (two similar, one very different) within the Baltic Sea region, we aim to contextualize the visual production processes and trace the relations between the surrounding context and the professionals' interpretations of visual truth. The war in Ukraine has intensified the struggles for what is to be understood as (visual) truth, and, when it comes to Russian independent journalism, has also signified a shift in journalistic values: Objectivity ideal that formerly had been seen as a building stone of independent journalism has been reviewed and reconceptualized. This opens for an important comparison between how (visual) truth and objectivity are linked and inter-related by visual media professionals located in democratic European countries, but using different types of platforms to reach out to their users, and belonging to different types of media organisations and media systems.Visual professionals include photographers, photo editors, photo department managers, layout editors, and others involved in negotiating visual truths in the newsroom. The intention is to focus on the interaction between and among the visual professionals and the rest of the newsroom and their technological environment, and explore how their work is shaped by different news media platforms and their own experiences. Of interest is also what, and how, the visual professionals know about their users and how that influences their visual practices. While the main focus is on photographs, they are understood in relation to other visuals, texts, and also visual design.The study approaches visual producers as interpretative communities. The focus on visual professionals' interpretations of visual truth and the degree of reflexivity in finding ways of presenting visuals is an underdeveloped area in studies about media. The study focuses on three distinct but interrelated aspects: 1) "Classifying visual truths" highlights the negotiations around categorisation of photographs, 2) "Making visual truths" focuses on the collectively negotiated interpretive repertoires around making visuals, and 3) "Presenting visual truths" focuses on if, and how, the technological, journalistic and cultural context forces visual professionals to reflect upon forms of presenting visual material so it can be used as a trustworthy and usable resource for their users.Methodologically, the study takes departure from participant observations at 1–2 newsrooms in each of the contexts that are accompanied by qualitative interviews with the identified key actors within these newsrooms.

VIS05 Understanding visual truths in the contemporary media landscape

PN 143 The media forensic production of visual evidence at the International Criminal Court

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This paper considers the recent turn towards media forensic practices and use of open-source imagery and video footage as evidence in international criminal investigations and prosecutions, with a specific focus on recent cases before the International Criminal Court. Based on an ethnographic study, which includes 15 semi-structured interviews with key actors in this legal field of practice it explores how the ICC is harnessing new image technologies and advancements in computing power to both reassess and reassert the status of video as usable evidence in human rights litigations. Since 2016, open-source information derived from the internet, especially eyewitness video

footage, has increasingly been relied upon as lead information or direct evidence in international and domestic courts. At the ICC, which has been posed as the leading forum for testing and advancing the use of open-source materials and methods for human rights legal practice, the Al-Mahdi (2016) and Al-Werfalli (2017) trials reflect a paradigmatic shift towards cases in which the crimes themselves have been caught on camera and where social media-derived eyewitness imagery may be admitted as direct evidence at trial. As the wish to and urgency of using digital eyewitness images as evidence in international criminal trials grows, courts and investigative mechanisms must develop contemporary criteria for weighing the admissibility, reliability, and probative value of this material. This paper looks at ways in which digital open-source imagery and new media forensic technologies and techniques are being incorporated into and transforming the work practices of the ICC and how, in the process, the status of video as evidence of the real is reasserted – even as it is synthetically produced and reconfigured by the redeployment of video into larger assemblages of non-linear, extensive image-data complexes. If digital imaging technologies has brought on a crisis of photographic referentiality, we must also consider how they open possibilities for creating new kinds of documentary evidence and for laying newly vested claims to the truth of visual media – and what the significance of this is for the pursuit of legal accountability and the broader battle over truth in what is often termed a "post-truth" era.

VIS05 Understanding visual truths in the contemporary media landscape

PN 144 Real or rendered? Ethical implications of using AI-imagery in journalism

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In news contexts, photographs are used to visualise news reporting and thus, they represent, and serve as witness to events taking place in the world, carry symbolic meaning, are products of technologies mediated by human action, exist in an economy of images, and can be afforded agency on their own. Furthermore, photographs have long played an authenticating role in news, likely due to their perceived ability to capture the 'real'. Given journalism's significant influence on shaping people's social imaginaries, what news media pay attention to and how they do so, is important for how people perceive reality. Technologies play a pivotal role in reproducing and recirculating news images, holding considerable material, symbolic, social and cultural implications. Towards the end of 2022 and in the first months of 2023, platforms enabling AI-images became widely available and became everyday tools for creating realistic images based on written prompts. Despite the prevailing belief in the neutrality and impartiality of AI technology in public discourse, studies have found that the dataset from which these platforms derive data have been found to contain racist, misogynist and otherwise harmful stereotypes. AI is understood as not only a technology, but as a (potential novel) media form that depends on technology, social and cultural developments as well as various practices.As AI-technology facilitates the production of photo-like imagery that can pass for photographs, this paper specifically explores the potential and risks associated with the use (and republishing) of AI-imagery in journalism in relation to journalism ethics, visual truth, and the ability of images to shape social imaginaries. One overarching research question is addressed: What type of AI-imagery is used in news media and in what contexts is it published? Here, I examine where, when, how, by whom and for what purpose specific AI-imagery is used in the news and further explore what ethical implications this potentially have for journalistic credibility. The study includes material from 10 Swedish newspapers: DN, Aftonbladet, Expressen, Svenska Dagbladet, DI, Göteborgs-Posten, Sydsvenskan, HD, UNT and Östgöta Correspondenten. The data includes AI-imagery created by journalists as well as imagery produced by external actors and reproduced in news stories. Through an in-depth visual analysis I map how AI-imagery is conceptualised, attributed and circulated in these news outlets. Additionally, the study includes interviews with visual journalists. With the digitalisation of news and the evolving media landscape over the past two decades, new challenges, including fake news and deepfakes and more recently, the use of AI-generated texts and images, have emerged. While the use of AI-produced texts in the news (e.g., for sports results) has been studied for some time, less focus has been given to journalistic use of imagery produced by AI tools (i.e., Midjourney, DALL-E). Through this paper, I aim to contribute to a renewed discussion on the role, significance, and ethical implications of AI-imagery in relation to journalism and visual truths.

VIS05 Understanding visual truths in the contemporary media landscape

PN 145 Realism, authorship, and value in contemporary news & documentary photography

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Since its inception, photography has revealed constitutive tensions and generated intellectual debates dealing with the various positions existing within a hypothetical theoretical continuum whose extreme poles are represented by the notions of "realism" and "expressionism" – that is, photography as a mechanical, objective, detached and scientific form of reproduction vs. a form of aesthetic expression and subjective interpretation of reality. In the journalistic field, such a double nature of photography has complexly defined both the profession and the scholarly work. On

the one hand, the journalistic field is founded on the socially constructed professional value of news objectivity, in which the largely perceived-as-factual dimension of photography clearly plays a fitting role. On the other hand, as a constitutively multi-dimensional and polysemous cultural object, and heterogeneous social practice, photography embeds also an expressive, emotional, creatively and subjectively articulated side, thus referring to cultural questions of crafting skills, style, taste, symbolic distinction and even artistic ambition – all of which can complicate and exceed the tasks that photography is assumed to fulfill within the journalistic field, providing at the same time room for innovation in the professional practice. Since the early 2000s, together with the disruptive impact of digital technology and the loss of salaried jobs with the restriction of the editorial market, such a tension has constituted a fertile ground in which to analyze the changing nature of contemporary photojournalism and documentary photography. This paper presents the results of a research project on the process of social construction and institutional recognition of the status of author in the international professional field of journalistic and documentary photography in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. The paper offers a critical historical reconstruction of major ways in which the notion of photographic realism has been framed in the professional discourse and practice. It focuses on a number of examples of highly established news photographers who have creatively and strategically adapted to a rapidly shifting technological and professional scenario by renewing traditional practices of production and representational forms, and by articulating recognizably distinctive aesthetics with subjective implications. In particular, it analyzes the institutional role played by the World Press Photo awards in consecrating practices and forms of visual authorship, and in framing visual subjectivity and expressive realism as organizing principles and discursive resources increasingly contributing to shape the practice of production and the hierarchy of symbolic value of photojournalism. On this basis, the papers aims to shed light on shifting practices and styles that negotiate the dichotomous tensions opposing objectivity and subjectivity, as well as on emerging repertoires of professional values that enrich visual news objectivity and newsworthiness with trustworthiness and affect. In methodological terms, the paper draws upon qualitative analysis of two research archives (2001–2021): the first one of photojournalistic representations of major global events on various international newsmagazines; the second one of all the photographs winning World Press Photo awards. The archival analysis is integrated by in-depth interviews with international photojournalists, photo editors, and jury members of press photo awards.

VIS06 Representations of bodies and spaces

PP 1077 'Pussy power not coal power!': Female participation and visual forms of activism in the school strikes for climate protests

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Since 2018 millions of students around the world have taken to the streets calling for urgent action on global warming. Australian young people have initiated and led movements like the School Strike 4 Climate with an estimated 500,000 school students participating in protest around the country (Hilder & Collin, 2022). Significantly girls and young women have a dominant presence at these strikes, with a large number leading the movement, assuming centre stage as speakers and organisers (Bessant, 2022).

This presentation begins by observing how girls and young women are highly visible in the contemporary climate movement. For many young women, the protests are a unique space for their political voice, including messages delivered through signs and placards carrying diverse images, words, slogan and metaphor. Signs and placards are deliberately made to be read by a public audience, including peers, politicians, and policy makers. We note that a prominent feature in the placards (which the girls and young women make and take to the protests) is their use of historic, iconic feminist imagery and language. This article documents the renewed use of these 'vintage' feminist symbols and texts that include eg 'earth as mother, goddess, Gaia, the world war 2 'we can do it' poster, women's liberation and suffragettes icons, and more recent 'pussy riot' and body autonomy references.

Drawing on our own extensive portfolio of photographs of the signs made by girls and young women which they use to communicate feminist politics at the Australian School Strikes for Climate movement we ask two questions:

How have vintage feminist icons been variously retro fitted, revised and remixed in contemporary settings to communicate political messages about climate change?

What does this signify, if anything, about contemporary feminist politics?

Bessant, J. (2022). Young Women, Gender, and the Future of Political Participation.

Hilder, C., & Collin, P. (2022). The role of youth-led activist organisations for contemporary climate activism: The case of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition. *Journal of Youth Studies, 25*(6), 793–811.

VIS06 Representations of bodies and spaces

PP 1078 "Realities" of Dating: Visual representation of romantic love in Korean dating reality shows

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The surge in unmarried and non-married populations, coupled with a record-low birth rate in South Korea, has been predominantly attributed to economic factors, including dwindling formal employment opportunities, youth poverty, and escalating childcare costs, as well as broader social conditions such as heightened competition and expanding inequality. However, scant attention has been given to the potential role of evolving attitudes toward love, marriage, childbirth, child-rearing, and divorce in contributing to or exacerbating these societal challenges. Focusing on the attitudes of young individuals, particularly those in their teens to 30s, towards love and marriage, this study endeavors to discern the interplay between these attitudes and prevailing social issues. Of particular interest is the impact of dating reality shows, which enjoy significant popularity, on shaping the perceptions of romantic love among the youth. To establish a connection between the viewing of dating reality shows and the perception of romantic love, this research initiates its analysis by delving into the portrayal of romantic reality within these shows. Employing the analytical frameworks of semiotics, sociolinguistics, and cultural studies, we scrutinize the visual expressions, narratives, and production techniques of a highly-rated dating reality show, namely, "Heart Signal 4," broadcast on Channel A in 2023. Our findings underscore the show's emphasis on love games played by physically attractive and fashionable individuals, while overlooking the practical challenges associated with dating. The show constructs a visually appealing dating space, comprising a luxurious house, trendy restaurants, scenic spots, and amusement parks, reinforcing the romantic illusion of dating with an aesthetic standard that aligns with fashionable visual expressions. The presented romantic love ideology on the show promotes an upper middle-class norm characterized by love detached from marital expectations, partner selection driven solely by individual preferences, and a focus on infatuation as the sole determinant of relationship authenticity. Further research is needed to determine how such representations of romantic reality affect viewers. However, if the portrayed ideals of dating, which are only "illusions" for many young people in Korean society, are presented as if they are achievable "realities", viewers may persist in pursuing partners until these illusions materialize. This pursuit, when faced with the inevitable disparity between fantasy and reality, may lead to frustration, abandonment, and confusion within the realm of unattainable love. Considering the diversity in representations of romantic reality across different shows, future research should extend its analysis to include a broader spectrum of dating reality shows. Additionally, understanding the viewership patterns and preferences for specific program types will be crucial in comprehending the nuanced impact of these shows on young people's perceptions of romantic love in South Korea. Furthermore, given the transnational consumption of dating reality shows through platforms like Netflix, it becomes imperative to consider the far-reaching implications of these shows beyond the confines of their country of production, extending their influence into diverse cultural contexts.

VIS06 Representations of bodies and spaces

PP 1079 Imagining urban spaces: How Google Images and visual generative AI represent the city of the future

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Cities are not only the places we live in; they are also spaces we imagine. Analyzing cities as projections, as "socio-technical imaginaries" (Jasonoff & Kim, 2015), has evolved from ideologically charged material representations driven by revolutionary ideals (Stibbe, 2023) to digitally mediated spaces challenging geographers' city conceptions, urging recognition of urban posthuman agency's diversity (Rose, 2017); and building complex and contested representations of communicative spaces (Anonymized). Factoring into the mesh of encountered representations of the city, artificial intelligence (AI) in its visual generative forms has evolved to become still another voice in the projections of the cities of the future. Prior studies on city representations have indicated that search engines, notably the quasi-monopolist Google Images, tend to simplify, commercialize, and homogenize city views, prioritizing one-dimensional perspectives over showcasing the social and cultural diversity of cities and urban spaces (Anonymized). Therefore, it is pertinent to continue with this line of inquiry by exploring how the Google Images search engine and visual generative AI (e.g., Midjourney, DALL-E) contribute to and interact in shaping the representation of cities' future and discern the specific perspectives they tend to favor. This project delves into the implications of visual representations of city futures provided by the Google Images search engine and various visual generative AI tools for selected cities and the city of the future in general. The methodology adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining digital-computational tools with interpretive iconographic-iconological techniques. This perspective aims to capture the projections of the future of the cities, analyze and compare the

resulting images, and identify the actors, perspectives, and social, political, and ecological representations shaping these visions. The findings presented revolve around a dual inquiry: 1) an investigation into the roles and implications of the Google algorithm and visual generative AI in ranking and prioritizing certain visions over others, and 2) an exploration of the available representations of urban spaces projected into the future, including their features and aspects related to communicative spaces research.

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VIS06 Representations of bodies and spaces

PP 1080 Ambiguities of the prayer gesture in the public sphere. A cultural exploration of meanings, uses, and intentions in Western visuality

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In 2016 Pope Francis, known as @Franciscus on Instagram, asked its virtual followers to pray for him. This sacred demand was enforced by a picture of Francis in prayer attitude. Two years before, the Canadian rapper Drake had launched his album *If You're Reading This It's Too Late* (OVO Sound/Cash Money Records/Young Money Entertainment/Universal Records, 2015). The illustration of the cover was the naïve writing of the title, and at the bottom two hands in prayer attitude with a number 6. Drake's illustration of the folded hands copies the drawing by Albrecht Dürer in 1508 (*Praying Hands*, The Albertina Museum, Viena). If we analyse the gesture in both examples, it has different meanings. While Franciscus is making a plea for his role as Vicar of Christ, Drake has changed the rhetorical intentions of *Praying hands* to mean "sorry". This ambiguity of meaning is characteristic of our transcultural world, which translates into the use of the same gesture in Asia, with the Indian *Añjali Mudrā* or the Japanese *Itadakimasu*, and in Western Europe with the gesture of prayer. We can find the simplest example of this complex linguistical use of gestures as a non-verbal form of communication in the folded hands emoji. Which, according to its original definition, means "please or thank you or praying hands" (Bai et al., 2019: 7).

Gestures play a key role in Western Visuality. Art historians such as Moshe Barasch studied the language of gestures in Giotto's production. He defined some conventional gestures as symbolic acts that emerge in certain historical periods, and are often specific to one culture, and therefore unintelligible to another (Barash, 1999: 12). This idea was exposed by other scholars, such as Erwin Panofsky, Aby Warburg, Ernst Gombrich and Gerhart Ladner. All of them were influenced by each other and followed the iconological approach to visual culture.

This paper aims to study the ambiguity of meanings -or the (dis)order- of the gesture of prayer in Western visuality and their ideological uses. Insomuch as its sacred use related to Christianity has been stripped of its original meanings and hybridised with Asian influences. This (dis)order is exploited in the public sphere, and the need to analyse seemingly banal images of politicians, athletes, or celebrities transmitted through newspapers or propaganda is necessary for a correct understanding of contemporary visuality. Hence, we are going to base our analysis on Panofsky's term *pseudomorphosis*, which we understand as the reuse of forms and gestures with a resignification of their meanings and connotations (1964), and the method of Warburg's *Mnemosyne* (1929) based on the survival and transformation of certain symbols and themes throughout history, emphasizing the interconnectedness of cultures and the persistence of visual elements.

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VIS06 Representations of bodies and spaces

PP 1081 The empty city during the COVID-19 pandemic as an 'hyperobjectual' becoming of the visual motif: An inquiry into saturated aesthetics

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During the first compasses of the pandemic, an image often imagined but rarely seen was omnipresent: that of the empty city. The intense fascination of media with this iconographic irruption evoked the photogenic qualities that the urban space apparently lacking human activity has. It was an image sought by photojournalists that recalled the unearthliness of early photography, metaphysical painting, surrealism, science-fiction literature or apocalyptic cinema, serial television and video games. This artistic lineage allows to typify it as a Visual Motif (Balló & Salvadó, 2023). The empty city retains its aura of enigma, but it also suffers a mutation in its transposition to the public sphere by the haunting of an Hyperobject: COVID-19, a zoonotic occurrence caused by the climate crisis and, ultimately, global capitalism (De Vogli, 2023).

Due to hyperobjects' space-time magnitude being so vast relative to humanity, their existence is deeply uncanny: they can only be felt locally and intimately, as they adhere their presence to smaller entities; their phased totality remains inaccessible, generating a profound sense of unreality; and yet, they are (Morton, 2013). There is a direct link between their attributes and how the empty city has historically been represented (Yablon, 2020): both are marked by the nightmarish. If pre-pandemic images portrayed subconscious fears through urban absence, rendering newly visible an otherworldly non-appearance (Jaffé, 1995), pandemic images were inspired by the art of the past to mediate an actually altered reality, whose spectral weirdness was inscribed on the ultimately measurable reverberations of the Anthropocene. By concentrating the presence and effects of COVID-19 into the empty city's depiction, the latter developed a unitary, saturated aesthetics (Marion, 2002) whose imagery is both catastrophic and dreamy. In this way, the visual motif may turn 'hyperobjectual' phenomena iconic.

Since space, as a socially generated and historically situated product that allows for a symbolic embodiment of everyday life (Lefebvre, 2013), is often created through image-making (Lynch, 1960), then the visual motif may serve as an effective cognitive map to navigate the urban: a mediation of late capitalism, whose diseased emptiness reflects a displacement towards the ruinous (Pohl, 2022). If each society produces its own space, the empty city is an eloquent expression of the pandemic age' aesthetic field. But a paradox lingers: the confined metropolis was not uninhabited at all, it only appeared to be so. There was no extinction event, as consumerism prevailed. Population stratified in those forced to remain outside risking infection and those quarantined, while the urban was transferred to a Fourth Space (Hardegger, 2022), colonizing home via digital interfaces in which work and leisure intermingled. This withdrawal from the tangible uncovered a dynamic of exteriority and interiority in COVID-19 imagery.

This communication aims at describing the pandemic drift of the empty city visual motif, analyzing its journey from surrealist-apocalyptic metaphysics to 'hyperobjectual' immanence, and at showing how, through representation, it might be able to render visible the invisible: the end of the world, brought about by global capitalism through the climate crisis that originated COVID-19.

AEM01 Worlds shaped by affect, emotion and media: Everyday life, news, and conflict

PP 0134 Boredom, young people and everyday media practice in digital life

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This paper explores and exemplifies the complex interplay between boredom and media practice in the everyday life of young people in Sweden. Being bored is a fundamental aspect of youth culture and experience, as well as a common theme in the narratives and imageries of youth popular culture. Yet the issue of boredom remains inexplicably underexplored in both youth cultural studies and media and audience research. Though boredom has long been acknowledged as an integral part of the lived realities of young people (Corrigan, 1979; Willis, 1977), including their everyday media practices (Hjort & Richardson, 2009; Livingstone, 2002), boredom is rarely the main analytic focus, and it generally tends to be taken for granted rather than explored in-depth. At the same time, the last couple of years has seen the emergence of a new multidisciplinary research field called "boredom studies" (Gardiner & Haladyn 2017), dealing explicitly with the many facets of boredom, but apart from Paasonen's (2021) ambitious treatment of the relationship between media and boredom there has so far been little exchange between boredom scholars and media scholars.

Theorizing boredom as a socially constructed emotion (Thoits, 1989) emanating from perceived lack of meaningfulness (Barbalet, 1999), this paper puts the boredom in young people's lives at the center of analytic attention and explores the ways in which their media practices both relieve and reinforce emotional experiences of boredom in digital life. Taking inspiration from media ethnography and drawing on original empirical material from in-depth qualitative interviews with four Swedish university students (18–20 years old), the paper sets out to revive boredom as an issue in the study of youth culture and everyday media practice. By showing how emotional experiences of boredom are always embedded and shaped in everyday life contexts and situations, intersected with other emotions such as loneliness, and actively regulated through a variety of both media and non-media practices, it also makes a much-needed empirical contribution to the growing body of mainly theoretical literature on the relationship between boredom and digital media (Hand, 2017; Kendall, 2018; Paasonen, 2021).

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AEM01 Worlds shaped by affect, emotion and media: Everyday life, news, and conflict

PP 0135 (Un)doing intimacy. Emotions and the technological infrastructure of patchwork families

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For years, we have been observing the phenomenon of the progressive emotionalisation of the Internet, that is, the development of services that not only enter the most intimate spaces of our lives, but also feed on the affectations of users, making them a source of revenue for service providers. Much of the research in this space, however, is devoted either to politically motivated conflicts between people who are strangers to each other or connected by weak ties – as these disputes then play out online – or to building new intimate relationships, for example using dating apps. I want to lean into a topic where love and aversion come together, with much of the communication taking place through various media channels.

My submission is the result of an ethnographic research project on the use of smartphones in a large Polish city, more specifically a case study focused on women from patchwork families with shared childcare, involving meetings with 30 people. It is a space with a large role for technology, which is essential for the logistical coordination of

the functioning of a dispersed family, but also an emotionally dense space. Children, family, old and new partners communicate with each other at a distance, because most of the time they do not share a physical space. Their communication is loaded with different emotions, including grief, resentment and new hopes. However, my interviewees are not only operating at a distance, they are also operating on a timeline: they are grappling with pre-break-up 'memories' archived on social media and performing the opposite process to displaying intimacy – actively forgetting and actually not only doing (new) intimacies, while planning their future, but also undoing (old) intimacy. The platform for all these activities and tensions is smartphones, its apps, continuous Internet connectivity and geolocation services, which allow – and sometimes even force – users to modify their behaviours and develop a range of new ones.

After the pilot interviews, men were excluded from the sample; it turned out that in a patriarchal society their level of logistical and emotional work is much lower, and some of them do not reflect at all on the fact that someone is doing these activities, that things do not happen by themselves.

The presentation will explore the emotional dynamics in the study group and their relationship to the infrastructure of intimacy understood as the applications used for patchwork contact. I will also share my thoughts on the challenges of conducting research in an area that is so difficult from an emotional perspective.

AEM01 Worlds shaped by affect, emotion and media: Everyday life, news, and conflict

PP 0136 Emotional communities in the journalistic age: Establishment of feeling rules by and within the field of journalism

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Journalism's relationship with emotion is an uneasy one: While research has shown how emotion structures news-making processes and journalistic narratives (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2020), perceptions of "neutrality, objectivity and detachment" (Kotisova, 2020, p. 1713) are still prevalent within the profession. Journalists are thus entangled between normative expectations and their own emotional experiences (Lünenborg & Medeiros, 2021). Most research on those "feeling rules" (Hochschild 1979) focuses on journalists' emotional management. Our study however investigates how feelings rules are constituted and (re-)negogiated *by* the journalistic field in the first place, and how they establish sub-groups, contradictions, and boundaries *within* the field.

Feeling rules can be established *from within* a group but also can be imposed *upon* a group – the latter Reddy (2001) names an "emotional regime". Here, however, we focus on the bottom-up constitution of feeling rules that Rosenwein (2006) defines as an "emotional community" – dynamic groups of people who share similar emotional values, norms, and expressions. *Emotional communities* are constructed but also made identifiable by repeated patterns of 'emotion words' (Plamper, 2010) or other emotional expressions (Verheyen, 2010). Within each *emotional community* exists a specific emotional repertoire guiding how individuals experience and express their emotions (Scheer, 2012). Journalists may be part of conflicting *emotional communities* having to manage contradictions between established emotional norms and actual emotional practices. They might also create something that we call 'imagined emotional community': By attributing feeling rules to others, they anticipate the emotional practices of e.g. audience communities and adapt their own feeling rules accordingly. Focusing on the in-group negotiation process of feeling rules advances a deeper understanding of the role emotions play in everyday journalistic work life.

Data will be based on two waves of reconstructive, semi-structured interviews with 20 journalists each from Austria and the Czech Republic in the first half of 2024. Using a comparative and longitudinal approach allows us to capture the temporal and spatial aspects of emotional practice. By applying Rosenwein's concept of *emotional communities*, we can better conceptualize their contradicting nature within the journalistic profession, but also the implications of conflicting feeling rules for journalists themselves. Feeling rules are inherently shaped by normative expectations of other (imagined) *emotional communities*, and our study helps to better understand their influence on journalistic production. Shifting the focus from how journalists perceive professional feeling rules to how they constitute and (re-)negotiate them will offer novel insights into their everyday emotional practices.

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AEM01 Worlds shaped by affect, emotion and media: Everyday life, news, and conflict

PP 0137 Local conflict journalists making news: Audience responses to the coverage of Motaz Hilal Azaiza and Wael Al-Dahdouh in the Gaza Conflict

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In the wake of the Israel-Gaza conflict, Gazan journalists have stepped to the fore, making headlines in the very stories on which they have been reporting. The importance of local Gazan journalists has been all the more significant given the restrictions on entry to Gaza for foreign correspondents. Two journalists in particular, Motaz Hilal Azaiza and Wael Al-Dahdouh, have become emblematic figures of Gazan journalism, in part for their on-the-ground reporting from the Gaza Strip as it has been under bombardment, in part for the consistency of this work in an area where the threat to journalists has been particularly heightened, and in part for the massive personal losses they have suffered during their labor. Motaz Hilal Azaiza, "The Eye of Gaza", is a 24-year-old photojournalist for the UNRWA. Wael Al-Dahdouh, "The Mountain", is bureau chief for Al-Jazeera in Gaza City. Whereas proximity to danger is a condition of conflict journalism, the death toll among journalists in Gaza has been the highest since the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) began recording conflict deaths of journalists, and the personal losses suffered by both journalists have made the imminent danger to their persons all the more apparent. Their personal losses have also meant that these journalists are being viewed in a particular light by their audiences. In this light, the outsourcing of emotion to affected parties, typical of the strategic ritual of emotionality practiced by journalists and expected by audiences, has been made not only wholly unnecessary, but virtually impossible. Audiences abroad have been privy to the personal grief of both men alongside their reports, raising an important question about the quality of their reception: how do audiences respond to journalism when journalists become the story? Analyzing comments on Twitter/X and Instagram, in this paper I set out to illuminate the responses of international audiences to the reportages and testimonies of Gazan journalists Motaz Hilal Azaiza and Wael Al-Dahdouh during the Israel-Gaza conflict. Theoretically, the paper draws on strategic rituals of emotionality (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2013) and emotional regimes (Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011) as these pertain to the journalistic audiences who receive and react to the reports of these Gazan journalists.

AEM01 Worlds shaped by affect, emotion and media: Everyday life, news, and conflict

PP 0138 Emotive means and disinformation: Analyzing linguistic emotionalization strategies on Twitter in the context of the Reichstag Occupation and Capitol Storming

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The occupation of the Reichstag steps in Germany in August 2020 and the storming of the US Capitol in January 2021 have underscored the escalating threat posed by the spread of disinformation through social networks, affecting democracy, the political system, and the public sphere. Members of extremist groups, deeply embedded in disinformation channels, attempted to storm public government buildings. To effectively counteract the spread of disinformation, it is vital to understand the mechanisms of emotional influence in social networks and messaging services. Emotionalization plays a key role in how information is consumed, shared, and perceived in these networks. This study focuses specifically on linguistic emotionalization strategies employed in disinformation messages on Twitter, a platform of considerable influence in digital communication. Notably, Twitter has been instrumental in disseminating disinformation, particularly during the occupation of the Reichstag steps and the storming of the US capitol. Our analysis is framed within the context of these pivotal events. We introduce an approach, that uniquely combines qualitative content analysis with an emotion-linguistic categorization system, addressing a notable underrepresentation of linguistic analysis in examining emotive means within social networks. We applied a multi-layered qualitative analysis model, featuring four primary categories of linguistic emotionalization: typographic, morphologic, pragmatic, and lexical. This approach also included an examination of emotional valences and variations in emotionalization strategies across different themes, which were previously identified in the data set. Throughout the analysis, we observed emotionalization strategies in all four key categories, across all themes, without any topic-specific variation. However, the authors of disinformation tweets avoided emotive means in pseudoscientific arguments or when imitating journalistic styles. The emotionalization strategies were supplemented by persuasive stylistic devices and specific metaphors, such as war and theatre metaphors. Overall, the data set displayed a predominantly negative emotional climate. Our analysis of emotionalization strategies revealed various stylistic devices used by the authors of disinformation tweets in different forms, showing a wide range of emotive techniques and diverse application and contextualization. Ultimately, we found that the expression of emotions acts as a control element to either highlight or trivialize topics.

AGC01 Dynamic dialogues on digitization in later life

PN 001 Older people, ICTs, (post)pandemic: Digital exclusion, resistance and digital services domestication

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The emergency of COVID-19 has deeply impacted the digitization of many activities and has particularly contributed to the introduction of digital solutions in welfare services. This rapid (and often imposed) digitalization process has offered the opportunity to new segments of the population to deepen their knowledge of digital tools while other segments have seen an increase in the difficulty of using digital technologies, which are more and more indispensable for everyday life. Older people, particularly affected by the pandemic, have been key players in digital transformation, as seen in the case of video calls in nursing homes and digital solutions adopted for assistance and care support. In particular, the older people, a part of the population which, especially in Italy, is less digitalised than younger cohorts, have had to deal with the sudden digitalisation of relationships and public services. But although it was thought that the pandemic would be able to spread the use of technologies even among those most resistant to innovation, the first data and the first empirical evidence make this hypothesis blurrier. Some studies have underlined that this digital acceleration risks being a transitory push to the digitalization of older people, not capable of reducing the digital divide but rather deepening it, according to the theory of stratification of digital inequalities. Starting from this context, this contribution presents the first results of a longitudinal qualitative study that investigated transformations in daily habits and digital tool usage among a panel of over 65 residents in Italian towns that were among the first affected by the pandemic. The Longitudinal Study on Older People's Quality of Life during the COVID-19 pandemic (ILQA-19) is a longitudinal qualitative study conducted on a purposive sample of 40 men and women aged between 65 and 80 years, residing in ten towns in the rural area of the province of Lodi (Italy) and belonging to the first COVID-19 'Red Zone' in Europe. In line with Goal 9 of the Agenda 2030, on the availability of an Internet connection for all, this contribution highlights how older people have seen their approach to technology transform in recent years and, in particular, what aspects are of greatest interest to older people in the use of digital technologies and what are the major challenges. In particular, the research focuses on the processes of resistance, rejection, and domestication of the use of digital services by older people and the role that social relations play in negotiating access to public services, increasing 'digital by default.'Finally, the research aims to consider not all forms of disconnection, resistance, negotiation in the use of ICT among the older population as forms of digital exclusion (especially in the post-pandemic context) but rather as 'choices' of older people, in a calculation of costs and benefits, utility, opportunity of use of specific media and services.

AGC01 Dynamic dialogues on digitization in later life

PN 002 Investigating the impact of over-helping and under-helping on older adults' digital skills

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Although digitalization is increasingly pervasive in modern society, certain marginal and societal groups can still encounter challenges in the digital world. Promoting digital inclusion and digital support aims to address these disparities, enabling equal participation in a digital society for individuals of all backgrounds. Regarding this, the quality of digital support emerges as a critical factor in ensuring fair access to digital technologies in a society that is becoming increasingly digitally connected. In this article, we examine the quality and dynamics of informal learning and digital support from the perspective of older adults' subjective experiences. Specifically, we ask (1) what are the key elements of informal learning in the context of older adults' acquisition of digital skills? Based on the first question, we further examine (2) how do the identified key elements of informal learning influence older adults' subjective learning experiences and independent use of digital technologies? Inductive thematic analysis is based on participant-induced elicitation (PIE) interviews (n = 21) carried out in Finland with older adults (aged 65 and over). Our findings suggest that older adults are a heterogeneous group with individual support needs and diverse prior experiences with digital technologies, strongly influenced by their media literacy skills and exposure to various media and communication environments. Second, we argue that even in cases where digital support is available (by e.g., friends and family), it can fall short without promoting independent use or generating subjective experiences of learning. As digital inclusion cannot be achieved only by improving access or availability of digital technologies, it is important to take a deeper look at the skills and knowledge required to operate in the digital society and to navigate different media and communication landscapes effectively. Lastly, our findings suggest that it is necessary to bring forward how informal digital support provided by warm experts can not only enhance but also hinder digital inclusion and independent aging.

AGC01 Dynamic dialogues on digitization in later life

PN 003 Decoding ageism in the digital inclusion debate: A detailed media and interview study

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As ICT use has become an integral part of everyday life, it has also permeated the ageing experience. Research into the media representation of older adults' relationship with ICT still shows a negative stereotypical view on ageing and technology (Köttl et al., 2022; Rasi, 2022; Ivan & Loos, 2023). The influence of this view on older people has been reflected in research on stereotype threat (Barber, 2017) and the embodiment of stereotypes (Levy, 2009). This research examines how media typification of ageing and technology influence the older individuals' narratives of digital inclusion in Flanders, Belgium.To enable this comparison, the media typification was determined by conducting a qualitative content analysis of Dutch-language newspaper (Dutch and Belgian) articles (N= 281). Selected articles: 1) discussed digital inclusion, and 2) were published in the period 2000 to 2020. The analysis resulted in five types, ranging from positive (Digital Fighter, Digital Debutant) to negative types (Old-thus-incompetent, Reluctantly Digital, and Digitally Self-Excluded). This typification constituted the basis for a qualitative analysis of the digital inclusion narratives used by 76 Flemish older adults (aged 65 to 91). The participants had different ICT engagement levels, which resulted in different uses of the types. The disengaged embraced the negative types to defend their disengagement. Thus, they embodied the classic media stereotype, as reflected in their language and tropes. The ICT engaged utilized the negative types to distinguish between their own ageing experience and that of the disengaged. They focus on explaining the differences between their ageing experiences and that of the negative types. Furthermore, the analysis of the digital inclusion narratives resulted in a sixth type of digital inclusion for older adults: the Digital Veteran. This narrative centers on the long history with different ICTs and the enthusiasm to easily engage with ICTs on a daily basis, a positive typification towards digital inclusion. Overall, the five types generated by the media are part of the narratives used by older people to explain their digital inclusion. However, the necessity to create a new type shows that the media only partially reflects the ICT experiences of older people. Barber, S. J. (2017). An examination of age-based stereotype threat about cognitive decline: Implications for stereotype threat research and theory development. Perspect Psychology Science, 12(1), 62–90. Ivan, L., & Loos, E. (2023). The marketing of technology products for older people: Evidence of visual ageism. In Digital Ageism (pp. 88–115). Routledge. Köttl, H., Tatzer, V. C., & Ayalon, L. (2022). COVID-19 and Everyday ICT Use: The Discursive Construction of Old Age in German Media. The Gerontologist. Levy, B. (2009). Stereotype embodiment: A psychosocial approach to aging. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 18(6), 332–336. Rasi, P. (2022). 'Behind the Digi-God's back': Social representations of older people's digital competences and internet use in regional Finnish newspapers. Ageing and Society, 42(4), 829–848.

AGC01 Dynamic dialogues on digitization in later life

PN 004 AI and aging: What older people want to know

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The exploration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the context of aging populations has become a focal point in recent collaborations between community-based initiatives and organizations dedicated to older people in Montreal. This paper delves into the multifaceted efforts aimed at disseminating information and fostering discussions on AI's implications for the older adults, showcasing how a reciprocal approach based on the co-development of events can effectively lead to knowledge mobilization. How can the co-design of media education with community organization, on different platforms, in different configurations, lead to life-long critical learning about new technologies, such as AI? This paper will discuss the lessons from three recent initiatives. The first, the creation of a local book club composed of older adults who have taken a unique angle to engage with AI – through the lens of science fiction. This unconventional approach provides a creative and speculative space for members to ponder the potential impacts of AI on aging. Through discussions spurred by futuristic narratives, participants explore the intersections of technology and aging, fostering a nuanced understanding that extends beyond traditional informational sessions. The second co-designed collaboration involves a robust community organization boasting over 300 members. Leveraging the power of online webinars, this group has facilitated lively discussions that reach a wide audience, bridging geographical gaps and providing accessibility to a diverse range of older individuals. These webinars serve as a platform for experts to share insights into the intricacies of AI and its relevance to the aging community. The interactive nature of the sessions encourages active participation, ensuring that the discussions remain engaging and tailored to the specific concerns and interests of the attendees. The third example involves a community resource center that invites experts to participate in sessions to delve into emergent issues surrounding AI. The center serves as a meeting ground for older individuals seeking a comprehensive understanding of AI's implications. Through facilitated discussions with experts, participants gain valuable insights into the evolving landscape of AI and its

potential ramifications for their lives. This paper meticulously outlines the key issues and challenges initially identified by the organizers, shedding light on the considerations that prompted these community-based initiatives, and why they suggest strategies for their very different communities of older adults. Furthermore, it examines the perspectives shared by experts and the concerns raised by older participants, who co-construct a critical examination of AI that captures the evolving dialogue on the intersection of AI and aging within Montreal's vibrant but very diverse older community. The collaborative efforts showcased herein exemplify the relevance of bringing in the voices of older adults into meaningful conversations about the transformative impact of AI on their (our) lives.

AGC01 Dynamic dialogues on digitization in later life

PN 005 Life transitions and media transitions: How retirement and widowhood shape media usage in later life

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Life transitions refer to discrete changes embedded in life trajectories that, planned or not, happen throughout life. Accompanied by shifts in social roles (Levinson 1978, 1997), they constitute biographical ruptures, discontinuities or "turning points." Life transitions shape different aspects of life, including media usage (e.g., Bryan et al. 2016). Yet, studies in this area mainly focus on the instrumental role of media in supporting such transitions and, to our knowledge, do not analyze everyday practices and neither employ longitudinal approaches. Besides, most focus on young or middle adulthood and, to a lesser extent, on later life.With a particular focus on retirement and widowhood –two turning points that particularly shape later life – our main research question is: How do life transitions shape media usage in later life? To answer it, we took a dynamic longitudinal perspective, which is essential in studying transitions (George, 1993). We relied on a four waves survey-based panel conducted in Romania between 2016 and 2023 that involved Internet users aged 60 and over at the beginning of the study. The same 254 participants answered the survey in the four waves –approximately every two years. During the studied period, 25% of the participants widowed and 18% retired. Preliminary results show that, in general, life transitions do not shape the regular usage of traditional media and digital media. However, time devoted to these media increases with life transitions but in different ways. Retirement tends to foster an increase in digital media, whereas widowhood relates more to traditional media, either before or after the Covid-19 pandemic. The difference appears to be justified by socio-economic conditions, meaning that a proper understanding of older audiences and their dynamics need particular, focused research. Whereas results should not be assumed statistically representative, this set of data that spans seven years is valuable in analytical terms and is also unique in communication studies involving later life.

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CAS01 Gender perspectives on media (re)presentations of sports

PP 0041 Female professionals in Nordic media sports: Agency and expertise in the changing media environment

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Sports culture has remained for a considerable time a distinct part of our society, dominated by the laws of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity (Adams et al., 2010; McKay et al., 2000). The practices that still affect the field today stem from long-held values and attitudes in sports, whereby, for example, women's sporting activities have been seen as inherently inferior to top-level male sports. This is particularly pronounced in team sports, which are perceived as masculine, and is reflected, for example, in inequalities in the income and media visibility of athletes of different genders.

In this study, we examine the extent to which hegemonic structures are still affecting women's roles in Nordic media sports. The theoretical framework of the study is feminist sports studies, which emphasise intersectionality and gender diversity. In this line of research, the transformation of sports culture is not seen as a linear progressive development, but as a fragmented and complex phenomena that seeks to identify the intersections of multiple differences that influence power relations in sports in any given period (Caudwell, 2011; Hargreaves, 2004; Tredway, 2020). Based on these premises we ask: How do female sports professionals in the Nordic countries perceive and express their agency in the changing media environment?

The data for this study consists of thematic interviews with 20 Finnish female journalists and top-level sports coaches conducted in 2023, and recordings of social media content updates by elite team sport athletes from Nordic countries collected during a one month period in 2022. The digital dataset includes a total of 142 feed updates and 418 stories, compiled using both digital ethnography and automatic recording. The interview data was analysed with the means of applied thematic analysis (Guest et al., 2012), and a framing analysis (Entman, 1993) was carried out of the social media material. Finally, the datasets were triangulated to discover whether there were any cross-cutting themes relating to the perceptions and expressions of women's agency in the sports field.

The analysis revealed that female athletes' social media updates were united by their self-portrayal as serious professional athletes. Compulsion to prove oneself was also a theme that inductively and frequently surfaced from our interview data. Hence, the study shows that female athletes, journalists and coaches are repeatedly forced to showcase their expertise and prove their competence in the field, and at the same time restrictive norms are narrowing the roles available for them. Furthermore, along with the opportunities, the study shows that digitalisation has caused more challenges for female professionals since it has increased the ways of trivialisation and harassment. These topics were reflected both in the content produced by the athletes and in the interviews with female coaches and journalists. Digitalisation has thus both empowered female sports professionals and made the media sports environment even more complex for them. Conclusively, we argue that even in one of the most gender-equal parts of the world, othering attitudes and discourses are constructing a sports culture where there are separate rules and practices for different genders.

CAS01 Gender perspectives on media (re)presentations of sports

PP 0042 What tournament press conferences reveal about gendered media bias in professional tennis

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Gender disparities are a pressing issue in professional sports. Compared to their male counterparts, female athletes are subjected to worse conditions, paid less, and receive unequal recognition. Media coverage reflects and is partly responsible for these disparities. Women athletes receive less media attention and are more frequently depicted in roles unrelated to their performance.

In the sporting world, professional tennis ostensibly enjoys a reputation for gender equality. The sport has produced male and female (*) global stars. Major championships, such as the four Grand Slam tournaments, include men and women, offer equal prize money, and share public attention. However, glaring disparities, including unequal prize money, have only been reduced in recent years, and many implicit and explicit biases against women persist today.

This context makes professional tennis particularly interesting for studies of gendered media bias. It is not only one of the most-watched sports globally but also a presumed trailblazer for gender equality in sports. Hence, we investigate (1) sports journalists' biases against female tennis players compared to male players and (2) how these biases have changed over the past three decades, 1992–2023.

We do this through the lens of press conferences held at professional tournaments. They provide regular, highly standardized, and mostly unfiltered encounters between journalists and tennis players. Our analysis focuses on journalists' questions and their interactions with the players, advancing other approaches to gender bias detection in two critical ways. Contrary to survey self-reports, we get a glimpse of journalists' revealed preferences and attitudes. Sports coverage, on the other hand, is the product of many individual and organizational actors. A content analysis of press conference questions reduces ambiguity as journalists are solely responsible for their questions.

Our mixed-methods approach integrates computational text analysis of a large corpus (about 30,000 press conferences, 400,000 questions, 1,400 tennis players) with context-aware qualitative analysis. Preliminary findings suggest subtle but notable differences in the journalists' treatment of male and female tennis players. Surprisingly, female athletes received slightly more questions than their male colleagues. However, both quantitative measures of the questions' content and qualitative analyses of notable exchanges indicate persistent biases against female players; for example, more unprofessional questions pertaining to family, parenthood, on-court behavior, fashion, etc. Additional analyses will track how these biases have changed over time. We discuss our findings against the broader societal tapestry in which athletes and journalists are situated through a nuanced exploration of biases across various social identities.

(*) Following the logic of professional tennis, our writing and analysis make the binary distinction between female and male players and define them through membership in the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) or the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP). We acknowledge that this is a simplification of gender as a social construct.

CAS01 Gender perspectives on media (re)presentations of sports

PP 0043 Sporting inclusion: An examination of the Czech media's approach to football player's Jakub Jankto coming out and the subsequent public reaction

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Historically, sports have been characterized by heteronormativity, creating an environment designed to prevent the "feminization" of men. This configuration of masculinity in sports perpetuates and reproduces gender and sexuality stereotypes (Ayvazo & Sutherland, 2009). In the sports context, there has been a growing recognition and acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals in recent years (Watt & Elliot, 2019).

This study deals with the coming out of Czech male footballer Jakub Jankto. He revealed his sexuality in February 2023 as the first player in the Czech professional competitions. His decision to talk about it publicly remains a significant exception also on the highest global level, especially during his active career (Justine Fashanu was first in 1990, but with tragic end; most recently Josh Cavallo in 2021, or Jake Daniels in 2022). Jakub Jankto played that time in Sparta Prague; now, he is a midfielder of Cagliari; he also has experiences from Getafe, Sampdoria, Udinese, and Ascoli, and he was a member of the Czech national team too.

The paper analyzes how the Czech environment represented by the media and their audience reacted to his coming out. It examines whether the media representation of this topic follows global trends where sports journalism is moving away from the "toy department" and focusing on non-sporting topics with a social overlap, as Cassidy (2016) proves in the United States in the similar cases of Jason Collins and Michael Sam. The paper also explores the perspectives of sports fans and readers of selected websites and their reactions. The previous research shows that sports fans do describe themselves as tolerant (Walser et al., 2022), but this is not supported by published posts in online discussions, which demonstrate that there are still comments with homophobic, offensive and harmful content (Nabono Martins, 2023).

The sample includes 43 texts published by the leading Czech sports online media (Sport.cz, iSport.cz and iDnes.cz) two weeks after the announcement, which were examined by discursive analysis, and thousands of posts in discussions under articles, which were examined by quantitative content analysis. While the journalistic texts appreciated Jankto's decision and supported him directly in commentaries or through interviews with relevant respondents, the discussions related to these articles contain, besides encouraging posts, more restrained or even critical statuses; some of them were even deleted because they did not respect the standards of the forums.

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CAS01 Gender perspectives on media (re)presentations of sports

PP 0044 Championing well-being: An analysis of European sports personalities and the (dis)order of public influence on the youth

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This article explores how European sports personalities communicate about well-being. Focusing on prominent figures from Denmark, Germany, Spain, Romania, Slovenia, and Italy, the study analyzes the most followed athletes' online presence and its touch with dimensions of well-being. The selected personalities include Caroline Wozniacki (Denmark, Tennis), Toni Kroos (Germany, Football), Sergio Ramos (Spain, Football), Simona Halep (Romania, Tennis), Luka Dončić (Slovenia, Basketball), and Valentino Rossi (Italy, Motorcycling).

The research question is: *In what ways do European sports personalities engage with the concept of well-being in their online communication?* A secondary question is *Are there instances where they contribute to (dis)orderly perceptions among youth followers?* By addressing these, the article aims to shed light on sports personalities, well-being, and potential (dis)orderly influences on the youth.

Each athlete is examined in the context of well-being domains, such as emotional, career, social, financial, and physical. For instance, Caroline Wozniacki's communication, the most followed sportsperson in Denmark, is explored in the context of social well-being, addressing her experiences with injury and divorce. Similarly, Toni Kroos is analyzed for emotional well-being, highlighting the impact of his marriage on his communication. Others like physical well-being, as exemplified by Sergio Ramos, and career, illustrated by Simona Halep, who faced mental health challenges amid a doping scandal. Luka Dončić from Slovenia is scrutinized for his influence on emotional well-being, while Valentino Rossi from Italy is studied for the implications of a tax scandal, reflecting on financial well-being.

The literature review incorporates the Framing Theory, and Source Credibility Theory from an Influencer Marketing perspective, touching with the Health Belief Model. This adds to understanding the dynamics of sports personalities' influence on youth well-being perception. Ethical considerations in the realm of public influence from an Image Transfer point of view are also explored.

The qualitative analysis involves focus groups to analyze the nuances of the athletes' online presence and its impact. Quantitative methods include measuring social media engagement to assess the reach of these sports personalities if they address well-being topics.

The focus groups of students aged between 19 and 24 were organized based on active engagement with social media and their following of the chosen European sports personalities. Identified themes were categorized into topics such as *Positive Influence, Negative Influence, Ethical dilemmas, Authenticity and Trustworthiness*, and others covering the recurrent themes in the participant's responses.

Results highlight a spectrum from unrealistic portrayals to transparency and controversial statements or actions. Positive role modeling, where influential personalities openly discuss struggles and victories, benefits the youth. Conversely, public personas must be cautious of potential negative influences, particularly regarding body image or lifestyle choices.

Implications of the study range from influencer responsibility to media literacy and dialogue. It emphasizes the need for efforts to ensure responsibility and positivity in youth well-being within European communities. The study's significance extends beyond individuals to societal and mediatic domains, considering the substantial image capital sports personalities possess.

CAS01 Gender perspectives on media (re)presentations of sports

PP 0045 Breaking barriers with a football: The activist TikTok narratives of Maymi Asgari

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Female football culture on TikTok

Since its introduction in 2018, TikTok has emerged as a hugely influential, trend-setting social media platform in an increasing range of contexts. Like most other cultural domain, sport is also increasingly consumed through short, spectacular, highlight-focused formats such as TikTok videos, YouTube shorts and Instagram reels, especially among

younger generations. This phenomenon is a consequence of fundamental processes of digitization within sport, as digital platforms increasingly are being involved in the production and consumption of sport content. These brief formats have emerged as algorithmically curated and personal alternatives to the traditional, communal address of mass-media sports events such as TV transmissions of football matches and "wraparound" (Goldsmith, 2013) pre- and post-event programs.

As an example of how sport is mediated on short form video, this paper explores how TikTok is employed by female footballers and female football fans in self-presentational performances and for sharing female expressions of football culture. While there is extensive literature examining feminist approaches to sport (e.g. Pfister & Pope, 2018), including specific focuses on older social media like blogs (Antunovic & Hardin, 2013) and Instagram (Toffoletti et al., 2021), sports culture on TikTok, including feminist perspectives, is a profoundly under-researched topic. As such, in a larger perspective the paper hopes to contribute with insights into ways short-form video platforms affect the emergence of new expressions of football culture and sports in general.

Using an ethnographic approach (Schellewald, 2021; Stahl & Literat, 2022; Vaterlaus & Winter, 2021) the chapter sketches how women apply the communicative, memetic affordances of TikTok (Zulli & Zulli, 2020) to present themselves as football fans and players. Analytically, a distinction is made between identity strategic expressions containing gendered, and activist messages, and more integrative, communal strategies emphasizing personal, affective, and performative perspectives of football.

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CAS02 Mediatization of sport and sports media logic: Theoretical and methodical approaches

PP 0129 News or not? Sports journalism and the climate crisis

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The increasing effects of the climate crisis demand rapid political and societal action, as it was stressed repeatedly in IPCC and UN reports (UNEP, 2023; IPCC, 2023). Germany, too, is already experiencing the consequences of global heating (BMUV, 2023). As the climate crisis is increasingly affecting all areas of life, media are reacting to that challenge both internationally and in Germany with extended coverage in diverse ways (Brüggemann & Sadikni, 2023; Hase et al., 2021; Tschötschel et al., 2022). However, scholars have thus far rarely analysed the potential changes dealing with the climate crisis might bring specifically to sports journalism (Wilson & Yoon, 2023) – despite sports being one of the well-established editorial departments (Boyle, 2006). Hence, this study creates an insight into how national sports editors and their departments in Germany deal with the topic of climate crisis.

As there is still little research in this area specific to sports journalism, a few theoretical aspects were drawn from the debate around journalism's coverage of the climate crisis generally. These include the potential use of constructive journalism as a reporting pattern (Haagerup, 2017; Urner, 2019), the applicability of traditional news values and factors (Marquardt, 2023; Neverla & Schäfer, 2012; Schäfer, 2019; Schulz, 2011) as well as a possible role conflict for journalists between their professional norm of objectivity and the accusation of activism when reporting on climate issues (Brüggemann et al., 2022; Haeming, 2020; Marquardt, 2023).

Additionally, other theoretical aspects have been derived from sports context, more vaguely referring to reporting on sustainability generally and other socio-political issues connected to sports. These involve potential differences

in the coverage intensity both based on political orientation of media outlets as well as in the context of sport mega-events such as Olympics (Yoon & Wilson, 2019). Also, the aspect of scholars criticising sports editor's roles as the "toy department" (Hardin et al., 2009; Oates & Pauly, 2007; Rowe, 2007) was reflected contrasted by more recent studies suggesting a shift towards journalistic ideals and more socio-political awareness in sports departments (Broussard, 2020; Schmidt, 2018; Weedon et al., 2018).

The study's character is explorative, thus eight semi-structured in-depth interviews with editors from national sports departments in Germany have been conducted. These are analysed with a qualitative approach, using the software MAXQDA. The sample is not representative but will offer trends from practical experts on how sports departments deal with the climate crisis in their reporting.

The interviews have not yet been finally analysed. However, we expect that the results will include the following: a general rise of awareness for climate issues in Germany's sports reporting. Some departments consciously researching climate topics while others focus on external factors like mega-events, cancelled competitions in e.g. winter sports or PR-communication by clubs and associations. Accusations of activism and the implementation of constructive journalism are rare, journalistic role perceptions vary and seem to influence the perceived importance of socio-political context and climate related coverage in sports – these seem to be more relevant in public service media.

CAS02 Mediatization of sport and sports media logic: Theoretical and methodical approaches

PP 0130 Praise for the deceased: Metajournalistic discourse in European (sports) media on the closure of the New York Times sports desk

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When the *New York Times* announced the closure of its sports desk on July 10th 2023 it added a whole new layer to the already hotly debated disruption of sports journalism (McEnnis, 2022). While established sports media had been threatened for some time by new entrants (McEnnis, 2017; Mirer, 2022; Nölleke & Perreault, 2023), reputable media outlets in particular seemed to pave avenues out of the crisis by reclaiming authority through a revival of traditional journalistic norms and practices (Gentile et al., 2022) as well as offering innovative narratives (Rojas-Torrijos, 2019). In this respect, the *NYTimes* could be considered a role model for sports journalism survival in times of digital disruption – so it came as a surprise when it closed its sports desk and shifted its coverage to *The Athletic* (which was acquired in 2022).

While this incident in itself says a lot about the ongoing changes in sports communication, it also provides a perfect opportunity to examine what societal value is attributed to sports journalism. When other outlets report on the closure of the *NYTimes* sports desk, they provide an institutional conversation (Perreault et al., 2023a) on the history and the current state of the field. Through this metajournalistic discourse they "construct, reiterate and even challenge the boundaries of acceptable journalistic practices" (Carlson, 2016, p. 349). Moreover, metajournalistic discourse offers insights into the role ascribed to (sports) journalism in society (Perreault & Nölleke, 2022). In this regard, previous research has shown the value of obituaries of individual journalists in understanding how the current state of journalism is reflected in the field (Perreault et al., 2023b). Since the closure of the *NYTimes* sports desk has prompted numerous obituary-like articles around the world, we ask:

RQ1: How do European sports media discursively construct the role of sports journalism in digital media landscapes?

RQ2: What understanding of good sports journalistic practice is revealed by the metajournalistic discourse of European sports media?

Examining European media responses is particularly valuable since the *NYTimes* is considered a model of quality journalism worldwide. However, sports and media culture in the US and Europe differ greatly. Thus, it is valuable to see how European media construct their own affectedness by the situation thereby reflecting about their own position in the wider fields of journalism and sports media. We therefore conducted a thematic analysis of 'obituaries' on the passing of the *NYTimes* sports desk published by German and Spanish media. Findings show how (sports) journalists take the opportunity to publicly reflect on the wider contribution of sports journalism to society and lament economic constraints and technological developments that threaten (sports) journalism's role. Using the *NYTimes* as an example the importance of good journalistic practices and ethical reporting is emphasized, in contrast to new entrants who are mainly seen as a threat to what worked in the good old days. We discuss this praise for the deceased in terms of boundary work, since the metajournalistic discourse serves to claim authority and delineate legitimate sports journalism from (illegitimate) insurgents.

CAS02 Mediatization of sport and sports media logic: Theoretical and methodical approaches

PP 0131 MeSort – methodological development and empirical findings: An innovative approach to research communication repertoires and strategies of grassroots sports clubs

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Only four years ago, grassroots sports clubs in Germany and Austria clearly underestimated necessity and possibilities of digitization (Wadsack, 2019). In a quantitative survey (Ehnold et al., 2020), 55% of sports clubs stated that digitization was not particularly important to them in 2019. This has fundamentally changed. Covid-19 and accompanying restrictions triggered a profound "digitization push" (Couldry & Hepp, 2023) in grassroots sports that is proving to be enduring.

However, the clubs did not change their communication strategies of their own free will: Serious societal upheavals (Aschauer et al., 2023; Hahn & Langenohl, 2022) and particular challenges posed by the pandemic (Grimm, 2023; Hastall & Scherenberg, 2023) forced them to act to fulfill their obligation to enable exercise (EC, 2007), engage their members (Weiss & Norden, 2015), and foster social cohesion (Nagel et al., 2015). But academia has also responded. Many communication scholars (Sanderson & Brown, 2020; Repenning et al., 2021; Pedersen, 2022; Horky et al., 2022; Schallhorn et al., 2022; Seeger et al., 2023) have examined the changes in "communicative practices" (Hasebrink & Hepp, 2017) and researched how clubs have acted in crisis communication (Manoli, 2016).

It is emphasized that a broad "media ensemble" (Hasebrink & Hepp, 2017) is used and clubs have sustainably expanded their media repertoires. Success of communication strategies depends to a large extent on individual commitment of competent members (Ehnold et al., 2020; Schallhorn et al., 2022). Many club-representatives underline that digital communication channels should be maintained and expanded, especially for informal exchange, administration of the clubs, and external presentation (Sinner et al., 2023; Seeger et al., 2023). Although multilevel-designs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and long-term observations have been implemented, desiderates continue to emerge (Sinner et al., 2023), particularly with regard to usage of newer social media channels, strategic combination of offerings, and target-group orientation. In addition, European clubs are once again confronted with new (communicative) challenges that will have an impact on the digitization process: energy costs and the return of the refugee-"crisis".

Therefore, we implemented a qualitative sorting-study (Stephenson, 1953; Davis & Michelle, 2011) among 29 selected clubs in Austria and Germany to both, contribute to mediatization research in sports (Frandsen, 2020) and addressing the research gaps by answering these RQs:

RQ1: *What importance do clubs assign to various digital offerings in their communication repertoires?*

RQ2: *What is the primary purpose assigned to each offering?*

As a methodological innovation, we used the DFG-funded software *MeSort* (MeSoftware, 2023), that provides "circle sort for researching media repertoires", "different sorting schemes for Q-sort methodology", and "concentric circles for social network analysis". This allows to provide new facets to the "communicative figuration" (Hepp, 2020, 102) of "mediatized grassroots sports" (Sinner et al., 2023). In doing so, we can show how many clubs are increasingly employing modern communication repertoires. They rely on a deliberately chosen main channel. In addition, they also offer target-group-specific content that is distributed via separate channels as needed. However, it is still not possible to identify a coherent overall strategy among the clubs surveyed.

CAS02 Mediatization of sport and sports media logic: Theoretical and methodical approaches

PP 0132 "It represents a pure and unfiltered form of connection and adventure". The role of physical activity in the digital disconnection of emerging adults

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Research on digital disconnection is developing intensively. Similarly, research on the role of digital technologies in physical activity. However, there is little research on the importance of not using technology in physical activity and the importance of physical activity for effective and enjoyable digital disconnection. Emerging adults constitute a population whose daily life is highly mediatized, but in which awareness of the role of digital disconnection for well-being is still limited. Therefore, the following question was posted in the study: What role does physical activity play in digital disconnection experience of emerging adults?

The study fits in with the conference theme, showing how the constant and powerful presence of media technologies in people's lives leads to the disruption and results in limiting digital technology through physical activity,

what is accompanied by restructuring users' daily lives and unlocking the creative and health potential inherent in technology non-usage and being physically active.

The study data collection was based on photo reporting by informants along with their textual interpretation of them. The survey was conducted in two waves, in spring and autumn (March-May and October-December 2023, respectively). Respondents were recruited from among university students of media and communication studies – their participation was free of charge and anonymous as well as consent was voluntary. 25 Polish informants aged 19–25 participated in the research. Each was asked to provide 5 photos depicting, in their opinion, situations of experiencing digital disconnection in their own or others' daily lives. For each illustration, the respondent was asked to provide a description of 150–200 words, answering short questions. Thus, a systematic visuo-textual analysis, inspired by the photo-voice method, was performed on corpus of 125 photos.

Results show that physical activity – including sports activities, functional movement (e.g. commuting, gardening), tourism and recreation – appears as the most common alternative to using digital technology. The respondents described physical activity as characterized by six contrasting features to the digital experience: 1). realism; 2). materialism; 3). multisensoriality; 4). authenticity; 5). meaningfulness, and 6). relationality. Respondents indicated that physical activity allowed them to experience multiple dimensions and components of externality, as well as themselves, i.e. their own inner thoughts and emotions.

Physical activity took different forms, but provided similar effects, which were certain mind and body states and feelings. The digital disconnection experience of the respondents was overwhelmingly positive. An essential element of physical activity was the outdoors, which could not be provided by digital technology; and the possibility of contacting with oneself (resting, relaxing) and/or others (making connections and bonds).

In the context of this year's conference theme, the results indicate how emerging adults "interpret and engage with a mediatized environment" – i.e. how they formulate and perceive counter-responses to the experience of digital over-connection, and the importance of their physical activity in this. Physical activity is a key alternative, but also a transformative force, both in practice of people's daily lives and in the perception of the importance of technology non-usage.

CAS02 Mediatization of sport and sports media logic: Theoretical and methodical approaches

PP 0133 Deep mediatized actors of sports betting in Belgium: When producers and consumers become a data source in a communicative figuration

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Gambling is a well-established topic within disciplines as psychology (Nicoll, 2019), health (Hayer & Kalke, 2022) and legal (Gebhardt, 2018) sciences, and sociology (Drews & Wuketich, 2019). In contrast, it is only marginally studied by media and communication scholars (see Dottori et al., 2023). This must be critically questioned, as online sports betting is a growing multi-billion-euro market and (mobile) online offers of bookmakers are among the most powerful drivers of mediatization in sports communication. In addition, online sports betting offers many consumers enjoyment and entertainment, but the field also poses major risks for many of those involved: Betting is a driving force behind match-fixing and associated crime. Furthermore, online sports betting offers great potential for addiction, especially for young men, active members of clubs (supposed experts), and supporters of athletes and managers who appear as testimonials in advertising (Turowski et al., 2023).

Against this background, it becomes clear why the rapidly progressing mediatization and digitization of the gambling sector has a major influence on communication and social (dis-) order and, though, demands a media and communication studies perspective to achieve a better understanding of the complex ecosystem in which players, industry, and other manyfold stakeholders interact. In order to capture these diverse actors and their object-related communicative practices, we rely on the communicative figuration approach (Hasebrink & Hepp, 2017) with the frame of relevance defined as *online sports betting as a communicative play network*. In this approach the figuration, defined by Elias (1978) as a network of relationships between interdependent individuals, is expanded to include deep mediatized communicative practices and digitized actors.

As empirical object, we analyze Belgium's sports betting landscape. We examine the field on three complementary levels with three RQs:

- RQ1: How is the Belgian gambling market structured compared to Europe?
- RQ2: Which bookmakers are represented and which contents are offered?
- RQ3: Who are the registered consumers of online betting and how do they act within the offered environment?

To answer our RQs, we first analyzed the available data on the betting market in Europe and the underlying Belgian legal texts (e.g. Gambling Act 1999, regulation by Belgian Gaming Commission). Secondly, we analyzed a quantitative data set (requested in accordance with Art.14(1) Gambling Act) containing both, all bookmaker registration

data and their media texts, and data on consumer registration and their online behavior. This allows to structure the Belgian market on two levels: We can characterize bookmarkers by their brands, license types, and localization, but also by quantity and type of provided content. Besides the provision of betting offers they publish control-enhancing information (e.g., providing stats), risk-reducing promotions (e.g., free bets), and sense-of-urgency offers (e.g., limited deals) messages. Moreover, we can structure the consumers according to their age and gender. We can also show which sports they bet on, and in the environment of which bookmaker. In addition, we can examine when they practice betting over time, and to what extent they do it. The combination of these parameters is unique and only available for Belgium.

EMS01 Ethics of mediated suffering

PP 1009 Conjuring the intolerable future: Victimhood, victimcould, and the political ambivalence of premediated suffering

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This paper uses multi-modal critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine how mediated spectacles of intolerable futures (and, the hypothetical injuries they contain) are emerging as a prominent, yet deeply ambivalent, technique of political claim-making. It develops a critical commentary on the political uses of what I call mediated "victim-*could*" (Author, 2022) through a dialogical analysis of three paradigmatic examples: 1) a dystopian campaign video from the Republican party in the United States (titled *What if?*) released in April 2023; 2) a staged-for-media protest performance in London by the climate action group Just Stop Oil in which two activists threw a can of tomato soup on Vincent van Gogh's famous *Sunflowers* painting in October 2022; and 3) a series of AI-generated images depicting the forceful arrest of Donald Trump, which circulated globally on social media as the former US president faced a looming indictment by federal prosecutors in March 2023.

From heated debates about the future of migration in the UK and Europe, to public ruptures over the (il)legitimacy of mass civilian slaughter in Israel's so-called "war on Hamas" in Gaza, to the divisive and escalating rhetoric of populist politicians around the world, the landscape of contemporary politics is increasingly legible as a terrain of struggle over competing claims to vulnerability and victimhood. Working with Chouliaraki's (2021) conceptualization of victimhood as a flexible communicative structure (rather than a stable political identity), the present analysis argues that we need to critically re-attune to the *uneven temporalities* of contemporary claims to victimhood as well as to the specifically *anticipatory* character of vulnerability politics. While victimhood centers injuries in the past and/or present, I argue that the three cases listed in the paragraph above – as paradigmatic examples of victim*could* – deviate from that model in two important ways: first, by locating the definitional injuries of "the victim" in a future that is unarrived and (officially) unreal; and second, by harnessing different kinds of creative media spectacle – from viral performance to generative AI – to "premediate" (Grusin, 2004) or "conjure" (Tsing, 2001) that future in the emotional and affective politics of the present.

Rather than seeking to deceive (as in campaigns of disinformation), these acts of creative premeditation invite their viewers to *feel* futures of victimization as if they were already taking place. This, in turn, helps to culturally construct a mandate for securitizing practices designed to prevent those very futures from unfolding. Thus, while vulnerability has emerged as the *lingua franca* of both progressive political movements and the reactionary movements of the far-right (both in Europe and around the globe), my analysis concludes that victim*could* often serves reactionary ends by a) strategically collapsing *probability* and *possibility* in symbolic politics; and b) failing to hold cultural imaginaries of future suffering accountable to the political inequalities of the present.

EMS01 Ethics of mediated suffering

PP 1010 Come and see the suffering: Reception of Come and See (1985) on English-speaking YouTube

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Due to over two centuries of Russian and sometimes Polish cultural oppression, there has been very little awareness of Belarusian culture and history in Europe, let alone English-speaking countries. The Soviet Belarusian historical/horror film *Come and See* (Klimov, 1985) makes for one exceptional case that stands out in a very particular niche of cultural criticism on YouTube. In this paper, I study representation of Belarusian national trauma through the prism of *Come and See* as it is reflected in video essays by popular English-speaking YouTube cinema channels. These channels cover either one or both of the following topics: the craft of filmmaking, and horror and shock content.

From the content uploaded by YouTube creators, I select 15 most popular videos for textual and visual analysis. As it appears, the majority of these videos belongs to one of the two popular YouTube genres: a video essay and a reaction video. Additional data for interpreting the audience's reaction is sourced from viewers' comments.*Come and See* is based on documented accounts of witnesses of extreme violence during World War II in Belarus, and it reproduces images of war crimes with a respectfully appropriate level of truthfulness. Despite the 'high art' status of the film, it appears to satisfy YouTube audiences' needs in both shared feelings (e.g. shock and horror) and educational content.

The first section of the paper explores how and why extreme sufferings depicted in the film based on real life events have become the material for the rather mundane genre of YouTube reaction videos (as in Sontag, 2013). The second section of the paper investigates representation of Belarus, and its national trauma (see Alexander, 2004), in the content and discussions from the international and primarily English-speaking YouTube communities, who were brought together by the shared experience of watching *Come and See*. In the third section, I open up

the discussion about the role of shared affect in the practice of production and consumption of YouTube videos, as shared 'structures of feeling' (Papacharissi, 2015), and make assumptions on how exactly these feelings can be structured to appeal to international communities on YouTube.

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EMS01 Ethics of mediated suffering

PP 1011 Solutions journalism: Understanding its impact on journalists' emotional well-being

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This research explores the impact of solutions journalism – as an editorial strategy and innovative narrative – on journalists' emotional well-being, working in European solutions-oriented newsrooms.

The traditional impact of journalism as the fourth power or watchdog has been recently challenged by studies that point to information fatigue and news avoidance due to excessive coverage of various topics, creating a news overload, and extreme focus on problems (de Bruin et al., 2021; Schäfer et al., 2022).

Solutions journalism – which Solutions Journalism Network defines as "rigorous and compelling reporting about responses to social problems" (n/d) – emerges as a change in the practice of journalists and the conceptualization of the story, which starts to privilege the solution to the problem instead of focusing only on the problem. The narrative is not intended to be merely "positive" but oriented towards solutions to social issues, duly proven with qualitative and quantitative evidence, to produce insights and scalability. This solution-oriented approach can rebuild lost credibility and increase audience interest in the news since it is evidence-based, and accurate and provides citizens and communities with information on how they can act on and leverage societal change (McIntyre & Lough, 2019).

Regarding the academic agenda, we see a parallel: it has focused on journalists' precarity, in different contexts (Owen, 2019; Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2021; Becket, 2015), and only recently on their well-being at work. For this research, we use WHO´s definition for well-being as it is in 2021´s glossary: "a positive state experienced by individuals and societies. Similar to health, it is a resource for daily life and is determined by social, economic and environmental conditions" (2021).

As Pantti & Whal-Jorgensen (2021) state, journalism is an emotional work, shaped by changes in the industry and specific routines, so there is a need for a better understanding of context-sensitive circumstances that can impact their well-being, including the newsroom editorial strategy.

We start from the hypothesis that, since solutions journalism has a positive impact on the audience, as shown in studies, it can also positively impact journalists' emotional well-being. Three research questions are addressed to explore the impact of solutions journalism on journalists working in European solutions-oriented newsrooms: 1) How do journalists perceive the impact of solutions journalism on their well-being? 2) How does it change their relationship with the purpose of journalism? 3) What kind of rewards and emotions do they feel when producing solutions-oriented stories?

To address these questions we used a mixed-methods approach combining a questionnaire with semi-structured interviews with journalists working in 20 European solutions-oriented newsrooms, representing all platforms.

Preliminary findings from a total of 45 valid questionnaires and 9 completed interviews show that journalists see solutions-oriented stories as a way to fulfil their notion of journalism as a service public profession and establish their legitimacy as essential actors in contexts of mediation, contributing to emotional reward and well-being at work.

EMS01 Ethics of mediated suffering

PP 1012 Mapping youth democracy: The individual and collective emotion/s of political action

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Fuelled by increased discontent and disillusionment with formal politics, increasing numbers of children and young people are taking to the streets all over the world, striking to demand a more inclusive democracy and an equitable society. In response, political elites and the legacy media persist in representing young people as either politically disengaged and apathetic or else dismiss evidence of student action suggesting that young people are being

manipulated and managed by devious adults. This paper refutes such claims arguing that many young people are deeply political, but in ways that are less conventional and more "expressive" and "emotional" (Muxel, 2010; Pickard & Bessant, 2018).

To demonstrate this, we present findings from a study of the Australian SchoolStrike4Climate movement ('New Possibilities, Young people and democratic renewal)' using a participatory activist research framework. We begin by presenting some preliminary data that explores the multiplicity of emotions expressed in the placards at student-led school strikes (Catanzaro and Collin, 2023). Emotions are depicted on placards using a number of diverse semiotic devices, including colour, expressive typography, and symbolism. We then address findings from our in-strike interviews with young people, revealing that the emotions they experience whilst they are at the strikes sometimes contrast to the emotions presented on their visual signage. This paper explores these contrasting modes of political emotions, communication, and expression.

To understand this further, we use a participatory emotion heuristic to reveal how young people experience, share, and communicate their experiences of collective action. With the aid of a digital tool, we explore the multitude of emotions felt by young people at various moments within a protest event. This approach allows us to examine affective responses across the duration of a protest action. Lastly, we assess the value of using a digital emotion 'mapping tool' in conjunction with young people's reflections to decipher how this method can support young people to share the ways collective action makes them feel and why.

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EMS02 Emotion and distant suffering

PP 1115 Goodnight Ma'am: Contesting legacies in digital mourning of the queen in a global media event

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On the 8th of September, 2022 the world paused as the BBC announced the death of Queen Elizabeth II. After 70 years on the throne, the longest-reigning British monarch had died aged 96. In no time the Queen's death became a global media event that would eventually culminate in the state funeral broadcasted and followed live worldwide. While many mainstream news and legacy media maintained a classical Coronation style ceremonial mode of reporting (Dayan & Katz 1994; see also Sonnevend 2016), social media became a highly contested arena in its ritualistic response to the Queen's death (Clancy 2023; see also Frandsen et al., 2022). In this paper we analyse the Queen's death and funeral by examining the contested performances of mourning in this global media event (see also Sumiala 2021). The empirical data is gathered by applying digital ethnographic observation of the event unfolding live (cf. Tikka et al., 2022; Valaskivi et al., 2022) in diverse news and social media platforms. These sites include BBC, Daily Mail, X (Twitter) and Instagram. The analysis consists of ethnographic description and close reading of three phases in the media event e.g. News on Death, Lying in State and the Funeral. In conclusion we reflect the live participation as a key performative strategy in contesting the legacy of the Queen's death as a global media event and related mourning and her role as a globally unifying symbol, and discuss how such contestations may not only produce different dramaturgies and narratives in digital mourning, but different events in which the social is brought to life through affective contestations (cf. Chouliaraki 2021; Dövelin et al., 2018) between and among different actors and platforms.

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EMS02 Emotion and distant suffering

PP 1116 Emotional contagion and ethical concerns in mediated human suffering: An examination of the Global South and Western audiences

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It has been argued that media coverage of human suffering which by all means a media event, must be brought into a narrative order that presents the human face of suffering or else audiences will not be moved. This is because, event such as terror attacks, natural disasters, war and so on – provide little more than voyeuristic entertainment when televised. To ensure the media audiences understand the pain, helplessness, and vulnerability of those in involved disaster, the narrative order that allows sufferers speak for themselves or tell their experiences on the camera with evidence pointing at suffering. Through mix method, the study investigates the western (represented by the UK) and global south (represented by Nigeria) audiences' emotion on humanised proximal and distant suffering. Finding showed that humanising suffering through visual and auditory cues in the moment of mediation leads to emotional contagion, which emanate from the mediated victims to an audience, and leading to intra-group affect. Also, among the Western audiences, the more emotional contagion a mediated human suffering triggers, the more they are influenced to take responsibilities in alleviating suffering and the question about ethical consideration of the media. Whereas among global south audiences, the level of emotional contagion does not determine collective action as factors such structural and systemic issues influence their taking responsibilities and less concern on media ethics. The implication of this study is that it shades light on how emotional responses to mediated human suffering are influenced by cultural and social factors, allowing for cross-cultural understanding. Ethically, it contributes to the development of ethical framework and guideline in mediating human suffering that promote empathy and dignity in the portrayal of human suffering, fostering greater global solidarity and understanding.

EMS02 Emotion and distant suffering

PP 1117 From uncensored documentation to emotional truth – Ethical approaches to mediated suffering in the work of Finnish war correspondents during the Russian-Ukraine war in 2020's

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Since the Russian military invasion of Ukraine in 2014, which escalated into a full-scale war in 2022, Ukraine has been a central interest of Western media. While news and images across multiple platforms have spread on an unprecedented scale, the reliability of information has been questioned due to disinformation and propaganda. In this context, eyewitnessing and interviewing local people have been considered crucial for reliable and truthful journalism. Professional journalists and photographers work to produce news stories ethically, taking into consideration the vulnerability of the participants and the audiences.

In this paper, we discuss the ethics of mediated suffering in the context of Finnish journalism on the Russian-Ukraine war, based on in-depth interviews (n = 50) with correspondents and photographers reporting from Ukraine in 2014–2024. The interviews, conducted in 2023–2024, focus on journalists´ own experiences of their work in Ukraine. Here, we investigate the ethical approaches and practices that journalists and photographers implement in witnessing and reporting war: How do media professionals perceive and mediate the ethical relationships between sufferers, spectators, and themselves? What are the limitations, responsibilities, aims, and justifications related to representing and mediating suffering?

We build on existing literature on proximity and distance, emotions, and the ethics of care. The affective proximity of the journalist is often seen to threaten the journalistic ideal of objectivity. However, the emotional turn in journalism has highlighted the emotional aspects of journalistic representations and practices of reporting, allowing a wider display of emotions in news stories, and drawing attention to the emotions of the journalists (e.g., Wahl-Jorgensen & Pantti 2021; Stupart 2021). Emotions are a part of ethical journalistic practice (e.g., Durham 2023; Matheson 2015). It has been shown that the ways of representing suffering differ depending on the cultural and geographical distance between the sufferer and spectator, affecting for instance the grievability of victims (e.g., Khaldarova & Pantti 2020; Dokyun Kim 2020).

Based on preliminary findings, we suggest that Finnish journalists and photographers reporting from Ukraine apply various ethical approaches and practices. For instance, some video- and photographers refrain from capturing lifeless bodies, while others seek to document the reality of war in its uncensored form. More traditional forms of war journalism are being accompanied by human-interest stories seeking to mediate the everyday experiences of people living amidst war. The war in Ukraine 'hits close', geopolitically and emotionally. For many Finnish journalists, this proximity is a central motivating factor to work in Ukraine. They aim to capture the emotional reality of their Ukrainian interviewees and evoke empathy in the audience.

Combined with self-reflection, witnessing, and mediating the suffering of another can create a broader understanding regarding emotional reality, which is mirrored in ethical journalistic practices. Research can reflect and make visible the ethical practices and approaches that remain implicit in newsrooms.

The research project has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the local university. (Anonymized)

EMS02 Emotion and distant suffering

PP 1118 Who let the dogs out? Fellas and the Russian invasion of Ukraine

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This study is based on evocative autoethnography, an"insider" ethnography, which is often, but not exclusively, used to study lived experiences. The aim is to discuss the emotional labor of keyboard warriors during an ongoing war. I'm a North Atlantic Fella Organization (NAFO) member, a leaderless Twitter/X collective supporting Ukraine with donations and countering (pro)-Russian posts, primarily on Twitter/X. My own experiences are combined with tweets and memes illustrating the collective's emotions and discussions.

Being an online activist during a war is more than just hammering the keyboard. It is an emotional, embodied experience. We laugh and cry together. We wish each other happy birthdays and happy fellaversaries (one year as a member). We see copious amounts of disturbing images (drone footage, go-pro video, bloody body parts, destroyed houses etc), and mourn losses related to the collective. We form a parasocial relationship to the military units we support. We follow and communicate with individual soldiers, both foreign and Ukrainian. There are fella fundraisers both in and outside Ukraine, and we support multiple crowdfunding operations.

During the past year, there has been an increasing number of tweets speaking of mental health and the importance of taking breaks and looking after oneself. There have also been discussions about guilt. Fellas feel guilty for being able to take a break while Ukrainians have no escape. Some speak of feeling guilty about being unable to donate as much as they wish. In contrast, there is also a lot of joking, camaraderie, virtual hugs, and casual banter, such as starting the day by wishing others "good morning".

Fellas are shitposters using memes and gifs to harass Russian public diplomacy efforts and pro-Russian propagandists. Shitposting, i.e., ironic engagement, mockery with provocative or vulgar humor, originates in 4chan and is mainly associated with AltRight trolling. Shitposting can, however, be seen as a rhetorical device that can be used for different purposes. For example, Anonymous used it to mock ISIS with memes, replacing jihadists' faces with yellow rubber ducks (Mortensen & Neumayer 2021, McCrow-Young & Mortensen 2021). As fellas see it – it is impossible to reason with sources who parrot absurd claims and are immune to fact-checking. Also, countering absurd claims may be funny for a few weeks. After doing it several hours a day, every day for roughly two years, it ceased to be funny. Mockery and shitposting insults offer an outlet for the inner tensions caused by dealing with a constant firehose of bullshit and zombie hoaxes (false claims impossible to kill by fact-checking and debunking). In brief, the aim is to provide an insider perspective on the complexities of being a shitposter and a keyboard warrior during an ongoing war.

EMS02 Emotion and distant suffering

PP 1119 Emotions and social (dis)order. The disruptive forces of schadenfreude and compassion in media reception

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As the call for papers of the "Affect, Emotion and Media" Temporary Working Group highlights, emotions can be functional and dysfunctional forces in today's society. These current times have been and still are, without doubt, burdening and highly emotional, revealing the power of emotions. It seems, especially in todays troubled times, humans need to find relieve from crisis and disorder. It is here, where entertainment experiences come into play. This talk reconsiders entertainment experiences that focus on the suffering of others, often found in so-called reality TV formats, that show misfortunes of others, like "I'm a star – get me out of here", or on social media in the form of so-called fail clips.

In such formats, schadenfreude, the "pleasure at the misfortunes of others" (van Dijk & Ouwerkerk, 2014, p. 6), plays a central role. Schadenfreude, as a distinct emotion, was considered by Ekman to be one of sixteen pleasurable emotions (2003) and is described as "pleasant to experience" (Graham et al., 2019, p. 207) and therefore potentially viewed as entertaining. Yet, schadenfreude is considered a socially undesirable emotion and, when viewing the suffering of another, compassion is considered more morally appropriate. Compassion is percieved as an emotion of regret for the misfortune of others and includes the desire to help (Goetz et al., 2010). Nevertheless, it seems that compassion is disrupted during the reception of such formats with the aim of feeling entertained. The following questions arise:

- Why do people enjoy watching the suffering of others?
- Which disruptive factors play a role when people feel schadenfreude or compassion?
- How can answers to the above questions contribute to a better understanding of schadenfreude and compassion in globally digitalized disruptive communication, such as hate speech?

This paper tackles these questions and presents a model of schadenfreude and compassion in media reception that combines individual and social appraisal processes. We provide evidence for the model in three multi-methodological studies (N_1 = 424, N_2 = 33, N_3 = 276). Snippets of casting show failures and fail clips were used as stimulus material to study the emotions of schadenfreude and compassion in media reception. Study 1 investigated several individual appraisals as determining factors of schadenfreude. Study 2 and 3 looked at interpersonal communication and social appraisals during the reception situation. Study 3 additionally included whether the reception situation involved known peers or strangers.

The findings disclose factors that foster schadenfreude and thus are disrupting compassion. We extend our analysis to today's globalized society and highlight implications of the mechanisms involved in schadenfreude and compassion for one global communication phenomenon: hate speech – a conscious and willful public statement intended to denigrate a group of people (Delgado & Stefancic, 1995). Here, schadenfreude should be considered as a driving force, with troubling consequences for individuals and society as a whole. As the United Nations (2024) highlight, "we need to better understand the dynamics of hate speech, including the motivations behind its spread".[1]

[1] https://www.un.org/en/hate-speech/impact-and-prevention/challenges-of-tracking-hate, retrieved Jan 8th, 2024.

MLC01 Media literacies and communication competencies

PP 0697 Post-digital literacy: Skills and norms for disconnection

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Digital literacy and similar concepts are widely used in educational and societal settings (Audrin & Audrin, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Still, conceptualisations are often criticised for focusing narrowly on individual technical skills (Gran, 2018; Riis, 2017), paralleling a broader critique of the instrumental conception of technology in society (Erstad, 2022; Selwyn, 2022; Aagaard, 2021). Responding to ECREA's invitation to reconsider implications of "the communication dis(order)", this presentation argues that it is timely to discuss what *post-digital literacy* might entail.

The concept of the post-digital recognises that the digital no longer describes distinct processes, but a pervasive sociotechnical system structuring all life's aspects (Cramer, 2015). The post-digital does not imply an uncritical acceptance of the digital, but a set of competencies where reflection on *when and how to disconnect* is as important as online skills (Fast, 2021). In this presentation, we use the term post-digital to recognise that digital technologies enhance communication but also disrupt, exclude, and invade, and that citizens use a multitude of ways to jam, restrict and block digital technologies (Riis, 2017; Syvertsen, 2020; Aagaard, 2021).

Based on two representative surveys from Norway (2018 and 2023), the presentation explores emerging norms for online/offline behaviour in society and discusses tensions over appropriate boundary management. The presentation shows that the understanding that people are *too much online* is shared by a majority in our highly digitised society. Furthermore, emerging norms for (dis)connection are *relational* in the sense that our responsibility towards others influences what is considered appropriate; and norms also vary between *situations*, *generations*, and *genders*. Women expect greater problems with the always-on society as they take more responsibility for balancing online/offline life (Beattie, 2020; Ytre-Arne, 2023).

The article challenges individualised conceptions of digital literacy, offers empirical information about emerging norms, and argues that life in post-digital societies requires new skills. Tentatively, we conceptualise post-digital literacy as *the ability to consider societal and individual norms concerning when and how to use digital devices, and understanding how the use of such devices may impact relations, interactions, and situations.*

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MLC01 Media literacies and communication competencies

PP 0698 Systematic literature review of algorithmic awareness

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Algorithmic platforms like Facebook, Google, and Amazon have become omnipresent in our digital communication habits while algorithmic processes are rapidly advancing in speed and intelligence. As our lives increasingly intertwine with algorithmic machines, comprehending the significance of algorithms becomes progressively crucial. The challenge lies in the fact that a majority of users are oblivious to the ways these platforms operate in their everyday experiences. Therefore, it is crucial to uncover the extent of awareness regarding algorithms.

Various studies have explored algorithm awareness or algorithm literacy. Nevertheless, due to each study assessing algorithm awareness within a different sample, there is a deficiency in comprehensive research that provides a holistic understanding. This study conducts a systematic literature review to analyze existing studies on algorithm awareness in the literature. Therefore, the aim of the current study is to map academic research on algorithmic awareness.

This systematic review offers a comprehensive database encompassing pertinent literature from various disciplines that pertains to algorithmic awareness. In doing so, the variables included in the systematic reviews are divided into three categories. The first category is Journal elements. This variable furnishes details regarding the journal's indexation, ranking, inclusion in the Web of Science (WoS) database, citation number, and the field of study. The second variables refer to the method applied, the research methodology used, and the size of the sample used in each study. The third variable encompasses elements related to the content and structure of the phenomenon under investigation: What discoveries have research on algorithms yielded?

During the initial search using the terms "algorithm awareness" a total of 17,753 articles were identified. Search engines indiscriminately list studies containing the term "algorithm." To pinpoint the studies at the core of this investigation, we conducted repeated searches using the following keywords: algorithmic literacy, algorithm literacy, algorithm awareness, algorithmic awareness, algorithm responsiveness, algorithmic skills. After narrowing down to the most pertinent ones within the research scope, the final count is 32. The PRISMA flow is used for the research, which includes deduplication, screening, and data extraction totals. An online systematic review software, Rayyan QCRI, was used to assist the two-part screening process.

The findings indicate that researchers in the field of algorithms aim to assess users' awareness levels of algorithms for different digital platforms (Facebook, Netflix, Instagram), recognize the significance of algorithms in terms of privacy, and conceptualize algorithm awareness as algorithm literacy, algorithmic skill, and algorithm responsiveness. The study uncovers variations in algorithm awareness levels across platforms, assesses algorithms with regard to personal privacy, and provides significant implications into diverse conceptualizations of algorithm awareness.

MLC01 Media literacies and communication competencies

PP 0699 Transforming media literacy and digital skills: Integrating ai into higher education curricula

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The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in recent years has significantly transformed the landscape not only of media and digital technologies. In the context of media literacy, AI tools are reshaping how information is created, distributed, and consumed. The emergence of algorithm-driven content, deepfakes, and AI-generated media necessitates a new framework for media literacy and contribute to this year's conference theme.

Today, more than 90% of occupations in Europe require basic digital skills, as well as basic literacy and numeracy. The use of digital technologies extends to all sectors of the economy, from trade and transportation to agriculture. Nevertheless, around 42% of the European population lacks basic digital skills, including 37% of the workforce (European Commission, 2023). The European Commission argues that 80 percent of all adults in the EU should have basic digital skills by the end of the decade. Therefore, the integration of AI into university curricula is crucial both for personal media literacy and for preparing students to successfully navigate this rapidly evolving digital environment. This study's research questions aim to find out which knowledge and skills are necessary to use AI system in the university context from the perspective of the students and staff members.

Various theoretical approaches and competence models are available for modeling the digital transformation in the field of media education. Potters' (2004) model focuses on building an individual's cognitive skills whereas Hobbs' (2011) five core competence model views media literacy as an expansion of traditional literacy. In recent years, Livingstone's (2004) model underlines the importance of contextualizing media literacy within broader societal and cultural dynamics. The study at hand is based on the European Union's Digital Competence Framework for Citizen (DigComp) (Vuorikari, Kluzer & Punie, 2022).

To answer the research questions, an online survey was conducted in December 2023 at the University of Muenster (Germany). The sample consisted of 1613 students and 1034 staff members. Most respondents agreed to the statement that the university should provide learning opportunities for AI systems. Further information was given in two open ended questions which have not yet been finally analyzed. One question concerned requirements the university should meet. Offering trainings for AI usage was often mentioned. Later in the survey, the respondents were asked for knowledge and skills they need to use AI in the university context. A first glance, the answers showed important issues: (a) knowledge about logic and functionality of different AI systems, (b) guidelines about data security and data protection, (c) questions of identification and labeling of AI generated information, (d) usage of AI techniques for teaching, (e) necessary changes in exams as well as (f) specific skills related to prompting. The open-ended answers are very informative and fill about 100 printed pages. Until summer 2024, the answers will be

coded and added to the dataset. The data will be analyzed for frequency and cooccurrence of demanded skills, differences between students and staff members as well as differences between subjects and faculties.

MLC01 Media literacies and communication competencies

PP 0700 Influencers in domestic labor: The skills behind platform work in cleaning, care, and accommodation services

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Platforms are not merely digital infrastructure that intermediates between different users. Platforms impact infrastructures, economic processes, and governmental frameworks in different spheres of life, shifting cultural practices (Poell et al., 2019), through a process of "platformization" (Helmond, 2015). In the case of a historically informal and invisibilized type of job, domestic services, platforms have been a door to formalize relationships, in some cases the platform gaining visibility (Ticona and Mateescu, 2018; Van Doorn, 2017). However, the pursuit of visibility (Bishop, 2012) can be considered a disciplinary mechanism where the algorithm determines what is desirable and popular, where users need to modify their behavior to comply with the perceived requirements (Bucher, 2012).

In this article, we delve into two main issues. On one hand, how influencer cultures have originated new practices, what Bishop (2023) calls 'influencer creep', specifically regarding self-branding, optimisation, and authenticity. On the other hand, we analyse the competences domestic workers develop to build and maintain their visibility on platforms. By "playing the visibility game" (Cotter, 2019), there is a process of surveillance, discipline, and control (Bucher, 2012); yet, a process of interpretation and testing the platform's functioning, affordances, and architecture (Petre et al., 2019; Sutherland et al., 2020).

We conducted a qualitative content analysis of 36 profiles in six platforms of cleaning, care, and temporary accommodation, to understand the design and requirements of these platforms concerning workers' practices. In addition, we interviewed 10 workers to gain insights into their daily online and offline routines and their perceptions regarding the use of work platforms and content creation for labor-related purposes.

The content analysis showed a common design of the six platforms (despite their service differences), with a series of parameterized features to expose performance metrics, combined with features that promote content creation, such as the writing of profile descriptions, catchphrases, and posting pictures related to their image, the services, or their previous experience. Within the interviews, we identified a complex set of competences, predominantly related to social management (with practices such as convincing customers via private messages, giving presents to customers, or managing negative comments on their profiles), content creation (e.g. taking and posting "authentic" pictures to set customers' expectations) and resource management (e.g. knowing the response time requirements and the functioning of the rating systems).

Therefore, this study contributes to the previous literature on learning in online environments with competences such as content production, individual and social management, and risk management (Scolari et al., 2018), and associated with the gig economy, such as algorithmic and gig literacies (Glotfelter, 2019; Koenig, 2020; Sutherland et al., 2020). Thus, domestic work in platforms is not only about delivering a service and building connections and trust in a shared physical space (Raval & Dourish 2016) but also managing their visibility similarly to what influencers do in social media (Bishop, 2023; Duffy & Hund, 2019).

Keywords: platform work; domestic work; competences; literacy; influencer

MLC01 Media literacies and communication competencies

PP 0701 Frontline knowledge: Digital media literacy of older adults in Ukraine

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In modern conflict zones digital literacy becomes crucial, as conflicts themselves become increasingly digitized and hyperconnected (Merrin, 2018). While a dangerous environment raises the need for orientation, propaganda and fakes discourage people's sense-making efforts (Pasitselska, 2022). Older adults, who often experience digital and social exclusion due to lack of digital literacy (Holgersson et al., 2019), are especially vulnerable to mis- and disinformation. While research, focusing mostly on Northern Europe, has studied digital media practices of older adults (Rasi et al., 2020), there is very little knowledge on digital media use and resilience of older adults in conflict zones (de Vries-Kedem & Rabho, 2021). Drawing on 8 focus groups with Ukrainian older adults across the country, this paper explores specific challenges and compensation strategies of older adults during the digital war. The study involves both Internet users and non-users, to understand the barriers of Internet access, as well as more advanced practices of social media and messenger app use. An inductive-qualitative analysis identifies three main factors that shape digital practices and dictate literacy needs of the Ukrainian older adults: self-(in)efficacy, social ties, and material infrastructure. The study demonstrates that perceived self-(in)efficacy defines the depth of engagement

with media sources and critically affects attitudes towards privacy and data protection online. It highlights the crucial role of family members in setting up the digital infrastructure of the older users, and in prescribing their media diet. Furthermore, the study reveals that diversity of available media sources and digital devices enables more extensive fact-checking practices. In light of these findings, the study suggests to promote information control and psychological resilience when intervening with media literacy training, while also emphasizing the importance of continuous technical and monetary support for older adults. This research contributes to further understanding of media literacy needs of older adults, and lays the foundation for developing digital literacy study programs for older adults in conflict zones.

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CEE01 Disruptions and solutions in communication systems of Central and Eastern Europe

PP 0148 Narrative Twist: A study of Facebook groups for Russian speakers in Finland

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Russian speakers in Finland exhibited a notable preference for and engagement with non-Russian news media sources and bi-cultural (not isolative) orientation in Finland (Khalimzoda and Siitonen, 2022). However, the eruption of the Ukrainian conflict has triggered a surge in (counter) disinformation (Babacan & Tam, 2022), transforming social media into a volatile arena of competing war opinions, often characterized by divisive twist and tone of the group moderator(s). This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in the two largest Facebook groups for Russian speakers in Finland, boasting over tens of thousand followers.

Understanding the intricacies of how this phenomenon affects Finland's Russian-speaking community and how they navigate under the informational pressure of their country of origin and destination is of paramount importance (Davydova-Minguet et al., 2019). Against this backdrop, this study delves into the transformation of these groups into arenas of competing war opinions and (counter) disinformation, with specific attention to discussions surrounding Western sanctions against Russia, Finland's economic challenges, and broader political discourse on Russia-West. Of particular interest is the role of group moderators, who often adopt provocative commentary journalism styles to influence the tone of otherwise neutral news reports. The study aims to analyze whether such twisting and tone-setting practices are systematic and thus strategic, potentially qualifying as disinformation, or if they occur infrequently. Drawing on the concepts of disinformation (Ireton & Posetti, 2018) and narrative twist (Phelan, 2008), a content analysis of the groups will be conducted to examine the presence and the nature of narrative twists, exploring whether they contribute to the dissemination of disinformation within these online communities.

Anticipated findings encompass a nuanced understanding of how Russian speakers in Finland navigate the surge in (counter) disinformation and participate in discussions surrounding Western sanctions, Finland's economic challenges, and broader political discourse. Moreover, this research aims to identify potential solutions and strategies for mitigating the divisive effects of disinformation and online tensions within these communities. By shedding light on these dynamics, the study contributes to enhancing media literacy and promoting constructive dialogue in a multicultural society even in times of geopolitical instability.

CEE01 Disruptions and solutions in communication systems of Central and Eastern Europe

PP 0149 Popularity, commitment, and virality. Assessment of the strategic communication of COVID-19 immunization in Romania and Moldova

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Vaccination was seen as a solution to the disorder that COVID-19 pandemic has brought worldwide. Therefore, message strategies used to increase (COVID-19) vaccination among population should be of great concern among (inter)national authorities especially within the context of vaccination criticism, misinformation and medical populism (Lasco, 2020). Studies (Kata, 2010; Dubé et al., 2015; Ward & Budarick, 2021; Su et al., 2022) have showed that health professionals should consider both fact-based scientific strategies, on the one hand, and emotional strategies through personal stories and humor, on the other hand.

The purpose of this study

In this study we focus on a comparative assessment of the COVID-19 vaccination communication strategies employed by two governments in Eastern Europe during the pandemic, namely Romania and Moldova.

Methodology

We used CrowdTangle to extract all the Facebook Romanian and Moldovan governmental posts (N = 4066. Facebook is the most used social media platform in the two countries). ExtractComments will be used to extract the comments to the posts with the highest engagement rate. Employing Loft et al.'s (2020) content strategies categories, Gilpin et al.'s (2010) model of socially mediated authenticity and Bonsón & Ratkai (2013)'s metrics of engagement assessment, we will adopt a top-down and bottom-up perspective. The top-down approach will focus on the identification of (1) the message strategies the Romanian and Moldovan authorities used in the vaccination communication campaign; (2) the message strategies with the highest engagement rate; and (3) the relationships between message strategies and popularity, commitment, and virality. Regression analysis will be carried out.

Since "perceived authenticity" (Gilpin et al., 2010) emphasizes the importance of interaction and since multiple voices and potential counter-discourses are present in online users' narratives (Breeze, 2021), the bottom-up

approach will focus on the identification of Romanian and Moldovan users' stances on (COVID-19) vaccination based on post-comment interaction. Topic modeling (WordStat) will be employed to assess the comments.

While current research identified probable causes for the high level of vaccine hesitancy in Eastern Europe (Mihelj et al., 2022), we consider that this twofold approach to governmental strategic communication may constitute an important insight on understanding the online vaccine skepticism in Romania and Moldova.

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CEE01 Disruptions and solutions in communication systems of Central and Eastern Europe

PP 0150 Offering solutions instead of nurturing conflict? Czech solutions journalists' perception of the role of the media economy in the acceptance of the solutions journalism approach

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Recent crisis times in which one crisis (the war in Ukraine) seems to follow another (the COVID-19 pandemic) represent a challenge to all societal segments, including the media and journalistic professionals. In the context of the Czech Republic, a post-transformation country with a relatively small media market and recent economic struggles, this paper discusses the possible impact of global crises on the journalistic profession, mainly its routines and general approaches.

We are theoretically informed by studies stressing the heightened need to build on solutions journalism principles during crisis times, both in news gathering and news writing, thus significantly changing the role journalism plays in society. It is essential, the proponents of solutions journalism argue, to enable communication between the different sides affected by the crisis, as well as to try to offer resolutions to the conflicting situations. Scholars call for an engaged, active approach to reporting and a focus on dialogue and discussion about the problem resolution, rather than sticking to the conventional news style embracing detachment, independence, polemics, and differences. Such transparent and solution-oriented informing is connected with a positive psychological impact on audiences in recent studies. It is also associated with possible economic benefits for the medium, mainly the chance to overcome the problem of audiences's disengagement. However, research results are inconclusive.

We conducted in-depth, qualitative interviews with 12 Czech solutions journalists or journalists awarded for solutions articles to identify how they perceive the position of and support for solutions journalism in the profession and its relation to crisis events and global crises. Sample diversity was ensured by interviewing professionals representing a mix of gender identities, professional experience (age), different working positions, and different media outlets, both mainstream and specialised, nationwide and regional. Data were analysed employing coding procedures of Grounded Theory.

Our results reveal that even those journalists who employ solutions principles only as part of their otherwise more conventional reporting stress the importance and positive impact of solutions approach, mainly in relation to crisis coverage. However, they consider the position of solutions journalism as marginal/ised and endangered, mainly because positive stories are usually not successful in terms of audience reactions (the click economy). Thus, whereas they believe that solutions journalism may attract specific audiences tired of negativity in the media, they strongly reflect the media economy when thinking about the approach. They reveal that solutions journalism represents a rather strange element in the Czech media sphere, pushed "from above", mainly by non-profits' trainings aimed at cultivating journalism and the media sphere in the Czech Republic. They appreciate this influence and believe that journalistic awards for solutions journalism are helping significantly in the acceptance of the approach in the newsrooms. The prestige these awards represent may serve as a competing decision-making factor among editors who are considering their support of solutions journalism.

CEE01 Disruptions and solutions in communication systems of Central and Eastern Europe

PP 0151 Echoes of the Cold War – Post-socialism and social criticism in contemporary Eastern European popular media

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There has been an emerging scholarly interest in post-Cold War Eastern Europe: the revival of Cold War themes and genres in popular culture, the debates on the 1989 transitions and the rise of postmodern populist political leaders put the region back into the limelight. The portrayal of the political, social and cultural aspects of the state socialist period has been constantly changing since the transition. Representation is not only generic and aesthetic, but also politically determined. The most significant stages in this process in recent years have been the illiberal cultural policy and the complete politicization of national film production in Hungary where they expect political loyalty in return for financial support. This practice is in contrast with productions of global media companies that famously formulate social criticism towards contemporary authoritarian tendencies in the region.

I intent to show the entanglements of illiberal states and neoliberal platform imperialism and the relationship between transnational aesthetic formats, regional political ideologies, and post-socialist cultural hierarchies by analyzing media texts such as Czech series *The Sleepers* (Bez vědomí, HBO, 2019), Hungarian *The Informant* (A besúgó, HBO Max, 2022), and Romanian *Spy/Master* (Max, 2023).

These series are merging classic spy culture of the Cold War era with networks of capitalist surveillance technologies and highlight patterns in which Cold War aesthetic and generic themes have reproduced themselves in contemporary culture. I examine bonds of power and representation in pre-figurative spectacles of state socialist regimes, personal and political legacies, aesthetic and social codes, and strategies of cultural colonization. Relying on comparative narrative- and textual analysis, this lecture argues that contemporary Eastern European serial products are utilizing a transnational, Westernized image of (post-)socialism to address tendencies of contemporary political authoritarianism and populism. All of these television products represent a hybrid generic repertoire and they are concerned with the region's troubled past, using state socialist regimes as allegories of alarming issues such as white nationalism, right-wing populism, surveillance and social control. These notions serve as analytical terms in the presentation.

Keywords: Eastern Europe, cultural memory, media history, populism, post-colonialism, post-socialism, television, serial fiction

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WON01 Women's network

PP 0051 Exploitation and empowerment: Challenges and opportunities to women at the AI era

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The era of artificial intelligence provides women with a new ecosystem for survival and development. At the same time, we should aware that, exploitation and empowerment coexist in this process. On a global scale, women are 25% less likely than men to understand how to use digital technology, and also less likely than men to understand how to use computers for programming and apply for information and communication technology patents. UNESCO points out that the development, use, and deployment of AI systems may replicate and amplify existing gender biases, and generate new biases. Lack of diversity in data, programming teams, or methods can lead to biased artificial intelligence tools producing discriminatory results.

At present, the threats and challenges posed by AI to women mainly manifest in the following aspects. Firstly, there is algorithmic discrimination, include mirror isomorphism, real coupling interaction and associative crossover. The bias caused by flawed datasets and datasets is significant for women. In the era of artificial intelligence, as a new type of social right, algorithms and big data may indeed bring widespread and systematic gender discrimination risks to women's digital survival. The risk of gender discrimination in algorithms exists at all stages of the algorithm's entire lifecycle. Compared to traditional discriminatory behavior, algorithmic discrimination has hidden, systematic, and repetitive characteristics, resulting in amplified gender discrimination and structural targeting of women's disadvantaged positions, which have important consequences that affect the daily lives of citizens.

Although human society is transitioning towards digitalisation and deep use of AI, women's basic rights, including the right to education, political rights, and even the right to health, are relatively lagging behind. Therefore, it is necessary to promote women's digital empowerment. At the individual and community levels, through policy analysis and case studies, this article will combine resources, actions, and achievements to seek feasible paths for promoting women's empowerment in the AI era.

WON01 Women's network

PP 0052 Academia as a safe and comfortable space for exclusionary, institutionalized subjectivities

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This research proposes considering academia as a safe and comfortable space for those who reproduce cis-hetero-sexist, racist, classist and/or ableist subjectivities. The aim of this approach is to understand how academia, as an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1974), is both an institution invested in the perpetuation of the exclusionary ideologies that shape the liberal, democratic state; as well as a site organized by them.

First, it explains why academia can be considered a safe and comfortable space for those reproducing institutionalized, exclusionary ideologies. It does so by drawing on the theory of *corporal geographies* of Barjola (2018), the concept of *dependent individuality* of Hernando (2015), as well as on Ahmed's queer phenomenology (2006). Through the work of Arranz (2015), Brah (2004) and Ortner (2005), it argues that academia perpetuates exclusionary ideologies and is ruled by them thanks to the reproduction of exclusionary subjectivities that inform how scholars produce knowledge and relate with others at universities.

This is illustrated by two examples. The first reflects on how sexual harassment is mostly dealt through the lens of restoring the prestige of the university by ensuring the safety and comfort of the cisgender male aggressor, considered as embodying and signifying that institution. The second analyzes the backlash towards the *Decolonize the curriculum* initiative spearheaded by the students of London's School of Oriental and African Studies to argue that exclusionary subjectivities, perceived as universal thanks to their institutionalization, shape common understandings of critical thought and freedom of speech to privilege the reproduction of those situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988) that best suit the needs of institutionalized ideologies.

This proposal, thus, rejects mainstream discourses that see issues like the promotion of freedom of speech and critical thought as incompatible with the transformation of universities into safe and comfortable spaces for everybody. It does so by unveiling how institutionalized, exclusionary ideologies shape academic understandings of freedom of speech, critical thought, knowledge-production methods and inclusivity policies. All of them aimed at preserving the safety and comfort of those who reproduce exclusionary subjectivities, while legitimating the violence and discomfort endured by those who contest them.

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WON01 Women's network

PP 0053 Motherhood in journalism: The impact of precarization on parenting strategies of women journalists

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In the demanding profession of journalism, navigating family planning is a significant challenge. This issue becomes more pronounced for women journalists in precarious employment situations without a formal employment contract. In their case, risks associated with precarious employment are heightened due to reduced maternity and parental benefits, along with the absence of a guaranteed job return following parental or maternity leave. This paper examines the job insecurity faced by women journalists, with the research objective centred on understanding how precarity impacts their parenting strategies within the field.

There are many studies focusing on precarity (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2013; Standing, 2011), changes in journalistic work (Deuze, 2007; Muehlberger, 2007), and women in journalism (Byerly, 2011; De Vuyst & Raeymaeckers, 2017; Ross, 2014) but a thorough understanding of the intersection between journalistic profession and women's parenting strategies in the context of precarity is lacking. This represents a notable gap in media industry research, as the job insecurity faced by women journalists exemplifies a key structural disadvantage within the journalistic labor market. It is increasingly women who are seeking precarized or part-time work, because they see a more accessible combination of work and care (Fudge & Owens, 2006).

It builds on 14 in-depth interviews with women journalists from diverse media outlets, exploring their perceptions, and strategies they employ to address the intersection of precarity, careers in journalism and parenting. By centering our research on Czech women journalists, we address an additional gap, as existing studies on journalists and precarity predominantly concentrate on Western countries. Central and Eastern Europe – with its unique history of state-sponsored women's emancipation projects and rapid transformation and liberalization after 1989 – constitutes a critical socio-political context for our study. Czechia, one of the countries of the region, exemplifies distinct post-socialist characteristics, including restrained gender equality and a notable embrace of neoliberal trends.

Our research reveals that women journalists are largely self-reliant, lacking systemic support. In the absence of a supportive family background or a partner capable of taking parental leave, these journalists face significant challenges in planning for parenthood. They often depend on positive relationships with their superiors and individualized approaches. However, this reliance hinders the establishment of systematic work-life balance measures within editorial offices and the broader journalism field.

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