News Item

Comparative Approaches to Mis/Disinformation: Motivations for Sharing Misinformation: A Comparative Study in Six Sub-Saharan African Countries | International Journal of Communication

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> In most African countries, "fake news," politically motivated disinformation, and misinformation in the media were common occurrences before these became a preoccupation in the Global North. However, with a fast-growing population of mobile users, and the popularization of apps such as WhatsApp, misinformation has become much more pervasive across the continent. Researchers have shown that perceived exposure to false information is high in some African countries, and yet citizens often share made-up news intentionally. This article explores the motivations and contributing factors for sharing misinformation in six sub-Saharan African countries. Our analysis of 12 focus groups with university students reveals two common motivations: civic duty and fun. The sharing of political (dis)information was uneven, but common among students with high levels of self-reported political engagement. We also present an array of cues used to determine credibility, which often determines the shareability of information. Cross-national differences are also discussed.
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