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Platformisation of Cultural and Audio-Visual Sectors in the European Union: New Policies for New Stakeholders

Jaka Primorac, **Paško Bilić**, **Aleksandra Uzelac**

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PLATFORMISATION OF

CULTURAL AND AUDIO-VISUAL

SECTORS IN THE EUROPEAN

UNION: NEW POLICIES FOR

NEW STAKEHOLDERS

PLATFORMIZACIJA KULTURNOG

I AUDIO-VIZUALNOG SEKTORA

U EUROPSKOJ UNIJI: NOVE

POLITIKE ZA NOVE DIONIKE

PLATFORMISATION OF CULTURAL AND AUDIO-VISUAL SECTORS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: NEW POLICIES FOR NEW STAKEHOLDERS

Jaka Primorac :: Paško Bilić :: Aleksandra Uzelac

ABSTRACT *This introductory article provides contextual framing for the contributions to the special issue dedicated to the analysis of the impact of the European Union policies dealing with online platforms that are influencing cultural and audio-visual sectors. This special issue gathers interdisciplinary approaches and diverse contributions highlighting the cultural and audio-visual production within the EU policy framework. The contributions show, both, explicit and implicit influence of EU policy instruments and policy-making as well as policy implementation lag concerning cultural diversity provisions and compliance with advertising regulations on the protection of minors on online platforms. Furthermore, they signal the explicit and implicit impact of the streaming platforms on the local audio-visual production in a small-size European country, as well as local responses to them. The contributions show that there is a need not only for further policy instruments in this field but also for more thorough research in this complex field of contemporary culture.*

KEYWORDS

CULTURAL SECTOR, AUDIO-VISUAL SECTOR, ONLINE PLATFORMS, CULTURAL POLICY, MEDIA POLICY, EUROPEAN UNION

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EUROPEAN UNION POLICIES AND THE PLATFORMISATION OF CULTURAL AND AUDIO-VISUAL SECTORS

Researching and writing about online platforms can sometimes be likened to trying to hit the moving target. The changes are occurring very fast and while trying to grasp the complex processes in front of us, the burgeoning literature, research, and data seem overwhelming. This fluidity is especially relevant when researching policies, strategies, and regulatory instruments related to the workings of diverse online platforms, whether they are centred on transport and education or food delivery. It can be said that this difficulty in grasping the current state of practice is even more pronounced in the context of cultural and audio-visual sectors resulting from their continuous role as double agents in (especially EU) policy discourse and practice – being both the agent of the public good and the agent of the industry. For a brief moment in time, it seemed that COVID-19 would tilt the scales of the cultural and audio-visual sectors' position in EU public policy towards the former one. Recent developments, however, seem to show that we are getting back to business as usual. In the current post-pandemic, precarious, global, social, economic, and environmental situation with the War in Ukraine still ongoing, the cultural and audio-visual sectors in Europe are again trying to balance the public good role and the industry-driver role. This role-balancing (policy) process took on a new dimension due to the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on the European cultural and audio-visual sectors (online) production and distribution showing the fragility of the sectors (e.g., OECD 2020; Polivtseva, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). It amplified citizens' usage of online platforms, both for work and leisure. In such a context, the discussion on the European Union policies connected to online platforms was deemed ever more important by a number of researchers and policymakers. Even before the pandemic's beginning, when we started our "European Union Policies and the Platformisation of Cultural and Audio-visual Sectors – platEU" project, the importance and need of opening discussion and undertaking more intense research on these issues was evident.

Recent research has shown the different ways in which online platforms impact the cultural and audio-visual sectors (Alacovska et al., 2022; Hesmondhalgh, 2022; Vlassis, 2020, 2021). Echoing work done by Helmond (2015), the authors such as Poell et al. (2022) stress that in such a context we can talk about the processes of platformisation. In the context of cultural production, they define platformisation as "the penetration of digital platforms' economic, infrastructural, and governmental extensions into cultural industries, as well as organisation of cultural practices of labour, creativity, and democracy around these platforms" (Poell et al., 2022, p. 5). They note the importance of the issue of platform governance as a point of departure in the context of transnational platform companies being global rather than local content standards setters. One of the main aims of this special issue was to open the discussion on the processes of platformisation more broadly, which implies the following: researching the role of European Union policies on online platforms that affect the supply and demand of cultural and audio-visual production; arguing on the two-fold impact of online platforms on the broader cultural and audio-visual sector; considering the agency not only of policy-makers, but also

producers, users, and other participants involved in the changing role of online platforms and their governance and regulation.

However, this is a difficult task, as the changes happening on and through online platforms are occurring very fast, while there is scarcity of platforms' socially responsible behaviour that takes into account the issues of cultural diversity, media pluralism, etc. Only a decade ago, the issue of regulating online platforms was approached as an insurmountable task and was viewed as a 'mission impossible', and even dismissed as a utopian idea. At that time, it was difficult to talk about the regulation of online platforms due to the prevalent discourse of the 'untouchable' tech giants' platforms. Therefore, few researchers approached critically these issues (e.g., Scholtz & Schneider (Eds.) 2016; Srnicek, 2017). However, it can be said that nowadays regulation and governance of digital technologies are high not only on the research agenda (Flew, 2022), but also on the (European Union) policy agenda. Platforms capture the attention of policymakers due to their dependence on user data, impacts on traditional cultural and audio-visual supply and demand, transnational reach, and excessive concentration of power. Academic approaches focusing on different facets of platforms have been many, whether we are speaking of the politics of platforms (Gillespie, 2010), platform imperialism (Jin, 2015), platforms of power (Mansell, 2015), platform capitalism (Srnicek, 2017), or discussing platform competition in two-sided markets (Rochet & Tirole, 2003). The ubiquity of online platforms in our daily lives prompted some authors to even talk about the rise of the platform society (van Dijck et al., 2018) and, within that context, the level of digital inequalities in access and skills needs to be taken into account. Moreover, the structural implications of supply of the European cultural and audio-visual products via platforms also need to be addressed, which is especially important in the context of dynamic platform infrastructures (Duffy et al., 2019).

The European Union has been active in this respect (e.g., Evens & Donders, 2018; Evens et al., 2020), particularly with regard to developing strategic goals. The key example is the Digital Single Market (DSM) Strategy which has been one of the priorities of the former but also the current European Commission's objectives. While on the one hand, the fact that small and medium size platforms can contribute to the growth of skills and jobs in the European Union was lauded, on the other hand, the domination of large, mainly US, businesses and platforms (e.g., Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple, Microsoft, Netflix) opened up questions related to European identity, European integration objectives and the role the EU plays in the globalized world (Vlassis, 2020, 2021). Both issues present a recurring theme within the development of European media policies, particularly when it comes to balancing industrial and competitive goals with cultural and public service goals (e.g., Michalis, 2014; Murdock, 2014). Such balancing act continues to be the main policy axis of the EU in relation to cultural and audio-visual sectors, which is evident in the new EU Digital Services Act package, which includes the Digital Services Act (COM 2020/825) and the Digital Markets Act (COM 2020/842), the transposition of the reviewed Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) from 2018, and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (Regulation (EU) 2021/241). EU policy has also moved beyond goal setting as the

example of GDPR shows that Europe is “a de facto global regulator for privacy” (Komaitis, 2018, as cited in: Flew, 2022). Nonetheless, the future impact of these and other policies remains to be tested and verified.

CONTENT OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

Considering all of these processes, this special issue unpacks the social, political and economic dimensions of platformisation, while trying to move beyond deterministic usage of the term. The call for papers included a number of questions. How can we interpret changes in European Union policies relating to online platforms and cultural and audio-visual sectors? How well, if at all, are they challenging US platform monopolies? How are they balancing market competition with cultural diversity and pluralism? What new stakeholders are emerging and what new policies are drafted/created? How do cultural content producers grapple with changes in platform governance (e.g., pricing strategies, content curation, privacy policies)? What are the implications for produced and distributed content? What new types of creative labour practices are brought about by online platforms and how can we best analyse the policies developed to mitigate these changes? We are very thankful to our contributors who provided us with their answers to some of these questions and who prepared the ground for new ones to emerge.

In the first contribution to the special issue, Lilian Hanania addresses the risks and opportunities for cultural diversity resulting from platforms’ personalization tools. The contribution is based on a legal analysis of the main provisions of the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on consumer profiling and automated decisions, as well as a sample of data protection policies of selected streaming platforms. Hanania shows how data protection policies may in practice affect the protection of consumers’ personal data for the purpose of recommending personalised audio-visual and music content online. She shows how such provisions relate to the discoverability of a diversified cultural offer online and, at the European level, the obligation for platforms to give prominence to European works in their catalogues. In her concluding remarks, echoing the results of her analysis, Hanania shows that there is still a lot to be done in order to improve the transparency of personalisation algorithms and to provide users with better control of their data, as required by the GDPR.

The issue of cultural diversity in the context of online platforms is also tackled in the contribution by Karolína Vodičková who provides a detailed analysis of the impact of the global video-on-demand (VOD) services on national audio-visual production in the Czech Republic. The emphasis of the paper is on the changes occurring within television production as the audience is migrating towards the digital environment. Vodičková shows that this is perceived as an opportunity for television to appear more competitive while drawing on its unique knowledge of the national audience. The case study demonstrates how the audio-visual industry in the Czech Republic is an example of a strong national market whose evolution is impacted by the presence of global platforms such as

Netflix and HBO Max. By providing examples from the Czech platforms' market, the case study illustrates the expansion of the local broadcasting providers into the digital sphere through their own platforms and content. In her paper, Vodičková shows the direct and indirect impact of the streaming platforms on the local audio-visual market, as well as the local policies' response to them. Both the national public service broadcaster and commercial broadcasters found their ways of responding to the entrance of the global streaming giants. European Union policies have a share in this response, but the specificity of the national audio-visual market with a large share of the local audience, and high local production prove to be an important part of the cultural diversity argumentation and a basis for further policy development.

The contribution by Esther Martínez Pastor, Rodrigo Cetina Presuel, and Isabel Serrano Maíllo is a comparative study of compliance with advertising regulations related to content created by or aimed at underage people on YouTube in three countries – the United States, the United Kingdom, and Spain. The authors conducted a content analysis on a sample of 463 videos selected from children's YouTubers' channels that appeared in the top 15 positions of the Social Blade ranking and that were published in the period between 2016 and 2020. Martínez Pastor et al. seek to determine if videos disclose whether they contain commercial content and whether this is done in accordance with the current regulations. In addition, they explore whether personal data are requested for promotional purposes. The research data show that, although in all the researched countries there is a plethora of regulations in relation to the protection of personal data of children online and in relation to the protection of children from commercial content, it is not a common practice to disclose that content is commercial in nature in the researched videos. This echoes our first contribution in the special issue on the policy implementation gap on different instruments, not only in European Union but also globally.

Although representing a small segment of the platform regulation complexity, this special issue gathered interdisciplinary approaches that brought together diverse contributions highlighting the EU policy framework within which cultural and audio-visual production functions. The contributions show the explicit and implicit influence of EU policy instruments, as well as the fact that policy making and policy implementation still needs further development in certain areas. The authors in this special issue show that this is evident in terms of ensuring and enabling cultural diversity provisions, compliance with advertising regulations regarding the protection of minors on online platforms, and the explicit and implicit impact of the streaming platforms on local audio-visual production in a small-size European country. Contributions show that there is a need not only for further policy instruments in this field but also for more thorough research in this very complex field of contemporary culture. The complexity of this field is also evident in the selection of the reviews of the newly published research that is available in the reviews section of this special issue, representing some of the key issues in this burgeoning area of research.

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Disclaimer

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PLATFORMIZACIJA KULTURNOG I AUDIOVIZUALNOG SEKTORA U EUROPSKOJ UNIJI: NOVE POLITIKE ZA NOVE DIONIKE

Jaka Primorac :: Paško Bilić :: Aleksandra Uzelac

SAŽETAK *Ovaj uvodni članak daje kontekstualni okvir priložima u ovom broju posvećenom analizi utjecaja javnih politika Europske unije koje se bave online platformama koje djeluju na kulturni i audiovizualni sektor. Ovaj tematski broj časopisa okupio je autore iz različitih disciplina koji se bave pitanjima kulturne i audiovizualne proizvodnje unutar okvira javnih politika Europske unije. Prilozi u ovom broju ukazuju na eksplicitan i implicitan utjecaj javnopolitičkih instrumenata Europske unije, kao i na određeno zaostajanje u kreiranju i provedbi politika u pogledu odredbi o kulturnoj raznolikosti i usklađenosti regulacije oglašavanja kako bi se zaštitili maloljetnici na internetskim platformama. Također ukazuju na eksplicitan i implicitan utjecaj streaming platformi na audiovizualnu proizvodnju u jednoj europskoj zemlji, kao i na lokalne reakcije na njih. Članci pokazuju da postoji potreba ne samo za daljnjim javnopolitičkim instrumentima u tom području već i za detaljnijim istraživanjima u tom složenom području suvremene kulture.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

KULTURNI SEKTOR, AUDIOVIZUALNI SEKTOR, ONLINE PLATFORME, KULTURNA POLITIKA, MEDIJSKA POLITIKA, EUROPSKA UNIJA

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STREAMING PLATFORMS AND PROFILING – RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DISCOVERABILITY OF DIVERSIFIED CULTURAL CONTENT

Lilian Richieri Hanania

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ABSTRACT *This contribution aims to address risks and opportunities for cultural diversity resulting from platforms' personalisation tools based on a legal analysis of the main provisions of the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on consumer profiling and automated decisions, as well as a sample of data protection policies of selected streaming platforms. It examines how the latter may in practice affect the protection of consumers' personal data for the purpose of recommending personalised audio-visual and music content online and how such provisions relate to the discoverability of a diversified cultural offer online and, at the European level, the obligation for platforms to give prominence to European works in their catalogues. The paper shows that a lot may still be done to improve the transparency of algorithms used for personalisation purposes and to provide users with greater control of their data, as required by the GDPR.*

KEY WORDS

CULTURAL DIVERSITY, GDPR, PROFILING, AUTOMATED DECISIONS,
PERSONALISATION, DISCOVERABILITY

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INTRODUCTION

In order to determine the personalised content recommendations that are considered to reflect users' preferences, and that are put forward to each user when they connect to their account, audio-visual streaming platforms process users' data. Through the exclusive application of recommendation algorithms (and, therefore, without human intervention), audio-visual and music streaming platforms personalise the homepage of each user as part of their services. While personalisation responds to the need to filter an increasing volume of information and content that may sometimes be overwhelming for users, the lack of human intervention in the personalisation process makes such process opaque and not easily understandable by most users.

In addition, such personalisation decisions made by platforms may have significant effects on users from a cultural diversity standpoint (Richieri Hanania & Norodom, 2016), "cultural diversity" being understood as "the manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression", in accordance with Article 4.1 of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Usually based on previously expressed preferences of content, personalisation algorithms tend to lock users into their earlier choices, sometimes perpetuating stereotypes and the polarisation of views (see, for instance, Burri, 2016), and also preventing users from discovering new and culturally diverse content which reflects the cultural richness of our planet.

This paper aims to analyse, from a legal perspective, four global streaming platforms' automated personalised recommendation systems and their data privacy policies in light of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC ("General Data Protection Regulation", hereinafter "GDPR"). In line with Article 288 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the GDPR, as a European Union (EU) Regulation, is directly applicable in all EU Member States. It applies to the processing of personal data of data subjects in the EU, even if the processing does not take place in the EU (Article 3 of the GDPR). The streaming platforms analysed in this paper were selected due to their global reach and relevance in the EU market. Since they process personal data of users established in the EU, they are subject to the GDPR and have adapted their privacy policies to comply with this Regulation.

This paper inquires into the way personalised recommendations by such platforms may affect the protection of users' personal data, as well as users' online content consumption and their "discoverability" of diverse online cultural content, understood as the easiness for users to come across new and diverse content amidst the tremendous amount of content available online. The discoverability of diverse cultural content online implies not only that diverse content is made available (diversity in supply), but also that users are able to effortlessly access such content (diversity in consumption) (see, for instance, Burri, 2016; Ochai, 2022, p. 115; Richieri Hanania & Norodom, 2016).

From a legal assessment viewpoint, the GDPR provides a protective framework for the processing of personal data that allow for the creation of profiles to better understand the personality, habits, and consumer preferences or, more generally, the behaviour of consumers. Article 4.2 of the GDPR defines largely the “processing” of personal data as

any operation or set of operations which is performed upon personal data or sets of personal data, whether or not by automatic means, such as collection, recording, organisation, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, restriction, erasure or destruction.

Profiling is specifically defined in Article 4.4 of the GDPR as referring to:

any form of automated processing of personal data consisting of the use of personal data to evaluate certain personal aspects relating to a natural person, in particular to analyse or predict aspects concerning that natural person's performance at work, economic situation, health, personal preferences, interests, reliability, behaviour, location or movements.

Through profiling, an individualised profile is constructed on the basis of the personal data collected on a person. This may be done by a fully automated decision, or through a partially automated decision, when the latter is also accompanied by human intervention. Since the evaluation of certain personal data is part of the very definition of profiling, it requires that a certain judgement be applied to a person, i.e., that the data collected are used to draw conclusions about that person, whether to make a decision about him or her or not.

Useful clarification on the legal regime applicable to profiling may be found in the guidance on profiling and automated decision-making by the “Article 29 Data Protection Working Party” established by Article 29 of Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. This advisory and independent group adopted “Guidelines on Automated individual decision-making and Profiling for the purposes of Regulation 2016/679” on 3 October 2017 as part of its work on the implementation of the GDPR and such guidance was subsequently revised and adopted on 6 February 2018. The Working Party explains profiling as “a procedure which may involve a series of statistical deductions. It is often used to make predictions about people, using data from various sources to infer something about an individual, based on the qualities of others who appear statistically similar.” (Article 29 Data Protection Working Party, 2018, p. 7).

By setting out obligations for companies using profiling tools, on the one hand, and specific rights for the individuals whose personal data are used for profiling purposes, on the other, the GDPR aims to limit the risks arising from erroneous analysis of personal data

by automated profiling mechanisms. It considers that the risks resulting from profiling are increased when decisions are fully automated, i.e., when they are exclusively made by algorithms applied to collected personal data without the involvement of any human intervention in such a process. Therefore, it provides for a set of rules applicable to profiling and automated decisions, which are supplemented by specific provisions when these decisions are exclusively automated. The main objective is to ensure that neither the decisions made as a result of automated processing or profiling, nor the collection of data for the creation of profiles and the application of these profiles to individuals, have an unjustified impact on users' rights.

This paper examines, from a legal standpoint, the main provisions of the GDPR on consumer profiling and automated decisions, as well as a sample of data protection policies from selected streaming platforms, in order to provide a legal opinion on how these policies affect in practice the use of consumers' personal data for the purpose of recommending personalised audio-visual content online. It then examines how such obligations relate to the discoverability of a diversified cultural offer online, and notably to the obligation for platforms targeting European users to give prominence to European works in their catalogues in accordance with the revised Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audio-visual media services ("Audio-visual Media Services Directive", hereinafter "AVMSD"), in order to address the risks and opportunities of platforms' profiling tools as regards cultural diversity.

PROFILING AND DATA PRIVACY PROVISIONS

Profiling is at the heart of the services provided by audio-visual and music streaming platforms. Receiving well-selected personalised music or audio-visual content is part of users' expectations when they subscribe to the services offered by streaming platforms. Yet, this entails several obligations for such platforms from a data privacy perspective, as a reflection of important users' rights that should not be overlooked.

Platforms' obligations with respect to profiling

The principles of Article 5 of the GDPR are applicable to streaming platforms as to any other personal data controller. First, the principle of transparency of data processing acquires particular importance in the case of profiling, which is a rather complex process that is often invisible and hardly understood by most users. Like other data controllers, streaming platforms must provide their users with concise, transparent, intelligible, and easily accessible information on what data are collected, how they are processed, what automated mechanisms are applied, according to what underlying logic and with what consequences, including profiling and decisions made on the basis of the profile created (e.g., the proposal of personalised content recommendations).

Other principles applicable under the GDPR include the lawfulness and fairness of data processing (e.g., data processing, including for profiling purposes, must not create discrimination), as well as purpose limitation (e.g., profiling must not use data originally collected for other purposes not initially intended by users). Data processing is lawful only if it is consented to for specific purposes. Another applicable principle is that of data minimisation (data processed must be adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary to achieve the consented purposes). Users must be clearly informed of the reasons for the collection of their data and the data must be processed, as much as possible, in an aggregated, anonymised or – if sufficient protection is provided – pseudonymised manner, when profiling takes place.

The data collected for profiling must also be accurate, or else they may lead to erroneous predictions or conclusions about a user's behaviour or preferences. Processing itself for profiling purposes seems particularly prone to error, since it involves inferences, data taken out of context and combined to produce predictions. Attention must, therefore, be paid not only to the accuracy of the data used, but also to any hidden biases that may apply when algorithms process that data, which may naturally result from the fundamentally human perception of the data scientists who create those algorithms. This increases the importance of the information that needs to be provided to users, in order to allow them to correct and/or to improve the quality of the data collected, even and especially when it is collected indirectly. Similarly, the processed personal data are subject to a principle of limited retention and may, therefore, only be kept for as long as necessary for the intended purposes, even though this may counter the economic interests of the platform, since the machine learning process is essentially enriched by a continuously growing volume of data.

The obligation to inform users must apply when a user subscribes to or creates an account to use an audio-visual or music streaming platform offering personalised recommendations, but also when the platform's privacy policies are updated, and at any other time upon the user's request. As an example, Google states that "[i]f changes [to the privacy policy] are significant, we'll provide a more prominent notice (including, for certain services, email notification of Privacy Policy changes)." (Google, 2022b). Similarly, for Netflix, a notice is provided to users in case of a change in Netflix's Privacy Statement, and the continued use of the services after such a notification constitutes the acknowledgment and acceptance of the new terms. If a user does not wish to accept such updates to the privacy policy, the only option is to cancel the use of the services (Netflix, 2021). Regarding changes to the rules on the protection of personal data, Disney+ indicates that users will be notified of such changes "if these changes are material" (which remains open to discussion) and users' consent will be sought "where required by applicable law" (Disney+, 2021).

Automated processing of data for profiling purposes depends on the informed consent of the user and the data controller must be able to demonstrate that the user understands exactly what they are consenting to. Arguably, a high degree of transparency of the criteria used by the algorithms and applied to the data collected by streaming

platforms is therefore required. This does not imply that streaming platforms should provide a complex explanation or full disclosure of the algorithms used – which most people would probably not be able to understand in any case, since algorithms have become increasingly complex. Nevertheless, what the data scientists take into account when programming algorithms (including the categories and segments used to define users' profiles) must be translated into a simple and intelligible form for users.

Such high level of transparency and information still seems to be insufficiently respected by the sample of streaming platforms whose privacy policies have been analysed for this contribution (Netflix, YouTube, Disney+ and Spotify), despite some manifest improvement in the last year. To start with, these policies are far from concise and generally difficult to understand for a user without any legal training. Among the four platforms, Google (YouTube) stands out for its efforts to simplify explanation, with the use of entertaining videos and easier-to-read text presentation, although the text remains long, scattered across a multitude of different and sometimes complex-to-navigate sites.

As an illustration, from the Google Privacy Policy webpage (Google, 2022b), a user may choose to do a "Privacy Check-up" which takes him or her to another page that allows, among other things, to manage the user's "YouTube History". The user may choose to save (or not) the YouTube videos he or she watches, as well as the terms searched for on YouTube, in order to have recommendations and be reminded of where he/she left off. The Google Privacy Policy also contains short videos that explain what information is collected and why (including, *inter alia*, the personalisation of content and advertising), as well as the technologies used to collect and store information (e.g., cookies, pixel tags, web browser storage, application data caches, databases, server log files). Information on some of the criteria used by YouTube's recommendation algorithms was recently added to Google's Privacy Policy, with the explicit exclusion of "sensitive categories, such as race, religion, sexual orientation, or health" from the criteria used for the personalisation of advertising (Google, 2022b). The same is not stated regarding content recommendations though.

Netflix's Privacy Statement (Netflix, 2021) outlines the information collected automatically, including user activity (title selection, searches, movies viewed), user interactions via emails and other messages received from Netflix, and general location data. In the section on the use of collected data, Netflix explains that personal data are used, among other things, to provide personalised recommendations of films or series considered to be of a user's interest. The user cannot opt out if he or she wishes to subscribe to the platform's services. A paragraph was added in the November 2021 version of Netflix's Privacy Statement, which explains that Netflix's personalisation system aims to predict what users are in the mood to watch, but "does not infer or attach socio-demographic information (like gender or race)" to a user as part of the algorithm decision-making process. A separate link was also added to provide the user with more information on how Netflix's recommendation system works (Netflix, 2022). It offers an overview of the factors taken into account to determine what a user is expected to enjoy, such as the user's viewing history and how he/she rated other titles, information about

the titles (e.g., genre, categories, actors, release date), titles watched by other members with similar tastes and preferences, time of day of activity, and for how long a user watches content streamed by Netflix. Except for the explicit exclusion of “demographic information (such as age or gender)”, information on the specific categories or segments considered in profiling is not detailed.

Another interesting example may be found in the Disney+ Privacy Policy (Disney+, 2021) and Cookies Policy (Disney+, 2022). The deletion of “Flash cookies,” indicated as being responsible for storing users’ preferences, is discouraged: “[i]f you disable Flash cookies, you won’t have access to many features that make your guest experience more efficient and some of our services will not function properly” (Disney+, 2022) and, without the collection of personal information, Disney+ may not be able to deliver certain experiences, products and services, and to take a user’s interests and preferences into account. With respect to the logic behind the application of recommendation algorithms, and although it is stated that users’ preferences, usage patterns, and location are collected, no further detail is provided on how these criteria are combined, nor on which categories the profiles created are based (Disney+, 2021).

As for Spotify, its privacy policy (Spotify, 2021) provides tables that are perhaps less easy to read, but that offer more detail on the data collected than the other platforms reviewed. It describes “usage data”, which are said to include not only information on searches, tracks listened to, playlists and browsing history, but also inferences drawn from the user’s interests and preferences based on their use of Spotify, as well as the user’s “general (non-precise) location” to enable Spotify to comply with licensing agreements according to geographical areas and to provide personalised content and advertising. The purpose of the use of the data collected is explicitly stated to be to provide and personalise Spotify services.

The lack of explanation on the criteria used by the algorithms and the categories into which users are placed for profiling purposes seems all the more important as these explanations are fundamental when addressing concerns about cultural diversity and the discoverability of new content proposed by the recommendations of these platforms (for example, Benhamou, 2016; Burri, 2019; Napoli, 2019; Richieri Hanania & Norodom, 2016).

Another important question relates to the legal basis for data processing by audio-visual and music streaming platforms. Could recourse to another legal basis than the explicit consent of the user possibly justify that the user receives less information on the processing of his/her data, or even with less regularity? Could another legal basis be envisaged in view of the business model of these platforms? Indeed, another acceptable legal ground under the GDPR for data processing (in addition to the consent provided by the user) is that of processing that is “necessary for the performance of a contract.” As the concept of “necessary” should in principle be interpreted narrowly (Article 29 Data Protection Working Party, 2018, p. 13), one could assume that, while the operation of these platforms is based on personalised recommendations, the performance of the streaming service itself does not necessarily depend on such recommendations.

In practice, however, non-acceptance of the terms of service and data privacy policies established by these platforms naturally implies non-use of their services. Netflix expressly states the performance of their service contract with each user among the legal bases for the collection and use of personal data (Netflix, 2021). From this point of view, personalised recommendations are considered essential to the delivery of the platform's services. On the page regarding its recommendation system, Netflix clearly defines its business as "a subscription service model that offers personalized recommendations." (Netflix, 2022) As for Spotify, a video on personalisation linked to the Spotify Privacy Policy (Spotify, 2022) starts by defining Spotify as a "personalised audio service" and explains in non-legal language how information collected using Spotify's services (songs played, playlists created) leads to personalised suggestions from Spotify (Spotify, 2021). Although choices on streamed content may be expressed by users according to section 2 of Spotify Privacy Policy, personalised services are listed as one of the purposes of data processing by Spotify, based not only on users' consent, but also on the performance of the service contract with Spotify and Spotify's legitimate interests. The user may at best contact Spotify's Data Protection Officer for further information on Spotify's balancing of its legitimate interests against the rights of users.

Finally, attention should be paid to personal data belonging to "special categories of data", i.e.,

data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation (Article 9 of the GDPR).

While Netflix (with respect to content personalisation) and YouTube (regarding advertising personalisation) explicitly exclude certain of these categories from their profiling processes (Netflix, 2021; Google, 2022b), profiling may create special categories of data from the combination of data that do not initially fall into these categories. As an example, the European Article 29 Data Protection Working Party cites a "study [that] combined Facebook 'likes' with limited survey information and found that researchers accurately predicted a male user's sexual orientation 88% of the time; a user's ethnic origin 95% of the time; and whether a user was Christian or Muslim 82% of the time" (Kosinski, Stilwell & Graepel, as cited in Article 29 Data Protection Working Party 2018, p. 15). Where preferences or characteristics belonging to these particularly sensitive categories can be inferred from profiling, the data controller must not only be able to demonstrate that the data processing is not incompatible with its original purposes, but also that it has a lawful basis for the processing (e.g., user consent), and the user must have been informed about such processing.

Users' data privacy rights and profiling

As a reflection of the above-mentioned obligations imposed on streaming platforms acting as controllers who process personal data, the GDPR recognises several users' rights. In addition to the right to be informed about the purposes of the processing, the sources of the data and the way in which the data is processed, users have a right to object, at any time, to the processing of their data, including for profiling purposes. The user must be informed of this right to object in an explicit and clear manner, separately from other information, and must be able to exercise it easily. As seen above with respect to the streaming platforms examined, the exercise of such a right would simply imply the non-use of their services.

In accordance with the GDPR, the user should also have access to the data processed in order not only to be able to correct any inaccurate information or even delete the profile or certain data that was used to create it, but also to know in which categories or segments of users they have been placed by profiling. The user may wish to complete or correct his or her information, as well as challenge the categories and segments that have been applied by the profiling algorithms. Recital 63 of the GDPR attempts to balance these rights with the economic interests of the controller by stating that the right of access to personal data "should not adversely affect the rights or freedoms of others, including trade secrets or intellectual property and in particular the copyright protecting the software." However, "the result of those considerations should not be a refusal to provide all information to the data subject" (a certain degree of access must therefore always be available to the user) and it is up to the controller, who must balance its interests against those of the user, to demonstrate "compelling legitimate grounds for the processing which override the interests, rights and freedoms of the data subject" (Article 21.1 GDPR). This seems to support the view that the users of streaming platforms should be given the means to better understand how the personalisation of recommendations is developed, based on which data, and in which categories they have been placed by each platform. We have seen that this is not the case in practice.

From the perspective of users' privacy rights, music and audio-visual content streaming platforms deserve even greater attention, as the GDPR prescribes a stricter framework for fully automated decisions when they produce legal effects on an individual (e.g., cancellation of a contract, refusal of a social benefit, refusal of citizenship, etc.) or when such a decision "similarly significantly affects him or her" (Article 22.1, GDPR). This last hypothesis may be found when an automated decision "results in influencing the person's environment, behaviour, choices or results in a form of discrimination." (CNIL, 2018, original in French). The line between a decision causing an effect that may be considered as similarly significant in its impact on users as a legal effect, and a decision that cannot be considered as such seems variable or at least debatable on a case-by-case basis (Article 29 Data Protection Working Party 2018, pp. 21-22). Do content recommendations by streaming platforms have a significant effect similar to a legal effect? Do they significantly affect the behaviour and choices of individuals? The answer to this question

is fundamental, because in these two hypotheses of Article 22.1 (either producing legal effects on a user, or an impact in a similarly significant way), it is “in principle prohibited to make a decision about a person, if it is entirely automated” (CNIL 2018, original in French).

Such prohibition is expressly mentioned by Spotify, which in its Privacy Policy (Spotify, 2021) lists users’ rights arising from the GDPR, explicitly stating the right “[n]ot be subject to a decision based solely on automated decision-making (decisions without human involvement), including profiling, where the decision would have a legal effect on [the user] or produce a similarly significant effect.” However, to exercise such right, the user is directed to Spotify’s Data Protection Officer, without further details.

In any case, Article 22.2 of the GDPR provides for three exceptions to this prohibition of fully automated decisions when a decision affects someone’s legal rights or similarly significantly affects him or her. Such exceptions also apply to automated decision-making accompanied by profiling and cover the following situations: (a) if the decision “is necessary for entering into, or performance of, a contract between the data subject and a data controller;” (b) if it “is authorised by Union or Member State law to which the controller is subject and which also lays down suitable measures to safeguard the data subject’s rights and freedoms and legitimate interests;” or (c) when it “is based on the data subject’s explicit consent.” Even in the case of a situation where profiling carried out by digital platforms of audio-visual and music content would be considered as having a legal effect on a user or affect him or her in a significant and similar way, such profiling could still fall within the exceptions of Article 22.2 (a) and (c), based on the performance of a contract and the explicit consent by these platforms’ users.

In the cases described under (a) and (c), however, the GDPR requires that appropriate measures protect the data subject’s rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests, “at least the right to obtain human intervention on the part of the controller, to express his or her point of view and to contest the decision” made about him or her (Article 22.3). A request for human intervention should not be symbolic - the decision must be controllable in a meaningful way, by someone with the power to change the decision and on the basis of the analysis of all relevant data. The exercise of these rights does not seem to be made explicit nor offered by the large streaming platforms examined in this contribution and seems to require improvement.

As the Article 29 Data Protection Working Party advises for all controllers in the processing of personal data, these platforms

should carry out frequent assessments on the data sets they process to check for any bias, and develop ways to address any prejudicial elements, including any over-reliance on correlations. Systems that audit algorithms and regular reviews of the accuracy and relevance of automated decision-making including profiling are other useful measures. (Article 29 Data Protection Working Party, 2018, p. 28)

Streaming platforms should, therefore, regularly conduct data protection impact assessments to measure the risks involved in automated decision-making, including profiling, and to determine the measures that are needed to address such risks. Such measures may include regular algorithmic auditing, data minimisation, anonymisation or pseudonymisation techniques, providing information to the data subject about the existence and logic of the automated decision-making process, explaining the consequences of such processing, and establishing a clear and easy-to-use procedure for individuals to both oppose the decision made by the automated mechanisms and express their opinion (Article 29 Data Protection Working Party, 2018, pp. 30-32). These recommended safeguards reinforce the conclusion that the information to be provided to users of streaming platforms and the specific measures to protect their rights as described above should be put in place with particular attention, so that profiling for personalisation purposes is more respectful of users' rights, and less biased from a cultural diversity standpoint.

PROFILING AND THE DISCOVERABILITY OF DIVERSIFIED CULTURAL CONTENT

As personalisation of content is part of the business model of streaming platforms, it is relevant to examine to what extent algorithmic recommendations based on profiling influence the users' choice of content and may thus contribute (or not) to the discoverability of culturally diverse audio-visual or music content. When it is stated in the privacy policies of streaming platforms that recommendations are based on previous consumption and viewing habits, as well as on the popularity of content in a given location or on information collected in a user's social media network, the probability for a user to discover new and diversified content seems quite low. By applying a certain categorisation to the data processed for profiling purposes, the tendency seems to be, on the contrary, to lock users into bubbles defined by their previous choices or those of their social circle.

As businesses that aim to increase their profits, streaming platforms may also tend to direct users to content that has been selected as economically relevant for the platform, notably since streaming platforms produce more and more their own content (Tchéhouali et al., 2022, p. 97). Also, from an economic point of view, platforms do not have any strategic incentive to expand content options when they are able to predict user preferences and thus reduce uncertainty about the success of broadcast content (Napoli, 2020), unless they consider that an increase in diversity would be appreciated by their users and could attract new subscribers. Such appreciation for cultural diversity and for the discovery of new cultural content from around the world may be progressively attained through education and awareness-raising on the importance of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, in line with Article 10 of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. However, it remains a work in progress.

On YouTube, in order to avoid being locked into recommendations associated with previously viewed or searched content, it is necessary to suspend or delete one's history

– or to go into private browsing mode (e.g., on Google Chrome, which immediately offers personalisation as soon as cookies are accepted). From a cultural diversity perspective, it would be interesting to allow the user to keep his or her search history, while choosing not to have recommendations on certain criteria. It would, therefore, be necessary that at least the main criteria used by algorithms and the categories in which users are placed be made accessible to them so that users are able, as prescribed by the GDPR, to challenge their inclusion in a specific category, or even to indicate certain categories that they feel would better represent them.

Algorithms applied to users' collected data may technically be programmed with the objective of promoting diversity in content supply, hence employing technology precisely in favour of diversity and the discoverability of new content, in what could be called a "governance of algorithms," in addition to a "governance by algorithms" as exercised by digital intermediaries such as streaming platforms (Burri, 2019, p. 10 and p. 14). For example, algorithms for recommending diversified content could be designed independently from the preferences previously expressed by a user if the latter had the possibility to decide not to be profiled or if he or she could explicitly express his or her interests and segments he or she would like to be part of. In fact, it was noted that some almost forgotten music tracks were able to achieve great success through the intervention of Spotify's algorithms (Carpentier, 2021).

The question remains as to what shapes cultural diversity online and how to ensure that this concept is understood as widely as possible, since, as recalled above, algorithms are ultimately programmed by people. The notion of cultural diversity held by the team of data scientists responsible for the creation of streaming platforms' algorithms is therefore fundamental in any attempt to improve the algorithms applied to determine personalised recommendations from the point of view of cultural diversity and the discoverability of diversified content.

The possibility of designing algorithms that can act in favour of cultural diversity was crucial when it came to the new obligations imposed on streaming platforms targeting European citizens following the 2018 revision of the AVMSD. Among other measures, the reviewed AVMSD requires media service providers of on-demand audio-visual media services to "secure at least a 30% share of European works in their catalogues and ensure prominence of those works" (Article 13.1 of the AVMSD). In accordance with such provisions, streaming platforms should find ways to draw their users' attention to European works in their catalogues. A non-exhaustive list of examples of means to attain such an objective is provided in the recitals of the amending Directive 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018:

(...) The labelling in metadata of audio-visual content that qualifies as a European work should be encouraged so that such metadata are available to media service providers. Prominence involves promoting European works through facilitating access to such works. Prominence can be ensured through various means such as a dedicated section for European works that is accessible from the service homepage, the possibility to

search for European works in the search tool available as part of that service, the use of European works in campaigns of that service or a minimum percentage of European works promoted from that service's catalogue, for example by using banners or similar tools. (Directive 2018/1808, 2018, Recital 35)

In addition to applying specific recommendation algorithms to highlight European works while combining such recommendations with users' tastes and preferences based on their previous consumption, a platform could also theoretically propose content in a more random fashion, without necessarily tying them completely to previously expressed preferences. This certainly entails a risk that purely random suggestions are in practice ignored by users or even that users feel unsatisfied by recommendations that do not correctly reflect their tastes (Burri, 2019, p. 13). The possibility for users to choose to withdraw from profiling carried out by streaming platforms without losing access to their services might be a useful complementary tool allowing for greater balance between the platforms' interests and users' rights and concerns.

The greater visibility of European content or more diverse content of different origins would likely be promoted in a partially random way and/or after explicit consultations with users. This could, moreover, be combined with other initiatives for the promotion of diversity by streaming platforms. One idea may be to promote certain titles from their catalogues through the organisation of online audio-visual or music festivals displayed on the homepage of the user interface over specific periods (e.g., one week or 10 days) and allowing users to discover new content and artists, whether related to a specific origin or other specific themes. For example, the experience of the "My French Film Festival" (Maillet, 2016), a very successful online festival, could inspire similar initiatives on streaming platforms.

Another example may be found with Disney+, which offers a "Made in France" section in France, which has been progressively enriched with more titles in the last couple of years, and which could certainly be expanded and replicated, even if intermittently, for other origins included in their catalogue. In the last few years, Netflix has similarly put in place some relatively simple tools that may be seen as a strong step towards greater discoverability of diversified cultural content, with the addition of new categories of content. A French user may now select, for instance, "France", "European", or "International" films and series, besides traditional categories such as "Comedy", "Drama", "Thriller", or "Documentaries." Also, an option "Surprise me" has been added to the Netflix menu but seems to be strongly influenced by the ranking of most popular content streamed on the platform.

While the practical application and concrete contribution of the AVMSD to the consumption of a more diverse offer of content will need to be assessed and measured over time, these new categories and options lately offered by streaming platforms making European content more easily discoverable seem to suggest that the provisions of the AVMSD are already producing significant practical effects. Although the improvement of these tools from a discoverability perspective likely requires greater

awareness around what cultural diversity means and how to value the richness of our increasingly multicultural societies, they may undoubtedly be acknowledged as a non-negligible step.

CONCLUSION

While recourse to automated profiling for personalisation purposes is at the heart of streaming platforms' services, the protection of users' rights requires transparency with respect to the processing of their personal data. From a data privacy perspective, lots may still be done to improve the transparency of algorithms used for personalisation purposes and to provide users with greater control of their data, as required by the GDPR.

Users need to be able to clearly understand what data is processed and how, what their rights are, as well as the procedures for exercising such rights. This means, first, that the privacy policies of streaming platforms need to be simplified, so all processing of personal data is better understood. User-friendly explanations on how profiling is conducted are particularly necessary because of the impact of automated systems on the future choices of users and the difficulty for the majority of individuals to understand how algorithms work from a technical point of view. In addition to greater transparency, streaming platforms should act to continuously remove biases in profiling and allow users to object to such profiling (without losing access to the platform), see the segments in which they have been automatically categorised and on what basis, request human intervention to review the profiling if needed, and possibly also select categories that they want to be part of. Such improvements are also in accordance with the recent recommender system transparency obligations imposed by the Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services (the "Digital Services Act" – DSA). According to the DSA, online platforms will need to disclose the main parameters of their recommender systems and provide their users with the possibility of modifying or influencing those parameters.

Finally, greater efforts are needed to raise the awareness of the public at large with respect not only to users' personal data rights, but also regarding the importance of cultural diversity and access to a diversified cultural offer online, with a view to fostering more peaceful and tolerant societies. Algorithms used by streaming platforms for personalisation purposes can and should be directed towards greater discoverability of culturally diverse content. At the European level, the AVMSD offers a valuable illustration of this possibility, by guiding streaming platforms in such a direction when it requires prominence and a minimum quota of European works in their catalogues.

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STREAMING PLATFORME I PROFILIRANJE – RIZICI I PRILIKE ZA OTKRIVANJE RAZNOLIKOGA KULTURNOG SADRŽAJA

Lilian Richieri Hanania

SAŽETAK Članak se bavi pitanjima rizika i prilika za kulturnu raznolikost koji proizlaze iz alata za personalizaciju platformi, a temelji se na pravnoj analizi glavnih odredbi Opće uredbe o zaštiti podataka Europske unije (engl. GDPR) o profiliranju potrošača i automatiziranim odlukama, kao i na analizi politika zaštite podataka odabranih streaming platformi. U članku se ispituje kako potonji mogu u praksi utjecati na zaštitu osobnih podataka potrošača u svrhu preporučivanja personaliziranih audiovizualnih i glazbenih sadržaja na internetu te kako se takve odredbe odnose na otkrivanje raznolike kulturne ponude na internetu i, na europskoj razini, na obvezu platformi da istaknu europska djela u svojim katalogima. Zaključuje se da još mnogo toga mora biti učinjeno kako bi se poboljšala transparentnost algoritama koji se koriste u svrhu personalizacije te kako bi se korisnicima omogućila veća kontrola njihovih podataka, kako to zahtijeva GDPR.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

KULTURNA RAZNOLIKOST, OPĆA UREDBA O ZAŠTITI PODATAKA (GDPR),
PROFILIRANJE, AUTOMATIZIRANO ODLUČIVANJE, PERSONALIZACIJA

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IMPACT OF GLOBAL STREAMING PLATFORMS ON TELEVISION PRODUCTION: A CASE STUDY OF CZECH CONTENT PRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT *The television industry is facing new challenges when adapting to the current streaming culture and exploring possibilities of digital distribution. Global streaming services are perceived as a major source of audiovisual entertainment in various countries regardless of the cultural and national heritage of the viewers and thus market competition has immensely increased. This paper focuses on the influence of global video-on-demand (VOD) services on audiovisual production on a national scale. The emphasis is on television production as the audience is transferring into the digital environment – this is perceived as an opportunity for television to appear more competitive while drawing on its unique knowledge of the national audience. The case study demonstrates how the audiovisual industry in the Czech Republic is an example of a strongly nationally oriented market whose evolvement is impacted by the presence of global platforms such as Netflix or HBO Max. Furthermore, by providing examples from the Czech platforms' market, the case study also illustrates the expansion of local broadcasting providers into the digital sphere.*

KEY WORDS

PLATFORMS, AUDIOVISUAL, STREAMING, VIDEO ON DEMAND, CZECH REPUBLIC, TELEVISION

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INTRODUCTION

The interactivity of the new media supports the differentiation between watching broadcast television as a traditional medium on the one hand, and using digital tools on the other. Selected studies even perceive the decline of television broadcasting due to such a challenge and due to the fact that digital tools present a contrast to the established television culture. John Fiske (1987) recognized popularity of television in the fact that television encourages interaction of the viewer in the sense of understanding of what he or she sees. Popularity of digital tools still persists in the interactive dimension, however the technology has further broadened possibilities of interactivity itself. Various perspectives can be used to analyze the transition from linear broadcast to digital distribution. The theoretical framework of this paper addresses key points when taking such perspectives and inquires into how each approach focuses on another aspect of the transition. According to Lotz (2014), the transition acts in favor of the digital distribution because the customer becomes a self-curator of content that is more easily accessible. The affordance of Internet protocol technologies to deliver personally selected content from an industrially curated library is the central difference introduced by this new distribution mechanism (Lotz, 2017, p. 4). On the contrary, Miller (2010) offers arguments supporting the important role of television as an institution on the market that participates in international export, import and production. Wolff (2015) perceives the transition to the digital sphere only as a way of reshaping television and not necessarily taking advantage of the Internet media. It can be noted that the audiovisual media still perform as a passive form of entertainment, making use of established narrative structures and aesthetics. Ramon Lobato (2020) recognizes the transition as a development of the traditional media, which contributes to the extension of the possible distribution channels and as a further specialization in content production. This includes quality drama made explicitly for binge viewing, proliferation of short-form web comedies and the vast pool of amateur content on YouTube (Lobato, 2020, p. 31).

To further understand the new infrastructure of the market, it can be acknowledged that such cultural transformation is consequent to the dynamic role in the society, their newly adapted habits and opportunities. More precisely, Mittel (2015) notes that contemporary cultural transformations are tied to the emergence of digital media and more interactive forms of entertainment. Digital tools make part of our every day as silent partners, helping us – with no agendas of their own (Gillespie, 2003, p. 117). This means that a significant transformation in customer behavior can be identified and that the influence of platforms has a complex impact on many levels. The audience has fewer and fewer limitations when choosing the content with an increase of possible opportunities how to watch the content. Technology has brought a variety of smart gadgets to enable streaming of content nearly anywhere and anytime (Arditi, 2021). Consumption of the content is limited by the offer available at current time, in the terrestrial area and by the chosen provider (Gripsrud, 2010). The majority of providers of audiovisual content offer user-friendly applications that make watching any audiovisual content including television even easier. Tryon (2013) defines the term *on-demand* as a service which breaks the notion of time and place supporting specific audience mobility.

Discussions on the new structure of the audiovisual market and the future role of the traditional television medium build on the possibilities of digital media and their ability to surpass territorial boundaries. From this perspective, television appears to be outdated and to be replaced by the global streaming services. However, the role of television broadcasters is still strong on the national level and digital distribution appears to be a next step for the television industry. This paper proposes an approach in which global video-on-demand providers impact content production on a local level and act as initiators of the transformation in the audiovisual industry.

GLOBAL PLATFORMS VS. LOCAL CONTENT PRODUCTION

In 2021, the European Audiovisual Observatory published a report detailing trends and development on the market of video on demand in Europe. The market turnover multiplied by 30% comparing the years 2010 and 2020 (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2022). The increase is mainly due to the expansion of Netflix outside of the United States, which ranks Netflix as a subscription video-on-demand platform with the largest share on the European market.

The issue of globalization and transnationalism has been present in the recent decades including the significant influence of the global provider on the local level. Each media era is specific in terms of the expansion of a new technology that challenges the usual market structure and industry production. Wieten et al. (2000) argue that dealing with the issue of transnationalism in the television industry first appeared in the 1980s with the implementation of satellite and cable television, which introduced American culture and fandom to the global world. Lotz (2017) argues that further digitalization and implementation of format adaptations provoked an even more competitive environment on the market. Industrial change often leads to striking changes in style and aesthetics, storytelling norms and representation (Herbert et al., 2020, p. 84). Sundet (2021) suggests that the contemporary issue of the presence of global platforms marks another era of the evolution of the industry, but does not necessarily imply the descent of television culture. Localization matters in television markets, and the global will not simply displace the local (Lobato, 2020, p. 109).

Contemporary media production has entered a streaming era which brings new opportunities, but at the same time poses new challenges. Sundet (2021) perceives streaming as a game-changer in the television industry and mentions the following three aspects: the introduction of new program schemes, breaking of territorial boundaries, and the creation of a globally oriented television market. Netflix is one of the major initiators of the streaming era which leads to the recognition of Netflix being an infrastructure builder (McEntree, 2010). It has developed content delivery on its own, as well as various software tools and processes, some of which are available as open-source projects (McEntree, 2010). Still, the infrastructure of Netflix is a dynamic metasystem with many contradictions, such as the need of soft and hard technical structures, open and closed knowledge system and public and private investment (Lobato, 2020, p. 101). The presence of global platforms

on the market incites the discussion on content regulation in the context of EU policy processes and on how to establish fair common rules for market competition (Farchy et al., 2022; Micova et al., 2018).

The presence and increasing number of subscribers of streaming platforms pose challenges to television providers in order to evaluate their current position in the market. As the introduced theoretical framework indicates, television as a traditional medium represents a valuable competitor for global streaming platforms. The challenge is to produce more competitive content and to appear more appealing for the local audience. Alongside this, the television industry is specific for its division into public service broadcasters and commercial broadcasters.

Key trends in European television suggest the general pattern which consists in the fact that commercial broadcasters tend to display considerably less diversity in their programming compared to public broadcasting service and to follow rather confined patterns (Wieten et al., 2000, p. 26). The public broadcasting service needs to abide by guidelines to fulfill the service of a public broadcaster by following principles such as commitments to universality, excellence, diversity, accountability, and innovation (Tracey, 1998). However, public broadcasting service is often perceived as less creative, stagnant, and too bureaucratic in comparison to the commercial one. Tracey (1998) further explores the idea of a public service system which would be devoid of any commercial or political motives and would have as its sole purpose the offering of a public service, thus remaining fragile and easily breakable. On the contrary, recent research by Sundet (2021) on the Norwegian public broadcaster NRK suggests that television drama productions are going big, aiming for larger, preferably transnational markets and audience groups via larger budgets and 'world-class' production values (Sundet, 2021, p. 52).

Local television productions have the advantage to produce more relevant content with higher authenticity for the audience. Local media systems and TV cultures continue to pre-structure transnational audiences' encounters with non-domestic content (Athique, 2014). Industry dynamics is often situated in relation to the cultural politics of nation-states with emphasis remaining on films and television programs on the one hand and audience reception on the other (Herbert et al., 2020, p. 93). Genre conventions have the ability to express the overview of the society or a given audience group. They connect the audience with the current ideological concerns of the time and also form a communication tool of both understanding and constructing the relationship between the producer, text and audience (Fiske, 1987, p. 110).

METHODOLOGY

Based on the previous literature review and proposed theoretical concepts, this paper aims to explore the influence of global platforms on the local content production through a case study of the audiovisual market of the Czech Republic. The hypothesis of the study is based on the recognition that the presence of global video-on-demand

services on the market challenges local audiovisual production and impacts traditional content producers.

The first part of the paper presents the results of the case study that addresses the introduction of the Czech audiovisual market and is structured into three parts: analysis of the national market and its limits, structure of the Czech television market, and video-on-demand market in Czech Republic. The introduction of the Czech audiovisual market is based on analysis of publicly available documents and Annual Overview of the Czech Media Market conducted by ATO-Nielsen Admosphere (Mediaguru, 2022), year-round data from the Czech Statistical Office (Czech Statistical Office, 2021) and media report by Atmedia (Atmedia, 2022).

The majority of the collected data were received from official publicly available materials published by The Czech Film Fund, Czech Television and TV Nova. Specifically, this involved an analysis of the annual reports of the institutions and of the official press releases.

In order to illustrate the issue of the impact of global streaming services on local content production, in the second part of the case study, two examples from the Czech audiovisual market are presented. They exemplify content production of television broadcasters and their original production distributed via their own video-on-demand platforms. The time frame was selected to cover recent and the most relevant years - the influence of global video-on-demand providers on local markets became visible in 2016, when Netflix introduced its own service in the Czech Republic and HBO offered the subscription service in 2017. The case study focuses on production since then with an emphasis on production in recent years.

The aim is to present a broad overview of the market. Therefore, the first example addresses the public broadcasting service Czech Television and its digital expansion. As a second example, the private television provider TV Nova, which has a leading position on the Czech television market, was selected.

CASE STUDY: INTRODUCTION OF CZECH AUDIOVISUAL MARKET

Analysis of the national market and its limits

In comparison to other European countries, the Czech audiovisual market can be described as a small one with focus on the national audience. The Czech Republic has a population of 10.7 million, which makes it the 12th country in Europe by population. In order to demonstrate why the Czech audiovisual market is perceived as a small one, and with focus on the national audience, the section titled "Analysis of the national market and its limits" identifies characteristic limits of Czech audiovisual production and further analyzes the market from the point of view of production, funding and distribution.

The local audiovisual industry is mainly limited by use of the national Czech language which is used only within the country with a characteristic exception of Slovakia. Citizens of Czech Republic and Slovakia were both part of former Czechoslovakia¹, which meant that the audiovisual media and television² offered content in both the Czech and Slovak languages. It follows that the contemporary Slovak market is accustomed to distribution of audiovisual content without standard localization attributes, such as subtitles or dubbing in the national language³. Furthermore, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have a strong cultural and historical proximity, which means that Czech and Slovak distribution companies often have an international partnership. For example, the company Bontonfilm covers the distribution of both national markets at once. A similar model is adopted when producing audiovisual content and providing co-production service, financing strategy or funding on both markets.

Another point is that the Czech Republic has tradition in dubbing of original foreign content, which supports the fact that the Czech audience is used to consuming content in their local language. In Czechoslovakia, the first international movie was dubbed in 1933, and since then, technologies have kept up with the current audiovisual market to provide Czech audio for majority of international content. The consumption of international content is closely tied to English language proficiency and exposure to international content. Up until now, nearly every US production show, soap opera or series which is broadcast on a television, has been dubbed in the Czech language. This implies the fact that Czech society was not used to exposure to international content in its original version. Furthermore, in comparison to other European countries, the educational system in the Czech Republic was late to include English as a mandatory foreign language to learn since elementary school. The generations of Czechs born before 1990s, were taught the German language or the Russian language as part of their education. Both these factors have contributed to lower English language proficiency in Czech society.

Another limitation of Czech audiovisual production is perceived in content adapted to the local audience, cultural heritage and sociocultural factors. Storylines and character roles build on national stereotypes, use of regional dialect, local traditions and particularities. Often, these elements can be hard to grasp for an international audience and assume different meanings when translated into other languages.

However, the Czech audiovisual market is well established and with rather high rates of production for a country of this size. The Czech Republic is often chosen as a location for runaway productions, so the industry is very well equipped from the technical point of view. Local crew and personnel are experienced in filming international projects and their expertise is often on a high level. The first Czech film production company Barrandov Studio was founded in 1921 and later, in 1932, the company's own film studios started operating in Prague, which provided additional services such as props and wardrobe

¹ Czechoslovakia: former country in central Europe formed in 1918. On January 1, 1993, Czechoslovakia separated into two new countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

² Czechoslovak Television: founded in 1953, in 1992 succeeded by Czech Television

³ For example former HBO Go (currently Max) started offering Slovak dubbing of original content since December 2021; up until then the content offered only Czech dubbing for both Czech and Slovak subscribers

rentals, camera and light equipment and technological background to serve local and international productions. Barrandov Studio has been very active up until now and has been offering production facilities for recent Netflix or Amazon Prime Video projects.⁴

Audiovisual production in the Czech Republic is well supported through public funding, which offers various funding possibilities for each project. Diverse funding patterns for mainstream content and art content can be identified (Czech Film Fund, 2018) and producers are accommodated to combine different sources in order to cover the budget. The majority of the production in the Czech Republic is funded through the finances provided by the Czech Film Fund, public institutions and regional authorities. The Czech Film Fund provides support for all stages of audiovisual production through selective calls. Every year, the institution puts €14.5 million to support local production. For example, in 2021, 73% of total newly released Czech films received some kind of support⁵ from the Czech Film Fund (Czech Film Fund, 2022). The Fund also administers production incentives for audio-visual projects made in the Czech Republic. The annual budget for this cash rebate is €31.4 million (Czech Film Fund, 2022). Producers also take advantage of commercial collaborations and other funding possibilities. Other common options are co-production contracts with a television, a local video-on-demand platform or a distribution company. This practice is supported by the fact that 91% of films distributed in movie theatres in the years 2020 and 2021 were co-produced with a television. Alongside, these co-productions support the role of television as an innovative medium and contribute to its competitive position on the market. In 2021, the public broadcasting service provider Czech Television supported co-production projects with 4.1 million euro; their future investment in co-production projects for years 2022-2024 will total €8.8 million (Czech Television, 2022, p. 77).

The industry has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and 2021 when the production rates lowered, and cinemas were closed or open with restricted capacity for most of these two years. Still, in 2021 local cinemas premiered 85 Czech films. National market share increased during the coronavirus pandemic to 48.3% in 2020 and 41.9% 2021 in comparison to 26.5% in 2019. When comparing national market share to other European countries, the situation in the Czech market is comparable to national market share in France (40.6%), different from neighboring Germany (21.7%) or Slovakia (10.0%) (European Audiovisual Observatory (2022, May). These figures support the notion that the Czech audiovisual market is focused on the national audience. The growth was supported by the pandemic which caused the postponement of production of many foreign movies and their premieres in the cinema, which means that Czech cinemas premiered more of the local content and showed fewer international movies. The consequence of the pandemic era (years 2020 and 2021) was a natural decrease in box office admissions. Precisely, box office admissions in the Czech Republic reached 7.1 million in 2021, in contrast to 18.3 million in 2019, that is, during the “pre-COVID” period.

⁴ Based on the data from The Czech Film Fund; for example, in 2021 – *Carnival Row* (Amazon Prime Video), *Extraction 2* (Netflix), *Dangerous Liaisons 2* (Netflix), *Totems* (Amazon Prime Video), *Ballerina* (prod. Lionsgate)

⁵ Support for either development, production and/or distribution (Czech Film Fund, 2022).

The Annual Overview of the Czech Media Market conducted by ATO-Nielsen Admosphere shows that television has a strong audience on the market and its reach is even increasing (Mediaguru, 2022). The Czech audience is thus recognized as accustomed to consuming audiovisual content from local production, which is supported by the following data. The Overview presents media reach including average time spent in front of the TV and numbers of viewers. In 2021, average daily time spent in front of television per person reached more than four hours. Per month, television is watched by 8.4 million within the age group 15+. 96% of Czech households have at least one television, while 10 years ago, it was as much as 98%. This supports the notion that television as a traditional medium acts as the key medium for the Czech audience and the most popular content currently draws around 1-2 million viewers, and very occasionally 3 million viewers. Data analysis shows that the most watched items of television content are newscasts and soap operas on commercial channels. Overall, it is found that the weekly rating evaluates the same kind of most watched content throughout a longer period of time.

Structure of the Czech television market

Television broadcasting in Czechoslovakia began in 1948 and until the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the only broadcaster was Czechoslovak Television. In the 1990s, the market grew with the introduction of two nationwide commercial channels – Prima TV and TV Nova. The same television media groups have remained dominant on the market up until today. In 1992, Czechoslovak Television transformed into Czech Television, which is a public television broadcaster, which is currently broadcasting on seven channels. As a national provider, this television is funded through a fee collection system of television concession fees, which currently amounts to 135 Czech crowns (5,50 EUR) per month per household. The commercial activities and advertising are restricted by law and the Act on Czech Television⁶, which sets limits in obtaining revenues from sale of advertising.

Television Nova is operated by the media and entertainment group CME and is perceived as the strongest private commercial television on the market. Its channel portfolio is actively expanding, and the company is aiming to have the biggest share of the digital market as well. Part of the group is an online video-on-demand platform Voyo. The third broadcaster, namely FTV Prima operates ten channels including the news channel CNN Prima News in partnership with CNN International. Channels are thematically varied and oriented to a specific target group, such as family program, comedy content, crime shows or content offer for women. Additionally, local television channels have portfolios of content offering international and national programming. Various trends adopted from foreign productions as well as licensed versions of reality TV shows can be identified.

The structure of the market responds to the consumer demand and media television companies offer more channels which are differentiated on the basis of genre and type of content. When referring to the commercial television companies with the highest market share (TV Nova, FTV Prima), their channel offer contains, for example, a movies-only channel, a channel targeted to women, an action channel or a channel with focus on sitcoms and other entertainment formats. The offer of the thematic

⁶ See more at: Act on Czech Television — English Pages — Česká televize (ceskatelevize.cz)

channels is based on international content and rebroadcast of their original content. Each commercial television company has a main TV channel which is intended to broadcast new and premiere content, fiction, and non-fiction as well. Original television production is targeted to entertain and promote the local film industry. The boom in high-end television series production started only in the early 2010s, when some of the broadcasters decentralized and started increasingly co-producing or commissioning original serial programming from independent producers (Sczapanik, 2021, p. 14). Research by Sczapanik (2021) supports the notion that local production initiatives of transnational pay television and subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) services triggered the premium television series production.

Video-on-demand market in the Czech Republic

According to year-round data from the Czech Statistical Office, in 2021, videos on the Internet were watched by an average of 5.5 million people over the age of 16, which represents 63% of this age group in the Czech Republic. The vast majority, about 5 million people, watched free videos (YouTube, Facebook or other sharing platforms). Regarding the category of subscription video-on-demand services, Atmedia (2022) demonstrates current stratification on the market in its periodical Atmedia Index. Data analysis from the first half of 2022 shows that 40% of the Czech population within age group 15-69 use subscription services, averaging at 1.6 million people. Part of the users (13%) stated they subscribed to a video-on-demand service during the coronavirus pandemic.

The first Czech digital platform providing video-on-demand content on the market was DAFilms in 2005 as an online video-on-demand service and streaming platform Stream.cz in 2006. The market has grown by introducing more platforms, both with free access and pay-per-view content. The trend in the industry is apparent success of platforms connected to bigger media companies which have better opportunities for financing of the content and production background. Each television broadcast provider has its own VOD service – iVysílání (public, Czech Television), Voyo (private, TV Nova), iPrima (private, FTV Prima).

Table 1. Video-on-demand services in the Czech market – Czech providers

Subscription model	Price / per month	Total number AV content	Country of origin (CZ)	Original production	On CZ market since
<i>DAFilms</i>					
SVOD	€5.95	3670	442	N	2005
<i>Edisonline</i>					
SVOD	€6.30	540	2	N	2020
<i>iPrima (former Prima PLAY)</i>					
Free / SVOD without ads	X / €3.60	1092	376	Y	2012
<i>iVysílání</i>					
Free	X	1143	753	Y	2011



Subscription model	Price / per month	Total number AV content	Country of origin (CZ)	Original production	On CZ market since
KVIFFF.TV (former Aerovod)					
SVOD	€6.50	612	230	N	2012
Mall.TV					
Free	X	13	7	Y	2018
Stream					
Free	X	107	16	Y	2006
Voyo					
SVOD	€6.50	1661	778	Y	2012

Sources: Providers and <https://filmtoro.cz/>

Table 1 presents the Czech video-on-demand services currently operating on the market.⁷ There are subscription services and free-to-access streaming platforms, both offering content and being active in their own original production. To further illustrate the local video-on-demand services, this paper will focus on two providers with the greatest amount of content produced in the Czech Republic – iVysílání and Voyo. Both examples will be presented in the following part of the study.

Altogether, on the Czech market, the following international video-on-demand services operate: Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV+, Disney+, HBO Max, Netflix, iTunes and Google Play. Table 2 presents currently available international video-on-demand services with a focus on their localized content offer. Data presented illustrate the total amount of audiovisual content in offer in relation to the amount of content from Czech production. Also, each video-on-demand service has different approach to the localization features such as Czech dubbing of foreign-language content.

Pricing strategies of the companies on the market are comparable and respond to the economic situation within society. In order to illustrate the pricing strategy on the market of subscription video-on-demand platforms in the Czech Republic, monthly subscription rates for international and local platforms are compared. Netflix's monthly subscription ranges from 199 Czech crowns (€8.10) to 259 Czech crowns (€10.60), depending on the chosen streaming plan. HBO Max's monthly subscription costs 199 Czech crown (€8.10) and the same price applies to Disney+ and Apple TV+. The Czech video-on-demand service Voyo costs 159 Czech crowns (€6.50).

In order to provide a complex overview, this paper will focus on video on the following demand services: Netflix and HBO Max. These two providers are the dominant subscription services on the Czech market: Netflix (32%) and HBO Max (17%).

⁷ Updated on 1st December 2022.

Table 2. Video-on-demand services on the Czech market – international providers

Price / per month	Total number AV content	Country of origin (CZ)	Available in Czech dubbing	On CZ market since
Amazon Prime Video				
€6.50	972	6	129	2016
Apple TV+				
€8.10	141	0	0	2019
Disney+				
€8.10	1840	0	1077	2022
HBO Max (former HBO Go)				
€8.10	2155	160	1293	2017
Netflix				
€8.10 / €10.60	8317	240	1027	2016
iTunes				
€8.10	7561	248	2683	2017
Google Play				
PPV from €2.70 per movie	3709	93	855	2018

Sources: Providers and <https://filmtoro.cz/>

The global platform Netflix entered the Czech audiovisual market as early as in 2016. Nevertheless, it is important to note that up until 2019, content was available only in English and without Czech subtitles. The company started to introduce more localized content in 2019 with implementing the option of selecting Czech subtitles or even Czech dubbing. Netflix also made contracts with distribution companies and acquired license for movies and series from Czech production. Current offer includes 239 movies from Czech production and one series which amounts to 2.9% of the whole offering in the territory.⁸ Netflix is active in increasing the number of Czech titles in their library. However, as far as is known, the company does not have ambitions to produce its own production content focused on the national audience. The Czech Republic is very often a location of shooting and co-production of Netflix international series or movies, which contributes to the dynamics of the audiovisual production market.

HBO Max (former HBO Go) was previously available only as an extra service with a telecommunication provider. Nevertheless, the full history of HBO goes a few years back when HBO was first introduced into the Czech market in 1994 as part of a cable television package. Since 2008, the company has operated a local office in Prague which is oriented to production and distribution on the national market. HBO participates in co-production of local content with a focus on national audiences and their production is perceived as having cinema-like quality. Important to note, HBO is the only international company producing content with a target market of the Czech Republic. In 2013, it premiered a three-part miniseries *Hořící keř* based on real events from 1969, that later appeared in

⁸ Updated on 1st December 2022.

cinemas. The drama received awards at the international Monte-Carlo Television Festival and was screened at the Toronto International Film Festival. The miniseries has ratings of 7.8 on IMDb and 86% on ČSFD⁹. Since 2016, HBO has produced series which have been well-received by critics and has contributed to the development of local drama production. The original content of the platform HBO produced in the Czech Republic includes: *Mamon* (2015), the crime series *Pustina* (2016), *Terapie* (2018), *Až po uši* (2014-2018), *Bez vědomí* (2019).

EXAMPLE 1: DRAMA PRODUCTION BY THE PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTER CZECH TELEVISION

Czech Television, although being a public broadcasting provider, has been successful when facing the competitive environment on the national television market. Production of drama and series is highly prioritized, and either as internal production or external production or co-production. Original drama production is divided according to different program genres such as crime series, comedy, sitcom or period drama. An example of a recently premiered series is *Zločiny Velké Prahy* (2021). Data provided by Czech Television suggest that the average viewership of each episode reached up to 1,92 million with a share of 39,67%. Total reach within the group of 15+ was 4,19 million viewers.

The genre of period drama has proven to be well-received by the audience in the previous years and is considered the most successful on the national market. It needs to be acknowledged that the production of the period drama requires a high budget, which is often not possible in the private sector and outside of Czech Television production. Production of period dramas can be divided into two categories. One category consists of those set in the 19th century or in the period of the First Czechoslovak Republic, such as the three seasons of the series *První republika* (2014, 2017, 2018), *Já, Mattoni* (2016), *Bohéma* (2017), *Četníci z Luhačovic* (2017), miniseries *Rašín* (2018), *Zločiny Velké Prahy* (2021), miniseries *Božena* (2021). Another category consists of the series that are set in the years 1990 – 2000 which was a turbulent period with high potential appeal for the audience. These include *Rédl* (2018) or *Devadesátky* (2022). Other period drama production includes the miniseries *Herec* (2020) set in the 50s, and *Dukla 61* (2018) set in the 60s. The genre of crime series is, as in many other countries, perceived as the one gaining the highest viewership and ratings. Czech Television has produced many crime series, to name the recent ones: *Ultimátum* (2022), *Vražedné stíny* (2022), *Stíny v mlze* (2022), the miniseries *Podezření* (2022), *Boží mlýny* (2021), *Hlava medúzy* (2021), *Místo zločinu Ostrava* (2020), *Poldové a nemluvně* (2020), the miniseries *Stockholmský rofesso* (2020), *Vysoká hra* (2020), *Zrádci* (2020), *Sever* (2019), *Lynč* (2018), *Rapl* (2016-2019), *Labyrint* (2015-2018), and *Život a doba soudce A. K.* (2014-2017).

Czech Television proves to be a competitive producer in the market which is supported by the ability of the institution to follow the trends in the European television market.

⁹ ČSFD: The Czech-Slovak Film Database is an online database of films, series and streaming content. The database includes individual profile pages of cast and creators and feature personal biographies, plot summaries, ratings, and fan and critical reviews. (www.csfd.cz)

Furthermore, their production has a given target group, but they still aim to explore new target groups and audiovisual formats. However, the increasing success of recent original production and particularly of the series by Czech Television is based on the facilities of the institution, possibilities in all production stages, including development, realization, and postproduction. The aim of the public broadcasting provider is to abide by the legal obligation by broadcasting informative, educational, cultural as well as entertainment programs (Wierthen et al, 2000, p. 171F), but also to produce quality content that has the potential to succeed in the competitive market. Sczepanik (2021) identifies the re-emergence of a public producer system and a strong role of Czech Television as a producer on the audiovisual market. The following part elaborates on the digital expansion of Czech Television and the company's efforts to rebrand its identity according to the current market structure.

Public broadcasting service in the digital era

Czech Television has ambitions to appear more competitive in the digital market, which resulted in the introduction of the new video-on-demand service website in late 2021. The aim of the public service broadcaster is to attract younger audiences and to provide content for new audience groups. Even though the portal *iVysílání* was operating as a library of content broadcast on air since 2011, the former purpose of the portal was to provide an archive of content. The portal had technical issues and the streaming was often malfunctioning. However, in recent years, the role of the public service provider has been shifting and, in order to maintain the television medium, European countries are adapting to the current streaming culture. The new version of *iVysílání* tries to achieve the quality of other video-on-demand services on the national market and also provides free online multimedia service similar to public broadcasting in other European countries (e.g., BBC iPlayer, RaiPlay, ARD Mediathek). *iVysílání* can be accessed through the website, on mobile and tablet applications, or on a smart television device.

The visual representation of the platform is designed and branded as other products of Czech Television. The main page presents one of the series with short synopsis and buttons *watch* or *more info*. Below, the main page includes categories such as *New on iVysílání*, *Current news*, *Exclusively on iVysílání* and thematic categories to choose from, such as films, series, documentary, entertainment, for kids, sport and news. The layout includes some features similar to other global platforms. A significant difference is the impossibility to set up one's personal account and create an individual library. Czech Television mentioned the topic of personal accounts as one of the future aims in order to offer more curated content and enable the possibility to rate or review content. Video-on-demand service now offers live broadcasting, content from broadcast, archive of various shows and films.

Furthermore, Czech Television started to produce content exclusively to be streamed on *iVysílání*. Exclusive offer is mainly based on entertainment formats or documentaries which have educational value or discuss social topics. Since its re-launch in December 2021, *iVysílání* has premiered two series to be distributed exclusively on the platform. The

first original production is *TBH: To Be Honest* (2021). The teen series about the world of adolescence and social networks. The format is shorter than usual serial episodes and each episode is 11-17 minutes long. User reviews on ČSFD valued the short format and mentioned the possibility of binge-watching. Others recognize that the project is different from other series in broadcasting and appreciate the topics included in the storyline. TBH has a rating of 7.3/10 on IMDb and 58% on ČSFD. Original production of iVysílání includes talk shows *Protivný sprostý matky* (2022) about motherhood and *Na záchodcích* (2022), which is based on a popular podcast. Both talk shows feature presenters who are not connected with other entertainment shows in Czech TV broadcasting, which is received as refreshing. Original production also includes the educational series *Kritika budoucnosti* (2021) or the documentary *RapStory* (2021).

Example 1 introduced the national public broadcasting service provider Czech Television, whose distinctive feature is its original drama content production. Czech Television makes investments in period dramas, crime series, and documentaries. The public broadcasting service provider is very active in its own digital expansion and data shows the company's focus on appearing more competitive in the contemporary market.

EXAMPLE 2: COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING AND TV NOVA

The commercial television station TV Nova was the first private nationwide channel in the Czech Republic. Broadcasting began in 1994 and production was focused on entertainment, comedy, and talk shows. TV Nova's contemporary production is characterized by its own original drama series, docudramas, and a variety of reality shows. Currently, the media group TV Nova is broadcasting on eleven channels and one international version of the main channel. The company uses a clear branding strategy and visual of the brand TV Nova. An exception is the streaming platform Voyo, which is connected to the media and entertainment company CME, the owner of the brand TV Nova, acting as an operating leading business in five Central and Eastern European markets. It is important to note that the company Nova possesses one of the biggest shares on the market because of their flagship television news, original fiction, non-fiction productions, and entertainment shows. One of the most watched shows, reaching around 1 million viewers per episode is the soap opera *Ulice* (2005-present). The soap opera is broadcast before the evening news and has maintained these viewership ratings up to now.

The fiction production of TV Nova is oriented on drama and crime series, comedy, and most notably soap operas and medical drama. Another long-running program is *Ordinace v růžové zahradě* (2005-2021; 2021-present), which was broadcast every Tuesday and Thursday in prime time until 2021. In 2021, the show was discontinued in broadcasting and new episodes are now available only on Voyo. Other medical drama productions include spin-off series *Doktoři z Počátků* (2013-2016), *Anatomie života* (2021) or series *Chlap* (2022), which is a remake of the Italian series *DOC – Nelle tue mani* (2020-present). Crime series are often set in a particular region of the Czech Republic to support the interest of the regional audience *Kriminálka Anděl* (2008-2014), *Dáma a král* (2017-2022), *Policie Modrava*

(2011, 2015- present), *Specialisté* (2017-present), *Odznak Vysočina* (2022- present). Family oriented and comedy genre series include *Na vodě* (2016), *Drazí sousedé* (2016-2017), spin-off series *Kameňák* (2019-2021), *Co ste hasiči* (2021) or a recent series *Pan professor* (2021-present), which is a remake of the German series *Der Lehrer* (2009-2021).

The strong side of TV Nova's production are reality television shows and format adaptations. Since the beginning of broadcasting, they have aired many national remakes of foreign game shows, e.g., *Chcete být milionářem?* (Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?) (2000-2005, 2016-2017), *Co na to češi* (Family Feud) (2016-present), *Na lovu* (The Chase) (2021- present). Other reality shows include *Výměna manželek* (Wife Swap) (2005-present), *Superstar* (2009-present), *Masterchef* (2015-present), *Tvoje tvář má známý hlas* (Your Face Sounds Familiar) (2016-present), *Love Island* (2021), *Survivor Česko & Slovensko* (2022), *Lego Masters* (2022-present). Shows containing topics of self-improvement, makeover, or home renovation have also high ratings. Non-fiction production includes docudrama series and scripted reality. One of the current projects is titled *Praha – den & noc*, which is a foreign remake of the German show *Berlin – Tag & Nacht* (2011-present). The show is specific for being partly scripted and for featuring nonprofessional actors who generate spontaneous discussions.

Voyo as a competitor on the digital market

TV Nova acquired the license for Voyo Czech Republic in 2011 and launched the service in 2012. Video-on-demand services first operated for both registered and non-registered users who had the possibility to watch content for free. The portal provided live broadcasting, archive of films and series and access to the broadcasting of sports events. Registered users had the possibility to stream more content, streaming without commercial breaks and to watch premiere episodes in advance. There was an option of pay-per-view or monthly subscription. In 2011, the monthly subscription cost 189 Czech crowns (€7,80) in comparison to 159 Czech crowns (€6,50) per month in 2022. This supports the pricing strategy which made the service appear more exclusive and designated for premium customers. Also, in 2011, Czech video-on-demand market did not offer any global providers or other subscription on demand service. With the expansion of the market, Voyo had to adjust to the prices of other providers in order to be more competitive. In 2012, Voyo launched its own application, which was accessible on smart devices, phones or smart television. At the time, the provider was very progressive with technical support and offerings, above all because of the previous experience of CME in other European markets. To boost the number of Voyo users, in 2014 TV Nova launched another video-on-demand service Nova Plus. The service was introduced to celebrate 20 years of TV Nova on the market and offered all content for free. Nova Plus included a lot of advertising for Voyo, promo banners appeared during the streaming, and users were encouraged to subscribe to Voyo to receive more quality content.

In 2020, Voyo, as a streaming service, underwent technical and branding transformation to create a user-friendly platform with an image of a global platform. Visual representation and layout resemble platforms such as Netflix. The design features

a dark background with titles presented in categories. The main page includes categories such as *recommended titles*, *new releases* or *continue to watch*. A detail view of each title introduces short synopsis, button *watch* and *more info*. User profiles provide options as favorite shows, creating queues with a personal watch list or using a search engine to find content. Each account can be connected to up to five devices, with possible use of two devices at once. The platform features the option of "Parent policy". Voyo policies mention a recommendation engine which is not further specified but acknowledges that the platform assembles user data in order to recommend content. The subscription fee can be paid by card, an SMS payment or with a coupon, which is available at grocery stores or newsstands.

Voyo made a strategic move in 2021, when the company started to invest and further develop exclusive content to be featured only on Voyo. At first, the premiere episodes of the most watched series *Ordinace v růžové zahradě* (2005-2021, TV Nova; 2021-now, Voyo) were discontinued in television broadcasting and were now aired only on Voyo. During its time in television broadcast, the series had a huge fanbase with an average viewership of 800,000 per episode. Furthermore, Voyo started to advertise special episodes of television series and longer episodes of reality shows with premium content. At the time of the re-launch of brand Voyo, television was broadcasting reality shows *Love Island* (2021) with average viewership of 300,000¹⁰ and *Survivor Česko & Slovensko* (2022) with average viewership of 600,000¹¹. Many new Voyo subscribers had the need to access the premium content related to these shows.

Brand Voyo originals presents fiction and non-fiction content to be available on the streaming platform only. Production is more oriented to visual quality, quality television content and attractive subjects. The offer includes series based on real stories from Czech society which are generally well-known and the topics can be characterized as having a tabloid character. The crime drama miniseries *Případ Roubal* (2021) was first to be introduced under the brand Voyo Original. The storyline follows a crime case from the 1990s about the investigation of a serial killer. On ČSFD, the series is rated 67%, on IMDb 6.4/10. The user reviews on ČSFD manifest the opinion that the topic had immense potential, yet the execution appears to be fast-paced with no sophisticated dialogues and exploration of characters. The main actor is appraised for his performance and has received a lot of acclaim for the role.

The second Voyo Original drama miniseries was *Guru* (2022). On ČSFD *Guru* is rated 64% and 7.1/10 on IMDb. The user reviews on ČSFD value the ambition of Voyo to produce such quality content and recognize the effort to create superior entertainment. Again, users acknowledge performances of actors and the casting of not well-known actors. The most recent Voyo Original production is the miniseries *Iveta* (2022), which describes the life story of a young Czech girl becoming a famous singer. The miniseries has strong visuals emphasizing the feeling of nostalgia and the atmosphere of the period. The

¹⁰ Figure is based on weekly audience results presented by ATO (Association of Television Organisations), data by Nielsen Atmosphere. Audience results – ATO – Association of Television Organizations. See example of the report: *Ochránce zůstává v neděli na čele s 1,36 mil. diváků* | MediaGuru (viewership *Love Island* 285 000).

¹¹ See example of the weekly report: *Slunečná v úterý nad úrovní 1,2 milionu, zahájil Survivor* | MediaGuru (viewership *Survivor* 650 000).

storyline features many popular songs in their original version and characters from pop music who have been in the industry up until now. The life of the singer Iveta was in fact very much in the public eye and widely covered by the tabloids, which makes the story even more appealing for the audience. On ČSFD, *Iveta* is rated 63% and 6.8/10 on IMDb. The user reviews on ČSFD appreciate the retro atmosphere and aspiration for the cinematic quality of the visuals. Others criticize the appearance to be excessively stylized and forced. Overall quality is seen in the subject of the miniseries which caught the attention of the media and audiences. Another Voyo Original series is *Národní házená* (2022), a fictional story following a team of amateur handball players.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this case study was to analyze the hypothesis that the presence of global audiovisual platforms on the market in the Czech Republic has an impact on television production on a national level. Global audiovisual platforms are often perceived as competitors to other digital platforms, yet not to television in its traditional linear form. The hypothesis of the study was based on the recognition that the presence of global video-on-demand services on the market challenges local audiovisual production and impacts the traditional content producers. The production of audiovisual content has opportunities to extend, explore new narrative structures and make use of the digital environment. Global influence brings inspiration from the international audiovisual industry and encourages national and smaller productions to produce more content. The aim to meet the demands of the contemporary viewer, modern society and the younger audience. European public service television possesses a key position in both media and entertainment production, which impacts the media industry within Europe. Similar studies have been conducted to explore the European market, but not in the context of the media market in the Czech Republic. The focus of the paper is to expand research oriented to the Czech media and audiovisual market with an emphasis on national television production in the digital era.

The case study provided an overview of the audiovisual market in the Czech Republic. The aim was to provide a complex analysis of the infrastructure with an emphasis on production and distribution processes, funding, and key actors on the market. The data presented demonstrate that local content production is oriented to the national audience and the presence of global platforms (e.g., Netflix, HBO Max) does not lower the demand for local content. The success of local content is proven by the high national market share and heavy investments in production of television companies. The part dedicated to the video-on-demand services in the Czech Republic discusses both local and international providers. The impact of the global platforms on the market in 2016-2017 when Netflix introduced its services on the territory of the Czech Republic can be recognized.

The case study presented the examples from the Czech national market – the public service provider Czech Television and private TV Nova. Both of them have strong positions on the television market and act as producers and co-producers of local audiovisual

content. Furthermore, both broadcasters have expanded into digital distribution in recent years and produce new content to be premiered on their video-on-demand services. The proposed hypothesis is applicable and apparent in an analysis of their contemporary content production.

The public broadcaster Czech Television, as a producer and provider of the public service, offers a variety of genres and formats. The popularity of crime series has been further supported by the global content production available on the market. The Czech audience appreciates the period drama referring to the past and the heritage of the country, but the format is very expensive to produce, which leads to decrease in its production. In comparison, production of the private television broadcaster TV Nova is oriented to a wide audience with an emphasis on entertainment and the genres such as soap opera, medical drama and reality shows. TV Nova is very active in the expansion of the brand into the digital sphere with subscription video-on-demand service Voyo.

New market infrastructure encourages the increase of competitiveness of local content and the development of television production in terms of introducing digital technology, as an extension of the traditional media.

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UTJECAJ GLOBALNIH STREAMING PLATFORMI NA TELEVIZIJSKU PROIZVODNJU: STUDIJA SLUČAJA PROIZVODNJE SADRŽAJA U ČEŠKOJ

Karolína Vodičková

SAŽETAK *Televizijska industrija suočava se s novim izazovima pri prilagodbi trenutnoj kulturi streaminga te istražuje mogućnosti digitalne distribucije. Globalni streaming servisi percipiraju se kao glavni izvor audiovizualne zabave u različitim zemljama, bez obzira na kulturnu i nacionalnu baštinu gledatelja, pa je stoga konkurencija na tržištu neizmjereno porasla. Ovaj se rad usredotočuje na utjecaj globalnih usluga videa na zahtjev (engl. video on demand, VOD) na audiovizualnu produkciju na nacionalnoj razini. Naglasak je na televizijskoj proizvodnji s obzirom na to da publika sve više prelazi u digitalno okruženje – to se doživljava kao prilika za televiziju da bude konkurentnija, oslanjajući se na svoje jedinstveno znanje o publici na nacionalnoj razini. Studija slučaja pokazuje kako je audiovizualna industrija u Češkoj primjer snažno nacionalno orijentiranog tržišta na čiji razvoj utječe prisutnost globalnih platformi, kao što su Netflix ili HBO Max. Pružajući primjere s češkog tržišta platformi, studija slučaja također ilustrira i širenje lokalnih pružatelja usluga emitiranja u digitalnu sferu.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

PLATFORME, AUDIOVIZUALNI SEKTOR, STREAMING, VIDEO NA ZAHTJEV, ČEŠKA, TELEVIZIJA

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MINORS AS CONTENT CREATORS: A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ADVERTISING REGULATION IN THE UNITED STATES, THE UNITED KINGDOM AND SPAIN

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ABSTRACT *This paper analyzes the degree of compliance with advertising regulation related to content created by or aimed at underage people on YouTube. Research was done using content analysis on a sample of 463 videos that were published on the YouTube platform in the period from 2016 to 2020. Videos were selected from the channels of the 15 most popular children's YouTubers, according to their position on the Social Blade Ranking, which originated from the United States, the United Kingdom, or Spain. The main objective of the study was to determine whether the videos disclose that they are about commercial content and whether this is done in accordance with laws in force. In addition, it was researched whether personal data were requested for promotional purposes. The article shows how despite the existence of advertising regulation in all of the researched countries, compliance is minimal regarding the identification of advertising content as such.*

KEYWORDS

MINORS, YOUTUBE, COMMERCIAL CONTENT, LEGAL CRITERIA, PRIVACY

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CONTENT CREATED FOR MINORS: A CHANNEL FOR BRANDS

Children have always been both a resource and a commodity for the advertising ecosystem. However, children have also emerged as successful creators of that type of content approximately in the past five years. This phenomenon has seen a steady growth since at least 2017 (Ofcom, 2019, 2022). It started with EvanTubeHD in 2011 and continued to grow through many others that decided to follow suit, such as Ryan, that at the age of 7 managed his channel RyanTowsReview and made it to the Forbes list as the channel's revenue surpassed 22 million dollars (Bergen, 2019). These children fuel true money-making machines, something brands are aware of, thus making their channels serve as displays for products of all kinds. Ryan, for example, by 2020 had garnered 23 million followers and more than 33 billion visits since he and his parents launched the channel RyanToysReview (now called Ryan's World) in March of 2015 (Social Blade, 2020).

Brands invest more and more in these influencers in order to promote their products, a market that is booming. In 2019 the PriceWaterhouseCoopers study "Kids digital media report 2019" forecasted that the investment in these influencers would grow by 20% until 2021. This would mean the total investment of 1,700 million dollars in 2021 in advertising for these influencers, thus representing 37% of total investment in advertising directed at minors (PWC, 2019). According to an estimate by *Adweek*, in the United States, global investment in influencers will grow by 500% by 2020, rising from the current \$2 billion to \$10 billion in just two years. In Spain, advertising investment in influencers was €37 million in 2018 (Infoadex, 2019). Two Spanish studies by IAB (2019a, 2019b), 'Advertising investment in digital media' and 'Social networks', indicated that 25.6% of total advertising investment was directed to social media, accounting for €807.2 million, out of a total of €3.15 billion. In relation to digital advertising aimed at minors, it was expected to increase by 45% from 2018 to 2021. Furthermore, the study "Kids Digital Advertising Market" estimated the continuation of this trend: it will continue to grow by 21.8% from 2022 to 2031 and that it will exceed a value of 21.1 billion dollars at the end of 2031 (Transparency Market Research, 2022).

Obviously, in the face of this phenomenon, the number of children on the other side of the screen – those that consume the content created and uploaded by other children – is also experiencing growth (McRoberts, et al., 2016; Yarosh et al, 2016). Minors are attracted by the stories their peers act out using toys and follow their advice and recommendations, developing the desire to buy the products mentioned in the channels by imitation (Brown & Hayes, 2008). In the United States, the time minors over 8 years of age devote to online video consumption duplicated from 2005 to 2019, with an average of 25 to 56 minutes a day among preteens, and 35 to 59 minutes a day among teenagers (Common Sense, 2019). In the United Kingdom, 49% of children between the ages of 8 and 11 prefer to watch YouTube over television (14%) and those between 12 and 15 years of age prefer it 49% to 16% (Ofcom, 2019). Content consumption on YouTube increases with age, 15% of those 3 or 4 years old watch basic content and content related to games, compared to 35% of those aged 5 to 7, 40% of those aged 8 to 11, and 52% of those aged 12 to 15 (Ofcom, 2019).

The underage YouTuber business has generated new professional actors in the advertising ecosystem of YouTubers that are specifically involved in content aimed at minors, including: the video exchange platform itself (YouTube); professional influencer talent agencies specifically aimed at representing YouTuber children or that help brands get in touch with the most suitable influencers to promote their products; the children content creators and their managers (usually their parents), and specific talent agencies; trade associations and Public Administration.

New businesses, new actors and relationships among them have raised the alarm on the need to ensure compliance with the law and adherence with self-regulation codes in order to safeguard children and their rights. The fact that this is a different environment may induce some to error, but we must take into account that, regardless of the environment, advertising messages are still advertising messages and the existing ethical and legal guidelines must still be followed. Parents that help children create, produce and distribute their content, and to negotiate advertising deals, must be aware that they have to abide by the law. The laws impose specific obligations that include identifying their content as advertising, identifying themselves as advertisers, a duty to remain truthful and fair, as well as, particularly, adhere to certain values that must be present in their commercial communications (Lievens, 2010; Lievens et al., 2006; McLaughlin, 2013; Staksrud et al., 2013).

These obligations come from national laws (in the United States, Spain and the United Kingdom) and European Union and European regulations (in the case of the United Kingdom and Spain). The first initiatives to regulate this emerging online market come from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in the United States, reports from the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) in the United Kingdom, the IAB reports in Spain (Martínez-Pastor & Vizcaíno-Laorga, 2016) as well as the European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA).

PREVIOUS STUDIES

The reality is that minors, and young people in general, are increasing their consumption of digital media (Holloway et al., 2013), with those between 5 and 15 years of age devoting more than 15 hours a week to online media consumption (Ofcom, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2018). The fact that there are more and more children creating content and more and more children who consume it has led to an increase in the presence of brands in channels aimed at children, channels hosted by children, and managed, in most cases, by their parents.

Existing literature centers mainly on the state of the art in relation to regulation on advertising directed to minors and the identification of advertising formats (Martínez, 2019, Vanwesenbeeck et al., 2016; Verdoodt et al. 2016; Verdoodt et al., 2015). Other work focuses on the identification of advertising on videos through text or verbally (Committee on Advertising Practice - CAP, 2017; FFC, 2019; IAB, 2018, 2017; Martínez-Pastor et al., 2017).

There are associations such as “Truth in Advertising” that monitor compliance in that context. The association brought a complaint before the FTC against Ryan ToysReview (2019) and called on the need to differentiate entertainment content from advertising content in order to safeguard the innocence of children. They argued that if advertising messages are not properly differentiated from the rest, there is a risk that children may confuse them.

Another line of research deals with the regulatory framework related to liability from parents and industry in relation to minor YouTube channels in Europe and the United States, specifically in Spain (Vizcaíno et. al., 2019). This line of research addresses the presence of products or brands in videos and the presence of brands and the types of products advertising and investigates the regulatory framework and fair competition practices in the United States and Europe (Campaign for a Commercial - Free Childhood, 2016; Committee on Advertising Practice - CAP, 2017; Cunningham & Craig, 2017; IAB, 2018, 2019; Wa, 2016).

Other authors focus on data protection rights for minors online and have called the phenomenon the “datafication” of childhood (Lupton & Williamson, 2017). In relation to data privacy, some authors study data surveillance of minors (Lievens & Verdoort, 2017), while others focus on the risks that data processing entails and on the liabilities of the processors (Van Alsenoy, 2016). Others engage in diachronic studies of data protection in Europe, from Directive 95/46 to the current General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Van Alsenoy, 2017). Milkaite & Lievens (2020) deal with the privacy policies of some of the main platforms – Instagram, Snapchat and Tik Tok – to see if they are compliant with Articles 12, 13 and 14 of GDPR.

Furthermore, some research analyzes the rights and obligations of social networks regarding user data processing (Van Alsenoy, 2014) and how they include privacy rules in their company policies, as in the case of Facebook (Van Alsenoy, 2014; Van Alsenoy et al. 2015). Others focus on data collection on minors through mobile apps without parental consent (Reyes et al., 2018; Valentino-DeVries, 2018) and how users feel they have no control over it (Stoilova, et al., 2019). In the meantime, other works are interested in finding out if advertising self-regulation applies to online behavioral advertising (OBA), or in relation to behavioral advertising and cookies and how this information is conveyed to users (Van der Hof, 2016), etc. Finally, Lambrecht et al. (2018) inquire into the liabilities of video exchange platforms that host user generated content and highlight the need of developing new tools that allow for enhanced compliance with advertising regulation since, while users are the ones that create the content, it is still hosted on those platforms.

The variety and breadth of the studies indicate that, on the one hand, there is clear preoccupation with the protection of minors that consume online videos, and, on the other, that there is a great deal of interest in determining the degree of compliance with advertising regulation, if it is sufficient or if it needs to be amended and completed in order to adapt to a new reality. This has inspired us to undertake the study as a part of the project supported by a 2018 Leonardo Grant for Researchers and Cultural Creators, BBVA

Foundation. Firstly, the study analyses the regulatory framework on minors and advertising of each country selected, the United States, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Secondly, after providing the regulatory analysis, we present the results of the content analysis of the selection of 463 videos from the 15 most popular children's YouTube channels according to Social Blade (2020) ranking in order to determine if they are in compliance with legal parameters in their territories and, finally, we analyze the data in order to get a picture on the current state of affairs and then point out what needs to be improved.

NORMATIVE CONTEXT IN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE

There is clear concern regarding the interactions between children and digital media both in the United States and Europe, as the analyzed laws and regulations reflect. One of those concerns is centered around the need of keeping children informed, at all times, about the types of messages they receive so they do not confuse the content they are watching, i.e., that they do not confuse entertainment content with advertising. For this reason, all advertising content must be clearly identified as such and it must be clearly differentiated from the rest of the content (McLaughlin, 2013; Lievens, 2010; Lievens et al., 2006; Staksrud et al., 2013). The goal is to prevent children from wanting a particular toy or product because they think their favorite YouTuber is enjoying that toy or product, when in fact he or she is merely displaying it in the channel as a result of a gift, endorsement arrangement or advertising contract with a brand.

Laws aimed at protecting children also refer to their privacy rights and prohibitions to collecting personal data related to the online behavior of children to fuel the behavioral advertising market, among other objectives. These laws, such as the EU Directives that seek to protect children in this emerging segment of the online market, or the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA) in the United States, are complemented by regulatory action by entities, such as the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) in the UK, or the FCT in the US, as well as reports, such as the one from the IAB in Spain (2015).

FTC enforcement of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act on YouTube channels – shifting the burden to content creators?

In the United States, telecommunications regulators took a hands-off approach to the regulation of online platforms. Most famously, Title V of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, through its intermediary liability rules established in Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996, grants broad immunity to Internet providers by not considering them publishers, just monitors of the content that appears on their platforms. Section 509 of Title V amends the Communications Act of 1934 to include Section 230 "Protection for Private Blocking and Screening of Offensive Material." It highlights the US Congress's perception that the Internet is a platform that can offer "a forum for a true diversity of political discourse, unique opportunities for cultural development, and myriad avenues for intellectual activity"¹ thanks to "minimum government regulation."² This led

¹ § 230 (a) (3) of Title II of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 201).

² § 230 (a) (4) of Title II of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 201).

Congress to codify as its policy for the development of the Internet and interactive media the preservation of a “vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet... unfettered by Federal or State Regulation.”³

In the absence of any regulation, United States Congress instead sought to encourage the development of technology that maximizes “user control over what information is received by individuals, families, and schools who use the Internet...”⁴ Since, according to Congress, the Internet is a diverse platform that offers unlimited choices and where control over the consumption of content is the responsibility of the user. Thus, parents bear the responsibility of controlling the content their children can access online. Highlighting the dispositions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 serves to set the tone for the way the United States chose to approach the Internet regulation that deals with children and parental decision and consent in regard to the content they access online, the interactions with online platforms and other users and the responsibilities, if any, of both platforms and the creators of content that seek children as their audience.

Misguided as these perceptions of what the Internet is today, and there are plenty of critiques that offer alternative views that are perhaps more rooted in the current realities of the Internet (Ghosh, 2020) – and as perceptions of the Internet and Internet companies have shifted since 1996 – we should certainly take into account calls to adopt regulations for Internet platforms and service providers, including Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act reforms, that come from academia (among many others see Citron, 2009, 2020; Citron & Wittes, 2017; Citron & Franks, 2020; Keller, 2018) and policymakers (See: Department of Justice, 2020 and for a summary of past legislative proposals, see: Reidenberg et al., 2012). Online platforms themselves claim that there was a need for more regulation in the past (Press Association, 2019). Nevertheless, the hands-off approach to online platform regulations persists as the Law of the Land to this day and gives context to the state of the art of regulation of the relationships between YouTube content creators, the Alphabet-owned platform itself and their audience of both children and their parents. In the American context, the Federal Trade Commission is the agency that has the most bearing on regulatory actions aimed at online privacy in general and YouTube content for children in particular. We must say, however, that in general, the Federal Trade Commission’s powers to regulate privacy are relatively weak which, critics argue leads to “stunning disparity between (FTC) guidelines and the consumer internet industry’s actual practices” (Ghosh, 2020, p. 69).

The Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA) is practically the only regulation in United States law that establishes any rules that govern interactions between platforms, channels, and their users which highlights the importance of protecting children online. It is aimed at protecting the privacy rights of children under the age of 13. COPPA itself requires the FTC to issue rules governing the online collection of data under the age of 13. These rules, published for the first time in 1999 and together with the Act itself, are known as the “COPPA Rule” (Zavaletta, 2001). The COPPA Rule applies to operators of websites and online servers – or those that act on their behalf – that collect

³ § 230 (b) (1) & (2) of Title II of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 201).

⁴ § 230 (b) (3) of Title II of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 201).

or maintain personal information (defined as individually identifiable information about an individual collected online including name, personal address, e-mail address, phone number or social security number⁵) about their users for commercial purposes.⁶ Personal information also includes any “information concerning the child and combines with an identifier described in section X(8).⁷” The law also sets rules for the disclosure of personal information collected from a child in identifiable form, for an operator for any purpose and for making a child’s personal information publicly available online.⁸

The COPPA Rule establishes that “verifiable parental consent” is necessary for the collection of the personal information of their children. This consent can be given by technological, or other “reasonable” means of obtaining it and must include “a request for authorization for future collection, use, and disclosure... to ensure that a parent or child receives notice of the operator’s personal information collection, use, and disclosure practices, and authorizes the collection, use, and disclosure, as applicable, of personal information and the subsequent use of that information before that information is collected from that child.⁹” Most importantly, COPPA regulates the collection and use of children’s personal information in websites and online services directed at children defining the term – “directed at children” as “a commercial website or online service that is targeted to children; or that portion of a commercial website or online service that is targeted to children¹⁰ that is, to “operators of general audience websites who have actual knowledge that a user is a child” (Zavaletta, 2001, p. 3) and the Rule establishes guidelines as to what the FTC will consider when classified a website as “directed to children.”¹¹

The COPPA Rule was amended in 2013, introducing several clarifications in terms of its definitions and adaptation to more recent technological developments. Among changes introduced in 2013, were amendments into what was to be considered as personal information – most notably, the inclusion of geolocation data – and what should be disclosed in a privacy policy and the direct notice to parents. Another is that the use of persistent identifiers by ad networks for behavioral advertising cannot be considered as “support for internal operations” and others related to photos, videos and audio recordings requiring parental consent for children-uploaded materials and establishing that blurred facial features of children exempts operators from notifying parents or obtaining their consent (Fitzpatrick & Winter, 2013). The COPPA rule was announced to be amended again sometime after January 2020 (Cohen, 2019), and according to announcements some of the proposed acts would drastically alter the landscape of online advertising aimed at children. The most recent example, is the proposition of the introduction of the Kids Internet Design and Safety (or KIDS) Act, proposed in September of 2021 (other versions of the same act had been introduced before). The Act would, among other things, expand protections to minors up to 16 years old and would prohibit the amplification of harmful content including through the use of algorithms. It would also ban “unboxing videos” or

⁵ Section X (8) of COPPA.

⁶ Section X (2) of COPPA.

⁷ Section X(8)(G).

⁸ Section X (4) of COPPA.

⁹ Section X (9) of COPPA. <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-id.x?SID=4939e77c77a1a1a08c1cbf905fc4b409&node=16%3A1.0.1.3.36&rgn=div5>

¹⁰ Section X (10) of COPPA.

¹¹ Title §312.2 of COPPA

marketing with interactive elements aimed at children and young teens, which the bill calls “manipulative marketing” (Markey Senate, 2021). At the time of writing this article, neither the KIDS act nor any other bills aimed at amending COPPA have been passed.

While there are previous examples of the enforcement of the COPPA rule (FTC v. Toysmart.com, LLC, and Toysmart.com, Inc., 2000), the best example concerning the enforcement of COPPA by the Federal Trade Commission so far is the action against Google and YouTube by the FTC and the New York Attorney General (Federal Trade Commission, 2019). As it was considered that these channels did not correctly notify parents that they were using online trackers (cookies) and require their consent, YouTube and its parent company had to pay \$170 million as part of a settlement for the alleged illegal collection of the personal information of children viewers of child-directed YouTube channels without parental consent (Federal Trade Commission, 2019). As a consequence of the settlement, YouTube agreed to create a mechanism to allow channel owners to designate when their videos are “directed at children” as per the COPPA Rule requirements that began to be implemented in January 2020 (Kelly & Alexander, 2019). The FTC has also since issued guidelines aimed at YouTube Channel owners so they can assess if their content is directed to children and thus, are obligated to comply with the COPPA Rule (Cohen, 2019). At the time of writing, the YouTube-created mechanism required creators to label videos that may appeal to children and if this is the case, “data collection will be blocked for all viewers, resulting in lower ad revenue, and those videos will lose some of the platform’s most popular features, including comments and end screens,” prompting some to declare that this marks the end of the “golden age of Kid’s YouTube” (Jennings, 2019).

The Guidelines for YouTube Channel owners establish that COPPA “applies in the same way it would if the channel owner had its own website or app”. The COPPA Rule applies to channel owners that upload content to YouTube when that content is directed to children and if the channel owner, or someone on its behalf... collects personal information from viewers (for example, through a persistent identifier that tracks a user to serve interest-based ads) (Cohen, 2019). These guidelines also highlight that the YouTube case contains clear examples of what the FTC may consider as a channel directed to children, namely, when content creators explicitly state that their YouTube channel is directed at children under the age of 13 in the “About” section of the channel, if the channel “has made similar statements in communications with YouTube”, if the channel owners “enabled settings that made their content appear when users searched for the names of popular toys or animated characters.” The guidelines make it clear that it is the FTC’s criteria to consider that a channel is directed at children when channels feature “popular animated children’s programs or showed kids playing with toys or participating in other child-oriented activities” (Cohen, 2019).

While YouTube has always been clearly covered by COPPA, the new YouTube Content system is seen as yet another instance of an Internet platform shifting the legal burden to users and creators. One of the criticisms aimed at COPPA has always been that it fails to meaningfully protect minors from online advertisers and other third parties, serving instead as a protection from liability for online platforms (Zavaletta, 2001). On

the other hand, and given the limited scope of the Law, evaluations of COPPA's efficacy have been positive. However, more studies about its compliance are definitely needed (Casarosa, 2011). Some of the studies that do exist have in fact found that COPPA is easily circumvented by children and that their parents may be helping them do it (boyd et al., 2011). Furthermore, the fact that Advocacy groups like Common Sense Media worry that "the rules don't go far enough, and that placing most of the burden on creators rather than YouTube itself won't do enough to protect kids online" (Kelly & Alexander, 2019), which serves to highlight that the worries remain the same twenty years after the appearance of COPPA. Others, like Simmons (2007) worry that COPPA infringes the First Amendment Rights of children to speak freely online and the Free Speech rights of the online platforms themselves due to the requirements it imposes on them, thus it is constitutionally suspect. We should remember that in the United States, the First Amendment of the Constitution precludes Congress to enact any laws that directly regulate private speakers, whether they are individual citizens or organizations. This means that online platforms, such as YouTube have a lot of power when deciding what content is allowed in their platforms and under what conditions, usually established in their own Community Standards that define what is and what is not acceptable speech, in alignment – for the most part – with their own business goals.

However, the fact of the matter is that COPPA remains the best example of online legislation that directly targets YouTube content creators and, as evidenced by the YouTube settlement, its implementation will have significant impact on the shape and form of YouTube channels aimed at children in the foreseeable future, not only in the United States, but perhaps worldwide. The effects of the settlement seem to be part of a trend, enabled by current US policy regarding the way the Internet is regulated, in which tech giants empowered by a Constitutional framework that demands little to no government interference and by-laws that tend to exempt them from liability, shift the burden of compliance to users and creators.

European Context: The United Kingdom and Spain

Europe has always protected consumers from misleading advertising both through the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive and the recently reviewed Audiovisual Media Services Directive. The Unfair Commercial Practices Directive establishes that

a commercial practice shall be regarded as misleading if it contains false information and is therefore untruthful or in any way, including overall presentation, deceives or is likely to deceive the average consumer, even if the information is factually correct, in relation to one or more of the following elements, and in either case causes or is likely to cause him to take a transactional decision that he would not have taken otherwise (Art. 6).

Misleading advertising is advertising that lacks proper information about an advertising goal, which can lead to error in the consumer regarding the nature and form of the message and that cannot be understood by the context. In this case, it could be

understood as those pieces of content in which the brand is hidden behind the content, it does not clearly appear, but has an obvious advertising intent (IAB, 2018). In this sense, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (2018) prohibits covert advertising and mandates that any commercial communication must be easily recognizable by any consumer (Art. 9.a). This task is left in the hands of the "... Member States who shall ensure that video-sharing platform providers clearly inform users where programmes and user-generated videos contain audiovisual commercial communications" (Art. 28 *ter*) through regulation or self-regulation.¹² This Directive also prohibits audiovisual commercial communications that incite minors to buy products due to their inexperience or credulity and does not allow for direct encouragement to persuade their parents or others to buy them the goods or services advertised and forbids the exploitation of the special trust they have on their parents, teachers or other people and also forbids showing minors in dangerous situations (Art. 9g). The Directive bars advertising aimed at minors of products such as alcoholic beverages (Art. 9e), cigarettes and other tobacco products (including electronic cigarettes and refill containers) (Art. 9d) or medicinal products (Art. 9f). It is suggested that commercial advertising targeted to minors related to foods contained saturated fats should be reduced (Arts. 9.3 and 9.4). In relation to content creation, this Directive defines the different elements of this ecosystem, including the video-sharing platform providers, the video-sharing platform service itself and user-generated content as well as their corresponding responsibilities. Video-sharing platform services are defined as services:

where the principal purpose of the service or of a dissociable section thereof or an essential functionality of the service is devoted to providing programmes, user-generated videos, or both, to the general public, for which the video-sharing platform provider does not have editorial responsibility, in order to inform, entertain or educate, by means of electronic communications networks... and the organisation of which is determined by the video-sharing platform provider, including by automatic means or algorithms in particular by displaying, tagging and sequencing (Art 1.).

which means companies such as YouTube that provide a video-sharing service through their platform. The content created by users, i.e., "user-generated video" is defined as a set of moving images with or without sound constituting an individual item, irrespective of its length, that is created by a user and uploaded to a video-sharing platform by that user or any other user" (Art. 1). For the purposes of this paper, "user-generated content" refers to the content created and uploaded to the video-sharing platforms with the help of their parents.

Since we are dealing with a Directive, each Member State of the EU is tasked with adopting its own regulations in relation to video-sharing platforms and ensuring that these platforms, such as YouTube, comply with national norms. In the case of minors, compliance

¹² Countries such as the United Kingdom (Influencer's Guide to making clear that ads are ads), France (Part of Recommendation Communication publicitaire digitale), Italy (Ap Digital Chart), Belgium (Belgian Advertising Council Recommendations on Online Influencers), Germany (Leitfaden zur Kennzeichnung von Werbung auf Instagram), Ireland (Asai Guidance Note), Sweden (The Swedish Consumer Agency Guidance on marketing in blogs and other social media), the Netherlands (Part of SRC The Dutch Advertising Code) among others, have developed self-regulation codes for the advertising sector, making special mention of the protection of minors.

refers to prohibited content (such as gratuitous violence, hatred or pornography) as well as commercial content that may impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors (Arts 28.3 and 6).

On the one hand, the 2018 Audiovisual Media Services Directive does not impose great obligations on platforms that allow for the sharing of user-generated content, even if they are now required to include proprietary and third-party control measures and even if a video that is reported for a takedown is eliminated within a few hours when there is a justified cause for it. It is notable how permissible the norm still is. Even if we are dealing with a business model based on third-party content distributed through the platform, the provider should still bear most of the responsibility, as it happens in other media such as television (Lambrech et al, 2018). On the other hand, the Directive impedes these platforms from collecting personal data related to the navigation habits of minors to be used for commercial purposes within the context of behavioral advertising (i.e., ads targeted at users based on their online activity).

Regarding European self-regulation practices, the European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA), the organization that includes European national self-regulation entities and the main trade associations representing the interests of the advertising industry, has elaborated the “Best Practice Recommendation on Influencer Marketing” (2018) report which recommends self-regulation associations from Member State countries to regulate the commercial advertising activities of *influencers*. This code of best practices insists that all commercial advertising content should be identified as such, and that such identification should be instantaneous and done in a way that is evident for its target audience. The report suggests the use of tags or hashtags that indicate that it is an instance of commercial advertising; or the insertion of text expressly stating that “the products have been sent free of charge for the purpose of review” or that “the trip was paid for by X”) as long there is advertising intent (sponsorship contract, gifts in cash or in-kind). Compliance with these obligations falls upon both the influencer and the sponsoring brand.

In that sense, the United Kingdom protects minors through its Advertising Code (Section 5) (ASA) the Guidance on recognition of advertising online marketing to children under 12 (Committee of Advertising Practice, CAP, 2017) and, specifically, with the Advertising Guidance note on Child Brand Ambassadors (Committee of Advertising Practice, CAP, 2019). The two first codes alert that commercial communications aimed at minors should not contain any that may result in physical, mental or moral harm to them or in dangerous situations without proper adult supervision, nor should they encourage children to imitate practices that may be unsafe for a child, nor should they exploit their credulity, loyalty, vulnerability or lack of experience in the terms provided for by the Audiovisual Media Services Directive¹³.

The aforementioned Guidance on Recognition of Advertising Online Marketing to children under 12 (Committee of Advertising Practice, CAP, 2017) and the Advertising

¹³ It should be noted that this work was carried out before Brexit and is likely to take a different form now.

Guidance note on Child Brand Ambassadors (Committee of Advertising Practice, CAP, 2019) alert on the necessity of identifying and differentiating entertainment content from commercial advertising content and warns that “a “highly immersive” marketing communication features prolonged or in-depth interactivity, principally, game-play or narrative such as that of a story in audio-visual content (...). The usual separations between advertising and other content – spatial and/or thematic – are absent” (Guidance on Recognition of advertising online marketing to children under 12). In this case, advertisers are warned that their commercial advertising communications must be identifiable for minors through the use of text such as “#ad” or “#advertisement” and any confusion about the commercial advertising nature of any content must be avoided. The Spanish IAB has also issued a Guide for Influencer Minors (IAB, 2018) directed at advertising industry professionals and parents that act as content creators in order to provide support in terms of legal matters related to commercial advertising on sharing platforms.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter, we analyzed the existing regulation related to content created by or aimed at underage people in the US, the UK, and Spain. As the next step in our research, we wanted to see what is the degree of compliance with the said advertising regulation. The following research questions prompted our content analysis research:

1. Do videos by underage creators disclose, in any capacity, whether the video contains advertising content?
2. Do videos disclose that there is advertising content through any visual or verbal cues?
3. Do creators request personal data from minors for advertising purposes and (if yes) in which cases?

Thus, the primary goal of our research was to determine if, in the researched videos there is a visual or verbal means of identifying that they contain commercial advertising according to current legislation. The secondary objective is whether they request personal data for commercial advertising purposes.

The research methodology used was a content analysis of a selected sample of YouTube videos created by underage content creators. The selected sample was collected through the main *kidfluencer* channels on Youtube in three countries: Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. To select the channels, we have followed the subsequent criteria:

1. Videos that feature people under 14 years of age;
2. Channels classified as A or B according to the Social Blade (2020) ranking (this ranking measures a channel’s influence based on a variety of metrics including average view counts and amount of “other channel” widgets listed in, where A is the most influential grade followed by B and C);

3. Channels that had a visualization median per video above 1.000 views and a rate of video publication over two videos per week. These data were obtained from YouTube channels themselves.

Thus, our sample included 15 YouTube channels aimed at children; 463 videos (published between 2016 and 2020) were selected randomly from those channels and were analyzed. This represented over 6.860 minutes of content viewed (with average duration of 15 minutes per video) that was analyzed by the authors of the article in 2020. As a reference point, we selected the most popular channels according to the first positions in the Social Blade ranking (See Table 1).

Table 1. The most popular channels according to the first positions in the Social Blade ranking

Channel name	Classification	Position in ranking (in their country)	Position in ranking (general)	Subscribers	Channel start date
Spain					
Las Ratitas 2016-2019	A	2	68	7,780,725	2015
TheCrazyHaacks	B+	62	3,034	2,606,544	2015
Jugando con Aby	B+	53	2,718	1,372,471	2015
Mikel Tube	A	61	390	2,398,017	2015
Los juguetes de Arantxa	B+	69	3,403	2,363,027	2015
United Kingdom					
NatyTubeFun	A	4	153	1,106,244	2011
Emily Tube	A	15	408	8,028,579	2014
ToysAndMe	A	61	2,215	9,631,930	2014
HitzhToys	B+	190	6,919	622,000	2014
LuckySurpriseToysReview	B	+250	11,512	2,599,417	2016
United States					
RyanToysReview	A+	10	30	17,004,486	2015
EvanTubeHD	B+	+250	3,757	5,919,552	2011
Naiah And Elli Toys Show	B	+250	5,009	1,719,468	2015
Hailey'sMagicalPlayhouse	B	+250	8,942	1,492,720	2015
Hulyan Maya	B	+250	6,210	1,660,008	2008

Source: *Social Blade* (2020) (from 2020 till today).

The selection of the three countries that appear in the table responds to the fact that they are points of reference among YouTube channels for minors. The United States was the pioneer with the channel EvanTube in 2011 and continues to have examples in excellent positions such as Kids Diana Show with 104 million followers and Like Nastya

with over 102 million followers in 2022. Spain is a country with some of the best positioned children's YouTubers in the world according to the Social Blade ranking. Examples include *las Ratitas* with almost 25 million followers in 2022 and we also selected the United Kingdom because within the European space, British channels are the reference point for English language content not only for minors but in general.

This study used the coding sheet created by its authors and that was used to identify the following main categories:

- >Identifying data: Youtuber, Title, Link, Date, Video duration, Video typology
- >Advertised product
- >Type of representation: the way the product or brand appears on the video
- >Type of advertising format
- >Persuasive resources
- >Regulation
- >Tone of the message
- >Participant profile
- >Staging/narrative: the type of stage.

In the 'Regulation' category the following data on the types of laws and norms were collected: European directives, national legislation and self-regulation norms that mandate that all advertising content must be clearly identifiable and unequivocal for the recipient with visual or auditory cues as well as laws that regulate the collection of personal data.

These instruments included:

- >EU level: Audiovisual Media Services Directive, Directive concerning misleading and comparative advertising and the General Data Protection Regulation.
- >Spanish National laws: the General Law on Advertising, the Law on Unfair Competition and the Audiovisual Communications Law and the National Data Protection and Digital Rights Organic Law.
- >United States national laws: Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA)
- >UK self-regulation: Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) code.
- >European self-regulation: the European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA) code and the Advertising code.

In each video we identified if advertising was present and if this advertising content was identified through text or audio or if it was not identified as commercial content. We also identified if personal data was collected for commercial purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Degree of compliance in terms of properly identifying advertising content

As it can be observed, it is common that the video contains no indication that it is, or that it contains commercial advertising, which clearly is in breach of legislation in the three countries included in this study. Of all of the researched countries, Spain is the country where the commercial nature of the videos is disclosed at the highest rate, with 29.1% (11.2% was disclosed verbally and 17.9% was disclosed through text), followed by the United States with 15.4% (13.9% disclosed the information verbally and 1.5% was disclosed through text). United Kingdom is the country where the rate of disclosure is the lowest (8.3% and only verbally). We should especially highlight the fact that in videos from the UK sample we did not find any visual indication that the content was commercial advertising or contained commercial advertising.

The previous analysis shows that, while specific advertising regulation exists both in Europe and the United States, and that such regulation does indeed demand the identification of advertising messages as to what they are, and that such regulation also contains dispositions aimed at protecting minors, the law is not followed. Our analysis shows us that in more than 70% of cases in Spain, 84% in the United States and in 91% of cases in the United Kingdom, the proper information is not disclosed. In any of the three countries, only in a minority of cases we were able to observe a visual or verbal indication that the video analyzed contained or was commercial advertising. Even if we combine the rate of compliance in all three countries, we see that only 11.1% of videos came with a verbal indication that they contained or were commercial advertising and only 6.4% of videos included a visual indication disclosing that they contained or were commercial in nature. In the case of the UK, we saw no videos that contained any visual indication of commercial advertising (Table 2).

Table 2. Identifying advertising content in videos from underage content creators

	Is there any visual or auditory cue that identifies the video as containing advertising or if it is advertising?		
	Yes, verbally	Yes, through text	No
Spain	11.2%	17.9%	70.9%
United Kingdom	8.3%	0.0%	91.7%
United States	13.9%	1.5%	84.7%
Total	11.1%	6.4%	82.4%

Requesting personal data for promotional purposes

We detected only two cases (0.4% of the videos) in which data were collected without authorization and both cases were from Spanish channels. In both cases, data are requested to enter a raffle, one for a T-shirt related to the channel's self-promotional purposes and in the other case, for the possibility of winning a gift from a well-known brand.

According to our study, it is clear that greater efforts are needed to ensure compliance with existing laws and that regulatory and enforcement bodies need to keep a watchful eye and even make use of the means of the enforcement provided for by law in order for this situation to improve. Apart from regulation, other norms, such as self-regulation codes and ethics codes within the advertising trade should recommend advertisers to make better efforts to properly label content as commercial advertising aimed at minors to protect the interests and wellbeing of children who consume the types of online content described in this work. Online video sharing platforms, such as YouTube should also make efforts to ensure that both advertisers and content creators comply with existing regulation and recommendation from relevant associations. It is also imperative to ensure the protection of privacy and personal data for children who consume online media in order to prevent them from disclosing and giving away personal information without proper parental consent. For this, COPPA in the United States and the General Data Protection Regulation in the EU provide the necessary regulatory frameworks. In Europe, we also observe that self-regulation norms are followed together with the legal rules to regulate the market from the advertising agents themselves.

It is evident that digital media have opened many new opportunities for business. One of the most buoyant new forms of business is that of influencer minors that has consistently grown since 2017. In particular, children that create and are the stars of channels aimed at other children in which they show them toys, explain to them how to play with them, etc. are very popular. Brands are aware of the popularity of this phenomenon and have fully entered the market in order to get a piece of the pie. They contact YouTuber children and hire them or gift them their products so they can be featured in their channels.

It was expected for companies to spend almost US\$10 billion in “influencer marketing” in 2020, as compared to the US\$6.5 billion from 2019. In Europe, there was an increase of 45% in spending, from 2018 until 2021. In the specific case of advertising aimed at children, digital spending was supposed to reach US\$1.7 billion in 2021 (37% of total spending in advertising aimed at children). As this phenomenon grows, the amount of content created by minors grows as well as the number of minors that consume content created and uploaded by their peers, influencer children. We can see that these numbers have doubled in the United States since 2015 and how the amount of time children spend consuming these contents also grows.

This is an emerging reality that worries regulators, who have taken action, as we have reflected in our work. However, these actions remain incomplete. It is true that regulators understand there is an imperative necessity for the messages that these minors broadcast to be clear in order to avoid that other children are led to confusion and into thinking that the message they receive does not contain any form of commercial advertising and that it is purely entertainment. However, it is also true that there are specific laws related to advertising in both Europe and the United States that seek to ensure that messages disseminated by children YouTubers are, among other things, clear enough, to avoid confusion among other minors who might think that the message they receive is not advertising, and instead is entertainment or of another nature.

While laws in both Europe and the United States seek to ensure that advertising is properly identified as such, and even if such laws exist, and there is concern regarding the interactions between children and digital media both in the United States and Europe, our study shows that there is a number of irregularities in all countries studied, particularly in relation to advertising messages and compliance with the duty to disclose that these messages convey advertising content. Non-compliance is alarmingly frequent as our research shows. The required information is not provided in more than 70% of cases in Spain, it is not properly disclosed in over 84% of cases in the United States and is not provided in more than 91% of the cases studied in the United Kingdom.

CONCLUSION

The digital sphere has opened many doors for new types of business. One of the most prosperous of these new types of business are underage influencer channels, where the protagonists of videos are children who show other children their toys or explain how to play with them, among other content. These channels have shown steady growth since 2017. Brands did not ignore this phenomenon and were quick to engage and secure their share of the market. They often contact YouTuber kids and sign them into contracts or give them gifts in order for them to show their products on their channels. It is necessary that the messages minors convey on their channels are clear and must avoid that other children get confused and think that the message they are receiving is not advertising and instead is just entertainment. There is specific regulation that seeks to avoid any confusion of whether the content is advertising or not. There are national regulations in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Spain as well as European Union laws that regulate advertising messages and, together with self-regulation codes, among other things, contain obligations to identify as advertising content that has such a goal. The first initiatives to regulate this growing online market were proposed by: the Federal Trade Commission in the United States; reports by the European Commission in the EU; reports by the Advertising Standards Authority in the UK; and reports by the IAB in Spain. Despite the existence of these regulations, this study shows that compliance is minimal regarding the identification of advertising content as such. Compliance does not reach 70% in any of the studied countries while the rate of compliance with data protection regulation is greater. However, interest in regulating this market and protecting minors is evident, as shown by the recent entering into force of the Digital Services Act Regulation in the European Union which makes regulating advertising in the online space, particularly in very large online platforms a priority, as it is the protection of the digital rights of citizens, including minors.

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MALOLJETNICI KAO STVARATELJI SADRŽAJA: STUDIJA O UČINKOVITOSTI PROPISA O OGLAŠAVANJU U SJEDINJENIM AMERIČKIM DRŽAVAMA, UJEDINJENOM KRALJEVSTVU I ŠPANJOLSKOJ

Esther Martínez Pastor :: Rodrigo Cetina Presuel :: Isabel Serrano Maíllo

SAŽETAK Članak analizira stupanj usklađenosti s propisima o oglašavanju koji se odnose na sadržaje koje su izradile maloljetne osobe ili su namijenjene maloljetnim osobama na YouTubeu. Istraživanje je provedeno analizom sadržaja na uzorku od 463 videa koji su objavljeni na platformi YouTube u razdoblju od 2016. do 2020. godine. Videozapisi su odabrani s kanala 15 najpopularnijih dječjih youtubera, prema njihovoj poziciji na Social Bladeu, a koji potječu iz Sjedinjenih Američkih Država, Ujedinjenog Kraljevstva i Španjolske. Glavni cilj istraživanja bio je utvrditi otkrivaju li videozapisi da se radi o komercijalnom sadržaju i je li to učinjeno u skladu s važećim zakonodavstvom. Ujedno, istraživano je jesu li osobni podatci traženi u promotivne svrhe. Članak pokazuje kako je unatoč postojanju oglašivačke regulative u svim istraživanim zemljama usklađenost s regulativom minimalna u pogledu identifikacije reklamnog sadržaja kao takvog.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

MALOLJETNICI, YOUTUBE, KOMERCIJALNI SADRŽAJ, PRIVATNOST

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PRIKAZI KNJIGA

BOOK REVIEWS

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, PLATFORM WORK AND GENDER EQUALITY

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Digital (r)evolution and rapid growth of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, such as machine learning and deep learning, have an inevitable effect on our lives. It is important to pinpoint a radical transformation of the world of work, regarding gender (in)equality in the labour market, and the distribution of unpaid work. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) published a report *Artificial intelligence, platform work and gender equality* in order to "fill knowledge gaps between the labour market, AI, platform work and gender equality" (p. 11). The EIGE's report reflects on transformation of labour market affected by use of AI but also on how the COVID-19 pandemic initiated a discussion on the use of monitoring and surveillance tools in order to track workers' activity, showing how "algorithmic monitoring is highly invasive and potentially discriminatory to the workers" (p. 12). The report is a result of an EIGE's mandate to monitor progress on achieving the objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) in the EU (Area F, "Women and the economy") and consists of five chapters.

In Chapter 1, it is discussed how AI is changing the quality and quantity of jobs across sectors and working conditions and how "non-standard forms of employment is changing conventional norms about where and when work is performed and the overall structure of work as we know it" Petrongolo & Ronchi, 2020, as cited in EIGE (2021, p. 28). In addition, authors problematize gender bias and discrimination in the algorithmic technologies regarding managing workers, and how this might amplify gender inequalities and perpetuate discriminatory practices. The change of an environmental scenery to digital surroundings leaves women in a position at a slightly higher risk of job loss due to automation. Brynjolfsson in his article "The Turing trap: The promise and peril of human-like artificial intelligence" points out the alternative to using AI to automate human intelligence and labour: using AI to complement workers by enabling them to do new things. Complementarity implies that "people remain indispensable for value creation and retain bargaining power in labour market and in political decision making. In contrast, when AI replicates and automates existing human capabilities, machines become better substitutes for human labour and workers lose economic and political bargaining power" (Brynjolfsson, 2022). In this sense, an overview of the research data on the impact of AI on the labour market, and resulting changes in working conditions from a gender perspective in this report, shows the possibility that AI can be used to fight gender stereotypes rather than only focus on how the application of AI-based technology reproduces discrimination, sexism and gender stereotypes and enables new forms of gender-based violence (p. 18). Research on working conditions and work patterns in Chapter 2 shows how the income, work flexibility and family roles (as factors of motivating platform work) are influenced by gender norms. The presented data are a result of an online panel survey of platform workers in 10 countries (Denmark, Spain, France, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland) that EIGE carried out in 2020. The findings of the survey show that in recent years, the share of women platform workers has been increasing, partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the related acceleration of digital forms of work (p.

34). Both women and men platform workers in the survey were relatively young, with the majority being highly educated. The survey finds that “the high shares of regular platform workers in younger (25–34) and prime (35–54) working-age groups point to the importance of platform jobs in both early and more advanced career pathways. The average age of regular platform workers was 30 years for women and 32 years for men. The majority of women (43%) belonged to the 25–34 age group” (p. 36). According to the results of the survey, women platform workers are more likely than men to mention “poor access to social security as a drawback of platform work” (p. 50) and among platform workers there are only 6% of women and 4% of men platform workers who are students. Contrary to the research, which suggests that specific aspects of flexibility of platform work (time and space) are an advantage and an important motivator for working on platforms, the results of the EIGE’s survey highlight the negative aspects of flexibility – unpredictability of working hours and income. According to the findings of the survey, “platform work is often performed outside the regular working day, by both women and men. As many as 36% of women and 40% of men who regularly work via platforms often or always work nights and/or weekends. Women’s overall working time and schedules on online platforms are more affected by family factors. Men’s working time and schedules are more affected by personal and professional factors. Childcare and household work influence the work schedules of women in couples with children. On average, women spend about 2.5 hours more per week than men in household work, and 3.5 hours more per week than men on childcare. The gaps are even greater in couples with children” (p. 55). There is an evident discrepancy in terms of income between women and men, especially for single women. The findings are highlighted in the following statements: “Women’s total income falls into lower income brackets more often than men’s total income. Single women are the most likely to be in the lowest income quartile, followed by lone mothers. For most women in couples with children, their income falls into the lowest income quartile in their country. By contrast, most men in couples with children belong to the highest income quartile” (p. 47). Chapter 3 focuses on the employment status of platform workers and access to social protection in reference to the fact that “platform work blurs the line between employment and self-employment” (Behrendt & Nguyen, 2018, as cited in EIGE, 2021). Authors suggest that social partners have a powerful role to play in regulating and shaping platform work. There are several problems with working conditions of the platform workers: “Fragmentation of tasks and long working hours have an effect on work–life balance. In addition, the fragmentation of tasks performed via platforms (micro-tasks) and large amounts of unpaid time spent searching for tasks lead to platform workers working excessively long days without rest periods or paid leave. Although this may conflict with existing working time regulations, these rules cannot be extended to platform workers classified as self-employed” (p. 15). Generally, platform workers are unprotected under national laws, and many women platform workers work under student contracts that offer limited social protection. There are no specific measures adopted in the EU to ensure equal treatment of and prevent discrimination against platform workers, except for Spain. Chapters 4 and 5 present conclusions and policy recommendations drawn from the research findings. The authors offer a potential remedy to challenge existing gender inequalities, which can be achieved only through: “(1) gender-responsive regulation, institutions and policies; (2) combating gender stereotypes, such as those relating to

women's participation in STEM; (3) policy measures that favour more equal division of paid and unpaid care work; and (4) equal representation of women in decision-making" (p. 77). In order to pursue and maintain a career in AI it is essential for women to combat gender stereotypes and the gender divide in digital skills (from an early age), strongly male-dominated work environments, the gender pay gap and the lack of work-life balance. Policy research tends to avoid adopting a gender perspective, which results in gender-blind regulations and therefore women's work in the platform economy remains largely invisible or is seen as a continuation of their traditional roles in (unpaid) domestic and care work (p. 78). The European Commission (EC) Artificial Intelligence Act represents a "promising step towards minimising the risk of erroneous, biased and discriminatory AI-assisted decision-making at EU and national levels" along with the gender mainstreaming and use of gender monitoring and evaluation "with a view to promoting gender equality and tackling discrimination in the AI ecosystem" (p. 81).

According to the EC, over 28 million people in the EU, work through digital labour platforms and their number is expected to reach 43 million people in 2025. Many of the potential uses of AI are yet to be seen, and it is important to control those in control of the technology, because AI-based technology can perpetuate gender stereotypes to achieve better marketing outcomes. Gender sensitive policies that address and manage technological changes are central to strengthening inclusiveness. The EIGE's Gender Impact Assessment Toolkit could be particularly useful during the development of legislation and various policies. This Toolkit has been defined as an ex-ante evaluation, analysis or assessment of a law, policy or programme that might have negative consequences on equality between women and men. The great challenges of the forthcoming era face us with the need to understand how technological progress should go in favour of equality and how it is distributed so as to ensure the balanced allocation of goods, services, and income. The EIGE's report is a very valuable contribution and a turning point for understanding gender equality in artificial intelligence and platform work for various stakeholders, though primarily for policy makers.

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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DIGITAL MONOPOLIES: CONTRADICTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES TO DATA COMMERCIALIZATION

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"Data has been hailed as the new oil. The largest datasets are currently locked inside technological forms and business models within commodity chains. While there is a justified fear of governments' uses of citizens' data, it is currently poorly regulated and deployed

solely as the means to private wealth through surplus value extraction." (p. 173) is claimed by Bilić, Prug and Žitko in the conclusion of their recently published *The Political Economy of Digital Monopolies: Contradictions and Alternatives to Data Commodification*. Their book presents an attempt at mapping the economic power structure of the contemporary tech giants, subsumed under the acronym GAFAM (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft). This is done in order to provide a systemic analysis of the seemingly immanent monopolistic nature of the very economic model under scrutiny. Furthermore, the authors formulate a Marxism-based critique of some of its basic structural traits, as well as critique of the wider social externalities of such economic model, while advocating for the democratic opening of the technological and economic field.

It is a truly admirable collaborative effort for several reasons. Foremost, because it grapples with a macro-theoretical explanation of rather recent, and rather complex phenomena – the rise to power of the so-called *digital platforms*, and enormous proliferation of such business model(s). Secondly, due to an impressive array of other theories presented that have so far dealt with digital economy issues, both from Marxian and non-Marxian perspectives. But also, due to extensive and sometimes very meticulous epistemological debates with other theoretical positions that this book engages with, over different aspects of the new (or rather not so new, as the authors would argue) digital economy. Lastly, because it presents *a breath of fresh air* in the field of studying digital economy, primarily in regard to how it approaches its object(s) of study – not by taking them for granted, by reifying them, or perhaps even worse – feeling a sense of admiration for them. Quite on the contrary – this book presents an uncompromising analytical position that does not stand in awe of the new technology, the organizational and power structure of contemporary tech giants, or the complexity of social ramifications of the models studied. Instead, equipped with a sharp Marxian analytical apparatus, and sociological imagination that is both plentiful and lucid, it meets the onslaught of the tech-driven capitalism on society head-on. In any case, certain aspects of this study present an insightful read for anyone interested in either contemporary debates within Marxian critique of political economy, or for scholars interested in the concrete empirical insights into the issues of production and circulation of commodities, but also issues regarding the possibilities of regulating the commodity chains in the context of digital platforms. All in all, it is a densely written study, both in terms of problems and ideas presented. So, what does it present to a reader, and how?

First of all, the authors provide arguments for their choice of the main analytical framework – the Marxian critique of political economy, with the addition of the Critical Theory, and the so-called *New Reading of Marx's* corpus of literature, with a strong emphasis on Marx's theory of *social forms*, subsumed under the umbrella term *value-form*. So, their idea was to stay open to both new readings of some of the "traditional" concepts within this theoretical tradition, while at the same retaining enough methodological flexibility when it comes to pressing issues under analytical scrutiny. They argue that much of the existing research on digital economy falls into a trap of devising new concepts, when there is no real necessity for those. As they further argue, such concepts then either reduce the original explanatory power of the conceptual models they build on, or become quickly outdated when either new social forms of technology in use, or new products and services emerge and take over the market.

The authors start from a pretty obvious issue at hand, formulating it into a basic research question: "Given the nominally competitive character of developed economies, why is there a single company for socially and economically important functions such as web searching, social networking, and online retailing?" (p. 2). This leads them to deeper analysis of a seeming paradox of the monopolistic nature of the contemporary digital market. As their approach is fundamentally both historical and empirical, one precious aspect of the book is certainly the analytical work the authors undertook in order to unravel the historical forces at work, that is, the description of how the corporate tech giants of nowadays ever became so economically giant and socially powerful. Secondly, they also strive to explain something rather mundane from a Critical Theory perspective – how "unnatural" and how deeply constructed in social terms is the experiential realm of everyday technological users in their constant engagement with datasets and algorithms (covertly), or recommendations and advertisements (overtly). More importantly, the authors want to unravel the economic processes taking part beneath the everyday users' experience of digital technology. To do so, they refer to the concept of technological "commodity fetishism", going all the way back to the Frankfurt School critique of the irrationalities of modern fetishist objectification of economically and technologically mediated social relations between humans.

But the authors go against the grain here. They are critical of the Frankfurt school's abandonment of their Marxist roots in the process of doing so – Adorno and Horkheimer's severing the ties of their culture industry model and its embedded ideology with the overarching capitalist organizational structure of the media production, distribution and consumption. To put it short, the authors claim that they endorse a "reversed" logic of the Frankfurt School – meaning that they try to simultaneously understand both the underlying structural workings of digital economy, and the impacts that this has upon the purely experiential dimensions of any user that daily engages with the new digital economy in its present cultural appearance. Such stance makes their approach closer to the *New Reading of Marx* School rather than Adorno and Horkheimer's original critique of the cultural industry model.

And while such an understanding of dialectical interrelation between the material and cultural realm is not particularly new in terms of theory, it is certainly "radical" in the sense of going back to the roots – all the way to Marx's *German Ideology*, and the famous notion of the ruling ideas of an epoch as the ideas of the ruling class. With the exception of Althusser, curiously enough, the authors did not refer to many other influential Marxian theoreticians of culture, such as R. Williams, T. Eagleton, or F. Jameson, all of whom espoused some form of cultural materialism in their explanations of the phenomenological dimensions of living conditions within (post)modern capitalist societies. Not to mention the complete absence of contemporary post-Marxist theoreticians of culture (Laclau & Mouffe, Žižek, etc.). Yet, it seems to be a reflection of the predominantly materialist and structuralist ground the authors choose to stand on.

Another curiosity of their predominantly historical materialist theoretical framework is the inclusion of the Weberian critique of the *instrumental rationality*, albeit heavily reworked via Marcuse's critical revision of the original Weber's notion of technology and the role it occupies within modern society. In short, the overall argument could be boiled down to the following thesis: "The mode of production, which produces technological

forms, shapes the range of experiential possibilities of the technological form.” (p. 46). So, while a certainly important aspect of the book is users’ experience of new digital technology, and the way they engage with digital platforms, it all goes back to the mode of production. The capitalist mode of production is a fundamentally overarching model of economic organization that enables the very functioning of the existing commodity chain. It is a chain of commodities in which users find themselves either as producers (providing data as raw material to be further commodified), or consumers of both advertising content (seen as “intermediary commodities”), and of final commodities (i.e., the produced material commodities in the traditional Marxist sense). All of this is taking place, the argument goes, with users’ active participation, while an ongoing logic of commodity production and circulation might not be that obvious to them (e.g., Google web searching or Facebook social networking that are often understood as services provided free of charge).

However, the authors argue, this is far from the truth. The new digital and platformized economy seems to be just an expression (technological form) of the currently predominant mode of (certainly, capitalist) production that ultimately serves the goal of corporate surplus value extraction by means of commodified labour. So, we are presented with a model of production and circulation of what the authors distinguish as essentially three main types of commodities: *pre-commodities*, *intermediary commodities*, and *final commodities*. The former two types of commodities are rather peculiar as they refer to both digital platforms and the services they offer (the *pre-commodities* that came about as the result of previous capital inputs and a wage-labour system), and the user-produced raw data that are being sold to interested third parties, i.e., advertisers (the *intermediate commodities*), in order to encourage sales of the *final commodities*. So, producers and consumers are all caught up within this commodity chain of data-based and technology-mediated production and circulation.

This brings us to another important theoretical aspect of the book – the idea of *legal forms* that both enable and legitimize the existence of digital monopolies. Starting from the critique of a “perfect competition” ideal type of market, which is popular within mainstream economics, the authors argue that instead of an aberration, or a stage in the development of capitalist market relations, the monopolies (or rather oligopolies) are an intrinsic part, and a regularly occurring phenomena in the process of capital accumulation and its continuous expansion. The legal forms, or to be more specific, the advent of the intellectual property rights only facilitated the private enclosure and subsequent commercialization of knowledge and data. And while the technological forms of both Google and Facebook once relied on publicly funded science and research, as well as Free Software inputs, the existing legal forms that came about since the advent and the subsequent privatization of the Internet ensured the protection of their oligopoly on immaterial wealth, such as scientific discoveries, technology and the accumulated data sets.

As the authors argue, all of the aforementioned models central to the book’s thesis – the threefold chain of commodity production-circulation, and the interplay between the data sets, technological and legal forms are further caught up in the core-periphery global model of surplus value extraction from the peripheral countries, thus enhancing the existing global inequalities, while promoting cultural imperialism of the core

countries operating through their leading technological companies. Such asymmetrical distribution resulting from the concentration of knowledge, technologies and capital in the hands of a few U.S.-based digital platform owners, and its protection via legal forms, while at the same time radiating outwards and reaping profits worldwide, leaves nation-states and transnational entities like the European Union without a possibility to demand democratic, fair and transparent control over data.

So, ultimately, for the authors, the underlying economic logic of the production model in question – of private profits and public externalities is not so new, albeit it is being increasingly mediated through digital platforms. Digital platforms are in such a view only a current, historically contingent technological extension (social form) of the specifically capitalist mode of production that, for the sake of surplus value extraction, undermines public sphere and weakens democracy.

The possible routes to alternative development are being largely discussed in the final section of the book. Corporate taxation is one such possibility – a common EU taxation policy in order to ensure the contribution to the public finances by transnational companies of the GAFAM type is something the authors are advocating for. However, future taxation policies should, in the best case, only alleviate the current damage to the public interests that are being most harmed by the existing digital business models – ranging from the issues of deregulated, underpaid or unpaid labour, to the issues of the violated media sphere, all of which are infringements on basic human and labour rights, and ultimately contributing, each in their own way, to the overall weakening of democracy. Nevertheless, the authors argue that tax regulation should only be seen as a first step in the long struggle to democratize societies and empower their capacities for the creation and sustainment of inclusive and egalitarian institutions for the digital age. The creation and advocacy of such public policies should be able to balance out the existing, technologically mediated and legally protected asymmetries of economic and social power. Human and social development should cease to be a by-product of the profit-driven model of production. The democratic (re)opening of the privately enclosed sets of big data, a model legitimized through legally ensured monopolies, and the reimagining and redesigning of the currently existing surplus value-extracting digital platforms might be – as the authors hope in their closing remarks – the first important step towards an alternative social development based on public wealth.

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Thomas Poell, David B. Nieborg and Brooke Erin Duffy

PLATFORMS AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

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The history of cultural production, especially since the dawn of digitization, has been written in terms of change. Going further, the first readings of these changes – caused by the ubiquitous presence of the Internet and the World Wide Web, smartphones

and social media – interpreted them as authentic revolutions in relation to their emancipatory potential for cultural production. Nevertheless, the definitive settlement of giant transnational companies offering goods and services over the Internet and the transformation of cultural industries in the last two decades, reminded us of the essentially socio-economic nature of digital environments. In other words, changes in cultural industries have tended to obscure deep continuities. As Vincent Mosco (2015) pointed out in a reference to Dan Schiller, “new media” might lead us to speak of “digital capitalism”, but if it is still capitalism, there is no doubt which term is more important of the two.

It is within the objective of making sense of changes while being mindful of the continuities with earlier forms of production, that the authors of *Platforms and Cultural Production* analyze the reconfiguration of cultural production caused by digital platforms. Thus, the approach is based on the premise that continuities are entangled with changes and hence maybe we should rather talk about patterns of change (Hesmondhalgh, 2019). The reconfiguration that services such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram or WeChat have meant for cultural industries is remarkable in all phases of the cultural production process, including creation, distribution, marketing, and monetization practices.

The in-depth analysis offered by Thomas Poell, David B. Nieborg and Brooke Erin Duffy has two distinct parts. The first half of the book focuses on institutional changes, including patterns of change in markets, infrastructure and governance, whereas the second part discusses changes in cultural practices, including labor and the relation between platforms, creativity and democracy. The study draws on knowledge from software studies, critical political economy of culture and communication and business studies, offering an analysis that departs from the notion of platforms and the so-called process of “platformization”, previously developed by some of the authors (Nieborg & Poell, 2018). Definitions matter when we talk about platforms. The broadness of the concept has often constituted an intentional discursive process in political and entrepreneurial terms (Gillespie, 2010); “platform imaginaries” have encouraged a perception of platforms as elevated surfaces above the ground, designed to facilitate a platform-neutral activity. To understand the changes brought by platform companies to cultural production, they are first defined by the authors not as neutral actors, but as complex data infrastructures that facilitate, aggregate, monetize and govern interactions between end-users, and content and service providers (the later also referred to as “complementors”, along with platform intermediaries and advertisers). Additionally, platformization is understood as the process of penetration of platforms’ economic, infrastructural, and governmental extensions into cultural industries; a process that becomes especially relevant in the case of so-called “platform-dependent” cultural producers who heavily rely on platforms. From this starting point, the book analyzes the two mentioned dimensions of change, illustrating its explanations with examples from very concrete industry segments and companies: specifically, the segments of social media, videogames and the news industry, and platform companies like Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, ByteDance, Spotify and Tencent.

Within its first part, the book starts focusing on patterns of change in markets. Chapter 2 illustrates how, while the platform economy has important continuities with previous industries, it has also generated new business models that reorganize institutional relationships. On the one hand, market continuities are clear when we think about how

transnational platform companies benefit from establishing conglomerates seeking to leverage economies of scope and scale, attract and retain high-quality personnel, produce services and products that become hits and create valuable brands. Nothing new under the cultural industries' sun. On the other hand, among the new business models and business strategies of platform companies, it is noted that, as multi-sided or bilateral markets, platforms are marked by network effects and have to make distinctive pricing decisions. Furthermore, authors note that platforms tend to have specific evolutions, ultimately constituting digital ecosystems. Paradoxically, platformization involves centralizations and decentralizations of economic power, since the process opens new economic opportunities for producers, while leading to a concentration of power when network effects materialize.

Chapter 3 continues assessing institutional changes, this time connected to the infrastructure of platforms, understood as databases and networks, as well as gateways, interfaces, tools and associated documentation to access these systems. This includes not solely so-called "cloud platforms", such as Amazon Web Services and the like (Srnicek, 2018), but also gateways that enable platform interactions. These gateways are, for instance, boundary resources like platforms' application programming interfaces (APIs) and software development kits (SDKs). This comprehensive understanding of platform infrastructure opens the way to important and rather underexplored lines of research connected to platform boundary resources.

The first part of the book about institutional changes ends with Chapter 4, dedicated to governance of platform markets and infrastructures. These services constitute digital content gatekeepers that block and filter in line with their terms of service agreements or with state policy and regulation regarding data protection, copyright enforcement and surveillance (Mansell, 2015, p. 21). Thus, the issues of how public institutions set limits on the activities of platforms as well as how platforms limit their own activities come into play. The chapter presents three sets of governance strategies: regulation, curation and moderation. Not only do these three strategies overlap, but governance "for" and governance "by" platforms can sometimes clash. In order to combat this, platforms, which are usually owned by transnational companies, need to update their internal rules in national markets accordingly.

Chapter 5 opens the second section of the book, dedicated to shifts in cultural practices, starting with changes in cultural labor. Cultural work, before platforms, used to be characterized as being insecure, irregular and unequal (Hesmondhalgh, 2019). The authors argue that digital platforms have accentuated certain ways of precarity, caused by new forms of invisible platform work, a heightened individuality of platform-dependent cultural creators, new notions of insecurity and a continuation of inequality patterns.

The general platformization of society turns platforms into instruments that convey new strategies of labor exploitation, which go beyond the sphere of cultural production. As Eudald Espluga suggests, many people cannot consider functioning without platforms because their precarious finances depend on them, in response to which the metaphor of platform addiction discusses digital consumption habits more abstractly (Espluga, 2021, p. 140), that is without considering the material conditions causing such dependence. The richness of the chapter lies in pointing to these new forms of precariousness in cultural production without romanticizing a pre-platform past nor offering an apocalyptic view,

focusing on collective malaise, and giving rise to lines of research that consider platform-specific precarity.

Following the analysis of platform labor, Chapter 6 discusses the tension between commerce and creativity in cultural industries. In the context of platformization, this has tended to take shape in the form of so-called vernacular creativity, understood as everyday practices of cultural production carried out by ordinary people. It could be argued that these readings have contributed to lowering our guard on platforms as a socio-economic structure. In other words, platforms are not experienced from a critical distance, but as extensions of life itself (Carrera, 2017, p. 39). Among new layers of tension between creativity and commerce, the book highlights nichification, metrification, the increasing presence of branded content and ideas about pursuing authenticity.

The analysis finishes with a chapter dedicated to the relation between platforms and democracy, namely the notions of access, diversity, protection, and trust. The two first concepts are highly connected, as complex interpretations of cultural diversity, beyond content itself, should include who has the chance to create and who has the means to access such creation. On the basis of Napoli's (1999) three-pronged approach, Albornoz and García Leiva (2019) point out, as the third basic factor for diversity in the audiovisual industry, that citizens must be able to access and choose from a wide range of content, as well as to create and disseminate it. Literature about the topic linked to platforms has been inclined to be built around the theory of the long tail, which sometimes conceals the fact that online production and distribution of cultural content requires the set-up of filters that determine the prominence of cultural works, some of which did not exist in the pre-Internet era, like search engines or platforms' recommendation systems (Ranaivoson, 2016).

In conclusion, the book studies the above points in terms of platform-driven change. The strongest point of the analysis is the fact that it demonstrates that the process of platformization and the way it has changed cultural production can be systematized. Nevertheless, as the authors themselves point out, systematization cannot be used to generalize, since we find possible variations in those changes around different axes. In this sense, some of the examples that illustrate the patterns of change throughout the book (mainly from video games, social networks, and the news industry) might fall into this trap. On the whole, Poell, Nieborg and Duffy carry out a commendable task of ordering changes and problems associated with the platformization of cultural production without neglecting old continuities. As it is not a uniform nor unilateral process, the book opens the way to more specific case studies that assess variations in geographic areas, industry segments and specific parts of the cultural production process. In addition, the reflections on these patterns of change are also particularly relevant when applied to media or entertainment companies that do not necessarily fall within the strictest definition of a platform, mainly because they are not economically and infrastructurally accessible to third parties; for instance, online services that give access to end-users to a curated selection of content. Not in vain, today we can observe the effects of platformization described throughout the book not only in the cultural industries, but in a society permeated by platforms.

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DISINFORMATION

DEZINFORMACIJE

DEZINFORMACIJE I TEORIJE ZAVJERA O CJEPIVU PROTIV BOLESTI COVID-19: INFODEMIJA NA DRUŠTVENIM MREŽAMA I U MEDIJIMA U HRVATSKOJ

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SAŽETAK *Dezinformacije, teorije zavjera i negativni komentari na društveni mrežama utječu na dostupnost točnih zdravstvenih informacija i na stavove prema cijepljenju. Cilj je rada istražiti mišljenje i stavove javnosti, odnosno dezinformacije i teorije zavjera o cijepljenju i cjevivu protiv bolesti COVID-19 na internetskim portalima i društvenoj mreži Facebook. Od 9. studenog 2020. do 30. siječnja 2021. analizirano je ukupno 4576 komentara, odnosno 113 postova pod temom cijepljenje i cjepiva kategoriziranih s obzirom na sentiment (pozitivni, neutralni, irelevantni i negativni). Unutar negativnih komentara (20,60 %) identificirano je 13 glavnih tematskih kategorija. Najzastupljenije su kategorija teorije zavjera (35,84 %) i kategorija iskazi nepovjerenja u sastav, učinkovitost, sigurnost i nuspojave cjepiva (19,93 %), dok je postotak dezinformacija bio 20,90 %. Rezultati upućuju na nužnost oblikovanja pravovremenog plana i strategije zdravstvenih kampanja te sadržaja za online edukativne materijale i platforme, kao i pokretanja programa zdravstvenog obrazovanja na nacionalnoj razini.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

COVID-19, CIJEPLJENJE, DEZINFORMACIJE, TEORIJE ZAVJERA, DRUŠTVENE MREŽE, MEDIJI

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UVOD

Cijepljenje je dokazano jedna od najuspješnijih javnozdravstvenih mjera, a cjepivo najučinkovitija globalna strategija za okončanje pandemije. Unatoč velikom napretku u cijepljenju tijekom prošlog stoljeća Svjetska zdravstvena organizacija prepoznala je oklijevanje prema cijepljenju kao glavnu prijetnju globalnom zdravlju (World Health Organization, 2019). Pad povjerenja u cijepljenje pridonio je globalnom padu prihvaćanja cijepljenja i uklonio brane zaraznim bolestima i epidemijama (Larson i sur., 2014).

Sve rašireniji pokret otpora cijepljenju uspješno koristi (društvene) medije za svoje jačanje. Otpor cijepljenju i oklijevanje prema cijepljenju, posebice njihovo brzo širenje uzrokovano širenjem dezinformacija i teorija zavjera u medijima i na društvenim mrežama, ugrožavaju javno zdravstvo diljem Europe i svijeta pa su tako odgovorni za više od 100 000 slučajeva ospica u Europi 2019. i ponovnu pojavu ospica u SAD-u gotovo dvadeset godina nakon što su istrijebljene (Hotez i sur., 2020).

Informacijska, medijska, znanstvena i zdravstvena pismenost među najvažnijim su čimbenicima formiranja mišljenja i stavova o cjepivima i cijepljenju protiv bolesti COVID-19. Internet je danas najveći i najbrži izvor za dobivanje informacija općenito, a milijuni ljudi svakodnevno traže zdravstvene informacije na mreži. Primjerice, prema istraživanju Begović i Labaš (2021) većini hrvatskih građana društvene mreže primarni su izvor informacija, a u kontekstu Europske unije Hrvati i Portugalci najviše vjeruju vijestima i informacijama koje dobiju putem društvenih mreža.

Najnovija istraživanja o informiranju o bolesti COVID-19 kao izvore informiranja ističu: masovne medije (TV i radio), tiskane medije (novine i časopise), društvene medije (Facebook, Twitter i sl.), tražilice poput Googlea, znanstvene i službene mrežne stranice te obitelji i prijatelje. Statistika iz Googleovih trendova potvrđuje da su ljudi širom svijeta aktivno pretraživali informacije povezane s bolesti COVID-19 (Hernández-García i Giménez-Júlvez, 2020; Rovetta i Bhagavathula, 2020).

U slučaju katastrofe ili pandemije izvori zdravstvenih informacija pomažu ljudima shvatiti situaciju, naučiti mjere opreza i smanjiti tjeskobu izazvanu neizvjesnošću. Međutim, izvori zdravstvenih i drugih informacija, posebice masovni i tiskani mediji te izvori s interneta, mogu negativno utjecati na ponašanje povezano sa zdravljem. Moguće posljedice netočnih i neistinitih informacija jesu emocije sumnje, straha, zabrinutosti i ljutnje te odluke koje iz njih proizlaze (Soroya i sur., 2021). Dezinformacije i teorije zavjera, kao i negativne emocije izražene u komentarima koji se šire društvenim mrežama i medijima, također mogu onemogućiti dostupnost točnih zdravstvenih informacija te oblikovati (zdravstveno) ponašanje i uzrokovati otpor prema cijepljenju (Badur i sur., 2020; Chan i sur., 2020; Mamidi i sur., 2019; Piedrahita-Valdés i sur., 2021; Tasnim i sur., 2020).

TEORIJSKI OKVIR

Europska komisija provela je 2018. godine u svim državama članicama Europske unije istraživanje o širenju dezinformacija i lažnih vijesti te o povjerenju u izvore informacija. Istraživanje je ukazalo na veliki problem raširenosti dezinformacija u cijeloj Europi te na smanjenje povjerenja u tradicionalne i *online* medije (European Commission, 2018).

Pojmovi kao što su *dezinformacija*, *misinformacija* i *teorija zavjere* ne mogu biti jednoznačno određeni. *Dezinformacije* (engl. *disinformation*) općenito obuhvaćaju neistinite informacije kojima je cilj namjerno zbuniti primatelja informacije ili manipulirati njegovim mišljenjem. Iako mogu biti u potpunosti neistinite, Stengel (2019) navodi kako dezinformacije često počinjavu na kombinaciji istinitih i lažnih informacija, što dodatno pojačava njihovu učinkovitost. Također, neistinitost dezinformacija ne podrazumijeva nužno iznošenje negativnih tvrdnji, pa tako postoje dezinformacije koje iznose neutralne ili pozitivne tvrdnje (poput ove: „Kinesko cjepivo Sinovac jedino bilježi 100%-tnu učinkovitost“), ali i dalje uzrokuju zbunjenost ili manipuliraju mišljenjem. Dezinformacije su pomno osmišljene i vješto konstruirane te se često koriste u kombinaciji s drugim komunikacijskim strategijama, poput korištenja jezika i komunikacijskih stilova u svrhu tzv. društvenog hakiranja (engl. *social hacking*, *social engineering*). Cilj im nije nužno uvjeriti osobu ili javnost u suprotno mišljenje, već potaknuti sumnju u provjerenu informaciju, što kod javnosti dalje potiče stvaranje vlastitih „činjenica“. Dezinformacije mogu uzrokovati štetu društvene, političke, ekonomske pa i zdravstvene naravi, a često se oslanjaju na zlouporabu (masovnih i društvenih) medija (Popovac, 2020; UNESCO, 2018). Pojam *misinformacije* (engl. *misinformation*) obuhvaća neistinite informacije koje nisu nastale niti se šire s namjerom manipuliranja mišljenjem ili izazivanjem određene štete objektu komunikacije pa ih je lakše kontrolirati i spriječiti u odnosu na dezinformacije. Nastaju kao posljedica nove medijske kulture digitalnog doba (Popovac, 2020; UNESCO, 2018). *Teorijom zavjere* smatraju se uvjerenja da utjecajne osobe s lošim namjerama potajno manipuliraju određenim događajima ili situacijama (European Commission, 2020). Karakteristike svojstvene većini teorija zavjera jesu postojanje navodnog, tajnog plana skupine urotnika, navodni dokazi koji naizgled potvrđuju teoriju zavjere, neosnovane tvrdnje da se ništa ne događa bez razloga i da ne postoje slučajnosti, podjela svijeta na dobro i zlo te okrivljavanje pojedinaca i skupina za određene događaje. Teorije zavjera često nastaju zbog sumnje u događaj ili situaciju, pri čemu se propituje tko ima koristi od događaja ili situacije, tj. tko su urotnici (European Commission, 2020; Uscinski, 2020).

Tijekom pandemije koronavirusa povećao se broj štetnih i obmanjujućih dezinformacija i teorija zavjera koje se šire uglavnom na internetu. Nesigurnost i strah zbog pandemije, složenost situacije, epidemiološke mjere, rješenje u obliku cjepiva i drugo potakli su nastanak teorija zavjera. Istraživanje provedeno u 28 zemalja pokazalo je da više od 30 % anketiranih osoba vjeruje u teorije zavjera vezane za podrijetlo i svrhu pandemije bolesti COVID-19 (Gallup International, 2020). U studijama je također utvrđeno kako je izloženost dezinformacijama i teorijama zavjera koje se šire preko medija i društvenih mreža jedan od ključnih čimbenika nepovjerenja u cjepiva i cijepljenje (Badur i sur., 2020; Piedrahita-

Valdés i sur., 2021), dok izloženost negativnim sentimentima oko cijepljenja na društvenim mrežama može povećati kolebljivost i odbijanje cjepiva (Mamidi i sur., 2019; Salathé i sur., 2013; Tasnim i sur., 2020). U vrijeme bolesti COVID-19 brojni domaći autori bavili su se infodemijom, tj. prekomjernom količinom netočnih informacija objavljenih o pandemiji COVID-19 (World Health Organization) u hrvatskom internetskom medijskom prostoru i medijima. Pomoću računalnih metoda obrade prirodnog jezika (NLP), točnije metoda tematskog modeliranja i analize sentimentata, detektirali su glavne teme i sentimente vezane za pandemiju bolesti COVID-19 u novinskim člancima i komentarima na internetskim portalima (Beliga i sur., 2021; Buhin Pandur i sur., 2021; Ilić i Beliga, 2021).

Unatoč europskim direktivama i uredbama koje propisuju strogo testiranje cjepiva u Europskoj uniji prije izdavanja dozvole za njihovo korištenje, djelovanje aktivista koji se bore protiv cijepljenja te širenje dezinformacija i teorija zavjera o potencijalnim nuspojavama cjepiva, koje pak nisu dokazane, uzrokovalo je zbunjenost i pomutnju kada je riječ o razlikovanju pouzdanih zdravstvenih informacija i znanstvenih činjenica od neutemeljenih tvrdnji koje se šire društvenim medijima (European Commission, 2020). Kada su u pitanju odluke o cijepljenju, danas je, uz već postojeći otpor cijepljenju, odnosno odbijanje cjepiva, sve prisutnije i oklijevanje prema cijepljenju. Svjetska zdravstvena organizacija definirala je oklijevanje prema cijepljenju kao odgođeno prihvatanje ili odbijanje cjepiva unatoč dostupnosti cjepiva i usluge cijepljenja (World Health Organization, 2019).

U kontekstu infodemije i pandemije bolesti COVID-19 svakako je važno osvrnuti se na ulogu i važnost informacijske, (kritičke) medijske, znanstvene i zdravstvene pismenosti, posebno s obzirom na njihov utjecaj na stavove i uvjerenja o zdravstvenim informacijama koje pronalazimo u medijima i na društvenim mrežama. Naime, pojava brojnih dezinformacija i teorija zavjera tijekom pandemije ukazala je na važnost razvijanja vještina ne samo informacijske i medijske pismenosti već i znanstvene i zdravstvene pismenosti. Informacijska se pismenost definira kao učinkovito korištenje informacija u kontekstu rješavanja problema, a podrazumijeva, između ostalog, vještine pronalaženja (relevantnih) informacija, njihovo vrednovanje, organiziranje i korištenje na razumljiv i svrhovit način te prenošenje informacija drugima. Informacijska se pismenost smatra ključnom kompetencijom ne samo cjeloživotnog učenja već uspješnog profesionalnog i privatnog života u informacijskom društvu. U kontekstu digitalne tehnologije i novih medija određeni aspekti informacijske pismenosti postali su posebno naglašeni, poput pitanja vjerodostojnosti i povjerenja u informaciju, vrednovanja i upravljanja informacijama, ali i društvena dimenzija informacije, odnosno pitanje uloge i utjecaja korisnika informacije na informaciju i nove participativne prirode komunikacije (ALA, 1989; Bawden, 2001; Špiranec i Banek Zorica, 2008). Često se uz pojam informacijske pismenosti spominju i drugi suvremeni oblici pismenosti, poput digitalne pismenosti, računalne pismenosti i medijske pismenosti. Medijska pismenost odnosi se na vještine kritičkog pristupa medijskim sadržajima, odnosno na vještine kritičke analize i vrednovanja informacija u medijima (Ciboci Perša i sur., 2021). Taj se kritički stav ne odnosi samo na dezinformacije, teorije zavjera i lažne vijesti već podrazumijeva zdravi cinizam spram svih medija i medijskih sadržaja (McDougal, 2019). Hasebrink (2012) razlikuje tri aspekta medijske pismenosti koje vezuje uz tri

uloge korisnika medija i tri načina vrednovanja medija. Prvi aspekt odnosi se na pitanje je li korisnik medija osvijestio vlastite potrebe i jesu li mediji te potrebe zadovoljili. Drugi se aspekt odnosi na korisnikovu sposobnost reflektiranja na društvenu i kulturnu ulogu medija i njegov politički angažman u zajednici. Treći aspekt medijske pismenosti odnosi se na razumijevanje potencijalnog pozitivnog i negativnog utjecaja medija na društvo te načina kako smanjiti ili zaustaviti negativan utjecaj, odnosno kako povećati pozitivan utjecaj medija na društvo. Znanstvena pismenost shvaćena, prema Milleru (1983), kao građanska znanstvena pismenost uz poznavanje osnovnih znanstvenih činjenica i razumijevanje osnovnih znanstvenih metoda podrazumijeva i prepoznavanje i uvažavanje pozitivnog utjecaja znanstvenog i tehnološkog napretka na društvo (Šuljok, 2020). Osnovna građanska znanstvena pismenost posebno je važna u dobu u kojem se znanstvene informacije šire putem novih medija, poput *blogova*, *podcasta*, novinskih portala, društvenih mreža i dr. (Jergović i Račić, 2011), posebno ako se u obzir uzme činjenica da su (pozitivni i negativni) komentari i preporuke građana značajan čimbenik u lancu nove znanstvene komunikacije. Grba (2021) smatra kako znanstvena nepismenost, kao jedan od glavnih čimbenika širenja dezinformacija, misinformacija i teorija zavjera tijekom pandemije bolesti COVID-19, nije uočena samo kod dijela šire javnosti i glavnih „izvora” teorija zavjera već i kod dijela političara i donositelja odluka uključenih u komunikaciju o pandemiji, odnosno u borbu protiv pandemije. Tako su se u nekim slučajevima donosile znanstveno neinformirane političke odluke, što je utjecalo, između ostalog, i na organizaciju i provođenje strategije za borbu protiv pandemije. Zanimanje za koncept zdravstvene pismenosti počelo je 70-ih godina 20. stoljeća, i to ponajprije u kontekstu zdravstvenog obrazovanja. Danas se o zdravstvenoj pismenosti razmišlja iz perspektive globalnog javnog zdravstva, s ciljem promoviranja zdravlja općenito te poboljšanja zdravstvenog stanja osoba s niskom razinom zdravstvene pismenosti (Parnell i sur., 2019). U najširem kontekstu zdravstvena se pismenost može definirati kao poznavanje i razumijevanje zdravstvenih tema s ciljem promicanja zdravlja. U užem kontekstu ona se može definirati kao skup kognitivnih, osobnih i socijalnih vještina koje određuju motivaciju i sposobnost pojedinca da pronade, razumije i koristi zdravstvene informacije i usluge u svrhu održavanja i unaprjeđenja zdravlja, informiranog odlučivanja kada je riječ o zdravlju te razumijevanja javnozdravstvenih pitanja i uloge zdravstvenih institucija u promicanju javnog zdravlja (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021; Kickbusch, 2009; Kickbusch i sur., 2013; Muslić i sur., 2018; Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2020; Parnell i sur., 2019; Pleasant, 2011; Protheroe i sur., 2009; Sykes i sur., 2013). U digitalnom dobu ona podrazumijeva i sposobnost osobe da se koristi digitalnim platformama i informacijama, i to u svrhu upravljanja osobnim zdravljem, razumijevanja osnovnih zdravstvenih informacija, učinkovite komunikacije sa zdravstvenim djelatnicima i uspješne procjene relevantnosti izvora informacija na internetu (Diehl, 2011; Mancuso, 2008; Parnell i sur., 2019). Kao i prije tako su i sada istraživanja pokazala da je zdravstvena pismenost povezana s ishodom liječenja, odnosno da je niska razina zdravstvene pismenosti povezana s loši(ji)m zdravstvenim ishodima te da može imati dugoročne posljedice na zdravlje pojedinca, pa čak i izazvati preranu smrt (Finset i Lie, 2010). Niska zdravstvena pismenost postaje posebno opasna u kontekstu infodemije i krizne situacije jer izaziva veći strah i nepovjerenje.

ISTRAŽIVANJE

Cilj istraživanja

Glavni cilj ovog istraživanja jest identificiranje glavnih tematskih područja, dezinformacija i teorija zavjera koje se vežu za cjepivo i cijepljenje protiv bolesti COVID-19 na Facebooku i u medijima. Izdvojene su kategorije (tematska područja) informacija i teorija koje obuhvaćaju laičko poimanje cjepiva i cijepjenja protiv bolesti COVID-19, a koje nisu u skladu s činjeničnim podacima ili službenim stavom i zaključcima šire znanstvene i stručne zajednice. Svrha je rada trojaka: prvo, razumjeti javno mnijenje i stavove (posebno negativne stavove) o cjepivu i cijepljenju protiv bolesti COVID-19; drugo, razumjeti kako se takve informacije dijele, prezentiraju i interpretiraju; treće, potaknuti pravovremenu reakciju u javnozdravstvenim kampanjama cijepjenja na temelju rezultata istraživanja.

Istraživačka pitanja na koja se rad fokusira jesu: 1) Kakav je stav javnosti na društvenoj mreži Facebook i u medijima u vezi cjepiva i cijepjenja protiv COVID-19 te u vezi imunizacije? 2) Koja su tematska područja (kategorije i potkategorije) u koje možemo svrstati negativne komentare o cjepivu i cijepljenju protiv bolesti COVID-19 na Facebooku i u medijima? 3) Kolika je zastupljenost dezinformacija i teorija zavjera u uzorku negativnih komentara?

Istraživački okvir

Provedeno istraživanje po svojoj je prirodi primarno kvalitativno. Kvalitativni pristup jedan je od najboljih načina pri istraživanju kompleksnih fenomena o kojima se zna vrlo malo i koji se, zbog svoje prirode, ne mogu podvrgnuti kvantifikaciji (Powell i Connaway, 2004). Međutim, iako se u istraživanju koristi kvantitativni prikaz podataka u obliku brojeva i postotaka, to se ne radi u svrhu prikazivanja statističke značajnosti, nego u svrhu ilustracije dobivenih rezultata.

Društvene mreže pokazale su se kao dragocjen izvor podataka pri analizi dinamike pandemije jer daju stvarnu sliku o mišljenjima, uvjerenjima i znanju o nekoj temi, uključujući i temu zdravlja i ponašanja na razini populacije. Nadgledanje sadržaja na društvenim mrežama jedna je od najboljih metoda za praćenje i razumijevanje zabrinutosti ljudi u stvarnom vremenu, kao i njihovih informacijskih potreba vezanih za zdravlje i zdravstvena pitanja (Dredze i sur., 2016; Franz i sur., 2019; Neiger i sur., 2012). Točnije, razumijevanje karakteristika i tema u komentarima s negativnim sentimentima moglo bi pomoći javnozdravstvenim ustanovama za kontrolu bolesti u naporima širenja relevantnih informacija u javnosti vezanih za probleme s cijepljenjem i cjepivom (Mamidi i sur., 2019). Uz metodu analize sentimenta, s posebnim usmjeravanjem na negativne sentimente, kao uobičajeni alat za razumijevanje percepcije i razloga za komentare s negativnim sentimentima koristi se i metoda analize sadržaja (Mollema i sur., 2015). Analiza sadržaja ili predmetno označavanje (u knjižničnoj i informacijskoj znanosti naziva se još i „predmetna obrada ili analiza teksta“, „sadržajna obrada“, „sadržajno označavanje“) podrazumijeva najčešće dva koraka. Prvi korak podrazumijeva predmetnu analizu dokumenta (određivanje očemno-

sti), dok drugi podrazumijeva prijevod rezultata predmetne analize u termine za predmetno označavanje koji mogu biti izraženi prirodnim (nekontroliranim) i kontroliranim jezikom za označavanje. Analizu sadržaja prirodnim jezikom može obavljati informacijski stručnjak ili računalo. U nekim sustavima postoje mehanizmi, poput statističke analize relativne frekvencije ili pojavljivanja termina, pomoću kojih se odlučuje koji su termini najvažniji te koji su odgovarajući za predmetno označavanje. Ti računalni pristupi uključuju praksu interdisciplinarnog područja pod nazivom „obrada prirodnog jezika“ (engl. *natural language processing* – NLP) i pretraživanja po ključnim riječima te po, u posljednje vrijeme sve razvijenijem korisničkom označavanju ili tagiranju (Chu, 2010; Hjørland, 2002).

Navedene metode mogu nam pomoći u mjerenju javnog mišljenja o cijepljenju i cjepivima, u analizi pridržavanja preventivnih mjera, razvoju učinkovitih javnozdravstvenih kampanja te u otkrivanju i borbi protiv dezinformacija i teorija zavjera.

Upravo zbog svih spomenutih razloga, a prije samog dolaska cjepiva protiv bolesti COVID-19 u Hrvatsku, u ovoj su studiji praćeni i nadgledani komentari s izraženim negativnim emocijama prema cijepljenju i cjepivu te je napravljena njihova sadržajna obrada i kategorizacija. Konačni je cilj pravovremeno reagiranje javnozdravstvenih kampanja za cijepljenje u vidu pružanja relevantnih i točnih informacija putem edukativnih materijala. Rad se stoga metodološki oslanja na studije koje su se bavile nadgledanjem sadržaja (teme, podteme) medija i komentara (npr. Beliga i sur., 2021; Ilić i Beliga, 2021) i njihovih sentimenata na društvenim mrežama (npr. Buhin Pandur i sur., 2021; Yousefinaghani i sur., 2021), s posebnim usmjerenjem na negativne sentimente (npr. Mamidi i sur., 2019; Wang i sur., 2020).

Uzorak istraživanja i prikupljanje podataka na temu cijepljenja i cjepiva

Uzorak istraživanja čine komentari Facebook grupe *Koronavirus Hrvatska* (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/557006188504494>), odnosno komentari ispod objava u grupi te javni komentari ispod samih članaka (s različitih portala) koje su na Facebook grupi *Koronavirus Hrvatska* podijelili njezini administratori i korisnici. Odabir kanala (društvene mreže i portali) nastao je slučajnim uzorkovanjem, a ovisio je o osobnom izboru administratora i korisnika Facebook grupe koji su objavljivali poveznice te ih označavali (tagirali) korisničkom oznakom *#CijepljenjeiCjepiva*. Facebook grupa *Koronavirus Hrvatska* javna je grupa koja je u doba prikupljanja podataka imala 15 600 članova te je jedna od brojnih Facebook grupa gdje se svi korisnici Facebooka mogu informirati o najnovijim vijestima i saznanjima vezanima za COVID-19. Administratori grupe zaključno s datumom 6. svibnja 2021. kategorizirali su sve objave pod 15 tema (npr. *cijepljenje i cjepiva*, *statistike*, *znanost i znanstvenici*, *iskustva cijepljenih* i slično). Od ukupnog broja svih objava raspršenih po navedenim kategorijama analizirano je 113 objava kategoriziranih pod temom *cijepljenje i cjepiva* počevši od 9. studenog 2020., odnosno od datuma prve objave informacija o cjepivu protiv bolesti COVID-19 u medijima, do 30. siječnja 2021. Prikupljanje podataka, odnosno dodjeljivanje teme *cijepljenje i cjepiva* objavama u grupi napravio je jedan od administratora grupe, čime je olakšano pretraživanje i pronalaženje objava na temu cjepiva i cijepljenja protiv bolesti COVID-19. Ukupan broj prikupljenih komentara na temu

cijepljenja i cjepiva koji su analizirani iz 113 objava jest 4576, od čega su 2572 komentara na objavama u grupi i 2004 na portalima (poveznice u objavama).

Analiza sentimenta i analiza sadržaja negativnih komentara

Svih 4576 komentara prvo je ručno kategorizirano s obzirom na njihov sentiment prema cijepljenju i cjepivu protiv bolesti COVID-19 na: pozitivne, neutralne, irelevantne i negativne komentare. Ručnu kategorizaciju napravio je anotator kojemu je ekspertiza predmetna/sadržajna obrada dokumenta, određivanje očemnosti dokumenta, jezici za predmetno označavanje i pretraživanje te informacijsko ponašanje korisnika na internetu. Dodjeljivanje sentimenta učinjeno je na temelju određivanja temeljnih emocija izraženih u komentarima i konteksta (prethodnih ili komentara koji slijede) u slučaju kada temeljne emocije nisu jasno izražene. Upravo zbog određivanja konteksta jedan komentar nije se mogao kategorizirati u više različitih sentimentata. U Tablici 1 prikazan je način kategorizacije komentara prema sentimentima uz primjere komentara s pridruženom emocijom i eventualnim kontekstom.

U ovom su istraživanju dezinformacije i teorije zavjera promatrane kao negativni komentari, tj. komentari s izraženim negativnim sentimentom, odnosno pridruženom negativnom emocijom. Naime, iako se dezinformacije i teorije zavjera mogu pojavljivati i u pozitivnim komentarima, autori ovoga rada smatraju kako iste nemaju štetan utjecaj na pozitivan stav o cijepljenju i cjepivu protiv bolesti COVID-19, već pojačavaju pozitivan stav te stoga nisu bili predmetom analize ovog istraživanja.

Daljnja je analiza provedena metodom analize sadržaja samo na komentarima kategoriziranim s obzirom na negativan sentiment (N = 943). Komentari s negativnim emocijama potom su na temelju njihova sadržaja dalje organizirani u kategorije i potkategorije. Kodiranje po kategorijama i potkategorijama rađeno je na temelju tema i kategorija koje su identificirane u prethodnim istraživanjima koja su koristila analizu sadržaja društvenih medija za procjenu mišljenja javnosti o cjepivima (Klimiuk i sur., 2020; Wolfe i sur., 2002). Dodatna klasifikacija teorija zavjera rađena je prema knjizi *Conspiracy theories: a primer* (Uscinski, 2020), gdje je autor utvrdio pet glavnih kategorija teorija zavjera. Prva kategorija vezana je za teorije zavjera o ubojstvu Kennedyja, o izvanzemalcima i imigrantima. Druga kategorija vezana je za teorije zavjera o znanosti, treća o ekonomiji, četvrta o politici (vladama), a peta kategorija jesu uvjerenja koja uključuju natprirodne fenomene i nadnaravna vjerovanja. Od navedenih kategorija u svrhu ovog istraživanja korištene su teorije zavjera o znanosti, ekonomiji, politici te potkategorija o imigrantima (antisemitizam, antiislamizam i dr.). Dodjeljivanje kategorija i potkategorija radile su dvije osobe nakon čega je provjerena podudarnost pri dodjeljivanju kategorija, odnosno pouzdanost između te dvije osobe putem Cohenova kappa koeficijenta (dobiveni rezultat je 0,82). Za nepodudarnosti je načinjena nova zajednička analiza tijekom koje je postignut konsenzus. Pri tome treba uzeti u obzir da su neki komentari sadržajno pripadali odnosno pokrivali dvije kategorije ili više kategorija.

Tablica 1. Primjer kategorizacije komentara prema sentimentima

Sentiment	Emocija	Primjer (komentar)	Kontekst (komentari koji prethode promatranom komentaru ili slijede nakon njega te određuju, odnosno potvrđuju, emociju promatranog komentara)
pozitivan	pozitivna emocija: povjerenje, sreća, zadovoljstvo, nada, zahvalnost, sigurnost, iznenađenje ¹ i dr.	<i>Ma ja mislim čim dođu cjepiva da će se to sve vratiti u normalu.</i> (emocija: nada) <i>U izvješću AstraZeneca koje je objavljeno u Lancetu se navodi da je cjepivo učinkovito preko 70% i da je sigurno za uporabu.</i> (emocija: sigurnost) <i>Prema sadašnjim kliničkim studijama Pfizer će štiti 90%.</i> (neutralna izjava koja postaje pozitivna zahvaljujući kontekstu)	<i>Pa to bi bilo stvarno izvrsno.</i> (emocija: povjerenje)
neutralan	izostanak emocije, tvrdnja se odnosi na cjepivo, cijepljenje i imunizaciju	<i>Počinje treća faza kliničkih istraživanja Moderne.</i>	
irelevantan	izostanak emocije, tvrdnja se ne odnosi na cjepivo, cijepljenje i imunizaciju	<i>Dosadni ste, nitko vas više ne prati.</i>	
negativan	negativne emocije: sumnja, strah, gađenje, ljutnja, bijes, frustracija, stres, zabrinutost, nesigurnost, podrugljivost, nervoza, iznenađenje i dr.	<i>Znači sad će ovi cijepljeni početi umirati prirodnom smrću, a svi ostali od korone? Pitam za frenda, malo se srami.</i> (emocija: podrugljivost) <i>Kažu da je 90% učinkovito, a ni riječi o tome koliko je sigurno po opće zdravlje.</i> (emocija: nepovjerenje, sumnja)	<i>O tome će se saznati nakon nekoliko godina poslije nekoliko stotina tisuća ili milijuna oboljelih ili umrlih od neke druge plandemije.</i> (emocija: nepovjerenje, sumnja)

¹ Određene emocije, poput iznenađenja, mogu biti pozitivno ili negativno određene, ovisno o kontekstu (osoba je ugodno iznenađena ili neugodno iznenađena).

REZULTATI

Kategorizacija komentara na temelju sentimenta

Od ukupno 4576 komentara 3633 komentara (79,39 %) označeno je kao pozitivno, neutralno i irelevantno. Dakle, samo 20,60 % komentara, odnosno 943 komentara bila su negativna (Grafikon 1). Od ukupnog broja negativnih komentara samo 216 negativnih komentara (22,90 %) je s Facebook grupe Koronavirus Hrvatska, a čak 727 negativnih komentara (77,09 %) dolazi s poveznica ispod članka na portalima (Grafikon 2).



▲ Grafikon 1.

Ukupno broj komentara (N = 4576) te podjela na temelju valencije (N = 3633 (79,39 %); N = 943 (20,60 %))

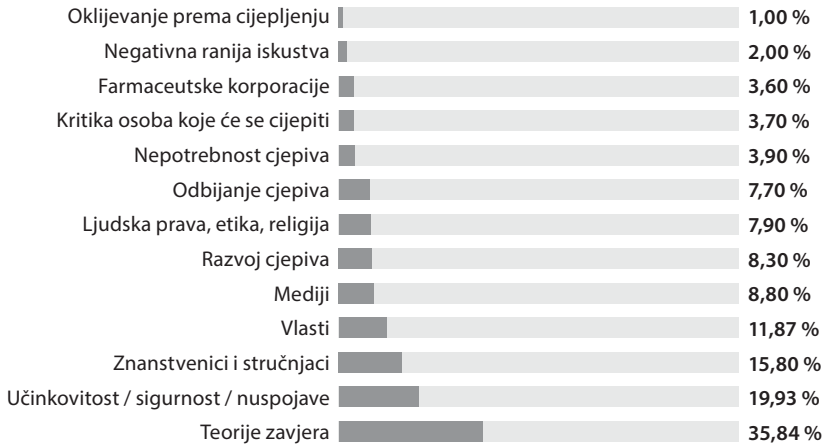


▲ Grafikon 2.

Negativni komentari (N = 943) na Facebook grupi *Koronavirus Hrvatska* (N = 216 (22,90 %)) i internetskim portalima (N = 727 (77,09 %))

Analiza sadržaja komentara s obzirom na negativni sentiment

Ukupno 943 izdvojena negativna komentara kategorizirano je u 13 kategorija, odnosno tema (Grafikon 3). Od svih tema najviše negativnih komentara sadržajno je klasificirano kao teorije zavjera (35,84 %). Slijede ih komentari u kojima se izražava nepovjerenje i zabrinutost u vezi sastava, učinkovitosti, sigurnosti i nuspojava cjepiva (19,93 %) te komentari s izrazima nepovjerenja prema znanstvenicima (15,80 %) i nepovjerenja u vlast (11,87 %). Ostale kategorije tiču se nepovjerenja u medije (8,80 %), nepovjerenja u vezi potrebnog vremena, testiranja i načina nastanka cjepiva (8,30 %), ljudskih prava, etičkih i vjerskih pitanja (7,90 %), kategoričkog odbijanja cjepiva i nagovaranje drugih da se ne cijepi (7,70 %), stava da je cijepljenje nepotrebno (3,90 %), negativnih komentara usmjerenih prema osobama koje će se cijepiti (3,70 %), nepovjerenja u farmaceutske korporacije (3,60 %), iskaza nepovjerenja u sustav zbog negativnih događaja u prošlosti (2,00 %) te oklijevanja kada je riječ o cijepljenju (1,00 %).



▲ Grafikon 3.

Postotak negativnih komentara (N = 943) po temama (N = 13)

U svakoj od kategorija pobrojane su dezinformacije. Dezinformacije se odnose na tvrdnje i informacije o cjepljenju i cijepljenju koje nisu u skladu sa znanstvenim činjenicama i tvrdnjama zdravstvenih stručnjaka. Utvrđivanje dezinformacija rađeno je na temelju znanstvene i stručne literature o cjepljenju i cijepljenju protiv bolesti COVID-19. U Tablici 2 nalaze se primjeri dezinformacija, a u bilješkama su navedeni primarni ili sekundarni izvori znanstvene ili stručne literature koja pojedinačnu dezinformaciju pomaže utvrditi. S obzirom na to da teorije zavjera proizlaze iz dezinformacija, pa određena teorija zavjere može sadržavati jednu ili više dezinformacija, u kategoriji teorije zavjera dezinformacije nisu brojane. Konačni broj dezinformacija, N = 187 (20,90 %), kao i postotak po pojedinačnim kategorijama i potkategorijama prikazan je u Tablici 2. Također, u Tablici 2 nalazi se podjela na 12 kategorija s pripadajućim potkategorijama (bez kategorije *teorije zavjera*) koje su proizašle iz analize sadržaja zajedno s udjelom negativnih komentara. Primjeri komentara navedeni su u tablici za svaku kategoriju i potkategoriju, a neki od navedenih primjera ujedno su i primjeri dezinformacija.

Tablica 2. Kategorije, potkategorije te udio dezinformacija izraženih u negativnim komentarima s primjerima

Potkategorije	Primjeri komentara	Dezinformacije Total N = 187; 20,90 %
Kategorije		
Iskazi nepovjerenja u sastav, učinkovitost, sigurnost i nuspojave cjepiva (N = 188; 19,93 %)		
Učinkovitost i sigurnost cjepiva (N = 19; 10,10 %)	<i>Cjepivo mRNA je potpuno neistraženo, neispitano, niti tvorci zapravo ne znaju kako do kraja djeluje, a o utjecaju ostalih spojeva koji se ubrizgavaju nitko nema pojma. O dugoročnim posljedicama na ljudsku DNK, pa tako i potomstvo nitko ne zna ništa (dezinformacija)²</i>	N = 67; 35,80 %
	<i>Bilo bi lijepo da se statistike o reakcijama i efikasnosti cjepiva objave javno od strane nezavisnih institucija EU, a ne da se ti podaci skrivaju (dezinformacija)³</i>	
Sastav i nuspojave / bolesti nastale zbog cjepiva (N = 131; 70,40 %)	<i>Izrael u čudu? 17 % teško oboljelih kod populacije koja je primila prvo cjepivo (dezinformacija)⁴</i>	
	<i>Pa sastav cjepiva NIJE javan, nego je poslovna tajna (dezinformacija)⁵</i>	
	<i>Francuski virusolozi i epidemiolozi tvrde da cjepivo smanjuje imunitet za 10 posto, a da ova protiv koronavirusa ne će imati svrhu. Jedno su bjesnoća, malarija ili slično, ali ovo je nasilno pretvaranje ljudi u pokusne kuniće (dezinformacija)⁶</i>	

² Transkripcija glasnike RNK u farmakologiji se koristi od 1990. Ima mnogostruke primjene i nisu opažene dugoročne neželjene pojave (<https://www.nature.com/articles/nrd.2017.243?fbclid=IwAR33bZwepX4bxaq65XvMzGjKx618d-wolPjtRUhsbrGbVUcE1hxfDkwb0fc>). Sastav je svih odobrenih cjepiva poznat, kao i djelovanje ostalih spojeva prisutnih u cjepivu uz glasniku RNK (<https://imunizacija.hr/koji-je-sastav-pfizerovog-mrna-cjepiva/>).

³ Europska agencija za lijekove od listopada 2020. čini javno dostupnim podatke za koje autor komentara sugerira da su javnosti nedostupni (<https://www.europeanpharmaceuticalreview.com/news/129817/ema-begins-rolling-review-of-bnt-162b2-covid-19-vaccine/>).

⁴ Nefitni mediji koji se bave provjerom činjenične točnosti tvrdnji ne uspijevaju ući u trag izvoru tvrdnje i ustanovljuju da se tvrdnja bez dokaza točnosti velikom brzinom širi medijima i društvenim mrežama (<https://faktograf.hr/2021/01/21/dezinformacije-o-cijepljenju-u-izraelu-kruze-drustvenim-mrezama/>).

⁵ Sastav je cjepiva javan, vidi npr. <https://www.budiprimjer.hr/sastav-cjepiva-moderna/>, <https://www.budiprimjer.hr/sastav-cjepiva-comirnaty-pfizer-biontech/>.

⁶ Imunolozi i epidemiolozi širom svijeta objašnjavaju javnosti kako cjepivo protiv bolesti COVID-19 ne šteti imunosti (<https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-coronavirus-britain-idUSL1N2SY1SP>; <https://healthfeedback.org/claimreview/covid-19-vaccines-dont-weaken-immune-system-lancet-study-misrepresented-tucker-carlson-hodgetwins/>). Pedijatri informiraju javnost kako nije istina da cijepljenje protiv bolesti koje se mogu prevenirati općenito umanjuje otpornost organizma (<https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center/vaccine-safety/immune-system-and-health>).

Potkategorije	Primjeri komentara	Dezininformacije Total N = 187; 20,90 %
Odgovornost za nuspojave (N = 38; 20,20 %)	<i>Tko će odgovarati za moguće posljedice od nedovoljno ispitano cijepiva...nitko, jer će kao bit dobrovoljno.</i> <i>Po stoti put pitam ako je cjepivo tako sigurno zašto moramo potpisivati izjavu da proizvođač ne odgovara u slučaju komplikacija!?!?! (dezinformacija)⁷</i>	
Iskazi nepovjerenja u znanstvenike i stručnjake (N = 149; 15,80 %)		
Znanstveni disidenti kojima komentatori vjeruju (N = 30; 20,10 %)	<i>Poslušajte jednu od najboljih doktorica u struci epidemiologije i vakcina. Tko su Capak i Beroš? https://www.facebook.com/Eliyyahu9/videos/1624370854422401/ (dezinformacija)⁸</i> <i>TV France Soir objavio ekskluzivni intervju s nobelovcem, prof. dr. sc. Lucom Montagnierom: Neću se cijepiti, RNK cjepiva izazivaju karcinom! (dezinformacija)⁹</i>	N = 21; 11,22 %
Iskazi nepovjerenja u vlast (N = 112; 11,87 %)		
(bez potkategorije)	<i>Tko god vjeruje da su se (ministri) cijepili „pravim“ cjepivom je budala¹⁰</i> <i>Napravila je sve što je mogla krivo, Merkl sad se suočava s TUZBOM protiv vlade, zbog neustavnog zatvaranja jer je po brojevima infekcije i zlopupotebom PCR testova koji su sada kako je dokazano od WHO, nisu pouzdani za dijagnostiku (dezinformacija)¹¹</i>	N = 5; 2,67 %

⁷ Proizvođači cjepiva, u skladu s europskom legislativom, nisu izuzeti od odgovornosti (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/HR/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31985L0374&from=EN>;

<https://faktograf.hr/2020/12/17/tko-je-odgovoran-za-nezeljene-posljedice-cjepiva/>). Cijepljenje se obavlja bez potpisivanja ikakvih obrazaca od strane cijepljene osobe (<https://zdravlje.gov.hr/vijesti/za-cijepljenje-protiv-covid-19-nije-potrebno-potpisati-obrazac/5361>).

⁸ Komentatori, znanstveni i medicinski laici, u mnogim upisima proglašavaju medicinske i znanstvene djelatnike koji se izjasne kao disidenti „vrhunskima“ i „najboljima“ (<https://faktograf.hr/2020/11/03/video-konferencije-svjetskog-savezajljenika-prepun-je-dezininformacija/>).

⁹ Montagnierova tvrdnja nije potkrijepljena dokazima (<https://faktograf.hr/2021/01/12/francuski-virolog-bez-ikakvih-dokaza-tvrdi-da-mrnk-cjepivo-uzrokuje-rak/>).

¹⁰ Hrvatski ministri primili su ista cjepiva kao i ostatak populacije (<https://faktograf.hr/2021/03/31/plenovic-beros-i-jandrokovic-nisu-se-lazno-cijepili/>).

¹¹ PCR test pouzdano je dijagnostičko sredstvo (<https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-cdc-testingguidance-idUSL1N2TG0QW>). I Svjetska zdravstvena organizacija u više je navrata izdavala upute za korištenje toga testa (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/diagnostic-testing-for-sars-cov-2>).



Potkategorije	Primjeri komentara	Dezinformacije Total N = 187; 20,90 %
Iskazi nepovjerenja u medije (N = 83; 8,80 %)		
Cenzura i propaganda (N = 37; 44,50 %)	<p><i>Meni je prijateljica poslala alternativno mišljenje nekih znanstvenika i nisam mogla otvoriti...odmah je uklonjeno kao neprimjereni sadržaj. Zašto tolika cenzura...sama ću prosuditi za sebe...ne mislim svojim stavovima ugrožavati druge ali imam pravo na informacije sa različitih strana.</i></p> <p><i>Propaganda cijepivu kojeg nitko neće. Misle da će nestasim potaknuti potraznju i privid da se ljudi oce dobrovoljno koknuti.</i></p> <p><i>Zato i brisu komentare da mi koji se ne zelimo cijepiti ne iznosimo cinjenice</i></p> <p><i>Koji ste vi idioti novinari prodajete lose cjevivo ahhah,kako cemo imat povjerenja u nesto sta je zbrckano u par mjeseci i to je jos gensko cjevivo koje se zna da uzrokuje rak, zasto? Novac (dezinformacija)¹²</i></p>	N = 8; 4,27 %
Iskazi nepovjerenja u vezi potrebnog vremena, testiranja i načina nastanka cjeviva (N = 79; 8,30 %)		
(bez potkategorije)	<p><i>Razvijanje učinkovitih i dobrih cijepiva može trajati i do par godina a za COVID19 ga razvili za svega par mjeseci i sada još pritišću da što prije dobiju dozvolu za uporabu, čak i ugledni stručnjaci već tvrde da je to sve pre brzo i da nije dobro. (dezinformacija)¹³</i></p> <p><i>Nije uopće napravljena toksikološka analiza niti provjere na jadnim životinjama za razliku od svih prethodnih cjeviva (dezinformacija)¹⁴</i></p>	N = 31; 16,57 %
Ljudska prava, etička i vjerska pitanja (N = 75; 7,90 %)		
(bez potkategorije)	<p><i>Ja kao katolik se necu cjepit iz moralnim i etickih razloga jer cjeviva sadrže DNK abortirane djece ili takozvani FETUS ubijene djece (dezinformacija)¹⁵</i></p> <p><i>Bojim se da će u Hrvatskoj to cijepljenje biti uvijet za ići dalje u školu, na radno mjesto itd! Dakle ako je trovanje biti će na silu (dezinformacija)¹⁶</i></p>	N = 11; 5,88 %

¹² Netočno je da cjevivo uzrokuje rak (<https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-coronavirus-cancer-idUSL1N2S322C>).

¹³ Ugledni stručnjaci ne tvrde da je cjevivo razvijeno suviše brzo (<https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-vaccine-clot-idUSL1N2MF10E>).

¹⁴ Ispitivanja na životinjama su provedena (<https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-covid-vaccine-animal-idUSL2N2NJ11K>).

¹⁵ Cjeviva ne sadrže DNK pobačenih fetusa. Vatikan smatra cjevivo moralno i etički prihvatljivim (<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2020-12/vatican-cdf-note-covid-vaccine-morality-abortion.html>).

¹⁶ Cijepljenje nije ni u jednom trenu bilo uvjet za išta od navedenoga.

Potkategorije	Primjeri komentara	Dezinformacije Total N = 187; 20,90 %
Kategoričko odbijanje cjepiva i nagovaranje drugih da se ne cijepe (N = 73; 7,70 %)		
(bez potkategorije)	<i>Cijepljenje protiv prehlade zbrdazdola sklepanim cjepivom bez detaljnih provjera kupljenim po tajnoj cijeni – apsolutno NE! (dezinformacija)¹⁷</i> <i>Ne bih se trovao s time niti da mi tom prilikom uruče kuvertu s milijun eura u cashu.</i>	N = 5; 2,67 %
Cijepljenje je nepotrebno (N = 37; 3,90 %)		
(bez potkategorije)	<i>Cijepljenje protiv ČEGA? Protiv jače prehlade? NE HVALA. 2019 Isti broj mrtvih na godisnoj razini kao i 2020. (dezinformacija)¹⁸</i> <i>Dakle, zbog nekakve prehlade kojoj je smrtnost 1,88 % oduzeta su nam sva prava i slobode i prisiljava nas se na cijepljenje (dezinformacija)¹⁹</i>	N = 14; 7,48 %
Negativni komentari usmjereni prema osobama koje će se cijepiti (N = 35; 3,70 %)		
(bez potkategorije)	<i>Jeftina propaganda za placeni PR baziran na laznim statistikama. A realnost je ovakva. Neuki, ucjenjeni, stari, ispranih mozgova i oni bez pristupa istini ce mozda primiti ovaj otrov. 80% ljudi NECE.²⁰</i> <i>Ovce, cijepite se!</i>	N = 17; 9,09 %
Iskazi nepovjerenja u farmaceutske korporacije (N = 34; 3,60 %)		
(bez potkategorije)	<i>Ovo židovski scenarij od korone do cjepiva. Vlasnici pfarma su u većini židovi</i> <i>Pfizer? Ne trebam više ni znati. Evo sve kazne sto su platili za korupciju, lazi i manipulacije.²¹</i>	N = 6; 3,20 %



¹⁷ Cjepivo je prošlo potrebna klinička testiranja (<https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-vaccine-clot-idUSL1N2MF10E>).

¹⁸ Periodičke publikacije HZJZ-a pokazuju zamjetan porast broja smrti u Republici Hrvatskoj 2020. u odnosu na 2019. (https://www.hzjz.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Bilten_Umrli-2019-2.pdf; <https://www.hzjz.hr/sluzba-epidemiologija-prevenција-nezaraznih-bolesti/izvjesece-o-smrtnosti-prema-listi-odabranih-uzroka-smrti-u-2020/>; https://www.bib.irb.hr/1133129/download/1133129.Ropac_Staevl_Rafaj_-Neki_epidemioloski_pokazatelji_u_pandemiji_AMC_4-2020..pdf).

¹⁹ Smrtnost od bolesti COVID-19, posebice u prvom valu, bila je znatno viša (<https://faktograf.hr/2020/06/02/covid-19-mediji-dokumentarac-ifr-cfr/>).

²⁰ Procijepljenost svjetske populacije protiv bolesti COVID-19 prešla je 50 % početkom studenog 2021. Do rujna 2022. barem jednu dozu cjepiva primilo je 5,37 milijardi osoba (<https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations>).

²¹ Pfizer je u više navrata isplatio velike iznose tužiteljima u nagodbama, no ni u jednom takvom slučaju nije bilo riječ o prikriivanju podataka o proizvodu. Nejasno je na koji bi način te činjenice trebale utjecati na sigurnost cjepiva (<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-largest-health-care-fraud-settlement-its-history>).

Potkategorije	Primjeri komentara	Dezinformacije Total N = 187; 20,90 %
Iskazi nepovjerenja u sustav zbog negativnih događaja u prošlosti (N = 19; 2,00 %)		
(bez potkategorije)	<i>Da nebi bilo kao kad su nas svih cijepili davno protiv velikih boginja pa su neki nastradali Al ne želim poslije čuti „uuups!“. Ja ću pričekati. Uostalom, nije da povijest ne poznaje farmaceutske greške. evo primjer... „Talidomid je lijek koji se prije šezdeset godina pojavio na tržištu sa svrhom ublažavanja jutarnjih mučnina u trudnica. Zbog štetna djelovanja te kemikalije [S–N–(ftalimido)glutarimid je teratogen] rođeno je više od deset tisuća djece s teškim malformacijama, zabilježen je velik broj mrtvorođenih, a nepoznat je broj namjerno počinjenih pobačaja. Slučaj talidomida smatra se najvećom farmaceutskom tragedijom, čije se posljedice vide i danas. Mnogi ljudi rođeni bez udova, bez ušiju ili izobličjenih lica podsjećaju i upozoravaju na površnost ispitivanja sigurnosti lijekova.“²²</i>	N = 1; 0,53 %
Oklijevanje u vezi cjepiva (N = 10; 1,00 %)		
(bez potkategorije)	<i>Što se tiče konkretno ovog cjepiva ja osobno ću pričekati bar do jeseni. Zašto? Jednostavno zato što neznam sve nus pojave.</i>	N = 1; 0,53 %

Iz Tablice 2 vidljivo je da se u drugoj najzastupljenijoj kategoriji uz *teorije zavjera*, a to je kategorija *iskazi nepovjerenja u sastav, učinkovitost, sigurnost i nuspojave cjepiva* (N = 188; 19,93 %), nalaze tri potkategorije: *učinkovitost i sigurnost cjepiva* (N = 19; 10,10 %), potom potkategorija *sastav i nuspojave/bolesti nastale zbog cjepiva* (N = 131; 70,40 %) te *odgovornost za nuspojave* (N = 38; 20,20 %). Najviše dezinformacija, 35,80 %, dijelilo se upravo u komentarima u toj kategoriji. Očito je kako komentatore najviše zabrinjava sastav te moguće nuspojave cjepiva, ali isto tako i pitanje snošenja odgovornosti u slučaju ozbiljnih posljedica cijepljenja (npr. „Učinkovitost 95%, Sigurnost xx%? (nisam vidio brojku za xx)! Kakvo je zdravstveno stanje ljudi 6 mjeseci ili godinu dana nakon primitka cjepiva? Naravno još ne možemo imati taj podatak, jer nije prošlo dovoljno vremena“). Upravo tu informaciju o odgovornosti, za koju komentatori često navode da preuzima pojedinac, a ne farmaceutska kompanija ili liječnici/stručnjaci/država, koriste kao navodni dokaz za jednu od potkategorija u kategoriji teorije zavjera. Najčešće su to teorije zavjera vezane za ekonomsku dobit farmaceutskih kompanija ili pak teorije zavjera o svjetskim vladama, organizacijama, pojedincima i slično koji upravljaju društvom (Tablica 3). Osim te kategorije još dvije kategorije imaju potkategorije. U kategoriji *iskazi nepovjerenja u znanstvenike*

²² Suvremena farmakovigilancija daleko je naprednija i efikasnija nego što je bila u navedenim razdobljima (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6132952/#:~:text=Pharmacovigilance%20started%20about%20170%20years,and%20the%20quality%20of%20life>).

i stručnjake (N = 149; 15,80 %) imamo potkategoriju *znanstveni disidenti kojima komentatori vjeruju* (N = 30; 20,10 %), a u kategoriji *iskazi nepovjerenja u medije* (N = 83; 8,80 %) imamo potkategoriju *cenzura i propaganda* (N = 37; 44,50 %). Što se tiče nepovjerenja prema znanstvenicima, komentatori uglavnom iskazuju nepovjerenje u nepristranost, moral i etičku korektnost znanstvenika te često navode kako su znanstvenici povezani s farmaceutskim kompanijama i političarima (npr. „Mnogi ‘znanstvenici’ su se prodali i spremni su se prodati onome tko najviše plati. Druga strana u formuli su mediji koji se obilato financiraju iz fondova farmaceutskih tvrtki. Takvi mediji prenose isključivo stavove znanstvenika koji govore u prilog farmaceutskim tvrtkama a drugačijih mišljenja gotovo da nema. I kada sve zbrojite (ogromna sredstva upumpana znanstvenicima, medijima i političarima) dobijete situaciju kakvu imamo”). Kategorije *iskazi nepovjerenja u znanstvenike i stručnjake* (N = 149; 15,80 %) i *iskazi nepovjerenja u farmaceutske korporacije* (N = 34; 3,60 %) često su povezane s događajima u prošlosti na temelju kojih komentatori preslikavaju situaciju iz prošlosti na današnju, npr. Pfizerove tužbe ili slučajevi narkolepsije kod djece nakon cijepljena protiv svinjske gripe (npr. „Odes na Google, napises Trovan vaccine i citas o Pfizer a to je samo JEDNA stvar u njihovom CV-u. Toliko su puta izgubi li na sudu da ne razumijem kako im je jos uvijek dopusten rad!!!”). U potkategoriji *cenzura i propaganda* uglavnom prevladavaju komentari koji se odnose na navodnu cenzuru komentara na društvenim mrežama i u medijima svih onih koji se protive cijepljenju, kao i navodno agresivnu propagandu cjepiva u medijima. U tim se komentarima također često povezuje navodna novčana dobit medija od strane politike i farmaceutskih kompanija. Također česta izjava komentatora jest da dobro i kvalitetno cjepivo ne bi trebalo nikakvu reklamu ni promociju, pri čemu zaključuju kako cjepivo protiv bolesti COVID-19 nije sigurno niti je kvalitetno (npr. „Meni je prijateljica poslala alternativno mišljenje nekih znanstvenika i nisam mogla otvoriti...odmah je uklonjeno kao neprimjereni sadržaj. Zašto tolika cenzura...sama ću prosuditi za sebe...ne mislim svojim stavovima ugrožavati druge ali imam pravo na informacije sa različitih strana“; „Zato i brisu komentare da mi koji se ne zelimo cijepiti ne iznosimo cinjenice“).

Kategorija *iskazi nepovjerenja u vezi potrebnog vremena, testiranja i načina nastanka cjepiva* (N = 79; 8,30 %) podrazumijeva komentare koji se odnose na nepovjerenje prema brzini izrade cjepiva, uzorku i kliničkim fazama koje je cjepivo prošlo (npr. „Očito si ti neobrazovan jer cjepivo napravljeno u pola godine nije sigurno, a najmanje provjereno. To je i sama doktorica Markotić rekla, također treba proći najmanje 3 godine za primjenu napravljenog cjepiva.“; „Cjepivo Nije testirano na životinjama“).

Uz temu *ljudska prava, etička i vjerska pitanja* vežu se komentari koji se odnose na navodno kršenje ljudskih prava i slobode u smislu mogućeg obveznog cijepljenja te navodnog prisilnog cijepljenja. Često se spominju i režimi poput fašizma, totalitarizma, staljinizma, a u vezi vjerskih prava spominje se i sastav cjepiva koji se protivi vjerskim uvjerenjima (npr. „Kuga lažova: Nirnberški zakonik zabranjuje prisilne medicinske postupke koji uključuju obavezno cijepljenje ‘Suđenje liječnicima’ (SAD protiv Karla Brandta) tijekom Nirnberškog suđenja nakon Drugog svjetskog rata, kojim je uspostavljen Nirnberški zakon koji regulira etiku medicinske intervencije“; „Ja kao katolik se necu cijepiti iz moralnim i etičkih razloga jer cjepiva sadrže DNK abortirane djece ili takozvani FETUS ubijene djece.“).

U kategoriji *kategoričko odbijanje cjepiva i nagovaranje drugih da se ne cijepi* bilo je 7,70 % komentara. Uz odbijanje cjepiva ponekad se koriste pogrdne riječi kojima se vrijeđaju osobe koje se žele cijepiti (npr. „Brnjicari stvarno vjeruju da su ovim glavonjama ubrizgali cjepivo“), a ti komentari pripadaju kategoriji *negativni komentari usmjereni prema osobama koje će se cijepiti* (N = 35; 3,70 %). Neki komentari navode kako je cijepljenje potpuno nepotrebno jer je COVID-19 samo jača prehlada, kako je smrtnost od njega jako mala te da će prije riskirati da se zaraze nego da se cijepi. Nažalost, najmanji postotak komentara u uzorku zauzimaju komentari u kojima se cijepljenje priznaje kao jedno od najvećih medicinskih dostignuća, ali je prisutno oklijevanje prema cijepljenju u smislu čekanja cijepljenja drugih kako bi se mogle vidjeti moguće nuspojave (npr. „Cijepljenje protiv prehlade zbrdazdola sklepanim cjepivom bez detaljnih provjera kupljenim po tajnoj cijeni – apsolutno NE!“; „Što se tiče konkretno ovog cjepiva ja osobno ću pričekati bar do jeseni. Zašto? Jednostavno zato što neznam sve nus pojave. Premalo ljudi se cijepilo u GB. Kada budem vidjela što se kod njih dešava (velik broj cijepljenih ljudi) vidjeti ću koje će biti nus pojave osim alergije“).

U Tablici 3 nalazi se kategorija *teorije zavjera* kao najzastupljenija kategorija u uzorku, a obuhvaća 35,84 % negativnih komentara. Tom temom pokriven je širok raspon nekonvencionalnih i neutemeljenih teorija koji se odnose na cijepljenje protiv bolesti COVID-19. Dodatna klasifikacija kategorije *teorija zavjera* rađena je prema knjizi *Conspiracy theories: a primer* (Uscinski, 2020). Teorije zavjera dijele se na *teorije zavjera koje govore o znanosti*, *teorije zavjera o svjetskim vladama/politici/organizacijama/pojedincima koji upravljaju društvom*, *teorije zavjera vezane za ekonomiju* i *teorije zavjera vezane za antisemitizam i antiislamizam*.

U prvoj kategoriji teorija zavjera vezanih za znanost postoje dvije potkategorije, a to su *teorije zavjera o posljedicama i sastavu cjepiva* (N = 66; 19,50 %) i *teorije zavjera o navodnom podrijetlu, svrsi cijepjenja i pandemije* (N = 103; 30,40 %). U prvoj potkategoriji najčešće se spominju teorije zavjera o tome kako cjepivo mijenja ljudski DNK, kako u sastavu cjepiva ima aluminija koji je štetan te uzrokuje rak, autoimune bolesti i na koncu smrt, kako će cjepivo utjecati na razvitak fetusa kod trudnica te kako će nas putem cjepiva zaraziti virusom HIV-a (npr. „Zapis na RNA mi ne zvuči dugoročno pametno. Kako će ista ta RNA reagirati na neku drugu bolest ili upalu, koju bi čovjek hodajući prebolio, ne znaju, ali može se dogoditi posljedica kao kod autoimune bolesti, da tijelo napadne vlastiti organizam, krivo očitavajući ‘događaj’. Zato se i ne cijepi ho-ruk i masovno, nego ‘na komadiće’ počevši od starijih, a potpuno ne preporučujući cijepljenje mlađima od 16 i trudnicama. Mislite da je to bez veze? I mislite da je bez veze to što se svi odriču odgovornosti za tako ‘napredno i sigurno cjepivo’.“; „Samo ne dajte mu australsko ima virus hiv-a“; „Pokušat će cijepiti prvo one koji rade za vladu i državu dok će političarima davati cijepivo bez aluminija i drugog otrova onda dalje bit će treća vrsta cjepiva za ‘izabrani narod’“). Druga potkategorija jesu teorije zavjera koje govore o navodnom podrijetlu te svrsi cijepjenja i pandemije. Komentari su vezani uz sljedeće termine: „plan“, „lažna cijepljenja“, „plaćeni znanstvenici“, „lažne studije“, „sve je laž“, „Brexit“, „Great reset“, „depopulacija“, „čipiranje“, „pretvaranje ljudi u zombije“, „Orwel 1984“ i slično.

Tablica 3. Kategorizacija teorija zavjera s primjerima komentara

Kategorije	Primjeri komentara
Teorije zavjera (N = 338; 35,84 %)	
O znanosti (medicina, tehnologija itd.): posljedice i sastav cjepiva (N = 66; 19,50 %)	<i>Tko mi garantira da taj mRNA neće prenijeti i neku drugu informaciju DNK-u u stanicu i da stanica zbog toga neće početi mutirati (rak)?²³</i>
O znanosti (medicina, tehnologija itd.): navodno podrijetlo, svrha cijepjenja i pandemije (N = 103; 30,40 %)	<i>Čipirati će nas preko cjepiva (ste gledali matrix, daj se probudite)²⁴</i> <i>RNA spriječiti da zatrudne. Depopulacija na najjače²⁵</i>
O svjetskim vladama /politici/ organizacijama/pojedincima koji upravljaju društvom (N = 103; 30,40 %)	<i>Kakve teorije o 5g? pa već je uveden, a bill gates je javno više puta izjavio da treba smanjiti populaciju sa osmijehom na licu.²⁶</i> <i>Točno se vide da ovi rade za Sorosa i Gatesa</i> <i>Za koga rade ovi znanstvenici i tko ih plaća?²⁷</i>
O ekonomiji (N = 50; 14,70 %)	<i>Zarada farmaco industrije!</i> <i>Svaka kuna koju zarade za sudjelovanje u ovoj prevari je krvavo zaradjena.²⁸</i>
Antisemitizam/antiislamizam (N = 16; 4,70 %)	<i>Eto fino, bar neka krscanski svijet sada zna da im se forsira neka vakcina koja im mijenja strukturu dna, koju je razvio neki turcin. Hvala na informaciji.²⁹</i> <i>Ona židovčina Đikić (promijenio prezime Dueck u Đikić) u službi te židovske farmakomafije ali ljudi su se srećom ipak probudili pa vide gdje ih to sve vodi.³⁰</i>

²³ Biolozi i liječnici objašnjavaju da cjepivo koje koristi glasničku RNK ne može izmijeniti DNK i izazvati pojavu raka (<https://apnews.com/article/archive-fact-checking-afs:Content:9340521654>).

²⁴ Cjepivom protiv bolesti COVID-19 nije moguće u ljudsko tijelo unijeti mikročip (<https://www.factcheck.org/2020/04/conspiracy-theory-misinterprets-goals-of-gates-foundation/>; <https://faktograf.hr/2020/05/21/ne-hrvatska-nije-narucila-cjepiva-s-cipom/>).

²⁵ Nema dokaza da je cijepjenje sredstvo smanjenja populacije (<https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-covid-depopulation-idUSL2N20L1XG>), a prikupljeni podaci pokazuju da je cjepivo sigurno za trudnicu i plod (<https://www.gavi.org/vaccineswork/covid-vaccines-and-pregnancy-review-evidence-shows-they-are-safe>).

²⁶ Nije točno da je Bill Gates izjavljivao da treba smanjiti populaciju. Izjavljivao je da treba smanjiti rast populacije (<https://mythdetector.ge/en/does-bill-gates-promise-us-depopulation-and-chipping/>).

²⁷ Tvrdnja je suviše općenita da bi bilo moguće dokazati neistinitost konkretnim primjerom, no odgovara kriterijima Europske komisije za prepoznavanje teorija zavjera (https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/fighting-disinformation/identifying-conspiracy-theories_hr).

²⁸ Tvrdnje su suviše općenite da bi bilo moguće dokazati neistinitost konkretnim primjerom, no odgovaraju kriterijima Europske komisije za prepoznavanje teorija zavjera (https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/fighting-disinformation/identifying-conspiracy-theories_hr).

²⁹ Teorija zavjere prema dokumentima Europske komisije (https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/fighting-disinformation/identifying-conspiracy-theories_hr).

³⁰ Prof. dr. sc. Ivan Đikić nije židovskog podrijetla i nije mijenjao prezime. Prezime Đikić često je u području Bugojna, gdje je rođen Đikićev otac Branimir i gdje žive mnogobrojni rođaci istoga prezimena (<https://actacroatica.com/hr/surname/Djiki%C4%87/>). Prezime Dueck ne nalazi se u *Židovskom biografskom leksikonu* (<https://zbl.lzmk.hr/>), urednika Ive Goldsteina, niti u bazi podataka Istraživačkog i dokumentacijskog centra (<https://cendo.hr/>).

Uz teorije zavjera vezanih za znanost kojih ima najviše u uzorku, sljedeća najzastupljenija kategorija teorija zavjera jest ona o *svjetskim vladama/politici/organizacijama/pojedincima koji upravljaju društvom* (N = 103; 30,40 %). U tim komentarima iznose se teorije o tome kako iza cjepiva stoje organizacije ili pojedinci koji upravljaju društvom radi vlastite koristi ili zato što žele nanijeti ljudima zlo. Česti termini koji se koriste jesu, primjerice, „krupni kapital“, „elita“, „zle sile“, „izabrani“, „banda“, „moćnici“, „oni“, „duboka država“, „WHO“, „Gates“, „Fauci“, „Soroš“, „Big pharma“ i slično. Ta je kategorija usko povezana i često se preklapa s *teorijama zavjera o ekonomiji* (N = 50; 14,70 %), odnosno komentarima koji navode kako će korporacije ili pojedinci zaraditi veliku količinu novaca od produkcije i distribucije cjepiva.

Najmanji postotak komentara odnosi se na komentare vezane za *antisemitizam i antiislamizam* (N = 16; 4,70 %). U njima se ljude vrijeđa po vjerskoj osnovi; navode se, primjerice, teorije o tome da Židovi truju Arape, a sami ne primaju pravo cjepivo, ili pak da je cjepivo razvio Turčin kako bi naštetio kršćanskom svijetu s cjepivom koje mijenja DNK.

RASPRAVA

Svrha je ove studije identificiranje glavnih tematskih područja, dezinformacija i teorija zavjera koje se vežu za cjepivo i cijepljenje protiv bolesti COVID-19, a koje su se širile od objave prvih informacija o cjepivima protiv bolesti COVID-19 u medijima. Da bismo bolje razumjeli negativna mišljenja i stavove prema cijepljenju i cjepivu protiv bolesti COVID-19, koristili smo metodu analize sadržaja komentara na Facebooku i na internetskim portalima. U ukupnom uzorku od 4576 komentara samo 20,60 %, odnosno 943 komentara, bila su negativna, pri čemu većina negativnih komentara potječe s poveznica navedenih ispod članaka na internetskim portalima (77,09 %), dok ih je na Facebook grupi *Koronavirus Hrvatska* bilo samo 22,90 %. To se može objasniti činjenicom da Facebook grupa *Koronavirus Hrvatska*, za razliku od internetskih portala, ima administratore koji nadgledaju postove i komentare članova te brišu komentare koji krše pravila grupe (ovo su neka od pravila grupe: „Samo provjerene informacije sa izvorom“ te „NE – teorije zavjere“).

Od svih tema najviše je komentara sadržajno klasificirano kao teorije zavjera (35,84 %), pri čemu je jednak, najveći postotak teorija zavjera od 30,40 % vezan za navodno podrijetlo, svrhu cijepjenja i pandemije te za zavjere o svjetskim vladama, politici, organizacijama i pojedincima koji upravljaju društvom, poput Billa Gatesa, Soroša, Židova i slično. Ostale teorije zavjera tematski se vežu za navodne posljedice i sastav cjepiva, dok se u drugima tvrdilo kako farmaceutske tvrtke te znanstvenici i stručnjaci pri izradi i distribuciji cjepiva imaju prvenstveno financijske, a ne zdravstvene motive. Od ostalih kategorija prednjače komentari u kojima se iskazuje nepovjerenje i zabrinutost u vezi sastava, učinkovitosti, sigurnosti i nuspojava cjepiva (19,93 %) te komentari s izrazima nepovjerenja prema znanstvenicima i stručnjacima (15,80 %) i nepovjerenja u vlast (11,87 %).

Negativnih komentara u kojima su se dijelile dezinformacije u uzorku ima 20,90 %. Najviše dezinformacija dijelilo se u kategoriji *iskazi nepovjerenja u sastav, učinkovitost, si-*

gurnost i nuspojave cjepiva (35,80 %), točnije u potkategoriji *sastav i nuspojave/bolesti nastale zbog cjepiva*. Dezinformacije su se uglavnom odnosile na to da se nakon primljenog cjepiva umire ili da cjepivo ima jake i dugoročne nuspojave, poput nemogućnosti začeća kod žena, negativnih posljedica na plod, smanjivanja postojećeg imuniteta, razvijanja težih oboljenja i slično. Sljedeća kategorija koja ima najviše zastupljenih dezinformacija također je vezana uz cjepiva, odnosno uz *potrebno vrijeme, testiranje i način nastanka cjepiva (16,57 %)*, pri čemu su najčešće dezinformacije o tome kako cjepivo nije prošlo sve kliničke faze istraživanja, kako nije testirano na životinjama i kako za dobivanje kvalitetnog cjepiva treba proći minimalno dvije ili više godina testiranja prije njegove primjene. Sami nazivi kategorija dezinformacija oblikovani su na temelju radova koji se bave kategorizacijom dezinformacija o prijašnjim cjepivima, poput cjepiva protiv HPV-a, poliomijelitisa i OPV-a (npr. Feldman-Savelsberg i sur. 2000; Ghinai i sur., 2013), te o cjepivu i cijepljenju protiv bolesti COVID-19 (npr. Klimiuk i sur., 2020; Nuzhath i sur., 2020). Dijeljenje takvih dezinformacija vezanih uz cjepiva, često potaknuto nepovjerenjem u znanost, iako povijesno prisutno kod brojnih drugih cjepiva naročito se ubrzalo u vrijeme pandemije bolesti COVID-19. Razlozi za to najvjerojatnije su slaba znanstvena pismenost te korištenje informacijsko-komunikacijske tehnologije i društvenih mreža na kojima su protok i diseminacija informacija iznimno brzi, odnosno gdje se, prema istraživanjima Vosoughija, Roya i Arala (2018), dezinformacije i lažne vijesti šire šest puta brže od istinitih i točnih³¹ informacija. Komentatori koji dijele dezinformacije i teorije zavjera često u komentaru daju izvor na koji se pozivaju kako bi dezinformaciji dali vjerodostojnost. Takvi su izvori najčešće ili slabe kvalitete, nerelevantni ili su u potpunosti nekvalitetni, poput opskurnih portala ili videa na YouTubeu. U komentarima se također često poziva na medijske natpise ili pak znanstvene radove iz kojih se izvlače krivi zaključci, na temelju čega je vidljiva slaba znanstvena, zdravstvena i medijska pismenost.

Rezultati naše studije podudaraju se s rezultatima recentnih studija koje se bave razumijevanjem stavova i nepovjerenja javnosti u cjepiva protiv bolesti COVID-19 te utjecajem i širenjem dezinformacija i teorija zavjera u vezi toga cjepiva (Hotez, 2020; Smith, 2017; Tasnim i sur., 2020).

ZAKLJUČAK

Uloga medija i društvenih mreža u demokratskom društvu još je jednom bila potvrđena pandemijom bolesti COVID-19. Građani su se o pandemiji, cjepivu i cijepljenju većinom informirali putem medija i društvenih mreža na kojima se, između ostalog, našao i veliki broj dezinformacija, lažnih vijesti i teorija zavjera koji su oblikovali percepciju pandemije.

Rezultati ovoga istraživanja pokazali su da su mišljenja i stavovi javnosti u promatranim medijima, a posebno na društvenoj mreži Facebook, o cjepivu, cijepljenju protiv bolesti COVID-19 i imunizaciji uglavnom polarizirani, no da ih je tek petina (20,60 % od ukupnog broja komentara) usmjerena na oklijevanje i otpor prema cjepivu, cijepljenju,

³¹ Točnost je, uz potpunost, preciznost i nepristranost, jedan od aspekata istinitosti. Kada netko govori istinu, može ujedno iznositi i (obično nenamjerno) netočne podatke.

imunizaciji i protuepidemijskim mjerama. Razlog za to, barem u slučaju društvene mreže Facebook, svakako je i činjenica da su administratori grupe *Koronavirus Hrvatska* uklanjali neprovjerene izvore informacija i informacije koje bi okarakterizirali kao dezinformacije i teorije zavjera. Negativni stavovi nisu bili usmjereni samo na cjepivo i cijepljenje već i na zdravstvene djelatnike, znanstvenike općenito, vladu i donositelje odluka. Na promatranom uzorku negativnih komentara većina se odnosila na teorije zavjera (35,84 %), dok se nešto manji broj (20,90 %) odnosio na dezinformacije.

Negativni su komentari obuhvaćali teorije zavjera tematski usmjerene na pitanje podrijetla virusa, svrhe cijepljenja i cilja pandemije te teorije zavjera koje su se odnosile na teme politike, svjetskih vlada i društvenih organizacija i pojedinaca koji „upravljaju društvom“. Također, među zastupljenijim temama bile su i teorije zavjera o sastavu cjepiva i posljedicama cijepljenja, farmaceutske industriji, kao i motivima znanstvenika i zdravstvenih djelatnika i stručnjaka koji su bili uključeni u zdravstvene kampanje, odnosno izradu i distribuciju cjepiva i imunizaciju. Kada je riječ o dezinformacijama, negativni su komentari obuhvaćali teme o nepovjerenju u sastav i učinkovitost cjepiva, nedovoljno kliničko ispitivanje cjepiva, teme o sigurnosti, odnosno nuspojavama cijepljenja te teme koje se odnose na pitanje nepovjerenja prema medijima, znanstvenicima i vladama.

Razumijevanje načina nastanka i širenja dezinformacija i teorija zavjera o cjepivu i cijepljenju protiv bolesti COVID-19 u medijima i na društvenim mrežama te razumijevanje uloge zdravstvene pismenosti i jasne komunikacije zdravstvenih informacija u kontekstu infodemije i pandemije važno je iz tri razloga. Prvi je potreba za formuliranjem jasnog plana komunikacije s javnosti putem zdravstvenih kampanja, i to prvenstveno medicinskih djelatnika kao glavnog izvora i diseminatora zdravstvenih informacija, posebice kada su krajnji primatelji informacija osobe koje se oklijevaju cijepiti. Drugi je razlog potreba za oblikovanjem sadržaja za *online* edukativne platforme i materijale te potreba za pokretanjem programa zdravstvenog obrazovanja putem tradicionalnih platformi i platformi društvenih medija. Jedna od takvih platformi jest i internetska stranica *Imaš znanje, budi primjer!* javnozdravstvene kampanje cijepljenja koju je pokrenulo devet komora u zdravstvu u Republici Hrvatskoj. Rezultati naše studije poslužili su za izradu informativnog paketa „pitanja i odgovori“ na istoj stranici. Treći i posljednji razlog jest potreba za razotkrivanjem dezinformacija i teorija zavjera koje se šire putem društvenih medija te potreba za identificiranjem načina na koji ljudi (ne)provjeravaju i (ne)vrednuju informacije i izvore koje dijele. S obzirom na već navedene rezultate iz istraživanja Begović i Labaš iz 2021. koji su, između ostalog, potvrdili da su hrvatskim građanima društvene mreže primarni izvor informacija, postoji jasna potreba za oblikovanjem plana i strategije uvođenja znanstvene, zdravstvene i medijske pismenosti u primarno, sekundarno i tercijarno obrazovanje na nacionalnoj razini. Pritom je potrebno uzeti u obzir heterogenost i dinamičnost suvremenog medijskog prostora koji uvelike oblikuje javnu percepciju javnozdravstvenog sustava i javnozdravstvenih pitanja, kao i širi kontekst koji uključuje ne samo politička, ekonomska, društveno-kulturna i duhovna pitanja nego i pitanja koja se odnose na osobna uvjerenja, kognitivne sposobnosti i psihološke karakteristike pojedinaca kao primatelja informacija. Također, sve strane uključene u planiranje, oblikovanje i diseminaciju zdravstvenih informacija i poruka moraju

biti svjesne izazovnosti komunikacije u kriznim situacijama, kao što je pandemija bolesti COVID-19, u kojima strah i nesigurnost, novost i složenost situacije te infodemija stvaraju uvjete pogodne za nastanak i širenje dezinformacija i teorija zavjera. Pouzdani izvori informacija, u obliku medijskih sadržaja i u obliku zdravstvenih poruka koje šalje struka, te sustavna i dosljedna zdravstvena komunikacija ključni su čimbenici suzbijanja kako dezinformacija, teorija zavjera i mitova o cjepivu tako i same bolesti.

Pandemija bolesti COVID-19 i infodemija ukazale su na važnost praćenja, kontrole i suzbijanja nastanka i širenja dezinformacija i teorija zavjera tijekom kriznih situacija. Prepoznata je nužnost jasnog plana i strategije komunikacije u medijskom prostoru kreiranog na institucionalnoj razini, a kojima je cilj poboljšati transparentnost komunikacije između donositelja odluka i javnosti te poticati profesionalizam i odgovornost u komunikaciji putem (društvenih) medija.

S obzirom na dinamičan karakter medijskog prostora medijskoj se pismenosti mora pristupiti kao kontinuiranom procesu koji počiva na načelima objektivnosti, odgovornosti, profesionalizma i transparentnosti. Izazov svakako ostaje kako komunikaciju na društvenim mrežama i drugim oblicima suvremenog medijskog prostora, u kojima pojedinac nije samo primatelj informacije već i njezin kreator, komentator i širitelj, također utemeljiti na navedenim načelima. Rezultati istraživanja upućuju na važnost poticanja i kreiranja aktivnosti i programa u području osvješćavanja i educiranja građana o informacijskoj, kritičkoj medijskoj, znanstvenoj i zdravstvenoj pismenosti, ali i na važnost dodatnog reguliranja tradicionalnog i suvremenog medijskog prostora u odnosu na medijsku komunikaciju u kriznim situacijama poput pandemije. Također, rezultati upućuju na važnost jasnog i pravovremenog plana i strategije zdravstvene kampanje te komunikacije zdravstvenih djelatnika i donositelja odluka s javnosti.

Ograničenja istraživanja

Ograničenja provedenog istraživanja tiču se dva pitanja. Prvo se odnosi na činjenicu da su u analizi sadržaja promatrani isključivo komentari kojima je pridružen negativan sentiment. Naime, određenim dezinformacijama, posebno onima kojima cilj nije nužno izravno proturječiti znanstvenim činjenicama, već izazvati zbunjenost kod primatelja informacije, može biti pridružen i neutralan ili pozitivan sentiment, kao što je to slučaj s prije navedenom tvrdnjom: „Kinesko cjepivo Sinovac jedino bilježi 100%-tnu učinkovitost“. Navedena tvrdnja ne izaziva samo zbunjenost kada je riječ o učinkovitosti ostalih vrsta cjepiva već i potencijalno opasnu lažnu nadu i lažno samopouzdanje. Drugo se pitanje odnosi na činjenicu da je istraživanje provedeno tijekom prve faze³² distribucije prvih doza cjepiva, tj. cijepjenja građana kada učinak i posljedice cjepiva još nisu bile jasne i očite. U tom je kontekstu, kada je riječ o nekim komentarima, primjerice onima kojima je pridružena negativna emocija sumnje i nesigurnosti, moguće da se ne radi o dezinformaciji – namjernoj neistinitoj tvrdnji kojoj je cilj zbuniti ili manipulirati mišljenjem kako bi se uzrokovala određena šteta, već o razumljivoj reakciji na novu, nepoznatu i relativno opasnu situaciju.

³² Distribucija prvih doza cjepiva, odnosno cijepjenje građana u Republici Hrvatskoj počelo je 27., 28. i 29. prosinca 2020.

Prijedlog budućih istraživanja

Daljnja istraživanja na ovu temu trebala bi usporediti dezinformacije i teorije zavjera o cijepljenju i cjepivu protiv bolesti COVID-19 nastale tijekom pandemije bolesti COVID-19 i dezinformacije i teorije zavjera o cijepljenju i cjepivu protiv bolesti COVID-19 nastale u razdoblju nakon jenjavanja bolesti COVID-19 kako bi se identificirale moguće razlike u mišljenjima i stavovima u odnosu na nove činjenice i saznanja, odnosno iskustvo u proteklom razdoblju. Također, bilo bi korisno istražiti u kojoj je mjeri automatizirana komunikacija (bila) prisutna u medijskom prostoru, odnosno koliko su dezinformacije o cjepivu i cijepljenju rezultat djelovanja botova te na koji su način takve dezinformacije utjecale na medijski diskurs o pandemiji bolesti COVID-19.

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COVID-19 VACCINES DISINFORMATION AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES: AN INFODEMIC ON SOCIAL NETWORKS AND MEDIA IN CROATIA

Kristina Feldvari :: Milijana Mićunović :: Marija Blagović

ABSTRACT *Misinformation, conspiracy theories, and negative comments on social networks affect the availability of accurate health information and attitudes toward vaccination. The aim of this paper is to explore the opinions and attitudes of the public, i.e. misinformation and conspiracy theories about vaccination and the vaccine against the disease caused by the COVID-19 virus on Internet portals and the social network Facebook. From November 9, 2020 to January 30, 2021, a total of 4,576 comments were analyzed, i.e. 113 posts in the topic of vaccination and vaccines categorized according to sentiment (positive, neutral, irrelevant, and negative). Among the negative comments (20,60 %), 13 main thematic categories were identified. The most represented were in the category of conspiracy theories (35,84 %) and the category of expression of distrust in the composition, effectiveness, safety, and side effects of vaccines (19,93 %), while the percentage of misinformation was 20,90 %. The results highlight the necessity of designing a timely plan and strategy of health campaigns and content for online educational materials and platforms, as well as the initiation of nationwide health education programs.*

KEYWORDS

COVID-19, VACCINATION, MISINFORMATION, CONSPIRACY THEORIES, SOCIAL NETWORKS, MEDIA

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PRIKAZI KNJIGA

BOOK REVIEWS

John C. Pollock and Douglas A. Vakoch (editors)

COVID-19 IN INTERNATIONAL MEDIA: GLOBAL PANDEMIC PERSPECTIVES

London: Routledge, 2022, 267 pp

ISBN: 978-1-032-02066-2

COVID-19 in International Media: Global Pandemic Responses, edited by John C. Pollock and Douglas A. Vakoch, is the book that puts focus on the question of how the media function worldwide in pandemic circumstances. The COVID-19 outbreak provoked many political, economic, and social issues in various national contexts, and the strategies and tactics introduced to minimize health risks were diverse and often guided by specific cultural norms. As a new momentum, compared to previous pandemics of such proportions, COVID-19 is characterized by ubiquitous mediatization, that has positive, as well as negative repercussions. The book highlights some of them. It is divided into four main sections that thematize the relationships between media, culture, government agency, and technology. There are 20 chapters in the book.

The first section is "Cultural differences in communication and identity". It consists of five chapters. The first chapter, "Coronavirus response asymmetries in the Global North and Global South: new challenges and recommendations" by Philip Santos, stresses the imperative of reaching the mutual recognition and cooperation among people from different parts of the world. Santos emphasizes relations between Africa and developed countries, and the importance of promoting solidarity and equality, instead of dependency. The second chapter is titled "Between declarations of war and praying for help: analyzing heads of states' speeches from a cross-cultural point of view". In this chapter, the authors Eika Auschner, Julia Heitsch, and Zully Paola Martínez Torres present content analysis of 11 political speeches, analyzed with the use of 11 criteria, such as, for instance, high/low context communication, and hierarchical/egalitarian style. Based on their analysis, speeches are classified as culturally expected, culturally ambiguous, and culturally unexpected.

"Unsettled belongings in deglobalization: Chinese immigrants' struggle for political identity by using transnational media in the COVID-19 pandemic" is the third chapter of the book. In this chapter, the author Zhipeng Gao uses Stuart Hall's theories of ideology and media in order to unpack rhetorical approaches to the pandemic as demonstrated by the Chinese government, highlighting its impact on immigrants from China who live in other countries. Gao concludes that anti-Western Chinese transnational media "cause some new Chinese immigrants to be alienated from their host societies" (p. 51). The following chapter is "Framing the pandemic as a conflict between China and Taiwan: analysis of COVID-19 discourse on Taiwanese social media" by Ling-Yi Huang. This chapter stresses the connections between online debates and Taiwanese public health policy. PTT, the most influential Taiwanese social media, framed the pandemic as a knowingly created risk, involuntary risk, universal risk, and environmental risk. In this way, such opinion environment was created that pressured the politicians to react. The fifth chapter is "Comparing coronavirus online searching and media reporting: alignment or disconnect? A big data analysis of media reportage and public information seeking in Nigeria". In this chapter, the authors Mutiu Iyanda Lasisi and Obasanjo Joseph Oyedele present a study

that shows that the mass media in Nigeria did not consider useful inputs regarding what their potential audiences search online to guide their reporting (p. 77).

"Responses to regulation: media as instruments of social control or conflict/resistance" is the second section of the book, and it consists of four chapters. The sixth chapter, "Imagining pandemic as a failure: writing, memory, and forgetting under COVID-19 in China", by Yawen Li and Marius Meinhof, discusses the imagination of national failure, and provokes questions regarding state strategies of information control. The following chapter is "Arrest of the public interest or fight for public health in Serbia: contrasting roles of professional and citizen journalists". The author Kristina Ćendić observes that the deeply polarized media landscape in Serbia demonstrated its pattern with pro-government media approving of actions against citizens, and on the other side, pro-opposition media insisting on the need to balance the state of emergency and public interest. Dyah Pitaloka and Nelly Martin-Anatias are the authors of the chapter "'We don't want to cause public panic': pandemic communication of the Indonesian Government responding to COVID-19". In this chapter, it is investigated how discourse and other semiotic elements contribute to the meaning-making process. The results of the research indicate that the Indonesian government's pandemic communication is strongly guided by Javanese cultural values (p. 114). The final chapter in this section of the book is "Pathological borders: how the coronavirus pandemic strengthened depictions of the Cyprus partition in the media and by the government". The author Daniele Nunziata conducted an analysis regarding the connection between the pandemic and political debates surrounding the "Cyprus problem". It is shown how specific circumstances can be used in order to provide justification for political goals and actions.

The third section is "Responses to regulation: media as instruments of cooperation and representation". It begins with the tenth chapter, "Digital media and COVID-19 in the UK and India: challenges and constructive contributions". Besides investigating situation in the two countries, the authors Indrani Lahiri, Debanjan Banerjee, K. S. Meena, Anish V. Cherian, and Maryam Alsulaimi emphasize in a general manner a "serious need to develop digital social responsibility policy by the governments at all levels, to break the pernicious trend and hold the social media giants accountable for helping to permeate fake news, as billions of people access them" (p. 135). In the chapter "New Zealand's success in tackling COVID-19: how Ardern's government effectively used social media and consistent messaging during the global pandemic", the author Nelly Martin-Anatias uses discourse and interpretive analysis to show an example of a quality political leadership that reduced the perceived gap between the politicians and citizens. The twelfth chapter is "Coronavirus pandemic: a historical handshake between the mainstream media and social media in response to COVID-19 in Vietnam" by Hang Thi Thuy Dinh and Hien Thi Minh Nguyen. The study that the authors conducted showed that social and mainstream media in Vietnam interacted with each other, and that social media fulfilled a function of extension arm of mainstream media in transmitting news concerning the pandemic. The following chapter is "Bloggers against panic: Russian-speaking Instagram bloggers in China and Italy reporting about COVID-19", where the authors Anna Smoliarova, Tamara Gromova, and Ekaterina Sharkova point to the fact that Russian-speaking bloggers served as fact-checkers for their audiences, living in China, Italy, and other countries.

Alberto del Campo Tejedor writes about the issue of how the coronavirus crisis in Spain interacted with political crisis between the central government and the pro-independence government of Catalonia in the chapter titled "Reimagined communities in the fight against the invisible enemy: soccer and the national question in Spain". The fifteenth chapter is "US nationwide COVID-19 newspaper coverage of state and local government responses: community structure theory and community 'vulnerability'" by John C. Pollock et al. In this chapter, the authors present research on COVID-19 coverage through the use of media frames, and they also write about how community demographics influences the news coverage. The following chapter is "Exploring the COVID-19 social media infodemic: health communication challenges and opportunities". As the author Carolyn A. Lin states, the objective of this chapter is to help researchers in the field of risk communication, policymakers, and health professionals gain understanding of how people perceive and respond to the "myths, misinformation, disinformation, and rumors amidst an infodemic, alongside science-based facts and recommendations" (p. 196).

Finally, the fourth section is titled "Risk, space, and cyberattacks. It consists of four chapters. Manufacturing fear: infodemics and scaremongering about coronavirus and Ebola epidemics on social media platforms in West Africa" by Paul Obi and Floribert Patrick C. Endong. It addresses the problem of the fact that citizens act quickly in sharing dis/misinformation with the intent to inform others. Şemsettin Tabur examines how the COVID-19 pandemic was represented in a number of real, imagined, and lived spaces, including for instance media and political discourse in the chapter "Space matters in narrating the catastrophe: relational risksapes of COVID-19, dominant discourses, and the example of Turkey". The nineteenth chapter of the book is "Risk society in the age of pandemics: disaster reporting in the media – Ebola and COVID-19". In this chapter, the authors Demond Shondell Miller and Nicola Davis Bivens claim that in the modern age of pandemics "risk and the value of information will continue to increase" (p. 244). The final chapter is "Abusing the COVID-19 pan(dem)ic: a perfect storm for online scams". In this chapter, the authors Kristjan Kikerpill and Andra Siibak present content analysis used for studying prevalent communication types in COVID-19 themed online scams and conclude that criminals easily adapt to ongoing social situations.

The book *COVID-19 in International Media: Global Pandemic Responses* is a useful guide for media scholars, students, and practitioners. It includes studies conducted across the world, that provide an opportunity to recognize local specifics, as well as a wider, global picture. Different methodological approaches presented in the book may inspire some new research projects. As the number of health risks increases in modern times, it is important for citizens to be aware that communication can solve, but also cause problems. It is a powerful tool that decentralizes strict hierarchy related to political and other decision-making processes. On the other hand, nowadays, disinformation enters the public sphere on short notice. Mainstream media and citizen journalists can work together on a mission of making the media environment healthier.

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Richard M. Perloff

THE DYNAMICS OF NEWS: JOURNALISM IN THE 21ST-CENTURY MEDIA MILIEU

New York: Routledge, 2020

ISBN 9781351233514, 340 pages

The university textbook *The Dynamics of News: Journalism in the 21st-Century Media Milieu* is the latest monograph by Richard M. Perloff, Professor of Communication, Political Science, and Psychology at Cleveland State University. Through 11 informative chapters, the author discusses the varied determinants of news, how it is shaped by the larger society while at the same time serving as an agent of change, how it fits into the networked digital sphere, as well as changing normative perspectives.

In the first chapter, "Prologue: News in a Fragmented Age", the author refers to several recent examples of racial bigotry against African Americans in the U.S. that became news only after going viral on social networks, thereby introducing readers to the topic of the book – *the multiplicity and complexity of contemporary news*. He reminds of the normative functions of news in a democracy that (should) include the description of the world we live in, interpretation of complex processes, promotion of empathy, and organization of public opinion. He concludes that "we live in turbulent and strange time, a decentralized era of news" (p. 9), and asks the question: What is the essence of news and journalism, and can they survive?

Chapter 2, "News and Journalism in the 21st-Century Milieu", discusses the changing media environment and four main characteristics of contemporary news. First, contemporary news is multifaceted – current and deep, but also fragmented and filled with information of questionable accuracy. Second, social media and the Internet have usurped the news media's exclusive gatekeeping role. Third, citizen journalism has entered the fray. Fourth, journalistic roles and categories are becoming less clear. The chapter concludes that journalism will become even more colourful and multifaceted in the future, but that it will retain a central role in democratic processes.

In the third chapter, "Defining News and Journalism", the author offers an integrative definition of journalism as "a craft collectively devoted to truthfully assembling, reporting, and verifying information, based on particular criteria, transforming the accumulated information into news of matters of public importance, while, at the same time, illuminating social problems, articulating opinions about topics of public interest, and engaging richly with the community" (p. 57). He also proposes a simple definition of news as "a narrative account of new or recent matters of public interest" (p. 62), emphasizing that the focus of news should always be on *the public*, as well as that it is not an objective and tangible phenomenon, but rather a social construction of journalists.

"What Should News Do? Ideals and Complicating Realities" is the title of the fourth chapter, in which the author discusses criteria to evaluate the role of news and media in a democracy and proposes three normative perspectives. The first is *libertarian theory*, which emphasizes the citizens' right to freedom of expression, the independence of news from political influences, and the competition of ideas. The second is the *social responsibility theory*, which implies a wide range of roles of journalists and news, such as monitoring of the social environment, exposing systemic abuses, facilitating democratic dialogue, etc. The third is a *collaborative approach*, which assumes that journalists and

news can help authorities identify problems and propose solutions. In conclusion, the author believes that journalism and journalists play a central role in protecting critical citizenry (p. 106).

Chapter 5, "The Rich, Colourful History of American Journalism: Overview and Perspectives", provides a historical overview of journalism and news in the U.S. The author points out that early American newspapers (prior to 1775) were short pamphlets that rarely covered "big" political issues. Then came the American Revolutionary War (1775 – 1783), during which once peaceful printing offices became "hives of political activity" (p. 115). In the next fifty years newspapers became a channel through which social elites promoted their ideas and political parties attacked their opponents. From the 1830s some newspapers began to cover topics of interest for the middle class, primarily motivated by profit which they began to make through advertising. At the end of the 19th century, investigative journalism developed, as well as "yellow journalism" that favoured sensationalism over facts. For most of the 20th century, newspapers were "in the shadow" of radio and television, and at the beginning of the 21st century of social media. The author concludes that "a look back" is useful not only for elucidating the economic, cultural, and technological circumstances that shaped the media in the past, but also for understanding their position today.

In the sixth chapter, "Unpacking the News: Refracting Not Reflecting Reality", the author argues that news *does not* (fully) reflect reality. For example, they pay more attention to negative events even though "negativity" is not prevalent in the lives of average readers. He raises the question of what *does* determine the news and reminds of an earlier claim that journalists (socially) construct it. "Their perspective determines how they interpret, assimilate, and build a narrative from the information they weave into a story" (p. 165). In the last part of the chapter, the author discusses what truth and facts *actually are*, and, suggests striving for objective journalism – one that should be based on gathering of information from different and verified sources.

"Do Journalists' Personal Attributes Shape News? Myths and Realities" is the name of the seventh chapter, in which the author discusses the influence of journalists' *individual characteristics* on the shape of news. He points out that, for example, in the earlier stages of journalism in the U.S. "white journalists" openly discriminated African Americans, Indians and foreigners, "male journalists" were insensitive to issues such as (sexual) abuse of women, "secular journalists" were insensitive to the role of religion in lives of people, etc. However, the author asserts that the situation is different today and that journalists' individual characteristics should not be viewed in isolation from political and journalistic values that guide them.

Chapter 8, "Journalistic Routines and Why They Matter, discusses journalistic routines and professional practices" as another important factor that shape news. The first important routine are journalistic values, which the author divides into classical (novelty, threats to the social and moral order, elitism and prominence, conflict and controversy, dramatization and personalization, visuals, the big story of the moment), and contemporary (immediacy, interactivity, and participation). Another important routine concerns the journalistic sources, which can be formal (such as government spokespersons) and informal (such as unnamed sources).

In the ninth chapter, "Organizational and Economic Influences", the author writes about the third group of factors that shape the news – *organizational and economic factors*. Organizational factors imply the hierarchical and egalitarian organizational structure in the newsrooms, constellation of job demands, newsroom culture, and top-down political priorities. Economic factors include Internet-based evisceration of classified advertising and reduction in display advertising revenue, difficulties in developing a successful online funding model, challenges in finding ways to monetize online news use, and indifference to journalistic values on the part of institutional investors.

"News and the Social System: Conformity or Change?" is the title of the tenth chapter, in which the author discusses *ideological and system influences*, the fourth group of factors that shape the news. He poses a question of whether the news contributes to the preservation of the existing order and power relations or encourages change and refers to the system theory, which assumes that the role of one subsystem (in this case the media) cannot be observed in isolation from the broader political, economic, cultural, and ideological contours of society as a whole (p. 279). The chapter concludes that journalists regularly (even negatively) report on specific events from each of these (sub) systems, but do not question their foundations (for example, the ideas of civil liberties and concentration of wealth in the U.S.).

The last chapter is "Epilogue", where the author reflects on the question of whether journalism is in crisis. He suggests that it has *always* been in crisis and that the main challenge is to assess whether that crisis is more of economic, ideological, technological, or social nature. The conclusion is that the future of journalism is not in doubt because of the growing need for experts who will search for the truth in complex public space of conventional, participatory, and fake sites (p. 317), while there is still room for improvement in the form of innovations, giving readers more control over content, and for cooperation of journalists with other sectors and groups.

The presented book synthesizes many perspectives and offers a creative combination of historical and contemporary analysis of news, people, and society. It covers a wide range of topics – the classic theories of what news should do, popular myths of news, the overarching forces involved in contemporary news gathering, critical economic determinants of news and social system influences, and innovative trends in journalism. It carefully dissects the key aspects and delivers a critical yet hopeful assessment about the present and the future of news that can help students and scholars to evaluate the multitude of changes in the contemporary and evolving information environment.

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INFORMACIJE

INFORMATION

Call for Papers for the special issue of the
Media Studies Journal (Medijske studije)

POLITICAL SCANDALS IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Abstract submission deadline (up to 500 words): **1 March 2023**

Notification of abstract acceptance: **15 March 2023**

Full paper submission deadline: **1 June 2023**

Special issue publication date: **December 2023**

A multitude of political scandals came to public attention in recent years all around the world, involving all kinds of nepotism, sexual misdemeanor and harassment, coercion and abuses of power. To name just a few examples, the scandals leading to the downfall of former British prime minister Boris Johnson, the sheer disregard for political hallmarks, namely lack of peaceful transfer of power by populists, such as Donald Trump or Jair Bolsonaro, or a new bundle of offshore-leaks, including tax-evasion schemes of not only the rich and powerful but also numerous key political figures, show that political misconduct is one of the main issues in media coverage on a global scale. In this regard, scandals of less severity, similar to the concept of "talk scandals" (Ekström & Johansson, 2008), are becoming more prominent in public discourse about politics as well. In some instances, such provocative acts are strategic forms of "self-scandalization" (Haller, 2013) to increase attention for controversial political messages which gain prominence in discourse through media coverage and engagement in social media (Kleiman, 2019). Populist politicians, notably right-wing populists, have been especially skilled in using scandalous behavior and deliberate provocations to instrumentalize media coverage and trigger public attention (Maurer, 2022). On the other hand, there is evidence that the emergence of scandals, especially corruption scandals, may help the prospects of populist parties (Foresta, 2020).

In this light, politics appears to have entered a mode of perpetual crisis and growing dysfunctionality. The rapid succession of scandals may be a symptom of this crisis, while being its catalyst at the same time. With respect to this very broad diagnosis, we must first ask what defines a political scandal and, second, how such scandals are relevant for a polity and public discourse. According to Thompson (2000), political scandals in modern societies are mediated through journalism. Some scholars argue that scandal coverage is useful for democracies because it may repair dysfunctions (Hondrich, 2002), as outrage may be an instrument for societal change (Hessel, 2010). Other researchers claim that scandals and outrage are often constructed with strategic interests by public players and may have harmful effects on societies (Kepplinger, 2020).

A cause of a number of political scandals in the last decades can be attributed to overall transformations of media and journalism in the digital age. On the one hand, technological infrastructure and digital tools give reporters new means to investigate political scandals that deal with substantial misconduct, such as corruption and other phenomena of power abuse. On the other hand, we can observe how social media offer new means to vent emotional attacks, spark outrage, or voice public discontent. Politicians are regularly

subject to such firestorms. The rise of social media, particularly social network sites, led to a higher number of audience-induced scandals and to a faster distribution of accusations (Burkhardt, 2018). Participatory digital publics can create a 'spill-over'-effect so that the consequences of misconduct, such as sexual harassment, may incite a more substantiated discourse in the political system and in conventional journalistic mass media (Coombs & Holladay, 2021).

Proposals may focus on – but are not limited to – topics such as:

- >the role of political scandals in modern post-industrial societies as an instrument for societal change (e.g., Hondrich, 2002);
- >audience-induced scandals and emotional outrage in participatory digital publics (e.g., Burkhardt, 2018);
- >political scandalization and reputation management in hybrid media systems (e.g., Chadwick, 2017; Samoilenko et al., 2020);
- >populism and political scandals (e.g., Maurer, 2022; Herkman & Matikainen, 2019)
- >political scandalization and self-scandalization in the age of authenticity (e.g., Enli & Rosenberg, 2018);
- >political scandals and gender (e.g., Cucchi & Cavazza, 2020; Courtemanche & Connor Green, 2020);
- >scandals and celebritization of politics (e.g., Street, 2019; von Sikorski et al., 2018).

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Primjer:

Corbett, N. (2009). Digital Performance, Live Technology: Video Games and the Remediation of Theatrical Spectatorship. U M. MacArthur, L. Wilkinson i K. Zaiantz (ur.), *Performing Adaptions: Essays and Conversations on the Theory and Practice of Adaptation* (str. 11–23). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

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Primjer:

Ridgeout, V., Foehr, U. i Roberts, D. (2010, srpanj). *Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18- Years Olds. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation*. Preuzeto 28.10.2013., s <http://kff.org/other/poll-finding/report-generation-m2-media-in-the-lives/>

UNICEF, Ured za Hrvatsku (2011, ožujak). *Mišljenja i stavovi djece i mladih u Hrvatskoj*. Preuzeto 19.11.2013., s <http://www.unicef.hr/upload/>

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