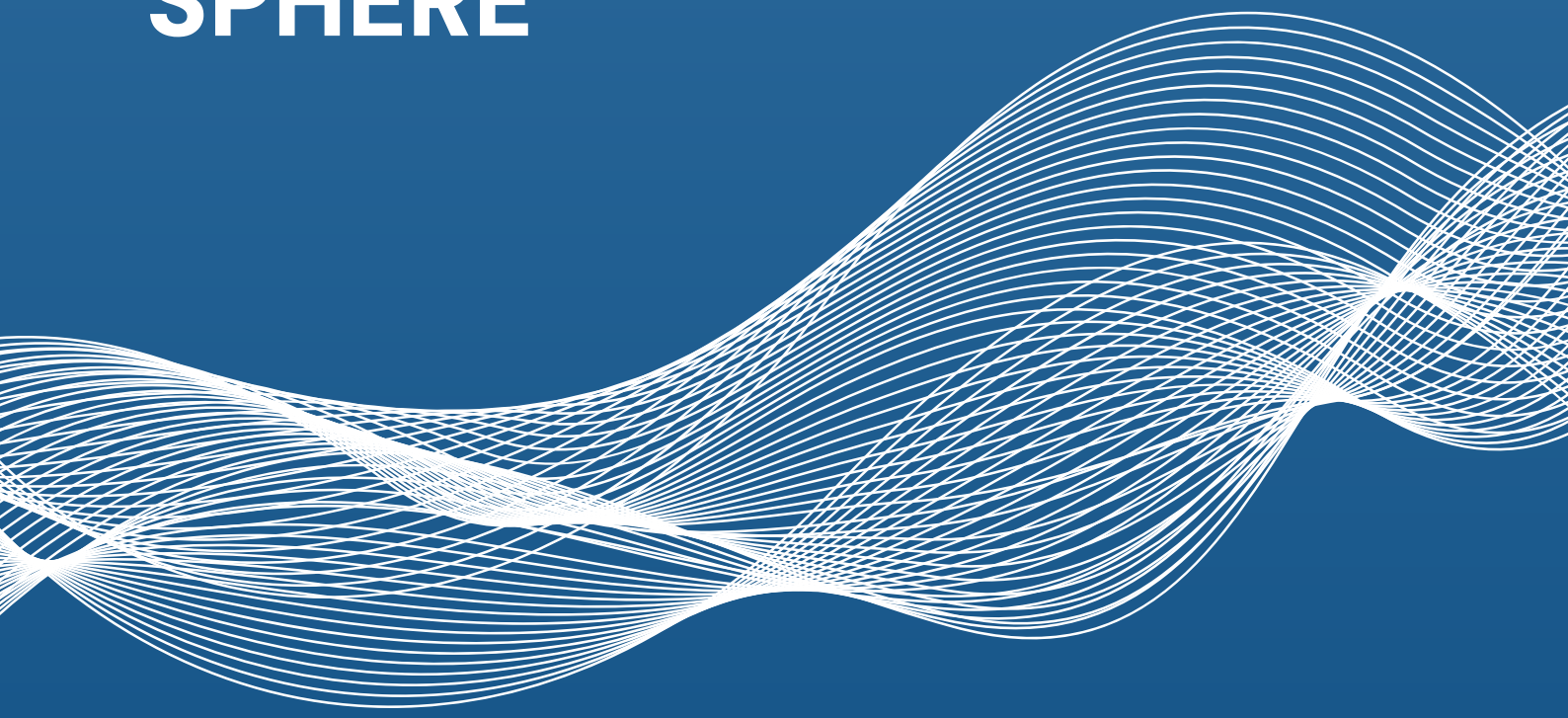
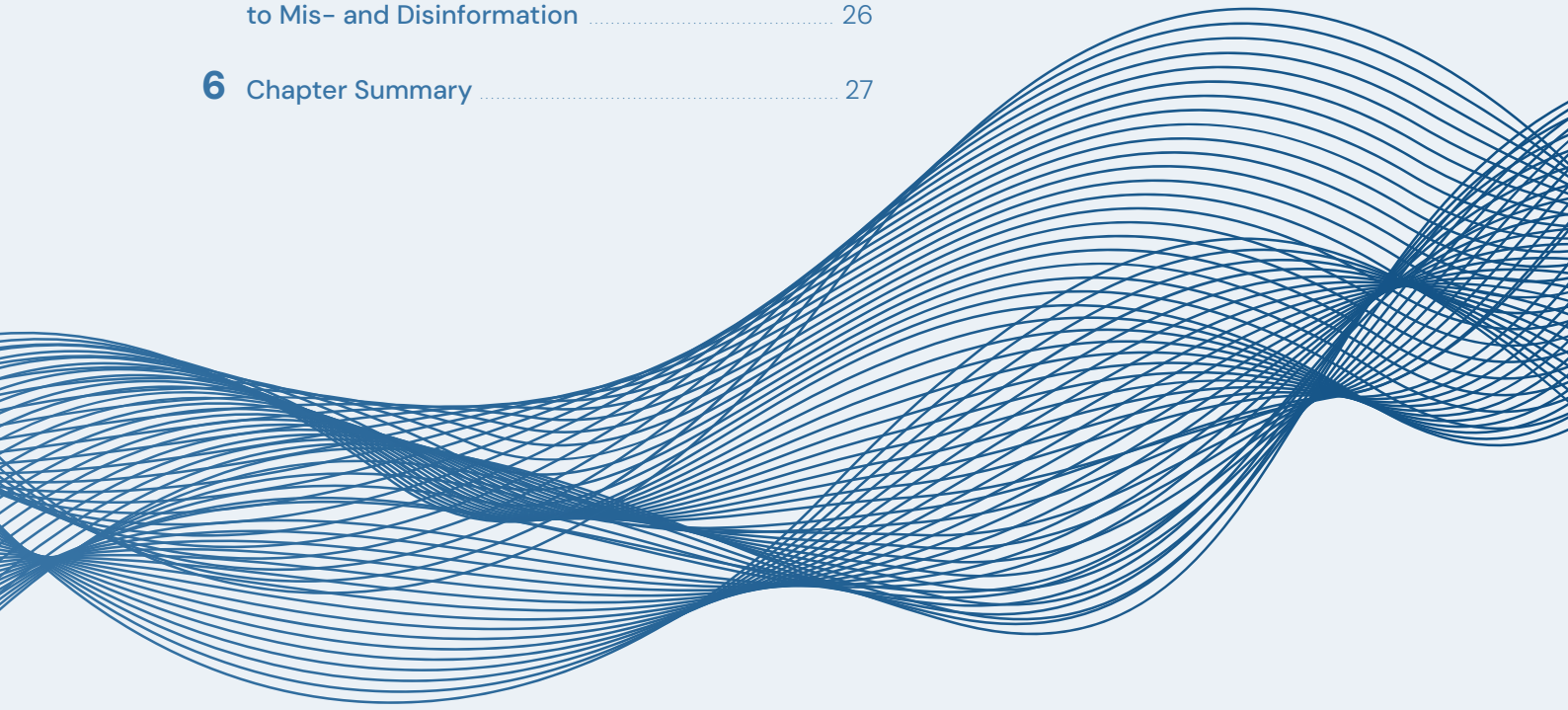
OBSERVATORY ON INFORMATION AND DEMOCRACY

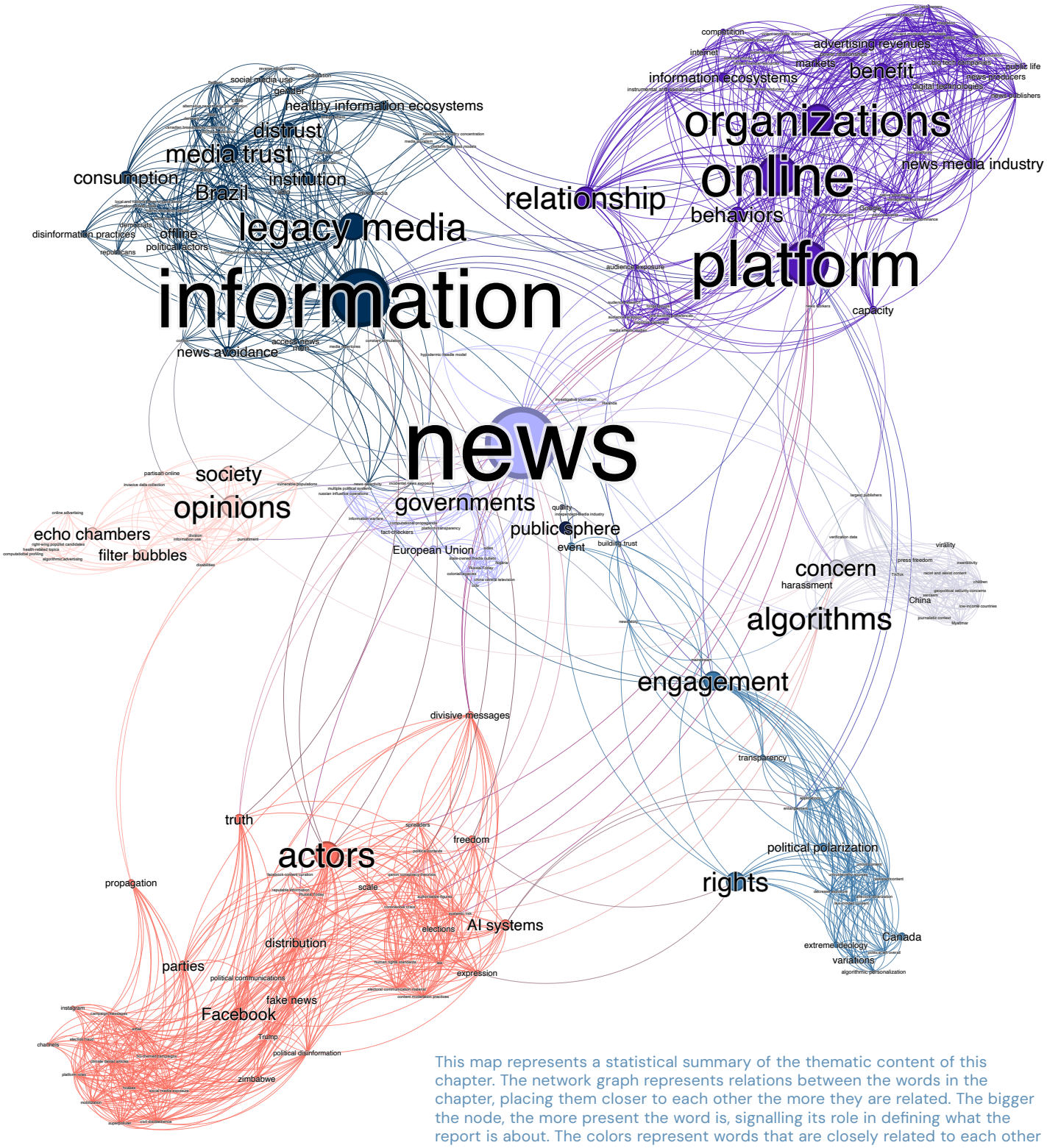
NEWS MEDIA, INFORMATION INTEGRITY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE



An initiative by: FORUM ON INFORMATION AND DEMOCRACY



How to cite this document: Mansell, R., Durach, F., Kettemann, M., Lenoir, T., Procter, R., Tripathi, G., and Tucker, E. (2025) 'Chapter 2: News Media, Information Integrity and the Public Sphere' in Information Ecosystems and Troubled Democracy: A Global Synthesis of the State of Knowledge on New Media, AI and Data Governance. International Observatory on Information and Democracy. Paris.



This map represents a statistical summary of the thematic content of this chapter. The network graph represents relations between the words in the chapter, placing them closer to each other the more they are related. The bigger the node, the more present the word is, signalling its role in defining what the report is about. The colors represent words that are closely related to each other and can be interpreted as a topic.

The map is generated by the OID on the basis of the chapter's text using GarganText – developed by the CNRS Institute of Complex Systems. Starting from a co-occurrence matrix generated from chapter's text, GarganText forms a network where words are connected if they are likely to occur together. Clustering is conducted based on the Louvain community detection method, and the visualization is generated using the Force Atlas 2 algorithm.

Link to the interactive map here

This chapter examines what research tells us about the multiple causes and consequences of changes in legacy and online news media, and what can be done to promote information integrity and a democratic public sphere.[1] The chapter begins with a brief discussion of what is included as legacy and online news media.

The research synthesis focuses on:

- **What are the market structures in the news media industry and the power relations between news media organizations and digital platforms?** The discussion highlights research on the platformization of news, the dependence of news media on platforms and declining advertising revenues, and efforts to monetize news content that create incentives for the production and circulation of mis- and disinformation.
- **What is the relationship between news media, a healthy public sphere and democracy?** This briefly discusses how the normative expectations for the news media are conceptualized, interpreted and practiced in different parts of the world, emphasizing the need to take account of the Eurocentricity of much research in this area.
- **Who engages with news, and what factors account for whether people trust the news and how they perceive the trustworthiness of news media organizations?** This addresses changes in journalism standards and practices, what is known about the way audiences engage with news, their various uses of news and their reasons for avoiding news, their resilience to mis- and disinformation, and evidence on the way actors seek to weaponize information. Evidence on whether engagement with the viral circulation of mis- and disinformation should be treated as a principal cause of polarization of public opinion is also examined.
- **What strategies are available to the journalism profession to work towards building trust in the news media?** Research on measures to increase audience engagement with trustworthy news is briefly discussed.

The chapter provides an insight into a wide range of research traditions, looking at both the effects of news media engagement on people's attitudes and behaviors and the broader complex factors that influence how diverse information ecosystems are experienced.

Further discussion of the news media, politics and trust theme is found in Chapter 3 which examines how the news media industry is engaging with AI systems as part of this chapter's focus on AI systems, information ecosystems and democracy. The governance of legacy and online news media is examined in Chapters 6 and 7, and the role of non-mainstream news media in information ecosystems is examined in Chapter 8.

[1] For background reading, see Benequista et *al.* (2019); Couldry & Curran (2003); Curran & Hesmondhalgh (2019); Curran & Park (1999); Mano & milton (2021); Wasserman (2018). See Appendix: Methodology for details of literature review process.

1 Introduction

This chapter starts with definitions. It is difficult to draw neat boundaries around what 'news' is and who can claim to be a 'news producer'. Our concern here is primarily with news media organizations, although we also discuss the activities of individuals who produce mis- and disinformation and who are not affiliated with recognized news organizations.

Legacy news media – television, radio and offline newspapers – and online news media coexist today, and the many participants in the news media industry share norms such as the protection of sources and the goal of objectivity or impartiality. Digital journalism has come to refer to the 'practices of newsgathering, reporting, textual production and ancillary communication that reflect, respond to, and shape the social, cultural and economic logics of the constantly changing digital media environment'.[2] News organizations may be commercial businesses relying on advertising revenues, state-owned, public service media (PSM), or collectively owned.

Legacy and online news media share characteristics including recording information with digital technologies; news formats that are intended to engage audiences with content; the production of content that can be accessed at any point in time or location; and an environment in which PSM and collectively owned smaller organizations struggle for prominence on digital platforms. Interaction between news organizations and those who engage with news content shapes news media agendas, although not with identical powers of decision-making. This relationship influences the perceived legitimacy of news media content, and whether news outlets are perceived as trustworthy. This in turn depends on 'affordances' – that is, the instrumental and social features that result from users' interactions with technology,[3] and the governance arrangements that are applied differently to legacy and newer news producers.[4]

Some news media are designated as alternative media. This form of media goes by numerous labels: 'radical', 'citizens' media', 'advocacy journalism', 'participatory', 'independent', 'activist' and 'grassroots autonomous media'. These organizations differ substantially in how they position themselves in relation to mainstream news and in their political orientations.[5] Alternative media are sometimes defined as 'a range of media forms and practices, from radical critical media to independent media, and from grassroots autonomous media to community, citizen and participatory media'.[6] Some position themselves as 'counter-hegemonic', emphasizing non-commercial amateur production and limited financial resources, while others focus on the use of technology for emancipatory purposes.[7]

This is the context in which much research focuses on whether the news media are trustworthy and whether news media audiences trust the content they encounter. 'Trust' is not always defined or operationalized in the same way, but it is generally associated with an:

> Individual's willingness to be vulnerable to media tbjects, based on the expectation that they will perform a) satisfactorily for the individual and/or b) according to the dominant norms and values in society (i.e., democratic media functions).[8]

[2] Burgess & Hurcombe (2019, p. 360). The European Union's Media Freedom Act of 2024 defines a 'media service' as one where the principal purpose is 'providing programmes or press publications to the general public, by any means, in order to inform, entertain or educate, under the editorial responsibility of a media service provider' (EC, 2024b, Article 2(1)). It is unclear whether this excludes individual journalists, bloggers, non-profit news website and other organizations. The Council of Europe and other human rights organizations employ a broader definition. Equally hard to define is what privileges and protections the news media should enjoy despite being protected by international law, as changing technologies mean that claims to these privileges are disrupted, and it is difficult to hold a broadly defined 'news industry' to traditional normative professional standards; see Seipp *et al.* (2023a); Tambini (2021).

[3] For definitions of 'affordance' as used in the research literature, see Evans *et al.* (2017); Hopkins (2020); Ronzhyn *et al.* (2023); Neubaum & Weeks (2023), supported in part by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the German State of North Rhine-Westphalia and by Stiftung Mercator.

[4] EC: Directorate-General for Communications Networks *et al.* (2022); see also Mazzoli (2020), supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), UK.

[5] Cushion (2021), supported by Ofcom, the UK communications regulator.

[6] Jeppesen (2016, p. 54).

[7] Harlow (2017).

[8] Fawzi *et al.* (2021, p. 156); see also Strömbäck *et al.* (2020), funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond for the Advancement of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Sweden.

Some research on news media and trust focuses on individuals' trust. Other traditions focus on relationships between actors, recognizing that 'trusting is not a matter of blind deference, but of placing – or refusing – trust with good judgement … [and] we need social and political institutions that allow us to judge where to place our trust'.[9] When the news media are seen by publics as being untrustworthy, this contributes to the undermining of democracy.

The history of asymmetric global and regional news media markets and news flows between the Global North and Global Majority World or 'non-aligned' countries was studied long before the internet and debates about mis- and disinformation. The term 'propaganda' was used in analyses of the hegemony of news organizations mainly in the Global North.[10] Digital platforms and the platformization of news media are now seen as weakening news media organizations and contributing to declining trust in information ecosystems around the world, with accompanying threats to democracy, as violent and toxic discourses are amplified online.[11] Combined with news organizations that in many countries are heavily dependent on advertising revenues and face declining revenue due to competition from the digital platforms in the ad tech market, the news industry is in crisis in many parts of the world.[12]

In addition, for journalists and news media organizations in the Global Majority World (and especially lower-income countries), a digital connectivity gap influences whether journalists and their audiences are able to benefit from online journalism practices, and high-choice news media environments are not available everywhere. Access to online news can be limited by weak or absent internet availability and affordability, the high cost of digital services and poor access to journalism training. Local reporting norms vary by country, and journalists' safety is often at risk.[13] Various practices limit or discourage online access to certain kinds of information, for example 'zero-rating' data-pricing policies of network operators and the use of algorithmic personalization tools that lock people into 'walled garden' environments, where it is more costly for them to access diverse sources of news that are not part of the package permitted by their online data service contracts.[14] These conditions influence what information people are exposed to online.

The next section examines research on the structure of the news media industry and the power relationships between news media organizations and the big tech companies' digital platforms.

2 News Media and Structural Power

The structure of the news media industry influences how news in different locations around the world is organized. Market structures of the privately owned news industry involve power relationships that create different economic and political incentives for the production and circulation of news content. These influence whether news content producers and news content are trusted, and they are visible in ownership conditions, the extent to which news organizations are politically independent, and in the relationships between digital platform companies that increasingly host news content. Research on news media trust often focuses on whether media power and influence are concentrated in ways that limit the diversity and plurality of news media content. The structure of the privately owned news media market impacts on the viability of PSM, which

[9] O'Neill (2002, p. 7); see also Blöbaum (2016); Frislich & Humprecht (2021).

[10] The non-aligned movement is a group of 120 mostly low- and middle-income countries active from the 1950s that elected not to align themselves with or against any major power bloc and that remains active; see Mansell & Nordenstreng (2006); Vincent & Nordenstreng (2015).

[11] Benkler (2020); Lasswell (1971); Rantanen (2024); Thussu (2022).

[12] Recuero (2024), supported in part by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq, Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico), Brazil.

[13] Conroy-Krutz & Koné (2022), independent pan-African research network, supported by National Endowment for Democracy (NED), an NGO, US; see also Chiumbu & Munoriyarwa (2023). Fixed broadband networks are relatively rare in many countries in the Global Majority World, where people tend to rely on the mobile internet for access to online news.

[14] Palmer & Toff (2022), supported in part by Google UK as part of the Digital News Initiative; see also Aharoni *et al.* (2021). Service contract fees can inhibit citizens' willingness to consume news from a broad range of sources (zero-rating and network neutrality issues are discussed in Section 4.1, Chapter 6).

also experience the platformization of their news content with impacts that vary with their funding arrangements.

Studies on structural power in the news media industry are typically conducted at country level, although differences are also examined between types of news producers that operate sub-nationally.[15] Research in the political economy tradition focuses on how media power is exercised within the news media industry and the way news media create 'the terrain for other actors to contest power'.[16] Thus:

> Concentrated media power … is antidemocratic both because it hands definitional, analytical, and interpretive power to unelected organizations and because it undermines the ability of citizens to acquire and exchange the information and ideas necessary to make informed decisions about public life. It is also dangerous, because it distorts the logic of the media industries themselves, transforming them from vehicles of symbolic interaction to increasingly significant engines of capital accumulation.[17]

Research on news media in the political economy tradition focuses on asymmetries of power between those producing and/or circulating news content and individuals or groups. Structural asymmetries are assumed to be present because of the power of dominant news media producers – and big tech companies – to control how audiences are exposed to news, that is, how corporate priorities for profit from advertising and the monetization of data generated by the audience's online interactions support the deployment of algorithm-driven news personalization systems.[18]

The dominance of big tech companies creates pressures on the news industry to change its operations and organizational frameworks: 'the rise of digital technologies, in a neoliberal, political, and economic climate, has facilitated the "platformization" of infrastructures and the "infrastructuralization" of platforms' (i.e., the ubiquity of digital platforms in people's lives).[19] In this context, digital platforms are akin to publishers, and even editors, as news production relies on the algorithms, advertising markets, data and content moderation standards of the platforms, although they resist being designated in this way.[20] 'Captured' by the digital platform companies, some news outlets become dependent on financial arrangements, while platform owners argue that they financial arrangements the news organizations through their public relations campaigns and informal relationships.[21] There are signs that some of the big tech owners of platforms are becoming less interested in hosting online news as they turn to new sources of revenue growth from the integration of AI tools into their systems. This is likely to create additional problems for news publishers as they try to build interest in their own online sites and attract readers using subscription packages and limited advertising revenue.

Mis- or disinformation is driven by platform company profit motives and exploitation of the affordances of platforms by professional persuaders.[22] The actors engaged in producing and circulating this information take advantage of the algorithm-driven ad tech market that engages in 'digital deceit' to amplify content.[23] This generates significant revenue for the platforms, for advertisers willing to have their content appear alongside this content, and for individual influencers (e.g., celebrities and creators of fake accounts and information).

[15] For a special issue on how platform power is theorized, see Nieborg *et al.* (2024). See also Nielsen & Ganter (2022). For a comparative analysis, see Nielsen & Fletcher (2023), supported by Google UK as part of the Digital News Initiative; Freedman (2014, p. 324).

[16] Freedman (2014, p. 324); see also Thussu (2022).

[17] Freedman (2014, p. 327).

[18] See Mansell & Steinmueller (2020); Wasko *et al.* (2011); Winseck (2022).

[19] Plantin *et al.* (2018, p. 298); see also Garcoa Ramirez (2021).

[20] In the United States, Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996 exempts platforms from liability for content they host on their platforms in the interests of upholding free speech rights; there is ongoing controversy about whether this should change, and in this sense, the platforms resist designation as 'editors' (Cramer, 2020). In the European Union, under the Digital Services Act of 2022 – which refers to an earlier e-commerce directive – platforms (intermediary services) are not liable for the content they host if they act as a 'mere conduit' Chapter 2, Article 4; provide temporary storage 'cashing' Chapter 2, Article 5; host without knowledge of illegal content and act quicky to remove or disable illegal content when they obtain such knowledge, Chapter 2, Article 6; and there are other provisions (EC, 2022c). Liability provisions vary in countries around the world.

[21] Greene (2018); Nechushtai (2018); Nieborg & Poell (2018); Papaevangelou (2023); Radsch (2023b).

[22] Bakir & McStay (2018), funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), UK.

[23] Ghosh & Scott (2018); Pielemeier (2020).

Monetization of mis- and disinformation. Websites that repeatedly published mis- or disinformation generated USD 2.6 billion in advertising revenue in 2021 worldwide (the United States accounted for more than half). Meta generated at least USD 30.3 million in ad revenue from networks it removed from its own platforms for engaging in coordinated inauthentic behavior.[24]

The digital platforms' control over the advertising market gives them the power to dictate financial terms to news organizations.[25] Their leverage over the news media industry comes from their position as intermediaries between news media content producers and their publics, and their capacity to deprioritize news.[26] Platform dominance and news media organization dependency is due to big tech companies' ability to aggregate end users, which magnifies network effects.[27] Many news media organizations have shifted to monetizing content by tailoring their news to platform affordances (technical characteristics and rules of operation) to boost user engagement and advertising revenue.[28] Reliance on ad tech metrics (e.g., clicks/impressions as a news performance indicator) has created a more competitive newsroom culture, but also increased management surveillance.[29]

Advertising on platforms has attracted traffic for some news publishers, but has not always translated into economic sustainability for their businesses.[30] Some news media organizations have transitioned to subscription models, owning online news distribution and hosting paid-for events, and to native advertising (ads with the look and feel of content they appear with) hosted at their own news sites.[31] Some benefit from direct payments by platform companies, for example Google or Meta, a compensation for hosting news content.[32] There have been clashes over such payments and about how to value news. Some platforms such as Meta have threatened to remove news content, for example in Australia and Canada, and in some cases take action to do so when agreement is not reached.[33] Market concentration in the news media industry and in the platform market undermines democracy because of the way it distorts news organizations' capacity to contribute to a healthy public sphere.[34] Table 2.1 highlights tensions in the relationships between some of the largest digital platforms and news media organizations.

Table 2.1
Tensions between digital platforms and news media organizations

Digital platform	Relationship between the platforms and news media organizations
X (formerly Twitter)	• Elon Musk's takeover of Twitter was followed by platform changes that were perceived as problematic/unfavorable for the journalism profession. • In January 2024, X suspended an unknown number of prominent accounts that were critical of the Israeli government, blaming the spam algorithms. • In October 2023, X stopped showing headlines in previews to improve the aesthetics of the iOS app. The measure of excluding titles from previews of links might have been meant to discourage users from sharing third-party content from media organizations. • Focusing on the French media sector in a six-month period after Musk's takeover, it was found that journalists started to question the broader legitimacy of social media as a journalistic tool, but engaged in 'strategic disconnection' instead of abandoning the platform.

[24] Elliott (2022); Skibinski (2021).
[25] Bell *et al.* (2017); Garcia Ramirez (2021); Nielsen & Ganter (2022); Radsch (2023).
[26] Kristensen & Hartley (2023), supported by the VELUX FONDEN, Denmark; Nielsen & Ganter (2022); Poell *et al.* (2023).
[27] Montero & Finger (2021); Nieborg & Poell (2018); Nielsen & Ganter (2022). For a comprehensive discussion of how platform dominance has been achieved, mainly from a Global North perspective, see Bannerman (2022); Moore & Tambini (2018, 2021), supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada. For African and Latin American countries, see Mabweazara *et al.* (2020); Mabweazara & Pearson (2024).
[28] Bell *et al.* (2017).
[29] Petre (2021).
[30] Nieborg & Poell (2018).
[31] Meese & Hurcombe (2021), supported by the Australian Research Council (ARC).
[32] Nielsen & Ganter (2022).
[33] Meese & Hurcombe (2021).
[34] Bimber & Gil de Zúñiga (2020); Vaidhyanathan (2022).

Digital platform	Relationship between the platforms and news media organizations
Facebook/ Meta	• Research on the 'Facebook problem' includes critiques of technology and design; amplification of misinformation; abuses of market power; monopolization of the digital advertising market, undermining financial support for journalism; encouraging sensationalist journalism and clickbait; and limitations of self-regulation. • Small tweaks to the News Feed's algorithm can have a profound impact on the visibility of news content.
Google	• There has been criticism of the monopolization of online advertising markets. • Google's news services tend to steer revenue toward the largest publishers. • Google has developed products that enable off-site publishing in new formats, such as Google Accelerated Mobile Pages. This implies a loss of control over channels of communication and increased dependence on platforms as news intermediaries. Risks include losing control over editorial identity (search algorithms shape the way users interact with news content) and access to data (more detailed analytics are available on-site than off-site).
YouTube/ Google	• There is concern about changes in YouTube's policies regarding the demonetization, delisting and removal of videos, with implications beyond the performance of individual videos.
TikTok	• There are concerns about the virality of content directed at young people, the decline of legacy news as gatekeepers, and how its algorithm exploits children's vulnerability and distributes racist and sexist content (in addition to geopolitical security concerns between the United States and China).
Social media platforms in general	• There is criticism of dominant social media platforms and their failure to moderate harmful content at key moments (e.g., Gamergate (misogynistic online harassment campaign); the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar from 2016; the 2016 US presidential election, the Christchurch New Zealand Mosque shooting 2019); or Alex Jones' promotion of conspiracy theories and the rise of online revenge porn. • There are problems with automated moderation and overstated claims of success; difficulty accounting for context, subtlety, sarcasm and subcultural meaning; and insensitivity to the use of duplicate content in different contexts, such as terrorist propaganda reposted in a journalistic context.

Source: Collated from scientific papers and media accounts.[35]

News media organization dependency on platforms is especially severe in low-income countries where press freedom is limited or non-existent.[36] Local news organizations in the Global North have been hard hit as they move their content online. Competition for audiences is reducing local news stories to little more than 'clickbait' in some countries.[37] News 'deserts' have been reported in Europe and the United States as news organizations close at local and sometimes regional levels. Some argue, however, that focusing on legacy news media distracts attention from the marginalization of certain audiences from the public sphere that has occurred historically.[38]

News media organizations have problems in accessing audience data, which compounds the power asymmetry with the digital platforms.[39] News reporting benefits from the ability to monitor audience interest, and this requires verification data. Journalists report difficulties in accessing accurate data and in interpreting the partial data they do receive that is biased to favor the platforms.[40] Instant online news production also undermines news verification processes and the ability of journalists to fact-check mis- and disinformation.[41] In countries in Latin America, where financing often comes from philanthropists, legacy news media are pressurized to focus their reporting on the interests of their funders.[42] As a result, legacy news media are struggling to maintain their audiences and the credibility of their news.

There is varied evidence of diminishing trust in news when it is obtained *via* platforms.[43] For example, across 47 markets and six continents in 2024, survey respondents expressing concern about

[35] Claesson (2023); Germain (2024); Gillespie (2020); Nielsen & Ganter (2022); Notley *et al.* (2020); Peters (2023); Pickard (2020c); Poell *et al.* (2023); Van Natta *et al.* (2023), the last two supported by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (MICIU, Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades), Spain and the European Commission.

[36] BBC Media Action (2021; Garcia Ramirez (2021); Nielsen & Ganter (2022); Schot (2020), Free Press Unlimited, the Netherlands, an independent foundation. For an overview of the economics of the media industry, see Rohn *et al.* (2024).

[37] Tomaz & Trappel (2022).

[38] Usher (2023); Verza *et al.* (2024).

[39] Meese & Hurcombe (2021); Nieborg & Poell (2018); Nielsen & Ganter (2022). There are issues around fraudulent reporting of data and the way AI-generated news is infiltrating new sites. The United States Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is focusing on how this effects data on market share, the potential for sales growth and the expansion by AI companies into new markets, potentially creating further pressure on news provider finances; see FTC (2024).

[40] Dommett (2023).

[41] Baron (2002); Wahl-Jorgensen & Carlson (2021); Ross Arguedas *et al.* (2022b), supported by the Meta Journalism Project; Himma-Kadakas & Ojamets (2022), supported in part by the Anders Foundation; Dierickx *et al.* (2023c), supported by the European Commission; Carson & Gibbons (2023), supported by Facebook.

[42] Labio-Bernal & Romero-Domínguez (2022).

[43] Ross Arguedas *et al.* (2022c) supported in part by the Facebook Journalism Project; van Dijck *et al.* (2018a).

online 'fake' news increased to 59% of the sample although concern varied hugely by country – South Africa, 81%, India, 58%.[44]

Interviews with news workers in Brazil, India, the United Kingdom and the United States indicate how platforms exert pressure on journalism practice and hamper audiences' ability to distinguish between credible and non-credible news sources.[45] This complicates the realization of journalistic values associated with news media trustworthiness,[46] and raises concerns about declining news media editorial control.[47] News media organizations face the multiple challenges of maintaining editorial authority independent of platforms and governments, maintaining high-quality news standards, and delivering in-depth and diverse content.[48]

In summary, analysis of news media market concentration and structural dependence on big tech platforms demonstrates why many legacy as well as online news media organizations are facing crises that threaten their sustainability, and this has consequences for the health of information ecosystems as well as the digital public sphere.[49]

3 News Media, the Public Sphere and Democracy

The relationship between the news media and the public sphere in a context of platformization and in the face of the circulation of mis- and disinformation is complicated, and it is also strongly influenced by country political conditions. For example, journalists and other actors – women and other minority or disadvantaged individuals or groups – are facing threats, violence and murder. This is occurring alongside increases in the production and circulation of mis- and disinformation (including hate speech). Since 1993, 1,701 journalists have been killed, according to UNESCO data, with 50% of the deaths occurring outside conflict zones.[50] Research demonstrates that in relation to women and their rights: 'misinformation, disinformation and defamation are real and pervasive threats … and women tend to be targeted more frequently than men'.[51] In the Global Majority World (and elsewhere), 'the act of gaining voice and attempting to have influence in the public sphere, the act of asserting their own humanity and right to exist qua human beings, *takes place during ongoing deprivation, campaigns of disinformation, police brutality and/or military atrocity*'.[52] For this reason, it is important not to lose sight of the material conditions of people's lives when the focus is on the role of the news media and how to combat mis- and disinformation.

News media organizations are essential to meet the public's need to be informed about matters of public value. Ideally they contribute to democracy by helping to foster community-building, enabling communication flows among members of society, keeping citizens up to date with events and by educating them.[53] News media organizations and professional journalists are expected to uphold normative goals. Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) states that: 'everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers'.[54]

[44] Newman *et al.* (2024), core funded by the Thomson Reuters Foundation and a wide range of others, including academic, foundation, non-profit and industry partners.
[45] Ross Arguedas *et al.* (2022c), supported as above.
[46] Van Dijck *et al.* (2018a).
[47] Eichler (2023); Nielsen & Ganter (2022); van Dijck *et al.* (2018b); see also Hartley *et al.* (2023), supported by the VELUX FONDEN, Denmark.
[48] Eichler (2023, p. 283).
[49] See Nicholson (2024) on the political economy of media industries (this issue is addressed further in Section 4.5, Chapter 6).
[50] UNESCO (2024); at the time of writing, in August 2024.
[51] Gallagher (2023, p. 58).
[52] Banaji (2024, p. 13; emphasis added).
[53] Anderson (1983); Hanitzsch & Vos (2018).
[54] UN (1948, Article 19).

Article 19 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) (1966) similarly states that: 'everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference … [and] the right to freedom of expression'.[55] The ICCPR recognizes that these rights entail duties and responsibilities. These normative goals are 'not self-executing', and especially not in countries where democracy is fragile, or in authoritarian states.[56]

The rights and responsibilities of the news media are contested especially when they conflict with the goals of actors who seek to secure power and privilege.[57] Studies of the news media's role in democracies are often grounded in a Western understanding of how normative goals should be interpreted in practice. Beyond the West, scholars frequently insist that the rights embodied in international declarations and covenants must be interpreted through the prism of their own cultures. Human rights norms may be universal, but there are many ways they can be respected through the presence of news media that aspire to these norms, even if the news organizations do so in a variety of ways. This is especially so in Global Majority World countries where local practices differ from those in the Global North.[58] Failure to acknowledge this is symptomatic of Eurocentricity, which too often characterizes knowledge production, and this is present when 'particular dominant social, political or economic interests' influence how the news media industry operates.[59]

International human rights declarations and covenants set normative goals for signatory countries. The ideal in liberal democracies is understood to mean that the news media's role is to voice the concerns of the public and hold the powerful to account – 'speaking truth to power'. Democratization is expected to be accompanied by an independent media industry. A vibrant public sphere (or healthy information ecosystem) is central to the ideal of rational democratic deliberation. In this context, news media are expected to provide factual, accurate and impartial (or objective) information, although this view can be challenged when it is inconsistent with inclusivity.[60]

In practice there are multiple co-existing public spheres, and people participate in public life with unequal power, often as counter-publics. This is especially so in the Global Majority World when people are seeking inclusion on the margins, which is a legacy of colonialism. This means that the news media cannot be expected to inform a singular public or operate as the only source of information when there are many sub-audiences to whom news producers can appeal.[61] Thus, the concept of a democratic 'public sphere' is a normative ideal. Historically, and today, there are ongoing struggles to achieve the ideal of news media independence and impartiality, especially in the face of overtly illiberal conditions. This is not the least because in practice there are major issues around how critical of government the news media can be, in both the Global North and the Global Majority World.[62]

Notwithstanding variations in practice, inclusive information flows are crucial because they influence the quality of public discourse and the formation and legitimacy of public opinion. If information is misleading or wrong, public discussion cannot be fair, and the quality of democratic discourse suffers: for example, 'hate in the space in which we debate publicly is one of the main ways of weakening democratic institutions'.[63] It is therefore important to recognize that while the platform 'algorithms segregate and personalize … *they cannot on their own, explain entity divisions*', that is, disputes

[55] UN (1966, Article 19).

[56] Milton & Mano (2022, p. 35); see also Hamelink (2023).

[57] Repucci & Slipowitz (2022) supported by Google Inc., the Hurford Foundation, Jyllands-Posten Foundations, Lilly Endowment Incl, Meta Platforms Inc., and National Endowment for Democracy; see also Mukhudwana (2021); Pintak & Ginges (2008) and Pintak & Nazir (2013), both part-funded funded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund US; Romano (2013).

[58] Chasi & Rodny-Gumede (2022); Wasserman (2020a).

[59] Willems (2014b, p. 418).

[60] Bennett & Kneuer (2023); Dahlberg (2014); Devenney (2009); Habermas (2015); Hallin & Mancini (2012); Jungherr & Schroeder (2021); Rugh (2000); Schudson (1978); Wasserman (2020b); see also Schlesinger (2020), supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), UK. The concept of the public sphere has been criticized for its assumption of 'critical-rational publics' (Gerbaudo, 2022). Habermas (2022) stresses that it is crucial to distinguish between the normative conditions for a democratic polity, where participants struggle to secure the rights to which they are entitled, and the empirical reality of exclusions and marginalizations.

[61] Dutta & Pal (2020); Fraser (1992); Fraser & Nash (2014).

[62] For a discussion on how human rights and democracy can be united in governance structures, see Besson (2011).

[63] Aruguete & Calvo (2023); Zuazo & Aruguete (2021), no page numbers due to our translations.

over accuracy and 'truth' within and among groups in society. Polarization in the public sphere 'exists before and beyond' the algorithm-driven personalization of news content that audiences find online.[64]

In the wake of platformization and the proliferation of mis- and disinformation, news media organizations face a variety of challenges. These are experienced differently in countries around the world, even as journalists and news media organizations benefit from hosting news on digital platforms and can reach new audiences. These changes have implications for whether the news media are seen as trustworthy and whether news consumers trust the news they encounter, both on- and offline. Prior to the platformization of news media, history is replete with examples of partisan (and political party-funded) news media voicing the concerns of their segmented audiences, not the public as a whole. This has varied from country to country and with the extent to which PSM have been able to serve the needs of the public in an impartial way.

4 Trust in News Media

Research consistently finds that Western countries are experiencing a decline in trust in legacy news media – trust in journalism as an institution – but this is not declining in all countries or at the same rate; trust in news media has always varied among countries and news media organizations. The issue is the extent to which platformization and the structure of the contemporary news media industry is contributing to a decline in trust in news media content and in the trustworthiness of news media organizations.

In the Global North, people's news consumption habits have been steadily moving from legacy news media to online sources and social media platforms.[65] A study in 2022 compared people's trust in news on a range of digital platforms, including Facebook, YouTube and Google in Brazil, India, the United Kingdom and the United States. It found that trust depended on the platform, the country, the audiences and the kinds of news, but also that these sources were less trusted than legacy news media.[66]

Brazil has seen one of the steepest declines in news media trust, dropping from 62% to 43% between 2015 and 2024, with the far right playing a key role in growing distrust of legacy media. In the West, some countries do not seem to be affected by declining levels of trust. In Denmark, trust is relatively stable, at around 57%. In South Korea, trust is reported to have risen from 22% to 31% between 2016 and 2024. There are countries where trust is high and increasing. In Kenya, it went up from 50% to 64% between 2020 and 2024, and in Thailand, from 50% to 54% between 2021 and 2024. In the United States there is a strong and asymmetrical decline in trust in news media between left-wing and right-wing voters, with a similar pattern in some countries beyond the West.[67]

It is important to keep in mind that not everyone accesses the news, and that media trust can be associated with a media element, such as a person (a journalist, an expert), a source (e.g., *The Financial Times*, Fox News) or a type (television, radio, press), or it may be understood generally to apply to 'the media'.[68] In addition, the results of surveys on media trust are questioned by some scholars who argue that it is unclear whether survey respondents understand what journalism standards are or should be when answering the survey questions.[69]

Research on media trust tends to focus on overall trust in the news media, in news media as a public institution, in media organizations and their

[64] Political polarization is discussed in Section 4.4 in this chapter.
[65] See Ofcom (2023c).
[66] Mont'Alverne *et al.* (2022), funded by the Meta Journalism Project.
[67] Data for the named countries: Newman *et al.* (2024), supported by the Google News Initiative as well as multiple public and private funders. See also Newman *et al.* (2022), supported by a range of public and private funders, including BBC News, Ofcom and the Google News Initiative; Strömbäck *et al.* (2020), funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond for the Advancement of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Sweden; and Hanitzsch *et al.* (2018).
[68] Skovsgaard & Andersen (2020).
[69] Bernardi & de Morais (2021); Bhat & Chadha (2020); Christofoletti & Becker (2023).

ownership, in media types (television vs. radio), in specific outlets, in media coverage and/or trust in journalists.[70] Trust in 'media' is used interchangeably with trust in the 'news media', in legacy media and sometimes in online media, which leads to ambiguity.[71]

Quantitative survey methods are used to reveal levels of trust among individuals, while other research focuses on industry structural factors that influence trust in news. Both face the problem of ambiguities around definitions of 'trust' and 'news media'.[72] Research reveals associations between trust and individual factors (socio-demographic, political and social attitudes) based on aggregate data (e.g., at country level) or individual-level data. Most studies measure overall trust in news media, which tends to measure trust in journalism as an institution, and are based on self-reports that may not be indicative of how people behave. Trust is also studied using qualitative methods that provide a deeper insight into why people trust or distrust news.

The results of research on media trust do confirm concerns about how the news media are implicated in increasing polarization within and between individuals and groups worldwide, but they do not provide clear answers as to exactly how they are implicated. To explain why this is so, we need to understand the concepts and theories about the impact of the media on individuals and societies that are present in research that informs studies of trust in the media – declining or otherwise.

4.1 CHANGING JOURNALISM STANDARDS AND NEWS MEDIA PRACTICES

Substantial resources were needed historically to produce and disseminate news, and legacy news media functioned as 'gatekeepers', selecting what they deemed to be important.[73] When this power was accompanied by adherence to widely promoted standards of reporting (e.g., accuracy, impartiality), this was seen as a positive contribution to democracy, to information integrity and healthy information ecosystems. When the news media excessively amplifies certain narratives, this can contribute to democratic fragility. In some countries (e.g., Brazil, France, Italy, Spain and the United States), for example, the news media amplify far-right narratives when they report the discourse of far-right populist figures on issues such as immigration, foreign affairs, the environment or gender discrimination.[74] Research on the media landscape during the 2016 United States presidential election, for instance, suggests that the propagation of mis- and disinformation took advantage of structural weaknesses in the country's media institutions.[75]

Digital platforms are said to operate as a new 'fifth estate' because they have a gatekeeping role, although they resist designation as 'media'.[76] This may lead to the presence of more diverse voices in the public sphere, but it raises questions about journalistic values.[77] During the two world wars, some news organizations sought to distance themselves from state propaganda, claiming to emphasize 'facts' and 'objectivity', especially in the United States.[78] However, in other circumstances, such as the ending of Apartheid in South Africa, the news media have faced difficult trade-offs – between encouraging the new democratic government and criticizing its actions.[79] What accuracy and 'truth' mean is understood differently in countries around the world, and procedures for achieving accurate reporting are being challenged as digital technologies contribute to changes in journalism practice.[80] Journalism is positioned in the literature as co-evolving with social media platforms

[70] Fawzi *et al.* (2021).
[71] Schranz *et al.* (2018).
[72] Christofoletti & Becker (2023).
[73] Shoemaker & Vos (2009).
[74] Pérez-Curiel *et al.* (2021).
[75] Benkler *et al.* (2018).
[76] Dutton (2023).
[77] Tandoc Jr & Vos (2016).
[78] Schudson (2022); Tuchman (1972).
[79] Wasserman (2020b).
[80] Habermas (2022).

such that practice 'not only symptomatically reflects, but also pragmatically adapts to and influences the changing media environment'.[81] Thus, digital journalism should not be understood as 'journalism that is transformed by being digital', but instead as a practice that increasingly embodies the use of digital technologies.[82]

A meta-analysis of research published between 2013 and 2018 indicates a shift in focus from studies of how digital technologies impact on journalism to how journalism reflects and impacts on society.[83] The discourses, practices and logics of journalism shape the cultures, technologies and products of news media. As an agent of change, 'digital journalism' is seen as influencing the status and role of digital platforms (e.g., the legitimization of X/Twitter as a 'global newsroom') and as triggering changes in technical processes and practices (e.g., the growing popularity of news content on Facebook led Meta to acknowledge its editorial and curatorial role, and responsibility for the content it fosters, which then led to changes in its algorithms and to greater efforts to signal contested news, harmful content and mis- and disinformation on its platforms).[84]

In the digitized news environment news organizations risk losing editorial control. This can diminish their credibility and lead to perceptions of news media bias. A competitive journalism culture within newsrooms, fueled by scrutiny of performance metrics and managerial surveillance, intensifies pressures on journalists and is widely seen as leading to a deprioritization of investigative journalism. There is evidence, however, of positive outcomes when journalists take advantage of digital services; for example, the use of WhatsApp in Rwanda has helped journalists to extend their coverage and educate each other through debate about their practices.[85]

In addition, 'alternative media' organizations and journalists may be co-opted by the far left and positioned as criticizing commercial values, while right-wing media is likely to be associated with alleged ideological partisanship.[86] Both function as counterpoints to a dearth of diverse viewpoints, yet alternative news media is often said to engage in 'one-sided and ideologically motivated "campaign" journalism'.[87] These news media do play a role in fostering dialogue, enabling marginalized voices to be heard and challenging the status quo, even if some are involved in circulating exclusionary narratives that may contribute to audience polarization.[88] Unfortunately, most studies of news diversity exclude alternative media, even where it operates as an influential competitor to legacy media. In research on media trust, and regardless of which type of news media is studied, assumptions must be made about how engagement with news content influences attitudes and behaviors.

4.2 NEWS MEDIA TRUST AND AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Some studies of the impact of mis- and disinformation circulated by the news media seek to identify how news or information exposure can directly cause changes in attitudes and behavior by isolating news media impacts from other factors.[89] For example, the 'hypodermic needle model' (sometimes known as the 'inoculation model') of media effects suggests that information will trigger a similar reaction in everyone exposed to it, regardless of people's characteristics.[90] It was initially developed to understand the effects of government propaganda in the era of mass media. This approach grants little or no agency to people and their ability to interpret the information.

A 'two-step flow model of communication' was later developed to add context, positioning opinion

[81] Burgess & Hurcombe (2019, p. 360).
[82] Duffy & Ang (2019, p. 378); see also Zelizer (2019).
[83] Steensen *et al.* (2019).
[84] Burgess & Hurcombe (2019, p. 360); for a systematic review of research on 'data journalism', see also d'Haenens *et al.* (2022); Erkmen (2023).
[85] McIntyre & Sobel (2019).
[86] Ihlebæk *et al.* (2022), supported by the Research Council of Norway.
[87] Ihlebæk *et al.* (2022, p. 1269), supported by the Research Council of Norway.
[88] Benkler *et al.* (2018); Siapera (2023).
[89] Anderson (2021); Klapper (1960); Lasswell (1971); McQuail (2010).
[90] Bineham (1988).

leaders as playing a role in mediating between news media and their audiences.[91] A 'selective exposure model' proposed that people choose which news media to engage with based on their pre-existing views, assuming more limited news media effects.[92] Other research focused on how the media shapes attitudes, suggesting that the media has a 'cultivation' role, that is, audiences tend to view the world as it is depicted in the media.[93] 'Agenda-setting theory' and 'framing theory' inform studies of the capacity of the media to set an agenda and to influence people's selection of topics that matter to them.[96] These models of media effects are influential, and they benefit from new methods for measuring the effects of the information that circulates on social media platforms.[95]

Other approaches to media effects are informed by theories from behavioral economics. Here the focus is on cognition and on the effects of nudging people away from mis-and disinformation based on understanding affective and cognitive responses. This work uses insights into cognition to provide cues to encourage people to change their online behavior, and is largely based on experimental studies. Nudging may aim to get people to attend to the accuracy of information. This assumes a 'limited-attention utility model' derived from the economic and psychological analysis of how choices are influenced by people's pre-existing preferences, recognizing that cognitive capacities are limited.[96] Some of this research finds that average exposure to mis- and disinformation is not as high as is sometimes claimed, and that social media is not the primary cause of broader social problems, such as polarization. Exposure to false and inflammatory content has been found to be concentrated within fringe groups with high motivation to seek this information out.[97]

As early as 1996 it was concluded that 'despite the volume of research, the debate about media effects – whether it can be shown empirically that the specific mass media messages, typically those transmitted by television, have specific, often detrimental effects, on the audiences who are exposed to them – *remains unresolved*'.[98] The search for the effects of mis- and disinformation continues in this tradition to discover ways to mitigate harms.

Other research traditions start from a different set of premises and have a similarly long history. The 'audience research' tradition, for example, is interested in how audiences interpret media content. This approach examines how people's lives are 'mediated' by their relationships or engagements with information such as the news media.[99] It assumes that audiences have sufficient agency to interpret the news, and will do so in ways that are conditioned by their contexts. In contrast to media effects studies, both quantitative and qualitative methods are used, as in the case of 'audience reception' studies that seek to understand how audiences and the media co-produce information and cultures.[100] Studies may focus on the 'uses and gratifications' that audiences experience when they engage in news selection,[101] and it is acknowledged that engagement (or non-engagement) with legacy and online media is important for people's – and especially young people's – ability to make sense of the world around them. Indeed, those who do engage online are depicted as living 'inside' media, and research may focus on how teenagers construct identities

[91] Katz (1957).
[92] Stroud (2017).
[93] Gerbner *et al.* (1980), supported by the Administration on Aging, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, US.
[94] Goffman (1974); McCombs & Shaw (1972); Valenzuela *et al.* (2023).
[95] Choi *et al.* (2020); Scott *et al.* (2022), supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), UK.
[96] Pennycook & Rand (2022).
[97] For a review of the literature, see OECD (2022b); Pennycook & Rand (2022). Budak *et al.* (2024) calls for more research on exposure to content among extremists and fringe groups, and efforts to limit demand for this kind of information by curtailing political elites and legacy media that spread this information. Some authors in Budak *et al.* (2024) worked for Microsoft Research, some were participants in the US 2020 Facebook and Instagram Election Study, and the research was partly funded by Meta and Google Research.
[98] Livingstone (1996, p. 306, emphasis added).
[99] Mediation or 'mediatization' research is a longstanding research tradition on how people engage with and are influenced by offline and online information (Couldry & Hepp, 2016; Silverstone, 2007).
[100] Ong & Das (2020) point out that research on media effects is caught in a pendulum swing back to older assumptions of 'hypodermic needle media effects', which, they argue, is misleading in an era of datafication.
[101] Livingstone (1998).

through online interaction, or why audiences chose their preferred media diets.[102] The 'audience research' tradition emphasizes that audiences use technologies in unexpected ways, and that they engage actively with news media content. Here the focus is on what can be learned from studies of how individual attitudes and behavioral characteristics influence trust in information and news media.

Studies often examine individuals' responses to news media, finding a variety of associations between individual characteristics and reported trust in news media. These studies rely on quantitative data collected at the individual level, finding, for example, that in Germany people with higher levels of interpersonal trust (the propensity to think that others will not harm them) report higher levels of trust in the news media.[104] In the United States, research finds that those with higher levels of political cynicism have less trust in the media.[105]

The socio-demographic and age factors that are associated with news media trust are inconsistent across countries. In some countries men are less trusting, while the opposite is found in Israel, for example, and no association between trust and gender was found in the United States.[106] In Brazil, India, the United Kingdom and the United States, less educated people are found less likely to trust news media.[107] In contrast, a study across 44 countries found a slight decrease in trust with each additional year of schooling, and longitudinal research shows that those with a higher education degree are slightly less likely to trust the news media.[108] There is also evidence that diaspora communities tend to make greater use of non-mainstream media, while long-term residents make much less use of it.[109]

Ideology and partisanship can influence trust in news media. This research is dominated by evidence from the United States, finding, for example, that Republicans are associated with significantly lower levels of trust in the media,[110] and that trust in local and national news organizations has declined more rapidly for Republicans than for Democrats.[111] In other countries, trust is found to be more closely associated with attitudes towards extremism and populism than with left–right commitments. Some studies find that those who situate themselves in a more extreme ideological position are less likely to trust the media; others that those with stronger populist views tend to trust the news media less.[112] Studies show that extreme ideology is positively associated with beliefs in conspiracy theories in Sweden, and in the United States it is also a predictor of lower trust in legacy news media, although those engaged with conspiracy theories may still have an interest in news.[113] Interest in and knowledge about politics are found to influence media trust, and several cross-country studies show that interest in politics is positively associated with trust in news media.[114]

Research suggests that the news media does not necessarily exacerbate mis- and disinformation problems. A study in 2023 in Brazil, India and the United Kingdom investigated the effect of news and platform use on awareness of and belief in Covid-19 'misinformation'. This found that news consumption weakened the acquisition of false beliefs depending on the information access mode (online or offline) and the news outlet type.[115]

The reasons people distrust the news are also varied. Perceived convergence between the interests of journalists and politicians or businesses

[102] Deuze (2014).
[103] Boyd (2014).
[104] Jackob (2012); Tsfati & Ariely (2014).
[105] Frieden (2014); Pinkleton *et al.* (2012).
[106] See Schranz *et al.* (2018); Toff *et al.* (2021a) with support of the Facebook Journalism Project; Tsfati & Ariely (2014).
[107] Toff *et al.* (2021a) with support as above.
[108] See Hanitzsch *et al.* (2018); Tsfati & Ariely (2014).
[109] Trauthig (2024).
[110] Toff *et al.* (2021a) with support as above; Verma *et al.* (2018).
[111] Eddy (2024). On the origins of this kind of asymmetric 'propaganda', see Benkler (2020).
[112] Hanitzsch *et al.* (2018); Stroud & Lee (2013); Suiter & Fletcher (2020), funded by Google UK, part of Google News Initiative, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland and the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, Dublin City University, Ireland.
[113] Krouwel *et al.* (2017); McKernan *et al.* (2023).
[114] Hanitzsch *et al.* (2018); Tsfati & Ariely (2014).
[115] Altay *et al.* (2023b, p. 1).

and a belief that the powerful push an agenda is one reason, and this is found to be strong among young people and those with lower incomes.[116] An interview-based study suggests that suspicion about the neutrality of news media leads media users to doubt the media, who to trust and what to believe.[117] How the media industry reports news also influences trust, with perceived accuracy, impartiality, expertise and integrity shaping the perceived quality of news and the level of trust.[118] People's subjective perceptions of accuracy influence trust. For example, when people with direct experience of an event believe there is a difference between what happened and its reporting, their trust in the media will be impacted.[119] Research also shows that rumors that go viral are often more influential than the credibility of a source of information or its factuality – sharing such information is found to be motivated less by the accuracy of information than by 'partisan support, community sentiment, emotional contagion and a taste for the sensational or bizarre'.[120] However, the operationalization of measures of affect or emotion so far relies on inconsistent definitions.[121]

As indicated, the role played by news media in circulating what is now called mis- and disinformation (formerly 'propaganda') long predates the internet. The affordances – that is, the instrumental and social features that result from users' interaction with technology – of platformized media change the distribution of power between the news media and its audiences. This raises many questions about the role of algorithms in shaping public beliefs and behaviors.[122] As digital platforms infiltrate people's lives, this is seen as constituting an epistemic crisis that threatens democracy.[123] To understand this, research seeks to measure the effects of audience exposure to mis- or disinformation to explain the effects of news media on people's attitudes and behaviors. Other research examines the information 'crisis' by studying reciprocal relationships between the content provided by the news media, the roles of changing technologies and the broader political, social, cultural and economic context in which news media operate.[124]

In summary, the problems associated with mis- and disinformation are researched across multiple disciplines. Some studies treat conspiracy theories and pseudoscience as mis- and disinformation, while others do not.[125] Inconsistent results of research on the effects of mis- and disinformation on democracy, trust and political institutions are partly attributable to different conceptualizations and definitions and to siloed disciplinary research streams. In some cases, the reliability of research findings is questioned. For example, in late 2024 it was revealed that some study results should be questioned, with researchers arguing that a study on the impacts of mis- and disinformation had been influenced by a temporary change in Meta's news algorithm so that it appeared to feed largely reliable sources of trustworthy news to users in contrast to the less rigorous standard algorithm that was normally used. It was argued that this change in the algorithm was not taken into account.[126] Meta, however, insisted that it had informed the researchers of the change.

4.3 NEWS MEDIA USE, NEWS AVOIDANCE AND RESILIENCE

Numerous factors influence people's media use, whether they try to avoid the news and whether they are likely to be resilient to mis- and disinformation. Where news media are diverse and

[116] Newman & Fletcher (2017), supported by Google and the Digital News Initiative.
[117] Toff & Nielsen (2018), supported by Google UK as part of the Digital News Initiative.
[118] Kantar Media (2016), an international market research company based in London and supported by Google's Digital News Initiative.
[119] Livio & Cohen (2018).
[120] Rodríguez-Ferrándiz (2023, p. 15), supported by the Ministry of Science and Innovation (MCIN) (Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación), Spain and the European Commission.
[121] Altay *et al.* (2023a), citing Rogers (2020), supported in part by the Connecting Europe Facility and Reboot Foundation. Bakker & Lelkes (2024); Wardle (2023), supported by the Dutch Research Council (NWO, Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk).
[122] See Benkler (2020); Guess *et al.* (2023a), supported by Meta, which did not have the right to prepublication approval.
[123] For literature reviews, see Ross Arguedas *et al.* (2022a); Tucker *et al.* (2018).
[124] See Schünemann (2022), for a discussion of research in a socio-technical tradition.
[125] See the definition of mis- and disinformation in Section 3, Chapter 1.
[126] See Bagchi *et al.* (2024), supported by a data-sharing agreement with Meta (with no involvement of Meta in the study) and in part by the Knight Foundation and Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF); for a critique, see Guess *et al.* (2023b), supported by Meta (with no right to prepublication approval) as well as the Democracy Fund, Hopewell Fund, Guggenheim Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Charles Koch Foundation, Hewlett Foundation and Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

(relatively) free from state coercion, a high choice news media environment presents opportunities to study which audiences consume what type of news media and their consumption patterns to explain political participation.[127] People are found to have different 'media repertoires', that is, engagement to varying degrees with media sources and types of content such as entertainment, political information, regional or national news.[128]

Research finds that age is a strong predictor of media use repertoires, with consistent evidence that older people tend to use more legacy media (i.e., watching television more than other age groups) with younger people getting their news from social media.[129] The less educated are more likely to access news from television. People who listen to podcasts tend to be more educated, and there is evidence that short videos are becoming a more common source of news, especially for younger people, although this varies by country.[130] More educated men are more likely to consume news from legacy media.[131]

These varied media repertoires are associated with different forms of political participation. In the United States a healthier information ecosystem has historically been associated with a public who consume 'hard news'.[132] 'Soft news' and social media tend to be regarded as less noble in the research literature, but are confirmed as being important in shaping people's engagement in politics.[133] Despite inconclusive results on whether there is a direct association between political knowledge and incidental news exposure, incidental news exposure is found to lead to reflections on politics that can increase people's knowledge. In a world where a humorist can live-cast a conversation with an actor about politics, the distinction between hard and soft news is fragile, and the news media and audiences play a role in influencing the topics that humorists address.

Some people tend to actively avoid certain sources of information. This is problematic in the presence of polarization and partisanship, especially if news selectivity leads to more extreme political positions.[134] Selective news exposure is influenced by several factors, such as confidence in one's judgments and political knowledge, or the degree of belonging to a homogeneous social group.[135] Research shows that while both political knowledge and interest are predictors of news usage, knowledge is a stronger predictor of whether people are more likely to seek out news stories rather than avoid them.[136] Affective or emotional engagement plays an important role in people's news usage or avoidance.[137] It is also important to undertake smaller qualitative studies of everyday news use to reveal the importance of social and cultural dynamics that influence motivations to engage with the news and to share false information on social media and chat apps.[138]

4.3.1 News Media Avoidance

Studies of news avoidance – people who voluntarily or involuntarily consume very little or no news at all – indicate that this is present to varying degrees around the world.[139] A study published in 2024 with evidence from 46 countries (with data from 2015 to 2022) shows that the number of people claiming not to participate in any news increased by 19%, with this pattern being present in most countries and for most types of news.[140]

[127] Chadwick (2017); Prior (2005).
[128] Castro *et al.* (2022).
[129] Castro *et al.* (2022); Kim (2016); Strömbäck *et al.* (2018); Taneja *et al.* (2012), part-funded by Sequent Partners, a marketing consultant, US.
[130] Aalberg *et al.* (2013); Newman *et al.* (2024), supported by a range of public and private funders including BBC News, Ofcom and Google News Initiative.
[131] Castro *et al.* (2022); Strömbäck *et al.* (2018).
[132] Schudson (1978).
[133] Castro *et al.* (2022); Reinemann *et al.* (2012).
[134] Buturoiu *et al.* (2023).
[135] Metzger *et al.* (2020), funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, US; see also Dubois & Blank (2018), supported by Google.
[136] Lecheler & de Vreese (2017).
[137] Corbu *et al.* (2021); Zhu *et al.* (2024).
[138] Tully (2022) demonstrates this in the case of Kenya.
[139] Skovsgaard & Andersen (2020). For a comprehensive treatment of news avoidance, see Toff *et al.* (2023).
[140] Altay *et al.* (2024), supported by Google News Initiative and the European Commission. The sample based on Reuters Institute's Digital News Reports overrepresents the Global North; all countries were not present in all years, and in some countries, participation was flat (e.g., Austria, Ireland, France, Japan, Netherlands, Switzerland) or increasing (e.g., Colombia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Peru) – but over a shorter time span in recent years.

There are variations in how news avoidance is defined, which means results are not easily compared.[141]

News media avoidance. A study drawing on the Reuters Institute's *Digital News Report 2023* data found that 'people who selectively avoid news consume almost as much news as those who do not', although this involves a mix of deliberate choices and socially conditioned preferences. The Institute's *Digital News Report 2024* found that 39% of survey respondents said that they 'sometimes' or 'often' avoid the news. This was an increase of 3% over the previous year, and there were more significant increases in Brazil, Finland, Germany and Spain.[142] In France, another survey study found that 94% of people aged 15 and older reported an interest in information, and that they stayed informed daily.[143]

Numerous factors are associated with higher levels of news avoidance. Studies point to significantly lower consumption or higher avoidance of news by women.[144] The young are more likely to avoid the news.[145] The more educated access more news than the less educated, according to a longitudinal study in Norway.[146] A longitudinal study in Sweden showed that political interest plays an increasing role in the consumption of news over time – political interests are found to be a determinant of news avoidance, with those with lower interest in politics being more likely to avoid the news.[147] Those with a weaker understanding of the news media ecosystem or who tend to trust the media less are more likely to avoid the news.[148] Studies also highlight the fact that people avoid the news when they perceive it to be too pessimistic.[149]

News avoidance may be a strategy to protect one's mental health or to avoid information overload (as found in Argentina, Finland, Israel, Japan and the United States).[150] News avoidance can be attributed to a coping mechanism or to a form of protection against the negativity and constant stimulation provoked by contemporary information ecosystems.[151] People also avoid the news because they report that it is irrelevant to them, or they believe the news is not trustworthy or that it is too commercial.[152] In Argentina, people were found to avoid the news because they regarded its information ecosystem as corrupt, while in Japan, they were more likely to try to avoid controversy and disagreement.[153] Notwithstanding these differences reported by individuals, the few studies that look at structural factors find that greater press freedom and political freedom and stability are negatively correlated with news avoidance.[154]

There is no normative answer as to how much news people should consume. However, news avoidance is problematic if it isolates people from daily political discussions and political decision-making.

4.3.2 Resilience to Mis- and Disinformation

Declining trust in the news media is associated with declining trust in institutions generally, and there are fears that this is contributing to democratic backsliding. How resilient are people to mis- and disinformation?

[141] Bos *et al.* (2016); Castro *et al.* (2022); Strömbäck *et al.* (2018).
[142] Palmer *et al.* (2023, p. 697), supported in part by Google UK as part of the Digital News Initiative; Arcom (2024); Newman *et al.* (2024).
[143] Arcom (2024).
[144] Toff & Kalogeropoulos (2020); Toff & Palmer (2019), supported by Google UK as part of the Digital News Initiative.
[145] Toff & Kalogeropoulos (2020).
[146] Karlsen *et al.* (2020), supported by the Research Council of Norway.
[147] Edgerly (2022), supported in part by the Walter Jay and Clara Charlotte Damm Fund of the Journal Foundation, US; Strömbäck & Shehata (2019), funded by the Axel and Margaret Ax:son Johnson Foundation, Sweden.
[148] Boukes & Vliegenthart (2017); Edgerly (2022); Toff & Kalogeropoulos (2020).
[149] Aharoni *et al.* (2021); Newman *et al.* (2024). See also Villi *et al.* (2022), supported in part by the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation, Finland.
[150] Aharoni *et al.* (2021); Villi *et al.* (2022), supported in part by the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation, Finland.
[151] Ytre-Arne & Moe (2021), funded by the Research Council of Norway; Suiter & Fletcher (2020). Evidence shows that news avoidance grew during the first year of the pandemic.
[152] Aharoni *et al.* (2021); Edgerly (2022).
[153] Villi *et al.* (2022), a study of Argentina, Finland, Israel, Japan and the United States, supported in part by the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation (Helsingin Sanomain Säätiö), Finland.
[154] Toff & Kalogeropoulos (2020).

Whether declining news media trust is a 'crisis', as is sometimes claimed, depends on the country, and the strong focus on trust is questioned by some scholars.[155] However, the instrumentalization of a 'lying press' by far-right political leaders is placing trust in the news media at the center of contemporary preoccupations. Cross-country comparative research sheds light on the factors that seem to make people in some countries more resilient to mis- and disinformation (although much scholarship focuses on the United States and Europe). Distrust in legacy media has been associated with alternative news media consumption, which is a cross-national factor associated with declining resilience to mis- and disinformation.[156] However, research also finds that trust in national news media does not build individual resilience, measured as a willingness to share, like or comment on misinformation (in the case of Canada, France and the United States, but not the United Kingdom). In 2020, the use of PSM (e.g., the BBC, France Télévisions or the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) was not found to build resilience in the short term.[157] A comparison of 18 Western democracies identified three groups of resilience to mis- and disinformation.[158]

Country clusters on resilience. *Cluster 1:* High resilience to mis- and disinformation – Northern and Western European countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), plus Canada; in 2022, all the countries were seen as news media-supportive, more prone to political consensus, less polarized and less prone to populist communication, and characterized by high levels of media trust, shared media consumption and strong PSM. *Cluster 2:* Southern European countries (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain) characterized by low resilience, with high levels of polarization, populist communication and social media news use, and low levels of trust and shared media consumption. *Cluster 3:* The United States – a low-trust, politicized and fragmented political and media environment.

A follow-up study in 2023 indicated that resilience was partly country-specific and highly dependent on the political and information environments.[159] Focusing on Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States, chosen for their diversity in terms of resilience factors, resilience was measured as an inclination to ignore or disregard 'disinformation' as opposed to engaging with it.

Mis- and disinformation and trust in Chile. A weak relationship was found between mis- and disinformation and media skepticism in 2017 to 2019. Initial beliefs about factually dubious information were negatively correlated with levels of trust in the news media.[160] Although lower trust in the media was related to higher levels of mis- and disinformation, the strength of this association weakened over time. There was no evidence of a positive feedback loop - the reverse spiral model – between mis- and disinformation and media skepticism.

Apart from a limited number of cross-national indicators of resilience (i.e., heavy social media use, the use of alternative media and populist party support), other variables, such as extreme ideology, populist support, age, level of education and

[155] Jakobsson & Stiernstedt (2023), supported by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet), Sweden.
[156] Humprecht *et al.* (2023), supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and Research Foundation – Flanders.
[157] Boulianne *et al.* (2022).
[158] Based on seven dimensions of media use to create indices of populism, polarization, media trust, shared media, strength of PSB, social media and market size; see Humprecht *et al.* (2020), supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and Research Foundation – Flanders. Experience of the United Kingdom during the Brexit campaign and since, when polarization increased and mis- and disinformation flourished, indicates that risks exist in this highly resilient cluster.
[159] Humprecht *et al.* (2023), supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and Research Foundation – Flanders.
[160] Valenzuela *et al.* (2022), a three-wave panel study supported by the National Agency for Research and Development (ANID, Agencia Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo), Chile.

gender, varied by country. The *contextual nature of resilience* was validated by another, which focused on awareness of, exposure to, and sharing of misinformation.[161] Despite inconsistent results, these studies do suggest that engagement with online news media is among one of the most important factors influencing societal resilience. This is in line with studies that conclude that the corrosive effects of mis- and disinformation on attitudes toward the news media are less serious than often assumed.[162]

4.3.3 Weaponization of Online Information

Politicians increasingly seem to be able to lie without negative consequences, and disparate actors – some political elites or digital platform owners – are claiming hegemony over what counts as 'truthful' interpretations of reality.[163]

In the late 1960s Hannah Arendt discussed whether it is always necessary to tell the truth, distinguishing between factual truths (facts, events) and rational truths (e.g., mathematical, scientific and philosophical truths) in political debates in plural societies, exploring the disturbing consequences of denying, mystifying or replacing truths with the opinions of political actors.[164] In a 'post-truth politics' era, authoritative figures center political communications around the strategic denial of verifiable facts.[165] In this way, information is weaponized, contributing to a democratic crisis. This is especially so when minorities are singled out via social media accounts for receiving divisive and manipulative content.[166] The weaponization of information in political contexts, including elections, is a major concern in many countries. The political use of social media and data to target communications directly at followers in unethical (and sometimes illegal) ways to influence election outcomes is at the core of debates about the harms associated with mis- and disinformation.[167]

Cambridge Analytica, the political campaign company that operated from 2013 to 2018, sparked outrage as one of the first 'information operations actors' to interfere with democratic processes on a grand scale by microtargeting individual voters and spreading disinformation. It was found to have undertaken illegal data gathering in both the United Kingdom and the United States due to its use of some 5,000 data points on voters, which it secured without user consent via This is Your Digital Life, an app hosted on Facebook. More generally, the company's tools for targeting voters were used to discredit its clients' political opposition in numerous countries.[168]

In the European Union, the Digital Services Act of 2022 requires the largest platforms, including search engines, to address the systemic risk of 'negative effects on civic discourse and electoral processes' associated with their services, but clear benchmarks need to be established.[169] Encompassing more countries, the Council of Europe 2022 recommendation on media coverage of election campaigns states that the 'the algorithms used by public and private actors to rank and display political advertising and electoral communication material, and those used in content moderation practices, should be transparent and verifiable, especially regarding potential bias and inaccuracies of the systems used'. Platforms are recommended to 'act against misrepresentation and the intentional spread of political disinformation, while ensuring full respect for the rule of law and human rights standards … notably the right to freedom of expression'.[170]

The *Electoral Integrity Global Report 2024* indicated that the top five countries in terms of election integrity were Czechia, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland, and the bottom five were Cambodia, Egypt, Madagascar, Turkmenistan and Zimbabwe. However, from 2012 to 2023 there

[161] Boulianne *et al.* (2022).
[162] Allen *et al.* (2020), supported by the Nathan Cummings Foundation, US.
[163] Hofmann (2024).
[164] Arendt (1968).
[165] Giusti & Piras (2021); Lockie (2017); Merenda (2021).
[166] Freelon *et al.* (2022); Freelon & Wells (2020); Park *et al.* (2023).
[167] Elishar-Malka *et al.* (2020).
[168] Briant (2021); Dowling (2022), supported by the Department of Defence, Australia.
[169] EC (2022c, Article 34(c)); and see Broughton Micova & Schnurr (2024).
[170] Council of Europe (2022, para. 4.2).

were no statistically significant increases or decreases on electoral integrity indices across 586 elections in 170 countries. The survey questions asked about the role of the media, and whether mis- or disinformation was spread on social media as one of several indicators.[171]

It is known that mis- and disinformation can be advantageous to political figures whose supporters share this content (e.g., Donald Trump and QAnon conspiracy theorists). The Trump Administration and Fox News facilitated and co-produced persistent mis- and disinformation during the coronavirus crisis.[172] Research has demonstrated that Trump's supporters influence the dynamics of top 'fake news' spreaders.[173]

Analysis of X/Twitter news activity suggests that 'fake' and extremely biased news have distinct diffusion mechanisms compared to center- and left-leaning news. In Brazil, a mixed-methods study found that mis- and disinformation tended to circulate more on political pages/groups aligned with the far right and former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, and on religious and conspiracy theory pages/groups and alternative (hyper-partisan) media, whereas fact-checked news circulated more on leftist pages/groups.[174] Another study documented the spread of conspiracy narratives in Brazil about George Soros, providing evidence of cross-platform dissemination.[175] However, in the case of electoral 'misinformation' during the 2022 Brazilian presidential election, it was found that professionally produced news from legacy news organizations played a key role in curbing misinformation, and despite misinformation spreading on digital platforms, there were either no or very small effects between platform use to source news and beliefs in electoral misinformation.[176]

Mis- and disinformation practices are consistently associated with far-right political movements and politicians in Brazil, Germany, Portugal and the United Kingdom.[177] Studies of migrant-related mis- and disinformation in the European Union reveal a mix of state-driven activities linked to Russia and domestic far-right actors.[178]

Legacy media weaponizing information in autocracies. This varies by social and political context. Right-wing activists are found to spread their messages by manipulating legacy media and working strategically with partisan media, and there is less research on the magnitude and character of left-wing mis- and disinformation activities. Illiberal political leaders adopt mis- and disinformation as a tool for gaining support and reducing resistance without resorting to terror – by securing formal ownership of the media or informal control, as in the case of 'information autocrats', such as Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore, Augusto Pinochet in Chile, Vladimir Putin in Russia, Alberto Fujimori in Peru and Mahathir Mohamad in Malaysia, and when there is convergence between parts of the media and far right political parties (e.g., the far right party, Vox, in Spain). In the Middle East, the Arab news media is subject to persistent repression by authoritarian governments, with evidence of media pushing mis- and disinformation. China and Russia deploy state-owned media outlets such as Russia Today (RT) and China Central Television (CCTV).[179]

[171] Garnett *et al.* (2024), supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada, based on electoral authority expert surveys in 42 countries.
[172] Jeppesen *et al.* (2022); Yang & Bennett (2022). For a literature review on how social media profiles are used to manipulate public opinion based on 369 articles, see Santini *et al.* (2018).
[173] Boulianne *et al.* (2022), part-funded by the Digital Citizenship Initiative of the Department of Canadian Heritage; Bovet & Makse (2019); Pérez-Curiel *et al.* (2021).
[174] Recuero *et al.* (2022).
[175] On the amplification of news content using bots in Brazil, see Santini *et al.* (2022); Santini *et al.* (2020), supported by the Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education (CAPES, Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior), Brazil.
[176] Mont'Alverne *et al.* (2024), funded by the Meta Journalism Project.
[177] Baptista & Gradim (2022); Buarque & Zavershinskaia (2022); Daniels (2018); Freelon *et al.* (2022); Recuero *et al.* (2020); Wojczewski (2022).
[178] Chavalarias (2024); Szakacs & Bognar (2021).
[179] Compiled from Douai (2019), IEMed, a think tank Barcelona, Spain; Freelon & Wells (2020); Guriev & Treisman (2019); Labio-Bernal & Manzano-Zambruno (2023).

In certain African countries, mis- and disinformation are shown to be connected to colonial legacies of mis- and disinformation and propaganda rather than to the rise of the far right.[180] In the political landscapes of countries such as Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, the spread of false information is especially complex when it is polarized and ethnically charged.[181] All sides of the political spectrum, as well as legacy and social media, participate in mis- and disinformation.[182] It is important to note that while mis- and disinformation or 'fake news' is seen as a novel scholarly topic today, false news as a phenomenon in Africa and the Middle East pre-dates the era of online news. Journalists have always had to learn to treat journalism as a contested area, vulnerable to manipulation by governments and powerful social elites.[183] However, recent developments have provided new opportunities for governments to restrict freedom of expression on social media.

State-sponsored mis- and disinformation campaigns are common in multiple political systems.[184] For example, tools, capacities, strategies and resources for computational propaganda have been identified in 81 countries, with private firms engaged in manipulation campaigns and practices of harassment against fact-checkers and those reporting on information operations.[185] Many illiberal leaders are preserving a democratic facade while controlling the information space – acting as 'informational autocrats'.[186]

Anti-Western propaganda is characteristic of Russian influence operations and information warfare aimed at undermining trust in NATO, the European Union and domestic governments, by interfering in elections and undermining democratic processes.[187] Actors, especially in Russia and China, have been connected to mis- and disinformation campaigns in both the Global North and Global Majority World.[188] Russian propaganda pushes mis- and disinformation narratives with the aim of winning a significant share of media audiences in countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia and Mexico.[189] China has been shown to be waging a state-sponsored mis- and disinformation campaign against a United States-led international system aiming to suppress internal and external criticism, amplify its prestige and favorably influence foreign policy actors, and it engages in information warfare to support its military strategy (e.g., on the issue of Taiwan).[190]

An analysis of the activities of troll factories under the control of the Russian Internet Research Agency (IRA) from 2017 to 2019 in the United States found that the scale of the IRA's troll factories was 'industrial – mass produced from a system of interchangeable parts, where each class of part fulfilled a specialized function'.[191] This highlights how, rather than posting tweets in support of one party, IRA trolls tweet divisive messages, sometimes targeting mainstream Republicans and, at other times, mainstream Democrats – tactics consistent with the aim of sowing mistrust and doubt in the election process.[192]

Research during the United States on the 2020 presidential election examined the promotion by pro-Kremlin media (the channel RT, in particular) on Facebook, and how content curation algorithms affected its distribution,[193] finding that the Facebook News Feed algorithm (which Facebook describes as aiming to expose users to reputable

[180] Mudde (2019).
[181] Mare *et al.* (2019).
[182] Lunga & Mthembu (2019); Ncube (2019); Wasserman (2020a).
[183] Mutsvairo & Bebawi (2019).
[184] La Cour (2020).
[185] Bradshaw *et al.* (2021), supported in part by the European Research Council (ERC), Adessium Foundation, Civitates Initiative, Ford Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Luminate, Newmark Philanthropies and Open Society Foundations.
[186] Guriev & Treisman (2019).
[187] Akimenko & Giles (2020); Alieva *et al.* (2022); Beskow & Carley (2020); Lemke & Habegger (2022); Morkūnas (2023); Robbins (2020); Zhang *et al.* (2021), supported by the Knight Foundation and Office of Naval Research, US.
[188] Chaguaceda *et al.* (2023); Sleibi (2023); Znojek (2020).
[189] Chaguaceda *et al.* (2023).
[190] Cheng (2016); Curtis (2021); Hung & Hung (2022), supported by the Tzu-Chieh Hung Ministry of Science and Technology, Taiwan.
[191] Linvill & Warren (2020, p. 463).
[192] Linvill & Warren (2019), supported by the Charles Koch Foundation, US.
[193] Kuznetsova & Makhortykh (2023, p. 22).

information[194]) still make it possible for pro-Kremlin media to propagate these messages, indicating that the Facebook content curation is vulnerable to manipulation of 'likes' to enhance message flows.

The weaponization of discourses using concepts such as 'fake news' is typically invoked in competitions for power, and is used to discredit, attack and delegitimize political opponents.[195] Legitimate news media are targeted by 'fake news' labeling,[196] reducing the perceived credibility of authentic media content, although research suggests that this may not affect people's policy preferences.[197] The weaponization of information is coincident with the explosion of technologies that help to make mis- or disinformation part of a flux of overabundant information.[198]

Although search engines play a role in promoting mis- and disinformation, much attention focuses on the role social media plays in the creation, distribution and monetization of this online content because it is sometimes outperforming legacy media as a source of news.[199] Research on the large social media platforms (Facebook, X/Twitter, Instagram, TikTok), video-sharing platforms (YouTube) and main private messaging apps (WhatsApp, Telegram) is summarized in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2
Platform roles in the weaponization of information – Selected Country Examples

Country/region	Example	Platform in question
Argentina (49) **Bolivia (27)** **Colombia (78)** **Ecuador (65)** **Peru (28)** **Spain (127)**	Channels of distribution across six Spain and Latin American countries: Facebook was the most-used network to disseminate mis- and disinformation (32.9%), followed by hoaxes disseminated in two or more networks (31.9%), WhatsApp (21%), Twitter (5.7%), email or SMS with (5.4%) and YouTube (3.0%).	Multiple social media platforms; bibliometric study of 371 examples of mis- and disinformation about the Covid-19 pandemic (March-May 2020).
Australia (2) **England (1)** **Spain (1)** **United States (8)**	Weaponized crowdfunding by actors to amplify and sustain the spread of their grievances. Crowdfunding platforms offer comprehensive tools that facilitate easy sharing and propagation of campaign messages across various platforms.	GoFundMe, a set of election fraud and 5G-themed campaigns on the crowdfunding platform GoFundMe.
Canada	Prevalence of misinformation surrounding Covid-19 on Twitter, compared to Canadian news media: social media exposure was associated with more misperceptions and less social distancing compliance.	X/Twitter; all articles published on 19 Canadian news sites.
India	WhatsApp as a tool for political communication used by political parties in India: for mobilization, coordination and reaching out to voters; political propaganda and disinformation were pushed on WhatsApp in the form of 'news'.	WhatsApp.
United States	Evidence from the 2016 presidential election on the virality of political fake news: posts favoring Trump were shared 30 million times on Facebook, while those favoring Clinton were shared 8 million times.	Facebook/Meta.
United States	Fueling civil disobedience in democracy: WhatsApp news is negatively associated with political knowledge and positively with illegal protest.	WhatsApp.
United States	False news stories (2006-17) diffused significantly further, faster, deeper and more broadly than the 'truth'. This effect was stronger for political news than for other topics.	X/Twitter.

[194] Brown & Levin (2020), a Meta blog post.
[195] Farkas & Schou (2018).
[196] Tong *et al.* (2020).
[197] Hameleers & Marquart (2023).
[198] Bargaoanu & Radu (2018).
[199] Newman *et al.* (2023), supported by a range of public and private funders including BBC News, Ofcom and Google News Initiative; Aïmeur *et al.* (2023); Wakefield (2016), supported by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, Canada.

Country/region	Example	Platform in question
United States	Amplifying climate mis- and disinformation: showing that posts linking to content from 10 'superpolluter' publishers, totaling 186 million followers on Facebook, accounted for up to 69% of Facebook interactions with climate denial content.	Facebook/Meta. A sample of 6,983 climate denial articles were published between 12 October 2020 and 1 October 2021 .
Zimbabwe	Digital propaganda 'battles', where political gladiators used mis- and disinformation, hate speech and mudslinging as weapons.	X/Twitter.
N/A	YouTube facilitates access to problematic content (sometimes with mixed results). Nine of the studies demonstrated support for the creation of filter bubble effects.	YouTube's systematic review of 23 studies published between 2013 and 2021.

Source: Collated from various sources indicated below.[200] *Note: numbers indicate the incidents covered by the cited sources.*

Sponsored content and the absence of transparent political advertising rules play a major role in weaponizing information. The amplification of mis- and disinformation uses the same tools that are the backbone of online advertising (e.g., precision advertising, algorithmic advertising, data-driven behavioral segmentation, 'psychographics profiling', computational profiling, computational persuasion).[201] In the United States, consumption of legacy media sources is found to be associated with more accurate beliefs about health-related topics and consumption of non-partisan, liberal media instead of conservative partisan media, and there was evidence of a smaller inclination to access 'fake news' websites.[202] These developments are examined in multiple studies that aim to establish whether and to what extent (under what conditions) exposure to mis- and disinformation is causing changes in public opinion and leading to polarization.

4.4 PUBLIC OPINION AND POLARIZATION

Research on causal relationships between mis- and disinformation and 'filter bubbles' or 'echo chambers'[203] and polarized public opinion yields ambiguous or at least contested results.[204]

Intensive research is underway on these questions, especially since 2014, when social media platforms – Facebook and Twitter (now X) – added 'like' and 'retweet' buttons to their sites. Whether social media increase political polarization has been a source of inquiry since at least 2017. Some studies show how exposure to content on social media can increase affective or emotional polarization, while others show limited and asymmetrical effects of social media use on attitudes towards people with diverging views.

For example, in 2020, a study in France, the United Kingdom and the United States found no evidence that online social media 'explain support for right-wing populist candidates and parties'. It did find that 'offline discussion with those who are similar in race, ethnicity and class positively correlates with support for populist candidates and parties in the United Kingdom and France'.[205] In the same time frame, a study in the United States found a 'substantial amount of overlap (51%) in the ideological distributions of accounts followed by users on opposite ends of the political spectrum'.[206] However, in 2022, a study on the role of social media platforms in contributing to

[200] Allcott & Gentzkow (2017); Center for Countering Digital Hate (2021); Chibuwe (2020); Elmer & Ward-Kimola (2023); Gutiérrez-Coba *et al.* (2020), supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage; Farooq (2018); Gil de Zúñiga & Goyanes (2023), supported by the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas); Vosoughi *et al.* (2018), supported by Twitter; Bridgman *et al.* (2020), supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage Digital Citizens Initiative.

[201] Bargaoanu & Radu (2018); Cano-Orón *et al.* (2021); Szczepkowski & Szczepkowski (2021).

[202] Jamieson & Albarracin (2020), part-supported by National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants, US; Guess *et al.* (2019), supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF), US.

[203] Pariser (2011, p. 9): 'a unique universe of information for each of us … which fundamentally alters the way we encounter ideas and information' enabled by algorithmic prediction engines; see also Sunstein (2007). Jamieson & Cappella (2008, p. 76) define an echo chamber as 'a bounded, enclosed media space that has the potential to both magnify the messages delivered within it and insulate them from rebuttal'.

[204] Haidt & Bail (2024) provide a review of studies of whether social media: makes people angry or affectively polarized; creates echo chambers; amplifies posts that are emotional, inflammatory or false; increases the probability of violence. Most cited studies are experimental or quasi-experimental and undertaken in the United States and Western democracies. For a systematic analysis of susceptibility to online misinformation in the United States, see Sultan *et al.* (2024), funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) and Volkswagen Foundation (Volkswagen Stiftung).

[205] Boulianne *et al.* (2020, p. 683), supported by the Audencia Foundation, France.

[206] Eady *et al.* (2019, p. 1), supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF), Knight Foundation and Rita Allen Foundation, US.

radicalization and violent extremism found no effect of echo chambers.[207] Another claimed that research in this area overestimates the impact of digital technologies in explaining social and political developments.[208] A 2024 study, again in the United States, concluded that AI tools (large language models, in this case GPT-3) in the hands of those launching foreign covert propaganda campaigns can be highly persuasive, as measured by people's agreement with claims made.[209] Yet a study of claims about filter bubbles was challenged in another study of public opinion in the United States, which found that social media use had led to less polarization as judged by partisanship (in this case, vaccine hesitancy), while use of legacy media made people more polarized.[210]

Studies of single platforms at a single point in time also indicate, for example, that in 2021, Twitter's personalization algorithm was amplifying tweets in Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States, but did not 'support the hypothesis that algorithmic personalization amplifies extreme ideologies more than mainstream political voices'. It did show that the political right experiences higher amplification compared to the political left overall.[211] The study was unable to identify precise causal mechanisms for the variations among countries.

Social media and polarization. A team of researchers collaborated with Meta to investigate questions about social media effects on politics using large-scale experiments during the United States 2020 presidential election. One study looked at the effects of echo chambers on polarization, finding that reducing exposure to like-minded content did not reduce polarization, although it did decrease exposure to uncivil language while increasing exposure to cross-cutting sources.[212] A second study investigated whether Facebook enables ideological segregation in political news consumption, finding that conservatives were more segregated than liberals, and that disinformation circulated mostly in an isolated conservative space. This study found that 'ideological segregation is high and increases as we shift from potential exposure to actual exposure to engagement'.[213] A third study examined the effect of Facebook's news feed algorithm by sorting posts chronologically, finding chronological filtering did not affect levels of issue polarization and affective polarization, although it could increase exposure to untrustworthy content and content from moderate voices, as well as decrease exposure to uncivil content and the time spent on the platform.[214] A fourth study looked at the effects of reshared content, finding that removing reshares from the platform could reduce exposure to untrustworthy content, but this did not affect political polarization.[215]

These four studies indicate that personalization systems and interaction with like-minded content can influence consumption of content from untrustworthy sources and exposure to incivility, but they do not demonstrate clear effects of social media on polarization. This research needs to be assessed in the light of the fact that it was conducted over a relatively short time, focused on one country (where polarization has increased

[207] Gunton (2022).
[208] Talamanca & Arfini (2022), supported in part by the Ministry of University and Research (MUR, Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca), Italy.
[209] Goldstein *et al.* (2024); OpenAI provided access to GPT-3 via an academic access program.
[210] Jones-Jang & Chung (2024).
[211] Huszár *et al.* (2022, p. 4). Several authors were employed by, affiliated with, or had a financial interest in X/Twitter at the time of the study.
[212] Nyhan *et al.* (2023), supported by the Facebook Open Research and Transparency (FORT) team and by foundations and universities; some authors were employed by Meta.
[213] González-Bailón *et al.* (2023, p. 392). The Facebook Open Research and Transparency (FORT) team provided support for the project; some authors worked for Meta; funding by Meta, Democracy Fund, Hopewell Fund, Guggenheim Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Charles Koch Foundation, Hewlett Foundation and Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Based on aggregated data for 208 million Facebook users in the United States.
[214] Guess *et al.* (2023a), supported by Meta.
[215] Guess *et al.* (2023b), supported by Meta.

in recent years), and on a single platform. Steps were undertaken to ensure the reliability of the findings and to limit Meta's influence on the results, but reliance on one platform company's data can potentially bias the results.[216]

These and other studies demonstrate how hard it is to pin down clear causal relationships between mis- and disinformation, the news media, the role of algorithms and platformization in changes in polarization and political participation.[217] This may partly be explained by problems of access to platform data, overreliance on controlled experiments and the scarcity of applications of field test methodologies that seek to confirm hypotheses about the causal effects of mis- and disinformation.[218] The difficulty in clarifying effects of 'social media' on polarization is due to the entanglement of content, personalization systems and social relations, all of which contribute to attitudes towards to mis- and disinformation and to political participation. Studies on polarization are resource-intensive, and researchers must generally collect data through platform application programming interfaces (APIs) that may allow limited access.

Monitoring mis- and disinformation, transparency and CrowdTangle.
CrowdTangle was especially valued for its use in mis- and disinformation monitoring. The tool was purchased by Meta in 2016 and allowed researchers, journalists and fact-checkers to explore public content posted on multiple social media platforms, including Facebook, X/Twitter, Instagram and Reddit. In August 2024, Meta announced that it was shutting the tool down, explaining that this was due to data access changes required by the European Union's Digital Services Act. The company announced Meta Content Library, which it said would provide the same kinds of services previously available through CrowdTangle. Usage limits, however, mean that many CrowdTangle users are not allowed access, and this has been criticized in the United States as a political move to censor partisan information close to the presidential election.[219] Some claim that the Meta Content Library has only '1% of its features' of CrowdTangle, expressing doubts about the adequacy of its replacement.[220] This move has been criticized by the European Commission for reducing platform transparency and access to data.[221]

Studies of rumors and information online and their role in political campaigns, even when their accuracy is uncertain, find that repeat spreaders can disproportionately influence public opinion, although there is also evidence of perverse effects of efforts to raise awareness around 'deepfakes' being associated with distrust in legitimate information.[222] At the same time, research shows that 'identity propaganda' aimed at amplifying historic differences and perpetuating hegemonic power structures can influence public opinion through its use of 'othering' narratives and its influence on attitudes and behavioral norms.[223] Other researchers argue that explanations for some of the differences in research results would become clearer if research methodologies took account of a wider range of contextual factors including power relationships, rather than focusing on experimental or even field research studies to identify patterns of individual cognition and behavior.[224] Research also finds that the cost of reaching people with mis- or disinformation, not the cost of creating it, is a bottleneck for those intent on distributing

[216] 2020 Election Research Project (2020).
[217] Ecker *et al.* (2024); Robertson *et al.* (2024), supported in part by Google Jigsaw and the Templeton World Charity Foundation.
[218] Forum on Information and Democracy (2024c).
[219] Gotfredsen & Dowling (2024).
[220] Bellan (2024).
[221] Kroet (2024).
[222] Kennedy *et al.* (2022); Twomey *et al.* (2023); Weismueller *et al.* (2023); Guess *et al.* (2023a), supported by Meta, plus various foundations and universities.
[223] Reddi *et al.* (2023).
[224] Martínez-Costa *et al.*'s (2023) work builds on theories of self-perception, self-efficacy, confirmation bias, miscalibration, misplacement and mis-estimation from psychology and economics.

mis- and disinformation, and that the evidence for the effectiveness of microtargeting through personalization is, in any case, limited.[225]

There is much less research on the role of mis- and disinformation in shaping public opinion in non-Western countries. As in the Global North, there is little consensus in the research community on how to define what counts as 'fake' or 'false news'. It is often the state that determines what is to count as misleading information, and this applies in both autocratic and democratic countries. Especially in countries in the Global Majority World, the ontological and epistemic implications of using language like information 'disorder', 'threat' or 'pollution' can be symptomatic of ethnocentrism that privileges a Western view of how information should be generated and assimilated in liberal democracies, with criticisms focusing on who is doing the labeling, what is being labeled as well as on how it is labeled.[226]

It is important to note that research in some countries in the Global Majority World points to positive features of online filter bubbles and echo chambers, which are found to provide some degree of respite from targeted attacks on marginalized groups.

Positive features of filter bubbles and echo chambers. This phenomenon is shown to help protect marginalized groups – e.g., feminists, LGBQT+ populations, those with disabilities, religious groups or political dissidents – by providing a safe space and possibilities for avoiding political or social repression. For vulnerable populations and disadvantaged or marginalized groups, the appearance of polarized groups communicating in 'filter bubbles' can yield safe spaces to express opinions, and well-conceived algorithms have the potential to enable people to express their ideas and identities without fear of punishment.[227]

Differences in news media and information use, experiences of harassment and abuse, invasive data collection and propagation of mis- and disinformation are implicated in fanning 'the flames of hatred and division in society'.[228] Overall, research suggests that exposure to like-minded political content is one of a number of causes of polarization of public opinion. Some argue that 'politically partisan online news echo chambers are generally small – much smaller than is typically assumed in public and policy debate',[229] the claim being that research on the negative impacts of mis- and disinformation exaggerates the harms.[230] One expert interviewed for this report suggested that empirical evidence on polarization indicates that mis- and disinformation and social media algorithms contribute to a small extent. While there is little evidence that most people are influenced by the mis-and disinformation they encounter online, elite cues matter more in terms of impact and influence, and the long-term effects are not well understood.[231] Another expert observed that the causal relationship may be that polarization in society generally is itself a cause of people falling for mis-and disinformation.[232] As a further expert pointed out, the availability of platforms has allowed people who could not get into mainstream media to get a name for themselves and cover a different side of the news.[233]

[225] Simon *et al.* (2023).
[226] Banaji & Bhat (2022); Banaji *et al.* (2019); Harsin (2024).
[227] Erickson (2024); Toff *et al.* (2021b).
[228] Bennett & Livingston (2020, p. 20).
[229] Ross Arguedas *et al.* (2022a, p. 17).
[230] Altay & Acerbi (2023, p. 2), supported in part by BBC World Service Trusted News Initiative; Allcott & Gentzkow (2017, p. 211); Karpf (2020); McGonagle *et al.* (2019).
[231] Interview with Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, then Director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Professor of Political Communication at the University of Oxford, UK, 12 February 2024.
[232] Interview with Natalia Aruguete, Researcher at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET, Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas), Professor at the National University of Quilmes (Universidad Nacional de Quilmes), Argentina, 13 February 2024.
[233] Interview with Eugenia Mitchelstein, Associate Professor and Chair in the Department of Social Sciences, University of San Andrés (Universidad de San Andrés), Co-Director at the Center for the Study of Media and Society in Argentina (MESO, Centro de Estudios sobre Medios y Sociedad), 27 February 2024. See also Boczkowski & Mitchelstein (2021, 2022); Mitchelstein & Boczkowski (2023).

In addition, cross-disciplinary and longitudinal research is relatively scarce.[234] In some cases, the negative effects of mis- and disinformation on political outcomes and democracy are assumed at the outset of a study, and in others, the impacts on truth/trust in expertise, institutions and the news media are alluded to, but the role of mis and disinformation is unclear or unspecified.[235]

Based on this synthesis of research, filter bubbles and echo chambers are 'not phenomena purely related to algorithms and what information they present, but to how people react to and interact with information',[236] and this depends on the locale. It is essential to undertake research that considers individual agency, the market structural conditions (financial and business models) in the news media and platform industries and political ideologies that feed polarization, if polarization phenomena are to be understood.[237]

Even if vulnerability to mis- and disinformation and its impact on public opinion varies by context, there is no doubt that powerful actors do jeopardize 'free and open opinion formation as well as promote the dispersal of communicative power'.[238] Research on the effects of filter bubbles and echo chambers on public opinion and polarization needs to acknowledge that what 'is unproblematic for one individual can have fatal consequences for another… which consequences are negative and which are positive is always contestable'.[239] In the real world of politics and democracy, governance rules and tools are needed to enable people to resist the negative implications of harmful information, while seeking to protect human rights and uphold the normative goals of the news media – and information ecosystems generally. Counterpower is essential if news media and platform power are to be resisted.

5 Strengthening Trust and Resilience to Mis- and Disinformation

Building trust in the news media is crucial for democracy. When trust is low or unevenly distributed over political divides, there are no easy solutions.[240] Governance and policy interventions are discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 with a focus on the potential for the exercise of counterpower to both dominant news media and mis- and disinformation. This section is concerned with how journalists and media organizations try to remedy declining trust and trustworthiness when it occurs.[241]

One strategy is for journalists to be more transparent about their work, reporting factual content and avoiding opinions where possible.[242] The benefits of sharing information on the process of writing a news story or sharing sources are illustrated by a cross-country initiative to increase transparency – the annual International Journalism Festival, the biggest free and open-to-the-public media event in Europe.[243] The literature suggests that news media organizations can address declining trust by addressing four aspects of news production (see Figure 2.1).[244]

[234] Obreja (2023).
[235] Kapantai *et al.* (2021, p. 1303), funded by the European Commission; van der Linden (2023, p. 96), citing Vosoughi *et al.* (2018); Eady *et al.* (2023), supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and several other US foundations; Nyhan *et al.* (2023), the Facebook Open Research and Transparency (FORT) team provided substantial support; Guess *et al.* (2023a), supported by Meta as well as a variety of US foundations; Allcott & Gentzkow (2017); LSE Truth, Trust & Technology Commission (2018).
[236] Talamanca & Arfini (2022, p. 19), supported in part by the Ministry of University and Research (MUR, Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca), Italy.
[237] Pickard (2020a).
[238] Seipp *et al.* (2023b, p. 20).
[239] Geiß *et al.* (2021, p. 683).
[240] Skovsgaard & Andersen (2020).
[241] Kohring & Matthes (2007).
[242] Newman & Fletcher (2017), supported by Google UK as part of the Digital News Initiative.
[243] See www.journalismfestival.com/faq.
[244] Kohring & Matthes (2007); Prochazka & Schweiger (2019).

Figure 2.1
Building trust in news

Source: Banerjee et al. (2023, p. 4)

What the public expects from news media has been investigated in Brazil, India, the United Kingdom and the United States.[245] Common expectations were that news organizations should work towards more transparency, achieving better alignment of editorial coverage with concerns in people's everyday lives and preserving media's independence. There were differences with respect to perceptions of newsroom diversity and concerns about one-sided coverage and initiatives to engage more with audiences. This study indicated that those who trust news are more receptive to initiatives that increase audience engagement, whereas the most distrusting individuals are likely to view all media outlets negatively and are harder to reach.

6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has emphasized that what counts as 'news' is hard to define – it includes legacy media organizations, online news producers, mainstream and 'alternative media' and content produced not only by professional journalists but also by a host of other individuals. The focus is mainly on the news industry that employs professional journalists, but the role of actors who produce mis- and disinformation has also been examined.

The analysis of research on asymmetrical power relations between legacy news media organizations and online news media, big tech-owned platforms and their audiences highlighted how the structure of the news media industry and platform dominance of the advertising market are key factors contributing to what is widely seen as an 'information crisis'. Market structures, ownership arrangements and the financial stability of news media organizations differ among countries, as do the offline material conditions in people's lives. These factors affect trust (or mistrust) in news media, and the circulation of mis- and disinformation.

Healthy information ecosystems depend on a robust public sphere. Mis- and disinformation circulating at scale through legacy and online news media were shown to be incompatible with people's fundamental rights 'to hold opinions without interference' and to 'impart information and ideas through any media'. The analysis yielded a complicated picture of what happens when people cannot tell the difference between accurate and inaccurate – or false – information. Questions about who consumes the news, whether they trust it and whether exposure to content is a principal cause of changes in people's attitudes and behaviors that lead to political polarization were shown to be difficult to answer based on existing empirical research.

The research evidence indicates that a focus on the public's declining news media trust (in some countries) needs to be complemented by research on media organizations' responsibilities

[245] Banerjee *et al.* (2023) – a mix of survey research, in-depth qualitative interviews, focus groups and other techniques.

to demonstrate their trustworthiness, although it is also important to note that people access news even if they distrust it. Declining news media trust in Western societies may partly be a response to rising skepticism about political and other institutions. Increasing levels of distrust may be desirable if this is associated with critical thinking, while recognizing that distrust can also be associated with nativist and racist sentiments. As a media historian notes, 'trust in institutions is salutary for democracy only to a point. The decline in trust in most institutions that public polling has documented since the 1960s was a decline from what was arguably much too unquestioning a level of trust'.[246]

Declining trust in news media might be a sign of a more intellectually active public. As emphasized in the context of South Africa, research indicates that it is essential for journalists to engage with questions about what constitutes 'truth', 'accuracy' and 'facts' to avoid being branded as the 'lying press'.[247] This is important in all countries where journalism faces 'moral panics' around mis- and disinformation.

The design and methodologies of much research is used for assessing the relationships between news media engagement, people's attitudes and behaviors and how the news media plays a role in the social and political ordering of societies, especially in their information ecosystems. Many studies aim to establish direct causal links between mis- and disinformation, changes in attitudes and behaviors and political polarization. This research is informed by theories of media effects and is undertaken in experimental or quasi-experimental settings or based on survey respondent self-reporting.

Other studies question whether the search for direct causal effects is appropriate. This research also points to the complexity of relationships that are shaped by encounters with news media and mis- and disinformation. These research traditions emphasize the agency of audiences to interpret the information they encounter. In this context, the relationship between filter bubbles, echo chambers, political polarization and mis- and disinformation is a reciprocal one that depends as much on conditions online as on conditions in the social, political, cultural and economic environment.

Despite the absence of consensus on the specific causes and consequences of distrust in news media and the rise of mis- and disinformation, this distrust is clearly implicated in harms to individuals and society – especially to marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

The synthesis of research in this chapter shows that:

- Dependence of news media on digital platforms places pressure on journalists and news organizations struggling to adjust to declining advertising revenue (PSM also faces varying levels of financial support). News media challenges, including declining advertising, are due in large part to platform business models and the priority given by digital platforms to monetizing audience engagement. Most news organizations are struggling to maintain financial sustainability and independence, and news deserts are emerging in some regions.

- When news media industry concentration rises, this is found to weaken media pluralism and perceptions of the trustworthiness of news organizations. News organizations' dependence on digital platforms varies by country, type of news, legacy versus online and strategies to address sub-audience segments, including younger audiences. Avenues are needed to strengthen the bargaining power of, especially smaller, news organizations against the platforms.

- State ownership of news media is viewed positively in some democracies and negatively in authoritarian states, but it is widely acknowledged that a diverse news media industry is essential to support a healthy information ecosystem.

[246] Schudson (2022, p. 150).
[247] Wasserman (2020a).

- News media trust depends on variables including age, gender, education, ideology and partisanship and socio-economic status. There are large differences across countries. In democratic and authoritarian countries interest in, and knowledge of, politics influences news media trust; this is linked to interest and participation in politics – and this linkage seems to be becoming stronger over time.

- News media trust is declining in some countries, stable in others and increasing in yet others. Declining trust in news media (and public authorities) is likely to persist in countries where it is already present.

- News avoidance is problematic because it isolates people from public life. People report that they avoid the news if it is too pessimistic, to protect their mental health or to cope with information overload.

- Research on news media consumption confirms that exposure to incidental news grows as social media use increases. Selective news exposure and news avoidance is influenced by factors such as confidence in the ability to discriminate between accurate and false information, political knowledge and whether people belong to homogeneous social groups. People may access news even if they distrust it.

- The destabilizing effects of mis- and disinformation on political processes are studied mainly in the United States and other Western countries. Countries outside the West are included in some studies, but coverage of the whole of the Global Majority World is patchy.

- The role of government bodies, ruling political parties and other actors in manipulating information during critical election periods is a concern in many countries. Especially in Global Majority World countries, mis- and disinformation can be due to polarized and ethnically charged politics on all points along the political spectrum. This occurs when legacy and online media engage in the production or circulation of mis- and disinformation.

- The weaponization of information is often linked to far-right groups doing the bidding of foreign powers, and mis- and disinformation campaigns ramp up in times of conflict.

- Cognitive biases can lead to overconfidence in abilities to detect mis- or disinformation, and exposure to like-minded political content can be associated with polarization, but partisan online echo chambers are generally found to be smaller than is typically assumed in policy debates.

- Self-imposed filter bubbles in some contexts can help protect marginalized groups by providing a safe space to express opinions and avoid political or social repression.

Research is needed:

- To investigate the respective roles of legacy news media, online news media and political actors (as well as other actors) who contribute to mis- and disinformation.

- To investigate factors contributing to differences between healthy and unhealthy forms of skepticism towards content and information sources.

- To undertake longitudinal studies with global coverage to assess relationships between changes in media trust and in political polarization and the experience of mis- and disinformation, using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

- To provide independent monitoring of the news media industry's capacity to sustain trustworthy news, focusing on threats to legacy and online news media, and how the platformization of news is affecting news media organizations' financial sustainability.

- To study different types of mis- and disinformation, including hate speech and conspiracy theories, and their impact on the public sphere, focusing on actors in addition to the far right, and on how they are incentivized to weaponize information.

- To examine how different news media formats can be used to reach a broad public, and how these formats are perceived with a view towards reducing problems created by news avoidance and by selective news exposure.

- To provide holistic assessments of resilience to mis- and disinformation across all countries to inform strategies for countering mis- and disinformation and the conditions that give rise to these types of information.

References

- 2020 Election Research Project. (2020). A proposal for understanding social media's impact on elections: Peer-reviewed scientific research. *Medium*, 31 August. https://medium.com/@2020_election_research_project/a-proposal-for-understanding-social-medias-impact-on-elections-4ca5b7aae10
- Aalberg, T., Blekesaune, A., & Elvestad, E. (2013). Media choice and informed democracy: Toward increasing news consumption gaps in Europe? *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18(3), 281-303. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161213485990
- Aharoni, T., Kligler-Vilenchik, N., & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, K. (2021). 'Be less of a slave to the news': A texto-material perspective on news avoidance among young adults. *Journalism Studies*, 22(1), 42-59. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1852885
- Aïmeur, E., Amri, S., & Brassard, G. (2023). Fake news, disinformation and misinformation in social media: A review. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, 13(30), 1-36. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13278-023-01028-5
- Akimenko, V., & Giles, K. (2020). Russia's cyber and information warfare. *Asia Policy*, 15(2), 67-75. www.jstor.org/stable/27023902
- Alieva, I., Moffitt, J. D., & Carley, K. M. (2022). How disinformation operations against Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny influence the international audience on Twitter. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, 12(80), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13278-022-00908-6
- Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 32(2), 211-236. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211
- Allen, J., Howland, B., Mobius, M., Rothschild, D., & Watts, D. J. (2020). Evaluating the fake news problem at the scale of the information ecosystem. *Science Advances*, 6(14), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aay3539
- Altay, S., & Acerbi, A. (2023). People believe misinformation is a threat because they assume others are gullible. *New Media & Society*, 26(11), 6440-6461. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448231153379
- Altay, S., Berriche, M., & Acerbi, A. (2023a). Misinformation on misinformation: Conceptual and methodological challenges. *Social Media + Society*, 9(1), 1-13. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/20563051221150412
- Altay, S., Fletcher, R., & Nielsen, R. K. (2024). News participation is declining: Evidence from 46 countries between 2015 and 2022. *New Media & Society, Online First*, 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241247822
- Altay, S., Nielsen, R. K., & Fletcher, R. (2023b). News can help! The impact of news media and digital platforms on awareness of and belief in misinformation. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 29(2), 459-484. https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612221148981
- Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
- Anderson, C. W. (2021). Fake news is not a virus: On platforms and their effects. *Communication Theory*, 31(1), 42-61. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtaa008
- Arcom. (2024). *The French and Information (Les Francais et information)*. www.arcom.fr/nos-ressources/etudes-et-donnees/etudes-bilans-et-rapports-de-larcom/les-francais-et-linformation
- Arendt, H. (1968). Truth and Politics. In H. Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (pp. 227-264). Viking Press.
- Aruguete, N., & Calvo, E. (2023). *Nosotros contra ellos: Cómo trabajan las redes para confirmar nuestras creencias y rechazar las de los otros [Us against them: How networks work to confirm our beliefs and reject those of others]*. Sociologie y Politica.
- Bagchi, C., Menczer, F., Lundquist, J., Tarafdar, M., Paik, A., & Grabowicz, P. (2024). Social media algorithms can curb misinformation, but do they? *ArXiv*. https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2409.18393
- Bakir, V., & McStay, A. (2018). Fake news and the economy of emotions: Problems, causes, solutions. *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 154-175. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1345645
- Bakker, B. N., & Lelkes, Y. (2024). Putting the affect into affective polarisation. *Cognition and Emotion*, 38(4), 418-436. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2024.2362366
- Banaji, S. (2024). Against resilience: The (anti-)ethics of participation in an unjust and unequal public sphere. Javnost – The Public, 31(1), 141-157. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2024.2311012
- Banaji, S., & Bhat, R. (2022). *Social Media and Hate*. Routledge.
- Banaji, S., Bhat, R., Agarwal, A., Passanha, N., & Pravin, M. S. (2019). *WhatsApp Vigilantes: An Exploration of Citizen Reception and Circulation of WhatsApp Misinformation Linked to Mob Violence in India*. Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Banerjee, S., Mont'Alverne, C., Ross Arguedas, A., Toff, B., Fletcher, R., & Nielsen, R. K. (2023). *Strategies for Building Trust in News: What the Public Say They Want Across Four Countries* Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.
- Bannerman, S. (2022). Platform imperialism, communications law and relational sovereignty. *New Media & Society*, 26(4), 1816-1833. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221077284
- Baptista, J. P., & Gradim, A. (2022). Online disinformation on Facebook: The spread of fake news during the Portuguese 2019 election. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 30(2), 297-312. https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2020.1843415

- Bargaoanu, A., & Radu, L. (2018). Fake news or Disinformation 2.0? Some insights into Romanians' digital behaviour. *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, 18(1), 24-38. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3296922
- Baron, G. R. (2002). *Now Is Too Late: Survival in an Era of Instant News*. Financial Times, Prentice Hall.
- BBC Media Action. (2021). *Enabling Media Markets to Work for Democracy: An International Fund for Public Interest Media*. International Fund for Public Interest Media (IFPIM).
- Bell, E., Owen, T., Brown, P. D., Hauka, C., & Rashidian, N. (2017). *The Platform Press: How Silicon Valley Reengineered Journalism*. Tow Center for Journalism, Columbia Journalism School, US.
- Bellan, R. (2024). Meta axed CrowdTangle, a tool for tracking disinformation. Critics claim its replacement has just '1% of the features'. *TechCrunch*, 15 August. https://techcrunch.com/2024/08/15/meta-shut-down-crowdtangle-a-tool-for-tracking-disinformation-heres-how-its-replacement-compares
- Benequista, N., Abbott, S., Rothman, P., & Mano, W. (Eds) (2019). *International Media Development: Historical Perspectives and New Frontiers*. Peter Lang Publishers.
- Benkler, Y. (2020). A Political Economy of the Origins of Asymmetric Propaganda in American Media. In S. Livingston & W. L. Bennett (Eds), *The Disinformation Age* (pp. 43-66). Cambridge University Press.
- Benkler, Y., Faris, R., & Roberts, H. (2018). *Network Propaganda: Manipulation, Disinformation, and Radicalization in American Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Bennett, W. L., & Kneuer, M. (2023). Communication and democratic erosion: The rise of illiberal public spheres. *European Journal of Communication*, 39(2), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231231217378
- Bennett, W. L., & Livingston, S. (Eds) (2020). *The Disinformation Age: Politics, Technology and Disruptive Communication in the United States*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bernardi, A. J. B., & de Morais, J. A. (2021). Fascismo à brasileira? Análise de conteúdo dos discursos de Bolsonaro após o segundo turno das eleições presidenciais de 2018 *Política & Sociedade*, 20(48), 300-327. https://doi.org/10.5007/2175-7984.2021.72401
- Beskow, D. M., & Carley, K. M. (2020). Characterization and Comparison of Russian and Chinese Disinformation Campaigns. In K. Shu, S. Wang, D. Lee, & H. Liu (Ed.), *Disinformation, Misinformation, and Fake News in Social Media: Emerging Research Challenges and Opportunities* (pp. 63-81). Springer International Publishing.
- Besson, S. (2011). Human rights and democracy in a global context: Decoupling and recoupling. *Ethics & Global Politics*, 4(1), 19-50. https://doi.org/10.3402/egp.v4i1.6348
- Bhat, P., & Chadha, K. (2020). Anti-media populism: Expressions of media distrust by right-wing media in India. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 13(2), 166-182. https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2020.1739320
- Bimber, B., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2020). The unedited public sphere. *New Media & Society*, 22(4), 700-715. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819893980
- Bineham, J. L. (1988). A historical account of the hypodermic model in mass communication. *Communication Monographs*, 55(3), 230–246. https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758809376169
- Blöbaum, B. (Ed.) (2016). *Trust and Communication in a Digitized World: Models and Concepts of Trust Research*. Springer International Publishing.
- Boczkowski, P. J., & Mitchelstein, E. (2021). *The Digital Environment: How We Live, Learn, Work, and Play Now*. MIT Press.
- Boczkowski, P. J., & Mitchelstein, E. (2022). *El Entorno Digital: Breve manual para entender cómo vivimos, aprendemos, trabajamos y pasamos el tiempo libre hoy*. Siglo Veintiuno.
- Bos, L., Kruikemeier, S., & de Vreese, C. (2016). Nation binding: How public service broadcasting mitigates political selective exposure. *PLOS ONE*, 11(5), 1-11. https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0155112
- Boukes, M., & Vliegenthart, R. (2017). News consumption and its unpleasant side effect: Studying the effect of hard and soft news exposure on mental well-being over time. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 29(3), 137-147. https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-1105/a000224
- Boulianne, S., Koc-Michalska, K., & Bimber, B. (2020). Right-wing populism, social media and echo chambers in Western democracies. *New Media & Society*, 22(4), 683-699. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819893983
- Boulianne, S., Tenove, C., & Buffie, J. (2022). Complicating the resilience model: A four-country study about misinformation. *Media and Communication*, 10(3), 169-182. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v10i3.5346
- Bovet, A., & Makse, H. A. (2019). Influence of fake news in Twitter during the 2016 US presidential election. *Nature Communications*, 10(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-018-07761-2
- boyd, d. (2014). *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. Yale University Press.
- Bradshaw, S., Bailey, H., & Howard, P. N. (2021). *Industrialized Disinformation: 2020 Global Inventory of Organized Social Media Manipulation*. Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford Project on Computational Propaganda.
- Briant, E. L. (2021). *Propaganda Machine: The Hidden Story of Cambridge Analytica and the Digital Influence Industry*. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.
- Bridgman, A., Merkley, E., Loewen, P. J., Owen, T., *et al.* (2020). The causes and consequences of COVID-19 misperceptions: Understanding the role of news and social media. *HKS Misinformation Review*, 1(Special Issue), 1-18. https://misinforeview.hks.harvard.edu/article/the-causes-and-consequences-of-covid-19-misperceptions-understanding-the-role-of-news-and-social-media

- Broughton Micova, S., & Schnurr, D. (2024). *Systemic Risk in Digital Services: Benchmarks for Evaluating the Management of Risks to Electoral Processes: Report*. CERRE (Centre on Regulation in Europe).
- Brown, C., & Levin, J. (2020). Prioritizing original news reporting on Facebook. Meta, Facebook, 30 June. https://about.fb.com/news/2020/06/prioritizing-original-news-reporting-on-facebook
- Buarque, B., & Zavershinskaia, P. (2022). The Far-Right Politics of 'Truth': An Exploratory Analysis of the 'Truths' Produced by AfD Kompakt and Patriotic Alternative. In V. A. Bruno (Ed.), *Populism and Far-Right: Trends in Europe* (pp. 25-48). Educatt.
- Budak, C., Nyhan, B., Rothschild, D. M., Thorson, E., & Watts, D. J. (2024). Misunderstanding the harms of online misinformation. *Nature*, 630(8015), 45-53. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-024-07417-w
- Burgess, J., & Hurcombe, E. (2019). Digital journalism as symptom, response, and agent of change in the platformed media environment. *Digital Journalism*, 7(3), 359-367. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2018.1556313
- Buturoiu, R., Corbu, N., & Boțan, M. (2023). *Patterns of News Consumption in a High-Choice Media Environment*. Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Cano-Orón, L., Calvo, D., García, G. L., & Baviera, T. (2021). Disinformation in Facebook ads in the 2019 Spanish general election campaigns. *Media and Communication*, 9(1), 217-228. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v9i1.3335
- Carson, A., & Gibbons, A. (2023). The big chill? How journalists and sources perceive and respond to fake news laws in Indonesia and Singapore. *Journalism Studies*, 24(14), 1819-1838. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2192299
- Castro, L., Strömbäck, J., Esser, F., Van Aelst, P., *et al.* (2022). Navigating high-choice European political information environments: A comparative analysis of news user profiles and political knowledge. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 27(4), 827-859. https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612211012572
- Center for Countering Digital Hate. (2021). *The Toxic Ten. How Ten Fringe Publishers Fuel 69% of Digital Climate Change Denial*. https://counterhate.com/research/the-toxic-ten
- Chadwick, A. (2017). *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*. Second Edition. Oxford University Press.
- Chaguaceda, A., Cilano Pelaez, J., & Puerta, M. I. (2023). Illiberal narratives in Latin America: Russian and allied media as vehicles of autocratic cooperation. *The Journal of Illiberalism Studies*, 3(2), 111-123. https://doi.org/10.53483/XCMW3558
- Chasi, C., & Rodny-Gumede, Y. (2022). Decolonial journalism: New notes on ubuntu and the public interest. *Journalism Studies*, 23(13), 1625-1637. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2022.2083006
- Chavalarias, D. (2024). Minuit moins dix à l'horloge de Poutine: Analyse de réseaux des ingérences étrangères dans les élections législatives de 2024. Hal Open Science. https://hal.science/hal-04629585v3/document
- Cheng, D. (2016). *Cyber Dragon: Inside China's Information Warfare and Cyber Operations*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- Chibuwe, A. (2020). Social media and elections in Zimbabwe: Twitter war between pro-ZANU-PF and pro-MDC-A netizens. *South African Journal of Communication Theory and Research*, 46(4), 7-30. https://doi.org/10.1080/02500167.2020.1723663
- Chiumbu, S., & Munoriyarwa, A. (2023). Exploring data journalism practices in Africa: Data politics, media ecosystems and newsroom infrastructures. *Media, Culture & Society*, 45(4), 841-858. https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437231155341
- Choi, J., Kim, K. K., & Kim, Y. (2020). Emotional Analysis with News Using Text Mining for Framing Theory. In R. Lee (Ed.), *Computer and Information Science* (pp. 95-108). Springer International Publishing.
- Christofoletti, R., & Becker, D. (2023). Pesquisas sobre confiança na mídia e o fortalecimento da ideia de crise permanente de credibilidade. *Chasqui: Revista Latinoamericana de Comunicación*, 154, 53-67. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=9274150
- Claesson, A. (2023). Twitter: A necessary evil? Journalistic responses to Elon Musk and the denormalization of social media. *Journalism, Online First*, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849231221616
- Conroy-Krutz, J., & Koné, J. (2022). *Confronting Threats to Civic Spaces: Final Report*. Afrobarometer. www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/NED-Confronting-Threats-Report-Afrobarometer-Final-27june22.pdf
- Corbu, N., Bârgăoanu, A., Durach, F., & Udrea, G. (2021). Fake news going viral: The mediating effect of negative emotions. *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 4(2), 58-87. www.mlar.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/4_Corbu.pdf
- Couldry, N., & Curran, J. (Eds) (2003). *Contesting Media Power: Alternative Media in a Networked World*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Couldry, N., & Hepp, A. (2016). *The Mediated Construction of Reality: Society, Culture, Mediatization*. Polity.
- Council of Europe. (2022). *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)12 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Electoral Communication and Media Coverage of Election Campaigns*. CM/Rec(2022)12.
- Cramer, B. W. (2020). From liability to accountability: The ethics of citing Section 230 to avoid the obligations of running a social media platform. *Journal of Information Policy*, 10, 123-150. https://doi.org/10.5325/jinfopoli.10.2020.0123
- Curran, J., & Hesmondhalgh, D. (Eds) (2019). *Media and Society*. 6th Edition. Bloomsbury.
- Curran, J., & Park, M.-J. (Eds) (1999). *De-Westernizing Media Studies*. Routledge.
- Curtis, J. S. (2021). Springing the 'Tacitus Trap': Countering Chinese state-sponsored disinformation. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 32(2), 229-265. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2021.1870429
- Cushion, S. (2021). Are public service media distinctive from the market? Interpreting the political information environments of BBC and commercial news in the United Kingdom. *European Journal of Communication*, 37(1), 3-20. https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231211012149

- d'Haenens, L., Lo, W. H., & Moore, M. (2022). Innovation in Journalism: How Technology Affects the News Media, Publication Formats, and the Journalist Profession. In J. Trappel & T. Tomaz (Eds), *Success and Failure in News Media Performance: Comparative Analysis in the Media for Democracy Monitor 2021* (pp. 337-345). Nordicom.
- Dahlberg, L. (2014). The Habermasian public sphere and exclusion: An engagement with poststructuralist-influenced critics. *Communication Theory*, 24(1), 21-41. https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12010
- Daniels, J. (2018). The algorithmic rise of the 'alt-right'. *Contexts*, 17(1), 60-65. https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504218766547
- Deuze, M. (2014). *Media Life*. Polity Press.
- Devenney, M. (2009). The limits of communicative rationality and deliberative democracy. *Journal of Power*, 2(1), 137-154. https://doi.org/10.1080/17540290902760915
- Dierickx, L., Lindén, C.-G., & Opdahl, A. L. (2023c). The Information Disorder Level (IDL) index: A Human-Based Metric to Assess the Factuality of Machine-Generated Content. In D. Ceolin, T. Caselli, & M. Tulin (Eds), *Disinformation in Open Online Media* (pp. 60-71). Springer-Verlag.
- Dommett, K. (2023). The inter-institutional impact of digital platform companies on democracy: A case study of the UK media's digital campaigning coverage. *New Media & Society*, 25(10), 2763-2780. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211028546
- Douai, A. (2019). Global and Arab Media in the Post-Truth Era: Globalization, Authoritarianism and Fake News. In *IEMed: Mediterranean Yearbook 2019* (pp. 124-132). IEMed – European Institute of the Mediterranean.
- Dowling, M.-E. (2022). Cyber information operations: Cambridge Analytica's challenge to democratic legitimacy. *Journal of Cyber Policy*, 7(2), 230-248. https://doi.org/10.1080/23738871.2022.2081089
- Dubois, E., & Blank, G. (2018). The echo chamber is overstated: The moderating effect of political interest and diverse media. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(5), 729-745. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2018.1428656
- Duffy, A., & Ang, P. H. (2019). Digital journalism: defined, refined, or re-defined. *Digital Journalism*, 7(3), 378-385. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1568899
- Dutta, M. J., & Pal, M. (2020). Theorizing from the Global South: Dismantling, resisting, and transforming communication theory. *Communication Theory*, 30(4), 349-369. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtaa010
- Dutton, W. H. (2023). *The Fifth Estate: The Power Shift of the Digital Age*. Oxford University Press.
- Eady, G., Nagler, J., Guess, A., Zilinksy, J., & Tucker, J. A. (2019). How many people live in political bubbles on social media? Evidence From linked survey and Twitter data. *SAGE Open*, 9(1), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019832705
- Eady, G., Paskhalis, T., Zilinsky, J., Bonneau, R., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. A. (2023). Exposure to the Russian Internet Research Agency foreign influence campaign on Twitter in the 2016 US election and its relationship to attitudes and voting behavior. *Nature Communications*, 14(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-022-35576-9
- EC (European Commission). (2022c). *Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act)*. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj
- EC. (2024b). *Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 Establishing a Common Framework for Media Service (European Media Freedom Act)*. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202401083
- EC: Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, Parcu, P., Brogi, E., Verza, S., Da Costa Leite Borges, D., *et al.* (2022) *Study on Media Plurality and Diversity Online – Final Report*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2759/529019
- Ecker, U., Tay, L. Q., Roozenbeek, J., van der Linden, S., *et al.* (2024). Why misinformation must not be ignored. *PsyArXiv*. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/8a6cj
- Eddy, K. (2024). Republicans, young adults now nearly as likely to trust info from social media as from national news outlets. *Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/10/16/republicans-young-adults-now-nearly-as-likely-to-trust-info-from-social-media-as-from-national-news-outlets/
- Edgerly, S. (2022). The head and heart of news avoidance: How attitudes about the news media relate to levels of news consumption. *Journalism*, 23(9), 1828-1845. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849211012922
- Eichler, H. (2023). Cross-Media and Platformised Journalism: ARD's Innovation Attempts at Becoming a Multi-Platform Contributor to Society. In M. Puppis & C. Ali (Eds), *Public Service Media's Contribution to Society: RIPE@2021* (pp. 265-288). Nordicom.
- Elishar-Malka, V., Ariel, Y., & Weimann, G. (2020). Rethinking political communication in the digital sphere. *The Journal of International Communication*, 26(2), 190-210. https://doi.org/10.1080/13216597.2020.1771397
- Elliott, V. (2022). Meta made millions in ads from networks of fake accounts. *Wired*, 23 June. www.wired.com/story/meta-is-making-millions-from-fake-accounts
- Elmer, G., & Ward-Kimola, S. (2023). Crowdfunding (as) disinformation: 'Pitching' 5G and election fraud campaigns on GoFundMe. *Media, Culture & Society*, 45(3), 578-594. https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437221136009
- Erickson, J. (2024). Rethinking the filter bubble? Developing a research agenda for the protective filter bubble. *Big Data & Society*, 11(1), 1-4. https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517241231276
- Erkmen, Ö. (2023). Data journalism: A systematic literature review. *Journalism Studies*, 25(1), 58-79. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2289885

- Evans, S. K., Pearce, K. E., Vitak, J., & Treem, J. W. (2017). Explicating affordances: A conceptual framework for understanding affordances in communication research. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22(1), 35-52. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12180
- Farkas, J., & Schou, J. (2018). Fake news as a floating signifier: Hegemony, antagonism and the politics of falsehood. *Javnost – The Public*, 25(3), 298-314. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2018.1463047
- Farooq, G. (2018). Politics of fake news: How WhatsApp became a potent propaganda tool in India. *Media Watch*, 9(1), 106-117. https://doi.org/10.15655/mw/2018/v9i1/49279
- Fawzi, N., Steindl, N., Obermaier, M., Prochazka, F., *et al.* (2021). Concepts, causes and consequences of trust in news media – A literature review and framework. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 45(2), 154-174. https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2021.1960181
- Forum on Information and Democracy. (2024c). The EU's Digital Services Act must provide researchers access to VLOPs' experimental protocols. Press Release on the paper of Alistair Knott, Dino Predreschi, Jonathan Stray & Stuart Russell, 14 June. https://informationdemocracy.org/2024/06/14/the-forum-members-of-its-working-group-and-researchers-call-for-the-dsa-to-provide-researchers-access-to-conduct-experimental-evaluations-of-vlops
- Fraser, N. (1992). Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (pp. 109-142). MIT Press.
- Fraser, N., & Nash, K. (Eds) (2014). *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere*. Polity Press.
- Freedman, D. (2014). The puzzle of media power: Notes toward a materialist approach. *International Journal of Communication*, 8(2014), 319-334. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/2081
- Freelon, D., & Wells, C. (2020). Disinformation as political communication. *Political Communication*, 37(2), 145-156. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1723755
- Freelon, D., Bossetta, M., Wells, C., Lukito, J., Xia, Y., & Adams, K. (2022). Black trolls matter: Racial and ideological asymmetries in social media disinformation. *Social Science Computer Review*, 40(3), 560-578. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439320914853
- Frieden, R. (2014). *Ex Ante Versus Ex Post Approaches to Network Neutrality: A Cost Benefit Analysis*. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2493945
- Frislich, L., & Humprecht, E. (2021). *Trust, Democratic Resilience, and the Infodemic*. Policy Paper. Israel Public Policy Institute, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, & Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany.
- FTC (Federal Trade Commission). (2024). FTC launches inquiry into generative AI investments and partnerships. Press Release, 25 January. www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2024/01/ftc-launches-inquiry-generative-ai-investments-partnerships
- Gallagher, M. (2023). Gendered Disinformation and Platform Accountability. In M. Gallagher & A. Vega Montiel (Eds), *The Handbook of Gender, Communication, and Women's Human Rights* (pp. 53-69). John Wiley & Sons.
- Garcia Ramirez, D. (2021). Journalism in the attention economy – The relation between digital platforms and news organisations. *Brazilian Journalism Research*, 17(1), 1-24. https://doi.org/10.25200/BJR.v17n1.2021.1332
- Garnett, H. A., James, T. S., & Caal-Lam, S. (2024). *The Electoral Integrity Global Report 2024*. The Electoral Integrity Project at Royal Military College of Canada, Queen's University, Canada and University of East Anglia UK.
- Geiß, S., Magin, M., Jürgens, P., & Stark, B. (2021). Loopholes in the echo chambers: How the echo chamber metaphor oversimplifies the effects of information gateways on opinion expression. *Digital Journalism*, 9(5), 660-686. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1873811
- Gerbaudo, P. (2022). Theorizing reactive democracy: The social media public sphere, online crowds, and the plebiscitary logic of online reactions. *Democratic Theory*, 9(2), 120-138. https://doi.org/10.3167/dt.2022.090207
- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Signorielli, N., & Morgan, M. (1980). Aging with television: Images on television drama and conceptions of social reality. *Journal of Communication*, 30(1), 37-47. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ221287
- Germain, T. (2024). X bans and then unbans journalists and podcasters in Twitter's latest free speech massacre. *Gizmodo*, 9 January. https://gizmodo.com/elon-musk-x-twitter-journalists-banning-spree-1851151593
- Ghosh, D., & Scott, B. (2018). *Digital Deceit: The Technologies Behind Precision Propaganda on the Internet*. New America, Public Interest Technology, & Harvard Kennedy School Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, US.
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., & Goyanes, M. (2023). Fueling civil disobedience in democracy: WhatsApp news use, political knowledge, and illegal political protest. *New Media & Society*, 25(12), 3500-3520. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211047850
- Gillespie, T. (2020). Content moderation, AI, and the question of scale. *Big Data & Society*, 7(2), 1-5. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951720943234
- Gitelman, L. (2006). *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture*. MIT Press.
- Giusti, S., & Piras, E. (Eds) (2021). *Democracy and Fake News: Information Manipulation and Post-Truth Politics*. Routledge.
- Goffman, E. (1974). Frame Analysis: *An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Harvard University Press.
- Goldstein, J. A., Chao, J., Grossman, S., Stamos, A., & Tomz, M. (2024). How persuasive is AI-generated propaganda? *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Nexus*, 3(2), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgae034
- González-Bailón, S., Lazer, D., Barberá, P., Zhang, M., *et al.* (2023). Asymmetric ideological segregation in exposure to political news on Facebook. *Science*, 381(6656), 392-398. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.ade7138

- Gotfredsen, S. G., & Dowling, K. (2024). Meta is getting rid of CrowdTangle – And its replacement isn't as transparent or accessible. *Columbia Journalism Review*, 9 July. www.cjr.org/tow_center/meta-is-getting-rid-of-crowdtangle.php
- Greene, L. (2018). *Silicon States: The Power and Politics of Big Tech and What It Means for Our Future*. Counterpoint.
- Guess, A. M., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. (2019). Less than you think: Prevalence and predictors of fake news dissemination on Facebook. *Science Advances*, 5(1), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aau4586
- Guess, A. M., Malhotra, N., Pan, J., Barbera, P., *et al.* (2023a). How do social media feed algorithms affect attitudes and behavior in an election campaign? *Science*, 381(6656), 398-404. www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abp9364
- Guess, A. M., Malhotra, N., Pan, J., Barbera, P., *et al.* (2023b). Reshares on social media amplify political news but do not detectably affect beliefs or opinions. *Science*, 381(6656), 404-408. www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.add8424
- Gunton, K. (2022). The Impact of the Internet and Social Media Platforms on Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism. In R. Montasari, F. Carroll, I. Mitchell, S. Hara, & R. Bolton-King (Eds), *Privacy, Security and Forensics in The Internet of Things (IoT)* (pp. 167-177). Springer International Publishing.
- Guriev, S., & Treisman, D. (2019). Informational autocrats. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 33(4), 100-127. www.jstor.org/stable/26796838
- Gutiérrez-Coba, L. M., Coba-Gutiérrez, P., & Gómez-Díaz, J. A. (2020). Fake news about Covid-19: A comparative analysis of six Iberoamerican countries. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 78(2020), 237-264. https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2020-1476
- Habermas, J. (2015). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. John Wiley & Sons [first published in 1962 in German; first English translation 1989].
- Habermas, J. (2022). Reflections and hypotheses on a further structural transformation of the political public sphere. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 39(4), 145-171. https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764221112341
- Haidt, J., & Bail, C. (2024). *Social Media and Political Dysfunction: A Collaborative Review*. New York University.
- Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (Eds) (2012). *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hameleers, M., & Marquart, F. (2023). It's nothing but a deepfake! The effects of misinformation and deepfake labels delegitimizing an authentic political speech. *International Journal of Communication*, 17(2023), 6291-6307. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/20777
- Hamelink, C. J. (2023). *Communication and Human Rights: Towards Communicative Justice*. Polity.
- Hanitzsch, T., & Vos, T. P. (2018). Journalism beyond democracy: A new look into journalistic roles in political and everyday life. *Journalism*, 19(2), 146-164. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916673386
- Hanitzsch, T., Van Dalen, A., & Steindl, N. (2018). Caught in the nexus: A comparative and longitudinal analysis of public trust in the press. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 23(1), 3-23. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161217740695
- Harlow, S. (2017). *Liberation Technology in El Salvador: Re-appropriating Social Media among Alternative Media Projects*. Springer.
- Harsin, J. (2024). Three critiques of disinformation (for-hire) scholarship: Definitional vortexes, disciplinary unneighborliness, and cryptonormativity. *Social Media + Society*, 10(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231224732
- Hartley, J. M., Petre, C., Bengtsson, M., & Kammer, A. (2023). Autonomies and dependencies: Shifting configurations of power in the platformization of news. *Digital Journalism*, 11(8), 1375-1390. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2023.2257759
- Himma-Kadakas, M., & Ojamets, I. (2022). Debunking false information: Investigating journalists' fact-checking skills. *Digital Journalism*, 10(5), 866-887. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2043173
- Hofmann, J. (2024). Desinformation als Symptom. Ein Überblick. *In Zentrum für Analyse/Forschung am Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (Hg.): Wissenschaftskonferenz 2023. Meinungsbildung 2.0 – Strategien im Ringen um Deutungshoheit im digitalen Zeitalter* (pp. 20-31). Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz.
- Hopkins, J. (2020). The Concept of Affordances in Digital Media. In H. Friese, M. Nolden, G. Rebane, & M. Schreiter (Eds), *Handbuch Soziale Praktiken und Digitale Alltagswelten* (pp. 47-54). Springer VS.
- Humprecht, E., Esser, F., & Van Aelst, P. (2020). Resilience to online disinformation: A framework for cross-national comparative research. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 25(3), 493-516. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161219900126
- Humprecht, E., Esser, F., Aelst, P. V., Staender, A., & Morosoli, S. (2023). The sharing of disinformation in cross-national comparison: Analyzing patterns of resilience. *Information, Communication & Society*, 26(7), 1342-1362. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.2006744
- Hung, T.-C., & Hung, T.-W. (2022). How China's cognitive warfare works: A frontline perspective of Taiwan's anti-disinformation wars. *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 7(4), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogac016
- Huszár, F., Ktena, S. I., O'Brien, C., Belli, L., Schlaikjer, A., & Hardt, M. (2022). Algorithmic amplification of politics on Twitter. PNAS, 119(1), 1-6. www.pnas.org/doi/epdf/10.1073/pnas.2025334119
- Ihlebæk, K. A., Figenschou, T. U., Eldridge Ii, S. A., Frischlich, L., Cushion, S., & Holt, K. (2022). Understanding alternative news media and its contribution to diversity. *Digital Journalism*, 10(8), 1267-1282. www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21670811.2022.2134165
- Jackob, N. (2012). The tendency to trust as individual predisposition – Exploring the associations between interpersonal trust, trust in the media and trust in institutions. *Communications*, 37(1), 99-120. https://doi.org/10.1515/commun-2012-0005

- Jakobsson, P., & Stiernstedt, F. (2023). Trust and the media: Arguments for the (ir)relevance of a concept. *Journalism Studies*, 24(4), 479-495. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2169191
- Jamieson, K. H., & Albarracin, D. (2020). The relation between media consumption and misinformation at the outset of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic in the US. *The Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) Misinformation Review*, 1(2), 1-23. http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:42661740
- Jamieson, K. H., & Cappella, J. N. (2008). *Echo Chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the Conservative Media Establishment*. Oxford University Press.
- Jeppesen, S. (2016). Understanding alternative media power: Mapping content & practice to theory, ideology, and political action. *Democratic Communiqué*, 27(1), 54-77. https://journals.flvc.org/demcom/article/view/88322
- Jeppesen, S., Hoechsmann, M., Ulthiin, i. h., VanDyke, D., & McKee, M. (2022). *The Capitol Riots: Digital Media, Disinformation, and Democracy Under Attack*. Routledge.
- Jones-Jang, S. M., & Chung, M. (2024). Can we blame social media for polarization? Counter-evidence against filter bubble claims during the COVID-19 pandemic. *New Media & Society*, 26(6), 3370-3389. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221099591
- Jungherr, A., & Schroeder, R. (2021). Disinformation and the structural transformations of the public arena: Addressing the actual challenges to democracy. *Social Media + Society*, 7(1), 1-13. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2056305121988928
- Kantar Media. (2016). Brand and Trust in a Fragmented News Environment. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
- Kapantai, E., Christopoulou, A., Berberidis, C., & Peristeras, V. (2021). A systematic literature review on disinformation: Toward a unified taxonomical framework. *New Media & Society*, 23(5), 1301-1326. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820959296
- Karlsen, R., Beyer, A., & Steen-Johnsen, K. (2020). Do high-choice media environments facilitate news avoidance? A longitudinal study 1997-2016. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 64(5), 794-814. https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2020.1835428
- Karpf, D. (2020). How Digital Disinformation Turned Dangerous. In S. Livingston & W. L. Bennett (Eds), *The Disinformation Age* (pp. 153-168). Cambridge University Press.
- Katz, E. (1957). The two-step flow of communication: An up-to-date report on an hypothesis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 21(1), 61–78. https://doi.org/10.1086/266687
- Kennedy, I., Wack, M., Beers, A., Schafer, J. S., *et al.* (2022). Repeat spreaders and election delegitimization: A comprehensive dataset of misinformation Tweets from the 2020 US election. *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media*, 2(2022), 1-49. https://doi.org/10.51685/jqd.2022.013
- Kim, S. J. (2016). A repertoire approach to cross-platform media use behavior. *New Media & Society*, 18(3), 353-372. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814543162
- Klapper, J. T. (1960). *The Effects of Mass Communication*. Free Press.
- Kohring, M., & Matthes, J. (2007). Trust in news media: Development and validation of a multidimensional scale. *Communication Research*, 34(2), 231-252. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650206298071
- Kristensen, L. M., & Hartley, J. M. (2023). The infrastructure of news: Negotiating infrastructural capture and autonomy in data-driven news distribution. *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 307-318. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6388
- Kroet, C. (2024). Meta urged to answer EU questions on CrowdTangle. *Euronews*, 6 August. www.euronews.com/next/2024/08/16/meta-urged-to-answer-eu-questions-on-crowdtangle
- Krouwel, A., Kutiyski, Y., van Prooijen, J.-W., Martinsson, J., & Markstedt, E. (2017). Does extreme political ideology predict conspiracy beliefs, economic evaluations and political trust? Evidence From Sweden. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology,* 5(2), 435-462. https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v5i2.745
- Kuznetsova, E., & Makhortykh, M. (2023). Blame It on the algorithm? Russian government-sponsored media and algorithmic curation of political information on Facebook. *International Journal of Communication*, 17(2023), 971-992. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/18687
- la Cour, C. (2020). Theorising digital disinformation in international relations. *International Politics*, 57(4), 704-723. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-020-00215-x
- Labio-Bernal, A., & Manzano-Zambruno, L. (2023). 8M demonstrations, the Spanish far right and the pandemic in a hybrid media system. *Media and Communication*, 11(1), 114-124. https://idus.us.es/handle/11441/142909
- Labio-Bernal, A., & Romero-Domínguez, L. R. (2022). *Periodismo SOS – Del filantrocapitalismo al poder que mata*. Ediciones Pirámide.
- Langer, A. I., & Gruber, J. B. (2021). Political agenda setting in the hybrid media system: Why legacy media still matter a great deal. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 26(2), 313-340. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161220925023
- Lasswell, H. D. (1971). *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. MIT Press.
- Lecheler, S., & de Vreese, C. H. (2017). News media, knowledge, and political interest: Evidence of a dual role from a field experiment: News media, knowledge, and political interest. *Journal of Communication*, 67(4), 545-564. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12314
- Lemke, T., & Habegger, M. W. (2022). Foreign interference and social media networks: A relational approach to studying contemporary Russian disinformation. *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 7(2), 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogac004

- Linvill, D. L., & Warren, P. L. (2019). *Touched by the Trolls: How and Why a Coordinated Information Operation Interacts with Outsiders*. www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Touched-by-the-Trolls-%3A-How-and-Why-a-Coordinated-Linvill-Warren/deba83d06283496135f5284e86201039ead352d3
- Linvill, D. L., & Warren, P. L. (2020). Troll factories: Manufacturing specialized disinformation on Twitter. *Political Communication*, 37(4), 447-467. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1718257
- Livingstone, S. (1996). On the Continuing Problems of Media Effects Research. In J. Curran & M. Gurevitch (Eds), *Mass Media and Society* (pp. 305-324). Edward Arnold.
- Livingstone, S. (1998). Relationships between Media and Audiences: Prospects for Audience Reception Studies. In T. Liebes & J. Curran (Eds), *Media, Ritual and Identity: Essays in Honor of Elihu Katz* (pp. 237-255). Routledge.
- Livio, O., & Cohen, J. (2018). 'Fool me once, shame on you': Direct personal experience and media trust. *Journalism*, 19(5), 684-698. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916671331
- Lockie, S. (2017). Post-truth politics and the social sciences. *Environmental Sociology*, 3(1), 1-5. https://doi.org/10.1080/23251042.2016.1273444
- LSE Truth, Trust & Technology Commission. (2018). *Tackling the Information Crisis: A Policy Framework for Media System Resilience*. LSE Commission on Truth, Trust and Technology.
- Lunga, C. M., & Mthembu, M. V. (2019). Investigating the source and strategies adopted by mainstream media in combating fake news in the Kingdom of Eswatini. *African Journalism Studies*, 40(4), 96-111. https://doi.org/10.1080/23743670.2019.1664606
- Mabweazara, H. M., & Pearson, B. (Eds) (2024). *Media Capture in Africa and Latin America: Power and Resistance*. Springer International.
- Mabweazara, H. M., Muneri, C. T., & Ndlovu, F. (2020). News 'media capture', relations of patronage and clientelist practices in sub-Saharan Africa: An interpretive qualitative analysis. *Journalism Studies*, 21(15), 2154-2175. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1816489
- Mano, W., & milton, v. c. (Eds) (2021). *Routledge Handbook of African Media and Communication Studies*. Routledge.
- Mansell, R., & Nordenstreng, K. (2006). Great media and communications debates – An assessment of the MacBride Report after 25 years. *Information Technologies and International Development*, 3(4), 15-36. https://itidjournal.org/index.php/itid/article/view/235.html
- Mansell, R., & Steinmueller, W. E. (2020). *Advanced Introduction to Platform Economics*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Mare, A., Mabweazara, H. M., & Moyo, D. (2019). 'Fake news' and cyber-propaganda in sub-Saharan Africa: Recentering the research agenda. *African Journalism Studies*, 40(4), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1080/23743670.2020.1788295
- Martínez-Costa, M.-P., López-Pan, F., Buslón, N., & Salaverría, R. (2023). Nobody-fools-me perception: Influence of age and education on overconfidence about spotting disinformation. *Journalism Practice*, 17(10), 2084-2102. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2022.2135128
- Mazzoli, E. M. (2020). Online content governance: Towards a framework for analysis for prominence and discoverability. *Journal of Digital Media & Policy*, 11, 301-319. https://intellectdiscover.com/content/journals/10.1386/jdmp_00027_1
- McCombs, M., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187. https://academic.oup.com/poq/article/36/2/176/1853310
- McGonagle, T., Bednarski, M., Francese Coutinho, M., & Zimin, A. (2019). *Elections and Media in Digital Times*. UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371486
- McIntyre, K., & Sobel, M. (2019). How Rwandan journalists use WhatsApp to advance their profession and collaborate for the good of their country. *Digital Journalism*, 7(6), 705-724. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1612261
- McKernan, B., Rossini, P., & Stromer-Galley, J. (2023). Echo chambers, cognitive thinking styles, and mistrust? Examining the roles information sources and information processing play in conspiracist ideation. *International Journal of Communication*, 17(2023), 1102-1125. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/19244
- McQuail, D. (2010). *Mass Communication Theory*. 6th Edition. SAGE Publications.
- Meese, J., & Hurcombe, E. (2021). Facebook, news media and platform dependency: The institutional impacts of news distribution on social platforms. *New Media & Society*, 23(8), 2367-2384. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820926472
- Merenda, F. (2021). Reading Arendt to Rethink Truth, Science and Politics in the Era of Fake News. In S. Giusti & E. Piras (Eds), *Democracy and Fake News: Information Manipulation and Post-Truth Politics* (pp. 19-29). Routledge.
- Metzger, M. J., Hartsell, E. H., & Flanagin, A. J. (2020). Cognitive dissonance or credibility? A comparison of two theoretical explanations for selective exposure to partisan news. *Communication Research*, 47(1), 3-28. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650215613136
- milton, v. c., & Mano, W. (2022). Afrokology and the right to communicate in Africa. *Javnost – The Public*, 29(1), 33-49. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2021.1889830
- Mitchelstein, E., & Boczkowski, P. J. (Eds) (2023). *Digital Journalism in Latin America*. Routledge.
- Mont'Alverne, C., Badrinathan, S., Ross Arguedas, A., Toff, B., Fletcher, R., & Nielsen, R. (2022). *The Trust Gap: How and Why News on Digital Platforms is Viewed More Sceptically Versus News in General*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.
- Mont'Alverne, C., Ross Arguedas, A., Banerjee, S., Toff, B., Fletcher, R., & Nielsen, R. (2024). The electoral misinformation nexus: How news consumption, platform use, and trust in news influence belief in electoral misinformation. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 88(S1), 681-707. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfae019

- Montero, J., & Finger, M. (2021). *The Rise of the New Network Industries: Regulating Digital Platforms*. Routledge.
- Moore, M., & Tambini, D. (Eds) (2018). *Digital Dominance: The Power of Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple*. Oxford University Press.
- Moore, M., & Tambini, D. (Eds) (2021). *Regulating Big Tech: Policy Responses to Digital Dominance*. Oxford University Press.
- Morkūnas, M. (2023). Russian disinformation in the Baltics: Does it really work? *Public Integrity*, 25(6), 599-613. https://doi.org/10.1080/10999922.2022.2092976
- Mudde, C. (2019). *The Far Right Today*. Polity Press.
- Mukhudwana, R. F. (2021). The rise of peripheral actors in media regulation in South Africa: An entry of social media mob(s). *African Journalism Studies*, 42(4), 153-178. https://doi.org/10.1080/23743670.2022.2032783
- Mutsvairo, B., & Bebawi, S. (2019). Journalism educators, regulatory realities, and pedagogical predicaments of the 'fake news' era: A comparative perspective on the Middle East and Africa. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 74(2), 143-157. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695819833552
- Napoli, P. M. (2003). *Audience Economics: Media Institutions and the Audience Marketplace*. Columbia University Press.
- Ncube, L. (2019). Digital media, fake news and pro-Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) alliance cyber-propaganda during the 2018 Zimbabwe Eeection. *African Journalism Studies*, 40(4), 44-61. https://doi.org/10.1080/23743670.2019.1670225
- Nechushtai, E. (2018). Could digital platforms capture the media through infrastructure? *Journalism*, 19(8), 1043-1058. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917725163
- Neubaum, G., & Weeks, B. (2023). Computer-mediated political expression: A conceptual framework of technological affordances and individual tradeoffs. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 20(1), 19-33. https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2022.2028694
- Newman, N., & Fletcher, R. (2017). *Bias, Bullshit and Lies: Audience Perspectives on Low Trust in the Media: Digital News Project 2017*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.
- Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C. T., Kirsten, E., & Nielsen, R. K. (2022). *Digital News Report 2022*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022
- Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Eddy, K., Robinson, C. T., & Nielsen, R. K. (2023). *Digital News Report 2023*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2023
- Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Craig, T. R., Ross Arguedas, A., & Nielsen, R. K. (2024). *Digital News Report 2024*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2024
- Nicholson, C. (2024). Elsevier parent reports 10% hike in profits for 2023. *Research Professional News*, 15 February. www.researchprofessionalnews.com/rr-news-europe-infrastructure-2024-2-elsevier-parent-reports-10-hike-in-profits-for-2023
- Nieborg, D. B., & Poell, T. (2018). The platformization of cultural production: Theorizing the contingent cultural commodity. *New Media & Society*, 20(11), 4275-4292. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818769694
- Nieborg, D., Poell, T., Caplan, R., & van Dijck, J. (2024). Locating and theorising platform power. *Internet Policy Review*, 13(2), 1-17. https://policyreview.info/articles/analysis/introduction-special-issue-locating-and-theorising-platform-power
- Nielsen, R. K., & Fletcher, R. (2023). Comparing the platformization of news media systems: A cross-country analysis. *European Journal of Communication*, 38(5), 484-499. https://doi.org/10.1177/02673231231189043
- Nielsen, R. K., & Ganter, S. A. (2022). *The Power of Platforms: Shaping Media and Society*. Oxford University Press.
- Notley, T., Dezuanni, M., Zhong, H., & Chambers, S. (2020). *News and Young Australians in 2020: How Young People Access, Perceive and Are Affected by News Media*. Western Sydney University and QUT Digital Media Research Centre.
- Nyhan, B., Settle, J., Thorson, E., Wojcieszak, M., *et al.* (2023). Like-minded sources on Facebook are prevalent but not polarizing. *Nature*, 620, 137-144. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-023-06297-w
- O'Neill, O. (2002). *A Question of Trust: The BBC Reith Lectures 2002*. Cambridge University Press.
- Obreja, D. M. (2023). Mapping the political landscape on social media using bibliometrics: A longitudinal co-word analysis on Twitter and Facebook publications published between 2012 and 2021. *Social Science Computer Review*, 41(5), 1712-1728. https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393221117749
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). (2022b). *Misinformation and Disinformation: An International Effort Using Behavioural Science to Tackle the Spread of Misinformation*. OECD Public Governance Policy Papers No. 21. https://doi.org/10.1787/b7709d4f-en
- Ofcom. (2023c). *News Consumption in the UK: 2023 Research Findings*. https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/264651/news-consumption-2023.pdf
- Ong, J. C., & Das, R. (2020). Two Concepts from Television Audience Research in Times of Datafication and Disinformation. In S. Shimpach (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Global Televsion* (Chapter 9). Routledge.
- Palmer, R., & Toff, B. (2022). Neither absent nor ambient: Incidental news exposure from the perspective of news avoiders in the UK, United States, and Spain. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 29(3), 755-773. https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612221103144
- Palmer, R., Toff, B., & Nielsen, R. K. (2023). Examining assumptions around how news avoidance gets defined: The importance of overall news consumption, intention, and structural inequalities. *Journalism Studies*, 24(6), 697-714. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2183058

- Papaevangelou, C. (2023). Funding Intermediaries: Google and Facebook's strategy to capture journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 12(2), 234-255. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2155206
- Pariser, E. (2011). *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You*. Penguin.
- Park, S., Strover, S., Choi, J., & Schnell, M. (2023). Mind games: A temporal sentiment analysis of the political messages of the Internet Research Agency on Facebook and Twitter. *New Media & Society*, 25(3), 463-484. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211014355
- Pennycook, G., & Rand, D. G. (2022). Nudging social media toward accuracy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 700(1), 152-164. https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162221092342
- Pérez-Curiel, C., Rivas-de-Roca, R., & García-Gordillo, M. (2021). Impact of Trump's digital rhetoric on the US elections: A view from worldwide far-right populism. *Social Sciences*, 10(5), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10050152
- Peters, J. (2023). X stops showing headlines because Elon Musk thinks it will make posts look better. *The Verge*, 4 October. www.theverge.com/2023/10/4/23903859/x-elon-musk-headlines-links-image-twitter
- Petre, C. (2021). *All the News That's Fit to Click: How Metrics Are Transforming the Work of Journalists*. Princeton University Press.
- Pickard, V. (2020a). *Democracy Without Journalism: Confronting the Misinformation Society*. Oxford University Press.
- Pickard, V. (2020c). Restructuring democratic infrastructures: A policy approach to the journalism crisis. *Digital Journalism*, 8(6), 704-719. www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21670811.2020.1733433
- Pielemeier, J. (2020). Disentangling disinformation: What makes regulating disinformation so difficult? Symposium: News, disinformation, and social media responsibility. *Utah Law Review*, 2020(4), 917-940. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3629541
- Pinkleton, B. E., Austin, E. W., Zhou, Y., Willoughby, J. F., & Reiser, M. (2012). Perceptions of news media, external efficacy, and public affairs apathy in political decision making and disaffection. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 89(1), 23-39. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699011428586
- Pintak, L., & Ginges, J. (2008). The mission of Arab journalism: Creating change in a time of turmoil. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 13(3), 193-227. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161208317142
- Pintak, L., & Nazir, S. J. (2013). Pakistani journalism: At the crossroads of Muslim identity, national priorities and journalistic culture. *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(5), 640-665. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443713483654
- Plantin, J.-C., Lagoze, C., Edwards, P. N., & Sandvig, C. (2018). Infrastructure studies meet platform studies in the age of Google and Facebook. *New Media & Society*, 20(1), 293-310. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816661553
- Poell, T., Nieborg, D. B., & Duffy, B. E. (2023). Spaces of negotiation: Analyzing platform power in the news industry. *Digital Journalism*, 11(8), 1391-1409. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2103011
- Prior, M. (2005). News vs. entertainment: How increasing media choice widens gaps in political knowledge and turnout. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(3), 577-592. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2005.00143.x
- Prochazka, F., & Schweiger, W. (2019). How to measure generalized trust in news media? An adaptation and test of scales. *Communication Methods and Measures*, 13(1), 26-42. https://doi.org/10.1080/19312458.2018.1506021
- Radsch, C. C. (2023b). Platformization and media capture: A framework for regulatory analysis of media-related platform regulations. *UCLA Journal of Law & Technology*, 28(2), 175-223. https://uclajolt.com/platformatization-and-media-capture-a-framework-for-regulatory-analysis-of-media-related-platform-regulations
- Radsch, C. C. (2023c). The value of news content to Google is way more than you think. *Tech Policy Press*, 8 August. https://techpolicy.press/the-value-of-news-content-to-google-is-way-more-than-you-think
- Rantanen, T. (2024). *Dead Men's Propaganda: Ideology and Utopia in Comparative Communications Studies*. LSE Press.
- Recuero, R. (2024). The platformization of violence: Toward a concept of discursive toxicity on social media. *Social Media + Society*, 10(1), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231224264
- Recuero, R., Soares, F. B., & Gruzd, A. (2020). Hyperpartisanship, Disinformation and Political Conversations on Twitter: The Brazilian Presidential Election of 2018. In AAAI (Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence) (Ed.), *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media* (pp. 569-578).
- Recuero, R., Soares, F. B., Vinhas, O., Volcan, T., Hüttner, L. R. G., & Silva, V. (2022). Bolsonaro and the far right: How disinformation about COVID-19 circulates on Facebook in Brazil. *International Journal of Communication*, 16(2022), 148-171. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/viewFile/17724/3631
- Reddi, M., Kuo, R., & Kreiss, D. (2023). Identity propaganda: Racial narratives and disinformation. *New Media & Society*, 25(8), 2201-2218. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211029293
- Reinemann, C., Stanyer, J., Scherr, S., & Legnante, G. (2012). Hard and soft news: A review of concepts, operationalizations and key findings. *Journalism*, 13(2), 221-239. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884911427803
- Repucci, S. & Slipowitz, A. House. (2022). *Freedom in the World 2022: The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule*. Freedom House https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2022/global-expansion-authoritarian-rule
- Robbins, J. W. (2020). Countering Russian disinformation. CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies) Blog post, 23 September. www.csis.org/blogs/post-soviet-post/countering-russian-disinformation
- Robertson, C. E., del Rosario, K. S., & Van Bavel, J. J. (2024). Inside the funhouse mirror factory: How social media distorts perceptions of norms. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 60, 1-7. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2024.101918

- Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, R. (2023). An overview of the fake news phenomenon: From untruth-driven to post-truth-driven approaches. *Media and Communication*, 11(2), 15-29. www.cogitatiopress.com/mediaandcommunication/article/view/6315
- Rogers, R. (2020). The scale of Facebook's problem depends upon how 'fake news' is classified. *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*, 1(6), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.37016/mr-2020-43
- Rohn, U., Bjørn von Rimscha, M., & Raats, T. (Eds) (2024). *De Gruyter Handbook of Media Economics*. De Gruyter.
- Romano, A. (2013). *Politics and the Press in Indonesia: Understanding an Evolving Political Culture*. Routledge.
- Ronzhyn, A., Cardenal, A. S., & Batlle Rubio, A. (2023). Defining affordances in social media research: A literature review. *New Media & Society*, 25(11), 3165-3188. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221135187
- Ross Arguedas, A., Robertson, C., Fletcher, R., & Nielsen, R. (2022a). *Echo Chambers, Filter Bubbles, and Polarisation: A Literature Review*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford and The Royal Society.
- Ross Arguedas, A., Badrinathan, S., Mont'Alverne, C., Toff, B., Fletcher, R., & Nielsen, R. (2022c). *Snap Judgements: How Audiences Who Lack Trust in News Navigate Information on Digital Platforms*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.
- Ross Arguedas, A., Badrinathan, S., Mont'Alverne, C., Toff, B., Fletcher, R., & Nielsen, R. K. (2022b). 'It's a battle you are never going to win': Perspectives from journalists in four countries on how digital media platforms undermine trust in news. *Journalism Studies*, 23(14), 1821-1840. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2022.2112908
- Rugh, W. A. (2000). *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics*. Praeger Publishers.
- Santini, R. M., Salles, D., & Barros, C. E. (2022). We love to hate George Soros: A cross-platform analysis of the Globalism conspiracy theory campaign in Brazil. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 28(4), 983-1006. https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565221085833
- Santini, R. M., Salles, D., Tucci, G., Ferreira, F., & Grael, F. (2020). Making up audience: Media bots and the falsification of the public sphere. *Communication Studies*, 71(3), 466-487. https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2020.1735466
- Santini, R. M., Agostini, L., Barros, C. E., Carvalho, D., *et al.* (2018). Software power as soft power. A literature review on computational propaganda effects in public opinion and political process. *The Open Journal of Sociopolitical Studies*, 11(2), 1-29. https://doi.org/10.1285/i20356609v11i2p332
- Schlesinger, P. (2020). After the post-public sphere. *Media, Culture & Society*, 42(7-8), 1545-1563. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720948003
- Schlosberg, J., & Freedman, D. (2020). Opening the gates: Plurality regulation in a post digital world. *Journal of Digital Media & Policy*, 11(2), 115-132. https://intellectdiscover.com/content/journals/10.1386/jdmp_00017_1
- Schot, E. (2020). *Income Models of Independent Media in Difficult Contexts*. Free Press Unlimited.
- Schranz, M., Schneider, J., & Eisenegger, M. (2018). Media Trust and Media Use. In K. Otto & A. Köhler (Eds), *Trust in Media and Journalism: Empirical Perspectives on Ethics, Norms, Impacts and Populism in Europe* (pp. 73-91). Springer Fachmedien.
- Schudson, M. (1978). *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*. Basic Books.
- Schudson, M. (2022). What does 'trust in the media' mean? *Daedalus*, 151(4), 144-160. https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01948
- Schünemann, W. J. (2022). A Threat to Democracies? An Overview of Theoretical Approaches and Empirical Measurements for Studying the Effects of Disinformation. In M. D. Cavelty & A. Wenger (Eds), *Cyber Security Politics* (pp. 32-47). Routledge.
- Scott, M., Bunce, M., & Wright, K. (2022). The influence of news coverage on humanitarian aid: The bureaucrats' perspective. *Journalism Studies*, 23(2), 167-186. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2021.2013129
- Seipp, T. J., Fathaigh, R. Ó., & van Drunen, M. (2023a). Defining the 'media' in Europe: Pitfalls of the proposed European Media Freedom Act. *Journal of Media Law*, 15(1), 39-51. https://doi.org/10.1080/17577632.2023.2240998
- Seipp, T. J., Helberger, N., de Vreese, C., & Ausloos, J. (2023b). Dealing with opinion power in the platform world: Why we really have to rethink media concentration law. *Digital Journalism*, 11(8), 1542-1567. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2161924
- Shoemaker, P. J., & Vos, T. (2009). *Gatekeeping Theory*. Routledge.
- Siapera, E. (2023). The Challenge of Far-Right Media. In S. Farrell, E. Siapera, & G. Souvlis (Eds), *Radical Journalism: Resurgence, Reform, Reaction* (Chapter 9). Routledge.
- Silverstone, R. (2007). *Media and Morality: On the Rise of the Mediapolis*. Polity Press.
- Simon, F. M., Altay, S., & Mercier, H. (2023). Misinformation reloaded? Fears about the impact of generative AI on misinformation are overblown. *Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) Misinformation Review*, 4(5), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.37016/mr-2020-127
- Skibinski, M. (2021). Special Report: Top brands are sending $2.6 billion to misinformation websites each year. *NewsGuard*. www.newsguardtech.com/special-reports/brands-send-billions-to-misinformation-websites-newsguard-comscore-report
- Skovsgaard, M., & Andersen, K. (2020). Conceptualizing news avoidance: Towards a shared understanding of different causes and potential solutions. *Journalism Studies*, 21(4), 459-476. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2019.1686410
- Sleibi, A. (2023). Wartime Opportunities: The Sway of Russian Disinformation on the MENA Region. In EIMed (European Institute of the Mediterranean) (Ed.), *Wartime-Russia Yearbook 2023* (pp. 312-317). www.iemed.org/med-yearbook/iemed-mediterranean-yearbook-2023

- Steensen, S., Grøndahl Larsen, A. M., Hågvar, Y. B., & Fonn, B. K. (2019). What does digital journalism studies look like? *Digital Journalism*, 7(3), 320-342. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1581071
- Strömbäck, J., & Shehata, A. (2019). The reciprocal effects between political interest and TV news revisited: Evidence from four panel surveys. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 96(2), 473-496. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699018793998
- Strömbäck, J., Falasca, K., & Kruikemeier, S. (2018). The mix of media use matters: Investigating the effects of individual news repertoires on offline and online political participation. *Political Communication*, 35(3), 413-432. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1385549
- Strömbäck, J., Tsfati, Y., Boomgaarden, H., Damstra, A., *et al.* (2020). News media trust and its impact on media use: Toward a framework for future research. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 44(2), 139-156. https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2020.1755338
- Stroud, N. J. (2017). Selective exposure theories. In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication* (pp. 531–548). Oxford University Press.
- Stroud, N. J., & Lee, J. K. (2013). Perceptions of cable news credibility. *Mass Communication and Society*, 16(1), 67-88. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2011.646449
- Suiter, J., & Fletcher, R. (2020). Polarization and partisanship: Key drivers of distrust in media old and new? *European Journal of Communication*, 35(5), 484-501. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323120903685
- Sultan, M., Tump, A. N., Ehmann, N., Lorenz-Spreen, P., *et al.* (2024). Susceptibility to online misinformation: A systematic meta-analysis of demographic and psychological factors. *PsyArXiv*. https://doi.org/https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/7u4fg
- Sunstein, C. (2007). *Republic.com 2.0*. Princeton University Press.
- Szakacs, J., & Bognar, É. (2021). *The Impact of Disinformation Campaigns about Migrants and Minority Groups in the EU*. European Parliament, Directorate General for External Policies of the Union.
- Szczepkowski, D., & Szczepkowski, P. (2021). Adware as one form of disinformation. *Studia Administracji i Bezpieczeństwa*, 1(10), 197-208. www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=1004222
- Talamanca, G., & Arfini, S. (2022). Through the newsfeed glass: Rethinking filter bubbles and echo chambers. *Philosophy and Technology*, 35(1), 1-34. https://doi.org/doi:10.1007/s13347-021-00494-z
- Tambini, D. (2021). What is journalism? The paradox of media privilege. *European Human Rights Law Review*, 5, 523-539. https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/112681/1/What_is_journalism_The_paradox_of_media_privilege_clean.pdf
- Tandoc Jr, E. C., & Vos, T. P. (2016). The journalist is marketing the news: Social media in the gatekeeping process. *Journalism Practice*, 10(8), 950-966. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2015.1087811
- Taneja, H., Webster, J. G., Malthouse, E. C., & Ksiazek, T. B. (2012). Media consumption across platforms: Identifying user-defined repertoires. *New Media & Society*, 14(6), 951-968. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444811436146
- Thussu, D. K. (2022). De-colonizing global news-flows: A historical perspective. *Journalism Studies*, 23(13), 1578-1592. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2022.2083007
- Toff, B., & Kalogeropoulos, A. (2020). All the news that's fit to ignore: How the information environment does and does not shape news avoidance. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 84(S1), 366-390. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfaa016
- Toff, B., & Nielsen, R. K. (2018). 'I just Google it': Folk theories of distributed discovery. *Journal of Communication*, 68(3), 636-657. https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqy009
- Toff, B., & Palmer, R. (2019). Explaining the gender gap in news avoidance: 'News-is-for-men' perceptions and the burdens of caretaking. *Journalism Studies*, 20(11), 1563-1579. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2018.1528882
- Toff, B., Palmer, R., & Nielsen, R. K. (2023). *Avoiding the News: Reluctant Audiences for Journalism*. Columbia University Press.
- Toff, B., Badrinathan, S., Mont'Alverne, C., Ross Arguedas, A., Fletcher, R., & Nielsen, R. (2021a). *Overcoming Indifference: What Attitudes Towards News Tell Us about Building Trust*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.
- Toff, B., Badrinathan, S., Mont'Alverne, C., Ross Arguedas, A., Fletcher, R., & Nielsen, R. (2021b). *Listening to What Trust in News Means to Users: Qualitative Evidence from Four Countries*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.
- Tomaz, T., & Trappel, J. (2022). News media in European democracies and beyond: Stable structural conditions but notorious deficits. *De Europa*, 5(2), 17-34. https://doi.org/10.13135/2611-853X/7200
- Tong, C., Gill, H., Li, J., Valenzuela, S., & Rojas, H. (2020). 'Fake news is anything they say!' – Conceptualization and weaponization of fake news among the American public. *Mass Communication & Society*, 23(5), 755-778. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2020.1789661
- Trauthig, I. (2024). *Diaspora Communities and Computational Propaganda on Messaging Apps*. CIGI (Centre for International Governance Innovation), Canada.
- Tsfati, Y., & Ariely, G. (2014). Individual and contextual correlates of trust in media across 44 countries. *Communication Research*, 41(6), 760-782. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650213485972
- Tuchman, G. (1972). Objectivity as strategic ritual: An examination of newsmen's notions of objectivity. *American Journal of Sociology*, 77(4), 660-679. https://doi.org/10.1086/225193
- Tucker, J. A., Guess, A., Barbera, P., Vaccari, C., *et al.* (2018). *Social Media, Political Polarization, and Political Disinformation: A Review of the Literature*. Hewlett Foundation, US.

- Tully, M. (2022). Everyday news use and misinformation in Kenya. *Digital Journalism*, 10(1), 109-127. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1912625
- Twomey, J., Ching, D., Aylett, M. P., Quayle, M., Linehan, C., & Murphy, G. (2023). Do deepfake videos undermine our epistemic trust? A thematic analysis of tweets that discuss deepfakes in the Russian invasion of Ukraine. *PLOS ONE*, 18(10), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0291668
- UN (United Nations). (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights
- UN. (1966). *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. United Nations General Assembly 2200A (XXI). https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights
- UNESCO. (2024). Observatory of Killed Journalists. www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/observatory
- Usher, N. (2023). The real problems with the problem of news deserts: Toward rooting place, precision, and positionality in scholarship on local news and democracy. *Political Communication*, 40(2), 238-253. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2023.2175399
- Vaidhyanathan, S. (2022). *Anti-Social Media: How Facebook Disconnects Us and Undermines Democracy*. Oxford University Press.
- Valenzuela, S., Halpern, D., & Araneda, F. (2022). A downward spiral? A panel study of misinformation and media trust in Chile. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 27(2), 353-373. https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612211025238
- Valenzuela, S., Bachmann, I., Lawrence, R. G., & Gil De Zúñiga, H. (2023). Politics and media. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 100(4), 808-825. https://doi.org/10.1177/10776990231203542
- van der Linden, S. (2023). *Foolproof: Why We Fall for Misinformation and How to Build Immunity*. Fourth Estate.
- van Dijck, J., de Waal, M., & Poell, T. (2018a). *The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connective World*. Oxford University Press.
- van Dijck, J., Poell, T., & de Waal, M. (2018b). News. In J. van Dijck, T. Poell, & M. de Waal, *The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connective World* (pp. 49-72). Oxford University Press.
- Van Natta, J., Masadeh, S., & Hamilton, B. (2023). Investigating the impacts of YouTube's content policies on journalism and political discourse. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 7, CSCW1, 16 April. https://doi.org/10.1145/3579499
- Vázquez-Herrero, J., Negreira-Rey, M.-C., & López-García, X. (2022a). Let's dance the news! How the news media are adapting to the logic of TikTok. *Journalism*, 23(8), 1717-1735. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884920969092
- Vázquez-Herrero, J., Negreira-Rey, M.-C., & Sixto-García, J. (2022b). Mind the gap! Journalism on social media and news consumption among young audiences. *International Journal of Communication*, 16(2022), 21. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/19643
- Verma, N., Fleischmann, K. R., & Koltai, K. S. (2018). Demographic factors and trust in different news sources. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 55(1), 524-533. https://doi.org/10.1002/pra2.2018.14505501057
- Verza, S., Blagojev, T., Da Cots Leite Borges, D., Kermer, J. E., Trevisan, M., & Reviglio Della Venaria, U. (2024). *Uncovering News Deserts in Europe: Risks and Opportunities for Local and Community Media in the EU*. European University Institute.
- Villi, M., Aharoni, T., Tenenboim-Weinblatt, K., Boczkowski, P. J., *et al.* (2022). Taking a break from news: A five-nation study of news avoidance in the digital era. *Digital Journalism*, 10(1), 148-164. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1904266
- Vincent, R. C., & Nordenstreng, K. (Eds) (2015). *Towards Equity in Global Communication? MacBride Update*. Second Edition. Hampton Press.
- Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146-1151. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aap9559
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K., & Carlson, M. (2021). Conjecturing fearful futures: Journalistic discourses on deepfakes. *Journalism Practice*, 15(6), 803-820. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1908838
- Wakefield, J. (2016). Social media 'outstrips TV' as news source for young people. BBC News, 15 June. www.bbc.com/news/uk-36528256
- Wardle, C. (2023). Misunderstanding misinformation. *Issues in Science and Technology*, 29(3), 38-40. https://doi.org/10.58875/ZAUD1691
- Wasko, J., Murdock, G., & Sousa, H. (Eds) (2011). *The Handbook of Political Economy of Communications*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Wasserman, H. (2018). *Media, Geopolitics, and Power: A View from the Global South*. University of Illinois Press.
- Wasserman, H. (2020a). Fake news from Africa: Panics, politics and paradigms. *Journalism*, 21(1), 3-16. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917746861
- Wasserman, H. (2020b). The state of South African media: A space to contest democracy. *Publizistik*, 65(3), 451-465. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11616-020-00594-4
- Weismueller, J., Gruner, R. L., Harrigan, P., Coussement, K., & Wang, S. (2023). Information sharing and political polarisation on social media: The role of falsehood and partisanship. *Information Systems Journal, Special Issue* (2023), 1-40. https://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12453
- Willems, W. (2014b). Provincializing hegemonic histories of media and communication studies: Toward a genealogy of epistemic resistance in Africa. *Communication Theory*, 24(4), 415-434. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/comt.12043

- Winseck, D. (2022). The Broken Internet and Platform Regulation: Promises and Perils. In T. Flew & F. R. Martin (Eds), *Digital Platform Regulation: Global Perspectives on Internet Governance* (pp. 229-257). Springer International Publishing.
- Wojczewski, T. (2022). Conspiracy theories, right-wing populism and foreign policy: The case of the Alternative for Germany. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 25(2022), 130-148. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-021-00218-y
- Yang, Y., & Bennett, L. (2022). Interactive Propaganda: How Fox News and Donald Trump Co-Produced False Narratives about the COVID-19 Crisis. In P. Van Aelst & J. G. Blumler (Eds), *Political Communication in the Time of Coronavirus* (pp. 83-100). Routledge.
- Ytre-Arne, B., & Moe, H. (2021). Doomscrolling, monitoring and avoiding: News use in COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. *Journalism Studies*, 22, 1739-1775. www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1461670X.2021.1952475
- Zelizer, B. (2019). Why journalism is about more than digital technology. *Digital Journalism*, 7(3), 343-350. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1571932
- Zhang, Y., Lukito, J., Su, M.-H., Suk, J., *et al.* (2021). Assembling the networks and audiences of disinformation: How successful Russian IRA Twitter accounts built their followings, 2015–2017. *Journal of Communication*, 71(2), 305-331. https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqaa042
- Zhu, Q., Weeks, B. E., & Kwak, N. (2024). Implications of online incidental and selective exposure for political emotions: Affective polarization during elections. *New Media & Society*, 26(1), 450-472. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211061336
- Znojek, B. (2020). The growing problem of disinformation in Latin America. *PISM Bulletin*. PISM (Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych).
- Zuazo, N., & Aruguete, N. (2021). ¿Polarización política o digital? un ecosistema con todos los climas. In L. A. Quevedo & I. Ramirez (Eds), *Polarizados: ¿Por qué preferimos la grieta? (aunque digamos lo contrario)* (pp. 135-154). Capital Intelectual.