# The Lying Society and Fake News in the City: Urban Communication Studies via Mixed Qualitative Data Analysis and Critical Artificial Intelligence Methodologies

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#### **Abstract**

Purpose. Within contemporaneity, urban cultures and citizen cultural users experiences are contaminated by social and political information, often disseminated via digital media. The present essay intends to call attention on the relevance of debating propaganda, disinformation, and media manipulation inside the city cultural fabric. For such aim, firstly, it encompasses a theoretical debate on these issues, via recent questions, central concepts and credible hypotheses, in particular on the sciences, technologies and arts of fake news. Such discussion articulates three major axes, among other directions: (a) communication, journalism and fake news; (b) general propaganda and political campaigns; (c) Russian war on Ukraine. This text aims to analyze the designated 'Lying Society', which, while present in many countries against the respective peoples, is reinforced today through the so-called 'fake war', produced by Russian Federation state, against an allegedly 'fake country', Ukraine, via fake news.

Method. The study uses a mixed method approach, by articulating QDA (Qualitative Data Analysis) and Critical Artificial Intelligence procedures, for interpreting social processes. The Ukrainian War has been conducted as a 'hybrid war', by Russian Federation. In fact, Putin's military invasion is reinforced with violence perpetrated inside multiple (and some unprecedent) economic, social and cultural spheres, often acting as hybridized social realms. These social dimensions fusions occur among energy conflicts, climate aggressions, people impoverishment, mass kidnapping, genocide commitment, sexual violations, panoptism on citizens, opponents poisoning, human rights knock down, international law disrespect, democracies undermining, nuclear blackmail, heritage destruction, cultural annihilation, to name just a few. As a transversal and also hybrid realm, information and knowledge media discussions are articulating social fabric, through news and, in particular, fake news. Within such broader context, social processes are analyzed here essentially via news and fake news contents and tactics, which make explicit the underlying core communication strategy named 'hybrid war', that provokes an unprecedent breed of global crisis. Fake news strategies use, among other communication tactics, alarmism, misinformation, factoids, big lies, post-truth politics, pseudohistory, fallacy of composition, etc. As for methodology and media sources, such investigation is conducted via a method developed by the author, named Hybrid Discourse Analysis, that uses tools as an Alphabet of Interconceptual Relationships and social-semantic networks. The selected corpus of sources includes texts, images, videos and digital media, on the risky global war rising in local Ukraine. However, the present text discusses just the tip of the iceberg, that is, a critical case study about 4 Wikipedia pages on Fake News and some related ideas, which is only a part of the whole project sample.

Results. One of the research outcomes is a Mini-Encyclopedia of Global Fake News, here solely sketched. The whole sample constitutes an unprecedented archive and memory of news wars based on war news. Such project is being developed within a Virtual Sociological Museum, to be consulted by diverse audiences' profiles, e.g., researchers, professors, students, citizens, tourists and social marginalities (migrants, retired, disabled people).

**Keywords:** Urban Cultural Studies; urban fake news; Lying Society; Critical Artificial Intelligence; Ukraine hybrid war; Hybrid Discourse Analysis; Mini-Encyclopedia of Global Fake News

# 1. Introduction: a fake war against a fake country, using fake news?

The Russo-Ukrainian conflict has been accompanied by a significant amount of disinformation and propaganda from both sides (Iosifidis, 2020). Russian state and statecontrolled media have spread numerous false claims about Ukraine, including accusations of genocide, development of nuclear and biological weapons, and ties to neo-Nazism. Russian disinformation has also targeted NATO and Ukraine's right to exist. While Ukrainian media and politicians have also been accused of propaganda, the extent is much smaller compared to the Russian disinformation campaigns. Russian propaganda has had more success in certain developing countries, and with Chinese state media showing support for the Russian side. The conflict has also led to censorship in Russia and China and strained relationships between mixed Ukrainian-Russian families. Social media platforms have played a significant role in spreading narratives and countering disinformation, e.g., the platform Reddit taking measures to combat misinformation (Eibl, 2019; Boyd-Barrett, 2019; Boyd-Barrett, 2023; Legucka, 2022; Kudors, 2023).

Within such context, it is paramount to collect, analyze and critique information about various sources discussing fake news and misinformation. For instance, examples of websites that publish fake news, discussions on the impact of fake news on trust and politics, and the role of social media platforms in combating fake news. Moreover, specific incidents and conspiracy theories must be debated. In order to counter such risky conjunctures, citizen journalism refers to conjectures emerging from members of the public actively collecting, reporting, and disseminating news and information. It often arises as a response to shortcomings in professional journalism and is carried out through platforms such as social media. Citizen journalism can be more opinionated and subjective compared to traditional journalism. It has become more prevalent with the rise of online platforms and new media technology. Citizen journalists have played a significant role in covering major global events like natural disasters, protests, and wars. However, there are criticisms that citizen journalism lacks regulation, professionalism, and resources. The concept of citizen journalism is still evolving, and there is ongoing debates and discussion about its definition and role in society.

One positive direction of this phenomenon is that citizen journalism allows individuals to have their voices heard on a global scale. It challenges traditional journalism by providing alternative perspectives and questioning which voices are heard and which are silenced. Citizen journalism has been particularly impactful in countries as China, where it has allowed politically and socially charged information to be disseminated. However, citizen iournalists often face repercussions from government officials and law enforcement, as they are seen as a threat to their governments. There are also criticisms of citizen journalism, such as concerns about the accuracy and ethics of reporting, as well as the potential for abuse, particularly in relation to marginalized groups. Overall, citizen journalism has had a significant impact on the media landscape and has changed how news is consumed and reported.

There are various sources and references related to citizen journalism. It includes books, articles, and websites discussing topics such as the impact of citizen journalism, the role of technology, the challenges and limitations of citizen journalism, and examples of citizen journalism in different cultural contexts, such as the Ukrainian crisis and its subjacent online resistance (Munk, 2023) or how social policies shape gender roles and discourses (Tarkhanova, 2023).

Considering such social and political backgrounds, the present text aims to show some steps on the development of one core objective, among others: *localize the study of fake news within the Ukrainian War local and global crisis.* In order to interpret such risky reality, multiple sociological concepts were produced, underlying some questions and concepts in debate, such as these neologisms: 'fake news'; 'fake war' (or allegedly 'special operation'), 'fake country' (or Ukraine allegedly naturalized as part of the Russian Federation). The following sub-chapters aim to contribute to a better comprehension of the precedent social questions and neologisms, and translate them both into sociological concepts and into more common terms and propositions, opinions and feelings, in order to be understood not just

by academic segments but also by broad audience profiles. In addition, for comprehending more profoundly the abovediscussed global and tragic reality, consult some writings on the impact of the Ukraine crisis inside specific social realms, developed by the author of the present text, such as: the discursive dimension, on Russia 'fake war' against an allegedly 'fake country' (Andrade, 2023a); dark tourism at Chernobyl (Idem, 2023b); the situation of cultural tourism in Ukraine after some months of war (Idem, 2022a); digital art in Ukraine as culture wars (Idem, 2022b). These essays develop former studies by the author on some related social issues via digital means, e.g., the innovative role of users within digital economy (Idem, 2019b); public communication and understanding of science (Idem, 2010a,b); the society of research and journalism (Idem, 2007a); the Sociology of the blogosphere (Idem, 2007b); the Alphabeth of Universal Relations (Idem, 2007c); cybermuseology, (Idem, 2007d); navigations in cybertime (Idem, 1997).

Some illustrations of a mixed hybrid research methodology are here presented. On one hand, this text applies more classical sociological techniques pre-Al, such as QDA (Qualitative Data Analysis). On the other hand, QDA recently uses both former human interpretation and semi-automatic computer analysis, connected with emerging Artificial Intelligence procedures, and sometimes generative A.I. e.g., Chat GTP, in order to study social phenomena. The social use of Artificial Intelligence must be understood as Critical A.I: such idea may be defined as a methodology that not only applies A.I. technologies, but essentially considers their critical and opinionated social uses: these should be ethically directed towards democratic citizenship, through the reinforcement of their advantages and the reduction of their disadvantages. An investigator, within a specific research, often applies human conceptualization, based on the knowledge that he or she has of theoretical schools or authors, whether those he or she prefers or those he or she intends to challenge, within the contexts of the global and localized culture and knowledge wars.

With regard to scientific sources, their non-automatic or automatic conceptual indexing often follow international standards defined by international commissions, which ensure the quality and sharing of globally legitimate concepts, for use by libraries, archives, museums, universities and other institutions. This strategy aims to ease a more dialogic debate of ideas and the preservation of sources of information and knowledge, so that they may be fruitfully used by researchers and planetary audiences. In other words, such sets of concepts and sources may be legitimized in certain areas of knowledge, for better communication among peers or between experts and their readers, who hold collective common sense's knowledge, complementary and in dialogue with scientific, technological, artistic knowledges, etc. In this way, *Critical Artificial Intelligence*, exemplified below, and meaning A.I. use with ethical lens, citizenship postures, intelligent positions and imaginative engagement, may assert itself as social and 'collective intelligence' in the words of Pierre Lévy, and, in particular, as sociological intelligence.

# 3.1. Sociological (re)search on the internet

Sources referring 'Fake news' may be found in the internet, via Google searches asking specific questions, and using its underlying Knowledge Graph, an A.I. semantic searching engine. For this aim, some typical questions may use the word 'who' (a social agent), within a classical question such as: 'Who did what?'. For instance: 'Who create fake news?'. Various other illustrations of productive questions may be observed at Figure 1.: 'which' (a social object), 'why' (a cause), 'how' (a method'), that may elucidate the research questions. The formulation of hypotheses (Figure 2), may use the terms 'can', 'with', 'without', 'near', 'is', 'for', 'to', etc. Moreover, some research theses may be extracted from Figure 3. It may be useful as well to search for sociological propositions directly to Google, such as: 'Fake news is unethical' (Figure 4).

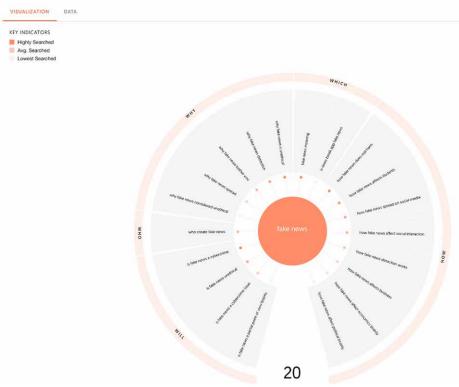


Figure 1. Questions asked

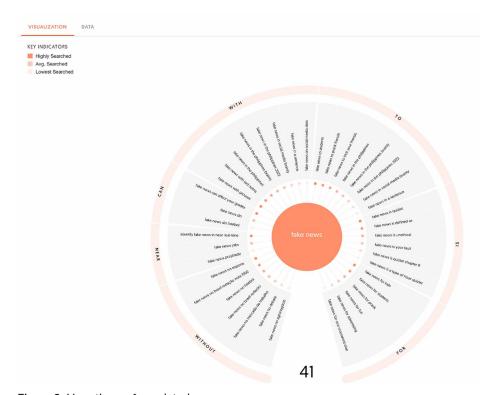


Figure 2. Hypotheses formulated

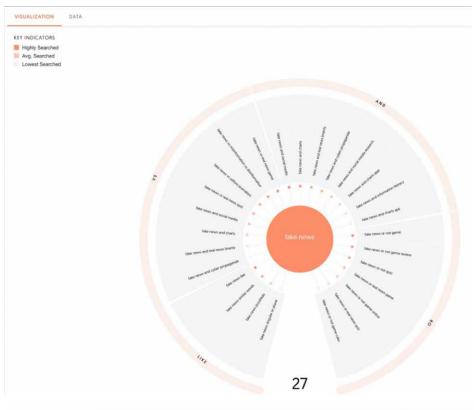


Figure 3. Theses considered for further analysis

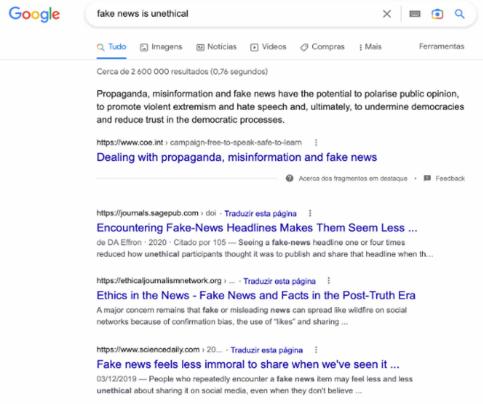


Figure 4. Fake news are unethical

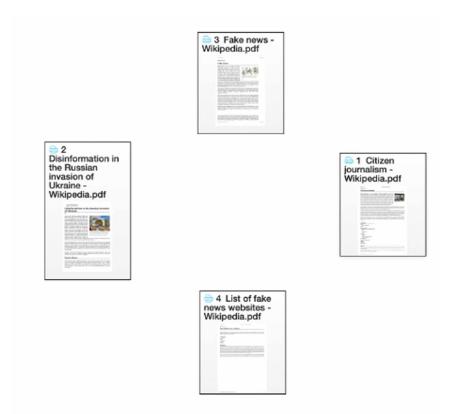


Figure 5. The corpus

# 3.2. The corpus

The precedent theoretical debate and the formulation of questions, hypotheses and temporary theses, contextualizes the following analysis and interpretation on misinformation, and about some of its related *concepts* and more specific *sub-concepts*. Concretely, the present case study critically analyses and interprets the following four Wikipedia pages, taken as a content and concept canvas for understanding misinformation and associated discursive processes (See Figure 5): the pages named 'Disinformation in the Russian invasion of Ukraine', 'Fake news', 'List of fake news websites' and 'Citizen journalism' (Wikipedia, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2024d).

# 3.3. The concepts underlying Wikipedia pages discourse

This section interprets a part of the corpus by using both human and Critical Artificial Intelligence procedures within QDA (Qualitative Data Analysis) software, in order to index sociological concepts on analytic units of the corpus, such as texts sentences or paragraphs, to produce conceptual networks, tables graphics and other hermeneutic tools. Concretely, the analyst manually interprets a text, by adding pertinent terms inside it or within the side margins of this text (see Figure 6). A.I. may aid such task by automatically organizing classes and sub-classes, which are then critically evaluated and enhanced by the researcher.

Figure 6 depicts the page 'Fake News', analyzed via relevant concepts. The actual page text is visible on the left. At the right, some concepts were associated with particular text paragraphs and periods. Other conceptualization of the sources is visible at Figs. 7, 8 and 9.

# 3.4. Mixed and hybridized methods

The present approach may be conducted via the fusion of different methodologies, e.g. *hybrid qualitative and quantitative methods*, such as the measurement of the n° of concepts applied to each *document* in the corpus (see Figure 10).

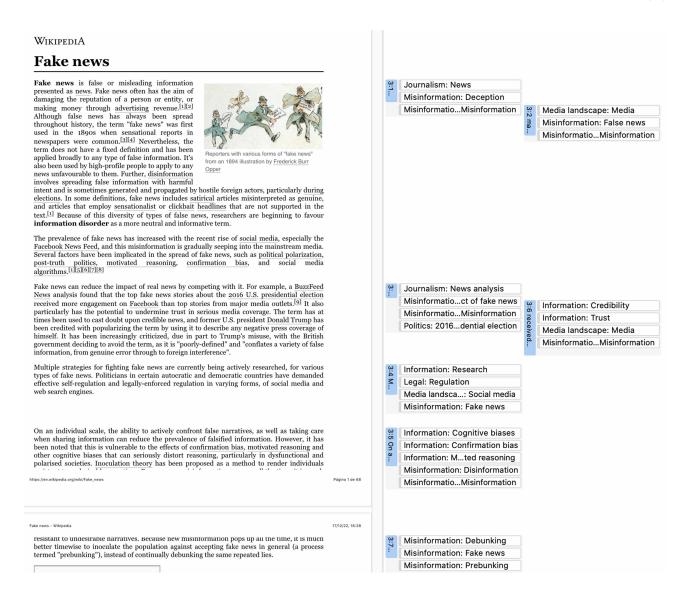


Figure 6. Analyzed Wikipedia page 'Fake news' (part)

Another analysis refers to the core *classes of concepts* in the corpus, ordered by their frequency (Figure 11). Next, a list of substantive qualitative terms related with the 'misinformation' process within the corpus as a whole, are shown in alphabetic order, together with their correspondent quantitative occurrences inside the selected sample (Figure 12).

#### 3.5. Discursive rhetorical tactics

It was noted that the Ukrainian War has been conducted as a called 'hybrid war', by Russian Federation. In fact, Putin's military invasion is being reinforced through violence perpetrated within multiple (and some unprecedent) social spheres, such as: economic and ecologic autocracy, energy conflicts, climate aggressions, people impoverishment, vicious policies, politics, politicians and law, mass kidnapping, genocide commitments, sexual violations,



Figure 7. Analyzed Wikipedia page 'Disinformation in the Russian invasion of Ukraine' (part)

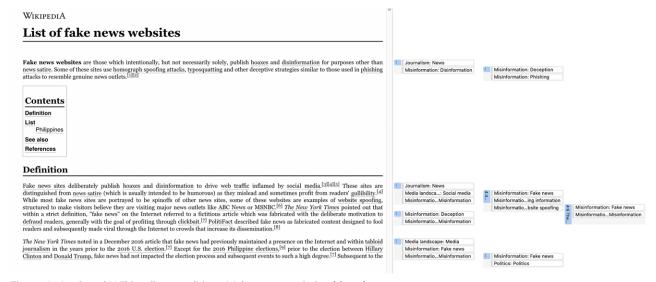


Figure 8. Analyzed Wikipedia page 'List of fake news websites' (part)



Figure 9. Analyzed Wikipedia page 'Citizen journalism' (part)



Figure 10. Hybrid qualitative and quantitative methods

citizens panoptism and genocide, opponents poisoning, human rights knock down, international law disrespect, democracies undermining, nuclear blackmail, destruction of cultural heritage, authoritarian, chauvinist and racist discourses, cultural annihilation. Such attacks to democracy and peace used diversified discursive rhetorical tactics. E.g., 'fake news' were disseminated via alarmism, desinformation, factoids, big lies, post-truth politics, pseudohistory, fallacy of composition, etc.

The previous analysis allows the researcher and the reader to select some of the concepts forged using fake news, within the context of a new emergent society, the *Lying Society*. Some of those terms which define Lying Society, allow the researcher and the reader to find, both extensively and intensively, mentions or explanations of those tactics, via the respective citations within a research corpus. Here are some examples, inside the present selected corpus, of

some of not always known terms that spread lies within the global/local disinformation processes.

# Backfire effect

"However, caution applies regarding over-zealous debunking of fake news. It is often unwise to draw attention to fake news published on a low-impact website or blog (one that has few followers). If this fake news is debunked by a journalist in a high-profile place such as The New York Times, knowledge of the false claim spreads widely, and more people overall will end up believing it, ignoring or denying the debunk. Research is needed to establish the prevalence of this effect, as well as its potential relationship to similar constructs such as the backfire effect, the Streisand effect and - more broadly - psychological reactance."

(Source: Wikipedia. 'Fake news', 3:45, p.9).



Figure 11: Classes of concepts within the corpus



Figure 12. Misinformation: frequencies of its specific sub-concepts, within the corpus as a whole

# Blame shifting

"expert Marcel Luthe said "Big names in international politics like Berlin's senator Geisel are blaming others and telling US piracy to serve anti-American clichés." [283] Politico Europe reported that "the Berliners are taking a page straight out of the Trump playbook and not letting facts get in the way of a good story."

(Source: Wikipedia. 'Fake news', 3: 129, p 25).

#### **Bots**

"Bots have the potential to increase the spread of fake news, as they use algorithms to decide what articles and information specific users like, without taking into account the authenticity of an article. Bots mass-produce and spread articles, regardless of the credibility of the sources, allowing them to play an essential role in the mass spread of fake news, as bots are capable of creating fake accounts and personalities on the web that are then gaining followers, recognition."

(Source: Wikipedia. 'Fake news', 3:91, p 18).

#### False flag operation

"In March 2022, videos were discovered purporting to show Ukrainian-produced disinformation about missile strikes inside Ukraine which were then 'debunked' as some other event outside Ukraine. However, this may be the first case of a disinformation false-flag operation,[136] as the original, supposedly "Ukraine-produced" disinformation was never disseminated by anyone, and was in fact preventive disinformation created specifically to be debunked and cause confusion and mitigate the impact on the Russian public of real footage of Russian strikes within Ukraine that may get past Russian-controlled media. According to Patrick Warren, head of Clemson's Media Forensics Hub, 'It's like Russians actually pretending to be Ukrainians spreading disinformation. (...) The reason that it's so effective is because you don't actually have to convince someone that it's true. It's sufficient to make people uncertain as to what they should trust ' ".

(Source: Wikipedia. 'Disinformation in the Russian invasion of Ukraine', 2:32, p9).

# Internet Trolling

"The idea of internet trolls gained popularity in the 1990s, though its meaning shifted in 2011. Whereas it once denoted provocation, it is a term now widely used to signify the abuse and misuse of the Internet. Trolling comes in various forms, and can be dissected into abuse trolling, entertainment trolling, classical trolling, flame trolling, anonymous trolling, and kudos trolling. It is closely linked to fake news, as internet trolls are now largely interpreted as perpetrators of false information, information that can often be passed along unwittingly by.

(Source: Wikipedia. 'Fake news', 3:99, p 20).

#### Logical fallacies

"Fake news website - Website that deliberately publishes hoaxes and desinformation.

### Fallacy of composition

"Fallacy of inferring on the whole from a part" (Source: *Wikipedia*. 'Fake news', 3:202, p38)

#### Pseudoscience

"Formerly NewsTarget, a website for the sale of various dietary supplements, promotion of alternative medicine, controversial nutrition and health claims, and various conspiracy theories, such as "chemtrails", chemophobic claims (including the purported dangers of fluoride in drinking water, anti-perspirants, laundry detergent, monosodium glutamate, aspartame), and purported health problems caused by allegedly "toxic" ingredients in vaccines, including the now-discredited link to autism." (Source: *Wikipedia*. 'List of fake news websites', 4:41, p3.

Next, Figure 13 presents the co-occurrences of concepts with *misinformation*, but just the ones within the same (socio) logical propositions of the Wikipedia pages, that underlie the respective social practices. Note that these occurrences are less frequent (150 cases) than the precedent (344). This is due to the fact that, in Figure 13 on the right, are shown just the cases where the occurrences are present in the same sentence of the corpus. Inversely, it is possible to depart from the *sociological concepts* underlined above, until

the detection of the underlying *social phenomena*, through the narration operated by the Wikipedia discourse, which is useful to consult in development of the considerations discussed in the present text. It is also feasible to construct insights on the very *social dimensions* that found societies, such as organizations, agents/persons, locations, etc. (see Figure 14).

Furthermore, sentiments underlying the Wikipedia pages' discursive texts, may also be circumscribed, within their positive, neutral or negative values. Figure 15, on its right column, elucidates which concepts are related with such three values. For instance, the term 'information: collaboration' is associated with positive feelings. Likewise, opinions can be visualized in Figure 16. Note the correspondences between each word taken as conducting the analysis (ex: 'news', visible at the second chart, and other words, for instance, 'fake news', which have much more occurrences than 'real news'.

# 4. Fighting the lying society: Verifying News Sources and Fact-Checking

In the digital age, with the rapid spread of information through mass media and social networks, it has become increasingly challenging to distinguish between real news and fake news.

This subchapter aims to contribute to equip social acrors, and in particular citizens, migrants, and tourists with some necessary tools and strategies to verify news sources and fact-check information, particularly when it comes to the issue of fake news on Ukraine by the Russian Federation. In fact, understanding the strategies and tactics employed by the Russian Federation in their fake war against Ukraine is crucial. The Russian government has been known to use mass media and social networks as powerful tools to spread misinformation and manipulate public opinion. By staying informed about these tactics, individuals can better identify and counter the spread of fake news. When encountering news related to Ukraine, it is essential to scrutinize the sources of the information. Reputable news organizations with a track record of accurate reporting are generally more trustworthy than obscure or unfamiliar sources. It is also recommended to cross-reference the news with multiple sources to ensure its certainty. *Fact-checking* is another critical skill in combating fake news. Various online platforms and fact-checking organizations provide valuable resources to verify the accuracy of news articles or claims.

O Misinformation	① 344	150
🌣 Misinformation: Backfire effect	③ 1	1
🔿 🔷 Misinformation: Biased reporting		1
🔷 Misinformation: Bots	① 1	1
○ ♦ Misinformation: Click-balt	① 1	1
O Misinformation: Clickbait	① 1	1
○ ♦ Misinformation: Conspiracy theories	⊕ 10	3
Misinformation: Debunking	① 2	2
Misinformation: Deception	<b>19</b>	3
OMisinformation: Disinformation	⊕ 44	10
Misinformation: Disreputable	① 1	1
🔷 Misinformation: Distrust	⊕ 1	1
Misinformation: Fact checking	③ 2	1
Misinformation: Fact-checking		2
○ ♦ Misinformation: False claim	⊕ 1	-1
Nisinformation: False claims	① 1	1
○ Misinformation: Falsehoods	⊕ 2	1
Misinformation: Gullibility	⊕ 1	1
○ ♦ Misinformation: Hoax	⊚ 6	4
Misinformation: Hoaxes	⊕ 1	1
Misinformation: Internet trolling	⊕ 1	1
♦ Misinformation: Malware	② 2	1
Misinformation: Misinformation	⊕ 94	24
Misinformation: Misleading		1
Misinformation: Misleading information	⊕ 2	2
Nisinformation: Negative postings	⊕ 1	1
Nisinformation: Prebunking	⊕ 2	1
🔷 🔷 Misinformation: Propaganda	⊕ 50	7
Misinformation: Resistant to misinformation	① 1	1
○ ♦ Misinformation: Satire	⊕ 8	3
♦ Misinformation: Science denialism	⊕ 1	1
Misinformation: Spoofing	⊕ 1	1
Misinformation: Spread of misinformation	⊕ 2	1
Misinformation: Streisand effect	① 1	1
Misinformation: Website spoofing	(ii) 1	1

Figure 13. Misinformation: its co-occurrence with other concepts,(only their co-presence within each of the sentences of the corpus

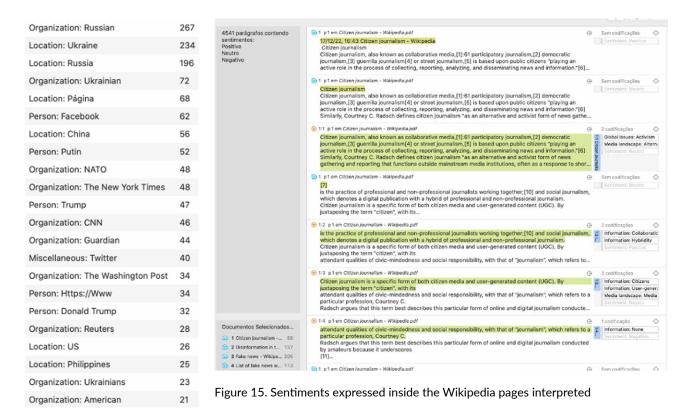


Figure 14. Mentions to social dimensions

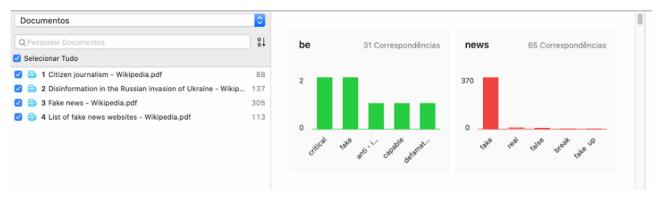


Figure 16. Opinions manifested inside the Wikipedia pages analyzed

Additionally, it is important to *critically analyze the content* of news articles or social media posts. Fake news often contains sensationalized or exaggerated claims, biased language, or lack credible sources. By evaluating the credibility and objectivity of the content, individuals can make informed judgments about the accuracy of the information. Furthermore, engaging in *media literacy education* can significantly enhance one's ability to discern between real news and fake news, in order to develop a critical mindset and become less susceptible to propaganda. In conclusion, the battle against fake news on Ukraine by the Russian Federation requires citizens, migrants, and tourists to be vigilant and proactive in verifying news sources and fact-checking information, among other *counter discursive tactics* against manipulative techniques and biases.

# 4.1. Recognizing Manipulative Techniques and Biases

In today's interconnected global/local world, where information spreads at lightning speed, it has become increasingly important to be able to distinguish between precise news and deceptive propaganda. The Russian Federation has been notorious for employing various strategies and tactics to spread misinformation about Ukraine. Through mass media and social networks, and among other (numerous) powers, the present Russian political regime contributed to the development of a Lying Society, which means a societal paradigm that manipulate facts to serve specific political agendas, as one of its characteristics. Other of the most common manipulative techniques employed by the Russian Federation is the use of emotionally charged language. Putin entourage often employ sensationalized headlines, inflammatory language, and exaggerated stories to evoke strong emotional reactions from the audience. By playing on people's emotions, they aim to cloud rational judgment and create a biased perception of events.

Yet another manipulative technique is the *selective use of facts*. The Russian Federation often cherry-picks information that supports their narrative, while conveniently omitting or distorting contrary evidence. This creates a one-sided view of the situation and misleads the audience into believing a false reality. In order to counter such dangerous discourse, recognizing *biases* is equally important. Individuals must

be aware that every news outlet has its own uncertainties, whether overt or subtle. It is essential to consume news from a variety of sources and critically evaluate the information presented. By so doing, one can identify patterns of bias and work towards a more balanced perspective. Additionally, citizens, migrants, and tourists should be wary of *social media platforms* and the spread of fake news through them. The Russian Federation has extensively used social networks to disseminate propaganda. Individuals should be cautious of *viral stories* without credible sources, do their own research, and fact-check information before sharing it further.

In sum, by being aware of emotionally charged language, selective use of facts, biases, and the dangers of social media, everyone can become more discerning consumers not just of information, but ultimately, of this knowledge that empowers individuals to combat the Lying Society and contributes to a more informed and resilient society. In other words, to effectively combat fake news, it is essential to develop critical thinking skills and media literacy. For instance, it is central to emphasize the role of responsible journalism in countering fake news, via independent media in uncovering and exposing misinformation, as well as the ethical considerations journalists face when reporting on controversial topics. By supporting reliable news channels and holding them accountable for accuracy and transparency, citizens, migrants, and tourists can contribute to the local/ global fight against fake news.

#### 5. Propaganda, disinformation, and media manipulation.

Moreover, recent polemic debates, often retaking old questions, are nowadays covering a range of topics related to propaganda, disinformation, and media manipulation. Their authors further explore the use of propaganda in different contexts, such as warfare, politics, and social media. They also discuss the challenges and dangers of disinformation, as well as strategies to counteract it. Some of the books referred below focus specifically on Russia's use of propaganda and disinformation, while others examine the broader global landscape of media manipulation. Overall, such discussion offers insights into the pervasive influence of propaganda and the need for critical analysis and media literacy in today's information age.

Some authors insist on the following questions and working hypotheses. For instance, Tirse Filibeli *et al* (2023), in the book *Mapping Lies in the Global Media Sphere*, explore the concept of *intentional misinformation* in the media, including the spread of conspiracy theories. They propose a critical approach to addressing this issue in various interdisciplinary fields. The book covers topics such as the digital divide, algorithmic bias, the impact of misinformation on vulnerable groups, and its effects on social, political, and cultural agendas.

As for Routledge Handbook of Discourse and Disinformation, this is a comprehensive guide that examines various discourses related to disinformation, misinformation, post-truth, hate speech, conspiracy theories, and fake news. The handbook is divided into two sections, offering insights into methodological challenges and approaches for reflecting and presenting case studies on topics such as climate change denial and COVID-19 conspiracies. The chapters explore how discourses of disinformation are constructed and developed, the persuasive strategies they employ, how to differentiate between disinformation and real news, and suggestions for creating a more trustworthy news environment (Maci, 2023).

On her turn, Claudia lov (2022) examines the challenges and issues currently faced by the European Union, including illegal migration, the refugee crisis, articulated with fake news, populism, insecurity, the Eastern Partnership, and the COVID-19 pandemic. It takes a constructivist approach and explores the interconnectedness of actors and systems within the EU.

According to James Lionson (2018), modern conflicts are marked by disinformation, corruption and fake news amplified by the media and the internet. Terrorists use terror as a method of war and use civilians as human shields. Westerners, out of post-colonial guilt and empathy towards the losers, lack the will to defend themselves. Battles often take place remotely, without active participation from combatants on the ground. However, the use of human shields and terrorists creates "martyrs". Iran, which is on the verge of possessing nuclear weapons, has designated its enemies and wishes to eradicate them, as well as Islamize the West. These modern low-intensity conflicts will last a long time and cause many innocent civilian casualties.

# 5.2. General propaganda and political campaigns

Also worth reading is Digital Democracy, Social Media and Disinformation, a book that explores the political, regulatory, and technological implications of internet intermediaries like Facebook, Twitter (now X), and YouTube, as well as the spread of digital disinformation, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The book covers various topics, including digital democracy, disinformation and fake news, freedom of expression, and post-truth politics. It discusses theoretical and regulatory concepts related to digital democracy and the network society, and proposes potential solutions to combat disinformation and fake news, such as selfregulation, news literacy, and policy recommendations. Such debate also explores the use of technologies like blockchain and public interest algorithms to counter disinformation. Additionally, it addresses the need for multiple approaches, involving governments, regulators, think tanks, academia, and technology providers, in order to effectively tackle the problem of digital disinformation. The book provides case studies on disinformation in Russia and Ukraine, highlighting the ways in which it was handled. (losifidis, 2020).

Another author, Parama Palit (2023), in *New Media and Public Diplomacy: Political Communication in India*, the *United States and China*, explores how new media and digital technologies have transformed public diplomacy and political communication. It examines the impact of these technologies in India, the US, and China, highlighting the changes they have brought about in engaging with constituents and influencing public opinions. The book also discusses the challenges and effects of using digital tools in diplomacy, as well as the role of social media in shaping political attitudes.

#### 5.3. Russian war on Ukraine

Another essay explores how Russia and Belarus use disinformation, historical narratives, and memory politics to advance their domestic and foreign policy objectives. It examines how these tactics are used to justify aggressive foreign policies, legitimize ruling elites, consolidate propaganda machines, and mobilize societies around national power centers. The book also evaluates the effectiveness of these strategies and discusses how the West can counteract the geopolitical narratives promoted by Russia and Belarus

that aim to undermine Western democracies and weaken societal resilience (Legucka, 2022).

An even more specific study is the *Russia and Latvia: A Case of Sharp Power.* It explores Russia's use of 'sharp power' in its relations with Latvia. It argues that Latvia, with a high percentage of Russian speakers, is particularly vulnerable to Russia's tactics. The book discusses how authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, like Russia, are unable to exercise soft power through the attractiveness of their culture and values. Instead, they use strategies such as public diplomacy, compatriot policy, media policy, propaganda, and disinformation to manipulate and distort the democracies of target countries. The book also examines the possible consequences and risks of such sharp power (Kudors, 2023).

Last but not the least, within a feminist optics, Oleksandra Tarkhanova's (2021) explores Ukrainian gender politics and how social policies shape gender roles and discourses. The book examines the impact of post-Soviet transformations, nation-building, neoliberalization, and post-Maidan political changes on gender norms and the relationship between the state and women. The author also discusses the shift from socialist paternalism to nationalist affective bonding and neoliberal sacrificial citizenship. This essay may contribute to the European debate on conservative neoliberal transformations and anti-gender political sentiment, offering insights into feminist theorization on neoliberalism.

### 6. A novel methodology

#### 6.1. Hybrid discourse analysis

Moreover, in order to reinforce the interpretation of the corpus, the sociological method named *Hybrid Discourse Analysis-HAD* was applied. It was developed by the author of the present text, whose bases may be found in Andrade (2007d), and some examples in case studies (2022a 2023b).

The following images present some applications of this methodology to a more developed analytic study on the Wikipedia page 'Fake News'. Among other Social Sciences tools, *sociological networks* are useful to conduct HAD. Note that natural language sentences, produced and disseminated by social agents within *social processes*, such as an author's

writing of a Wikipedia page, may be translated into sociological propositions. For instance, in Figure 17, an orbital sociological networks includes 'news' as the core analyzed written idea. Thus, it is placed on the center of the orbital conceptual net. Its conditions or causes are located on the left, and its consequences or effects on the right. The closer terms to 'news', inside the image, are the ones more deeply associated to it, such as 'fake'.

Another way to present sociological webs is to construct axial networks. Figure 18 depicts an illustration of an axial web, which shows qualitative information, as orbital networks do. More profound relations among concepts are concentrated above the horizontal axis. Again, its causes or conditions are placed on the left of the vertical axis, and its effects or consequences on the right.

A third type of sociological networks is *star* networks. Such conceptual webs present as well quantitative frequencies. In Figure 19, 'fake' is the most associated idea with 'news', with 38 occurrences in the whole 'Fake news' Wikipedia page. Considering now the keyword 'fake' as the central concept, some results may be observed in Figure 20.

Figure 21 places not just a word, but two, i.e., 'fake and news', on a protagonist place, at the network center. Notice the frequencies of the conditions, causes or subjects (ex. 'Trump telling fake news', with 2 mentions), and 11 consequences or effects on elections. 7 in the USA.

In addition, Figure 22 shows, within the Wikipedia page 'Fake News', the sentences in English that correspond to the concepts including the idea 'Fake News', detected in Figure 5. Note the sentences 325 and 330, where Russia is mentioned as a huge producer of that disinformation type.

Furthermore, the sociological network visible in Figure 23, shows, at the star web's center, both an antecedent concept, i.e., a cause or a condition such as 'news', and a relation between concepts, in this case 'moves towards'.

Figure 24 clarifies which are the concrete social words that

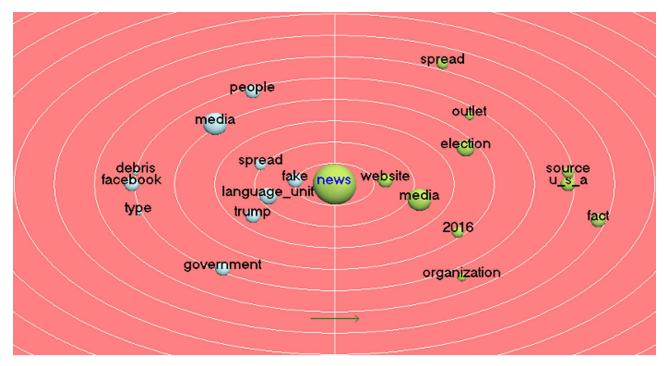


Figure 17. Orbital sociological network on 'news'

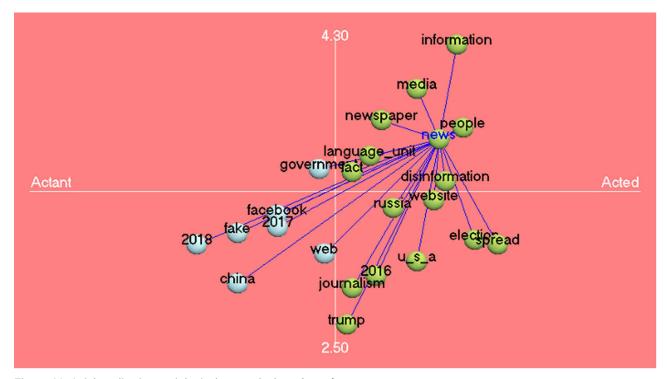


Figure 18. Axial qualitative sociological network about 'news'

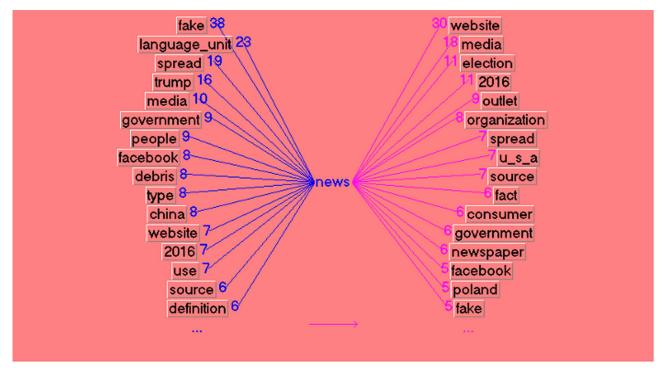


Figure 19. Star quantitative sociological network on 'news'

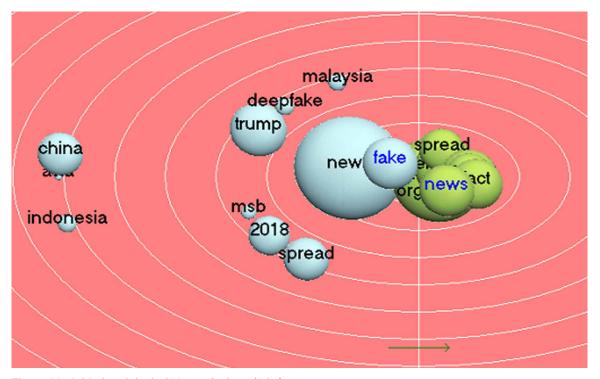


Figure 20. Orbital sociological Network about 'fake'

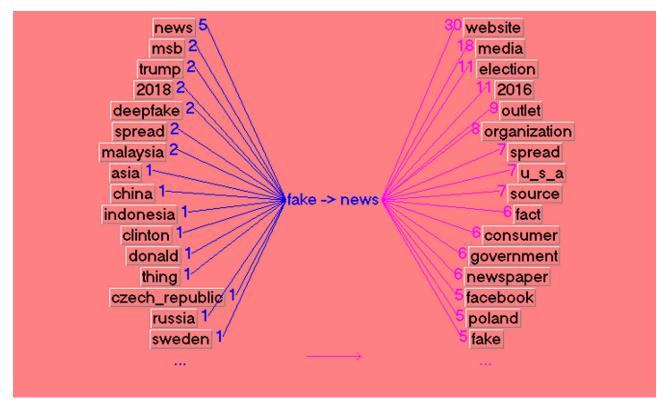


Figure 21. Star network on 'fake news'

[13] FAKE NEWS has also been_called junk news, pseudo-news, alternative facts,
[174] 21st-century FAKE NEWS is_intended often to increase the financial profits of the news outlet.
[209] take news saw higher sharing on Facebook than legitimate news_stories
[223] FAKE NEWS hoaxes Paul Horner is perhaps the best known example of a person who deliberately creates fake news for a
purpose.
[289] Under certain circumstances, spreading FAKE NEWS may constitute a criminal offence for the Italian penal_code.
[311] According to Serbian investigative journalism portal Crime and Corruption Reporting Network, more than 700 FAKE
NEWS were published on the front pages of pro-government tabloids during 2018.
[321] María Ramírez of Univision Communications has_stated that_much of the political FAKE NEWS circulating in Spain is
due to the lack of investigative journalism on the topics.
[325] The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), part_of the Ministry of Defence of Sweden, identified
NEWS_reports targeting Sweden in 2016 that originated from RUSSIA.
[330] The newspaper reported the MSB identified RUSSIA today and Sputnik News as significant FAKE NEWS purveyors.
[333] FAKE NEWS during the 2016 U_S. election spread to China.
[344] FAKE NEWS in India has_led to violent incidents between castes and religions, interfering with public policies.
[348] The largest Islamic mass organization in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama, has_created an ANTI-FAKE NEWS campaign
called#Turnbackhoax,
[350] Malaysia In April 2018, Malaysia implemented the ANTI-FAKE NEWS Bill 2018,
[355] FAKE NEWS negatively affected individuals in Myanmar, leading to a rise in violence against Muslims in the country.
[356][ 357] Philippines FAKE NEWS sites have become rampant for Philippine audiences,
[360] and 2018 show that the most shared FAKE NEWS in the Philippines appeared to benefit 2 people the most:
[404] Canada FAKE NEWS ONLINE was brought to the attention of Canadian politicians in November 2016,

Figure 22. Citations in the corpus

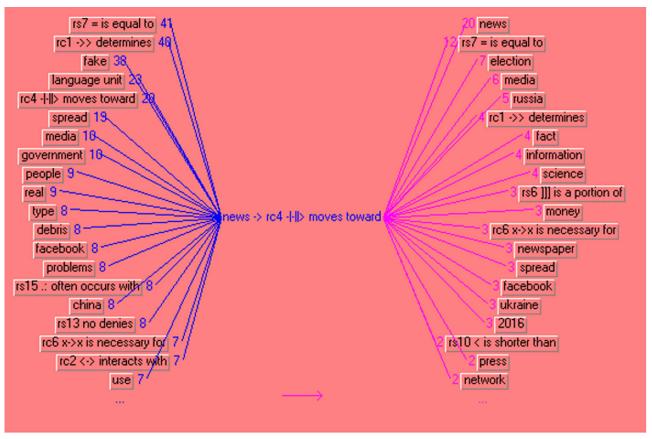


Figure 23. Star network on 'news moves towards'



Figure 24 Citations in the corpus representing the concept 'fake news', and one of its relations, 'moves towards'

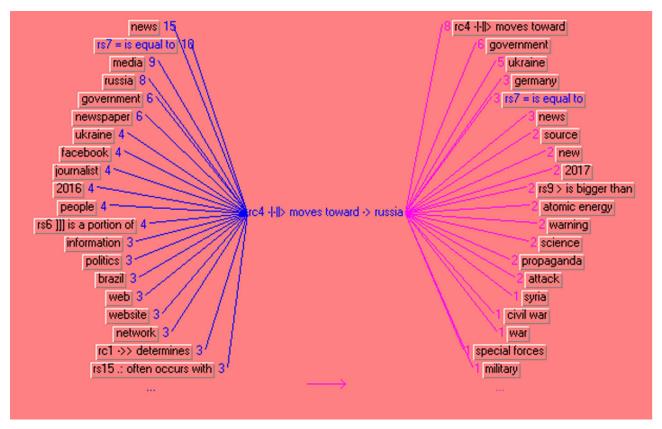


Figure 25. Star network on 'moves towards Russia'

[47] In 2014, the RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT USED disinformation via networks such\_as RT to create a counter-narrative after Russian-backed Ukrainian rebels shot down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17.[

[221] In February 2019, Glenn Greenwald wrote that a cybersecurity company New Knowledge"was\_caught just six weeks ago engaging in a massive scam to CREATE fictitious RUSSIAN TROLL accounts on Facebook

[306] During the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, the RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT passed a law PROHIBITING"fake news"regarding the Russian military,

[320] HAVING PRECEDED widespread global coverage of the Cambridge Analytica scandal and RUSSIAN TROLLS.

Figure 26. Citations in the corpus representing the concept 'Russia, and one of its relations, 'moves to', with other concepts

correspond to the sociological interconceptual relation 'moves towards'. For example: 'trends', 'contributes', 'impact', 'spread, 'circulated', 'increased', 'have started','driven', 'create', 'influence', changes'.

In Figure 25, the third part of the precedent incomplete sociological proposition 'fake news moves toward' emerges, that is, 'Russia'. In other words, the two star networks shown in Figures 23 and 25, present a complete sociological proposition, composed by an anterior concept ('fake news'), an interconceptual relation ('moves towards') and a posterior concept, 'Russia'. Meaning that Russia received a relative

centrality within the Wikipedia page 'fake news' discourse, which presents and may represent the underlying social process where fake news are produced intensively by Russia. More concretely, Figure 26 exposes some English sentences corresponding to the keywords analyzed in Figure 24. For instance, Russian Government and 'trolls' (that is, internet users that deliberately spread lies) use desinformation and create fictitious accounts on Facebook. However, at the same time, the Russian Government forbids fake news in regards to Russian military.

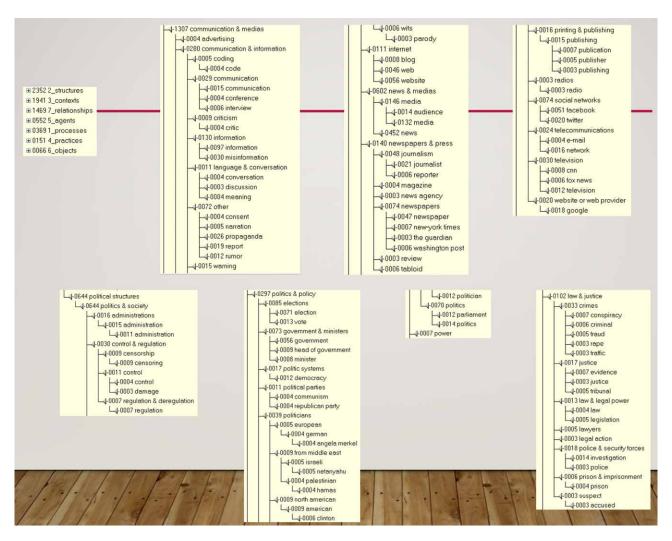


Figure 27. Frequencies of concepts within social dimensions 'communication and media' and 'political social structures'

# 6.2. A Mini Encyclopedia about fake news

Any social process may be decomposed into *social dimensions*. Images 27 and 28 demonstrate how to construct a *mini-encyclopedia on fake news*, by measuring the social dimensions' frequencies in the Wikipedia page 'Fake news'. In Figure 28, note the frequencies of the social relationships that articulate concepts, within the corpus sentences. Such relations were defined previously as an *alphabet of 37 (socio) logical relations* (Andrade, 2007d).

Finally, one *mini-encyclopedia* on fake news section is an *alphabetic list of concepts*, extracted from the text words within the Wikipedia 'Fake News' page (see Figures 29 and 30).

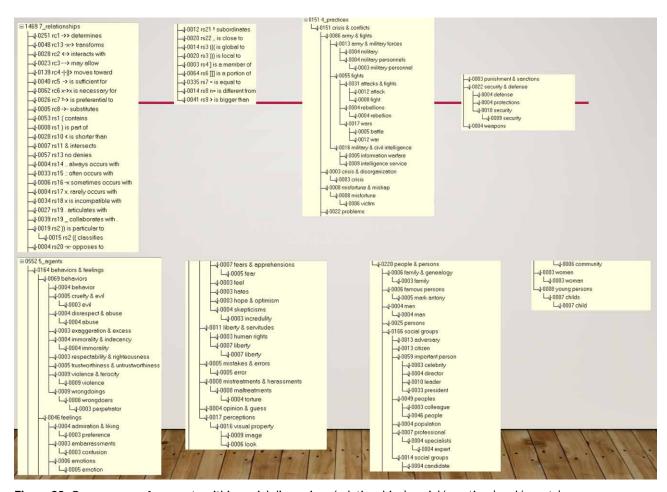


Figure 28. Occurrences of concepts within social dimensions 'relationships', social 'practices' and 'agents'

# 7. Conclusion: unmasking the Lying Society, a call to action

The present text revisited some of the many voices that attempt to debate the current status of fake news, through a state of the art of authors and works that problematize them. Moreover, within the framework of Wikipedia Studies, a case study on the current war in Ukraine sought to apply a methodology appropriate to the study of social networks, through the examples of some Wikipedia pages.

However, such themes are still rare in Communication Studies in Portugal, and especially in the context of Urban and Cultural Studies. We hope that this essay may contribute to the following endeavour: the clarification of war news through news' wars, and vice versa.

In fact, within the ever-evolving digital age, where information is readily available at our fingertips, the spread of fake news has become a significant concern. Nowhere is this more evident than in the ongoing battle between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, as well as in the clash between Israel and Hamas, another planetary significant conflict to be studied in another opportunity. For now, the present text just aimed to hopefully shed some light on the strategies and tactics employed by the Russian Federation in their attempt to manipulate public opinion and undermine Ukraine's sovereignty. Throughout this writing journey, the author had explored some various ways in which the Russian Federation utilizes mass media and social networks to propagate their narratives and discourses, and supporting a Lying Society that has far-reaching consequences. We

have seen how the present autocratic regimes distort facts, fabricate stories, and manipulate emotions to sow discord and confusion among entire populations and peoples.

In sum, the impact of fake news on Ukraine cannot be understated. It has not only affected the perception of Ukraine as a country, but has also influenced geopolitical dynamics, exacerbating the conflict between the two nations. The Russian Federation's relentless dissemination of fake news has created a distorted reality that poses a threat to the stability of the region, and ultimately to the whole planet. However, knowledge is power, and by trying to unveil and unmask the Lying Society, it is possible to counter the influence of fake news. As world citizens, it is our responsibility to be critical consumers of information. We must question the sources, verify the facts, and crossreference multiple platforms before forming our opinions. Furthermore, it is central to actively engage in promoting media literacy within our communities. By educating ourselves and others about the tactics employed by the Russian Federation and by other autocracies, citizens can equip themselves with the tools needed to identify and combat fake news. This includes supporting independent and reliable news stakeholders and mediators that adhere to ethical reporting standards. Additionally, it is necessary to call upon governments and tech companies to take a proactive stance against fake news. Policies and regulations should be put in place to ensure the veracity and integrity of information disseminated through mass media and social networks. By holding these entities accountable, multiple segments of worldwide populations can create a social and political environment where at least the more unpostponable work in progress truths may prevail over the incommensurable forms of deception.

Finally, some possible final recommendations are the following: Firstly, from a substantive point of view, it is paramount to underline the urgency of reflections and practical case studies on the current fake news, which contribute for a global crisis on communication media and discourses. Secondly, via a methodological perspective, propose some innovative procedures, such as the abovementioned articulation between human interpretation and A.I, that may hybridize scientific, technological and artistic knowledge. In a stance of intervention within the public space, the author calls for the participation of all stakeholders, researchers, students, citizens and activists, etc., for a broad commitment within a critical content on economic, ecological, socio-political and cultural issues, such as the Ukraine crisis. Some of this critical content may be Mini-Encyclopedias about current theoretical issues and practical engaging actions that are proving to be pressing and unavoidable.



Figure 29. Alphabetic list of concepts (A-O)

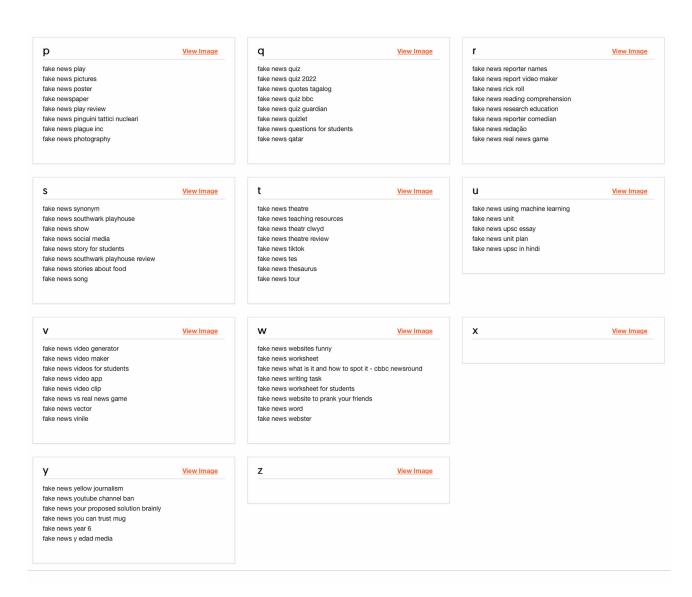


Figure 30. Alphabetic list of concepts (P-Z)

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