ISSN: 2230-9926

Available online at http://www.journalijdr.com

IJDR

International Journal of Development Research
Vol. 12, Issue, 12, pp. 60747-60749, December, 2022
https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.25931.12.2022

RESEARCH ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

TRUTH, MISINFORMATION AND FAKE SCIENCE

***Ana Regina Barros Rêgo Leal**

Federal University of Piauí-UFPI

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received 19th September, 2022
Received in revised form
22nd October, 2022
Accepted 09th November, 2022
Published online 25th December, 2022

KeyWords:
Truth; Misinformation; Fake science.

****Corresponding author:***
Ana Regina Barros Rêgo Leal

ABSTRACT

The present communication discusses the relations of truth and the social context in which it is affirmed, relating temporality, contextuality and historicity, having as a starting point the thoughts of Foucault and Nietzsche. The text also seeks to place disinformation and fake science in the context of confronting the truth as a fissure in the social fabric that exposes the tensions among regimes of truth.

Copyright©2022, Ana Regina Barros Rêgo Leal. *This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.*

Citation: ***Ana Regina Barros Rêgo Leal.*** "Truth, misinformation and fake science*", International Journal of Development Research*, 12, (12), 60747-60749.

INTRODUCTION

For Foucault, societies, in their temporalities, have regimes agreed upon a "general policy" of truth. This, according to the author, means that each society defines which discourses and narratives are acceptable in their social context. Several mechanisms and loci of power end up defining, from the historical point of view and from the historicity of the phenomenon of truthpoint of view, strategies that "[...] allow distinguishing between true and false statements, the way in which one and the other are sanctioned, the techniques and procedures that are valued for obtaining the truth, the status of those who have the function of saying what counts as true" (FOUCAULT, 2010, p.112).

This establishment of regimes of truth temporally and contextually sheds light on the different perceptions of truth that pervade the history of humanity.

In *The Order of discourse*, Foucault (2016) defines the systems of exclusion and distinction that interfere in discourse, which, in turn, emerges as a vehicle for power. The exclusion systems would be centered in the *Interdiction* that reveals a regulation about what, where and how it should be spoken of. In *Separation and rejection,* that manifest the opposite relationship between reason and madness, with the supremacy of reason over madness. And, finally, in *The Will to Truth*, based on Nietzsche, in which he deals, as seen previously, with the dichotomous, but intrinsic, relationship between truth and deceit.

Therefore, in Foucault as in Nietzsche (2007, 2011), *the will to truth* is directly related to the *will to power*. Controlling the construction of what is or can be true is, in itself, a strategy of domination, constitution and maintenance of power, since it carries elements of regulation, control of what can circulate socially as premises of what is said and believed as true, since the human being in society moves towards the encounter with *veritas*, whose social convention is the guide to a state of good living.

Later, in *The History of sexuality I*, Foucault (1999) confronts the *will to truth and the will to know*, situating the *will to truth* as an exclusion mechanism as strong as the opposition between reason and madness. At that moment, Foucault seeks to trace a morphology that allows him to delve deeper into humanity's problems with the truth. The core point would be to reveal the role of *exclusion of the will to truth* in relation to the discourse in which it manifests itself. To this end, he also focuses on issues of arbitrary power and coercive systems, which are in tension with the historical and social struggles that dispute the construction of truth.

In this context, Foucault (1999) is guided by concerns about games that seek to guide the truth against fraud, locating socially accepted conventions in a truth/error system. According to Rêgo and Barbosa (2020), Foucault seeks to decipher whether the games oftruth also include a will to know, which would thus interconnect with both truth and knowledge.

In another moment, Foucault (2011) continues his genealogical enterprise about the truth and, in *The Courage of Truth* presents a

historical trajectory of the phenomenon through the ages. It begins in the first class with *parrhesia* as a form of frank speech located in antiquity, in which the parrhesiast was endowed with a specific form of *truth-telling* and *truth-telling about oneself*. To, then, work on the truth of the technician (teacher, doctor, musician, etc.), of the philosopher, of the prophet, placing them in their social places that gave them power of speech and audience, as well as forms of manifestation of their truths, through their specific knowledge, applied temporarily in their societies, in which they conquered social respectability.

In Foucault's work, we can perceive two ways to understand a history of truth, one that focuses on the construction processes of a discourse that passes itself off as socially true, detailing the peculiarities of its historicity in its temporalities. On the other hand, Foucault works on the relationship between truth and power, which end up being consistent with social phenomena structured from tensionalities, which are often coercive (RÊGO and BARBOSA, 2020).

In short, and for Foucault, societies, in their temporalities, elevate certain institutions to the condition of places of truth, which, in turn, have their spokespersons.

It is still necessary to reinforce what was said above in another way, and it consists in the fact that *veritas* has an internal structure that regulates the discursive construction and an external one through networks through which it interconnects with society.favouring power structures.

In recent centuries, Western society included in modernity has been marked by the regime of truth forged in this historical temporality, based on scientificist methods that had in the *cogito* and in the Descartes' method the beginning of their dominance in the sciences and in the institutions raised to the condition of pillars of modernity, such as journalism and freedom of the press.

Foucault's path in his genealogy and morphology of truth reveals that around the construction of veracity, as something that is proved to be true, there is also the encounter with values and beliefs, leading to a belief in *what is said to be true*, theoretically, would be the belief in the basis of the real that would promote the ballast of true discourse.

In regards to journalism and the communicational and media field, it is possible to locate different construction processes of what can be taken as true in the regimes of modernity and postmodernity, or, liquid modernity, as required by Baumann (2003).

In modernity, methods will connectto the economic field, making discourses that are taken as true marketable, such as what happened with journalism. It is at this point that it is worth contemplating that scientific methods were constituted and articulated to work on true constructions that were increasingly indisputable throughout modernity and that today are put under suspicion from different angles until reaching denialist movements in the scientific and historical realms, for example.

On another front, the speech of God, that was thought to be silenced in modernity and that stands as the only one that does not need a method, since it is reportedly based on the system of values and beliefs and claims itself as superior to the human from the start, therefore undeniable, ends up returning with great force at this moment, contesting what has been established and opposing science on several fronts.

It is in this interim that we find ourselves today between criticism and crisis, here plagiarizing the title of Koselleck's book (2009), since the criticisms that we have carried out, especially from the human sciences on the fetishization of the method (Sodré, 2014) and which contributes to the crisis of truth and of the social credibility of institutions such as journalism, is also fostering a paradox in which we find ourselves today, between a desire for the past not always triggered by a critical tradition, but that could at least takes us back to the social level of credibility and locus of truth situated in a past, even so, promising of a social and economic status. And a desire for the future, for the social transformation of the institutions that now conform around new pacts of truth that, beyond the clashes between evidence and belief, can build a third way that adds traces of reality, beyond its effects, without necessarily forge the subjective as objective, the partial as impartial, among other aspects of its possible constitution around what may *come to be taken as true*.

What nowadays disputes the status of true is confronted daily and with great intensity with fraud hybridized in various narrative constructions that circulate as a disinformation phenomenon within society and it has a double challenge that is structured in a reticular way in digital social networks and that come from a market for the intentional construction of disinformation and a social context of production, as well as from the welcoming of disinformation narratives by society, structuring a social phenomenon of great proportions, where a false science finds acceptance.

Pseudoscience has a trajectory linked to scientific denialism and, after the Second World War, it became a political and marketing strategy, not only for different visions of the world and desires for the future, but, often for genocide of the poor and vulnerable, for profit and domination, as we experience today in Brazil and in many countries around the world.

The *fake Science* that makes up the phenomenon of disinformation, makes up today, as well as the *fake news*, a complex category that ends up conforming different types of narratives that are consolidated through different strategies of action, gain of visibility and credibility.

Fake Science, also known as pseudoscience, is therefore not composed solely of fraud, on the contrary, it is anchored in scientific processes and methods, with the aim of opposing science, which has led not only the lay public to believe in widely disseminated false research, for example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, but has also led professionals from areas connected to life sciences, such as medicine, to adhere to such false discourses.

Scientific publications qualified as credible sources are targets of falsifications that seek exactly to add positive value stored in scientific journals. In this specific case, researchers who are fake or not, but whose intention is to oppose science and deny it, expose the use of scientific methods, while manipulating data and results. This practice has become commonplace since about 40 years ago when the tobacco industry engaged retired scientists to create a manual with action strategies that aimed to counter science evidence regarding the harmful effects of cigarettes, notably, as a cause of cancer. Among the strategies were both the invasion of pseudoscience in the scientific field, with manipulated or false publications, as well as intervention in the educational process and occupation of media spaces. A very similar strategy to the one used in the political field since Goebbels, respecting the due proportions.

Since then, it is possible to accesswebsites that publish true research with manipulated data, as well as fake websites that are replicas of the UN or UNESCO websites, or of the World Institute for Climate Monitoring, making it difficult for a lay person to tell whether a website is legitimate or not. In addition, fake research ends up being published in consolidated journals and present in credible databases such as the *Web of Science*, raising doubts even in the scientific society. It is worth to highlight that doubt is both the basis of science, since it drives research and boosts the production of knowledge, and the trigger of denialism and misunderstanding.

Countless examples of scientific disinformation can be found throughout the 20th century, however, it is the current pandemic moment that has boosted the production of pseudoscience.

In 2006, the South Korean scientist Woo Suk-Hwang was exposed in a research in which he stated that he had achieved human cloning, however, it was just a fraud.

In 2018, the journal *Neuroquantology* published the article "DNA modifications through remote intentions". The authors ofsuch article claim to have analysed the data statistically and applied academic and scientific rigor, however, the experiment itself is potentially a fraud, since mutations in DNA do not happen by manipulating the mind remotely.

In 2020 and 2021 we experienced a real battle between the regimes of truth of science (evidence) and of many doctors (experience) disputing the truth about early treatment usinga Covid-19 kit, which led to numerous controversial publications, in addition to manipulated publications such as those that circulated recently and had as reference the Oxford research on Ivermectin, which in Brazil was modified and used in many ways, aiming to manipulate the audience. Finally, the Brazilian Secretary of Health itself published an official report attesting to the ineffectiveness of the drugs that made up the Covid kit to treat the new coronavirus.

On the other hand, currently, science and medicine characters put themselves in the disinformation market as endowed with credibility, given their adherence to the scientific field, however, as we have seen nowadays, many only act to disseminate false or distorted information that can evenjeopardize people's health, as in the case of half a million Brazilians killed by Covid-19.

Some of these "physicians" or "nurses" have monetized channels on digital platforms and those with a great number of followers end up making a lot of money from misinformation, which today is a product with great marketing potential.

In this scenario, disinformation in science has led to an increase in scientific denialism, which currently has a great and powerful ally in the anti-vaccination movement, whose daily production of disinformation narratives that circulate across different digital platforms and reach simpler people, causing great damage among Brazilians and North Americans, but the situation is not different in India or in African countries.

In the Brazilian case, they are acting directly to discredit vaccines, such as Coronavac, for example, which has been suffering daily attacks, but the other vaccines also do not go unnoticed, many are accused of installing 5g chipsets or of causing death in a few years.

This invasion of disinformation led Brazilians from all regions and a large number of indigenous people to death, as the fake news about vaccines is combined with disinformation about the use masks and social distance, composing an architecture of planned and programmed death.

Acknowledgements: UFPI e CNPq.

REFERENCES

BAUMAN, Zygmunt (2003). Modernidade líquida. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar.

FOUCAULT, Michel (2011). A coragem de verdade. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.

FOUCAULT, Michel (2016). L'ordredudiscours. Paris: Gallimard.

FOUCAULT, Michel (1999). História da sexualidade 1*:* a vontade de saber. Rio de Janeiro: Edições Grall.

FOUCAULT, Michel (2010). Ditos e Escritos IV: estratégia, poder-saber. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária.

KOSELLECK, Reinhart (2009). Crítica e crise. Rio de Janeiro: EDUERJ.

NIETZSCHE, Friedrich (2007). Fragmentos finais. Brasília: Ed. UNB.

NIETZSCHE, Friedrich (2011). A vontade poder. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto.

RÊGO, Ana Regina e BARBOSA, Marialva (2020). A construção intencional da ignorância: o mercadodas informaçõesfalsas. Rio de Janeiro : Maud X.

****