

The Interference of Propaganda and Rumor in the Formation of Social Awareness: An Analytical Study in the Light of the Incident of Release

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Abstract

This study examines the intricate relationship between propaganda and rumor in shaping collective consciousness within Islamic societies, using the historical case of the "Incident of Al-Ifk" as a focal point. The research explores definitions, mechanisms, and forms of both propaganda and rumor, emphasizing their psychological and social dimensions. Through qualitative analysis of classical and contemporary sources, the study highlights how rumors can be amplified by systematic propaganda, leading to profound impacts on social cohesion and ethical values. Furthermore, the paper discusses the societal responses to such phenomena, drawing lessons for modern societies faced with the proliferation of misinformation, especially in the digital age. Recommendations are proposed to mitigate the spread of harmful rumors and malicious propaganda, emphasizing the roles of media literacy, ethical leadership, and legislative frameworks.

Keywords: Propaganda, Rumor, Collective Consciousness, Al-Ifk Incident, Islamic Society, Social Psychology, Media Literacy.

Introduction

Human societies today are increasingly challenged by the tyranny of information and its rapid circulation through traditional and digital media channels, making it difficult for individuals and institutions to distinguish between facts and rumors, and between targeted messages and spontaneous content. In this intertwined context, the forces of propaganda and rumor converge to redraw societal values and guide the collective behavior of individuals beyond the capacity of traditional critical examination. The complexity of this landscape is further complicated by technological developments and the spread of social media, where news and messages are moving at lightning speed, often lacking minimal verification or scrutiny, putting society in direct confrontation with successive waves of intended and unintended media influences.

In this context, the great problem of the dialectical relationship between propaganda and rumor arises, as rumor is not limited to being unreliable news, but turns into an effective tool for social influence when it meets well-established propaganda strategies that seek to influence the public's attitudes and shape their perceptions about pivotal issues. The danger of this lies in the fact that rumor and propaganda have the ability to access the psychological and social structures of individuals, which makes their impact go beyond the apparent dimension of news to reflect on values, norms and attitudes within society.

Hence, it is increasingly important to study the interaction of propaganda and rumor in the Islamic context, not only to understand the dimensions of the historical incident of the

incident of disengagement and the social and religious controversy it provoked, but also to draw inspiration from lessons on how to build effective community immunity in the face of the flood of misinformation and false news that threaten the cohesion of modern societies. This research

adopts a critical analytical methodology that combines the reading of authentic heritage sources, such as the Prophet's biography and interpretations of the Holy Quran, with modern literature in the fields of media, sociology and social psychology, in order to draw a comprehensive and integrated picture of the relationship between propaganda and rumor, and to indicate its effects on the collective construction of the nation.

In its chapters, the research will deal with the basic concepts and analysis of the mechanisms of proliferation and the mechanisms of influence, and provide an in-depth reading of the episode of Fakk as a historical application model, before concluding by proposing a set of practical solutions and preventive strategies to confront rumors and tendentious propaganda in contemporary Islamic society.

Literature Review and Previous Studies

The Western and Arab literature is unanimous that propaganda and rumor have a profound influence in shaping the consciousness of societies, especially during crises. Western studies indicate that rumor spreads in the absence of reliable information, and propaganda relies on the exploitation of psychological emotions to achieve specific goals (Allport & Postman: 1965, p.19). While the Arabic literature focused on the danger of rumor and propaganda in social destabilization, and showed the complementary relationship between them in targeting public opinion (Darwish: 1998, p. 67; Alayan: 2005, p. 110). Contemporary studies have also shown the impact of conscious media in reducing the spread of rumors, especially in the contexts of health and community crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic in Algeria (Bouderbala et al.: 2022, p. 123).

In the Islamic context, the Al-Afak incident emerged as a unique model for analyzing the convergence of propaganda and rumor in shaping public opinion and influencing the cohesion of society, while showing the importance of ascertainment and wisdom in the face of false news (Ibn Kathir: Interpretation of Surat Al-Nur). There is still a need for in-depth comparative studies that monitor the interaction between the two phenomena within historical and contemporary contexts (Darwish: 1998, p. 18).

Methodology and research plan

This study adopted an analytical descriptive approach based on tracking the relationship between propaganda and rumor by analyzing the historical and social context, focusing on the episode of unfolding as an applied model. The research combines a historical approach that monitors the evolution of the two phenomena across original sources, and a comparative approach that approximates the classical and contemporary contexts to observe similarities and differences.

A review of various academic and historical sources, including biographies and interpretation books, as well as modern literature in media and communication sciences, was relied upon in order to analyze the nature of the dialectical relationship between propaganda and rumor, and to explore the psychological and social dimensions of their spread in societies.

Definition of propaganda and rumor and their forms

First: The Concept of Advertising

Propaganda is defined as a structured process that aims to influence the attitudes and

behaviors of individuals and groups by conveying media messages with specific contents that serve political, social, or economic objectives. Advertising is thoughtful and planned, relying on psychological and communication means and methods to change the intellectual attitudes of the target audience (Jowett & O'Donnell: 2015, p. 7).

Propaganda is divided into main types according to its purpose and the transparency of its source:

- **White propaganda:** Explicit and clear-sourced, often credible and overt.
- **Gray propaganda:** not precisely sourced, combining some facts with some misinformation.
- **Black propaganda:** It relies on lying and forgery, and hides its true source to achieve its goals.

Propaganda's primary goals include influencing public opinion, mobilizing the masses, arousing emotions, fostering loyalty to authority or the establishment, and confusing opponents or competitors (Alayan: 2005, p. 22).

Second: The Concept of Rumor

A rumor is a piece of information that is transmitted verbally or through means of communication without verifying its authenticity, and its source is often unreliable. Especially in times of ambiguity or crisis, rumor spreads very quickly, strongly influencing individuals' behavior and attitudes (Allport & Postman: 1965, p. 33).

Forms of rumor:

- **Misleading rumor:** Aimed at distorting facts or misleading public opinion.
- **Inciting rumor:** It urges people to a certain behavior, and may exploit feelings of fear or anger.
- **Positive rumor:** Although sometimes inaccurate, it has a positive psychological or social impact such as raising morale.
- **Negative rumor:** Aimed at discrediting a person or group.
- **Political rumour:** It spreads in times of crises and elections and aims to manipulate political trends.
- **Social rumour:** relates to personal and societal news, and often leads to social divisions (Darwish: 1998, p. 53).

Third: The dialectical relationship between propaganda and rumor

Propaganda and rumour overlap in many aspects. Propaganda often exploits rumour as a tool to strengthen its messages or weaken opponents. Rumour can also be used to pave the way for major propaganda campaigns. Rumor prepares public opinion, while propaganda invests this influence in favor of specific goals, and the relationship between them is often strengthened in times of transformation and crisis (Alayan: 2005, p. 44).

Analyzing the incident of unraveling as an applied model for the relationship between propaganda and rumor

1. Historical context

The Al-Ifak incident is one of the most prominent historical incidents faced by the Muslim community in Medina in the sixth year of the Hijra. It began when some hypocrites spread a rumor accusing Mrs. Aisha, may God be pleased with her, of committing a shameful thing while returning from the battle of Bani Al-Mutlaq. The rumor affected public opinion and caused great turmoil among Muslims, as people approached it without verification, and the fraught atmosphere and social and political conditions at the time contributed to its spread

(Ibn Kathir: Interpretation of Surat Al-Nur, p. 571).

2. Mechanisms for the spread of rumor and the role of propaganda

The spread of rumor in the Al-Ifak incident relied on several mechanisms, the most important of which is the continuous repetition of the news among people, and the circulation of the novel between councils and markets, without the availability of a reliable source or conclusive evidence. The hypocrites took advantage of the troubled psychological state of society and contributed to amplifying doubts, which made the rumor seem like a reality. In this context, propaganda took the opposite character, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was keen to verify the news, and not respond to pressures until the innocence of Mrs. Aisha appeared in the revelation of verses from the Holy Quran (Ibn Hisham: The Prophet's Biography, vol. 2, p. 345; Ibn Kathir: Interpretation of Surat Al-Nur, p. 573).

3. The role of influential figures in amplifying the rumor

Influential figures, especially hypocrites such as Abdullah bin Abi bin Salul, played a major role in amplifying and promoting the rumor, using their social status to spread suspicion and cause strife. They relied on psychological and emotional influence, taking advantage of ambiguity and uncertainty to spread the rumor in a systematic way. On the other hand, the close companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) confronted this rumor, and showed defensive positions calling for confirmation and not rushing to judgment (Ibn Kathir: Tafsir Surat al-Nur, p. 574; Darwish: 1998, p. 72).

4. Psychosocial dimensions of the spread of rumor

The incident of unraveling shows how rumor finds fertile ground in societies when feelings of doubt and uncertainty prevail. Social pressures and the desire to know played a role in prompting individuals to believe the rumor or promote it without verification. Emotional emotions, such as fear, anger, and jealousy, have also had a profound impact on the rapid spread of rumor and enhanced its impact on the social fabric (Allport & Postman: 1965, p. 53; Darwish: 1998, p. 77).

5. Leadership Response and Legitimacy

The leadership response of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) represents a model of wisdom, patience and steadfastness; he refused to make hasty judgments, called for investigation and investigation, and worked to calm societal tension until revelation came to declare the innocence of Mrs. Aisha. This position showed the importance of rational leadership in the face of rumors, and stressed the need not to be dragged behind undocumented news (Ibn Kathir: Interpretation of Surat Al-Nur, p. 579).

6. Lessons Learned from the Incident

The incident highlighted a number of key lessons in dealing with propaganda and rumour:

- The need to verify the news before believing it or publishing it.
- The danger of being dragged behind rumors in threatening community unity.
- The role of wise leadership in calming crises and guiding society towards truth.
- The importance of preserving the reputation of individuals and staying away from bad speculation (Alyan: 2005, p. 130; Ibn Kathir: Interpretation of Surat Al-Nur, p. 582).

Negative Effects of Rumor and Propaganda

Rumour and propaganda are among the most dangerous phenomena that threaten the stability

of societies and the disintegration of their value and social structure. They are not just means of transmitting information, but tools to guide behavior, sow suspicion, and provoke crises, especially if they are systematically exploited to achieve private goals or narrow interests.

First: Ethical and Social Influence

Rumour and propaganda affect public morality in society, weakening the value system based on honesty, honesty and good faith. The spread of rumors leads to a decline in trust between individuals, the spread of suspicions, and the growth of the phenomena of absenteeism and gossip, which creates an environment of suspicion and suspicion (Darwish: 1998, p. 101).

Rumors and malicious propaganda often target prominent figures or influential groups, aiming to discredit and undermine social status, which negatively reflects on group affiliation and leads to division within society. These risks increase when rumors are related to issues of honor, security, or religious values, as happened in the incident of Al-Ifak, when rumors threatened the unity of the Muslim community and almost destroyed its confidence in its leadership (Ibn Kathir: Interpretation of Surat Al-Nur, p. 573).

Psychological impact:

Rumour and propaganda have profound psychological effects on individuals, provoking anxiety, fear and anger, and prompting some to adopt extremist positions or engage in defensive or hostile behaviors. When rumors spread about fateful issues, individuals feel helpless or confused, and it is difficult for them to distinguish between truth and falsity, which may lead to social withdrawal or an increased tendency for rapid ratification without erasing (Allport & Postman: 1965, p. 93).

In many cases, the rumor contributes to frustration and loss of hope, as those affected feel isolated and alienated, sometimes leading to health or behavioral problems such as chronic anxiety, depression, or even loss of confidence in the social environment (Alayan: 2005, p. 153).

Third: Political and Security Influence

Rumour and propaganda pose a threat to security and political stability, especially when employed in the context of electoral conflicts or national crises. Too often, rumor is used as a tool to discredit leaders or sow discord among social groups, or to undermine trust in formal institutions. Recent studies have shown that social media platforms have become a fertile environment for the spread of rumors and false news, which makes it easier to exploit them to mislead public opinion or provoke divisions (Bouderbala et al.: 2022, p. 128).

In crisis contexts - such as the COVID-19 pandemic - rumour and propaganda have confused society and called into question government actions, threatening health and social stability and weakening the collective response to the crisis.

Practical examples

- The **incident of dismantling**: embodied the danger of rumor in threatening the unity of society and raising doubts about honor and honesty, and stressed the need to verify before the news is believed and published.
- **COVID-19 pandemic**: Demonstrated how medical rumors and targeted propaganda can spread terror and drive individuals to erroneous behaviors or reject protective measures, leading to serious health repercussions.
- **Political crises**: In periods of elections or political crises, rumors and propaganda are often used to guide public opinion and mislead the public or target political opponents.

Fifth: Results and Cross

It is clear from the analysis that rumour and propaganda threaten moral, social and political security, and negatively affect mental health and societal stability. In turn, the role of good leadership, responsible media and collective awareness in immunizing society from its dangers is highlighted.

Comparison between the incident of dismantling and contemporary models of rumour and propaganda

First: Similarity of Context and Dynamics

The episode of unfolding shows how rumor can infiltrate the fabric of society and exploit psychosocial spaces to cause widespread disruption, a trait we also find in contemporary models, especially with the rise of the role of social media and the spread of false news. In both cases, the rumor spreads rapidly and affects the reputation of individuals or groups, prompting the public to take hasty or defensive positions before the evidence or clarity of the truth is realized (Darwish: 1998, p. 134).

In the modern era, digital technology is accelerating the spread of rumors in a way that was not previously available. In a few minutes, a fake news story could reach millions of people, while the rumor of the Prophet's time traveled through councils, markets and oral conversations at a slower pace. However, the essence remained the same: exploiting the information gap and poor validation.

Second: Objectives of Rumor and Propaganda

In the incident of Al-Ifak, the rumor was a means to distort the reputation of Mrs. Aisha, may God be pleased with her, and to destabilize the confidence of the community in its leadership, and the hypocrites used the event to achieve political and social goals. In contemporary models, propaganda and rumor are often aimed at achieving similar purposes, such as discrediting opponents, misleading public opinion, or achieving rapid political or economic gains (Alayan: 2005, p. 163).

During elections, for example, rumors and black propaganda spread to guide voters or undermine rival candidates. In times of health crises, fake news about treatments or preventative measures spreads, leading to mass confusion and confusion.

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The rumor of the incident relied on repetition, verbal spread, and the addition of alleged details to increase credibility. Contemporary rumor relies on the speed of information transmission over the Internet, amplifying the event by sharing anonymous photos, videos and testimonies, in addition to relying on influencers or celebrities to enhance its credibility. Modern propaganda also resorts to the design of thoughtful messages, the use of psychological persuasion techniques, and the repetition of messages until they take root in the minds (Allport & Postman: 1965, p. 122).

Fourth: Community and Institutional Response

Contemporary societies face great challenges in countering rumors and propaganda due to the huge volume of information and the difficulty of verifying sources. However, successful experiences - as in some countries during the COVID-19 pandemic - have shown that comprehensive awareness campaigns, the intensification of responsible media work, and the speed of official response, can limit the spread of rumors (Bouderbala et al.: 2022, p. 130).

In the incident of Al-Ifak, the prophetic response embodied a model of wisdom and delay, where the rumor was confronted with the call to verify and search for the truth, and then the

Our 'anic solution came to resolve the issue and reassure society. In the digital age, confrontation requires cooperation between official and media institutions and civil society, in addition to raising the level of media and digital awareness among individuals.

Lessines Learned:

Comparing the episode of unfolding with contemporary models reveals firm facts:

- **The danger of rumor and propaganda** in destabilizing societal unity and provoking divisions.
- **The importance of verifying and verifying** before certifying or publishing any information.
- **The role of conscious leadership and responsible media** in calming crises and correcting perceptions.
- **The importance of enhancing the intellectual and monetary immunity** of individuals, to make them less vulnerable to rumors and malicious propaganda.

Strategies to reduce the spread of rumor and propaganda

Modern societies face great challenges in facing the torrent of rumors and tendentious propaganda, especially with the development of communication and social media. Therefore, it is necessary to develop effective strategies to reduce these phenomena and enhance society's immunity to fake news.

First: Enhancing community and media awareness

Community outreach is the first line of defense against rumour and propaganda. Individuals need to have critical thinking skills and the ability to distinguish between correct information and fake news. This is achieved by:

- **Organizing large-scale awareness campaigns** in schools, universities and civil society institutions on the dangers of rumor and the importance of verification.
- **Encourage a culture of self-verification**, so that individuals get used to verifying news sources before republishing or certifying them.
- **Strengthening the role of the family and educational institutions** in instilling the values of honesty and media responsibility in young people (Alyan: 2005, p. 174).

The development of legislation and laws

Laws play a pivotal role in regulating the digital media space and reducing the spread of malicious rumors. To achieve this, you must:

- **Updating legislation** to include criminalizing the dissemination of rumors and false news, especially if they cause moral or material damage.
- **Activating electronic censorship** of digital platforms, taking into account not to restrict freedom of expression.
- **Impose clear penalties** on those found to be involved in spreading rumours, while providing legal mechanisms for those affected to defend their rights (Bouderbala et al.: 2022, p. 132).

Third: Investing in technology and artificial intelligence

Modern digital technologies provide advanced opportunities to monitor and respond to rumors before they spread:

- **Develop fake news detection systems** based on artificial intelligence and big data analysis, enabling early warning of suspicious news.
- **Monitoring social media content** and filtering accounts and groups that spread rumors.
- **Provide public verification platforms**, so that individuals can quickly and easily validate

news (Allport & Postman: 1965, p. 139).

Fourth: Supporting professional and investigative media

The media has an essential role in revealing the facts and confronting false news:

- **Activating the role of investigative journalism** in tracking the sources of rumors and revealing them to the public.
- **Encourage media organizations to adopt professional codes of conduct**, and not to rush to publish news without verification and documentation.
- **Giving more space to scientific and official voices** in explaining controversial issues and clarifying facts to the public (Darwish: 1998, p. 154).

Fifth: The Role of Religious and Educational Institutions

Religious and educational institutions play a crucial role in instilling moral values and fortifying society:

- **Include the topic of rumor and its danger in educational curricula**, highlighting historical and factual examples of the impact of rumors and propaganda on individuals and communities.
- **Activating religious sermons and family counseling programs** that focus on urging honesty and warning against publishing news without knowledge or proof, based on Islamic teachings (Ibn Kathir: Interpretation of Surat Al-Nur, p. 586).

Sixth: Encouraging community initiatives

Civil society can contribute effectively to combating rumors and propaganda by:

- **Launch digital awareness and education initiatives**, such as workshops and interactive platforms to counter fake news.
- **Supporting “rumor hunters” groups** - youth groups that specialize in monitoring rumors and responding to them scientifically.
- **Encourage reporting of fake news** through official channels and provide whistleblower protection.

Conclusion: Confronting rumor and propaganda requires concerted efforts between individuals and institutions, integrating educational, technical and legal solutions, in addition to raising community awareness and enhancing media transparency, in order to achieve community immunity capable of addressing such phenomena at all times and places.

Outcome

1. **The study reveals that the relationship between propaganda and rumor is controversial;** propaganda exploits rumor as a means to amplify media messages, and rumor takes advantage of the atmosphere that propaganda creates in forming public opinion that may be characterized by inaccuracy or confusion.
2. **Rumour and propaganda together are effective tools in shaping the consciousness of communities**, and both can threaten community cohesion if used for negative ends, especially in times of crisis or conflict, or when critical validation is absent (Darwish: 1998, p. 164).
3. **Rumour and propaganda lead to serious psychological, social and political effects**, such as weakening trust between individuals, spreading fear, anxiety and division, distorting reputation, and affecting the confidence of society in its leadership or institutions (Allport & Postman: 1965, p. 143).
4. **The Islamic experience through the incident of Al-Ifak confirms** that addressing the rumor requires wise leadership, patience, and the adoption of the principle of confirmation before issuing judgments or reporting news, which was reflected positively in the restoration

of the unity of society later (Ibn Kathir: Interpretation of Surat Al-Nur, p. 586).

5. **Comparisons with contemporary models indicate** that the development of the means of communication has increased the speed of the spread of rumor and the severity of its impact, and that traditional solutions are no longer sufficient, but require an integrated system that combines education, law, technology, and institutional and community work.

6. **Recent experiences show that responsible media and institutional awareness** have contributed to reducing rumors, especially during pandemics or public crises, and that clear legislation and smart technology enhance opportunities to address rumor and propaganda at the national level (Bouderbala et al.: 2022, p. 134).

10 Conclusion

The phenomena of propaganda and rumor are not just emergency communication incidents, but are two mechanisms that have been rooted in social and human life since ancient times. The study showed that the greatest risk lies in the overlap of these two phenomena, especially if propaganda finds a fertile environment of ambiguity or information vacuum that allows rumor to expand and influence. The episode of deconstruction as a historical case study confirms that society, no matter how cohesive it is, may be subject to strong tremors due to a tendentious rumor, if there is no conscious leadership, moral environment, and critical awareness among its members.

In contrast, contemporary models show that rumor and propaganda today possess more sophisticated and dangerous tools, as a result of the explosion of digital information. Therefore, the responsibility to reduce the effects of these phenomena lies with everyone:

- individuals to check and think critically,
- educational and media institutions with awareness and professionalism,
- legislators to modernize legal systems,
- Technology means to develop tools to detect rumors and block abusive accounts.

The results of the research confirmed that immunizing society against propaganda and rumor is not an individual or seasonal task, but rather a permanent community project, which requires cooperation and integration of efforts to protect the values of cohesion, honesty and trust, and to confront everything that threatens societal stability or disturbs the awareness of generations.

Recommendations

1. **Incorporate critical thinking skills into educational curricula** to train students to analyze news and distinguish between facts and rumors.
2. **Support professional and investigative media** and intensify awareness programs on the dangers of publishing news without verification.
3. **Developing legislation regulating the digital field** and imposing clear penalties on the promoters of rumor and false propaganda.
4. **Encouraging the use of artificial intelligence techniques** in detecting and tracking fake news on social media.
5. **Strengthen the partnership between official institutions and civil society** to launch awareness and training initiatives on digital safety and news handling skills.

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