



Recognizing Fake News Consumption

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Abstract:

Fighting the transmission of false information is still a challenging issue. It is crucial to comprehend the issue of fake news because of this. This analysis seeks to understand why fake news is so frequently spread on social media and why some people actually believe it. The way that its structure is presented (including the images picked, the titles' structure, and the language used in the text) might help to clarify why something becomes viral and what causes people to believe fake news. We demonstrate that fake news looks at every conceivable angle to grab the reader's attention, from the way the title is put together to the language used throughout the text. The qualities of fake news (more surreal, exaggerated, stunning, emotional, compelling, click bait, shocking visuals), which appear to be carefully planned out and utilized by fake news makers, are linked to its proliferation and success. This analysis demonstrates that fake news is still frequently disseminated and consumed because that is the major goal of its producers. Although some studies contradict these relationships, it seems that conservatives, right-wingers, the elderly, and individuals with lower levels of education are more prone to share and believe false information.

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Introduction

Online information consumption in general as well as how we obtain news stories has evolved. The main method for getting news is now social media. According to recent surveys, Facebook ranks among the most popular places for young people to obtain news (Newman et al. 2019). Facebook and Twitter, on the other hand, are in charge of the spread of false information in the digital sphere, boosting its exposure by developing segregated groups or recommendation algorithms (Zimmer et al. 2019a, 2019b). Our analysis aims to demonstrate the reasons for fake news's persuasiveness and the elements that facilitate its dissemination. It is critical to comprehend the function the structure (topic, title, and body text) plays in the rapid distribution of fake news as well as what drives readers to consume and share it. This goes beyond only understanding the digital mechanisms that encourage the proliferation of fake news. Several research conducted recently have looked at ways to fight online misinformation. Others aim to increase social media users' awareness and stop the spread of lies by betting on the automation of fact-checking (Graves 2018; McClure 2017; Nguyen et al. 2019). On the one hand, efforts are combined in the search for technological programs that allow the identification and detection of fake news (Burkhardt 2017b; Hardalov et al. 2016). A group of solutions that seem to point toward a promising future include the detection of malicious social bots (Davis et al. 2016; Shao et al. 2017; Ferrara 2017; Bessi and Ferrara 2016; Zimmer et al. 2019a); the detention of false content; and linguistic analyses that consider the text structure (Hardalov et al. 2016; Shu et al. 2018a; Horne and Adali 2017).

One of the main goals of current research has been to prevent confirmation bias and promote diversity of material (Mohseni and Ragan 2018; Lex et al. 2018; Hou et al.

2018). Few research, however, have concentrated on the structural traits of fake news. In an effort to define a profile for the true consumer of online disinformation, this review seeks to add to the body of literature by analyzing the phenomenon of fake news from the viewpoint of the consumer, understanding the traits of fake news articles that encourage their viral spread, and identifying the variables linked to the choice and consumption of fake news in an online environment.

In order to determine the apparent effectiveness and spread of this kind of online deception, this review focuses on consumer motives (user/reader) and the structure/presentation of fake news. The dynamics of social media variables, such as recommendation algorithms, echo chambers, filter bubbles, and malevolent social bots, which also significantly contribute to the dissemination of false information, were not discussed. With this review, we hope to comprehend the isolated false news issue from the standpoint of the features of the digital environment it exists in. Our objectives are to determine the primary determinants of false news believing and distribution as well as the key distinctions and connections between fake and legitimate news in order to emphasize the significance of these traits for their spread. We are aware that some news articles have a higher chance of going viral than others, that some headlines are more captivating, and that people frequently choose the news they read depending on their political and ideological affiliation as well as their social and psychological makeup. Furthermore, recent research has demonstrated that the term "fake news" has come to mean many various things, which has prompted academics to attempt but fail to come up with a clear definition. As the term began to be used in many situations and places, its semantic range grew and became more subjective. As part of this review, we also want to provide a practical definition of

fake news that is germane to the ongoing discussion in the fields of political communication and journalism.

The following research issues are the focus of our study, which is grounded in an extensive literature review:

- Question 1: Does fake news fast spread on social media because it focuses on features that users or readers find appealing?
- Question 2: Why do people spread false information on social media?
- Question 3: How do demographic and political factors relate to the acceptance and spread of false information?
- Question 4: Who consumes bogus news?

In terms of study design, the paper was divided into numerous sections, beginning with a brief historical overview of fake news and continuing with a consideration of the various issues associated to its consumption, dissemination, and belief. In short, we first found certain epistemological issues with the phrase "fake news" that were present in the literature. We provide a working definition of fake news that clarifies its semantic area and is centered on its present relevance for current debate in the fields of journalism and political communication. In order to understand what drives people to consume and spread fake news on social networks, we then build a link between the structure of fake news and user/reader preferences. The article's final goal is to provide a decisive response to the question, "Who are the consumers of fake news?", concluding a comprehensive analysis of recent literature (2016–2020) to identify the key variables influencing trust in fake news.

Methods

The research papers used for this study's analysis were taken from the Google Scholar database. The research that was published between 2016 and 2020 were taken

into account in this review. The research papers that received the most citations over these years were those that were chosen. According to the document type, language, and inclusion in the theme category of our review article, scientific papers were assessed. Selecting the publications that analyze the primary variables influencing the belief in false news allowed us to build our corpus of scientific literature that were taken into consideration for the inquiry. From a pool of 419 results based on this category (texts dealing with belief in fake news), we chose 52 scientific publications based on the most recurrent, consistent, and researched aspects by the academic community in relation to the consumption of fake news. The 419 academic documents containing "fake news" in the title, abstract, or keywords were gathered in June 2020 using the research query "fake news share," "fake news consumption "and" belief fake news."

A Historical Analysis of Fake News

We are all aware that fake news is not a recent phenomenon. But today's technologies and techniques are different (Posetti and Matthews 2018; Uberti 2016). Facts that have been distorted, information that has been slanted, propaganda, and information that has been used to attack ideals and ideas have always existed in society. Even in Roman times, in 44 BC, what would have been comparable to modern-day fake news may have been used as a political ploy (Posetti and Matthews 2018). A variety of historical indicators suggest that fake news may have always existed.

For instance, a person in Rome known as Pasquino was employed to spread untrue information and unfavorable rumors in an effort to harm and smear public people and politicians (Burkhardt 2017a; Canavilhas and Ferrari 2018; Darnton 2017). Additionally, there was a phony news publication called "Canard" that was

sold on the streets of the French capital in the 17th century in France (Darnton 2017). In the 19th century, fake news was also widely disseminated in Germany. McGillen (2017) looked into the strategies employed by those who spread false information during this time and made the case that the deception may have been a result of the press's use of fictitious foreign correspondents to compete in an increasingly cutthroat market. Due to the high cost of sending journalists abroad, there were bogus reporters who created captivating stories. This explanation would suggest that, just as it is today, fake news was produced in the 19th century for economic and financial reasons as well (Bernal 2018).

Fake news has an unprecedented effect and reach due to the current media environment, despite neither being new nor having been created by Donald Trump. The history of fake news is divided into four eras by Burkhardt (2017a): the pre-printing press era, the post-printing press era, the mass media era, and the internet era. According to the author, fake news was about information control during the first age (before the invention of the printing press), when knowledge was also power. It uses Procopius of Caesarea as an example, who in the sixth century propagated false information to attack Emperor Justinian (Burkhardt 2017a). The post-printing press age is symbolized by the *Canard* in France and the *Pasquino* in Italy. As an illustration of the mass media period, in 1926, the radio program "Broadcasting the Barricades" transmitted bogus news as a spoof, frightening the unaware populace (Burkhardt 2017a). The "Pizzagate conspiracy" and the Pope endorsing Donald Trump as president are two examples of fake news that has been widely disseminated in the internet age.

Contemporary Usage

Merriam Webster is credited with coining the phrase in the late 19th century, according to Watson (2018b). Before this time, the phrase fake news was only used to describe false news. Keep in mind that "fake news" does not necessarily mean "false news." Meneses (2018) contends that while both may be equivalent, they are never the same. According to the author, the difference lies in how the deception is created and spread. While fake news refers to "false information" that was purposefully intended to be deceptive, false news is related with journalistic inaccuracy, a lack of expertise, and irresponsibility (Meneses 2018). Contrary to fake news, which has only been a concept for the past 20 years, Meneses (2018) claims that the word "false news" has always existed? The internet, social media, and technological development all contributed to the neologism.

The 2016 US presidential election is when the phrase first gained popularity. Trump's campaign used the idea as a tool or political weapon, frequently referencing it in his speeches. Hillary Clinton was the one who introduced the concept of fake news to the campaign, accusing the false information spreading on social media in a statement. The phrase quickly went viral after Donald Trump adopted it and started using it frequently on Twitter (Wendling, 2018).

Defining Fake News: A Contemporary problem

In the literature, there is still no universally accepted definition of fake news. The truth is that defining the idea of fake news has not been simple, despite the widespread usage of this word by academia, the media, and politics. The phrase "fake news" has been used since the 19th century, according to Watson (2018b), but its definition has changed throughout time. It first gained popularity in 2016, during the American presidential election campaign (Meneses 2018). Since then, the term "fake news" has been used often in the context of the media, which has complicated its

definition. Due to the significance the concept gained, "fake news" overtook other terms as the most frequently searched phrase on Google in 2016 (Zaryan 2017). The Collins Dictionary likewise made the decision to designate terminology as the word of the year for 2017. The politician that made the phrase popular was Donald Trump, who ran for president in 2016. According to Farkas and Schou (2018), Trump began using the phrase frequently to denigrate any journalism that did not support his campaign. Therefore, fake news has primarily been utilized to advance ideas or gain money since the American elections (Lazer et al. 2018).

Numerous authors argue against the use of the phrase "fake news" due to its polysemy. According to Habgood-Coote (2019), the phrase "fake news" does not have a consistent definition and is based on a variety of settings, hence it has been improperly used by scholars and journalists. Furthermore, Habgood-Coote (2019) thinks the word is "absurd" and unneeded because it has so many definitions and is used for propaganda purposes that could endanger democracy. The European Commission's study opted to solely use the term "disinformation" due to the variety of meanings around fake news (Cock Buning 2018). The term "disinformation," as used in the European Commission report, refers to a broader range of misleading or fraudulent information, with a purpose to mislead, in a variety of formats (such as memes, modified texts), which fake news can fit (Ireton and Posetti 2018). However, the majority of the literature aligns the idea of false news with the structure of a news narrative, which gives it more legitimacy and intrigue. However, because news must present a real and factual scenario, the idea of false news might be paradoxical (Tandoc et al. 2018b). We are presently seeing a "shift to post-truth, trading, heavily on assumptions about a "period of truth" we apparently once enjoyed" (Corner 2017).

What, however, is false news? By analyzing the definitions in the literature and taking into account the context and significance of the phrase, we will attempt to define fake news in this section. According to the majority of authors (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017; Lazer et al. 2018; Rini 2017; Shu et al. 2017; Gelfert 2018; Tandoc et al. 2018b), fake news is defined as an article that mimics the framework of a news story or report and contains bogus content that was produced with the intention of misleading readers. In actuality, Meneses (2018) argues that the ability to discriminate between false and fake news is a function of the intent to deceive. False information is not meant to deceive the reader. A journalistic error or a lack of professionalism on the part of the journalist in vetting the sources can lead to a story or item of news having misleading information in it (Nielsen and Graves 2017; Gelfert 2018; Meneses 2018). The word "fake" itself alludes to the purpose to mislead and lie. In imitation of the actual, "fake" refers to counterfeiting (Fallis and Mathiesen 2019; Gelfert 2018). In order to manipulate and fool the reader and make the fake information appear authentic, fake news attempts to be believable and obtain credibility by copying the format of reports or news (Blokhin and Ilchenko 2015; Levy 2017; Lazer et al. 2018). It is crucial to emphasize that we approach modern fake news online, specifically in the context of social media, where misleading information is frequently disseminated in the digital world. Today's fake news seeks to get widespread distribution (Rini 2017; Meneses 2018; Calvert et al. 2018). For these reasons, false news can appear in the same formats as real news on these social media platforms (title, image, and signature/source), such as a Facebook news feed item or a Twitter tweet. Fake news also contains links to websites that look like legitimate news sites (Silverman 2016).

According to Fallis and Mathiesen (2019), fake news is a form of counterfeit news that distorts what is real and accurate. Fake news fabricates information, just as art, where priceless works of art or coins could be fabricated.

On the other hand, the majority of writers concur that fake news need not be wholly fabricated or untrue. Fake news follows the media agenda, attempts to describe actual events while distorting and manipulating the truth (Tandoc et al. 2018b; Gelfert 2018; Rini 2017; Allcott and Gentzkow 2017; Potthast et al. 2018; Kalsnes 2018; Recuero and Gruzd 2019); Tandoc et al. 2018b; Gelfert 2018; Rini 2017; Allcott and Gentzkow; Potthast et al.

However, there has been much debate surrounding the "deliberate intention to deceive" in regard to the concept of fake news. Some scholars (Pepp et al. 2019; Walters 2018; Jaster and Lanius 2018) do not believe that the aim of the false news maker is crucial. The writers speculate on the motive behind the fabrication and dissemination of false information by young Macedonians from a small hamlet during the American elections. Young people, according to Jaster and Lanius (2018), merely did not care about the truth. It's possible that the only motivation was financial (in the form of click-through-based advertising revenue). For financial advantage, young people produce any type of narrative (Fallis and Mathiesen 2019). The same inquiry is required to evaluate bot intentions and the potential for fake news creation. The aim of the human mind behind bots or artificial intelligence should be considered instead of the subject of bot intent, which should not be judged in this manner. Furthermore, Pepp et al. (2019) contend that false news, regardless of the producer's intentions, simply does not adhere to editorial standards and journalistic norms. The widespread distribution of content that appears to have been treated with journalistic rigor but does not adhere to such norms is related to fake news.

We think it's critical to create a "working definition" of terminology in light of this issue caused by the difficulty in characterizing fake news in order to be able to address the fresh difficulties in journalism and communication. Instead of coming up with a suitable description for current debate, many research (Mulroy 2019; Rubin et al. 2015; Verstraete et al. 2017; Watson 2018a; Wardle 2017; Weiss et al. 2020) have attempted to categorize fake news. To avoid emptying the meaning or definition of fake news, we contend that it is crucial to develop a definition of work that excludes closely related terms like propaganda, publicity, rumors, conspiracy theories, and satirical news.

According to our definition, fake news is "a type of online disinformation with totally or partially false content, created intentionally to deceive and/or manipulate a specific audience, through a format that imitates a news or report (acquiring credibility), through false information that may or may not be associated with real events, with an opportunistic structure (title, image, content) to attract the readers' attention and persuade them to believe in falsehood.

Use and Distribution of Fake News on Social Media

It has been common practice for users and readers to share news on social media, as well as for various journalistic organizations trying to drive traffic to their websites by sharing material on sites like Facebook and Twitter (Valenzuela et al. 2017). WhatsApp is also used to spread misleading information widely. For instance, according to Khurana and Kumar (2018), fake news regarding the conflict between Hindus and Muslims is circulating in India in a variety of formats (pictures, videos). Additionally, WhatsApp was the most popular medium for disseminating false information in Brazil during the 2018 elections. WhatsApp has evolved in Brazil from a simple messaging service to a full-fledged social media platform that has the power

to shape political beliefs (Graghani 2018). This process altered not only how news was consumed, but also how it was produced and how journalists practiced their craft. Social media, on the other hand, can represent "a double-edged sword" for its users because it offers both authentic news pieces and, more generally, fake news and articles that spread misinformation. According to the literature, some of the main reasons why people share news include the need for social acceptance (Lee and Ma 2012; Bright 2016), emotional impact of the content (Duffy et al. 2019; Harber and Cohen 2005), party and ideological beliefs (Marwick 2018; Uscinski et al. 2016), or the desire to keep "friends" up to date (Galeotti 2019; Duffy et al. 2019).

Users who spread false information, however, also consider some of these reasons. Understanding the mechanisms underlying news sharing and consumption is crucial to comprehending why fake news is still frequently circulated and consumed on social media.

Even though we cannot classify fake news as "news" because it contains entirely or partially false information (Gelfert 2018; Rini 2017) and is produced with the intent to deceive, manipulate, and mislead (Gelfert 2018; Meinert et al. 2018; Pate and Ibrahim 2020; Tandoc 2019), we acknowledge that fake news acquires the value of "news" in the sense of bringing "information" or "novelty," even though it is false. Tandoc et al. 2018a; Silverman 2016), so if one can consider that the majority of people who share a fake news consider it to be true, it follows that their motivations are similar to when sharing real news. Fake news seeks to become legitimate and credible mostly by imitating the format of real news (Lazer et al. 2018; Levy 2017), with similar sources (Tandoc et al. 2018a), so if one can consider that.

It is also recognized that some people may intentionally spread false information with the purpose to deceive, which can occur for a variety of reasons, just

like the persons who developed the false information. These propagandists, like those who create false news, may be driven by the desire to garner attention, to malign the reputation of a political candidate, to impose a particular ideological viewpoint, or to incite certain user behaviors (Lewis and Marwick 2017; Marwick 2018). People who intentionally spread false information may do it for amusement or to stir up trouble (Vorderer et al. 2004; Coleman 2014). Likes, reactions, comments, and shares on social media can be used as credibility indicators for other users for both news and fake news (Delmazo and Valente 2018). They may also have an impact on how topics are chosen, produced, and disseminated by journalists or fake news producers (Salgado and Bobba 2019).

The Main Motivations for Sharing Fake News

According to Kümpel et al. (2015), sharing news is the routine act of a user who wants to inform or refer others to content on social media. What inspires people to spread news, though? And how do these motives compare to spreading false information? First, it has been demonstrated in the research that topics that are contentious, unexpected, or unusual pique people's interest and encourage higher user sharing (Duffy et al. 2019; Garca-Perdomo et al. 2018; Harber and Cohen 2005; Kim 2015). These characteristics are typical of fake news material; they manipulate information, spread lies through the creation of overblown stories, and fuel conspiracy theories based on societal anxiety while covering the same media goal as the media (Polletta and Callahan 2019).

Sensational and contentious headlines make up the majority of fake news, and their emotive wording may help it spread extensively (Vosoughi et al. 2018). Emotion can be linked to the public's perception of fake news as well as its ability to influence and persuade them (Martel et al. 2019). According to Harber and Cohen (2005),

Valenzuela et al. (2017), Berger and Milkman (2012), content that elicits powerful emotions (both good and negative), such as happiness, excitement, or wrath, is more likely to be shared. Additionally, Garca-Perdomo et al. (2018) came to the conclusion that the surprise and the drama capture the user's attention.

Second, according to many studies (Lee and Ma 2012; Bright 2016; Duffy et al. 2019), social connections and the user's standing or reputation are important markers for news sharing. By demonstrating to his social network (friends, private groups, and the general public) that he is "informed" and that he has fresh, pertinent "information," the user feels as though his or her reputation in society is strengthened. When a novelty is spread, the user may accept it more readily, especially if the material is impressive and generally consistent with the major traits of fake news (Galeotti 2019). Participation in gossip is encouraged by the same motive (Talwar et al. 2019). However, Duffy et al. (2019) demonstrated that spreading false information might harm interpersonal connections. The user's entire social reputation may be in danger if they share misleading information. In addition, hate speech and retaliatory behavior can be made public through social media (Fox and Rooney 2015; Garcia and Sikström 2014; Mathew et al. 2019). The literature has demonstrated that fear of missing out (FoMO), which is associated to the use of social media and can be a factor that leads to the user's urge to share information, is related to these sociological and psychological features of the use of social media (Alt 2015; Talwar et al. 2019).

FoMO is characterized by an anxious sensation or psychological response that drives individuals to make an effort to increase their popularity in a certain group with the hope of winning approval and feeling accepted. According to Talwar et al. (2019), FoMO can make people more susceptible to gossip consumption.

Third, it also justifies the political and ideological importance in their dissemination and the creation of various segregation groups, such as echo chambers and filter bubbles, if false or conspiratorial information supports the user's beliefs and opinions (Uscinski et al. 2016; Marwick 2018). Through media features or recommendation algorithms, social media can facilitate the spread of bogus news (Bernal 2018; Zimmer et al. 2019a).

Since false news is created with the intention of not only misleading, but also being extensively shared online, the distribution of fake news is still connected to the format of fake news (Rini 2017; Bakir and McStay 2018). In order to create advertising money and/or achieve ideological advantage, all of its qualities (such as click bait, exaggerations, controversies, scandalous imagery, and dramatic writing) entice users to their reading and sharing (Lazer et al. 2018). In reality, spreading false information can be a dishonest way to earn money from online programmatic advertising that is based on views and clicks. One of the key drivers behind the creation of false news has been the desire to make quick money through its dissemination. In order to profit from Google AdSense advertising, a number of sites in Macedonia in 2016 disseminated misleading information regarding the American elections (Silverman and Alexander 2016). These young people, according to Silverman and Alexander (2016), were not interested in political topics but rather in the financial incentives offered by Facebook, which allowed them to drive traffic to their websites. In an interview with Inc magazine, one of the perpetrators of fake news claimed to earn more than \$10,000 per month through advertising (Townsend 2016).

Making Fake News Popular

The popularity of material can be affected by a number of factors and elements relating to the network and users rather than any "magic formula" (Valenzuela et al.

2017, 2017). According to Salgado and Bobba 2019, Galeotti 2019, and Trilling et al. 2016, the audience relevance and importance of the publication can have a significant impact on how popular a (false) news story is. Since only some readers may be interested in this misinformation and not all, this importance is purely arbitrary. Rini (2017) took this into account when describing fake news, stating that while one of the main goals of fake news is to be widely disseminated, its phony content is intended to deceive a portion of its audience. The popularity of a piece of (false) news can also be correlated with the qualities of the coverage of a certain event or the subject being addressed or investigated (Vosoughi et al. 2018; Bright 2016; Budak 2019), depending on the degree of importance that it can represent. For instance, if we concentrate on the top 50 fake news stories that went viral in the United States on Facebook in 2016, we discover that they mostly dealt with politics (Silverman 2016). The fake news that "Donald Trump was endorsed for President by Pope Francis" or that "the FBI agent, related to the Hillary Clinton email leak, was found dead" was among the ones that garnered the greatest interest. Exaggerated and outrageous headlines, with a particular focus on "shocking" or "ridiculous" crimes, can be found in this Top 50. For instance, according to a Buzz Feed News research, "Woman arrested for defecating on boss' desk after winning the lottery" is the second most popular bogus story (Silverman 2016). Topics connected to sexual assault, crimes, or fake, fictitious, or political inventions are used in fake news.

Role of the Structure of Fake News

The format of the titles, the language used in the text, and other aspects of the structure of fake news can all be utilized to help explain why it spread so quickly on social media. Only these features of false news—namely, its formats, content, and standards used—will be the subject of this analysis. In this part, we do not discuss the

impact of artificial intelligence, the activities of harmful algorithms or bots, or the methods used to distribute information in filter bubbles or echo chambers.

Bright (2016) and Heath (1996) both found that consumers like exaggeration, particularly when the news is exaggeratedly terrible, and that (false) news that depicts accidents, disasters, or crimes can increase emotional sharing.

Even still, false information about politics can spread swiftly, just like false information about terrorism, natural disasters, urban legends, or financial matters (Vosoughi et al. 2018). Vosoughi et al. (2018) show that compared to other topics, fraudulent content regarding politics was not only more widely circulated but also reached a wider audience. These writers demonstrated that untruth spreads more quickly than accurate content, evoking various emotions in readers such as contempt, terror, or astonishment without mentioning the type of false information it is (Vosoughi et al. 2018). On the other hand, Humprecht (2019) showed that, in contrast to the USA and the UK (where internet misinformation is mostly political and partisan), sensationalist articles are more prevalent than political content in Germany and Austria. In a study of the fact-checkers in these four nations, the author discovered that while online misinformation in English-speaking nations typically targets political figures, it primarily targets immigrants in German-speaking nations, holding them accountable for the country's current political, economic, and social conditions. For instance, corruption and politics are two major targets of online misinformation in Brazil and Portugal (Cardoso et al. 2019; ISCTE 2019).

According to Budak (2019), traditional media outlets' coverage of the American elections on Twitter differs from that of phony news organizations. The traditional news was more concerned with issues relating to the environment, women, the economy, and elections (Budak 2019). Budak (2019) demonstrates how the fake

news agency's coverage of the candidates (Hillary and Trump) differs from that of the mainstream media. Contrary to traditional media, the most common phrases used in discovered fake news, such as "sex," "death," "corrupt," "illegal," "alien," or "lie," refer to spectacular or provocative content (Budak 2019).

In reality, research has shown that fake news uses a lexicon that is more informal and straightforward in terms of information and technical production—not just in the headline of the article but also throughout the body of the text (Horne and Adali 2017). For repeated disclosure, it's important to take into account a number of factors used by false news creators, such as clear and stunning messaging with alluring headlines that appeal to the public's emotions through clickbaiting (Munger et al. 2018). These elements increase the story's persuasiveness while also making it more appealing (Wiggins, 2017).

In a content analysis, Horne and Adali (2017) discovered that the lexical coherence of fake news items can be used to identify them from legitimate news. "Real news articles are significantly longer than fake news articles, and fake news articles use fewer technical words, smaller words, less punctuation, fewer quotes, and more lexical redundancy" (Horne and Adali 2017). According to the authors, interpreting bogus news requires less education.

Through mostly heuristic methods, these traits enable us to confirm that fake news also plays a persuasive role. Therefore, it is easier and less time-consuming to detect bogus news (Horne and Adali 2017; Baptista 2020). Since phony titles often contain much more words, have excessive amounts of content, and exaggerate (using hyperbolic words that mimic clickbait), the correlation of ideas and the reader's perceptions may be less logical and solely focused on their names (Horne and Adali

2017; Bazaco et al. 2019). According to Wiggins (2017), the sensationalist and alluring manner in which the majority of fake news is presented falls under the peripheral route of persuasion, as opposed to the central route, which "implies focusing on those elements not central to the argument or message, but paying more attention to how the message is presented" (Wiggins 2017).

Is It Too Good or Too Bad? The Importance of Content to Be Viral

We must also consider the kind of news (good or negative) investigated while examining what makes fake news go viral in the online world. The body of research has demonstrated that false news employs eye-catching headlines and exaggerated events that can elicit a range of emotions, from happiness or enthusiasm (positive) to rage or grief (negative). This dramatic presentation of made-up news may help it become popular online. Salgado and Bobba (2019) came to the conclusion that unfavorable news stories on Facebook garner higher attention. Additionally, Heath (1996) found that individuals like exaggeration, particularly when the news is exaggeratedly terrible. As a result, (false) news stories featuring accidents, disasters, or crimes can elicit more emotional sharing. Indeed, a number of research (Galil and Soffer 2011; Soroka and McAdams 2015) have demonstrated that negative news (such as crises, wars, or tragedies) draws more attention from the general public.

According to Baumeister et al. (2001), negative occurrences are "stronger" than positive ones because negative information is absorbed more thoroughly. "Avoiding negative self-definitions is more motivating for the self than pursuing positive ones. In contrast to positive ones, negative impressions and stereotypes are more easily formed and resistant to disconfirming (Baumeister et al. 2001). However, Berger and Milkman (2012) came to the conclusion that virality is tied to physiological

excitement, which can be sparked by powerful positive or negative emotions. Stories that stir up powerful emotions are more appealing and popular.

Weeks and Holbert (2013) shown that virality may be correlated with the degree of interest or emotional stimulation of the content. In this regard, Fernandez (2017) emphasizes that the key is to elicit a response, whether it be mockery or outrage (Fernandez 2017). According to the author, whether the response to false news is positive (if we think of a sweet story) or negative (scandalous disasters), what matters is that the article inspires readers to respond and remark on the topic. Looking at the fake news that claimed the Pope had endorsed Donald Trump, Fernandez (2017) contends that there is still an involvement related to a political and cultural identity, with the mix of religious and political affiliations, in addition to an emotional mix (shock, bewilderment, excitement, indignation).

Who Consumes Fake News?

Recent studies have attempted to identify the variables that influence the choice and consumption of fake news in an online setting. The belief in, consumption of, and distribution of fake news may be influenced by a number of factors, such as the public's growing mistrust of the media (Swift 2016; Nielsen and Graves 2017), users' educational background (Pop and Ene 2019; Flynn et al. 2017), our availability and time spent on social media (Nelson and Taneja 2018), our age and gender (Shu et al. 2018b; Tant,ău et al. 2019; Manalu et al. 2018), our party affiliation and ideological identity (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017; Uscinski et al. 2016; Rini 2017), or our cognitive ability (Pennycook and Rand 2017, 2019b).

In particular, if the user has a particularly active political identity or engagement, spending too much time on social media increases the user's exposure to misleading or erroneous content (Halpern et al. 2019). Repetition of the exposure can

also make the material more familiar and approachable, which can lead to a belief (Galeotti 2019). The user can continue to believe in the content of this exposure even while fact-checkers later refute it (Pennycook et al. 2018).

In spite of this, Halpern et al. (2019) came to the conclusion that social media use is unrelated to the acceptance of fake news. According to the authors, people who are more connected may be better equipped to choose reliable information, so exposing themselves to less of this kind of misinformation (Halpern et al. 2019). It should be emphasized that according to some research (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017; A. Guess et al. 2019), the audience for false news is smaller than the audience for actual news. Since they projected that just one in four Americans visited disinformation websites during the elections, Guess et al. (2019) even stated that certain warnings concerning echo chambers had been overblown in relation to the 2016 American election period. The audience that consumes fake news is also exposed to legitimate news on social media, thus they are not just limited to filter bubbles and echo chambers (Nelson and Taneja 2018).

Even though some false news on Facebook has generated more engagement than the most popular real news, the majority of fake news sites in Italy and France only reached fewer than 1% of the internet population monthly in 2017.

The majority of the time, nevertheless, this was not the case (Fletcher et al. 2018). The audience for fake news is smaller than for mainstream media, and there are less mistrust of these established media outlets. However, Facebook continues to be the preferred social network for accessing news (Newman et al. 2019) and is one of the primary platforms for propagating fake news (Bernal 2018). Online disinformation is currently being used as a political weapon. What supports these outcomes?

The user's accessibility to social media may be related to their consumption of bogus news. Nelson and Taneja (2018) made the case that the choice of information and television programs is more influenced by our schedules and time constraints than it is by general public preferences. In addition to looking for other alternatives (Elberse 2008), users who have more time to spend online are also more exposed to all forms of information, notably the most well-liked ones. According to Nelson and Taneja (2018), time spent on Facebook and Google is positively connected with the consumption of false information. The user's education level can also have an impact on how much they believe and spread false information. Younger people in particular who have more education are less likely to spread erroneous information (Pop and Ene 2019). According to Flynn et al. (2017), education level can be used as a technique to stop the spread of misinformation online. However, Manalu et al. (2018) discovered that users between the ages of 15 and 30 are more likely to believe fake news since they are exposed to it more frequently.

According to the 2019 Digital News Report, young people prefer "easy" and "fun" access to news rather than having to "work hard for their news" (Newman et al. 2019). There is already evidence that high school and college students struggle to discriminate between true and incorrect information (McGrew et al. 2018; Wineburg et al. 2016). On the other hand, it was revealed in a study that aimed to investigate the user profiles of individuals who believed in fake news that older people and those who are more outgoing and sociable believe fake news (Shu et al. 2018b).

According to Munger et al. (2018), older people tend to prefer clickbait headlines, which are titles created with the intention of getting readers to click on content of "doubtful value or interest" (Merriam-Webster n.d.; Munger et al. 2018). Consumption can also change based on gender differences: whereas men prefer to use

social media to consume news, women are more likely to spread misleading information (Shu et al. 2018b).

These demographic factors may also be linked to the acceptance and propagation of untrue rumors. According to Lai et al. (2020), women are more inclined than males to trust rumors. Less educated or literate people share the same characteristics (Lai et al. 2020). However, certain personality characteristics, such as high levels of neuroticism and extroversion, might also be linked to a person's belief in untrue rumors (Bordia and DiFonzo 2017; Lai et al. 2020).

According to multiple research (Deppe et al. 2015; Kahan 2013; Pennycook and Rand 2019a, 2019b), analytical and intuitive ideas might obstruct the assessment of genuine or incorrect information. Since the majority of the public is restricted to reading the headlines (Gabelkov et al. 2016), Pennycook and Rand (2017) claim that the most intuitive people are more spontaneous, act quickly with little attention or intellectual reflection, and are therefore more likely to believe in "bullshit" (Pennycook and Rand 2019a).

In relation to this, (Pennycook and Rand 2019a; Swire et al. 2017; Deppe et al. 2015) draw attention to the fact that liberals are more likely than conservatives to be analytical. Conservatives are more prone to rely on their instincts, which make them more likely to believe in "bullshit" or to consume bogus news. Jost et al. (2003) examined the social behavior associated with conservatism and discovered that, in a social sense, persons who identify as ideologically right-wing tend to reject complex topics more frequently and rely more heavily on implicit reasoning.

Tetlock (1983) discovered that conservatism is linked to a more restricted mind that offers resistance to complexity and change and learns from the world around it by making snap judgments that are occasionally based on stereotypes.

People who are prone to delusion, have psychotic thoughts, or who hold odd beliefs, such as believing in conspiracy theories or paranormal phenomena, may be more likely to believe in fake news (Douglas et al. 2019).

Political Ideology, Partisanship and the Consumption of Fake News

As we have shown, the relationship between the creator and the consumer of fake news is built in a natural and direct manner, adhering to procedures that are concerned with the cognitive domain of human nature itself. According to Rini (2017), people rely their acceptance of particular information on testimony. A user learns about fake news through the testimony of someone else who shared it and believed it to be true. Since the testimony originates from someone who has recently declared an ideology or a party affiliation, it is frequently communicated, especially on social media, in a biased manner. A recipient who shares these social ideals will embrace and spread this information (Rini, 2017).

According to research by Barnidge et al. (2020), users of selective exposure look for confirmation of pre-existing ideas and are motivated by political considerations. According to Galeotti (2019), people's motivations are typically tied to their political affiliations or ideological preferences. Depending on their political opinions, people are more likely to accept or reject particular arguments, news, or information (Galeotti 2019).

Uscinski et al. (2016) discovered that party affiliation tends to assume different attitudes toward various conspiracy theories and that party affiliation affects belief in a conspiracy theory. People frequently have a tendency to think that conspiracy theories, rumors, or unlawful activity are connected to the political opposition (Uscinski et al. 2016). Uscinski et al. (2016) contend, however, that the propensity for conspiracy theories is shared by Democrats and Republicans. However,

research tends to show that those that are ideologically right-wing are more prone to believe in, consume, and propagate false information (Douglas 2018; Halpern et al. 2019; Lewis and Marwick 2017; Mancosu et al. 2017; Marwick 2018). According to Mancosu et al. (2017), this notion is mostly held by individuals who identify with a right-wing populist political narrative. The rise of false news is actually a result of the people's mistrust of public and political institutions, particularly the media and political elites. According to McNair (2017), the rise of populist and nationalist candidates like Trump or Marine Le Pen was influenced by mistrust of the electorate and audience in general.

With anti-elitist, anti-corruption narratives and a foundation in preconceptions and prejudices, the literature has been able to identify a positive association between populism and conspiracy (A. Marwick and Lewis 2017; Van Prooijen et al. 2015). However, the acceptance of this kind of information is not only associated with the right but also with extreme views on the left and right (Van Prooijen et al. 2015). According to history, fascism (on the far right) and communism (on the far left) were two ideologies that were embraced by radical regimes that existed (van Prooijen et al. 2018). However, if we examine the most well-liked urban legends in the US, we may observe that the story has elements that are typically more favored by the right than by the left.

According to Douglas (2018), right-leaning false news has a religious component. The author uses the hoax that Clinton was involved in satanic rituals, the untruth that the Pope supported Trump, or a number of lies associated with the Islamic State or Muslims as examples. However, this does not imply that those on the left do not engage in the consumption or dissemination of false information (Douglas 2018). Donald Trump is the focus of fake news that is targeted at the left, according to

Douglas (2018). Even though this percentage is higher in segregated groups, Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) were able to confirm that Democrats and Republicans have a 15% probability of believing in ideologically similar material. Republicans, on the other hand, demonstrated that they were more prone to spread false information that was not political (Pereira and Van Bavel 2018).

Democrats have demonstrated that they are more "skilled" at recognizing fake news from authentic stories, suggesting that Republicans may be more susceptible to it (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017). According to Bakshy et al. (2015), conservatives may also be more exposed to fake news on social media. The most engaged users on social media, regardless of their viewpoint, tend to follow the most popular sites, according to certain scholars (Nelson and Taneja 2018; Gentzkow and Shapiro 2011).

Conclusions

The most recent research on fake news appear to show that, in comparison to the reach of legitimate news and the traffic produced by reliable news websites, false news and disinformation websites only reach a small sample of the population. But given that fake news is still spreading on social media, there is no justification for underestimating its influence or the harm it does. With the help of this review article, we were able to demonstrate how fake news takes use of every opportunity to grab the reader's attention, from the way a piece's title is presented to the language used throughout the text. Above all, this language aims to be clear, compelling, and emotional.

Despite the impact that social media in particular and technology in general have on the spread of online misinformation, fake news is still produced with the intention of taking use of all the "opportunities" and benefits that social media offers. Only when fake news is widely spread can it accomplish its ideological or financial

objectives. The makers of bogus news look at every angle that can encourage user consumption and sharing. The choice of the topic to be addressed, the language used throughout the content, the title they give the publication, and the image they employ are all early indications of the fake news makers' desire to make the publication popular or go viral.

The objective of the fake news agency is identical to that of traditional media, according to a number of studies. In order to make the topic seem more surreal, odd, shocking, and controversial, fake news manipulates, falsifies, and distorts the facts. These features encourage consumers to share the information. Therefore, a false tale has a considerably higher chance of going viral than a true one.

We also discovered that it is still important to look into what drives people to read and spread false information. The empirical findings about the consumption of fake news and the demographic factors are not all in agreement. On the other hand, the motivational variables that suggest party, political, and ideological ties are closely associated to the acceptance of bogus news.

Since fake news frequently uses storylines committed to this ideology, many studies assume that right-wing people are more prone to believe false news. However, some studies disagree with this assumption.

Future Approaches

Researchers should pay more attention to the structure of fake news in order to comprehend how widely it is disseminated online. Since fake news adapts to the digital revolution by gaining new formats, it is becoming more and more crucial to track the development of its online presentation. Future works may discuss the impact of the new formats on disinformation generally, including internet memes, as well as fake news specifically. Additionally, it will be crucial to investigate the phenomena of

false news from a wider variety of sources, in many contexts, rather than just the US context.

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