https://doi.org/10.7592/EJHR.2025.13.4.1080

The European Journal of Humour Research 13 (4) 84–101
www.europeanjournalofhumour.org

Combatting conspiracy theories (also via humour): a case study of an Estonian conspiracy debunking group on Facebook

Anastasiya Astapova
University of Tartu, Estonia
anastasiya.astapova@ut.ee

Maili Pilt
University of Tartu, Estonia
maili.pilt@ut.ee

Abstract

This article focuses on popular understandings of how to combat conspiracy theories. Our case study is an Estonian-language Facebook group, "Victory of Light! Continuation", which was founded in the middle of the pandemic. This group exemplifies a case of social media activism, bringing together people dedicated to fighting disinformation by reporting on and trolling those who spread it. Based on online fieldwork and an interview with the group's founder, the article explores the fight against COVID- and Ukraine-related misinformation, with humour being one of this group's strategies. We also analyse how the group members identify themselves as a wholesome community and how they have unwittingly created a folk archive of conspiracy theories that are popular in Estonia. In addition to the perceptions of the group's founders and members about how they succeed in combatting misinformation, we also consider those at the receiving end of this activity, who often see the situation as harassment and bullying.

Keywords: conspiracy theories, humour, digital ethnography, meme activism, COVID-19, Russo-Ukrainian war.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought about an infodemic—an abundance of false or misleading information in digital and physical environments. This includes conspiracist allegations, such as claiming that the virus is either a Chinese or American biological weapon; that the virus does not exist or is completely harmless; that telecommunication technologies disseminate COVID-19; or that shadowy elitist groups and individuals like the deep state, Bill Gates, George Soros, Big Pharma, the World Health Organisation or an international Jewish

conspiracy are using the hysteria to hurt Donald Trump, cull certain populations, and achieve other malicious goals (Bavel et al., 2020; Biddlestone et al., 2020; Durand & Cunha, 2020). These narratives are in line with the conventional understanding of conspiracy theories, which is based on three basic narrative elements: 1) nothing happens by accident, 2) nothing is as it seems, and 3) everything is connected (Barkun, 2003; Butter, 2020). Followers of COVID-19 conspiracy theories have been shown to ignore social distancing and health officials' advice (Bavel et al., 2020, p. 464; Bierwiaczonek et al., 2020; Earnshaw et al., 2020) and to carry negative attitudes toward vaccine science (Bertin et al., 2020). Reportedly, they have also fuelled hostility toward groups seen as responsible for the virus, such as Asian or Jewish communities (Bavel et al., 2020, p. 464). This situation has caused a crisis for fact-checking platforms that combat misinformation: the chief operating officer of Snopes, for example, has pointed out that "[there] are rumours and grifts and scams that are causing real catastrophic consequences for people at risk" and noted that his group and others like it are "grossly unprepared" (Leskin, 2020; Shahsavari et al., 2020, p. 280).

Politicians, representatives of official institutions, scholars, grassroots activists, and other stakeholders have recognised the harmful impact of COVID-19 misinformation and the need to combat it and come up with new formats for doing so. They have exploited the potential of social media, mostly known to be a perfect environment for the spread of conspiracy theories, but with the opposite aim—to spread content for debunking misinformation (Giusta et al., 2021). The UN, for example, hired popular bloggers to spread pro-vaccination content and teach health professionals and scientists about how to spread it and be convincing (Fleming & Heimans, 2021). There have been occasional attempts to use humour, too. The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) in the United States encouraged its users to create vaccine hesitancy counter-memes to share on social media with the hashtags #GetVaccinated, #GiftOfHealth, etc. (National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, 2021). These have mainly been institutional initiatives, but there are grassroots efforts as well. In this article, we analyse an instance of a grassroots debunking initiative from an Estonian-language Facebook group founded by a hospital nurse to combat conspiracy theories via different strategies, including humour.

2. Methodology and ethics

At the time of writing this article, an Estonian-language Facebook group, "Victory of Light! Continuation" (*Valguse võit! Järg,* further referred to simply as "Victory of Light!" for the sake of brevity) has brought together 1,929 followers. This is a considerable membership given the total population of 1.3 million people in Estonia, and this is the main Estonian Facebook group aiming to combat misinformation. Most recently (2023), the participants of the group also founded the NGO "Vox Rationis" ["Voice of Reason" in Latin] aiming to promote evidence-based debate and prevent the spread of misinformation in Estonian society. The NGO organises seminars to exchange experience with various stakeholders, events for the general public, and various campaigns (see Vox Rationis, n.d.).

We traced the development of the group from its creation in 2021 to the summer of 2022, when it had to turn from focusing on debunking COVID-related misinformation to debunking misinformation about the Ukrainian war. We analyse this group by using online ethnography (Hart, 2017, pp. 2-3). We observed the group without intervening or posing questions so as to document communication without impacting it (Ugoretz, 2017). Given the ephemerality of the social media data—the group or its posts can be deleted anytime—we saved the information from "Victory of Light!" using screenshots (208 saved pieces in total) including the original posts and the group members' comments on them.

In addition, we interviewed Anni, the founder of the "Victory of Light!" group (via Zoom on June 3, 2022). Led by one of the authors, Maili Pilt, the open-ended interview lasted for approximately two hours, during which we discussed the history and activities of "Victory of Light!", the aims with which it was established, and the strategies Anni and other active members have used to battle conspiracy theories. We also discussed more general topics, such as what conspiracy theories are, how and why they spread, and how Anni evaluates the effectiveness of her group and other state and grassroots initiatives in preventing the spread of misinformation.

As our research is based on social media, we have followed the guidelines of the Ethics Working Committee of the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) (Franzke et al., 2020). The central idea of these guidelines is that since internet environments are all very different, ethical decisions must be based on the particularities of the specific environment and the research. With the major aim to do no harm, we have hidden usernames and profile pictures of the group's members in the screenshots used as examples in this article. We also did not use examples containing information about specific individuals—for example, those defined as "conspiracy theorists" by members of the group—and we do not mention their real names to avoid further marginalisation. We also suggested to Anni, the group founder, that we could use a pseudonym when referring to the group and herself. However, she rejected this offer and explained her decision by saying that fighting conspiracies and false information is her mission.

The article proceeds as follows: we start with a section on the main topics and distribution channels of COVID-19 and Russo-Ukrainian war conspiracy theories in Estonia, as we and other scholars have observed so far, but also as documented by this group, which has created a folk archive of Estonian conspiracy theories. The second part focuses on the history of the foundation and development of the group "Victory of Light!" as an online community fighting against conspiracy theories. The third part focuses on strategies "Victory of Light!" members use to fight conspiracy theories and misinformation, including the role of humour in them.

3. Conspiracy theories about COVID-19 and the Russo-Ukrainian war in Estonia and "Victory of Light!" as their folk archive

COVID-related beliefs in Estonia are primarily influenced by global conspiratorial thinking and mostly circulate around five main themes: (1) the origin of the virus, (2) measures taken against COVID-19, (3) manipulations related to 5G, (4) dangerous vaccines, (5) and the fake pandemic or questioning the existence of the coronavirus (Madisson & Ventsel, 2023, p. 186). As elsewhere, however, while case-specific conspiracy theories may seem interrelated and similar worldwide, they are subject to local variation, as their cultural reasoning differs. Specific conspiracy theories must adapt to and resonate with localised histories, contexts, and circumstances (Drążkiewicz, 2022). In Estonia, they may be grounded in preexisting interest in the New Age and natural lifestyles (Uibu, 2020). As a result, for instance, the conspiracy theory that 'Big Pharma' supposedly conducts unconstitutional human experimentation in the form of vaccination resonates with the characteristics of the Estonian misinformation space (Belova-Dalton, 2021, p. 204). Interest in alternative healthcare might also explain a spike of interest in folk medicine treatments for the coronavirus in Estonia. Recommendations for alternative treatments for coronavirus included MMS (chlorine dioxide, an industrial bleaching agent) and DMSO (dimethyl sulfoxide), liquids previously widely used in the Estonian alternative healthcare space to address other health problems (Hiiemäe & Utriainen, 2020; Uustalu, 2020). Other alternative medicines included ivermectin (an antiparasitic drug for animals), spruce shoots, and pine needles, which were recommended to prevent COVID, as an alternative to face

masks and vaccines, and later as a treatment for vaccine side effects (see, e.g., Kallas, 2021; Rääk, 2021; Raudsik, 2021a).

The Soviet and Communist past may have impacted other local developments of international conspiracy theories: for example, a rumour claimed that Irja Lutsar, the former head of the COVID-19 Scientific Advisory Board formed at the Government Committee of Estonia, is affiliated with the Chinese Communist Party (Belova-Dalton, 2021; see Ilieva, 2021 about a similar rumour in Bulgaria). Advanced technological development, IT proliferation, and the spread of the internet may also have had a significant impact, leading to a particularly strong fear of 5G mobile technology (Laine, 2020). The related topic of chemtrails has reactivated and has been linked to theories about vaccines, with some positing that people are being poisoned with vaccination and chemtrails simultaneously—each as part of the same plan. Such conspiratorial posts have been reposted in the "Victory of Light!" group for discussion (Figure 1). The belief in "vaccine radiation" was sometimes so pervasive that, for example, a beautician refused to serve a vaccinated person, fearing health problems (Raudsik, 2021b).

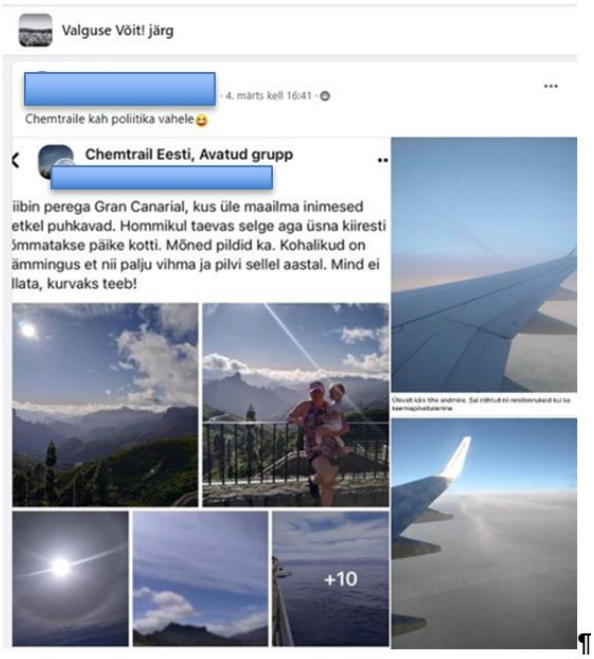

Figure 1. An example of the chemtrails conspiracy theory reposted in the "Victory of Light!" group for discussion (Captions: "I am staying with my family in Gran Canaria, where people from all over the world are vacationing at the moment. In the morning, the sky is clear, but the sun is behind the stripes [*tõmmakse päike kotti*] quite quickly. Locals are puzzled by so much rain and clouds this year. It doesn't surprise me though; it makes me sad!")

As elsewhere, the spread of conspiracy theories and fake news resulted in hate speech against public figures, disrespectful treatment of law enforcement officers, and damage to property (Belova-Dalton, 2021, p. 177). Similarly, conspiracy theory entrepreneurs and influencers have emerged in Estonia (Belova-Dalton, 2022, p. 14). They spread content related to conspiracy theories to advertise and sell alternative products (MMS liquid, oils, tickets to self-help workshops, crystals, etc.) or generate income in other ways, such as fundraising from disciples to support their mission (Osula, 2020). The most significant outlets spreading conspiracy theories in Estonia include *Minuaeg* ("My Time", www.minuaeg.ee), *Eestinen* (a portal providing Finnish news to Estonians, https://eestinen.fi/), *VanglaPlaneet* ("Prison Planet", vanglaplaneet.ee), *Objektiiv.ee*, and most infamously *Telegram.ee*—all of which define

themselves as oppositional to the mainstream media (which they accuse of lies, insufficient reporting of events, and manipulation) and the government (which they depict as totalitarian or tyrannical). In 2022, the portals and their main authors, who also post on Facebook, turned to the war in Ukraine. Both globally and in the Estonian case, conspiracy theories have represented both major events as parts of a continuous experiment on people (sometimes termed the "Great Reset"), bioweapons development (first COVID and then bioweapons developed in Ukrainian biolabs under US supervision), and a broad, malicious plan to destroy people's moral values. Some claim that there is no war, just like there was no pandemic (Astapova, 2023).

Figure 2. A screenshot from "Victory of Light!" illustrating the conspiracy theory that there is no war in Ukraine (Captions: "News from Ukraine. For the most part, people in Ukraine don't even know there's a war because it's in such a small area of Ukraine, and most of the damage has been caused by their own bastards in Ukraine over the past 8 years. No one has to escape Ukraine because the entire large country is free from war. In the picture, people are on holiday in Mariupol, and no one is thinking about the war.") The conspiracy theory was debunked by members of the group who discovered that the photo is from the 1980s.

The "Victory of Light!" group has become a catalogue or folk archive of conspiracy theories in response to all the major developments—first around the pandemic, and later the war in Ukraine. Whenever a new conspiratorial narrative emerged in Estonia or a conspiracy theory entrepreneur made another profitable move, there was immediately a post about this in the "Victory of Light!" group calling for discussion and often ridiculing believers (or influencers). Folk archives are different from those created in the patrimonial heritage regime or from authorised discourse (Smith, 2006; Hafstein, 2012, pp. 501-502). Also defined as participatory, community or spontaneous archives, they "are about affiliation, expression, collaboration, distribution and the disclaiming of earlier divisions between professionals and amateurs" (Hänninen & Heimo, 2019, p. 114). Still, they tend to follow some institutional rules. When reposting different pieces of misinformation and thus contributing to the archive, members of the group have come into a habit of analysing the content, the authors' profiles, and the authors' former actions. As such,

their posts and comments provide a lot of metadata and context for each piece of conspiracy theory, which makes the archive even more valuable.

To leap ahead slightly, although the group shifted its focus from COVID-19 to Russo-Ukrainian war-related misinformation, the debunking strategies employed by "Victory of Light!" largely remained consistent. Key adaptations—such as the reduced reliance on mass reporting—were primarily motivated by changes in platform algorithms and broader social media dynamics rather than by the specific nature of the conspiracy theories themselves. As discussed by Astapova (2023), COVID-19 conspiracies and those related to the Russo-Ukrainian war often coexist within broader conspiratorial belief systems. Consequently, the social profile of those who engage with COVID-19 conspiracy theories is not necessarily different from those who engage with war-related conspiracies. Therefore, while the external context evolved, the core challenges faced by debunkers and the audiences they targeted showed significant continuity across the two cases.

4. "Victory of Light!": foundation and functions

As Anni Lamp explained in the interview, the idea to create a Facebook group to fight the spread of misinformation occurred to her in the spring of 2021, which coincided with massive anti-government demonstrations against the pandemic restrictions. A care nurse in a hospital by profession, Anni was concerned about how her colleagues dealing with COVID patients were coping with the situation. On social media, COVID-19 sceptics assumed that the intensive care units were empty in Estonia and invited people to break into hospitals, take pictures there, and thus expose "coronavirus conspiracies". Anni found several Facebook groups calling for such exposure and started to comment on their posts. When posting and seeing further comments, she found many like-minded and worried people. A particular situation finally brought them together. After another rally against the coronavirus restrictions in Tallinn, several protesters went to the restaurant Pizza Americana, located near the main square. As they did not have vaccination certificates, the waiters refused to serve them. The protesters reacted with outrage, leading the restaurant to close. The restaurant posted on social media about the incident, and many users sympathised with them, calling for a so-called "pizza action": ordering a lot of pizzas from the restaurant and sending them to the doctors of West Tallinn Central Hospital as a token of gratitude for their stressful work during the pandemic (Palmipuu, 2021). Inspired by this and realising how many like-minded people are out there, Anni came up with the idea to create a Facebook group for those who wanted to fight against pandemic deniers.

At its peak, the first "Victory of Light!" group had 2200 participants. However, Facebook deleted this public group after "conspiracy theorists" reported it and algorithms showed that group posts contained inappropriate content (essentially being an archive of conspiracy theories). The same happened to the next version of the group Anni tried to create. The third version continues to survive at the time of writing this article due to the very strict rules Anni and the other administrators and moderators of the group came up with. The group has private settings, and its moderators do background checks on people who want to join the group (to avoid conspiracy theory followers reporting it). In their private Facebook chat, they also make decisions regarding, for instance, the deletion of posts or the removal of a group member who refuses to follow the rules.

The name "Victory of Light!" was inspired by the Estonian patriotic song Koit ("Dawn"), in which the phrase "Victory of Light" occurs in the chorus. Historically used for protests against Soviet oppression, the song is about the liberation and awakening of the land and people based on a metaphor of the light winning over darkness. Protesters against COVID restrictions appropriated the song for their rallies, and as Anni explained, she decided to hijack it and use it

ironically to name the group. Just like the title, the cover photo of the "Victory of Light!" group on Facebook (Figure 3) has an ironic meaning. The photo references the idea of *sheeple*, sheep people blindly trusting governments, which has been among the major tropes of COVID-19 conspiracy theories around the world (e.g., Rangiwai, 2021). The sheep in the picture are wearing sunglasses because they block the "light"—that is, the conspiracy theorists' "truth", as Anni explained.

Figure 3. The cover photo of the "Valguse Võit!" Facebook group

The text introducing the group expresses both its aims and solidarity amongst its members: "We are fed up with false information and scammers, but we will not remain silent or go away. Good, fun, responsible compatriots with developed empathy and a sense of humour are welcome to join the group #koosolemetugevad [#strongertogether]."

"Victory of Light!" has served as a support group for its members. Several medical professionals found ample emotional support in the group when they were under attack from alternative thinkers. Among them is a family doctor (and now a member of Parliament) who played an important role in communicating the state's official coronavirus policy to the public at the height of the pandemic. Because of this, this doctor has been targeted by critics who have claimed that her only interest was to gain fame through her activities. The doctor reposts her critics' messages in the group, and the group members support her with positive words and humour. One of the group members, for example, wrote to her: "I wanted to say a special thank you because you have been at the forefront of fighting this madness". The doctor responded: "And I thank all the fighters of light for standing behind me (and some of you also on the front line)". As Anni explained in the interview, others found their way to the group because their family members who were against vaccination went down the rabbit hole of conspiracy theories. Started as an online group, "Victory of Light!" also went offline with summer and winter meetings in the Estonian countryside with discussion sessions around topics like "Why is digital activism important? Small actions by citizens that lead to big changes in society."

5. Strategies to combat conspiracy theories

Our observations in the "Victory of Light!" group and the interview with Anni reveal several strategies that have helped the group survive as a community and in the conflict around conspiracy theories.

5.1. Identifying misinformation and reporting it

Members search for false information and conspiracy theories on Facebook or elsewhere on the web (e.g., Telegram groups) and post a reference to the corresponding content in the "Victory of the Light!" group. Instead of reposts, the rules of the group require its members to post

screenshots of the posts. This is because reposts may trigger the Facebook algorithm to consider "Victory of Light!" itself to be a disinformation group and close it, as has happened twice. Screenshots also reduce the possibility that by sharing a post directly, group members will increase the popularity of conspiracy posts, which then may reach more people (due to the algorithms' tendency to boost posts with more engagement). Any misunderstanding within the group should stay and be solved there—with the help of administrators if necessary—but most importantly, the members should not report any posts in the group to Facebook itself to avoid attracting scrutiny from the platform that could result in the group being shut down.

Over time, the group has also developed jargon, nicknames, or acronyms to refer to people spreading conspiracy theories or to misinformation without being noticed by the Facebook algorithms. For example, a person who believes or shares information that is contrary to common sense is called an *uhhuu* ("a cuckoo") or *lamemaalane* ("a flat-earther") rather than a conspiracy theorist. The term *toktor* (a misspelled "doctor") is used for people who give medical advice without having the relevant education themselves. Politicians from the conservative EKRE political party, which often spreads conspiratorial narratives, are called *kaabud* ("hats"), as they often wear black hats. An Estonian female entrepreneur selling therapeutic oils is called an *õlijumalanna* ("oil goddess"). Members of "Victory of Light!" borrow this strategy from the conspiracy theory groups themselves, which, for instance, use the word *õunamahl* ("apple juice" in Estonian) instead of "vaccine" to not attract the Facebook algorithms to themselves. At the same time, the references used in "Victory of Light!" are bitterly ironic and essentially negative, which would hardly help convince followers or entrepreneurs of conspiracy theories to consider the other position.

"Victory of Light!" has also encouraged its members to report misinformation to Facebook so that the Facebook algorithms may remove it or close groups and profiles spreading it. As Anni explained in the interview, members sometimes provoke users who spread misinformation by starting certain conversations in their groups to report them later. If successful in their endeavours, the members of "Victory of Light!" post in the group about this. This is how members have self-reportedly shut down several large Estonian-language Facebook groups spreading conspiracy theories and false information (Figure 7). Among these were the anti-vaccine group "Side-effects of medicines and vaccines" [*Ravimite ja vaktsiinide kõrvaltoimed*], with 40,000 members, and the pandemic deniers group called "Healthy Estonia, free of masks, QR codes, immune passports, and chips" [Maskide, QR koodide, immuunpasside ja kiipide vaba ning eluterve Eesti], with over 14,000 members.

Members of "Victory of Light!" report posts related to conspiracy theories and other misinformation not only to Facebook, but also to the police, child protection services, health boards, the press, or other organisations that can help in a specific situation. For example, a mother posted on a folk medicine Facebook group because she was seeking help to find suitable homeopathic treatments for her child who, as she wrote, had been lethargic for several days. "Victory of Light!" members reported the situation to the police, and the child was transported to the hospital at the last minute (Sepp, 2023).

It is common knowledge in conspiracy theory research that debunking misinformation is way harder than prebunking it (e.g. via education). Scholars have urged against engaging in online disputes, as arguing about every fact is more likely to provoke counterarguments. For instance, email or social media exchanges with conspiracy theorists have been shown to only result in them providing dozens of links and pages of "proof" from their side, which leads nowhere. Empirical studies have demonstrated that confronting the basic assumptions of followers of conspiracy theories with scientifically proven facts are hardly helpful, since this targets the essence of their knowledge and personalities (Knight, 2021). The members of the "Victory of Light!" group, however, claim the opposite: that they succeed in debunking conspiracy theories and change people's minds. In the interview, Anni said that former followers

of conspiracy theories had thanked her because the group helped them to understand that they had believed or spread lies. In this article, however, we unfortunately are not able to evaluate this argument and ask followers of conspiracy theories themselves if their minds were changed this way. Things are not that simple anyways, as we shall show in the group critique section.

5.2. Cooperation and hashtags

Among the participants of "Victory of Light!" are journalists from the state media channels who, Anni says, are allowed to "spy" [*luurata*] in the group so that she and other group members can "feed" [*ette sööta*] certain central topics for discussion to the public. Anni states that this strategy has worked very well because the press has written about topics discussed in the group several times; for instance, they have appeared in the "Fact Check" column of Delfi, one of the largest Estonian news portals. When trying to check this claim, we indeed found that posts in the group and articles on the portal about the same issue appeared on close dates, but we were not able to find a direct connection; i.e., journalists may have published them separately (without reading the group posts) when the topic was of high public interest.

To spread the word about misleading conspiracy theories, the group has also cooperated with other similar groups on Estonian Facebook, including UPS −Eesti Uhhuunduse peegeldus sotsiaalmeedias ("UPS −Estonian Cuckoos' reflection in social media", with 7100 followers) and *Uhhuude ja Külahullude Entsüklopeedia* ("Encyclopedia of Cuckoos and Village Madmen", with 7900 members), which both share its aim to raise awareness about misinformation. Cooperation with other debunking groups has also allowed "Victory of Light!" to survive. When the previous versions of the group were shut down because it was reported on (and Facebook algorithms considered it to be spreading misinformation), a reunion invitation was circulated via the other debunking groups asking members to join the new versions of "Victory of Light!".

"Victory of Light!" has also cooperated with the Facebook movement Kiluparv ("Flock of Sprats"), functioning primarily via the #kiluparv hashtag. The idea behind the creation of the movement is that by "flying in with a flock" (i.e., making a mass report), it is possible to eliminate more false information. Those noticing conspiracy theories and false information online are invited to add the hashtag *#kiluparv* to posts so that more people can make a report. Another important hashtag "Victory of Light!" has cooperated on is *#minasiin* ["I am here"], originally directed against cyberbullying, as well as misinformation about LGBTQ+ people, immigration, minorities, the war, etc. to counter posts related to these topics that mocked or criticised someone. Both hashtags do not seem to be very active right now, and the reason might be that they resulted in cyberbullying, which is what mass reports essentially are.

5.3. Humour and meme activism

Countering conspiracy theories, misinformation, stereotypes, and misconceptions with humour has been an intuitive strategy for a variety of actors long before the pandemic. Pilipets and Winter (2019) have, for example, described instances of so-called meme activism—memes targeting conservative stances on refugees and asylum-seekers as well as misinformation spread about them. Tom Mould has documented what he calls welfare counter-memes: visual humour created to critique pervasive stereotypes that scapegoat and stigmatise aid recipients and programmes in the USA (Mould, 2022). Activists targeting stereotypes with humour follow the path of those who create and spread these stereotypes and misinformation with memes, which is why what they create may be called counter-memes (or sometimes anti-legends) (Astapova, 2022). At the same time, aggressive mocking and bullying hardly encourage productive dialogue, just like calling names and using labels for followers of conspiracy theories does not (Knight, 2021).

While debunking humour can be humiliating and counterproductive, using it for prebunking, also called "a misinformation vaccine", is more promising, as it prevents the spread of conspiracy theories rather than dealing with their consequences (Knight, 2021). In an experiment conducted in the United Kingdom, scholars have found preliminary evidence that memes may—under certain circumstances—influence public intentions to vaccinate, although more research is needed (Geniole et al., 2022). In this case, humour can be helpful due to its capacity to make content more entertaining, engaging, and accessible in science communication (Yeo et al., 2021). A humorously framed message affects its audience emotionally and rationally and promotes certain values subtly and less intrusively (Fiadotava et al., 2023).

Humour is an essential part of "Victory of Light!", as its participants are highly aware. As the group's description says, people with a good sense of humour have waited to join the group and its activities. As Anni puts her vision of the role of humour in the interview, "no one likes to be laughed at for what they post, and if mocked for the contents of their posts, people would be unlikely to post such misinformation again." Yet she also emphasised that it is important to laugh not at individuals who spread misinformation but at the content of the conspiracy theory. The latter is an idea that "Victory of Light!" group members have been repeatedly reminded of—one should not "sink to the level of conspiracy theorists" and attack the interlocutors personally. "Sink to the level of" is still there in the statement, though.

A positive aim the humour of the group certainly serves is to promote group cohesion. Within the group, humour creates a sense of community among those who are in on the joke (Yeo et al., 2021, p. 553), Conversation with a "conspiracy theorist" can be exhausting, but a supportive group of like-minded people one can joke with is helpful. At the same time, the group's humour reinforces the exclusion of others (Fiadotava et al., 2023). As Anni said in her interview, being part of a group and laughing together about conspiracy theories helps people with a scientific worldview cope in today's crazy "uhhuu" world. According to Anni, humorous conversations have a therapeutic effect on those group members who are hated and personally attacked by "conspiracy theorists" (e.g., because of their profession, views, or activism). This demonstrates the ambiguity of the potential interpretation of humour by different audiences and its effectiveness, which again cautions about how differently humour may work if employed as an intentional tool for persuasive goals (Riesch, 2015, p. 773; Fiadotava et al., 2023).

The humorous posts can be roughly classified into (1) internet memes related to the spread of conspiracy theories and misinformation created or reposted in the "Victory of Light!" group (see examples in Figures 4-7); (2) screenshots from conspiracy theorists' accounts which prompt humorous and ironic discussions by members of "Victory of Light!"; and (3) conversations and memes that empower the group as a whole by contrasting its members with those whose actions they oppose.

The internet memes are mostly international and appear in the group as soon as they go viral elsewhere. They correspond to what Russell Frank (2011) calls newslore in that they are created as a reaction to everyday news and events (see Figures 4–7).

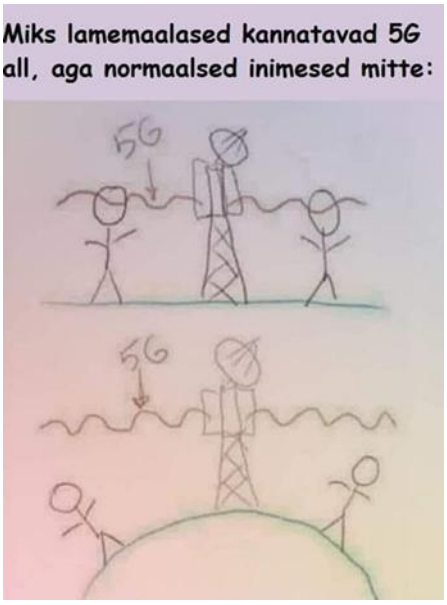

Figure 4. Why do flat-earthers suffer from 5G, while normal people don't?

Figure 5. Anti-vaxxer's Christmas present

Figure 6. The pandemic and the war in Ukraine expertise meme

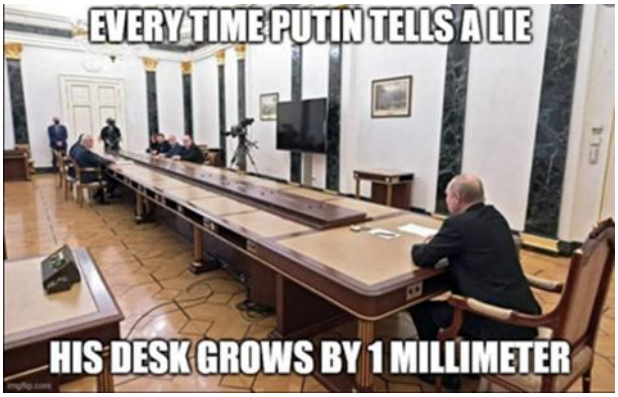

Figure 7. Putin's table meme (referencing the fact that for a while since the pandemic, Vladimir Putin has been sitting at the other side of an extremely long table away from his colleagues and guests, apparently due to fear of getting COVID)

While the group members claim they do not attack people personally but rather laugh at the essence of their beliefs, the screenshots prompting the members' humorous reactions in fact target individuals. Such screenshots usually contain information about an author of a conspiratorial post (see an example about the war in Ukraine, Figure 2). The marginalising effect of humour is also visible in posts with memes or textual jokes contrasting the group members with their opposing group, i.e., "conspiracy theorists". For example, they make fun of the conspiracy theorists' sources of information by joking "I heard it from a friend's friend", "think with your own head", etc. At the same time, these posts may sincerely encourage the group and emphasise its mission. For example, the screenshot below (Figure 8) illustrates supportive dialogue between Anni and one of the group members. Anni expresses her gratitude to the group by saying, "I don't need a medal because I have you!", and the group member reacts to it with the humorous internet meme titled "Go team sheep!" emphasising the atmosphere of mutual support and cohesion of the group.

Figure 8. A supportive humorous conversation between Anni and a group member

6. Group critique

The creators of the group as well as its members claim that they serve the highest aim of combatting misinformation in accordance with elevated moral and ethical standards, and that they succeed. As we have already shown throughout this article, however, this is not so simple. It all starts with the target of "Victory of Light!"—"conspiracy theorists" who are called other marginalising names as well. While some of these humorous nicknames (such as "cuckoo" or "toktor") may seem funny for the activists and certainly contribute to their common identity as being inherently different from generic crazy conspiracy theorists, they are hardly helpful for changing minds. In Ruch & Proyer (2008), the fear of being laughed at, *gelotophobia*, was introduced. They showed that gelotophobia varies among individuals, with different factors contributing to it, such as having been ridiculed by a father in childhood and many more yet to be discovered. We have not been able to find research relating high gelotophobia to a propensity to adopt conspiracy theories; however, intuitively, it seems that there may be a correlation. As conspiracy theorists with alternative views to those of the majority are often marginalised (Barkun, 2015), their sensitivity to aggression and further marginalisation by humour may be higher. On the other hand, conspiracy theorists defining themselves as truth defenders might be less prone to gelotophobia or being ridiculed by what they consider to be the compliant majority. In any case, the "Victory of Light!" group still tries to make use of the conspiracy theorists' potential gelotophobia, as everyone is potentially afraid of being laughed at, at least to some extent. Another important related idea that often goes hand in hand with research on gelotophobia is *katagelasticism*—the joy of laughing at others (Ruch & Proyer, 2009), which obviously unites the members of "Victory of Light!".

Other negative aspects of the group's activism were highlighted for us at an academic conference, "MEDICA XVI: KOOSOLEMINE [being together]" (Estonian Literary Museum, 14th December 2023), where we presented the paper "On grassroots social media activism in countering conspiracy theories and misinformation related to the COVID-19 pandemic." It turned out that one person from the audience had been temporarily banned from Facebook, and based on our presentation, she concluded that she might have been a victim of mass reporting. Like her, many other attendees reacted negatively to the fact that there are activists who use mass reporting. Some asserted that mass reporting is, in fact, cyberbullying. As some listeners suggested, in Estonia, reporting has additional negative connotations because of the historical parallels with the Soviet secret police (Estonia was under Soviet occupation from 1939 to 1991), who encouraged reporting and even blackmailed and tortured people to make them report on others (see, e.g., Mertelsmann & Rahi-Tamm, 2009). As such, calling for collaboration and reporting (e.g., via hashtags) might only increase confrontation instead of changing minds or combatting conspiracy theories, and even more so in post-Soviet societies. Thus, mutual reporting may create a cycle of conflict and bullying essentially initiated by the debunking activists. That reporting is inappropriate and an ineffective strategy is also shown by the fact that people or groups banned on Facebook for spreading conspiracy theories and misinformation come back after a while, often with much stronger arguments and opposition to those who reported them (e.g., QR code and immune passport deniers moved to the Telegram app after they were reported and continued to operate there). Some users—for example, the activists who are themselves trying to combat conspiracy theories—may fall innocent victims to reporting. The Facebook algorithms, as well as the changing policies of Meta, are highly imperfect; for instance, Facebook did not allow one of the authors of this essay to announce an academic conference on conspiracy theories, as its algorithm considered this announcement to actually spread conspiracy theories.

To be fair, at the time of writing, we noticed changes in the "Victory of Light!" group's practices. Reporting has become a minor strategy in the last year, and instead of this kind of

covert operation, more attention has been given to public discussions and raising awareness of conspiracy theories, especially in the context of the NGO "Vox Rationis" that grew out of the "Victory of Light!".

7. Conclusion

The Estonian Facebook debunking group "Victory of Light!" is a valuable resource for research as a popular archive of conspiracy theories that are currently spreading in society. In addition to the materials *per se*, it is also a storehouse of metainformation about the distribution channels and entrepreneurs of conspiracy theories. While there is no doubt about its archival value, many questions remain as to whether it succeeds in its aim to combat conspiracy theories, given that some of its strategies might work less well than others. Self-assessment within the group is extremely positive, as we learned from the interview, and, for example, from a TV show that featured Anni and other key members (ERR, 2024). However, some strategies, such as mass reporting, do not seem to be the most appropriate solution in the long term, as they deepen antagonism between those spreading conspiracies and those fighting against them. The use of humour might sometimes be counterproductive, as laughing at people (especially those fearful of ridicule, i.e., those experiencing gelotophobia) and their ideas hardly facilitates dialogue. What the group in general and humour in particular certainly do though is support the cohesion of like-minded people.

The case of the group raises questions about strategies other than the well-documented strategies of prebunking and debunking, which the group mostly does. It is worth considering a third, potentially more effective approach that might be termed "interbunking"—a dialogic process that engages conspiracy theory sympathisers in a more nuanced way. Rather than merely countering claims or preventing belief formation, interbunking would involve creating a conversational space where scepticism is acknowledged, and critical engagement is encouraged without direct confrontation. Humour, in such interactions, could function not as a tool of ridicule but as a subtle form of comic complicity that lowers defensive barriers and invites hesitant individuals to reconsider their views without feeling personally attacked. Although the group's tone often leaned toward exclusionary humour, future grassroots debunking efforts might benefit from exploring interbunking as a strategy that fosters dialogue rather than deepening divides. Interbunking humour can help guide a dialogue and perhaps even partially avoid echo chambers.

The ethnographic knowledge drawn from such activist groups and those on the receiving end of their activity highlights what is essential for various stakeholders. The users' vernacular knowledge of and experience in using social media algorithms (both to avoid them and to try to make them work) is valuable for owners and developers of social media platforms. Ultimately, it might be helpful to better identify and limit the spread of false information and conspiracies. As archives of conspiracy theories, such groups also simplify research for those working on misinformation, as everything is already catalogued for them. In a similar vein, they are useful for educators, e.g., at schools, to help them be aware of the latest conspiracy theories and ways to debunk them in the classroom. Finally, such activist groups, as well as those on their receiving end, may help humour scholars learn much about the negative and positive aspects of prebunking and debunking humour for both jokers and their targets.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Estonian Research Council grant PSG729 "COVID-19 Conspiracy Theories: Contents, Channels, and Target Groups" and by Horizon Europe project "DELIAH: Democratic Literacy and Humour."

References

Astapova, A. (2022). Vaccine hesitancy counter memes. *Journal of American Folklore, 135*(538), 466-470. https://doi.org/10.5406/15351882.135.538.04.

Astapova, A. (2023). Conspiratorial thinking among Russian speakers in Estonia: From COVID-19 to the war in Ukraine. *Journal of American Folklore, 136*(542), 361-385. https://doi.org/10.5406/15351882.136.542.01.

Barkun, M. (2003). *A culture of conspiracy: Apocalyptic visions in contemporary America.* University of California Press.

Barkun, M. (2015). Conspiracy theories as stigmatised knowledge. *Diogenes*, *62*(3-4), 114-120. https://doi.org/10.1177/0392192116669288.

Bavel, J. J.V., Baicker, K., Boggio, P. S., Capraro, V., Cichocka, A., Cikara, M., Crockett, M. J. et al. (2020). Using social and behavioural science to support COVID-19 pandemic response. *Nature Human Behaviour*, *4*(5), 460-471. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0884-z.

Belova-Dalton, O. (2021). Spread of fake news and conspiracy theories leading to potential radicalisation during COVID-19 pandemic: The case of Telegram. *Proceedings XX security challenges during COVID-19*, 175-214. Retrieved June 25, 2024, from https://media.voog.com/0000/0051/2796/files/Proceedings20_2021.pdf.

Belova-Dalton, O. (2022). *COVID-19 ajal levitatavad vandenõuteooriad ning nende roll inimeste võimalikus radikaliseerumises Eestis ja mujal maailmas*. [Conspiracy theories spread during COVID-19 and their role in the possible radicalisation of people in Estonia and other parts of the world.] Sisekaitse akadeemia Sisejulgeoleku instituut [The Internal Security Institute of The Estonian Academy of Security Studies]. Retrieved June 25, 2024, from http://www.digar.ee/id/nlib-digar:766263.

Bertin, P., Nera, K., Delouvée, S. (2020). Conspiracy beliefs, rejection of vaccination, and support for hydroxychloroquine: A conceptual replication-extension in the COVID-19 pandemic context. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*. Retrieved June 25, 2024, from https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.565128.

Biddlestone, M., Green, R., Douglas, K. M. (2020). Cultural orientation, power, belief in conspiracy theories, and intentions to reduce the spread of COVID-19. *The British Journal of Social Psychology, 59*(3), 663-673. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12397.

Bierwiaczonek, K., Kunst J. R., Pich, O. (2020). Belief in COVID-19 conspiracy theories reduces social distancing over time. *Applied Psychology, Health and Well-Being, 12*(4), 1270-1285. https://doi.org/10.1111/aphw.12223.

Butter, M. (2020). *The nature of conspiracy theories*. Polity.

Drążkiewicz, E. (2022). Study conspiracy theories with compassion. *Nature, 603*(7903), 765. https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-022-00879-w.

Durand, J-Y., Cunha, M. I. (2020). 'To all the anti-vaxxers out there…': Ethnography of the public controversy about vaccination in the time of COVID-19. *Social Anthropology: The Journal of the European Association of Social Anthropologists = Anthropologie Sociale, 28*(2), 259-260. https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12805.

Earnshaw, V. A., Eaton, L. A., Kalichman, S. C., Brousseau, N. M., Hill, E. C., Fox, A. B. (2020). COVID-19 conspiracy beliefs, health behaviors, and policy support. *Translational Behavioral Medicine, 10*(4), 850-856. https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibaa090.

Eestinen (n.d.). https://eestinen.fi/.

ERR (2024, April 15). Inimesed. Ave Eesmaa: valeinfo levitajad saavad juba otsustavatele positsioonidele. [People. Ave Eesmaa: spreaders of false information get the decisive positions.] *Eesti Rahvusringhääling* [Estonian National Broadcasting]. Retrieved June 25, 2024, from https://menu.err.ee/1609313472/ave-eesmaa-valeinfo-levitajad-saavad-juba-otsustavatele-positsioonidele.

Fiadotava A., Astapova A., Hendershott, R., McKinnon, M., Jürgens AS (2023). Injecting fun? Humour, conspiracy theory and (anti)vaccination discourse in popular media. *Public Understanding of Science, 32*(5), 622-640. https://doi.org/10.1177/09636625221147019.

Fleming, M., & Heimans, J. (2021, December 3). On countering vaccine falsehoods. *The Economist*. Retrieved August 2, 2024, from https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2021/12/03/melissa-fleming-and-jeremy-heimans-on-countering-vaccine-falsehoods.

Frank, R. (2011). *Newslore: Contemporary folklore on the internet.* University Press of Mississippi.

Franzke, A. S., Bechmann, A., Zimmer, M., Ess, C., the Association of Internet Researchers (2020). *Internet research: Ethical* guidelines 3.0. Retrieved June 25, 2024, from https://aoir.org/reports/ethics3.pdf.

Geniole, S. N., Bird, B. M., Witzel, A., McEvoy, J. T., Proietti, V. (2022). Preliminary evidence that brief exposure to vaccination-related internet memes may influence intentions to vaccinate against COVID-19. *Computers in Human Behavior, 131*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2022.107218.

Giusta, M. D., Jaworska S., Greetham, D. V. (2021, January). Expert communication on Twitter: Comparing economists' and scientists' social networks, topics and communicative styles. *Public Understanding of Science, 30*(1), 75-90. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662520957252.

Hafstein, V. T., (2012). Cultural heritage. In R. F. Bendix & G. Hasan-Rokem (Eds.), *A companion to folklo*re (pp. 500-516). Blackwell.

Hart, T. (2017). Online ethnography. In J. Matthes (Ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods* (pp. 1-8). John Wiley & Sons. doi:10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0172.

Hänninen, K., & Heimo, A. (2019). Constructing our heritage: Participatory, community and spontaneous archives and digitally born heritage. In P. Hakamies & A. Heimo (Eds.), *Folkloristics in the digital age*. *Folklore Fellows' Communications*, *316* (pp. 110-131). Suomalainen Tiedeakademia.

Hiiemäe, R., & Utriainen, T. (2021). From "unbelievable stupidity" to "secret clues for staying healthy": CAM landscape and boundary-work in Estonian and Finnish mainstream media in April 2020. *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore, 82*, 183-214. https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2021.82.hiiemae_utriainen.

Ilieva, A. (2021). The General, his fandom, and a participatory pandemic. *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore, 82*, 53-78. https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2021.82.ilieva.

Kallas, K. (2021, August) Koroonaviirus: Iisraeli teadlased: tõhus Covid-19 ravi kestab kolm päeva ja maksab alla kolme euro. [Coronavirus: researchers of Israel–effective treatment for Covid-19 lasts three days and costs less than three euros.] *Objektiiv.* Retrieved August 5, 2021, from https://objektiiv.ee/iisraeli-teadlased-tohus-covid-19-ravi-kestab-kolm-paeva-ja-maksab-alla-kolme-euro/?fbclid=IwAR32JSMKMQVKe_8-7n0DazENXWWdteYt7Gv_x5IXp0JumPKSgOjmB.

Knight, P. (2021). Talking about COVID Conspiracy. Sense about science and the 'infodemic: combatting Covid-19 conspiracy theories' project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Retrieved February 19, 2022, from https://senseaboutscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Talking-about-Covid-Conspiracy.pdf.

Laine, M. (2020, May 21). Valeinfo: paljastatud. Ähvardused ja valed uues Facebooki grupis: miks inimesed 5G mastide kohta massiliselt luiskavad? [Misinformation: Disclosed. Threats and lies in new Facebook group: Why are people lying en masse about 5G masts?] *Eesti Päevaleht*. Retrieved June 25, 2024, from https://epl.delfi.ee/artikkel/89932391/ahvardused-ja-valed-uues-facebooki-grupis-miks-inimesed-5g-mastide-kohta-massiliselt-luiskavad.

Leskin, P. (2020, March 31). One of the internet's oldest fact-checking organisations is overwhelmed by coronavirus misinformation - and it could have deadly consequences. *Business Insider*. Retrieved June 25, 2024, from https://www.businessinsider.com/coronavirus-snopes-misinformation-fact-checking-overwhelmed-deadly-consequences-2020-3.

Madisson, M-L., & Ventsel, A. (2023). COVID-19-related conspiracy theories in the Baltic States. In P. Knight & M. Butter (Eds.), *Covid conspiracy theories in global perspective* (pp. 185-199). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003330769-19.

Minuaeg (n.d.). www.minuaeg.ee.

Mould, T. (2022). Counter memes and anti-legends in online welfare discourse. *Journal of American Folklore*, *135*(538), 441-465. https://doi.org/10.5406/15351882.135.538.03.

National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (2021). When a social media troll tells you to "do your research" on vaccines. *Infectious disease memes.* Retrieved February 19, 2022, from https://www.nfid.org/resource/infectious-disease-memes/.

Objektiiv (n.d.). https://objektiiv.ee/.

Osula, P. (2020, April 22). "Pealtnägija": vandenõuteooriad ohustavad nii neisse uskujaid kui ülejäänud ühiskonda ["Eyewitness": Conspiracy theories threaten both those who believe in them and the rest of society]. *Eesti Rahvusringhääling* [*Estonian National Broadcasting*]. Retrieved June 21, 2021, from https://www.err.ee/1080907/pealtnagija-vandenouteooriad-ohustavad-nii-neisse-uskujaid-kui-ulejaanud-uhiskonda.

Palmipuu, Triin (2021, October 24). Meeleavaldusest alguse saanud heategevusaktsioon: plaan on meeles pidada kõikide Eesti haiglate töötajaid [A charity campaign that started from a demonstration: the plan is to assist the employees of all Estonian hospitals]. *Postimees.* Retrieved September 9, 2022, from https://naine.postimees.ee/7369156/meeleavaldusest-alguse-saanud-heategevusaktsioon.

Pilipets E., & Winter R. (2019). Repeat, remediate, resist? Digital meme activism in the context of the refugee crisis. In J. Wimmer, C. Wallner, R. Winter, K. Oelsnerbook (Eds.), *(Mis)understanding political participation: Digital practices, new forms of participation and the renewal of democracy* (pp.158-177). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315620596-10.

Rangiwai, B. (2021). "Wake up, Sheeple!": Conspiracy theories and Māori during COVID-19. *MAI Journal: a New Zealand journal of indigenous scholarship, 10*(1), 46-49. https://doi.org/10.20507/MAIJournal.2021.10.1.6.

Raudsik, H. (2021a, December 31). Faktikontroll. C-vitamiin, tsink ja männiokkatee ei aita koroonavaktsiini kehast välja uhtuda. [Fact check. Vitamin C, zinc, and pine needle tea do not help to wash the coronavirus vaccine out of the body.] *Eesti Päevaleht.* Retrieved June 21, 2022, from https://epl.delfi.ee/artikkel/95537567/faktikontroll-c-vitamiin-tsink-ja-manniokkatee-ei-aita-koroonavaktsiini-kehast-valja-uhtuda.

Raudsik, H. (2021b, May 11). Valeinfo: paljastatud. Vaktsineeritud inimesi siin me ei oota! "Vaktsiinikiirgus" on uus jabur vaktsiinivale, mis Eestis uskujaid leiab. [Misinformation: Exposed. We don't expect vaccinated people here! "Vaccine radiation" is a new ridiculous vaccine lie that finds believers in Estonia.] *Eesti Päevaleht.* Retrieved June 21, 2021, from https://epl.delfi.ee/artikkel/93388965/vaktsineeritud-inimesi-siin-me-ei-oota-vaktsiinikiirgus-on-uus-jabur-vaktsiinivale-mis-eestis-uskujaid-leiab.

Rääk, K. O. (2021, October 21). Ivermektiin on liiga odav ja tõhus, et lubatud olla. [Ivermectin is too cheap and effective to be allowed.] *Uued Uudised.* Retrieved June 22, 2022, from https://uueduudised.ee/arvamus/ivermektiin-on-liiga-odav-ja-tohus-et-lubatud-olla/.

Riesch, H. (2015). Why did the proton cross the road? Humour and science communication. *Public Understanding of Science*, *24*(7), 768-775. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662514546299.

Ruch, W. & Proyer, R. T. (2008). The fear of being laughed at: Individual and group differences in Gelotophobia. *HUMOUR 21*(1), 47-67. https://doi.org/10.1515/HUMOR.2008.002.

Ruch, W. & Proyer, R. (2009). Extending the study of gelotophobia: On gelotophiles and katagelasticists. *HUMOR*, *22*(1-2), 183-212. https://doi.org/10.1515/HUMR.2009.009.

Sepp, A. (2023, August 4). Kaine mõistus võitis: 3-aastane valeravitud laps paraneb haiglas. [Common sense won: a 3-year-old child who was treated incorrectly recovers in the hospital.] *Saarte Hääl*. Retrieved June 22, 2024, from https://saartehaal.postimees.ee/7827984/kaine-moistus-voitis-3-aastane-valeravitud-laps-paraneb-haiglas.

Shahsavari, S., Holur, P., Wang, T., Tangherlini, T., Roychowdhury, V. (2020). Conspiracy in the time of corona: automatic detection of emerging COVID-19 conspiracy theories in social media and the news. *Journal of Computational Social Science*, *3*(2), 279-317. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42001-020-00086-5.

Smith, L. (2006). *The uses of heritage.* Routledge.

Telegram (n.d.). https://www.telegram.ee/.

Uibu, M. (2020). The emergence of new medical pluralism: The case study of Estonian medical doctor and spiritual teacher Luule Viilma. *Anthropology and Medicine, 28*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/13648470.2020.1785843.

Uustalu, A. (2020, May 16). Eesti Uudised. MMSi pooldaja hirmutas vaktsineerima minevat pereema. [An MMS supporter scared a mother who was going to get vaccinated.] *Õhtuleht.* Retrieved June 22, 2022, from https://www.ohtuleht.ee/1034133/mmsi-pooldaja-hirmutas-vaktsineerima-minevat-pereema).

Yeo S. K., Cacciatore, M.A., Su, L.Y-F., McKasy, M, O'Neill L. (2021). Following science on social media: The effects of humour and source likability. *Public Understanding of Science, 30*(5), 552-569. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662520986942.

VanglaPlaneet (n.d.). https://vanglaplaneet.ee/.

Vox Rationis (n.d.). https://voxrationis.ee/pohikiri/.