“Trumpism' and its implications for the Caribbean”
MSBM- Dept. of Gov’t Forum Feb 21-2017

Implications for Journalism and Media Freedom
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Presentation Outline

• Context— the Trump Conundrum
• ‘Trumpism’ Defined
• Role of media in democratic governance
• Media bias versus fake news
• Media in the 2016 campaign
• Trump’s war with the US media
• The problem with Trumpism and the media
• Why the issue matters to the Caribbean
• Context— the Trump conundrum
  – “The leaks are real... but the news is fake.”
  – Trump acknowledges that information leaked about contacts between (then) National Security Adviser Flynn and Russian embassy officials.
  – Subsequently dismisses Flynn for lying about said contacts.
  – Lambasts ‘fake media’ for reporting the facts
  – How come? Trump’s old penchant for turning reality upside down
Definitions of ‘Trumpism’

• A social/political movement based on elements of (a) racism, (b) religious bigotry, (c) demeaning attitudes towards women, (d) attempts to intimidate the press, (e) rejection of scientific findings … It is often characterized by completely baseless, false statements. (Urban Dictionary)

• noun1. the policies advocated by Donald Trump, especially those involving a rejection of the current political establishment and the vigorous pursuit of American national interests

• 2. a controversial or outrageous statement attributed to Donald Trump (Collins on-line dictionary)
Press Freedom

• Critical to democratic governance
  – Provide information and insight to empower audiences to engage as citizens in democracy
  – Hold state and public officials accountable
  – Speak truth to power
    • “You don’t get to tell us what to say”, Fox News’ Chris Wallace told Trump Chief of Staff Preibus in interview
    • Media role enshrined in First Amendment: Congress shall make no law limiting the freedom of the press
Media Bias vs Fake News

Bias (Wikipedia)

- Media bias is the bias or perceived bias of journalists and news producers within the mass media in the selection of events and stories that are reported and how they are covered.

Fake (Webopedia)

- Fake news, or hoax news, refers to false information or propaganda published under the guise of being authentic news. Fake news websites and channels push their fake news content in an attempt to mislead consumers of the content and spread misinformation via social networks and word-of-mouth.
Major Media Supported Clinton in 2016 campaign

Example of Pro-Clinton editorial

Editorial bias?

- Among largest 100 US newspapers:
  - 57 Endorsed Clinton
  - 2 Endorsed Trump
  - 4 Endorsed Libertarian Johnson
  - 3 “Not Trump”

Yet media and polls got it wrong.
Harvard Study Shows Early Pro-Trump Bias

FAVORABLE COVERAGE OF DONALD TRUMP

Percentage that is positive or neutral in tone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBC</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Washington Post</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Times</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Media Tenor, January 1-December 31, 2015
DJM immune from ‘normal’

• Things that would disqualify ‘normal’ candidates:
  – Slander against Mexican immigrants
  – Slur about John McCain’s record as a POW
  – Lie about New Jersey Muslims celebrating 9/11
  – Attacks on Megyn Kelly, ... a disabled New York Times reporter ... a Mexican-American judge
  – Sly overtures to David Duke and the alt-right
  – Unwavering praise of Vladimir Putin
  – Refusal to release his tax returns
  – Boast of groping women on the tape of him with Billy Bush
  – Unsubstantiated claims against opponents
Fake News examples in 2016 election
Trust in US institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Support (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidency</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Court</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV News</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gallup, June 2016
Fake news ‘Trump-style’

- **Donald J. Trump**
- ✅ [@realDonaldTrump](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump)
- Any negative polls are fake news, just like the CNN, ABC, NBC polls in the election. Sorry, people want border security and extreme vetting.
- **7:01 AM - 6 Feb 2017**
- - Example of attacking unfavourable news, even if true
Why Trump’s ‘fake news’ world is dangerous

- **Donald J. Trump Verified account**
  @realDonaldTrump

- The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!
Majority say fake news has left Americans confused about basic facts

% of U.S. adults who say completely made-up news has caused ____ about the basic facts of current events

- A great deal of confusion: 64%
- Some confusion: 24
- Not much/no confusion: 11


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Responsibility for ‘Fake News’

Public, politicians, social media all receive share of responsibility for stopping spread of fake news

% of U.S. adults who think ___ have a great deal/some/little or no responsibility in preventing completely made-up news from gaining attention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A great deal of responsibility</th>
<th>Some responsibility</th>
<th>Little/no responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Members of the public</strong></td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Govt, politicians and elected officials</strong></td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social networking sites and search engines</strong></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Many Americans Believe Fake News Is Sowing Confusion”
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Trump supporters remain loyal
Trump’s ‘fake news’ world is dangerous

• Promotes legitimacy of ‘alternative facts’
• Undermines America’s moral authority to promote freedom of the press globally
• Undermines US global human rights advocacy
• Seeks to redefine ‘truth’ as what you can get away with (The post-truth world)
• Encourages would-be authoritarians to copy Trump’s conflating criticism of government policy with ‘opposition to the people’
• Seeks to intimidate media into submission
Lessons for Jamaica

• Fake news increasing staple of social media in Jamaica
• Jamaican police wasting resources chasing ‘fake news’ on-line
• Three men (separate incidents) attacked by mobs accusing them of on-line stories about ‘harvesting body parts’
• Media and audiences must recommit to journalism values of truth and fairness