



FACT-CHECKING MEDIA

MASTER'S THESIS

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FACT-CHECKING MEDIA

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FACT-CHECKING MEDIA

ABSTRACT

The media has long been considered as one of the pillars of democracy, because it has a first-rate significance in informing and engaging the citizens, however the most important problems are being supplied inside the exceptional of the information this is published, and the misinformation of the citizens. In recent years, the spread of misinformation on social media, including patently false political “fake news”, misleading hyper-partisan news, and other forms of inaccurate content, has become a major source of social concern and academic research. The use of professional fact-checkers to identify and label false or misleading claims is one of the most prominent approaches to combating disinformation that technology companies are currently using and has received considerable attention in academia. However, these methods cannot keep us with the huge amount of content that is posted daily on social media. In this paper, we discuss the current state-of-art methods for detecting fake news, the need for fact-checking systems, and the potential impact of these methods on the resilience of disinformation in Albania.

Keywords: Fact checking media, journalists, Albania, fake news, democracy

MEDIAT “KONTROLLUESE TE FAKTEVE”

ABSTRAKT

Media është konsideruar prej kohësh si një nga shtyllat e demokracisë, sepse ka një domethënie të madhe në informimin dhe angazhimin e qytetarëve, por problemet më të medha po shfaqen brenda informacionit të rremë që publikohet dhe keqinformimit të qytetarëve. Vitet e fundit, përhapja e dezinformatave në mediat sociale, duke përfshirë "lajmet e rreme" politike, lajmet e rreme hiperpartiake dhe forma të tjera të përmbajtjes së pasaktë, është bërë një burim kryesor i shqetësimit social dhe kërkimit akademik. Përdorimi i kontrolluesve profesionalë të fakteve për të identifikuar dhe etiketuar informacionet e rreme është një nga qasjet më të spikatura për të luftuar dezinformimin që kompanitë e teknologjisë po përdorin aktualisht dhe ka marrë vëmendje të konsiderueshme në akademi. Megjithatë, këto metoda nuk mund të ndalojnë tërësisht sasinë e madhe të përmbajtjes të rreme që postohen çdo ditë në mediat sociale. Në këtë punim, ne diskutojmë metodat aktuale moderne për zbulimin e lajmeve të rreme, nevojën për sisteme të kontrollit të fakteve dhe ndikimin e mundshëm të këtyre metodave në qendrueshmerinë e dezinformatave në Shqipëri.

Fjalët kyçe: Mediat kontrolluese, gazetare, Shqipëria, lajme të rreme, demokracia

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Thank you all!

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Master Thesis, titled Media Support in Democratic Processes is based on my original work except quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that this thesis has not been previously or concurrently submitted for the award of any degree, at Epoka University, any other university or institution.

Franceska Picari

June 2023

TABLE OF CONTENT

APPROVAL PAGE	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ABSTRAKT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DECLARATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENT	vi
CHAPTER	
INTRODUCTION	1
1 RESILIENCE TO MISINFORMATION IN ALBANIA	5
2 FAKE NEWS	9
3 MEDIA SYSTEM IN ALBANIA	19
4 MEDIA IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY	30
METHODOLOGY	42
RESULTS and ANALYSIS	43
ANALYSIS	47
CONCLUSIONS	50
REFERENCES	55
CURRICULUM VITAE	58

INTRODUCTION

“The more I observe the main effects of a free press, the more convinced I am that, in the modern world, freedom of the press is the principal and, so to say, the constitutive element in freedom.”

— Alexis de Tocqueville

The concept of fake news has been around for a long time. Before the rise of digital technology, news outlets mainly focused on sensational stories such as crime, gossip, and disasters. The prevalence of fake news is attributed to the availability of various digital tools.

Since people can easily publish articles on various digital platforms, the spread of fake news can be facilitated. There is a lack of credible standards regarding the information that these platforms provide.

On these sites, there is no custodian of reliability criteria for information, enabling the dissemination of false information conceivable. To make matters worse, it is far from easy to distinguish between factual news and untrue or partially true news (Pérez-Rosas et al. 2018).

Because of the nature of social media, it is simple to propagate false information because a user may share it to friends, who may then transmit it to other friends, and so on. Sometimes comments on false information increase its "credibility," which might prompt quick dissemination and the spread of more false information (Albright 2017).

Media is one of the main fighters against corruption. Freedom of the press is often described as an important factor in combating corruption. For a country like Albania, which wants to modernize itself and join the European Union, deep-seated corruption is one of the biggest obstacles to overcome. If free and independent, media can play an important role in this process.

The spread of mis- and disinformation is an increasing concern for democratic societies around the globe (Lazer et al., 2019). In modern high-choice media environments, exposure to misinformation can be harmful and can have negative consequences for democratic governance as well as trust in news media and journalism more broadly.

Some scholars have even argued that we are entering a post-truth era with an alternative epistemology and thus an alternative reality, in which, for instance, former president Obama was not born in the United States and global warming is simply a Chinese hoax. These ongoing “debates” highlight the importance of several distinct but related constructs. The first is the concept of “fake news,” which refers to false or misleading information.

Egelhofer and Lecheler (2019) proposed that fake news can be conceptualized as a two-dimensional phenomenon differentiating (a) fake news genre or “the deliberate creation of pseudo journalistic disinformation” from (b) the fake news label used (e.g., by politicians like Donald Trump) to delegitimize news media. Second, there is a distinction between disinformation and misinformation, whereas disinformation is a subset of misinformation. Disinformation is spread intentionally by various actors who know that the information is false. In contrast, misinformation is spread by actors who mistakenly believe the information to be factually correct when it is not.

Previous research has primarily focused on textual forms of misinformation, while visual and multimodal forms (e.g., news images, memes, and videos) of misinformation have received much less attention. This is surprising because visual information may affect how media consumers select and process information. Furthermore, visual information can affect news consumers’ emotional reactions, attitudes, and behavioral responses independently of textual communication. This tendency is likely due to visual information coming “with an implicit guarantee of being closer to the truth than other forms of communication”.

Albania has a record of competitive elections, although political parties are highly polarized and often organized around prominent figures. Freedom of religion and freedom of assembly are generally respected. Despite recent government efforts, corruption and organized crime remain serious problems, and a mix of powerful business, political, and media interests inhibits the growth of truly independent news outlets.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The primary research objectives of this thesis are centered around comprehensively investigating the landscape of fact-checking within the media environment of Albania. The study aims to delve into the methodologies and practices employed by fact-checkers in Albania to verify the accuracy of news and information disseminated through various media channels. By analyzing the strategies and tools utilized, the research seeks to assess the effectiveness and impact of fact-checking initiatives on promoting media accuracy and combating the spread of misinformation in the Albanian context. Additionally, the thesis endeavors to understand the challenges faced by fact-checkers, including resource constraints, technological limitations, and potential biases, while also exploring the role of social media platforms in amplifying fact-checked information. Ultimately, this research contributes to a nuanced understanding of the dynamics between fact-checking, journalism, and media consumption habits in Albania, and provides valuable insights into the larger struggle against misinformation in a rapidly evolving information landscape.

CHAPTER 1

RESILIENCE TO MISINFORMATION IN ALBANIA

The dissemination of misinformation is an important issue that poses a serious threat to various sectors, but empirical studies in this regard remain limited. To address this issue, researchers have introduced the concept of resilience as a model to examine cross-national vulnerability to misinformation. However, despite the growing concern about misinformation, there is a lack of scientific research on the effectiveness of interventions aimed at preventing its spread.

In the Western Balkans, specific research has been conducted on hate speech, propaganda and disinformation in the Albanian media. In addition to examining vulnerability to misinformation, it is important to consider factors that promote resilience to it. Basic vulnerability and community resilience factors, as well as key practices, must be understood to build resistance to disinformation. Relatedly, research on the relationship between social cohesion and disaster recovery has shown the importance of cohesive communities in building resilience to adverse events. Measuring individuals' susceptibility to misinformation and predicting its occurrence is essential to developing effective interventions. Researchers have developed instruments that measure a person's susceptibility to misinformation and its predictions. Overall, recognizing the need for empirical research on misinformation and developing interventions that promote resilience to it is critical to addressing this growing societal problem.

Media and democracy play a crucial role in shaping the resilience to misinformation, as both are interconnected and have a significant impact on the way information is disseminated, consumed, and perceived.

1. Free and independent media: A healthy democracy relies on free and independent media outlets that can report on events accurately, without coercion or political pressure. When the media is allowed to function independently, it can better serve as a check against misinformation by providing reliable and verified information.

Plurality of voices: A diverse media landscape with different sources and viewpoints helps in promoting critical thinking and an informed public. In a democratic society, this diversity allows for multiple perspectives to be heard, and it enables citizens to evaluate and cross-verify information, reducing the potential of falling for misinformation.

Informed citizenry: Democracy thrives on an informed and engaged population who can critically analyze the information provided by media to make informed decisions. Promoting media literacy and educating citizens on how to evaluate sources of information is essential for building resilience to misinformation in a democratic society.

Transparency and accountability: A robust democracy demands transparency and accountability from both media organizations and public institutions. This openness helps identify and correct misinformation, encouraging trust and faith among the public in the veracity of information provided.

Civil society engagement: Active civil society organizations can play a significant role in countering misinformation. They can monitor and fact-check information, holding media organizations and public institutions accountable, ensuring that the spread of misinformation is challenged.

Democratic norms and legal frameworks: Upholding democratic norms and strong legal frameworks help protect media freedom, freedom of expression, and access to information. In turn, these factors contribute to creating an environment that discourages misinformation from taking root.

Collaboration and dialogue between stakeholders: Democracy fosters collaboration and dialogue between various stakeholders, including media, civil society, government, tech companies, and citizens. This environment helps to identify and address different information challenges collectively and efficiently, ensuring a more resilient response to misinformation.

By fostering a democratic environment that upholds media freedom, pluralism, transparency, and accountability, societies can improve resilience to misinformation. On the other hand, curtailment of democratic values, suppression of media freedom, or manipulation of public discourse can exacerbate the spread of misinformation, weaken societal resilience, and potentially threaten the stability of democracies.

Resilience to misinformation in Albania can be strengthened by promoting accurate information, increasing media literacy, investing in independent journalism, and encouraging government transparency. However, as in all countries, it is important to recognize that misinformation is a complex issue that requires continuous efforts to combat.

Strengthen media literacy education: Education initiatives that address media literacy can help individuals to develop critical thinking skills and differentiate between accurate and false information. It is important to integrate media literacy as a subject into school curriculums and to promote awareness campaigns on identifying misinformation.

Empower independent journalism: Ensuring the independence and quality of journalism is crucial to combating misinformation. By investing in professional media organizations, providing training for journalists, and supporting an environment that enables freedom of expression, it is possible to promote accurate information and discourage misinformation.

Encourage government transparency and accountability: Governments play an important role in ensuring that accurate information is being disseminated to the public. By making efforts to be more transparent and accountable, governments can help to build trust with citizens and decrease the spread of misinformation.

Collaborate with tech companies and social media platforms: In the digital era, much of the misinformation spreads through social media. Collaborating with tech companies and social media platforms to track and remove false information and to promote accurate content can be an effective way to tackle misinformation.

Build public awareness campaigns about the dangers of misinformation: In both urban and rural areas, public awareness campaigns can be held to educate citizens on recognizing and combatting misinformation. This can involve partnerships between governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, media organizations, and community groups.

Enhance fact-checking initiatives: Encouraging and supporting the development of fact-checking networks can help identify and correct false information more quickly. This can include training more professionals in fact-checking techniques and working with digital platforms to tackle misinformation in real-time.

Foster a culture of critical thinking: Encouraging critical thinking and skepticism while consuming media content is essential in building resilience to misinformation. This can be achieved by promoting open discussions and debates on various topics and engaging citizens in civic engagement exercises.

In conclusion, while misinformation persists in Albania and elsewhere, the efforts put into strengthening resilience to misinformation can contribute significantly to improving the information landscape and thus benefiting the country as a whole.

CHAPTER 2

FAKE NEWS

Fake news, a term that can mean many different things, has become a concern among media professionals. It can refer to satire, deception, propaganda, lies, and politically motivated half-truths. The media landscape has changed significantly in recent years, with clickbait and sensationalist content replacing professional journalism. Social media has become a powerful tool for political engagement and expression, allowing political actors to shape public opinion and control the flow of information. New ways of receiving, reacting to, and sharing news have made the media landscape difficult to fact-check.

Consumers' online information-seeking habits have changed, making the impact of misinformation dependent on news consumption habits and confirmation bias. Fake news spreads through various media channels including social media, websites, television, radio, and print media.

Fake news can take many forms, such as:

Deception and misinformation: Deliberate dissemination of false or misleading information, including conspiracy theories, urban legends, or other lies intended to deceive the public.

Propaganda: Information, often biased or misleading, used to promote or discredit a particular political cause, ideology, or individual.

Satire and Parody: While satire and parody are legitimate forms of humorous expression that often involve exaggeration or imitation, they can be mistaken for real news if taken out of context or not recognized as humor.

Clickbait: Sensational or misleading headlines and content that encourage users to click on links, drive traffic and enable advertising revenue for publishers or websites.

Deepfake and manipulated content: The use of advanced technology to create authentic yet fake audio, images or video, usually to deceive or manipulate public perception.

The spread of fake news can have serious consequences, as it can manipulate public opinion, promote distrust in institutions and the media, fuel social and political divisions, and lead to violence or unrest. Tackling fake news requires a combination of efforts, including increasing media and digital literacy, supporting independent journalism, ensuring transparency and accountability, and enhancing cooperation between stakeholders such as governments, media, tech companies and citizens.

Misinformation affects democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It can be classified into three types: misinformation, false information and information based on truth (Derakhshan and Wardle, 2017). Misinformation is intentionally created to harm people, social groups, organizations, or countries, while disinformation is intentionally harmless misinformation. Disinformation campaigns can influence public opinion, but not all countries are immune to them. Factors contributing to disinformation campaigns include human psychology and the influence of irrational cause.

Post-conflict countries, especially polarized societies, countries with a history of ethnic and religious divisions and differences, unregulated or weak media systems, low trust in the media, and a large number of online and social media users stop democratic society. As a threat, it is an environment conducive to the growth and development of disinformation campaigns. Humphrecht et al. (2020) developed a societal framework that is more resistant to misinformation by dividing it into three main domains using measurable indicators for cross-country comparative analysis of factors:

-Factors Limiting Resilience in the Political Environment

-Factors Limiting Resilience in the Media Environment

-Factors Limiting Resilience in the Economic Environment

Clusters are based on media systems, with northern and western European countries having democratic-corporate and liberal systems, southern European countries with polarized-pluralist systems, and the United States as an exception. (Humprecht, Esser, & Van Aelst, 2020).

Fake news is defined by Paskin (2018: 254) as "particular news articles that originate in mainstream media (online or offline) or social media and are not satirical, but are presented as facts". A pandemic such as COVID-19 illustrates the importance of combating fake news. In addition to using digital fake news detection tools, social networks are educating the public about spotting fake news.

In addition to placing potential fake news articles lower in the news feed, Facebook offers tips on how to identify fake news (Sparks and Frishberg 2020), as well as using machine learning algorithms to identify false or sensational claims made in alternative cure advertisements. Twitter provides credible information when users search for information on the virus, and Instagram redirects users searching for information to a message that contains credible information (Marr 2020).

There are a number of approaches available to detect fake news, which makes these measures possible. A machine-learning platform, for example, uses fake news from the biggest media outlets to refine its algorithms for detecting fake news (Macaulay 2018). Metadata can be used to detect fake news, such as by comparing the release time, the timelines for spreading the article, and where the story spread (Macaulay 2018).

Social bots target super-users to spread misinformation and manipulate humans into sharing fake news articles. (Shao et al. 2018).

Clickbait promotes fake news by attracting user attention through sensational headlines, directing them to ads and increasing revenue by increasing clicks. (Chen et al. 2015a).

Certainly, tools for detecting fake news have been developed. For example, a tool has been developed to detect fake news on social media by examining lexical choices in headlines and other intense language structures (Chen et al. 2015b). Another tool designed to detect

fake news on Twitter includes a Twitter Crawler component that collects and stores tweets in a database (Atodiresei et al. 2018). When a Twitter user wants to check the accuracy of the news they found, they can copy a link into this app, which will then process the link for fake news detection. This procedure is based on an algorithm known as the NER (Named Entity Recognition) (Atodiresei et al. 2018).

For fake news detection, the following approaches are proposed: (1) language approach, (2) topic-agnostic approach, (3) machine learning approach, (4) knowledge-based approach, and (5) hybrid approach.

Approach to Language

The method focuses on linguistics to detect fake news using humans or software programs. It considers all words, letters and paragraph structure with emphasis on grammar and syntax. Three main methods contribute to this approach: Bag of Words (BOW), which treats each word as a separate entity, n-grams, and individual word frequencies to detect misinformation. However, this model is less practical because it does not take into account the context and position of words.

Topic-Agnostic Approach

This category approaches detecting fake news by ignoring article content in favor of topic-agnostic features. This method identifies fake news using linguistic features and web marking capabilities (Castelo et al. 2019). Topic-agnostic features include: 1) multiple ads, 2) longer headlines with catchy phrases, and 3) different text patterns to elicit an emotional response from key messages. 4) the availability of the author's name (Castelo et al. 2019; Horne and Adali 2017).

Machine Learning Approach

Fake news detection algorithms are developed using various databases, which can be refined by computer scientists to develop new approaches. One such database is created by crowdsourcing services, where six categories of legitimate information are collected. Workers are then tasked with creating mock versions of the news. The fake news detection framework is a machine learning technique that encodes signals from obscure articles, allowing users to easily identify fake news. The framework targets four key areas: tweet metadata, tweet source, date and location, and where and when the tweet was tweeted.

Rumors are collected to create a database using the Twitter Streaming API. Twitter Explorer, a machine learning method, collects and stores tweets in a database, allowing users to compare different tweets. This approach helps fight fake tweets on Twitter and helps prevent the spread of misinformation through fake accounts, likes and comments.

Knowledge Based Approach

New research suggests combining machine learning and knowledge engineering to detect fake news on social media. Fake news spreads rapidly, making fact-checking methods challenging thanks to microblogging platforms like Twitter. (Kazvinian et al. 2011). A knowledge-based approach uses external sources to verify the authenticity of fake news and identify it before publication. There are three main types: expert-oriented, computational-oriented, and collective fact-finding. (Ahmed et al. 2019).

Fact checking by experts. Professional-oriented fact-checking requires careful analysis and review of data and documents (Ahmed et al. 2019). In expert-oriented fact-checking, experts manually assess the accuracy of information by researching specific claims, assigning credibility to a particular element by comparing the accuracy of the text with previously verified ones. (Vlaços and Riedel 2014). Computational oriented fact checking. The goal of computationally oriented fact-checking is to provide automated fact-checking that can determine whether news is true or false (Ahmed et al. 2019). Examples of computationally oriented fact checking are knowledge graphs and open web resources that use functional references to help distinguish between real and fake news (Ahmed et al. 2019). The recently developed ClaimBuster tool is an example of how fact-checkers can automatically identify fake news (Hasan et al. 2017).

This tool uses machine learning techniques combined with natural language processing and a large number of database queries. It analyzes content to identify "facts" in social media, conversations, and presentations, compares it to a repository of verified facts, and delivers it to the reader (Hasan et al. 2017).

Dedicated to community service. Crowdsourcing allows a group of people to make collective decisions by verifying the accuracy of information (Pennycook and Rand 2019). The accuracy of reporting depends entirely on the wisdom of the crowd (Ahmed et al. 2019). Kiskit is an example of a crowdsourcing platform that allows a group of people to rate different parts of a news article (Hasan et al. 2017). After evaluating one piece, the

crowd moves to another until the full news article is evaluated and its accuracy is determined by the wisdom of the crowd (Hasan et al. 2017).

Hybrid Approach

The first element of a fake news article is the text of the article, the second element is the response to the article, and the third element is the source used to promote the news article (Ruchansky et al. 2017). A recent study proposed a hybrid model that combines human and machine learning to help identify fake news on social media (Okoro et al. 2018). If we guess, they have only a 4% chance of detecting fake news and can only detect fake news 54% of the time (Okoro et al. 2018).

This percentage has been shown to increase using the hybrid model (Okoro et al. 2018). Hybrid models combine social media innovation with machine learning and network approaches to be effective (Okoro et al. 2018). The purpose of this model is to determine the false probability of a message (Okoro et al. 2018). Another hybrid model, CSI (capture, scoring, integration) has been developed and used in three main elements: (1) capture - Recurrent Neural Network (RNN), (2) extract representative articles using scores and representation vectors. generate and (3) combine capture results and scores into vectors used for classification (Ruchansky et al. 2017).

The spread of misinformation on social media, including fake news and hyper-partisan content, has become a significant concern. Academic research and societal concern are focused on limiting online misinformation. Technology companies like Facebook and Twitter are using professional fact-checkers to identify and label false claims, which has gained attention in academia.

Fact-checking can reduce the spread and impact of misinformation by alerting users to inaccuracies, reducing misconceptions, and influencing user exposure to specific content. However, it faces challenges in scalability and trust, as it is time-consuming and cannot handle the huge amount of content posted daily on social media. This lack of coverage reduces the impact of reforms and increases the spread of misinformation due to the "implicit truth effect", where people may assume that a lack of warning indicates verification.

Besides, even when fact-checking warnings are applied successfully to misinformation, their impact may be diminished by a lack of trust. According to a Poynter poll, 70% of Republicans and 50% of all Americans believe fact-checkers are biased and distrust fact-checking corrections.

Have a look into a potential solution to both of these issues: using the "wisdom of crowds" to make fact-checking scalable and immune to accusations of bias. In contrast to professional fact-checkers, who are in short supply, it is simple (and cheap) to recruit large numbers of laypeople to rate headlines, allowing for scalability.

It is simple to create politically balanced layperson ratings by recruiting laypeople from across the political spectrum. But would such layperson ratings provide useful information about the accuracy of the content being rated? Professional fact-checkers have extensive training and experience that allows them to assess the quality of information.

Professional fact-checkers are generally to be trusted more when it comes to fact-checking news. These individuals have special skills, training, and experience in evaluating information, verifying sources, and determining the accuracy of claims. They are also more likely to adhere to strict standards and methods in their work, making their fact-checking efforts as impartial and reliable as possible.

While the public can play a role in identifying false or misleading information, those without appropriate training and expertise may not be as effective in assessing the credibility of this information. In many cases, the average person may be influenced by personal biases, emotions, or misinformation circulating in their own social or ideological circles.

That said, it's important to note that not all professional fact-checkers are created equal. Trustworthiness can vary depending on factors such as the organization they work for, their funding, and their reputation for editorial independence and accuracy and fairness. It is important to critically evaluate the work of fact-checkers and consider these factors before accepting their conclusions.

While professional fact-checkers are generally more reliable when it comes to fact-checking news, navigating the complex and ever-evolving information landscape requires individuals to develop their own media literacy and critical thinking skills. Be aware that even a professional fact-checker is not infallible, and it is important to use one's own judgment and evaluation to determine the veracity of any information.

But should the masses get involved in the process of fact-checking?

People can and should engage in the fact-checking process as long as they approach it responsibly and with a commitment to accuracy. A collective effort can be beneficial, as it can help identify false or misleading information more quickly and effectively than relying solely on professional fact-checkers. Citizen involvement in fact-checking can foster a more informed society and increase public awareness of the importance of truth and accuracy in the media. Here are some ways in which the public can effectively contribute to fact-finding:

1. **Media Literacy:** Educate yourself on how to identify reliable sources of information, identify biases, and critically evaluate news content. Organizations and experts can develop and promote media literacy programs, resources, and tools to help people do this.
2. **Responsible sharing:** Before sharing news, articles or claims on social media, individuals should verify facts with independent and reputable sources to ensure they are not spreading false information.
3. **Participate in online communities:** Join online platforms dedicated to debunking fake news and misinformation, where people can contribute to discussions, share accurate information, and learn from others.
4. **Collaborate with fact-checking organizations:** Some organizations may welcome citizen involvement in the form of tip-offs, feedback, or data analysis and volunteer fact-checking efforts.
5. **Hold media and public figures accountable:** Demand accuracy and transparency from news outlets and report inaccuracies or biases when encountered. Encourage respectful

discussions with friends, family, and colleagues about the credibility of news and challenge false claims when they arise.

Promoting a sense of collective responsibility for the accuracy and reliability of information in the public sector is key. This can create a stronger and more proactive approach to combating fake news and disinformation, ensuring that people have access to accurate and trustworthy information.

Resilience to misinformation in Albania

In Albania, resilience towards misinformation is becoming increasingly important. Misinformation can spread rapidly through social media and other online platforms, leading to confusion, fear, and even harm. However, those who are resilient to misinformation are able to critically evaluate the information they receive and make informed decisions. They recognize that not all sources of information are trustworthy and are willing to take the time to fact-check and verify information before accepting it as true. By promoting resilience towards misinformation, Albanians can better protect themselves and their communities from the negative effects of false information. This can be done through education, media literacy, and promoting critical thinking skills.

Crowd wisdom is a powerful tool for identifying misinformation on social media. While the ratings of individual laypeople can be noisy and ineffective, aggregating their responses can lead to very accurate judgments of the crowd. Crowd ratings of the credibility of news publishers are highly correlated with professional fact-checker ratings. However, these ratings may be ineffective in combating online misinformation due to the vast quantity of content and distrust of news publishers. Crowdsourcing can help identify misinformation on the ground by judging only the headline and lead of an article, allowing a small, politically balanced group of laypeople to match the performance of fact-checkers researching the entire article.

Using a consistent level of collective accuracy as a feature in news listings can help increase the scale of fact-checking on social media. However, effectiveness depends on the method of correction and the possibility of reversing familiarity. Disinformation exposure

is a proactive approach to countering fake news, and crowdsourcing introduces users to the concept of accuracy, making them more selective in sharing content.

The promise of crowdfunding does not mean that professional auditors are no longer needed. Instead, crowdsourcing can be part of a disinformation detection system that includes machine learning, employee ratings, and expert opinion.

Additionally, the level of disagreement between checkers raises concerns about systems that support biased decisions by the fact of a single checker or, as is often the case, using an evaluation check as "ground truth" in supervised machine learning models.

We believe that including crowd-sourced assessments will help overcome the shortcomings of other methods: Using crowd-sourced assessments as training inputs can enable AI to adapt faster, as well as add and extend professional fact-checking.

Allowing a large number of articles to be rated and flagged will immediately increase the effectiveness of fact-checking while reducing the likelihood that unflagged false claims will be more credible due to the lack of warnings.

First, to contribute to the ongoing debate regarding the role of reasoning in susceptibility to misinformation. Some have argued that people engage in "identity protective cognition" such that more reasoning leads to greater polarization rather than greater accuracy.

Findings of greater cognitive reflection and political knowledge is associated with higher fact-checker agreement support the "classical reasoning" account whereby reasoning leads to more accurate judgments.

CHAPTER 3

MEDIA SYSTEM IN ALBANIA

The Albanian media follows its root back to the mid-19th century within the national revival development of its diaspora communities and was set up basically to promote the Albanian personality and patriotism until the country's announcement of independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912. The primary Albanian newspaper "L'Albanese d'Italia" was distributed from February to June 1948 in Naples by the Albanian artist Jeronim De Rada, both in Italian and in 'Arberesh' - the Albanian language spoken by the diaspora that migrated to Southern Italy during the 15th century.

The primary Albanian dialect daily papers were distributed in Greece; "Pellazgu" distributed in Lamia in 1960, and "I foni tis Alvanias – Zëri i Shqipërisë", distributed in Athens in 1879. A few other Albanian dialect distributions like 'Flamuri i Arbërit', in Italy, 'Drita' or afterward on 'Dituria' distributed in Istanbul, 'Arberi i Ri' in Palermo, 'Shqiptari' in Bucharest, 'Albania' in Brussels, 'Kombi" and 'Dielli' within the USA, 'Drita' in Sofia, were propelled from 1883 to 1909.

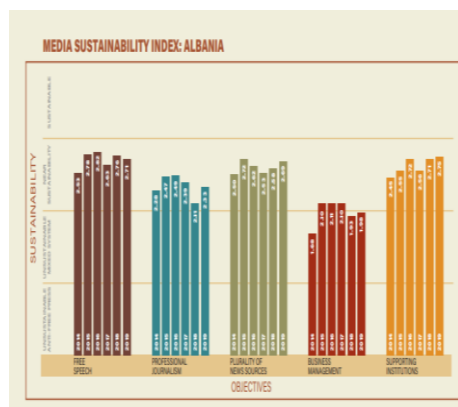
After the Youthful Turkish Revolution and the starting of the moment protected time of the Ottoman Empire, Albanian dialect press was permitted inside the borders of the empire and a number of distributions opened within the cities of Shkodra, Korca, Elbasan, Ioannina, Thessaloniki and others.

After the fall of the communist regime, the Albanian media faced a change in role due to various financial, political and social circumstances. During communist rule, Albania had state/party media controlled by the Communist Party and associated organizations.

However, after the fall of the regime, modern laws replaced the restrictive laws, leading to the disappearance of communist media outlets and the ushering in of a disused era of writers. Researchers identified two stages of Albanian media development: politically closed media, clashes between media and government, and open confrontation between writers and politicians and increasing media control in society. The second stage was the clientelist media, in which there was a natural interdependence between the media, legal issues and commerce.

The media environment in Albania has changed rapidly, with an increasing number of television stations, newspapers and online media. However, research studies have revealed a lack of accurate data on media landscape actors.

Albania's media landscape is facing financial and political pressures, as well as transparency, labor relations, ethical concerns and quality issues. Media growth over the past two decades has not been linear, but reflects a dynamic and thriving media scene. The Albanian press is weak, fragmented and constantly changing. More than 100 press outlets are evaluated, including influential print outlets such as Panorama, Shkip, Shekulli and Gazeta Shqiptare. However, the media advertising passage remains free, open and equal. Distribution of print media remains challenging, as it is dispersed in major cities and does not reach rural areas. (IREX Report 2021)



Basing on this report, Albania is considered or classified as a country near sustainability, Nation has advanced in meeting multiple targets, with lawful standards, polished skill, and the business environment strong of autonomous media. Advances have survived changes in government and have been codified in law and practice. Be that as it may, more time may be required to ensure

that alter is persevering which expanded professionalism and the media trade environment are feasible.

The levels of readership in Albania, as is the drift in other nations, are generally low due to inadequate print dispersion framework, a frail membership framework, high prices, and competition from audio-visual media and more as of late from online media

stages. Agreeing to Freedom House there's a drift of decrease in independent media ratings within the recent years. In this way illustrating that private and political interface proceed to rule the media, and this trend is even more widespread, and affects the media system and the fact that the level of democracy in Albania, in the last 3 years is declining, from 48/100 in 2019, to 45.8 in 2022, so that every sector is affected including media freedom. (Freedom House 2019-2022 reports).

The development of online media in Albania is evident in the growth of web access, especially in urban areas, and the use of ICT such as tablets and smartphones. Online media in Albania includes modern media characteristics such as virtuality, hypertextuality, multi-media, interactivity and digitality. Most media outlets have their own websites, some of which have mobile-friendly applications. The website serves not only as a web platform for print newspapers or audio-visual broadcasters but also as a live platform for viewers to participate in comments on news articles and reports.

The most prominent websites of standard media, such as Top Channel, Shekulli, Panorama, MAPO and Ora News, include not only texts and photographs, but also merged media formats such as video and sound, interactive media, blogs and galleries. A Participatory Perspective. However, there are other online media segments such as news, entertainment, sports, culture and lifestyle sites.

A positive aspect of online media in Albania is the diverse quality of data and material provided and created by the public, allowing democratization through participatory, open and multi-way communication spaces. However, concerns about data quality and impact remain, as the small sample size inhibits the financial sustainability of the media, leading to questions about media ownership and transparency.

The Albanian media scene is also characterized by political parity, which is shaped by media substance and bias, financing and promotion, and the career paths of journalists, their political affiliations.

Divisions and polarization can be traced within the forms of news determination, surrounding, tone of scope, and selection of sources of data. The political motivation prevails over benchmarks of media polished skill in news scope and themes of open

intrigued, moreover driving to self-censorship. Albanian media exhibit outside pluralism. There's a wide extend of media outlets reflecting distinctive points of view and interests. However, scope and get to shifts from one media to another and it is difficult to recognize highlights of internal media pluralism.

In addition, media subsidizing and advertising is additionally subordinate to an expansive degree on the media relations with the government and effective political performing artists. What is more, a progressively popular trend in Albania is the move of media experts from news coverage towards governmental positions.

This advantageous interrelation between media, legislative issues and businesses is additionally reflected in delays and halts in media enactment or what is characterized as coasting laws. The Albanian Structure, which was presented in 1998, guarantees opportunity of expression, but the media scene is ineffectively directed. Audio-visual media enactment has undergone a few changes within the final decade.

Receiving European benchmarks on media enactment and approach stay driving strengths in spite of the issues in media improvement within the nation.

Separated from formal news coverage instruction, media polished skill in Albania has not profited from other performing actors such as the respectful society or media proficient organizations, which have been frail and indeed instrumentalized by political or financial interests. Exceptionally few media have a code of morals in hone and self-regulatory components are to a great extent new to media administration and staff. The need of self-regulatory components echoes the need of open intrigued within the media. In expansion, the media proficient affiliations and exchange unions that have been as of late established have however to be solidified and to serve as on-screen characters within the media scene.

Media, corruption, and democracy are interconnected in multiple ways, influencing one another and shaping the health and functioning of a democratic society. The correlations among these elements are:

1. The role of media in democracy: A free, independent, and pluralistic media is a cornerstone of a healthy democracy. The media serves as a watchdog, monitoring the activities of government institutions and public servants, holding them accountable and exposing abuses of power and corruption. Additionally, the media serves as an information platform that educates citizens about social, economic, and political issues, which is essential for informed decision-making and democratic participation.

2. Media and corruption: When the media is effective in its watchdog role and investigative journalism, it can uncover and report instances of corruption, thus prompting public outrage, legal actions, and policy reforms. In this sense, a strong and free media can contribute to reducing corruption and improving governance.

However, if the media is captured by corrupt forces or subject to political influence, it may turn a blind eye to corruption, prioritize non-relevant issues, or even disseminate false or misleading information. This can lead to an uninformed public, weakened accountability mechanisms, and increased corruption levels.

3. Corruption and democracy: Corruption undermines democratic values and principles by eroding citizens' trust in government institutions and political processes. When political or administrative corruption is widespread, there is a risk of democracy becoming dysfunctional, with citizens becoming disenchanted and disengaged from political participation. This often results in voter apathy, which may lead to a vicious cycle of poor governance and further corruption.

4. The interconnected nature of media, corruption, and democracy: The relationship between these three elements is complex, with each one affecting the other in different ways. A free, independent, and vibrant media contributes to a healthy democracy by holding powerful actors accountable and exposing corruption. Conversely, a corrupted or controlled media can weaken democracy by fostering misinformation, tolerating corruption, and eroding public trust. Ultimately, the level of corruption in a society impacts the strength of its democratic institutions, which, in turn, can influence the effectiveness and credibility of its media.

The interplay between media, corruption, and democracy is multifaceted. A free and independent media is essential for a thriving democracy, and it can play a vital role in the fight against corruption. However, corruption can also tarnish the media and, in turn, weaken democratic processes and institutions.

The relationship between the media and democracy has become an important aspect of modern society. The media, including newspapers, television, radio and the Internet, play an important role in disseminating political news and shaping public opinion. As countries gain more democratic governance, the importance of the media in promoting information and political participation in decision-making processes increases. The concept of advertising has changed a lot over the years. In the past, communities were small and citizens made decisions and made decisions through face-to-face meetings or text messages. As the population grows, participation in democracy needs to be moderated, resulting in mass media coverage in newspapers, followed by radio, television, and the Internet.

The media has many roles in a democracy. It acts as an overseer, supervising the operation of the state against excessive exposure, corruption, and holding those in power accountable. This program earned the press the name "The Fourth Force" and added checks and balances to the third branch of government. In addition, the media forces the voters to make a choice by providing the necessary information for the discussion. The impact of denial of freedom, human rights and the rule of law is an ongoing study by experts and researchers in many fields. Sometimes, misinformation and disinformation are used interchangeably. Distinguishing these two words is the starting point for analyzing the missionary's thoughts.

According to Woolley and Josef (2020), disinformation is the deliberate use of controversial language to influence politics, encourage division, or incite official hatred. With this in mind, we cannot say that all countries are exempt from disinformation cause misinformation is part of human psychology. However, some countries are more at risk than others. " The failure of the media to provide information that promotes awareness of public participation affects the possibility of democracy. Restrictions on diversity and media limit voters' ability to be informed and increase the likelihood of bad politicians being elected (Voltmer, 2013). According to a recent analysis, the state of media freedom in the Western Balkans does not appear to have resulted from pressure on journalists,

government control of property, media and media content (Jankulovska, 2020). The Western Balkan countries have harmonized their laws and regulations on freedom of the press, mass media and freedom of expression as much as possible with European standards, which are necessary for joining the EU. (BeAGLE, 2017), but they still have difficulties in implementing and responding to them. Allegations of violations of these rights. It will complicate the policy of transition to knowledge production and consumption. The media plays an important role in democracy. The newspaper brings information in different colors from all over the world. The media informs the citizens of a country about the social, economic and political events taking place in the country. The media should present unbiased information without changing the facts, but with some analysis. For this reason, the media has been called the fourth pillar of freedom. Access to information is critical to the health of democracy for at least two reasons. The first is to ensure that the public is responsible, informed and committed, rather than making false statements. Second, the document ensures that the calling and signing of the representative oath meets the needs of the voters. In some societies, the antagonism between the media and government is an important and healthy part of the success of democracy. The tension and burden relationship is necessary in disputes or conflicts that arise later and affect the relationship, and the responsibility to publish information is important for communication between the state and many aspects of civil society. To foster democratic change, media development goals often involve turning the media away from government or private interests that directly or indirectly control it. If the media does not play a significant role in this administration, the purpose of promoting media should be to strengthen the department to improve and support the development of certain media and voices that you voluntarily believe in and create. Give citizens access to the information they need to make informed decisions, participate in the community, support economic freedom in the media sector, use their independent, plural and multidimensional voice, and serve the public interest. Public interest is defined as multiple voices, in which both parties have many ways to express different views and voices. What is the role of the media in promoting governance, general management and human development? A long line of liberal philosophers, from Milton to Locke and Madison to the late John Stuart, have argued that freedom and self-government are essential to freedom in the whole country as it facilitates the path of thinking, thinking, and heart. Speak openly, strengthen government response and accountability to all citizens, and provide different venues and channels of political education for different groups and interests. Ensuring ease of expression and information is

an important human right recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948, the European Human Rights Tradition, the American Human Rights Tradition and the African Convention on Human Rights. people's rights.

It is thought that the relationship between the development of freedom of the press and the process of democracy is reciprocal. The main claim is that the change in the control regime, starting with the organization, opened the state control over the media to private property, and that the censorship and state control expanded and reduced the respect for information. With access to more radio and television, and the advent of modern innovations such as the internet and mobile phones, Post-Open Mind offered a broad range of products and more useful content. Many observers, driven by this solution, say that free advertising is not fair to democracy, that this is the biggest issue, but that the process is important for the same people to move forward with the final demand. A better media is therefore widely respected, especially one that promotes democracy and good governance as well as the advancement of people. These requests were heard by leading commentators, donors and the international community. But what is the actual evidence to support these arguments? While there is evidence of media-centered decision-making in some countries and regions, it is surprising that most comparative studies have explored the real connections in this regard. Most current research also focuses on media studies, such as media readership or television ratings, rather than news. Democracy study, which in the past has shown stigma to the importance of constitutionalism and the beauty of democracy, has often emphasized the sacred process of action by calculating the influence of elections and commissions, government or a state, and leaders or presidents. Ignore the site analysis of the news media and compare the evidence that is part of the Democratization process. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the concept of early modernization gained an important and clear relationship between communication, business development and the democratization process in modern communication. Urbanization and increased energy have given access to modern developments such as the telephone, newspaper, radio and television, all established for public education for political gain. In a democracy, everyone has the right to express their own results. Everyone has the right to object to laws and remedies from the government. In practice, however, the media has become a tool that can spread lies and distort the truth. People no longer know what is right and what is wrong. The government demonizes the true content of the news and focuses on the negative. In some countries, the media have lost their respect since the collaboration. Media companies are incorporating,

innovating and creating frameworks for anticipated profits. A new aspect of journalistic responsibility is information verification. Its main purpose is to provide accurate, unbiased analysis to correct public misunderstandings and increase public understanding of complex issues. Because fact-checking often includes context and background information, the public can make informed decisions based on available information. Democracy can have a huge impact on a country's advertising.

In a democratic society, the media must play an important role in providing accurate information to the public, encouraging public debate and holding people accountable. Promoting free media is one of the most important aspects of media freedom. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are generally safer in a democracy as they allow journalists and media outlets to report on issues of public interest without fear of censorship or opposition. The media can therefore act as watchdogs, monitoring the actions of government and other powerful institutions, and providing information to the public to make informed decisions. Media ownership is also important in a democratic society. Consolidation of ownership of the media in the hands of a few elites or organizations causes the media to represent a narrow spectrum of views and limits the diversity of views and viewpoints that seek to be public. This is why democracies aim for diversity in the media to ensure that most voices and viewpoints are represented. Another effect of media freedom is the creation of independent regulatory bodies. Independent regulators overseeing the media industry and ensuring that the media work fairly and impartially is commonplace in democratic societies. These groups can also help increase social media and social media awareness.

In general, democracy can benefit the media by providing media freedom, diversity in media opinion, and independent regulators. These factors help ensure that the media are an important tool for promoting openness, accountability and public discourse in democratic societies. The media can have a huge impact on the freedom of any country, including Albania. There are ongoing concerns about the state of media freedom and the potential for protest and politics in Albania. In recent years, allegations of media ownership, political interference in media organizations, physical attacks and threats against journalists have come to the fore. These issues have raised concerns about the media's ability to monitor those in power and provide accurate and impartial information to the public. The lack of media diversity in Albania is also a problem, as many media outlets are linked to

politicians or business circles. This can limit the range of public opinion and information, which hinders effective independent decision making.

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However, it is worth noting that there have been some positive developments in recent years, including the creation of a new media management system and the introduction of laws to increase transparency and protect journalists. There is also an independent media in Albania that tries to provide balanced and accurate reporting.

Overall, the relationship between the media and democracy in Albania is complex and evolving.

It is important that the media remain free and independent and provide accurate and diverse information to promote health and freedom.

Media can be used for:

Public Education: The media is crucial in educating the general public about political events, decisions, and policies. Citizens need this information in order to understand their alternatives, express their opinions, and hold elected officials accountable during elections.

Promote conversation: The media can act as a forum for debate and discussion on a range of issues, allowing people to air their views and promoting the sharing of ideas. Independent thinking of this nature is crucial for the formation of public opinion.

Investigative reporting: By exposing government officials' corruption, abuse of authority, and other unethical behavior, the media can serve as a watchdog. In a democracy, this promotes accountability and transparency.

Multiple perspectives are represented: A diverse region can boost the representation of various ethnicities, political views, and cultural traditions, offer voice to vulnerable groups, and promote engagement.

But despite all the positive effects media has on democracy, we should take into account the fact that media influences also in a negative way like:

Media concentration and ownership: Concentration of media ownership can lead to a lack of diversity of information provided, which can affect public opinion and limit the number of public comments.

2. **Excitement and infotainment:** To engage viewers and readers, some media outlets may prioritize exciting stories over mainstream media. This can lead to public denial as citizens may not have access to the information they need to participate in the democratic process.

3. **Misinformation and misleading information:** Spreading false or misleading information undermines trust in the media and independent institutions, and makes it difficult for the public to act.

4. **Echo Chambers and Filter Bubbles:** The rise of social and personal media can lead to the creation of echo chambers and filter bubbles, where people are often exposed to information that confirms the views that they believe already exist. This can lead to political polarization and loss of democratic thought.

Media can have both positive and negative effects on democracy, depending on factors such as ownership, media coverage, human use, and interaction with media content. The public, government, and media organizations must work together to reduce negative influence and make the media useful for the democratic process.

The relationship between media and democracy is a crucial aspect of modern society, and its importance cannot be overstated. The media's role in fostering informed decision-making, promoting political participation, and holding those in power accountable is vital for the functioning of a healthy democracy. To ensure that the media continues to serve the public interest and promote democratic values, it is essential to address the challenges and seize the opportunities presented by the evolving media landscape. By doing so, we can create a media system that truly supports and strengthens our democratic institutions, ensuring a brighter future for all.

CHAPTER 4

MEDIA IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

The unfolding of incorrect information is intrinsically human. Disinformation is described as misleading facts or verifiably false facts or verifiably false facts, or as mal-records but it's far considered to be part of the "facts disorder" portion of the approach of fact-checking is the mindfulness of the cognitive predispositions, natural to every people, whereas those predispositions provide help to us to discover exceptional approaches, they can purpose us to miss widespread truths, certainly whilst they may be displayed. The make use of actualities and narrating as a tool of political mobilization has been a protracted-set up implies to steer the open of an agreement.

Fact-checking media has been growing in the Balkans in recent years, as the region has seen a rise in misinformation and propaganda. Here are some key developments:

Establishment of organizations for fact-checking: FactCheck.mk in North Macedonia, Faktograf in Croatia, Istinomer in Serbia, and Raskrinkavanje in Bosnia and Herzegovina are just a few of the fact-checking groups that have been created in the Balkans. These groups attempt to validate the information and make media outlets and politicians liable for disseminating inaccurate information.

Media literacy is rising: Many groups in the Balkans are attempting to encourage media literacy and analytical thinking among the populace. These initiatives seek to educate the public on the value of fact-based news while also assisting them in recognizing and avoiding misleading information.

Support from international organizations: International organizations, including the European Union and the United Nations, have provided support and funding for fact-checking initiatives in the Balkans. This support has helped to strengthen the capacity of local organizations and improve the quality of fact-checking in the region.

Challenges: Despite these developments, fact-checking media in the Balkans still faces significant challenges. These include limited resources, political pressure, and attacks on journalists. Additionally, the proliferation of social media has made it easier for false information to spread quickly and widely, making the work of fact-checkers even more important.

The arranged effect of social media has broadened the assets of records and in this manner the development of our memories. Social media has furthermore evacuated an important channel of writers as the muse of truth-tellers. a few lawmakers and conclusion creators have seized upon this opportunity as a piece out of control. critiques may be knowledgeable by using truths, or through the planned refusal of them in case a bunch settlement compels one so.

And in recent times, social media structures display an unused and powerful tool to governments. As a result, in later a long time, reality-checking has ended up extra primary in new insurance. This is frequently reflected in the expanding numbers of fact fact-checking media.

The issue of disinformation is universally identified as difficult for the everyday running of democratic societies, economies, and political frameworks. In later a long time, 'faux news' and facilitated disinformation campaigns have had evidence of geopolitical impact. they have harrowed choices in both setup and present-day famous governments and undermined social and political team spirit in response to international demanding situations, which include the later COVID-19 enormous. it's far with those and different occurrences in intellect that the EU Union (European) identified 'the presentation of residents to huge scale disinformation' as 'a first-rate undertaking for Europe' in 2018, project a progressively craving program of hobby to counter this advancing chance given that.

The misrepresentation at the center of disinformation might also take one or numerous shapes. Gatherings of people can be deluded as to the realness of the implied truths of the problem or the source of the material, and truthful material may be taken out of place in set up to incite a specific reaction. indeed, the character of the conveyance channel itself may be a lie. In all instances, in any case, the goal is – ‘to control a goal population by using influencing its convictions, states of thoughts, or dispositions in set up to obtain conduct compliant with political dreams’.

Disinformation will be a crucial trouble throughout the Western Balkans and an increasingly more important portion of the manner wherein each residential and outside appearing artists are trying to find after political ends. The ponder generation and dispersal of ‘fake information’ – complete or midway misrepresentations disguising as journalism – has gotten to be a triumphing strategy of tough decisions, moving government method agendas, and settling rankings among commercial enterprise competitors. further, disinformation is adequately unavoidable in the vicinity that it hampers the solidification of equitable media frameworks, and on this manner of majority rule administration more extensively, in addition to increasing the demanding situations of publish-struggle determination and transitional equity.

In a few locations, this hazard is greater severe than within the Western Balkans. As a theater of geopolitical debate and sharply polarized legislative problems, characterized by means of frail management and delicate respectful social orders, the Western Balkans is an interestingly appealing target for each far-off and family acting artists searching to regulate, weaken or delegitimize the results of majority rule paperwork.

The locale in this way gives a basic task- and possibility – for the ECU to distinguish and are searching for after techniques for reestablishing arrange to ‘disordered’ communication, supporting majority rule authorities, and building soundness.

During the region, records litter reflects social and political litter and requests to identification is especially powerful – indeed whilst disconnected realities whilst legislative problems fall flat to supply cloth blessings.

Ethnic and partisan divisions in this manner offer easy grain for stimulating passions. The inescapability of debasement, as properly, makes ripe floor for disinformation. Allegations of misbehavior and conspiracy are continuously conceivable, certainly once they aren’t

authentic, and a wedge of doubt is driven between citizens and governments. absolutely, trust in the nation is incredibly low. accept as true within the authorities has not outperformed 50% of the population within the beyond for a long time wherever in the region.

Geopolitical frailty basically empowers disinformation. some governments in the region, which includes Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, work beneath confined or challenged sway. Others, one manner or another, are covered in neighborhood debate. This has compound and complex impacts on disinformation. For one thing, it allures far off acting artists into the location.

Countering disinformation in the Western Balkans has proven – because it has elsewhere round the arena – to be loaded with troubles. in the region, frequent on-screen characters counting the EU, NATO and others have worked to help the capability of governments, writers and gracious society to thrust back against disinformation.

Online disinformation is common in the Western Balkan countries and is therefore manipulative and destructive in shaping public opinion, especially during political activities such as election campaigns. The coronavirus pandemic has caused political communication during election campaigns to shift and take place primarily online. When audiences are unsure of what political decision to make and automatically demand more information to help them make that decision, the online realm is filled with fake news, fabricated information, and a pack of disinformation campaigns that serve a political or business agenda. interest group.

Online disinformation is a widespread problem that threatens even the most democratic societies. However, societies with fragile democracies or countries in transition are disproportionately affected. During elections, countries such as Kosovo, Albania and North Macedonia are also targeted by disinformation campaigns by both internal and external actors.

Greene et al. (2021) concluded, based on an analysis of two years of previous elections in the Western Balkan countries, that not only disinformation campaigns that share untruths or inaccurate information about candidates are the most significant factors undermining the integrity of the democratic electoral process, but that there are also internal and external factors that they contribute equally to:

- low level of participation;
- creation of new parties;

In this regard, the World Press Freedom Index for a country reflects the state of the media in that country in terms of media plurality, media independence, media environment and self-censorship, legislative environment, transparency, infrastructure and abuses. This year, the World Press Freedom Index 2021 ranked North Macedonia 90th out of 180 countries evaluated by the organization. Albania and Kosovo are close. Albania is ranked 83rd in the world press freedom index, while Kosovo is ranked 78th.

As misinformation affects democracy, human rights and regulation, experts study its impact on various aspects. They are often used interchangeably with misinformation, but the distinction between the terms is crucial to understanding the message. Fake statistics include false information created intentionally to harm individuals, social organizations, agencies, pass-over-facts, and factual misinformation.

FAKTOJE may be a media organization that confirms the realities through a standardized proficient technique, which has been completed for a long time by means of the reality-locating arrange in which "Faktoje" got to be an element in early 2020. Our assignment is to demonstrate the truth of guarantees, articulations and the activities of open authorities (entities that advantage from open financing) and after that inform the open the fact.

Albania

Albania has improved to +1 from the 2020 ranking, but the country faces a defamation law under discussion in the parliament, which has been criticized by media, civil society organizations, journalists' associations, international press freedom groups, the European Commission, and the Venice Commission for its general nature. The law allows the Audiovisual Regulatory Authority (AMA) to impose sanctions on news websites, encouraging self-censorship. Albanian online media is characterized by physical and verbal attacks, and authorities fail to punish the perpetrators. During the pandemic crisis, the government warned citizens to beware of the media, which they used as a pretext to sue five journalists and the media for "spreading panic" among citizens. Over 40% of reporters had their salaries cut and 47 journalists lost their jobs.

The government is hostile to journalists and media that criticize the government. "Acromax Media" deleted videos that exposed or criticized government actions during the 2020 election period, seen by independent media and journalists as an attempt by the government to limit freedom of the press and freedom of speech. However, Albanian media managed to create a platform for ethical self-regulation, which is commendable achievement.

Disinformation campaigns in Albania are more domestic in nature with political and financial goals rather than geostrategic goals. The strong consensus of the Albanian population for the EU and NATO limits the ability of external actors to undermine their relations. Commercially oriented disinformation is produced for political purposes, with high-level political or institutional figures spreading false information through their social media profiles.

During Albania's April 25 parliamentary election campaign, a voter database scandal revealed the personal information, contact details, and voting preferences of 90,000 citizens monitored by the Socialist Party's "patronazhistt." Employers in central and local government, as well as employees in institutions prohibited by law from political activity, are examples of "patronage." The Strasbourg Court of Human Rights refused to secure their offices, equipment, and telephones, citing European law. A deep-fake ad that received 203,844 views on a page with only 1,883 followers cost about \$300. The page ran political ads from December to April 24th 2018, with millions of viewers financed by "dark money" of unknown origin, similar to this deep-fake (Likmeta, 2021). In general, the 2021 election campaign was considered difficult by the Reporting Diversity Network 2.0, with incidents of hate speech including abusive, inflammatory, offensive and sexist language.

The media scene in Albania is vibrant, but complex. The state of affairs with professionalism and ethics is frequently described negatively, pointing at a scarcity of independence, overdependence on politics, loss of capacity, violations of privateness, and distinct misdoings.

The ones criticisms regularly pervade non-public debate, generally neglecting to give an explanation for and look at reasons that result in professional

issues, collectively with financial issues, the situation in hard work circle of relative members and investment in human sources, and undue interference from multiple actors. In modern-day years, personal communication narratives in the c in opposition to the media have tended to intensify, main to accelerated private criticism on this respect.

Although the media paid attention to these stories, they were merely repeating what had already been said many times, rather than reporting carefully by critically reflecting on hate speech narratives (Haysa, 2021). It is noteworthy that there are 2.00 million Internet users in Albania, with 55.6 percent using social media on a daily basis (Dataportal, 2021).

There are various fact-checking websites and media outlets in Albania that are committed to ensuring the accuracy of news and information. Here are some such examples:

1. Faktoje.al: This is a fact-checking website dedicated to ensuring the accuracy of Albanian news and information. A team of journalists and researchers evaluate allegations made by politicians, media and other sources for the website.
2. Crypometer: This is another Albanian fact-checking site. The website is run by a team of seasoned journalists who research statements from politicians, the media and other sources. They assign a scale from "true" to "false" to the claims.
3. Exit.al: This is an Albanian independent media platform dedicated to providing truthful and reliable news and information. Politics, economics and culture are among the themes covered on the website.
4. Balkan Insight: This is a news website that focuses on Albania and the Balkan region. The website provides in-depth analysis and reporting on various topics including politics, society and culture.

Kosovo

Kosovo has experienced a decline in media freedom and transparency, ranking 78th in the World Press Freedom Index. The coronavirus crisis has intensified the hostile environment, causing journalists and media to face physical and verbal attacks, cyber-

attacks, pressure for self-censorship and lack of media transparency. The country's system is classified as transitional or hybrid, and party officials have been reported using threatening language on social media and inciting physical violence.

Kosovo faces a significant risk of foreign smear campaigns with geopolitical interests, which aim to delegitimize Kosovo's status, weaken relations with Europe, and destabilize its administration. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) monitored election campaigning on online news portals and social media from January 24 to February 13, 2021, showing that online portals and social media accounts contributed to divisive language during the election campaign. Memes, make-up stories and sexism were widely circulated, using inflammatory language to attack female candidates regarding their personal lives and physical appearance. Bot activities in Serbia and Russian-backed media created false and fabricated narratives about Kosovo politicians that Kosovo media did not recognize as trafficked information brought across the border.

An example of deliberately manipulated stories or messages is a post made on October 6, 2020, on Kosovo's parliamentary elections, which reached 57,638 people on Facebook to campaign for the 2021 parliamentary elections. RTK published an article claiming that Russian influence on the election was being exerted by a mutual friend of Vjosa Osmani and her husband, Dan Rohrabacher, a pro-Russian congressman in the Serbian parliament. Kosovo has the highest percentage of internet users in the region, with around 95% of the population using social media daily.

North Macedonia

North Macedonia has improved its position in the 2020 World Press Freedom Index rankings, but its media landscape has faced numerous penalties for its culture of impunity. Media and journalists face threats, insults and verbal and cyber harassment. The Ministry of Justice is working to improve media freedom by drafting a new penal code that includes similar charges for assaulting a journalist or media outlet as well as assaulting a police officer, reducing defamation charges and prosecutions for journalists, media outlets and editors. including to do. criminal offence.

The media landscape in North Macedonia has changed significantly since 2017, when the media was completely under the control of the party and served its disinformation and propaganda campaigns. However, political power and corruption have taken over the media landscape, with 50% of respondents perceiving the media as politically dependent and 70% perceiving the media as influenced by corruption. The government's financial package during the coronavirus pandemic was not well received by independent media and journalists, indicating the government's control over media freedom.

The state is in transition or has a hybrid system, but its overall democracy score has improved due to its liberal-democratic principles and commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration. North Macedonia's identity has been contested numerous times, making its commitment to EU integration and NATO membership more difficult than expected. The ruling party (VMRO-DPMNE) led the country into a nationalist and anti-Western mindset, resulting in an 11-year absence from democratic processes. In 2017, North Macedonia made progress towards changing the country's name to "North Macedonia" and gaining NATO membership in 2020. However, citizens did not unanimously support the government's approach to EU integration and NATO membership, and nationalist party ideology was marginalized. The political battle between the ruling party and the opposition (VMRO-DPMP) now focuses on the preservation of Macedonian narratives and state identity, as well as processes that bring North Macedonia closer to EU integration. North Macedonia is also a state with inherited inter-ethnic divisions, which led to war in 2001 and ended with the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement that same year. Distorted information in North Macedonia develops around these narratives in relation to these political complexities.

Recent disinformation campaigns have included descriptions of threats to Macedonian identity, combining anti-Bulgarian, anti-Greek and anti-Albanian sentiments with accusations that Macedonian youth will become "cannon fodder" for NATO wars and pushing NATO to develop 5G technology. Negative health and public safety consequences. The appointment of Talat Zafari as parliamentary speaker in early 2017 and the passing of a law allowing the use of Albanian as an official language made the fear of a "Greater Albania" a reality. Cross-border geopolitical rivalry often misleads and deceives local citizens in North Macedonia, sows inter-ethnic tensions, undermines North Macedonia's processes with neighboring countries, defocusses the country's EU integration

perspective, and the 2018 parliamentary elections and parliamentary elections. Elections, influencing electoral processes in 2020. Census in 2021.

Investigative journalists and fact-checking organizations in North Macedonia have discovered a vast network of disinformation campaigns originating from Hungarian and Slovenian companies, funded by Hungarian President Viktor Orbán, a friend of former North Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. These campaigns included right-wing online media and media that supported and promoted the Gruevski system. A CivilMedia (2020) study of media reporting during the North Macedonian parliamentary election campaign revealed more than 80 cases of orchestrated content sharing involving defamation, insults, insults or hate speech, often in combination. The report disclosed more than 80 observed 14 actions related to the systematic dissemination of information. In 28 cases, distribution of coordinated content included hate speech, death threats or incitement of violence against campaigning politicians.

The victims of verbal violence were journalists, activists, intellectuals and ordinary citizens who were not public figures or participants in elections but were targeted for attacks because of their views and opinions. The CIVIL Monitoring Team found 12 cases of discrimination, ridicule or hate speech based on ethnic and religious grounds, as well as incitement to racism and xenophobia. Six cases of orchestrated content sharing included elements of discrimination or hate speech based on gender or sexuality.

Turkey fact checking media

In today's digital era, the dissemination of information has expanded rapidly, resulting in a torrent of misinformation and disinformation. This has led to the emergence of fact-checking organizations that play a crucial role in verifying and debunking false claims, especially in the politically charged environment of Turkey. This article examines the significance of fact-checking organizations in Turkey, such as Teyit, their impact on the country's political landscape, their challenges, and the potential implications of state involvement in fact-checking.

Teyit, Turkey's largest independent fact-checking organization, has been operating for over five years with the primary goal of debunking false claims and combating the spread of misinformation in the country's public discourse. Teyit's team meticulously analyzes social

media trends, news reports, and tips from the public to identify potential misinformation and disinformation. The organization prioritizes fact-checking based on factors such as the claim's widespread distribution, importance, urgency, and verifiability.

Fact-checking organizations in Turkey have played a crucial role in uncovering false claims and manipulated narratives that may otherwise go unchecked. For instance, Teyit has debunked bizarre claims that Angela Merkel is Adolf Hitler's daughter and that NASA announced a giant asteroid would crash into Earth. The organization has also tackled more complex disinformation campaigns related to COVID-19 vaccines, refugees, and the economy.

Fact-checking organizations in Turkey face significant challenges due to the government's control of media and censorship practices. According to various sources, more than 80% of traditional media in Turkey is controlled by pro-government owners, which has led to concerns about media independence and the quality of information available to the public. The Turkish government's announcement to launch a state-controlled fact-checking platform has raised concerns about the potential implications of state involvement in fact-checking. Critics argue that such a platform could be used to further the government's interests and stifle dissenting voices, undermining the independence and credibility of fact-checking organizations.

The independence and transparency of fact-checking organizations are crucial to maintaining public trust and ensuring accurate information dissemination. State involvement in fact-checking could jeopardize these principles, leading to biased or manipulated information that serves the interests of the government rather than the public.

Turkey has a complex media landscape, with a mix of state-owned and privately-owned media outlets. In recent years, there have been concerns about press freedom and the independence of the media in Turkey, with some media outlets facing pressure and censorship from the government.

There are several organizations that monitor and report on the media landscape in Turkey, including the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Reporters Without Borders (RSF),

and Freedom House. These organizations have raised concerns about the state of press freedom in Turkey, particularly following the failed coup attempt in 2016.

According to a report by the CPJ, Turkey is one of the world's leading jailers of journalists, with dozens of reporters and media workers currently in detention. The RSF ranks Turkey 153rd out of 180 countries in its 2021 World Press Freedom Index, citing a "relentless crackdown on independent media" and the use of "judicial harassment" to silence critical voices.

Turkey has a media regulatory body, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), which is responsible for overseeing the country's broadcast media. However, there have been concerns about the independence and impartiality of the RTÜK, particularly in light of its role in censoring and punishing critical voices.

In addition to these concerns about press freedom, there have also been reports of disinformation and propaganda in Turkey's media landscape. The government has been accused of using state-owned media outlets to promote its own agenda and suppress dissenting voices, while pro-government media outlets have been accused of spreading false information and propaganda.

Overall, the media landscape in Turkey is complex and often fraught with challenges and concerns about press freedom and independence. While there are organizations and regulatory bodies in place to monitor and regulate the media, there are ongoing concerns about the ability of journalists and media workers to report freely and independently, and to hold those in power accountable.

Fact-checking organizations in Turkey, such as Teyit, play a vital role in combating misinformation and disinformation in the country's political landscape. Despite facing challenges such as government control of media and misinformation spread by political parties, these organizations continue to uphold media accountability and transparency. However, the prospect of state involvement in fact-checking raises concerns about the potential implications of government interference. As the digital era progresses, the importance of maintaining the independence and credibility of fact-checking organizations in Turkey remains paramount.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology for this quantitative theory of the need for a fact-checking media in Albania, and the trust of citizens in the actual media.

A quantitative method is appropriate when we want to measure the level of trust in the media and the government at the same time, so I have conducted a survey, in which I wanted to understand more about the perception of citizens on the media system and the need for a fact checking media.

This survey is conducted online, and the sample is chosen randomly. I have used different types of questions in the survey, demographic question that include, multiple choice and open-ended ones. For the reliability of the survey, I have conducted this survey twice, with the same questions but in different times (test-re-test method), and the results were the same in the end.

Furthermore, the questions order is chosen specifically like this, starting with a question that is directly related to my study, and then concluding with the demographic questions, to attract the participant.

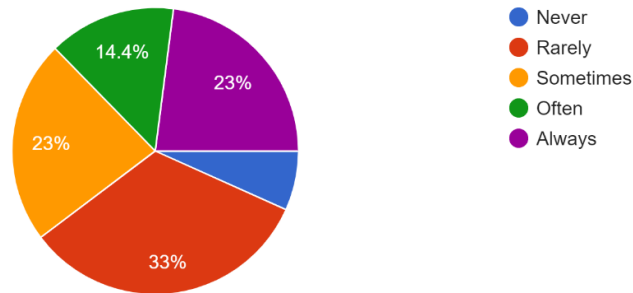
RESULTS and ANALYSIS

210 people participated in this questionnaire. of different age groups, starting from the age of 18 to the age of 65.

This questionnaire was built to study the need for a control system for the media in Albania, and what changes this system would have if it were more present in our country.

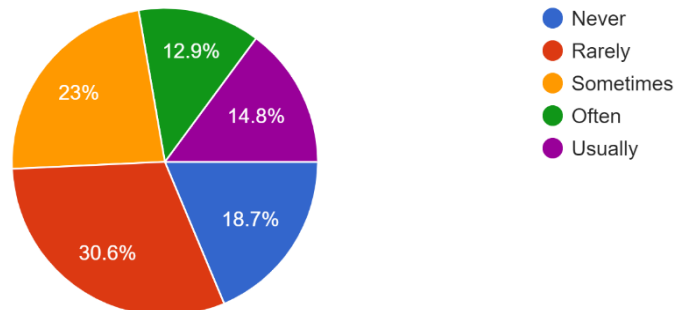
How often do you consume news media (e.g. newspapers, TV news, online news websites, social media)?

209 responses



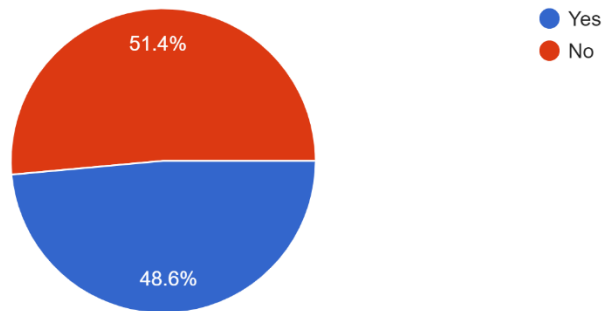
Have you ever personally shared false information online or with others?

209 responses



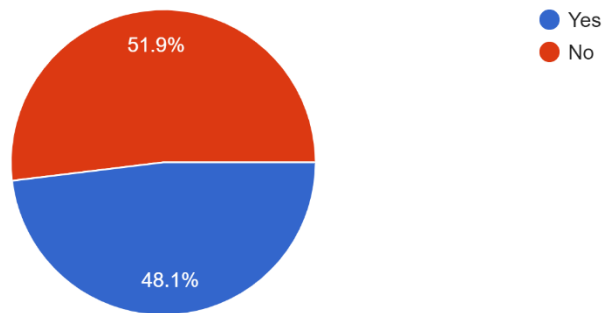
Do you trust fact-checking websites or services in general?

208 responses



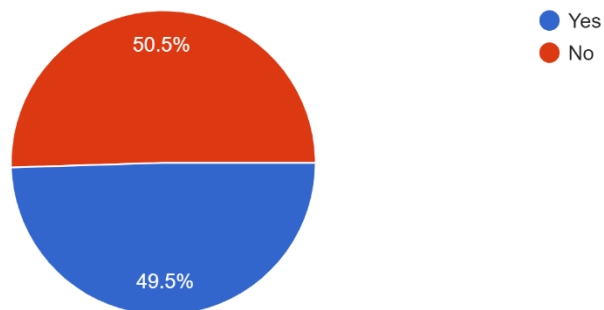
Do you trust in traditional news sources (e.g. TV, radio, newspapers) to provide accurate and unbiased information?

208 responses

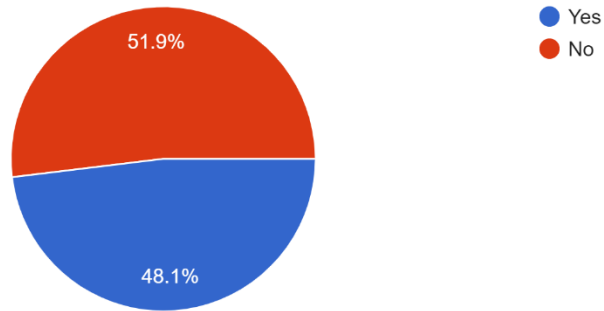


Do you trust fact-checking organizations in Albania to identify and correct false information?

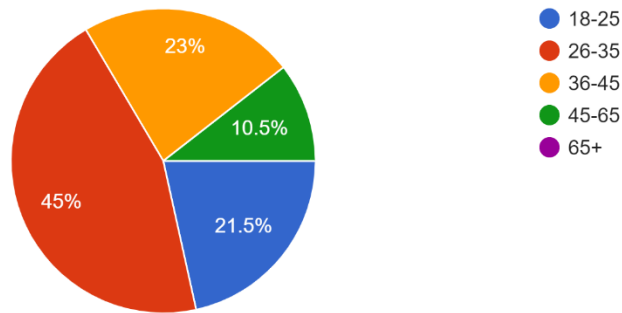
208 responses



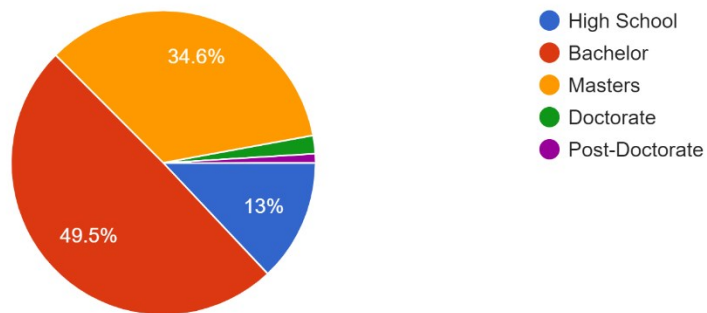
Have you ever reported false information to social media platforms or news organizations?
208 responses



Age
209 responses



Level of Education
208 responses



ANALYSIS

The construction of this questionnaire aims to understand the need that we as a society have for fact-checking the media because apart from the fact that the transmission of fake news is a problem and a vicious circle that never ends, it also has very large impacts on the political system of our country. The construction of control systems, such as the various websites, provide great help by making the readers of this news not give up on the news, but join the media system and hold the government accountable, get involved in reviewing the news and fact-checking even though they may not have a proper education.

The participants in the constructed survey, 45% of them belong to the age group of 25-36 years, and all of them are employed in different sectors, in the private and public sectors, so they belong to a category in which they received the appropriate education, and are people capable of being part of the media control system, as was the hypothesis raised in one of the chapters, for mass participation in the fact-checking process.

But what should be presented from this survey, is the ability of the citizens to understand if the news is fake or not, and if they manage to understand this news, what was the way used to distinguish them.

But as can be seen from the constructed survey, more than 50% of the participants have never reported fake news, from which we come to 2 very important points of this issue.

1. Their ability to understand fake news
2. Understanding the importance of fake news in the political system of a country.

For all the participants in the survey, the biggest responsibility regarding the fact checking system falls on the media, and also on the government. since the media is considered as the fourth power of a country, they give it this importance, but in fact the media represents the one for which an article can get more clicks.

The government, on the other hand, in full parallelism with the media, must definitely stop the presentation and publication of fake news which affect ineffectively their work but also the trust that citizens have for their government.

But what can be clearly understood is the part where the citizens do not know the power they have. none of the participants in the survey mentioned the fact that fake news can be stopped by the citizens themselves and in the simplest way, by not clicking on them, in this way the portals or the media itself will see a decrease in the audience in which will not be able to continue, so it will present real news.

How can it be clearly understood that the citizens are either uninformed about their power or do not have the proper skills to do a fact-checking?

In the question presented in the survey, if you have ever used a checking or monitoring website for fake news, 69.4% of the participants have never used such a system, which makes it clear that citizens read the news no more a critical point of view, but above all, the transmission of these news to other people, increases even more the level of disinformation and misinformation of citizens.

How often do citizens come across fake news in social media?

About 34.9% of them answer sometimes, and 35.4% of them answer occasionally.

From the answers, it is understood here that again people fail to understand the news when it is fake, or they simply enjoy the part of reading fake facts about different issues.

How much do people believe in the fact-checking media system in general and Albania?

Up to 51% don't trust fact checking media system in general and in Albania, where it is clear from here that even if there will be some truthful fact checking media systems, it will be difficult for the citizens once again due to the fact that they do not believe in these systems makes it even more difficult as a process.

Mistrust in the media system in our country increases the misinformation of citizens, affects the process of democratization of Albania, where the media fails to exercise its power as a monitoring system, but becomes part of misinformation and disinformation of citizens.

CONCLUSIONS

The need for a media control and monitoring system is very important in Albania. we are always prone to receiving false information, and almost 75% of the news we read is news that is controlled by a very small group of people.

we have noticed the tendency to avoid focusing on certain events with other news, which is a very smart policy to divert attention from a 'hot topic'.

Fact-checking media plays a vital role in today's information-driven society. In Albania, as in many countries around the world, misinformation and the spread of fake news have become significant challenges. To maintain an informed society and a healthy democracy, it is crucial to strengthen fact-checking initiatives, promote media literacy, leverage technology, and ensure transparency and accountability in the media landscape. These steps are instrumental in combating misinformation and fostering trust among the public.

First and foremost, strengthening fact-checking initiatives is essential to address the growing issue of misleading information. Fact-checking involves rigorous research and investigation to verify the accuracy of claims made by individuals, organizations, or the media. By holding the media accountable for their reporting, fact-checking enables the public to make informed decisions based on credible information. In fact, fact-checking can serve as a powerful tool to safeguard democracy by exposing falsehoods and bringing the truth to light.

Promoting media literacy is equally critical in combating misinformation. Media literacy refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and critically interpret media messages. By empowering individuals with the necessary skills, they can better navigate through the vast amount of information available and discern between reliable sources and those spreading misinformation.

Media literacy programs should be encouraged and implemented at various levels, including schools, universities, and community organizations, to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills required to consume media responsibly.

Leveraging technology is another crucial step in fact-checking media. With the rise of social media and digital platforms, false information can propagate rapidly, reaching a wide audience within minutes. However, technological advancements also offer opportunities to combat misinformation. Automated fact-checking tools, artificial intelligence, and machine learning algorithms can help in the identification and verification of false claims. By harnessing these technologies, fact-checkers can detect patterns and analyze large volumes of data efficiently, thereby improving the accuracy and speed of fact-checking processes.

Transparency and accountability are fundamental principles that underpin a trustworthy media landscape. Media organizations should disclose their sources, methodology, and affiliations to ensure transparency. Additionally, establishing an independent and impartial regulatory body can help monitor and enforce ethical journalistic standards. By upholding these principles, media outlets can demonstrate their commitment to accurate reporting and regain the trust of the public.

Fact-checking media in Albania is crucial to maintaining an informed society and a healthy democracy. By strengthening fact-checking initiatives, promoting media literacy, leveraging technology, and ensuring transparency and accountability, the fight against misinformation can be intensified. It is the collective responsibility of media organizations, fact-checkers, government agencies, educators, and society as a whole to work together in combatting the spread of fake news. Only through these concerted efforts can we foster trust, promote a well-informed citizenry, and safeguard the democratic foundations of our society.

The rise of misinformation in the digital age has made fact-checking and media literacy more complicated than ever. By learning from the experiences of fact-checkers and experts in Albania, we can begin to understand the challenges and opportunities for addressing misinformation and promoting media literacy. Through collaborative efforts, innovative approaches, and a commitment to empowering individuals, we can work to create a more

informed and engaged society that is better equipped to navigate the complexities of the digital age.

Fact-checking media systems can play a significant role in the process of democratization in Albania. Trust in the media is low in the country, and journalists are often not asked to fully verify facts. By promoting independent and fact-checked media, these systems can help restore trust in the media landscape. However, Albanian media content continues to deteriorate, with much of its opinion-based rather than evidence-based or fact-checked.

Supporting a more trustworthy and open media landscape can aid Albania's democratic transition. This can be accomplished by launching programs like fact-checking and verification tools for local journalists. Fact-checking media systems can aid in the growth of a strong democracy in Albania by disseminating correct information and encouraging ethical journalism.

In Albania, disinformation could be an omnipresent highlight of household political competition, but endeavors are generally astute and campaigns are short-lived. There's moderately small proof of endeavors by outside powers to mutilate Albanian legislative issued or worldwide issues.

Fact-checking media in Albania, as in any other country, is essential to ensure the dissemination of accurate information and combat the spread of misinformation, disinformation, and fake news. Misinformation can have serious consequences in various aspects of society, including politics, economy, and public health.

Fact-checking and the future of media literacy

Adapting to new forms of disinformation

As the digital landscape continues to evolve, fact-checking and media literacy efforts must adapt to new forms of disinformation. By staying abreast of emerging trends and technological developments, fact-checkers and educators can better prepare individuals to critically evaluate the information they find online.

Collaborative efforts and global networking

The fight against misinformation requires a collective effort of fact-checkers, journalists, educators, governments and other stakeholders. By fostering collaboration and building global networks, these groups can share resources, strategies and best practices to address the challenges posed by misinformation in the digital age.

Empowering individuals to become active participants

Ultimately, the key to combating misinformation lies in empowering individuals to be active participants in the process of verifying information and critically evaluating the media they consume. By providing people with the tools, skills, and knowledge needed to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources, society as a whole can become more resilient to misinformation and disinformation.

The following are some findings about Albanian media fact-checking:

Necessity: Fact-checking is critical to promoting a well-informed society and supporting democratic processes. It helps hold public figures, politicians and media organizations accountable for their statements and actions. Additionally, it contributes to building trust in media organizations and educates the public on how to critically evaluate information.

Collaboration: Fact-checking organizations in Albania should collaborate with international fact-checking networks and media watchdogs. This cooperation will help establish best practices, share knowledge and resources, and increase the credibility and reach of local fact-checking initiatives.

Media Literacy: Educating people about media literacy and critical thinking skills is essential. Media literacy programs should be integrated into the Albanian education system starting in elementary school, to help individuals identify reliable sources, evaluate information, and identify biases and manipulation techniques.

Technology: Fact-checking organizations should leverage technology and artificial intelligence (AI) tools to analyze vast amounts of data and quickly identify false claims or misleading stories. However, they should be aware of the ethical and privacy implications of using such technologies.

Transparency and Accountability: Fact-checking organizations should maintain transparency in their procedures, funding sources, and organizational structure. This openness will help build trust among people and prevent accusations of bias or hidden agendas.

Government and regulatory support: The Albanian government should support fact-finding initiatives, emphasize their importance, and provide a favorable environment for their development. In addition, media regulations should encourage responsible journalism and discourage the dissemination of false or misleading information.

Diversification of Funding: Fact-checking organizations should diversify their sources of funding to ensure financial stability and independence. This diversification may include grants, donations, subscriptions, and partnerships with other organizations or platforms.

Fact-checking media in Albania is necessary to maintain an informed society and a healthy democracy. Strengthening fact-checking initiatives, promoting media literacy, leveraging technology, and ensuring transparency and accountability are crucial steps toward combating misinformation and fostering trust in the media landscape.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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