Resilience, epistemic rights and information security:
War coverage in the era of AI

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Psychological resilience

- the **capacity to cope with uncertainty and anxiety** (stress) related to media exposure (stressor) under traumatic (war), or confusing (disinformation) circumstances, by developing **adaptive pathways** to wellbeing (cognitive, emotional or behavioral) (Malecki et al. 2023).

- retaining the sense of meaningfulness and benevolence of the world, or regaining the feeling of self-worthiness, through **narrative construction** of the stressful experience that **leads to adaptation** (IJantema et al. 2023).

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Social resilience

depends on environmental context, particularly on the risks and **resources that affect adaptation** (Maclean et al. 2014), such as:

- the access to **quality information and knowledge,**

- **the opportunity to acquire skills** that enable adapting to changes,

- community networks that provide support,

- sustainable livelihood and stable connections to place,

- access to facilities and infrastructures,

- economic innovativeness and engaged governance.

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Epistemic rights (crisis):

a sizable percentage of citizens in a democracy **do not have sufficient access to quality information** to exercise their rights (Horowitz et al. 2024) due to:

- news market ownership and **profit orientation** by big tech companies and media conglomerates;

- digital exclusion, **education deprivation,** lack of citizen engagement in self-goverance;

- journalism divides, poor news coverage of community issues, poor moderation standards; geographical, ethnic, linguistic blind spots;

- **algorithmic bias**, echo chambers, disinformation, hate speech.

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CORECON The coverage and reception of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Polish, Romanian and English-language media: A **comparative critical discourse** study.

- **Cross-cultural** perspective – given the current geopolitical situation, evolving mediascapes, disinformation and fake news crisis.
- **Recommendations** for journalism training, critical media literacy and resilience.
- **Polish/Romanian subcorpora** of media texts Feb 2022-June 2024, from mainstream (80%) and social media (20%).
- **English subcorpus** automatically scraped and processed https://corecon.omeka.net/

Information security - chatbots for news?

- **Advantages**: comprehensive information based on an adequate prompt, timely reaction to query and follow-ups, responses tailored to the needs of the users, interpretation of complex issues and access to a variety of data (Burger et al. 2023);

- **Disadvantages**: data-training cutoff dates, oversimplification and factual errors in ouputs, decontextualization and lack of cultural/local specificity of sourcing, racial bias, manipulation of public opinion (Farrokhnia 2023);

And yet, **young people prefer AI-driven applications and trust chatbots** rather than online resources/media outlets (Dube et al. 2024).

Study design

- Adaptation of an experiment (Volk et al. 2024) related to trust in science, with qualitative comparative **content and discourse analysis** (textual data).

- Setting up **three user profiles** and prompting ChatGPT-4 to answer to **three related questions** on (1) the motivations for the Ukraine war, (2) the responsibility for the war, and (3) the preferred post-war scenarios.

- RQ1: Is an AI application, such as ChatGPT-4, capable of skewing the representation of a political issue depending on the information it is fed about the user via a profile?

- RQ2: What are the differences in responses if the chatbot "believes" the user is (1) a **pacifist** favoring a diplomatic solution to political conflict, (2) a **militarist** accepting the hegemony of a stronger state, or (3) a person that is **disengaged**, apolitical or impartial.

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Results – content analysis

- **Variation** in length of the responses, level of detail, organization into sections, order of factors enumerated, presence of conclusion;

- Different degrees of **splitting the blame** between (1) Russia and Vladimir Putin, (2) Western Nations and NATO, (3) Ukrainian Governments, (4) Separatist Movements in Eastern Ukraine, and IN ONE CASE (5) International Mismanagement.

- Different post-war scenarios **ranked**: from full troop withdrawal to negotiated peace settlement [with] territorial compromise; Ukraine's NATO membership off the table, justice and accountability ranked high/mid/low.

Results – discourse analysis

- Militaristic – Russian interests **stressed**: Russia acting in response to the "loss of its sphere of influence" and a "security threat" (implication: from Ukraine/NATO). Russia has a legitimate right to protect "significant population of ethnic Russians and Russian speakers, many of whom identify closely with Russia."

- Pacifistic – Russian "narratives" and "grievances" **listed and highlighted** as unjustifiable causes of the war.

- Disengaged – Ukraine **misrepresented**: Euromaidan as "Western coup", stress on "*struggle* over Ukraine's sovereignty, national identity, and geopolitical alignment" as if Ukraine was not a sovereign nation state.

Conclusion

- depending on the information about user preferences, ChatGPT-4 presents contentious information on political issues to **match** the user's views and knowledge;

- **algorithmic decisions** perpetuate the ideological leanings that users already have and appear to **confirm their biases**;

- CORECON **interventions** designed to (1) raise resilience to the biases of chatbot outputs, (2) identify the implications of (AI) personalization, and (3) develop critical literacy by spotlighting the textual and stylistic adaptations that chatbots are capable of introducing in their responses.

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