

No. 124

Call for papers

"Disinformation and power: Crisis of the intermediaries"

Barcelona, March 2019

Timetable of the call:

24 April 2019 Submission deadline for abstracts (300 words) and a short biographical note (100 words).

6 May 2019: Authors are notified of the results of the selection process.

20 June 2019: Submission deadline for completed articles ([see instructions for authors](#)).

All written correspondence should be sent to the CIDOB publications email address: publicaciones@cidob.org

Monograph coordinators: **Daniel Innerarity** (Professor of Political and Social Philosophy, IKERBASQUE Researcher at the University of the Basque Country and Director of the [Instituto de Gobernanza Democrática](#)) and **Carne Colomina** (journalist and Researcher at CIDOB).

The propagation of falsehoods on the internet has become a social political problem. The **erosion of the truth** in public discourse and the transformations in the fields of news and opinion have weakened the traditional information monopolies (from the press to universities and the political class). In this **disinformation society**, amplified by social networks, the debating of ideas has become fragmented and polarised. The capacity to lie in the public sphere has been *democratised*. The politics of emotions, added to the increasing irrelevance of the factual truth in public discourse, has changed the democratic process of opinion-forming. Our relationship with certain concepts and their meaning has changed, and the use of terms coined in order to reveal precisely the manipulation of truth has been politicised. The very existence of disinformation allows any unfavourable opinion or news headline to be delegitimised by using the term fake news.

The right to dissent – to think differently – is one of the lifebloods of democracy. But is there a right to tell lies? Hannah Arendt claimed that in lying there is also freedom. Nevertheless, in this accelerated setting of the degradation of politics, in particular, and of the principles and spaces of mutual trust, in general, what is happening to the democratic system when its political parties and

representatives are the ones who have decided that the truth is not important? What should be done when a lie, a denial of clear facts or the invention of events that never took place seeks not to convince or persuade but simply to spread chaos, confusion, anger or fear?

Sceptical responses have led to a **crisis of intermediaries** – of those who have acted as interpreters of reality – at the very time a surfeit of information – truthful or otherwise – requires greater capacity from us for interpretation and discernment. In this process of losing their command of public discourse, have intermediaries forgotten whom they serve, for whom they speak and how they speak to them? What should the response be to this loss of trust in democratic processes, in the media and in knowledge producers?

Factuality, understood as the defence of verifiable facts, is seen as a new form of resistance. But to face multiple challenges, the paths explored must also be multiple. Should the truth be protected or lies weeded out? How do we respond to disinformation's disruptive capacity without harming freedom of expression? How should democratic processes in need of renewed trust and credibility be rethought? What happens when it is political actors – authoritarian and/or democratic – who abuse disinformation or use it as a weapon for delegitimising opposition, dissent or particular electoral results?

This issue of *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals* seeks to investigate the **effects of disinformation on the authority of intellectual, political and/or academic–scientific intermediation, as well as its consequences for democratic processes and for civil society's willingness to participate and mobilise**. As well as **theoretical analysis of disinformation as a tool of political power**, concrete **case studies** are also sought.

What is proposed, ultimately, is to conduct a **global analysis of disinformation**, with particular emphasis on **disintermediation** and the **deprofessionalisation** of information, as well as on the way this undermines the foundations of representative democracy.

In particular, contributions will be welcomed of original empirical–comparative and/or theoretical work on the following subjects, among others:

- **The use of disinformation as an instrument of power and its effects on democratic systems.**
- **The relationship between disintermediation and citizens' vulnerability to disinformation.**
- **Disinformation as an excuse and strategy for silencing dissident opinions, delegitimising the media as a democratic counterweight and restricting public debate.**
- **How can traditional institutions of mediation (political parties, unions, media outlets, think tanks, etc.) reconstruct their mediating function in the new contexts and in the age of social networks?**
- **What legitimacy and limits do the instruments put forward for fighting disinformation have? What are the new forms of censorship applied under the protection of fighting against disinformation?**

Abstracts will be accepted in Spanish and English.

The editorial board of the magazine, coordinated for this issue by Daniel Innerarity and Carme Colomina, will be responsible for the final selection of articles to be published in the first issue of 2020 (April/May 2020).

Created in 1982, *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals* is a scientific publication on international relations that publishes original work. Each issue is a monograph, coordinated by an expert, which provides in-depth analysis of an aspect of the international state of affairs. The articles undergo an external double-blind peer review process and are indexed and summarised in the main academic social sciences databases, such as Scopus and Web of Science. The publication is aimed at the academic community and the interested public in general. It is published in print and digital versions.