

Yige Liu

Mary Hays

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Is Trump's Government Attacking LGBTQ?

— Toulmin Analysis of Fake and Real News

I can still remember the night. Donald Trump was elected as the president of United States by its people— my Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were filled with crying and screaming posts from my desperate friends. The reactions made me, an authentic international student, extremely confused. The voices from celebrities and media, elites with strong speaking power, supported Hilary so strong that the presidential election seemed surely predictable. Under this circumstance, Trump's presidency could be regarded as a triumph of the common people over the elites — why people around me (clearly not the elites) regarded the presidential election as a catastrophe? For instance, I had a conversation with one of my gay friends, who joined the protest in Providence later that night, about why he was against Trump that severely.

“His government is attacking us.” I remember the sentence he sent me via text.

However, after days and months of observation, I began realizing that his assertion was not absolutely right, although, for a significant number of people, Trump's government is attacking LGBTQ, was a substantial statement. Why? Because countless

fake news articles were created to show that Trump's government was on the opposite of the LGBTQ equality.

One of the most targeted figures of fake news related to the LGBTQ rights is Mike Pence, the 48th Vice President of the United States. It is reporting on so-called Mike Pence's announcement to Fox News of gay "conversion therapy" saved his marriage. Since the article as a whole is proving and analyzing how Mike Pence made the "announcement," "Mike Pence credited 'gay conversion therapy' with saving his marriage"(Garcia) is the claim of it. Whether the announcement exist or not is a simply yes or no question, and the author surely stands on the "yes" side; thus, there is no qualifier limiting the thesis.

In addition, although the media reporters might have the power of influencing the values of the public, they don't expect the public to accept their claims without any doubts. In order to make the report trustful, the author of this specific fake news offers grounds for his claim. Trying to rationalize the existence of the extremely controversial and radical announcement, the reporter choses to construct the anti-LGBTQ figure of Mike Pence through an actual quotation. As a member of Congress, Pence stated that "(the legislative branch) should oppose any effort to recognize homosexuals as a 'discrete and insular minority' entitled to the protection of anti-discrimination laws similar to those extended to women and ethnic minorities" (Garcia). Since the quotation is real, it does reflect the attitude of Pence toward the LGBTQ, and therefore provides the evidence and prerequisite of Pence's anti-LGBTQ announcement to Fox News.

The warrant for the ground is given in another quotation of Mike Pence, he said: “With God’s help, and the work of many of his therapists, I was able to seek the straight path when I was a younger man. If it wasn’t for that, I would have never been able to marry”(Garcia). The quotation shows how he accepts gay conversion and being “benefited” by the conversion as a “biblical,” or anti-LGBTQ, person with potential of homosexuality. Thus, the credibility of this part requires that Pence at least once had the inclination of being a gay. Recognizes this fact, the author offers backing for the warrant. The backing is the words from James Badwater, who was identified in the fake news as “University of Chicago Professor (and) a dorm roommate of Mr. Pence in 1983”(Garcia). In his quotation, he recollected the experience he shared with Pence, and showed that Pence was both mysterious and interested in man’s body. Then, Badwater directly pointed out that Pence had the gay conversion right before he had his marriage that substantially offers additional support and logic for the warrant. Nevertheless, Snopes.com shows that the roommate is totally invented by the reporter; thus, the words from the so-called “roommate” are fake.

Although fake news constructs the image of a anti-LGBTQ government, real news reports provided by trustworthy media still exist. In the report, “Trump continues Obama order protecting the LGBTQ federal workers”, the Log Cabin Republicans’ claim that Donald Trump is a real friend of the LGBTQ community (Eugene). The ground for the claim is Trump’s decision of continuing an executive order protecting the LGBTQ federal workers. It extended the former gender equality protection to the LGBTQ community. The warrant of the ground is given by Gregory Angelo, the president of the

Republican LGBT advocacy group: he said that the action of extending the protection was Donald Trump “delivering on the commitment” of promising to be the “real friend” of the LGBTQ community (Eugene).

However, the claim of the republican , as indicated by New York Times, is challenged by “leaders of the Human Rights Campaign, an LGBT advocacy group that endorsed Clinton, remained critical of the President”(Eugene). They point out that Trump can never be the “real friend” as long as he is attacking any, including but not limited to the LGBTQ group, minority groups. For example, Trump discriminates against several nationalities through the traveling ban. Thus, there should be a rebuttal provided by who made the claim. However, the neutral reporter doesn’t make the claim himself, so that there is no rebuttal in the real news article.

Reflecting on the fake and real news, I find that the articles are so audaciously created that extremely influence the view points of the public. In the fake news article, Pence, a significant member of Trump’s government seems like nothing except for a radical anti-LGBTQ member. As a result, the fake news article makes people to negatively evaluate the attitude of the government. However, the real news article objectively reports how Trump’s government choose to protect the rights of LGBTQ group. Thus, it is irresponsible to make any point or declare any position regard a controversy before collecting information from different resources and figuring out the reliability of each piece of information.

The question “Is Trump attacking LGBTQ?” is inspired by one of my friend, Rock Huang, who joined the protest against Donald Trump in New York. However,

instead of being an enthusiastic protestor, Rock chose to be a critical spectator. “I randomly interviewed protestors from the LGBTQ, racial minorities, and feminists with a question: ‘why do you think Trump is against your group?’ Among the sixteen of them, twelve couldn’t answer my question, two feminists answered because of the video (Trump’s harassing words against women), one said it was because Trump mentioned Ivanka as ‘would like to date with if she’s not my daughter,’ and the last one, a LGBT protestor, noted the policies of Pence.” Huang told me via WeChat after coming back from the protest. I was extremely impressed by his words, became silent for a while, and finally asked the question against the backdrop of roaring protests.

“Is Trump’s government actually attacking the LGBTQ, or is fake news articles convincing people that the government is attacking the LGBTQ while they are not?”

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