U. PORTO

MESTRADO EM PSICOLOGIA
PSICOLOGIA DAS ORGANIZAÇÕES, SOCIAL E DO TRABALHO

Populism and Fake News: The role of anti-elitism, demonization and moral disengagement

Marcos Gonçalves Oterelo Temporão

M

2023

University of Porto
Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

Populism and Fake News: The role of anti-elitism, demonization and moral disengagement

Marcos Gonçalves Oterelo Temporão

October, 2023

Dissertation presented for the Master's in Psychology, Organizational, Social, and Work Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of University of Porto, supervised by Professor *Isabel Rocha Pinto* (F.P.C.E.U.P.)

LEGAL NOTICES

Resumo

Este estudo tem como objetivo explorar um mecanismo que motiva os utilizadores das redes sociais a disseminar notícias falsas, mesmo sabendo que são falsas. Através de um estudo correlacional ($N = 156$), analisamos a ligação entre as crenças antielitistas e a motivação para interagir com notícias falsas sobre grupos pertencentes à elite, como políticos e os ricos. Além disso, estudamos os papéis da demonização e do descomprometimento moral como mediadores desta relação. Em geral, as pessoas revelaram baixa motivação para interagirem com notícias *online* que sabiam ser falsas. Apesar disso, e como esperado, verificamos que as crenças antielitistas estão relacionadas com atos de aprovação em relação a notícias falsas sobre os grupos-alvo e que essa relação é mediada pela demonização e pelo descomprometimento moral. As implicações dessas descobertas são exploradas no contexto do crescente sentimento populista registado no mundo, considerando a sua relevância para os vários intervenientes que procuram combater a proliferação de notícias falsas *online*.

Palavras-chave: Notícias falsas; Antielitismo; Populismo; Demonização; Descomprometimento Moral.

Abstract

This study aims to explore a mechanism that motivates social media users to disseminate fake news, even when they know them to be false. Through a correlational study ($N = 156$), we analysed the link between anti-elitist beliefs and motivation to engage with fake news about elite groups, such as politicians and the wealthy. Additionally, we studied the mediating roles of demonization and moral disengagement in this relationship. Generally, people reported low motivation to engage with online news when they know them to be false. Despite this, and as expected, we observed that anti-elitist beliefs are linked to acts of approval towards fake news about the target-groups and that this relation is mediated by demonization and moral disengagement. The implications of these findings are explored in the context of the growing populist sentiment registered in the world and their pertinence for various stakeholders who aim to tackle the proliferation of online fake news.

Keywords: Fake news; Anti-elitism; Populism; Demonization; Moral disengagement.

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo explorar un mecanismo que motiva a los usuarios de las redes sociales a difundir noticias falsas, incluso cuando saben que son falsas. A través de un estudio correlacional ($N = 156$), analizamos la relación entre las creencias anti-eletistas y la motivación para interactuar con noticias falsas sobre grupos pertenecientes a la élite, como políticos y personas ricas. Además, estudiamos los roles mediadores de la demonización y el desapego moral en esta relación. En general, las personas informaron tener baja motivación para interactuar con noticias en línea. A pesar de esto, y como se esperaba, observamos que las creencias anti-eletistas están relacionadas con actos de aprobación hacia las noticias falsas sobre los grupos de élite y que esta relación está mediada por la demonización y el desapego moral. Se exploran las implicaciones de estos resultados en el contexto del creciente sentimiento populista en el mundo y su relevancia para varios interesados que buscan combatir la proliferación de noticias falsas en línea.

Palabras clave: Noticias falsas; Anti-elitismo; Populismo; Demonización; Desapego moral.

Introduction

Fake news is not a new phenomenon. Throughout history, the public has been subjected to political propaganda, misinformation, and rumours spanning a wide range of topics (Wu et al., 2021). However, in recent years, a new trend has emerged in the way false information is spread. The term "fake news" gained significant prominence during the 2016 US presidential elections and has continued to gain popularity since then (Dentith, 2017). Concurrently, fact-checking and warnings about misinformation have become increasingly integrated into our daily lives (Van Bavel et al., 2021). The surge of fake news can be attributed to various factors, including the advent of social media and the 24-hour news cycle, which have significantly altered the creation and circulation of news in our society (Van Bavel et al., 2021).

Fake news is a significant problem, as their spread creates difficulties for citizens to make informed decisions based on facts, thus posing a threat to healthy societies (Mair, 2002). Fake news is often utilized by political parties, particularly during election seasons (Dentith, 2017). This strategy is commonly employed by populist and illiberal groups aiming to fuel animosity towards specific societal groups, such as minorities or elites (Fernández-Garcia & Salgado, 2022). These tactics pose a significant risk to the functioning of liberal democracies, which rely on adherence to certain principles, including respect for minorities, protection of human rights, equality and accessibility of resources and services by all (including information) and transparency of procedures (Canovan, 1999, 2004). Consequently, it is crucial to study the factors contributing to the spread of fake news and explore effective measures to limit its impact.

Many are the opinions and evidence about how to stop the spread of fake news based on how to provide individuals the access to information about content veracity of the news they receive (Chung & Kim, 2021). These opinions and evidence rely on the idea that the spread of fake news is due to the lack of knowledge about the falsity of the content of these news and messages. In this study, we propose that this might not be the case. We aim to explore a psychosocial mechanism that motivates social media users to disseminate fake news, even when they know them to be false. Additionally, we seek to explore methods to motivate users to report such content, with the goal of contributing to their control/removal from the platform.

1. Definition and characteristics of fake news

The term "fake news" specifically refers to fabricated information that is deliberately presented as genuine news (Lazer et al., 2018; Shu et al., 2017; Van Bavel et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2021). In essence, fake news mimics the conventions of traditional media reporting, and its creators are knowingly disseminating falsehoods. It's worth emphasizing that Zhang and Ghorbani (2020) refer that the online platforms serve as a primary and privileged channel for the widespread dissemination of fake news. This is particularly important given that in the online space, especially on social media platforms, there are fewer checks in place before any kind of information is posted, which can favour the production of false information.

It is also important to distinguish fake news from other phenomena that are often confused. Fake news differs from political propaganda, rumours, and misinformation due to its distinct characteristics, including its format and underlying intention. Misinformation refers to incorrect or misleading information that is typically unintentional in nature (Shu et al., 2020), whereas rumours are unverified information that circulates informally (Zubiaga et al., 2018). Political propaganda generally contains false or misleading information, but its distribution methods do not simulate the conventions of traditional media reporting (Huckin, 2016). Therefore, they can not be considered fake news.

2. Motivators behind engagement with fake news

The factors that contribute to people's engagement in acts that approve fake news, such as liking and sharing them, has been the target of some studies. A systematic literature review by Melchior and Oliveira (2023) found that a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators contributes to wanting to share fake news. The most prevalent intrinsic motivator found in studies is the belief in fake news. According to a literature review conducted by Bryanov and Vziatysheva (2021), individuals' belief in fake news is a result of several factors, such as the characteristics of the message itself, for example how it is presented; individual factors like cognitive styles, predispositions, and

information literacy; and the absence of warnings or nudges indicating the falsity or potential falsity of the news.

Considering this last factor, it is also crucial to understand the role that fact-checking can play in limiting the spread of false information. In their research, Chung and Kim (2021) found that fact-checking is an effective method for making people aware of the falsehood of the news content and, consequently, for discouraging its dissemination. In their study, when fake news was debunked by fact-checkers, participants were less inclined to share the news on social media platforms like Facebook compared to when the fake news was presented without any indication of its falsehood. The same researchers also discovered that when no fact-checking information was available, those who saw fake news with higher social media metrics (such as likes, comments, and shares) expressed a greater inclination to share the news, in contrast to those who saw news with lower metrics. However, when fact-checking information debunked the fake news, higher social media metrics no longer influenced people's intentions to share the news. Given this, it can be expected that when people are presented with fact-checking information that debunks a news article, they should be less motivated to share that information.

However, there are more factors that play into sharing fake news online. Besides the intrinsic motivators, Melchior and Oliveira (2023) also found that some of the most prevalent extrinsic motivators present in studies are the belief in conspiracy theories related to the content of the news article, and the political beliefs of the individual. People who believe in conspiracy theories regarding the topic of the news article could be more prone to share it because it relates to their previous beliefs. Sharing can also be used to discredit true information related to that subject (Nazar & Pieters, 2021). Regarding political beliefs, one particularly relevant study (Osmundsen et al., 2021) argue that fake news sharing is driven mainly by the feeling of hate towards political opponents and not by positive feelings towards their own party or group. Crucially, they also found that the act of sharing fake news is not dependent on whether the individual is able to discern whether the news article is true or false, which means that people may share fake news knowingly, when this is beneficial for their political objectives. Though this study was conducted comparing the Democratic Party and the Republican Party in the US, expressing a left/right divide, other political beliefs (e.g., agreement with populist stances) may fuel one's intent to share fake news directed towards other opposing groups.

Thus, we believe that the influence of pre-existing beliefs might potentially jeopardize the effects observed by Chung and Kim (2021) concerning the effectiveness of fact-checking information.

3. Definition and evolution of populism

Populism is a long-standing phenomenon in politics, with certain events like the 2008 global recession and the 2015 migration crisis amplifying populist ideas and leading to increased support for populist parties (Noury & Roland, 2020). However, populist parties and ideologies have been present in the political landscape since the nineteenth century, primarily in North and South America (Forgas & Crano, 2021; Silva & Salgado, 2018). While populism is currently more commonly associated with right-wing parties, this has not always been the case. Tarragoni (2021) describes three waves of populism, with the first two waves being more closely aligned with left-wing ideologies, emphasizing workers' rights and egalitarianism. It was not until the 1970s that right-wing parties adopted populist ideologies and began gaining popularity, marking the third and current wave of populism (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Taguieff, 1998; Tarragoni, 2021). Nevertheless, it is important to note that not all contemporary populist parties are right-wing, as many left-wing parties have also emerged in response to the 2008 financial crisis (Silva & Salgado, 2018). In the last decade, right-wing populist parties, have successfully increased their presence in national parliaments and governments across Europe, North America, and South America. Portugal is no exception to this trend, where, for the first time since the dictatorship, a radical right-wing populist party gained representation in the national parliament in the 2019 legislative elections. Since then, the party's support has grown significantly, and it is currently the third largest political force in the country.

Populism revolves around the notion of dividing society into two homogenous and antagonistic groups. It depicts the people as virtuous while blaming outgroups such as minorities (ethnic, religious, sexual, etc.) or elites, like the political class, financial institutions, governments, or the wealthy, for the challenges faced by the people (Buzzi, 1994; Canovan, 1981; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Mudde, 2004; Mudde, 2007; Taggart, 2000). Stemming from this division, populists argue that politics should prioritize the unrestricted sovereignty of the people, implying that the will of the people should always be respected, and nothing is above it.

It is also commonly defined as a thin ideology (Mudde, 2004, 2007; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013). Populism rarely exists on its own and often incorporates thicker ideologies (Kriesi, 2014; Mudde, 2004). These can include socialism, neo-liberalism, or more recently, the radical right-wing or nativism (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). The composition of "the people" can significantly vary depending on the specific ideology to which populism is attached. Left-wing populists tend to have a broad and inclusive understanding of the people, encompassing native populations, minorities, and other marginalized groups. This stands in contrast to the more explicitly racist and xenophobic stances often associated with nativism and radical right-wing nationalist parties (Erisen et al., 2021). Regardless of who constitutes the people, the centrality of this group is a fundamental characteristic of populism. Furthermore, populism is characterized by a Manichean outlook, dividing the world into the good (the people) and the bad (the elites or minority groups). This mindset is also reflected in the way populists propose to solve problems, advocating that there is only one way to address them (Erisen et al., 2021). The solutions presented by populists are also characterized by their simplicity, prioritizing a popular appeal to effectively solving the issues at hand.

It is not only the concept of "the people", but also the concept of "the elite" that is subject to change within the context of populism. In Western Europe, where populist parties are mostly in the opposition, the most common referred elite is the government (Erisen et al., 2021). The European Union, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the wealthy in general, or other international organizations are also common targets of populist rhetoric. The elite can be anyone or anything perceived to hold power, and they may not be precisely identified (Erisen et al., 2021). Typically, the more diffuse the anti-elitism, the more radical it becomes (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). This corresponds to a vertical division of society, where the people are characterized as the oppressed while the elites are portrayed as the oppressors. This way, the elites are totally detached from the people and anti-elitists argue that the elites lack knowledge of, or concern for the people, therefore asserting that they do not truly belong to the same group (Ernst et al., 2017, 2019). Therefore, Ernst and colleagues (2017, 2019) synthesized anti-elitism along three dimensions: discrediting the elite, blaming the elite, and detaching the elite from the people.

We argue that anti-elitist beliefs can result in strong negative sentiments towards individuals or groups belonging to the elite, such as politicians or the wealthy. An extreme

form of these sentiments, fuelled by the Manichean outlook on society, may manifest as the demonization of these groups.

4. Demonization and populism

Demonization is rooted in the concept of "evil" and involves attributing demonic characteristics to individuals or groups, effectively stripping them of their humanity (van Prooijen & Veer, 2010). As such, it can be seen as an extreme form of dehumanization. This process occurs when the observer perceives the behaviours of the targeted group as immoral and harmful. For this reason, the individuals or groups in question are considered deserving of persecution and punishment (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2012).

Fousiani and van Prooijen (2023) found that people tend to demonize high-power offenders more than low-power offenders. This can be attributed to the fact that high-power groups are held to higher moral standards and are expected to utilize resources in a prosocial manner, exhibit integrity, and adhere to moral norms (Sassenberg et al., 2012, 2014). Moreover, powerful offenders are often perceived as selfish and intentionally engaging in transgressive behaviour (Fragale et al., 2009) while lacking moral credentials (Kakkar et al., 2020). Given that, in the populist rationale, elites are typically considered a high-power group, and anti-elitists hold them responsible for all societal problems, we may think that high populist attitudes (namely anti-elitism attitudes) would be associated to the demonization of the elites, perceiving their transgressions as intentional and purposeful against the "pure and good people". The blame, or punishment of such elites would allow them to restore a sense of justice and ingroup preservation function (Ellard et al., 2002; Hafer & Bègue, 2005).

As the targets of demonization are viewed as diabolical and evil figures responsible for all problems faced by the people, we propose that they may not be held to the same moral standards when it comes to judgment by the people. Consequently, the process of demonization should trigger moral disengagement among anti-elitists regarding negative attitudes/ punishment of elites, allowing for behaviours that would otherwise be frowned upon or deemed morally unacceptable.

5. Moral disengagement and populism

When a group is demonized, it often causes individuals to alter their behaviour towards that particular group (Fousiani & van Prooijen, 2023). This can result in a greater inclination towards engaging in immoral behaviours. Acts that would typically be regarded as immoral (as harming others) can become justified as personally and socially acceptable when directed towards demonized groups. Moral disengagement is the psychosocial mechanism that allows to justify engagement in immoral behaviour, while reducing feelings of guilt (Bandura, 1996). It involves a cognitive redefinition of morality surrounding the attitudes and behaviours of those engaging in immoral behaviour in such a way that it can be perceived as acceptable in some circumstances.

Bandura (1999, 2016) described eight interrelated cognitive mechanisms that contribute to our ability to deactivate our moral standards and allow us to engage in morally questionable behaviours. The first is *moral justification* through which the behaviour is perceived as legitimate because it is seen as serving a noble and vital cause. The second mechanism is the use of *euphemisms* to disguise actions as benign or harmless. *Advantageous comparisons* consist of comparing one's unethical behaviour with worse alternatives. This way it gives the appearance of choosing the least bad option. People can also blame their behaviour in an authority figure or group, something that Bandura (1999, 2016) classifies as *Self-exoneration*. The *diffusion of responsibility* works in a similar way. In this case, the individual either spreads the responsibility of the action by a group, or divides the behaviour in smaller actions that, individually, look more benign. The individuals may also try to alter the importance of the consequences *disregarding or misrepresenting* them, minimizing their impact on others. Finally, people can also utilize a process that consists in *dehumanizing* the target person or group. This involves stripping a person or a targeted group of their human characteristics, dehumanizing them by comparing them to animals, for example. In this situation, the consequences are not given much importance because the individuals affected are seen as undeserving and may even be held responsible for what has happened to them.

In the case of anti-elitists, we expect that the demonization of elite groups may predict a process of moral disengagement. As a result, immoral behaviours directed towards the elites may be perceived as justifiable. Specifically, we suggest that moral disengagement leads to a higher likelihood of engaging in behaviours that support and

spread fake news, namely those that contains negative information about elites, even when aware that such information is false. This occurs because the moral barriers that would typically discourage engagement in behaviours like sharing false information are "turned off" when the news concerns a group in society that is seen by anti-elitists as aggressors (such as politicians and the wealthy).

On the other hand, we suggest that lower moral disengagement may lead to a higher motivation to act in ways that aim to stop the spreading of fake news. This might occur because individuals may be motivated to act in ways that are normative and moral, such as alerting others to the fake content of the news and alerting the social media platform that the information does not correspond to the truth.

6. The present study

In this study, we propose that demonization and moral disengagement mediate the relationship between anti-elitism and the motivation to engage in acts of approval towards fake news about politicians and the wealthy (two groups commonly described as elites), that are known to be fake, such as liking and sharing the news article (see Figure 1). This should happen because anti-elitist beliefs express a negative judgment of groups such as politicians and the wealthy (Erisen et al., 2021), which should be related to the demonization of such groups they already see as problematic (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2012). As demonization is shown to increase immoral behaviours and decrease moral impediments (Fousiani & van Prooijen, 2023), we expect that, through higher moral disengagement, people will be more willing to act in ways that approve and disseminate news that negatively target groups such as politicians and the wealthy, even when aware that these articles are proven to be false.

As we have seen, the elite can be constituted by different groups, depending on who defines them (Erisen et al., 2021). Politicians and the wealthy were the two groups we have chosen to represent two of the main targets of anti-elite rhetoric. On one hand, politicians, as they are one of the primary targets, mainly by right-wing populist parties. On the other hand, the wealthy, as they are one of the main targets of left-wing populist parties.

Figure 1

Mediation Model Expected for the Effect of Anti-elitism on engagement in Acts of Approval towards Fake News about the Target Group, Mediated by Demonization and Moral Disengagement towards the Target Group.
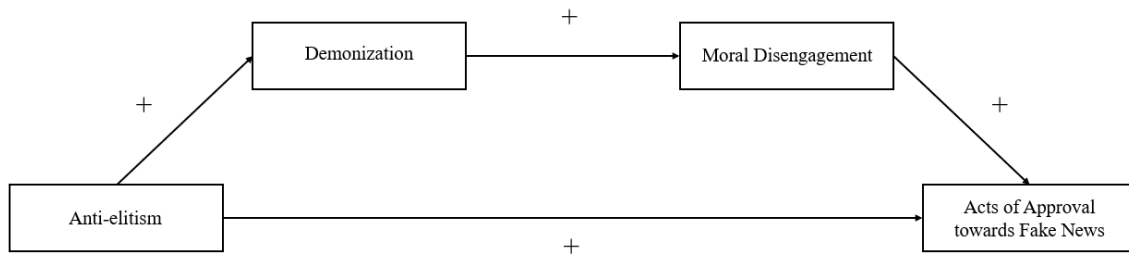
To complement the main model, we also propose that in the case of lower levels of anti-elitist beliefs, such demonization of the target groups and moral disengagement should also be low, while being motivated to disapprove and promote the removal of the news, such as reporting the fake news to the social media platform (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Mediation Model Expected for the Effect of Anti-elitism on engagement in Acts of Disapproval towards Fake News about the Target Group, Mediated by Demonization and Moral Disengagement towards the Target Group.
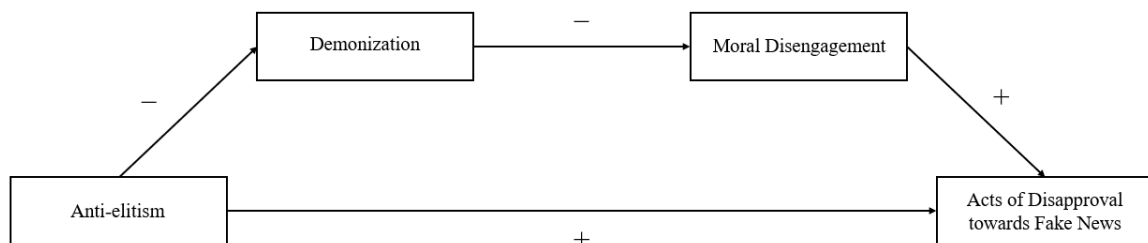
Method

1. Participants

We collected a sample of 156 participants, composed of Portuguese citizens and people residing in Portugal (89 female and 67 male), aged between 18 and 57 years old ($M = 25.77$, $SD = 8.45$). Concerning education, 47% had a high school diploma and 53% a college degree. The sample is composed mainly by students (73%), followed by 24%

employed people and 3% unemployed. Regarding their political tendencies, participants tend to be more left leaning ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.60$).

2. Procedure[1]

In order to explore the research questions proposed, we conducted a correlational study. Participants had to meet the eligibility criteria of being over 18 years old. They were contacted through online platforms, such as Facebook groups and via the institutional mailing list of the University of Porto (convenience sample), to complete a survey (supposedly) about their opinions on the causes of the people's impoverishment (the instrument can be seen in Appendix A). Participation was voluntary and no monetary compensation was provided. Upon giving informed consent, participants provided demographic information including age, gender, nationality, education level, employment status and political orientation. The debriefing, at the end of the survey, was used to explain to participants the real goals of the study and the research objectives.

First, the participants answered to scales measuring their beliefs in anti-elitism and the extent to which they demonized politicians and the wealthy. Afterwards, all the participants were exposed to two bogus news articles. One article discussed a new law that would allow politicians early access to retirement benefits without penalties (see Appendix B). The other article focused on the growing inequality between the rich and the poor, presenting evidence that supported the worsening of this situation (see Appendix C). The order of news presentation was randomized to control for stimuli order effects. Following the presentation of each article, participants learned that the content was false through a paragraph extracted from a (bogus) fact-checking agency (see Appendix B and C), explaining the reasons why the news was false and classifying it as such. Both the news and the fact-checking agency were created by the researchers for the purpose of this study.

After the presentation of these two stimuli, participants answered to two scales. The first scale assessed moral disengagement towards the target mentioned in the news

---

[1] We conducted a pilot study ($N= 157$) to evaluate our materials, which included the news articles and several scales (for instance, anti-elitism). However, due to space restrictions, the results of the pilot study will not be discussed.

(politicians or the wealthy). The second scale referred to participants' intended actions towards the news article.

3. Measures

The questionnaire begins with several demographic questions, including gender, age, education level and employment status. Political orientation was also measured, using a 7-point scale (1 = *Left-wing,* 7 = *Right-wing*).

3.1. Anti-elitism

Participants' anti-elite attitudes were assessed using a 3-item scale adapted from Castanho and colleagues (2018) (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*): (1) "The government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves"; (2) "Government officials use their power to try to improve people's lives"; (3) "Quite a few of the people running the government are crooked".[2]

A single-factor variable was composed according to the factorial composition of the original scale. We averaged the items into an anti-elitism measure (*Cronbach's α =* .70; *M* = 5.03, *SD* = 1.03), such that higher scores indicate higher anti-elitism beliefs.

3.2. Demonization

Participants completed a 5-item scale for each target group, adapted from van Prooijen and van de Veer (2010), to measure demonization towards both politicians and the wealthy (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*): (1) "The impoverishment of the people is entirely caused by the wickedness of politicians *[the wealthy]*."; (2) "The severity of the impoverishment of the people is due to the fact that politicians *[the wealthy]* are only motivated to destroy everything that is good."; (3) "The severity of the impoverishment of the people is due to the fact that politicians *[the wealthy]* seem to enjoy harming the Portuguese."; (4) "Politicians *[The wealthy]* are immoral."; (5) "When I think of politicians *[the wealthy]*, all I can imagine is how evil they are.";

---

[2] While the items primarily express anti-elitist sentiments directed towards politicians, our findings suggest that, as our mediation models operate similarly for both politicians and the wealthy, there are no discernible differences in anti-elitist attitudes towards these two distinct target groups.

A single-factor variable was composed according to the factorial composition of the original scale. We averaged the scores of the items 1 through 5 into a demonization of politicians' index (*Cronbach's α = .89, M = 2.89, SD = 1.34*), and items 6 through 10 into a demonization of the wealthy index (*Cronbach's α = .92, M = 2.88, SD = 1.56*). Higher scores indicate higher demonization of the target group.

3.3. Moral disengagement

Participants responded to an 8-item scale for each target group, adapted from Bandura and colleagues (1996), regarding moral disengagement towards politicians and the wealthy (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*): (1) Moral justification: "It is acceptable to share potentially false information about politicians *[the wealthy]* when it supports important causes for the Portuguese people."; (2) Euphemistic Language: "Sharing potentially false information about politicians *[the wealthy]* is just a consequence of their actions."; (3) Advantageous comparison: "Sharing potentially false information about politicians *[the wealthy]* is not as bad as other things people do online."; (4) Displacement of responsibility: "Portuguese people are obligated to share potentially false information about politicians *[the wealthy]* because politicians *[the wealthy]* also do it."; (5) Diffusion of responsibility: "If a Portuguese person shares potentially false information about politicians *[the wealthy]*, it is unfair to blame all Portuguese people."; (6) Distorting consequences: "Sharing potentially false information about politicians *[the wealthy]* does not have such a big impact on politicians *[the wealthy]*."; (7) Attribution of blame: "If a Portuguese person shares potentially false information about politicians *[the wealthy]*, it is because a politician *[the wealthy]* shared it first."; (8) Dehumanization: "It is not harmful to share potentially false damaging information about a politician *[the wealthy]* because they do not have feelings, so they cannot be hurt.".

A single-factor variable was composed according to the factorial composition of the original scale. We averaged the scores of the items 1 through 8 into a moral disengagement regarding politicians' index (*Cronbach's α = .77, M = 1.79, SD = 0.77*) and items 9 through 16 into a moral disengagement regarding the wealthy index (*Cronbach's α = .77, M = 1.90, SD = 0.77*). Higher scores indicate higher moral disengagement towards each target group. The items 5 and 13 were not considered in the

final score, because they were reducing the Cronbach's α from .77 to .72 in both measures.

3.4. Engagement with the news

The participants' willingness to engage with each presented news announcing measures to benefit politicians and the growing inequality between the wealthy and the poor, was measured through a 7-item scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*): (1) "Like"; (2) "Leave a supportive comment"; (3) "Leave an opposing comment"; (4) "Share"; (5) "Forward to friends"; (6) "Forward to family"; (7) "Report the content".

A principal components factorial analysis conducted on these items extracted two factors accounting for 65% and 70% of the total variance regarding engagement with the news about politicians and the wealthy, respectively. We averaged the scores of the items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 into an acts of approval towards fake news about politician's index (*Cronbach's* α = .82, *M* = 1.90, *SD* = 1.12) and items 3 and 7 into an acts of disapproval towards fake news about politicians' index (*r* = .40, *p* < .001, *M* = 2.36, *SD* = 1.42). The acts of approval towards fake news about the wealthy index (*Cronbach's* α = .87, *M* = 2.03, *SD* = 1.26), and the acts of disapproval towards fake news about the wealthy index (*r* = .39, *p* < .001, *M* = 2.19, *SD* = 1.38) were composed by the same items as the ones regarding politicians. Higher scores indicate higher willingness to engage with the respective news article in a supportive or unsupportive way.[3]

Given that sharing, forwarding to friends and family, and leaving supportive comments saturated in the same factor as liking the content, we considered these behaviours as indications of participants' approval of the fake news content. On the other hand, leaving opposing comments, saturated in the same factor as reporting the news

---

[3] Despite the findings from the exploratory factor analysis, we also attempted to develop an approval of fake news scale that did not involve the "like" variable. We did this to create an approval scale that could be directly compared to the disapproval scale. Additionally, we aimed to isolate the "like" variable due to the lower user investment necessary to engage in this action, compared to other behaviours included in the scale. However, the average values of these two variables did not significantly differ from each other. As a result, we chose to maintain the factor structure that emerged from the conducted exploratory factor analysis.

article, indicating participants' discontentment and disapproval towards the news, with the intention of getting the news article removed from the social media platform.

Results

1. Preliminary results

Correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationships among the variables under study. Table 1 provides a summary of descriptive statistics and correlations among these variables, which will be used in the subsequent exploration of mediation models.

Table 1

Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Between Measures

	Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Anti-elitism	5.03	1.03								
2	Demonization of Politicians	2.89	1.34	.56***							
3	Demonization of the Wealthy	2.88	1.56	.23**	,34***						
4	Moral Disengagement towards Politicians	1.79	0.77	.15	.32***	.17*					
5	Moral Disengagement towards the Wealthy	1.89	0.77	.05	.17*	.31***	.65***				
6	Acts of Approval towards Fake News (Politicians)	1.91	1.12	.09	.22**	.19*	.31***	.27***			
7	Acts of Disapproval towards Fake News (Politicians)	2.36	1.42	.13	.13	.04	.08	.08	.21**		
8	Acts of Approval towards Fake News (The Wealthy)	2.03	1.26	.17*	.25***	.28***	.28***	.27**	.78**	.19*	
9	Acts of Disapproval towards Fake News (The Wealthy)	2.19	1.38	.03	.07	-.05	.08	.03	.12	.72***	.16*

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

As expected, we found that anti-elitism is positively correlated with the demonization of both target groups ($r = .56$, $p < .001$ for politicians and $r = .23$, $p = .004$ for the wealthy).

Also as expected, we observed that demonization of politicians is positively correlated with moral disengagement towards politicians ($r = .32$, $p < .001$). Likewise, the demonization of the wealthy is positively correlated with moral disengagement towards the wealthy ($r = .31$, $p < .001$).

Regarding the presented news, the willingness to engage in acts of approval towards the news article about politicians is positively correlated with both the demonization ($r = .22$, $p = .007$) and moral disengagement ($r = .31$, $p < .001$) towards this group. The same pattern can be observed for the news article about the wealthy, where acts of approval are positively correlated with the demonization ($r = .28$, $p < .001$) and moral disengagement ($r = .27$, $p = .001$) towards the wealthy.

Interestingly, there are positive correlations between the variables of acts of approval and acts of disapproval of the news. For instance, there is a positive correlation between approval of the news article about politicians and disapproval of the same news article ($r = .21$, $p = .008$), and a similar pattern is observed for variables related to the news article about the wealthy ($r = .16$, $p = .045$). Apparently, these results seem in total contradiction. However, when we consider the low averages found regarding the acts of approval ($M = 1.91$, regarding politicians and $M = 2.03$, regarding the wealthy), as well as the acts of disapproval ($M = 2.36$, regarding politicians and $M = 2.19$, regarding the wealthy), it seems to indicate that, in general, our participants were not willing to engage with the presented fake news. This correlation should be interpreted as the less they are willing to support, the less they are willing to disapprove the fake news, reflecting a generalized absence of motivation to interact with online news. This aligns with what the literature suggests regarding news that participants know to be false, namely that when participants are aware of the false content of the fake news, they tend to be less motivated to spread it (Chung & Kim, 2021).

2. **The effect of anti-elitist beliefs on engagement in acts of approval towards fake news**

Even though the preliminary results suggests that generally users tend to avoid engaging with fake news when they know them to be false, we expect that anti-elitist beliefs can motivate users to engage in acts of approval towards the presented news, thereby contributing to its validation and dissemination. Additionally, this effect is expected to be mediated by the demonization of the target groups (politicians and the wealthy) and subsequent moral disengagement.

To test this hypothesis, a serial mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS 4.0 version, Model 6 with 5000 bootstrap samples (Hayes, 2022). The predictor variable is anti-elitist beliefs, the first mediator is the demonization of the target group, the second mediator is moral disengagement towards each target group, and the acts of approval towards the news article is the dependent variable. This analysis yields two mediation models, one for the target group "politicians" (see Figure 3) and the other for the target group "the wealthy" (see Figure 4).

The serial mediation model explains 11% of the total variance in the model concerning politicians, $F(3, 152) = 6.33$, $p < .001$, and 13% of the total variance in the model concerning the wealthy, $F(3, 152) = 7.54$, $p < .001$.

In the first model (see Figure 3), we found that anti-elitist beliefs are significantly associated with the demonization of politicians ($b = .72$, $SE = .09$, 95% CI [0.55, 0.89]). This, in turn, significantly relates to moral disengagement towards this group ($b = .20$, $SE = .05$, 95% CI [0.09, 0.30]). Lastly, moral disengagement is significantly associated with engagement in acts of approval towards fake news about politicians ($b = .38$, $SE = .12$, 95% CI [0.15, 0.62]). The direct effect is not significant ($b = -.04$, $SE = .10$, 95% CI [-0.23, 0.16]), but the indirect effect is significant ($b = .05$, $SE = .03$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.12]).

Figure 3

Mediation Model Showing the Effect of Anti-elitism on Engagement in Acts of Approval towards Fake News about Politicians, Mediated by Demonization and Moral Disengagement about Politicians.
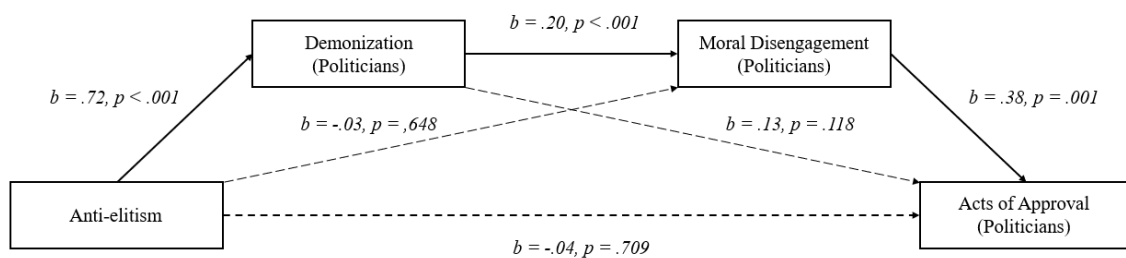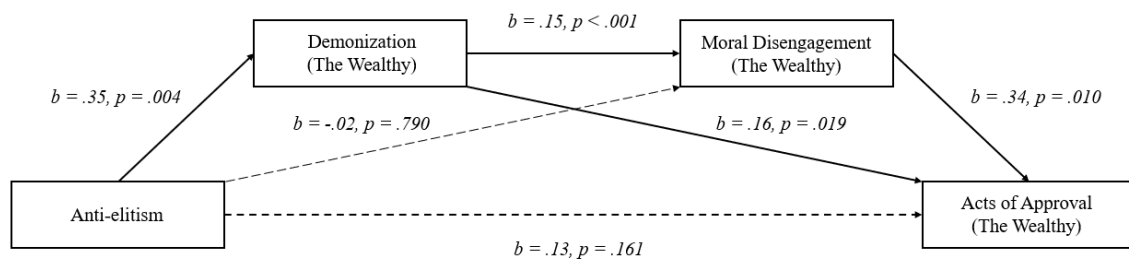
Overall, these findings indicate that the more anti-elitist individuals are, the more they demonize politicians, which, in turn, is associated with higher moral disengagement towards them and, consequently, a higher motivation to engage in acts of approval towards fake news about this target group, be it by sharing, commenting, or liking the content.

As we can see in Figure 4, the results of the model regarding the wealthy are similar to those found in the model concerning politicians. We found that anti-elitist beliefs are significantly associated with the demonization of the wealthy ($b = .35$, $SE = .12$, 95% CI [0.11, 0.58]), which, in turn, significantly relates to moral disengagement towards this group ($b = .15$, $SE = .04$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.23]). Subsequently, moral disengagement is significantly associated with engagement in acts of approval towards fake news about the wealthy ($b = .34$, $SE = .13$, 95% CI [0.09, 0.60]). The direct effect is not significant ($b = .13$, $SE = .09$, 95% CI [-0.05, 0.32]), while the indirect effect is significant ($b = .02$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.05]).

Figure 4

Mediation Model Showing the Effect of Anti-elitism on Engagement in Acts of Approval towards Fake News about The Wealthy, Mediated by Demonization and Moral Disengagement about The Wealthy.

These findings suggest that the more anti-elitist individuals are, the more they demonize the wealthy, which, in turn, is associated with higher moral disengagement towards them and, consequently, a higher motivation to engage in acts of approval towards fake news about this group, be it by sharing, commenting, or liking the content.

Additionally, the demonization of the wealthy is significantly associated with a motivation to engage in acts of approval towards fake news about the wealthy (see Figure 4, $b = .16$, $SE = .07$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.29]). The indirect effect for this model is also significant ($b = .05$, $SE = .03$, CI [0.01, 0.14]). However, when comparing the two models using pairwise contrasts of indirect effects, no significant differences were found ($b = .04$,

SE = .03, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.11]). Therefore, we can assume that the link between anti-elitist beliefs and engagement in acts of approval towards fake news about the wealthy can be understood even without needing to consider the influence of moral disengagement as a mediating factor.

By analysing these two models, we gain a better understanding of how anti-elitist beliefs may be an antecedent of people's willingness to engage in acts of approval towards news with knowingly false content, in ways that validate and disseminate it. Whether it pertains to politicians or the wealthy, the more individuals hold anti-elitist beliefs, the more they tend to demonize these target groups, which relates to a diminished sense of moral responsibility towards actions that would typically be considered immoral, such as spreading lies. This, in turn, is associated with a greater willingness to engage with content that, despite being proven false, aligns with the anti-elitists' preconceived notions about the target groups. As such, this is in line with what we expected.

3. The effect of anti-elitist beliefs on engagement in acts of disapproval towards fake news

As we have seen, anti-elitist beliefs can be considered predictors of the way people interact with false information about elite groups. This relationship is mediated by demonization and moral disengagement towards these groups. Taking this into account, we explored the same model taking disapproval of fake news as the dependent variable.

A serial mediation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS 4.0 version, Model 6 with 5000 bootstrap samples (Hayes, 2022). The analysis considered anti-elitist beliefs as the predictor variable, demonization of the target group as the first mediator, moral disengagement towards the target group as the second mediator, and the acts of disapproval towards the news article is the dependent variable. Two mediation models were created, one for the target group of politicians (see Figure 5) and another for the target group of the wealthy (see Figure 6).

Both the model regarding politicians, $F(3, 152) = 1.65$, $p = .294$, and the model regarding the wealthy, $F(3, 152) = 0.36$, $p = .781$, do not show statistically significant results.

As we can see in Figure 5, similar to the previous results, we found that anti-elitist beliefs are significantly related to the demonization of politicians which is significantly associated with increased moral disengagement. However, in the final step, which examines the relation between moral disengagement and the motivation to engage in acts of disapproval towards fake news about politicians, the effect is not significant ($b = .08$, $SE = .16$, 95% CI [-0.22 0.39]) and there is no indirect effect ($b = .12$, $SE = .02$, 95% CI [-0.03, 0.06]). The effect of demonization on the engagement in acts of disapproval is also not significant ($b = .07$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI [-0.14, 0.28]). Moreover, there is no direct effect ($b = .12$, $SE = .13$, 95% CI [-0.14, 0.39]). This suggests that anti-elitist beliefs (namely the low level of such beliefs) do not result in a motivation to engage in acts of disapproval towards fake news about this target group, through demonization and moral disengagement.

Figure 5

Mediation Model Showing the Effect of Anti-elitism on Engagement in Acts of Disapproval towards Fake News about Politicians, Mediated by Demonization and Moral Disengagement about Politician.
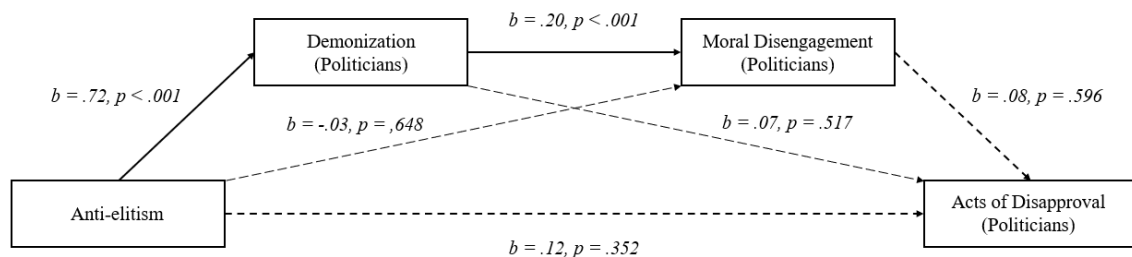
The results of the model related to the wealthy, showed in Figure 6, are similar. We found that anti-elitist beliefs are significantly associated with the demonization of the wealthy, which in turn is related to higher levels of moral disengagement.

Figure 6

Mediation Model Showing the Effect of Anti-elitism Engagement in Acts of Disapproval towards Fake News about The Wealthy, Mediated by Demonization and Moral Disengagement about The Wealthy.
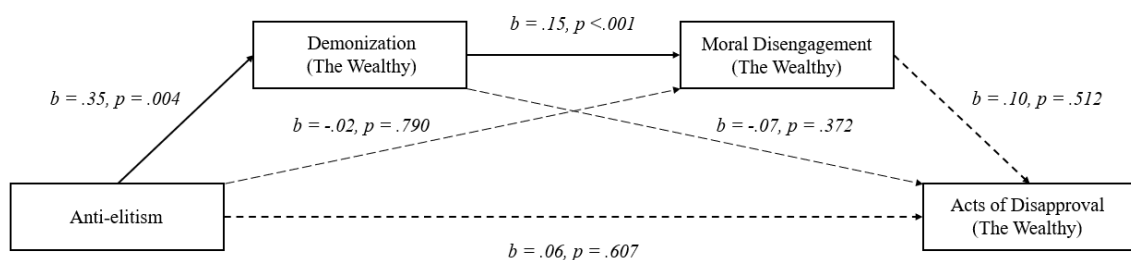
However, when examining the relationship between moral disengagement and the engagement with acts of disapproval towards the fake news about the wealthy, we found no significant effect ($b = .10$, $SE = .15$, 95% CI [-0.20, 0.40]) as well as no indirect effect ($b = .01$, $SE = .01$, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.03]). The direct effect is not significant ($b = .06$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI [-0.16, 0.28]). Moreover, the effect of demonization on the engagement in acts of disapproval is also not significant ($b = -.07$, $SE = .08$, 95% CI [-0.22, 0.08]). Once more, this suggests that anti-elitist beliefs do not predict motivation to engage in acts of disapproval towards fake news, only in acts of approval.

Discussion and conclusion

The present study aims to contribute to the understanding of why people share fake news on social media even when they are aware of the false nature of their content. By identifying the factors that drive individuals to support and spread false information, it becomes possible to address the root causes and contribute to counter the spread of fake news. Specifically, this research investigates the role of anti-elitist beliefs in the willingness to engage in acts of approval and disapproval towards fake news about target-groups belonging to the elite, as well as understanding the role of demonization and moral disengagement in this process.

The findings indicate that, when people strongly hold anti-elite beliefs, they tend to demonize more the elite groups mentioned in the presented news, which, in turn, could promote higher moral disengagement in relation to these groups. As a result, they become more willing to support and disseminate fake news about those elite groups. This could include activities such as liking the news article, sharing it with others, or sending it to friends and family.

People tend to support arguments and opinions that match their pre-existing beliefs (Van Bavel & Pereira, 2018). Because of this, it is possible to understand why people holding anti-elitist beliefs are interested in supporting and sharing news that aligned with these beliefs. Anti-elitists believe that groups such as politicians and the wealthy only act in their own self-interest and enjoy better conditions compared to the rest of the population (Erisen et al., 2021). The news article presented reported that

politicians were getting extra benefits, and that the wealthy were getting wealthier, with the passing years, in contrast with the rest of the population. As such, the presented news is in line with the pre-existing beliefs and the opinion that these individuals have of the elite groups. Previous studies also found an effect of political beliefs in the willingness to share fake news, which is consistent with our findings (Altay et al., 2021; Osmundsen et al., 2021). Altay and colleagues (2021) argue that this does not mean that people do not value the accuracy of the content they share, but instead, that factors such as confirming and justifying their beliefs, signalling their identity, derogating the outgroup or because they think that it can be interesting if true, can play a role in motivating them to share news with false content.

1. The mediating role of demonization and moral disengagement

According to our findings, and as predicted, this process occurs due to the intervention of two processes: demonization and moral disengagement. As explained in the fact-checking excerpt, the news articles presented were false. As such, despite the nature of the content aligning with participants' beliefs, some process had to make it justifiable to endorse and share news with false content, which is generally not approved by society. As predicted, through demonization and moral disengagement processes, participants made acceptable behaviours that would otherwise be considered immoral. People tend to demonize individuals in positions of power more than those without power, expecting the former to act more prosocially (Fousiani & van Prooijen, 2023; Sassenberg et al. 2012, 2014). As elites are seen as powerful and immoral by anti-elitists, the conditions are set for demonizing these groups (Fousiani & van Prooijen, 2023). By demonizing and blaming them for all the wrongdoings to the people they will not be judged by the same moral standards as other groups, justifying actions that would be immoral in other circumstances (moral disengagement towards them). Thus, through moral disengagement concerning the target-groups, anti-elitists are more willing to support and disseminate information that aligns with their beliefs and supports their opinions about elite groups, such as politicians and the wealthy, even when this information is proven to be false. Sharing fake news is a way of undermining and punishing the elite, which is consistent with previous research that demonstrates that the sharing of fake news is primarily motivated by feelings of animosity towards political

opponents rather than by positive sentiments towards one's own group (Osmundsen et al., 2021).

As we discussed earlier, the role of moral disengagement as a mediator isn't the same for both target groups. When it comes to politicians, moral disengagement plays a necessary role in creating a significant indirect effect between anti-elitist beliefs and engagement in acts of approval towards fake news about politicians. However, when the news targets the wealthy, the mere act of demonization seems to be enough to motivate participants to engage in acts of approval towards fake news about this target-group. Despite this, moral disengagement remains a possible mediator of this relationship, although it is not a mandatory one. Therefore, even though the process may not be as consistent as it is with politicians, we can assume that it follows a similar pattern.

2. Association between fake news and populist parties

The process found in this research can help understand why fake news are commonly found as part of populist parties' campaigns. These parties are among the main promoters of anti-elitist beliefs, as this is a fundamental characteristic of populism. Therefore, it makes sense that a political group that fosters aversion towards elites is associated with the use and dissemination of false information about those groups, as our results show that anti-elitist beliefs can predict the sharing of fake news about the target groups when mediated by demonization and moral disengagement towards elite groups. Even though we cannot assume that this mechanism holds true regarding other target groups, populists perceive the elite as a significant opposing faction, and so it can be expected that a substantial portion of the fake information disseminated by these political parties is aimed at this particular group. This can serve to fuel and amplify this dynamic, as the availability of fake news about the elites could promote more anti-elitist sentiment, which could lead to more engagement with fake news on this topic.

Though we have found a process through which people are more inclined to share fake news, we do not mean to suggest that people are highly motivated to do so. The general will manifested by participants to engage in acts of approval towards fake news about the target groups was very low (scale means between 1.26 and 1.90). This suggests that only a small percentage of our participants (and potentially of the population) engages

in such behaviours, and it does not reflect a widespread desire to act against the target groups on social media. This may be viewed as a positive sign, meaning that most users do not engage in the support and spread of false information, when they are aware that the content is false. However, as our results show, engagement with fake news, even though one knows them to be false, can be promoted by anti-elitist beliefs and the consequent demonization of elites and moral disengagement regarding sharing fake news that target them. For this reason, the rise in support for populist parties, and the consequent bigger platform that they get, can have dangerous consequences. As such, it is important to understand how this mechanism can be stopped.

Taking this into account, we wanted to understand if this process is specific to acts of approval towards fake news or if it could also explain the motivation to report false content and, therefore, contribute to the fight against fake news. The models were not significant, failing the final association with acts of disapproval towards fake news. Our results show, thus, that the simple decrease of derogatory processes directed to outgroups targeted in the fake news, as are the cases of demonization and of moral disengagement, are not sufficient to explain reporting behaviour.

3. Limitations

As in all studies, it is essential to critically analyse our work and to acknowledge some limitations we encountered. Our study primarily relied on self-report measures, which have limitations. For example, issues such as social desirability may have prevented participants from openly stating their intentions to show approval towards news they knew to be false. Additionally, participants' responses may have been influenced by the fact that they were responding in an artificial setting, leading to potential differences regarding what could occur in a real-life situation. This is a common problem regarding the study of the phenomenon of fake news, as it is difficult to simulate the settings that people find themselves in when facing a real fake news article. Nevertheless, as intention is an antecedent of behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), the reported intentions of participants regarding the interaction with the presented fake news allow us to draw some conclusions. The fact that we observed the process (and an undesirable one, as is the case of dissemination of fake news) in this artificial and social desirably demanding scenario,

give us confidence that this process has a high probability to occur with stronger emphasis in reality.

Furthermore, some of the scales used were adapted or created by us without undergoing the usual validation process for the Portuguese population. It was impossible, given the time limit for this work, to engage in such a procedure. To minimize these effects, several researchers of our lab team conducted the translation and selection of items and consensually decided how to proceed[4].

While acknowledging these limitations, we believe that our study provides valuable insights into the dissemination of fake news phenomenon, shedding light on the relationship between anti-elitist beliefs, demonization, moral disengagement, and the willingness to promote and share false information. However, further research and replication studies are necessary to strengthen our findings and deepen our understanding of this complex issue, namely by exploring which are the determinants of reporting fake news.

4. Future studies

To build upon the conclusions presented in this study, it could be interesting to conduct similar research in other countries to investigate differences and similarities in the mechanisms that promote the validation and sharing of fake news in different political and cultural contexts. Additionally, as we mentioned earlier, the concept of elite can vary depending on who is defining it. In this study, the elite represented groups were politicians and the wealthy. The results were clearly consistent in showing a social psychological process that potentially can be generalized. However, future studies may use other groups belonging to the elite in order to understand if the process found can explain actions towards a wider range of target groups. This process can also be tested regarding other target-groups, such as minorities, as they are also a common target of populist rhetoric. In this case, we suggest the use of a more comprehensive populist scale instead of relying solely on an anti-elitism (and namely anti-politicians) scale as the initial predictor of this process. Expanding on the current findings, we recommend delving deeper into the potential impact of fact-checking on people's reactions. To do so, future research might

---

[4] Taking the restriction of wording in this work, we chose to not detail this procedure.

be interested in including a condition in which individuals engage with news content without being informed beforehand that the information is false, as this approach could potentially strengthen the observed outcomes in this study.

This study also opens some avenues to explore which are the cognitive-motivational processes associated to the decision of spreading fake news even when there is information about their false content. Indeed, since anti-elitism beliefs emerged as a relevant predictor of such intention (to spread fake news), it would be interesting to test if anti-elitist individuals disregard such information as a result of processing information bias, or if they are engaging in a group-serving cognitive-motivational bias (ingroup favouring and not only outgroup derogating motives), in this last case, behaving with a clear deceiving intentional motivation.

Furthermore, we could not pinpoint a mechanism to effectively combat the spread of fake news. This highlights the complexity of the factors influencing individuals' actions in combating fake news and suggests that other factors beyond those we assessed may play a role in determining whether people act against the availability and dissemination of false information. In future studies it would be interesting to include other variables that could shed light on ways to tackle fake news. Self-efficacy beliefs may play a role, as people often perceive the mechanisms provided by social media platforms to report misconduct as ineffective and slow, which may deter them from reporting such situations (Wong et al., 2021). Additionally, stronger feelings of social responsibility may promote more action against fake news, as individuals with a greater sense of responsibility for society may be more motivated to take actions that benefit the community (Wong et al., 2021). Understanding the mechanisms that drive people to share fake news is crucial, but it is equally important to find ways to discourage sharing and encourage reporting behaviour when faced with fake news. This can be highly informative for social media platforms, governments, and other stakeholders about ways to promote a more responsible and healthy digital environment that serves the interests of society and becomes a tool for enhancing democracy and social equality (while preventing potential sources of conflict).

General Conclusions

In conclusion, this study contributes to our understanding of a mechanism that can promote the approval and sharing of fake news by examining the roles of anti-elitist beliefs, demonization, and moral disengagement. By understanding these processes, stakeholders such as governments, civic associations, researchers, and social media platforms, can develop more effective initiatives aimed at mitigating the factors that lead people to share fake news, thereby reducing the prevalence of this phenomenon and contributing to more positive digital environments.

As demonstrated, individuals typically lack strong motivation to interact with fake news circulated on the internet. Nonetheless, it's worth noting that pre-existing beliefs, such as anti-elitism, can serve as incentives for the spread of fake news, when mediated by demonization and moral disengagement. In recent times, we have witnessed an increase in the use of fake news as a political campaign method, especially by populist parties. Indeed, anti-elitism stands as a fundamental trait of these parties, and consequently, their political rhetoric can play a role in encouraging individuals to adopt anti-elitist beliefs. This, in turn, can foster a heightened willingness to disseminate fake news online, as demonstrated by the mechanism uncovered in this study. Hence, to effectively combat the proliferation of fake news on the internet, it becomes crucial to cultivate a political culture that doesn't centre around animosity towards specific groups, including the elites. This especially pertains to populist parties, given that this is the principal rhetoric commonly embraced by such political entities.

According to our findings, acts of approval, such as liking and sharing fake news, tend to take place when there is a higher level of moral disengagement. In contrast to our initial expectations, having lower levels of moral disengagement doesn't result in a stronger intention to report false online content. Therefore, further research is required to identify factors that encourage individuals to take a more proactive role in monitoring and reporting fake news on the internet.

References

Altay, S., Araujo, E. & Mercier, H. (2021). "If This account is True, It is Most Enormously Wonderful": Interestingness-If-True and the Sharing of True and False News. *Digital Journalism*, 1-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1941163

Bandura, A. (1999). Moral disengagement in the perpetration of inhumanities. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 3*, 193–209. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0303_3

Bandura, A. (2016). *Moral disengagement: How people do harm and live with themselves*. Macmillan.

Bryanov, K., & Vziatysheva, V. (2021). Determinants of individuals' belief in fake news: A scoping review determinants of belief in fake news. *PLoS ONE, 16*(6), 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0253717

Buzzi, P. (1994). Le front national: entre national-populisme et idéologie d'extrême droite. *Notes et études documentaires, 4996,* 15–36.

Canovan, M. (1981). *Populism*. London Junction.

Canovan, M. (1999). Trust the people! Populism and the two faces of democracy. *Political Studies, 47*(1), 2–16.

Canovan, M. (2004). Populism for political theorists? *Journal of Political Ideologies, 9*(3), 241-252. https://doi.org/10.1080/1356931042000263500

Castanho, B. C., Andreadis I., Anduiza E., & Blanuša, N. (2018). Public opinion surveys: A new scale. In K. A. Hawkins, R. Carlin, L. Littvay, & C. R. Kaltwasser (eds), *The Ideational Approach to Populism: Concept, Theory, and Analysis* (pp.150-177). Routledge

Chung, M., & Kim, N. (2021). When I Learn the News is False: How Fact-Checking Information Stems the Spread of Fake News Via Third-Person Perception. *Human Communication Research, 47*(1), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1093/hcr/hqaa010

Dentith, M. R. X. (2017). The Problem of Fake News. *Public Reason, 8,* (1–2), 65–79.

Ellard, J. H., Miller, C. D., Baumle, T., & Olson, J. M. (2002). Just world processes in demonizing. In M. Ross & D. T. Miller (eds), *The justice motive in everyday life* (pp. 350–362). Cambridge University Press.

Erisen, C., Guidi, M., Martini, S., Toprakkiran, S., Isernia, P., & Littvay, L. (2021). Psychological Correlates of Populist Attitudes. *Political Psychology, 42*(S1), 149–171. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12768

Ernst, N., Engesser, S., & Esser, F. (2017). Bipolar Populism? The Use of Anti-Elitism and People-Centrism by Swiss Parties on Social Media. *Swiss Political Science Review*, *23*(3), 253–261. https://doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12264

Ernst, N., Blassnig, S., Engesser, S., Büchel, F. & Esser, F. (2019). Populists Prefer Social Media Over Talk Shows: An Analysis of Populist Messages and Stylistic Elements Across Six Countries. *Social Media + Society, 5*(1), 1-14. https://www.doi.org/10.1177/2056305118823358

Fernández-García, B., & Salgado, S. (2022). Discourses about Fake News, Conspiracies and Counter knowledge in Spain. *Western Journal of Communication*, *86*(4), 61-580. https://doi.org/.1080/10570314.2022.2087896

Fishbein, M. & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research.* Reading.

Forgas, J. P., & Crano, W. D. (2021). The Tribal Challenge to Liberal Democracy. In J. P. Frogas, W. D. Crano, & K. Fiedler (eds), *The Psychology of Populism* (pp. 1–19). Routledge.

Fousiani, K., & van Prooijen, J. W. (2023). Motives for Punishing Powerful Vs. Powerless Offenders: The Mediating Role of Demonization. *Victims & Offenders, 18*(6), 1070-1092. https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2022.2069899

Fragale, A. R., Rosen, B., Xu, C., & Merideth, I. (2009). The higher they are, the harder they fall: The effects of wrongdoer status on observer punishment recommendations and intentionality attributions. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 108*(1), 53–65. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2008.05.002

Giner-Sorolla, R., Leidner, B., & Castano, E. (2012). Dehumanization, demonization, and morality shifting: Paths to moral certainty in extremist violence. In M. A. Hogg & D. L. Blaylock (Eds.), *Extremism and the psychology of uncertainty*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Hafer, C. L., & Begue, L. (2005). Experimental research on just-world theory: problems, developments, and future challenges. *Psychological bulletin, 131*(1), 128-167. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.131.1.128

Hayes A. F. (2022). *Introduction to mediation moderation and conditional process analysis: a regression-based approach* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.

Huckin, T. (2016). Propaganda Defined. In G. L. Henderson, M. J. Braun (Eds), *Propaganda and Rhetoric in Democracy: History, Theory, Analysis* (pp. 118-132). SIU Press.

Jagers, J., & Walgrave, S. (2007). Populism as political communication style: An empirical study of political parties' discourse in Belgium. *European Journal of Political Research, 46*(3), 319–345. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00690.x

Kriesi, H. (2014). The Populist Challenge. *West European Politics 37*(2), 361–378. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2014.887879

Lazer, D. M., Baum, M. A., Benkler, Y., Berinsky, A. J., Greenhill, K. M., Menczer, F., Metzger, M. J., Nyhan, B., Pennycook, G. & Rothschild, D. (2018). The science of fake news. *Science, 359*(6380), 1094-1096. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aao2998

Melchior, C., & Oliveira, M. (2023). A systematic literature review of the motivations to share fake news on social media platforms and how to fight them. *New Media & Society*. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448231174224

Mudde, C. (2004). The populist zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition*, *39*(4), 542–563. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x

Mudde, C. (2007). Populist radical right parties in Europe. Cambridge University Press.

Mudde, C., & Kaltwasser, C. R. (2013). Exclusionary vs. inclusionary populism: Comparing contemporary Europe and Latin America. *Government and Opposition, 48*(2). https://doi.org/147-174. 10.1017/gov.2012.11

Mudde, C., & Kaltwasser C. R. (2017). *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press

Nazar, S., & Pieters, T. (2021). Plandemic revisited: a product of planned disinformation amplifying the COVID-19 "infodemic". *Frontiers in Public Health*. *9*(649930). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.649930

Noury, A., & Roland, G. (2020). Identity Politics and Populism in Europe. *Annual Review of Political Science, 23*, 421–439. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050718-033542

Osmundsen, M., Bor, A., Vahlstrup, P. B., Bechmann, A., & Petersen, M. B. (2021). Partisan Polarization Is the Primary Psychological Motivation behind Political Fake News Sharing on Twitter. *American Political Science Review*, *115*(3), 999–1015. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000290

Sassenberg, K., Ellemers, N., & Scheepers, D. (2012). The attraction of social power: The influence of construing power as opportunity vs. responsibility. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*(2), 550–555. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.11.008

Sassenberg, K., Ellemers, N., Scheepers, D., & Scholl, A. (2014). Power corrupts revisited: The role of construal of power as opportunity or responsibility. In J. W. van Prooijen & P. A. M. van Lange (eds), *Power, politics, and paranoia: Why people are suspicious of their leaders* (pp. 73–87). Cambridge University Press.

Shu, K., Sliva, A., Wang, S., Tang, J. & Liu, H. (2017). Fake news detection on social media: a data mining perspective. *ACM SIGKDD Explorations Newsletter*, *19*(1), 22-36. https://doi.org/10.1145/3137597.3137600

Silva, F. C., & Salgado, S. (2018). Why no populism in Portugal? Changing Societies: Legacies and Challenges. *Citizenship in Crisis*, 249–268. https://doi.org/10.31447/ics9789726715047.10

Taggart, P. (2000). *Populism*. Open University Press.

Taguieff, P. A. (1998). Populismes et antipopulismes: le choc des argumentations. *Mots – Leslangages du Politique*, *55*, 5–26. https://doi.org/10.3406/mots.1998.2343

Tarragoni, F. (2021). Populism, an ideology without history? A new genetic approach. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2021.1979130

Van Bavel, J. J., Harris, E. A., Pärnamets, P., Rathje, S., Doell, K. C., & Tucker, J. A. (2021). Political Psychology in the Digital (mis)Information age: A Model of News Belief and Sharing. *Social Issues and Policy Review, 15*(1), 84–113. https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12077

Van Bavel, J. J., & Pereira, A. (2018). The Partisan Brain: An Identity-Based Model of Political Belief. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 22*(3), 213-224. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2018.01.004

Van Prooijen, J. W., & van de Veer, E. (2010). Perceiving pure evil: The influence of cognitive load and prototypical evilness on demonizing. *Social Justice Research, 23*(4), 259-271. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-010-0119-y

Wong, R. Y. M., Cheung, C. M. K., Xiao, B. & Thatcher, J. B. (2021). Standing Up or Standing By: Understanding Bystanders' Proactive Reporting Responses to Social Media Harassment. *Information Systems Research*, *32*(2), 561-581. https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.2020.0983

Wu, Y., Ngai, E., Wu, P., & Wu, C. (2022). Fake news on the internet: a literature review, synthesis and directions for future research. *Internet Research, 32*(5), 1066-2243. https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-05-2021-0294

Zhang, X. & Ghorbani, A. A. (2020). An overview of online fake news: characterization, detection, and discussion. *Information Processing and Management*, *57*(2), 102025. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2019.03.004

Zubiaga, A., Aker, A., Bontcheva, K., Liakata, M. & Procter, R. (2018). Detection and resolution of rumours in social media: a survey. *ACM Computing Surveys*, *51(*2), 32. https://doi.org/10.1145/3161603

Appendix A – Survey

Informações sobre o estudo e Consentimento Informado

Introdução e contexto: Convidamo-lo/a a participar neste estudo, integrado num projeto de Dissertação de Mestrado em Psicologia da Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto.

Objetivo: O objetivo do presente estudo é recolher a opinião da população portuguesa sobre o empobrecimento do povo.

Procedimentos: Enquanto participante deste estudo, ser-lhe-á pedido que forneça a sua opinião relativamente a aspetos relacionados com algumas publicações. Serão também pedidas algumas informações demográficas (como idade e género). A resposta a este questionário demora aproximadamente 10 minutos. Não existem respostas erradas, pelo que pedimos que responda o mais sinceramente possível.

Elegibilidade: Poderá participar neste estudo qualquer pessoa com, pelo menos, 18 anos de idade.

Riscos e benefícios: Não há riscos previsíveis associados à sua participação neste estudo. Embora este estudo não o beneficie pessoalmente, esperamos que os nossos resultados forneçam mais conhecimento sobre determinados processos psicossociais associados a fenómenos sociais relevantes.

Confidencialidade: O questionário encontra-se implementado numa plataforma gerida pela Qualtrics, sujeito às condições da licença subscrita pela FPCEUP (https://www.qualtrics.com/terms-of-service/). As suas respostas serão descarregadas da plataforma para o computador do investigador, onde serão analisadas de forma agregada, conjuntamente com as respostas dos restantes participantes. A informação será tratada de forma confidencial pelo investigador e conservada apenas pelo período necessário para cumprir as finalidades que motivaram a sua recolha.

Participação voluntária: A participação neste estudo é completamente voluntária. Pode interromper a sua participação a qualquer momento.

Questões: Para o esclarecimento de qualquer questão relativa a este estudo poderá contactar o investigador responsável (Marcos Temporão), através do endereço eletrónico: up201807178@fpce.up.pt

Declaro que tenho mais de 18 anos, que li e compreendi as informações acima indicadas e que aceito, de livre vontade, participar no estudo.

Sim
Não

Autorizo a recolha, tratamento e armazenamento dos dados acima identificados para o fim a que se destinam, e concordo com o método de disseminação dos resultados.

Sim

Não

Género:

Feminino

Masculino

Outro

Idade

[   ]

Nacionalidade

Portuguesa

Outra. Qual?

[   ]

Escolaridade (último grau concluído):

Ensino Básico

Ensino Secundário

Ensino Superior

Outra. Qual

[   ]

Situação profissional:

Trabalhador por conta de outrem

Trabalhador independente-prestação de serviços

À procura do 1º emprego

Empresário(a) – dono(a) de empresa

Reformado(a) / Pensionista

Doméstica(o)

Desempregado(a)

Estudante

Indique, de 1 a 7, como se posiciona politicamente, sendo que 1 corresponde a "Esquerda" e 7 a "Direita".

| Esquerda | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Direita |

Indique, de 1 a 7, como se posiciona politicamente **em relação a questões sociais** (e.g. despenalização do aborto), sendo que 1 corresponde a "Liberal" e 7 a "Conservador".

| Liberal | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Conservador |

Indique, de 1 a 7, como se posiciona politicamente **em relação à economia**, sendo que 1 corresponde a "Esquerda" e 7 a "Direita".

| Esquerda | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Direita |

Em comparação com os restantes cidadãos do país onde vive, qual a sua perceção em relação ao seu estatuto socioeconómico?

| 1 - Muito baixo | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 - Muito alto |

Considere as seguintes afirmações. Indique, de 1 a 7, em que medida concorda, sendo que 1 corresponde a "Discordo completamente" e 7 "Concordo completamente".

	Discordo completamente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo completamente 7
O governo é dirigido por um grupo restrito de grandes interesses que só se importam consigo mesmos	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Os políticos usam o seu poder para tentar melhorar a vida das pessoas	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Muitas pessoas no governo são desonestas	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Considere as seguintes afirmações. Indique, por favor, o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das afirmações abaixo, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo completamente) a 7 (Concordo completamente).

	Discordo completamente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo completamente 7
O empobrecimento do povo é inteiramente causado pela maldade dos políticos.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
A gravidade do empobrecimento do povo deve-se ao facto de os políticos só estarem motivados para destruir tudo o que é bom.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
A gravidade do empobrecimento do povo deve-se ao facto de os políticos parecerem gostar de prejudicar os portugueses.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Os políticos são imorais.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Quando penso nos políticos só consigo imaginar como são maus.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

43

	Discordo completamente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo completamente 7
O empobrecimento do povo é inteiramente causado pela maldade dos mais ricos.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A gravidade do empobrecimento do povo deve-se ao facto de os mais ricos só estarem motivados para destruir tudo o que é bom.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A gravidade do empobrecimento do povo deve-se ao facto de os mais ricos parecerem gostar de prejudicar os portugueses.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Os mais ricos são imorais.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Quando penso nos mais ricos só consigo imaginar como são maus.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Atente na seguinte notícia publicada por um jornal na rede social Facebook

Jornal do Douro · 🌐   ...

Uma alteração à lei, aprovada recentemente na Assembleia da República, permitirá que os governantes e deputados se possam reformar após 5 anos de serviço. Este novo esquema permite, ainda, que os ex-governantes e ex-deputados tenham acesso à subvenção vitalícia, que antes era apenas acessível para quem servisse mais de 8 ano...**Ver Mais**

jdouro.pt
Alteração à lei permite que deputados se reformem com apenas 5 anos de serviço e com acesso à subvenção vitalícia

👍 134   2 comentários 27 partilhas

👍 Gosto   💬 Comentar   ↪ Partilhar

44

Por favor, responda à seguinte questão com base na publicação que acabou de ler.

De acordo com a notícia, a nova lei permite o acesso à subvenção vitalícia pelos deputados?

Sim

Não

Atente ao seguinte excerto, retirado do site uma agência de *fact checking* (verificação de factos), em relação à notícia apresentada.

"Após averiguar a veracidade dos factos vinculados na notícia, concluiu-se que a mesma contém incorreções. Assim, quanto questionada sobre este tema, uma fonte oficial da Assembleia da República garantiu que o noticiado é falso. Aos deputados e demais titulares de cargos públicos aplica-se o regime geral da Segurança Social, ou seja, não há lugar a condições especiais no acesso à reforma. [...] Em relação às subvenções vitalícias, estas foram abolidas em 2005, pelo que após essa data nenhum novo ex-governante pode requerer a mesma.

Na escala de avaliação, o conteúdo analisado é classificado como **Falso**."

Por favor, responda à seguinte questão com base no excerto que acabou de ler.

De com as informações do excerto, as subvenções vitalícias foram abolidas em 2005?

Sim

Não

Considere as seguintes afirmações. Indique, por favor, o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das afirmações abaixo, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo completamente) a 7 (Concordo completamente).

	Discordo completamente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo completamente 7
É aceitável partilhar informação potencialmente falsa sobre políticos quando ela apoia causas importantes para o povo português.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Partilhar informação potencialmente falsa sobre políticos é apenas uma consequência dos seus atos.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Partilhar informação potencialmente falsa sobre políticos não é tão grave como outras coisas que as pessoas fazem online.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Os portugueses são obrigados a partilhar informação potencialmente falsa sobre os políticos porque os políticos também partilham.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

	Discordo completamente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo completamente 7
Se algum português partilhar uma informação potencialmente falsa sobre políticos é injusto culpar todos os portugueses.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
A partilha de informação potencialmente falsa sobre políticos não tem um impacto assim tão grande nos políticos.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Se algum português partilha informação potencialmente falsa sobre políticos é porque um político partilhou primeiro.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Não faz mal partilhar informação danosa potencialmente falsa sobre um político porque não têm sentimentos, logo não se sentem magoados.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Considere que encontra a notícia apresentada numa rede social. Indique, por favor, quais as ações que gostaria de realizar, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo completamente) a 7 (Concordo completamente).

	Discordo completamente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo completamente 7
Colocar um gosto	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Deixar um comentário de apoio	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Deixar um comentário de oposição	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Partilhar	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

	Discordo completamente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo completamente 7
Encaminhar para amigos	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Encaminhar para familiares	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Denunciar o conteúdo	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

47

Atente na seguinte notícia publicada por um jornal na rede social Facebook

O Económico · ⊚   ···

Ao longo dos últimos 10 anos, a desigualdade entre os mais ricos e os mais
pobres tem vindo a agravar-se. A diferença entre os 20% mais ricos e os 20%
mais pobres nunca foi maior. Um estudo recente indica, ainda, que a
acumulação de riqueza por parte dos mais endinheirados tem promovido o
empobrecimento da população e o aumento significativo do número de
pessoas em risco de pobrez... **Ver Mais**

economico.pt
A desigualdade económica cresce exponencialmente em Portugal, colocando
cada vez mais pessoas em risco de pobreza ou exclusão social

👍 103   3 comentários 15 partilhas

👍 Gosto   💬 Comentar   ↪ Partilhar

Por favor, responda à seguinte questão com base na notícia que acabou de ler.

De acordo com a informação da notícia, ao longo da última década, a desigualdade
económica entre os mais ricos e os mais pobres tem vindo a agravar-se?

Sim

Não

Atente ao seguinte excerto, retirado do site uma agência de *fact checking* (verificação de factos), em relação à notícia apresentada.

"Após uma análise dos conteúdos da notícia, foi possível concluir que os dados apresentados não estão corretos. De facto, os principais indicadores utilizados para medir a desigualdade económica, como o índice Gini, demonstram que esta forma de desigualdade tem vindo a diminuir. [...] Dados da PORDATA mostram que o número de pessoas em risco de pobreza ou exclusão social também tem vindo a diminuir, sendo que em 2020 existiam menos 721 mil pessoas nesta condição do que em 2008.

Na escala de avaliação, o conteúdo analisado é classificado como **Falso**."

Por favor, responda à seguinte questão com base no excerto que acabou de ler.

De acordo com o excerto, os dados indicam menos pessoas em situação de pobreza em 2020 do que em 2008?

Sim
Não

Considere as seguintes afirmações. Indique, por favor, o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das afirmações abaixo, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo completamente) a 7 (Concordo completamente).

	Discordo completamente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo completamente 7
É aceitável partilhar informação potencialmente falsa sobre os mais ricos quando ela apoia causas importantes para o povo português.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Partilhar informação potencialmente falsa sobre os mais ricos é apenas uma consequência dos seus atos.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Partilhar informação potencialmente falsa sobre os mais ricos não é tão grave como outras coisas que as pessoas fazem online.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

49

Os portugueses são obrigados a partilhar informação potencialmente falsa sobre os mais ricos porque os mais ricos também partilham.

○　　○　　○　　○　　○　　○　　　○

	Discordo completamente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo completamente 7

Se algum português partilhar uma informação potencialmente falsa sobre os mais ricos é injusto culpar todos os portugueses.

○　　○　　○　　○　　○　　○　　　○

A partilha de informação potencialmente falsa sobre os mais ricos não tem um impacto assim tão grande nos mais ricos.

○　　○　　○　　○　　○　　○　　　○

Se algum português partilha informação potencialmente falsa sobre os mais ricos é porque um rico partilhou primeiro.

○　　○　　○　　○　　○　　○　　　○

Não faz mal partilhar informação danosa potencialmente falsa sobre os mais ricos porque não têm sentimentos, logo não se sentem magoados.

○　　○　　○　　○　　○　　○　　　○

Considere que encontra a notícia apresentada numa rede social. Indique, por favor, quais as ações que gostaria de realizar, usando uma escala de 1 (Discordo completamente) a 7 (Concordo completamente).

	Discordo completamente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo completamente 7
Colocar um gosto	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Deixar um comentário de apoio	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Deixar um comentário de oposição	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Partilhar	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

	Discordo completamente 1	2	3	4	5	6	Concordo completamente 7
Encaminhar para amigos	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Encaminhar para familiares	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Denunciar o conteúdo	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Agradecimento e Debriefing

Em primeiro lugar, agradecemos a sua participação e o tempo que disponibilizou para o preenchimento deste questionário. O seu contributo é extremamente importante para a nossa investigação.

Em Psicologia Social, para podermos estudar determinados fenómenos e observar os processos psicossociais a eles associados frequentemente recorremos à construção de "cenários", para permitir que os nossos participantes sejam colocados em situações semelhantes às que queremos estudar. Estes cenários respondem a dois objetivos:

1. Conhecer as causas de determinados fenómenos. Ao construirmos estes cenários, estamos a controlar, dentro dos possíveis, as condições em que os nossos participantes se encontram. Assim, podemos conhecer que alterações dos cenários causam diferenças nos comportamentos das pessoas.
2. Proteger os nossos participantes enquanto estudamos temas delicados. Por exemplo, se queremos estudar a discriminação não devemos provocá-la de forma a vê-la acontecer realmente, porque haverá sempre alguém que poderá ser vítima deste fenómeno. Assim, ao construirmos estes cenários protegemos potenciais vítimas.

No estudo em que participou, as publicações na rede social Twitter foram construídas apenas para efeitos de estudo e nem o seu conteúdo, nem os seus autores, são verdadeiros. O principal objetivo deste estudo foi compreender de que forma é que as pessoas interagem com publicações populistas nas redes sociais. Para isso, foi estudada a intervenção de vários processos psicossociais, tais como a demonização ou descomprometimento moral. Este objetivo não pôde ser mencionado no início porque levaria a que o/as nosso/as participantes não respondessem de forma espontânea perante a situação que expusemos. Caso tenha alguma questão, relembramos que pode entrar em contacto com o investigador responsável - Marcos Temporão - pelo email up201807178@fpce.up.pt

Agradecemos a sua participação neste inquérito.
A sua resposta foi registada.

Appendix B – Fake news and fact-checking regarding politicians

Jornal do Douro

Uma alteração à lei, aprovada recentemente na Assembleia da República, permitirá que os governantes e deputados se possam reformar após 5 anos de serviço. Este novo esquema permite, ainda, que os ex-governantes e ex-deputados tenham acesso à subvenção vitalícia, que antes era apenas acessível para quem servisse mais de 8 ano...**Ver Mais**

jdouro.pt
Alteração à lei permite que deputados se reformem com apenas 5 anos de serviço e com acesso à subvenção vitalícia

134   2 comentários 27 partilhas

Gosto   Comentar   Partilhar

1. Fake news regarding politicians

Atente ao seguinte excerto, retirado do site uma agência de *fact checking* (verificação de factos), em relação à notícia apresentada.

"Após averiguar a veracidade dos factos vinculados na notícia, concluiu-se que a mesma contém incorreções. Assim, quanto questionada sobre este tema, uma fonte oficial da Assembleia da República garantiu que o noticiado é falso. Aos deputados e demais titulares de cargos públicos aplica-se o regime geral da Segurança Social, ou seja, não há lugar a condições especiais no acesso à reforma. [...] Em relação às subvenções vitalícias, estas foram abolidas em 2005, pelo que após essa data nenhum novo ex-governante pode requerer a mesma.

Na escala de avaliação, o conteúdo analisado é classificado como **Falso**."

2. Fact-checking regarding the news about politicians

Appendix C – Fake news and fact-checking regarding the wealthy

O Económico · ⊘   ···

Ao longo dos últimos 10 anos, a desigualdade entre os mais ricos e os mais pobres tem vindo a agravar-se. A diferença entre os 20% mais ricos e os 20% mais pobres nunca foi maior. Um estudo recente indica, ainda, que a acumulação de riqueza por parte dos mais endinheirados tem promovido o empobrecimento da população e o aumento significativo do número de pessoas em risco de pobrez... **Ver Mais**

economico.pt
A desigualdade económica cresce exponencialmente em Portugal, colocando cada vez mais pessoas em risco de pobreza ou exclusão social

👍 103   3 comentários 15 partilhas

👍 Gosto   💬 Comentar   ↪ Partilhar

    1.   Fake news regarding the wealthy

Atente ao seguinte excerto, retirado do site uma agência de *fact checking* (verificação de factos), em relação à notícia apresentada.

"Após uma análise dos conteúdos da notícia, foi possível concluir que os dados apresentados não estão corretos. De facto, os principais indicadores utilizados para medir a desigualdade económica, como o índice Gini, demonstram que esta forma de desigualdade tem vindo a diminuir. [...] Dados da PORDATA mostram que o número de pessoas em risco de pobreza ou exclusão social também tem vindo a diminuir, sendo que em 2020 existiam menos 721 mil pessoas nesta condição do que em 2008.

Na escala de avaliação, o conteúdo analisado é classificado como **Falso**."

    2.   Fact-checking regarding the news about the wealthy