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Fake News as Aberration in Journalism Practice: Examining Truth and Facts as Basis of Fourth Estate of the Realm

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Abstract

The deliberate publication of fake news by any media organisation or online network is an aberration in journalism practice. And such sophist intentions and dissemination of falsehood to the people through the virtual media, social media and old media is a depravity against humanity to spread mischief, acrimony, crises, disease, corruption, and squalor. It is total negation of journalism values and news values. Thus, this chapter seeks to examine the concept of newsworthiness in the wake of resurrection of the ghost of fake news in this digital age, which was the practice in the age of ignorance when unlettered men abound as journalists. It investigates the ideological constructs of news because it is a violation of journalism practice for any organisation to base its ideology on the publication of fake news. This study highlights news production process in tandem with the socio-cultural interests, political philosophy, and economic interests of the sponsors, financiers, and owners of the media. The chapter critically examines factors of news or factors of newsworthiness in relation to the concept of fake news. If the twelve factors of news are frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite people, reference to elite persons, and reference to something negative, should there be anything fake called News? In narrative and argumentative form, the study concludes that anything fake or any information that is based on falsehood cannot be regarded as News. If it is news, it must be based on Truth and Facts. If it is news, it must be new. If it is news, it must be based on actualities. If it is news, it must be based on evidences. If it is news, it must be fair. If it is news, it must be based on realities. If it is news, it must not be based on vendetta. If it is news, it must not be hoax. If it is news, it must not be fallacy. If it is news, it must not be innuendoes.

Keywords: fake news, journalism values, news values, truth, facts

1. Introduction

A study of fake news is crucial in this digital age of instant message of news dissemination and interaction globally, when the spread of fabricated news is gaining relevance in the mass media, new media, social media, websites, and blogs. Fake News as form of neologism, is otherwise known as junk news, pseudo-news,

alternative news or hoax news to fabricate news with harmful intent to spread lies (Dis-information); to transmit false information without harmful intent (Mis-information); and to convey genuine information with intent to cause harm (Mal-information) [1–3]. The spread of fake news is quite appalling as they are being presented as factually accurate and truthful. Whereas, propaganda, or satire news cannot be disseminated as authentic news, but yellow journalism.

Really, fake news discourse has been popular in recent times due to the manifestation of the 'Global Village' theory, through Online journalism, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram et al.; Websites, Blogs, and the desperation of people to gain financially and politically. Hence, the Global network and platforms are besieged with sensational, dishonest, outright fabricated news, and headlines to increase readership, advertisement patronages [4, 5].

The post-truth politics has also pushed fake news to the front burner with the easy access to online advertisement revenue, increased political polarisation and the popularity of the social media, especially the Facebook News Feed and Twitter [1]. Meanwhile, the resurrection of the ghost of fake news in various newsrooms has undermined serious media coverage and makes it difficult for journalists to cover significant news events [6].

A survey by BuzzFeed that the top fake news about the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election received more engagement on Facebook than the top 20 election stories from 19 major media outlets [7].

Meanwhile, fake news can be historically traced to the 13th Century B.C., when Ramses the Great spread lies and propaganda portraying the Battle of Kadesh as a stunning victory for the Egyptians. The fake news depicted Ramses the Great himself killing many of his foes at the Battle. Whereas, the Treaty between the Egyptians and the Hittites, reveals that the battle was actually a stalemate [8]. Besides, Octavian misinformed the people against his rival Mark Antony, portraying him as a drunkard, a womaniser, and a mere puppet of the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra VII [9].

In fact, MacDonald [10] reveals that Octavian published a fake Will of Mark Antony which caused an outrage among the Roman populace. The fake testament claimed that Mark Antony upon his death wished to be entombed in the mausoleum of the Ptolemaic Pharaohs. However, Biography.com [11] notes that Mark Antony killed himself after his defeat in the Battle of Actium, and after hearing false rumours promoted by Cleopatra herself saying that she had committed a suicide.

In the second and third Centuries A.D., false rumours were spread about Christians claiming that they engaged in rituals and cannibalism, and incest [12, 13]. Also, in the late third Century A.D., David Gwynn [14] discloses that Christian apologist Lactantius invented and exaggerated stories about pagans engaging in acts of immorality and cruelty. And Gillian Clark [15] declares that Porphyry, fabricated similar stories about Christians.

Indeed, the publication of fake news spans through all ages to the present digital age of the 21st Century. During the Medieval period, a significant fake news in 1475 claimed in Trent that the Jewish community had murdered a two-and-half year-old Christian infant named Simonino [16]. The false news triggered the arrest and torture of Jews in the City, where fifteen of them were burned at stake. All attempts by Pope Sixtus IV to suppress the phony news proved abortive. The "blood libel" news had turned tragic as the Jews were claimed to have killed Christians deliberately to use the blood of the children for religious or ritual purposes [17].

In the aftermath of the invention of printing press in 1439, the publication of counterfeit news became widespread. Yet, there was no standard journalistic ethics to follow. In the 17th Century historians started the practice of citing their sources in footnotes. The trial of Galileo di Vincenzo Bonaiuti de Galilei, the Italian

astronomer, physicist, and engineer in 1610, actually pushed forward the demand for veritable news [16].

It is remarkable that in the 18th Century, publishers of fake news were fined and banned in the Netherlands. A publisher, Gerard Lodewijk Van der Macht, was banned and fined four times by Dutch authorities. And he re-established his press four times [18]. Also, Jacob Soll [16] unveils that Benjamin Franklin wrote fake news about murderous 'scalping' Indians in the American colonies. They were working with King George III in an effort to diffuse public opinion in favour of American Revolution.

Perhaps, as part of American wonders in history is the 1835 fake news on the Great Moon Hoax. The New York Sun published articles about a real-life astronomer and a made-up bizarre life on the moon. According to Brooke Borel [18], the fake news attracted new subscribers, and the penny paper suffered little setback, as it was meant to entertain readers, and not to mislead them.

Also, in the 19th Century, yellow journalism reached its peak in the 1890's as there were circulation war of sensational news between Joseph Pulitzer's New York World and William Randolph Hearst's New York Journal. The publishers of fake news inspired US government into the Spanish-American war, which was triggered as USS Maine attacked the harbour of Havana, Cuba.

Truly, fake news actually expands with the democratisation of communication improved technology as traditional media are in high demand in the 20th Century. It is revealed that Woodrow Wilson, the American 28th President (1913–1921) promoted the phrase, "Fake News" in 1915 [19]. Although, the phrase had been used in the United States in the previous Century, we will appreciate the fact that this is the period of First World War, when there was anti-German atrocity propaganda, and others to outwit one another in the global conflict.

It is crucial to note that Hitler and Nazi Party established the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda in 1933 on attaining power, and made Joseph Goebbels the Propaganda Minister [20]. Just as Hitler's Germany was using propaganda to disseminate fake news to fan the embers of Nazi rule, the British propaganda used radio broadcasts and leaflets to publicise phony news to discourage German troops. Also, the American propaganda used The New York Times and others as propaganda machineries to spread fake news [21].

With the global network of information through the World Wide Web (WWW) in the 21st Century, fake news continues to be widespread [22]. It is amazing how fake news is increasing at increasing rate with the emergence of the International Networking (Internet), and creation of untruthful, misleading, and unwanted information which lacked verification. These are disseminated through email, social media, blogs, websites, WhatsApp, and others with the aim of deceiving readers into clicking of the links to maximise the traffic and profit through advertisement [23].

Besides, we have satire news, that's not intended to mislead but to inform and share humorous commentaries about real news and the mainstream media [24]. Such satirical news as opposed to fake news reflect in television programmes in United States television shows such as Saturday Night Live's, Weekend Update, The Daily Show, The Colbert Report, The Late Show with Stephen Colbert and The Union newspaper [25, 26].

Truly, President Donald Trump of America has propagated fake news in the new dispensation with his daily Tweets, dispelling negative news about him and his presidency as fake news [27, 28]. The British government has however decided in October 2018 that it bans the use of the term "Fake News" as it is a "poorly-defined and misleading term that conflates a variety of false information, from genuine error through to foreign interference in democratic processes" [28].

The Internet has assisted protagonists of fake news to spread their illicit trade to go viral globally. The inventor of World Wide Web (WWW), Tim Berners-Lee says in 2017, that fake news is one of the most three significant trends that must be checked, if the Internet must truly “serve humanity”. The other two trends to be resolved is the use of Internet by governments for both “citizen-surveillance purposes, and for cyber-warfare purposes” [29]. The Reuters [30] reveals a research finding that 58 per cent of people had less trust in social media news stories as opposed to 24 per cent of people in mainstream media after learning about fake news.

This stems from the fact that fake news websites spread misinformation, falsehood, and misleading news to spread mischief, vendetta, and hatred. According to Michael Radutzky [31], huge patronage of advertisements in fake news websites make it global and spread the fake news. Thus, Jestin Coler, who establishes fake news websites for fun, discloses that Ten Thousand Dollars is earned monthly through advertisements placed on his fake news websites [32].

This study about fake news becomes pertinent as it is gaining more popularity with the social media spreading fake news, which people easily access, as against the traditional media. The Pew Research Center [33] reveals that 62 per cent of American adults gets news on social media, and most of them are fake news, compared to the mass media of radio, television, newspapers and magazines.

2. Exploring the concept of fake news

It is crucial to explore the true meaning of Fake News, especially as President Donald Trump of America has redefined the term to mean any negative news in the media against him and his presidency [27]. But Fake News is a neologism that means news stories that are untrue, not factual, and deliberate falsehood. Fake news does not mean unfavourable news, but news that were fabricated as a lie to mislead people, and cause chaos and anarchy among people. Fake news are formulated stories that are conjured as vendetta, and spread rumour mongering through the traditional media, social media, fake news websites, blogs, and other media outlets [1].

Fake news are machineries of propaganda strategy to deceive, mislead, confuse, and coerce people to influence and further an agenda, so that they may be psychologically brainwashed to believe the falsehood being promoted for supports. Propaganda use different methods, according to Lee and Lee like name calling, bandwagon, transfer, card stacking, testimonial, plain folks, and glittering generalities to gain support for what Frank Jefkins [34] identifies as “an opinion, creed or belief”.

Meanwhile, Claire Wardle [35] identifies seven types of fake news thus: i. satire or parody (“no intention to cause harm but has potential to fool”); ii. false connection (“when headlines, visuals or captions don’t support the content”) and spread through the traditional media, social media, websites; iii. Misleading content (“misleading use of information to frame an issue or an individual”); iv. false context (“when genuine content is shared with false contextual information”); v. impostor content (“when genuine sources are impersonated” with false, made-up sources); vi. manipulated content (“when genuine information or imagery is manipulated to deceive”, as with a “doctored” photo); and vii. Fabricated content (“new content is 100% false, designed to deceive and do harm”).

It is through these differentials that we can identify and differentiate fake news from the true news in different media. But the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) gives some tips on how to actually spot

fake news [36]. They are: 1. Consider the source (to understand its mission and purpose); 2. Read beyond the headline (to understand the whole story); 3. Check the authors (to see if they are real and credible); 4. Assess the supporting sources (to ensure they support the claims); 5. Check the date of publication (to see if the story is relevant and up to date); 6. Ask if it is a joke (to determine if it is meant to be satire); 7. Review your own biases (to see if they are affecting your judgement); and 8. Ask experts (to get confirmation from independent people with knowledge).

The spread of fake news through the social media such as Twitter, Facebook news feed, Websites, and Blogs continues to worry experts in linguistics and the field of mass communications. This manifests in the spread of fake news with over 100 incorrect articles on the 2016 United States presidential election [37]. It is revealed that the fake news articles were disseminated through satirical news Websites, individual Websites, daily Tweets of President Trump, and others to propagate false information on the elections.

Prevalence of Fake News seems to be winning against correct news when we realise that it propelled Donald Trump to win 2016 presidential election in America. The election was won through Electoral College and not through majority votes. Donald Trump and Mike Pence of Republican Party won at Electoral College with 304 votes, as against 227 Votes for Hilary Clinton and Tim Kaine of Democratic Party. This is against the popular votes of 65,853,514 won by Hilary Clinton with 48.2 per cent of the votes, as against the 62,984,828 Votes of Donald Trump with 46.1 per cent [38]. And out of 7 faithless electors, 2 pledged to Donald Trump, and 5 to Hilary Clinton [39, 40].

But the daily Tweets of Trump dispelling correct negative news against him as fake news, and multiplicity of fake news sponsored in the media to create confusion propelled Trump as glorified candidate against all odds, to mould public opinion wrongly. Thus, steps must be taken urgently to checkmate fake news in the media to save humanity from untruth to pervade the globe against truthful news to elevate peoples of the world.

However, scientific efforts are being made to detect fake news in the media. Language techniques, theories, and models such as n-gram encodings and bag of words are being developed to determine the legitimacy, the credibility, and truthfulness of the news. Some Websites such as "Snopes" are developing methods to detect fake news manually, while some universities are developing mathematical models to detect fake news.

It is hoped such scientific efforts will meet the voracity of desperations being displayed by the protagonists of fake news to spread their illicit trade in the mass media, online media, and social media to create hatred, chaos, and anarchy among peoples of the world.

3. News and news values

It is apposite to consider the correct meaning of news, and factors determining news values so as to situate it against fake news. News is the reportage of current events or happenings, which may be normal, oddity or calamitous and transmitted through the organs of mass communication of radio, television, cinematography, newspaper, magazine, or the International Network (Internet) to the numerous heterogeneous audiences [41, p. 328].

The novelty of news makes it a major ingredient of the mass media and the new media which people pursue on daily basis, as it forms the immediate dissemination of information which is a major function of the media [14, pp. 42–44].

It is actually through the news that the media unveils the unknown to the people; confirms known information to the public; corrects innuendoes from propaganda devices; confers authority on issues, events, and opinions through reportage; reports opinions which are free; and presents sacred facts to the populace to ward off speculations, gossips, and rumour mongering in the society.

However, news is perceived from conflict point of view by Marshall McLuhan [5, p. 45] as he notes that 'the real news is bad news'. This orchestrates the common definition of news by the American journalist, Charles Anderson Dana (1819–1897), who states that, 'When a dog bites a man that is not news, but when a man bites a dog that is news' [42–44].

Meanwhile, Maria Elizabeth Grabe [45] offers an evolutionary psychology explanation for why negative news have higher news value than positive news. According to her,

Human perceptive system and lower level brain functions have difficulty distinguishing between media stimuli and real stimuli...The brain differentiates between negative and positive stimuli and reacts quicker and more automatically to negative stimuli which are also better remembered. Negative media news fall into this category.

News is categorised to hard news; soft news; spot news; developing news; and continuing news or running stories. These differentiations of news by journalists are based on the kind of news content or the subject of events as news. According to Gaye Tuchman [46, p. 179], these are Pres-scheduled event-as-news and the Non-scheduled event-as-news. The former refers to an event that is announced for a future by a convener which may be Congress debate sessions, press conferences, Annual General Meetings, court sitting, and among others. The news of such events is disseminated immediately, because, if it is news, it must be fresh, immediate, and timely.

The latter on Unscheduled event-as-news is an event that occurs unexpectedly such as accidents, fire, flood, or the death of prominent news maker such as a president. Such news is spot news that must be disseminated immediately. Scoops or investigated stories are non-scheduled events-as-news too, which may be disseminated as the editorial board of the news organisation may decide based on the nature of the exclusive news.

The objectives of news are embedded in the institutional framework of news media operations through what Gaye Tuchman [47] calls 'news beat' arrangements, official settings, time rhythms, and the journalistic reports.

In furtherance of the work of Berger and Luckman [48] on social construction of reality through news, Gaye Tuchman [47] stresses that the meaning of news reports is entrenched in this institutional 'newsnet' and 'routinization' of news through objectified methods of news processes.

4. Between news values and journalistic values

News is compiled by journalists based on the factors of news worthiness. As Boyd [49] notes, the news values or news criteria are often referred to as 'news worthiness', which serves as guide for the news journalists to cover, report, grade, and select news.

In their determinist view of news values, Conley and Lambie [50, p. 42] declare that,

News values will determine whether stories are to be pursued. They will determine whether, if pursued, they will then be published. They will determine, if published, where the stories will be placed in news presentation. Having been placed, new [sic] values will determine to what extent the public will read them.

In the etymology of news values, Walter Lippmann [51, p. 322] is widely acknowledged as the proponent, and describes it as 'attributes or conventions for the selection of news items to be published'.

Indeed, Richardson [52, pp. 91, 92–94, 182] examines news values from language perspectives as one of the professional practices 'that shape journalism as a discourse process and therefore help to account for the products of newspaper discourse', which helps the journalists to 'select, order and prioritise the collection and production of news', based on the 'imagined preferences of the expected audience'.

Meanwhile, Caple and Bednarek [5, p. 55] give three approaches to the discourse of news values:

a. a focus on news workers' beliefs or judgements about the newsworthiness of an event in its material reality (a 'material' perspective); b. a focus on news workers' beliefs or judgements about the newsworthiness of an event for their target audience (a 'cognitive' perspective); and c. a focus on how news production texts (press release, interviews, published story...) construct the newsworthiness of an event through language, photography, etc. (a 'discursive' perspective).

4.1 Journalistic values

There are basic differences between news values and journalistic values, just as functions differ from principles of a phenomenon. And as Johnson and Kelly [53, 54 p. 116] agree, 'news values' differ from 'journalistic values'. They regard journalistic values as 'accuracy and balance', which Fuller [55, 56] describes as 'standards and guidelines' such as 'objectivity, accuracy, fairness, neutrality, intellectual honesty, and degrees of proof'.

These journalistic values deal with the ethical standards in the practice of journalism in the print and electronic media as well as the new media. This is because of the need to have self-control in the coverage of events, the writing of the news, and the dissemination of the news.

In their estimation, Caple and Bednarek [4, p. 55] describe news values as 'properties or qualities of events', just as Kepplinger and Ehmig [27, p. 58] note that 'news values are regarded as the 'journalists' judgment about the relevance of factors. While news factors are by definition 'qualities of news stories', which might be the degree of damage reported, the status of people involved, the geographical distance between the event and the place where the recipients of the news stories live'.

This explains the position of Westerstahl and Johansson [57, p. 71] who perceive news values 'as systems of criteria central to the decision-making process as to what will or will not be selected as news', which Stromback et al. [58, p. 719] declares that 'the news values exist in the minds of journalists' to drive coverage and dominate their practice.

As 'ideological constructs of news', Curran and Seaton [59, p. 336] note that news values are tacit newsroom culture that determines the framing of news to meet the ideological inclinations and philosophy of the news media, which Golding and Elliot [60, p. 114] describe as 'routine and highly regulated procedures'.

From sociological point of view, news is selected to meet the social sensitivities of the sponsors, and are constructed ideologically to meet certain goals and objectives within the framework of the media establishments, which are influenced by the background and orientation of the journalists to meet corporate goals and objectives [61, p. 184].

In his declaration, Schulson [62, p. 142] states that 'news is not simply selected but constructed', as by-products of journalistic procedures and ethical practices apart from meeting ideological inclination of the sponsors.

This also attests to the view of Murdock [63, p. 163] that 'news production process is not random reactions to random events', it is based on the socio-cultural interests, political philosophy, and economic interests of the sponsors, financiers, and owners of the media.

4.2 Types of news values

The first set of news values were listed by Galtung and Ruge [64, p. 71] who describe them as 'factors of newsworthiness or news factors'. They argue that the 'news factors are a set of selections based on common-sense perception psychology, created through analogy to radio wave signals'.

In their research, Galtung and Ruge [64, p. 66] declare that 'the more an event accessed these criteria, the more likely it was to be reported in the print and broadcast news'.

The 12 factors given by them include:

1. Frequency; 2. Threshold (absolute intensity, intensity increase); 3. Unambiguity; 4. Meaningfulness (cultural proximity, relevance); 5. Consonance (predictability, demand); 6. Unexpectedness (unpredictability, scarcity); 7. Continuity; 8. Composition. These first 8 factors are considered as 'culture-free' that are based on perception. The remaining 4 factors are 'culture-bound'. These are: 9. Reference to elite nations; 10. Reference to Elite people; 11. Reference to persons; 12. Reference to something negative [64, p. 71].

In a review of the Galtung and Ruge study on news values, Tunstall [65, pp. 21, 22] identifies an 'unusual strength of the coherent set of hypotheses' that has the potential of application in a wide range of news contexts, including broadcast news. These hypotheses are:

- a. 'The higher the total score of an event, the higher the probability that it will become news, and even make headlines'. This is 'Additivity Hypothesis'.
- b. The second one is 'Complementarity Hypothesis' which is, 'Wherein an event low on one dimension or news factor will have to be high on another 'complementary' dimension to make it the news' [64, p. 71].

But in their critique, especially in relation to radio news, Niblock and Machin [66, p. 201] identify some factors of news values that are not covered by Galtung and Ruge.

According to them, the factors are: 'time, procedural requirements and targeting' in relation to selection and running order of radio stories aimed at different markets [66, p. 201].

In his classifications of news values, Bond [44, p. 5], lists the news criteria as:

a. Impact of the news to the audiences; b. Proximity or nearness of the news to the people; c. Timeliness or the freshness of the news which must be immediate; d. Prominence which makes the media to sell; e. Novelty nature of the news item to make it attractive to the audiences; f. Conflict such as crises, calamities, fraud, scandals, and others that arrest attention of people; g. Audience, which explains the heterogeneous receivers of news in the media; h. Human interest, which denotes human angle to news events that concerns the puny such as a baby surviving an accident, children being kidnapped, women being abused, and old people being traumatised; i. and Significance, which signifies the importance of the story to the people such as weather forecast.

These values of news serve as the basis for the allocation, selection, and construction of news to suit the ideological foundations, political philosophy, economic

interests, social interactions, and cultural dynamics of the media owners, sponsors, and financiers [67, 68, p. 298].

5. Framing of news

The dissemination of news carries with it a mythology, which make people regard news as a mirror of the society or as a reality of the scheduled and unscheduled events, or through which people can perceive the society.

This perception of news as representing 'the way it is', of various events opens a multilateral range of important questions to research, which brings up the idea that news is socially constructed or framed just like other forms of knowledge.

This concept of news 'frame' or 'construction' is perceived by Erving Goffman [69] as the principles of organisation that govern people's interpretation of and subjective involvement with events.

But Robert Hackett [70] perceives the concept of the framing of news beyond the narrow concern of bias and deviation from an objective standard. According to him, news framing tilt towards a more fruitful view of the ideological character of news, which is thoroughly structured in contents, practices, and relations with society. The framing of news underscores the constructed quality of news, while the notion of news bias suggests that a faithful reflection of events is possible.

However, Todd Gitlin [71, pp. 7, 21] defines news frames as 'persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse'. This lays the emphasis on the routine organisation, which transcends any given story and is 'persistent' over time (resistant to change). In the dissemination of information, the framing of news enable journalists to 'recognize it as information, to assign it to cognitive categories'.

This gives frames a power, to actively bring otherwise amorphous reality into a meaningful structure, making them more than the simple inclusion or exclusion of information.

In their understanding of news frames, Gamson and Modigliani [72, p. 3] describe frame as a 'central organizing idea...for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue', signified, by the media 'package' of metaphors and other devices.

In his estimation of news frame, Entman [73, p. 52] notes that a frame is determined in large part by its outcome or effect, stressing that 'to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation'.

The duo of Hertog and McLeod [74] however define frames as organising principles that are socially shared and persistent over time and that are working symbolically to provide a meaningful structure for the social world. In their analysis of social movement coverage, they note that if a protest march is framed as a confrontation between police and marchers, the protesters' critique of society may not be part of the story. This is not because there was not room for it, but because it was not defined as relevant.

6. News as discourse and instrument of surveillance

The centrality of news as major ingredient of the media confers high degree of authority, legitimacy, power, and status on the organs of mass communication to

influence public opinion. It actually symbolises the media as privileged social institution in the society to seek information and disseminate it without fear or favour.

From political perspective, news is selected and constructed to meet the dynamics of democratic process, since the media serves as major institution of democracy to ensure free and fair elections, promote people's rights to select and elect their leaders regularly within the framework of political liberty without terror or panic, to expose corruption in the system as surveillance of the environment [75, p. 37; 76, p. 33; 77].

These are carried out based on the political ideology of the media establishment which may be conservative, liberal, or extreme left; and which may be based on the political interests of the sponsor, advertisers, and financiers.

Economically, news is used by the media to enhance the commercial interests of its owners, advertisers, sponsors, and financiers. Thus, the radio and other organs of mass communication construct narratives that use a specific temporal order of events to construct meanings that will further the frontier of economic interests of their promoters [78].

As veritable instrument of socialisation, the radio news and other media organs provide common pool of knowledge to the people to enable them interact effectively in the society; and to foster social cohesion and awareness for active public life [79, p. 14].

As vanguard of cultural promotion, news in the media are ideologically used to disseminate the cultural and artistic products for the purpose of preserving the heritage of the past; further the embracement of advantaged culture by widening the mental horizons and exposure of individuals; awakening the imagination of groups of people; and stimulating the aesthetic needs and creativity of the people [80, p. 296; 81, p. 41; 82, p. 141; 83, p. 154; 84, 85].

Hence, Denis McQuail [86, p. 376] declares that news is 'central ingredient' of the media that,

... It is one of the few original contributions by the media to the range of cultural forms of expression. It is also the core activity according to which a large part of the journalistic (and thus media) occupation defines itself... Media institutions can barely exist without news...

The power of the media to influence public opinion and to serve as surveillance of the environment are being explored and exploited by media owners and the elite in Nigeria to achieve their political, economic, social, and cultural interests [78].

Indeed, this is a universal occurrence as it happens in different countries of the world, which confirms the media to be bias, and which confirms news to be ideological and un-neutral [87–90].

7. Taming of fake news

The preponderance and rascality of fake news has enveloped the world with the prompt blanket of the International Networking (Internet). There is urgent need to checkmate fake news, so as to save humanity from calamities of promoting hatred, violence, blackmail, and killings through distraught caused by spreading falsehood through deliberate dissemination of fabricated and incorrect news. It is imperative to tame fake news through the following:

1. **Self-Regulation** by the Mass Media; Online Media; Social Media; Blogs; Websites: It is crucial for media captains to strengthen collaboration across countries of the world to check fake news, ban fake news publications, and come up with sanctions against media organisations on the Internet from contravening the self-regulating laws. This is the best form of control, as government controls may be more

devastating where self-control fails. Therefore, media professional associations, unions, and institutes should come up with self-regulatory rules, guidelines, laws, sanctions, and prohibitions against fake news, violators banned from practising, and to withdraw their licences for operations.

2. **Government Legislations:** There is increasing concerns on the need to control hate speech, fake news, hacking of election results, and abuse of the Internet in the social media, traditional media, and online media. Hence, there is need for countries of the world to have regulations to ban hate speech, fake news, and others. Acts of parliament should be put in place to sanction those who publish fake news on websites, blogs, and others within the cyber space in their respective territories. The Facebook Chief recently agreed for governments to play a “more active role” in regulating the Internet, urging more countries to adopt versions of sweeping European rules aimed at safeguarding user privacy [91]. This is a good development as Facebook and other Internet giants have long resisted government intervention, but the leading social network has reversed course amid growing calls for regulation, in an apparent bid to help steer the debate. According to Zuckerberg, “I believe we need a more active role for governments and regulators. By updating the rules for the Internet, we can preserve what’s best about it...the freedom for people to express themselves and for entrepreneurs to build new things -- while also protecting society from broader harms. New regulations are needed in four areas: harmful content, protection of elections, privacy and data portability. Facebook has drawn fire over all four, from hate speech on the platform and the recent live streaming of attacks on mosques in New Zealand, to its use in foreign efforts to meddle in elections and concerns over its collection of personal user data. Facebook would support more countries adopting rules in line with the European Union's sweeping General Data Protection Regulation, which gives regulators sweeping powers to sanction organisations which fail to adhere to heightened standards of security when processing personal data” [91].
3. **International Agencies to ban fake news online:** There is need for United Nations agencies like United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and United Nations Information Service to set machineries in motion to stem the tide of fake news to save humanity from chaos and anarchy caused by deliberate use of lies to create and spread hatred and enmity in the world online.
4. **Coalition of International Human Rights organisations against fake news and hate speech:** There is need for the coalition of national human rights groups against fake news and hate speech to form international organisation that will sign treaties and regulations against fake news publications online through websites, social media, blogs, and others.
5. **International Networking (Internet) Regulation Controls:** There is need for Internet regulation controls to ban and remove fake news websites, blogs, and others from the cyber space permanently, and put sanctions in place against perpetrators of such fake news promoters in different countries of the world.
6. **Radical agitations against fake news through:** Music, protests, academic papers, public speeches, lectures, drama sketches, poem, essays, films and cinematography, and others.

8. Conclusion

This study in narrative form has been able to examine fake news, true news, the values of news, the framing of news, values of journalism, and news as discourse and as instrument of surveillance so as to be able to understand the true meaning of news, and appreciate the havoc being done by fake news in the society. Since news forms the centrality of the mass media and online media, the spread of fake news erodes the essence of the media and its powers. The heavy prevalence of fake news in the media corrodes the values of the organs of mass communication as the authority, legitimacy, power, and status of the media are negated by the dissemination of fake news. Apart from self-regulations which is the best form of control professionally, government legislations are desirable from all countries of the world to punish culprits of fake news promoters around the world. Humanity suffers great setback with the spread of fake news in the media, which worsens globally with the online media. Besides, fake news undermines true journalism, professionalism, and for journalists to serve humanity as surveillance of governments and society. Indeed, fake news slips the world into the abyss of silence as falsehood is spread untamed, at the detriment of good journalism to serve humankind. Apart from threatening democracy as demonstrated in the 2016 presidential election in America, fake news threatens press freedom, free speech, democratisation of information, true journalism to serve as surveillance of society. All hands must be on deck to check fake news from spreading in the mass media, online media, and the social media for sanity to prevail in the world.

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