JOHN NERY

ELECTIONS, POPULISM, DEMOCRATIC INTERVENTIONS

BUILDING A DEMOCRATIC COALITION AGAINST DISINFORMATION

THREE PRELIMINARIES

INFORMATION DISORDER :
Toward an interdisciplinary framework
for research and policy making

Council of Europe report
DGI(2017)09

Claire Wardle, PhD
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LET'S USE A COMMON LANGUAGE

- **Misinformation** is when false information is shared, but no harm is meant.
- **Disinformation** is when false information is knowingly shared to cause harm.
- **Mal-information** is when genuine information is shared to cause harm, often by moving information designed to stay private into the public sphere.

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LET'S DEFINE "FAKE NEWS" TOO

"The term 'fake news' does not in fact refer to false reports as a category of news; rather, it refers to deliberately false information that pretends to be news. 'Fake news' is not a subset of the news; it is an entirely different universe, consisting precisely of made-up news.

The analogy to a fake Rolex that one can buy off the street may be instructive …. the fake watch represents the antithesis of the genuine Rolex. That is what 'fake news' is—not a type of news, but precisely the opposite of what the news is."

It is happening in India and it's called the "love jihad". This is the conspiracy theory that Muslims in India are engaged in a plot to seduce away Hindu girls and forcibly convert them to Islam. This is supposedly part of a grand strategy to conquer India through a demographic revolution. Hindus now make up almost 80% of the population, but since Muslim men are allowed four wives, they will out-reproduce Hindus and turn Hindus into a subjugated minority, the line goes.

The theory is ridiculous, but it's no laughing matter. Muslim men have been lynched and put on hit lists in the name of defending Hindus against love jihad. Consensual marriages have been broken up and women forced to return to their families – so it's an attack not only on a religious minority by the majority community, but also on women's autonomy by the patriarchy.

This isn't just about family honour, though. The love jihad theory has been elevated from grassroots, homespun gossip to industrial-strength propaganda because of its utility in high-stakes elections. Hindu nationalist politicians belonging to prime minister Narendra Modi's party have used the love jihad hoax to incite deadly communal riots and solidify the Hindu base in the run up to elections.

NOT ALL DISINFO IS DIGITAL

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DISINFORMATION AND ELECTIONS

1995

8.	Francisco Tatad	Lakas-Laban	LDP	9,146,951	35.5%
9.	Gregorio Honasan	NPC	Independent	8,968,616	34.8%
10.	Marcelo Fernan	Lakas-Laban	LDP	8,762,235	34.0%
11.	Juan Ponce Enrile	Lakas-Laban	Independent	8,701,191	33.8%
12.	Anna Dominique Coseteng	NPC	NPC	8,700,278	33.8%
13.	Ramon Mitra Jr.	Lakas-Laban	LDP	8,650,618	33.6%
14.	Rodolfo Biazon	Lakas-Laban	LDP	8,587,338	33.4%
15.	Aquilino Pimentel Jr.	Lakas-Laban	PDP–Laban	8,522,148	33.1%
16.	Bongbong Marcos	NPC	KBL	8,168,768	31.7%
17.	Arturo Tolentino	NPC	NPC	7,726,006	30.0%
18.	Ramon Fernandez	NPC	NPC	3,572,604	13.9%
19.	Rosemarie Arenas	NPC	NPC	3,178,837	12.4%

e • d Summary of the May 10, 2010 Philippine Senate election results

2010

Rank	Candidate	Party	Votes	%
1.	Bong Revilla	Lakas–Kampi	19,513,521	51.15%
2.	Jinggoy Estrada	PMP	18,925,925	49.61%
3.	Miriam Defensor Santiago	PRP	17,344,742	45.47%
4.	Franklin Drilon	Liberal	15,871,117	41.60%
5.	Juan Ponce Enrile	PMP	15,665,618	41.06%
6.	Pia Cayetano	Nacionalista	13,679,511	35.86%
7.	Bongbong Marcos	Nacionalista	13,169,634	34.52%
8.	Ralph Recto	Liberal	12,436,960	32.60%
9.	Tito Sotto	NPC	11,891,711	31.17%
10.	Serge Osmeña	Independent	11,656,668	30.56%

"ASPIRATIONAL TROPES"

The first key aspirational trope is the perpetuation of the narrative that _the Philippines was a great nation during the time of former President Marcos_. This draws on a pre-colonial myth of the Philippines as a "Kingdom of Maharlika", a noble nation, that was enriched and made continually vibrant by Marcos with an unparalleled level of social and political development that was apparently reversed when Marcos was ousted from power

This is connected to the second aspirational trope-- regional competitiveness and independence from superpowers. Aligned with the enumeration of Marcos' achievements, pro-Marcos influencers painted a picture of nostalgia over the glory days during Marcos' leadership that positioned _the nation as an "economic superpower"_ equal, if not more vibrant, than the United States. Connected to this vision is going beyond "the need to go overseas to become a slave in other countries," an aspiration many Filipinos can relate to.

NETWORKED CONSTUCTION OF BIG LIES

Cheryll Ruth Soriano, PhD

The third aspirational trope is advancing their vision of a "true, working democracy, where the Philippine government is organised with functioning laws that are obeyed by *a disciplined citizenry*". These YouTubers would explain that contrary to critics' accusation that Marcos is *a*nti- democracy, his brand of democracy is the one that was most just, unlike other "fake democracies".

The next trope of videos involve the promotion of Ferdinand Marcos as *a benevolent and exceptional President*, unparalleled in his accomplishment as the country's leader. Marcos is identified, "not just as the greatest leader of the Philippines, but of the entire world" and whom other global leaders revered.

Which leads us to the final piece of the narrative: that all the aspirations – of the country's greatness, realization of its superpower potential, achievement of a true and working democracy, and use of available wealth for the benefit of national progress can only be achieved if *another Marcos* were to be reinstalled in power.

NETWORKED CONSTUCTION OF BIG LIES
Cheryll Ruth Soriano, PhD

DISINFORMATION AND POPULISM

THE IMPACT OF DISINFORMATION ON THE PUBLIC SPHERE

HABERMAS' THEORY OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE (filtered through Fraser]

Classification of the public	Definition of the space	Subject & method of deliberation	Relationship bet. State & Society
Reasonable citizens	The political public sphere	Matters of common good	Society influences State thru public opinion
"private individuals form a public body"	"mediates between Society and State"	"public discussions about political power"	"public organizes itself as bearer of public opinion"
PUBLIC BODY	PUBLIC SPACE	PUBLIC REASON	PUBLIC IMPACT

How DISINFORMATION distorts the PUBLIC SPHERE

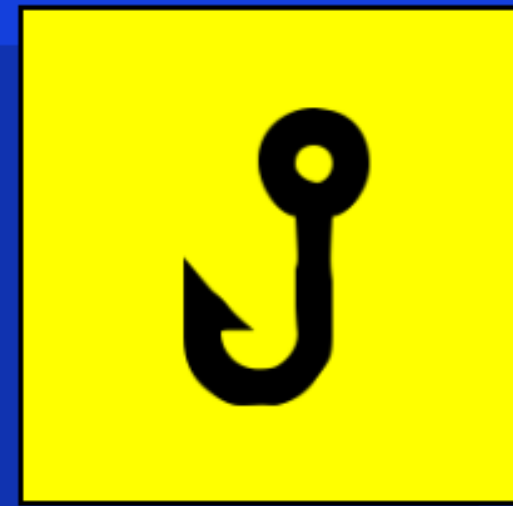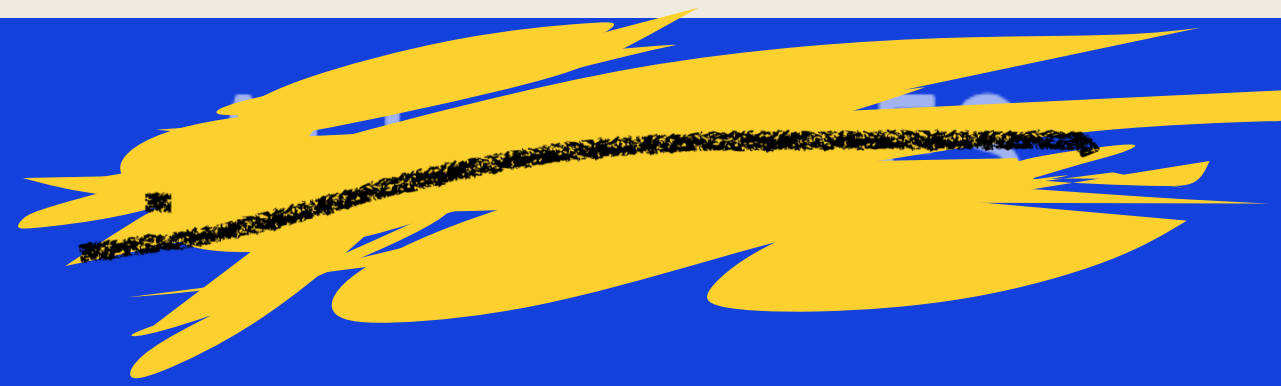| PUBLIC BODY	PUBLIC SPACE	PUBLIC DISCOURSE	PUBLIC IMPACT
Exploits existing inequalities	Pits public spheres against each other	Uses "firehose of falsehood"	State shapes/ controls public opinion
Prevents individuals "coming together"	Fabricates new "counter-publics"	Seeds confusion, uncertainty	Uses public opinion to flatten or conflate

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> THE IDEAL SUBJECT OF TOTALITARIAN RULE IS NOT THE CONVINCED NAZI OR THE CONVINCED COMMUNIST, BUT PEOPLE FOR WHOM THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FACT AND FICTION (I.E., THE REALITY OF EXPERIENCE) AND THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN TRUE AND FALSE (I.E., THE STANDARDS OF THOUGHT) NO LONGER EXIST.
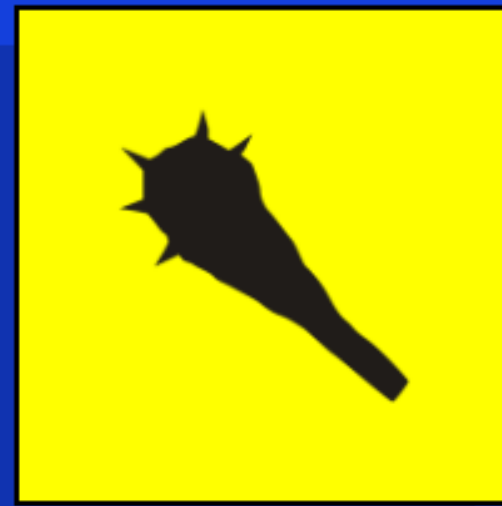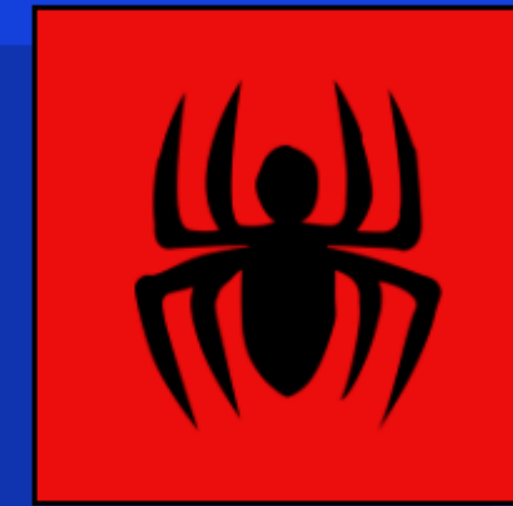>
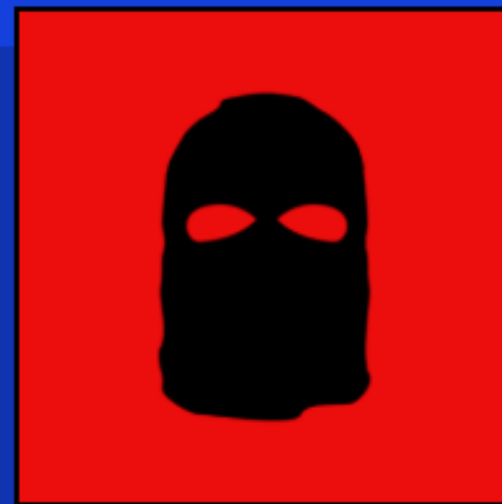> — *Hannah Arendt*
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DEMOCRATIC INTERVENTIONS

1. INOCULATE
2. INVESTIGATE
3. ISOLATE
4. INFECT