

Report 3.1.1_COMP

Disinformation narratives in fake news in Polish / Czech / Slovak and their semantic structure (semantic analysis)

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1. Methodology and main assumptions

The research was conducted on a sample of 1563 (1020 from Poland, 263 from Czech republic and 280 from Slovakia) fake news messages that were published in the Polish, Czech and Slovak language in the time interval January 2023 - November 2024¹.

The analysis included messages that were recognized as fake (fake news) by fact-checking organizations cooperating in the CEDMO 2.0 project. Specifically, those messages that were labeled as fake news, which refer to facts (provide false or manipulated information/data), were taken into account. Accordingly, debunks that refer to statements made by politicians were not analyzed. The situations in which the primary purpose is not to mislead, but to persuade the recipient to do something harmful to him/her, such as investing money (so-called scam), were also omitted, similarly as reports summarizing trends or disinformation narratives. The limitations adopted were due to the desire to achieve maximum genre and functional purity of the statements analyzed.

Data from the AFP fact-checking portals in Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia (<https://sprawdzam.afp.com/>; www.napravoumiru.afp.com, www.napravoumiru.afp.com) and the Demagog Association portal Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia (<https://demagog.org.pl/>; www.demagog.cz, www.demagog.sk) were taken into account. The adopted method of producing a corpus of data addresses several difficulties that arise in the context of analyzing disinformation messages. The first is the unambiguous definition of the categories analyzed. In this case, it was assumed that the professional knowledge and competence of fact-checkers, who select material for analysis according to consistent, transparent and coherent criteria, applying specific and precisely described procedures in the analysis and qualification of media messages (in this case, as fake news) allow to maximize the genre purity of the analyzed set of texts. At the same time, using this type of

¹ The indicated time interval is due to the connection of the conducted analysis with the research conducted within the framework of CEDMO, which covered the period until the end of 2022. The difference in sample size is due to the differing activities of fact-checking organizations in the countries studied. However, given the significant number of texts from all countries, it can be assumed that this difference does not have a fundamental impact on the possibility of comparing the results obtained.



data, we were sure that we are working on texts that are (without any doubt) false, as proven by a professional fact-checking group.

We realize, of course, that such a procedure has resulted in a kind of mediation - as the data set obtained depends on the decisions of the fact-checkers and in this sense, strictly speaking, is not fully representative (in relation to the total set of fake news). It is worth noting, however, that it is not possible to achieve total representativeness in this type of analysis - as there is no complete, total set of fake news available in social media at any given time. It should also be emphasized that - in connection with the criteria used by fact-checkers to select the analyzed disinformation messages, we have finally gained access to a set of data which meets several important criteria, including the criterion of representativeness (in the narrower sense - presenting the dominant trends in fake news messages at a given time) as well as the criterion of validity and social impact (in accordance with professional principles, fact-checkers select materials according to their popularity on the Internet, the intensity of reaction or their 'networking' in the context of other disinformation messages).

In connection with the criteria used by fact-checkers to select the analyzed disinformation messages, we also gained access to a dataset that meets several important criteria, including the criterion of representativeness and the criterion of social validity and impact (according to professional principles, fact-checkers, when selecting the materials they analyze, are guided by their popularity on the Internet, the intensity of the reaction or their "networking" in the context of other disinformation messages).

The use of data provided by AFP and Demagog allowed us to obtain comparative material for all three consortium countries, as both organisations conduct fact-checking activities in Poland as well as in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. At the same time, Demagog and AFP remain recognised organisations of this type, which ensures the high quality and reliability of the data obtained. Not without significance for the reliability and representativeness of the obtained data is also the fact that these organisations are characterised by a slightly different context of their activities - the fact-checking department of AFP has a global character and is linked to the activities of AFP as a news agency, while the activities of the Demagog Association in the individual countries of the consortium are not linked to media institutions and have a primarily national character.



2. Research question and coding scheme

The data presented in the report is concerned with two areas:

- a/ structural semiotics, which is understood here as the formal structure of the message,
- b/ and selected narrative elements of fake news messages, which relate to the assumptions of narrative theory.

The methodology used is intermediate between the classical qualitative method (case study) and quantitative method (e.g. CADS). Thanks to this, by analyzing several hundred examples according to the categories adopted earlier (tested in earlier CEDMO studies and modified on the basis of the experience gained during the implementation of this research) it is possible to capture the tendencies that dominate the structure of fake news messages². On the other hand, the use of elements of qualitative analysis allows us to answer the question of the interrelationships between the various elements and their functions in the analyzed messages to the audience.

In connection with the above assumptions, the research questions posed concern the characteristics and functions of the following elements:

1. the format of the message
2. selected elements of the narrative structure of the message
 - a/ actor (type and role)
 - b/ space + context
 - c/ problem (conflict)
 - d/ temporality
 - e/ narrator (author in the text)

² It should be noted that the catalog of elements constituting the narrative (such as character, context, problem, etc.) is not closed. In the presented study, it was decided to check the presence of those elements which, on the basis of the literature and previous research, were considered potentially characteristic of a fake news narrative. This choice, the validity of which was confirmed in the course of the research, also resulted in the relatively strong presence of the category other/mixed in the results obtained. This is an understandable and justified situation, since, according to the assumptions made, not all elements of the narrative were observed. Moreover, unsurprisingly, contemporary media narratives often mix threads, are dynamic and, to some extent, unpredictable.

The coding basis was a codebook with the following structure:

1. STRUCTURAL SEMIOTICS

Format of the message:

- Text (T)
- Text + photo (TP)
- Text + video (TV)
- Text + photo + video (TPV)
- Other (only photo, only video)

2. NARRATIVES (categories based on the narrative theory)

Analysis using selected categories based on narrative theory). This type of analysis referred to the message as a whole, considering the given message as a semantic whole.

2a. Actor (main actor, type and role)

The main actor, the person presented as the subject, the main character, the agent of the actions taken. In this case, one main actor in terms of type and role is indicated.

Actor Type	Comment
Politician(s)	Persons who are professionally involved in politics, but who do not hold positions in political authorities or other institutions; often presented in the context of their private lives
Authority representatives (officials)	Persons who are presented through the prism of public functions, related to the exercise of power or decision-making
Ordinary people	Citizens, participants in social life, often victims of authorities or institutions, or people who share their knowledge with others

Uniformed services (army, police)	Individuals with special authority, also to use force, people in uniforms who signal their status, most often representatives of state authority
Specialists (scientists, doctors)	Persons with special competence, evidenced by education or a particular function, often doctors, researchers, other specialists in a particular field, e.g. cosmonauts. They are not ordinary people who share their knowledge.
Institutions (depersonalised)	Institutions seen as depersonalised entities; countries, governments, supranational institutions
Other (mixed, hard to say, no main actor)	This category was used if it was not possible to clearly identify a dominant actor.

Actor - role	Comment
Victim	Victim of the actions of other actors (often institutional) on whom the story focuses
Offender	most often in combination with the type 'institution' or 'politician', causing harm to other people; in combination with the type 'ordinary person' - refugee
Hero	A person worthy of respect, showing daring, making sacrifices in the name of higher values.
Other (mixed, hard to say)	This category refers to situations where it is difficult to identify the main actor, or - when his/her role does not fit into the areas indicated above / is not united (which is not often the case in the messages analysed)

2b. Space + Context

In this case, the basis (first step) of the analysis is the visual messages, if there are none, the inferences from the text. Only one main space/context is indicated. If there are several contexts or it is difficult to assess them, they are categorised as other. Frames from the film are treated as photographs.



A/ Abstractions (drawings, collages, visionary metaphors)

B/ Documents (charts, maps, documents)

C/ Inside

- Public
- Private

D/ Outside City

E/ Outside Non-city

2c. Problem (conflict)

Only one main (general) problem is indicated. If there are several problems or it is difficult to evaluate categorize as other.

Problem	Symbol
European Union	EU
Climate	C
LGBT +	L
Politicians	P
Refugees	R
Health	H
Disasters	D
International institutions (WHO, WEF)	II
The war in Ukraine	WU
The war in the Middle East	WME
Elections	E

2d. Temporality

This category refers to the time frame in which the narrative is conducted. In this case, the text (the dominant verb forms in it) was essentially analysed . Three categories were used:

- Past - a single event from the past



- Present - presentation of a permanent present state (e.g., a building, a factory, data)
- Future - it will be a problem, if something will happen.
- Other (difficult to say, mixture)

2e. Narrator (Author in the Text)

In this case, inference was made on the basis of the text. Visual representations were generally considered to be objectified, unless there was some direct interference from the author (for example, through a drawn arrow or circled text elements in a photograph)

In this context, two categories were distinguished:

- Present in the text, persuasive, telling his/her opinions /emotions (forms of I and we in the text, author speaking from himself/herself, revealing his/her assessment and emotions)
- Absent in the text, Objectified, presenting facts or citing authorities (without I/we in the text)

3. Results – presentation and analysis

3.1. The format of the message

Text + Photo	44%
Text + Video	38%
Text	9%
Other / mixture	5%
Text + Photo + Video	4%

Table 1. Format of the message – entire corpus



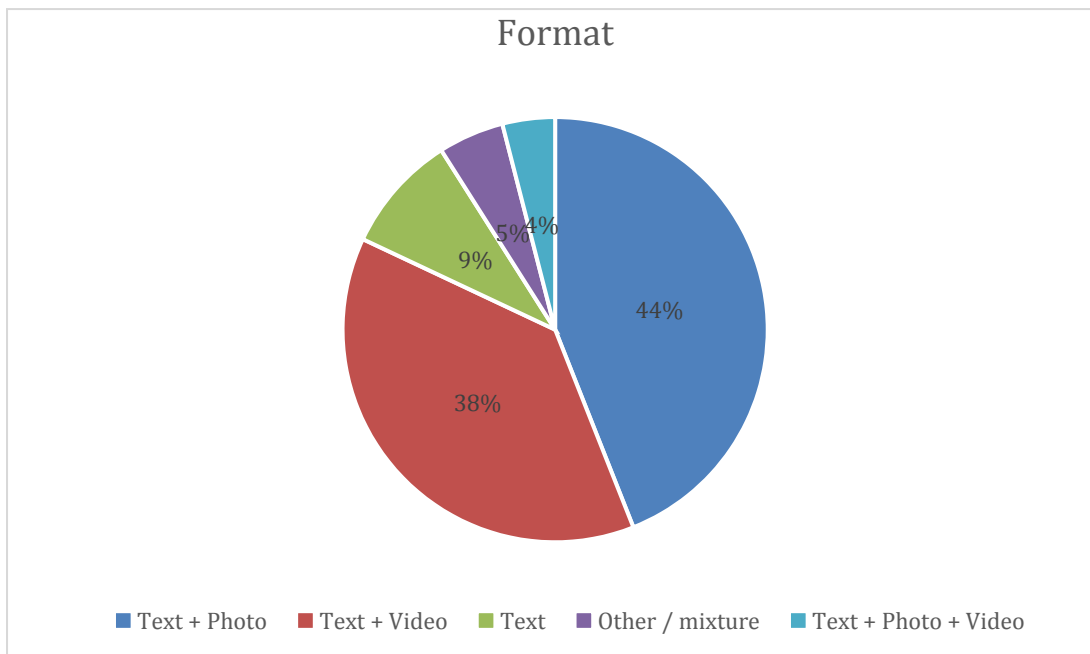


Figure 1. Format of the message – entire corpus

The data obtained confirm the thesis on the fundamental role of the image in (new) media communication. The vast majority of the analysed messages (82%) contain a visual or audio-visual element, while still observing the dominance of the image over the audio-visual form (film). This trend may be due to the specific nature of the medium, such as the Internet, and the speed at which the message is received - watching a film requires more time and slightly more concentration of attention than looking at a photograph.

Only one in ten of the messages analysed is limited to text alone, which is not surprising. What is interesting, however, is that there are even fewer messages that combine elements of a photo and a film, a mere 4%. The reason for this may be similar to the one mentioned above - such a message requires a greater concentration of attention and a longer reception time, in addition - both film and photo usually duplicate similar content, so such a structure is ineffective from the viewer's point of view.

It is worth noting that the text + film format may have several modifications - these are both longer films with a separate title or subtitles (characteristic of YouTube) and (increasingly) short film forms overlaid with texts highlighting their most important content or encoding the attitude of the author/narrator towards the material posted (characteristic of TikTok). Either way, fake news perfectly realises the tendency towards visuality and hybridity characteristic of contemporary media messages - they are composed of several codes, with the visual

code remaining the dominant one, both in the form of static images (photo, possibly graphics) and audiovisual dynamic images (film). In this way, the content (semantics, narratives) gains an impact and at the same time can be considered valuable (interesting) by audiences with different communicative competences. Content encoded using different codes mutually illuminate, interpret and structure each other, making the narratives much more expressive and the messages themselves more persuasive. It is worth noting that - despite the dominance of messages that contain a visual code - text is also important. Text, in the vast majority of cases, accompanies visuality, without leaving it as the only code with which the viewer has to deal. The text frames the message, fosters “rational” argumentation, indicates the key and characteristic elements of the narrative, and finally - encodes the narrator's attitude towards the message.

	CZE	POL	SVK
Text	14%	5%	8%
Text + Photo	53%	32%	48%
Text + Video	28%	46%	39%
Text + Photo + Video	2%	5%	4%
Other / mixture	2%	12%	2%

Table 2. Format of the message – comparison

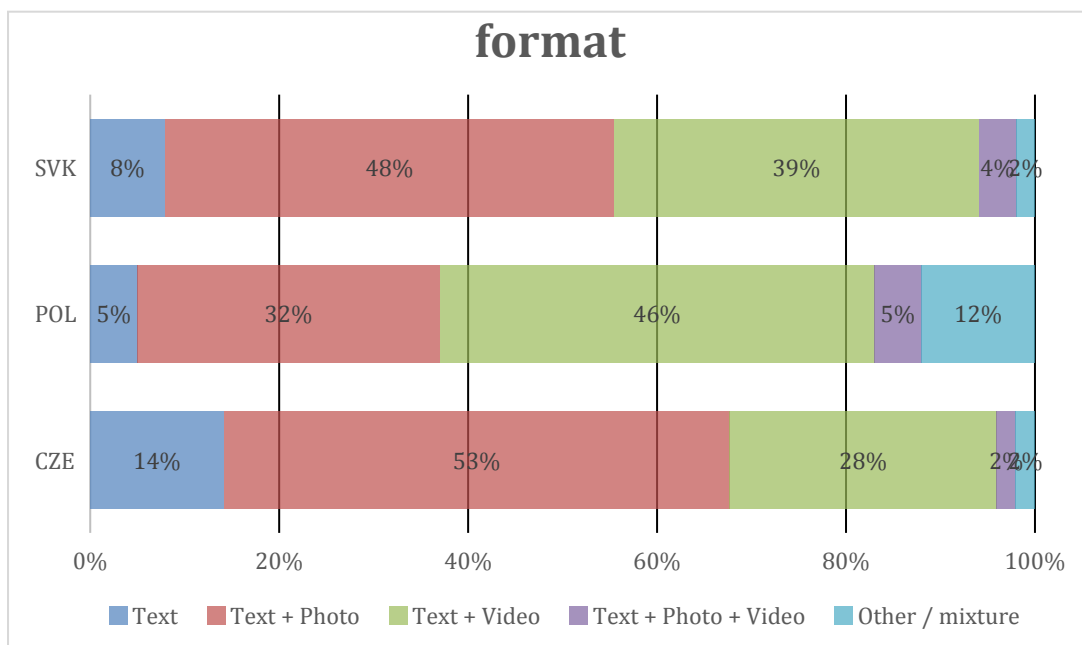
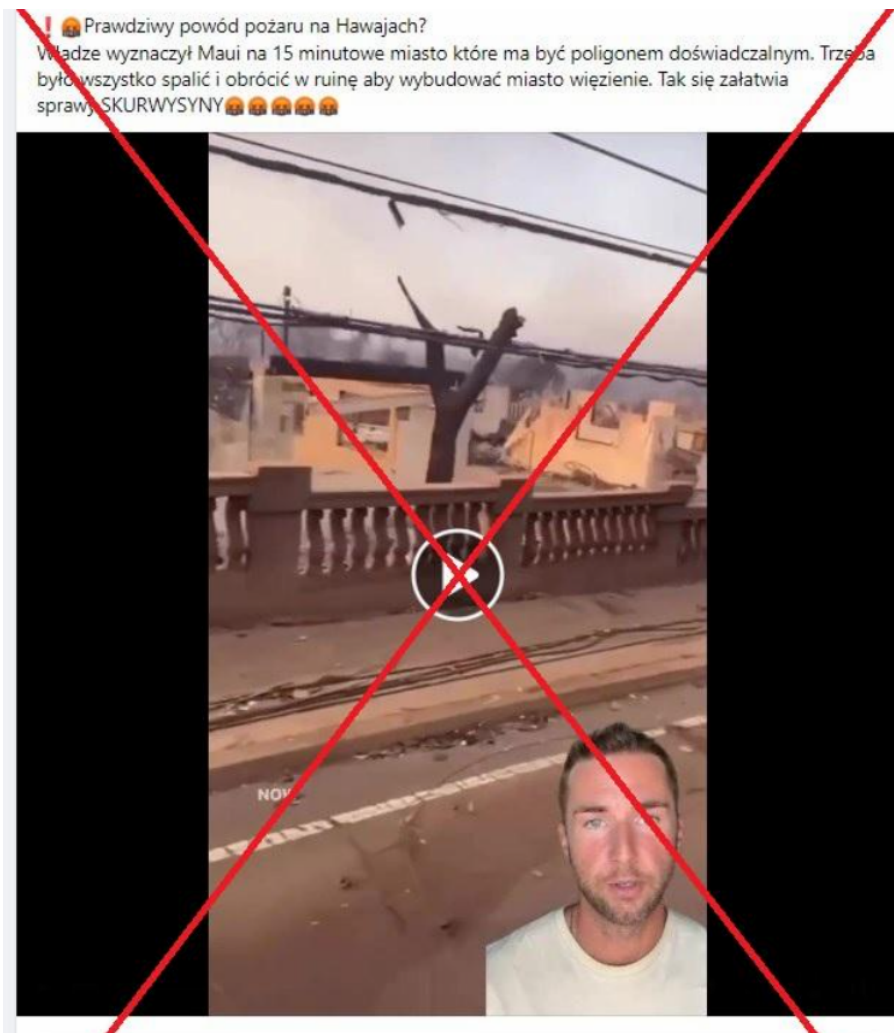


Figure 2. Format of the message – comparison



In terms of differences between the three languages (countries) studied, it is clear that fake news messages in the Czech Republic remain the most “conservative”. There is a relatively high proportion of plain text, with relatively little of the format combining text and video. Poland, on the other hand, has the highest proportion of the latter, which is both at the expense of plain text (only 5% of messages) and text combined with a photograph (the lowest rate among the three countries studied). In Slovak fake news, the photo combined with text dominates, but the presence of plain text and text combined with video is relatively average (compared to the other countries).



Picture 1. Format: Text + video. <https://sprawdzam.afp.com/doc.afp.com.33RA42Y>

3.2. Narrative

3.2.1. Actor - type

Politician(s)	19%
Institutions	19%
Ordinary people	18%
Specialists	16%
Other/mixed	15%
Authority representatives	8%
Uniformed	5%

Table 3. Type of actor – entire corpus

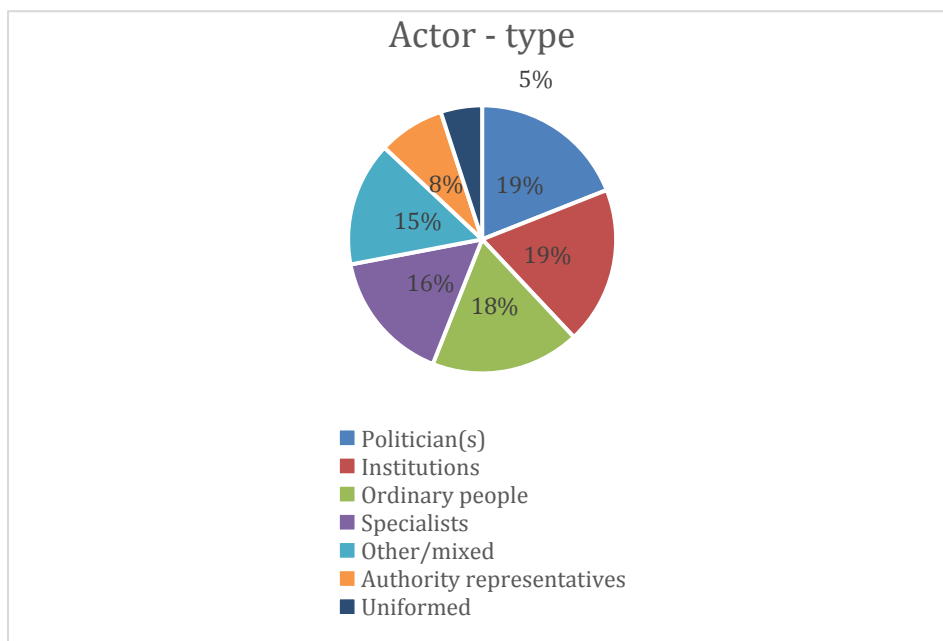


Figure 3. Type of actor – entire corpus

In many cases, it was difficult to clearly identify the type of actor who plays the main role in the message analysed. In such a situation, the category other/mixed was used. It is worth emphasising that this category appears both in situations where the main actor does not fit into any of the previously identified characteristic categories (he/she cannot be unambiguously assigned to any of the types) and when it is difficult to identify the main actor or the function can be attributed to several actors.

Across the three countries studied, the actors that appear particularly frequently in the messages analysed are politicians and institutions. The dominance of these categories points to a specific vision of the world, in which these types of actors (the vast majority of

which are constructed in a negative way) have a decisive role for the shape of the world, play key roles, and become the (usually negative) protagonists of the story.

Narratives in which politicians are set in the role of the main actor most often concern their abuse of power, corruption or issues of their private lives, events that undermine their credibility or contradict the principles they proclaim (this is clearly the case with Zelensky, for example). Such narratives are deprecating, close to gossipy, crossing the boundaries of privacy or intimacy. Institutional actors also appear in a negative function - in this case, their oppressiveness in relation to “ordinary people” is particularly emphasised.

Also included in this category can be “representatives of power” (8%) - people who do not appear in the function of politicians, but are representatives of institutions that have, one way or another, power and influence over reality.

Then there is the aforementioned category of the “common man/woman” (or ordinary people - as a collective actor). This type of actor is most often a victim of the actions of politicians or institutions, and his or her story is a pretext for showing the latter in a negative light. A special situation is when the “ordinary person” is a refugee - in which case he or she is presented as a negative character in almost every narrative.

Specialists are actors who have special knowledge of a subject or play a special role in social processes. They are most often academics, but also, for example, journalists or sportsmen/women. They either enjoy special authority (if they fit in with the presented ways of interpreting the world) or they are presented as those who abuse their position, let themselves be corrupted, are afraid to speak the truth, etc. Further down the line, the actors appearing in fake news are politicians.

An analysis of the main actors appearing in fake news messages shows a significant similarity to the actors in journalistic narratives - here, too, we are dealing with ordinary people (often presented as victims of the system); politicians in the context of rumours about their private lives or institutions, presented as ones that “do not countenance the ordinary person”.

	CZE	POL	SVK
Politician(s)	20%	12%	26%
Authority representatives	17%	3%	3%
Ordinary people	14%	29%	10%
Uniformed	6%	3%	5%



Specialists	11%	17%	19%
Institutions	15%	13%	29%
Other/mixed	17%	23%	8%

Table 4. Type of actor – comparison

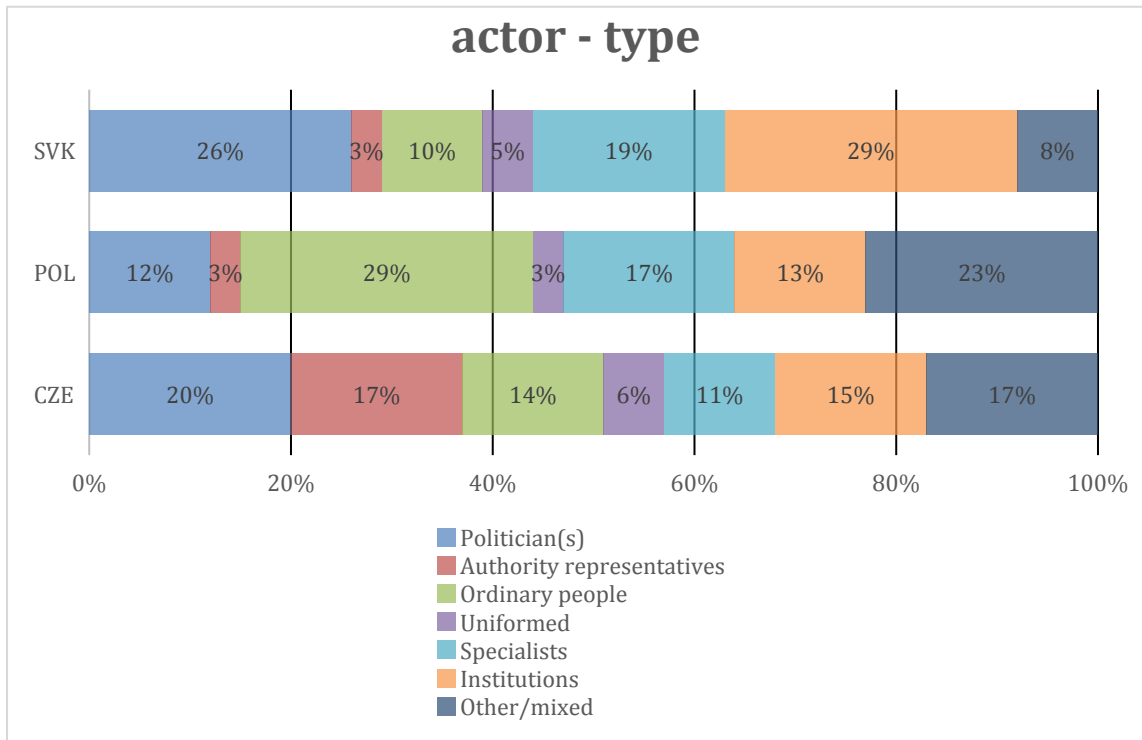


Figure 4. Type of actor – comparison

A comparative analysis reveals significant differences between the countries studied. In Polish fake news, stories of ordinary people play a much greater role, which, in turn, are the least important in Slovakia. The limited presence of “ordinary people” as the main actors in Slovak messages entails the dominance of actors of a kind of opposite nature - politicians, institutional actors, as well as specialists. Thus, Slovak fake news, unlike Polish fake news, places politicians and institutions at the centre, while Polish fake news locates so-called “ordinary people” as the main actors. In both types of narratives, the former are usually the offenders, the latter the victims. The difference lies in the perspective from which the story is told. The Czech narratives are relatively the most balanced in terms of the type of actor, although in this case it is worth noting the relatively strong presence of representatives of institutions with power in various areas of social and political life.





Picture 2. Actor type – ordinary people, the special case of refugees. <https://fakty.afp.com/doc.afp.com.336J7YX>

3.2.2. Actor - role

offender	62%
other	15%
hero	13%
victim	10%

Table 5. Role of actor – entire corpus

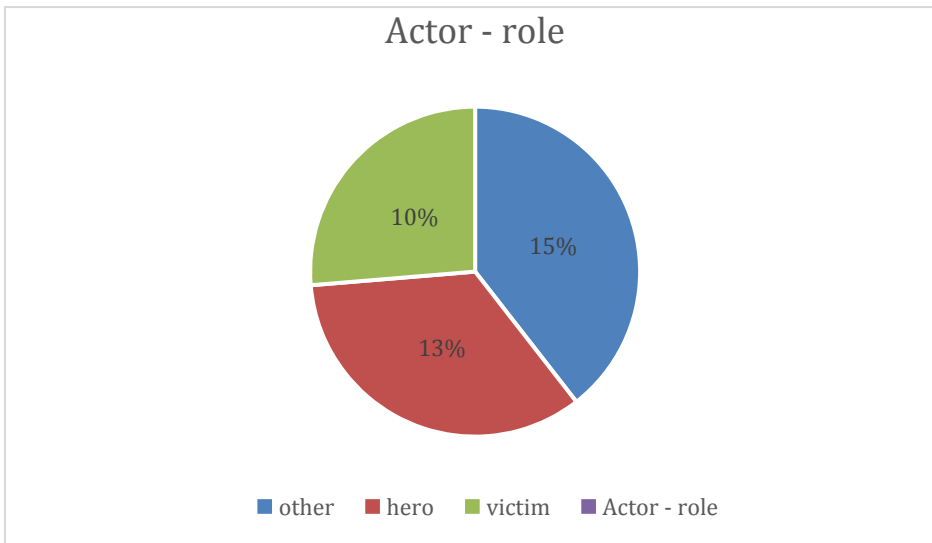


Figure 5. Role of actor – entire corpus

As can also be seen in the case of the role of the actor, a significant proportion of the messages analysed remain difficult to identify. The other/mixed category includes both those messages in which it was difficult to identify a specific actor and those in which, although it was possible to identify a specific actor, it was difficult to assign a clear role to him/her (for example, it was subject to change in the course of the message or was not clear-cut).

As far as roles that are relatively identifiable are concerned, the “offender” (a term used to describe someone/ something aggressive whose/their victim is others, most often “ordinary people”) is definitely predominant. The offender is a politician, an institution or a refugee. The dominance of the category of aggressor, offender in the analysed messages points to a characteristic world construction - it is a world conceived as a space of oppression in which the recipient is exposed to a range of aggressive and harmful actions, both undertaken by personal and institutional actors. The role of offender and victim are, as it were, two sides of the same coin; they condition each other's existence. In the distinction presented here, however, it is important which perspective the narrative adopts - whether it is the story of a negative character who persecutes others, or rather the story of one who is persecuted. As can be seen, in the messages analysed, the perspective of the former is by far the dominant one, which is obviously linked to a negative (also moral) assessment of offenders.

An interesting category is that of the “hero”. Often such a person is an authority figure or someone who is appreciated for the courage or sacrifice in the name of ideals. Protesters against politicians or institutions also tend to be collective heroes. Thus, it can be seen that the discourse of fake news also has its positive figures; these are, of course, those who oppose the dominant narrative. The category of the hero is democratised - it is made up of politicians or leaders, as well as researchers (scientists proclaiming alternative knowledge about the world) or doctors, but also, mentioned above, “ordinary people” who set an example with their commitment, dedication or courage.

	CZE	POL	SVK
victim	7%	17%	5%
offender	75%	42%	70%
hero	11%	12%	15%
other	8%	29%	10%

Table 6. Role of actor – comparison

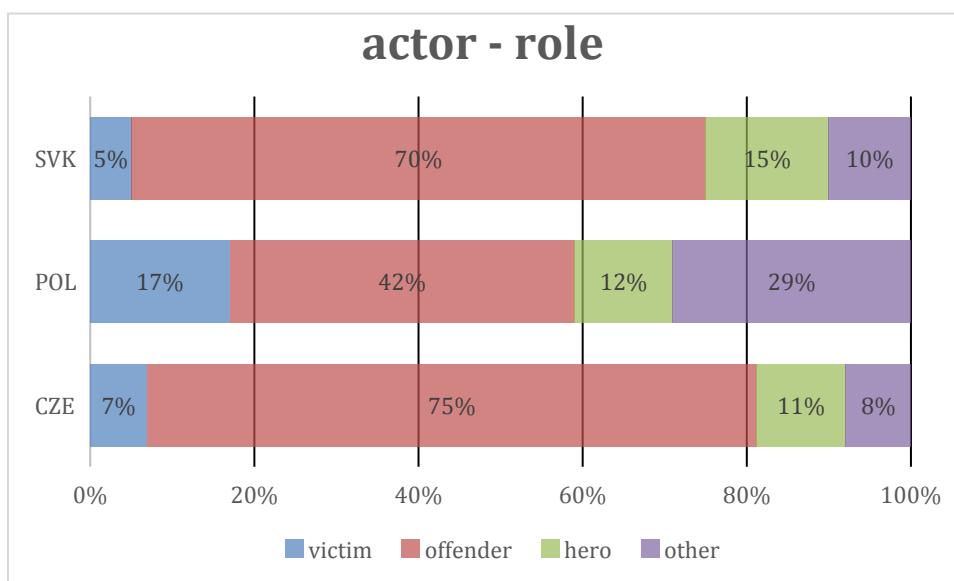
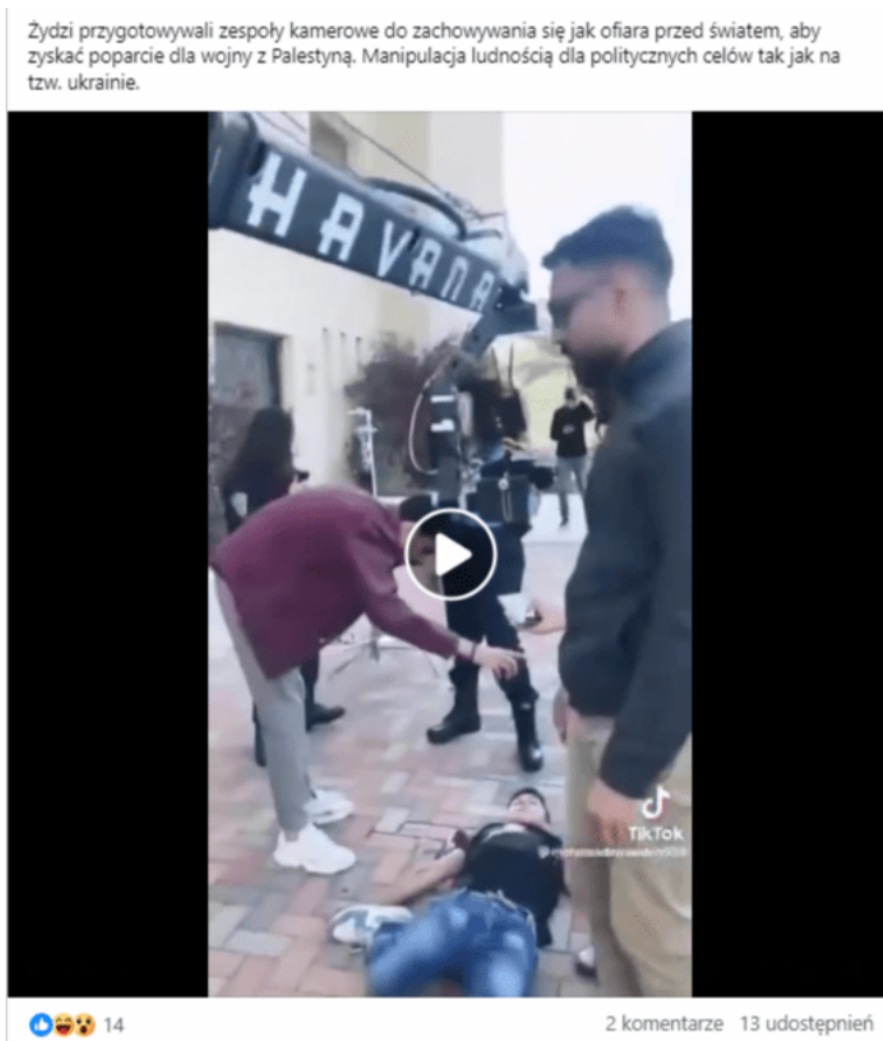


Figure 6. Role of actor – comparison

The proportion of actors' roles varies according to the country (language) of fake news. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the dominance of offenders is much more pronounced than in Poland. This is clearly related to the previously observed feature of Polish fake news, namely the relatively strong presence of “ordinary people” as protagonists of the story. These people, as already mentioned, most often constitute the category of victims. Generally speaking, Czech and Slovak news stories remain similar to each other in the

analysed scope, while Polish news stories are much more diverse (which is confirmed by the fact of a significant presence of stories whose protagonists cannot be clearly classified into the analysed categories or whose protagonists have different roles).



Picture 3. Type of actor – offender. https://demagog.org.pl/fake_news/zydzy-zainscenizowali-atak-nie-to-film-sprzed-roku/

3.2.3. Space - context

outside - city	26%
inside - public	19%
other/mixture	17%
inside - private	10%
outside - non-city	10%
abstractions	9%
documents	9%



Table 7. Context (space) – entire corpus

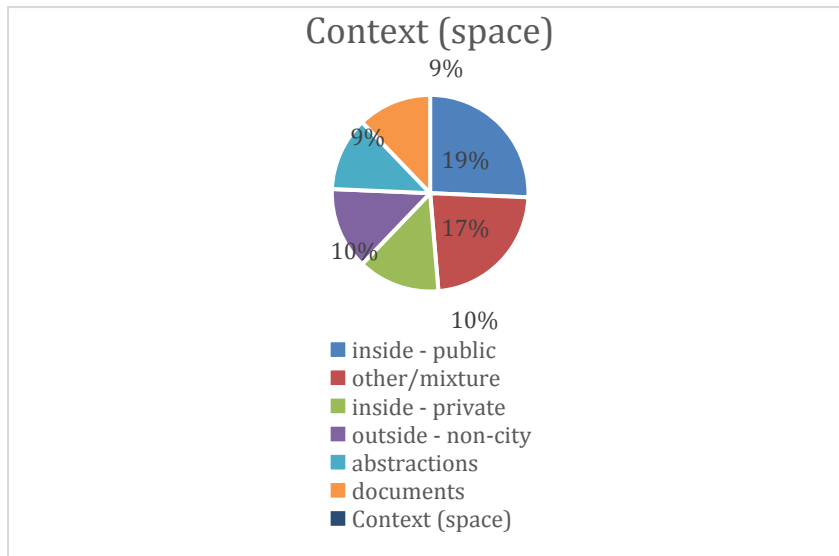


Figure 7. Context (space) – entire corpus

The results obtained in the course of analysing the context of fake news narratives (the space in which events take place) indicate first of all their very strong anchoring in reality (the world of everyday experience). To a small extent, abstract, fairy-tale and illusory spaces are present in the messages analysed; the vast majority are real contexts of everyday life.

As for the opposition “inside” - “outside”, the presence of both contexts is similar (29% versus 36%), but with a visible predominance of the “outside” context.

In terms of “inside” contexts, public contexts dominate (e.g. hospital, office, shop, etc.), “outside” on the other hand shows a clear predominance of the city.

The space actualised by the narratives of fake news is therefore a space that is far more public than private (indeed, all the “outside” is also public), the space of the city, often of specific urban locations. This is important information about the construction of the world of fake news - it is a world of the centre rather than the periphery, a world of public life and the problems associated with it rather than private life. A good example is the narrative of illness, suffering and death, which could be private. In this case, however, it becomes public, documents the malfunctioning of public institutions, and is located in hospitals or cemeteries rather than in the privacy of private homes.

	CZE	POL	SVK
abstractions	2	2	22

documents	11	7	9
inside - public	23	23	11
inside - private	1	14	14
outside - city	30	22	27
outside - non-city	8	12	10
other/mixture	24	20	7

Table 8. Context (space) – comparison

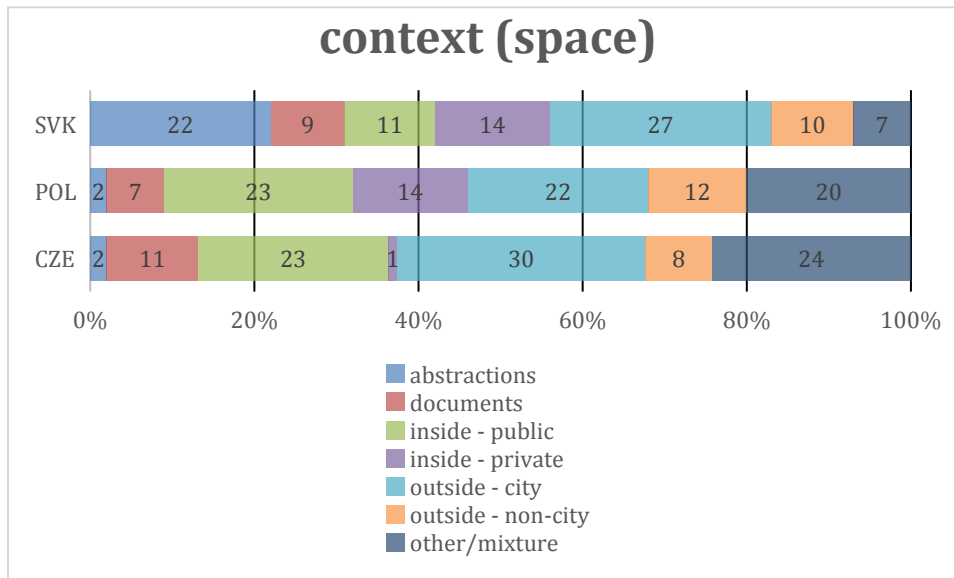


Figure 8. Context (space) – comparison

In the context analysed, significant differences between countries (languages) can be seen. In particular, Slovak fake news proves to be peculiar - there is less embeddedness in the real world (definitely more abstraction), less representation of the 'inside' space and more representation of contexts of ambiguous, diverse nature. However, urban space still dominates and private space plays a relatively large role (Poland is an exception here, where its role is drastically decreasing in favour of mixed variants and external urban space).

Meta fact-check 13. září 2023

A tady je obyčejný flash mob z Kyjeva na počest prvního září!
Na Ukrajině není žádný nacismus a tohle všechno je jen photoshop Rusů, jako vždy.
t.me/to_je_nas_svet



Picture 4. Context (space) – city outside. <https://demagog.cz/diskuze/podvrh-vydava-ruskou-oslavu-55-vyroci-gagarinova-letu-za-svastiku-zformovanou-ukrajinci>

3.2.4. Problem (conflict)

The war in Ukraine	28%
Health	20%
Politicians	11%
Other/mixture	11%
Climate	9%
Refugees	5%
Institutions	4%
European Union	3%
Disasters	3%
The war in the Middle East	3%
Elections	2%
LGBT +	1%

Table 9. Problem (conflict) – entire corpus

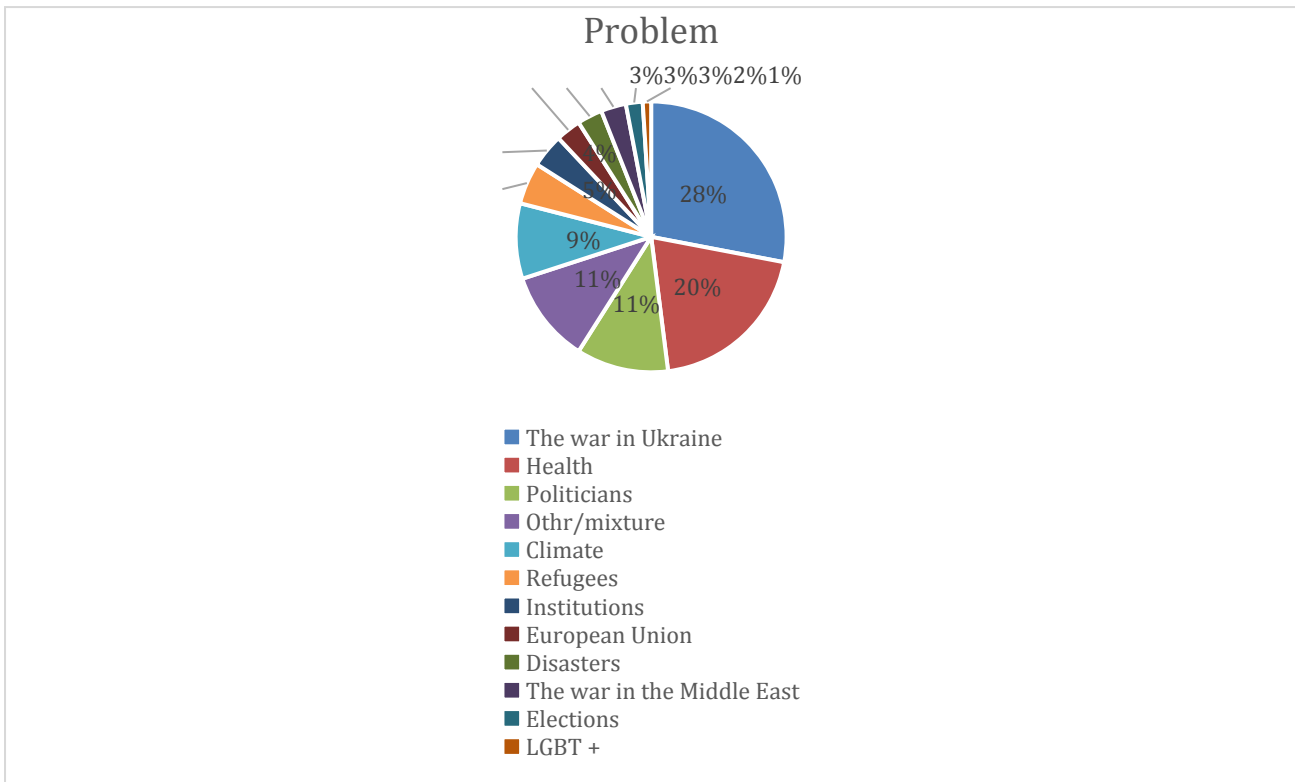


Figure 9. Problem (conflict) – entire corpus

The thematic scope of the analysed fake news remains diverse, depending also on the decisions of the fact-checking organisations (Demagog and AFP) through which the data for analysis was obtained. However, taking into account the aforementioned rules of selection by fact-checkers of the materials that are debunked (their popularity on the web and, related to this, social impact), it can be seen that health-related issues are definitely gaining ground, lagging slightly behind disinformation about the war in Ukraine, which, since the full-frontal aggression of Russia, has remained an important element of disinformation narratives in European countries, including Central Europe. Health topics are linked to vaccination (not only against COVID-19), but also various alternative therapies and interpretations of medical requirements (e.g. acceptable cholesterol standards) in the context of conspiracy theories. The category “war in Ukraine” is largely made up of fake news that concerns Volodymyr Zelensky. Politicians and criticism of climate change and refugee issues are also topics of fake news.

As can be seen, the topics of the news analysed are often mixed - this means that different issues are updated in a given narrative. This is an interesting and symptomatic phenomenon - fake news is holistic, building a coherent vision of the world based on

conspiracy thinking, referring to alleged facts/data from different areas of social life and combining them into a coherent story about the world.

The above presented data also point to another important feature of disinformation narratives - namely, they follow media-bearing themes of the moment.

While there are undoubtedly recurring themes in the area of disinformation (fake news), the subject matter of such messages proves to be highly varied and dynamic.

	CZE	POL	SVK
The war in Ukraine	40%	12%	32%
Health	13%	31%	16%
Politicians	13%	8%	11%
Other/mixture	8%	16%	8%
Climate	9%	9%	8%
Refugees	5%	8%	3%
Institutions	1%	5%	5%
European Union	1%	3%	4%
Disasters	3%	3%	3%
The war in the Middle East	2%	3%	5%
Elections	3%	1%	3%
LGBT +	2%	1%	1%

Table 10. Problem (conflict) - comparison

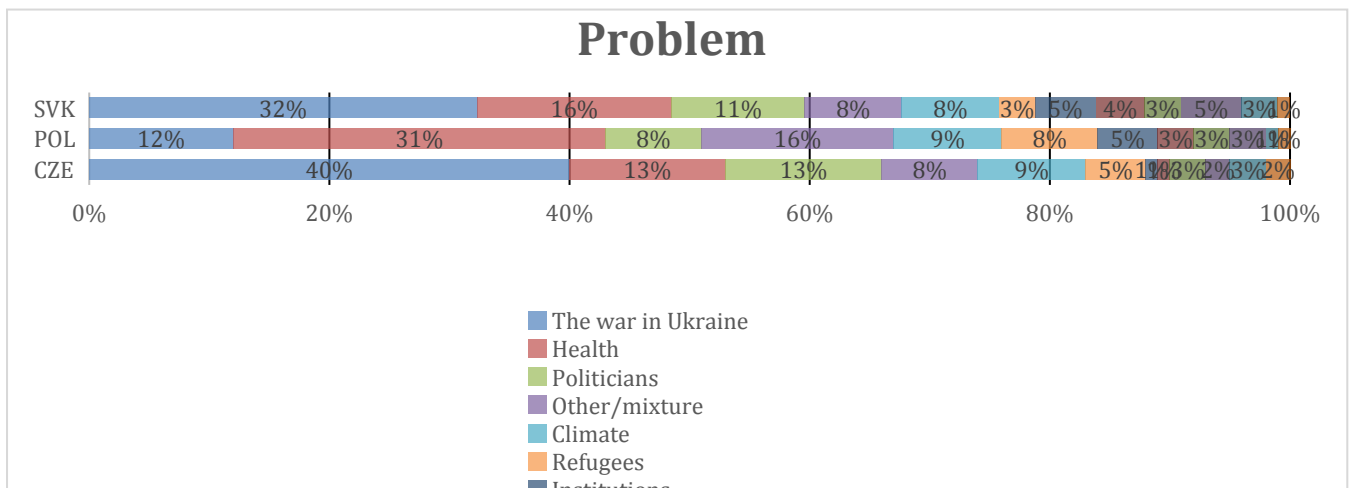


Figure 10. Problem (conflict) – comparison

In terms of the dominant themes of disinformation narratives in the three analysed countries, significant differences can be seen, which, incidentally, also confirms the dependence of disinformation on dominant media themes (which are shaped differently in



the analysed countries). Above all, interestingly and surprisingly, in the time period under study, the war in Ukraine was the subject of relatively least extensive disinformation in Poland. On the other hand, the highest number of messages on this topic is observed in the Czech Republic. This phenomenon is of course not due to the fact that the creators of disinformation circulating in the Polish public space are not interested in this topic. The point is rather that themes related to Ukraine and Russia are “smuggled in” in other contexts, combined with different narratives (e.g. on health). It is also worth noting at this point that Polish was the language with the highest number of messages on diverse, difficult-to -define themes. What also distinguishes Poland from the other countries surveyed is the strong presence of health disinformation.



Snímka nepravdivého FB příspěvku vyhotovená 8. srpna 2023

Picture 5. Disaster. <https://napravoumiru.afp.com/doc.afp.com.33QV6CQ>

3.2.5. Temporality

Past	60%
Present	35%
Future	5%

Table 11. Temporality – entire corpus

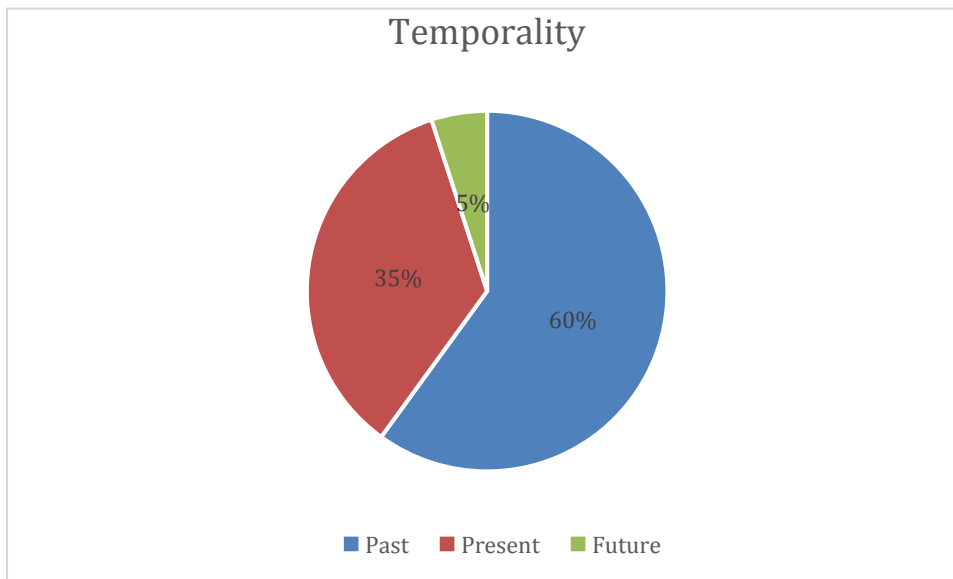


Figure 11. Temporality – entire corpus

The narrative of fake news is dominated by the past tense. However, it is a specific past tense - one that encodes the news, informs about something that happened admittedly in the past, but in the near past, and which has an impact on the present. There is a similar function for the present tense - usually structures that report on something that is just happening, that is sensational, surprising. The present tense also encodes, in fewer cases, narratives of a conspiracy nature, refers to the laws that govern the world, the constants that shape reality.

The future tense in the function of the main communicative frame is very rarely observed in fake news. Although the future tense appears when we read about the consequences of certain events or processes, in the vast majority of cases it is subordinate to the present or to what has happened in the recent past.

	CZE	POL	SVK
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past	61%	59%	61%
present	34%	37%	34%
future	5%	4%	5%

Table 12. Temporality – comparison

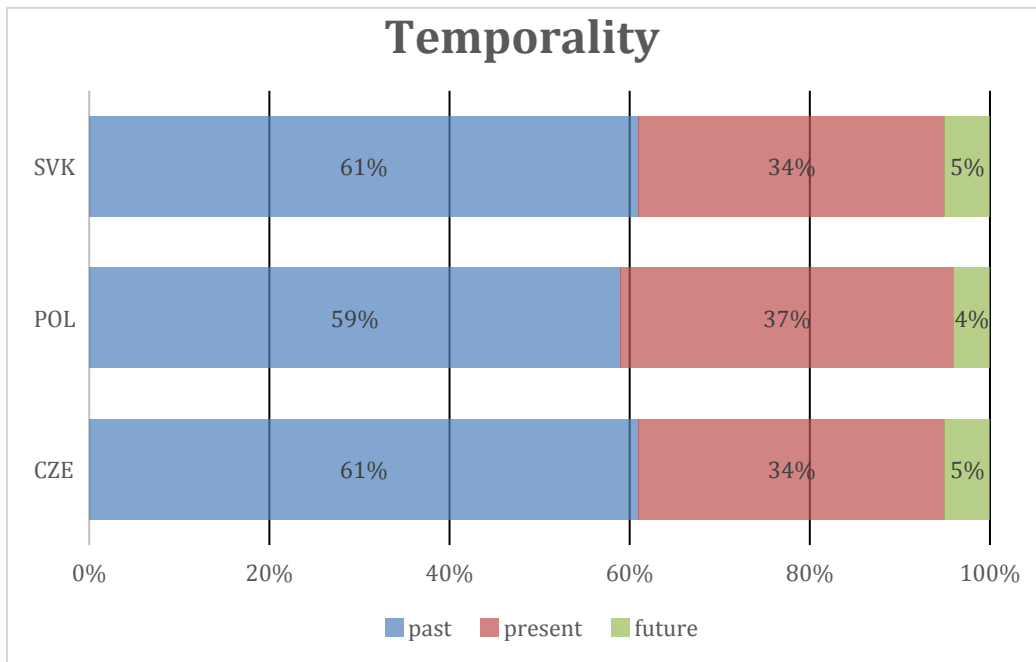


Figure 12. Temporality – comparison

As far as the placement of the story on the timeline is concerned, fake news in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are very similar to each other, it can be seen that this feature is an essential, genre-specific feature for the type of messages analysed.



Picture 6. Temporality – past. <https://infosecurity.sk/fact-checks/infovojna-a-zem-a-vek-siria-konspiracnu-teoriu-o-americkych-experimentoch-na-ukrajinskych-vojakoch/>

3.2.6. Author in the text (narrator)

present	70%
absent	30%

Table 13. Author – entire corpus

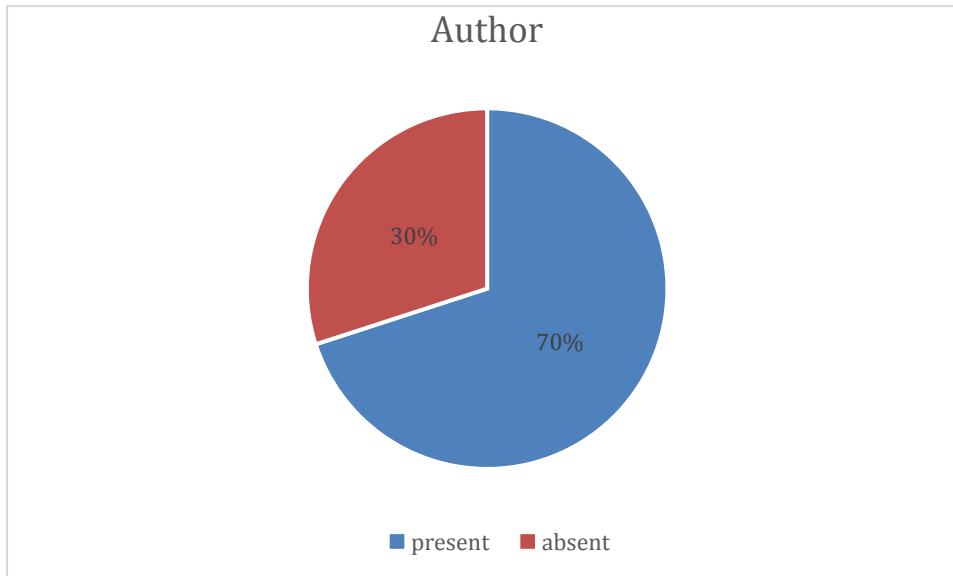


Figure 13. Author – entire corpus

As can be seen, in the vast majority of the analysed messages, the author (narrator) was observed to reveal himself/herself in the text. The author reveals himself or herself most often by demonstrating an emotional (evaluative) attitude to the presented content or by building a relationship with the recipients, for example through direct phrases or questions addressed to them. Author self-disclosure is an important feature of fake news, which builds its credibility in large part through a personalised relationship between sender and receiver.

	CZE	POL	SVK
present	75%	61%	75%
absent	25%	39%	25%

Table 14. Author – comparison



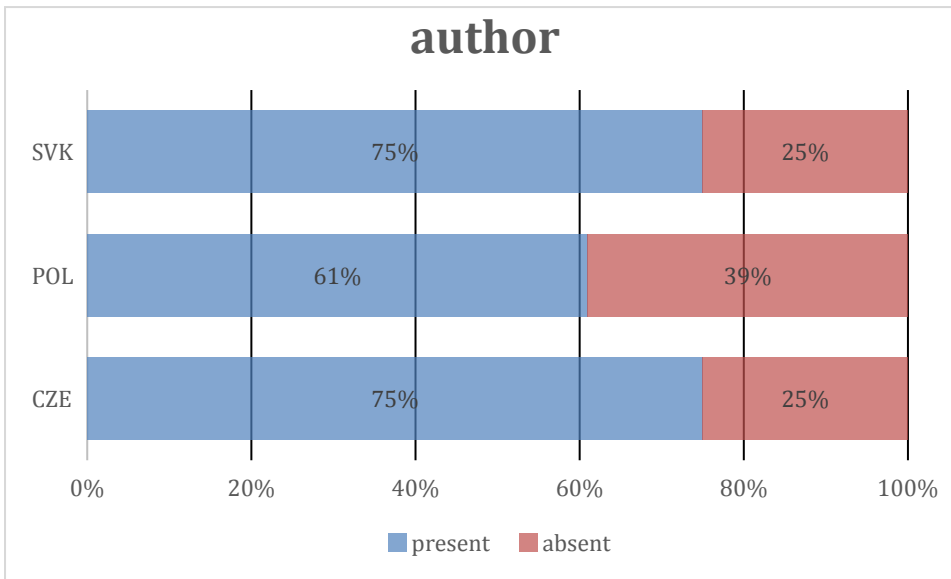
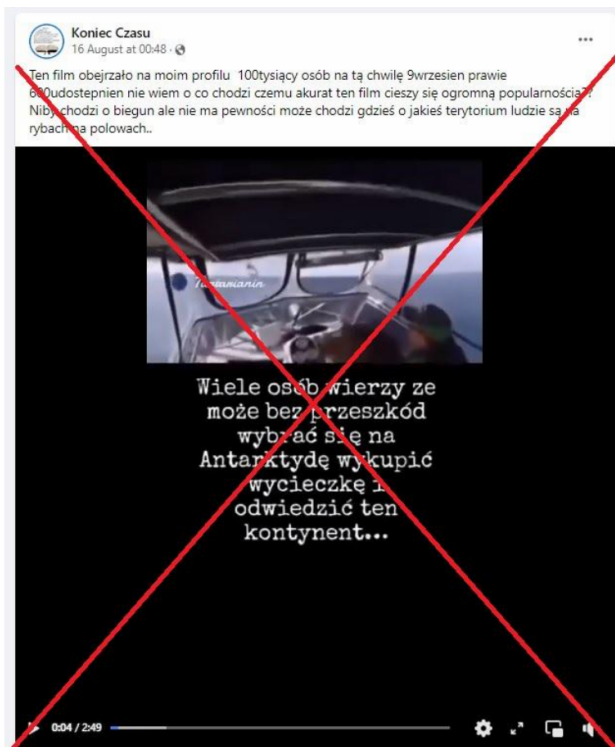


Figure 14. Author – comparison

Although the presence of the author in the text can be considered an important and distinctive feature of fake news, it is worth noting that it is relatively lower in Poland than in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. This may be related to the striving for a greater (apparent) objectivisation of the message, or it may also be related to the low (lowest in the analysed countries) presence of pure text in fake news in Poland.



Picture 7. Narrator present in the text. <https://sprawdzam.afp.com/doc.afp.com.33WY949>

4. Summary. Main conclusions

Fake news can be considered a set of relatively structurally (genre) coherent texts, as evidenced by the research and analysis previously conducted within the CEDMO consortium³. However, their subject matter is diverse and directly linked not only to the current socio-political situation, but also to the main areas of interest of professional media. Fake news, unlike, for example, tale, operates with concreteness, referring to topical issues. Therefore, it cannot be fully coherent in terms of narrative. This feature reveals itself clearly in the relatively high presence of other/mixed type categories in the analyses presented above. This fact is not surprising. On the other hand, as it seems, in the area of common, repetitive elements, it is possible to distinguish a dominant, in this sense typical, narrative structure of fake news messages.

In terms of message format, the analysed fake news confirms the thesis of the importance of visual communication in media messages. The vast majority of messages operate with images - whether in static or dynamic form. It is interesting to note, however, that the image is not a stand-alone code - in almost every case it is accompanied by text, the format and function of which vary. In this context, with a view to further research, it is important to analyse the functions and the interplay between text and image in fake news.

The dominant type of actors in the messages analysed are “ordinary people”, who are victims of actions taken by politicians, less frequently refugees, relatively often also institutions with power. The profile of the protagonist constructed in this way points to a specific construction of the social world found in fake news - it is an unfriendly world seen through the prism of everyday harm experienced by “ordinary people” on the part of politicians or institutions with power, or possibly representatives of culturally different groups (most often refugees).

³ *Disinformation in Central Europe. Actors, structure, impact*. Ed. by M. Wenzel, K. Stasiuk-Krajewska. Palgrave Macmillan 2025.



The narrative of fake news is clearly located in public rather than private space, in the city rather than outside it. Thus, the world depicted in fake news is a world of public experience, of social and civic affairs, and to a lesser extent private. It is also a world of the centre rather than the periphery.

The subject matter of fake news is diverse, which is not surprising as this type of media content responds to significant socio-political phenomena and elements of media narratives. Interestingly, the role of narratives on health issues is increasing, and it is also clear that fake news narratives combine different thematic threads to create a coherent vision of the world, alluding in its structure to conspiracy theories.

The tense of the stories is mainly past or present. Such temporality results from the main genre and functional characteristic of fake news, which is constructed as up-to-date, credible and - to some extent - sensational. However, fake news is not objective, as evidenced by the clear presence of an author (narrator) in most such messages.

Despite the numerous similarities, regarding the analyzed elements of the narrative, fake news in the three analyzed countries (languages) also has its specific features, which are as follows:

Czech Republic

- most traditional in terms of form (most text);
- most balanced when it comes to the type of actor;
- from the offenders' perspective;
- large number of publications about the war in Ukraine.

Poland

- little text, most fake news in the form of text and photos;
- main role played - as heroes - by ordinary people;
- from the perspective of victims;
- less role of private spaces in favor of public spaces;
- important role of disinformation on health;



- relatively least visible presence of the author in the text.

Slovakia

- balanced in terms of type of format;
- least role played by “ordinary people” as protagonists, politicians or institutional actors are most common;
- the perspective of offenders;
- relatively least attachment to the real world in terms of context.



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