KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMNET OF

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

FACT-CHECKERS AND JOURNALISTS' PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR NORMATIVE ROLES IN TURKEY

ECE NİL FEYZİOĞLU

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR ÖZEN BAŞ

MASTER'S DEGREE THESIS

ISTANBUL, JULY, 2021

FACT-CHECKERS AND JOURNALISTS' PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR
NORMATIVE ROLES IN TURKEY

ECE NİL FEYZİOĞLU
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR ÖZEN BAŞ

MASTER'S DEGREE THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
WITH THE AIM TO MEET THE PARTIAL REQUIREMENTS REQUIRED TO
RECEIVE A MASTER'S DEGREE IN THE PROGRAM OF NEW MEDIA

ISTANBUL, JULY, 2021

NOTICE ON RESEARCH ETHICS AND
PUBLISHING METHODS

I, ECE NİL FEYZİOĞLU;

- hereby acknowledge, agree and undertake that this Master's Degree Thesis that I have prepared is entirely my own work and I have declared the citations from other studies in the bibliography in accordance with the rules;

- that this Master's Degree Thesis does not contain any material from any research submitted or accepted to obtain a degree or diploma at another educational institution;

- and that I commit and undertake to follow the "Kadir Has University Academic Codes of Conduct" prepared in accordance with the "Higher Education Council Codes of Conduct".

In addition, I acknowledge that any claim of irregularity that may arise in relation to this work will result in a disciplinary action in accordance with the university legislation.

ECE NİL FEYZİOĞLU

_____

DATE AND SIGNATURE

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL (For Master's Degree Thesis)

This study, titled FACT-CHECKERS AND JOURNALISTS' PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR NORMATIVE ROLES IN TURKEY, prepared by the ECE NİL FEYZİOĞLU, was deemed successful with the UNANIMOUS/MAJORITY VOTING as a result of the thesis defense examination held on the DATE OF THE DEFENSE EXAM and approved as a MASTER'S DEGREE THESIS by our jury.

JURY:
    SIGNATURE:

Assistant Professor, Özen Baş (Advisor)   (Kadir Has University)

Associate Professor, Eylem Yanardaoğlu   (Kadir Has University)

Assistant Professor, Sinan Aşçı   (Bahçeşehir University)

I confirm that the signatures above belong to the aforementioned faculty members.
_____

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Timur AYDEMİR

Director of the School of Graduate Studies
APPROVAL DATE: Day/Month/Year

TABLE of CONTENTS

FACT-CHECKERS AND JOURNALISTS' PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR NORMATIVE ROLES IN TURKEY

ABSTRACT

In democracies, people should have access to factual and healthy information to make wise collective choices for the common good. However, the circulation of misinformation hinders citizens' capacity to access factual information. Various problems of the Internet age, such as online disinformation, echo chambers, or bots, are dismantling the Internet's function as a democratic and inclusive public sphere, highlighting the threatening power of online communication technologies in determining the fate of democracies. The fact-checking ecosystem has started to grow globally as a new global democratic practice since the early 2000s to increase the disinformation resilience of societies and democracies and to combat the circulation of false information. Although the fact-checking ecosystem is growing worldwide, very little research has been done in Turkey investigating the perceived roles, responsibilities, and challenges of journalists and fact-checkers concerning each other. This study investigates how journalists and fact-checkers perceive their roles in their societies and how they make sense of their existence as a profession. In devising strategies to make fact-checking initiatives more credible, popular, and influential among different user groups, the first step would be to analyze media professionals' perceptions towards each other's roles. Moreover, this study is also the first step in learning about possible areas of collaboration between traditional media and relatively new fact-checking initiatives. However, this study finds that journalists are suspicious of and distant to fact-checking platforms in Turkey since journalists were too defensive of their professional roles as arbiters of truth. Thus, there is still much work to be done in Turkey to increase the conversation among fact-checkers and journalists, especially to prevent the perception of the fact-checking organizations as a new form of infotainment style news or a new source of censorship.

Keywords: Journalism, Fact-Checking, New Media, Information Disorder, Misinformation, Disinformation

TÜRKİYE'DEKİ TEYİTÇİ VE GAZETECİLERİN TÜRKİYE'DEKİ NORMATİF ROLLERİNE İLİŞKİN BAKIŞ AÇILARI

ÖZET

Demokrasilerde, insanların akıllıca kolektif seçimler yapması için gerçek ve olgusal bilgilere erişebiliyor olmaları gerekir; fakat yanlış bilginin dolaşımının kolaylaşması ve hızlanması, vatandaşların gerçek bilgilere erişme kapasitelerini engellemektedir. Çevrimiçi dezenformasyon, yankı odaları ve botlar gibi İnternet çağının çeşitli sorunları, İnternet'in demokratik ve kapsayıcı bir kamusal alan olarak tasarlanan işlevini ortadan kaldırmakta ve çevrimiçi iletişim teknolojilerinin demokrasilerin kaderini belirleyici gücünü vurgulamaktadır. Doğruluk kontrolü ekosistemi, toplumların ve demokrasilerin yanlış bilgi karşısındaki direncini artırmak ve yanlış bilginin dolaşımı ile mücadele etmek için 2000'li yılların başından itibaren büyümeye ve doğruluk kontrolü dünya çapında yeni bir demokratik uygulamaya dönüşmeye başlamıştır. Doğruluk kontrolü ekosistemi tüm dünyada büyüse de, Türkiye'de gazetecilerin ve teyitçilerin birbirlerine bakış açılarını araştıran çok az araştırma yapılmıştır. Bu çalışma, gazetecilerin ve teyitçilerin toplumdaki normatif rollerini nasıl algıladıklarını ve bir ekonomik uğraş olarak varoluş nedenlerini nasıl anlamlandırdıklarını sorgulamaktadır. Doğruluk kontrolü girişimlerinin farklı kullanıcı grupları arasında daha güvenilir, popüler ve kullanışlı hale gelmesi için stratejiler oluştururken ilk adım, medya profesyonellerinin ve doğruluk denetçilerinin birbirlerinin toplumdaki rollerine yönelik algılarını analiz etmek olacaktır. Dahası, bu çalışma, aynı zamanda geleneksel medya ile göreceli olarak daha yeni olan doğruluk kontrolü girişimleri arasındaki olası iş birliği alanlarını öğrenmenin ilk adımıdır. Fakat; bu çalışma, gazetecilerin "gerçeğin hakemi" olarak mesleki rollerini fazlasıyla savunmalarından dolayı, gazetecilerin Türkiye'deki doğrulama platformlarına karşı şüpheci ve mesafeli olduklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu nedenle, Türkiye'de teyitçiler ve gazeteciler arasındaki iletişimi artırmak, özellikle doğrulama kuruluşlarının yeni bir haber-eğlence tarzı haber biçimi veya yeni bir sansür kaynağı olarak algılanmasını önlemek açısından önem taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gazetecilik, Doğruluk Kontrolü, Doğrulama Kuruluşları, Yeni Medya, Bilgi Düzensizliği, Mezenformasyon, Dezenformasyon

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST of TABLES

1. INTRODUCTION

The initial utopianism about the Internet that envisaged a mode of unrestrained global communication that would challenge authoritarianism and foster freedom throughout the world was ruined by popular historical events such as the 2016 Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom, the presidential election in the United States, and later the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 (Persily and Tucker 2020, 1). Problems of the Internet age such as online disinformation, hate speech, polarization, data surveillance, echo chambers, and bots swept away the perceived function of the Internet as a democratic, inclusive public sphere, highlighting the threatening power of the online communication technologies in determining the fate of democracies (Tucker and Persily 2020, 4). The experiences of democratic public spheres with increased levels of problematic information circulating through online media that copy the imagery of journalism have left behind growing legitimacy problems, a decline in citizen confidence in institutions, and publics that are vulnerable to alternative, unhealthy information sources (Bennett and Livingston 2018, 126).

As journalism also gets its share from the decline in citizen confidence in institutions, journalists have an urgent responsibility to purify the information ecology by allocating true from false and helping the truth to spread (Silverman 2015, 11). However, one widespread argument is that news organizations play a decisive role in disseminating problematic content (Silverman 2015, 11). Thus, today, especially online news media, is blamed for online misinformation instead of participating in the solution (Silverman 2015, 13).

However, as the Covid-19 pandemic has reminded audiences of the value of traditional news sources (Newman et al. 2020, 10), it also "renewed confidence amongst journalists about the value of their product" (Newman 2021, 9). Thus, journalists are increasingly required to stress "their roles as objective, truth-oriented disseminators, hereby distinguishing their profession from alternative sources of (mis)information" (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 2), especially in the face of a global health emergency and an "infodemic."

Meanwhile, as instantaneous networked communication produces high-volume online news in almost real-time, resulting in a loss of accuracy and verification (Le Masurier 2014, 139), fact-checking emerges as a new democratic practice by forming its own social and political institutions throughout the world (Ünver 2020, 1). The development of fact-checking institutions as a new democratic practice in Turkey, combined with the changing roles of journalists throughout the world, requires investigating the perceived roles, responsibilities, and challenges of journalists and fact-checkers concerning each other.

Therefore, this study poses the following questions:

RQ1: How do journalists working in traditional news organizations in Turkey perceive the roles of fact-checkers in their societies?

RQ2: How do journalists working in traditional news organizations in Turkey perceive their role in their societies in response to mis- and disinformation?

RQ3: How do fact-checkers in Turkey perceive their role in their societies?

RQ4: How do fact-checkers in Turkey perceive the roles of journalists in their societies in response to mis- and disinformation?

RQ5: Are there areas, as perceived by fact-checkers and journalists, for future cooperation in response to the "information disorder" between journalists and fact-checkers in Turkey? If so, in what ways do journalist and fact-checkers think that they can cooperate in response to mis- and disinformation?

By asking these questions, this research explores media practitioners' perspectives towards the practices of fact-checking and journalism in Turkey. Although the fact-checking ecosystem is growing in Turkey, little research has been done on how journalists perceive such services. How journalists and fact-checkers give meaning to their professions and practices concerning the growing problems of mis- and disinformation and each other is important for several reasons.

First of all, fact-checking is labeled as "a fresh challenge to journalistic attempts at normative boundary-setting in a digital news environment" (Singer 2020, 2). Thus,

2

while fact-checking is introduced as an "improvement over other existing outlets" (Singer 2020, 15), perspectives of journalists and fact-checkers in Turkey on such roles and responsibilities should be investigated.

Moreover, fact-checking is claimed to "be leading the way for other journalists" in terms of serving as "digital-first or digital-only entities" and developing "meaningful interactions with users" (Singer 2018, 1078). Besides, to make fact-checking initiatives more useful and popular, fact-checkers need the support, visibility, and credibility of traditional media outlets (Singer 2020, 15). Thus, if these two professions are to learn and benefit from each other, analyzing their perceptions towards each other's roles in society can be the first step. In this way, this study can also be the first step to learn about possible collaboration areas between traditional media and relatively newer fact-checking initiatives to create strategies as a response to mis- and disinformation and make fact-checking more reliable, popular, and useful among different user groups.

Also, as fact-checkers' concerns on the perception of fact-checking as a new form of censorship globally increase (Örsek, 2021), the voices that perceive fact-checking as a new form of censorship are also raised in Turkey (Yıldız 2021).

Finally, since Turkish citizens will vote in a "highly competitive election" in 2023, discussing the "information-related issues will help fight against possible foreign influence campaigns and purposeful attempts to spread misinformation and disinformation" (Yurdakul 2020, 11).

With these concerns, this study first explores whether Web is perceived as a digital public sphere or not in the existing literature. Besides the ideas of democratization of information and increase in communication and interactivity that comes with the advent of Web 2.0, this study finds that Web 2.0 is reflected as a tool for "influence operations" in the literature, which are "coordinated efforts to manipulate or corrupt public debate for a strategic goal" (Facebook 2021, 6). Furthermore, this study also reviews the literature to understand the relationship between mis/disinformation that contributes to the deterioration of the Internet as a medium for public debates and the global transformation of the news industry. It problematizes the link between the digitalization

3

of the global and Turkish news industry and the journalistic responsibility of being accurate. Later, this study explores the existing literature on information disorder and the related terminology.

Moreover, after it analyzes whether fact-checking is presented a solution to the problem of mis/disinformation or not in the previous studies, it continues with the global and Turkish perceptions on fact-checking. Before explaining the methodology of this research, this study takes a close look at the fact-checking organizations in Turkey. Then, after the methodology is explained, the findings of this research are presented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Internet, World Wide Web, and Digital Public Sphere

The Internet is a dynamic entity made up of "technological infrastructure and communicating human actors" (Fuchs 2008, 123). Likened by Fuchs to "a carpet that is (…) permanently rewoven by millions of people that are distributed all over the world" (124), the Internet is described as a "global techno-social system that stores objectified human knowledge" (122). In order to fully acknowledge the potentials of the essence and influence of the Internet, one should not confound the "network with one or more of the applications that people use" such as the World Wide Web, which is an example of "data-enabled services that run on the infrastructure that constitutes the Internet" (Naughton 2016, 6).

Thus, while the Internet is a global network of networks, The World Wide Web was created by Tim Berners-Lee at CERN as an instrument to distribute data among the workers of the organization and throughout the world (Naughton 2016, 13). Thus, the Web was initiated to share "static documents" across the Internet in a populous organization like CERN (Naughton 2016, 16). Therefore, for Fuchs (2008), Web 1.0 is a "tool for thought" and file-sharing that made information more accessible to a broader audience (127).

On the other hand, Web 2.0 is for communication and interactivity (Fuchs 2008, 127). The term Web 2.0 is usually acknowledged as an interactive, collaborative, and participatory environment by scholars (DiNucci 1999; O'Reilly 2005; Jenkins 2006; Deuze 2007). Even though engagement and Web 2.0 are widespread terms, they are blamed for being overused as a confusing buzzword or blurred in definition (Lawrence, Radcliffe and Schmidt 2018, 1220). Although Fuchs (2008) argues that Web 2.0 wholly developed around 2005 (127), the fact that one cannot point out the date that Web 1.0 had ended, and Web 2.0 started makes the term even more imprecise (Song 2010, 250). Nevertheless, the following definition by O'Reilly (2005) can be used as a starting point in defining Web 2.0:

5

Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an "architecture of participation," and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences.

Even after the words of O'Reilly, the differences of Web 1.0 from 2.0 needs further clarification. Moreover, to discuss whether Web functions (or dysfunctions) as a digital public sphere, one should elaborate more on the optimistic expectations from it.

According to Fuchs (2008), as the Web evolved to Web 2.0 and social networking platforms emerged, communication became more important, and the potential of the Web to support virtual communities occurred. Fuchs further suggests that "online cooperation systems" such as wikis signal the arrival of the "networked digital technologies that support human cooperation" of Web 3.0 (127). In other words, for some, Web 2.0 entails the "democratization of information" (Jackson and Lilleker 2009, 233). Thus, it has the potential to disrupt "the established way of doing things in society" by allowing alternative voices to be heard (Deuze 2012). Hence, the term Web 2.0, far from being a neutral concept, comes with a loaded bag of meanings (Song 2010, 251).

First of all, the term is "normative" since it signals an improved form of the Internet compared to Web 1.0 (Song 2010, 251). This superiority leads to the celebration of Web 2.0 as a tool for democratization, participation, and empowerment with its user-generated content. For instance, Coleman (2005) expresses that while the old media and politics neglect citizens, blogs as "a form of networked expression" become the "listening posts of modern democracy" (274). Hence, Coleman equates blogging with the "declaration of one's presence' and the 'affirmation that one's understanding of the world is worth sharing" (Coleman 2005, 274).

Thus, according to this view, Web 2.0 enables individuals with related interests to "participate, socialize, and set the social norms" (Cho 2007, 19). Unlike Web 1.0, the

6

new participatory Web allows for the emergence of what Pierre Levy calls "the knowledge communities" in which participants channel their individual experience and competence to shared goals and objectives (Jenkins 2006, 4). The fact that this way of networked organization of audiences transforms consumption into a collective process constitutes the normative foundation of Web 2.0 (Jenkins 2006; 4). Therefore, the emergence of Web 2.0 enables the mobilization of information to produce a "knowledge culture" (Jenkins 2006, 57). As Jenkins argues, new forms of voluntary, temporary, strategic communities emerge which depend on shared intellectual and emotional interests and are glued together by collective production and reciprocal transaction of knowledge (Jenkins 2006, 27).

From this perspective, it is argued that the contemporary public sphere, in which people can engage in subversive rhetorical acts and marginalized voices can more easily be heard, is digital (Duthely 2017, 202). Duthely (2017) gives Black feminist hip-hop rhetoric in the digital public sphere, such as The Crunk Feminist Collective (CFC) blog, as an example for subversive multimodal rhetorics that create space for Black women's perspective (203). Thus, she argues that the blog is using technology to retell narratives to disrupt systems of power by giving voice to the marginalized segments of the society (203). The instant dissemination of information and ideas provides a space in which "oppressed people can engage in verbal warfare that questions, challenges and conflicts with dominant notions and ideas" (Duthely 2017, 205). Yet, Duthely warns that "this idealistic view of digital spaces overlooks the racism, sexism, classism and homophobia" that is easily disseminated in these online realms (205).

2.2 Digital Space as Counter-Public Sphere

Even though Duthely (2017) argues that the "contemporary public space is digital" (202), as explained above, not everyone agrees with this opinion. According to another view, for constructive progress in terms of democracy to happen, institutional changes are essential (Fuchs 2008, 133). Since the Internet's repercussion is "filtered through the structures and processes of society" (Curran, Fenton and Freedman 2012, 179),

7

advances in communication technologies alone are not enough to create institutional reforms.

Hence, Web 2.0, not necessarily progressive, can be used as a tool for democratization as well as a means to "reinforce (…) agencies of socialization and agents of control – such as parents, educators, the state" (Deuze 2012). For instance, research conducted in Britain reveals that political parties are not using Web 2.0 to create an "informational democracy" (Jackson and Lilleker 2009, 247). Instead, they see Web 2.0 sites as "perception-building tools" that give a misleading impression of communication between citizens and decision-makers (Jackson and Lilleker 2009, 247).

Similarly, For Fuchs (2008), even though Web 2.0 contains the potential to give support for alternative public spheres, it is not a final solution to the "lack of institutions that guarantee political participation" (134). Moreover, the fact that everyone can create a blog, in theory, does not automatically solve the problem of political participation (135). Even though these alternative media instruments like blogs or podcasts add variety to institutionalized mainstream media's dullness, this does not necessarily result in a more democratic public sphere.

One cautious view on democracy and Web 2.0 comes from the founder of the Web, Tim Berners-Lee. He argues that even though the Web emerged as a powerful democratic means that various actors such as individuals, universities, and businesses work both separately and collectively, "the Web as we know it, however, is being threatened in different ways" (Berners-Lee 2010). According to him, the Web's egalitarian principles are in danger for several reasons, such as prominent social networking sites storing user data without the consent of individuals or governments tracking people's online activities.

Therefore, the question of who benefits from the "participatory architecture" and participation conditions becomes important (Olsson 2014, 204). From the perspective of critical political economy, Web 2.0 is not a new phenomenon since it is still a "product (…) of social relations of domination within the society that has both invented it and

brought it to use" (Olsson 2014, 204). Thus, Web 2.0 uses the participatory model to "achieve high numbers of users, which allows them to charge high advertisement rates and drive-up profits" (Fuchs 2008, 343).

At this point, the study by Erbaysal Filibeli and Şener (2019) can be given as an example in which they discuss whether Twitter functions as a digital public space. They argue that Twitter no longer functions as a digital public sphere that is an uncensored medium of rational discussion and egalitarian participation. They also suggest that Twitter does not allow equal and fair representation of every idea since it is a platform that is fragile to manipulation (512). Moreover, they add that Twitter, with its short text and visual format, provides the populist leaders the opportunity to reach their audiences directly and supports emotional and provocative expressions that fit populist discourses instead of rational discussions (512).

Moreover, Tucker and Persily (2020) argue that the 2016 presidential election in the United States and the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom changed the view that perceived the Internet as a public sphere and democratization of information (1). After 2016, "bots, foreign election interference, online disinformation, targeted ads, echo chambers, and related phenomena" were identified as problems working against democracy that made people question new technology's role in "determining winners and losers" during an election, social movement, populist victory, or political violence (Tucker and Persily 2020, 1).

The shift of the "conventional wisdom concerning the effect of the Internet on democracy" increased the literature on "disinformation, polarization, echo chambers, hate speech, bots, political advertising, and new media" (Tucker and Persily 2020, 2). Thus, deliberate intentions that spread false information to manipulate public opinion have "weaponized the Internet" (Ressa 2016). Manipulation attempts have been weakening trust in institutions and polluting public discussions (Facebook 2021, 9), calling forth the necessity of building resilience within countries to minimize their vulnerabilities of disinformation (Humprecht, Esser and Van Aelst 2020, 507).

9

In Turkey, the Internet and social media's effectiveness as a public space is a long-going controversial debate. Turkey is often exposed to false information that might have extensive consequences in a polarized public (Yurdakul 2020, 9). As Turkey's political polarization heighten, "civility in public discourse" and opportunities for all-embracing political debate gradually deteriorates on social media (Yurdakul 2020, 1). The more tensions along party lines are entrenched, the more difficult it gets to engage in a fact-based national dialogue about policy problems among citizens (Yurdakul 2020, 1). The dissemination of problematic information in the digital space fosters vulnerabilities that these conditions create (Yurdakul 2020, 1).

2.3 Global Transformation of News Industry and Mis/Disinformation

When unfolding journalism's core principles, media professionals' numerous comments concentrate on five common themes: truth and accuracy; independence; fairness and impartiality; humanity; accountability ("Five Principles Of Ethical Journalism" undated). Thus, the founder of Ethical Journalism Network (EJN), Aidan White, lists presenting accurate facts and assuring that they have been verified as the core principles of journalism ("Five Principles Of Ethical Journalism" undated). Similarly, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) highlight the practice of verification as the factor that makes journalism different from "entertainment, propaganda, fiction, or art" (189). According to them, journalism differs from entertainment or infotainment that seeks amusement, propaganda that fabricates facts for persuasion and manipulation, or fiction that develops scenarios to give a personal sense of truth since it focuses on telling the events accurately (189). However, with the influence of digitalization, news organizations are under fire for contributing to the dissemination of false information since they focus less on verifying than driving traffic and social engagement (Silverman 2015,11).

As news gets digital, tensions arise between the journalistic responsibility of being accurate and the Internet culture's speed (Silverman 2015, 17). Relatively easy access to the Internet, social networks, and smartphones inevitably lead to a dilemma "between chasing clicks and establishing credibility" in news organizations (Silverman 2015, 18).

10

Moreover, even though the promise of accuracy and truthfulness are among the crucial norm that defines journalistic expertise and authority (Hermida 2015, 38), the transformation of storytelling practices because of digitalization further eradicated the quality of the content by increasing the click-bait practices to drive online traffic and the task of the journalists to produce for multiple platforms (Posetti 2017, 58). These circumstances have put individual journalists and media companies under fire as they are often blamed for disseminating disinformation themselves (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 2).

As the digital-first deadlines are always emphasizing 'now,' the possibility of errors is increased (Posetti 2017, 58). Thus, as the audience demand for real-time news increased, the popularity of acts that do not include editorial oversight, such as social-first publishing or 'Facebook Live' videos, also became widespread, resulting in the popularity of the "publish first, check later" mindset (Posetti 2017, 58). The emphasis on "virality at the expense of quality and accuracy" have also contributed to the "information disorder" (Posetti 2017, 58), resulting in a decrease "in trust in news brands, journalism and individual journalists who share inaccurate, fabricated, or misleading information" (Posetti 2017, 62). For instance, Shin et al. (2018) explain the frequent return of old rumors with a different focus or new specifics with the editorial process carried out by media practitioners who feel the need to make the news more appealing and attractive (285).

What is more, it is argued that the spread of communication technologies gradually eradicates the vitality of "journalists as eyewitnesses to the news" (Hermida 2015, 40). The new media technologies allowed for "new modes and genres of audience participation" (Williams, Wardle, and Wahl-Jorgensen 2011, 86), in which the audience gets more involved in making and distributing news via digital technologies (Borger et al. 2013, 117). The widespread use of affordable, app-enabled smartphones with access to social media has led to audiences choosing peer-to-peer modes of information sharing over traditional news productions (Posetti 2017, 57). Therefore, while journalists used to hold a monopoly on the supply of daily public information, their authority is now weakened because of citizens' instant reporting of news, curating news floods, or

11

monitoring information on social media (Hermida 2015, 38). However, "filter bubbles" or "echo chambers" emerged as a consequence, curtailing the "users' exposure to alternative views and verified information" (Posetti 2017, 59).

In addition, the inadequacy of the traditional business models amplifies "information disorder" by decreasing the newsroom resources in terms of staff and budgets, "on-the-ground" reporting, and quality control processes, increasing the deadline pressure and job losses (Posetti 2017, 57).

Picard (2016) explains that, for a long-time, journalists were able to overlook the fact that the news they produced was also a commodity thanks to the growing advertising revenue (147). Since the news was funded by advertising, news organizations' main business was advertising, not news (Picard 2016, 147). Thus, the concern of how to make journalism sustainable was not on the agenda. However, digital advertising's impotence to make sustainable profit hastened the news industry's weakening (Posetti 2017, 57).

Moreover, instead of the "renaissance of journalism," the rise of the audience interaction in journalism gave the high-profile news corporations and digital platforms such as Facebook and Google a competitive advantage in terms of technical competency and advertising while causing a deterioration in quality (Curran, Fenton and Freedman 2012; Viner 2017). Congruently, Posetti (2017) argues that the over-dependence on data analytics that focuses on the number of the click of the articles and unique website visitors instead of indicators for quality journalism such as "attention minutes" and "time spent" contribute to the "information disorder" (58).

2.4 Transformation of the News Industry in Turkey

The ongoing challenges, structural changes, and the digital age opportunities that transform the news industry globally also influence the news environment in Turkey. As Posetti (2017) explains, the late-2000s witnessed Twitter and Facebook accompanying YouTube as a must-communication tool for journalists' practices and professional

12

identities, transforming the news industry (59). In Turkey, compared to other social media, Twitter is used the most by the mainstream online news websites as a source of news in the news flow (Kıyan and Törenli 2018; Duman 2019). The use of social media for news purposes takes place in two ways, namely, using it as a news source in the process of corporate production of news and putting the news into corporate circulation.

Kıyan and Törenli (2018) argue that the use of social media for news purposes created various sources for journalists aside from traditional sources such as official press statements (48). The work of Taşkıran (2016) validates this argument by stating that even though media professionals in Turkey use social media as a news source, they prefer to confirm the information they gathered from social media via other sources since they do not find social media trustworthy (216). Moreover, media professionals find using the information on social media directly without confirming via other sources not in accordance with journalism ethics (Taşkıran 2016, 216). Çaba (2019) also reveals that journalists use Twitter only as an additional news source.

Moreover, Kirdemir (2020) argues that besides failing the role of gatekeeping of factual information, Turkey's institutional media also is becoming the "amplifier of false news and inauthentic activity" (27). Parallel to Kirdemir's argument, Digital News Report 2020 by Reuters Institute reveals that the overall trust in news in Turkey is 55%. Even though the results indicate a nine-percentage increase compared to the previous year, nearly half of the sample do not trust the news. Moreover, Fletcher (2020) explains the relative increase in trust levels with "low levels of trust to begin with."

The gradual deterioration of the news environment in Turkey has several reasons. To begin with, parallel with Posetti's explanation of the global trends in journalism (2017), Yurdakul (2020) argues that the decreasing advertising revenues caused the printed press to weaken (3). The media investment in Turkey to printed newspapers and magazines declined 25,9% from 2018 to 2019 ("Türkiye'de Tahmini Medya Ve Reklam Yatırımları: 2019 Yıl Sonu Raporu" 2020, 9). "Competition for ratings, traffic, and ad revenue" promoted clickbait journalism, leading to weaker journalistic practices (Yurdakul 2020, 3). In accordance, Mumay (2019) argues that news organizations in

Turkey are inclined to value more for ratings and clicks than producing quality news as the revenue based on display advertisements instead of subscription models (102). In support of this argument, in Uygun's interview with Mehmet Demirkol, a journalist and sports commentator from Turkey, argues that as quality journalism is expensive, media organizations in Turkey prefer to produce works in high quantity and not high quality to make a profit (NewsLabTurkey 2020).

2.5 Information Disorder

The information disorder deteriorates the Internet's reliability as a space for public information and debate (Brandtzaeg and Følstad 2017, 1). The discussions on types of misinformation and propaganda have a long history. One can talk about the deep and diverse records of mis- and dis-information. By seeking the roots of "the contemporary proliferation of bullshit," Frankfurt (1986) acts as the harbinger of the later work on "post-truth politics" (Hannon and Edenberg 2020). Frankfurt (1986) argues that "bullshit" is one of the most significant characteristics of our culture since people contribute their share (1) by being "unconnected to a concern with the truth" (9) or because of the "lack of care" (10).

However, the consequences of modern social technology, such as global information pollution; the effortless production, dissemination, and consumption of polluted messages; and almost real-time communication between actors are new for the current media ecology (Maweu 2019; Wardle and Derakhshan 2017). Relatively recent political events such as the 2016 Presidential elections in the US and the Brexit referendum in the UK have increased the attention given to the disinformation ecology (Hannon and Edenberg 2020). Moreover, in September 2020, World Health Organization has emphasized the urgency of the disinformation problem by stating that even though the communication technologies are at humanity's service to keep people informed and connected during the Covid-19 pandemic, they also create "an infodemic that continues to undermine the global response and jeopardizes measures to control the pandemic" ("Managing The Covid-19 Infodemic: Promoting Healthy Behaviours And Mitigating The Harm From Misinformation And Disinformation" 2020). Similarly, Tucker and

14

Persily (2020) emphasize that after the Covid-19 pandemic, the development of the academic field of disinformation has become even more crucial since the online information environment has undergone a further change with Covid-19–related disinformation and the increase of the dependence on digital platforms (2).

Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) argue that the effects of information disorder on democracies are still unknown (5). However, if people want to make wise collective choices for the common good, they must rely on genuine factual information, but their capacity to do so is hindered by misinformation (Brown 2019, 194). Despite the current need for facts, Amazeen (2019) argues that "there appears to be a worldwide oversupply of misinformation and an undersupply of knowing what is true" from an economic point of view (555).

Misinformation is more dangerous than the absence of knowledge for several reasons (Cook, Ecker, and Lewandowsky 2015, 4). First of all, misinformation can be publicized intentionally to cause harm and fool the audience (4). Secondly, contrary to ignorance, false beliefs built on misinformation are often grasped with strong sentiments (5). Moreover, since misinformation is not easy to correct, even after debunking, these false beliefs can still impact people's judgments (5). Finally, research shows that false information, which triggers emotions such as fear, disgust, and surprise in replies, spreads significantly farther and faster than the truth (Vosoughi, Roy and Aral 2018, 1). According to the research, "it took the truth about six times as long as falsehood to reach 1500 people" (3), revealing that "false news spreads more than the truth because humans, not robots, are more likely to spread it" (1).

Consequently, misinformation hinders "decision making in democratic societies that depend on a well-informed public" (5). To develop effective solutions against this new phenomenon, having a shared understanding of the problem and using the correct terminology matters (Wardle and Derakhshan 2017, 5). Hence, the term "fake news" is avoided by some scholars because of its inadequacy to explain the complexities of 16 information pollution as politicians also use the term to discredit the news content they disagree with (Wardle 2017; Wardle and Derakhshan 2017; Zuckerman 2017; Badshah

15

2018; HLEG 2018; Egelhofer et al. 2020). For instance, former US President Donald Trump refusing to take a question from a CNN reporter during a press conference blaming the news organization for being "fake news" can be given as an example (Savransky 2017). Another example can be the Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act that was passed in 2018 in Kenya that "criminalizes fake news, with a penalty of up to US\$ 50,000 and/or 10 years in jail" which was met with an outcry "due to the perceived hidden intentions to infringe on the freedom of expression and freedom of the media" (Maweu 2019, 64). Therefore, the term "fake news" becomes a strategy of the powerful to discredit the content against their interest (Maweu 2019, 64).

Gelfert (2018) suggests that the term "fake news" should be used in specific cases in which false or misleading content is intentionally designed to manipulate the audience (86). Instead of "fake news," Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) suggest three different types of information, which are "mis-, dis- and mal-information" (5). From their account, misinformation occurs "when false information is shared, but no harm is meant" (Wardle and Derakhshan 2017, 5). Disinformation is when false information is shared intentionally to cause harm (Wardle and Derakhshan 2017, 5). Finally, dissemination of accurate information to harm, "often by moving information designed to stay private into the public sphere," is an example of mal-information (Wardle and Derakhshan 2017, 5). Therefore, instead of using the term fake-news, Wardle (2017) offers a detailed conceptual framework to define seven types of problematic content designed to deceive: satire and parody; false connection; misleading content; false context; imposter content; manipulated content; fabricated content.

2.5.1 Seven Types of Problematic Content

The first type of problematic content identified by Wardle (2017) is satire and parody. Although satire and parody as a type of information disorder can be unexpected, since the audience is not always aware that "satire is actually satire, especially when they are reading on a social feed," the content becomes problematic (Wardle 2018, 953). Wardle 17 and Derakhshan (2018) argue that even though satire and parody can be "a form of art," as audiences receive information via social media, the confusion created by

16

satirical news sites increases (46). Moreover, not only audiences but also news institutions are occasionally fooled by satirical content, as they share it as fact (Trewinnard and Bell 2018, 99).

While news satire content being disseminated by social media users as if it were news is a common situation, Sinclair (2020) suggests not seeing parody as "part of the background noise" (76). She differentiates fake news from parody and satire since fake news intends to fool the audience as "parody and satire aim to expose and can even be a necessary weapon in countering fake news" (62). Similarly, Daniel (2018) argues that while fake news is meant to take advantage of human bias, satire helps to challenge those biases. Therefore, Sinclair (2020) argues that realizing imitated content and its purposes requires digital media literacy and offers parody as a solution to enhance audiences' digital media literacy capacity (76). She gives the case of a fake Washington Post newspaper from January 16th, 2019, published with a fake news story titled "Unpresidented: Ending Crisis, Trump Hastily Departs White House" as an example of parody developing digital media literacy capacity of citizens (64). The paper, labeled with a future date, May 1st, 2019, was printed on paper and announced the resignation of the United States president at the time. The paper was created by a duo known as The Yes Men as a political parody to hint at "what a different tomorrow in a different political reality would look like" (Glaser 2019). Thus, according to Sinclair (2020), a parody that leads readers to "think, laugh and engage in dialogue is far more valuable and important than fake news that deceives" (64). Similarly, Glaser (2019) also argues that the offline parody publication of the Washington Post newspaper by The Yes Men was a creative attempt to distract the attention from the individual smartphone screens to remind the possibility of a potential future.

The second type of problematic content is false connection, which is the mismatch between the headlines, visuals, captions, and content (Wardle and Derakhshan 2018, 47). One of the reasons for the increase of false connection is clickbait headlines (47). As headlines have moved online from paper, descriptive and unequivocal headlines were replaced with economic concerns to maximize clicks (Molyneux and Coddington

2020). Clickbait headlines negatively impact audience perceptions that can deteriorate the reputation and credibility of an organization (Molyneux and Coddington 2020, 441).

Thirdly, misleading content, which is another type of problematic content, occurs when the message is intentionally framed and trimmed off by the disseminator (Wardle and Derakhshan 2018, 47). Particularly cropped visuals, specifically selected quotes or statistics, inadequately labeled sponsored content such as native or paid advertising that looks like editorial content can be given as examples ("Media Disinformation" n.d). Wardle and Derakhshan (2018) point out that this type of situation is explained with the Framing Theory (47) as Framing Theory suggests, "networks of professional communicators" include and highlight some features of perceived reality in their messages that lead to a specific interpretation (Matthes, Entman and Pellicano 2009, 176). While some disseminators frame the message strategically to persuade the audience to adopt the accounts that support their concerns, such as politicians, political satirists, editorial writers, party-affiliated newspapers, and government-owned broadcast newscasts, others usually frame the message without any specific political agenda (Matthes, Entman and Pellicano 2009, 176).

Graphs and charts are commonly used as agents for misinformation since their uniform and scientific format insinuate a deceitful authority (Guy 2017). Therefore, Wansink and Tal (2016) warn that since the "easily produced, trivial elements that are associated with science, such as graphs, can enhance persuasion," the credibility of science in the eyes of society can easily be abused (124). Thus, since the human brain is less likely to be critical of visuals, they are strong tools for disseminating misleading information (Guy 2017; Wardle and Derakhshan 2018).

The fourth type of problematic information, which is false context, occurs when authentic content is being redistributed out of its original context. Wardle and Derakhshan (2018) give the example of one of the most shared photos on social media in the wake of the earthquake in Nepal in 2015 of two small children firmly hugging each other that actually belonged to a daily pastoral scene from Vietnam in 2007 (47). 19 Even though there have been attempts to look for the brother and sister among the

18

earthquake's victims and calls for donations, the photo was taken nearly a decade ago in northern Vietnam by the Vietnamese photographer Na Son Nguyen (Pham 2015). Nguyen explains that the photo is "his most shared photo but unfortunately in the wrong context" as it was later shared with "credits such as "two Burmese orphans" and even "victims of the civil war in Syria"" (Pham 2015).

In the fifth type of disinformation, which is imposter content, journalists and news organizations' names or logos are used in the content that they have no relation to deceive and mislead the audience (Wardle and Derakhshan 2017, 47). Maweu (2019) gives the example of the 2017 elections in Kenya when the two international media houses, BBC Africa and CNN, had to warn their audience not to be tricked into the imposter content that is distributed with BBC and CNN logos on Twitter, WhatsApp, and Facebook (69).

In the Kenya case, the imposter content had concrete negative influences as the creators wanted to give the wrong impression through the two credible international news sources that Uhuru Kenyatta, the incumbent, was winning the election (Maweu 2019, 69). According to Maweu, the disinformation campaign succeeded since it had the potential to nurture strong emotional responses from the Kenyan audience as "the supporters would express their joy and those who oppose him their disgruntlement," eroding citizen trust in democratic institutions at the end (Maweu 2019, 69).

At this point, Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) argue that the more the problematic content addresses people's emotions such as anger, resentment, or fear, the more engagement it gets. In short, the architecture of the social media platforms facilitates the fast travel of emotional content since people publicly "perform" through likes, comments or shares "to connect with their online communities and 'tribes'" (Wardle and Derakhshan 2017, 7).

The sixth type of problematic content, which is manipulated content, is when authentic content is manipulated to cause harm and deceive the public (Wardle and Derakhshan 2018, 48). The Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's manipulated video to make

19

the Speaker sound drunk by slowing down her speech can be given as an example of this type of "information disorder" (Reuters Staff 2020). As The Washington Post accounted for, the video was shared on Twitter by President Donald Trump and his lawyer, Rudy Giuliani (Harwell 2019). Even though Facebook's fact-checking partners disproved the manipulated video after it was posted, Facebook attached those fact checks to the video to prevent its future dissemination and notified people who had shared it; the manipulated video still created more engagement than the work of factcheckers (Funke 2019).

Finally, fabricated content occurs with the completely fabricated news sites or deep fake videos (Maweu 2019; Wardle and Derakhshan 2018). The term 'deep fake,' a combination of 'deep learning' and 'fake,' covers videos, images, and audio files that are produced or altered by artificial intelligence, with the intent of fooling the audience into believing the content is real (Van de Weghe 2019). Such disinformation campaigns disseminating fabricated content aim to spread doubt, uncertainty, and confusion to cultivate polarization using pre-existing tensions in society or discredit political actors' reputations during elections (Maweu 2019, 71).

A fabricated video posted on Instagram, in which the founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, reveals that he has "total control of billions of people's stolen data, all their secrets, their lives, their futures" can be given as an example of deep fake phenomenon (Funke and Benkelman 2019).

2.6 Information Disorder in Turkey

According to a study carried out by Bozdağ (2017), the first thing that comes to mind about the Internet in Turkey is social media, and the use of social media constitutes 61% of Internet use (38). Therefore, as social media transformed the practice of journalism globally (Trewinnard and Bell 2018), Twitter, in particular, has taken a crucial part in reshaping the dynamics of news and journalism in Turkey, too (Doğu 2017, 688). As democratic countries globally are exposed to false information spreading via social 21

media and news websites that imitate journalism formats (Bennett and Livingston 2018, 125), Turkey also gets its share.

The report by Kirdemir (2020) highlights not only Twitter but also YouTube as the dissemination tool for false information, pointing out the "transitivity between YouTube and other social media platforms" (27). It also emphasizes that disinformation campaigns on social media influence foreign policy discourse, such as the "anti-NATO propaganda in Turkey's social media world" (27). Moreover, Turkey's media institutions contribute to this problem by failing as gatekeepers and disseminating false news, leaving the Turkish infosphere vulnerable to foreign hostile disinformation campaigns (Kirdemir 2020, 27).

In their research, Andı, Aytaç, and Çarkoğlu (2019) investigate the relationship between political knowledge and the use of online sources for political information in Turkey (2). Their work reveals that, while there is a positive correlation between Internet use and political knowledge in Turkey, social media use is positively correlated with being misinformed (15). Moreover, social media users are less prone to giving "not sure" answers (15). Thus, they argue that social media platforms produce both misinformation and users that are "confident about what they think they know" (15). Consequently, they claim that while social media is often celebrated as a tool for democratization, it may block citizens' understanding of political issues as well. Moreover, as citizens attach to news sources that consolidate their opinion, having a consensus on objective facts becomes difficult (Yurdakul 2020, 17).

2.7 Fact-Checking as A Solution to Information Disorder

The capability of instantaneous networked communication to produce high-volume online news in almost real-time has led to a loss of accuracy and verification (Le Masurier 2014, 139). Consequently, fact-checking has become a new democratic practice by forming its own social and political institutions throughout the world in less than a decade (Ünver 2020, 1). Graves (2018) defines fact-checking as a hybrid movement combining various fields such as journalism, academia, and politics with a

21

shared concern of supporting democratic ideals of professional journalism, such as accuracy and fairness (626).

To understand the role of fact-checkers within the context of journalistic work, Singer (2020) points to their emphasis on accountability and transparency as a response to their perceived failings of professional journalism (2). Fact-checkers' practice of presenting the reasoning of arguments they make differs from the traditions of institutional political reporting (Graves 2017; Singer 2020). Moreover, Singer (2020) argues that journalists and fact-checkers differ in terms of the "fundamental norm of truth-telling" (2). Even though accuracy is a respected ideal for both fact-checkers and journalists, journalists concentrate on accurately reporting what has been said while fact-checkers evaluate the argument's veracity (Singer 2020, 2). In support of Singer's argument, Graves, Nyhan, and Reifler (2016) also argue that because of the objectivity principle that influences the mainstream press in the US, reporters usually do not prefer having a side in factual disputes or opposing public political claims and instead move with limited definitions of accuracy such as "ensuring that quotations are correct" (102). On the contrary, factcheckers' role is to openly assess the accuracy of politicians' claims (Graves, Nyhan, and Reifler 2016).

Can fact-checking become a solution to citizens' likelihood of being deceived by misinformation? As a solution, Cook, Ecker, and Lewandowsky (2015) suggest explicitly and repeatedly warning people about the possibility of being misinformed (14). As they argue, although repeating the disavowal does not necessarily wipe off the misinformation effect, it still decreases its potential harm, mainly if misinformation is strongly encoded (15). Moreover, they warn about the asymmetry of strengthening of the initial misinformation having a more substantial negative effect than strengthening of the retraction has a positive effect (15). Therefore, they stress the necessity of effective corrections to provide an alternative story that fills the crack created by the misinformation (15). However, what this asymmetry indicates is that fact-checking as a solution to disinformation has its problems.

22

To begin with, fact-checking practice and what one considers as "facts" also require subjective interpretation (Brandtzaeg and Følstad 2017, 10). At this point, Uscinski and Butler (2013) criticize fact-checking of being "little different than other sensationalized 'infotainment' style news coverage that attempts to shoehorn reality into commercially marketable segments" since it presents a simplistic record of a complicated world (163).

Similarly, Lim (2018) highlights the inconsistencies in fact-checkers' findings and argues that presenting an objective judgment on a politician's honesty is hard (Lim 2018, 6). Also, since people having disagreements about the truth is quite ordinary, Uscinski and Butler (2013) suggest that a fact-checker's disagreement with a politician "does not make the politician a liar any more than it makes the fact checker a liar" (163).

Moreover, fact-checkers are sometimes blamed for being partisan (Graves 2017, 519). Actors with partial ties providing fact-checking services can also become problematic (Brandtzaeg and Følstad 2017, 10). For instance, when the organization "Donald J. Trump for President" invited Trump supporters to took part in a fact-checking initiative during the 2016 US presidential campaign, their practice was criticized as securing Trump's interests (Brandtzaeg and Følstad 2017, 10).

Also, Mena (2019) mentions "confirmation bias" as a problem of fact-checking, which happens when a person is confronted with the idea that is inconsistent with the person's prior beliefs (660). As people tend to avoid such confrontations and hold on to the information that reaffirms their prior views, it is crucial to investigate how fact-checkers "deal with their own confirmation bias when it comes to using different sources and fact-checking claims" (Mena 2019, 660).

What is more, lack of correct information is not the only problem when fighting "information disorder" (Hodges 2020). Since societal factors such as "decline in social capital, growing economic inequality, increased polarization, declining trust in science, and an increasingly fractionated media landscape" lead to the emergence of the posttruth world of today (Cook, Ecker and Lewandowsky 2015, 30), increasing the

23

number of checked facts and debunked problematic news content is an impotent reaction (Hodges 2020). According to Hodges, the solution is to enhance the level of trust in public institutions. Parallel to this argument, McDougall (2019) argues that the adoption of critical media literacy as a mandatory and dynamic subject in schools would enhance citizens' resilience to "information disorder" more than fact-checking and verification tools (29). Thus, McDougall (2019) describes the former as "teaching to fish," while the latter is "giving a fish" (30).

Finally, research finds that, for many journalists, it is not yet clear "what to make of their fact-checking cousins, 'a vagueness that arises from' challenges to notions of where journalism itself starts and ends" (Singer 2020, 3). This point also makes it crucial to analyze the perceptions of fact-checker and journalist towards fact-checking practices in Turkey.

2.8 Perceptions Towards Fact-checking

To assess the conduct and strengthen fact-checking institutions, analyzing the perceptions towards fact-checking services becomes essential. Brandtzaeg, Følstad, and Chaparro (2017) investigate how the trustworthiness and usefulness of fact-checking services are perceived by journalists and compare these views to those of regular social media users. Their research reveals that while both groups emphasize the usefulness of such services, they hold a strong distrust as well (16). Thus, the authors suggest several points as a conclusion (17). First of all, they emphasize that some social media users and journalists perceive verification and fact-checking services as limited in terms of knowledge and credibility and suggest that these services should be transparent with their methodologies, ownership structures, and financial resources (17). Finally, they highlight collaborative fact-checking involving professionals and lay users.

In another research, Brandtzaeg and Følstad (2017) argue that while fact-checking services work to counter online disinformation, whether the public actually trusts or distrusts them is not known (65). Thus, they ask how the trustworthiness and usefulness of fact-checking services are perceived by social media users and highlight fact-

24

checking's impotence in reducing misperceptions among the people most inclined to believe them since people avoid facts that contradict their existing beliefs (2). According to them, "(…) the more political or controversial issues a fact-checking service covers, the more it needs to build a reputation for usefulness and trustworthiness" (2). Therefore, addressing the opinions about fact-checking services bears importance. Moreover, even though the demand for fact-checking services is increasing, since the majority of social media users do not use them adequately, Brandtzaeg and Følstad advise that such services should be even more active on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and online discussion forums, where easy access to fact-checking is needed (9). Another important finding of the research is that distrust about fact-checking "extends beyond a particular service to encompass the entire social and political system" (9) and is supported by emotions instead of rational arguments (10). Thus, they suggest fact-checking organizations should build an interactive relationship with users to increase trust (11).

Amazeen (2019) explores the "practitioner perceptions of the varying contexts within which fact-checking emerges along with its related challenges" (557). She shows that fact-checkers worldwide explain the global expansion of fact-checking with the gradual deterioration in journalism practices, public empowerment, emerging technologies, and heightening socio-political tensions (555).

In addition, in her work, Singer (2020) explores the reason for the increasing popularity of this form of journalistic activity and "the perceived need for a separate set of people calling themselves fact-checkers" (2). She finds that fact-checkers think the importance of their work lies in their ability to provide a valuable public service by countering misinformation, offer a more trustworthy coverage area than most other media, and most importantly, educate audiences (Singer 2020, 15). Thus, fact-checkers claim that they perform the normative function of offering civically significant, trustworthy information that should have been provided by legacy news outlets (Singer 2020, 10). Consequently, they identify one of their goals as bettering established journalists' work (Singer 2020, 12). The goal of the study reported here is to investigate whether the fact-checkers in Turkey perceive their roles in line with the summarized findings above and

25

analyze the journalist and fact-checker perceptions in Turkey towards the role of fact-checking and journalism in response to mis- and disinformation. Also, while the studies on the fact-checking ecosystem in Turkey generally focused on questioning the functions, scope, and methodology of fact-checking organizations in Turkey (Uzunoğlu and Uyar 2021, 1), the aim of this work is to contribute to the literature on the information ecosystem in Turkey by revealing how media professionals give meaning to their roles as the news get digitalized and compare and contrast the journalist and fact-checker views.

2.9 Fact-checking Environment in Turkey

The rise of digital media, social media platforms, and misinformed publics have led to the emergence of verification platforms to check information which disseminates on traditional media and social media platforms (Ünal and Çiçeklioğlu 2019, 146). Yanatma (2018) explains the growth of some credible fact-checking organizations in Turkey with the high level of polarization in politics and news media (25). According to Ünver (2020), every country has its specific milestones that lead to increased public demand for fact-checking (35).

Instead of politics, the content of the misinformation in Turkey used to consist of "public health issues such as vaccination, food security and conspiracy theories about pharmaceutical companies" that heightened around 2009 with the H1N1 'Swine' Flu outbreak (Ünver 2020, 3). Thus, the first fact-checking initiative in Turkey, YalanSavar.org, was founded in 2009 to fight against the problematic health information such as the conspiracy theories about the flu being a 'lab-created' bioweapon, or a master plan created by pharmaceutical companies to make a profit by selling vaccines (Ünver 2020, 3).

In accordance with the work of Ünver (2020) and Uzunoğlu and Uyar (2021), during interviews, it was stated by fact-checkers that there are three different periods in Turkey in terms of fact-checking which are the first, second and the third waves. While the first wave fact-checkers were actually amateur bloggers, such as YalanSavar.org,

26

Malumatfuruş, and EvrimAgaci.org, the second wave, such as Teyit.org or Doğruluk Payı, emerged as political verification platforms as a response to polarized media environment in Turkey.

The third wave of fact-checkers emerged because of the impact of the political polarization and act with a political agenda. The interviewees revealed that they are mostly active during election periods. Ünver explains that they are "funded by the government or are pro-government initiatives that sought to balance the fact-checking ecosystem" to avoid the ecosystem become too anti-government (Ünver 2020, 35). However, instead of opposing other organizations, third-wave pro-government fact-checkers "established a different avenue of fact-checking by verifying claims against the government" (Ünver 2020, 35).

Even though the Ünver's study reveals that "overall awareness of and reliance on fact-checking platforms" is low, he positively assesses the work of fact-checkers in Turkey as "among the most successful and politically sustainable fact-checking groups in the world" since they have invented successful audience engagement models despite the polarized atmosphere (35).

YalanSavar.org, one of the oldest fact-checking organizations from Turkey, was established by science enthusiasts in 2009 as a voluntary platform to contribute to the formation of critical thinking. They underline that as a voluntary organization operating in the field of health, they perceive advertising revenue against their organizational ideals and principles and do not use advertising on their website as it would harm accurateness and reliability. Also, as they have other professional responsibilities, they see YalanSavar.org more as a hobby and produce content in their spare time and cover all expenses themselves.

Instead of fact-checking the daily agenda, they focus on providing accurate and quality information on science. They explain their social impact as inspiring people who care about the information ecosystem as a 12-year-old organization.

Malumatfuruş was established in 2009 under the name of Muhtesip and later renamed in 2015 (Uzunoğlu and Uyar 2021). They have been operating anonymously since then to repair what they thought were failing in journalism. The primary aim of the organization is to raise awareness so that the audience can doubt that both mainstream media and social media spread false information, either intentionally or inadvertently. The organization also aims to increase awareness on some of the fact-checking tools, such as the reverse image search feature on Google. Although the organization used to focus especially on the disinformation in mainstream media and the claims of columnists, with the increasing use of social media, they have also started to examine the disinformation in social media.

Like Yalansavar, this platform consists of volunteers who have jobs in other professional fields except journalism and does not generate any financial profit through the platform. During the interview, the organization was not yet an IFCN member, but was planning to apply in the future.

Another organization from the information ecosystem of Turkey is EvrimAgaci.org, which was established in 2010 by a group of biology students from the Biology Department of the Middle East Technical University in Turkey. Even though the aim of the group was to focus on the misinformation on evolutionary biology, later they have widened their scope of interests. They have been working for the accurate communication of science and contributing to making scientists' voices heard. They aim to be an accurate Turkish academic resource on the Internet on science topics, such as mutation and evolution. They explain the most important task of fact-checking attempts as creating a database in Turkish language and accumulating knowledge.

DogrulukPayi.com, a member of IFCN, was established for political fact-checking in 2014 by political scientists. In May 2020, they have joined Facebook's Third-Party Fact-Checking Program, which has increased scope of fact-check, social impact and audience reach as an organization.

28

Teyit.org, established in 2015, is as an independent fact-checking platform that is a member of IFCN and a part of Facebook's Third-Party Fact-Checking Program since 2018. Besides Facebook, Teyit.org also cooperates with TikTok since December 2020 (Semercioğlu 2020). As Ünver (2020) argues, while other fact-checking organizations were established with a specific area of expertise such as "leader statements, science, or columnist claims", Teyit.org was established "with a 'catch-all' agenda" due to the urgent needs of the traumatic period in which it was established (9).

Moreover, Doğrula.org, Gununyalanlari.com, and FactCheck.tr are pro-government organizations that focus primarily on analyzing disinformation and claims that target government acts and attitudes (Uzunoğlu and Uyar 2021; Ünver 2020).

In addition, "Doğruluğu Ne?" platform was established in 2019 by an academic from Communications Faculty. Their future aim is to establish an association that includes academicians, students and journalists and build a stronger corporate identity. At the time of the interview, they were doing fact-checking as amateurs and did not have any sources of income. It was expressed that the team is composed of students, so that students also learn fact-checking practices, and by teaching these students how to fact-check, the organization also contributes to the further development of this field in Turkey.

Finally, in February 2021, Directorate of Communications of Turkey announced that as an organization they will launch a fact-checking platform called "Doğru mu?" that will "fight against lies and false facts on social media" and "reveal whether the news and information circulating on social media are true or false" ("Presidency's Directorate of Communications Introduces Next-Generation Fact-Checking Platform In Fight Against Lies And False Facts On Social Media" 2021).

2.10 Perceptions Towards Fact-Checking in Turkey

Investigation of how journalists and fact-checkers in Turkey perceive their roles in response to mis- and disinformation bears importance for several reasons. First of all, as professions are defined as legitimacy to practice a body of knowledge with a normative

29

interest in benefiting the society, Lewis (2012) defines threats to any profession as "struggles over boundaries about the rhetorical and material delimitations of insiders and outsiders, of what counts as ethical practice, and so on" (837). According to Lewis, these are concerns of control by the professions to accomplish their normative functions (Lewis 2012, 837). The fact that digital communication technologies facilitate end-user participation, as explained by Jenkins (2006), challenges the preexisting rationale for professional control over journalistic practices (Lewis 2012, 837). In addition to end-users, it is argued that fact-checkers are also perceived as a "fresh challenge to journalistic attempts at normative boundary-setting in a digital news environment" (Singer 2020, 2). However, "fact-checkers may be leading the way for other journalists" since they work as "digital-first or digital-only entities" and develop "meaningful interactions with users" (Singer 2018, 1078). Even though Turkey's general awareness rate towards fact-checking is low (Ünver 2020, 35), the existing perceptions of journalists and fact-checkers towards each other should be analyzed to detect the potential cooperation areas between fact-checkers and journalists. Only then "the globally shared and challenging goal of fact-checkers" of reaching a broader audience can be fulfilled (Singer 2018, 1075).

Analyzing the journalist and fact-checker perceptions towards the role of fact-checking and journalism in response to mis- and disinformation bears special importance for the Turkish context. In February 2021, T24, which defines itself as an independent internet newspaper with "no relation with any company, person, institution, organization, association, organization, fund or similar organization, and does not consume any external resources with its own resources" ("Hakkında" n.d.) has blamed Teyit.org, one of the most popular fact-checking organizations in Turkey, with partisanship (Akın 2021b).

Since 2018, Teyit.org cooperates with Facebook to more effectively tackle misinformation ("Facebook'un Doğrulama Programı Türkiye'de Teyit İşbirliğiyle Hayata Geçiyor" 2018). Facebook takes action against the sources "that repeatedly share or publish content that is rated as False or Altered" by reducing their distribution and preventing them from monetizing, advertising, and registering as a news page on

Facebook ("Facebook's Enforcement of Fact-Checker Ratings" n.d.). Moreover, when a registered news page regularly distributes false news, its registration as a news page is cancelled ("Facebook's Enforcement of Fact-Checker Ratings" n.d.).

As a final step, Facebook explains that the "thousands or millions of copies" of the misinformation that was spotted by independent fact-checkers on the platform are identified by the use of technology across Facebook and Instagram ("Facebook's Enforcement of Fact-Checker Ratings" n.d.). Even though "the content may include small differences, such as cropping, aspect ratio or typographic symbols," the distribution of the copies is automatically curtailed by Facebook to maximize the number of contents analyzed by fact-checkers, rather than making them give extra time to the "variations of content they've already seen" ("Facebook's Enforcement of Fact-Checker Ratings" n.d.). One important point is that as fact-checking partners do not directly analyze and rate these problematic copies, they "cannot process appeals or corrections for this content" ("Facebook's Enforcement of Fact-Checker Ratings" n.d.). Thus, which copies are identified as problematic information depends on Facebook's decision and the technology used by the platform.

Under these circumstances, T24 blamed Teyit.org for having selection biases and not examining and flagging all the content in the ecosystem that contains the same disinformation element, which was a point that also came up during the interview with Journalist 4 for this study. Followingly, T24 warned that "fact-checking can turn into a new kind of censorship in addition to the pressures that come from the official authorities" (Yıldız 2021). In her piece, T24 writer Yıldız questioned the evaluation processes and independence of Teyit.org, arguing that when Teyit.org debunks a content, it does not give the entire list of the media organizations that shared it. Later, referencing T24, some other internet media argued that Teyit.org favors and protects the state media, while it systematically debunks alternative media to discredit them ("Cüneyt Özdemir: Bu Teyit.Org'Un Yediği Ilk Halt Değil; Gerçeklerin Eninde Sonunda Ortaya Çıkmak Gibi Bir Huyu Var!" 2021; "Teyit.Org'un Yandaş Medya Torpili" 2021).

31

As an answer, Mehmet Atakan Foça, founder of Teyit.org, expressed that even though some media organizations develop a constructive dialogue with Teyit.org when they publish false content, the reasons behind the attacks to Teyit.org are economic as the cooperation with Facebook reduces the traffic from Facebook and the advertising revenue of the news websites that shares problematic content regularly (Akın 2021a).

Despite the newly emerging frictions between journalism as a profession and fact-checking institutions in Turkey, the polarization and restrictions in Turkey's media environment (Bulut and Yörük 2017, 4099) necessitates strong networks among fact-checkers, journalists, and the public to create a healthy information ecosystem. As a solution to information disorder, Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) advise media organizations to collaborate claiming that "having journalists at different news organisations fact-checking the same claims or debunking the same visual content" has no point (82). These types of cooperation require investigation of the perspectives of fact-checkers and journalists towards their roles in society.

Furthermore, Yurdakul (2020) argues that since Turkish citizens will vote in a "highly competitive election" in 2023, discussing the "information-related issues will help fight against possible foreign influence campaigns and purposeful attempts to spread misinformation and disinformation" (11). The problem of "information disorder" becomes even more significant when decisive democratic moments such as national referenda and general elections are on the agenda (Maweu 2019, 63). The fast and high-volume information flood prevents journalists and the general public from being critical of the content they encounter and verifying their accuracy, notably through the online social media platforms, in a delicate time when the citizens need to be able to tell the difference between accurate and inaccurate information to exercise their democratic rights (Maweu 2019, 63). Thus, analyzing media professionals' perspectives towards fact-checking and journalism in Turkey can be the first step to secure a safe information environment during elections.

In addition, even though trust in the news media continues to fall throughout the world (Newman et al. 2020, 14), the Covid-19 pandemic has reminded audiences of the value

of traditional news sources (10). As Turkey is one of the countries with low levels of trust in the news (Yanatma 2018, 9), journalists should stress "their roles as objective, truth-oriented disseminators, hereby distinguishing their profession from alternative sources of (mis)information" (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 2).

Under these circumstances, this research aims to understand how media practitioners perceive the roles of fact-checkers and journalists in Turkey in response to mis- and disinformation by conducting in-depth interviews with journalists and fact-checkers to shed light on the perceived challenges and roles of these groups and the potential cooperation areas between them. Therefore, this study asks the following questions:

RQ1: How do journalists working in traditional news organizations in Turkey perceive the normative roles of fact-checkers in their societies?

RQ2: How do journalists working in traditional news organizations in Turkey perceive their normative role in their societies in response to mis- and disinformation?

RQ3: How do fact-checkers in Turkey perceive their normative role in their societies?

RQ4: How do fact-checkers in Turkey perceive the normative roles of journalists in their societies in response to mis- and disinformation?

RQ5: Are there areas, as perceived by fact-checkers and journalists, for future cooperation in response to the "information disorder" between journalists and fact-checkers in Turkey? If so, in what ways do journalist and fact-checkers think that they can cooperate in response to mis- and disinformation?

3. METHODOLOGY

To explore fact-checkers and journalists working in traditional news organizations' perspectives in Turkey towards their role in response to mis- and disinformation, this study has used individual interviews with fact-checkers and journalists as data. While determining the interview candidates for the semi-structured interview, two previous studies were used.

In one of them, Ünver (2020) lists the fact-checking initiatives in Turkey as YalanSavar.org, Malumatfuruş, EvrimAgaci.org, DogrulukPayi.com, Teyit.org, Gununyalanlari.com, FactCheck.tr, Doğrula.org (5). The list by Ünver was used by this research to reach out potential fact-checker interviewees. Later, during semi-structured interviews with fact-checkers, a relatively new fact-checking organization, "Doğruluğu Ne?" operating in Turkey was detected and included in the research sample.

The second research used in determining the interview candidates for the semi-structured interview was the Digital News Report prepared by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism for 2020. Within the scope of the thesis, it was decided to reach journalists working in traditional media organizations named Hürriyet, Sözcü, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Sabah and Posta, which were identified as the most frequently used brands of Turkish print media in the report. Thus, the above-mentioned fact-checking and news organizations were sent invitations to participate in the research.

The corporate e-mail addresses of fact-checking organizations were used to contact with fact-checkers. It was requested that the research invitation be delivered to the relevant persons within the fact-checking organization. In this way, it was ensured that people who actively work as fact-checkers have received the invitation. Only one fact-checking organization, gununyalanlari.com, did not state its' corporate e-mail address. Thus, the organizations' Facebook account was used to get in touch with them. In total, nine fact-checking organizations were contacted. Six of them responded positively, while three of them did not respond to the invitation. A total of twelve interviews were conducted, of

which six were journalists and six were fact-checkers (see Table 3.1). The interviews lasted an hour on average.

When it comes to contacting with journalists, both the corporate e-mail addresses of newspapers and personal e-mail addresses of journalists were used, if the e-mail address of the person was specified on the newspaper's website. In total, 231 e-mail addresses were sent the invitation. Only one of the news organizations mentioned in the research sample did not receive any invitation, because the news organization did not reveal the e-mail addresses of its employees and its corporate e-mail address was not working since it was full and "currently cannot accept messages." Two people who stated that they work for this newspaper on their LinkedIn profiles were also sent messages, which came no reply.

In total, ten of the journalists declined the invitation. Three of them stated time constraints as the reason, five of them stated that they are not professional journalists and two of them stated that their positions within the newspaper did not allow them to participate in such research. Three people accepted the invitation, stating that they are not professional journalists. However, they were not included within the research sample.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted online, face-to-face, or as a telephone call, recorded with the participant's consent and supported by written notes taken during the interview. The interviews were conducted in Turkish and then transcribed and translated into English. Three of the journalists interviewed did not give consent to the recording of the interview. Those interviews were supported by notes taken during the conversation.

Inspired by the research by Singer (2020), later a textual analysis was conducted to understand how fact-checkers and journalists make sense of "who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live" (Mckee 2003, 8). Thus, through research questions, the data on fact-checkers' and journalists' perceptions on their occupational

activities, their views on the contributions of fact-checking to the current infosphere, and potentials for collaborations between fact-checkers and journalists were collected. The participants of this study were assured of anonymity so that the research invitation was accepted by more people and more robust research data were collected about their perspectives. The background of interviewees is given below as a table to provide insight on their perspectives presented in the research (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.1

Sample description ($N = 12$)

Sample characteristics	Fact-checking Organization	Newspaper
Total	6	6
Female	1	4
Male	5	2
Education		
Identifies herself/himself as journalist	2	6
Not identifies herself/himself as journalist	4	-
Occupation		
Not identifies fact-checking as her/his primary job	3	-

Table 3.2

Sample background ($N = 12$)

#	Participant	Organization	Background
1	Journalist 1		• 40 years of experience in the profession • Sports journalist
2	Journalist 2		• Two years of experience as a freelance writer in the newspaper • Studied journalism in university • Has another job besides writing in the newspaper
3	Journalist 3	• Traditional newspapers that are the most frequently used brands of Turkish print media (Newman et. al. 2020, 84)	• 35 years of experience as a journalist • Critical financial journalist
4	Journalist 4		• Nine years of experience as news research manager • 26 years in journalism • Started when she was a communications student
5	Journalist 5		• 30 years of experience as a journalist • Currently works as the news coordinator
6	Journalist 6		• Five years of experience as digital chief editor
7	Fact-Checker 1	• The third-wave pro-government fact-checkers haven't responded the research invitation.	• Involved in fact-checking both academically and practically • Working as an editor for seven years
8	Fact-Checker 2	• The participants were from first and second wave fact-checking organizations.	• Founder of a voluntary platform created by critical thinking and science enthusiasts • Sees fact-checking as a hobby, has another job

9	Fact-Checker 3	• Currently working as an editor • Worked for a traditional media organization for 11 years
10	Fact-Checker 4	• Popular science writer • Founder and executive director
11	Fact-Checker 5	• Sees fact-checking as a hobby, has another job • Prefers to stay anonymous as a fact-checker
12	Fact-Checker 6	• Works as an academic • Also experienced as a journalist

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Journalists' Perceptions on How They Perceive Fact-Checkers' Roles in Response to Mis- and Disinformation

As the first research question asks how journalists perceive the roles of fact-checkers, this research finds that journalists who were interviewed were cautious of and distant to fact-checking platforms in Turkey. Yet, Teyit.org was the most popular fact-checking organization among journalists and mentioned by all of them. Only one of the journalists, Journalist 2, expressed that fact-checking organizations are unknown to her, which can be explained with the fact that she may not be up-to-date with the innovations and recent developments in the information ecosystem since she works as a freelance writer in the newspaper and has another job besides writing in the newspaper.

To understand how journalists working in traditional news organizations in Turkey perceive the roles of fact-checkers in their societies, this study investigates how journalists explain the reason for the emergence of fact-checking organizations in the first place. It should be noted that when journalists were asked the reason why fact-checking organizations has emerged, they all explained the need for fact-checkers in relation with journalism.

Journalists were inclined to see fact-checkers as "'outsiders' who are performing journalistic tasks" (Singer 2020, 15) and to question their limitations in comparison to journalism, which is ultimately an issue of "boundary maintenance" (Lewis 2012, 837). There was consensus among the journalists on fact-checking being the primary duty of journalists. Journalists see fact-checking inherent in journalism and perceive that it is journalist's duty to verify the news and to contact the experts of the related subject. Thus, they made a clear separation by saying that the fact-checker is not always a journalist, but the journalist is a fact-checker. Journalist 3, with her experience in journalism for over thirty years, even stated that fact-checking organizations are against the nature of journalism since fact-checking is already an inherent part of journalism.

Digitalization, economic and political pressures on media, polarization, and low trust in media institutions were listed by journalists as reasons that lead to an increase in the number of fact-checking organizations.

Digitalization and participatory culture emerged as factors that challenges the journalistic control over information since "information is no longer scarce, hard to produce, nor difficult to repurpose and share" (Lewis 2012, 838). The expression of "everyone now sees her/himself as a journalist" was frequently used when explaining the effects of digitalization on the emergence of fact-checking organizations. Moreover, the fast and effortless dissemination of misinformation and vast amount of information flow were also mentioned by journalists. Therefore, digital communication technologies, with their interactive, collaborative, and participatory cultures (Jenkins 2006; Deuze 2007), challenge the professional authority over "content creation, filtering, and distribution" by enabling end-user participation (Lewis 2012, 837). However, according to journalists, as the borders between professional journalists and the citizens blurred, the circulation of inaccurate or problematic information that mirrors news through networks of peers became easier (Posetti 2017, 59).

It was also commonly stated by the journalists interviewed that if there were not so much political and economic pressure on media, fact-checking activity would not be needed this much. Journalists gave media owners having numerous enterprises on different sectors as a reason for the global emergence of fact-checking. They expressed that to increase the trust in media, media owners should not be dealing with other jobs to ensure credibility.

Journalists also revealed that the number of clicks is valued more by the newspaper administration than accuracy, leading to an increase in the number of fact-checking organizations, which is actually caused by the lack of sustainable finance models for traditional news organizations. Therefore, the weaknesses of the traditional business models of newspapers nurture "information disorder" by replacing quality over traffic (Posetti 2017, 57).

40

It was also expressed by journalists that the polarized media environment combined with the advent of social media lead to the spread of more slogan-like and less informative news content. Journalist 4 explained the emergence of fact-checking organizations with people getting used to consuming shorter information due to social media and added that fact-checking organizations also serve the limited attention of people with their content, since they label news as either false or accurate with in their analyses. Thus, fact-checking is criticized of being closer to "infotainment" style news coverage since it reduces the complexity of reality (Uscinski and Butler 2013, 163). Similarly, Steensen (2019) argues that the assumption of fact-checking and verification that the "knowledge claims can be categorized as true or false, fake or real" are not in accordance with the complex nature of knowledge and truth since in today's world "knowledge and truth are increasingly understood as constructions, and in which absolute certainty has become an unreachable luxury" (187). From another perspective, the comment is in accordance with the findings of Singer (2015) about journalists' concerns on the weakening of journalistic autonomy through "the subversion of news values to entertainment values" (Singer 2015, 7).

In addition, regarding polarization, Journalist 4 expressed that fact-checking organizations have created themselves space due to the political belief in Turkey that some news are misrepresented. She revealed that even though "some media outlets distorted, misrepresented, and sometimes exaggerated the news more than apparent due to the political pressures on the press, not all newspapers are the same."

She underlined the following:

> For instance, our newspaper is also doing research to fact-check the accuracy of many claims. Our newspaper also writes the same topics. The content that is covered by Teyit.org is also covered by others, too. But so many users have closed their eyes to this aspect... Actually, even if you shout the truth with more information, they don't care, since Teyit.org seems to be on their side... At the end, it comes to choosing your side... (…) Ultimately people do not read newspaper. The problem of this country is that people don't read anything until the end. They cannot bear to read anything to the end. Hence, they are either

incomplete informed or misinformed. Yet, they don't hold back their criticisms. [1]

Thus, besides polarization, the globally decreasing trust in media institutions also emerged as a reason for the worldwide increase in the number of fact-checking organizations. While journalism is also seriously affected by the loss of trust citizens in media institutions, fact-checking emerges as one of the efforts to solve this problem of trust (Sabancı 2021).

During the interviews, journalists' views on the shortcomings of the fact-checking platforms was a recurring theme. For instance, journalists expressed the limited employment capabilities and professional networks of fact-checking platforms as weaknesses for fact-checking platforms. Journalists also perceived lack of sources of finances as an important challenge for fact-checking organizations. In addition, newly emerging corporate identity of fact-checking platforms emerged as a hesitation for journalists as they expressed their concerns on fact-checking platforms' methodology to access information, their economic resources, and their overall autonomy in the field of journalism. For instance, Journalist 5 stated her doubts and concerns about the independence of these fact-checking organizations stating that they are getting funding from social media companies. However, Journalist 6 stated that he finds fact-checking organizations' agreement with Facebook useful since it makes a revision more compulsory for publishers. The positive attitude of Journalist 6 towards the relationship between social media companies and fact-checking organizations can be explained with his five years of experience as digital chief editor. As he is conducting a relatively new position, he may be more welcoming towards newly emerging fact-checking organizations and their roles in society.

---

[1]   "Bizim gazetemiz de mesela bir sürü şeyin doğruluğunu teyit etmek için araştırma yapıyor. Aynı şeyi bizim gazetemiz de yazıyor. 'Teyit.org'un yazdığını başka hiçbir yer yazmıyor.' değil aslında... Ama kullanıcılar gözlerini bu tarafa o kadar kapatmış ki... Aslında doğruyu sen daha fazla bilgi ile bağırıp çağırsan bile ilgilenmiyorlar; çünkü Teyit.org onların tarafında görünüyor. Tarafını seç yani... (…) Sonuçta insanlar okumuyorlar. Sonuna kadar okumama bu ülkenin sorunu. Bir şeyi sonuna kadar okumaya tahammülleri yok. Dolayısıyla, ya eksik ya yanlış bilgileniyorlar; sonra ahkam kesiyorlar."

It is worth noting that Journalist 4 had the perception of the fact-checking organizations as a source of censorship. She gave the example of the discussion between T24 and Teyit.org which was still current at the time of the interview. She added that an insufficient investigation by a fact-checking organization could cause Facebook to restrict a content. Thus, as a journalist with 26 years of experience, she was inclined to see the research by fact-checking organizations unsatisfactory, which can also be an issue of "boundary maintenance" (Lewis 2012, 837). From this perspective, in the future, with a bigger sample composed of journalists, a study can be conducted that measures the impact of experience in the journalism profession on perspectives about the innovations in the journalism field.

4.2 Journalists' Perceptions on How They Perceive Their Roles in Response to Mis- And Disinformation

To better understand how journalists perceive their roles in response to mis- and disinformation and answer the second research question, this study investigates journalists' thoughts on the reason for the increasing spread of the problem of misinformation in Turkey and analyzes how journalists position themselves with regards to the problem of information disorder. All journalists expressed fast-paced media environment, digitalization, and clickbait as reasons for the increasing spread of the problem of misinformation in Turkey.

When journalists were asked whether they used social media as a news source for the content they produce, they stated that using social media as a news source is not a choice but a professional obligation, as official statements are made from official social media accounts instead of press conferences with journalists. Moreover, they all underlined the strict editorial processes, and stated that they only take into account the social media accounts they know who they belong to while making news, after they fact-check and confirm the content. With this attitude, they differentiated traditional media from "alternative sources of (mis)information" because of their stricter editorial processes and emphasized their roles as "truth-oriented disseminators" (Balod and

Hameleers 2019, 2). For instance, Journalist 1, as a professional with forty years of experience as a sports journalist, highlighted fact-checking as new media's weakness since people working there are not taught how to fact-check, unlike the professionals in traditional media, thus stressing the strong fact-checking mechanisms of traditional media. Thus, this research finds that while traditional journalists under the influence of the digitalization of the news industry use social media as an additional news source, they emphasize core journalistic values and express that they do not use the information on social media directly without confirming via other sources as it would not be in accordance with journalism ethics, which is in line with the findings of Taşkıran (2016).

However, at this point, it is worth mentioning that, during interviews, journalists repeatedly mentioned that the editorial processes of the newspaper and the website of that same news organization are separate. Thus, not every content that is published on the website of the news organization is included in the newspaper. The editorial processes of the newspaper are explained as stricter than the editorial processes of the website of the news organization.

For instance, Journalist 1 expressed that:

> We need to divide them into two. Let's say I'm in the X newspaper, and there is x.com.tr. I am making X newspaper separately. X.com.tr's team is separate. But if you tell the outside reader, x.com.tr belongs to the X newspaper. It is thought as if it were intertwined with the newspaper. Yes, we do interact. The articles in the X newspaper appear on x.com.tr. But not all that appear on x.com.tr are in our newspaper. [2]

Later, he expressed that even if traditional media fact-checks the content before publishing a piece of news, some new media organizations can put sensational news on

---

[2] "Bunları da 2'ye ayırmak lazım. Diyelim, ben X gazetesindeyim, bir de X.com.tr var. Ben X gazetesini ayrı yapıyorum, X.com.tr'nin ekibi ayrı. Ama dışarıdan okuyana söylerseniz, X.com.tr ile X gazetesi aynıdır. Gazete ile sanki iç içe düşünülüyor. Evet, etkileşimde bulunuyoruz, X gazetesindekiler, X.com.tr'de çıkıyor ama X.com.tr'de her çıkan da X gazetesinde olmuyor."

their pages without going through the fact-checking process to increase the number of clicks.

Similarly, all journalists expressed that in order to increase the number of clicks on the Internet, news websites sometimes publish sensational news without even going through the verification and fact-checking processes. They also underlined that number of clicks is valued more by the newspaper administration compared to accuracy.

Journalist 2 stated that the meaning of spreading false information has changed in the eyes of journalists in the last years and spreading false information is not perceived as much of a problem as it used to be. Similarly, Journalist 1 stated that as newspapers trust that it is easy to retract a false news from the website, in order to be fast, they sometimes risk giving false news.

What is more, during interviews, journalists' perceptions of the changing role of journalism with regards to the participatory culture of the Internet and increasing problem of mis/disinformation was asked since media professionals reformulate their roles in a participatory media environment as their journalistic control over information has been weakened by digitalization (Lewis 2012, 837). As journalists' authorities are challenged by communication technologies, they emphasize "basic primary roles" as their important responsibilities (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 7). Underlining the "traditional practice of objective news reporting" (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 7), journalists who were interviewed frequently mentioned the separation between personal views and accurate reporting. Moreover, during interviews, "their societal role of disseminating truthful information while monitoring the elites in power" was highlighted as the source of their professional authority in the face of disinformation and the participatory culture of the Internet (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 7).

Furthermore, journalists defined their roles as seeking and uncovering the truth. Journalist 3 argued that fact-checking organizations do not have the priority to reveal a truth or present the news to readers. She argued that instead, fact-checking organizations

45

exist because of journalism. Journalist 4, stated that she perceived fact-checking in contradiction with the truth-seeking aspect of journalism:

> So, I think, their field overlaps with the activism aspect of the work. In fact, journalism does not include activism. Journalism acts on a single truth, that is, the truth. It does not do activism. Activism is something else. There are also activist journalists. But they do not stand for 'the truth,' but rather stand for the truth they believe. We do not define ourselves that way.[3]

Among journalistic values, objectivity was one of the most emphasized during interviews. For instance, according to Journalist 4, in time, some journalists have become more activists than journalists, which is in contradiction with journalist's role of "conveying what is happening to the public." Journalist 4 expressed that "the activist journalists are actually the most dangerous since they do not act on a single truth, but on their own truth or what they believe." Here, beside her emphasis of objectivity, it is worth mentioning that compared to fact-checkers, journalists seemed to have more disagreements and less cohesion among each other, which can be a future research topic.

Journalists also stated that misinformation plays a role that can reduce or increase a media organization's public credibility since the more accurate information the media organization equips its newspaper, the more successful it will be. In addition, journalists stated that clickbait practices and sensational headlines to increase traffic hurt the credibility of newspapers and journalism. Thus, the current challenge identified by Balod and Hameleers (2019) that "journalists have to strengthen their roles to distinguish themselves from disseminators of mis- and disinformation" was validated through this research (12).

---

[3] "Gazetecinin rolü, kamuoyuna olanı aktarmaktır. Gazeteciliğin önce ne olduğunu anlamak lazım. Mutlaka hepimizin siyasi görüşleri vardır. Ama bunu haberimize yansıtamayız. Aktivist gazeteciler böyle yapmıyor. En tehlikelisi aslında bu; çünkü kendi inandıkları değerler doğrultusunda hareket ediyorlar."

Another finding was that journalists thought they should focus on improving themselves, publishing enriched information, and presenting the reader something different and original since people can reach information easier than the past. Therefore, the perceived "need for 'value-added' information" by journalists in Filipino "in the face of increased competition with other sources of information" revealed by Balod and Hameleers (2019) was also valid for the Turkish context.

4.3 Fact-checkers' Perceptions on their Roles in Response to Mis- and Disinformation

In order to answer the third research question, this study explored how fact-checkers in Turkey perceived their roles and found out that for fact-checkers, whether the practice of fact-checkers is journalism or not is also a controversial issue. The fact-checkers who were interviewed stated different opinions on the nature of fact-checking. In accordance with the work of Graves (2018), it can be said that in Turkey fact-checking is carried out on three axes which are journalism, academia, and politics/civil society (619). Similar to the global trend, fact-checking environment in Turkey also includes both journalists and non-journalists (Graves 2018, 626).

For instance, Fact-checker 1 said that they started fact-checking as a group of political scientists and with an academic perspective. He stated that they have started with a more academic language that gradually evolved to a more journalistic one.

When Fact-checker 3 was asked whether their activities are journalism practice, he stated that not all of the team members are journalists. He added that the organization sometimes receives criticisms and feedbacks, especially from journalists, stating that they need to be an expert on a subject in order to make verification or falsification, especially on topics that require specialization, such as health, astronomy, or biology (Keskin 2021). Therefore, their authorities are challenged and questioned since fact-checking as a separate institution from journalism is newly emerging in Turkey.

On the contrary of the mentioned criticism to fact-checking platforms, fact-checkers stated that fact-checking platforms are needed because some issues are very technical. For instance, Fact-checker 2 expressed that verifying a very technical claim in the field of health would be very difficult for a journalist.

In addition, Fact-checker 5 stated that no one on the team is a journalist, and anyone who adopts basic journalism principles can do fact-checking. He also added that a doctor's or a medicine student's fact-check on pandemic, or an economist's review on economy would be more qualified than a journalist's content on the same subject. Thus, who has the competence to write on which subject has come up as a matter of debate in the interviews with fact-checkers. However, the need for expert knowledge to fact-check a suspicious claim because of the increasing complexity of the issues and misinformation, especially with the health crisis, was a recurring theme among fact-checkers. Therefore, it can be argued that fact-checkers perceived fact-checking and traditional journalism as intersecting, yet different practices.

When the reason for the increase in the number of fact-checking organizations was asked, fact-checkers stated that the problem of misinformation was getting too complex due to digitalization. They explained that the increase in disinformation and misinformation on new media platforms lead to the emergence of these organizations that carry out open-source fact-checking, which was a serious need. Thus, it was expressed that social media platforms emerging as mediums of disinformation and directly impacting human life have a toxic effect on the shaping of opinions. Fact-checker 2 additionally stated that the world is facing a dynamic change with the widespread use of Internet that leads to the emergence of fact-checking as a profession. She reminded that the excitement that came with the early days of Internet about the ease of accessing information was a disappointment since the access to "trash information" has also increased.

Moreover, fact-checkers perceived journalism as inadequate in doing the job they argue that they bring the necessary innovations and improvements. In addition, the weaknesses in journalism and lack of 5W1H principles in news contents emerged as

other reasons. They stated that if journalism fulfilled its responsibilities, fact-checkers would not be needed. "Copy and paste journalism" was a frequently used term by fact-checkers. Therefore, fixing the problems in journalism was a common organizational aim among fact-checkers. They perceive that they provide "civically important, trustworthy information that legacy news outlets should be providing but, in their view, largely are not" (Singer 2020, 10).

Furthermore, the weaknesses of science and health journalism in Turkey was a recurring theme during interviews with fact-checkers due to Covid-19 pandemic. It was also stated that since some subjects are very technical and require expertise, such as health issues that can cause real-life harm (Örsek 2021), fact-checking organizations were needed.

When fact-checkers were asked the reasons for the increasing spread of the problem of misinformation in Turkey, they stated a variety of reasons. First of all, as in the interviews with journalists, digitalization emerged as an important reason. According to fact-checkers, participatory cultures eliminating the professional filters for content creation and distribution create information disorder (Lewis 2012, 837).

Moreover, fact-checkers emphasized the cognitive aspects of the misinformation problem. Echo chambers created by algorithms and the metrics of the current social media platforms emerged as reasons for the increasing spread of the "information disorder." Fact-checkers stated that as everything is now quantitative, social media users have a desire to interact with more people, and because of this desire, many people prefer to share a very attractive false information instead of a dry correct information. People are inclined to assess the accuracy and consensus of a claim from the number of times it has been shared (Weaver et al. 2007, 821), which makes metrics of social media even more controversial in terms of disinformation resilience. For instance, the most popular and engaging videos on YouTube about diabetes are less likely to have medically valid information because of the biased algorithms on social media platforms that are developed for engagement and popularity (Susarla 2020).

49

Also, Fact-checker 1 underlined a concept called "doomscrolling" in the spread of misinformation, which is continuously reading through social media feeds to encounter bad news (Anand et al. 2021) and said that people finding emotional and negative stories more attractive also facilitates information disorder (Benton 2019).

Secondly, the increasing vagueness of accurate and inaccurate information with the post-truth age was also mentioned by fact-checkers. They stated that moments of uncertainty such as earthquakes or conflicts cause further misinformation. It was also highlighted that pandemic as a time of uncertainty crisis that increases the tendency of people to be deceived by misinformation.

The lack of sustainable financial model for newsrooms emerged as a fourth reason for the increasing spread of the problem of misinformation in Turkey. For instance, they have explained that the editorial staff working for the minimum wage and forced to make speed journalism contributes to the information disorder. Fact-checkers also emphasized that their economic hardships lead to click-bait practices and sensational contents in traditional media.

Finally, fact-checkers emphasized the reader's responsibility in the spread of the misinformation. It was stated that many people form their ideas by only reading the title of a piece of news, or worse, they share without properly reading the content, which is an issue that social media platforms also prevent by reminding the user to open the link and read it before sharing with others (Ghaffary 2021).

Low media literacy, people getting used to consuming "pill-like short information," and the education system lacking the teaching of the habit of critical thinking emerged as other reasons. For instance, Fact-checker 2 said that complex answers to complex issues do not satisfy people.

Graves (2020) explains that even though fact-checking would not completely solve the problem of "information disorder," it is still first step in staging "political discourse onto firmer ground." Thus, he suggests exploring the measures to promote fact-based

discourse, such as partnership with major media outlets or social media companies, or education programs, instead of "reductive debates about whether fact-checking "works" or not."

In accordance with Graves, all of the fact-checkers stated that fact-checking organizations cannot be a complete solution to the problem of misinformation alone since the problem is complex. Therefore, raising awareness, teaching social media users to suspect the content, and increasing media literacy to build up disinformation resilience, instead of aiming to be a complete solution to the misinformation problem was a repeated theme among interviews. For instance, Fact-checker 3 added that fact-checking organizations are the solution to the misinformation problem to the extent that they can teach their followers to think rationally and critically about which content to believe. As another example, Fact-checker 5 stated his additional purpose is to tell people about some of the fact-checking tools, such as the reverse image search feature on Google.

Even though fact-checkers stated that fact-checking alone would not be enough to prevent the spread of false information and many actors should work together, the involvement of the state as an actor to fight against disinformation was met with suspicion among fact-checkers since the state may use the problem of false information as an excuse for censorship, such as authorities abusing "fake news" regulations after coronavirus pandemic (Wiseman 2020). Moreover, Fact-checker 1 underlined that when the state defines false information, it becomes an authoritarian definition and an excuse to suspend unwanted social media accounts.

In addition, the cooperation of social media platforms emerged as an important point when fighting misinformation and disinformation. For instance, when the impact of their organization in the information ecosystem was asked, Fact-checker 1 stated that they used to appeal to a narrower audience and had a narrower social impact before working in partnership with Facebook. He said that they were established for political fact-checking, and that a more politically interested and left-leaning audience used to follow them, and the number of followers could increase or decrease depending on the

51

content. In addition, Fact-checker 4 also added that contents and reviews by reliable fact-checking organizations should be prioritized by search engines such as Google.

Therefore, the need for the cooperation of search engines to increase the impact of fact-checking organizations was a recurring theme during interviews. However, even though the pressure on the companies to address the problem of disinformation and misinformation are increasing, social media companies are hesitant to take enough responsibility (Wardle and Singerman 2021), claiming that they are not "the arbiter of truth of everything that people say online" (McCarthy 2020). Also, the corporate profit motive of search engines through selling ads and user data, combined with the inclination of individuals towards sensational and entertaining content, make search engines channels of misinformation because as people click inaccurate content, search engines provide them choices in accordance with their biases, further reinforcing them (Shah 2021). Bakir and McStay (2018) names this the "economics of emotion" under which emotions are manipulated to "generate attention and viewing time, which converts to advertising revenue" (155). Thus, Shah (2021) also highlights the importance of showing people how these systems work and create profit to prevent the vicious cycle that is nurtured by market economies and people's tendency to be attracted by sensational links.

Moreover, fact-checkers stated that fact-checking organizations are needed the most and should make an impact during crisis times such as earthquakes or elections. Giving reference to the information uncertainty environment at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, they said that environments in which no one knows anything facilitate the flow of false information. Research also validates that since more hoaxes circulate, more fact-checking is performed during crisis times and hoaxes also get more complex in terms of quality (López-García, Costa-Sánchez and Vizoso 2021). It was stated during the interviews that the circulation of misinformation in crisis environments can create a serious problem in the offline environment. In addition, it was said that human psychology is very responsive to all kinds of information and can share without thinking about the result during crisis times.

52

Also, Fact-checker 5 stated that some accuse fact-checkers with giving oxygen to the claims that no one has heard of, thus making them more well-known than before. Yet, he shared that he does not agree with this claim since fact-checkers aim to raise awareness on misinformation. On the contrary, Journalist 6 said that some claims should not be addressed by fact-checking organization since they gain legitimacy, foundation and visibility when addressed. As an example, he revealed that he found the decision of fact-checkers analyzing the claim that the call to prayer was protested in the Feminist Night March in 2019 International Women's Day in Turkey wrong (Tokyol 2019).

Other organizational aims mentioned by fact-checkers were starting a conversation with journalists and inspiring people who care about the information ecosystem.

4.4 Fact-checkers' Perceptions on Journalists' their Roles in Response to Mis- and Disinformation

To answer the fourth research question, when the role of journalism under digitalization was asked, fact-checkers gave various answers. First of all, it was stated that while in the past the media tools were only in the hands of journalists, now everyone has these tools and can claim to be a journalist.

Fact-checkers stated that, under these circumstances, journalists' job is to provide more specialized and curated information. For instance, Fact-checker 5 stated that a focused curation should be made by journalists with a specific area of expertise since in this age both the reader and the journalist cannot be an expert in everything. He added that many of the news sites are copies of each other, journalism has become an easily obtainable title, in such a case, the journalist should produce a little more original content. Thus, fact-checkers perceived that journalists should practice "interpretive journalism" in which they support their stories with a narrative and contextual background information and "take an active role in identifying which stories should be prioritized" (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 9).

53

Moreover, solutions journalism and slow journalism emerged as recurring concepts during interviews with fact-checkers. While slow journalism is suggested as an alternative to speed journalism (Le Masurier 2014, 149), solutions journalism was offered for the "coverage of responses to social problems" and assessment of to what extend those responses work or not ("Learning Lab" n.d). For instance, Fact-checker 3 stated that in today's journalism, it is necessary to focus on solutions with solutions journalism as a huge climate change crisis is ahead. He also stated that the pandemic has showed that journalism should talk more about the solutions.

However, when Journalist 3, who is a journalist for 35 years, was asked about these two relatively new trends in journalism, she took these terms as a more fashionable way of saying investigative reporting and argued that these new concepts are "translated notions[4]." She also emphasized that journalists have been doing these practices for years and they are not new phenomenon. This can be explained with the fact that Journalist 3 works as a professional journalist for 35 years and has been occupying traditional positions. Therefore, she perceived slow journalism and solutions journalism as a return to traditional journalism or the rediscovery of it, rather than seeing it as a new genre.

In addition, making sure the produced content does not serve polarization was mentioned by Fact-checker 3. He explained that news organizations should work on how and where to position a content in the political context of a polarized society and set a conceptual framework on terms and definitions.

4.5 Journalists' and Fact-Checkers' Perceptions of Audience

As this study explores how journalists and fact-checkers perceive their roles, it is important to understand to whom they target with their work. When journalists were asked who their audience are, they either have described a wide concept and gave answers such as those "who want to know the details," "who are literate," or expressed that they don't have a specific audience.

---

[4]   "Çeviri kavramlar."

54

Similarly, fact-checkers also described a wide and unspecific group, such as "all of the social media users" stating that everyone needs news sources they can trust, or "people who give importance to critical thinking." Fact-checker 1 stated that they sometimes advertise on Instagram and Facebook to influence more people individually, and their content is seen by more people. He explained that in this way, individuals can change their relationships with online content individually and gain the habit of critical thinking. Moreover, Fact-checker 6 stated that even though they are now amateurs, they aim to build a corporate identity to increase their audience size. It should be noted that since the impact of fact-checking on audiences is not yet clear (Singer 2020, 3), the uncertain target audience may make it difficult to measure social impact of fact-checking in the future.

The interviews with fact-checkers and journalists revealed that even though cooperation with Facebook increases doubts among journalists towards fact-checking organizations, it also increases the visibility and impact of fact-checking platforms. Thus, the importance of technology companies in extending fact-checkers' social impact is evident.

When it comes to the normative changes that journalists would like to create in their target audience, journalists stated no common and specific mission. The majority of the journalists believed that a normative change in the audience is not the job of a journalist as they are not teachers. As an answer to this question, they re-emphasized their responsibility as truth-seekers. For instance, Journalist 3 stated that news is a very simple thing and all over the world governments hide something from the society. She explained the role of the journalist as the person that should reveal them to public.

Journalist 4 named preventing the spread of false information as already journalists' "primary duty unlike fact-checkers". She also revealed that the normative changes that some fact-checkers would like to create in their target audience, such as creating media literacy or fact-checking false news as "nothing extra" for their newspaper.

When fact-checkers were asked the normative change that fact-checkers want to achieve in their audience, every interviewee stated that due to the size of the information ecosystem, the number of contents they can control is limited, so one of the most important and realistic goals is to raise the awareness of the audience about information disorder. Thus, increasing media literacy emerged as a common aim among the fact-checkers who were interviewed.

Fact-checker 6 stated that their future aim is to establish an association that includes academicians, students and journalists, and that they plan to do both academic work and field work on media literacy. He expressed that the team is composed of students, so that students also learn fact-checking practices, and by teaching these students how to fact-check, the organization also contributes to the further development of this field in Turkey. Therefore, Fact-checker 6 aimed a normative change not only for the audience, but also for the team.

Fact-checker 1 said that they not only aim to fact-check a suspicious claim after it was already published, but they also care about informing people before they come across with a wrong information, and they work for this, for example, by publishing a newsletter in which the reader can inform himself/herself before getting in touch with a piece of disinformation. In general, fact-checkers were in agreement that "their work significantly benefitted society" (Singer 2020, 14).

4.6 Journalists and Fact-checkers Perceptions' on the Area that is Most Harmed Because of Information Disorder

As this study explores how journalists and fact-checkers perceive their roles and give meaning to their existence, it is important to understand to what they stand against with their work and how they explain the dimensions of the problem of mis/disinformation.

Both fact-checkers and journalists expressed that misinformation could lead to personal or systematic damage of any kind. As an example, Fact-checker 5 gave the disinformation campaign aimed at Syrians, saying that the problem of misinformation

56

may cost the life of a person, and targeting certain groups may harm human life or human dignity. The group of people who call the coronavirus "Chinese virus" and grow a hate towards Asian people were also mentioned as an example.

It was also stated by fact-checkers and journalists that new media emerged to contribute to people's freedom of expression, but over time, these technologies have started to threaten democracy instead of nurturing freedom of expression, and that some of the most important examples of this were Cambridge Analytica scandal and Brexit. For instance, Fact-checker 6 explained that disinformation had a negative effect on formation of people's opinions, and the efforts to develop democracy and freedom of expression through social media are now damaging democracy.

Moreover, during interviews with journalists and fact-checkers, it was stated that the field of health journalism is in very poor condition in Turkey. For instance, interviewees among fact-checkers and journalists said that the importance of science journalism has increased with the Covid-19 pandemic and stated that due to the attention race in the traditional media, the priority was not to provide accurate information, but to attract more attention by conveying the most controversial and sensational information at the beginning of the pandemic. They added that the news on the pandemic was not was not scientifically full, therefore, even though a few experts really tried to explain healthy information on Covid-19 pandemic, editorially, the virus became the material of the attention war and traditional media failed the test.

Journalist 6 also added that the content on vaccines were very problematic for a long time, and these contents also made the process very difficult for science. He said that science journalism is a big field, and it is necessary for the journalist to know foreign languages and to follow newspapers from abroad to make science journalism or to produce Covid-19 content.

57

4.7 Perceived Future Challenges for Fact-Checkers and Journalists to Fulfil their Roles

As this study explores how journalists and fact-checkers give meaning to their existence, it also investigates which obstacles they perceive on their way to living up to their expectations. Both journalists and fact-checkers perceived some challenges in order to fulfill their organizational aims.

Economic sustainability emerged as a future challenge for both journalists and fact-checkers. Subscription system was frequently mentioned as a solution for the weaknesses in journalism among journalists and fact-checkers. As Journalist 3 stated, the news is actually an expensive business, even though the widespread use of social media and the Internet may be creating an opposite illusion and journalists expect their readers to become a bigger part of it in the future.

Problem of reliability, lack of institutionalism and economic troubles also emerged as perceived future challenges for fact-checking organizations. Platforms who perceive fact-checking as their hobby or as a side-job stated that they are challenged by finding time and economic resources to sustain their activity. Also, Fact-checker 6 stated that the "About" section is among the most frequently read sections on his own websites, and people are curious about who the fact-checking organization is. He stated that the transparent presentation of the purpose, principles, methodology, team and economic resources would provide more reliability for fact-checking organizations. Thus, institutionalization emerged as an important factor for economic sustainability for fact-checkers (Uzunoğlu and Uyar 2021).

Lack of institutionalism of fact-checking organizations was also among the hesitations of journalists towards fact-checkers. For instance, Journalist 5 expressed that she doubted the fact-checking platforms' methodology to access information, their economic resources, and their overall autonomy because of their lack of corporate identity. Therefore, the interviews with journalists revealed that institutionalization and

stronger corporate identity would make fact-checking platforms more trustworthy among journalists.

Evolving communication technologies was another perceived future challenge for both fact-checkers and journalists. During interviews, it was expressed that as technologies evolve, fact-checkers should find new strategies. For instance, Clubhouse was mentioned frequently by fact-checkers and journalists since sound mechanism is more difficult to control, or deep-fake videos were emphasized as future threats for journalism by both groups.

Another perceived challenge for fact-checkers is the fact that the rate of the circulation of misinformation is much higher than an accurate information (Langin 2018; Silverman 2015).

Moreover, fact-checkers were concerned on the perception of fact-checking as a new form of censorship (Örsek, 2021). Fact-checker 1 stated that social media platforms should have a clear policy on how to handle inaccurate content. He perceived Twitter stating that elected officials and world leaders "are not above rules" and "cannot use Twitter to incite violence, among other things" ("Permanent Suspension Of @Realdonaldtrump" 2021), and permanently suspending the then-President Donald Trump's Twitter account in January 2021 as a vague, failed and late strategy. He added that the suspension of Trump's Twitter account without announcing any rules beforehand caused fact-checking to be perceived as censorship.

Similarly, Facebook's Oversight Board also underlined the lack of clear standards of Facebook in a statement ("Case Decision 2021-001-FB-FBR" 2021). The Board criticized the decision of Facebook on January 7, 2021, to limit then-President Donald Trump's access to his Facebook page and Instagram account, stating that "it was not appropriate for Facebook to impose the indeterminate and standardless penalty of indefinite suspension."

Therefore, to mend the failed and unclear communication of tech companies on how fact-checking works (Örsek 2021), it was stated by Fact-checker 1 that public relation campaigns are needed so that the image of fact-checking as a censorship among traditional and alternative journalism should not grow.

Finally, all of the fact-checkers and journalists interviewed stated polarization and political environment in Turkey as challenges for journalism and fact-checking organizations. Furthermore, both fact-checkers and journalists stated that polarization in Turkey influenced readers' perception of accuracy towards their content. They added that the polarized audience labeled media ecosystem actors as either 'from us' or 'from them,' which is uncomfortable and sometimes leads to online lynching. Thus, both journalists and fact-checkers observe that under polarized media atmosphere, beliefs are more effective in people's perception of truth than facts. Due to "confirmation bias", people tend to avoid confrontations with ideas that are inconsistent with their prior beliefs or hold on to the information that reaffirms their prior views (Mena 2019, 660).

4.8 Journalists' and Fact-checkers' Perception of Future Cooperation Between Journalists and Fact-Checkers in Response to the "Information Disorder"

When the perceived areas for future cooperation in response to the "information disorder" between journalists and fact-checkers in Turkey were asked to answer the fifth and sixth research questions, journalists who were interviewed responded warily. They all presented their reasons why they could not work together.

First of all, journalists stated that news verification by fact-checking organization would take too much time. Secondly, journalists stated that traditional media organizations possess a very professional team for fact-checking and verification is the very job of the journalist. Moreover, they explained that under the current economic conditions, media organizations have even reduced the number of reporters and "on-the-ground" reporting" as much as possible (Posetti 2017, 57), who are the biggest news resource of a media organization. Thus, journalists perceived a cooperation with fact-checkers as an extra economic burden. Finally, they also added that barriers like personal greed or

material interests would lead to competition among media outlets and make collaboration with fact-checking organizations difficult.

While journalists perceived a possible cooperation in the future limited with accuracy control by fact-checkers and stated that fact-checking is journalists' duty, fact-checkers who were interviewed discussed the issue from a broader perspective.

Fact-checkers suggested a variety of cooperation areas such as education programs to improve digital news making skills, gatherings for experience sharing, joint content production, and traditional media giving reference to the sources of fact-checking platforms to increase their visibility. Fact-checkers were more open to cooperation and communication with traditional media and the "infodemic" as named by WHO in 2020 was a strong incentive for them. For instance, Fact-checker 4, who is a science writer, stated that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, conveying scientific information on health through traditional media is essential and such a cooperation with traditional media would be useful.

Also, during interviews with fact-checkers, journalistic professional boundaries emerged as a recurring theme. Fact-checkers expressed that journalists see fact-checkers as an attack on their professional field and they see the practice of fact-checking as a new form of censorship that acts as a barrier and restriction to the dissemination of their news content. It was also stated that the perspectives towards fact-checking practice has not yet matured in Turkey. For instance, Fact-checker 3 made the following comment:

> There are also those who think very traditionalist and say that "Who, which organization can fact-check the news I made?" These discussions actually became a part of our daily lives with the change of journalism. Yet, over time, these discussions will become clearer.[5]

---

[5] "Çok gelenekçi düşünüp 'Benim yaptığım haberi kim, hangi kuruluş denetleyebilir?' diyenler de var. Gazeteciliğin değişimi ile hayatımıza girmiş bir tartışma bu. Zamanla daha da kavramsallaşacak, oturacak."

As another challenge for the future cooperation between fact-checkers and journalists, fact-checkers stated that even though the new generation of journalists are people who are more open to interaction, other journalists are very difficult to reach.

Also, fact-checkers added that independent media working together to strengthen each other is ideal. However, they added that the ideal is not fulfilled because of personal and institutional ambitions combined with the fragmented media ecosystem in Turkey, which is in line with the findings of Kızılkaya and Ütücü (2021), as they also suggest that "the independent media landscape is too fragmented" in Turkey and there is need for more collaboration (6).

It is worth mentioning that fact-checkers underlined that the cooperation between Facebook and fact-checkers attracted attention in the sector and increased the financial competition with other media organizations, especially with alternative media in Turkey. Similarly, Örsek (2021) explains the increasing popularity of fact-checking with the decision of tech platforms to work directly with fact-checkers, underlining that Third-Party Fact-Checking Program of Facebook cooperates with more than 80 partners in 60 different languages. He explains that as the most organized effort to fight mis/disinformation online, the cooperation leads to dissatisfaction among publishers and campaigns on fact-checking as censorship. Also, he notes that the tech companies have failed to openly explain their principles on how fact-checking works and "fact-checkers are easier targets than those big platforms" (Örsek 2021). Thus, Facebook's influence on fact-checking ecosystem, both as the reason of disinformation and as a remedy, and the perspectives of journalists working in alternative media organizations on fact-checking in Turkey are important research topics for the future.

While the ties between fact-checkers and traditional journalists are not very strong at the moment, a cooperation between fact-checkers and traditional media actors would increase disinformation resilience. Moreover, as a newly emerging institution, fact-checkers need other media actors such as mainstream journalists to share their analyses and increase their visibility (Singer 2020, 15).

62

Another finding of this research is that unlike the cooperation between traditional media actors and between fact-checkers and journalists, the network among the actors of the fact-checking ecosystem is very strong. As it was explained before, fact-checking organizations in Turkey is analyzed under three periods (Uzunoğlu and Uyar 2021; Ünver 2020). This research finds that the first and second wave fact-checking organizations in Turkey cooperate with and support each other. As the interviews with fact-checkers revealed, there have been no disputes among different actors within the fact-checking ecosystem, even with the third wave organizations, who are funded by the government and known for their pro-government attitude unlike the others.

Therefore, the findings of this research in terms of lack of hostility between fact-checking organizations is in line with the previous research in Turkey (Ünver 2020). It is worth underlining that due to polarization, some of the fact-checkers revealed that they expect fact-checking organizations with political biases to emerge in the future and ecosystem to become more open to disinformation.

Fact-checking organizations in Turkey also have strong international ties due to IFCN, which is perceived as a credible and reliable institution among fact-checkers. All of the fact-checkers stated that IFCN made important contributions to the implementation of the methodology of fact-checking in a more disciplined manner. Two of the fact-checking organizations in the sample were already a member of the IFCN, while two of them are also planning to be in the future. It is important to note that Graves (2018) explains the existence of the global conversation among fact-checkers "with growing attention to establishing basic standards for effective, high-quality fact-checking" (626).

This research also finds that journalists' perspectives on fact-checking are influenced by their positions in their organizations, age, and years of experience. For instance, compared to other journalists within the research sample, Journalist 6 has relatively shorter years of experience and holds a position as a chief digital editor. The fact that his perspective towards fact-checking is more positive than other traditional media professionals with longer years of experience hints that personal factors are significant in determining the perspectives towards fact-checking.

63

Since the journalists were chosen among the traditional newspapers for this study, it was not determined that the institution factor significantly impacted their perspectives. However, in the future, in addition to traditional newspapers, research that also involves the perspectives of journalists from television and online media can be conducted since journalists from digital media and their traditional counterparts from television and newspapers all tackle mis/disinformation, yet their experiences vary. For instance, the investigation of the perspectives of television journalists would also contribute to the literature since the Reuters Institute Digital News Report in 2020 finds that television is the most important source of news (Newman et al. 2020, 85). Moreover, the investigation of the perspectives of journalists from digital media also matters because they experience mis/disinformation spreading instantly to millions of people online. Thus, the institution could have been an important factor in a sample of different types of journalists. However, this research finds that personal factors such as age, years of experience, position within the institution, or area of expertise influence the perspectives of journalists towards the newly emerging fact-checking ecosystem in Turkey. From this perspective, future research should be conducted, considering these personal factors with a bigger research sample.

This study finds that there is no open opposition among different fact-checking institutions when it comes to fact-checkers. Thus, for this study, the institution factor did not play a significant role in the case of fact-checkers, either. However, it should be kept in mind that the fact-checkers within the sample were from the first and second-wave fact-checking organizations. If the third-wave pro-government fact-checkers responded to the research invitation, then the institution factor could have played a more significant role in determining the perceptions of fact-checkers. While due to time constraints, this research could not wait any longer for them to respond to the invitation, future research should take the perspectives of fact-checkers from third-wave fact-checking organizations into account.

5. CONCLUSION

Increased levels of problematic information circulating through online media that copy the imagery of journalism have left behind growing attacks on journalism and a decline in citizen confidence in media institutions while weakening the disinformation resilience of the publics (Bennett and Livingston 2018, 126) and leading the way for the emergence of fact-checking institutions (Brandtzaeg, Følstad, and Chaparro 2017, 2).

It is still uncertain for many journalists "what to make of their fact-checking cousins," a vagueness that arises from "challenges to notions of where journalism itself starts and ends" (Singer 2020, 3). Journalists who were interviewed were suspicious of fact-checking platforms in Turkey. While Teyit.org was the most popular fact-checking organization among journalists and mentioned by all of the journalists in the sample, the finding reveal that there is still much work to be done to increase the conversation among fact-checkers and journalists, especially to prevent the perception of the fact-checking organizations as a source of censorship in Turkey.

Also, another negative perspective that is likely to grow among journalists is that the perception of fact-checking as "infotainment" style news coverage since one of the interviewees expressed that fact-checking reduces the complexity of reality into slogan-like findings which are labeled as either false or accurate (Uscinski and Butler 2013, 163). Thus, to prevent both of the negative perceptions mentioned above, fact-checkers in Turkey should continue to emphasize their methodologies and research steps within their analysis as stated in the IFCN code of principles (Brandtzaeg, Følstad, and Chaparro 2017, 17). Therefore, the process of selecting and verifying the content should be transparent so that users can assess the steps leading to results and accuracy of the claim themselves (Brandtzaeg, Følstad, and Chaparro 2017, 17).

Moreover, in accordance with the findings of Uzunoğlu and Uyar (2021), this study reveals that journalists think that institutionalization of fact-checking organizations is vital to increase their trustworthiness (42). In addition, institutionalization also brings new opportunities of partnerships, especially with social media platforms, which increase the impact of fact-checking (Uzunoğlu and Uyar 2021, 42).

As this research finds, there was consensus among the journalists on fact-checking being the primary duty of journalists, which also affected their perception of future cooperation between journalists and fact-checkers. Journalists were too defensive of their roles as arbiters of truth, claiming that they have already been doing what fact-checkers emerged to do. However, since collaboration has an essential role in fighting any mis/disinformation (Örsek 2021), it is important to increase the communication between fact-checking organizations and journalism in Turkey. While fact-checking is "leading the way for other journalists" in terms of being "digital-first entities" and developing "meaningful interactions with users" (Singer 2018, 1078), fact-checking organizations need the support of other media actors such as mainstream journalism to increase their visibility and social impact as a newly emerging institution (Singer 2020, 15). Thus, even though "the independent media landscape is too fragmented" in Turkey (Kızılkaya and Ütücü 2021, 6), cooperation among fact-checkers and journalists would improve the media ecosystem and strengthen "resilience to disinformation" (Humprecht, Esser and Van Aelst 2020, 498). As an example of this fragmented structure of the independent media landscape, it may be helpful to visit Fact-checker 1's opinions in which he expressed that the first organized reaction against fact-checking in Turkey came from T24 to Teyit.org, which are both digital native and independent media organizations, and not from a pro-government media institution.

From this perspective, fact-checkers' cooperation ideas, such as education programs to improve digital news making skills, gatherings for experience sharing, joint content production, and traditional media giving reference to the sources of fact-checking platforms to increase their visibility, are essential in terms of the improvement of available resources and digital competencies in Turkey. Moreover, since media ecosystem actors are stronger when they act together, such cooperation would also develop and benefit the communication with technology companies and government authorities (Kızılkaya and Ütücü 2021, 6). In addition, as the digitalization of news leads to tension between the journalistic responsibility of being accurate and being fast (Silverman 2015, 17) and established news organizations are challenged to maintain their authorities "as objective, truth-oriented disseminators" (Balod and Hameleers

66

2019, 2), more dialogue and collaboration between all stakeholders are necessary for quality journalism (Kızılkaya and Ütücü 2021, 6).

It is worth mentioning that this research reveals that fact-checking organizations in Turkey have no hostility and do not openly conflict with each other, which is in line with the previous work (Ünver 2020). However, it is worth underlining that due to polarization, some of the fact-checkers expect fact-checking organizations with political biases to emerge in the future and ecosystem to become more open to disinformation. Thus, the argument by Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) suggesting that "having journalists at different news organisations fact-checking the same claims or debunking the same visual content" has no point (82), may not be realistic for the information environment in Turkey, as political opinion differences are likely to grow among organizations.

Also, since societal factors such as "decline in social capital, growing economic inequality, increased polarization, declining trust in science, and an increasingly fractionated media landscape" lead to the emergence of the post-truth world of today and increasing mis/disinformation (Cook, Ecker and Lewandowsky 2015, 30), it is important to realize that fact-checking alone cannot solve the problem of "information disorder" as more significant societal improvements are needed. Therefore, the importance of fact-checkers working with other stakeholders, such as health authorities, academia, or tech companies, to strengthen the fragile information ecosystem gains importance (Örsek 2021). As the influence of the cooperation between tech companies and fact-checkers is increasing, and fact-checking practice is gaining global attention (Örsek 2021), it is important to underline what fact-checking aims as a newly emerging democratic institution. As the infodemic continues to cause real-life harm (Örsek 2021), fact-checkers in Turkey underline their responsibility as raising awareness to the spread of mis/disinformation, teaching social media users to suspect the content they encounter on the Internet, and increasing digital media literacy to build up "disinformation resilience."

67

Similar to the work of Uzunoğlu and Uyar (2021), this research also finds that there is no consensus among fact-checkers on whether they are journalists or not (1). Nevertheless, coming from three different backgrounds, which are journalism, academia, and politics/civil society (Graves 2018, 619), fact-checkers in Turkey aim to bring the necessary innovations and improvements in journalism and to present trustworthy information to the public that should have been provided by established news organizations (Singer 2020, 10). Moreover, as Turkey's political polarization heighten and "civility in public discourse" and opportunities for all-embracing political debate gradually deteriorate on social media (Yurdakul 2020, 1), the goal of fact-checkers is to start a fact-based dialogue among citizens and a conversation among fact-checkers and journalists.

Meanwhile, as the transformation of storytelling practices because of digitalization further eradicated the quality of the content by increasing the click-bait practices to drive online traffic and the task of the journalists to produce for multiple platforms (Posetti 2017, 58), the accusations towards journalists in terms of being the disseminators of inaccurate information increased, weakening their professional authority. Under these circumstances, journalists emphasize their "basic primary roles" such as the "traditional practice of objective news reporting" and "their societal role of disseminating truthful information while monitoring the elites in power" (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 7). For instance, every journalist in the research sample underlined that even though media professionals in Turkey use social media as a news source, they always confirm the information they gathered from social media via other sources since they do not find social media trustworthy compared to established media (Taşkıran 2016, 216). Thus, with this attitude, they differentiated themselves as established media from "alternative sources of (mis)information" because of their stricter editorial processes and emphasized their roles as "truth-oriented disseminators" (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 2). Therefore, as the global decline in trust in institutions decrease disinformation resilience worldwide (Humprecht, Esser and Van Aelst 2020, 500), journalists must rebuild their roles as the sources of accurate information instead of the "disseminators of mis- and disinformation" (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 12). However, traditional news organizations still need to find a consistent solution to the lack of

68

sustainable finance models to prevent the digitalization of storytelling practices leading to click-bait practices to drive online traffic.

Under these circumstances, during interviews, fact-checkers emphasized journalists' responsibility to provide more specialized and curated information. Thus, fact-checkers perceived that journalists should practice "interpretive journalism" in which they support their stories with a narrative and contextual background information and "take an active role in identifying which stories should be prioritized" (Balod and Hameleers 2019, 9).

Also, solutions journalism and slow journalism emerged as recurring concepts during interviews with fact-checkers to remedy the current weaknesses of journalism and excessive flows of information. While slow journalism is suggested as an alternative to speed journalism (Le Masurier 2014, 149), solutions journalism was offered for the "coverage of responses to social problems" and assessment of to what extend those responses work or not ("Learning Lab" n.d).

5.1 Limitations of the Study and Future Research Recommendations

Like any study, this one has limitations. A limitation of this research is that the findings here are not representative of all fact-checkers and journalists in Turkey because of the small sample size. Future research can analyze the perceptions of fact-checkers and journalists towards their roles in response to mis/disinformation on a bigger sample. Also, the fact that people who are already interested in and knowledgeable about the subject accepted the research invitation is a limitation of this research.

In addition, since this study has used individual interviews with fact-checkers and journalists as data to explore the perspectives of fact-checkers and journalists working in traditional news organizations in Turkey towards their role in response to mis- and disinformation, which is a qualitative research method, the research findings are "suggestive instead of definitive" (Amazeen 2019, 557). Therefore, some points may not be included or not detailed enough because of time constraints during interviews and a small sample size.

69

Moreover, while this research covers the perceptions of mainstream journalists towards fact-checkers, it is also essential to discover the perceptions of alternative media because fact-checkers interviewed here underlined that the cooperation between social media companies and fact-checkers attracted attention in the sector and increased the financial competition with other media organizations, especially with the alternative media in Turkey.

Also, future research could explore whether the findings in this research about the journalists' perceptions of fact-checking evolve in time.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akın, Doğan. 2021a. "Teyit.Org Ne Yapıyor, Mehmet Atakan Foça Ne Söylüyor?". *T24*. https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/dogan-akin/teyit-org-ne-yapiyor-mehmet-atakan-foca-ne-soyluyor,30001.

Akın, Doğan. 2021b. "Yalana Da Sarılan Bir 'Teyit'çilik: Atakan Foça, Senin 9 Ayda 2 Milyon Lira Aldığın Facebook'tan, T24 11 Yılda 1 Kuruş Almadı!". *T24*. https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/dogan-akin/yalana-da-sarilan-bir-teyit-cilik-atakan-foca-senin-9-ayda-2-milyon-lira-aldigin-facebook-tan-t-24-11-yilda-1-kurus-almadi,29941.

Amazeen, Michelle A. 2019. "Practitioner perceptions: Critical junctures and the global emergence and challenges of fact-checking". *International Communication Gazette* 81 (6-8): 541-561. doi:10.1177/1748048518817674.

Anand, Nitin, Manoj Kumar Sharma, Pranjali Chakraborty Thakur, Ishita Mondal, Maya Sahu, Priya Singh, Ajith S. J., Jayesh Suresh Kande, Neeraj MS, and Ripudaman Singh. 2021. "Doomsurfing And Doomscrolling Mediate Psychological Distress In COVID-19 Lockdown: Implications for Awareness of Cognitive Biases". *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*. doi:10.1111/ppc.12803.

Andı, Simge, S. Erdem Aytaç, and Ali Çarkoğlu. 2019. "Internet and Social Media Use and Political Knowledge: Evidence from Turkey". *Mediterranean Politics*, 1-21. doi:10.1080/13629395.2019.1635816.

Badshah, Nadeem. 2018. "BBC Chief: 'Fake News' Label Erodes Confidence in Journalism". *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/media/2018/oct/08/bbc-chief-fake-news-label-erodes-confidence-in-journalism.

Bakir, Vian, and Andrew McStay. 2018. "Fake News and The Economy of Emotions". *Digital Journalism* 6 (2): 154-175. doi:10.1080/21670811.2017.1345645.

Balod, Hon Sophia S, and Michael Hameleers. 2019. "Fighting for Truth? The Role Perceptions of Filipino Journalists in An Era of Mis- And Disinformation". *Journalism*, 146488491986510. doi:10.1177/1464884919865109.

Bennett, Lance, and Steven Livingston. 2018. "The Disinformation Order: Disruptive Communication and The Decline of Democratic Institutions". *European Journal Of Communication* 33 (2): 122-139. doi:10.1177/0267323118760317.

Benton, Joshua. 2019. "What Sort of News Travels Fastest Online? Bad News, You Won't Be Shocked to Hear". *Nieman Lab*. https://www.niemanlab.org/2019/07/what-sort-of-news-travels-fastest-online-bad-news-you-wont-be-shocked-to-hear/.

Berners-Lee, Tim. 2010. "Long Live the Web: A Call for Continued Open Standards and Neutrality". *Scientific American*. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/long-live-the-web/.

Borger, Merel, Anita van Hoof, Irene Costera Meijer, and José Sanders. 2013. "Constructing Participatory Journalism as a Scholarly Object". *Digital Journalism* 1 (1): 117-134. doi:10.1080/21670811.2012.740267.

Boutin, Paul. 2006. "Web 2.0". *Slate Magazine*. https://slate.com/technology/2006/03/web-2-0-doesn-t-live-up-to-its-name.html.

Bozdağ, Çiğdem. 2017. "Türkiye'de Yeni Medya Kullanım Eğilimleri Araştırma Raporu". Kadir Has Üniversitesi. https://khas.edu.tr/en/node/5963.

Brandtzaeg, Petter Bae, and Asbjørn Følstad. 2017. "Trust and Distrust in Online Fact-Checking Services". *Communications of The ACM* 60 (9): 65-71. doi:10.1145/3122803.

Brandtzaeg, Petter Bae, Asbjørn Følstad, and María Ángeles Chaparro Domínguez. 2017. "How Journalists and Social Media Users Perceive Online Fact-Checking and Verification Services". *Journalism Practice* 12 (9): 1109-1129. doi:10.1080/17512786.2017.1363657.

Brown, Étienne. 2019. "Propaganda, Misinformation, And the Epistemic Value of Democracy". *Critical Review* 30 (3-4): 194-218. doi:10.1080/08913811.2018.1575007.

Bulut, Ergin, and Erdem Yörük. 2017. "Digital Populism: Trolls and Political Polarization of Twitter in Turkey". *International Journal of Communication* 11. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/viewFile/6702/2158.

"Case Decision 2021-001-FB-FBR". 2021. *Oversight Board*. https://www.oversightboard.com/decision/FB-691QAMHJ/.

Cho, Allan. 2007. "An Introduction to Mashups for Health Librarians". Journal Of The Canadian Health Libraries Association / Journal De L'association Des Bibliothèques De La Santé Du Canada 28 (1): 19. doi:10.5596/c07-007.

Coleman, Stephen. 2005. "Blogs and The New Politics of Listening". *The Political Quarterly* 76 (2): 272-280. doi:10.1111/j.1467-923x.2005.00679.x.

Cook, John, Ullrich Ecker, and Stephan Lewandowsky. 2015. "Misinformation and How To Correct It". *Emerging Trends in The Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 1-17. doi:10.1002/9781118900772.etrds0222.

"Cüneyt Özdemir: Bu Teyit.Org'un Yediği İlk Halt Değil; Gerçeklerin Eninde Sonunda Ortaya Çıkmak Gibi Bir Huyu Var!". 2021. *T24*. https://t24.com.tr/haber/cuneyt-ozdemir-bu-teyit-org-un-yedigi-ilk-halt-degil-gerceklerin-eninde-sonunda-ortaya-cikmak-gibi-bir-huyu-var,934200.

Curran, James, Natalie Fenton, and Des Freedman. 2012. *Misunderstanding the Internet*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Çaba, Deniz. 2019. "Sosyal Medya Çağında Gazetecilik Ve İnovasyon: Twitter'Da Gazetecilik Pratikleri Üzerine Bir Analiz". *İlef Dergisi*. doi:10.24955/ilef.574429.

Daniel, Matt. 2018. *I Write Fake News. I'm Not Part of The Problem.* Video. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YO_n2t2XIqk&ab_channel=TEDxTalks.

Deuze, Mark. 2007. "Convergence Culture in The Creative Industries". *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 10 (2): 243-263. doi:10.1177/1367877907076793.

Deuze, Mark. 2012. "Media Life Is A Threat to Social Order". *Culture Digitally*. http://culturedigitally.org/2012/01/media-life-is-a-threat-to-social-order.

DiNucci, Darcy. 1999. "Fragmented Future". *Print* 53 (4). http://www.darcyd.com/fragmented_future.pdf.

Doğu, Burak. 2017. "Turkey's News Media Landscape in Twitter: Mapping Interconnections Among Diversity". *Journalism* 21 (5): 688-706. doi:10.1177/1464884917713791.

Duman, Kenan. 2019. "Haber Kaynağı Olarak Sosyal Ağların Kullanımı: Türk İnternet Haber Siteleri Üzerine Bir Analiz". *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Dergisi*, 1637-1654. doi:10.19145/e-gifder.583735.

Duthely, Regina. 2017. "Black Feminist Hip-Hop Rhetorics And The Digital Public Sphere". *Changing English* 24 (2): 202-212. doi:10.1080/1358684x.2017.1310458.

Egelhofer, Jana Laura, Loes Aaldering, Jakob-Moritz Eberl, Sebastian Galyga, and Sophie Lecheler. 2020. "From Novelty To Normalization? How Journalists Use The Term "Fake News" In Their Reporting". *Journalism Studies* 21 (10): 1323-1343. doi:10.1080/1461670x.2020.1745667.

Erbaysal Filibeli, Tirşe, and Orhan Şener. 2019. "Mani püle Edi lmi ş Enformasyonel Bi r Vi tri n ve Popüli st Bi r Enformasyon Alanı Olarak Twitter". *Moment Journal* 6 (2): 492-515. doi:10.17572//mj2019.2.492515.

Facebook. 2021. "Threat Report". The State of Influence Operations 2017-2020. https://about.fb.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/IO-Threat-Report-May-20-2021.pdf.

"Facebook'un Doğrulama Programı Türkiye'de Teyit İşbirliğiyle Hayata Geçiyor". 2018. *Teyit.Org*. https://teyit.org/facebookun-dogrulama-programi-turkiyede-teyit-org-is-birligiyle-hayata-geciyor.

"Facebook's Enforcement of Fact-Checker Ratings". n.d. *Facebook Business Help Centre*. Accessed March 7.

https://www.facebook.com/business/help/297022994952764?helpref=search&sr=2&query=Facebook%20blog.

"Five Principles of Ethical Journalism". n.d. *Ethical Journalism Network*. Accessed December 16. https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/who-we-are/5-principles-of-journalism.

Fletcher, Richard. 2020. "Trust Will Get Worse Before It Gets Better". *Digital News Report*. http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/publications/2020/trust-will-get-worse-gets-better/.

Frankfurt, Harry. 1986. *On Bullshit*. Princeton University Press.

Freedman, Des. 2012. "Web 2.0 and the death of the blockbuster economy." In Misunderstanding the Internet, edited by James Curran, Natalie Fenton, and Des Freedman, 69–94. New York: Routledge.

Fuchs, Christian. 2008. Internet and society. Social theory in the information age. New York. Routledge.

Funke, Daniel. 2019. "Fact Checks Couldn't Contain the Virality Of That Altered Pelosi Video. But That Doesn't Mean We Should Give Up on Them. - Poynter". *Poynter*. https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2019/fact-checks-couldnt-contain-the-virality-of-that-altered-pelosi-video-but-that-doesnt-mean-we-should-give-up-on-them/.

Funke, Daniel, and Susan Benkelman. 2019. "Zuckerberg Gets Deepfaked, Congress Gets The Rundown And The Rest Of Us Try To Sort It All Out - Poynter". *Poynter*. https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2019/zuckerberg-gets-deepfaked-congress-gets-the-rundown-and-the-rest-of-us-try-to-sort-it-all-out/.

Ghaffary, Shirin. 2021. "Facebook Will Push You to Read Articles Before You Share Them". *Vox*. https://www.vox.com/2021/5/10/22429240/facebook-prompt-users-read-articles-before-sharing.

Glaser, April. 2019. "The Fake Washington Post Wasn't Fake News". *Slate Magazine*. https://slate.com/technology/2019/01/fake-washington-post-not-fake-news-yes-men-parody.html.

Gökçe, Osman Zeki, Emre Hatipoğlu, Gökhan Göktürk, Brooke Luetgert, and Yücel Saygin. 2014. "Twitter and Politics: Identifying Turkish Opinion Leaders In New Social Media". *Turkish Studies* 15 (4): 671-688. doi:10.1080/14683849.2014.985425.

Guy, Hannah. 2017. "Why We Need to Understand Misinformation Through Visuals". *First Draft*. https://firstdraftnews.org/latest/understanding-visual-misinfo/.

Graves, Lucas. 2018. "Boundaries Not Drawn". *Journalism Studies* 19 (5): 613-631. doi:10.1080/1461670x.2016.1196602.

Graves, Lucas. 2020. "A Smarter Conversation About How (And Why) Fact-Checking Matters". *Nieman Lab*. https://www.niemanlab.org/2019/12/a-smarter-conversation-about-how-and-why-fact-checking-matters/.

Graves, Lucas. 2017. "Anatomy of A Fact Check: Objective Practice and The Contested Epistemology of Fact Checking". *Communication, Culture & Critique* 10 (3): 518-537. doi:10.1111/cccr.12163.

Graves, Lucas, Brendan Nyhan, and Jason Reifler. 2016. "Understanding Innovations In Journalistic Practice: A Field Experiment Examining Motivations For Fact-Checking". *Journal of Communication* 66 (1): 102-138. doi:10.1111/jcom.12198.

Hannon, Michael, and Elizabeth Edenberg. 2020. "Political Epistemology". *Philosophy*. doi:10.1093/obo/9780195396577-0408.

Harwell, Drew. 2019. "Faked Pelosi Videos, Slowed to Make Her Appear Drunk, Spread Across Social Media". *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/05/23/faked-pelosi-videos-slowed-make-her-appear-drunk-spread-across-social-media/.

"Hakkında". n.d. . *T24*. https://t24.com.tr/hakkinda.

Hermida, Alfred (2015) Nothing but the Truth: Redrafting the Journalistic Boundary of Verification. In Matt Carlson and Seth Lewis (eds), *Boundaries of Journalism*, Routledge. 37-50.

Humprecht, Edda, Frank Esser, and Peter Van Aelst. 2020. "Resilience To Online Disinformation: A Framework For Cross-National Comparative Research". *The International Journal Of Press/Politics* 25 (3): 493-516. doi:10.1177/1940161219900126.

Jackson, Nigel A., and Darren G. Lilleker. 2009. "Building An Architecture Of Participation? Political Parties And Web 2.0 In Britain". *Journal Of Information Technology & Politics* 6 (3-4): 232-250. doi:10.1080/19331680903028438.

Jenkins, Henry. 2006. Convergence Culture: Where Old And New Media Collide. New York: NYU Press.

Kirdemir, Baris. 2020. "Exploring Turkey's Disinformation Ecosystem: An Overview". Digital Media Ecosystem In Turkey: Actors, Interests And Politics. EDAM. https://edam.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Exploring-Turkeys-Disinformation-Ecosystem-by-Baris-Kirdemir.pdf.

Kıyan, Zafer and Törenli, Nurcan (2018). Sosyal Medyanın Gazetecilikteki Rolü: Türkiye'deki Haber Kuruluşları Üzerine Bir İnceleme, Gaziantep University Journal of Social Science, 17(1), s. 32-52.

Kızılkaya, Emre, and Burak Ütücü. 2021. "'The New Mainstream' Is Rising (And It Seeks Support)". IPI TURKEY. https://freeturkeyjournalists.ipi.media/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ENG-IPI-Turkey-Digital-Media-Report-01032021-finaI-.pdf .

Kovach, Bill, and Tom Rosenstiel. 2007. The Elements Of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know And The Public Should Expect. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Langin, Katie. 2018. "Fake News Spreads Faster Than True News On Twitter—Thanks To People, Not Bots". *Science*. https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/03/fake-news-spreads-faster-true-news-twitter-thanks-people-not-bots.

Lawrence, Regina G., Damian Radcliffe, and Thomas R. Schmidt. 2018. "Practicing Engagement". *Journalism Practice* 12 (10). doi:10.1080/17512786.2017.1391712.

"Learning Lab". n.d. *Solutions Journalism Network*. Accessed May 11. https://learninglab.solutionsjournalism.org/en/courses/basic-toolkit/introduction/welcome.

Le Masurier, Megan. 2014. "What Is Slow Journalism?". *Journalism Practice* 9 (2): 138-152. doi:10.1080/17512786.2014.916471.

Lewis, Seth C. 2012. "The Tension Between Professional Control and Open Participation". *Information, Communication & Society* 15 (6): 836-866. doi:10.1080/1369118x.2012.674150.

Lim, Chloe. 2018. "Checking How Fact-Checkers Check". *Research & Politics* 5 (3): 205316801878684. doi:10.1177/2053168018786848.

López-García, Xosé, Carmen Costa-Sánchez, and Ángel Vizoso. 2021. "Journalistic Fact-Checking Of Information In Pandemic: Stakeholders, Hoaxes, And Strategies To Fight Disinformation During The COVID-19 Crisis In Spain". *International Journal Of Environmental Research And Public Health* 18 (3): 1227. doi:10.3390/ijerph18031227.

Keskin, Öyküm. 2021. "Neden Ve Nasıl Sağlık Teyitçiliği Yapıyoruz?". *Teyit.Org*. https://teyit.org/ekipten-neden-ve-nasil-saglik-teyitciligi-yapiyoruz.

"Managing The COVID-19 Infodemic: Promoting Healthy Behaviours And Mitigating The Harm From Misinformation And Disinformation". 2020. *World Health Organization*. https://www.who.int/news/item/23-09-2020-managing-the-covid-19-infodemic-promoting-healthy-behaviours-and-mitigating-the-harm-from-misinformation-and-disinformation.

McCarthy, Tom. 2020. "Zuckerberg Says Facebook Won't Be 'Arbiters Of Truth' After Trump Threat". *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/may/28/zuckerberg-facebook-police-online-speech-trump.

Matthes, Jörg, Robert M. Entman, and Lynn Pellicano. 2009. "Nature, Sources, And Effects Of News Framing". In *The Handbook Of Journalism Studies*, edited by Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch Taylor and Francis.

McDougall, Julian. 2019. "Media Literacy Versus Fake News". *Medijske Studije* 10 (19): 29-45. doi:10.20901/ms.10.19.2.

McKee, Alan. 2003. *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide*. London: SAGE Publications. Accessed May 4, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

"Media Disinformation". n.d. *Ethical Media For Active Citizenship*. http://ethicalmediatraining.eu/training/activities/media-disinformation/.

"Media Ownership Monitor". 2019. https://turkey.mom-rsf.org/en/media/.

Mena, Paul. 2019. "Principles And Boundaries Of Fact-Checking: Journalists' Perceptions". *Journalism Practice* 13 (6): 657-672. doi:10.1080/17512786.2018.1547655.

Molyneux, Logan, and Mark Coddington. 2020. "Aggregation, Clickbait And Their Effect On Perceptions Of Journalistic Credibility And Quality". *Journalism Practice* 14 (4): 429-446. doi:10.1080/17512786.2019.1628658.

Naughton, John. 2016. "The Evolution Of The Internet: From Military Experiment To General Purpose Technology". *Journal Of Cyber Policy* 1 (1): 5-28. doi:10.1080/23738871.2016.1157619.

Newman, Nic. 2021. "Digital News Project". Journalism, Media, And Technology Trends And Predictions 2021. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-01/Newman_Predictions_2021_FINAL.pdf.

Newman, Nic, Richard Fletcher, Rasmus Nielsen and Simge Andı. 2020. "Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2020". *Oxford: Reuters Institute For The Study Of Journalism*. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-06/DNR_2020_FINAL.pdf.

NewsLabTurkey. 2020. *Mehmet Demirkol: İyi Gazetecilerin Güçlü Kurumlara Ihtiyacı Var*. Video. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vegCVpMeOWE&ab_channel=NewsLabTurkey.

"Permanent Suspension Of @Realdonaldtrump". 2021. *Twitter Blog*. https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/company/2020/suspension.html.

Pham, Nga. 2015. "Haunting 'Nepal Quake Victims' Photo From Vietnam". *BBC*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32579598.

Picard, Robert. 2016. "Funding Digital Journalism: The Challenges of Consumers and the Economic Value of News," pp. 147-154 in Bob Franklin and Scott A. Eldridge II, eds. *Routledge Companion to Digital Journalism Studies*, London: Routledge

O'Reilly, Tim. 2005. "Web 2.0: Compact Definition?". *O'reilly*. http://radar.oreilly.com/2005/10/web-20-compact-definition.html.

Örsek, Baybars. 2021. "What To Expect From Fact-Checking In 2021". *Poynter*. https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2021/what-to-expect-from-fact-checking-in-2021/.

Posetti, Julie. 2017. "Protecting Journalism Sources In The Digital Age". UNESCO Series On Internet Freedom. Paris: UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248054.

"Presidency's Directorate Of Communications Introduces Next-Generation Fact-Checking Platform In Fight Against Lies And False Facts On Social Media". 2021. *Directorate of Communications*. https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/turkce/duyurular/detay/presidencys-directorate-of-communications-prepares-a-next-generation-fact-checking-platform-in-the-fight-against-lies-and-false-facts-on-social-media.

Ressa, Maria. 2016. "Propaganda War: Weaponizing The Internet". *Rappler*. https://www.rappler.com/nation/propaganda-war-weaponizing-internet.

Reuters Staff. 2020. "Fact Check: "Drunk" Nancy Pelosi Video Is Manipulated". *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-factcheck-nancypelosi-manipulated-idUSKCN24Z2BI.

Sabancı, Ahmet. 2021. "Kaybettiğimiz Güveni Nasıl Geri Kazanacağız?". *Newslabturkey*. https://www.newslabturkey.org/kaybettigimiz-guveni-nasil-geri-kazanacagiz/.

Savransky, Rebecca. 2017. "Trump Berates CNN Reporter: 'You Are Fake News'". *The Hill*. https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/313777-trump-berates-cnn-reporter-for-fake-news.

Semercioğlu, Can. 2020. "Platformdaki Yanlış Bilgileri Tespit Etmek İçin Tiktok'La Çalışmaya Başlıyoruz". *Teyit.Org*. https://teyit.org/ekipten-platformdaki-yanlis-bilgileri-tespit-etmek-icin-tiktokla-calismaya-basliyoruz.

Shah, Chirag. 2021. "It'S Not Just A Social Media Problem: How Search Engines Can Spread Misinformation". *Nieman Lab*. https://www.niemanlab.org/2021/03/its-not-just-a-social-media-problem-how-search-engines-can-spread-misinformation/.

Shin, Jieun, Lian Jian, Kevin Driscoll, and François Bar. 2018. "The Diffusion Of Misinformation On Social Media: Temporal Pattern, Message, And Source". *Computers In Human Behavior* 83: 278-287. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2018.02.008.

78

Silverman, Craig. 2015. "Lies, Damn Lies And Viral Content". Tow Center for Digital Journalism, Columbia University. https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8Q81RHH.

Sinclair, Christine. 2020. "Parody: Fake News, Regeneration And Education". *Postdigital Science And Education* 2 (1): 61-77. doi:10.1007/s42438-019-00054-x.

Singer, Jane. 2020. "Border Patrol: The Rise And Role Of Fact-Checkers And Their Challenge To Journalists' Normative Boundaries". *Journalism*. doi:10.1177/1464884920933137.

Singer, Jane. 2015. "Out Of Bounds: Professional Norms As Boundary Markers". In *Boundaries Of Journalism: Professionalism, Practices And Participation*, 21-36. New York: Routledge.

Singer, Jane B. 2018. "Fact-Checkers As Entrepreneurs Scalability And Sustainability For A New Form Of Watchdog Journalism". *Journalism Practice* 12 (8). doi:10.1080/17512786.2018.1493946.

Song, Felicia Wu. 2010. "Theorizing Web 2.0". *Information, Communication & Society* 13 (2): 249-275. doi:10.1080/13691180902914610.

Steensen, Steen. 2019. "Journalism's Epistemic Crisis And Its Solution: Disinformation, Datafication And Source Criticism". *Journalism* 20 (1): 185-189. doi:10.1177/1464884918809271.

Susarla, Anjana. "Biases In Algorithms Hurt Those Looking For Information On Health". Last modifird July 14, 2020. *The Conversation*. https://theconversation.com/biases-in-algorithms-hurt-those-looking-for-information-on-health-140616.

Taşkıran, İzzet. 2016. "Gazetecilerin Sosyal Medyayi Haber Kaynaği Olarak Kullanimi: Medya Profesyonellerinin Bakiş Açilarini Tespit Etmeye Yönelik Bir Araştirma". *Intermedia International E-Journal* 1 (3): 213-213. doi:10.21645/intermedia.2016319269.

"Teyit.Org'un Yandaş Medya Torpili". 2021. *Tele1*. https://tele1.com.tr/teyit-orgun-yandas-medya-torpili-330714/.

Tokyol, Gonca. 2019. "8 Mart 'Vakası' Üzerinden Medyada Teyit Tartışması". *T24*. https://t24.com.tr/haber/bir-8-mart-vakasi-ezan-isliklandi-iddiasi-teyitlenmeli-miydi-teyit-org-bu-iddiayi-neden-inceledi-neden-elestirildiler-uzerlerine-vazife-miydi,812899.

Trewinnard, Tom, and Fergus Bell. 2018. "Social Media Verification: Assessing Sources And Visual Content". In *Journalism, 'Fake News' & Disinformation*. UNESCO.

79

https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/journalism_fake_news_disinformation_print_friendly_0.pdf.

Tucker, Joshua, and Nathaniel Persily. 2020. "Introduction". In *Social Media And Democracy*, pp 1-9. Cambridge University Press.

"Türkiye'de Tahmini Medya Ve Reklam Yatırımları: 2019 Yıl Sonu Raporu". 2020. Deloitte. http://rd.org.tr/assets/uploads/medya_yatirimlari_2019_.pdf.

Uscinski, Joseph E., and Ryden W. Butler. 2013. "The Epistemology Of Fact Checking". *Critical Review* 25 (2): 162-180. doi:10.1080/08913811.2013.843872.

Uzunoğlu, Sarphan, and Verda Uyar. 2021. "Türkiye'de Doğru Bilgiyi Aramak: Çöldeki Vahanın Peşinde". NewsLabTurkey. https://www.newslabturkey.org/turkiyede-dogru-bilgiyi-aramak/.

Ünal, Recep, and Alp Şahin Çiçeklioğlu. 2019. "The Function And Importance Of Fact-Checking Organizations In The Era Of Fake News". *Medijske Studije* 10 (19): 140-160. doi:10.20901/ms.10.19.8.

Ünver, Akın. 2020. "Fact-Checkers and Fact-Checking In Turkey". Digital Media Ecosystem In Turkey: Actors, Interests And Politics. https://edam.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FactCheckers-and-FactChecking-in-Turkey-H.-Ak%C4%B1n-%C3%9Cnver.pdf.

Van de Weghe, Tom. 2019. "Six Lessons From My Deepfake Research At Stanford". *Medium*. https://medium.com/jsk-class-of-2019/six-lessons-from-my-deepfake-research-at-stanford-1666594a8e50.

Viner, Katharine. 2017. "A Mission For Journalism In A Time Of Crisis". *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/nov/16/a-mission-for-journalism-in-a-time-of-crisis.

Vosoughi, Soroush, Deb Roy, and Sinan Aral. 2018. "The Spread Of True And False News Online". *Science* 359 (6380): 1146-1151. doi:10.1126/science.aap9559.

Vraga, Emily K. 2019. "What Can I Do? How to Use Social Media to Improve Democratic Society." *Political Communication* 36 (2): 315–23. doi:10.1080/10584609.2019.1610620.

Wansink, Brian, and Aner Tal. 2016. "Blinded With Science: Trivial Graphs And Formulas Increase Ad Persuasiveness And Belief In Product Efficacy". *Public Understanding Of Science* 25 (1): 117-125. doi:10.1177/0963662514549688.

Wardle, Claire. 2017. "Fake News. It's Complicated.". *First Draft*. https://firstdraftnews.org/latest/fake-news-complicated/.

Wardle, Claire. 2018. "The Need For Smarter Definitions And Practical, Timely Empirical Research On Information Disorder". *Digital Journalism* 6 (8): 951-963. doi:10.1080/21670811.2018.1502047.

Wardle, Claire, and Eric Singerman. 2021. "Too Little, Too Late: Social Media Companies' Failure To Tackle Vaccine Misinformation Poses A Real Threat". https://www.bmj.com/content/372/bmj.n26.

Wardle, Claire, and Hossein Derakhshan. 2017. "Information Disorder: Toward An Interdisciplinary Framework For Research And Policy Making". Council of Europe. https://rm.coe.int/information-disorder-toward-an-interdisciplinary-framework-for-researc/168076277c.

Wardle, Claire, and Hossein Derakhshan. 2018. "Thinking about 'information disorder': formats of misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information." In *Journalism, Fake News & Disinformation: Handbook For Journalism Education And Training*, edited by Julie Posetti and Cherilyn Ireton, 43-54. Paris: UNESCO.

Williams, Andy, Claire Wardle, and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen. 2011. ""HAVE THEY GOT NEWS FOR US?"". *Journalism Practice* 5 (1): 85-99. doi:10.1080/17512781003670031.

Wiseman, Jamie. 2020. "Rush To Pass 'Fake News' Laws During Covid-19 Intensifying Global Media Freedom Challenges - International Press Institute". *International Press Institute*. https://ipi.media/rush-to-pass-fake-news-laws-during-covid-19-intensifying-global-media-freedom-challenges/.

Yanatma, Servet. 2018. "Turkey Supplementary Report". Digital News Report 2018. Reuters Institute. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-11/Digital%20News%20Report%20-%20Turkey%20Supplement%202018%20FINAL.pdf

Yıldız, Canan. 2021. "Teyit.Org Ve Yeni Sansür Yolları İhtimali: Bir Sen Eksiktin Facebook!". *T24*. https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/candan-yildiz/teyit-org-ve-yeni-sansur-yollari-ihtimali-bir-sen-eksiktin-facebook,29883.

Yurdakul, Afşin. 2020. " The Impact of Polarization on Turkey's Information Environment". Digital Media Ecosystem in Turkey: Actors, Interests and Politics. https://edam.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The-Impact-of-Polarization-Afsin-Yurdakul.pdf

Zuckerman, Ethan. 2017. "Fake News Is A Red Herring". *Deutsche Welle*. https://www.dw.com/en/fake-news-is-a-red-herring/a-37269377.

A.1 Interview Questions in Turkish

Teyitçiler için:

1. Teyitçilik dışında mesleğiniz var mı?

2. Türkiye'deki doğrulama girişimlerinden hangisini veya hangilerini tanıyorsunuz?

3. Yanlış bilgiyi nasıl tanımlıyorsunuz?

4. Türkiye'deki doğrulama girişimlerinin faaliyetlerini nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

5. Sizce yanlış bilgi sorunun yaygınlaşmasındaki temel sebep nedir?

6. Yanlış bilginin yayılımında internet ve sosyal medyanın rolünü nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

7. Yanlış bilginin yayılımında geleneksel medyanın rolünü nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

8. Sizce Türkiye'de yanlış bilginin en çok zarar oluşturduğu alan nedir?

9. İçeriklerinizi hangi hedef kitleye yönelik oluşturuyorsunuz?

10. İçeriklerinize yapılan geri dönüşler ve eleştirilerden bahsedebilir misiniz?

11. Kuruluşunuzun Türkiye'deki yanlış bilgi sorununa etkisini nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

12. Neden kendine "teyitçi" ve "doğrulama girişimi" adını veren yeni oluşumlara ihtiyaç doğdu?

13. Doğrulama girişimlerinin amacı ne?

14. Doğrulama girişimleri, yanlış bilgi ve bilgi düzensizliği sorununa çözüm olabilir mi?

15. Teyitçi olarak en önem verdiğiniz değerleriniz neler? Bu değerler, gazetecilik değerleri ile nasıl benzeşiyor ya da onlardan nasıl farklılaşıyor?

16. Teyitçilerin toplumdaki rolü ve gazetecilerin toplumdaki rolü arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıkları nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

17. Gazeteciler, yanlış bilgi ile karşılaştıklarında ne yapıyorlar?
    a) Gazeteciler, yanlış bilgi ile karşılaştıklarında ne yapmalılar?

18. Gazetecilerin toplumdaki rolünün geçtiğimiz yıllarda bir değişime uğradığını düşünüyor musunuz? Eğer düşünüyorsanız, bu değişime ne sebep oldu?

19. Gazetecilerin rollerinin zaman içinde nasıl gelişmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorsunuz?

20. Gazetecileri bilgi düzensizliği ile mücadele sürecinde bekleyen zorluklar nelerdir?

21. Doğrulama girişimlerini bilgi düzensizliği ile mücadele sürecinde bekleyen zorluklar nelerdir?

22. Hedef kitlenizde yaratmayı istediğiniz normatif bir değişim var mı?

83

23. Hedef kitlenizin büyüklüğüne dair gelecekten beklentiniz nedir?

24. Gelecekte Türkiye'deki yanlış bilgi sorununun bugüne kıyasla ne durumda olacağını düşünüyorsunuz?

25. Türkiye'deki enformasyon ortamının iyileştirilmesi için, gazetelerin ve doğrulama girişimlerinin iş birliği yapabileceği alanlar var mı? Varsa, neler?

26. Türkiye'deki enformasyon ortamının iyileştirilmesi için, gazetecilerin ve teyitçilerin iş birliği yapabileceği alanlar var mı? Varsa, neler?

27. Türkiye'deki enformasyon ortamının iyileştirilmesi için, doğrulama girişimlerinin birbirleriyle iş birliği yapabileceği alanlar var mı? Varsa, neler?

28. Türkiye'deki enformasyon ortamının iyileştirilmesi için, gazetelerin daha iyi yapması gerekenler neler?

29. Türkiye'deki enformasyon ortamının iyileştirilmesi için, doğrulama girişimlerinin daha iyi yapması gerekenler neler?

30. Gazeteciler, doğrulama girişimlerinden ve onların günlük pratiklerinden nasıl faydalanabilir?

31. Doğrulama girişimleri, gazetecilerden ve onların günlük pratiklerinden nasıl faydalanabilir?

Gazeteciler için:

1. Köşe yazarlığı dışında mesleğiniz var mı?

2. Türkiye'deki doğrulama girişimlerinden hangisini veya hangilerini tanıyorsunuz?

3. İçeriklerinizi hangi hedef kitleye yönelik oluşturuyorsunuz?

4. İçeriklerinize yapılan geri dönüşler ve eleştirilerden bahsedebilir misiniz?

5. Geçmişte doğrulama girişimlerinin incelediği bir içeriğiniz oldu mu?

6. Sosyal medyayı ürettiğiniz içeriklere kaynak olarak kullandığınız oluyor mu? Oluyorsa, sosyal medyada yer alan enformasyonları içerik üretim süreçlerine dahil ederken, nasıl bir yol izliyorsunuz?

7. Yanlış bilgiyi nasıl tanımlıyorsunuz?

8. Sizce yanlış bilgi sorunun yaygınlaşmasındaki temel sebep nedir?

9. Yanlış bilginin yayılımında internet ve sosyal medyanın rolünü nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

10. Yanlış bilginin yayılımında geleneksel medyanın rolünü nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

11. Sizce Türkiye'de yanlış bilgi en çok hangi alanda zarar oluşturmaktadır?

12. Gazeteciler, yanlış bilgi ile karşılaştıklarında ne yapıyorlar?
    a) Gazeteciler, yanlış bilgi ile karşılaştıklarında ne yapmalılar?

13. Kuruluşunuzun Türkiye'deki yanlış bilgi sorununa etkisini nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

14. Türkiye'deki doğrulama girişimlerinin faaliyetlerini nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

15. Neden kendine "doğrulama girişimleri" adını veren yeni oluşumlara ihtiyaç doğdu?

16. Doğrulama girişimleri, yanlış bilgi ve "bilgi düzensizliği" sorununa çözüm olabilir mi?

17. Doğrulama girişimlerinin toplumdaki rolü ve gazetecilerin toplumdaki rolü arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıkları nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

18. Gazeteci olarak en önem verdiğiniz değerleriniz neler? Bu değerler, doğrulama girişimlerinin değerleri ile nasıl benzeşiyor ya da onlardan nasıl farklılaşıyor?

19. Hedef kitlenizde yaratmayı istediğiniz normatif bir değişim var mı?

20. Hedef kitlenizin büyüklüğüne dair gelecekten beklentiniz nedir?

21. Gazeteci olarak, toplumdaki rolünüzün geçtiğimiz yıllarda bir değişime uğradığını düşünüyor musunuz? Eğer düşünüyorsanız, bu değişime ne sebep oldu?

22. Gazetecilerin rollerinin zaman içinde ne ölçüde ve nasıl gelişmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorsunuz?

23. Doğrulama girişimlerini "bilgi düzensizliği" ile mücadele sürecinde bekleyen zorluklar nelerdir?

24. Gazetecileri "bilgi düzensizliği" ile mücadele sürecinde bekleyen zorluklar nelerdir?

25. Gelecekte Türkiye'deki yanlış bilgi sorununun bugüne kıyasla ne durumda olacağını düşünüyorsunuz?

26. Türkiye'deki enformasyon ortamının iyileştirilmesi için, gazetelerin ve doğrulama girişimlerinin iş birliği yapabileceği alanlar var mı? Varsa, neler?

27. Türkiye'deki enformasyon ortamının iyileştirilmesi için, gazetecilerin ve teyitçilerin iş birliği yapabileceği alanlar var mı? Varsa, neler?

28. Türkiye'deki enformasyon ortamının iyileştirilmesi için, doğrulama girişimlerinin birbirleriyle iş birliği yapabileceği alanlar var mı? Varsa, neler?

29. Türkiye'deki enformasyon ortamının iyileştirilmesi için, köşe yazarlarının yapabilecekleri neler?

30. Türkiye'deki enformasyon ortamının iyileştirilmesi için, gazetelerin daha iyi yapması gerekenler neler?

31. Türkiye'deki enformasyon ortamının iyileştirilmesi için, doğrulama girişimlerinin daha iyi yapması gerekenler neler?

32. Gazeteciler, doğrulama girişimlerinden ve onların günlük pratiklerinden nasıl faydalanabilir?

33. Doğrulama girişimleri, gazetecilerden ve onların günlük pratiklerinden nasıl faydalanabilir?

For the fact-checkers:

1. Do you have any other job besides fact-checking?

2. Which of the fact-checking initiatives from Turkey do you know or follow?

3. What is your definition of misinformation?

4. How do you evaluate the activities of fact-checking initiatives in Turkey?

5. What do you think is the main reason for the problem of misinformation in Turkey?

6. How do you evaluate the role of the Internet and social media in the problem of misinformation in Turkey?

7. How do you evaluate the role of traditional media in spreading misinformation?

8. In which area do you think misinformation in Turkey create the most damage?

9. Do you have a target audience in your mind when you are creating your content?

10. How are the feedbacks and criticisms towards your content?

11. How do you evaluate the impact of your organization on the problem of misinformation in Turkey?

12. Why was there a need for new entities that call themselves "fact-checkers" and "fact-checking platforms"?

13. What is the purpose of fact-checking initiatives?

14. Can fact-checking initiatives be the solution to the problem of misinformation and information disorder in Turkey?

15. What are your most important values as a fact-checker? How do these values resemble or differ from journalistic values?

16. How do you evaluate the similarities and differences between the role of the fact-checkers and journalists in society?

17. What do journalists do when they encounter misinformation?
a) What should journalists do when they encounter false information?

18. Do you think the role of journalists in society has changed in recent years? If you think so, what caused this change?

19. How do you think the role of journalists should evolve over time?

20. What are the challenges facing journalists in the process of tackling information disorder?

21. What are the challenges facing fact-checking initiatives in tackling information disorder?

22. Is there a normative change that you want to create in your target audience?

23. What is your future expectation regarding the size of your target audience?

24. How do you think the misinformation problem in Turkey will be in the future compared to today?

25. Are there areas where newspapers and fact-checking initiatives can cooperate to improve the information environment in Turkey? If so, what are they?

26. Are there areas where journalists and fact-checkers can collaborate to improve the information environment in Turkey? If so, what are they?

27. Are there areas where fact-checking initiatives can cooperate with each other to improve the information environment in Turkey? If so, what?

28. What should newspapers do better in order to improve the information environment in Turkey?

29. What should fact-checking initiatives do better to improve the information environment in Turkey?

30. How should journalists benefit from the daily practices of fact-checking initiatives?

31. How should fact-checkers benefit from the daily practices of journalists?

For journalists:

1. Do you have any other job besides journalist?

2. Which of the fact-checking initiatives in Turkey do you know and follow?

3. Do you have a target audience in your mind when you are creating your content?

4. How are the feedbacks and criticisms towards your content?

5. Have you ever had any of your content reviewed by fact-checking initiatives in the past?

6. Do you use social media as a source for the content you produce? If so, how do you incorporate the piece of information on social media into the content you produce?

7. What is your definition of misinformation?

8. What do you think is the main reason for the problem of the spread of misinformation in Turkey?

9. How do you evaluate the role of the Internet and social media in the spread of misinformation?

10. How do you evaluate the role of traditional media in spreading misinformation?

11. In which area do you think misinformation causes the most damage in Turkey?

12. What do journalists do when they encounter misinformation?
    a) What should journalists do when they encounter false information?

13. How do you evaluate the impact of your organization on the misinformation problem in Turkey?

14. How do you evaluate the activities of fact-checking initiatives in Turkey?

15. Why was there a need for new entities that call themselves "fact-checkers" and "fact-checking platforms"?

16. Can fact-checking initiatives be the solution to the problem of misinformation and "information disorder"?

17. How do you assess the similarities and differences between the role of fact-checking initiatives and journalists in society?

18. What are your most important values as a journalist? How do these values resemble or differ from the values of fact-checking initiatives?

19. Is there a normative change that you want to create in your target audience?

20. What is your future expectation regarding the size of your target audience?

21. As a journalist, do you think your role in society has changed in recent years? If you think so, what caused this change?

22. To what extent and how do you think the role of journalists should evolve over time?

23. What are the challenges facing fact-checking initiatives in tackling "information disorder"?

24. What are the challenges facing journalists in the process of tackling "information disorder"?

25. How do you think the misinformation problem in Turkey will be in the future compared to today?

26. Are there areas where newspapers and fact-checking initiatives can cooperate to improve the information environment in Turkey? If so, what are they?

27. Are there areas where journalists and fact-checkers can collaborate to improve the information environment in Turkey? If so, what are they?

28. Are there areas where fact-checking initiatives can cooperate with each other to improve the information environment in Turkey? If so, what are they?

29. What should newspapers do better in order to improve the information environment in Turkey?

30. What should fact-checking initiatives do better to improve the information environment in Turkey?

31. How should journalists benefit from the daily practices of fact-checking initiatives?

32. How should fact-checkers benefit from the daily practices of journalists?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal Information

Name and surname: Ece Nil Feyzioğlu

Academic Background

Bachelor's Degree Education: Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Political Science and Public Administration, 2019

Post Graduate Education: Kadir Has University, New Media Program

Other:

Humboldt University, Berlin, When Islam and Feminism Meet Seminar, 2019

Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, Erasmus Exchange Program, 2017

Foreign Languages: English, German

Work Experience

The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), Assistant Expert, Ankara (July 2020-present)

Kadir Has University, Course assistant ('Communication and Art' class), İstanbul (February 2020- June 2020)

United Nations Development Program, Internship, Ankara (May 2019 – June 2019)
Inclusive Democratic Governance Portfolio Civilian Oversight Project