

Dealing with Misinformation on COVID-19: Comparing the Use of Transparency and Accessibility in Fact-checking Practices across 74 Countries

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Premise

- Research on COVID-19 misinformation
- Research on Fact-checking

Research on Covid misinformation

- COVID-19 pandemic unfolded alongside an “infodemic” of misinformation.
- Misinformation as a phenomenon of social media, but also traditional media.
 - Content analysis of 38M articles in English-language media around the world from Jan 1 to May 26, 2020 found only 16% of misinformation coverage was “fact-checking” in nature (Evanega et al., 2020).
- Tangible outcomes of misinformation on physical and mental health outcomes.
- Misinformation related to the diagnosis, spread and treatment of COVID-19 reduces trust in science and vaccines, as well as compliance with public safety measures.

Misinformation as political weapon

Study Finds ‘Single Largest Driver’ of Coronavirus Misinformation: Trump

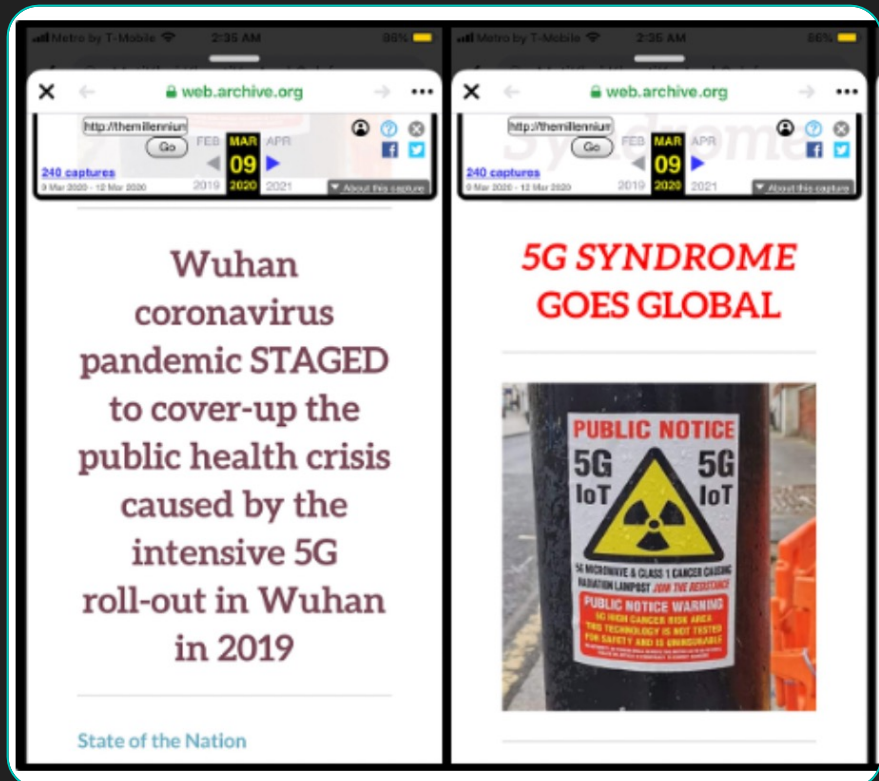
Cornell University researchers analyzing 38 million English-language articles about the pandemic found that President Trump was the largest driver of the “infodemic.”

Coronavirus: Brazil's Bolsonaro in denial and out on a limb

By Katy Watson
BBC South America correspondent

🕒 29 March 2020

Fact-checking on Covid misinformation



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PolitiFact [Fact-Check](#)

False: No evidence that coronavirus was faked to cover up '5G Syndrome'

PolitiFact is a fact-checking website that rates the accuracy of clai...



Science Feedback [Fact-Check](#)

False: The cause of COVID-19 has been definitively identified in scientific studies as a novel coronavirus, not 5G

There is no causal link between COVID-19 and 5G technology. Th...

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Main goals

1. To examine fact-checked claims regarding COVID-19 to provide a snapshot of misinformation on this global pandemic.
2. To investigate two important aspects of fact-checking practices including *transparency* and *accessibility* in the context of COVID-19 misinformation.
3. To draw the connections between aspects of COVID misinformation and country-level characteristics.

Significance

- To provide insights into the clarity and effectiveness of fact-checking efforts,
- To highlight areas in which global fact-checkers can improve to make their work more accessible and credible to the public.

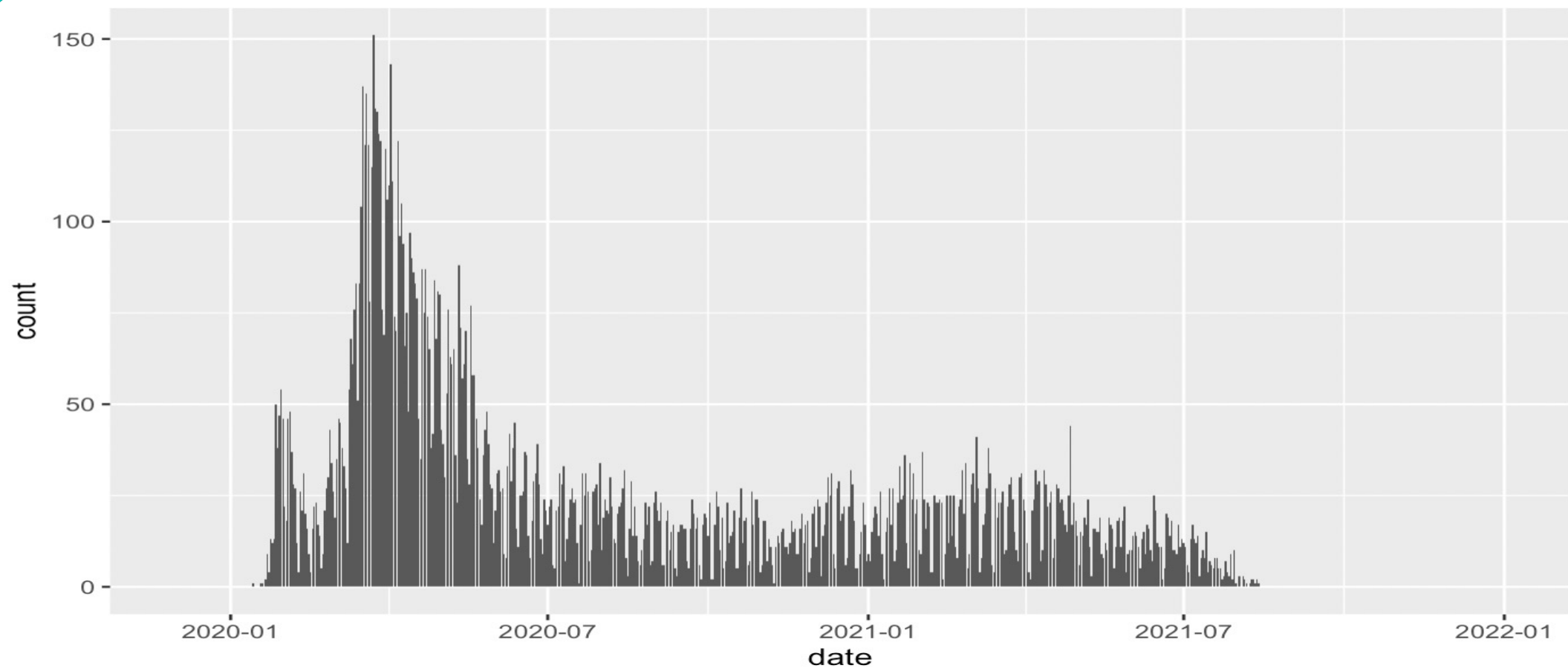
Key concepts and operationalizations

- *Transparency*: the practice of openness in providing users with information on the verification process.
 - Operationalizations: sources and embedded links in fact-checked articles.
- *Accessibility*: whether fact-checkers make their content and verdicts accessible to users.
 - Operationalizations: clearly pointing out whether a claim is true, false, or inconclusive, infographics, visual cues.

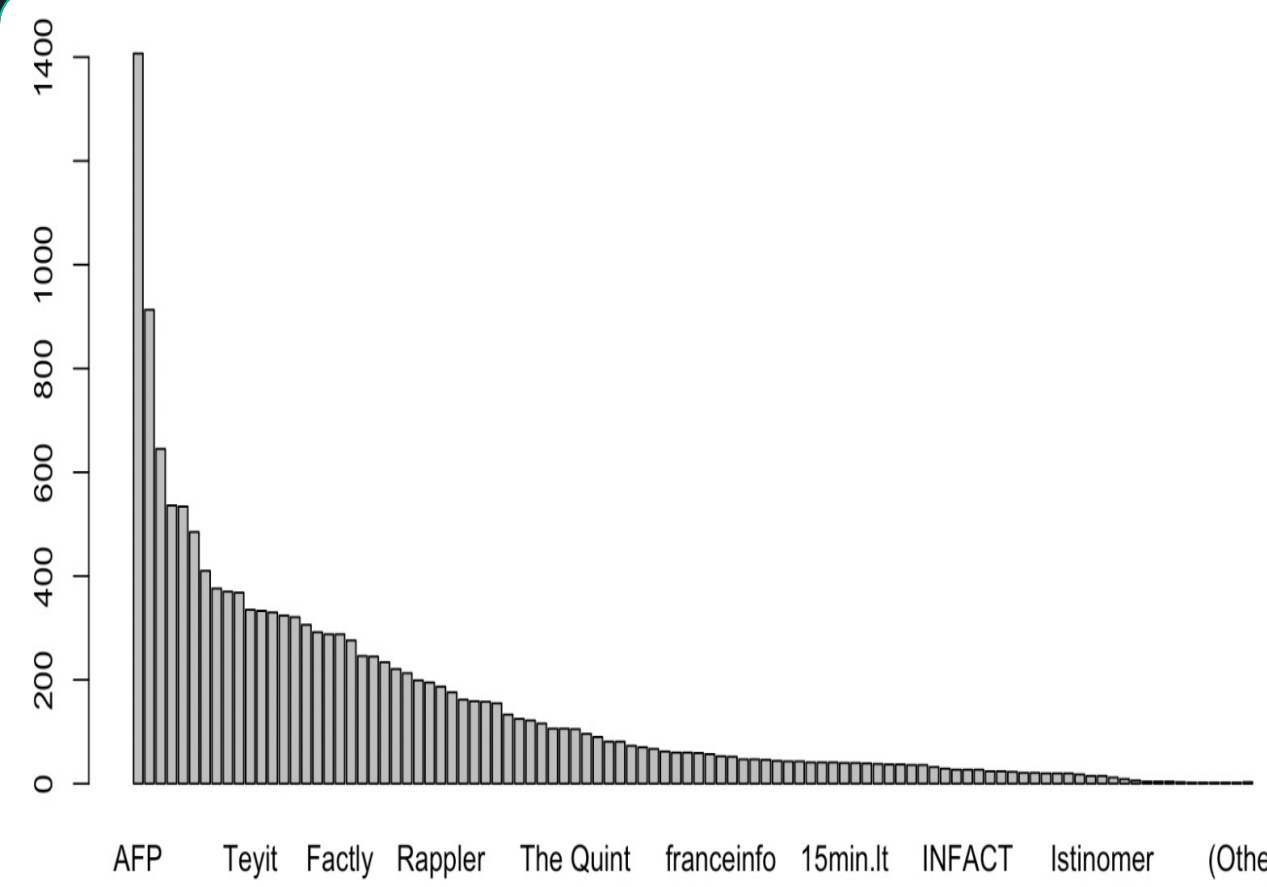
Data & Methods

- Data source: the CoronaVirusFacts/ DatosCoronaVirus Alliance Database compiled by the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN).
- 14,570 COVID fact-checks published in 40 different languages by 102 professional fact-checkers from 74 countries.
- Methods: Quantitative textual analysis, NLP and statistical modeling.

Preliminary findings



Fact-checkers: 102 international fact-checkers



fact_checked_by2

Colombiacheck	Ellinika Hoaxes	Full Fact	Myth Detector	Salud con lupa
Convoca.pe	Estadão Verifica	GhanaFact	Newschecker	Science Feedback
Correctiv	Facta	India Today	Newsmeter.in	Spondeo Media
Décodeurs - Radio-Canada	FactCheck Georgia	Infact	NewsMobile	StopFake.org
Décodeurs - Radio-Canada and CBC	Factcheck.kz	INFACT	Newtral.es	Sure And Share Center MCOT
Delfi Melo Detektorius (Lie Detector)	Factcheck.org	Istinomer	Nieuwscheckers	Taiwan FactCheck Center
Demagog	FactCheck.org	JTBC news	Observador	TEMPO
Décodeur de rumeurs	Factcheck.Vlaanderen	Kalkritikbyrån	OjoPúblico	Teyit
Digitale India	FactCheckNI	La Nación	Open	The Quint
Doğruluk Payı	FactCrescendo	La Silla Vacía	Pagella Política	TheJournal.ie
Dubawa	Factly	La Voz de Guanacaste	Periodismo de Barrio	TjekDet.dk
Ecuador Chequea	Factnameh	LeadStories	PesaCheck	VERA Files
EFE Verifica	Faktabaan/FactBar	Les Décodeurs	Poligrafo	Verificado
Efecto Cocuyo	Faktograf	Maldita.es	PolitiFact	Vishvas News
Effecineq	Fatabyano	MediaWise	Rappler	Vistinomer
Effecineq - SkyTg24	France 24 Observers	Misbar	Raskrinkavanje	VoxCheck
El Surtidor	franceinfo	Mygopen	Re:Check	Washington Post Fact-Checker

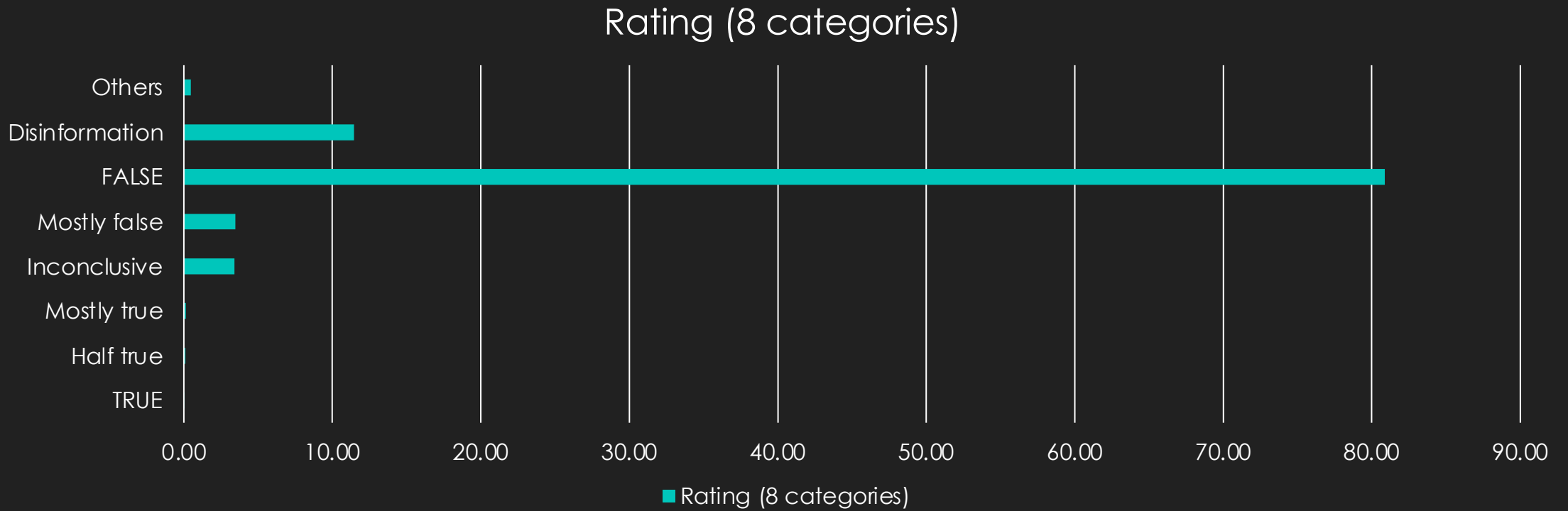
Geographic variation

India	United States	Brazil	Spain
2042	1385	1329	1108
Ukraine	Colombia	France	Georgia
1033	567	531	488
Philippines	Turkey	North Macedonia	Argentina
448	442	324	313
Taiwan	Mexico	Germany	Greece
307	305	303	276
Italy	Indonesia	Australia	Middle East
262	204	189	166
Poland	Sri Lanka	Canada	Ireland
165	152	134	115
Nigeria	Kenya	Thailand	Bolivia
114	107	107	97
Portugal	Japan	Croatia	United Kingdom
86	75	67	66
Lithuania	Myanmar	Ghana	Belgium
65	64	62	61
Venezuela	Ecuador	Hong Kong	South Korea
61	59	53	52
South Africa	Latvia	Egypt	Costa Rica
45	42	40	39
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Denmark	New Zealand	Guatemala
37	37	34	32
Peru	Pakistan	Kazakhstan	Russia
28	26	25	23
Netherlands	Paraguay	Tunisia	Malaysia
21	21	21	18
Serbia	Singapore	Uganda	China
17	17	16	15

Rating classification: 56 raw rating types by international fact-checkers

"	"(org. doesn't apply rating)"	"altered image"
"conspiracy"	"correct"	"enganoso"
"exaggerated"	"exaggerated"	"explanatory"
"f aux"	"fake"	"fake news"
"false"	"false and misleading"	"falso"
"fałsz"	"faux"	"half true"
"half truth"	"in dispute"	"inaccurate"
"mainly correct"	"mainly false"	"manipulated"
"manipulation"	"misinformation / conspiracy theory"	"misleading"
"misleading/false"	"misleading"	"misleading"
"missing context"	"missing context"	"misleading"
"mix"	"mixed"	"mostly false"
"mostly true"	"needs context"	"no evidence"
"not true"	"out of context"	"partially correct"
"partially false"	"partially true"	"partl false"
"partly false"	"partly true"	"party false"
"satire"	"suspicious"	"true"
"true but"	"two pinocchios"	"unlikely"
"unproven"	"unsustainable"	

Re-classified ratings



Accessibility

It is false that ultraviolet light predicts the result of coronavirus antigen tests

Malaysian health minister's photos taken at same vaccination event?



Plan for future analysis

- Measures of transparency by extracting images, videos, outlinks embedded in the fact-check articles.
- NLP use to understand contents of Covid misinformation (e.g., coronavirus origin, COVID-19 impact, information about vaccines and public safety measures).
- Accessibility and transparency and country-level correlates (e.g., media freedom, media trust, Internet use, social media use, and economic indices).