Alina Bârgăoanu
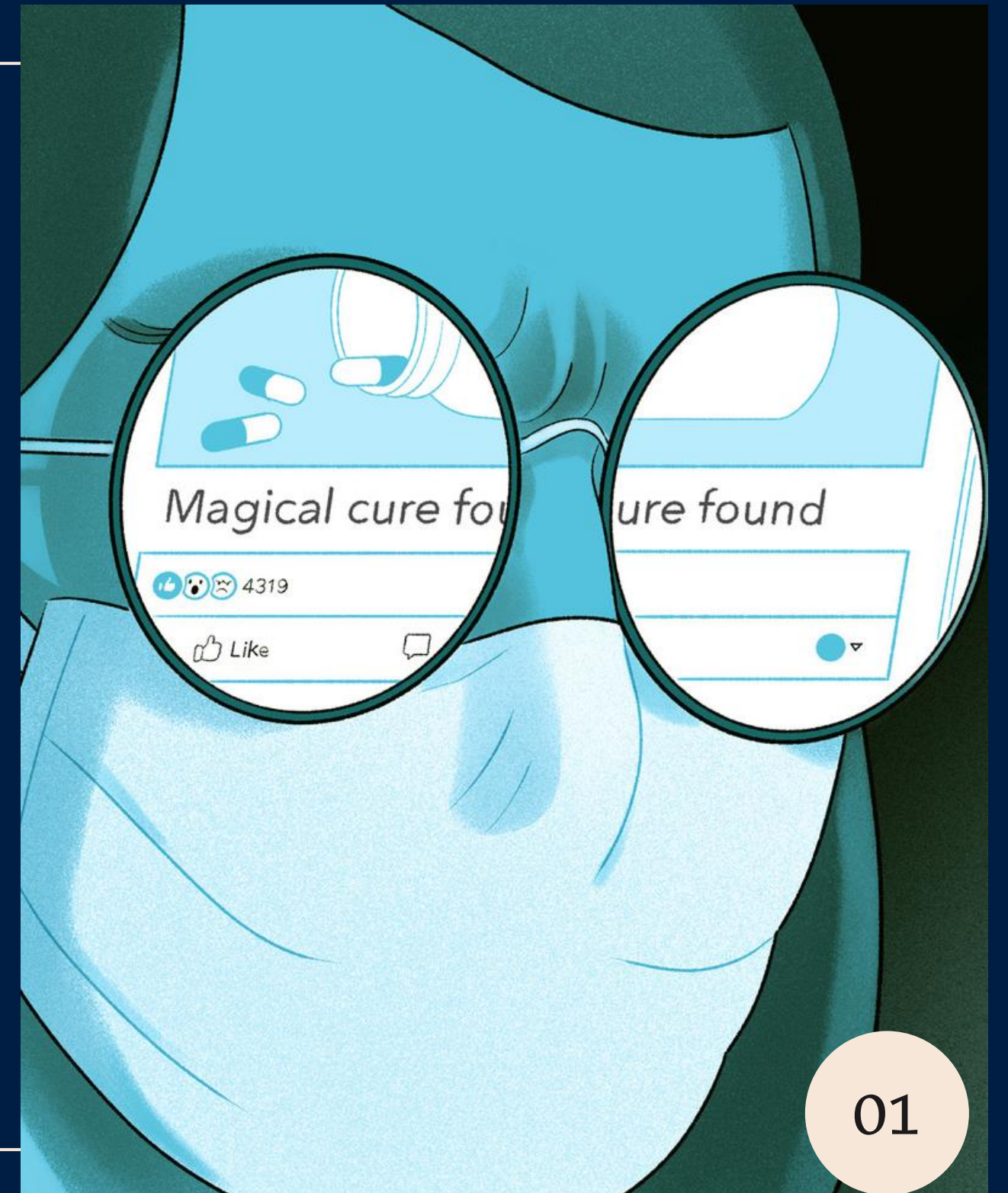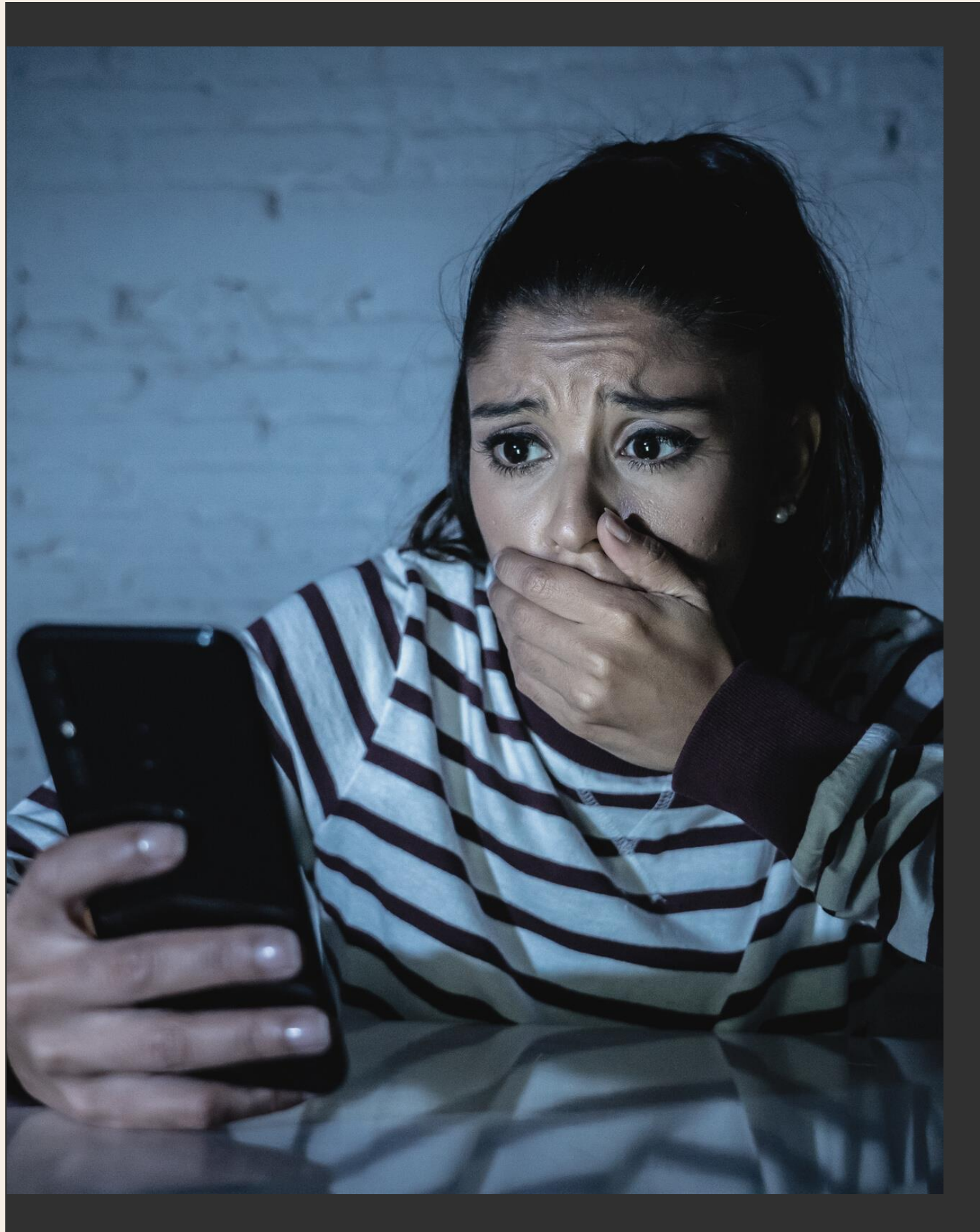
The emergence of the pseudo-scientific discourse: crisis of science or crisis of the public sphere?
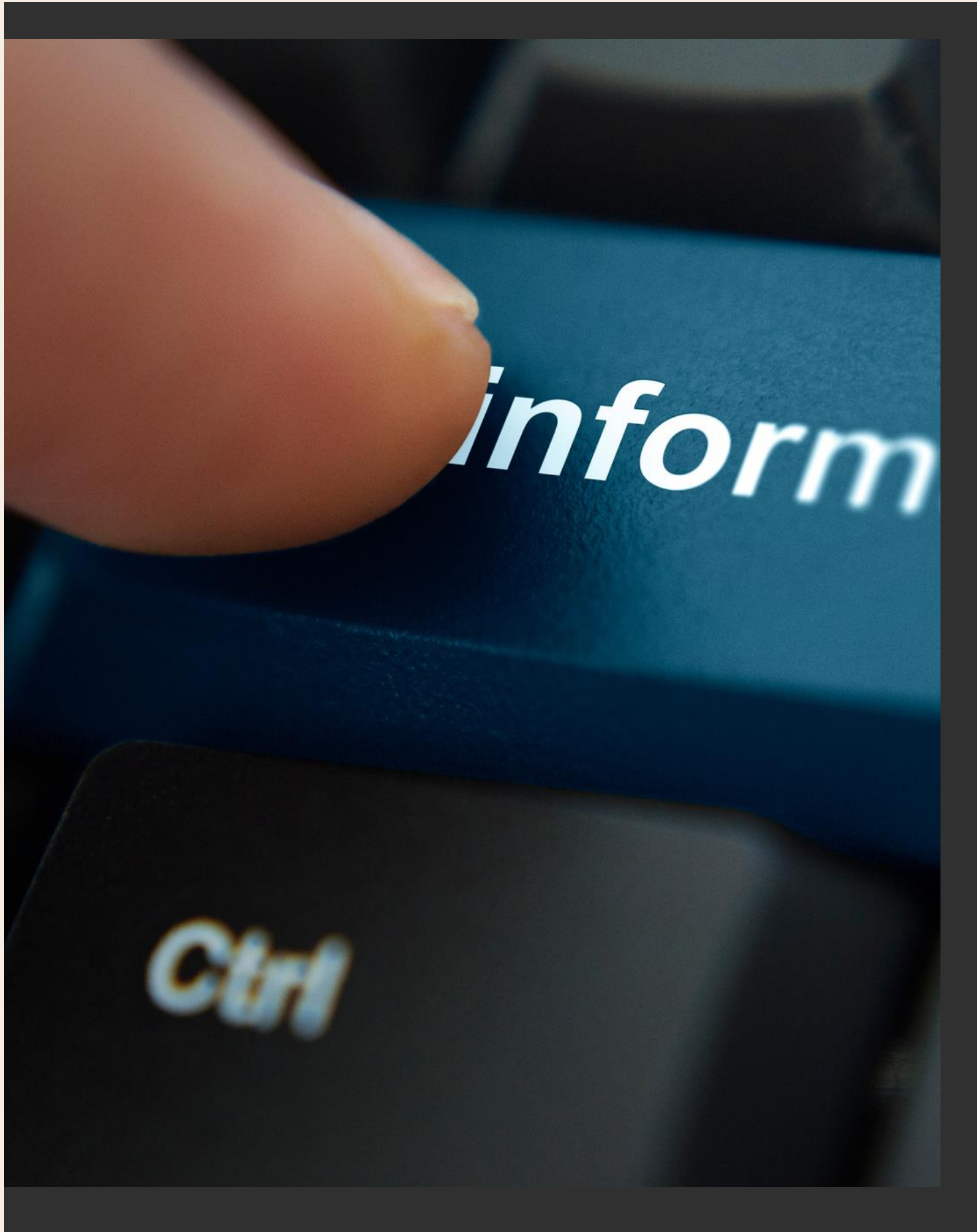

01

Mega changes

- **Information-rich environments** -> create knowledge resistance
- **The smartphone age**: blending of social and traditional media into one algorithmic, data-driven, always on continuum
- **Exponential technologies** (time space compression) -> create subjective psychological effects of disorientation and alienation
- **Private control of public spaces** -> elonmuskization of public conversations
- **Non-Westernization of the global sphere** -> global conversations are no longer shaped by Western actors

A changing information sphere

- Blurred lines:
  - Internal/ external boundaries
  - War/ peace (M. Leonard – "The age of unpeace")
  - Online/ offline
  - Public/ private (network sphere)
  - Real/ not real (computerized reality, gamification)

- Hyperconnectivity as a disruptive factor even BEFORE the pandemic

Image source: theconversation.com

The pandemic – a "mysterious" political phenomenon

- Misinformation, disinformation, rumors, pseudo-scientific discourse, propaganda from state and non-state hostile actors, cognitive warfare during a global HEALTH emergency

- Politisation and geopolitisation of SCIENCE

During the pandemic

- Science: a POLITICAL matter

  - a subject of public debate and public deliberation

  - mistrust in authorities/ authoritative figures

  - deep suspicion towards science/ technological changes

  - "do-your-own-research"

  - subjective "truths"

  - "democratization" of facts and of disinformation

  - an interplay between majorities and minorities

The "art" of disinformation

- To frame science, scientists, experts as part of the "system"/
  "establishment"

  - Anti-establishment rhetoric

  - "Fight"/ "resist" the system

  - "Mainstream science"

  - Rejection of authority – twisted version of "liberty"

  - "Freedom from science"

  - "Tyranny of science"

  - Activating the deep resentments created by the crisis of
    (POLITICAL) representation

Weaponization of unaddressed legitimate concerns

- Scale and speed of technological change

- Surveillance capitalism

- Loss of privacy

- Lack of transparency

- Government overreach

- Power asymmetries

- Unbridled monopolies

- Loss of control (perceived lack of agency)

- Lack of (political) representation

- Radical uncertainty

Mega-changes + the pandemic: no good historical precedent

Niall Ferguson: "This time we've gone from plague to war. In 1918, it was from war to plague"

Image source: supchina.com

From here to where?

- Understanding the mega-changes (almost all being co-substantial with the explosion of digital, mobile, Internet technologies)

- Acting at the core of the problem: hyper-connectivity, information overabundance, new features of the info-sphere

- Deciphering the "mystery" of the pandemic as a political and geopolitical phenomenon

- Taking into account differences:

  - Export of the political representation crisis in major democracies as a result of their mainstreaming power

CONTACT

ALINA BÂRGĂOANU

alina.bargaoanu@gmail.com

www.antifake.ro

Thank you!