

How Has The
Concept Of 'Fake
News' Altered The
Public Discourse
On Inequality In
Society



Post Truth

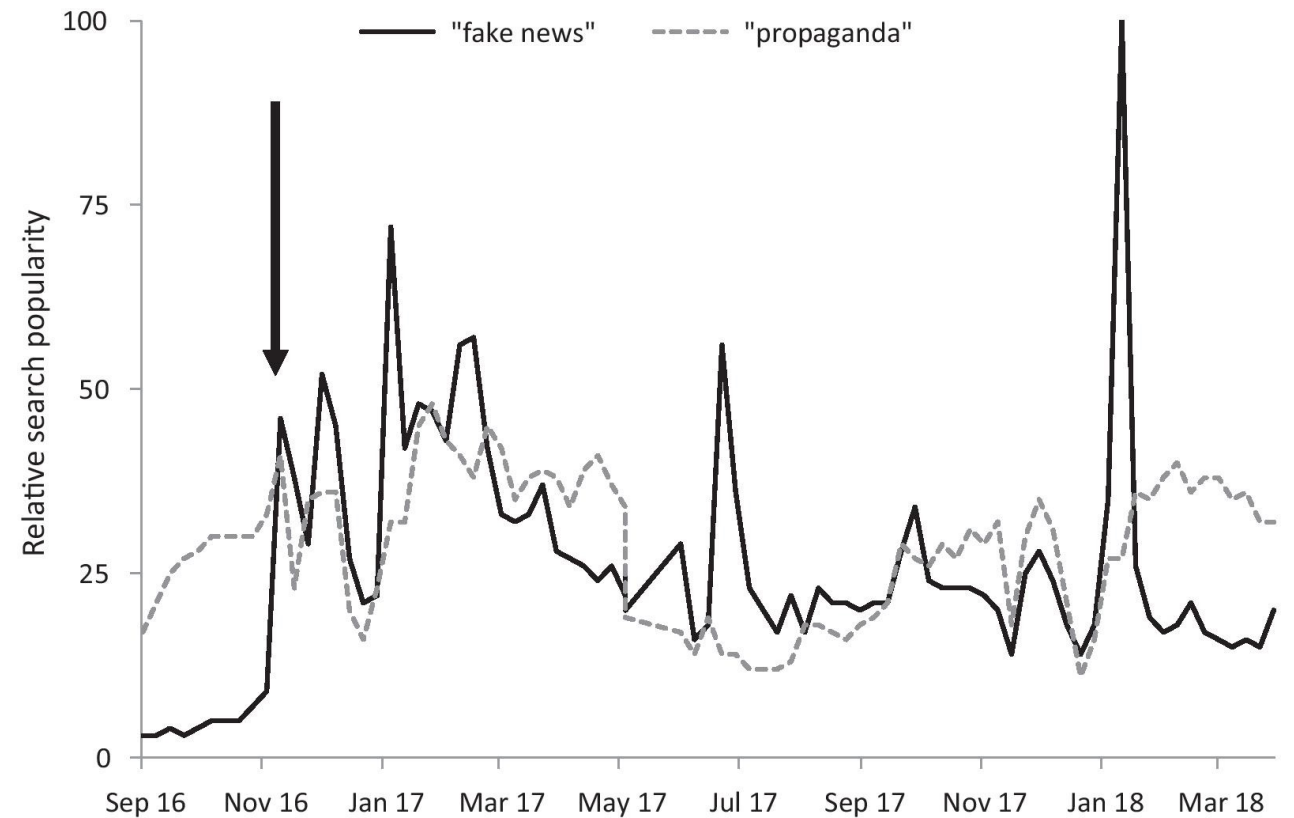
- Originating in 'circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion or personal believe' (Oxford Dictionary, 2016)
- Statements that may not be true are often regarded as too benign to call false.
- 'Keyes described post truth as 'Society's preference for the use of euphemisms correlates with the increased reliance on emotions instead of facts ', it goes onto to state 'Nowadays truthfulness in not in demand and lies are not stigmatised. We are facing the 'routinization of dishonesty' (Keyes, 2004)
- Pre-empting arguments and dismissing them as opinion, bias & expression to strengthen own position. Proclaiming this is beyond populist opinion.
- It is at best the truth improved for the benefit of the individual or group and at worst, deceitful or lying, spinning a narrative for ones own or a common group interest/s where it plays on emotions, prejudices and existing believes/values of individuals.

Fake news

- Allcott and Gentzkow (2017, p.213) defined fake news as ‘news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers’
- Lazer et al. (2018) define online disinformation as ‘false information purposely spread to deceive people’
- Since Donald Trump’s election as President he used fake news known as a “discourse of fake news” to attack news media and discrediting his rivals. When Journalists’ fail to challenge fake news usage, it offers an opportunity for political elites to normalize this discourse. ‘Rise of the Trumpenvolk’ Oliver & Rahn (2016)
- Foucault (1980 p.118.) argued it was no longer a case of drawing a line between the discourse that falls below the truth or facts, but it’s a category of its own.
- Orwell in his novel 1984 worried about an assault on the idea of truth , to the point, where the very possibility of a distinction between truth and lie is erased.(Nicholas, 2017)
- [JK Rowling’s latest trans row explained following George Orwell tweet \(hitc.com\)](#) Mustafa (2021)

Fake news

- During US Presidential elections in 2016, 'Fake news' became more prominent.
- Google trends captured data that highlighted trends in search terms, and it discovered that the term '**fake news**' was more popular, in the build up to elections, and then spiked in January 2017 (after the elections), due to 'fake news' of the presidents denouncement Micheal.R.B, (2021).
- The peaks and troughs are mirrored in propaganda too.



Recent Fake News Society

- [11 September 2001: The conspiracy theories still spreading after 20 years - BBC News](#)
- The rise of new conspiracy movements online, like [Qanon](#) (Wendling, 2021) have believes about the real truth of 9/11 and are still in circulation to a far larger audience.
- False claims leading to Anti Semitism views being pushed out and promoted



Examples Of Discourse On Inequalities Through Fake News

Incorrectly reported /tweeted causing issues with Police investigations

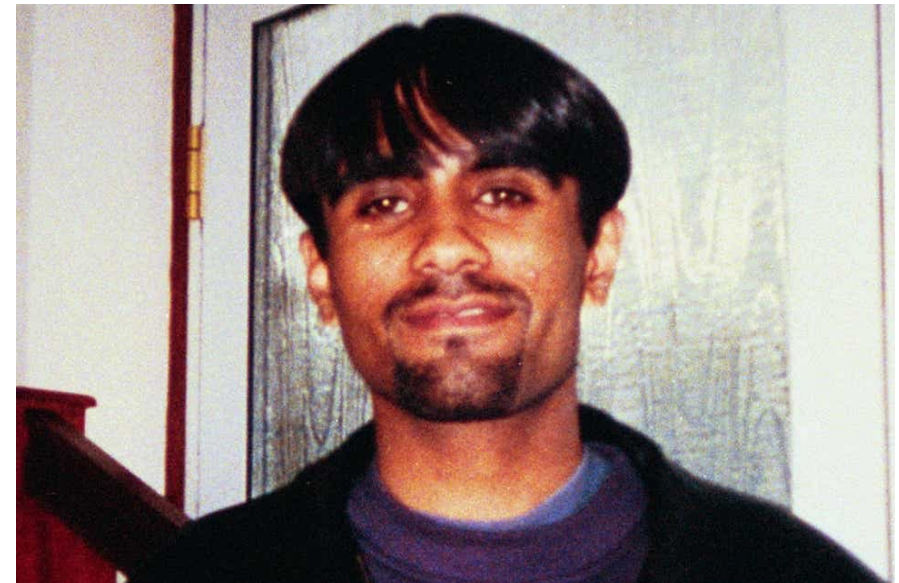
[George Floyd Protests \(lsu.edu\)](#)



“The combination of evolving events, sustained attention and, most of all, deep existing divisions make this moment a perfect storm for disinformation,” according to (Graham Brookie, director of the Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensic Research Lab) LSU. (2020)

Incorrectly reported / social media causing issues with Police investigations

[Why a Sikh mother has spent nearly a quarter of a century seeking answers to her son’s death | SikhPA](#)



Her petition explains “we experienced a huge number of police failures, assumptions and stereotyping based on our colour”, outlining why she still seeks justice. *Admin, SikhPA.* (2021)

Fake News Political - Conspiracy Theories About Pelosi Attack

(Photo by JUSTIN TALLIS/AFP via Getty Images
House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and her
husband Paul Pelosi

[Conspiracy Theories About Pelosi Attack Spread
Unchecked on 'Alt-tech' Sites, Conservative Media |
Southern Poverty Law Centre \(splcenter.org\)](#)

Wilson, J. (2022)

[https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/3713643-
pelosi-says-husband-faces-long-recovery-after-
horrific-attack/](#)

Dress. (2022)



Paul Pelosi Attack: New Federal Indictment Reveals What Suspect Was Wearing When Police Arrived



David DePape faces federal charges of assaulting an immediate family member of a federal official and attempted kidnapping of a federal officer



[Musk posts baseless conspiracy theory about Paul Pelosi attack on Twitter | Elon Musk | The Guardian](#) Bekiempis, (2022)
[Hillary Clinton on Twitter: "The Republican Party and its mouthpieces now regularly spread hate and deranged conspiracy](#)
Clinton (2022).

How it escalates

Ben Collins

@oneunderscore__



30 Oct

The latest conspiracy theory about Paul Pelosi's attack is frankly too disgusting to print. Baked into it is another attempt to smear the LGBTQ community, and some on the mainstream right are pushing it. Her's the gist of this conspiracy theory. Don't give the actual link clicks. It took Elon two days after taking over to post an anti-LGBTQ conspiracy theory at Hillary Clinton about Nancy Pelosi's attacked husband. I hope everybody understands what's going (Collins, 2022)

[How Stochastic Terrorism Uses Disgust to Incite Violence - Scientific American](#) (Nelson, 2022)

<https://flipboard.com/article/musk-posts-baseless-conspiracy-theory-about-paul-pelosi-attack-on-twitter/f-3bb6502726%2Ftheguardian.com>

(Bekiempis, 2022)

“Here is the hippie commune Pelosi’s pro-hemp nudist attacker lived in. It is festooned with LGBTQ flags, BLM signs and other Leftist propaganda.” Even Elon Musk joined in, sharing and later deleting a sensationalist conspiracy theory

By [Jay Caspian Kang](#)

October 30, 2022



NBC News must answer these 5 questions on the retracted Paul Pelosi attack story



“Fox News, some of this is on your hands. Some of this is on your hands. You like to call people out, I’m calling you all out,”
(Goldberg 2022)



<https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/nbc-news-answer-5-questions-retracted-paul-pelosi-attack-story> (Gainor, 2022)

Who and What to Believe?



Donald J. Trump

@realDonaldTrump

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'BuzzFeed Runs Unverifiable Trump-Russia Claims' [#FakeNews](#)



Fake News: BuzzFeed Runs 'Unverifiable' Trump-Russia Claims | LifeZette

Left-leaning news outlet abandons all journalistic ethics in publishing explosive dossier

[lifezette.com](#)

9:00 PM - 10 Jan 2017

13,228 Retweets 40,546 Likes



- Lack of trust from all and no agreement from increasing online conspiracy theorist
- What are the likes of The BBC and FOX news and global channels are doing.
- Will people be able to judge what is real or fake news in the future and does it matter?
- People want the comfort even if that means inequality .

Conclusion

- The impacts on inequality when striving for democratic access to news and updates.
- Fake news is effective if people lack **critical thinking** (Wiles, 2018)
- Restricting or heavily regulating news, media platforms
- Measures to reduce fake news and help people in society to vet and check the accuracy of the news they are basing their opinions on (<https://www.logically.ai/resources>)
- Snopes reported on false claims regarding Paul Pelosi story <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/paul-pelosi-gay-prostitute/>
- Tackling Misinformation with HAMLET (Human and Machine in the Loop Evaluation and Training)
- [Trusted news: BBC Reality Check - BBC Bitesize](#)

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