

Many of the ideas presented in this book date back to conversations started in 2015. Back then, we had become increasingly interested in understanding how new forms of deception and disguised propaganda work on digital platforms.

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At the end of 2016, things seemed to suddenly change, as fake news became a ubiquitous term in the public imagination. Yet, somewhat contrary to our previous work, what caught our attention was not how such news actually operated, but the kind of performative impact the concept of fake news seemed to have. Indeed, it seemed to us that fake news, alternative facts, post-truth and similar ideas were being used as new political weapons in a struggle over the very future of democracy. This book is our attempt to understand this field of struggle. Only by knowing the stakes of these conflicts might it become possible to imagine other futures and alternatives for democratic practices.

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