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MEDIA AND TRUST. ON THE NEED TO SEEK INFORMATION IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY AND ITS SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES. CASE STUDY OF POLAND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Abstract. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused anxiety and uncertainty as to how to function "normally" to take over the place of routine. The greater reliance on social media, the encouraging of beliefs in conspiracy theories have all been linked with lower levels of preventative behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic. The perpetual deluge of (true) information, misinformation and disinformation, whether man-made or bot-made, can be toxic, especially in combination with an unawareness of what news really is and how it affects us, both individually and collectively.

Therefore, the current pandemic is partly a challenge to filter (in real time) the sheer quantity of information published on a daily basis but also the inability of researchers, policy makers, journalists, and ordinary citizens to keep up with quickly changing facts.

I assume that in a situation of uncertainty people seek information in order to make the best decision. Accepted information is an expression of trust in their own sources of information, including trust in scientists and doctors or a lack of trust in government decisions, and a lack of trust in pharmaceutical companies. Political trust received attention during the COVID-19 pandemic. Higher political trust led to higher compliance between behaviour and those government policies implemented to contain pandemics. The research's intent is to illustrate which and how media sources of information constituted resistance to actions taken by state institutions and scientists in a situation of epidemiological emergency.

Keywords: COVID-19, uncertainty, vaccine, trust, media, disinformation.

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1. Introduction

In general, increasing knowledge of natural hazard-related risks ultimately leads to better understanding, improved management, and finally to risk reduction and adaptation.

However, knowledge is unique to an individual person's mind and is often confused with information, which is merely a means of documenting and sharing knowledge. The rapid increase in research-based knowledge has led to an increased fragmentation of knowledge. Knowledge fragmentation has advantages in that it means that advanced, specialised expertise in various fields exists. Additionally, there is the vast knowledge related to the experience of communities, families and individuals that is not always capitalised on. Till this day aspects of the complex interface between information sharing, knowledge-making and decision-making remain unexplored and a better appraisal is needed to effectively integrate information, knowledge, and expertise into efforts regarding mechanisms for positive exchange between science, policy, practice, and the public (Spiekermann et al. 2015). The spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in 2020 heightened uncertainty. The uniqueness of the pandemic situation was the inability to relate to past experience. Additionally, at the beginning of the pandemic, there was a lack of expertise to accurately determine the level of the coronavirus threat and to systemically minimize the risks of illness. The initial pandemic situation can be described as a state of informational uncertainty, that is, a shortage or complete lack of information necessary to take action (Greco, Roger 2001). However, the pandemic has shown that most communities are able and willing to respond drastically to crises during a period when they perceive a high level of threat and when they are supported by institutions in collective action to reduce the threat (Botzen et al. 2021).

The public discourse on the pandemic currently incorporates a panoply of topics including science, public health, social disruptions, political divisions, and the economic fallout: each of which can be a vehicle for misinformation–information that differs from expert consensus at the time it is shared (Schoch-Spana et al. 2021).

The problem is people have become increasingly reliant on social media as credible and useful sources for acquiring all kinds of information, including health knowledge (WHO 2016). In this crowded information landscape, the veracity of information can be difficult to determine and key messages can be lost. Risk perception in the midst of a growing epidemic can be influenced by several factors, including knowledge of the disease, information sources and emotional aspects (Zhong et al. 2021).

While many reasons exist for this flood of misinformation, including the widespread public adoption of social media platforms as a tool for information seeking itself, the uncertain nature around COVID-19 as a novel infectious disease, and the presence of disinformation campaigns aimed at deflecting blame and pushing false narratives around the global COVID-19 response, no easy solutions exist to stem the tide between blind trust and scepticism towards scientific knowledge.

2. Research background and theoretical foundation

Attitudes toward COVID-19 virus containment recommendations have been shaped as a result of varied information. The theoretical basis is the category of trust and uses and gratification theory. A chief tenet of U&G theory of audience behaviour is that media use is selective and motivated by a rational self-awareness of the individual's own needs and an expectation that those needs will be satisfied by particular types of media and content. The use and gratification approach postulates that media outlets compete with other sources of information to satisfy audience needs. A user is an active information seeker if he perceives his knowledge as insufficient. When there is a gap, i.e., a difference between the existing situation and the ideal situation, information seeking serves to minimize uncertainty, to find meaning, and communicating with others constitutes a bridge that connects information gaps, through narratives meaning is made, chaos is ordered, future events are controlled and predicted (Weick 1995). Information seeking in everyday life is all about paying attention to information relevant to the individual. Information is data that has been processed so that it becomes useful in making a decision (Martin, Powell 1992, after: Grabowski, Zając 2009). Making a decision produces specific consequences. The meaning of information is provided with the context and given by the receiver as a result of the observation of the external world. So information depends on the interpretive ability of the receiver. Knowledge, on the other hand, is information verified in practice, empirically verifiable information.

Narratives – individual and shared – are the evolving product of conversations with self and others. In this social practice, what counts are those shared stories that are treated as credible by the other participants. People prioritize credibility over accuracy in the descriptions of events and contexts because an obsession with accuracy seems fruitless and impractical in an ambiguous postmodern world, one saturated with politics and conflicting interests and populated by people of multiple and shifting identities. Kabat-Zinn (2020) shows that what circulates in the news are stories about what happened, i.e., a diversity of narratives that pass for news that are created and influenced by people and organisations with varying agendas. The perpetual deluge of (true) information, misinformation and disinformation, whether man-made or bot-made, can be toxic, especially in combination with an unawareness of what news really is and how it affects us, both individually and collectively.

The recent subject literature has identified explicit concerns about vaccine confidence – such as safety, potential side effects, efficacy, and trust in government, the medical industry and pharmaceutical companies as particular reasons that individuals provide for their uncertainty or unwillingness regarding the COVID-19 vaccination. Some explanation might be that any rapidly evolving situation such as the COVID-19 pandemic is

the rapid rate of new scientific information published and the inability of researchers, policy makers, journalists, and ordinary citizens to keep up with quickly changing facts. In other words, the current pandemic is partly a challenge to filter (in real time) the sheer quantity of information published on a daily basis […]. Even a publication of a clinical study is not the last word and studies may be contradicted or proven wrong. In the early phases of a pandemic, "facts" are perhaps more accurately referred to as "BETs" (best evidence at the time). Facts are sparse and recommendations based on BETs are subject to change. The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated this with examples such as mask-wearing recommendations, use of certain drugs such as hydroxychloroquine, and social distancing or school opening guidelines. The public health and medical evidence also needs to be integrated with economic and political considerations and may be subject to cultural variations and influences (Eysenbach 2020).

COVID-19 renewed long-standing concerns that "a misunderstanding of how science works and/or lead people to ignore scientific advice" (Dieckmann, Johnson 2019) and of engaging in "denigration of scientific expertise and harassment of scientists" (Scientists 2020, after: Friedman, Plumer 2020).

According Eysenbach (2020) "[t]he current infodemic is a crisis to distil the sheer quantity of information, which is occurring on four levels: (1) science, (2) policy and practice, (3) news media, and (4) social media. Disinformation and misinformation are neither new problems nor ones co-emergent with the birth and adoption of social media" (Krause et al. 2019, after: Scheufele et al. 2021).

Misinformation is understood as the unintended false meaning of (true) information. It means that misinformation is false, although it may be believed to be true by those spreading it in good faith. It can also be posted in bad faith, or with a political goal in mind, but still concurrently be credited as true. Misinformation can come in many forms going from so called conspiracy theories to false remedy claims, and may lead to overreaction (e.g., hoarding), under-reaction (e.g. lack of protective measures), and ineffective and potentially harmful actions such as using ineffectual remedies (Glasdam, Stjernswärd 2020).

According to Allington et al. (2021b) the more an individual relied on social media for information on COVID-19, the more likely that individual was to believe conspiracy theories related to COVID-19. Conspiracy theories or conspiracy beliefs are defined as "the tendency to assume that major public events are secretly orchestrated by powerful and malevolent entitles acting in concert" (Douglas et al. 2019, as cited in Allington et al. 2021a). In addition, higher rates of conspiracy beliefs and greater reliance on social media were linked with lower levels of preventative behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic (Morales et al. 2022).

3. Trust in an emergency

According to a nationally representative survey of adults in the United States carried out by the Pew Research Center in 2016, public confidence in the scientific community appears to be relatively strong (Funk 2017). Public trust in scientists as sources of information is generally higher than it is for any of several other groups

in society. Far more people trust medical scientists to provide full and accurate information about the health effects of childhood vaccines than they trust information from pharmaceutical industry leaders, the news media, or elected officials. A year into the pandemic we are more aware, and trust that science is part of the solution (3 M 2021). For 89% science gives hope for the future (vs. 86% in Poland), 91% agree that in order to contain the spread of COVID-19, people's actions should follow scientific evidence/advice (vs. 86% in Poland), 88% agree vaccines are an essential part of how science addresses public health concerns (vs. 77% in Poland).

91% declare "I trust science" (vs. 90% 2020 Pandemic Pulse, 85% 2020 Pre-Pandemic, 87% in 2019, 86% in 2018). 86% trust in scientists (vs. 86% 2020 Pandemic Pulse, 80% 2020 Pre-Pandemic, 81% in 2019, 79% in 2018). Only 35% declare that they believe science aligns with their personal beliefs (vs. 36% 2020 Pandemic Pulse, 42% 2020 Pre-Pandemic, 42% in 2019). In general, in Poland, trust in science is correlated with age and income. Women and men, 50+ with high incomes trust science the most (3 M 2021).

4. Media sources

The reliability of the information obtained, especially in non-standard situations, appears to be a key consideration in making judgments. In terms of media sources, participants tend to consume news from a variety of sources, including traditional news outlets/legacy media (e.g., TV) and digital/social media (e.g., Google, social media platforms, alternative news media).

For 66% of respondents television is the source of information. 45% of respondents look for current information about Poland and the world in social media with the most popular social media platform being Facebook (89%) and YouTube (52%); while third place in terms of popularity was taken by Instagram (35%). Twitter is used by 25% of respondents. SpotData and Provident Polska conducted research on a representative group of adult Internet-using Poles, which shows that as a result of the pandemic as many as 41% of Poles declared that they spend more time online than before the pandemic, including almost every fourth (24%) – much more time. Every third respondent (33%) was more likely to use social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) during the pandemic than before, every tenth respondent (10%) spent less time on them, and almost half (47%) as much as before (Defratyka 2020). Twitter users' interactions with epidemiologists and economists jumped in March and April 2020. One can see a great interest in reports on the development of epidemics and their interpretation by experts. At the same time, the slump in economic activity caused Twitter users to seek interpretations of economic phenomena (Defratyka 2020).

40% declare that they use alternative sources of information. Alternative media are always alternative to something. In this case, these are virtual media,

alternative to mainstream media. Mainstream media transmit officially accepted narratives, spread by state experts and power structures. Therefore, the main aim of alternative media is to produce content that is competitive to mainstream media. What distinguishes them additionally is the specific ideological purpose of their creation and functioning.

Respondents who use alternative sources of information are more susceptible than the general public to false health information. 30% of the Poles surveyed agree with the statement that the COVID-19 pandemic was pre-planned. Only 5% of respondents look for current information about Poland and the world in fact-checking services (Dezinformacja 2022).

Trust in science and the government has been extremely critical during the COVID-19 pandemic (Liang et al. 2020). A higher political trust led to better compliance between behaviour and government policies for pandemic containment (Matsushima et al. 2021). Many governments have introduced various recommendations and restrictions based on the best available scientific evidence, ranging from the use of face masks to strict movement restrictions. As some of these measures entail severe inconvenience for daily activities and an intrusion on individual freedom, achieving a high compliance rate requires that people trust what they are being told. Trust in scientific evidence, the medical community, government actions and policy experts are all crucial for achieving a high degree of adherence to public health instructions. However, a substantial number of people do not trust the government, science in general, or the medical community (O'Shea, Ueda 2021). The research shows that the decision which negatively influenced the level of trust in representatives of authorities and the uniformed services, as well as in Church representatives, was the introduction of "national quarantine" (Zychowicz, Halista-Telus 2021). The mistrust in politicians and science also resulted in vaccine hesitancy (Roberts et al. 2021). Additional factors resulting in vaccine hesitancy, particularly in the U.S., included vaccine safety, vaccine effectiveness, anxiety over potential side effects, and mistrust of the healthcare system and government (Khubchandani et al. 2021; Pogue et al. 2020).

5. Media and attitudes towards vaccination

Newspoint conducted an analysis of publications about vaccines that appeared online between March 2020 and April 2021. Newspoint's media monitoring captured the gradual rise in the popularity of vaccines – from the first reports of ongoing research, through announcements of vaccine invention in late 2020, to a peak of interest in the topic in the first four months of 2021 and a gradual muting from May onwards, when vaccine availability noticeably increased. In terms of online sources for information about vaccines, the largest number of publications came from edited portals (76.59%). Second was Facebook (13.17%) and Twitter (8.32%).

Quite surprising was the prevalence of neutral and positive overtones in posts about vaccines that were published on Facebook and Twitter. This may indicate the existence of a high-profile but low-reach bubble of anti-vaccine circles (Sadowski 2021).

In December 2021, the website www.szczepimysie.pl conducted a sentiment analysis on the topic of vaccination online. The reference "we vaccinate" appeared 32.5 thousand times – a 30% decrease compared to the previous survey (Sentiment Analysis 2021a; Sentiment Analysis 2021b). Almost 27 thousand mentions appeared on social media. Only 16% of these had positive points of view, 47% had negative, although positive mentions had increased and negative decreased compared to the previous period. 75% of the mentions were published on Twitter. #vaccinate and #vaccination appeared 1267 times and #stopsanitariansegregation 767. Among the most active profiles (the highest number of mentions) the first 5 were anti-vaccine profiles. Among the most influential accounts, the first place was taken by a news account (tvn24) encouraging people to vaccinate, while the second and third places were taken by anti-vaccination accounts, including one account of a streamer on twitch.[1]

Research conducted by the Center for Research on Prejudice shows that people who draw information from traditional media were more likely to declare a strong desire to be vaccinated than people who do not use such media at all. At the same time, people who obtain their information about the world from alternative media proved to be less willing to be vaccinated than people who do not use these sources (Soral et al. 2021). Mandatory or voluntary vaccination did not influence the willingness of the respondents to be vaccinated. Vaccine hesitancy was more common among those who frequently use social media and news websites and less common among those who obtain information about the world mainly from traditional media. In the study, it was the youngest and less educated who declared less willingness to be vaccinated – however, the relationship between education and willingness to be vaccinated was not large (Soral et al. 2021).

6. Alternative media as a source of information

Data for this analysis was obtained from sources indicated as alternative media by respondents in the report Dezinformacja oczami Polaków (Dezinformacja 2022). The most frequently consumed alternative media sources, according to the DigitaPoland report (Dezinformacja 2022), include:

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[1] **Twitch** is an American video live streaming service that focuses on video game live streaming, including broadcasts of esports competitions, in addition to offering music broadcasts, creative content, and "in real life" streams. In August 2014 the service was acquired by Amazon. In March 2017, Twitch added an "IRL" category that allows users to stream videos on any topic, not necessarily gaming-related.

- Wolnemedia.net
- Wiesci24.pl
- Wrealu24.tv
- Warszawskagazeta.pl
- Odkrywamyzakryte.pl
- globalna.info.

Of the listed media, only wieści24.pl presents content that is consistent with mainstream recommendations by experts and politicians, although they are generally critical of the government. The most visited portal wolnemedia.net defines its profile with the slogan: *STOP to Mass Manipulation Media!* Most of the materials published on the site are reprinted from other portals. The first video about COVID-19 was published on 12th February of 2020 and has been viewed 646 times. But the conspiracy theories about chips being implanted in people along with vaccines were already appearing in the year before the COVID-19 pandemic was announced. Videos published on YouTube were linked to the content of the article (original source: NaturalNews.com), those videos are no longer available, they were removed by YouTube along with the account they heralded from.

Natural News is one of the Internet's oldest and most prolific sources of health misinformation and conspiracy theories: Natural News is a hub for climate change deniers and anti-vaxxers. While it poses as a news outlet, Natural News is actually a network of sites filled with bylined articles and flanked by ads for survivalist gear and dodgy health cures. The Internet trust tool NewsGuard reports that Natural News "severely violates basic standards of credibility and transparency". Various fact-checking organizations have repeatedly flagged Natural News content as false.[2]

On February 22, 2017, Google delisted about 140,000 pages on Natural News, removing it from search results. It was returned soon after. The following year, on March 3, 2018, YouTube removed Natural News' video channel for terms of service violations, effectively removing its library of videos from the site. The channel was subsequently reinstated and the videos returned. In June 2019, Facebook removed Natural News from its website for violating its policies against spam.[3]

The wolnemedia.net portal also publishes information from www.dailyexpose. uk, which has a YouTube account (2.5 thousand subscribers), publishes on Telegram and gab.com. Gab.com is an American social network launched in 2016 whose users are considered to be extremist. The portal attracts users and groups that have been expelled from other social networks, including neo-Nazis, white supremacists and conspiracy theory enthusiasts.[4]

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[2] https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/6/25/21293246/facebook-misinformation-natural-news-conspiracy-theory (accessed: 15.03.2022).

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_News (accessed: 15.03.2022).

[4] https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gab (accessed: 15.03.2022).

One of many things we can read at www.dailyexpose.uk:

> It must become clear to everyone that Pathogens and Putin are not a threat to mankind's existence – while parasites in human form are – and that a new Dark Age is imminent if they continue believing the government propaganda and behaving like everything it decrees is perfectly normal.[5]

The Bibuła portal is the most frequent source of information on Robert Malone. Published, and then made available by the website www.wolnemedia.net on its pages, was, among other things, a text entitled: "The Lancet: *Vaccinated people more vulnerable to various diseases than unvaccinated*".[6] And it describes: Vaccine Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome – VAIDS. However, the article lacks a link to the original article, or even bibliographic data. The syndrome described has been identified by experts as fake news.[7]

What should be emphasized is the ability of new media to link. Wolnemedia.net, as the final recipient of information, makes the message credible by pointing to its source. By going to the source we find a link to another source. In this way we reach the original source: https://ru.journal-neo.org/; pl.SputnikNews.com.

Other sources of information about the pandemic and vaccinations are goniec.net, a weekly produced by Polish Canadians, and Liberty.News, with a national Catholic profile.

The wRealu24 television station was founded in 2015. The goal of the founders was to create an independent television with exclusively Polish capital. They declare: "We reliably present the most important information from the country and the world, especially that which is inconvenient and often even silent by the mainstream media".[8] Initially, it posted videos on YouTube, which was blocked by YouTube in August 2019.[9] The channel is a television channel and has its own productions. It sets the tone by selecting commentators and experts who doubt the existence of the pandemic, referred to thes "plandemic" on air. The main topic, though not exclusively, is the criticized economic lockdown.[10] TV wRealu24 has channels on https://twitter.com/wrealu24_pl, Facebook, YouTube. In 2020, YouTube stopped the wRealu24 channel from publishing new content for a week and removed material about the epidemic, citing the "false medical information" contained in it, as the reason.

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[5] https://dailyexpose.uk/2022/03/02/covid-putin-no-threat-to-freedom-gates-trudeau-are/ (accessed: 15.03.2022).

[6] https://www.bibula.com/?p=129732 (accessed: 15.03.2022).

[7] https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-vaids-fakes-idUSL1N2UM1C7 (accessed: 15.03.2022).

[8] https://wrealu24.tv/o_nas (accessed: 15.03.2022).

[9] https://www.wirtualnemedia.pl/artykul/wrealu24-tv-usuniety-z-youtube-za-mowe-nienawisci-marcin-rola-zyjemy-w-czasach-pelzajacego-totalitaryzmu (accessed: 15.03.2022).

[10] https://spidersweb.pl/rozrywka/2020/12/15/wrealu24-marcin-rola-youtube-ban-covid (accessed: 15.03.2022).

The most popular video on YouTube is "Braun Reveals Shocking FACTS About COVID-19 Vaccination in Poland! New MEGA financial scandal?" The video has been viewed 235k, has 17k likes and almost 2k comments. The channel was tagged by Google with the information: "Covid-19 – Check out MZ's updates on Covid-19". On Twitter, the TV channel encourages people to watch the videos on the Banbye channel, its own media platform, which has 12,000 subscribers. The Banbye channel has been dubbed the Polish YouTube by its creators, and the creators themselves explain the initiative this way: "The spark that brought our initiative to life was the widespread blocking by BIG TECH of »unwise« channels in all major social media. We too have become a victim of this ruthless censorship!".

The portal www.OdkrywamyZakryte.pl, as reported by the authors, is censored on Google and Facebook "because we are not funded by the government to publish lies and propaganda". The portal publishes on Telegram messenger. The published content is closer to a tabloid than a serious news portal. Example titles include: "Austrian brothel offers vouchers for services in exchange for Covid vaccinations", or "New Zealand pays doctors to euthanize Covid patients", and "Bill Gates and George Soros quietly join forces to control the Covid industry". The site's first post about vaccine harm and fake pandemics was published in 2017. Underneath the article is an update: "The fake coronavirus pandemic was not triggered without purpose. Scientists observing the growing public health crisis following the launch of a commercial 5G network immediately found a Plan B to cover up people's reaction to the new technology".[11]

The publications are unsigned and do not cite sources for the information presented. It is unclear whether they are the property of the site's editorial team or from outside sources.

7. Conclusion

The uncertainty that has surrounded humanity since the global announcement of the coronavirus pandemic has contributed to the production of an excess of information, including false information. The dissemination of false information was aided by reports of further waves of the pandemic and increasing numbers of deaths. The initial uncertainty resulting from the lack of information increased confidence in science and scientists as potentially being capable of ending the pandemic. In a short time, the production of false information flooded the Internet, making the selection of true information from disinformation downright impossible. Research reports, which were often contradictory and data selectively used by those questioning the pandemic, also contributed to a decline in trust in scientists and a decrease in willingness to comply. This fostered the development of conspiracy

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[11] https://www.odkrywamyzakryte.com/grypa-hiszpanka/ (accessed: 15.03.2022).

theories and strengthened the anti-Covid movement. A disturbing trend in medical misinformation in 2021, one at the same time lowering trust in medical professionals, was the actions of groups, associations, or societies of scientists and physicians presenting themselves as "independent" and proclaiming scientifically unproven theories about the pandemic and vaccination. Not only do its members reproduce false theses spread abroad, but the association's social media profiles publish new, sensational, mostly scientifically unsubstantiated or simply false data on the pandemic and especially on vaccinations and here on a daily basis.

There is a significant relationship between beliefs about the pandemic and media consumption. Media consumption is correlated with age and these two variables, age and source of information, influence the evaluation of the pandemic and the adherence or rejection of epidemiological recommendations. The role of tracking false information has been taken on by fact checking organizations, and social media platform owners are actively involved in labelling information as false or blocking user accounts. For those spreading false claims, such actions are evidence of censorship and the existence of a transnational conspiracy.

Aversion and distrust of political power is positively correlated with the movement known as "Stop Sanitary Segregation".

An analysis of the content of the so-called alternative media has revealed that anti-vaccine content was present within them long before the coronavirus pandemic itself. The recipients of alternative media often belong to well-defined subcultures, whose members share certain values and whose worldviews are at least similar. The motivation for alternative media creators is not only to provide information to audience, with a certain worldview profile, but also (and sometimes above all) to confirm the validity of shared views and values, to strengthen and broaden the ranges, in order to reach new recipients and there by strengthen and confirm the postulated attitudes, norms and values. Creators and recipients are united by distrust towards information provided by official media and power structures, as well as almost complete negation of the authority of science and scientists themselves, especially medics, epidemiologists, virologists and vaccine manufacturers.

However, while in 2020 disinformation about the fact that vaccines contain, for example, toxins or chips was spread, in 2021, when the campaign promoting vaccinations began, theses about the ineffectiveness and harmfulness of vaccinations had started to spread. As Dariusz Jemielniak believes, this disinformation is scientifically unverifiable, because it refers to the future, and at the same time evokes strong fear emotions (proclaiming, for example, that vaccinations are an experiment, vaccinations serve to exterminate the population).[12]

The analysis of the Internet indicates the marginality of information questioning the pandemic or spreading conspiracy theories about it, although at the same time

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[12] https://konkret24.tvn24.pl/swiat,109/trendy-w-dezinformacji-2021-roku-jak-przekroczono-kolejne-granice,1089944.html (accessed: 15.03.2022).

they have great power to activate the Internet community. Similarities in the sources of this information are worth noting. Most often, these are portals or individuals attributing values to themselves: patriotism, nation, Catholicism, independence. The identity of the original source is often softened by the supply chain mechanism. The stripping away of intermediaries leads us to the original source, which usually turns out to be an extremist broadcaster or a pro-Russian one.

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MEDIA I ZAUFANIE. O POTRZEBIE POSZUKIWANIA INFORMACJI W CZASACH NIEPEWNOŚCI I JEJ SPOŁECZNYCH KONSEKWENCJACH. PRZYPADEK POLSKI W CZASIE PANDEMII WIRUSA COVID-19

Abstrakt. Pandemia COVID-19 wywołała niepokój i niepewność co do tego, jak funkcjonować normalnie. Luka informacyjna skłoniła ludzi do szukania rozwiązania w mediach, także społecznościowych. Z kolei poleganie na tych ostatnich zwiększa prawdopodobieństwo wiary w teorie spiskowe. Wszystkie te czynniki zostały powiązane z niższym poziomem zachowań zapobiegawczych podczas pandemii COVID-19. Nieustanny zalew (prawdziwych) informacji, dezinformacji i błędnych informacji, czy to wytworzonych przez człowieka, czy przez boty, może być toksyczny, zwłaszcza w połączeniu z nieświadomością tego, czym naprawdę są wiadomości i jak na nas wpływają, zarówno indywidualnie, jak i zbiorowo.

Dlatego obecna pandemia jest po części wyzwaniem związanym z filtrowaniem (w czasie rzeczywistym) ogromnej ilości informacji publikowanych codziennie, ale także niezdolnością badaczy, decydentów, dziennikarzy i zwykłych obywateli do nadążania za szybko zmieniającymi się faktami.

Zakładam, że w sytuacji niepewności ludzie poszukują informacji, aby podjąć najlepszą decyzję. Przyjmowanie informacji jest wyrazem zaufania do własnych źródeł informacji, w tym zaufania do naukowców i lekarzy lub braku zaufania do decyzji rządowych, a także braku zaufania do firm farmaceutycznych. Większe zaufanie polityczne prowadziło do większej zgodności zachowań z polityką rządu wdrażaną w celu powstrzymania pandemii. Celem artykułu jest pokazanie, które medialne źródła informacji i w jaki sposób stawiały opór wobec działań podejmowanych przez instytucje państwowe i naukowców w sytuacji zagrożenia epidemiologicznego.

Słowa kluczowe: COVID-19, niepewność, szczepienia, zaufanie, media, dezinformacja.