COMMUNICATION & SOCIETY

Miscellaneous

Beyond detection and correction: Fake news' *news-ness* and *shareworthiness* as alternative ways to tackle disinformation

Raúl Rodríguez-Ferrándiz
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1341-255X
r.rodriguez@ua.es
Universidad de Alicante

Submitted
March 4th, 2024
Approved
September 18th, 2024

Communication & Society
ISSN 0214-0039
E ISSN 2386-7876
www.communication-society.com

2025 – Vol. 38(1)
pp. 47-62

How to cite this article:
Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, R. (2025). Beyond detection and correction: Fake news' *news-ness* and *shareworthiness* as alternative ways to tackle disinformation, *Communication & Society, 38*(1), 47-62.
https://doi.org/10.15581/003.38.1.005

Abstract

Fake news is a concern for present-day society. A lot of quality research efforts have focused on how fake news can be detected, and to what extent general warnings, accuracy prompts and fact-checking labels can correct people's misconceptions. In this work we problematize critically the research questions formulated on *fakeness* detection and specifically we address two significant alternative (though complementary) approaches: 1) What formal traits and news values do fake news best imitate, which sheds light on what "news" means (irrespective of falsity) since the rise of social media as news source (*news-ness* assessment), and 2) what factors explain fake news sharing (*shareworthiness* prediction), which explains why it is shared with a higher intensity than real news, even in the case of awareness that a falsity is being shared. Intertwined with these approaches, two theories compete to best explain fake news' social pervasiveness and virality: the *ignorance theory* (*aptitudes*: be mistaken, confused or careless about assessing news accuracy, resulting in sharing falsehoods unintentionally) and the *partisan theory* (*attitudes*: motivated reasoning and political bias which encourages people to knowingly share fake news consistent with their view). The aim is twofold: to identify, compare and challenge the scholars' underlying assumptions and practical implications, and to draw a coherent narrative that encompasses the motivation to deceive, the social media affordances that make this deception plausible and shareable, and the polarization, intergroup hostility, and the greater exposure to extreme political views that may boost disinformation.

Keywords
Fake news, fakeness, news-ness, shareworthiness, ignorance theory, partisanship theory.

Funding
This research is part of the projects "TRIVIAL: Technological Resources for Intelligent VIral AnaLysis through NLP" (PID2021-122263OB-C22) and "SOCIALTRUST: Assessing trustworthiness in digital media" (PDC2022-133146-C22), funded by Spain's Ministry of Science and Innovation MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033/ and by the European Union Next GenerationEU/PRTR.

1. Fake news as controversial issue

Nowadays "fake news" serves as a label for a whole set of social phenomena. Firstly, it is a sociotechnical phenomenon tracked and analyzed by professional organizations specifically created to detect and debunk them, fact-checkers. Secondly, it is also used in information wars in which fake news is attributed to adversarial political and media institutions in order to discredit them, in a zero-sum game in which general disbelief wins (Happer *et al*., 2019). Thirdly, it has been of concern to many international institutions committed to information quality (EU, UNESCO, UN) (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017; Ireton & Posetti, 2018). Next, a number of focus group studies and general public surveys indicate the ideas evoked by the term fake news, and confirms that it has entered popular language in a powerful, albeit ambiguous way (Nielsen & Graves, 2017; Brummette *et al*., 2018; Tong *et al*., 2020; Tandoc & Seet, 2022; Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, 2023).

Finally, fake news is definitely a matter of concern for scholars from various fields, in which its incidence from 2016 onwards has been demonstrated by bibliometric studies (Alonso García *et al*., 2020; Park *et al*., 2020; Righetti, 2021; Tandoc, Lim & Ling, 2018). Fake news is also a source of controversy in academia, between those who view it as an operational term for a category and those who reject the term and prefer others instead: *false news*, *disinformation*, *misinformation*, *made-up news* and *junk news*.

In the following sections we focus on reviewing high impact quantative studies on fake news. We also select those which, taking together, pose dilemmas, ambiguities, frictions, conflicting perspectives and results. To lay out the groundwork we have established a criterion to classify their research questions. Ours, consequently, are meta-questions like these: What do these studies tell us about how people receive, process (fake) news, assess news-ness, judge accuracy and decide whether or not to share them? Furthermore, what do they tell us about the theories that scholars cling to when building their hypothesis and asking their research questions, and how these theories determine the choice of their empirical approaches and domains (content, style, values, users, propagation, effects, remedies)?

2. Methodology: A problematizing review on fake news theoretical and empirical approaches

Our approach is a "problematizing" review whose main aim is to generate "novel research questions through a dialectical interrogation of one's own familiar position, other stances, and the literature domain targeted for assumption challenging" (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011, p. 260). In this article our problematic context can be explained using Chadwick's definition of "fake news:" "the exploitation of the technological affordances and incentive structures of social media platforms, online search engines, and the broader news media industry to spread fabricated information for financial and/or political gain" (2017, p. 272). In fact, Chadwick considers fake news as a kind of "hybrid media hack" and causes "dysfunctional hybridity" (*ibid*.). That is, they are collateral damages within the framework of his well-known theory.

Disinformation and fake news are topics that clearly represents the challenges to compartmentalized thinking and the advantages of embracing different disciplines: communication sciences, computer science, library science and documentation, law, sociology, psychology, philosophy, etc. (Park *et al*., 2020). However, these disciplines apply often immeasurable methodologies with divergent (and at first reading, discouraging) results: to encourage interdisciplinary research on fake news and promote cross-disciplinary joint efforts, fundamentally related theories must be identified and detailed, even, and especially when they clash.

In our case, considerable efforts have been carried out on detecting fake news and assessing, after detection, to what extent general warnings and fact-check tags can correct people's misconceptions. In this vein, Shu *et al*. (2017) and Zhou and Zafarani (2021) carried out valuable systematic research focusing these works on *detecting* fake news, distinguishing four

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

perspectives: (1) false knowledge, (2) writing style, (3) propagation patterns, and (4) source credibility.

We have left aside this approach, and instead we have focused on two aspects less addressed in the literature: not so much how falsehood (*fakeness*) can be detected and tackle, but, conversely, what fake news traits and values best *mimic* real news (their *news-ness*), and why do people who *spread* this obtain a higher rate of virality than with true news (their *shareworthiness*) (Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, 2023). We'll see them in #3 and #4, respectively, trying to expose the rationales behind each of these approaches, the conflicting perspectives and the challenges raised.

Our baseline data set was a sample of texts from a WoS search: most cited articles with "fake news" in the author's keywords plus the title of the work in the Web of Science Core Collections (2017-2023, N=1,426) in May 2023, limiting the results to articles. We found a promising variety of research fields, but there were too many works for carrying out a problematizing review. We narrowed down the sample by limiting it to the 100 most cited texts in the database and found that the range of fields remained similar to that in the original sample. After a reading of the abstracts, methodologies and results we discarded works mostly devoted to debates on what constitutes fake news and distinctions between other types of disinformation. Instead, we focused on those based on data gathered by original experiments or observations, addressing where false information comes from, how it spreads, whether and why people believe it, to what extent it affects or even infects the whole media system and what are its social and political consequences. The aim is to draw a coherent narrative that encompasses not so much the comparison of fake news' detection models and the effectiveness of warnings and tags on trustworthiness (even on real news), but rather asks what sociotechnical affordances of digital platforms and social media, on the one hand, make the lie plausible (its *news-ness*, which seems go far beyond its newsworthiness) and on the other hand make it gratifying to share it, even when the user is aware or suspects its falsehood (its *shareworthiness*).

3. *News-ness*: Fake news' disguising abilities

Studies on fake news' news-ness start from an assumption: since fake news are confused with news and skillfully imitate them, in a way they *are* news, or function as such, and have similar effects (unless they do not correspond to a verifiable fact). Fake news, being false, tell us researchers more about what is considered "news" today than true news, because fakers have identified news' most relevant features to make up theirs (and it works). In a way they are news-ness masters. If fake news masquerades as news and is then diluted into an increasingly intertwined media ecosystem, what effect does it have on agenda setting, both regarding emerging online partisan media and more decidedly, on legacy media outlets? That is, how can fake news draw media attention on certain issues and certain cognitive frameworks? (Benkler *et al*., 2017; Vargo, Guo & Amazeen, 2018; Guo & Vargo, 2020).

Also, if this is true, to what extent does fact-checking help focus attention on the same issues and frameworks? Does fact-checking as a news genre, and its by-products (warnings, alerts) prevent people from believing misleading claims or do they react by strengthening their beliefs, as a backfire effect (Nyhan & Reifler, 2010)? Is the fact-checker itself perceived as biased, even when the correction is aligned with the respondent's political bias (Li *et al*., 2021)? Moreover, social media have become the main source of information for ever more people. In the blend of news and updates in one's news feed, undoubtedly "news" has become more loosely defined and is almost on par with "content posted on social networks" (Vosoughi *et al*., 2018). "News" is often divorced from journalists/institutions, indicating a broadening of the concept for younger and less frequent/traditional news consumers, while older and more frequent/traditional news consumers view news in more institutional terms (Robertson, 2023). In a complex ("hybrid," Chadwick, 2017) media environment, what online content counts as "news" (or, rather, doesn't count as "news")?

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

Studies on the *news-ness* of fake news aim to answer critical questions which are overlooked in those which focus on fakeness. The latter pose research questions like these: How confident people are in accurately detecting fake news and which cues are more critical to them to assess reliability (Hinsley & Holton, 2021)? What is, effectively, people's deception detection accuracy facing true and fake news? If accuracy is considerably higher than it is actually, can one establish which factors could explain the gap between the two values in order to reduce it? (Lyons, *et al*., 2021)? Also, what cognitive features of recipients make them more gullible on accepting them to be true, and so what mental predisposition boosts or, conversely, prevents gullibility (Pennycook & Rand, 2019, 2020)? Is it possible to inoculate against online disinformation, preemptively presenting someone with a weakened version of a misleading piece of information to confer psychological resistance (Roozenbeek & van der Linden, 2019)?

Therefore, we consider that it is essential to think out of the box of the "fakeness or authenticity" dichotomy. For example: there is an apparent paradox in describing "news overload" and "news fatigue" (Talwar *et al*., 2019), and consequently detecting "news avoidance" (Park, 2019) and at the same time observe that more and more people claim to get news from social media, which are the more important gateway to news (29%) over direct access to news websites apps (22%). The platform mix has up to six networks now reaching at least 10% of respondents reporting obtaining information from them –YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and X– compared with just two a decade ago (Newman *et al*., 2024). How is this explained (also considering the additional paradox that users themselves admit that these sources are less credible than traditional media)? (Mitchell *et al*., 2020; Shearer & Mitchell, 2021). It has been argued that a growing number of people have a "news-find-me perception:" Individuals believe that they don't have to spend time searching for news in overabundant informative offers because their peers and social networks inform them sufficiently (Gil de Zúñiga *et al*., 2017). It has been also demonstrated that this news-find-me perception is a strong predictor of falling prey for fake news (whether political or not), because it corresponds with a low-effort cognitive reflection when consuming news (Diehl & Lee, 2022).

A Pew Research Center study (Shearer *et al*., 2024) states that Facebook, Instagram and TikTok American users say keeping up with the news is not why they use such sites, although X is the exception. Nevertheless, they consume news-related content (satirical posts about current events, news articles, opinions, or information on breaking news events) on all four platforms. Figures for this range between 92% on X and 82% on Instagram. In addition, the news on each platform come from a variety of sources. Those who regularly use Facebook and Instagram as news sources are more likely than TikTok and X users to get news from friends, family and acquaintances. As for TikTok, here more consumers get news from influencers or others they don't know personally than on other platforms. Only X provides news mostly from news outlets and journalists. Interestingly, news consumers on X are the most likely (up to 37%) to say they often see news that seems inaccurate.

In a nutshell, might the social media environment discourage news to be sought out and promote, rather, incidental exposition to it by passing it through a social filter? Moreover, is it plausible that these mostly automated social filters make news (even fake ones) appears so pleasing, convincing and trustworthy?

3.1 *Mimicking news: Timeliness, negativity, prominence, format, content*

Not only must we demonstrate in what way and how fake news are untrue. Moreover, how and to what extent they resemble real news must be assessed. This is what Tandoc, Thomas and Bishop (2021) did. On comparing fake news reported and debunked by BuzzFeed, Politifact and FactCheck with (real) news from *The New York Times*, they showed that the qualities of *timeliness, negativity* and *prominence* were shared on similar levels by real and fake news.

The same happened with the features of the news format (inverted pyramid, listicle, chronology, reversed chronology, or narrative), as well as the content: most issues focused on

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

government and politics. The critical distinguishing characteristic between real and fake news lies in the mixture of information and opinion: in *The New York Times* researchers found that 75.8% of its articles excluded journalist opinions, whereas with fake news only 35% did. At this point the analysis made by the authors comes to a close, but we might ask the following question: if fake news refrained their inclination to include opinion, then the features that shaped new-ness both in real and fake news would converge to such an extent that it would be impossible to tell them apart both for formal criteria (we could call them syntactic, in semiotic terms) and contents (semantics). Therefore, only by contrasting facts, or rather with news reports from other media (that is, pragmatic criteria) can accuracy be evaluated. In our view, this introduces a concerning issue: if the creators of fake news aim to confuse them with real news, why do they insist on including opinion? That is, showing an explicit bias. Is the bias, precisely, what makes them shareworthy, even though by doing so their credibility is affected, or, in other words, it becomes irrelevant (social shares are somehow useful, irrespective of being inaccurate with respect to facts)?

3.2. *Story types and source reliability*

As we have seen, Tandoc, Thomas and Bishop (2021) compared a corpus of real news with one of fake news debunked by credited fact-checkers. Edgerly and Vraga, who defined news-ness as "the extent to which audiences characterize specific media content as news" (2020, p. 808), took a different approach: they made up a Twitter post on a possible government shutdown. They adapted it to four different headline story types (breaking, fact-check, opinion, and exclusive) and attributed them to three different sources, each to a point in the political spectrum (MSNBC, Associated Press and Fox News). Other variables remained unchanged. They found that the bias of the respondents had no influence on the news-ness (is this tweet news?) attributed to the headline story type, with higher scores for breaking and fact-check format, and lower ones for opinion and exclusive. However, in the news-ness attributed to the news there was a significant coherence between the political bias of the respondent and the source (simulated) where the news came from: Democrats tended to belittle the news-ness from Fox News, and Republicans questioned it when the source was MSNBC.

Unsurprisingly, when the source coincided with the respondent's bias, it showed less intention to verify it but showed more if confronted with such bias. The main aim of this study was not to find out if the respondent believed in the news or not (it was not a study on *fakeness*), but to investigate the effect of the attributed source and format on perceived *news-ness* and the intention to verify.

3.3. *Fact-check and backfire effect*

Verification embedded in the news format doesn't help either to reduce misperceptions and motivated reasoning. Nor does it help to answer the question "what is news?." Li *et al*. (2022) asked, in a similar vein to Edgerly and Vraga (2020), about what influence a certain news format had on attributing credibility. They took the same news (an actual claim made by Donald Trump about gun laws in Chicago) and attributed it to three sources with different biases (those used by Edgerly & Vraga: Fox News, AP and MSNBC) and adapted them to three formats: conventional story, fact-check with no explicit rating and fact-check with an explicit rating.

They found fact-checking could provide accurate heuristics and helped update beliefs compared to conventional news reporting. In other words, they demonstrated that presenting a news story containing corrected information "increases individuals' ability to more accurately assess the truthfulness of a claim, even as the substantive content of the story stays the same" (p. 283). However, "even after successful belief updating after reading a fact-check, partisans do not adjust their evaluations of the politician under scrutiny according to the conclusions of the fact-check" (p. 288). That is to say, fact-checking might be as effective as counterproductive

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

because "self-serving information processing happens above and beyond accurate updating of actual beliefs" (p. 299).

Furthermore, fact-checking formats generate a more hostile media perception towards both the journalist and the story. Surprisingly, even though the respondents agree with fact-checking findings, they still perceive media that undergo formal fact-checking as more biased (p. 301). The authors advance a conclusion that they describe as counterintuitive: fact checking helps to correct misperceptions but reduces confidence not only in the medium that provides it but in news and media in general.

4. *Shareworthiness*: What does fake news sharing mean?

Why fake news are shared massively, even more than true news (Vosoughi *et al*., 2018)? Studies on fake news' *shareworthiness* do not focus on detecting fake news nor on their capacity to mimic real news, but on the sharers' online behavior. They look at how they go viral, who shares them the most, the uses they have and the gratification felt on sharing and which correlation exists, if any, between sharing and knowing or suspecting falsity.

Shareworthiness has been defined as the understanding on "how the number of shares an article receives on online news sites can be predicted" (Trilling *et al*., 2017, p. 38). This domain embraces several related research questions, i.e., what news values (García-Perdomo *et al*., 2018) and what specific circumstances and motivations are there when news is shared, whether true or false (Bright, 2016; Duffy, Tandoc & Ling, 2020)? Might it be that technological design choices create certain "affordances for deception" (Chadwick & Stanyer, 2022) so that audience misperceptions and misunderstandings are more easily prone to "availability cascades" (Kuran & Sunstein, 1999)?

Scholars have addressed the fact that most social media platforms not only provide a content-forwarding feature (e.g., retweeting in Twitter) that encourages individuals to express support of news content but are typically presented with numeric metrics indicating the popularity of their content, such as the numbers of likes, comments, and other engagements that likely improve credibility assessment. Thus, scholars have conducted research on these endorsement-based heuristics, not only considering whether people trust (fake) news more easily when the news is shared a lot (Ali *et al*., 2021; Luo *et al*., 2022, see above), but which user profile is most trusted by others: family and close friends (Shin *et al*., 2022), celebrities who enjoy fame and public recognition (Sterrett *et al*., 2019), or political elites, including politicians, journalists and activists (van Duyn & Collier, 2019). Moreover, strategies of manipulation of social endorsement cues, such as "astroturfing, sock-puppetry, trolling, fake reviews, or 'sybil' activity misleadingly manufacture reputational capital using online recommendations and review systems" (Chadwick & Stanyer, 2022, p. 11) have been identified.

4.1. *Fakesharingworthiness?: Uses and gratifications of sharing falsities*

Regarding fake news sharing, it has been observed that, from a psychological point of view, accuracy-oriented motivation seems to give way to goal-oriented motivation in contexts of polarization (Kunda, 1990). Osmundsen *et al*. (2021) compiled a representative sample of over 2,300 Twitter users. They extracted more than 2.7 million tweets and retweets posted by these panelists. They identified when panel members tweet or retweet URLs to external websites and cross-referenced all tweeted URLs with a list of fake news sources, constructed by journalists and scholars. Encoded for political bias, 30 of the most popular were pro-Republican news sources and 12 pro-Democratic, and altogether 86% of all fake news originated from either one of these 42 domains. Then they cross-referenced tweets with a list of real news publishers obtained from the AllSides organization, an institution which aims to help citizens surf online media by providing "balanced news and civil discourse."

The practice of sharing fake news is similar to that of other forms of partisan political behavior (i.e., sharing real partisan –or even hyper-partisan (Wischnewski *et al*., 2021)– news

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

from legacy media). Fake news would be a radical version of traditional partisan news, which would be "located at the extremes of the news source continuum" (Osmundsen *et al*., 2021, p. 1010). Fakeness doesn't discourage usefulness, on the contrary, it boosts it. The line between real and fake news is blurred when supporting one's position and even more when attacking or countering their opponents. Indeed, fake news shared by both pro-Republicans and pro-Democrats partisans show negative out-party affect coefficients twice as much as the positive in-party ones, "suggesting that animus political opponents rather than positive feelings toward the in-party drives sharing of fake news sources" (p. 1008). This definitely makes the *shareworthiness* of fake news "a cultural norm; a practice that is simply part of 'what it takes' to engage politically on social media in order to attract attention and nudge others to take positions" (Chadwick *et al*., 2018, p. 4269).

4.2. *The great divide: accuracy judgements and sharing intentions*

It is one thing if users massively and knowingly share fake news to gain social approval and to show their political credentials among like-minded friends, and another if users share them in good faith (and would not do so if they were aware they were fake). Pennycook *et al*. (2021) compiled an identical number of current fake news (selected from Snopes, a fact-checker) and strictly contemporary real news (selected from mainstream news) from 2017 to 2019.

These were presented with their headlines, sentences and images, and in a Facebook post format. Half of the headlines were chosen to be Pro-Democrats and the other half Pro-Republicans. Subjected to a stimulus in the form of true or fake news, chosen at random, a subgroup of informants judged the veracity of said news (accuracy condition) and another –similar in terms of political spectrum considered– declared if they would consider sharing it online (sharing condition).

The results were highly remarkable: the political bias of the participant had a slight influence on assessing whether the news were accurate. In any case, on average, identification of true and fake news matched the general *slightly-better-than-chance* well-known theory (Levine, 2020). Interestingly, "whether the headline was politically concordant or discordant had a significantly larger effect on sharing intentions [...] than whether the headline was true or false" (pp. 590-591): partisan alignment is a much stronger predictor of sharing than veracity. Let us give an example provided by the authors: The fake news 'Over 500 'Migrant Caravaners' Arrested With Suicide Vests' (published on 1st of May 2018 by the *Daily World Update* and debunked by Snopes the same day) was rated as accurate by 15.7% of Republicans in their study. However, 51.1% of Republicans said they would consider sharing it. On average, the participants in the sample were more than twice as likely to consider sharing false but politically concordant headlines (37.4%) as they were to rate such headlines as accurate (18.2%). According to the authors, this pattern matches that of *actual* (not intended) sharing observed in a large-scale analysis of Twitter users (Grinberg *et al*., 2019). Yet, "when asked at the end of the study whether it is important to share only content that is accurate on social media, the modal response was 'extremely important'" (Pennycook *et al*., 2021, p. 591). In fact, even those who stated it was very or extremely important to *only* share accurate content indicated that, on average, they would consider sharing 27.7% of the false headlines they were shown. How can one explain this apparent contradiction?

The most obvious explanation was assuming a "preference-based rejection of truth." That is, if participants share despite believing to be inaccurate, what they are doing is dissociating their evaluation on truth from their intention to share. The public was less gullible in terms of party politics than thought, but when sharing "the social media context focuses their attention on other factors such as the desire to attract and please followers/friends or to signal one's group membership" (2021, p. 591).

4.3. *Confusion, inattention or preference-based rejection of truth?*

However, the researchers supplemented their work with further studies. A group of participants responded on the accuracy of a news headline, without partisan political

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

connotations, at the beginning of the study, pretending to be a preliminary question for a different type of test. Then, these participants had to respond to the same survey on sharing intentions as those in the control group. So, the results indicated that a shifting attention on accuracy ostensibly reduced the willingness or disposition to share fake news (but not true ones).

When subjected to a final study to three previously independent tests (active reflection on accuracy, questions on accuracy condition and questions on sharing intention from a selection of real and fake news), the results indicated that just 15.8% of the participants expressed "a preference-based rejection of truth," which is consistent with other studies' results (Barthel *et al*., 2016; Chadwick & Vaccari, 2019). That is, they consciously dissociated the allocation of truth and sharing intention, while 33.1% stated "confusion-based rejection of truth" (they shared information they thought to be true when in reality it was fake). Also, a striking 51.2% of participants no longer shared once they considered accuracy (that is, "inattention-based rejection of truth").

By way of explanation, authors suggested that "the current design of social media platforms –in which users scroll quickly through a mixture of serious news and emotionally engaging content and receive instantaneous quantified social feedback on their sharing– may discourage people from reflecting on accuracy" (p. 594). That is, this study changed to some extent the conclusions from previous ones by Pennycook *et al*. on fakeness we saw above (Pennycook & Rand, 2019a, 2020). This nuance is of interest: the focus on shareability indicates that the psychological profile of average social media users when faced with (dis)information is inattentive or distracted, rather than confused or deceived. They are not deprived of analytical reasoning skills but have temporarily suspended them by contextual factors. They dissociate because the decision to share is not conditioned, nor even related to belief: it is not even considered in that communicative context. That is why it would be enough to subtly encourage informants to reflect on accuracy by associating both actions to refrain from sharing false news, *but not true ones*: in the authors' view the optimal degree of correction is to promote healthy skepticism without falling into disruptive and indiscriminate cynicism.

4.4. *Assessing the meaning of sharing in social media*

To these authors, discernment is "the difference in accuracy judgments (or sharing intentions) between true and false headlines." Higher discernment demonstrates "higher sensitivity to truth relative to falsity" (Pennycook *et al*. 2020, p. 772). However, at no time are informants questioned as to whether their intention to share is due to reasons other than the approval of the claim.

It is reasonable to think that not all who share support the view expressed in the news (whether this is true or false), but it is shared precisely to question, disprove or dispel it. What does it mean sharing on social media: a full repetition or republishing of the shared content, an endorsement, a quote, a mere ostensive gesture to point to or direct attention to, even to question, if not revoke, the original claim? (Arielli, 2018).

A study of this kind is conducted by Metzger *et al*. (2021), although the methodology is quite different to that used by Pennycook *et al*. (2021). They did not survey a sample of informants to evaluate their judgement on credibility and their hypothetical intention to share an assorted selection of real and fake news but analysed the reactions and comments users *effectively* made to a collection of real and fake news which had been checked by Snopes and Politifact. The sample was made up of comments collected from Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in response to 5,303 fact-checked claims. The results did not invite optimism about the accuracy of deception detection: only 15% of the comments on false claims indicated that the user did not believe them, while 12% did believe they were true. This 3% result of course was very poor and reminds the slightly-better-that-chance theory (Levine, 2020). As for the true claims, 26% of respondents considered them to be true, and 20% false.

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

However, the point is that fake news were "challenged" (put into doubt, refuted, ridiculed) more than were explicitly supported or endorsed. We might object that with the other comments, which are the majority (73% for fake news), it was not possible to deduce whether their statements were supported or not. And it seems reasonable that just the mere reaction by means of a comment, although without any nuances, feeds the algorithms which promote their notoriety.

In any event, the authors assert that "if misinformation on social media is often disbelieved, and to the extent that those sharing it are doing so for reasons that expose and help to stem the spread of misinformation, then shared misinformation is in fact not universally harmful and its propagation is not always and necessarily detrimental." They suggested that "these data should prompt scholars to expand their thinking on why people share misinformation beyond unintentional sharing of (believed) misinformation, to suggest a healthy process of intentional social debunking of fake news that is rarely examined in the literature" (p. 140).

These conclusions pose intriguing new challenges. Can such intentionality be determined accurately in a comment when sharing, or is this mere conjecture by the researchers? Firstly, fake news may not only lie, but often supplant the identity and, consequentially, also the intention of the alleged sender. Fakeness affects not only content, but also authorship in order to discredit a person or an institution from within. It does this by exaggerating or distorting their stance in a well-known false flag semiotic operation called "black propaganda" (Becker, 1949), and now known as "cloaked websites" (Farkas *et al*., 2018) or "impersonator trolling" (Besser, 2021). If the comments elicited by fake news may contain both spontaneous and honest reactions but also feigned ones, how can intention be assessed? Secondly, in a media context characterized by short attention spans and fast scrolling feeds, might the overall effect of sharing fake news, even when the intention is clearly to denounce them, is to unintentionally help them go viral? (Marwick, 2018; Venturini, 2019).

5. Discussion

5.1. *On* news-ness' *pertinence*

Contrary to fakeness' ones, *news-ness* studies do not aim to identify and intercept fake news, thereby preventing them from being trusted and going viral. Instead, they broaden the focus in an attempt to explain why the perception of *news-ness* (and the credibility that comes with this) could have changed so drastically in an environment which prioritizes customised information. This context is obviously a fertile breeding ground for fake news. What happens is that fake (and also true) news participate in congruent streams of information which prioritise *homophily* (Rhodes, 2022) and even *acrophily* (Goldenberg *et al*., 2023). And endorsement cues as posting, liking, forwarding, commenting, and retweeting (Luo *et al*., 2022; Ali *et al*., 2022) may raise the chance of trusting fake news, not only exposing individuals to agreeable content through algorithmically powered filter bubbles, but favoring like-minded individuals through highly personalized echo chambers. Having like-minded peers in one's network prevents questionable material from being challenged.

We could argue that *news-ness* driven approach to fake news enters a variable unknown to fakeness driven one: the fact that "any study about fake news is actually a study about how people understand and define the concept of news." That is to say, "the beating heart of fake news is something much more foundational, and worthy of attention from scholars –the very definition of news" (Edgerly & Vraga, 2020, pp. 747-748), and "the haziness surrounding the term "fake news" comes from it being impossible to define "fake" if not in relation to "real": fake news is what real news –here defined as the idealized model of Western journalism– is not. Its definition, therefore, is relational. Just as "real" journalism is defined by culture and common practice, "fake" news is also a phenomenon to be understood in the context that it is inserted" (Mourão & Robertson, 2019, p. 2080).

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

5.2. *On shareworthiness' critical divide*

Regarding fake news' *shareworthiness*, it's obvious that motivations for creating and for sharing fake news may not be the same, and a crucial distinction must be made between intentional and unintentional sharing (Duffy *et al*., 2020; Tsang, 2021). In fact, "sharing" news (as any other digital content), is a quintessential characteristic of online behavior (Dijck, 2013; Kennedy, 2013; Quevedo Redondo, Antona Jimeno & Vicent-Ibáñez, 2022). There were even longstanding genres of journalism notoriously prone to making false or misleading statements, such as the yellow press and tabloids, which have been with us long before the Internet arrived. What is different today is that news are shared on par with other content. As a result, researchers had to tackle a major task, not only concerning the shareability of fake news, but sharing them *and* the estimated intention to lie and/or to harm (Cinelli *et al*., 2021).

Hence, we find in *shareworthiness*' approaches a divide between the studies which suggest partisan motivated reasoning (people deliberately share fake news which is aligned with their own bias) and those which point to a confusion-based inaccurate judgement or an inattention-based rejection of truth, which leads to falsehoods being shared unintentionally.

5.3. *Three into one:* Fakeness, news-ness *and* shareworthiness *approaches*

Comparing the overall trends on fake news' *fakeness*, *news-ness* and *shareworthiness* approaches, the most surprising finding is a kind of inversion of logic. If the *veracity* of the news which is about to be shared is mere conjecture (and different studies show recipients often do not even look at the original source, let alone check it: they mainly just share headlines, Effron & Raj, 2019), and *virality* instead is objective data attached to the news and providing living proof of the interest and relevance to others (Luo, Hancock & Markowitz, 2022), is it possible to reverse the dictates of common sense? In this scenario, it is not credibility plus *news-ness* of a fake news what make it viral, but rather its sharing success what gives it *news-ness* (and even worst: *trustworthiness*, Ward, Zhen & Broniarczyk, 2022). In a way, fake news sharing conflates with Internet meme sharing, considering that not only are fake news spread as viral replications, but they are reinvented and adapted to new contexts, just like memes (Rodríguez-Ferrándiz *et al*., 2021; Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, Sánchez-Olmos & Hidalgo-Marí, 2023). Just like memes, they are occurrences that mix the playful with the militant. If anything, the reflection on its *fakeness* only arrives afterwards, once sharing (fake) news has fulfilled purposes that have nothing to do with accuracy and hardly with information: self-disclosure, socializing, gaining social status, sharing experiences with others, fear of missing out, social media fatigue.

6. Conclusions: Ignorance or partisanship, aptitudes or attitudes

In any case, the great divide cuts across these approaches. If we look closer at the rationales behind the aims and the methodologies, studies –whether they focus on *fakeness, news-ness* or *shareworthiness*– can be divided into those which implicitly subscribe to the *ignorance theory* and those to the *partisan theory* (Osmundsen *et al*., 2021), that is, between a collateral damage that may be prevented and corrected and an informed consent behavior that may not.

The former emphasizes the audience's *aptitudes*, so that inaccurate judgements (accepting as true what is in fact fake) are due to misguided reasoning, or careless or lazy information processing. Ignorance theory minimizes the influence of confirmation (and also disconfirmation) bias, and related well-known theories in social sciences, such as selective exposure and desirability bias: if subtly shifting attention to accuracy increases the veracity of the news people are willing to share and, after this intervention, sharing discernment is even better with ideologically aligned headlines than ones which are not (Pennycook & Rand, 2021), then partisan alignment is not a stronger predictor of sharing than veracity. One could say, veracity (or presumed veracity) prevails in these contexts, albeit not necessarily in *whatever context*: it seems that users only choose veracity above their partisan bias when "problematic information" (Marwick, 2018) is concerned, when they must decide on whether to share it or not and when

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

there are subtle nudges that make the concept of accuracy salient. Obviously, this concerns a narrow and controlled context, albeit one which could potentially be broader if measures for media literacy were made more widespread. That is, accuracy prompts promoted from social media outlets, fact-checking users themselves carry out, and "social debunking" as a grassroots strategy to counter the spread of fake news.

The latter, on the other hand, focuses on *attitudes*: believing in false news is a consequence of motivated reasoning and political bias, which facilitate identity-protective cognition. Political partisans are convinced that it is worth sharing news that is aligned with their ideology, and being aware or suspicious of untruths does not fundamentally modify that behavior. People are not malicious or simply ignore truthfulness: they find it *useful* to share fake news that are consistent with their ideology, as much than partisan but true news that they also find on their social media. They have received them in a friendly environment (not in a social vacuum), which is conspicuously opposed to an external chaos of relativism, discrepancy and hostile media. People are not incompetent, gullible nor got deceived, but they do not fully experience self-deception either due to partisan bias: if the in-party love prevails, they are gratified or flattered by the data that confirm their points of view and that is why they share the (fake) news that endorse them. Conversely, if the out-party hatred prevails (which is mostly the case, Rathje *et al*., 2021), outrage is the prevailing moral tone, and the intention to share is even more powerful.

Considering that the studies both reach solid conclusions, this sharp discrepancy can seem strange or even demotivating. However, we think that although it is difficult to reconcile these studies, they pose very stimulating epistemological and methodological challenges. For instance: Is a third way possible? The very act of sharing false content online –often without reading beyond headlines– is not just the result of mistaken beliefs (as the ignorance theory claims) or of self-conscient partisanship (as the partisan theory asserts) but these misperceptions are heightened *ex post facto*. Sharing does not result from a belief but the other way round: they believe after sharing (and being rewarded by peers). Thus, credibility is based on the pursuit and achievement of virality.

It's worth acknowledging how hard it is to conduct empirical research through surveys on judging the trustworthiness of some news and simultaneously deciding to share. If you ask someone if they would knowingly share false news, they would probably answer no, which is of little use. Moreover, if you show them different news, all of which is false, but without revealing this and ask them if they would share it, the results do not indicate they would share false ones more inadvertently than false ones knowingly or with suspicion, or vice versa. Finally, if you ask whether they are true or false and, later, if they would share them, then both questions are so close that it is very difficult for the informant not to link the two and show scruples. They suspect that the very aim of the survey is to evaluate their ability to dissociate the assessment of trustworthiness from the intention to share. That is, whether people are or not morally indifferent to lying when sharing is at stake.

The triadic model that we propose (*fakeness*, *news-ness* and *shareworthiness* as the main goals of fake news' approaches) can help draw up a map of research that clarifies stances and shows the strengths and weaknesses of methodologies. We aim to go into this in more depth and expand it into an enriched analysis model. This should take into account not only the three categories or focal points for classifying the studies, but a list of the main domains addressed (content, format, values, context, propagation, user, source, effects and remedies). This model will tell us what the underlying theories are when they construct their hypotheses and ask their research questions. It will also enable us to evaluate and compare their findings and detect the shortcomings of the fake news research field from a holistic perspective.

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

References

Ali, K., Li, C., Zain-ul-abdin, K., & Zaffar, M. A. (2022). Fake news on Facebook: examining the impact of heuristic cues on perceived credibility and sharing intention. *Internet Research*, *32*(1), 379-397. https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-10-2019-0442

Alonso García, S. *et al*. (2020). The Impact of Term Fake News on the Scientific Community. Scientific Performance and Mapping in Web of Science. *Social Science 9*(73). https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci9050073

Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2011). Generating research questions through problematization. *Academy of Management Review, 36*(2), 247-271. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2009.0188

Arielli, E. (2018). Sharing as Speech Act. *Versus, 127*, 243-258.

Bakir, V., & MacStay, A. (2018). Fake News and The Economy of Emotions. *Digital Journalism*, *6*(2), 154-175. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1345645

Barthel, M., Mitchell, A., & Holcomb, J. (2016). Many Americans Believe Fake News Is Sowing Confusion. *Pew Research Center.* Retrieved from https://pewrsr.ch/3F3jb3x

Barrera, O. *et al*. (2020). Facts, alternative facts, and fact checking in times of post-truth politics. *Journal of Public Economics*, *182*, 104-123. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2019.104123

Becker, H. (1949). The nature and consequences of black propaganda. *American Sociological Association, 14*(2), 221-235.

Benkler, Y., Faris, R., Roberts, H., & Zuckerman, E. (March 3, 2017). Study: Breitbart-Led Right-Wing Media Ecosystem Altered Broader Media Agenda. *Columbia Journalism Review*. Retrieved from https://t.ly/Ygpuq

Besser, Y. (2021). Web of lies: hate speech, pseudonyms, the Internet, impersonator trolls, and fake jews in the era of fake news. *Ohio State Technology Law Journal*, *17*(2), 233-275. Retrieved from https://ssrn.com/abstract=4393206

Brummette, J., DiStaso, M., Vafeiadis, M., & Messner, M. (2018). Read All About It: The Politicization of "Fake News" on Twitter. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *95*(2), 497-517. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699018769906

Chadwick, A. (2017). *The hybrid media system: Politics and Power* (2nd Ed.). Oxford U.P. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190696726.001.0001

Chadwick, A., & Stanyer, J. (2022). Deception as a Bridging Concept in the Study of Disinformation, Misinformation, and Misperceptions: Toward a Holistic Framework. *Communication Theory, 32*(1), 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtab019

Chadwick, A., Vaccari, C., & O'Loughlin, B. (2018). Do Tabloids Poison the Well of Social Media? Explaining Democratically Dysfunctional News Sharing. Loughborough University. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/2134/33261

Chadwick, A., & Vaccari, C. (2019). News sharing on UK social media: Misinformation, disinformation, and correction (Report No. O3C 1). Loughborough University. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/3nJzJXS

Cinelli, M. *et al*. (2021). Dynamics of online hate and misinformation. *Scientific Reports, 11*, 22083. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-01487-w

Clayton, K. *et al*. (2020). Real Solutions for Fake News? Measuring the Effectiveness of General Warnings and Fact-Check Tags in Reducing Belief in False Stories on Social Media. *Political Behavior, 42*, 1073-1095. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-019-09533-0

Diehl, T., & Lee, S. (2022). Testing the cognitive involvement hypothesis on social media: 'News finds me' perceptions, partisanship, and fake news credibility. *Computers in Human Behavior, 128*, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.107121

Dijck, J. van (2013). *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media*. Oxford U.P.

Duffy, A., Tandoc, E., & Ling, R. (2020) Too good to be true, too good not to share: the social utility of fake news, *Information, Communication & Society*, *23*(13), 1965-1979. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1623904

Edgerly, S., & Vraga, E. K. (2020). That's Not News: Audience Perceptions of "News-ness" and

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

Why It Matters. *Mass Communication and Society*, *23*(5), 730-754. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2020.1729383

Effron, D., & Raj, A. M. (2019). Misinformation and Morality: Encountering Fake-news Headlines Makes Them Seem Less Unethical to Publish and Share. *Psychological Science, 31*(1), 75-87. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797619887896

Farkas, J., Schou J., & Neumayer, C. (2018). Cloaked Facebook pages: Exploring fake Islamist propaganda in social media. *New Media & Society, 20*(5), 1850-1867. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817707759

García-Perdomo, V., Salaverría, R., Kilgo, D. K., & Harlow, S. (2018) To Share or Not to Share. *Journalism Studies*, *19*(8). https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2016.1265896

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Weeks, B., & Ardèvol-Abreu, A. (2017). Effects of the News-Finds-Me Perception in Communication: Social Media Use Implications for News Seeking and Learning About Politics. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, *22*, 105-123. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12185

Goldenberg, A. *et al*. (2023). Homophily and acrophily as drivers of political segregation. *Nature Human Behavior, 7*, 219-230. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01474-9

Grinberg, N., Joseph, K., Friedland, L., Swire-Thompson, B., & Lazer, D. (2019). Fake news on twitter during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. *Science, 363*, 374-378. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aau2706

Guo, L., & Vargo, C. (2020). "Fake News" and Emerging Online Media Ecosystem: An Integrated Intermedia Agenda-Setting Analysis of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election. *Communication Research*, *47*(2), 178-200. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650218777177

Happer, C., Hoskins, A., & Merrin, W. (Eds.) (2019). *Trump's Media War.* Palgrave-McMillan.

Hinsley, A., & Holton, A. (2021). Fake News Cues: Examining the Impact of Content, Source, and Typology of News Cues on People's Confidence in Identifying Mis- and Disinformation. *International Journal of Communication, 15*, 4984-5003. Retrieved from https://t.ly/hPsN_

Ireton, Ch., & Posetti, J. (Eds.) (2018). *Journalism, 'Fake News' & Disinformation Handbook for Journalism Education and Training*. UNESCO. Retrieved from https://en.unesco.org/node/295873

Jones, M. J. (2018, June 20). *Americans: Much misinformation, bias, inaccuracy in news*. Gallup.

Kennedy, J. (2013). Rhetorics of Sharing: Data, Imagination, and Desire. In G. Lovink & M. Rasch (Eds.), *Unlike us readers: Social media monopolies and their alternatives* (pp. 127-136). Institute of Network Culture.

Kunda, Z. (1990). The case for motivated reasoning. *Psychological Bulletin*, *108*(3), 480-498. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.108.3.480

Kuran, T., & Sunstein, C. R. (1999). Availability cascades and risk regulation. *Stanford Law Review*, 683-768.

Lazer, D. M. J. *et al*. (2018). The science of fake news. *Science*, *359*(6380), 1094-1096. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aao2998

Lee, S., Gil de Zúñiga, H., & Munger, K. (2023). Antecedents and consequences of fake news exposure: a two-panel study on how news use and different indicators of fake news exposure affect media trust. *Human Communication Research*, hqad019. https://doi.org/10.1093/hcr/hqad019

Levine, T. R. (2020). *Duped: Truth Default Theory and the Social Science of Lying and Deception*. The University of Alabama Press.

Li, J., Foley, J. M., Dumdum, O., & Wagner, M. W. (2022). The Power of a Genre: Political News Presented as Fact-Checking Increases Accurate Belief Updating and Hostile Media Perceptions. *Mass Communication and Society*, *25*(2), 282-307. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2021.1924382

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

Luo, M., Hancock, J. T., & Markowitz, D. M. (2022). Credibility Perceptions and Detection Accuracy of Fake News Headlines on Social Media: Effects of Truth-Bias and Endorsement Cues. *Communication Research*, 49(2), 171-195. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650220921321

Lyons, B. A., Montgomery, J. M., Guess, A. M., Nyhan, B., & Reifler, J. (2021). Overconfidence in news judgments is associated with false news susceptibility. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *118*(23), e2019527118. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2019527118

Marwick, A. E. (2018). Why Do People Share Fake News? A Sociotechnical Model of Media Effects. *Georgetown Law Technology Review, 2*(2), 474-512. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/3Mos90S

Metzger, M. J., Flanagin, A. J., Mena, P., Jiang, Shan, & Wilson, Ch. (2021). From Dark to Light: The Many Shades of Sharing Disinformation Online. *Media and Communication*, 9(1), 134-143. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v9i1.3409

Mikkelson, D. (2016, November 17). We have a bad news problem, not a fake news problem. *Snopes*. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/3CUPNv9

Mitchell, A., Gottfried, J., Stocking, G., Walker, M., & Fedeli, S. (2019). Many Americans Say Made-Up News is a Critical Problem That Needs to Be Fixed. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from https://pewrsr.ch/3t1NFk9

Mitchell, A., Jurkowitz, M., Oliphant, J. B., & Shearer, E. (2020, July 30). Americans Who Mainly Get Their News on Social Media Are Less Engaged, Less Knowledgeable. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from https://pewrsr.ch/437CXY1

Mourão, R., & Robertson, C. T. (2019). Fake News as Discursive Integration: An Analysis of Sites That Publish False, Misleading, Hyperpartisan and Sensational Information. *Journalism Studies*, *20*(14), 2077-2095. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2019.1566871

Newman, N. *et al*. (2024). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024*. Reuters.

Nielsen, R. K., & Graves, L. (2017). 'News You Don't Believe': Audience Perspectives on Fake News. *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/3nT3vdT

Nickerson, R. S. (1998). Confirmation bias: A ubiquitous phenomenon in many guises. *Review of General Psychology, 2*(2), 175.

Osmundsen, M. *et al*. (2021). Partisan Polarization Is the Primary Psychological Motivation behind Political Fake News Sharing on Twitter. *American Political Science Review*, *115*(3), 999-1015. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000290

Park, A. *et al*. (2020). Understanding Fake News: A Bibliographic Perspective. *Defence Strategic Communications*, *8*. https://doi.org/10.30966/2018.RIGA.8.4

Park, C. S. (2019). Does Too Much News on Social Media Discourage News Seeking? Mediating Role of News Efficacy Between Perceived News Overload and News Avoidance on Social Media. *Social Media + Society*, *5*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119872956

Pennycook, G., Epstein, Z. Mosleh, M., Arechar, A. A., Eckles, D., & Rand, D. G. (2021). Shifting attention to accuracy can reduce misinformation online. *Nature, 592*, 590-595. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03344-2

Pennycook, G., & Rand, D. G. (2019). Lazy, Not Biased: Susceptibility to Partisan fake news is better explained by lack of reasoning than by motivated reasoning. *Cognition, 188*, 39-50. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2018.06.011

Pennycook, G., & Rand, D. G. (2020). Who falls for fake news? The roles of bullshit receptivity, overclaiming, familiarity, and analytic thinking. *Journal of Personality*, *88*, 185-200. https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12476

Pennycook, G., & Rand, D. G. (2021). The psychology of fake news. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *25*(5). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2021.02.007

Quevedo Redondo, R., Antona Jimeno, T., & Vicent-Ibáñez, M. (2022). Investigación sobre *News Sharing*. Una propuesta de análisis bibliométrico. *Communication & Society, 35*(2), 285-298. https://doi.org/10.15581/003.35.2.285-298

Righetti, N. (2021). Four years of fake news: A quantitative analysis of the scientific literature. *First Monday, 26*(6-7). https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v26i7.11645

Rhodes, S. C. (2022). Filter Bubbles, Echo Chambers, and Fake News: How Social Media Conditions Individuals to Be Less Critical of Political Misinformation. *Political Communication, 39*(1), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2021.1910887

Robertson, C. T. (2023) Defining News from an Audience Perspective at a Time of Crisis in the United States, *Journalism Practice, 17*(2), 374-390. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1919178

Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, R. (2023). An overview on fake news phenomenon: From untruth-driven to post-truth-driven approaches. *Media and Communication, 11*(2), 15-29. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6315

Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, R., Sánchez-Olmos, C., Hidalgo-Marí, T., & Saquete-Boro, E. (2021). Memetics of deception: spreading local meme hoaxes during COVID-19 1st year. *Future Internet*, *13*(6), 152. https://doi.org/10.3390/fi13060152

Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, R., Sánchez-Olmos, C., & Hidalgo-Marí, T. (2023). For the sake of sharing: Fake news as memes. In M. Filimowicz (Ed.), *Information Disorder. Algorithms and Society Series* (pp. 46-68). Routledge.

Roozenbeek, J., & van der Linden, S. (2019). Fake news game confers psychological resistance against online misinformation *Palgrave Communication 5*, 65. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0279-9

Shearer, E., & Mitchell, A. (2021, January 12). News use across social media platforms in 2020. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from https://t.ly/S6tSd

Shearer E. *et al*. (2024). How Americans Get News on TikTok, X, Facebook and Instagram, *Pew Research Center*, June 14. Retrieved from https://t.ly/s8AwW

Shin, I., Wang L., & Lu, Y. (2022). Twitter and Endorsed (Fake) News: The Influence of Endorsement by Strong Ties, Celebrities, and a User Majority on Credibility of Fake News During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Communication, 16*, 2573-2595. Retrieved from https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/18187

Shu, K., Sliva, A., Wang, S, Tang, J., & Liu, H. (2017). Fake news detection on social media: A data mining perspective. *ACM SIGKDD Explorations Newsletter, 19*, 24-36. https://doi.org/10.1145/3137597.3137600

Sterrett, D. *et al*. (2019) Who Shared It?: Deciding What News to Trust on Social Media. *Digital Journalism*, *7*(6), 783-801. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1623702

Talwar, S. *et al*. (2019). Why do people share fake news? Associations between the dark side of social media use and fake news sharing behavior. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services 51*, 72-82 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.05.026

Tandoc, E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. (2018). Defining 'fake news': A typology of scholarly definitions. *Digital journalism*, *6*(2), 137-153. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143

Tandoc, E. C., & Seet, S. K. (2022). War of the Words: How Individuals Respond to "Fake News," "Misinformation," "Disinformation," and "Online Falsehoods. *Journalism Practice.* https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2022.2110929

Tandoc, E. C., Thomas, R. J., & Bishop, L. (2021). What Is (Fake) News? Analyzing News Values (and More) in Fake Stories. *Media and Communication*, *9*(1), 110-119. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v9i1.3331

Tong, Ch., Gill, H., Li, J., Valenzuela, S., & Rojas H. (2020). "Fake News Is Anything They Say!" –Conceptualization and Weaponization of Fake News among the American Public. *Mass Communication and Society*, *23*(5), 755-778. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2020.1789661

Trilling, D., Tolochko, P., & Burscher, B. (2017). From Newsworthiness to Shareworthiness: How to Predict News Sharing Based on Article Characteristics. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *94*(1), 38-60. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699016654682

Tsang, S. J. (2021). Motivated Fake News Perception: The Impact of News Sources and Policy Support on Audiences' Assessment of News Fakeness. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 98*(4), 1059-1077. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699020952129

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62

Van Duyn, E. & Collier, J. (2019). Priming and Fake News: The Effects of Elite Discourse on Evaluations of News Media. *Mass Communication and Society*, *22*(1), 29-48. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2018.1511807

Vargo, C. J., Guo, L., & Amazeen, M. E. (2018). The agenda-setting power of fake news: A big data analysis of the online media landscape from 2014 to 2016. *New Media & Society*, *20*(5), 2028-2049. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817712086

Venturini, T. (2019). From Fake to Junk News, the Data Politics of Online Virality. In D. Bigo, E. Isin & E. Ruppert (Eds.), *Data Politics: Worlds, Subjects, Rights* (pp. 123-144). Routledge.

Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, *359*, 1146-1151. https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aap9559

Ward, A., Zheng, J., & Broniarczyk, S. M. (2023). I share, therefore I know? Sharing online content –even without reading it– inflates subjective knowledge. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 33*(3), 469-488. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1321

Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). *Information Disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making. Council of Europe Repor*t DGI(2017)09. Brussels: Concil of Europe. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/3DZwt1e

Zhou, X., & Zafarani, R. (2020). A Survey of Fake News: Fundamental Theories, Detection Methods, and Opportunities. *ACM Computing Surveys*, *53*(5). https://doi.org/10.1145/3395046

ISSN 2386-7876 – © 2025 Communication & Society, 38(1), 47-62