

The background features a cluster of seven blue, stylized human figures. Each figure is composed of a circular head and a rounded, open-bottom torso. They are arranged in a group, with some overlapping, creating a sense of a crowd or community. The figures are a solid blue color with a slight drop shadow.

“Michelle Obama is a man”

Problematizing Authority in Today’s Post-Truth, Post-Trust World

Carol A. Leibiger
Alan W. Aldrich
University of South Dakota

Declaration

I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is Treaty 4 and 6 territory and the traditional territory of the Cree and Saulteaux, Assiniboine, and Métis.

I am a US-American from South Dakota, part of the traditional lands of the Lakota, Nakota, and Dakota peoples.

I pay respect to these communities and their Elders past, present and emerging.

Fake news: Michelle Obama



INDEPENDENT

[News](#)

[Voices](#)

[Sports](#)

[Culture](#)

[Indy/Life](#)

[Video](#)

[Daily Edition](#)



[News](#) › [World](#) › [Americas](#)

Alex Jones claims he has 'proof' Michelle Obama is a man

Infowars host says pictures of pleats in former First Lady's dress shows she has a penis

Chloe Farand | Friday 25 August 2017 10:42 BST | [53 comments](#)



97
shares



Click to follow
The Independent US

People are social.



- People...
 - affiliate with groups.
 - hold membership in multiple groups.
 - value their group memberships.
- Groups serve important instrumental and relational functions.
- Groups...
 - co-construct knowledge.
 - recognize different kinds of authority.
 - invest authorities with power.
- Self-identity is created and sustained in part through our groups.

Group knowledge



Group knowledge parallels and can compete with larger societal (superordinate) discourses or narratives.

- “America as a melting pot”
- “Hard work leads to success”
- “Equal opportunity for everyone”
- “March of progress”
- “American exceptionalism”

Current shift to heterogeneity



- Mainstream media used to be seen as the voice of the superordinate group.
 - There were fewer media sources (old media with old-media ethics).
 - They covered higher-status/elite group news.
 - They ignored/minimally covered lower-status group news.
- Competing groups are claiming recognition and authority.
- Like society, media is reconstituting itself.



Heterogeneity, groups, and new media



- Like society, media is becoming more fragmented or aligned with different groups of consumers and their group knowledge/beliefs.
 - Social media
 - Nonprofessional media, i.e. blogs, wikis, etc.
- New media don't necessarily subscribe to old media standards.
 - Ethical standards
 - “Alternative facts” vs. “facts”
 - Group orientation vs. mainstream orientation



Academic knowledge/expertise



- Academics are now one group among many.
- Academic knowledge/discourse no longer enjoys its earlier prestige.
- Since academic knowledge is no longer privileged, it is not surprising that students reject it.
 - They don't identify as members of the academy.
 - They don't discriminate between knowledge and beliefs.
 - They privilege their group opinions.



Information literacy instruction



- Information-literacy instruction seeks to teach students...
 - how to navigate and evaluate information and sources
 - for academic, professional, and personal purposes.
- The *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2016) can inform information-literacy instruction.
- The Authority frame...
 - states that contexts and notions of authority differ
 - recognizes the legitimacy of personal or group beliefs within appropriate contexts.

Authority and context



If information-literacy instruction serves academic, professional, and personal needs, people need to be taught to distinguish...

- different kinds of authority
- within/across differing contexts and groups, i.e.
 - academic or professional communities,
 - media or consumer groups,
 - familial groups,
 - ethnic groups,
 - religious groups, and
 - political groups.



Fake news



- Fake news is often a response to superordinate /establishment group beliefs and knowledge.
- Group beliefs, knowledge, and authority are validated, helping to create and sustain group affinity.
- Relationships have primacy over facts/knowledge when they are in conflict.
 - When a group perceives itself as endangered, members pull together.
 - Members cling more tightly to their group belief system, resisting outside influences that conflict with their beliefs.
 - Groups use social (new) media to reinforce their beliefs.
- Fake news can be wielded with good or bad intent.

Fake news: Survivors as “crisis actors”



Problematizing Authority



The Authority frame...

- represents standards of academic research (credentials)
- is situated in academic notions of truth and reason.
- cannot adequately address nonacademic information sources.

- The Authority frame's dispositions call for...
 - (self-)recognition of bias
 - development of an open mind, self-awareness, and self-evaluation.
- There is no recognition of the importance of motive.

On motive



- People fulfill goals by creating and disseminating information. Information can influence as well as inform.
- Examining motive reveals underlying reasons, both relational and instrumental, for message creation and design, as well as the ways in which the information is received and used.
- Motive is not particular to the sender or receiver.
- Understanding motive requires examining the motives of all participants.



Examining motive



Sender motives:

- Why provide the information?
- What group is the message targeting?
- What is the purpose of the message design (logos)?
- What is the emotional appeal of the message (pathos)?

Receiver motives:

- What is the information need?
- Why was this specific content chosen (logos)?
- How does the message make the receiver feel (pathos)?
- To which of the receiver's group memberships is the message salient?

Fake news and motive



- Fake news often appeals to basic emotions and beliefs.
- People often fail to examine beliefs or deal with them critically or logically.
- Emotions and beliefs can be exploited by fake news.
- Exploitation of emotions and beliefs can be better understood by examining speakers' and receivers' motives.



YourNewsWire.com
News. Truth. Unfiltered.

HOME	NEWS ▾	HEALTH	SCI/ENVIRONMENT	TECHNOLOGY	ENTERTAINMENT	CONSPIRACIES	CONTACT US
CONTACT US	TERMS OF USE	PRIVACY	ADVERTISE				
HEADLINES >	[May 23, 2018] 96 Year Old Granny Groped By Sick TSA Agents • NEWS						

CNN Raided By FCC For Deceiving American Public

© May 23, 2018 Baxter Dmitry News, US 14



The **CNN** head office in Atlanta, Georgia, was raided by Federal Communications Commission (FCC) agents Tuesday in an operation related to the *"violation of press guidelines" including "publishing and promotion of blatantly false information designed to deceive the American public,"* according to reports.

The FCC arrived unannounced and seized documents and hard drives as part of their investigation, including all of the *"source data"* the network has used for their stories.

MSNBC and the Associated Press are also reported to have been raided by the FCC for violating press guidelines, including the *"printing of blatant lies"*, the *"publishing and promotion of stories which require immediate retractions while not promoting the retractions"*, according to a source within one of networks.

According to the FCC, *"Broadcasters may not intentionally distort the news."* It is understood that CNN, MSNBC and the AP are under investigation for breaking FCC rules. The FCC states that *"rigging or slanting the news is a most heinous act against the public interest."*

Proposed revision to the Authority frame



Add one disposition:

examine the possible motives of both the message creator and message receiver.

- This one recommendation allows the framework to be generally applicable and not prescriptive.
- The Authority dispositions are strengthened through inclusion of motive.

Other aspects of the framework will also be strengthened.

- Information Creation as a Process
 - Help to better understand purpose of the message being conveyed and its delivery method
 - Help to better understand the role of the other's context/situation/group
- Research as Conversation
 - Help to better critically evaluate the contributions made by others (Research as Conversation)

Thank you!



Carol A. Leibiger

Associate Professor, Information Literacy Coordinator

c.leibiger@usd.edu

Alan W. Aldrich

Associate Professor, Instructional Services Librarian

alan.aldrich@usd.edu

Mainstream society and old media



- Mainstream (superordinate) society was previously perceived and treated as being much more homogeneous than today.
- Academic credentials were proof of expertise and authority.
- There were fewer media sources (old media with old-media ethics).
- These media sources covered higher-status or elite group news.
- Lower-status groups were ignored or given minimal coverage or attention.