

ZeMKI-Online-Forschungskolloquium

ZeMKI *Online* Research Seminar

Linzer Str. 4, Room 60.070, 28359 Bremen, DE

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Prof. Dr. Hillel Nossek

(Kinneret Academic College on the Sea of Galilee, Israel)

Who is Afraid of Fake News?

The message, the medium, and the audience - Covid-19 as a case study

Abstract:

The phenomenon of Fake News, despite its historical past, rose to the media agenda and public agenda around the candidacy and election of US President Donald Trump, who often used it in diverse ways and primarily to define what his enemies are doing. Most research on the subject deals with content and criticism of the sources and distributive media, but only a minority deals with the target audience of public messages, the media audience that should make decisions based on false information. The presentation deals mainly with the audience, how it defines the phenomenon, how it recognizes or does not recognize Fake News, to whom it attributes the production, and especially whom it believes and does not believe creates Fake News. The question of trust in the media and their ability to check and verify the information is a critical question for the quality of information people consume in democratic societies. The new media that allows everyone to be creators and not just passive consumers adds a critical element to the information sources. Initial research in Israel indicated that the public regards legacy media as less responsible than other media for disseminating fake news, while the leading distributors of fake news are, in the public's opinion, the social networks (61%). According to the Israeli public opinion, legacy media are considered more reliable than others (48%) except for family and friends who are more valued and came in the first place (68%). Legacy media are valued more than others as the ones that can prevent the spread of fake news. The least trusted that are responsible for spreading "fake news" are the spokespersons, public relations agents, politicians, and social networks. Covid-19 pandemic and especially the vaccinations put the issue of trust in the media information and the audience reactions to it on the public and research agenda. The main question will be: whether the preliminary findings of elections Fake News may explain the audience's reactions to Fake News about Covid-19 and the vaccinations.

Bio:

Hillel Nossek is head of the research authority and head of the Communications Department of the Kinneret Academic College on the Sea of Galilee. Since October 2018, he is head of the Dan Shomron Institute for Research on Security, Society and Peace Studies. Among the academic positions he held in the past: Dean of the School of Communications, Head of the Research Authority and Head of the Teaching Authority of the College of Management Academic Studies, Chairman of the Israel Communication Association and Head of the Media, Public Opinion and Society Sector at the International Association for the Study of Mass Media. Editor of the Journal of the Israel Communication Association: Media Frameworks (from 2015). His primary research and publications include the consumption of new and old media, and their use for the construction of social identities; News in general and foreign news in particular (production, distribution, and consumption). He is also interested in the link between political violence, terrorism and media; Military and media relations in general, and military and security censorship in particular, as well as community communications and alternative media.