



Crisis, Security and Conflict Communication Working Group

Abstracts of papers accepted for presentation in the Online Conference Papers of the
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The role of virtual reality in mediating the vulnerability of distant refugees: Distance, agency, and the hierarchies of human life

Authors

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Abstract

Immersive virtual reality (VR) has gained momentum in humanitarian communication due to its utopian promises of co-presence, immediacy and transcendence, as well as the potential to erase “symbolic bordering” (e.g., Nash, 2017; de la Pena et al., 2010). These potential benefits have led the United Nations (UN) to tirelessly produce and distribute VR series to evoke global empathy and encourage policymakers, philanthropic business tycoons and citizens around the world to actually do something (i.e. give a donation) for refugees caught up in a humanitarian crisis. However, it is unclear whether or not VR can cultivate cosmopolitans with a sense of social responsibility towards the geographically, socially/culturally and morally mediated misfortune of faraway others.

Drawing upon existing works on the mediation of humanitarianism (e.g., Chouliaraki, 2013; Silverstone, 2006), this article constructs an analytical framework to articulate the issue. Applying this framework on a case study of five of the UN’s VR pieces, the article identifies three paradoxes that exist between cyber-utopian and cyber-dystopian narratives. In the “paradox of distance”, VR relies on the notions of “presence” and “storyliving” to implicitly link audiences spatially and temporally to distant suffering, creating global connectivity and reducing perceived distances between audiences and others; yet it also enables audiences to fully occupy the point of view of distant sufferers (creating too close/absolute proximity), which may cause them to feel naïve self-righteousness or narcissism with their pleasures and desire, thereby destroying the “proper distance”. In the “paradox of agency”, VR simulates a superficially “real” encounter for visual intimacy, thereby establishing an “audiences–beneficiary” relationship in humanitarian communication; yet in this case the mediated hyperreality is not an authentic reality, and its simulation does not fill the gap between reality and the virtual world. In the “paradox of the hierarchies of human life”, VR enables an audience to experience virtually fundamental “freedom”, epitomizing an attitude of cultural relativism that informs a great deal of contemporary multiculturalism, providing vast possibilities for a more egalitarian representation of distant sufferers; yet it also takes the spectator’s personally empathic feelings as the focus of intervention, rather than structural inequality and political exclusion (an economic and political power

relations of viewing). Thus, the audience can potentially remain trapped within the minefield of hegemonic humanitarianism.

This study is significant in two respects. First, it advances the turn of digitalization in studies of media and morality in the polymedia milieu; it is motivated by the necessary call for a move beyond traditional technological environments to arrive at a more novel understanding of the asymmetry of power between the safety of spectators and the vulnerability of mediated sufferers. Second, it not only reminds humanitarian journalists and NGOs that they should not rely entirely on the richer news experience or powerful response-ability enabled by VR to gain a “moral bond” with distant sufferers, but also argues that when fully-fledged VR technology is developed, it can serve as a kind of alchemy and should not be underestimated merely as a “bugaboo” of an alarmist philosophical and fictional dystopia.

Submission ID

128

Blame the media? Political discourses for citizen (dis)trust toward the Chilean Congress

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Abstract

Often regarded as a stable democracy with an overall strong economy in Latin America (French-Davis & Stallings, 2001), Chile’s deep inequalities resulted on October 18, 2019 in a so-called “social outbreak,” the biggest massive protests since the return to democracy in 1989 (Bachmann et al., 2021), making evident not only the ongoing social and economic demands but also the deep institutional distrust.

However, warnings of a potential crisis had already been noticed long before 2019 (PNUD, 2015 and onward). Signs of a fractured society were emerging for years (González & Le Foulon Morán, 2020; De Tezanos et al., 2016) in a context of low levels of interpersonal trust (Dammert 2013, 2014; World

Values Survey; 2018). One of the signs was the low levels of citizens' trust in political institutions including the government, political parties, and congress (CEP, 2021).

Indeed, many surveys in the last 10 years show that trust toward the Chilean parliament is extremely low and keeps declining. In 2020 only 1% of citizens said they trust the parliament; and the highest score recorded by the same periodical survey on this item was 5%, in 2010 (Encuesta-Bicentenario, 2020). In this ten-year period, several legislators and political parties faced various scandals, widely covered by the media and which have placed corruption –previously considered as a value that distinguished “non-corrupt” Chilean politicians from the rest of Latin America– on the public agenda (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2021).

This paper addresses this issue by focusing on congresspeople's discourses on the subject and explores the following research questions: How do congresspeople explain this crisis of trust? How do they understand the meaning and importance of citizens' distrust in the Chilean Congress? What is the role played by the media in this crisis, according to them?

In order to answer these, and within a four-year research project, we conducted 15 in-depth interviews with members of Chilean parliament (3 senators, 12 house representatives) during 2020 and the beginning of 2021. Five participants are from parties in the right-wing government coalition, and 10 from the opposition (from lefts centrists parties, independents and a left coalition), and none of them directly tied to the corruption scandals.

Through qualitative open coding, we analyzed 150 hours of interviews and found 3 main discourses: 1. Media –controlled by economic powers– had a great role in amplifying distrust towards congresspeople: Although legislators recognize that political scandals deepen the distrust, they consider the media in general and digital outlets in particular deliberately escalated the distrust toward political institutions, antagonizing citizens, 2. There is no institutional effort to rebuild trust in Congress, and 3. Instead, individual efforts for building reputation and image for each congressperson prevail, which leads to non-coordinated efforts and lackluster strategies when dealing with the media, deemed as overstepping their watchdog role. These findings are important to explore the extremely low levels of trust toward the institutions, and to understand how those who exert power understand the dynamics of relationship management and trust building in a context of a shaky democracy.

Submission ID

258

Playing the role of the journalist: police going live

Authors

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Abstract

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter empowered protestors to circulate information to ordinary citizens in social movements. In the waves of protests in the Anti-Extradition Bill movement in Hong Kong since 2019, protestors have spread information on police brutality which undermined the public image of law enforcement (Lee, 2020). Trying to turn the table, the Hong Kong police launched their own social media channels that counteract protest media and spread pro-police narratives. To provide alternative coverage on social media, they created live videos and short briefs that mimic the style of television news on their Facebook page. They engage the online users with sophisticated and visually compelling content such as videos that resembled the television news, as well as the creation of original cartoon characters for promoting anti-crime themes. The openness on social media platforms has allowed the regime to participate in an equal footing manner as normal citizens. Nevertheless, as a part of the regime, the police naturally inherited a greater framing power over normal citizens by controlling the official narratives.

The police using social media may both enhance its official narratives through the increased media exposure, or engage ordinary citizens from the grassroots. By examining the content in their Facebook channel, it is possible to unveil if the police are utilizing their power to impose hard propaganda or trying to sound persuasive to the online users. The way police reported about Hong Kong since 2019 through their own social media outlet informs how the regime is adapting to the new media environment. By qualitatively analyzing the audiovisuals and narratives in police live videos, this study seeks to identify the ways in which police live videos resemble professional video news coverage. Results show that 1) the visual layout of the videos resembled a news broadcast; 2) the videos featured anchor-like presenters in a traditional “newsroom” studio setup or as standuppers, who spoke in a neutral “broadcast tone”; 3) the narratives in the police live videos were mostly presenting “facts” that reframed official statements into a 3rd person format, such as “the police says” and “the police urge,” to amplify the official point of view. 4) the live videos were able to capture the happenings behind the police line, beyond the reach of any journalist. The observations suggested by presenting like video news, the police live videos were consolidating the government narratives as facts. Through utilizing their unequal power relations with professional journalists and the public, their live videos became the only witness behind the police line. While it undermines the ability of the fourth estate to monitor the

administrative power, the police live videos exploited the professional image of the press to sound convincing.

Submission ID

295

Framing the Macedonian Name Dispute in Greece: Nationalistic Journalism and the Existential Threat

Authors

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Abstract

The news is a powerful force that can shape public opinion by disseminating a certain truth. In the Macedonian Name Dispute (MND), the Greek media promoted the country's main nationalistic narrative that treats the compromise between Greece and its neighboring country (now-named North Macedonia) as a national crisis that can even lead to an existential threat for Greece and its people. In 2018 and 2019, the MND dominated once again the country's discourse due to the "Prespes Agreement." That accord between the two countries seemed to have solved peacefully the almost 30 years-old-dispute. However, the MND was once again used successfully as a political weapon to gain electoral power and overthrow the government that realized the agreement. New Democracy (ND), the main right-wing party of Greece, won the national elections on the 7th of July 2019. Despite its rage against the "Prespes Agreement" throughout the two years, after becoming the country's government, it supported the agreement as an essential peaceful step for Greece and the Balkans. In order to investigate the recent events related to the MND, this study examined more than 600 news articles throughout 2018 and 2019 to identify how the news media framed the events associated with the MND and the "Prespes Agreement." The results revealed that most news stories framed the MND incidents as a political and mobilization tool of the public and as an issue that involves the idea of an existential threat for Greece. Furthermore, the news coverage showed that several news stories employed the patriotic and nationalistic frame to support or undermine the country's then-government. These findings offer insights into the use of territorial name disputes as a communication tool. Besides, that particular topic has not been studied through a communication perspective, including the mobilization power that a territorial dispute can hold since it is successfully securitized and preserved in the public discourse for many years.

Keywords

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341

They Are All Guilty: South African and Nigerian Media Framing of 2019 Xenophobic Attacks

Authors

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Abstract

Background

Xenophobia—fear of strangers or foreigners—has generated recurrent crises in Africa. A recent case was the 2019 violent xenophobic attacks and counter-attacks in South Africa and Nigeria, respectively. These crises have potential implications for the diplomatic relations among the affected African countries. Naturally, the media ecosystem in Africa largely determines (de)escalation of crises in the region. Specifically, the news media were believed to have played significant roles in the escalation of xenophobic crises in Africa especially those between South Africa and Nigeria who are among the 10 most populated countries in Africa. This is because how the media reported and represent the xenophobic crises largely determined the extent of (de)escalation of the crises.

Research Gap, Objectives, Methods and Materials

Existing media studies on xenophobia have established the complicity of the African media in the escalation of the phenomenon but scant attention has been paid to comparative media framing of xenophobic attacks in South Africa and Nigeria given the diplomatic ties and pre-eminent political and economic status of the two countries in Africa. Therefore, this paper was designed to compare the frames and themes used by select print media in South Africa and Nigeria to project South Africans and Nigerians in 2019 during the violent xenophobic attacks and counter-attacks respectively in the two countries. Implications of such representations for the diplomatic relationship between the two countries were also examined. Media Framing and Wimmer's Power theories were adopted as the theoretical framework. Thirty-six news stories about the 2019 xenophobic crises extracted from purposively selected top two national dailies from South Africa and Nigeria (i.e. *Independent Online*

and *Mail* [South Africa]; *Punch* and *Guardian* [Nigeria]) were subjected to quantitative and qualitative content analyses.

Potential Findings and Relevance

Preliminary findings show that the media in both countries condemned xenophobia in their reportage of the crises. However, both South African and Nigerian media were guilty of malicious representations of citizens and leaders of the two countries by using negative tags such as *barbaric lots*, *refugees*, *looters*, and *mindless criminals*. Use of negative frames by the media could escalate the xenophobic crises, compromise the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and South Africa, and endanger African unity in general. There is a need for a media ecosystem that promotes a truly united Africa in an environment that is devoid of stereotypes of all citizens and foreigners.

Keywords: Diplomatic relationship between Nigeria and South Africa, Media framing of xenophobic attacks, Nigerian print media, South African print media, Xenophobic crises in Africa.

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407

Can social media really ‘End the Harm’? Stakeholder perspectives on the public awareness campaign against paramilitary-style attacks in Northern Ireland.

Authors

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Abstract

Paramilitary-style attacks (PSAs) continue to blight working-class loyalist and republican communities in Northern Ireland over two decades on from the Belfast Agreement. This tactic, used by paramilitaries on both sides to ‘deal’ with anti-social behaviour in these areas where the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) remain distrusted, inflicts lifelong physical and psychological trauma on the victims, most of whom are young men aged under 25 years old. Research suggests that as many as one in three citizens in the deeply-divided polity believe that ‘punishment attacks’ or ‘beatings’ can be justified in certain circumstances. This prompted the Department of Justice (NI) to launch Ending the Harm (ETH) in October 2018, a campaign designed to promote a new public discourse rejecting the legitimacy of PSAs. It was the first in Northern Ireland to use social media to micro-target young

people in areas in which these attacks frequently occur. A narrative approach was developed for advertisements posted across digital and traditional media, which conveyed the perspectives of those involved in PSAs such as the victim and the paramilitary. Unlike public information campaigns during the Northern Irish conflict encouraging citizens to directly report paramilitary activity to the police (Finlayson and Hughes, 2000), citizens were encouraged to visit the ETH website, where they could find out more information about PSAs and how to contact the PSNI.

This paper explores key stakeholder perspectives on the efficacy of ETH in challenging the views of citizens who justify or defend these attacks. It does so by first reviewing the literature on the impact of historical government public awareness campaigns within Northern Ireland and overseas, examining the scale and impact of PSAs, and providing an overview of the Ending the Harm campaign to date. A particular focus was the extent to which online platforms raised awareness of PSAs amongst young people, who are often the victims of these attacks. These issues were explored through a qualitative thematic analysis of interviews (N=10) conducted with representatives from the Campaign Reference Group including the Department of Justice, the PSNI and the advertising agency responsible for the campaign, between June and October 2019. Results indicate that there was much enthusiasm for the use of social media in raising awareness of this issue, particularly amongst those communities that distrust the PSNI. Snapchat in particular was considered an effective tool for challenging the views of young people who believed PSAs could be justified in some circumstances. Social media statistics were held up as evidence of how the public were engaging with the campaign, including the minority of negative comments posted on its Facebook page. However, like the Confidential Telephone ads decades earlier, ETH did not directly address the causes of the perceived illegitimacy of the PSNI in neighbourhoods most affected by PSAs. Transforming attitudes towards paramilitaries in divided societies depends as much on the promotion of alternatives to ‘swift justice,’ such as restorative justice, as showing the trauma associated with these attacks.

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594

Rewriting the Boundaries of International Political Crises. Online Platforms and Contentious Communication Practices: Towards A Taxonomy

Authors

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Abstract

Contemporary conflicts are influenced by a *deep mediatization*. The production of information is an effective weapon of war in a media ecosystem constantly in flux: such weaponization requires the active involvement of international actors, who do not simply reproduce the framing of stories created by mainstream media but contribute to enhance the narratives of international affairs. Therefore, States are now employing the very same communication tools, such as online platforms, hailed as activators of revolutions only a few years ago.

Platforms connect users and distribute content, without being formally involved in its production: they offer content moderation as an effective commodity, influencing public discourses, however, *platformed* operators are private actors devoted to economic profit.

These representational turns are characterizing the storyline of international crises (namely, the rise of popular geopolitics; the “aesthetic” turn; and the circulation of strategic narratives) and aim at the direct involvement of foreign audiences in the definition of international crises. Indeed, online platforms facilitate the direct intervention of politically oriented actors, bypassing the routines of mainstream media and intervening in digital public spheres. Moreover, the boundaries between public and private issues are collapsing, as an increasing emotional awareness influence the personal processing of political issues outside of the domestic realm.

This contribution aims to reconstruct a taxonomy of the presence of the State on online platforms by recomposing a multidimensional approach based on:

- the listing of specific patterns of online conflicts;
- the socio-technical characteristics of platforms, digital practices, and theoretical tools describing the peculiarities of online conflicts;
- the identification of actors based on their visibility and recognizability of their intents;
- the cataloguing of tangible outputs that contribute to the definition of conflictual actions.

This schematization will be reinforced by the awareness of the theoretical scenarios that characterize contemporary international relations: the rise of non-material factors in foreign affairs will be explored to contextualize the conflictual opportunities exacerbated by online platforms.

This work aims to provide a systematic classification of the practices of contemporary supranational disputes and conflicts, exposing the link between platformed affordances and visible manifestations of contentious occurrences in international affairs. The used approach will allow arranging a theoretical understanding based on practical examples.

Conflictual episodes will be grouped in “families” based on their similarities: therefore, we will explore the role of online platforms in several conflictual phenomena, such as participation, (computational)

propaganda, codes and practices of diplomacy and public confrontations, conflictual display, and radicalization and terrorism.

Finally, the taxonomy will explain how different conflictual manifestations that take place on online platforms, are contributing to call into question the boundaries between entertainment and information, private goals and the public good, and local affairs and global interests.

Submission ID

604

Beyond Prejudice: Social Network Analysis of Tweets under “China’s 2060 Carbon Neutral Target” Issue

Authors

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Abstract

Global warming is considered to be one of the greatest crises facing mankind in the 21st century. The governance and responsibility allocation of environmental issues have become an important issue affecting international relations and international public opinion (Schäfer, 2012). However, the climate change communication of developing countries is rarely acknowledged (Zhao, 2019). In September 2020, China announced that it would strive to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. This goal has aroused extensive discussion in global social media. Existing studies have found that global mainstream media often have political bias when reporting developing countries’ participation in climate change governance, even in the field of science journalism (Cunningham, 2012). However, these studies pay little attention to the roles and interpretation perspectives of different subjects in social media.

Through the research methods of SNA and frame analysis, this study attempts to answer the following questions: What are the identity characteristics of active accounts and relevant opinion leaders in the communication network of “China’s 2060 carbon neutral target” issue on social media, and which kind of opinion leaders play a more important role in the network? What discourse frameworks exist in the communication network of “China’s 2060 carbon neutral target” issue of overseas social media?

In this study, 34,028 tweets from Twitter were analyzed. Gephi version 0.9.1 was used to generate a directed SNA graph, a total of 5,766 nodes and 6,196 edges were used for the retweet analysis.

The study finds that, under the social media communication network of “China’s 2060 carbon neutral target” issue, the majority of Twitter users come from North America and Europe. Although the tweets from media and politicians’ accounts received higher forwarding volume, they did not play a more important role in the network, and there was a lack of interaction between accounts. Scientists, environmental protection specialists, and environmental journalists form a connected social network, in which scientists play the role of structural holes. In contrast to earlier findings, neither Chinese official media nor overseas media play a more important role in the social media network under this topic.

The study also summarizes three discourses and six corresponding frameworks in the tweets about “China’s 2060 carbon neutral target” by manual coding. The former includes constructive discourse, critical discourse, and questioning discourse. The latter includes popular science, cooperation, economic rationality, pan politicization, democratic practicality, and survivalism. The three discourses compete with each other. Tweets against “China’s 2060 carbon neutral target” represented by criticism and doubt are the mainstream in the early stage. The constructive discourse of tweets is more consecutive in time series and becomes the main framework for the spread of this topic on Twitter. This shows that with the participation of scientists and other professionals, the topic of “carbon neutrality” as a scientific terminology can avoid the widespread misunderstanding of climate change governance carried out at the national level.

Submission ID

758

Libya, CNN and the story of modern slavery in Africa

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Abstract

The experiences of migrants in Libya have been the subject of much international attention, especially since a CNN report in November 2017 which included film footage of ‘slave markets’ where it appeared that people were being bought and sold.[1] The response to the CNN report was a rapid and globalised politicisation of the issue (Gabriell 2019) fuelled by reactions in other forms of media and by interventions from national and international political actors in Europe, Africa and North America - including the European Union, African Union and International Organisation for Migration.

The story of modern slavery in Africa has become one of the emblematic issues of the so-called migrant crisis, demonstrating the suffering, mis-treatment and human rights violations suffered by those caught up in it. It also resonates strongly within the mediatized politics of international development, where the eradication of ‘modern slavery’ has now been included in one of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 8.7), launched in 2015.

This paper adopts a comparative approach to explore different narratives of human rights and humanitarian framings of the issue by analysing political statements and news publications from a range of actors and countries both inside and outside Africa, namely Libya, Rwanda, Nigeria, UK, US and France. Findings are organised around three main themes: 1) the contemporary and transnational resonance and significance of the language of slavery and modern slavery, 2) the navigation and/or resolution of conflicts between goals of sustainable development and migration control, human rights and global justice, and 3) the relevance of neo-colonialism and the dominance - and resistance to – prevailing ideas about Africa and Africans both outside and within the region.

[1] <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/14/africa/libya-migrant-auctions/index.html>

Submission ID

862

Analysing Discourses of White Supremacy and Conspiracy in YouTube Comment Sections

Authors

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Abstract

Over the years, extreme right-wing communities have formed on YouTube, spreading discourses of white supremacy and conspiracy. This presentation provides a methodology for understanding the various personae and networks of values evident in YouTube comment sections. The case study for this presentation is the Notre Dame Fire from April 2019. This fire occurred in Paris, France, and received a major global reaction. The dataset for analysis consists of comments taken from popular YouTube videos in English-speaking extreme right-wing communities that spread conspiratorial content about how the fire started or how it was received on social media, in the 24 hour period after the fire occurred. Most of these videos also spread disinformation and hate speech, for example, blaming Muslims for starting the fire and labelling the Notre Dame fire as a terrorist act.

The methodology for this research is situated within Systemic Functional Linguistics, an approach that analyses language in terms of its social context. An appraisal analysis (Martin and White, 2005) was performed on the YouTube comments in order to highlight instances of evaluative language used, by identifying couplings of ideational (what is being evaluated) and attitudinal meaning (how it is being evaluated). From this, an affiliation analysis (Zappavigna, 2018; Zappavigna 2021) was applied in order to understand the core values that each commenter is bonding around and the linguistic resources used in order to achieve this. The patterns identified from the appraisal and affiliation analysis allowed a range of personae to then be identified. The term personae is used in order to represent that an individual can enact multiple personae depending on the discursive features they decide to adopt in a given situation. These results were used to create a bond cluster diagram (Inwood and Zappavigna, in press), illustrating the different values that particular personae hold and how these personae relate to each other in discourse.

In the case study of the Notre Dame Fire, there were distinct groups of personae evident in the comment corpus. Whilst a core ‘suspicious fire’ bond was formed that led to conspiratorial thinking, personae additionally attributed blame towards different targets, such as distinct ‘evil Macron’, ‘evil Islam’ and ‘lying authorities’ bonds emerging. Thus, within this predominately conspiratorial discourse, there were different issues at play regarding globalisation, migration, and western traditions.

Beyond this particular case study, the results of this research are relevant to broader studies regarding the discourses of white supremacy and conspiracy. These are global issues we are facing today, but also local issues in the sense that specific communities face their own struggles in combatting this dangerous discourse. By understanding the personae that lurk in these comment sections, this can aid in the creation of manual and automated detection processes for identifying the specific networks of values that charge white supremacy and conspiratorial discourse.

Submission ID

934

Internet Regulation and the Mitigation of Global Catastrophic Risks

Authors

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Abstract

The topic of Internet regulation has been addressed by a broad interdisciplinary literature. The analysis often goes beyond a focus on blocking a specific type of content, filtering and censorship. Continuous mapping of new generations of Internet control (Deibert & Rohozinski, 2010) identifies more complicated regulative measures, that are constantly evolving. On national level, we see more and more efforts to implement new forms of Internet sovereignization that seek to allow state actors to “align digital technology with political borders” (Mueller, 2017). On the global level, new initiatives for Internet governance suggest a securitization of perceptions of the Internet and accordingly an increasing role for state actors (Claessen, 2020).

An understanding of Internet regulation relies on different Internet Imaginaries (Mansell, 2012). Debates around the tension between Internet regulation and Internet freedom rely on an understanding of the Internet as a liberation technology (Diamond & Plattner, 2010). Scholars that rely on approaches highlighting roles of the Internet in economic production (Benkler, 2006), emphasize the economic risks of Internet regulation. This study, however, stresses the need for an analysis of Internet regulation that relies on a different understanding of the role of the Internet.

Drawing on a concept of *generativity* (Zittrain, 2008) and on a notion of *preadaptation* (Cuénot, 1914), it offers an argument for how Internet regulation may diminish our capacity to address global catastrophic risks (Bostrom & Cirkovic, 2011). A framework for the analysis of Internet regulation relies on the juxtaposition of a concept of generativity and an evolutionary understanding of variability and preadaptation as developed in the context of cultural-historical psychology (Vygotsky, 1978; Cole, 1996).

The article demonstrates the role of the Internet in an increasing variability of activities mediated by a variety of digital tools and new forms of activity systems (Engeström, 1987; Kaptelinin, 2014) relying on the analysis of digital innovation, specifically crowdsourcing and common-based production practices, in response to Covid-19. This includes the role of digital tools both, on the one hand, in detecting a crisis and constructing it as a potential object of activity and, on the other hand, in mobilizing resources to address the threat through relying on various forms of connective action (Bennet & Segerberg, 2012).

In this light, the Internet can be considered as a critical system for the prevention and mitigation of global catastrophic risks (Avin et al., 2018). The framework highlights the ways in which Internet regulation may potentially restrict three critical aspects of addressing existential risk: how the risk is constructed and transformed into an object of activity, the scope of resources for addressing the risk, and how these resources can be mobilized. The preservation of generativity is a key factor in securing the resilience of social and political systems in the face of crises yet to come. Conversely, the

restriction of generativity would lead to a failure of the Internet as a system for the mitigation of catastrophic global risks.

Submission ID

1169

Crisis with undefined delayed damage: what the beast is and how to handle it

Authors

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Abstract

Nowadays there is a number of crises' classifications on a wide range of grounds in the academic literature. S. Fink builds classification regarding the attribution of responsibility, highlighting opposition crises, where the organisation is perceived as the culprit of the occasion, and non-oppositional crises, where the organisation is perceived as a victim. R.R. Ulmer et al. group all crises into two blocks: voluntary crises and involuntary ones. The first group includes all crises provoked by the deliberate actions of people with dubious motives, the second includes crises that are unintentional, such as natural disasters, disease outbreaks, etc. Based on the lists of the most common crises, T.W. Coombs proposed his own crises' typology, which identifies 10 crisis types with different attributions of responsibility: low, moderate and high. However, there is a need to develop a new crises' classification, based on the criterion of the manifestation time of crisis consequences. The study of crises with undefined delayed damage is of particular importance today due to several factors, the main of which is the constantly increasing rate of technological progress and the associated risks of environmental disasters.

We distinguish crises with certain immediate damage and with undefined delayed damage. The first group of crises includes events, the negative consequences of which manifest themselves immediately or quickly. For example, damage caused by a forest fire or a plane crash can be timely and accurately identified. Crises with indefinite delayed damage include environmental and some man-made disasters, such as accidents at nuclear power plants, oil spills, etc. The danger of such crises lies in the fact that after the crisis has occurred and the organisation has taken corrective actions, it is difficult for even experts to unequivocally assess the possibility of manifestation of the crisis consequences in the future. So, after the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the USSR on April 26, 1986 a large

amount of radioactive substances was released into the environment. The damage caused by the catastrophe still cannot be adequately measured: the territories' pollution, radiation sickness and gene mutations. This raises the strategically important question of what strategies should be implemented by the company and/ or government authorities to resolve this type of crisis. Obviously, the long-term negative consequences of crises with indefinite delayed damage are a specific challenge for an organisation that finds itself in a situation of urgent need to use a unique set of crisis communication strategies. Modern crisis communication theories, such as SCCT, do not distinguish this type of crisis as an independent one, and therefore, the question of the most adequate set of communication strategies and tactics remains open.

In this paper, we define the features of the crisis with undefined delayed damage. Then basing on a case of oil spill in the Russian Arctic caused by the accident at Norilsk-Taimyr Energy Company's TPP-3 on May 29, 2020, we propose the recommendations for the use of crisis communication strategies. Methods used in the study are case study and content analysis.

Submission ID

1246

Japanese Newspaper Editorials on Anti-nuclear Power after the Fukushima Nuclear Disaster

Authors

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Abstract

This year marks ten years since the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster in Japan. It was one of the worst nuclear disasters in history, alongside the Chernobyl disaster, and became the catalyst for a clamour among the nation's media to call for a ban of nuclear power in Japan, a country with over 50 nuclear power stations.

In 1945, in the final days of the Second World War, the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Following this experience, Japan banned the use of nuclear armaments in the post-war period. Simultaneously, the construction of nuclear power plants and the development of nuclear power for peaceful ends were pursued as a national policy and became an important part of the post-war national identity of the Japanese. The miraculous economic development of post-war Japan was linked in popular discourse with the so-called 'dream of atomic power' and the 'myth of atomic

safety'. For this reason, up until the Fukushima disaster, nuclear power enjoyed the support of the majority of the public in Japan.

The Fukushima disaster, however, changed everything. Public opinion has shifted with the majority of Japan's population keen to see the end of nuclear power. Most deserving of attention is the post-disaster shift towards an anti-nuclear stance that occurred amongst the many Japanese journalists, intellectuals, and members of the broader mass media who had until then supported the nation's nuclear policy.

The purpose of this study is to explore what the journalism discourses on anti-nuclear power after Fukushima are, how and why they have changed from before Fukushima, what they have then achieved, and what problems they involve. In particular, this study focuses on how those discourses relate or do not relate to climate change issues such as global warming, because if Japan were to abandon nuclear power, it would then need to consider how to balance this decision with efforts to tackle climate change.

This study's target is the editorials of Japanese national newspapers for the 10 years since the Fukushima accident. Three major newspapers, Asahi Shimbun, Mainichi Shimbun, and Tōkyō Shimbun changed their positions after Fukushima and have presented numerous (1,974) editorials that articulated an anti-nuclear stance. These are the analysis subjects. The editorial pages are central to a newspaper's identity (Wahl-Jorgensen 2004: 59; 2008: 70) and often have the power to set the dominant political agenda over months and years (McNair 2000: 30). These are the reasons this study focuses on newspaper editorials after the Fukushima disaster. Concerning methodology, this research adopts an interdisciplinary approach but is mainly based on a frame and content analysis of political communication research, combining both a qualitative and quantitative approach. This study is the first attempt at comprehensively investigating the manner in which Japanese newspapers have critically responded to the disaster in the last ten years.

Submission ID

1389

Reporting violent extremism

Authors

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Abstract

Covering violent extremism of any hue – whether the type perpetrated by jihadists or by the far-right insurgents or other violent groups – exposes journalists and news outlets to greater risks than they

usually encounter in less hostile assignments (Abubakar 2020; Cottle et al. 2016). But while scholarship has dealt extensively with the media coverage of violent extremism (see Nacos 2016, for example), relatively little has been done in researching the consequences of such coverage on the lives of local journalists and the wider impact on journalism production (Carlsson and Poyhtari 2017). This paper examines the lived experiences of journalists who spent years reporting on violent extremism. It uses the case study of covering the protracted Boko Haram insurgency (Thurston 2017) in Nigeria to highlight the toll reporting violent extremism takes on the lives of journalists and on news production. Grounded in Jeffrey Alexander's (2006) Civil Sphere theory, the study draws on individual interviews, focus groups and newsroom observations to analyse the difficulties faced by journalism practice in uncivil places. A total of thirty-four journalists, who covered the insurgency in Nigeria, participated in the individual and group interviews. The newsroom observations were conducted at two news outlets (a broadcast station and a newspaper house) in Nigeria. The paper provides insights into a pattern of journalistic practices, resilience and resistance in a hostile environment.

Submission ID

1494

Terrorism and journalism: An Inquiry into Journalistic Freedoms in Kenya when Reporting Terrorism

Authors

Mr. Benjamin Muindi - Daystar

Abstract

Terrorism is ranked as a major threat to the interests of nation states across the world. The impact of terrorism has been devastating on human life: death of civilians not involved in conflict, physical and psychological injuries; negative impact on socio-economic and political outlooks, and loss of property, among others. Scholars argue that the acts of terror and subsequent counterterror measures, both formal and informal, are negatively affecting fundamental human rights as enshrined in international charters and constitutions governing different countries. Freedom of expression and, its barometer - media freedom - are particularly vulnerable, as security organs and police survey the production and dissemination of information believed to be critical intelligence in thwarting potential threats by the insurgents. In Kenya, there is a knowledge gap on the impact of counter-terrorism laws, policies and regulations on how journalists report news related to terrorism. At the same time, Kenya's proximity to Somalia, and its incorporation in the global war against terrorism by the U.S. and European countries such as the U.K., Germany, France and Italy, among others has made it a target for terrorists. Since

2011, the impact and frequency of terror activities recorded on the Kenyan soil has soared to heights never seen before in the country's history. The reporting of terror and terror-related activities has now become a key issue in the local news agenda. As such, journalists drawn from both international and local media enterprises have become critical actors in the coverage of these events as they occur. Using in depth interviews and textual analysis research methods, the study seeks to provide rich and nuanced insights into the realities of freedom of the media in this era of global terrorism. Drawing on structuration meta-theory and the hierarchy of influences theory, this paper explores the potential impact of terrorism on media freedom in Kenya. This is done through a phenomenological investigation into the lived experiences of Kenyan-based journalists involved in the coverage of terrorism since 2011. This investigation reveals the nexus among structure, agency and professional identity of journalists directly involved in the coverage of terrorism, and the implications of this on media freedom. The study found that media freedom is curtailed at various levels and in both formal and informal ways. Laws, professional rituals, personal biases and prejudices can and do affect what and how news is reported. Therefore, this thesis contends that terrorism and terror-related activities present new and yet undocumented obstacles to media freedom in the Kenyan context. This investigation offers new insights into how the structures of counter-terror societies and experiences of reporting terrorism are recasting journalistic agency and professional identity.

Submission ID

1797

MSP paper: Street Art, Aesthetics, and the Spatiality Peace Formation in Mostar

Authors

Dr. Lydia Cole - University of Durham

Abstract

Amidst a context of global uncertainty, the grassroots arts festival - Streets Arts Festival Mostar – held its ninth edition in September 2020. Reflecting this context, the paper examines the relationship between street art and multifaceted processes of peace formation in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Situating the festival as part of a broader set of “bottom-up processes that challenge the status quo by creating spaces for sustainable” peace (Djurasovic 2019, 126), the paper develops aesthetic and spatial analytical registers to explore these peace dynamics. Reflecting on the ways that the festival responds to everyday political issues which impact the city, the paper contends that this is not its primary or only

peace agenda. Rather, the politics of the festival must be traced with regard to its production of alternative aesthetics, spaces of sociality, and networks of friendship in and beyond Mostar.

- 1) The aesthetic register asks after the aesthetic content of murals and their curating: What is represented? Who can represent what? Where are they represented? Who decides? Noting that murals vary in theme and relation to narratives of peace in the city, the paper engages visual analysis, narrative, and spatial analysis to critically unpack these questions.
- 2) Leading on from this, the spatial register examines the intervention of street arts in relation to spatial transformation of the urban landscape, highlighting how street arts have intervened to instigate processes of revitalisation and noting the way that murals feature in everyday spatial narratives of the city.
- 3) The final register examines the production of networks of peace, focusing on how and to what extent those engaged in the festival participate in wider processes of peacebuilding.

The paper is informed by field visits to Mostar in 2019 and 2020 which involved site visits to murals, as well as interviews with festival organisers and informal conversations about the festival at OKC Abrašević. This is supplemented through Skype interviews with artists, as well as media commentary on the festival. Overall, the paper will suggest that the festival curates the urban landscape in ways which produce alternative conceptualisations of peace for the city.

Submission ID

1885

MSP paper: Social media and intergroup contact during contentious episodes in divided societies: Comparative perspectives from Colombia and Northern Ireland.

Authors

Mrs. Diana Dajer - University of Oxford

Abstract

Diana Dajer, University of Oxford

Paul Reilly, University of Sheffield

Father of peace studies Johan Galtung (1967) was among those scholars to predict that the growth of information and communication technologies would facilitate associative peacebuilding strategies

which increase contact between antagonists who have previously been kept apart. Social media has certainly created greater opportunities for intergroup contact in deeply divided societies transitioning out of conflict. This can theoretically aid ‘informal learning’ about the ‘other’ community in contexts where there are few physical spaces for these groups to meet. However, prospects for peace and reconciliation are not advanced by the disinformation, misinformation and hate speech that invariably circulate on platforms like Facebook during elections and contentious public demonstrations where sectarian differences are laid bare. These information flows have the potential to spark intercommunal violence, especially in the context of an information crisis in countries such as the UK, characterised by deteriorating trust in media and political institutions, or in Colombia, where decades of armed conflict have eroded social cohesion.

This paper adds to the emergent literature on social media and intergroup contact in post-conflict societies through a comparative study of contentious episodes in Colombia and Northern Ireland. While there has been much research into structured intergroup contact where online contact is supervised (see Amichai-Hamburger, Hasler, and Shani-Sherman, 2015 for example), the focus here was on unstructured contact via online platforms. A qualitative case study approach is adopted, in order to explore how online social media platforms, like Twitter, act as ‘connectors’ and ‘dividers’ in these two societies, both of which remain deeply-divided along sectarian lines, despite peace settlements being in place.

The study focuses on the nature of intercommunity contact during polarised political debates on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Using case studies such as the UK EU Referendum and the plebiscite on the Colombian peace agreement (both in 2016), it examines whether there is any evidence of the ‘agonistic pluralism’ envisaged by Mouffe (2013), where former enemies are recast as ‘adversaries’ who respectfully disagree about contentious issues. The analysis suggests that online platforms turbocharge disinformation and misinformation during contentious episodes that reinforces divisions within these two societies. There is little evidence of the ‘informal learning’ about outgroups which might help break down barriers between former enemies, with inflammatory content and hate speech typically the most widely shared content during these episodes. Still, one of social media’s contributions to peacebuilding in Colombia and Northern Ireland to date appears to lie in its use by citizens to debunk misinformation, which has the potential to spark sectarian violence. Likewise, online platforms may contribute to more durable peace settlements in divided societies by enabling younger citizens to mobilise in policy areas which transcend the tribal politics of the violent past. The paper concludes by identifying recommendations for policymakers on how best to respond to hate speech and misinformation, which has the potential to undermine peace in ‘post-conflict’ societies.

Submission ID

1888

MSP paper: Communication in Peacebuilding: Peaceful cooperation, discursive civility and safe spaces

Authors

Dr. Stef Pukallus - University of Sheffield

Abstract

Civil wars are the most frequent and the most violent form of organised violence. They are also the kind of conflict that are the most difficult to permanently end with recurrence rates as high as 50%. It is therefore imperative to find new approaches to peacebuilding that empower communities to engage in peaceful cooperation and thereby build self-sustainable civil peace. Peaceful cooperation is communicatively performed across three categories of civil norms: (1) assent to civil peace, (2) substantive civility and (3) capacity building and civil competencies (Pukallus forthcoming; Harrison and Pukallus forthcoming) and depends on the learning of a civil-communicative skill which I call discursive civility (Pukallus forthcoming) and upon which all self-sustainable civil peace relies.

Discursive civility is a tool to help (re)build a society that has the communicative capacity to deal with disagreement and difference, to manage a plurality of (conflicting) views, histories and geographies as well as the existence of conflicting consensuses in agonistic non-violent ways. It comprises three rules which together guide the style of expression of points of view but do not regulate content. These three rules are first, emotional forbearance; second, perspective-taking and listening and third, making a reasonable contribution to peace. These three rules need to be interpreted and applied across the communicative spectrum of society – from debate and discussion, to the mass media (factual and fictional) to the performative and the visual arts. It is through discursive civility that communities can restore a civil language, behaviour, values, mores and norms in the carrying out of everyday interactions and routines, both verbally and non-verbally. It is also these three rules of discursive civility that act as the guarantor for safety for all participants that engage communicatively with each other. Such safety – and ultimately the creation of safe discursive spaces (Pukallus forthcoming) – is necessary if participants are to dare to re-imagine former enemies as co-citizens able to engage in peaceful cooperation.

Submission ID

1893

Between earthquake and pandemic: re-assessing editorial preparedness in Nepali newsrooms after five years

Authors

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Abstract

This paper explores the editorial preparedness in Nepali newsrooms during the Covid-19 pandemic, which befell the nation just five years after a devastating earthquake. We analyse the challenges faced by journalists, and assess their disaster preparedness in the period after the 2015 earthquake.

Journalism becomes ever more vital during a health crisis (Haddow & Haddow 2014), playing a central role in providing trustworthy information to the public and holding to account governmental and health agencies in their response to the crisis. Performing this vital function becomes more difficult when journalists are hindered by the very crisis they are reporting on (Sreedharan & Thorsen 2020). Individual health concerns, restrictions on movement, and the hostile economic climate and ever-present threat of redundancies make the work of news operations more challenging.

While Nepal is hardly alone in its experience of Covid-19, journalists there are under extraordinary pressure, recovering as they are from the 8-magnitude earthquake of 2015, which killed more than 9,000 people, injured 22,000, left an estimated 3.5 million homeless, and cost the country approximately half its GDP. One of the world's most disaster-prone countries, it is a classic example of a 'disaster community' (Mathews & Thorsen 2020), witnessing some 500 natural disasters every year, from flooding to health crises to avalanches and landslides. Regular changes of government have also significantly impacted the country, with unstable coalitions the norm since the end of the Nepalese Civil War in 2006.

The safety and professional development of Nepali journalists, therefore, is of paramount importance, as is their ability to efficiently function in the midst of unpredictable events (Sreedharan & Thorsen 2019).

This paper draws on semi-structured interviews and a national survey of journalists to explore the disaster preparedness of journalists and news organisations in Nepal. The interviews were with 14 elite stakeholders (7 owners and 7 editors), from 10 media organisations, conducted virtually or in person

depending on Covid-19 restrictions, between July and September 2020. The national survey of 1,134 journalists was conducted in July 2020, with respondents from all seven provinces in Nepal. Both interviews and the national survey included news personnel working in print, online, broadcast, and radio, as well as news agencies.

Despite Nepal's extreme vulnerability to disasters, our study found a significant number of Nepali journalists have low or extremely low levels of confidence in their ability to carry out their professional duties during disasters. Some 70% reported they had never undertaken disaster-related training (or were unsure if they had). Only 1.5% of those who *had* received disaster-training, reported they received continued training -- that is, they had received training on more than one occasion (e.g. before and after the 2015 earthquake). We explore the barriers to disaster resilience training from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective, and focus on the need for news organisations to develop editorial resilience in response to disasters and emergencies. Findings are presented in the context of psychological resilience, financial resilience, health protection and resilience, and finally editorial resilience and capacity building.

Submission ID

2135

Media staging strategies of terrorists and counter-measures

Authors

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Abstract

In the course of the digitalisation that has advanced in recent years, social networks have become widespread and important. Their presence makes them ideal weapons for terrorists to spread their messages.

The present research work poses the question of how media staging strategies of terrorists can be categorized and how counter-strategies can be developed on this basis. It follows two hypotheses:

1. Terrorist acts show a certain pattern of staging, which can be proven in different cases.
2. If the staging pattern of terrorist acts is known, counter strategies can be developed on this basis.

To date, there is no comprehensive theoretical framework for the investigation of terrorist acts as staging patterns (Nacos, 2007; Archetti, 2013). Therefore, a new perspective on the subject is being developed.

In the present study a theoretical framework on a societal level is provided by mediatization (Krotz 2007), i.e. an increasing penetration of all areas of life by the media. With regard to the concrete staging of terrorist acts, the classical drama model in the theatre (Schaumklee, 2009) is used. This is characterized by five acts: 1. exposure: the acting persons are introduced, 2. intensification: the situation intensifies, 3. climax: the plot reaches its zenith, 4. retarding element: the plot slows down to work towards the impending catastrophe in a phase of highest tension, 5. catastrophe: the disaster occurs.

The drama model is additionally extended on the micro level by the staging approach of Goffman (1959). He assumes that people constantly stage themselves, because they want to fulfil a certain role. However, the staging does not only start with the act itself, but can also take on an important meaning in the phases before.

A case study analysis was chosen as the empirical method for examining the research question. Four terrorist acts were selected according to various theoretical criteria. A key criterion was that the staging of the terrorist act appeared to be an essential part of the act itself. The four cases were: 1. Oslo, Norway (2011): Car bomb, shots at young people on the island of Utoya, 2. Sirte, Libya (2015): Beheading of 21 Coptic Christians by followers of the Islamic state, 3. Berlin, Germany (2016): Truck drives into a crowd of people at the Christmas market, 4. Christchurch, New Zealand (2019): Attack on two mosques.

Results: In three of the four cases one can speak of a media production that largely follows the classic drama model according to Schaumklee (2009). In all four cases, Goffman's staging approach (1959) comes into play: the terrorists use their act of violence to stage themselves.

The drama model provides some important starting points for counter strategies. For example, it would be the task of the media, politics and tech companies - as far as possible - not to give terrorists a stage - in all phases of the terroristic act.

The present study applies for the first time a new framework to terrorist acts with a strong staging character and develops counter strategies on this basis.

Submission ID

2161

Factors influencing journalists of rival countries: The case of conflict reporting in India and Pakistan

Authors

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Dr. Fawad Baig - Associate Professor, University of Central Punjab

Abstract

India and Pakistan are involved in long-standing inter-state conflict, which directly affects the 20% of world population. After more than 72 years of their inception, both countries are still not able to harmonize their relations as neighboring countries. Media of India and Pakistan have also covered wars and conflicts between two countries with jingoistic narratives. Using the hierarchy of influence model by Shoemaker and Reese (1996), this study explores the factors that influence journalists of two rival countries and shape their coverage of conflicting relations.

Semi structured interviews (n=10) were taken from the journalists, editors and resident editors of two Pakistani newspapers, The News International and Dawn. Only those journalists were interviewed who had covered stories related to India. Secondary data of a survey (Worlds of Journalism Study, 2018) of Indian journalists (n=327) was also used for the study. Results of the survey of Indian journalists confirmed a less active role conception of being detached observer among them. Pakistani journalists in their interviews also reported the role of detached observer and watchdog as their preference.

Among the factors influencing coverage, individual factors did not play any role for both Pakistani and Indian journalists in their reporting of each other while routine factors were very influential. Lack of resources and direct access to information, editorial policy and both external censorship and self-censorship were the common factors that Indian and Pakistani journalists perceived for having strong influence in shaping their news content. Pakistani journalists seemed to have substantial influence from the state and military while considerable number of Indian journalists reported the strong influence of public opinion and media laws and regulations as well. These influences shape the content of these journalists and often result in war orientation for the intense conflicts during the escalatory manifest phase of conflict.

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Submission ID

2318

The role of strategic narratives in shaping collective memory: the case of 2018 Polish-Israeli crisis

Authors

Dr. Karolina Brylska - University of Wars

Abstract

The presentation is dedicated to the results of research study, led at the University of Warsaw and devoted to the crisis in Polish-Israeli relations at the turn of 2017/2018. The mentioned conflict lasted for only few months, however Polish-Jewish relations, mostly in the context of WWII are a long lasting issue in the Polish political agenda - both domestic and foreign. As a part of the foreign policy, it is a fragile affair between Poland, Israel, USA, and Germany as well. Due to historical conditions, these bilateral relations are so complex that so-called strategic narratives increasingly cover their interpretation. According to Miskimmon et al. (2013), narratives are defined as a means to ‘construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future of international politics to shape the behavior of domestic and international actors’ (p. 2). Roselle et al. (2014) argue that strategic narratives can be understood at three different levels: as International System Narratives, National Narratives and Issue Narratives (p. 76). We assume that strategic narrative can be the ‘way of describing the world that exposes specific values, meanings and ideas, and at the same time serves to explain and encourage specific actions of political actors’ (Gackowski & Brylska, 2020) to build a tool of soft power, defined by Joseph Nye (2004: 5).

The project we developed concerns the period of escalation of conflict between Polish government, on the one side, and Israeli government and Jewish-American Foundations on the other side at the turn of 2017 and 2018, when Polish government proceeded the amendment of law on National Remembrance Institute. According to its authors it was expected to help fighting disinformation and propaganda slamming Polish history, e.g. utterance Polish Death Camps. The mentioned law (finally, after a few months, decommitted) was criticized both in Poland and abroad as imprecise and censoring testimonies of survivors and scientific work. During the public debate on this amendment, the Jewish-American Ruderman Family Foundation clip, under the working title “Polish Holocaust”, was published - it was calling for the suspension of the US diplomatic relations with Poland. The controversial video

provoked a huge discussion in the Polish media, which we thoroughly analyzed (6 main TV stations, 23 hours of recordings analyzed). We collected data based on news and current affairs programs aired in Polish tv stations in February 2018 and analyzed it using content, rhetorical and discourse analysis methods and techniques. Thus, we indicated the individual actors' argumentation and language structures and catalogued their characteristic patterns or motifs. We also tried to find forms, meanings, and components within the framework of messages accompanying the Polish-Israeli relations and determine their functions.

Thanks to the data gathered, it is possible to track and analyse the Polish TV discourse's strategic narratives. Consequently, it will help reconstruct the repetitive ways of interpreting important political events and processes, transmitted by the media.

Submission ID

2408