



**United Nations**

Department of  
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Social Affairs



# Division for Inclusive Social Development webinar

## The social impacts of misinformation

*Speaker:*

**Jay Van Bavel**

*New York University (NYU)*

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**1 – 2 pm EST**

Mis- and disinformation are not new phenomena. However, the rapid evolution of communication technologies over the past few decades, including the rise of social media and the recent integration of artificial intelligence tools, has ushered in a new era for human interaction where mis- and disinformation have gained alarming prominence.

Online, misperceptions and misunderstandings, even when accidental, can spread like wildfire. Moreover, technology is often intentionally used to harm, deceive, and disinform. The consequences certainly escape the confines of the internet. Mis- and disinformation undermine social cohesion. Amongst other things, they erode people's trust in institutions and in each other, muddle public deliberation and debate, fuel tensions and polarization, and diminish capacities for collective action. Why is misinformation so damaging? What can be done to mitigate its risks and enable the potential of communication technologies for social cohesion and solidarity?

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Jay Van Bavel is a Professor of Psychology & Neural Science at New York University, an affiliate at the Stern School of Business in Management and Organizations, and Director of the *Social Identity & Morality Lab*. He is the co-author of “The Power of Us: Harnessing Our Shared Identities to Improve Performance, Increase Cooperation, and Promote Social Harmony”. Prior to joining NYU, Jay completed his PhD at the University of Toronto and a Postdoctoral Fellowship at The Ohio State University.

From neurons to social networks, Jay’s research examines how collective concerns—group identities, moral values, and political beliefs—shape the mind, brain, and behavior. His work addresses issues of group identity, social motivation, cooperation, implicit bias, moral judgment, decision-making, and social media. He studies these issues using a combination of neuroimaging, lesion patients, social cognitive tasks, economic tasks, cross-cultural surveys, and computational social science.



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