

Real news or Fake News

**A LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE RISE OF FAKE NEWS IN
SOCIETY**

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Introduction

In this literature review, I am going to examine what factors that can be identified with the rise of fake news on the internet. Fake news refers to a source of news that deliberately spread disinformation or trying to confuse the reader. These kinds of news also try to look like regular news. Different types of fake news exist such as satire, propaganda or manipulation (Tandoc Jr., Lim & Ling, 2018). The authors explain with their article as well that fake news is not a new phenomenon. The concept of fake news has however increased after the 2016 presidential election and become an acknowledged concept by the public (Farkas & Schou, 2018; Vargo, et. al. 2017).

Farkas and Schou (2018) further points out that fake news could as well be a way to discredit or attack different kinds of news production that some people may view as biased or otherwise presenting news or stories in a wrong way.

These articles propose that the concept of what fake news is, could be used for many different issues. But the original source of why fake news increase remains. Could the traditional media play any role in this or has the society developed in a certain direction?

My previous research showed that the news media CNN played a minor role in the possible rise of fake news with their framing of the news. One of the primary findings were the concept called the leader's discourse. This discourse could for instance place a nation leader in certain discourses to confirm their leadership by how they acted as a leader (Rossi, 2018).

Thus, it would be interesting to study if and how traditional media such as newspapers, radio or television have any role in the increase of fake news. My hypothesis is that fake news exists due to the coexistence with news reporting in traditional media such as television or printed newspapers, and that fake news could be a natural response to regular news reporting in those media.

To approach this problem, I formulated the following research question:

What are the major factors in the increase of fake news and does traditional media have any role in this?

To further analyze this problem, I divided the overall question into four different operationalized questions each corresponding to a specific perspective I'm using while reviewing and discussing this issue.

Fake news and the development of the media

My first perspective to analyze this problem is through the perspectives of the social and media development. To further analyze the overall question, I developed the following operational question to connect the problem to this perspective.

Has the media industry developed in a certain direction that changes the amount of fake news?

Globalization is a recurring concept in the modern media development research. Simon Cottle (2009) explains that journalism act in a globalized world where everything is connected to each other. Cottle's description of the CNN-effect show how the global issues can enforce a change in other parts of the world. The theory of globalization will form a foundation for my concept that I will discuss later.

Tandoc et. al. (2009) suggested that fake news is not a new concept. They explain that the same kind of fake news or disinformation has existed for many centuries. Taking this into consideration it would mean globalization is not the primary factor in how the fake news could increase. However, I suggest that globalization could be one of the major factors in the increase of fake news.

A globalized environment makes it easier to spread and take part in new ideas. As Cottle (2009) asserted a minor national issue are issues to everyone and not just a single nation or group.

Another relevant concept to understand fake news could be the one of mediatization. Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby (2015) emphasizes that mediatization is a long-term process. They suggested that mediatization concepts captures different changes, such as changes in culture and within the media industry.

“Instead, by focusing on ‘mediatization’, we must ask much more fundamentally: how are media and communications related with certain sociocultural forms and their transformation(s)? Which interrelations do we find? What consequences can we observe during these transformational processes?” (Hepp et. al. 2015, p. 321). They may suggest with this, that mediatization is not a simple concept to understand but that research must focus on other aspects as well.

Hepp et. al. (2015) also propose that mediatization could capture the changes in society as well. Mediatization could refer to a how media enforce conditions on for instance politics. It could also be suggested that politics or other institutions could mediate conditions on the media (Kunelius & Reunanen, 2015). “Journalism’s increasing dependence on and vulnerability to public attention

demonstrates that mediatization occurs not only between the media system and other subsystems. Mediatization also occurs inside the media system.” (Kunelius & Reunanen, 2015, p. 381). They may suggest how mediatization occurs within the journalism and media in the same manner as politics or other institutions.

What I will propose is that these definitions could be connected to the theories of globalization. It could mean that globalization is a factor or source of the mediatization of journalism. By this I suggest that globalization “mediates” conditions of the media. This mediation of the news production could be a foundation for the fake news to be produced.

Globalized mediatization

I will now establish the idea that globalization in relation the mediatization could be a factor in fake news. The globalized access to everyday problems could be a form of “mediatization” of news, that results in fake news. Mediatization being a concept of how the media conditions different structures such as politics or other organizations, could in turn be mediated by politics or as I now propose, the globalization. Could it be that globalization is a form of mediatization that “mediates” conditions of the journalism and media production industries?

This is the concept I name globalized mediatization, in how globalization mediates conditions of the media and therefore supports fake news. As Cottle (2009) explained, a global issue is as well a local issue in the globalized society. News reporting and how the different aspects of it works could thus be a form of global issue. Some local news may not just be interesting locally but global as well.

Compared to how Hepp et. al (2015) suggested how mediatization is a long-term process that captures different changes, this is how I define globalization as a form of mediatization.

I name this new concept globalized mediatization and define it as how the globalized environment is a source of the mediatization of the media and journalism. This mediatization could be a factor for the fake news as it makes it easier for news to reach different parts of the world.

Production of the news

In this next perspective I will discuss how modern media production work in relation to the fake news. Combining this with the first section could be how technology shape and develop globalization. To understand the problem from this second perspective, I developed the following operational question:

How does technology change the way news are produced and distributed?

The general concept from this perspective is how internet development change the way news are produced. Modern news production is no longer only restricted to a certain form but could take many different forms due to technological advancements (Menke et. al., 2018; Cottle, 2009).

Menke et. al. (2018) explain how different forms of media production could have a variety between nations. This convergence is also suggested to be more open in southern European countries due to their advancement of visual media rather than print and as well

Al-Rawi (2018) assert as well that gatekeeping processes in mainstream and traditional media is often a clear well-defined process while social media follow what he calls a networked gatekeeping activity. Gatekeeping on itself is a process to decide what information will reach the audiences.

What this article may suggest is how there are different forms of gatekeeping processes. Fake news could be more common on the internet than in traditional media, but these mainstream media are also available on the web. With this I suggest that there is a similar process of gatekeeping developing between traditional and the fake news media. There is as such a convergence in gatekeeping culture.

Quandt and Singer (2009) explain that convergence relate to how journalists no longer can control the flow of news or decide who is speaking. They also present arguments to emphasize that the journalist's role of being a gatekeeper of news will no longer exist on its own.

“The real power of convergence is in relinquishing the power of controlling information and fostering the power of sharing it.” (Quandt and Singer, 2009, p. 141). From this the authors notes how the journalistic field could benefit from sharing information and not only keeping the power of gatekeeping with themselves.

Connecting the fake news to this context could illustrate how fake news relate to the traditional news in what I propose to be same form of news production. Could this be a convergence between news production not only from a technical perspective but also a social convergence?

Convergent news production

This new concept I describe I call convergent news production. Fake news and “regular” news are produced in the same way and they are also going through same steps of gatekeeping. This could be a form of convergence between the productions of all kinds of news form. How Quandt and Singer (2009) also suggested could be that it is important to share the power to control information could be related to the fake news. Fake news I assert to be a form of how the control of information is released to the public.

This could be the source of that both kinds of news, the fake news and traditional news are in a convergence with each other. With this I suggest how fake news and the regular news compete through the gatekeeping and technological processes.

Discourses of fake news and traditional media

In the perspective of media discourses and representation, I’m going to discuss discourse theory and how I identify fake news as a form of discourse. The operational question from this perspective is:

What discourses can be identified with the fake news in relation to traditional media?

Discourse theory refers to how different categories exists and how people are supposed to be part of one certain category. Discourse theory is as well described as how social objects could be included or excluded in society (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The authors also explain that discourses are always contesting with other discourses.

The idea could then be that fake news is one form of a discourse. Due to discourse being a way to frame certain event or categorize certain events this could be that fake news is compared to the framing of discourse.

Farkas and Schou (2018) explain that fake news is used as a form of tool to attack or discredit opponents. They use the term of floating signifier to define how the fake news developed. They emphasize how fake news are an important part in political struggles. Through this analysis, we highlight how “fake news” has gradually become a key component within hegemonic struggles to reproduce or challenge existing power struggles in civil society (Farkas and Schou, 2018, p. 300). This could form an idea of how media are competing with the politics and therefore give a rise to fake news. This is similar in how Winther Jørgensen and Phillips suggested how discourses are a competition.

Al-Rawi (2018) assert with his article that users of social media more often associate traditional media to be biased, while mainstream media are more prone to see social networks sites to spread fake news because of its traditional role in creating disinformation.

But however, the question remains how this discourse relates to the increase of fake news on the web. Relating to the concepts described in the first section of this paper, I describe fake news as a discourse in its own, meaning how they are formed in one shape according to discourse theory.

The fake news discourse

The concept addressed is what I call a fake news discourse. I define this concept as how fake news exists as a form of discourse. Fake news as Farkas and Schou (2018) defined as a concept to discredit news production.

Fake news could share elements with other discourses in how they are constructed. As Winther Jørgensen & Phillips (2002) asserted the discourses are a way to exclude and include objects or other phenomena in society. Discourses are a competition between different institutions in society. This is as well what Al-Rawi (2018) discussed with his article in how there is a competition between the different news corporations and websites.

By this conclusion, I place the fake news in the category of discourses since it could be a competition between the regular news production and the news production through alternative medias or other form of online platforms.

Agenda setting of the fake news

The final perspective I address my question from is the role of media audiences. To analyze and understand this final perspective I will address the following operational question:

Do modern news consumption and the demands from the audience change the amount of fake news?

Technology and access to globalized news makes it easier for citizens to access different kinds of news or partake in globalized events. As described in the first perspective I came up with the concept of globalized mediatization. The second concept of convergent news production becomes relevant in this perspective. Social news and citizen journalism are more common in the globalized world. Luke Goode (2009) emphasize that citizen journalism is not only an online phenomenon. These other forms of journalism can take on different forms such as an eyewitness from accidents or other incidents in society.

All these different forms of news are all affecting their audience in some way. The agenda setting theory becomes relevant for the following discussion to understand its relation to the fake news. The traditional agenda setting theory define how the media sets the agenda for the citizens (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Other media scholars suggest how fake news participate in this same agenda setting of society (Vargo et. al., 2017).

Vargo et. al. denies that fake news has much more power of the agenda setting, than the traditional media which could suggest that there is no larger conflict going on between the attention of the news from that perspective.

Regina Marchi's (2012) article examines how teenagers consume news. The conclusion however does not claim that teenagers reject traditional news, but that younger audiences prefer other renderings of news.

This study expands on youth and media research, finding that teens gravitate toward fake news, "snarky" talk radio, and opinionated current events shows more than official news, and do so not because they are disinterested in news, but because these kinds of sites often offer more substantive discussions of the news and its implications. (Marchi, 2012, p.257).

The conclusion mentioned by Marchi could support the idea that younger audiences prefer news that allow for interaction. This could relate to the concept of how fake news increase. Younger audience could view these as more authentic as Marchi suggested those audience want news to be.

Ksiazek (2016) points out that comments on news could be more frequent and less hostile if journalists are more visible. Ksiazek suggests as well that commenting and participating is a sign of additional interest in the stories. There is also a suggestion that there is a need for participation. As Goode (2009) pointed out the role of social news is a form of participatory news form.

This concept of social news could be similar to how fake news operate. Fake news could perhaps rise from some form uneven participation from regular journalists.

Social and citizens news agenda

The concept I address from this perspective is what I refer to as social and citizens news agenda. This is a concept in how agenda setting and social news or citizen journalism work together to create this final concept. The agenda setting itself forms the view and sets the agenda for society (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and thus I propose that citizen journalism is a response to the need to participate in journalism that Ksiazek (2016) as well points out.

As Ksiazek (2016) explain the fake news could then be viewed in this same way as a response to the need for participation. Citizens could see the traditional news media as biased and therefore see a need to participate. Goode (2009) mentioned the eyewitness news stories as a form of citizen journalism as well. This could in turn give more fake news due to different people taking part of the news production.

This is what I will refer to as social and citizens news agenda. The agenda setting results in a need for response. This response is also the source of new agenda setting through both citizen journalism and the fake news. This could in turn be a two-way process where few fake news could support more fake news.

Conclusion

The findings discovered in this paper were covered from four different perspectives. I will now connect these four descriptions into one understanding of fake news and the traditional medias role in fake news.

The first concept is what I refer to as globalized mediatization. This concept I define as how globalization is one form of mediatization of itself. With this I propose how globalization could “mediate” the production and distributional conditions of news media in a way it could make fake news more accessible. This more accessible way is how the globalization reduce the size of the world which I claim to be a form of mediatization of journalism.

My second defined concept is that of convergent news productions. This is a concept of how it could be a convergence between the news production in the media. The convergence I suggest being how fake news and traditional news or blogs are produced in the same way. This connects to the first concept since I emphasize how globalization change news production.

The third concept from the perspectives of media representation and discourses are what I call the fake news discourse. This is described how fake news are a competing phenomenon with traditional news and how fake news work in the same way as a discourse. This could mean fake news are a natural response to the already established discourses.

The final concept definition is how the agenda setting of fake news operate. I call this concept the social and citizen news agenda and define it in how fake news is a form of social response in the same way as citizen journalism, news commenting or social news. This meaning that there is a general need for participating in journalism.

When combining these four perspectives to understand how fake news work and if their possible increase due to these factors, it presents some relevant sightings. I propose how all the concepts can be used together and connects to each other. As the overall question asked, these four concepts could give a simplified explanation of how fake news operate, but more interesting what role the traditional news media have. Traditional media are being mediatized by the global society, there is a convergence between different kinds of news production.

These findings also support my hypothesis. The fake news discourse for instance could show that there is a natural response to regular news through the fake news. I maintain the idea that there is

a need to cover news by regular citizens who may believe there is a bias or information being left out in traditional media.

Why this increase could now also be supported by my concept of globalized mediatization, with the globalized world. The fake news was not a new concept but may have increased the recent years due to all my four concepts together, and perhaps other concepts not discussed here as well.

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