



The Coverage and Reception of  
the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict



# From silence to salience: Voices behind polarized deliberation on the Ukraine war in Poland's social media

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*Look who's talking: Voices and sources in the news*



# Outline

- About the **CORECON** project;
- Media context: (non)**deliberaton** and the anti-systemic (counter)publics;
- **Recontextualization**: voices and subjectivities given rhetorical salience;
- Study design and sources;
- Selected results, conclusions and further steps;





- CORECON: *The coverage and reception of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Polish, Romanian and English-language media: A **critical discourse study**.*
- Focus on **journalistic practices** as reflected in texts (quantitative & qualitative approach).
- **Recommendations** for journalism training, critical media literacy and information resilience.
- **Polish sub-corpus** of 1.2 million words (Feb 2022-June 2024) from Polish mainstream (80%) and social media (20%).
- **Case study:** Twitter/X @LukaszBok (an influencer specializing in disaster and conflict reporting) and @WarNewsPL (a collective covering the military aspects of geopolitical conflicts).

# MEDIA CONTEXT

Definitions and categories



# Online/social media



- Construction of the **fragmented (non)deliberative public sphere** – alternative/fringe sources, echo-chambers, conflict/hate speech (Filardo-Llamas et al., 2021; Chovanec, 2023).
- **Ritualistic identity** – confirming values and asserting common knowledge (alternative knowledges) (Anderson, 1998; Billig, 1995; Wodak, 2021).
- Performance and **management of conflict and polarization** through discursive strategies of antagonism and agonism (Richardson, 2007; Knoblock, 2020).
- Ideological dimensions in the **Polish media and blogosphere** – liberal/conservative + anti-systemic (counter)publics (Cap, 2022; Deutschmann, 2023).

# Recontextualization: pathway towards salience

- Discourse producers (journalists, influencers, commenters) present **particular representations of social practices** (in tune with their ideological preferences) (van Leeuwen, 2008).
- Such recontextualization may involve highly sophisticated **rhetorical maneuvers**, as well as semantic **deletions, additions** (e.g., repetitions, reactions), **substitutions or rearrangements** (2008: 17-19)
- Some sources and voices, identities and styles, or actions, settings and timings may become **excluded** from the discourse or **transformed**
- Recontextualization may also add elements such as **purposes** and **legitimations** for the actions (2008: vii).

# STUDY DESIGN

Sources, dataset



← WarNewsPL ✓

55.7K posts



**WarNewsPL** ✓

@WarNewsPL1

Bieżące informacje dotyczące światowych konfliktów. 📺 Kanał YouTube 📌  
[youtube.com/@warnewspl](https://youtube.com/@warnewspl) Kontakt: [warnewspl@gmail.com](mailto:warnewspl@gmail.com) Portal:  
[warnewspl.com](https://warnewspl.com)

Translated from Polish by Google

Current information on world conflicts. 📺 YouTube channel 📌 [youtube.com/@warnewspl](https://youtube.com/@warnewspl)  
Contact: [warnewspl@gmail.com](mailto:warnewspl@gmail.com) Portal: [warnewspl.com](https://warnewspl.com)

📁 Media & News 📅 Joined February 2022

1,185 Following 338.4K Followers

← Łukasz Bok ✓

38.4K posts



**Łukasz Bok** ✓

@LukaszBok

Autor KiKŚ. Zainteresowania: Bliski Wschód, sport, żywioły. Tutaj prywatnie.

Translated from Polish by Google

Author KiKŚ. Interests: Middle East, sports, elements. Here privately.

🔗 [facebook.com/KonfliktyPL](https://facebook.com/KonfliktyPL) 🕒 Born March 26 📅 Joined October 2014

418 Following 926.2K Followers

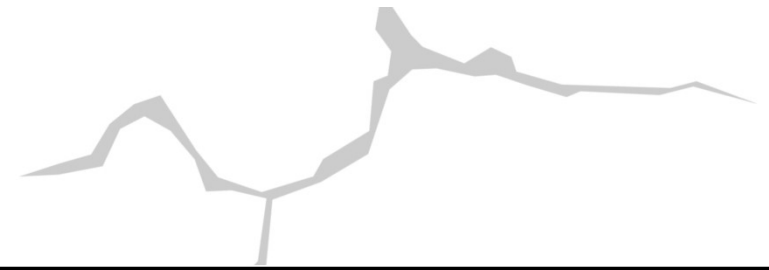


# Dataset compilation

- advanced search tool on X,
- 6 posts per month (February-June 2022), 5 posts per month (July 2022-June 2024)
- retrieved with necessary word (Ukrain\*) and optional words (Russia\*, Kremlin, Putin, Zelensky, war, conflict, operation, attack, military aid, ministry, contract, prime minister, NATO),
- search results screened according to “above the average” engagement, i.e.
  - **over 40,000 views and over 500 reactions for @WarNewsPL (n=151),**
  - over 100,000 views and over 1000 reactions for @LukaszBok (n=153),
- available at <https://corecon.omeka.net/items/browse?collection=5>
- additional compilation of all posts on Ukraine by @LukaszBok in March 2024 (n=33)



# Data



source	@WarNewsPL	@LukaszBok
dataset: broad/focused	151 posts	33 posts
timespan	Feb 2022-June 2024	March 2024
analytic procedure	thematic analysis sources traced and classified automatically	sources traced and classified manually, ideology expressed in comments to 2 top posts (n=137)

# RESULTS

Analysis and examples



# @WarNewsPL Feb 2022-Apr 2023

source	content	mentions
Russian, official	state propaganda justifying the special operation, warnings about the consequences of Sweden and Finland's joining the NATO, reports on Putin's speeches and visits	Putin, Pieskov, Lavrov, Shoigu, Konashenkov, Dugin, Kadyrov, Voroncov, Soloviov
Ukrainian, official, local	details of Russian attacks and Ukrainian defences, focus on casualties and destruction, information about Russian rocket attacks on civilian targets and energy infrastructures	Zelensky, Kuleba, Zaluzhny, Reznikov, Kozicki, Kliczko, Kanal 24
UN/NATO/UK/USA	reports from the front, call for sanctions, analysis of legal and diplomatic implications, intelligence on Russia, military aid	Stoltenberg, Milley, Richard, Austin, Wallace
China	attempts at diplomacy, fighting the sanctions	Xi Jinping, Mao Ning
European (right-wing) political parties	comments to the plans of increase or suspension of military assistance, calling for negotiations	Radew (BL), Fico (SL), Pavel (CZ), Rau (DE), Orban (HU)
Russian, alternative	reports on damage, infighting and sabotage inside of Russia	

# @WarNewsPL May 2023-June 2024

source	content	mentions
Ukrainian, official, local	details of casualties and destruction, successful military actions, Zaporozhia energy infrastructures, comments on the Kherson and Awdiivka battles, Zelensky's appeals	Zelensky, Kuleba, Jusov, Prokopenko, Shmyhal,
Russian, official	recounting the threats toward Poland and the Baltics, accusations of diversion from Ukrainian forces, vilifying the West/NATO,	Putin, Medvediev, Pieskov, Rabiakov, Gladkov, Shoigu
Russian, alternative	local reports of explosions and attacks, Bielogrod offensive	ASTRA
Polish government/army	expressions of solidarity, dealing with the economic issues, dealing with espionage; analysis and warnings about technological capacity	Duda, Tusk, Sikorski, Kukuła, Andrzejczak
NATO/UK/EU	legal issues of use of the weapons provided to Ukraine	Stoltenberg, Kirby
Belarus/the Baltics	border controls, stability, propaganda	Lukashenka, Landsbergis

## @LukaszBok March 2024 (n=33)



1. Indecision regarding **munition deals** for Ukraine that divide Europe (Czechia and Norway *for* vs Germany and Hungary *against*).
  2. Accepting **Sweden** to the NATO.
  3. Diplomatic confusion after Emmanuel **Macron**'s appeal for troop engagement.
  4. Alexei **Navalny**'s funeral.
  5. **Moscow theatre terrorist attack**: Russia and Belarus initially blame
  6. Russian (pseudo)elections and **Putin**'s threatening the NATO after his victory.
  7. Polish **farmers' protests** against the unrestricted influx of uncertified Ukrainian foodstuffs.
  8. Russian **missile** flying over Polish territory.
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# Sources in @LukaszBok (n=33)



Source (attacker)	Source (defender)	Source (interested)
Russian official 7	Ukrainian 5	German 1
Russian – Putin 1	International/EU 3	Hungarian 1
Russian alternative 1	Polish 3	Norwegian 1
Belorussian official 1	Czech 3	American 1
Belorussian – Lukashenka 1	French – Macron 3	The Vatican – Pope 1

## @LukaszBok: top posts



- Chief of Staff of Polish Army, gen. [Wiesław Kukuła](#) warns that Russia is preparing for a conflict with NATO.  
*19 March 2024 – 430,000 views – 96 comments;*
- [Donald Tusk](#): The post-war era is over; we live in a pre-war era. Solidarity between NATO and America is more important than ever.  
*9 March 2024 – 315,900 views – 98 comments;*
- FSB Director: The Moscow attack was inspired by Ukraine, Great Britain and the United States.  
*26 March 2024 – 315,200 views – 278 comments (mostly ridiculing Russian "fairy tales").*



# Comments (n=137) @LukaszBok (2 top posts)

Comments' ideological orientation	%
anti-Polish government	36.5
pro-Polish government	6.5
anti-Russian	9.5
anti-Ukrainian (pro-Russian)	6.0
anti-war/anti-NATO	9.5
personal/humorous/rhetorical	32.0
	(52%) 100,0

# CONCLUSIONS

Analysis and examples



# Polish social media: polarized (non)debate

1. Social media posts showcase sources' ideological positions or **recontextualize original meanings** into rhetorical acts of (de)legitimization.
2. War X accounts allow **silenced non-mainstream voices** and stances to resurface and perform antagonistic/agonistic conflicts.
3. Commenting is used for **ritualistic identity expression** (pro/anti-governmental, pro/anti-Russian/Ukrainian, pro/anti-war)
4. The rise to **salience** of **anti-systemic (counter)public** needs to be traced (52%).
5. Rhetorical **salience** of expression (questions, irony/humor, topoi, cultural references, gifs/memes) needs to be inspected (32%).

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Social media: CORECON2024

