

ECREA post-conference

Digital media and information disorders: Theorizing and investigating influence operations, impact and contextual factors

Time: Monday October 24th, 2022 at 10-17

Venue: Ada building – room 333, IT-City Katrinebjerg

During the pandemic we have experienced a hitherto unprecedented international focus on digital information disorders such as misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories both in policies and scientific contributions across research fields. With among others Lazarsfeld and Merton's (1948) work on propaganda, communication studies have a strong tradition in theorizing and methodologically operationalizing empirical studies on how mediated propaganda affects user behavior and attitudes with central notions such as influentials and opinion leaders. The notion of 'limited effect' has sparked a renewed heated debate on whether this transfers into weak/no effect or under what limited contextual conditions new forms of digital propaganda might actually have quite powerful effects. Digital media affects the distinction between mediated and unmediated life and collapses them into an 'onlife' that provides new theoretical and empirical contexts for effect and influence studies. Recent studies on digital social media influence have pointed to contextual (e.g. platform) factors to be central for the operationalization of communication-style influence (Malhotra & Galletta, 2003; Gruzd & Wellmann, 2014; Goggin & Petakovic, 2014) measured on different levels such as network visibility, in and outgroup social cues, rhetorical and emotional persuasion, and inauthentic behavior such as strategic communication overload, flagging and boosting from e.g. bots, sock puppets, junk news and click farms (Bastos & Mercea, 2019; Howard, 2020). This post-conference invites scholars from around the world and different disciplines to bring forward research focusing on theories and/or empirical studies on digital information disorders e.g., its complex conceptual and contested nature, its contextual factors and associated influence operations, effects and impacts and potential prevention strategies such as digital literacy, fact checking operations and other counter propaganda strategies. We welcome contributions from a variety of topics such as Covid-19, Russian-Ukrainian war, climate change, anti vaxxer social movements etc. The post-conference will furthermore focus on nations and regions as contextual factors.

Open call for abstracts: We invite abstracts of max 500 words together with a short author bio of max 100 words. Max capacity: 35 participants. Deadline for abstracts is May 15, 2022. Notification of acceptance: June 1, 2022. Please send your abstract and bio to: datalab@au.dk

Organizer: DATALAB - Center for digital social research, Aarhus University

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