

Chapter 8


Mapping Stigmatizing Hoaxes Towards Immigrants on Twitter and Digital Media: Case Study in Spain, Greece, and Italy

Marta Sánchez Esparza

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6525-0148>

Rey Juan Carlos University, Spain

Ignacio Vázquez Diéguez

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7938-5446>

Universidade de Beira Interior, Portugal

Adoración Merino Arribas

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3294-9996>

Universidad Internacional de La Rioja, Spain

ABSTRACT

This text presents a mapping of the hoaxes published on Twitter and in digital media during 2020 in Spain, Greece, and Italy after having been classified as disinformation with the intention of causing harm in the fact-checking portals of the three cited countries. Verification services that are members of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) have been chosen for this analysis: Spain (Newtral.es/Maldita.es), Greece (Ellinika Hoaxes), and Italy (Facta News/Lavoce.info). The chosen online portals belong to FactCheckEU, a European project launched by the international verification network. The validated sample presents 150 pieces of information identified as hoaxes by the verification platforms and disseminated in the current communication scenarios by the network in the three direct recipient countries of the migratory phenomenon through the Mediterranean. A qualitative methodology applied to the case study is used, which is complemented by critical discourse analysis.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-8427-2.ch008

INTRODUCTION

In a world context marked by global migration movements and multiple information channels on the net, a study on the stigmatising hoaxes towards immigrants in Europe is necessary, specifically in three Mediterranean countries receiving the population (Spain, Greece, and Italy). Keep in mind that in the three nations previously mentioned, conflicts have led to the rejection of those who arrive. In this study, we align ourselves with Berger and Luckman (1966) to determine that rejection is a socially constructed category. From this derives the importance of verifying that the information related to immigration, disseminated in digital media and Twitter, respects deontology and does not intend to stigmatise people or migrant groups.

Precisely, stigmatising hoaxes fall within the scope of disinformation, which, according to a report by the European Commission (HLEG, 2018), refers to inaccurate, misleading, or false information, always to cause harm. To better understand the case study, we align ourselves with Magallón (2019), who encompasses, in what has been called ‘unfaking news’, not only disinformation but also fake news, misinformation, false stories, news verification, and false news, to clarify the process of circulation of information that is not true and that affects current communication scenarios that are disseminated through the network.

In addition, in line with UNESCO (2015), the European Union also considers disinformation as verifiably misleading information, that is, information that, when going through verification platforms, is detected as a hoax (Salaverría et al., 2020). For this reason, in this work, reliable verification platforms are taken as a reference that is accredited in each of the analysis countries and that have signed a code of principles that commit them to detecting hoaxes about immigrants published in digital media as reliably as possible.

Disinformation made a massive splash in public opinion in 2016, with two events: Brexit and the election of Trump (Alonso-García et al., 2020; Bakir & McStay, 2018). These two events of a political nature have been interpreted as disinformation strategies to obtain political revenue (Molina, 2019). Since then, the audience has used the term fake news to refer to false news of all kinds. However, there is only misinformation if there is an intention to deceive (Fallis, 2015).

New academic research on fake news specifies that this false or distorted information (disinformation) imitates the content of reliable media, always to deceive the final recipient, especially through social media, where they find the ideal channel as part of the “new discursive order” (Camargo, 2021; Chenzi, 2021).

This is the main argument that justifies the need for verification systems to detect hoaxes, that is, false information that carries the intention of harming. For this reason, fact-checking platforms were born to explain to the audience what information they have in front of their eyes.

Academic studies such as Wardle and Derakshan’s (2018), Kapantai et al.’s (2021), or Ireton and Posseti’s (2018) study how fact-checking platforms detect erroneous information, classified as misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information, and certify that it is not true, because they act as the only real firewall in the situation of disinformation (Carr et al., 2020). Other investigations progress to 11 forms of misinformation (Kapantai et al., 2021): clickbait, misleading connections, fabricated misinformation, impostor misinformation, hoaxes, biased or one-sided information, pseudoscience, conspiracy theories, trolling, fake reviews, and rumours (Kapantai et al., 2021).

Precisely, this is the context of news reproduction through social media, where the focus must be placed to discern if this information is true or, on the contrary, since it is news reproduction, greater

24 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the product's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/mapping-stigmatizing-hoaxes-towards-immigrants-on-twitter-and-digital-media/326109?camid=4v1

Related Content

The State of the Art of Software Defined Networking (SDN): Network Management Solution in Current Network Architecture Using the SDN

Emilia Rosa Jimson, Kashif Nisar and Mohd Hanafi Ahmad Hijazi (2018). *International Journal of Information Communication Technologies and Human Development* (pp. 44-60).

www.igi-global.com/article/the-state-of-the-art-of-software-defined-networking-sdn/215435?camid=4v1a

Enhance Students' Computing Skills via Web-Mediated Self-Regulated Learning with Feedback in Blended Environment

Tsang-Hsiung Lee, Pei-Di Shen and Chia-Wen Tsai (2012). *Human Interaction with Technology for Working, Communicating, and Learning: Advancements* (pp. 149-166).

www.igi-global.com/chapter/enhance-students-computing-skills-via/61487?camid=4v1a

Humans as Farmers

(2014). *Technology versus Ecology: Human Superiority and the Ongoing Conflict with Nature* (pp. 112-124).

www.igi-global.com/chapter/humans-as-farmers/78801?camid=4v1a

Learning Goes Hi-Tech

Pralhad Jadhav (2013). *International Journal of Information Communication Technologies and Human Development* (pp. 51-61).

www.igi-global.com/article/learning-goes-hi-tech/102987?camid=4v1a