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Security vs. traditional and new media

Introduction

The growing importance of the role of the media, identified with the processes of mediatization, which is the name for a number of not only quantitative but also qualitative changes, allows to ask questions about the scope of the relationship between security as a topic present in the media and the issue of security in media use¹. The media themselves are usually the main source of information about threats, catastrophes, wars, but also recommendations on how to act in the event of a crisis, as well as persuasive messages that are supposed to influence emotions, attitudes and evoke specific actions related to the safety of an individual. Media messages about safety give a chance to be well informed and ready to make the right decisions based on the information available².

The traditional security paradigms and the role of mass communication have undergone a major metamorphosis in the post-Cold War era characterized by globalization and information evolution³. It has redefined the role of the mass media by transferring from the redactor's office to the people around the world with the

¹ H. Batorowska, R. Klepka, O. Wasiuta, *Media jako instrument wpływu informacyjnego i manipulacji społeczeństwem*, Wydawnictwo Libron, Kraków 2019, pp. 127–142.

² J. Idzik, *Man in the world of old and new media – selected concepts of media influence and their contemporary interpretations*, "Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia de Securitate" 2019, Vol. 289, No. 9 (3), pp. 7–18.

³ R. Klepka, *Komunikowanie o bezpieczeństwie* [in:] *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa*, O. Wasiuta, R. Klepka, R. Kopeć (eds.), Instytut Nauk o Bezpieczeństwie Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego im. Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Krakowie, Kraków 2018, pp. 371–373.

use of technology, mobile communication, cable and satellite television, and the internet. The mass media are both positive and negative in relation to security. The challenges of national security are mostly of non-military nature and are focused on internal threats to the state rather than external ones. With that in mind there are multiple discussions being raised about the responsibility issue of mass media. Media, such as internet itself, that take no accountability for its content, can easily become a threat to the general security. However, the media and security institutions both are still adapting to the ever-changing technological environment and challenges that it brings⁴.

The purpose of this article is to try to identify and discuss issues important for the contemporary security of individuals and society that are related to the impact of the media. The article is based on a critical analysis of the literature on the subject, mainly the works of foreign researchers who are little known in Poland, and is a synthesis of a part of the research conducted by the authors so far.

The media and coverage of social and political reality

Among the negative sides of safety communicating there is one that needs to be pointed out – terrorism⁵. It is said that there is an almost symbiotic bond between terrorism and the media, because terrorism gives many exciting and brutal stories, that help in the sales of media product and the media supply the terrorists with the ability to let the world know of their existence and spread fear into the hearts of the society. If information media are crucial to terrorist strategy to gain public attention and spread fear among the population, there are questions about the possibility of prohibiting the presentation of media reports on terrorism. In that case any type of restriction during the terrorist attacks will be met with two severe problems, normative and practical. Starting with the normative problem of censorship and restricting the media reports considering terrorism, it needs to be said that the free media, although not always, are the bastion of liberal democratic values, are however a crucial property of democratic societies. As it was pointed out by the Paul Wilkinson, the pioneer of the terrorist research, it is commonly being said that it is vital to avoid the appropriation and manipulation of mass media by the terrorists, but if the freedom of media is sacrificed in the name of fighting the terrorist threat, it will mean that the one of the crucial basis of a democratic society is destroyed⁶.

⁴ C.D. Vreese, *News Coverage, Politics* [in:] *Encyclopedia of Political Communication*, Vol. 1, L.L. Kaid, C. Holtz-Bacha (eds.), Sage Publications, Los Angeles–London–New Delhi–Singapore 2008, pp. 496–498.

⁵ A. Spencer, *Terrorism and the News Media: Symbiosis, Control and Framing* [in:] *The Palgrave Handbook of Security, Risk and Intelligence*, R. Dover, H. Dylan, M.P. Goodman (eds.), Palgrave Macmillan, London 2017, pp. 449–450.

⁶ L. Huddy et al., *Fear and Terrorism: Psychological Reactions to 9/11* [in:] *Framing Terrorism: The News Media, the Government and the Public*, P. Norris, M. Kern, M. Just (eds.), Routledge, New York–London 2003, p. 264.

Communicating about security also meets threats caused by manipulation and media bias, and its most advanced form which is propaganda. Reporting of war and threats can prevent casualties in human life but it can also start ethnic conflicts, as well as national, civil wars and revolutions. The best examples of creating and exploiting the communication related to security are provided by the hybrid warfare between Russia and Ukraine, in which the manipulation of information provokes and deepens the chaos and informational overload⁷.

Media coverage of security events is strongly dominated by reports of war and news of armed conflicts⁸. These types of news are often strongly politicized, which might reflect the actual international relations and the balance of power. The information cultures are very different in terms of attention that is given to the international and foreign news. While the news in the United States concentrates on internal problems, the news in most of European countries is focused mostly on international issues. This is due to the fact that many international news outside the US is about the US. As a matter of fact the world is very unevenly represented in the world news, and regional problems of Africa and Asia occupy far less time on air in the Europe and the United States rather than the number of news related to Europe and the United States broadcasted in news programs in Africa and Asian regions. The priority in political services often belongs to internal affairs but in the time of security threats, that is wars, terrorist attacks or conflicts, the foreign news might dominate the scene⁹. The foreign affairs might reach the information pro-grams only when, they involve elite groups, the events happen right next to the country in which they are to be broadcast, they possess a certain level of importance and have possible casualties involved. The main overtone of news of war and international conflicts is often based on the view of the country's position in war¹⁰. The close relationship between official sources and the content of war reports has been documented in the United States and in countries with authoritarian regimes and strong structural connections between politics and the press. News from abroad is an expensive element of media organizations and often its range depends on both having a network of correspondents and the availability of equipment. Undoubtedly

⁷ O. Wasiuta, P. Wasiuta, *Medialna manipulacja informacją w wojnie hybrydowej Rosji przeciwko Ukrainie* [in:] *Medialne obrazy świata. Wybrane problemy społeczno-polityczne w mediach*, R. Klepka (ed.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, Kraków 2018, pp. 77–102.

⁸ R. Klepka, *Wojna w mediach: wybrane zagadnienia dotyczące relacjonowania konfliktów zbrojnych*, "Wojny i konflikty. Przeszłość-Teraźniejszość-Przyszłość" 2016, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 7–17.

⁹ R. Klepka, *News na temat bezpieczeństwa* [in:] *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego*, Vol. 2, O. Wasiuta, R. Klepka (eds.), AT Wydawnictwo–Wydawnictwo Libron, Kraków 2019, p. 20.

¹⁰ M. Karmasin et al., *Perspectives on the Changing Role of the Mass Media in Hostile Conflicts* [in:] *Selling War: The Role of the Mass Media in Hostile Conflicts from World War I to the "War on Terror"*, J. Seethaler, M. Karmasin, G. Melischek (eds.), Intellect Books, Bristol, Chicago 2013, p. IX.

the competition between media organizations and financial cuts led to a drop in the number of international news¹¹.

News related to security is very often related to state events and even local ones as well. The first group shows news about crime, events with dangerous after effects, cataclysms, catastrophes. On the other hand, local events report, traffic accidents and individual human activities, that are commonly tied to understatement of risk, and less often with events that remain without a negative human impact. In the news about security, media negativity is clearly visible, which means that the bad news is standard and reported more willingly than the good news, and that can finally lead to a situation described by a famous media theorist Marshall McLuhan, that noticed that the only good news mentioned in the newspaper are the ads¹².

Media in crisis situations

In crisis situations, the media have a number of specific functions, which may accelerate its resolution and influence the way in which the crisis situation is resolved¹³. At the same time, it should be remembered that the pace of influence of contemporary media, especially social media, gives great opportunities to inform or admonish to the upcoming crisis, not limiting media activities only to inform after the event, and even giving the opportunity to create warning messages by users, not just to receive them as in the case of traditional media.

The manner, goals and range of media influence depends on the type of crisis. There are many definitions of the crisis, but most contain three elements: threat, sudden occurrence and uncertainty. Using these elements, one can treat the crisis as a serious threat to the basic structures or basic values and states of society, which under the pressure of time and in highly uncertain circumstances require making key decisions. The necessity of media action occurs both in the event of such diverse adversities as natural disasters and environmental threats, financial collapse, terrorist attacks, epidemics, explosions, infrastructure disasters or organizational failures. All these events are characterized by difficult conditions for those who are trying to manage the response operation and make urgent decisions. Usually, basic information about the causes and consequences of the crisis remain unavailable¹⁴.

¹¹ C.H. De Vreese, *Mediatization of News: The Role of Journalistic Framing* [in:] *Mediatization of Politicp. Understanding the Transformation of Western Democracies*, F. Esser, J. Ström-bäck (eds.), Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2014, pp. 139–149.

¹² R. Klepka, *Obrazy polityki w mediach: podstawowe uwarunkowania* [in:] *Medialne obrazy świata...*, op. cit., p. 15.

¹³ Idem, *Media w sytuacjach kryzysowych* [in:] *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego*, Vol. 1, O. Wasiuta, R. Klepka (eds.), AT Wydawnictwo–Wydawnictwo Libron, Kraków 2019, pp. 623–624.

¹⁴ A. Boin, M. Ekengren, M. Rhinard, *The study of crisis management* [in:] *Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*, M.D. Cavelty, T. Balzacq (eds.), Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, New York–London 2010, pp. 452–456; W.T. Coombs, *Parameters for Crisis Communication*

The role of the media in a crisis situation is first of all to inform, but also to observe and present to the individual the rational, probable threats resulting from the crisis¹⁵. It is extremely important in such a situation to abandon the practice of escalation of sensation typical for the media, in favour of pragmatic information. Subsequently, the role of the media consists of reporting the rescue operation, the operation of institutions, bodies, entities, staffs that act to avert the effects of the crisis or reduce its consequences. The media then undertakes a discussion on the causes, genesis and events preceding the crisis. Quite often, at this stage, the considerations of journalists and the media are interpretations, they are often attended by investigative journalists, and the comments of experts and appearance of specialists. It is very important that the stage of journalistic evaluation of the crisis should not replace warning and information about the event. Subsequently, the role of the media is education, that is, to anticipate the possible actions of recipients and directing this activity in a way that facilitates the rescue operation, but also after its completion will provide instructions on possible actions to avoid similar crises in the future. Finally, after a certain period of time from the end of the crisis, the media can take actions to update the recipients in favour of steps that would counteract the occurrence of a similar crisis in the future¹⁶.

It should be pointed out that the media often only to some extent implement the model of action outlined here. The goals of the media, especially commercial media, are related to the activity of maintaining the highest audience or readership, which means that media activities are often limited to sensational reporting of the crisis and emotional explanation of causes, seeking guilty and speculating about their punishment or about possible political, economic or criminal consequences for people who can be attributed with responsibility for the incident.

There is no doubt that new media using the Internet, especially social media, play an increasingly important role in crisis situations¹⁷. Facebook and Twitter provide an opportunity to react very quickly, to formulate a warning, to inform about the situation. They can also provide a forum for discussing an event.

The Internet is a breakthrough technology whose impact on human communication in the 21st century is comparable only to the use of font by Gutenberg. For intelligence agencies around the world wanting to learn more about people's goals,

[in:] *The Handbook of Crisis Communication*, W.T. Coombs, P.J. Holladay (eds.), Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, Oxford, Carlton 2010, pp. 17–20.

¹⁵ A. Boin, M. Ekengren, M. Rhinard, *The study of crisis management*, op. cit., pp. 452–456; W.T. Coombs, *Parameters for Crisis Communication*, op. cit., pp. 17–20.

¹⁶ W.T. Coombs, *Crisis Communication* [in:] *The Concise Encyclopedia of Communication*, W. Donsbach (ed.), Wiley Blackwell, Malden, Oxford, Chichester 2015, pp. 122–123; K. Fearn-Banks, *Crisis Communication* [in:] *21st Century Communication. A Reference Handbook*, W.F. Eadie (ed.), Sage Publications, Los Angeles–London–New Delhi–Singapore 2009, pp. 743–748.

¹⁷ R. Klepka, *Bezpieczeństwo w mediach społecznościowych* [in:] *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego*, Vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 111–112.

identities, locations, movements, finances and intentions, the Internet is a source that constantly offers new opportunities for data acquisition. The digital nature of all information on the Internet makes it possible to retrieve it both from the patterns and content of Internet communication and from the effective collection of data stored in a way that has never been possible before, at an affordable price.

Social media specifically designed to facilitate interaction between individuals, either in the form of broadcast information (such as Twitter), as information shared by group members (such as Facebook and LinkedIn) or as a platform where videos or other content can be easily shared (e.g. YouTube), play a special role in relation to safety messages¹⁸. Social media have become an important part of human life. From sharing information such as text, photos, news, to the actions taken by many people sharing the latest news and photos from other media, documents with questions, posting educational assignments and workshops, online surveys, marketing activities in social media and activities aimed at business customers to jokes, sharing music, videos and other entertainment content. Due to the use of social media by Internet users in many possible ways, social media is often referred to as the essence of modern Internet culture¹⁹.

The risks associated with the use of social media are linked to the development of effective tools for extracting and analysing digital data in recent years. This has been due to the dynamic interaction of, on the one hand, the growing demand for information about people as individuals, in particular after the September 11 attacks and the emergence of al-Qaeda, followed by ISIS and, on the other hand, the potential supply of such information from the growing use of the internet by society, companies and governments. Social media generate huge amounts of data about individuals who are of interest to commercial companies, governments that want to improve public services, law enforcement agencies that seek to identify criminals using the internet, and national intelligence agencies that seek information about individuals who are key to their national security missions.

Security and social media

The difficulty in maintaining security is related to the strong adaptation of social media as a tool of modern war, understood in a traditional way, as well as information warfare. Using social media, it is possible to artificially popularize a given topic and make it important and widely commented on. There are three methods to help control trends in social media: distributing trends, taking over trends and creating trends. The first method is relatively easy and requires the least resources. Distributing trends is simply about sending messages to any topic that you want to become popular. For

¹⁸ R. Gupta, H. Brooks, *Using Social Media for Global Security*, Wiley, Indianapolis 2013.

¹⁹ P. Jeffares, *Interpreting Hashtag Politics: Policy Ideas in an Era of Social Media*, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire 2014; N. Senthil Kumar, K. Saravankumar, K. Deepa, *On Privacy and Security in Social Media – A Comprehensive Study*, "Procedia Computer Science", 1.01.2016, Vol. 78.

example, you can post a picture of a president on Twitter with a meme message created with a tool that applies a culturally appropriate joke to a particular picture or movie, along with an unrelated #SuperBowl hashtag. Anyone who clicks on the trend list, expecting to see something about football, will see the president's meme. Taking over a trend requires more resources in the form of more watchers who spread the message or a bots network, i.e. autonomous programs that can interact with computer systems or users designed to automatically spread the message. Of the three ways to learn about a trend, creating a trend requires the greatest effort. It requires money to promote the trend or knowledge of the social media environment built around the topic, and most likely a network of several automated bots accounts. Bot accounts automatically tweet and forward tweets based on a set of programmed rules. In 2014, Twitter estimated that only 5 percent of the accounts were bots, this number increased with the total number of users and was already 15 percent by 2017²⁰.

An excellent example of the threat to social media from sending fake messages comes from the most popular Facebook news during the US presidential election in 2016. The source of the fake news was the allegedly patriotic American blog "End the Fed", a site run by Romanian businessman Ovidiu Drobot²¹. One of the social networking news that the Pope supported Donald Trump as a presidential candidate received over a million responses on Facebook alone. Other fake social media news from this site had more recipients at the end of 2016 than traditional sources.

There is a widespread use of social media, affecting safety and feeling of security around the world²². Criminals, terrorists and riot participants use social media to present their voices, recruit and plan their actions. During the Arab Spring, protesters across the Middle East used social media to organize and help overthrow their governments. During the London riots, young people used local social media platforms to coordinate looting and resist the police. Terrorists use social media to spread propaganda about their cause, demonise targets and recruit others to carry out attacks. Gangs use social media to threaten each other, recruit members, plan violence and other criminal activities. Because of the riots, terrorism and the criminal use of social media, governments around the world are facing new and stronger non-state threats that they increasingly do not understand. Only some groups and governments effectively use social media to ensure the safety of communities. However, most of them are largely unaware of the potential of social media and how they can and should use it.

Media in security prevention

The media also play a key role in promoting activities and attitudes, and it is through them that security campaigns are usually carried out, including planned activities

²⁰ J. Prier, *Commanding the Trend: Social Media as Information Warfare*, "Strategic Studies Quarterly" 2017, Vol. 11, No. 4, p. 54.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 60.

²² M. Cross, *Social Media Security: Leveraging Social Networking While Mitigating Risk*, Elsevier, Amsterdam et al. 2013.

that affect knowledge, attitudes and behaviour relating to different areas of security²³. Such campaigns are geared towards the purpose of the action, which is to inform, convince or motivate behavioural changes in a relatively well-defined and large audience. In safety campaigns the objective of the action is relatively general and is intended to bring non-commercial benefits to individuals and/or society as a whole, over a given period of time through structured communication activities involving mass media and the internet, often supplemented by interpersonal support²⁴.

Designing a campaign begins with a conceptual assessment of the situation to identify opportunities and barriers, and identify segments of the population whose practices are to be changed and the basic behaviours to which the campaign ultimately seeks to influence. The next step is to track the occurrence of such behaviours to identify their immediate and further determinants, and then create models of pathways of influence through attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, social influences and environmental forces. The next phase is to examine the model from a communication perspective and define target audiences and target behaviours that can be directly affected by campaign messages.

Most campaigns aim to relay messages directly in the main subgroups, endangered subpopulations that can benefit from the campaign²⁵. The potential of direct effects depends on the relative openness of the target audiences. Campaigns usually achieve the strongest impact, triggering or amplifying messages intended for people who are already predisposed. Another key segment of recipients includes those who have not yet attempted undesirable behaviour, but whose background characteristics suggest that they are at risk in the near future, many of them may be susceptible to persuasive messages. People involved in inappropriate practices are not directly targeted, so a large investment in resources that would lead to an interruption of business leads to marginal gains.

By influencing behaviour, campaigns either try to promote positive actions, such as wearing seat belts, respecting speed limits, tolerating minorities or prevent problematic behaviours such as drunk driving, forest burning or domestic violence. In many variants of the campaign, information messages play an important role in the way of raising awareness or providing instructions. Awareness messages typically present relatively simple content that tells people what to do, determines who should do it, or provides guidance on when and where to take action. Even superficial messages can encourage recipients to search for richer in-depth content from

²³ R. Klepka, *Kampanie medialne na rzecz bezpieczeństwa* [in:] *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego*, Vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 511–514.

²⁴ J. Fawkes, *Public relations and communications* [in:] *The Public Relations Handbook*, A. Theaker (ed.), Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London–New York 2001; J. Motion, R.L. Heath, P. Leitch, *Social Media and Public Relations: Fake friends and powerful publics*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London–New York 2016.

²⁵ C.K. Atkin, R.E. Rice, *Advances in Public Communication Campaigns* [in:] *The International Encyclopedia of Media Studies*, A.N. Valdivia (ed.), Blackwell Publishing, Malden, Oxford, Carlton 2013, pp. 2–6.

developed information resources, such as websites, books or opinion leaders. More complex instructional messages present information on how to do something²⁶.

In the prevalence of media campaigns for security, most campaign designers still choose traditional media channels, i.e. press, radio and television. Websites have also been a popular medium of media campaigns since the end of the nineties²⁷. In the last decade, campaigns have increasingly used interactive technology, such as blogs and microblogs, CDs and DVDs, customized news and websites, computer games and applications for mobile phones.

Most experts claim that media campaigns have achieved modest rather than strong impact, especially in terms of improving security. This is partly due to meagre dissemination budgets, incorrect application of theories and models, and poorly developed strategic approaches. It is also due to the difficulty of the task facing the campaigner, who may be promoting complex or difficult behaviours, targeting resistant audience segments, or coping with limited resources, while the endangered audience is constantly exposed to media coverage and advertising that have a negative impact on behaviour²⁸.

Security media campaigns are now increasingly taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the internet and in particular social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, which offer new opportunities for media campaigns. On the one hand, social media reflects the way users communicate with each other, is very interactive and users can easily share information with others. On the other hand, they enable a more complex, two-way communication, which is a direct result of the democratization of information. As a result, not only do the creators of the campaign talk to their audience, but they also talk directly to each other. The basic changes that the use of social media brings about for security campaigns concern several key elements: direct access to the recipient's identity, constant presence in their social network, the possibility of continuous contact, conversation, building relationships, creating a group of stakeholders around the campaign, building reputation and further sharing content. The creators of media campaigns are required to take a strategic approach to be present in the social media, because similarly to traditional media, other messages and content also fight for the attention of the audience.

Conclusions

Old and new media have a significant impact on knowledge, feelings, attitudes and opinions of societies. Both theoretical reflections and empirical research on security cannot do without reflection on the media today. This state of affairs makes the

²⁶ E.W. Austin, B.E. Pinkleton, *Strategic Public Relations Management: Planning and Managing Effective Communication Programs*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, New Jersey 2008, pp. 31–32.

²⁷ K.A. Foot, P.M. Schneider, *Web Campaigning*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2006, pp. 7–12.

²⁸ C.K. Atkin, R.E. Rice, *Advances in Public Communication Campaigns*, op. cit., p. 18.

notion of media security, understood as the existence of a state of undisturbed functioning of the media system in a given country and the desire to maintain it, more and more often also in Polish literature on the subject. This state consists of a number of factors ranging from the media education of the society and its preparation to the reception of media content through technical and technological conditions of media availability, legal guarantees of freedom of information, expression and opinion-forming to the existence of media order, guaranteeing the existence of a pluralistic media system ensuring free possibility of independent expression of views and lack of concentration of media ownership in the hands of a limited number of entities. The notion of media security also touches upon various conditions of the functioning of social media. In view of the large research field of media security, it seems that there are broad prospects for exploring further links between security issues and the media.

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Security vs. traditional and new media

Abstract

The article presents selected links between security and old and new media. The subject of consideration is the area of communication about security, with particular emphasis on the issue of media coverage of socio-political reality. Attention is paid to the relations between the media and terrorism, reporting on armed conflicts and the tasks that the media face in crisis situations. In addition, the characteristics of relations between security issues and social media have been made. In conclusion, it was pointed out how the media can influence in the area of security prevention.

Słowa kluczowe: media, bezpieczeństwo narodowe, wiadomości, relacje medialne, kampanie medialne

Key words: media, national security, news, media relations, media campaigns

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