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FAKE NEWS – A CYNICAL APPROACH TO POLITICS

*Those who corrupt the public mind are just as evil as
those who steal from the public purse.*

Adlai Stevenson

What is “fake news”?

“Fake news” is a sophisticated method for subversive action which lies at the heart of modern hybrid warfare.

Lesson 1: *“fake news” cannot be properly understood outside its hybrid frame.*

Lesson 2: *only the tools that are effective against hybrid warfare could be effective against “fake news”.*

Goals

(1) changing the political attitudes and feelings of people;

(2) destroying the extant political order;

(3) suggesting radical political alternatives.

Tools

(1) rampant political lies;

(2) selected parts of the truth about a politically relevant case;

(3) overexposure of the truth about a selected case to suggest the preferred political conclusions or to avoid the undesirable ones.

Targets

(1) “Fake news” hits particular parts of society with the expectation that its disruptive effect will resonate in the rest of society.

Leverage 1: *all social phenomena are interconnected.*

Leverage 2: *external influence disguises itself as internal social interaction.*

(2) “Fake news” attacks the whole body of society and not only its head (politics).

Leverage 1: *all social phenomena have certain political value.*

Leverage 2: *disturbances in society will inevitably influence politics.*

Leverage 3: *the externally desired political effect disguises itself as a natural reaction of society.*

Social Mechanisms

(1) “Fake news” attacks the highest political authorities and the extant political order.

Leverage1: *the sympathy of people disaffected with the political and economic elites.*

Leverage2: *the populist deviation.*

(2) “Fake news” activates political illusions, myths, and metaphors; particular historical complexes; and conflicting identities, all of which challenge the dominant political value system and institutional setting.

Best ground: *the relics of communist propaganda.*

Dissemination

- (1) by deliberately created media, especially web sites;
- (2) by official media which disprove or criticise “fake news”;
- (3) by social media and personal communication of people.

Profile of the countries which spread “fake news”

(1) “Fake news” promises a disproportionate influence on the political arena. This attracts countries characterized by some of the following:

- *low living standards;*
- *heavy ideological heritage;*
- *politicization of religion;*
- *deficit of public control;*
- *lack of transparency;*
- *authoritarian regime.*

(2) If such a country is rich in natural resources, the probability of it using “fake news” is higher.

Rationale 1: *bigger regional or global ambitions;*

Rationale 2: *capacity to “invest” in “fake news” despite low living standard.*

Contradictory trends in the EU which facilitate the acceptance of “fake news” and appear in the areas of:

- (1) cultural and gender differences;
- (2) the compatibility between different cultures and between each of them and democracy;
- (3) the place of religion in democracy;
- (4) tolerance;
- (5) freedom of speech in principle and in practice;
- (6) the popular portrayal of ecology and reality.

Resulting discrepancies between

- (1) public narratives and private lives;
- (2) declared diversity and growing unification;
- (3) principle of separation between state and church, and the growing obsession of the state with religion;
- (4) the glamorous claims on freedom of speech and the rigid taboos blocking democratic reason;
- (5) the cult of empiricism in social sciences and the lack of conceptual orientation of society.

Final effects

- (1) political and social polarization of the EU societies;
- (2) stimulation of the separatist and exit tendencies;
- (3) provoking the phantasy of global radicalism;
- (4) radicalization of even well integrated third generation Muslims;
- (5) breeding of populism.

Responsibility of political and other social sciences

Given the hybrid nature of “fake news”, political and other social sciences should:

- (1) analyse the political relevance of key areas of social life and their usage in “fake news”;
- (2) make a well-structured classification of its mechanisms;
- (3) elaborate well-tuned indicators which identify all metamorphoses of “fake news”;
- (4) systematize the reliable investigation methods;
- (5) select effective and unobtrusive ICT tools for counteraction;
- (6) develop a permanent feedback on the effects of all these analyses and measures.

Let's talk sense to the American people. Let's tell them the truth, that there are no gains without pains, that we are now on the eve of great decisions, not easy decisions...

Adlai Stevenson

Now the European people deserve the same!

THANK YOU!