

POST-TRUTH DÖNEMİN SİYASAL İLETİŞİME YANSIMALARI

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ÖZ

Hakikat Ötesi, Hakikat Sonrası veya Gerçeğin/Hakikatin Önemsizleştirilmesi olarak Türkçeye çevrilen Post-Truth teriminin yeni olmamasına rağmen, konuyla ilgili araştırma sayısının 2016 yılından itibaren artmasıyla birlikte gelinen noktada, alan araştırmacılarının daha çok ilgisini çekmeye başlayan bir kavram olmuştur. Literatürde, bir yandan kavram özelinde toplumsal çalışmalar yapılırken ve Post-Truth çağında yaşadığımız savunulurken, diğer yandan karşıt görüşler de alan araştırmalarında yer almaktadır. Post-Truth kavramı, içinde yalanı barındıran bir kavramdır ve yalanların gerçekmiş gibi sunulduğu kompleks bir durumu açıklamaya çalışır, burada ilginç olan ise özellikle siyasilerin yalana başvurmasından ziyade halkın bu duruma, yalan olduğunu bilse bile hoşgörülü yaklaşmasıdır. Günümüzde halk bilgi kaynağı olarak kitle iletişim araçlarını kullanmakta, araştırmalarını bu mecrada yapmaktadır. Kolay anlaşılır, zahmetsiz, teknik terimlerden uzak, sürükleyici, heyecanlandırıcı ve fakat temelsiz, kaynaklı ve niteliksiz bilgi yığınları, forumlar, sosyal medya ortamları aracılığıyla kısa sürede binlerce kişiye ulaşmaktadır. Bundan dolayı bilginin kaynağı belirsizleşmekte, bilginin kontrolü akademiden çıkmakta, sunulanlar alıcılar tarafından yalan olup olmadığına dair şüphe duymadan hap gibi alınmasına neden olmaktadır. İşte bu ortamlarda da zemin Post-Truth için daha elverişli hâle gelmektedir ve bu durumun siyasetle ilişkilendirilmesi kaçınılmazdır. Bu çalışmada, sosyolojik açıdan etkisi henüz araştırılan Post-Truth döneminin özelliklerinin çokça yer bulduğu siyasi arena ve doğası gereği başat olarak siyasal iletişime yansımalarına ve etkisine dikkat çekilmek istenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Post-Truth, Gerçek Ötesi, Siyasal İletişim.

REFLECTIONS OF THE POST-TRUTH PERIOD ON POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

ABSTRACT

Although the term Post-Truth, translated into Turkish as “Hakikat Ötesi, Hakikat Sonrası or Gerceğin / Hakikatin Önemsizleştirilmesi –Trivialization of Truth” is not a new understanding, it has become a concept becoming more attractive for researchers with the increasing number of studies as from the year 2016. In the literature, while social studies focused on the concept are carried out and it is claimed that we are in the Post-Truth era, opposing views take also place in the field studies. The term “Post-Truth” contains lies within itself, and tries to explain a complex situation where lies are offered as if true, while the interesting part here is, the public tolerance to this situation, even they know that it is a lie, rather than the lies put forward by politicians. Today, people use mass communication media as the source of information and conduct their researches on such an environment. Apparent, effortless, free from any technical terms, page-turner and exciting but baseless, sourceless and unqualified stacks of information are presented to thousands of people through forums or social media channels. The information source therefore becomes unclear, its control is off the hands of academics, and the offerings are swallowed as pills by the receivers without any suspicion on their accuracy. In such layouts therefore, the conjuncture

becomes more favorable for the Post-Truth, which is inevitably associated with politics. In this study, we wanted to point out the political arena where the characteristics of the Post-Truth Era of which sociological effects have yet to be studied are frequently referred to, and its reflections and effects primarily towards political communication.

Keywords: *Post-Truth, Post-Reality, Political Communication.*

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, when Oxford Dictionaries selected the term post-truth as the word of the year, they also had indicated the appearance of a deviant structure or, in essence, a surplus in social science. The reason to designate the post-truth as a surplus is that even though every year Oxford Dictionaries entitles a word as the word of the year, none of them has resounded in academia as much as post-truth. Why academia has perceived the term post-truth as a more important formation compare to others? Surely, with the help of post-truth studies, this question could be answered by being remembered the emphasis on the election campaign of Donald Trump and Brexit Referendum in 2016. However, these studies tend to delve into the term in order to evaluate its meaning, historical background and its contribution to the certain social sciences.

With that regard, three main inferences could be found about post-truth in the literature. Firstly, although most of the studies agree that post-truth is a consequence of the postmodernist contribution or interruption to reality, in order to understand the structure of the term, they refer to either the historical evolvement of the truth or analogies in the doctrines of philosophy and sociology. Secondly, the term post-truth is tended to define with the emphasis on lies or insignificance of truth. Moreover, these two terms are mostly used as a general term which contains the other negations of the truth such as bullshit, misinformation, fallacy, humbug, etc. (Ylä-Anttila, 2018). And lastly, in the concept of political science, there are two interpretations. While one of them asserts that post-truth emerged after the events in 2016, the other one claims that post-truth is always/already embedded in the political sphere. Apart from that, for both views, there are disagreements about the role of the post-truth (Alpay, 2017; Block, 2019).

Nonetheless, this frame that it is drawn by studies on post-truth in the literature paves the way for a Zizekian inquisition. Why is there nothing where there should be something? The reason that this question becomes relevant for this specific issue is that the interpretations of post-truth create a chain of oxymorons. The argument which points out spatio-temporal metamorphosis as a cause of the post-truth falsifies the assessments which rely on discussions about the value of truth in the fundamental writings in politics, philosophy or sociology, most of them written by Plato, Aristotle, Schopenhauer, Pareto, Nietzsche, Machiavelli, etc. Because if post-truth is a consequence of the alterations in the public sphere which is fueled by postmodernism, studies that create a bond or similarities between the value of truth and post-truth require to ask additional questions (Keyes, 2004; Backström, 2019). Do negations of truth and post-truth address the same meaning? Was post-truth always there? And if so, why the negations changed their forms and they are replaced with the term post-truth? In this vein, there could be found the second point of critique of the literature review. Because the arguments about the meaning of the post-truth seem to suture the current alteration/split in the public sphere with reference to the former knowledge on the truth. If post-truth points out the opposite sides or manipulation of the truth, what is the role of the prefix post on the term? By considering this tendency of the literature review, the effect of the contemporary features in a sociological way on the structure of post-truth is still vague. As mentioned above, this vagueness that emerged with inconsistencies could also be noticed about the reflections of post-truth period on political communication.

Background

Post-Truth in The Temporal Aspect and Related to Meaning

Post-truth, unlike ideas like falsehood, lies, or propaganda, tries to change how people think about the truth and reality in a planned and strategic way. It takes advantage of their ideas, their values, or their feelings. To understand the idea of post-truth and why it can't be used as a synonym for words like falsehood, willful ignorance, lying it's important to know how these words are different from each other.

After explaining these ideas, it's time to explain what post-truth means. When the history of this word is looked at, it may seem like the prefix post refers to time, as if there was a pre-truth or past-truth. However, the real meaning of the prefix post is that the truth has been overtaken and is no longer important (Bauman, 2015; McIntyre, 2018: 5), and the truth in recent years, in the post-truth era. It has been a Tesich (1992) and Roberts (2010) both say that people would rather live in a lie than change their current situation, and when it comes down to it, most people choose facts that support their ideals or values. People often look for arguments that support their ideas or beliefs and prefer to live in deception rather than accept arguments and facts that threaten their values, ideas, or the status quo. Self-deception and delusion can be conscious or unconscious at this point, as the person keeps trying to trick themselves. This is why many people still believe a lie that has been debunked or attacked by reliable sources (McIntyre, 2018: 9). It's also important to talk about who you're writing for. In the post-truth era, people who want to persuade or force their views on the world will step in. Because of this, it is important to find out why people believe in post-truth speech. Humans are a post-truth species whose power depends on making up stories and believing them, says Yuval Noah Harari (2018). Myths that keep coming back to life have been used to bring people together since the Stone Age. Harari says that people's belief in post-truth isn't just because of Facebook and other social media sites; it's also because of how we are as people. Rose McDermott (2019) says that even though humans are a post-truth species, education and skepticism can make people more open to post-truth speech. Due to algorithms, the social media ecosystem can amplify these factors by isolating users in an ideological bubble where only information that they agree with and won't threaten their beliefs and ideas can enter.

Taking these things into account, we can say that post-truth can have different effects on different people. When the receptor's beliefs are very strong and facts threaten their way of thinking, the receptor chooses to question the facts instead of accepting them as true (Fuller, 2018; McIntyre, 2018). Also, when audiences are not curious, fear the outside world, and don't want to learn more about it, they seek and value only information that already supports their narrow beliefs (McComiskey, 2017: 39). And when people aren't open to or interested in the truth and live in the ideological bubble that social networks create, post-truth can have a big effect on them without them even realizing it (McIntyre, 2018).

What does post-truth mean? For this study's definition of post-truth, all previous definitions and ways of looking at things were taken into account. Post-truth is made up of three main parts: the people who do it, what they say, and who listens to them. Practitioners are the people or media who give the speech in order to change the reality of the audience. The word speech refers to all kinds of communication that come from a person, such as written or spoken words, pictures, etc. This speech is about feelings, values, ideologies, or beliefs, but it doesn't say much about facts. The people who will hear the speech make up the audience. This group of people could be moved by the speech or not. Those who judge the speech based on the facts are in the group for whom it has no effect. On the other hand, people who are influenced can be split into two types of receptors: those who are aware of it and those who are not. The conscious receptor is exposed to all kinds of information, but chooses to only accept those that support their ideas and values. Those that contradict or raise doubts about them are ignored or discredited. The unconscious receptor doesn't know that the information they get has been filtered. They choose media and information that supports their values, beliefs, and ideas. So, they are more likely to believe anything they hear in these media, no matter how true it is. Post-truth is a strategy used by people (usually politicians) to change the reality of a group of people based on fact-free speech that is built on the emotions, ideologies, beliefs, and values of the target group.

Lastly, we studied the other inference of the literature review. According to this inference, there are several different counter ideas about the position of the post-truth in politics. When we assessed the position of the truth in politics with the visions of Weber and Morgenthau with the Pichler's article, Schmitt, Arendt, and Foucault, we emphasized that although post-truth studies in the literature conduct a subjectivity-oriented works, studies which try to understand the position of truth in politics focuses on the value and the meaning of the truth. Therefore, we deduced that the questions about the position of post-truth are not clearly determined. Consequently, to proceed further in this study in order to

understand the structure of the post-truth, we will focus on Slavoj Zizek's thoughts. The reason that this study considers Zizek's contributions relevant is that compatible with the conclusions of this chapter, Zizek's line of reasoning pursues the unique conditions of time periods, suspicions to the existence of certain factors and the value of these factors in the political sphere.

How the post-truth situates in the post-politics? The term post-politics problematizes the structure of politics and what is political. Slavoj Zizek, in his book, *The Ticklish Subject*, explains the political with the relationship between particular and universal in the political sphere. According to him, every structure which is accepted as universal contains a particular which is dispelled from the universal. In other words, particular is the slot of the universal. In order to clarify this frame, Zizek gives an example of the accusation against single mothers as a source of evil in the English society in the printed media during the late 20th century (Zizek, 1999: 176). Zizek claims that universal structure -which in the example it points out the English society- could only continue to function with the existence of the particular - which in the example it is the concept of a single mother-. Since an empty- signifier is the veil of the real kernel of the inconsistencies in the universal, it survives by offering a particular as the cause of the problems. Essentially, the universal always needs an excluded subject to allege this particularity. In this frame, a subject which dwells in the particular is addressed as a witness of the tension between particular and universal. Because only the subject realizes the hegemonic manipulation of the universal. For Zizek (1999: 242), what is political is the counter-argument of the subject against universal in order to undermine the hegemonic position of the universal. The contradictions between the subject and the universal are the reflection of the antagonisms in the political sphere in Mouffe's studies. According to her, these antagonisms are the sine qua non for the political (Mouffe, 1999: 3).

Social Networks as a Political Tool and It's Relation with Post-Truth in Politics

As was already said, the Internet, social networks, and the fact that so many people use them have changed how people get information. Because of this, among many other things, the internet and social networks have become political tools, just like traditional ways of communicating have in the past. Since the Internet and social networks have grown, anyone can now spread information and have the same effect on others as they could before. Because of this, new digital platforms have come up that can be used to spread false information, disinformation, and post-truth in general.

There's no denying the importance of the media in modern democracies. Political parties use the media to spread their election platforms and to connect with voters (Villafranco, 2005). Because of how important they are, the media now play a big role in democratic processes. This is called media democracy because it shifts power from political parties to traditional media, which acts as a link between society and power (Carey, 1997). Sartori (1998) talks about the purpose of television by saying that this medium has had many effects on society and has changed the way political relationships work. Citizens form opinions based on what they see on TV, and they vote based on the things they see on TV. Politics, on the other hand, moved to these new platforms as traditional ways of communicating became less popular and the internet and social networks became the main ways people got information. Because of how the Internet has changed and the rise of social networks, people now access and use information in different ways. Many political groups and governments that have used the networks as a political platform have benefited from this, but the traditional media have had a hard time adapting to the new technology and informational ecosystem. This is why political parties, politicians, and governments use social media sites like Facebook and Twitter so often for political purposes today. This is used to spread information about politics, economics, and public policies. Compared to traditional media, this is a more direct way to get your message across.

Daniel Zeng, Hsinchun Chen, Robert Lusch, and Shu Hsing Li (2010) say that politicians are using social networks more and more to find out who supports them and what the public thinks about their policies and positions. So, in the last few years, networks have become one of the most important tools that politicians use in their campaigns. Patricia Durantez- Stolle and Raquel Sanz (2011) say that when politicians use social media well, it can help bring them closer to their supporters, improve their

credibility, and improve their reputation. This would also make it easier for candidates to talk to the public and make them more visible, which could get people who don't usually vote to get involved.

Another benefit of using Web 2.0 in politics is that it can make opinion leaders who are good at persuasion and influence more visible, and the speed of the Internet can help spread voter intent (Christakis & Fowler, 2010). The 2008 U.S. Presidential Election is a good example of how social media can have an effect on politics. Jason Hannan says that Barack Obama was not only the first black president of the United States, but also the first president to use social media (2018: 5).

The Importance of Social Networks in Post-Truth

Social networks are so important in politics, many academics have studied them. In 2010, Sunil Wattal, David Schuff, Munir Mandviwalla, and Christine B. Williams put out a study about Web 2.0 and how it affected the US Presidential Election of 2008. This study says that American politicians were among the first to use social media as a tool for politics and elections. Barack Obama's campaign for president was a clear example of this, showing how politics and social media have changed over time. Under the guidance of Professor Jennifer Aaker, Victoria Chang did a second case study on Barack Obama's campaign for president in 2008. This study showed how well the campaign's social media strategy worked. Obama's campaign attracted about 5 million people on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, which is about four times as many people as his main competitor, John McCain, got. In the elections that year, Barack Obama won in 27 of the 50 states, got 364 electoral delegates, and got about 64,385,746 direct votes. His opponent, John McCain, got 162 electoral delegates and about 56,712,746 direct votes. This shows that the way the Obama campaign managed its network had a big effect on how involved US voters were (New York Times, 2008).

Because this campaign was so successful, politicians and political parties all over the world started to change their election strategies to focus more on social media. In the same way, governments, opposition groups, and politicians started to change how they communicated with the public by using networks to spread their actions and get closer to the public. Experts in network management, such as Network Management Advisors and Community Managers, have put a lot of importance on being the people be. This is because politicians and governments have changed how they talk to the public.

The lack of rules about the truthfulness of the information shared on social networks has changed their original purpose and made them the perfect place for post-truth. This has turned social networks from something good for democracy into something bad for it. Because politicians and citizens can talk to each other quickly and easily through social networks, using them in politics could be seen as a way to make democracy stronger. However, social networks have become something that hurts democracy.

In 2016, the world's politics were affected by the results of three democratic votes: Brexit, Donald Trump's election as president of the United States, and the Plebiscite for Peace in Colombia. Even though these results come from different places, they all have one thing in common: they are all about social networks and post-truth. Hannah Marshall and Alena Drieschova (2018) say that even though it's easier and faster to get information now, it's getting harder and less common to know if it's good or true. This is because new ways to communicate have made it easier to discredit people who check facts.

Technology makes it possible to send information faster than ever before, but it also makes it harder to control and keep track of. Some politicians have used these two things to help them reach their political goals by spreading false information, fake news, and other forms of post-truth speech. To understand how post-truth and social networks are related, the digital ecosystem that has made it possible for post-truth speech to spread must be shown and studied.

Social Networks: The Ideal Environment for Post-Truth Considerations Regarding Political Communication

The logic behind social media has undergone a significant shift ever since the elections for President of the United States in 2008. The elections that took place in 2016 in the United Kingdom, the United

States, and Colombia shed light on the danger that social media can present to democratic processes. Even though the advantages of social networks have been demonstrated, they also have a dark side. Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter were initially conceived as social platforms; however, in recent years, they have evolved into antisocial tools (Warzel, 2016). The dissemination of post-truth across social networks is a prime example of this phenomenon. Right-wing or ultra-right-wing politicians or political groups, such as Donald Trump and the Republican party in the United States, Nigel Farage and the United Kingdom Independence Party in the United Kingdom, and the former president Alvaro Uribe and the party Centro Democrático in Colombia, have been the most prominent proponents of this tactic. However, this does not imply that only those on the far right and the right use social networks as a platform for post-truth; it has also been used, albeit to a much lesser extent, by parties on the center and left of the political spectrum. Moreover, this does not imply that only those on the far right and the right use social networks as a platform for post-truth.

The ecosystem of tools, strategies, and actors that have emerged and evolved since the advent of Web 2.0 and make social networks the ideal platform for post-truth speech will be described in order to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of post-truth in social networks:

Echo Chamber: When people hear their own voice or, in the context of social networks, when users only consume content that expresses their own points of view, this phenomenon is referred to as an ideological bubble or an echo chamber. Both of these terms refer to a situation in which people hear their own voice (Garimella et al, 2018). User 1 and User 2 have the same opinion and stance regarding the information that they share; the information provided by User 1 is echoed by User 2, who in turn shares it with User 3, who also has the same opinion and stance as Users 1 and 2. This is the simplest form of what is known as an echo chamber and it consists of a transitive triad in which each actor maintains the same informational stance (Jasny et al, 2015). This space can accommodate not just three users at a time, but hundreds, thousands, or even millions of people, especially when social networks are taken into consideration. The phenomenon of an echo chamber in social networks can be demonstrated using a variety of different platforms, such as individual blog pages. Researchers Gilbert, et al. (2009) conducted a study on a variety of political blogs and found that the number of comments that agreed with the blog's author was disproportionately greater than the number of comments that opposed the author's position. This finding suggests that users who share the author's viewpoint are more engaged with the blogs. An et al. (2012) looked at users of Twitter who consume political news as part of their use of the social network and found some interesting results. 90% of users are direct followers of news profiles that have a single political leaning, but the retweets that their friends post cause them to diversify the news that they read. Regarding Facebook, Bakshy et al. (2015) conducted research to determine the extent to which users of this platform who hold a specific political orientation consume cross-cutting content. This refers to content that is primarily published by users who hold a political stance that is in opposition to the user's own. According to the findings of the study, users still prefer to interact with content that does not challenge their core beliefs or political stances, even though they are exposed to content that cut across multiple categories.

The Filter Bubble: The filter bubble is yet another phenomenon that can be attributed to social networking sites that contributes to post-truth. In contrast to the echo chamber, the filter bubble is not directly caused by the user; rather, it is produced by digital platforms themselves. It restricts users' access to information that could challenge or broaden their perspectives, which has a negative impact on civic discourse, as Eli Pariser (2011) explains in his book *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You*. Pariser states that this has a negative effect on civic discourse. People who are only given access to a limited amount of informational content are likely to believe that their ideas are in line with the prevalent one. According to Fernández-García (2017), you can locate these filters that are based on algorithms on a variety of different platforms. Filter bubbles are a component of the Google search engine platform, which is designed to refine search results based on a user's previous queries and the links they have followed. When determining which search results are most pertinent for each user, Google takes into account more than 57 different factors, including the type of computer being used, the user's location, the software being used, and so on. Facebook and Twitter are two of the most well-

known examples of social networks that make use of this filter type. In order to display a more personalized experience and provide advertising that is tailored to the user's preferences, the filters take into account the interactions of users, such as who they follow, who their friends are, the type of information they share, and so on. This phenomenon was summed up best by Mark Zuckerberg himself when he commented that a squirrel dying in front of your house may be more relevant to your current interests than people dying in Africa (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Additionally, people have pointed the finger of blame at filter bubbles for the events of 2016. During the presidential elections in the United States in 2016, Facebook was accused of spreading false information and news because the algorithm that the social network used to disseminate information did not verify the source of the information nor did it ensure that the information was accurate (Fernandez-Garcia, 2017). If a Facebook user who was a supporter of Donald Trump only visited sites and profiles related to him and his political affiliation, it was highly likely that the Facebook algorithm responsible for filtering information would show them articles or news in support of Trump, regardless of the veracity of the information contained in those articles.

Big Data: It is a concept that has only been around for a short while. It refers to the management, processing, and analysis of enormous amounts of data, which requires the application of particular technologies and analytical methods in order for the data to be converted into something of value (De Mauro et al. 2016). In general, it refers to a tool that companies use to gain a deeper understanding of the behavior of their customers and then base their decisions on that understanding. The Cambridge Analytica (CA) scandal, which took place in 2016, is considered to be the most significant event to date that was related to Big Data. This case was the first of its kind because C.A. was involved in two of the most significant political events of the year: the referendum on leaving the European Union and the election for president of the United States. According to The Guardian, the company illegally acquired millions of Facebook profiles belonging to voters in order to collect sufficient data and develop software that could predict and influence these individuals during election periods. The goal of the company was to collect data that would allow it to predict and influence these individuals during election periods. The newspaper discovered that CA designed a program to manipulate people's emotions by displaying tailored political advertisements to each individual (The Guardian, 2018). The importance of C.A.'s participation in these election processes cannot be overstated, which is why both right-wing campaigns were successful. The scandal showed the world how the management of large amounts of information can influence people through post-truth speech. Political advertisements that were loaded with what the people like, believe, and are ideologically affiliated with strengthened the convictions of right-wing supporters and persuaded a significant number of voters who were on the fence.

Trolling of Post-Truth: Trolling is a phenomenon that occurs in the interactions between Internet users, with the intention of eliciting a strong reaction from as many users as possible through the use (Paavola et al, 2016: 105). There are users who engage in trolling without concealing their identity, despite the fact that the majority of trolls hide behind the anonymity that social networks provide. They can operate independently or in groups, and while not all of the content they post will always be demonstrably false, that is not the case with the overwhelming majority of it. In the article that he wrote with the title Trolling to death? In his article social media and post-truth politics, published in 2018, Jason Hannan explains how the dynamics between social networks and politics have changed since the elections in 2008, particularly as a result of trolling and the rise of the Alt-Right, which he defines as a new generation of conservatives equally cyber-savvy as their liberal counterparts, but whose politics are driven by a burning, insatiable rebellion against liberal orthodoxy. It seems as if the rebels of the past have become too mainstream, which has allowed a new generation of conservatives to become the social network rebels. This new generation of conservatives is using trolling and other tools as their sword, and anonymity is serving as their shield. In addition to this function, trolls have been used as echo chambers for post-truth discourse. By using them, people can spread false information, memes, message chains, and attacks on political figures or positions.

Bots: They are software robots that can imitate human behavior in a digital environment. This software receives data from real users, and through the application of artificial intelligence, it analyzes that data,

learns from it, and then mimics the behaviors of those real users. One type of bot that is used by companies to assist with customer service is known as a chatbot. Chatbots have the ability to recognize inquiries from customers and respond in a manner that is almost identical to how a human would. These automated programs can also be discovered on social media platforms, where it is said that they are frequently harmless or even useful, but some are designed to cause harm by interfering with, manipulating, and deceiving social media users. In social networks, malicious bots appear as profiles of real users who interact with other human users. People tend to trust social contacts and can be manipulated into believing and spreading content produced in this manner (Shao et al, 2017). These social bots have also been utilized in political contexts and for the dissemination of post-truth propaganda. Numerous studies have provided evidence that social bots played a role in both the presidential election in the United States in 2016 and the Brexit referendum.

Misleading or Fictitious Information Spread Across Social Networks: According to Lazer et al. (2018), fake news is manufactured information that mimics news media content in form but differs from it in organizational process or intent and lacks the editorial standards and procedures of the news media to ensure that the information it publishes is accurate and credible. This aims to spread false or misleading information with the intent to deceive others. These authors discuss the historical context of fake news in their article titled *The science of fake news*. They explain that the mass media of the 20th century was created by oligopolies following a set of journalistic standards in order to ensure the objectivity of the information. Fake news is a direct result of this. The emergence of social media in the twenty-first century, the horizontality brought about by Web 2.0, and the ease and low cost of content creation on the internet have undermined the means of traditional news sources and these norms, thereby creating the ideal environment for disinformation. In other words, the internet has become the ideal environment for spreading false information. One of the most notable occurrences connected to the spread of fake news in recent times is the presidential election that took place in the United States in the year 2016. In an article published in September 2016, the global analytics and advisory firm Gallup disclosed that the level of trust that the American public places in the mainstream media had fallen to an all-time low of 32 percent (Swift, 2016). The author asserts that people's trust in news reports from traditional media has been steadily and gradually declining over the past several decades, but in 2016, the decline was precipitous. This was primarily due to the positive attention paid to Hillary Clinton and the negative attention paid to Donald Trump during the presidential campaign. In point of fact, the percentage of Republicans who trusted traditional media dropped from 32 percent in 2015 to 14 percent in September of 2016. This would allow one to forecast the patterns that would emerge in the months leading up to the elections. Fake news may have played a role in the outcome of the 2016 presidential election, according to the findings of a study that was carried out by Hunt Allcott and Matthew Gentzkow (2017). These findings are quite intriguing. As part of their inquiry, they carried out a survey in which they asked respondents whether or not they would have believed the headlines of fake news articles supporting either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump. These fake news articles supported both candidates. There were approximately three times as many false news articles published in support of Trump as there were published in support of Clinton. The authors believe that this pattern may be the result of one of three factors: a general decline in Republican confidence in traditional media, which could explain their migration to non-traditional news sources; a perception that Clinton was favored by the media; or pro-Trump storylines may simply have been more compelling than pro-Clinton storylines. In conclusion, they came to the conclusion that the average adult was exposed to anywhere from one to several articles of fake news during the election period, and that Republicans are more likely than Democrats to believe in fake news.

One picture can communicate more than a thousand words: Memes: The term meme has been utilized not only in the fields of psychology, anthropology, and linguistics, but also in a variety of other academic fields. The development of Web 2.0 in the 21st century was required for its application in the field of communication before it could be considered a part of that field. In 1976, Richard Dawkins coined the term small units of culture that spread from person to person through copying or imitation. Dawkins used the term to refer to small units of culture. (Shifman, 2014). The author Limor Shifman creates his own definition of internet memes in the book *Memes in Digital Culture*, which he published in 2014.

His definition is based on several different concepts that came before it (including Dawkins') and is framed within the context of internet-related communications.

Chains of Messages Sent on WhatsApp: The messaging app and social media platform known as WhatsApp is currently among the most popular of its kind in the modern era. Users are able to share not only text but also images, documents, videos, and audio files thanks to its user-friendly interface, which makes its use easier and enables users to do so. One of its most important features is that it can spread like a virus, enabling users to send the contents they want to share with up to 256 contacts or groups and to forward those messages to 20 contacts or groups (Resende et al, 2019). If each of the 256 people who receive the content wants to share it with others, then it has the potential to reach 65,536 additional people. In addition, the process can be carried out an unlimited number of times, thereby enabling the content to be viewed by the greatest number of people. The viral spreading feature has been utilized to disseminate a wide variety of information, including daily prayers, natural medicine recipes to cure from colds to cancer, advice to escape sorcery, and, of course, fake news and other forms of disinformation. Over the course of the last few years, it has become a political strategy in Latin American countries. Message chains, much like memes, are frequently employed in the context of political campaigns to smear members of the opposing political party.

CONCLUSION

The research shown that the term post-truth was already in use before the election for president in 2016. Since the early 1990s, Steve Tesich has been debating the concept of the world of post-truth and investigating the extent to which many people in the United States would rather live in a world of lies than put their status quo at risk. David Roberts presented a definition in 2010 that is pertinent to this study and was given prior to the year 2016. The concept of post-truth politics is broken down, and Roberts demonstrates what he refers to as the real process of decision-making. The majority of people make decisions based on their principles and values rather than on the arguments presented to them, and when doing so, they typically choose facts and arguments that are in line with their existing principles and values.

During the time that this chapter was being written, the terms fake news and science denial came into common usage. It is necessary to have an understanding of these terms in order to fully appreciate the post-truth trend that is currently prevalent. A succinct explanation was provided regarding the manner in which certain individuals or groups attack scientific evidence that is in conflict with their beliefs or ideas. This is referred to as denial of science. A good number of these organizations might promote or provide financial support for additional scientific research that contests, disproves, or casts doubt on the claims of their competitors. However, in this era of post-truth, it has been demonstrated that it is not necessary to invest in research because it only takes one tweet, comment, or catchphrase for people to begin to question the validity of a scientific finding. It was demonstrated that so-called fake news has been around for a very long time and is not a recent phenomenon. In the past, false information has been disseminated for a variety of purposes, including to mislead people, as was the case with the post-truth, to attack political opponents, to boost website traffic, or to sell more copies of publications (in the case of the press). After the presidential election in 2016, a number of scholars looked into the concept of post-truth and made an effort to define and explain it from a variety of philosophical, rhetorical, and political vantage points (among others).

It was shown that there is a connection between politics, social networks, and post-truth. People were given a brief history of the Internet so that they could better understand this connection. It was demonstrated that this shift had a discernible impact on traditional media, both in terms of the frequency with which people used them and in terms of their function as a platform for politics. This is a function that the internet and social networks have taken on as a result of the horizontality that web 2.0 provides. The use of social media in political campaigns is nothing new, but it has also been put to use to suppress the dissemination of truthful information. This is because they do not contain any checks or other

methods that can be used to validate the information that they do contain. As a consequence of this, post-truth speech is more readily disseminated.

In addition to the absence of a filter, one of the primary advantages of post-truth is the fact that the tools and people of social media have made it the ideal platform for its dissemination. It was explained how internet echo chambers function, as well as how the filter bubble makes it possible for individuals to only see and hear information that validates their own beliefs, values, and interests. As a consequence of this, they are protected from seeing or hearing information that is in conflict with the worldview that they hold. In addition, it was demonstrated, albeit briefly, that the utilization of Big Data and the management of enormous quantities of information can have an impact on the results of elections.

It was mentioned that bots were one of the individuals who contributed to the spread of post-truth speech. On the internet and within social networks, bots are complex computer programs that can act in ways that are similar to those of real people. These have been used to spread post-truths and give the impression that a speech or position has a lot of support when, in reality, it is just a machine dressed up as a human. This can create the false impression that the speech or position is more popular than it actually is. In addition, the work of Trolls was presented there. Trolls are real people who frequently spread false information and harass their political opponents by doing so online while posing as anonymous users. It was explained that the use of fake news, memes, and lengthy chains of WhatsApp messages were the three most important post-truth strategies. Information that gives the impression of being true news but is, in fact, false is referred to as fake news. People are being led astray by the dissemination of misleading information. Memes are images that circulate online with the intention of spreading false, misleading, or derogatory information about a political opponent. They generally have a big impact because short texts and images are easy to understand and remember. Finally, it was demonstrated that politicians frequently use WhatsApp chains in Latin American countries in order to disseminate their message. Due to the efforts of all of these people and tools, post-truth speech has been able to more easily disseminate its ideas and influence democratic processes, such as the Brexit and Trump's election.

As a result, it accepts the claim that Post-Truth is neither fully new nor all-encompassing enough to touch all spheres of life. In contrast to these methods, the technological transformation and digitalization of communication tools emerge as an invention that gives post-truth its spirit. It can be claimed that identity anxiety accompanies it. What is old in post-truth is the effect of lies on the political scene, the fact that factual truth always requires political articulation and interpretation, the ambiguity of the fact-opinion distinction, and the spread of populism as a result of increasing skepticism when a new technological transformation occurs in light of the examples encountered after 2016. Reconstructing the common public reality that has been undermined by post-truth will require halting the deepening crisis of authority caused by social media and establishing a permanent and trustworthy space for shared experience.

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