SOCIAL MEDIA, ADVERTISING AND DISINFORMATION: A TRANSDISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS OF FAKE NEWS AND ITS ADVERTISING USE IN DIGITAL CONSUMPTION CULTURE.

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ABSTRACT

In the digital age, social media has reshaped advertising and the flow of information, facilitating the spread of disinformation through strategies such as microtargeting and programmatic advertising. The interplay between algorithms and sensationalist content contributes to social polarisation and undermines trust in institutions. This paper examines the relationship between social media, advertising and disinformation from an interdisciplinary perspective, employing critical discourse analysis of advertising campaigns that rely on fake news and clickbait. Additionally, it explores regulatory proposals and media literacy initiatives to mitigate these phenomena and rethink current advertising models.

1. Introduction

In the era of hyper-technological advancement, social networks have reconfigured not only the manner in which we communicate, but also the ways in which we consume information and interact with digital advertising (Elías-Zambrano & Cabezuelo-Lorenzo, 2024; García-López, 2024). Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and X (formerly Twitter) have become spaces where social interaction, advertising and misinformation are intertwined in complex and, in many cases, problematic ways. The present article aims to analyse this intersection, exploring how algorithms, microtargeting and programmatic advertising can transform the economy, potentially engendering a kind of attention economy that facilitates the manipulation of audiences and the propagation of fake news. The logic of digital capitalism has the potential to turn human attention into a scarce and highly monetisable resource, which can lead to advertising practices that prioritise engagement over truthfulness and social welfare (Vaidhyanathan, 2018; Zuboff, 2019).

From a transdisciplinary perspective, this work integrates approaches from Communication and Media Studies, Cultural Studies, the political economy of communication and critical philosophy. The fields of Communication and Media Studies facilitate the analysis of the redefined flows of information and advertising on digital platforms, while Cultural Studies provide a critical lens for examining the cultural and social implications of these phenomena, particularly in terms of power, identity, and resistance (Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Hall, 1997). Conversely, the political economy of communication proffers instruments for comprehending the economic structures that perpetuate disinformation and manipulation in the digital age (Fuchs, 2021; McChesney, 2013). In addition to these perspectives, philosophical reflection explores the ethical and humanistic implications of the economy of attention and disinformation. Han (2017) has highlighted that contemporary society is characterised by a "logic of transparency" and an "excess of positivity". This is a consequence of constant exposure to digital stimuli, which generates an information saturation that hinders critical reflection and individual autonomy. In this context, social networks not only disseminate information, but also create an ecosystem in which we are encouraged to be constantly available, consuming and sharing content without pause (Álvarez-Monzoncillo et al., 2016). According to Han, this dynamic transforms individuals into "performance subjects," who, in their pursuit of recognition and validation, may engage in self-exploitive behaviours. These dynamics can bear significant consequences for democratic systems and personal freedoms.

In a line of thought in line with the postulates outlined above, Riechmann (2020) has drawn attention to the "era of collapse" in which we live, characterised by the convergence of ecological, social and technological crises. Digital capitalism has thus exacerbated alienation and dehumanisation, transforming individuals into mere consumers of data and products. The advent of novel communicative artefacts, such as artificial intelligence (AI), has precipitated a paradigm shift not only within the domain of advertising but also in associated domains, including journalism and the audiovisual sector (Quian & Sixto-García, 2024). However, the accelerated adoption of these technologies is having negative effects on society, such as disinformation and hate speech. In this sense, disinformation can be regarded not only as a technical or communicative problem, but also as a symptom of a society that has lost its ability to discern the true from the false, the important from the trivial. The solution, therefore, does not lie solely in regulations or technological innovations, but in a profound transformation of our values and ways of life, a transformation that will allow us to recover our autonomy and our connection with the commons.

The significance of this research lies in the pressing need to comprehend and address the challenges posed by social media in the age of misinformation. In a context characterised by increasing political polarisation, the erosion of trust in institutions and the proliferation of fake news, it is imperative to analyse how advertising practices and algorithms contribute to these phenomena. For instance, recent studies have demonstrated that social media algorithms tend to prioritise content that is sensationalist and polarising, as such content generates higher levels of engagement (Tufekci, 2018; Vosoughi et al., 2018). The dissemination of misinformation and the utilisation of strategies such as deepfake have emerged as conduits of communication, or alternatively, miscommunication (Ballesteros-Aguayo & Ruiz del Olmo, 2024). These phenomena have the potential to engender a digital environment characterised by pervasive concerns regarding hate speech (Brändle et al., 2024). Furthermore, programmatic advertising and microtargeting enable advertisers to target specific audiences with highly personalised

messages, which may include misinformation designed to exploit cognitive and emotional biases (Zuiderveen Borgesius et al., 2018). As Cabezuelo-Lorenzo et al. (2023) observe, "in the contemporary context, we are confronted with not only an educational emergency, but also a communicative one, particularly in the context of the challenge posed by fake news in digital media" (p.42).

The primary objective of this article is to critically analyse the relationship between social networks, advertising and disinformation, exploring how algorithms and advertising practices can contribute to the manipulation of audiences and the propagation of fake news in a socio-cultural sphere sustained by an economy of attention. In order to this end, four specific objectives have been delineated. Firstly, an examination will be conducted of the role of algorithms and programmatic advertising in the distribution of disinformative content and its impact on social polarisation. Secondly, it analyses microtargeting strategies employed in advertising campaigns based on fake news, identifying their ethical and political implications. Thirdly, it explores regulatory and media literacy proposals with a view to mitigating the negative effects of disinformation and rethinking current advertising models. Finally, it reflects on the cultural and eco-social implications of the attention economy, considering its impact on individual autonomy and democracy.

The central hypothesis suggests that misinformation on social media is not merely an isolated phenomenon, but rather, a consequence of a nexus among opaque algorithms, aggressive advertising practices, and an eco-social mechanism that has promoted engagement to the detriment of what is genuinely human and thereby ecological. This convergence has been demonstrated to facilitate the manipulation of audiences, whilst concomitantly exacerbating social polarisation and undermining trust in democratic institutions. In this regard, recent research posits that disinformation disseminates more expeditiously than truthful information, partly due to its emotional and sensationalist character (Vosoughi et al., 2018). Furthermore, the absence of transparency in advertising algorithms and targeting processes hinders accountability and the effective regulation of these practices (Napoli, 2019).

In this context, it is essential to rethink current advertising models and explore alternatives that prioritise social welfare and democratic integrity; in short, "slow" communication practices for the common good (Elías-Zambrano et al., 2023). Proposals such as the regulation of algorithms, the promotion of media literacy and the development of more ethical and transparent advertising models could contribute to mitigating the negative effects of misinformation (Frau-Meigs et al., 2021; McStay, 2020). Nevertheless, it is imperative that these initiatives are accompanied by critical reflection on the power structures that underpin the attention economy and its impact on society.

2. Economics of Attention in Digital Consumer Culture

The attention economy has become a pivotal concept in the understanding of the dynamics of contemporary digital communication. In the contemporary period of techno-scientific hegemony, the capture of attention by consumer-recipients has become a highly prized and contested resource. Brand-consumer interaction in the contemporary era transpires principally through social networks (Ligaraba et al., 2024). This phenomenon has radically transformed the way in which companies, the media and digital platforms interact with users, who on many occasions are temporarily unaware of their interaction with social networks (Giraldo-Luque & Fernández-Rovira, 2020). As Simon's (1971) seminal work demonstrated, the concept of attention, in a world oversaturated with information, was a scarce commodity. Since then, the field has evolved considerably, with contemporary critiques by authors such as Wu (2016) and Han (2017) highlighting not only economic, but also cultural, political and ethical aspects. The fundamental premise of this economic model is that human attention is a scarce and valuable resource in an information-saturated world. In the context of social media and digital platforms, the attention of users has become the primary currency of exchange, determining the value of content and monetisation strategies. Consequently, the value of attention is currently measured in the monetisation of capturing the attention of a receiver-consumer, whose critical capacity or eco-social perspective is not so much of interest, but rather his or her momentary media focus with advertising potential (Moreno-Albarracín & Blanco-Sánchez, 2024).

The transition from an economy based on the production of tangible goods to one focused on capturing and retaining attention has had profound implications for the way online content is created,

distributed and consumed. Digital platforms have thus developed sophisticated algorithms designed to maximise the time users spend interacting with their services. This has resulted in the creation of what some critics have termed 'architectures of addiction'.

2.1. Social Media and Digital Ecosystems

Social media has redefined the way we consume information, interact with others and construct our identities. In the contemporary era, all public spaces, including urban areas, have become mediatised environments whose primary objective is the promotion of consumerism (Abram, 2024). In virtual spaces, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and X (formerly Twitter) function not only as spaces of social interaction, but also as digital ecosystems where users' attention is constantly captured, monetised and manipulated. As posited by Wu (2016), this phenomenon constitutes an element of a historical process in which companies have sought to capture and market human attention. This has been a recurring theme from the earliest advertisements to the recommendation algorithms that are now prevalent on social media platforms.

In this context, algorithms assume a pivotal role. These structures are designed to maximise engagement. These systems have been shown to prioritise content that is sensationalist, emotional and polarising, as such content is more effective at capturing and retaining attention (Tufekci, 2018). Han (2017) has offered a critique of this dynamic, positing that information saturation and the incessant demand for attention effectively transform individuals into "performance subjects," who are exploited by a system that compels constant availability and content consumption. This logic has consequences for individuals as well as for democracy. It undermines the capacity for critical reflection and informed debate (Pariser, 2011).

Therefore, it can be posited that social networks are not neutral mechanisms of communication but are deeply imbricated with the structures of neoliberal socio-economic and cultural logic. These platforms are designed to capture attention and influence behaviours, directing individuals towards the consumption of specific products and services (García-López, 2016). This manipulation of attention exerts ideological effects, serving to reinforce values such as individualism, consumerism and competition, whilst marginalising alternative and critical discourses. Consequently, it fosters a culture of misinformation with the potential to undermine the democratic values that have been purportedly sustained by so-called first-world countries over the past decades.

2.2. Disinformation in the Digital Age

The dissemination of false information has become a major concern in the digital era, and its interconnection with social networks and the attention economy has been a subject of extensive research in recent years. As posited by Wardle and Derakhshan (2017), distinctions are to be made between disinformation (false information created with the intention to mislead), misinformation (false information shared without malicious intent) and a kind of harmful information (true information used to cause harm). Within the domain of social media, these phenomena are exacerbated by the aforementioned algorithms that prioritise engagement over veracity, and by advertising practices that exploit disinformation to achieve commercial or political objectives.

The propagation of disinformation can be regarded as an exemplification of the attention economy's propensity to favour misinformation. Research conducted by Vosoughi et al. (2018) has demonstrated that fake news tends to spread faster than real news, in part due to its emotional and sensationalist nature. This phenomenon not only impacts the quality of the information we consume, but also has profound implications for democracy, as it undermines trust in institutions and polarises society (McGonagle, 2017). It can be argued that misinformation is not an isolated phenomenon, but rather the result of a convergence of economic interests, advertising strategies and power structures. In this mercantilist mechanism, advertising not only benefits from the propagation of disinformation, but also contributes to its dissemination by normalising misleading discourses and manipulating audience perceptions. However, as Zuboff (2019) has previously outlined, the practice of surveillance capitalism entails the utilisation of personal data for the purpose of predicting and manipulating human behaviour. This phenomenon gives rise to significant political ramifications, particularly with regard to the consolidation of power in the hands of a small number of technology corporations (McChesney, 2013). These corporations utilise programmatic advertising and microtargeting as fundamental business

strategies to not only capture the attention of the receiver-consumer but also to shape the worldview of audiences that are increasingly uncritical.

2.3. Programmatic Advertising, Microtargeting and Clickbait

Programmatic advertising and microtargeting are arguably two of the most disruptive and controversial practices of the digital age. Programmatic advertising is the term given to the use of algorithms for the automation of ad buying and placement, while microtargeting is the process of audience segmentation based on demographic, behavioural and psychological data. These practices have been instrumental in effecting a paradigm shift within the advertising industry, enabling advertisers to reach specific audiences with highly personalised messages (Zuiderveen Borgesius et al., 2018).

From the perspective of consumer theory, these techniques represent a radical evolution in the way firms influence consumer decisions. Consumer theory, initially developed by economists such as Gary Becker (1965) and subsequently expanded upon by authors including Richard Thaler (2015) within the paradigm of behavioural economics, examines the decision-making processes of consumers in the context of their preferences, budgetary constraints, and the availability of information. In the contemporary context, microtargeting and programmatic advertising have transformed these factors, enabling companies to manipulate preferences and mitigate consumers' informational constraints.

A prime example of this is microtargeting, which uses personal data to predict and exploit individual preferences, allowing advertisers to design messages that resonate emotionally with consumers. This notion aligns with the concept of nudging pioneered by Thaler and Sunstein (2008), which posits that minor adjustments to the decision-making environment can substantially impact individual behaviour. In the context of digital advertising, algorithms function as persistent persuasive stimuli, subtly influencing consumers' choices without their full awareness.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that these techniques give rise to significant ethical and political challenges. One such strategy is microtargeting, which has been the subject of considerable criticism on account of its potential to disseminate false information and manipulate the outcomes of political elections. During the Brexit campaign and the 2016 US presidential election, microtargeting techniques were utilised to disseminate misleading and polarising messages, thereby giving rise to intense debate about the regulation of such practices (Cadwalladr, 2017).

It is evident that programmatic advertising and microtargeting are not neutral, but rather ideologically charged. As Pariser (2011) explains, these practices reinforce filter bubbles and echo chambers, resulting in the isolation of individuals in fragmented and polarised media realities. In this context, form is prioritised over content, with messages being constructed to be visually striking but conceptually empty. This dynamic not only serves to trivialise social problems but also hinders the formation of a critical and well-informed citizenry.

This phenomenon can be understood as a form of information overload, whereby individuals are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information and advertising stimuli, which in turn reduces their ability to make rational and well-informed decisions (Schwartz, 2004). In this paradigm, programmatic advertising and microtargeting exert a dual influence on consumption decisions, concomitantly contributing to the alienation and loss of autonomy of individuals. This phenomenon has been extensively discussed by critical authors such as Han (2017) and Zuboff (2019).

3. Methodology

The present paper employs a transdisciplinary qualitative approach with a view to analysing the intersection between social media, advertising and misinformation. The focus is on the way fake news is used as clickbait to direct users towards advertising content. The methodology is structured in two main phases: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Source Review for an Ethical Proposal.

3.1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

In the initial phase, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed in accordance with the approach proposed by van Dijk (2003), with the objective of conducting a comprehensive analysis of two exemplary cases of programmatic advertising on social networks that employ fake news as a bait. CDA is a method that allows us to study how the abuse of power and social inequality are represented,

reproduced and legitimised in text and speech in social and political contexts (van Dijk, 2003). Therefore, CDA stands out not only for its role in the necessary social denunciation, but also for its fundamental role in changing the narrative model (Sánchez-Soriano and García-Jiménez, 2020), in this case, advertising.

In accordance with the foregoing, a triadic methodological framework is hereby proposed, predicated on the relationship between discourse, cognition and society. This framework will be employed to analyse how certain hegemonic groups exercise control over text and context, and consequently over people's thoughts and behaviours. This approach unravels the discursive structures that perpetuate misinformation and manipulate users on digital platforms.

3.1.1. Selection of Cases for Analysis

Two paradigmatic cases were selected to illustrate the use of fake news as clickbait on social networks:

- Case 1: Using the image of celebrities to promote fraudulent cryptocurrency investments.
  Recently, fraudulent advertisements have been reported on the social network X (formerly Twitter) using images of public figures such as Ana Belén and David Broncano to promote the sale of cryptocurrencies. These promotions include fake news and interviews, pretending to be from reputable media, and redirecting to fraudulent websites (Huffington Post, 2025).
- Case 2: Fake ads using artificial intelligence to generate misleading content.
  In 2024, Facebook is flooded with pages that use artificial intelligence to create fake and sensational images in order to generate interactions and advertising revenue. One example is the manipulated photo of Sophia Loren, looking old and decrepit, shared by a Mexican Facebook page. Although the image looks real, it was created by AI to attract attention and generate debate about its authenticity, thereby increasing comments and revenue for both the author of the image and the social network (El País, 2024).

3.1.2. Sample Justification

The selection of these cases is based on two criteria: their relevance and timeliness, and the diversity of strategies employed for the purpose of disinformation. The initial case demonstrates how public trust in prominent individuals is exploited to legitimise financial fraud, while the subsequent case exemplifies the utilisation of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, to generate misleading content that fosters interaction and economic benefits. The two cases under consideration permit an analysis of different manipulation tactics and their impact on the attention economy.

3.1.3. Analysis Procedure

For each case, the original publications are compiled, including texts, images and any associated multimedia material. The discursive structures, linguistic and visual resources employed, and the context of dissemination are analysed. The analysis is centred on the identification of discursive manipulation strategies, ideological representations and persuasive mechanisms employed for the purpose of attracting and deceiving user-consumers.

Table 1. Phases of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

STAGE	DESCRIPTION
1. Case selection	Two representative cases are selected in social networks that use fake news as bait to direct users to advertisements: - Case 1: Using the image of celebrities to promote fraudulent investments in cryptocurrencies. - Case 2: Fake promotions using artificial intelligence to generate misleading content.
2. Justification of the sample	The selection responds to criteria of relevance and diversity of disinformation strategies: - Case 1: Exemplifies how trust in public figures is exploited to legitimise financial fraud. - Case 2: Reflects the use of AI to create false images that generate interaction and monetisation. Both cases allow us to analyse differentiated tactics of manipulation in the attention economy.
3. Analysis procedure	Original social media posts (X/Twitter and Facebook) are collected, including text, images and other multimedia elements. ACD tools are applied to examine: - Discursive structures used. - Linguistic and visual resources used. - Manipulation and persuasion strategies. - Context of circulation and reception of the message. The aim is to identify recurrent narrative patterns in advertising based on disinformation.

Source: own elaboration, 2025

3.2. Reviewing Sources for an Ethical Proposal

In the subsequent phase, a comprehensive literature review of extant research and proposals addressing the ethics of digital advertising and disinformation on social networks is conducted. The present review aims to identify regulatory frameworks, media literacy initiatives and responsible practices that can mitigate the spread of fake news and promote more ethical advertising models.

3.2.1. Source Selection Criteria

Academic sources, reports from specialist organisations and public policy documents published in the last five years were selected to ensure the timeliness and relevance of the information. These sources address issues such as the regulation of programmatic advertising, media literacy strategies, ethics in digital communication and studies on the impact of misinformation on society (Tambini, 2020; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

3.2.2. Review Procedure

A systematic search was also conducted in academic databases and institutional repositories, using keywords such as 'ethics in digital advertising', 'regulation of misinformation', 'media literacy' and 'responsible advertising models'. The selected sources will be analysed to extract proposals and recommendations that contribute to the development of an ethical framework for social media advertising to counter disinformation and protect users (Zuboff, 2019; Napoli, 2019).

4. Research Results

4.1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Selected Cases

Following an analysis of the two selected cases, it can be concluded that recurrent discursive patterns and manipulation strategies are implicitly observed in advertising based on disinformation strategies. The detailed results of each case are presented below, following the triadic methodological framework proposed by van Dijk (2003), which relates discourse, cognition and society.

4.1.1. Case 1: Using the image of celebrities to promote fraudulent cryptocurrency investments.

The analysis of the first case shows how disinformation is constructed by exploiting the public's trust in well-known public figures. Fraudulent advertisements on the social network X use images of celebrities such as Ana Belén, David Broncano or Carlos Sobera, along with fake news and interviews pretending to be from reputable media outlets. These posts redirect to fraudulent websites promoting cryptocurrency investments.

From a discursive point of view, several key strategies can be identified:

a) Legitimisation through authority figures: Celebrity images and the simulation of recognised media lend credibility to the advertisements, building on the public's trust in these figures.
b) Use of persuasive language: Texts use highly emotional and intentional language, with phrases such as 'unique opportunity' or 'make money fast' designed to elicit an immediate response.
c) Visual manipulation: Images of celebrities are carefully selected and edited to convey seriousness and confidence, reinforcing the fraudulent message.

Figure 1. Using celebrities to invest in cryptocurrencies

Source: Facua, 2025.

Cognitively, these strategies appeal to biases such as the authority heuristic (the tendency to trust recognised figures) and the urgency effect (the need to act quickly in the face of a perceived opportunity). This case reflects how misinformation exploits the dynamics of trust and prestige in society, leading to the perpetuation of inequalities and vulnerabilities.

4.1.2. Case 2: Fake promotions using artificial intelligence to generate misleading content.

The second case analysed focuses on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to create false and sensational images on Facebook. A prominent example is the manipulated photo of Sophia Loren, looking old and decrepit, shared by a Mexican Facebook page. Although the image looks real, it was created by AI to attract attention and generate debate about its authenticity, thereby increasing comments and revenue for both the author of the image and the social network.

The discursive analysis of this case reveals the following strategies:

a) Visual sensationalism: The image of Sophia Loren, manipulated to look aged, provokes a strong emotional response, which increases the likelihood that users will interact with the post.

b) Calculated ambiguity: The publication does not explicitly state that the image is real, but its design and context suggest authenticity, leading to debates and comments on social media that increase its visibility.
c) Exploiting curiosity: Misleading content is presented in a way that arouses users' curiosity and motivates them to click and share the post.

Figure 2. Use of AI for the manipulation of the image of Sophia Loren

Source: El País, 2024.

Cognitively, this case exploits confirmation bias (the tendency to seek information that confirms our beliefs) and the novelty effect (preference for surprising or unusual content). Socially, it reflects how emerging technologies such as AI can be used to manipulate users' perceptions and behaviour, with significant ethical and political implications.

4.2. Ethical Proposals

After analysing the two selected cases, it can be concluded that recurrent discursive patterns and manipulation strategies are implicitly observed in advertising based on disinformation strategies. The detailed results of each case are presented below, following the triadic methodological framework proposed by van Dijk (2003), which relates discourse, cognition and society.

The review of sources for an ethical approach identified three key areas for mitigating the spread of misinformation and promoting more responsible advertising models: regulation, media literacy and ethical business practices. a) Regulation of programmatic advertising and microtargeting: Previous research has already proposed the implementation of stricter regulatory frameworks to limit the use of personal data in digital advertising and ensure transparency of algorithms (Tambini, 2020; Zuiderveen Borgesius et al., 2018). This includes banning misleading practices, such as the use of fake news as clickbait, and requiring digital platforms to take responsibility for the advertising content they distribute. Developing such measures would be important for the ethical delimitation of fake news-induced advertising.

a) Media literacy: Teaching critical skills to evaluate information and identify misinformation is fundamental to empowering user-consumers. Initiatives such as those proposed by Frau-Meigs et al. (2021) and Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) highlight the importance of integrating media literacy into education systems and public awareness campaigns.
b) Ethical business practices: Digital platforms and advertisers should adopt codes of conduct that prioritise integrity and social good over financial gain. This includes implementing content verification systems, promoting responsible advertising, and working with independent organisations to audit their practices (Napoli, 2019; Zuboff, 2019).

5. Conclusions

The present article explored the intersection between social media, advertising and disinformation from a critical and transdisciplinary perspective. The research findings demonstrate the efficacy of advertising practices based on fake news strategies and the use of opaque algorithms to manipulate audiences and polarise society. The identification of recurrent discursive patterns, manipulation strategies and potential solutions to mitigate the negative effects of disinformation within the prevailing ecosystem of the attention economy is presented. In summary, it is imperative to reconsider advertising models in social networks and to encourage more ethical and transparent practices in the digital environment on the part of broadcasters. The specific findings of the research are presented below:

- Disinformation as an advertising strategy: The cases analysed demonstrate that fake news is not merely an information problem, but also an effective persuasive communication tool to capture attention and generate engagement. This tool is employed by a segment of the advertising industry with the objective of maximising profits. The exploitation of public figures and the use of artificial intelligence to create misleading content reflect how disinformation is integrated into the digital communication strategies of certain broadcasters and companies.
- The role of algorithms and microtargeting: The deployment of social media algorithms and microtargeting techniques has been identified as a key factor in the amplification of misinformation, with these mechanisms prioritising content that is sensationalist and polarising. These practices have the capacity to influence user-consumer decisions, whilst concurrently reinforcing filter bubbles and echo chambers. This has the potential to compromise necessary social cohesion and erode trust in institutions.
- The need for regulation and media literacy The results of the study indicate the necessity of the development of stricter regulatory frameworks and the promotion of media literacy initiatives. These measures are imperative in empowering users to establish a counter-power, thereby ensuring the transparency of digital platforms and counteracting the deleterious effects of misinformation.
- Towards an ethical advertising model: The findings of the study indicate that digital platforms and advertisers should adopt more responsible practices. Today's advertising industry should help promote social good beyond profit as the only way forward. This encompasses content verification techniques, the promotion of transparent advertising, and collaboration with independent organisations to audit their practices.

In light of the aforementioned considerations, it is imperative to delineate the limitations of the study and duly take them into account. Firstly, the analysis focuses on two specific cases, which limits the generalisability of the results. Future research can expand the sample to include more cases and platforms to allow for a more comprehensive analysis of disinformation strategies. Secondly, while the qualitative approach of ACD is undoubtedly valuable, it can be complemented by quantitative methods to measure the impact of misinformation on user behaviour.

In addition, the exploration of the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, in the creation and propagation of misinformation is proposed as a key research strategy for future studies. Furthermore, it is considered pertinent to investigate the capacity of media literacy initiatives and regulatory policies to adapt to rapid changes in the digital environment.

Notwithstanding the challenges posed by misinformation in the digital age, this article proposes a framework for rethinking advertising practices and promoting a more ethical and responsible use of social networks. The results of the study indicate the necessity of approaching this phenomenon from a critical and transdisciplinary perspective, integrating approaches from Communication and Media Studies, Cultural Studies and practical philosophy. In order to construct a digital environment that is both equitable and democratic, it is necessary for there to be a joint commitment that integrates transparency, education and effective regulation. In this process, the advertising industry should assume an ethical responsibility aligned with eco-social principles, to ensure that communicative circulation prioritises collective welfare over commercial interests and manipulative strategies.

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