I want to include, I want to modify the text before slide 13, where the scene I want to set is that the modern strategic communicator for the Defence Forces is in an environment that is much more difficult for strategic communication than it had been in basically the lived past. And the reason that that's the case is that while propaganda has always existed through a mixture of misinformation, malinformation, and disinformation, the concept of objective truth existed, so you could say the idea that there were facts still existed. But nowadays we've come through a period, the postmodern period of leftist thinkers who have questioned the idea of objective truths. And that then has weaponized the social media and internet from the misinformation, malinformation, and particularly the disinformation space. And that for that reason, our strategic communicators are living in an environment where basically the trust in journalism is at a low ebb, and I need a citation. If I'm going to say that, I definitely need a citation for that. Trust in journalism is at a low ebb, and the trust in government is at a low ebb. I would need a citation for that, more than one citation. And that then we're coming across internal crises and we're trying to communicate those externally, but the people that we're communicating to don't actually, they don't believe truth. They don't believe that it's coming from the government and it's true, or that even if there is a fact that it is actually a fact that they believe it can be interpreted. And then on top of that, you've got the actors who are weaponizing this, like Russia and China. Can you give me something that would conceptualize all of that succinctly? Of course, the key here is succinctly, and I don't want you to make sure that you're not creating or making up citations.

For the introduction on slide 13:

The modern strategic communicator operates in an environment shaped not only by hostile disinformation but by a deeper cultural shift. Postmodern thinkers like Foucault (1980) and Butler (1990) questioned the existence of objective truth itself, framing knowledge as contingent, discursive, and tied to power. Derrida (1978) pushed further, showing how meaning and truth are always unstable. While propaganda has long existed, this philosophical challenge has made publics more inclined to treat facts as interpretive rather than authoritative. In the social media age, this scepticism has been weaponised by state and non-state actors alike.

(Wike et al., 2017) conducted in 38 countries shows great variation in trust towards government, with the percentage of people trusting their government to do “what is right for the country” ranging from 12 to 89 percent.

We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does. This is from Foucault, Michel (1977). Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Pantheon.

In *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), Foucault makes the point most directly in his essay **“Truth and Power.”**

The key passage is:

*“Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.”* (Foucault, 1980, p. 131)

This is the line most often cited to show that for Foucault, “truth” is not objective but socially/politically produced and maintained.

👉 **Reference (bibliography):**  
Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977.* Edited by C. Gordon. New York: Pantheon.

**In-text citation:**  
(Foucault, 1980, p. 131)

Pluckrose, H. and Lindsay, J. (2020) *Cynical theories: How activist scholarship made everything about race, gender, and identity — and why this harms everybody*. Durham, NC: Pitchstone Publishing. Said that “society is formed by systems of power and hierarchy wherein a dominant culture, such as white western culture, oppresses marginalised cultures using languate and “discourses” to maintain its privilege. … Objective knowledge is impossible. That knowledge is a construct of power.

Robert Dalton (2005) reaches the following conclusion: The phenomenon of declining political trust among the American public has been widely discussed, with the explanations often focusing on specific historical events or the unique problems of American political institutions. We first demonstrate that public doubts about politicians and government are spreading across almost all advanced industrial democracies, and we examine the social correlates of the decrease in trust. We find the greatest declines are among the better-educated and upper social status. These results suggest that changing citizen expectations, rather than the failure of governments, are prompting the erosion of political support in advanced industrial democracies.

In his essay "Do we want trust in government?", Russel Hardin (1999) notes the following with respect to the most appropriate attitude to be adopted by citizens vis-à-vis public institutions: The stance of citizens towards government could, in principle, be one of trust, distrust or lack of either. I wish to pursue the plausibility of supposing that the relevant response …, both rationally and actually, is commonly the lack of either trust or distrust because we typically lack the relevant knowledge for going further than that. …. It may even be true that the conditions for distrust can be met more readily than the conditions for trust. … The easy answer to the question of my title [“do we want trust in government?”] therefore is that, insofar as trust is not possible except by mistake, we do not want it

Given the whole universe of actors in charge of exercising different aspects of the power of the state, it can be posited that some are trustworthy and some are not. However, in most situations, the citizen simply cannot have the necessary information to make an educated guess as to which is which. In fact, if the notion that “power corrupts” is to be believed, it could be assumed that, in governance, untrustworthiness is more likely than trustworthiness, all else being equal. Given this reality, trust in governance actors may not necessarily be a reasonable (or desirable) position (UNDP 2021)

FOR SLIDE 16 and slide 31: The basis of trust Finally, the generation of trust can be seen as the result of different processes: Cognitive A rational process, based on empirical observation Affective An emotional process, rooted in socialization A cognitive process is based on what happens in the real world (even if mediated by subjective factors, as discussed before). An affective process, instead, is based on what an individual has been raised to believe and can be mixed with stereotyping (positive or negative) based on different forms of identity. The relative weight of cognitive and affective drivers of trust is likely to vary significantly across contexts, but it is important to factor this distinction into relevant analyses. (undp 2021)

For the introduction over slide

You could write something like:

**Slide 13 – Introduction (Speaker Notes draft)**

The modern strategic communicator operates in an environment shaped not only by hostile disinformation but by a deeper cultural shift. Postmodern thinkers such as Foucault argue that truth is not discovered but produced within power relations: “each society has its regime of truth” (Foucault, 1980, p. 131; see also Foucault, 1977 [1995], p. 27). Indeed, Derrida (1978) destabilized meaning itself. Pluckrose and Lindsay (2020) critique how this view—that "objective knowledge is impossible" and tied to power hierarchies—has eroded factual authority.

While propaganda has always existedthe idea of a stable factual baseline once persisted. Today, publics are more inclined to treat facts as interpretive rather than authoritative. This scepticism has been amplified by social media, where falsehoods spread faster than corrections (Zannettou et al., 2019; Pennycook & Rand, 2021).

Trust in institutions has simultaneously declined. Cross-national surveys show wide variation in trust in government and media, often at historically low levels (Wike et al., 2017; Dalton, 2005; Reuters Institute & Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, 2025). Scholars note that public doubts have spread across most advanced democracies (Dalton, 2005), while some argue that conditions for distrust are more easily met than for trust itself (Hardin, 1999). UNDP (2021) cautions that citizens often lack the information required to trust rationally, making scepticism the default stance.

For strategic communicators, this means crises are communicated into an environment where journalism is distrusted, governments are met with scepticism, and facts themselves are seen as negotiable. Russia and China exploit these fractures through systematic disinformation (Kragh & Åsberg, 2017; Bachmann et al., 2023). The task of sustaining credibility is therefore more complex than at any time in the lived past.