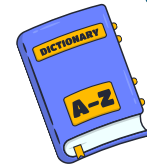


REGULATING DISINFORMATION AND BIG TECH IN THE EU



THE PROBLEM

- Disinformation can be understood either as a **side effect** of digitalisation or as a **feature** of the market-oriented functioning of social media platforms. What is certain is that **disinformation** and **post-truth politics** cannot be detached from **democracy** and the concept of new digital **public spheres**.
- The way disinformation is **framed** can **empower** some actors and sideline others. And the key players know this. Governments, Big Tech, civil society, and journalists all **compete to define disinformation** in ways that align with their interests.



RESPONSES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

There are four democratic responses to disinformation at the national level (Farkas and Schou):

- 1 Moralising and condemning:** excluding forces not committed to democracy
- 2 Policing the truth:** prosecuting and removing disinformation
- 3 Technological solutionism:** relying on IT tools and self-regulation
- 4 Re-establishing the centre of truth-making:** restoring trust through fact-checking



KEY TAKEAWAYS



- The EU's regulatory strategy is defined by **transparency** rather than **content control**.
- How we **define** disinformation influences who **stands to gain** from regulation.
- Efforts to keep platforms responsible are complicated by Big Tech's **lobbying** and **influence**.
- The EU's framework establishes a **global standard** for disinformation governance while balancing a variety of interests.

THE EU'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK



- As part of a strategy based on **transparency**, the EU's rules mandate that platforms reveal how their **algorithms** recommend content and evaluate dangers, but do not question their **targeted ads** business model.
- The **Digital Services Act** (DSA) and the **Digital Markets Act** (DMA) make large platforms **co-regulators** of the digital space, but do not establish content control.
- The **European Media Freedom Act** compensates the focus on digital platforms by protecting journalists, but this is only marginal and cooperation by the platforms remains essential.

To combat online disinformation, the EU faces the challenge of creating regulations that balance transparency, accountability, and the preservation of democratic values.



Read the paper