

State-sponsored disinformation in Western democracies is the elephant in the room | Euronews

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Discussions on disinformation mostly focus on the external sources of disinformation: Russia and China. If we focus exclusively on disinformation as a foreign challenge, we are simply ignoring the elephant in the room. Democratically-elected leaders are increasingly fuelling the spread of disinformation.

Contemporary disinformation is distinct from propaganda. It is neither based on ideologies nor facts. In many ways, it is predicated on a much more pessimistic and cynical worldview where, as Peter Pomerantsev writes about the disinformation of the Putin-regime, “Nothing is true and everything is possible.”

The goal of disinformation is not to persuade the audience with one message. Rather, disinformation is intended to confuse people with multiple messages. As a result, it does not need ideology or to be fact-based at all. It can be almost anything, which is why it is so much more dangerous than propaganda.

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