

Research project summary:
State responses to threats to epistemic security
Project managed by:
Dr Sophie Rosenberg
Project outline:
<p>This research project explores how states respond to threats to epistemic security, or threats to a society's ability to generate and assess reliable information in order to make timely and collective decision-making, as coined by the Turing Institute. These threats include misinformation, disinformation, 'fake news,' online influence operations, deepfakes, among others. Epistemic security can be considered an additional and complementary conceptions of security (beyond national security, or human security, or health security) and one that arguably links many conceptions of security.</p> <p>Disinformation has been linked to the commission of human rights abuses and the spread of violent extremism. In response, governments around the world have implemented measures ostensibly to uphold epistemic security, including 'fake news' laws, fact-checking websites, content take-down requests, website suspensions, and internet shutdowns. Yet, depending on the circumstances, these measures can be used to undermine the security of its citizens, both physical and epistemic.</p> <p>This project asks several questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are states engaging in international cooperation and multilateral efforts to counter disinformation? - Governments implement measures such as fake news laws, fact-checking measures, content take-down requests website suspensions, and internet shutdowns. How often is this directly in response to political instability and internal conflict? Is a new trend emerging whereby governments frequently implement epistemic security measures in response to political violence?
What you will be expected to do:
<p>The UGRA will be expected to conduct extensive open-source research and independent analysis on questions relating to states' policies and positions regarding information integrity, by drawing on academic and non-academic sources (including governmental reports, UN reports, press reporting, policy reports, NGO reports...), and databases relating to armed conflict trends. This work can be conducted remotely.</p> <p>Specific tasks include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyse global trends in enacting measures to counter disinformation, especially 'fake news' laws - Conduct in-depth case studies of governments' implementation of measures such as fake news laws, internet shutdowns, content take-down requests, website suspensions etc., including possible relations to trends of political violence - Identify, collate, and analyse justifications presented by governments around the world regarding their implementation of epistemic security measures (including fake news laws, website suspensions, internet shutdowns...) - Analyse multilateral state efforts to set norms, common standards, and rules around disinformation, highlighting differences between regional approaches
Desirable technical skills (e.g. language/tech skills)
Language skills valued but not required.
How many hours you will work overall, and per week (subject to variation)
80 total, 8 per week.
Can the project be undertaken remotely or do you have to be physically present at a specific location to carry out the work?
This project can be undertaken remotely.