Dealing with Misinformation on COVID-19:

Examining Principles of Accessibility and Transparency in Fact-Checking Practices of IFCN

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Global Fact 9

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Premise

COVID-19 pandemic unfolded alongside an "infodemic" of misinformation.

Premise

As the spread of misinformation transcends borders, collaborative partnerships have been formed among fact-checkers around the world.

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The Craig Newmark Center   IFCN   MediaWise   NewsU   PolitiFact

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NEWS   TRAINING   ETHICS & LEADERSHIP   FACT-CHECKING   MEDIA LITERACY   EVENTS

The CoronaVirusFacts/DatosCoronaVirus Alliance Database

Here is the database that gathers all of the falsehoods that have been detected by the CoronaVirusFacts/DatosCoronaVirus alliance. This database unites fact-checkers in more than 70 countries and includes articles published in at least 40 languages. Para búsquedas en **español**, haz clic aquí. Faça buscas em **português** aqui.

Challenges faced by fact-checkers

To provide corrections of falsehoods in a prompt manner while ensuring the accessibility and quality of their content.

After all, the impact of fact-checking efforts when tackling misinformation and hoaxes is, to a large extent, contingent on how well the fact-checked information is processed and received by the audience.

Thus, how fact-checkers around the world demonstrate fact-checking principles in their practices is of critical concern.

The goals of this work:

Investigate two important aspects of fact-checking practices including *accessibility* and *transparency*

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 research questions

An overview of IFCN COVID-19 misinformation efforts

How are accessibility and transparency demonstrated in COVID-19 fact-checking news?

Any differences in fact-checking practices across time, type of mis- or disinformation, country-level factors?

Key concepts and operationalizations

Accessibility: whether fact-checkers make their content and verdicts accessible to the readers.

- Clear indications of whether a claim is true, false, or inconclusive in the fact-checking content.
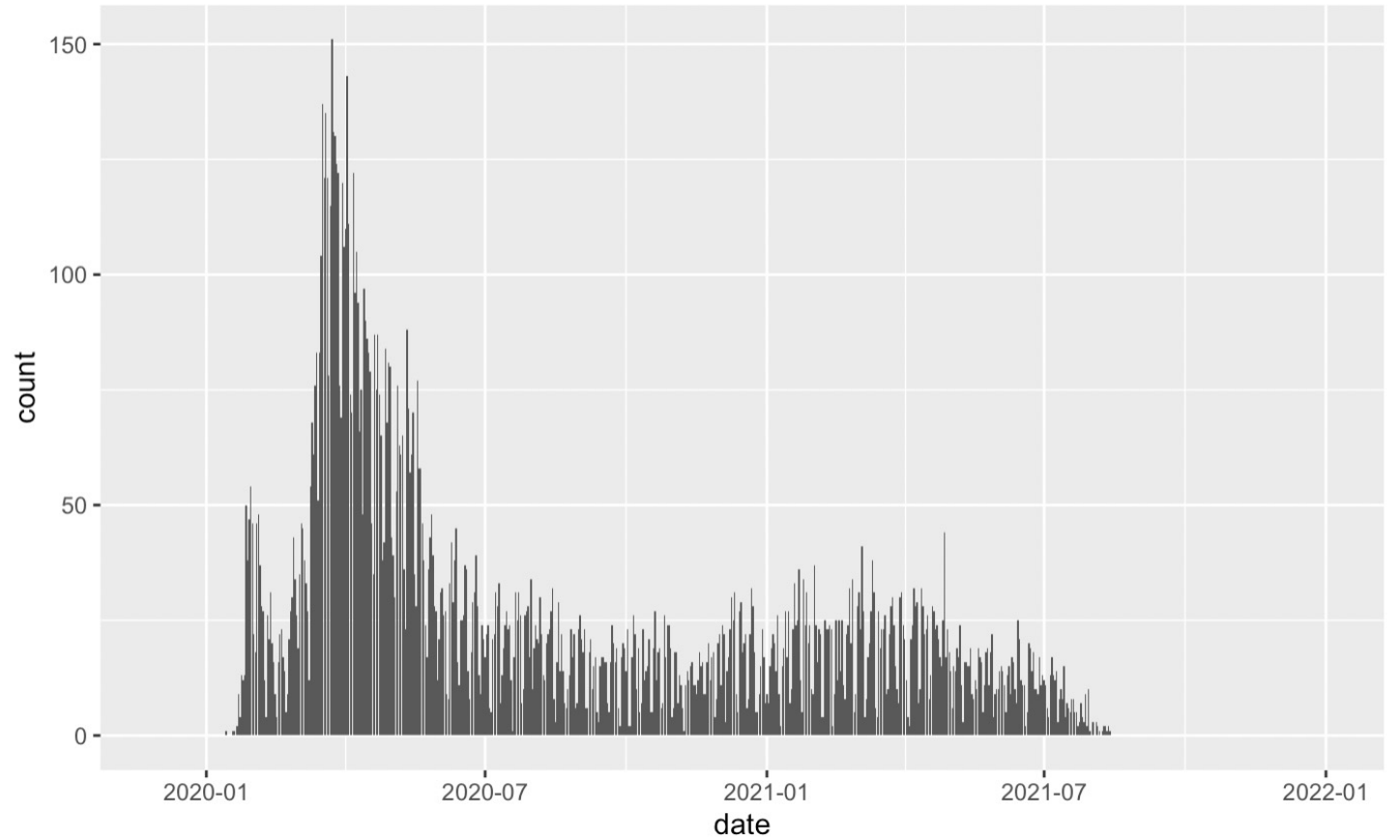- Inclusions of infographics, visual cues.

Transparency: the practice of openness in providing readers with information on the verification process.

- Use of various sources and reference links in fact-checked articles.

Data & Methods

- Data source: the CoronaVirusFacts/ DatosCoronaVirus Alliance Database compiled by the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), made available on Poynter.org.

- 14,570 COVID fact-checks published in 40 different languages by professional fact-checkers from 103 countries.

- Methods: Descriptive analysis, text mining, multi-level modelling.

Main findings

IFCN
@Poynter.

International Fact-Checking Network

15min.lt	Colombiacheck	Ellinika Hoaxes	Full Fact	Myth Detector	Salud con lupa
AAP FactCheck	Convoca.pe	Estadão Verifica	GhanaFact	Newschecker	Science Feedback
AFP	Correctiv	Facta	India Today	Newsmeter.in	Spondeo Media
AfricaCheck	Décrypteurs - Radio-Canada	FactCheck Georgia	Infact	NewsMobile	StopFake.org
Agência Lupa	Décrypteurs - Radio-Canada and CBC	Factcheck.kz	INFACT	Newtral.es	Sure And Share Center MCOT
Agencia Ocote	Delfi Melo Detektorius (Lie Detector)	Factcheck.org	Istinomer	Nieuwscheckers	Taiwan FactCheck Center
Animal Político	Demagog	FactCheck.org	JTBC news	Observador	TEMPO
Annie Lab	Détecteur de rumeurs	Factcheck.Vlaanderen	Källkritikbyrån	OjoPúblico	Teyit
Aos Fatos	Digiteye India	FactCheckNI	La Nación	Open	The Quint
Bolivia Verifica	Doğruluk Payı	FactCrescendo	La Silla Vacía	Pagella Politica	TheJournal.ie
BOOM FactCheck	Dubawa	Factly	La Voz de Guanacaste	Periodismo de Barrio	TjekDet.dk
Buzz Feed Japan	Ecuador Chequea	Factnameh	LeadStories	PesaCheck	VERA Files
BuzzFeed Japan	EFE Verifica	Faktabaari/FactBar	Les Décodeurs	Poligrafo	Verificado
Check Your Fact	Efecto Cocuyo	Faktograf	Maldita.es	PolitiFact	Vishvas News
CheckNews	Effecinque	Fatabyyano	MediaWise	Rappler	Vistinomer
Chequeado	Effecinque - SkyTg24	France 24 Observers	Misbar	Raskrinkavanje	VoxCheck
	El Surtidor	franceinfo	Mygopen	Re:Check	Washington Post Fact-Checker

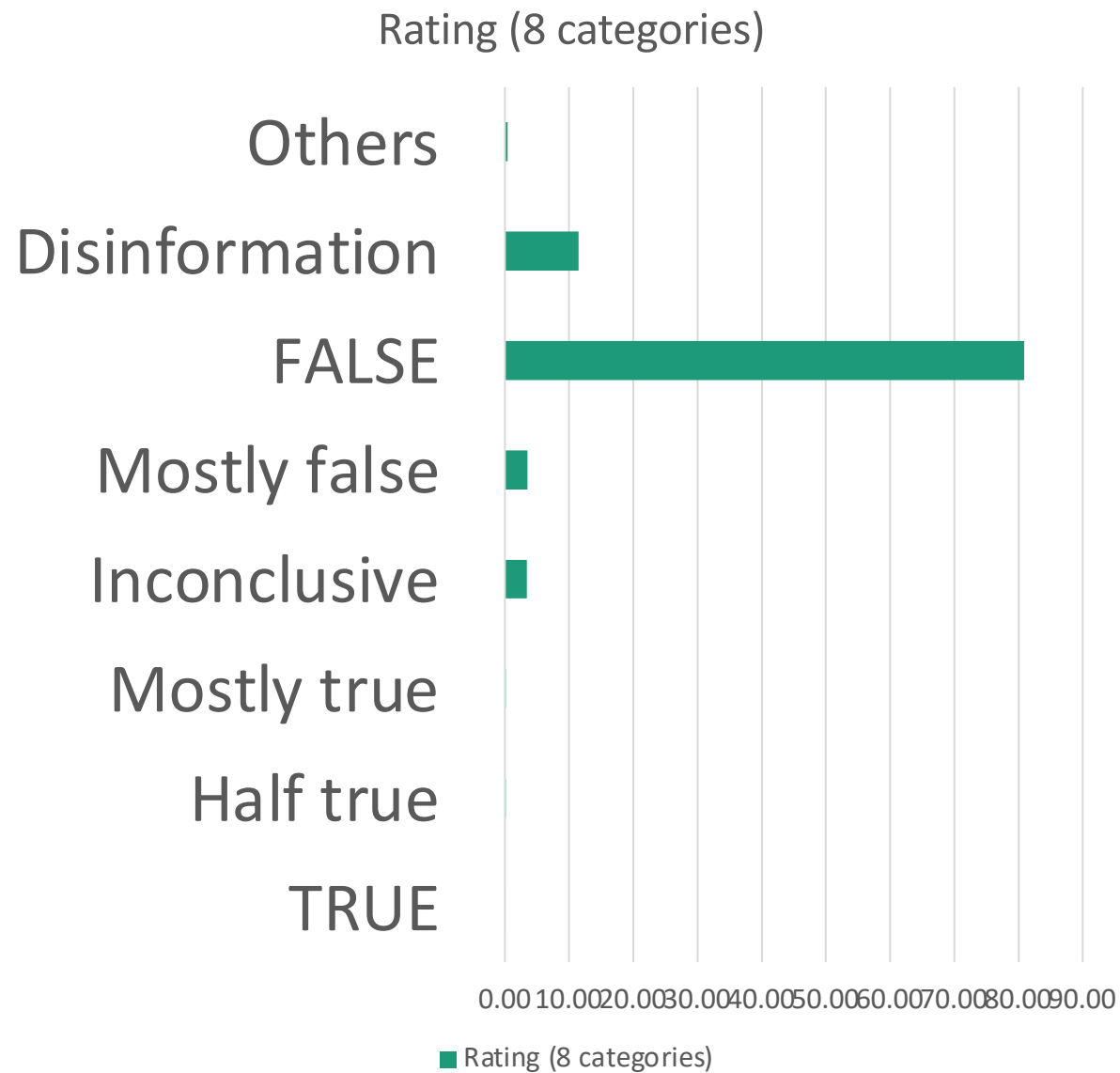# Fact-checkers: 102 international fact-checkers
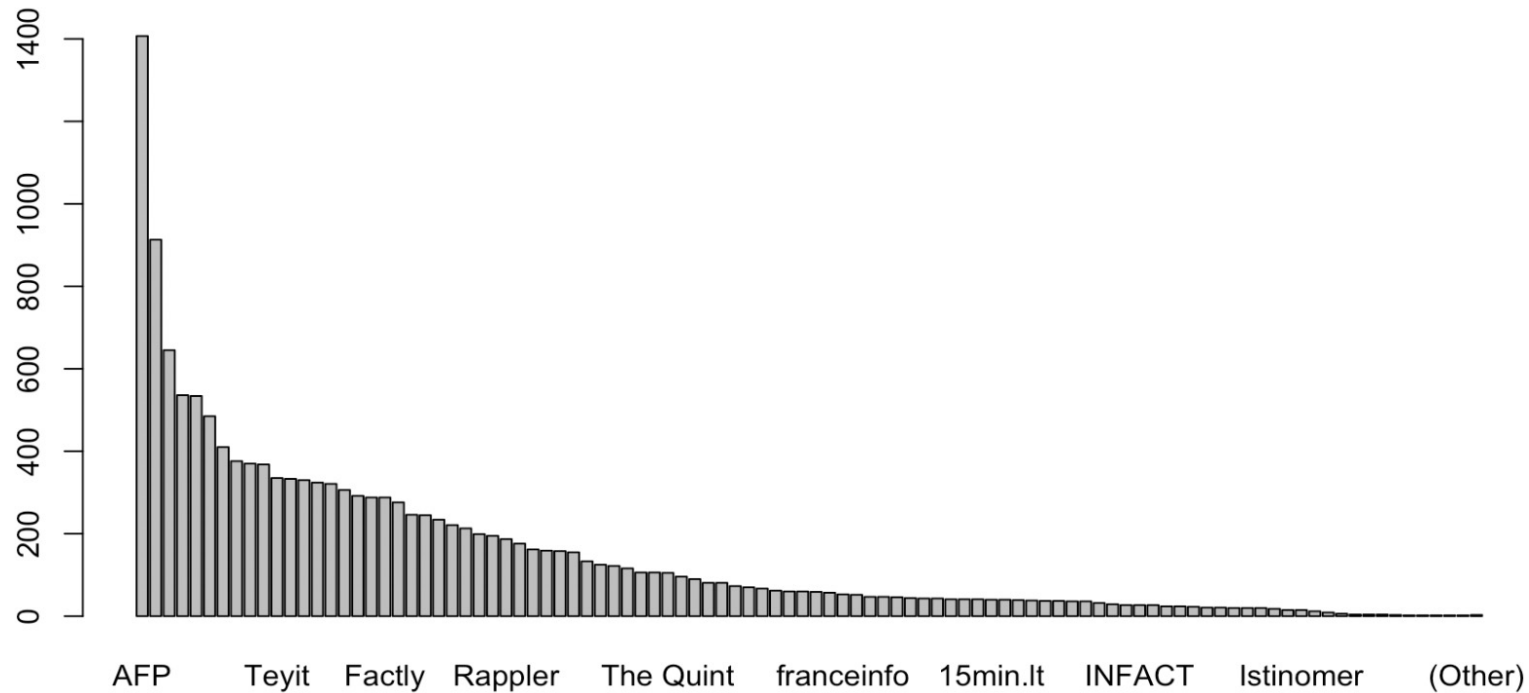
Geographic variation

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

""

"conspiracy"

"exagerated"

"f aux"

"false"

"fałsz"

"half truth"

"mainly correct"

"manipulation"

"misleading/false"

"missiing context"

"mix"

"mostly true"

"not true"

"partially false"

"partly false"

"satire"

"true but"

"unproven"

"(org. doesn't apply rating)"

"correct"

"exaggerated"

"fake"

"false and misleading"

"faux"

"in dispute"

"mainly false"

"misinformation / conspiracy theory"

"misleanding"

"missing context"

"mixed"

"needs context"

"out of context"

"partially true"

"partly true"

"suspicions"

"two pinocchios"

"unsustainable"

"altered image"

"enganoso"

"explanatory"

"fake news"

"falso"

"half true"

"inaccurate"

"manipulated"

"misleading"

"misleasing"

"missleading"

"mostly false"

"no evidence"

"partially correct"

"partl false"

"party false"

"true"

"unlikely"

# Re-classified ratings

Rating (8 categories)

Accessibility

- More than 99.3% of articles are accessible.

- Articles with false or mostly false labels are **more significantly likely** to have accessible content than "articles" with disinformation labels.

- No evidence of increasing accessibility in content over time.

- No significant effect of country-level factors (GDP, press freedom index) on accessibility.
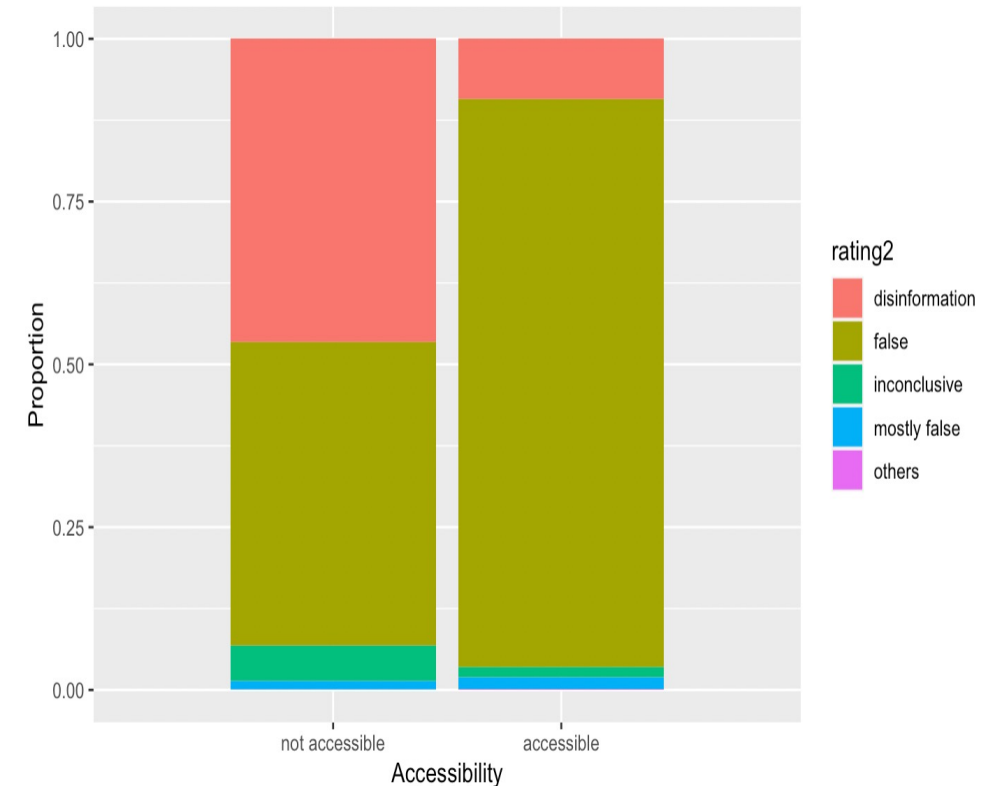
Transparency

- Increasing use of sources embedded in fact-check articles over time.
- "Disinformation" articles are significantly less transparent than other rating types.
- Country-level factors (GDP, press freedom level) were not associated with transparency level.
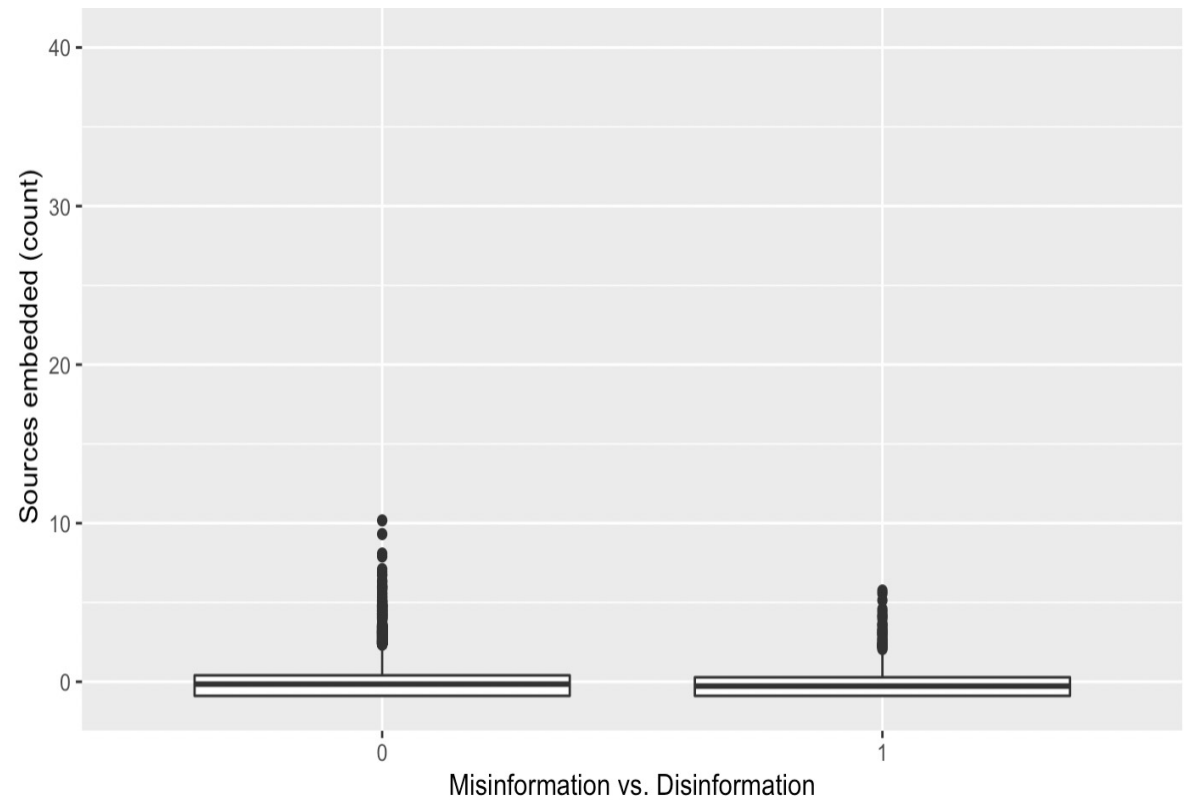
Conclusion

- Clear demonstration of "accessibility" principle in IFCN fact-checking practices.

- Compared to other contents, disinformation (including misleading, exaggerated, manipulation of content, alter images) suggests extra challenges to fact-checkers.

- Socio-political systems under which fact-checkers operate did not seem to have significant influence on fact-checking practices.