Fact-checking in the Postmodern Era

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Abstract

In this thesis, we have tried to evaluate the concept of fact-checking, which constructs a new discourse in the media industry in parallel with the concept of post-truth, and within this framework, we have tried to evaluate how fact-checking channels evaluate the concepts of truth and lies within the framework of Postmodern thought, as well as focusing on the question of whether fact-checking tools, which claim to be a fact-truth, are the new gate-keepers of the new media and which truths or lies these platforms open their eyes to and which ones they close to (such as peak a boo). Indeed, Postmodern literature offers us a contextualized form of the "knowability" of truth or reality. Although Postmodern thought has been accused of "muddying the waters", so to speak, because of this character, it offers us a wealth of literature on the ontic, epistemic, socio-economic archaeology of knowledge, truth, and the discourse of truth.

Keywords: Agenda-setting; discourse; fact-checking; gatekeeping; postmodernity; post-truth

INTRODUCTION

Media is a comprehensive concept that combines many communication tools in a single range. In the literature, media is divided into printed media (newspapers, magazines, books, academic journals, etc.), audio media (music recordings, radio, audio, etc.), visual media (television and cinema), and finally, new/digital media (internet, new communication technologies, and electronic media) (Barbier, 2001, pp. 25-26)

Although media diversity or inflation, which occurs with the increase in digital media use and participation, is considered a "democracy gain," this inflation has also opened a great door to significant disinformation, the dump of which might be said to surpass Bentham's (1995, p. 35) "panoptic tower."

Virilio (2003, pp. 107-125) emphasizes that the real-time perspective of telecommunication creates a new "surface area." He argues that "the message is no longer the vehicle; instead, it is the speed of the message" against McLuhan's (2005) famous saying, "The medium is the message." This area emerges as a new "public space" that permeates every moment of our lives socially, economically, politically, and culturally, where we can communicate interactively without time and space limitations.

The most crucial characteristic distinguishing this new public space from the public space idealized by Habermas (2007, p. 135) within the "communicative action" framework is that it creates a slippery ground with its openness to temporary and unstable momentary identities.

It has been discussed for more than a century how the upgrading of information plays a role in reinforcing the power of the media and how it affects the perception of reality. We can characterize post-truth and fact-checking discussions as a continuation of this tradition.

Although the concepts of *gerçek* and *hakikat* are used interchangeably by the (TDK) Turkish Language Association [1](2023), we should say that the reason why we use the word *hakikat* as the Turkish equivalent of the concept is that post-truth refers to the purpose of creating a truth discourse by staying within the circle of reality, not the unreal. According to Williams (2005), the founder of pragmatism, truth changes because reality itself changes, leading us to pieces of truth instead of absolute truth. That is, truth is a process (Williams, 2005:11). In this sense, post-

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[1] TDK: https://sozluk.gov.tr/ see: "hakikat", "gerçek" Access Date: 20.08.2023

truth is not the claim that truth does not exist but that facts are subject to our point of view (McIntyre, 2018:11)

According to Orhan Hançerlioğlu's (1977) *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "Truth does not express objective reality itself but its reflection in thought and the conformity between thought and its object." Hançerlioğlu explains the difference between the two words as follows:

Reality makes us wish for objective reality, and truth makes us wish for the subjective reflection of this objective reality in our minds. For example, a pen we hold is real; its reflection is truth. The articulation of both concepts in their true form needs to be clarified. Therefore, there is an objective aspect in our subjective truth, and truth is as objective as it is subjective. Truth is never subjective; we call it subjective because it is reflected in our subjectivity. Otherwise, it is always objective because it is reflected in something objective. Is what we see the truth? Or is it a dream? Our truths are approximate, therefore relative. (Hançerlioğlu, 1977, p. 276)

The importance of the post-truth concept emerges more clearly at this point because it allows us to question the context that reveals it and the concept itself.

The birth of fact-checking is undoubtedly not only paralleled by the emergence of digital media. If the concept of post-truth is considered only within the framework of technology-media, it will offer a reductionist perspective.

The concept of fact-checking followed a parallel course with the idea of post-truth. The inflation in fake news production during the 2016 presidential elections in the US with Donald Trump's presidency and Trump's "media versus media" discourses a**re** undoubtedly the most influential factors that made the concept of fact-checking prominent. However, we can also read the idea of fact-checking as a new investment in the media industry.

Today, news verification sites are established to prevent information/news pollution from catching up with the production and consumption speed of fake news due to the circulation speed and the assembly-line-based technique of newsmaking in digital media.

Still, fact-checking sites can easily fall into this fake news cycle. For instance, the Turkish news verification platform *teyid.org* published incorrect news about the "allegation that the flag of

'No' was hung on the Bavarian State Opera House for the referendum." Then, it made a "correction" but published the news using the "hashtag" rather than the "correct" label.[2]

Many lies and false news, especially during the 2016 elections in the USA, have been the subject of great controversy. Google then rolled out 'Fact Check' in several countries. Google has now made this application available worldwide. Wherever 'Google News' is in use and in all languages where search results are available, news that has successfully passed the fact-checking process of Google News is included in Google search results as "fact-checked." In addition, Google, which has developed a fact-checking tool, provides its users with a fact-checking search page service.[3]

In addition, summits where international fact-checking sites come together today occur regularly.[4] The increasing number of these sites as an "assurance" investment shows that media owners also undertake concerns about news production and the reliability of information; these sites are rapidly becoming "media kits" that keep the media power alive.

In the report titled "The Rise of Fact-checking Sites in Europe," published by the Reuters Institute,[5] information is presented on how fact-checking sites operating in 20 different countries are organized, how they are funded, and how they work. The research shows that these sites primarily work by creating an NGO (non-governmental organization) model and that they define themselves as social activists.

The concept of fact-checking is modern due to its theoretical framework. Post-truth is an attempt to question the idea of postmodernity again through fact-checking. Referring to Cemil Meriç's (1999:63) saying that truth is "a Goddess who wears a different dress in each age," we can say that the truth is redefined and subsequently falsified through fact-checking, which is done with the claim of revealing the truth.

In this study, by evaluating fact-checking as a new media discourse, we will discuss how frequently the news verification sites operating in Turkey, Teyit, Doğrula, and Doğruluk Payı, check the fake news in the "Disinformation Bulletin" published by the Presidency

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[2] Teyit: https://teyit.org/referandum-icin-bavarian-devlet-opera-binasina-hayir-bayragi-asildi-iddiasi/

[3] Google fact-checked: https://toolbox.google.com/factcheck/explorer

[4] International fact-checking summits: https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2019/apply-now-for-the-seventh-global-fact-checking-summit-in-oslo/

[5] Reuters Institute: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-research/rise-fact-checking-sites-europe

Communication Directorate. The aim is to show how successful the fact-checking channels are in the fight against fake news as they claim, and whether these channels are the new media gatekeepers.

Before doing this analysis, we will discuss the network society, information society, fact-checking, post-truth, news, discourse, ideology, and the concept of postmodernity to show the gray area of the distinction between lie and truth.

RESULTS

In order to test the above hypotheses, we searched for the news in a total of 12 *Disinformation Bulletins*, which were published by the Directorate of Communications between October 2022 and December 2022, using the three most basic keywords of the relevant news items in the search engines of the Turkey-based *teyit.org*, *doğrulukpayi.com and doğrula.org* websites, accredited to IFCN. We selected these keywords from the spots in the related newsletters. For example, the keywords "656, Mosque, and PVC" were selected from the heading "656-Year-Old PVC Installations to the Mosque." We determined the intensity of discussion about it on social media by determining whether they were shared by Twitter accounts with at least 100 thousand followers in the relevant date range and whether these shares became the subject of at least 100 retweets and 100 likes by using the advanced search tool of the Twitter platform.

If even a single account fulfilling the relevant criteria shares it, it might enable approximately three million users to interact with this news. For example, the October 1-8 Disinformation Bulletin determined that two Twitter accounts with an average of 1.5 million followers shared the news item "The Presidency of Religious Affairs earns income from interest." Therefore, examining this widely circulated news by the aforementioned verification sites could not be considered an unwarranted expectation. However, this news item did not come under the radar of any of the three sites in the sample.

In summary, in our methodological framework, we first presented the news items the Directorate of Communications considered as disinformation in detail. We then determined to what extent this news circulated on Twitter according to the abovementioned criteria. Finally, we investigated whether these news items were handled by the sampled verification platforms.

By making analyses in line with the findings, we tried to determine whether the verification platforms keep up with their claims.

4.1. 1-8 October 2022 Disinformation Bulletin Analysis

Four news were included in the disinformation bulletin dated 1-8 October 2022, published on the Directorate of Communications of the Republic of Turkey website. In the bulletin, four claims were evaluated under the headings of "They attached PVC to the 656-year-old mosque." dated October 1, 2022; "The Directorate of Religious Affairs generated 58 million 17 thousand liras of interest income in 2021," dated October 4, 2022; "The Turkish Coast Guard pushes immigrants violently to Greece," dated October 6, 2022; and "There is a shortage of 600 million cubic meters in natural gas warehouses," dated October 8, 2022.

As regards the claim that "They attached PVC to the 656-year-old mosque," which is the first news of the October 1-8 Disinformation Bulletin, it is stated that the news was published in some press organs without disclosing their names. According to the bulletin, the photographs showing Gazi Murat Hüdavendigar Mosque with PVC windows are old. These windows, which were installed by the community on its own initiative, were removed with the restoration works that started 6 years ago and are still ongoing in the mosque.

Figure 1

The first news item of the Disinformation Bulletin 1-8 October 2022: "They installed PVC windows in the 656-year-old mosque".
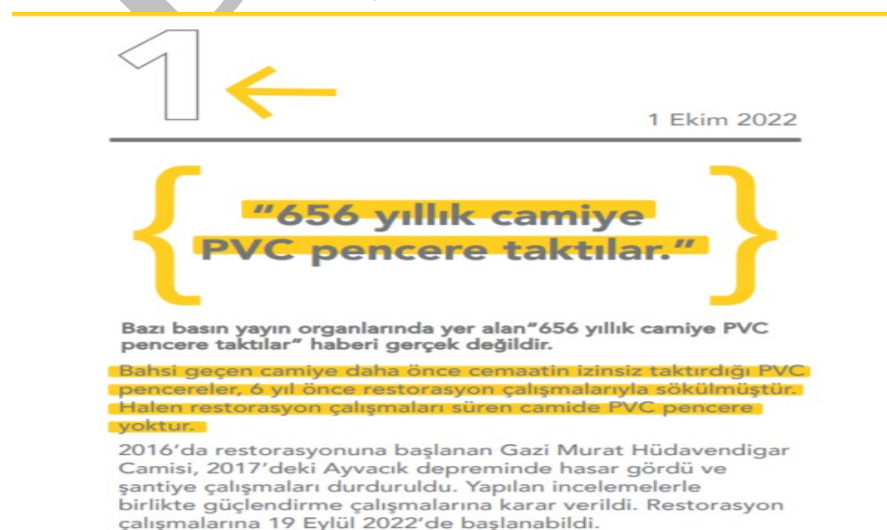
Restoration studies of historical artifacts are one of the topics that create interest in social media. During the Justice and Development Party (AK Party), many similar news items were used to convey the message that the AK Party was ignorant about historical artifacts. One of the most popular of this news was the restoration of Şile Castle in 2015. Critical posts likening the restored version of the castle to the famous cartoon character SpongeBob were shared intensively on social media.

Figure 2

Sample tweet that likened Şile Castle Restoration to a cartoon character[6]

Senior architect/restoration expert from ITU Faculty of Architecture, one of the experts in the field at the beginning of the restoration works of the castle, and also a member of the Architectural and Urban Conservation Working Group, Prof. Dr. Although Kemal Kutgün explained to news organization BIANET (2015) with examples that the restoration was carried out in the most accurate way scientifically; however, the intense reaction of social media and other news organizations continued to determine the agenda. Therefore, the evaluation of such

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[6] Source: https://twitter.com/errdemglr/status/636265371226378240?s=20&t=Gor-72YHd63n9NuD7M0zmw

news by the disinformation bulletin can be considered reasonable in order to prevent disinformation.

In order to determine the power of the first news item of the Disinformation Bulletin, "They installed pvc on a 656-year-old mosque", to influence the agenda, first of all, the keywords "mosque, pvc, window" were searched in the advanced search section of Twitter between October 1-3, 2022 by considering the minimum criteria.

Figure 3

The first news item reviewed in Twitter Advanced Search.

The criteria of a share with a minimum of 100 retweets and 100 likes could not be found between the aforementioned dates. Therefore, it can be said that this news did not have an intense interaction on social media.

In the second step, this news was searched in the search engines of teyit.org, dogrulukpayi.com, and doğrula.org sites using the exact keywords. No relevant news was found in any of the three verification platforms. The result did not change when each keyword was searched separately. The fact that this news is not considered worthy of verification can be argued to demonstrate

that these platforms follow criteria such as high interaction rates in social media in their editorial selections.

Another news subject to verification by the Disinformation Bulletin was the news claiming that the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DİB) benefited from interest revenues. According to some media outlets, DIB obtained some of its budget from interest revenues in 2021.

Figure 4

Analysis of the Disinformation Bulletin on DİB.

Although interest is seen as a normalized transaction at every stage in Turkey's current economic system, since it is prohibited in Islam, it can be seen as an oxymoron situation in which the organization responsible for regulating Islamic practices in the country comes in this way. In this case, it can be considered inevitable that such a claim will come to the agenda about DİB, which is thought to benefit from unexplained income in its budget. However, it is evident that not taking the opinion of DİB, the party of the claim, while making such news will not be compatible with the ethical rules of journalism. As a matter of fact, the Directorate of Communications declared that the news was disinformative and that the alleged revenues were not obtained from interest. In the Twitter search we made during the period when the relevant news item was on the agenda, it is seen that the two accounts (@ kacsaatolduson with 1.1

million followers and @Haber with 489 thousand followers) brought this claim to the agenda. The tweets they sent had a very intense interaction rate, as well.

Figure 5

Twitter Advanced Search results about the news on DİB.

This news item, which has reached a vast audience on Twitter and should be defined as scandalous regarding the relevant institution, was searched with the keywords "religion, interest, and income" and in the sampled fact-checking sites and was found to be considered not worthy of verification by them. On the other hand, there is a confirmed news item in Teyit during that period regarding the amount of the budget allocated to DİB.

The third new item in the Disinformation Bulletin was the Greek Minister of Migration's allegation that the Turkish Coast Guard forces deported refugees trying to cross the Aegean Sea to Greek territorial waters.

Figure 6

Analysis of Disinformation Bulletin dated 6 October 2022

Regarding the prominence of the relevant news item on Twitter, a search was made with the keywords "Greece, immigrant, and minister," and it was discovered that the news did not reach a prevalence according to the criteria we set.

Figure 7

Twitter search results about the claim on the Turkish Coast Guards.
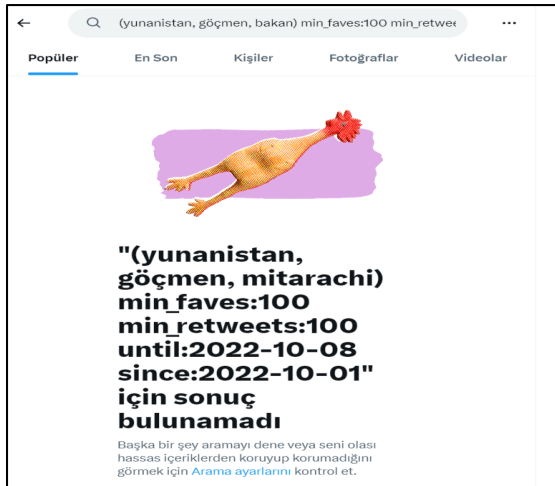
Again, in the searches made on the pages of the verification platforms with the same keywords, it was seen that this claim was not subject to verification. This claim, which was probably taken into consideration by the Ministry of Communications for diplomatic reasons, did not reach a virality that would occupy the political agenda on social media. Thus, the result was expected.

The last news item discussed in the 1-8 October Disinformation Bulletin was shared by some national press organs like *Yeniçağ* and *Birgün* through their Twitter accounts and claimed that Turkey is deficient in natural gas warehouses.

Figure 8

Disinformation Bulletin analysis on natural gas deficiency.

Although no prevalence that meets the criteria of the research was found in the advanced search results on Twitter, this news was shared from the official accounts of *Birgün* with 2.1 million followers, and *Yeniçağ* with 275 thousand followers. Still, it was found that this claim was not evaluated by the fact-checking sites analyzed.

4.2. 9-16 October 2022 Disinformation Bulletin Analysis

In the bulletin evaluating the second week of October, nine news/claims were assessed. The bulletin's most important agenda was the accident in a coal mine in Bartın on October 14, 2022. The allegations of negligence of state institutions regarding this

accident occupied the agenda in both traditional and social media channels at that time. According to the bulletin, some information in the report of the Court of Accounts, which was

the subject of the allegations and prepared before the explosion in the relevant mine, was "distorted" and put on the public agenda.

Figure 9

9-16 October 2022 Disinformation Bulletin on Bartın Mine Accident.

Since the starting point of the related claims is the reports of the Court of Accounts, the keywords "Court of Accounts, *degaj*, and Bartın" were used for the Twitter prevalence search. It is seen that the prevalence of these claims brought up by influential political figures such as Zafer Party (ZP) Chairman Ümit Özdağ and CHP Zonguldak MP Deniz Özyavuz is intense. As a result of the search made with the exact keywords on the pages of the verification sites, it was observed that Teyit and Doğrula platforms fact-checked this claim and marked it as true.

Figure 10

Analysis of the Court of Accounts' report on the Bartın Accident, Twitter search results and news on Teyit and Doğrula Platforms

On the other hand, the Directorate of Communications defends the thesis that the relevant Court of Accounts report addresses possible general risks in mines, while the claimants and verification sites argue that the report specifically refers to the mine where the accident occurred.

The second claim in the bulletin is the Greek Minister of Migration's accusation that Turkey mistreated 92 refugees. In the bulletin, it is stated that Greece resorted to disinformation to cover up its own crimes. As with the previous similar claim, it was seen that this news did not meet the prevalence criteria of the research on Twitter. Likewise, the verification sites did not take into account these claims of Greece.

The third claim in the bulletin included a tweet image from the account of Sera Kadıgil, the Istanbul deputy of the Turkish Labour Party (TİP). This tweet argues that the Ministry of Justice has been hiding child abuse data for the last six years.

Figure 11

Disinformation Bulletin analysis of allegations of child abuse.
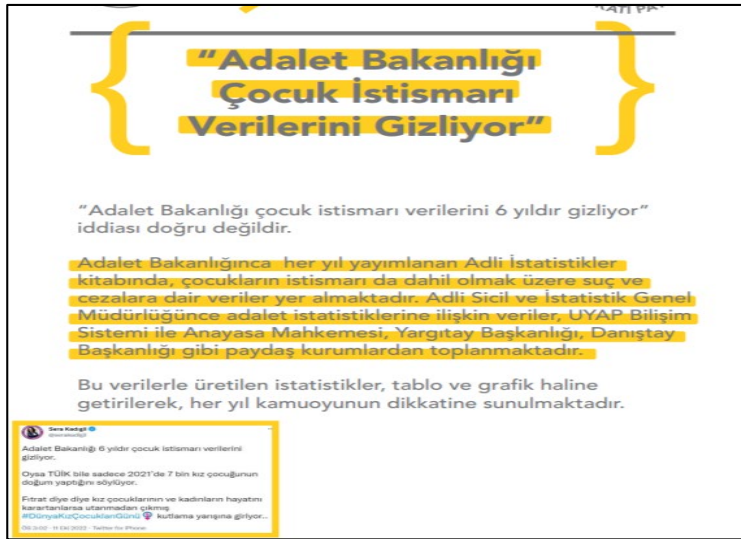
In the bulletin, this claim is denied by citing the *Judicial Statistics* book published annually by the Ministry of Justice. In the Twitter prevalence search, it was observed that the relevant claim did not reach the prevalence to comply with the research criteria in an account other than the Turkish Labor Party Deputy Sera Kadıgil's. As a result of the searches made on the pages of the verification sites, it was found that this claim by Sera Kadıgil was not taken into consideration by them either.

The fourth claim examined by the bulletin was the news that "Mukhtars irregularly registered foreigners," which was stated on a television channel. In the bulletin, in which the related channel is not disclosed, the claim was evaluated as disinformative because the mukhtars did not have such an authority. No such claim has been encountered on Twitter and the analyzed verification platforms within the relevant date range.

The fifth story of the newsletter examines a claim shared on her personal Twitter page by Ruhat Mengi, who previously worked as a columnist in various newspapers. According to the allegation, the state officials were able to read the WhatsApp messages with three blue ticks. It

was observed that this claim, which was described as disinformation by the bulletin, did not reach a prevalence on Twitter.

Of the verification platforms, this claim was only addressed on the Teyit's web page and classified as false. This verification, which is in line with the bulletin, seems to belong to 2020, however.

4.3. 17-23 October Disinformation Bulletin Analysis

17-23 October Disinformation Bulletin discussed five claims that occupied the agenda in the related week. The most important is the allegation that the Turkish Armed Forces used chemical weapons against the terrorist organization PKK by showing some videos as evidence. This claim has been widely evaluated in the bulletin.

Figure 15

17-23 October 2022 Disinformation Bulletin analysis about the allegations against the Turkish armed forces.

These claims and the reactions that followed them became one of the main agenda items in the country's traditional and new media environments at that time. Therefore, the expectation that this agenda would also be on the agenda of verification platforms was not unwarranted because it was a hot news item that met the criteria of "virality, urgency, and importance occupying the public agenda. In such an atmosphere, the Disinformation Bulletin has allocated three pages to the relevant claims. It has developed a discourse that references international agreements and

the inventory of the Turkish Armed Forces that the claims are false. It also drew attention to the extent of the disinformation by exposing that some of the images circulated with the allegation that "TSK used chemical weapons" belong to the events in Syria.

Figure 16

The Ministry of National Defense's statement against the claims about the use of lethal weapons.

In this process, which shook the country's agenda and then led to the arrest of TTB President Şebnem Korur Fincancı, the verification platforms seem to have ignored these claims. No negative or positive content has been created regarding them. When the verification platforms deal with a claim, it is not only possible to reach definite conclusions, such as true or false. There are also gray area options such as "Hybrid" or "Verification Failed." Therefore, the only explanation for not evaluating these claims may be editorial selection. According to some criticisms, it might be because these formations receive a significant part of their revenues from

foreign institutions and organizations.[7] If they take a "hawkish" stance against the PKK or its political extensions, these revenues might be significantly risked. At this point, it might be argued that developing income models based on diversified financing obtained from volunteering individuals will allow such platforms to act boldly against any disinformation that has serious social consequences.

Figure 17

Teyit's search results with the keywords "chemical, PKK, and weapon".

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[7]Teyid: https://teyit.org/finansal-kaynaklar, https://www.dogrulukpayi.com/sayfa/hakkimizda, https://www.dogrula.org/finansal-kaynaklar/

Figure 18.

Doğruluk Payı and Doğrula's search results about the claims related to the use chemical weapons.

As can be seen in the search results, the verification platforms remained indifferent to confirming these claims. Moreover, although different keywords (Fincancı, Tanrıkulu, etc.) were used to search for the event with the thought that the previously used keywords would be insufficient, the result did not change.

In the retrospective searches made for the claims in the bulletin that "Turkey is getting the technology of the Typhoon Missile from North Korea" and "Hundreds of Syrians have started to work as teachers in the National Education Staff since 2011," it was seen that the relevant

claims did not reach the intensity to comply with the research criteria. The search with keywords on the verification sites found no results for these claims.

DISCUSSION

Our primary purpose in designing this research was to obtain findings on how the verification platforms that emerged within the framework of the new generation of journalism practices function and justify their claim to fact-check the truth. For this, we examined 88 news in 13 bulletins published by the Turkish Communications Directorate Disinformation Bulletin, a biased publication by nature, for three months. In this direction, we first checked whether the news items covered by the bulleting reached sufficient prevalence on Twitter (at least 100 tweets and 100 likes), which is considered highly influential as a news platform. 25 out of the 88 news stories met these minimum criteria.

When we looked at which of those 25 news items were covered by the fact-checking platforms of Teyit, Doğrula, and Doğruluk Payı, we found that only 11 news were examined in at least one. Therefore, considering that the claim in a tweet that has received 100 retweets and 100 likes might potentially reach an average of one million views, it was observed that the 14 claims that occupied the public-political agenda were not handled by these platforms that claim to work to ensure that the society reaches the correct information. This ratio is thought to result from editorial choices of the verification platforms, as mentioned earlier.

The fact that fact-checking organizations that keep the gate of information, so to speak, with the claim of being independent and impartial miss some essential claims that occupy the public-political agenda both in quality and quantity requires us to rethink the functionality of these organizations. As an overall result of this research, we think that the criteria these organizations use to decide which news to fact-check should be disclosed. Such a disclosure will bring along a structure more suitable for the position these formations see as suitable for themselves. In this sense, our main suggestion is that the "human factor" should be less involved in news verification. In particular, artificial intelligence applications can now take the decision to select news items for verification. The human factor should only come into play at the verification stage of the claims which will follow this selection.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the question of whether the concept of fact-checking has developed in the media industry in parallel with the concept of post-truth and whether the fact-checking tools, which claim a truth claim in this context, are the new gatekeepers of the media and which truth or lie these channels open and which they close their eyes to.

At this point, the discussion of post-truth could only be meaningful if there was some kind of confrontation with traditional conceptions of truth. For this reason, in this study, we tried to evaluate from a postmodern perspective how fact-checking channels, which are new media tools of verification, incorporate the concepts of truth, post-truth, and lie.

Postmodern thought offers a contextualized form for the knowability of truth or reality. Although postmodern thought is accused of "muddying the waters," so to speak, because of this character, it offers us a rich literature in terms of ontic, epistemic, socio-economic archaeology of knowledge, truth, and truth discourses. It can be said that the approaches that define the age we are living in as the post-truth age are coming to terms with postmodern thought from a neo-Marxist perspective and that the fact that they use fact-checking tools to the maximum extent while doing so does not cover the fact that fact-checking channels are an essential element of the capitalist media market, which instead strengthen it. For this very reason, this study explains that fact-checking should be addressed within the framework of post-truth and postmodern discourses.

At the end of our study, it is understood that fact-checking organizations, idealized in the name of journalism, have many shortcomings. Most news items in the verification bulletins published by a state institution were not subjected to verification even if they seemed to meet the evaluation criteria of independent verification bodies. We believe that there is no justification for the omission of disinformative news, such as the allegation that the Turkish Armed Forces used chemical weapons, which set the agenda of Turkey on a global scale in October 2022 and which meets almost all the evaluation criteria of the verification bodies and whose analysis is possible from open sources.

Such omissions may well have political justifications. People working in fact-checking organizations may have a political agenda. The ethical thing to do is stop presenting themselves

as a neutral organization. If their motives are non-political, they should explain why they do not analyze the news that meets the criteria they have announced. It is not unreasonable to expect them to make an effort to improve themselves without taking refuge in excuses such as insufficient workforce, which can be overcome with artificial intelligence software. Otherwise, they should choose between being a classic news organization or a control mechanism that monitors news organizations.

With new media tools, the most critical change in journalism is the speed of information. Rather than the quality of the news, media organizations have entered into a race to see who will share the news first or who will receive more interaction. This "new generation journalism" approach, which breaks away from all the ethical codes of traditional journalism, is one of the leading causes of disinformation. The delusion that verification organizations alone can oppose such a gigantic problem is, of course, irrational. As seen in our study, verification organizations, which emerged with the mission of identifying and deciphering misleading news unbiasedly, almost disappear when it comes to situations that plunge the country into chaos. These organizations, whose criteria for news evaluation are "urgency, importance, and virality," turn their heads the other way when the Turkish Twitter agenda is shaken by certain news. It is more important to discuss what new fact-checking organizations should do rather than the motives behind these behaviors. If a fact-checking organization values urgency, it should be able to analyze a news story without the public being manipulated by fake news. If it prioritizes significance, it should focus on the political agenda, which is the artery of society. If it prioritizes virality, it must address agendas formed within quantitative standards.

While criticizing the weaknesses of verification organizations, another point that should not be overlooked is the new generation of news organizations that impose a heavy workload on them. The public must access accurate news, so governments adopt regulations to legalize such news organizations. For such organizations to be recognized by the public, requiring them to have a corporate web page with a detailed list of their administrative and editorial staff is necessary to prevent anyone from doing news reporting irresponsibly. The fact that the state, which expects many responsibilities to be fulfilled, from the prosecutor's office to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), even for a simple school newspaper, disregards organizations that reach five million unique views with a tweet and whose relationship with journalism is not open to the public, prepares the end of journalism in the classical sense. One of the measures to be taken in this regard should be to ensure that journalism is practiced by people trained in this field.

In this study, we have endeavored to look at the issue from a more original perspective than the studies examining the relationship between journalism and verification organizations. A more comprehensive study, perhaps the first of its kind, especially on the Disinformation bulletin, will bring more meaningful results and suggestions on the issues addressed. We believe that the IFCN-approved ones and other organizations that provide verification services independently should be examined in detail within the scope of such studies. With the increase in these studies, we believe that verification organizations will be drawn to a more realistic ground in the context of society and news relations.

Most importantly, however, future studies should seek to distinguish the conditions under which fact-checking reduces misperceptions from those under which they fail or backfire. Many citizens seem reluctant to revise their beliefs in the face of accurate information and attempts to correct these false beliefs may worsen matters. Identifying the best way to provide accurate information would advance understanding how citizens process information and help strengthen public understanding of democratic debate and the political process.

Furthermore, basing the revenue model of verification bodies on diversified funding from voluntary individuals and funds would allow such bodies to act boldly in the face of any allegations. However, the fact that these verification organizations share their revenues transparently on their channels makes it essential to evaluate the debate on financing conventional media in a new framework. Indeed, as Baudrillard says, transparency is also the absolute threat of our time (Baudrillard, 1995:117). It is also worth discussing and researching whether the donation model acts as a political and economic catalyst. In our opinion, this deserves a discussion so broad as to be the subject of another thesis.

Returning to the topic at hand, the fact-checking organizations' disappearance, so to speak, on "inconvenient" issues, as we have repeatedly seen, seems highly problematic regarding the social role they are assigned. At this point, for example, the allegations dealt with by the Disinformation Bulletin should be accepted by fact-checking organizations as a kind of denunciation. Thus, analyzing the extent to which the allegations that attract the attention of the institution responsible for state communication are true or false reinforces the objective identity of verification bodies. Furthermore, given the positive connotation of the option of "mixed" as a way of evaluating news other than the true-false option, it may be suggested that verification bodies use a more accurate concept instead of this option. Because in its current form, the

"mixed" news category means "both offside and goal", to put it in soccer terminology. As is well known, the goal of an offside move is considered invalid.

Finally, fact-checking channels are not expected to evaluate every claim made. However, the claims that deserve public attention meet the urgency, importance, and virality criteria. Just as in this research, even examining widely shared content by determining a standard of virality will serve the mission to which verification formations aspire more than their current standards.

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