

Propaganda, misinformation, and histories of media techniques | HKS Misinformation Review

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April 16, 2021

Propaganda has a history and so does research on it. In other words, the mechanisms and methods through which media scholars have sought to understand propaganda—or misinformation, or disinformation, or fake news, or whatever you would like to call it—are themselves historically embedded and carry with them underlying notions of power and causality. To summarize the already quite truncated argument below, the larger conceptual frameworks for understanding information that is understood as “pernicious” in some way can be grouped into four large categories: studies of propaganda, the analysis of ideology and its relationship to culture, notions of conspiracy theory, and finally, concepts of misinformation and its impact. The fact that misinformation scholarship generally proceeds without acknowledging these theoretical frameworks is an empirical detriment to it and serves to make the solutions and remedies to misinformation harder to articulate because the actual problem to be solved is unclear.

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