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THE ORIGINS AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEWS MEDIA'S SECURITIZATION – INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF NEWS SECURITY¹

In the past couple of years, trends in both international security and media environment have led to successful securitization of news media. Amid growing debate about “fake news”, disinformation campaigns and hybrid warfare, news came to be viewed as a weapon of contemporary international conflict. As a result we can now talk about a new dimension of security. The authors propose to call it *news security*. It is related to public's protection from deliberate disinformation and the manipulation of news. This relatively new and promising area of research is strongly connected to the broader concepts of human security and cybersecurity. Access to reliable and truthful information can be viewed as a human right and a precondition for stable and healthy functioning of democratic societies. At the same time, current threats to “news security” are highly conditioned by technology revolution in media (driven by digitalization and network effects).

This article aims to answer two main research questions: 1) What conditions lead to successful securitization of news media and emergence of the new security sector – *news security*? 2) What strategies states employ to ensure news security? For that purpose we start with a short characteristic of the current media environment conditioned by digital revolution and Web 2.0's effects. We then proceed to describe this aspects of the international security environment's evolution which have been most conducive to news' securitization. At this point the authors' definition of *news security* is being introduced. The article's final part describes different strategies employed by states to ensure *news security*. The authors put special em-

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phasis on media education as a tool to make societies more resilient in relation to this security sector. These reflections are formed by authors' experience working in the international media education program *News Literacy*.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Naturally, the process of news' securitization is taking place in a particular media environment which itself is undergoing rapid transformation. Thus it is useful to shortly reflect on many features shaping and influencing current media landscape. There is a wide consensus that most important among them are globalization and digitalization. Many researchers propose a notion that takes into account or confirms the assumptions of technological determinism or even technoutopianism while analyzing developing media environment. However, in the context of this article, it is much more valuable to look at the features of current media systems through the lens of the human factor, analyzing the new role of the user and the media audience.

Within two decades, the Internet has become the most important point of reference for the media environment, changing all stages of journalistic work, increasing the speed and scope of information flow, redefining the concept of journalism itself, influencing the method of financing and – through the media convergence process – combining digital and traditional platforms. According to a GlobalWebIndex report 2019, on a global scale Internet users aged 16-64 spend 6.75 hours a day online on the consumption of media content, and all forms of online media activity are becoming more and more common – regardless of age. The enthusiasm of recipients started changes in the traditional media segment, operating outside the Internet – only in 7 out of 41 (17%) of the surveyed countries, consumers spend a total of slightly more time using traditional media than digital media; in the remaining 34 countries (83%) the situation is reversed. Among the offline media traditional television still dominates over online television, however, in the case of the printed press in 40 out of 41 countries (98%) more readers reach for the digital form of the press more often².

These indicators mean not only a change in the source of information, but also a greater exposure to information, a change in the news cycle, democratization of the concept of journalism (assuming its extension, among others, by increasing the importance of user generated content) and a significant change in the business model for traditional and digital media due to advertiser migration to online platforms.

² Data based on the GlobalWebIndex report 2019 where the use of the Internet means any form of connecting to the network (mobile, stationary, etc.), traditional television is defined as a broadcast and viewed in real time on a traditional device, online television is streaming or television on demand (VOD), traditional radio means radio that emits and is listened to in real time on a traditional device, online radio is programs received online, most often in the form of streaming, traditional press is a printed and physical press, online press it's a press or news read online, for example through websites or applications. More: Global Web Index 2019.

Bearing in mind the structure of this paper, we decided to distinguish two levels allowing to describe the shift in news ecosystem: 1) the general features of the digital information environment; 2) recent trends and challenges in this environment.

The general features of the digital information environment

The spread of the Internet as an information media platform has been shaped and observed for almost three decades from several perspectives; in our opinion the particular attention should be paid to two levels: commercialization and concentration of media platform ownership and user participation in social, political and economic dimensions. Web 2.0 or Participatory Web (O'Reilly 2005; Levinson 2009) has been working in practice for over twenty years, so we're not just talking about changing the *one to many* model (traditional broadcasting) to *many-to-many*, networking and creating virtual communities, creating user generated content, producing and sharing information in a community, but above all about consolidating these aspects of users' functioning and their further evolution.

The commercialization and concentration of media platform ownership is undoubtedly an important factor shaping the digital information environment. In the updated edition of their emblematic analysis of "Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media", American researchers Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman point to the increasing concentration of media ownership, listing the nine most powerful media conglomerates in the world; they also notice the diminishing role of non-commercial media (public, civic) in Europe and Asia, where up to now public media have had a dominant position (Herman, Chomsky 2010). As a consequence, the quality of information and its dependence on advertisers is an increasing challenge – what news organizations are fighting by proposing „pivot to paid” in the form of subscriptions, memberships, donations and others (Reuters 2019: 9). An additional element is the social responsibility of social media platforms belonging to major media conglomerates – the latest example is the phenomenon described by WHO as *infodemic* in combating the pandemic which giants tech companies as Facebook, Twitter, etc. were included (Holmes 2020).

The shift towards users' activity, which Axel Bruns named *producers* (Bruns 2008), has elicited numerous analyzes regarding citizen empowerment. Many of them oscillate between two extreme poles: the Internet as an instrument that deepens democratization of social processes and the critical approach, called sometimes cyber-skepticism (Wojcieszak 2006). The initial optimism regarding the renaissance of the media in the Internet age called by D. Rushkoff „new global narrative” (Rushkoff 2002), the concept of cross-linked social movements operating simultaneously in virtual and real space or a networked society developed by M. Castells (Castells 2011; Castells 2015) and the latest research of British political scene by S. Coleman (Coleman 2017) are valuable examples of a positive approach. A more skeptical attitude is represented, among others, by E. Morozov, who recognizes the Internet as an instrument of control and manipulation, especially in authoritarian states and empha-

sizes the aspect of all forms of exclusion that technology deepens (Morozov 2012). Also Jodi Dean emphasizes that the Participatory Web was to empower and free users of citizens from inequality, while realistically strengthening the information economy and deepening differences and digital exclusion (Jodi 2009).

The digital divide in a traditional way is defined by Jan van Dijk as: „stratification to those who have access to computers and the Internet, and those who do not have this access.” (van Dijk 1999: 245) Also Pippa Norris in her breakthrough study of the concept fields mentioned three of this multidimensional phenomenon: “global divide (divergence of Internet access between industrialized and developing societies), social divide (the gap between information rich and poor in each nation) and democratic divide (the difference between those who do, and do not, use the panoply of digital resources to engage, mobilize and participate in public life).” (Norris 2001: 4) However, in the latest approach, the concept of digital divide is not only reduced to the technical impossibility of using digital technologies, but also takes into account the quality of these technologies (as: Internet connection speed) and the ability to consciously and safely use digital technologies. The Internet Society’s fourth annual “Global Internet Report 2017 – Paths to Our Digital Future” confirms this challenge by highlighting the security divide which will appear “between those with the knowledge and resources to protect themselves from cyber threats and those without.” (Internet Society 2017: 79) Thus, the cyber security area can be considered as demanding due to the need to secure both: an appropriate level of access to ICT and digital literacy, as well as an adequate level of knowledge and critical skills on the subject.

Recent trends and challenges in the digitalized information environment

By describing the dynamics of the contemporary media environment, the statement by Katja Valaskivi opens a field for critical approach toward digitalized media landscape: „From a historical perspective, we are in the phase that has always followed the implementation of a new media technology. It is the phase of disillusionment, the phase where the utopian promise of the technology turns sour; the recognition that technology itself does not bring equality, access to information and civil discourse to humankind.” (Valaskivi 2018: 2-3)

In such context, it is necessary to follow the latest trends and unexpected changes in media landscape as well as the challenges that are associated with them. Therefore, based on the “Reuters Institute The Digital News Report 2019” by Reuters Institute and University of Oxford and “Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making” report by Council of Europe and Harvard scholars, the authors decided to identify several trends that set main challenges for news securitization:

- Social media’s and messaging apps’ position as a source of news;
- Trust in the news and news brands;
- Fake news and real news tension;

(Reuters 2019; Wardle, Derakhshan 2017)

First, while online news is – globally – the most popular source of news in the vast majority of analyzed countries (mainly with TV in the second place), the analysis of social media position is also particularly important in the context of reliability and different news circulation. The 2019 report reveals that the use of social media for news in some countries has started to decline after few years of constant growth, for example in the UK the percentage of respondents using social media as source of news grew from 20% in 2013 to 41% in 2017, now reaching 40%. The similar patterns also exist elsewhere, we can distinguish an example of Sweden where the usage of social media as a news source has fallen from 56% in 2016 to 46% in 2019. This data is linked to a particular fall in news usage for Facebook (while the average use of the platform for any purpose is static since 2015) from 42% in 2016 to 31% in 2019, while the other similar networks remained stable. As it is revealed by the authors of the report, Facebook remains by far the most important social network for news (Reuters Institute 2019: 3).

What is particularly worth attention is the fact that social communication around news is becoming more private while messaging apps keep growing globally. In fact, WhatsApp is now a primary network for commenting and sharing news in Global South countries like Brazil (53%) or South Africa (49%) (Reuters Institute 2019: 17-19). Users in these countries are also far more likely than in the Global North to be part of relatively large WhatsApp groups with people they don't know – a trend that indicates how messaging applications can be used to easily share information at scale, potentially facilitating the spread of misinformation. Public and private Facebook Groups discussing news and politics are common in Turkey (29%) and Brazil (22%) but are much less used in Western countries such as Canada (7%) or Australia (7%) (Reuters Institute 2019: 17-19). The spread of unfounded gossips by WhatsApp has led to a spate of killings in India in 2018 (Pokharel, Griffiths 2018) and recently it led to numerous police interventions in the country because of spreading intentional rumors on coronavirus (Dore 2020), which shows the new context and challenges in the news security field.

All these factors together mean that a large and growing percentage of information is not controlled by institutionalized media, arises from the bottom up, often as user generated content and is disseminated in networked social groups. This undoubtedly creates a large field for manipulation and dissemination of various forms of disinformation, as well as hinders the search for the original source and reliability of information. What's more, information emerging in state of emergency can be spread primarily through these channels – social and private, which can be a trigger of panic or misunderstanding difficult to control.

Another important trend is the state of trust in the news and news brands, as the report confirms across all analyzed countries, the average level of consumers' trust in the news in general is stable at 42% which is relatively low and linked to the high levels of media polarization and the perception of excessive political influence. What is particularly significant it that almost a half, 49%, agreed that they trust the media they themselves use most of the time (Reuters Institute 2019: 20-21).

This tendency leads us to another expense of the analysis that shows how strongly trust can be influenced by pre-existing political views. The example based on US media is showed in the table below, affirming that confirmation bias is a leading tendency in the same way for the audience identifying themselves left-wing, as well as for those identifying themselves right-wing. Therefore, trust in media is closely related to the cognitive process and prejudices of the public and cannot be studied only in the context of the platform.

News brand	Users self-identified as left-wing: average of trust in news brand	Users self-identified as centre: average of trust in news brand	Users self-identified as right-wing: average of trust in news brand
CNN	7.1	5.9	2.4
Fox News	2.4	4.8	6.9
Breitbart News	1.9	3.9	5.5

Based on the questions used in the survey: Some people talk about 'left', 'right' and 'centre' to describe parties and politicians. With this in mind, where would you place yourself on the following scale? How trustworthy would you say news from the following brands is? Use the scale below, where 0 is 'not at all trustworthy' and 10 is 'completely trustworthy'. Base: *Left/centre/right: US = 567/970/550*. Note: *People who indicated that they have not heard of a brand were excluded.*

Source: Reuters Institute 2018:18-19.

What is a relative new tendency is the visible growth of partisan agendas online such as US focused Breitbart and Infowars (strongly supporting right-wing), the Canary and Evolve Politics in UK (strongly left-wing) or Fria Tider and Nyheter Idag in Sweden (right-wing), although the usage of these websites is not as large as the awareness of their activity. In US the usage of non-partisan websites is between 1-8%, in Sweden between 4-11% (Reuters Institute 2019: 22-25), but apparently their presence is influencing broader public debate.

The media on a global scale, therefore, do not have a high ratio of trust and there is a clear tendency to trust the media that we know and that are consistent with our worldview, which can lead to even greater polarization at the socio-political level. In terms of security, this can significantly hinder the transmission of more ideologically nuanced messages, cause greater exposure to unverified information rooted in a medium we trust by assumption.

An additional context, emphasized by Claire Wardle and Derakhshan Hossein, (Wardle, Derakhshan 2017) is trust in information coming and circulating in social media. As they note, based on the research by Californian researchers, (Metzger, Flanagan, Medders 2010) the social media users are much more likely to trust a message coming from someone they know, even if they suspect it to be false, thus peer-to-peer networks are characterized by high trust tendencies and by high level of potential risk of spreading false information.

Fake news and real news tension is also a meaningful tendency shaping the media form and producing information disorder understood as a phenomenon composed by three elements: mis-, dis- and malinformation. As it is revealed in the report prepared by Claire Wardle and Hossein Derakhshan, mis-information is a process of sharing false information, but without meant harm, while dis-information is a process of conscious sharing false information with the intention to cause harm and mal-information is a situation when valid information is shared with the intention to cause harm for example by moving the information from private to public sphere (Wardle, Derakhshan 2017: 5).

According to the Reuters Institute, over half of respondents (54%) agree or strongly agree that they are concerned about what is real and fake on the Internet. The highest level of this concern is in countries where polarized political background is combined with high social media use like Spain (69%) or US (64%). When it comes to the responsibility to fix problems of fake news and unreliable news most responders believe that the greatest responsibility lies with the platforms (71%) and publishers (75%) due to the origin of the news they complain about – biased or inaccurate news from the mainstream national media. (Reuters Institute 2018: 8-9) On the other hand, there is some public expectation of government response to stop “fake news”, especially in Europe (60%) and Asia (63%).

Among the most popular methods combating fake news and disinformation we can highlight legal solutions, filtering enabled by artificial intelligence and partially applied by main social media platforms (Ciampaglia 2018), expert activity and educational campaigns based on fact-checking. According to „A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation. Report of the independent High level Group on fake news and online disinformation” set up by European Commission at the beginning of 2018 we should also add safeguarding the diversity and sustainability of European news ecosystem and enhancing transparency of online news and their circulation (De Cock Buning 2018). In the next parts of the paper we will analyse what are the most relevant strategies employed in different states to ensure specifically News Security.

POST-COLD WAR, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF NEWS SECURITY

We can observe similar dynamics at work concerning news as a reference object of security. Such terms as „information warfare”, „disinformation” and „information security” have been established as integral parts of security studies' vocabulary. Prime evidence for news' securitization can be found in provisions of strategic documents adopted in a number of countries. We can cite several examples. In December 2016 the Russian Federation has adopted a new Doctrine of Information Security (Doctrine of Information Security 2016). It identifies „national interests in the information sphere”, among them: „providing the Russian and international community with reliable information on the State policy of the Russian Federation and its official position

on socially significant events in Russia and in the world, and applying information technologies to ensure the national security of the Russian Federation in the sphere of culture.” (Doctrine of Information Security 2016: 8/d) When discussing „major information threats,” the document’s authors state that: „Intelligence services of certain States are increasingly using information and psychological tools with a view to destabilizing the internal political and social situation in various regions across the world, undermining sovereignty and violating the territorial integrity of other States.” (Doctrine of Information Security 2016: par.12)

Polish White Paper on National Security from 2013 includes an observation that: „the influence of media on shaping of social attitudes and opinions is significant. This creates a threat of manipulation and possibility of stoking social reactions threatening state’s internal security.” (White Paper 2013: 138) This corresponds with a wider NATO policy of putting emphasis on information aspects of its operations. It has been reflected in the establishment in 2014 of the Alliance’s Strategic Communications Center of Excellence in Riga. (NATO StratCom COE) This institution’s mandate is premised on an assumption that: „Strategic communication is an integral part of the efforts to achieve the Alliance’s political and military objectives, thus it is increasingly important that the Alliance communicates in an appropriate, timely, accurate and responsive manner on its evolving roles, objectives and missions.” (NATO StratCom) The strategic communications themselves are understood as „(...) coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO’s aims.” (NATO StratCom)

These developments naturally raise the question of what factors drive the securitization of news? To answer it properly we need to look at several trends. Propaganda, disinformation and agitation have always accompanied international conflict. However, some defining characteristics of current armed conflicts make their information sphere more relevant. Primary among them is the asymmetric character of most of them. It comes in at least several varieties. For the Western countries, most military endeavors undertaken in the post-Cold War period can be characterized as „wars of choice” rather than „wars of necessity.” For Western publics these conflicts have been mostly remote affairs with unclear relevance for their everyday perceptions of security. This attitude has been interestingly described by Colin McInnes through the: „war as a spectator sport” metaphor. (Heuser 2010: 452) For that reason the building and maintenance of public support for expeditionary operations became an important, if not crucial, element of the „war effort.” At the same time, military forces intervening in civil wars and waging counter-insurgency operations have to convince the local population to their cause.

At the same time what is also called „information warfare” became an important element of great power rivalries. Both Russia and China are believed to be widely using disinformation and wider strategic communications to further their interests and strengthen their positions in disputes involving United States. (Laity, Nimmo et al. 2015) This is an example of an asymmetry of a different kind. Although Russia and

(especially) China are great powers in their own right, they still cannot fully match American military and economic preponderance. Thus, it is not surprising that they are reaching for a wide variety of indirect tools (sometimes collectively described as „hybrid warfare“) to wage conflict. In this context information operations seem to be cost-effective way to counter opposing side's main strengths. (Giles 2016: 53)

Due to all aforementioned factors the infosphere has become an important battlefield in several contemporary conflicts. The most often cited examples are Russian operations in Ukraine and propaganda activities of the Islamic State. Both of them present interesting cases illustrating the strengths and weaknesses of information campaigns undertaken by both state and non-state actors. A report by NATO's StratCom COE strongly concludes that: „The information campaign was central to Russia's operation in Ukraine. Taking over Crimea without any military confrontation demonstrated that the concept of well-constructed influence operations is a very essential part of Russian operational planning and that Russian military forces have a strategic communications mindset applied down to the tactical level.“ (StratCom 2014: 32) Naturally, these actions are not confined to one particular military operation. Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss detail how the Russian state has „weaponized information“ through such actions as establishment of their own news organizations (e.g. RT, Sputnik), social media activity (including the practice of trolling) or spinning Western media. (Pomerantsev, Weiss 2014: 14-18)

The other case, concerning what can be called „cyber Jihad“ is even more illustrative. Psychological influence is at the very core of the concept of terrorism itself. It can be claimed, that terrorists and their organizations have always been concerned with publicity, media and public opinion. Current digital media environment has created new opportunities to scale up terrorist propaganda. Social media became a new and important battlefield in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with Israel Defense Forces' interactive media branch engaged in online tit-for-tat with its opposite numbers in Hamas and other Palestinian armed organizations. (Kerr 2014) Arguably, the most sophisticated terrorist media enterprise is in possession of Islamic State. Throughout the years this organization (going through its different iterations) has built up a large, professional, and strikingly flexible media operation. (Whiteside 2016) What is interesting, looking at ISIS structure the media branch is being treated somewhat like „special operations forces“ in Western militaries. Several future leaders of the „Caliphate“ had worked in it before being promoted to important command positions. (Whiteside 2016: 23-24) It is beyond doubt that effective propaganda has been among leading factors leading to ISIS's spectacular success in building a de-facto (if short lived) statelet in Iraq and Syria. It allowed for both recruitment of new fighters and instilling fear in opponents.

As securitization of news is a quite recent phenomenon it is only natural that proper conceptualization of this security sphere proves to be challenging. Probably the most common approach is to define it as information security. However, this concept has a heavy focus on technical matters pertaining to what is also called cybersecurity. It often deals more with safety and integrity of technical systems used

to process, store and exchange information. In Western thinking these two areas are often treated separately from one another under the rubrics of cybersecurity (viewed as security of IT systems) and Information Operations (dealing with the content of information and its usage for affecting attitudes and opinions). At the same time, the Russian doctrine treats both of these as inherently integrated under a common rubric of information warfare. What is interesting from our point of view is the distinction made in Russian publications between information-technical warfare – dealing with breaching IT systems and information-psychological warfare, which consists of manipulating enemy's morale and decision-making. (Giles 2016: 6-13) In order to precisely define the point in the broad information security landscape with which the authors aim to deal in this article they propose a concept of *news security*. We would define it as a state in which the public is protected from disinformation and manipulation of news conducted by malicious actors to achieve political, economic or military effects.

NEWS SECURITY STRATEGIES – A COMPARISON

The growing relevance of news security issues begs the question of what policies constitute an appropriate response to this situation. It can now be explored what are the main strategies employed in different states to ensure news security. Two ideal types can be identified, representing opposing ends of an axis stretching from control to freedom of information. One would be an authoritarian strategy of information control. This is what Russia and China are treating their populations with. It is based on a premise that state should protect its citizens from disinformation through a strict control of the news flow. Naturally, this is also a convenient cover for censorship providing justification for lack of freedom of expression. On the opposite side of this spectrum is the liberal model, espoused by many Western democracies. It basically posits that freedom of expression and media pluralism will create conditions under which the disinformation will be uncovered, debunked and falsified. However, recent trends described as the rise of post-truth politics in the West lead many to believe that such a laissez-faire approach may be insufficient to counter information influence operations mounted by the likes of Russia or IS. Thus some new approaches are being investigated. One is to create own counter-narratives to basically go to an information counter-offensive. (Giles 2016: 57) The other is to create public institutions which would effectively police the media environment, uncovering disinformation and debunking it (as for example in a much discussed case of Czech „anti-fake news unit”; Tait 2016).

When looking at Western countries' historical experience in this regard the Swedish practice of including “psychological defense” in its “total defense” effort stands out. Since the early Cold War countering disinformation and propaganda has been an integral part of civil defense preparations and planning. (Rossbach 2017) Currently these practices are being revisited as part of reintroducing the total defense concept.

(DefenseNews 2018) There is even a serious proposal to reinstate a separate agency to manage psychological defense, a task previously undertaken by the Swedish National Board of Psychological Defence. (European Interest 2018) It is also worth noting that Finland is being often presented as an example of a state which is quite resistant to disinformation campaigns. Several factors have been identified as sources of this strength: high journalistic standards, public trust in mainstream media and high quality education system. (Standish 2017; Koponen, Sanomat 2018) Another state whose practices are arising high interest is Lithuania. It has developed an interesting and diverse ecosystem of government, media and civil society initiatives aimed at countering Russian disinformation. (The Economist 2019)

Looking from the perspective of liberal democratic values underpinning the trans-Atlantic security community, it is important to strike a right balance between legitimate government action to counter threats to news security and maintenance of freedom of expression and civic society's dynamism. It is important for state actions not to turn into another form of propaganda. That explains the growing interest in education programs aimed to strengthen citizen's competence for conscious consumption of news and sound judgment of news content's reliability. (Hornik 2016) Such an approach seems to be a useful compliment to a comprehensive news security strategy of a state. The case for such an approach seems to be further strengthened by the findings of the report published by the National Endowment for Democracy in January 2020 (Woolley, Joseff 2020). Its authors argue that most studies of disinformation focused on supply side of this phenomenon. Their research shows that great role is being played by demand side of the problem. There are psychological and politic-ideological factors which make many people not only susceptible but actually willing to consume news which turns out to be fake or misleading. In this context, critical and competent media education seems to be an especially useful tool to at least limit the "demand for disinformation" in democratic societies.

The characteristics of the digital media environment distinguished above significantly complicate the process of seeking reliable information and separating facts from false messages in various aspects of reality. An attempt to respond to these challenges is a relatively new field of education regarding conscious reception and creation of information. Experts stress, however, that currently „in the period of constant changes and innovations, the most important is not the question whether media education will develop, but what kind of media will dominate in schools and other educational environments" (Hoechsman, Poynts 2012: 12) The most important competence now is "the ability of citizens to access, consciously analyze and produce information in order to achieve specific goals." (Silverblatt, et al. 2014: 4)

An interesting educational proposal in this context is a program created by practitioners and theoreticians from Stony Brook University (State University of New York). The creators of this concept decided to name it *News Literacy*, because unlike the broader concept of Media Literacy (emphasizing the need for sociological analysis of various types of media, such as marketing, propaganda and pop culture), it emphasizes information aspects directly related to journalistic practice. Based on

current examples, *News Literacy* course highlights the skills of deconstruction and verification of information media. (Jolly 2014) In confrontation with the phenomenon of mass and digitalized communication, the most important tool for recipients of information is “the ability to think critically” (Silverblatt, et al. 2014: 4).

The combination of practice and theory resulted in specifying the main goals of the *News Literacy* program. They mainly include teaching how to distinguish journalism from other forms of information, separating information from opinions and providing methods to deconstruct and assess the credibility of sources. Great emphasis was also placed on translating the learned skills into practical use in relation to all information platforms (television, radio, printed press, Internet). The aim of the *News Literacy* program is also to draw attention to the phenomenon of media bias and the prejudices of recipients as its source. It is also consistently emphasized that in the teaching of *News Literacy*, educating a new generation of journalists is just as important as educating conscious recipients of information. As was established by various researchers (Maksl et al. 2017; Fleming 2012) conducting a survey of college students, *News Literacy* course had significantly increased levels of news media literacy together with larger knowledge of current events and higher motivation to consume news, confronted with students who had not taken the course.

There are several educational initiatives that, like the *News Literacy* course, aim to broaden media education of citizens in Poland. Based on the report prepared for the News Literacy Center at Adam Mickiewicz University by Weronika Nowak, we can conclude that four large projects have been successfully operating for several years: the Modern Poland Foundation, the Panoptykon Foundation, the Center for Citizenship Education dealing strictly with education and the Association Demagogue, which, apart from fact-checking activities, also runs educational workshops and recently is launching the e-learning platform. Although these organizations do not strictly deal with the area of news security, the effect of their operation is undoubtedly to raise the level of critical news reception from various thematic fields.

Throughout this article we have outlined how changes in both the media landscape and international security environment led to the securitization of news and emergence of a new security sector – news security. The shift to digitalization and accompanying changes in news consumption patterns create a fertile ground for disinformation and manipulation on a pretty large scale. At the same time, actors engaged in asymmetric and hybrid conflicts found disinformation to be an effective weapon, able to circumvent their opponents strengths. When investigating strategies employed by different states to ensure news security we have positioned it along a spectrum stretching from tight information control to nurturing the free exchange of ideas. It now becomes clear that most members of the trans-Atlantic community aim at the middle ground, looking for ways to actively tackle threats to news security without

undermining the freedom of speech and media pluralism. In this context the approach utilizing media and critical thinking education seems very promising. That is because they strengthen society's resilience in face of information threats through empowering citizens and equipping them with tools to understand and shape the social reality.

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ABSTRACT

In the past several years, trends in both international security and media environments have led to successful securitization of news media. Amid growing debate about “fake news”, disinformation campaigns and hybrid warfare, news came to be viewed as a weapon of contemporary international conflict. Based on Adam Mickiewicz University’s experience of participation in a global education and research program “News Literacy” (devised at Stony Brook University, New York, USA) the authors would like to propose the concept of news security. It is a relatively new sector of security related to the public’s protection from deliberate disinformation and the manipulation of news.

This relatively new and promising area of research is strongly connected to the broader concepts of human security and cybersecurity. Access to reliable and truthful information can be viewed as a human right and a precondition for stable and healthy functioning of democratic societies. At the same time, current threats to news security are highly conditioned by technology revolution in media (driven by digitalization and network effects).

The article aims to present the concept of news security and its constituting features as another approach to study and practice of both human security and cybersecurity. It also includes insights and experiences derived from the authors’ participation in the “News Literacy” project, focused on critical media education for a better informed public.

Analysis presented in the article focuses on identifying key drivers and characteristics of news’ securitization taking place globally. The authors examine the statistical data on digitalization and media consumption patterns, as well as analyze a case study of disinformation. A typology of strategies employed by different states to ensure news security is presented and comments on their effectiveness are made.