



**THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**RETESTING THE ECHO CHAMBER RESEARCH: AN
EVALUATION FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ENVIRONMENT IN
TÜRKİYE**

Master's Thesis

Çağatay Burcu

Political Science

August 2023



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THESIS APPROVAL

This is to certify that the thesis defense examination for the thesis titled “Reliability and Validity Test of Echo Chamber Research: An Evaluation for Social Media Environment in Türkiye” prepared by Çağatay Burcu with student number 205415012 studying in the field of Social Sciencies Department Political Science Program has been conducted in accordance with the related clauses of the Graduate Studies and Examination Code of YÖK (Council of Higher Education) on ../../..(date) at(hour), and has been approved by majority of votes/by unanimous vote.

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Approval:

The thesis has been approved by the Institute Board with the decision dated ../../..... and numbered

...../...../.....

Prof. Dr.
Director

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In this thesis, the concept of echo chamber is examined. It has been researched whether individuals in Türkiye create an echo chamber in social media.

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vi
ÖZET	vii
ABSTRACT	viii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	9
1.1 THE BIRTH OF THE ECHO CHAMBER CONCEPT	15
1.1.1. Reinforcing Existing Preferences.....	15
1.1.2. Media Diets in a High-Choice Media.....	16
1.1.3. Media Diversity	18
1.1.4. Political Interest	19
1.1.5. Interacting In The Environment In Ways That Avoid Echo Chamber	21
1.2 METHODOLOGY.....	21
1.2.1. Variables and Measurement	22
1.3 TURKISH CONTEXT.....	24
1.3.1 Polarization and Echo Chamber in Türkiye.....	24
1.3.2 Social Media Use and Echo Chamber in Türkiye	29
1.3.3 Fake News, Fact-Checkers And Fact-Checking in Türkiye	33
CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	38
2.1 News Consumers	38
2.2 Media Environment	57
2.3 Echo Chamber	64
CHAPTER 3. DATA ANALYSIS.....	82
CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION	120
REFERENCES.....	123
APPENDIX-A.....	133
APPENDIX-B. The Original Survey Questions and Answers	135
CURRICULUM VITAE	149

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Frequency of political opinion change	85
Table 2. The relationship between political interest and age.....	88
Table 3. The relationship between political interest and age.....	89
Table 4. The relationship between media diversity and age	90
Table 5. The relationship between media diversity and age.....	90
Table 6. The relationship between different news source and age	91
Table 7. The relationship between agreement with friends and age.....	92
Table 8. The relationship between confirmation and age	92
Table 9. The relationship between ‘offline media’ and age	93
Table 10. The relationship between changing political opinion and age.....	94
Table 11. The relationship between political interest and diploma degree	95
Table 12. The relationship between political interest and diploma degree	96
Table 13. The relationship between media diversity and diploma degree.....	97
Table 14. The relationship between media diversity and diploma degree.....	97
Table 15. The relationship between different news source and diploma degree.....	98
Table 16. The relationship between agreement with friends and diploma degree.....	99
Table 17. The relationship between confirmation and diploma degree.....	99
Table 18. The relationship between ‘offline media’ and diploma degree	100
Table 19. The relationship between changing political opinion and diploma degree ..	101
Table 20. Political interest and different news source	103
Table 21. Political interest and agreement with friends.....	104
Table 22. Political interest and confirmation.....	105
Table 23. Political interest and ‘offline media’	105
Table 24. Political interest and changing political opinion	106
Table 25. Media diversity and different news source	107
Table 26. Media diversity and agreement with your friends	108
Table 27. Media diversity and confirmation.....	108
Table 28. Media diversity and ‘offline media’	109
Table 29. Media diversity and changing political opinion	110
Table 30. Political ideology and agreement with friends	116
Table 31. Political ideology and platform that is never preferred/watched.....	117

Retesting The Echo Chamber Research: An Evaluation For Social Media Environment in Türkiye

ÖZET

Yankı odası son zamanlarda akademik alanda çokça tartışılan kavramlardan biri olmuştur. Bunun bir nedeni kavramın kutuplaşma, parçalanma, yanlış/yalan bilgi vb. durumların açıklanmasında anahtar rol oynayacağını düşünülmesidir. Sınırlarının ve tanımının net olarak yapılamaması kavramın yoğun tartışılmasına yol açmıştır. Kavramın etkisini ölçmek için yapılan akademik araştırmalar ise çelişkili sonuçlar vermektedir. Bu tezde Dubois ve Blank (2018) tarafından kullanılan yöntemin Türkiye bağlamında yeniden test edilmesi amaçlanmıştır, nitel yöntem kullanılarak 810 katılımcıyla anket yapılmıştır. Sonuçlara göre, ilk olarak, yankı odası kavramının Törnberg'in (2018) önerdiği gibi ağ/görüş kutuplaşması çerçevesinde değerlendirilmesinin uygun olduğu görülmüştür. İkinci olarak bulgular, Türkiye bağlamında ağ kutuplaşmasının yalnızca kısmen etkili olduğunu, fikir kutuplaşmasının ise oldukça yüksek düzeyde olduğunu göstermiştir. Üçüncü olarak, siyasete ilgi ve medya çeşitliliği yüksek olmasına rağmen görüş değiştirme sıklığının oldukça düşük olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Dördüncü olarak, homofili (aynı türlük veya benzerlik yatkınlığı) etkisi –varsayılanın aksine- oldukça düşük bulunmuştur. Katılımcıların, arkadaşlarının çevrimiçi platformlarda paylaştığı siyasi içerikleri onaylamadıkları ortaya çıkmıştır. Beşinci nokta, haberin detaylarını okurken ilgi çekicilik ve popülerlik/virallik ön plandadır. Ayrıca haber kaynağı seçerken güvenilirlik ve bilgilendirici içeriğin de katılımcılar için önemli olduğu izlenmiştir. Son olarak sosyal medya platformları ve internet haber sitelerinin katılımcılar için haber almanın birincil aracı olduğu gözlemlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yankı Odası, siyasi ilgi, medya çeşitliliği, ağ/fikir kutuplaşması, Türkiye

ABSTRACT

The echo chamber has recently been one of the hotly-debated concepts in the academic field. One reason for this is that the concept is thought to play a key role in explaining situations like polarization, fragmentation, mis/disinformation and so on. The fact that its boundaries and definition cannot be made clearly has led to intense discussions on the concept. Academic research conducted to measure the impact of the concept, on the other hand, give contradictory results. This thesis, aims to retest the research previously done by Dubois and Blank (2018) for the Turkish media environment. A survey is conducted with 810 participants using the qualitative method. The survey results illustrate that first, it is appropriate to reconsider the echo chamber concept within the theoretical framework of network/opinion polarization, as Törnberg (2018) suggested. Secondly, network polarization is only partially effective in the context of Türkiye, while opinion polarization is at a considerably high level. Third, although interest in politics and media diversity are high, the frequency of changing views is quite low. Fourth, the homophily effect is found to be quite low. The survey participants do not agree with the political content their friends share on online platforms. Fifth, interestingness and popularity/virality of news are at the forefront when reading the details of the news. In addition, reliability and informative content are important when choosing a news source. Finally, it is observed that social media platforms and internet news sites have become the primary means of getting the news.

Keywords: Echo Chamber, political interest, media diversity, network/opinion polarization, Türkiye

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2016, two political events significantly occupied the world politics. These are the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom, and the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States¹. Some scholars (Nguyen & Vu, 2019) have emphasized the connection of both events with echo chambers. Among the factors that reveal this connection are the users' interaction with other users with similar views, the selection of news that does not conflict with the individual's current views, that is, selective exposure, algorithms in online platforms, and so on (Nguyen & Vu, 2019, p.1). The concept of 'self-brainwashing' was used by Bartlett (2015) to explain the echo chamber. According to this, similarity has been established between the concept of self-brainwashing and the fact that the individual in the echo chamber does not go beyond his/her current views and is not exposed to different perspectives (Nguyen & Vu, 2019, p.2).

The concept of echo chamber was introduced as a result of the analysis of how the various attitudes or preferences of individuals in the online environment affect their media use. Cass Sunstein (2001) first used the concept. The simple definition of the concept, which is used metaphorically, can be made as individuals reinforce their current views by following news media close to their own views and exclude foreign opinions. The echo chamber concept is about whether people are looking for information and news which are similar to their views or not. Do they expose to like-minded news or not? Do they try to verify about the news which is appropriate with their world view or just believe them without question? How do people react to the news which is opposed to their political position? What effects do technological developments and algorithms have on being in the echo chamber? These are some of the fundamental questions in the echo chamber research. The conflicting evidence in the existing echo chamber research has turned the topic into a hotly debated one in recent decades by scholars working on the

¹ Later, Donald Trump was tried for electoral manipulation and there was a lot of hot debates about this issue (<https://libraryguides.vu.edu.au/c.php?g=460840&p=5330649#s-lg-box-wrapper-20286513>). Also see Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017).

media. While some research results reveal the effects of the echo chamber (Wojcieszak & Mutz, 2009; Garrett, 2009; Bakshy et al., 2015; Del Vicario et al., 2016; Choi et al., 2020; Cinelli et al., 2021), other research results may reach the conclusion that the concept of the echo chamber is exaggerated (Gentzkow & Shapiro 2011; Flaxman et al. 2016; Bruns 2017; Dubois & Blank 2018; Nguyen & Vu 2019). There needs to be more research to understand the concept itself, its conceptualization in different contexts and its implications.

Why is it essential to retest the echo chamber concept? The power of the echo chamber concept comes from the possibility that it can be the source of many issues that are discussed in political and social domains such as political polarization and fragmentation, conspiracy theories, partisan tendencies, misinformation, disinformation, the rise of populism, and so on. Therefore, it can be argued that it is a key concept to explain some of popular topics. Another reason for the widespread use of the echo chamber concept is that it is considered together with some social psychology theories and concepts such as cognitive dissonance theory, selective exposure, homophily, like-mindedness, confirmation bias, so on and so forth.

Due to the complexity of the nature of the concept, the problem of blurring of 1) its definition, 2) its boundaries, and 3) measurability are some of the issues that have come to the surface. A first point of discussions is that due to specific problems, it has become difficult to come up with a commonly accepted definition. For example, it can be shown that a user takes a more tolerant stance on political issues while firmly advocating his/her opposition to vaccines (Garrett, K. 2017). Therefore and as the second point of discussions on the concept of echo chamber is that it is not clear whether its definition will be made as a cluster (Cinelli et al. 2021), as integration into a subject (Choi et al. 2020), or philosophically (Nguyen, C. 2020).

As a cluster, individuals with similar views form a group in the echo chamber. Individuals with similar political tendencies (such as left-wing, right-wing, Democrat, and Republican) and beliefs (such as Muslims, Christians) can form an echo chamber by clustering. The echo chamber as integration into a subject was used for more specific situations. Communities such as those who are against the vaccines or those who reject

the climate crisis can come together to create an echo chamber. From a philosophical point of view, it is desired to give a more general definition of the echo chamber. It is aimed to explain that the environment in which the individual lives, familial and structural differences can encourage being in the echo chamber.

Dubois and Blank (2018) conducted a research to measure the echo chamber effect on the UK social media users. They have two criticisms of the previous studies in terms of the measurability of the concept: i.) The concerns about the the studies which focused on a single platform. These studies make the issue of generalization difficult. In addition, they may not provide sufficient information about the dissemination of political information in offline media or online media. ii) Opposing views on a single platform do not provide adequate and consistent information about how individuals use the media. It should be revealed how a user relates to the whole media environment. Because the user may show different attitudes and behaviors between platforms. For example, they may use Instagram for entertainment, while using Twitter for political topics. A more detailed and holistic approach to the relationship between platforms will lead to a better understanding of the existence of echo chambers (Dubois and Blank, 2018, p.730-731).

According to the two hypotheses they put forward, as the media used by individuals diversify and their interest in politics increases, the probability of being in the echo chamber will decrease. As a result of their research, they observed both situations. So they argued that echo chamber is not influential as it was presumed earlier. One of the important points of this article is that they did not focus on single media platforms such as Twitter or Facebook. Instead, they try to analyze how people use media as a whole in their surveys. What kind of attitudes do they take? For instance, they asked participants whether or not they have parallel views with their friends. Since this methodology paves the way for understanding more comprehensively how people use media and the echo chamber's effect, it is followed in this thesis, too. Therefore, with this thesis research and via online survey technique, I attempt to analyze the concept of the echo chamber by replicating and retesting the Dubois and Blank (2018) study on Turkish social media users in the Turkish context. The given article retested on the Turkish case since both the concept of echo chamber itself and the scholarly studies on this concept still have some

limitations and vagueness, including the Turkish media environment. Research on the echo chamber has mostly focused on media consumers in the United States and Europe. However the structure of the media, its effects, and also the use of the media diverse from one country to another. In this way, my thesis will contribute to i.) the literature both at the national and international levels; and ii) the testing of the echo chamber concept.

My thesis aims to contribute both at the national and international levels. At the national level, it aims to provide data on the case of Turkish participants, therefore, it allows further chances of comparison at the international level with other country-specific data. The concept has remained vague in academia in terms of operationalizing the concept and the measurement of it in different contexts. This shows that the concept should be tested, retested and questioned in academic studies in different socio-political and cultural contexts in order to enhance its measurement in the complex media environment. In this respect, my thesis attempts to contribute to the literature by retesting the concept in a new context.

In this study, I will try to measure the Internet users' attitudes and behaviors about political news in Türkiye with specific consideration on the potential of echo chambers. The research will attempt to develop the general understanding of media-politics interaction in Türkiye by questioning whether echo chambers exist and, if yes, to what extent these echo chambers interact with the perceived political polarization in the country. The variables are under the headings of '1.2.1. Variables and Measurement'.

According to the results of the online survey conducted with 810 participants in this study, political interest and media diversity in the Turkish context is high regardless of age range or diploma degree. This does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the echo chamber was not effective, as Dubois and Blank (2018) suggested in their hypotheses. In this thesis, the concept of echo chamber is discussed as network/opinion polarization, as suggested by Törnberg (2018). Accordingly, while network polarization is only partially effective in Türkiye, opinion polarization is at a very high level. Participants do not approve of their friends' political posts online, are sensitive to fake news, and use different news sources. This causes network polarization to be only

partially effective. On the other hand, news that changes political views is very rare and therefore opinion polarization is at a very high level.

One limitation of this study is that it does not directly measure how often individuals are exposed to political news of different opinions. Similarly, not measuring how much of the news read and encountered in a day is one-sided and how much contains political news from different views is another limit. The other limitation can be considered as the representation of survey sampling since a considerable amount of the participants in this study have high education. It would have been further interesting to see whether an echo chamber research would find out the same results on a more heterogeneous sampling education-wise. Finally, participants' media repertoires can also be measured in future studies.

Another finding of the research is the low homophily effect. Individuals do not approve of their friends' online posts with political content. Therefore, it can be concluded that they do not have a homogeneous online environment. In terms of political ideologies, it has been concluded that social democrats and socialists are more inclined to approve their friends' posts with political content online.

Other finding is related to how the details of the news are read. Accordingly, the interestingness of the news content and the popularity/virality of the news come to the fore. When choosing a news source, the reliability and informative nature of the source are taken into consideration. Therefore, there is a sensitivity to fake news. Finally, it has been revealed that social media platforms and internet news sites are the primary way of getting news.

Academicians, journalists, political parties, leaders, and policy makers can benefit from the data of my research. For instance, if the survey results illustrate that the participants live in echo chambers in the online environment, then some political parties might develop political communication strategies for future elections such as organizing more campaigns in the offline public sphere or focusing more on online campaigns accordingly. Journalists and news programmers may take into account the results of this thesis. Also policy makers can also benefit from this study because, assuming that polarization is likely to be high in a community where echo chambers are very dense,

they can develop some policies to reduce online and offline fragmentation in the society. Having said those, however, the data on echo chambers in the Turkish context is too scarce. There are few studies which are directly focus on echo chamber (Ozaydin, S. Y. & Nishida, R. 2021; Ozaydin, S. Y. 2021; Kutlu, A. 2021; Doğu, B. 2020). Finally, students of political communication and social sciences can also benefit from this thesis since it examines echo chamber related theoretical concepts -such as homophily, selective exposure, confirmation bias, cognitive dissonance, false consensus effect- in an in-depth manner as possible.

What is the political 'danger' of the echo chamber? How may the echo chamber affect democratic practice? According to Van Aelst et al. (2017, p.6-16), six concerns have been put forward in terms of the effect of the echo chamber on democratic practice. The first is that the development of the Internet will not guarantee an increase in political knowledge. Users can also deal with non-political issues instead of following political news. The second comes from the fact that the quality of the news may decrease. This economic-based concern was raised due to concerns arising from budgets and advertising revenues. The third comes from a focus on power and a reduction in diversity. Profit and growth-oriented media companies may not present various topics as news or may not enter certain topics in political talk shows in order not to lose the majority of their audience. The fourth comes from the concern that polarization and fragmentation may increase. The fifth concerns the rise of relativism. Accordingly, media organizations that are trying to present the news quickly may not conduct detailed research on the facts. Finally, there is a concern about asymmetry in political information. The fact that access to information is faster and easier has revealed an unequal accumulation of knowledge between those who follow political news more frequently and those who do not. Researching and understanding these new dynamics will be beneficial for society because online platforms and the usage of the Internet are very complicated areas. The researchers have tried to measure the influence of online news. For instance, how Obama's online campaign reflected election results. The problem with this kind of research is that they cannot develop a general understanding of the media effects because they focused on a single platform such as Twitter, Facebook, or blogs, etc. in general.

1.1 THE BIRTH OF THE ECHO CHAMBER CONCEPT

In the formation of the echo chamber concept, apart from the factors inspired by social psychology, the Internet also had an impact. Two of the ways the Internet can promote the formation of an echo chamber is that the ability for people to reinforce their current preferences and the algorithmic filter bubbles (Dubois and Blank, 2018, p.731). Dubois and Blank's work deals with the first way, that is, the preferences of the users. The relationship between filter bubble and echo chamber will be examined in 2.3.6 section

1.1.1. Reinforcing Existing Preferences

While individuals' use of the media to reinforce their existing views can create their own echo chambers, it can lead to political polarization and fragmentation. According to Webster (2005, p.367) fragmentation is the spread of choice of masses that have had several previous views over larger areas. According to Sunstein (2002), polarization occurs when the audience separates from each other on various issues. (as cited in Dubois and Blank, p.731) Concerns about polarization and fragmentation are related to political information and news. Two of these concerns are; the distinction between the informed and the uninformed on political issues, and the polarization between those who are interested in politics and those who are not (Dubois and Blank, 2018, p.732).

The selective exposure of individuals to media platforms close to their own views can lead to their separation from those of different political views. This situation causes the polarization of society. Partisan attitudes may increase. Fragmentation can be considered from three perspectives. These are the media-centered, user-centered, and audience-centered approaches. The first measures how much media outlets are used by people. The second concerns the media repertoires of individuals. The last one has to do with how news consumers are split between traditional and online. Fragmentation is not

just due to individuals' media use. The structure of the media can also trigger fragmentation and polarization. In a competitive market environment, media outlets can present polarizing news to boost their ratings (Webster, 2012, p.40).

1.1.2. Media Diets in a High-Choice Media

There are platforms where users regularly follow the news, thus creating their own media repertoire. Partisan tendencies and political predispositions can be decisive in the formation of media repertoires (Dubois and Blank, 2018, p.732). The opportunity for individuals to receive news has expanded. Among these, websites, blogs, online platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have been the main means of getting the news. This new media environment differs from traditional media because it is faster and easier to access information than it was in the past. With the help of a search engine, users can do a quick scan of news they are curious about, and they can't charge for it most of the time. Online platforms are taking place more and more in the lives of individuals. Here, the question of how individuals use the media comes to the fore. How do individuals affect them and are affected by them in the political domain?

Among numerous different possibilities, I will provide two commonly referred attitudes that the people mostly reflect while using the social media for gathering news: A) the principle of homophily, and B) cognitive dissonance and selective exposure theory. A) Individuals may prefer media outlets or platforms that are close to their own beliefs and ideologies, reinforcing their current worldview. One of the factors affecting this choice may be the principle of 'homophily'. The family structure, environment, and socio-economic conditions in which each individual is born are more or less effective in the formation of a person's worldview. According to the 'principle of homophily' individuals will be under the influence of their families, friends, and environment, and will be in a way of thinking and life that will not go out much outside that environment. How might this affect an individual's media use? For example, a person can only follow close friends on social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter, and can only see their political posts. The problem here is to what extent the person participates in the political posts of

his/her friends or to what extent these posts go beyond the principle of homophily. The media environment can also encourage strengthening the existing attitude. For example, algorithms on online platforms can bring news that is close to the user's preferences, leading to the reinforcement of their current views. B) Individuals who want to access information more can follow news and media that differ from their views. This opens the way to being aware of a wider variety of views on political issues. Accessing more diverse information can have two different implications for the individual. Firstly, a more pluralistic, more open attitude to different views can be adopted, and secondly, different views can be used in a way that further strengthens the existing view. 'Cognitive Dissonance Theory' and 'Selective Exposure Theory' can be two explanative theoretical frameworks of the second situation. The concepts in quotation marks will be explained in the theoretical framework section.

Both of these forms of media use (A&B) bring a new dynamic to political issues. How might political debates be affected by this situation? There are two views which are positive and negative on the impact of the transfer of political debates to the online environment. The positive opinion reflects those who think that the discussions in the online media will improve democracy and can be useful about political issues. Users who have the opportunity to discuss with people from different views can look at political events from a wider perspective. This is to move towards a more pluralistic approach rather than a conflicting approach in solving or analyzing political events. The other opinions are the negative parties who think democracy will suffer from one-sided discussions. They claim that individuals use the media to strengthen their own views. Political discussions are held online on blogs, online chat rooms, or on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Various problems have been raised regarding the discussions held in online environments such as whether online platforms can facilitate political discussions. For individuals, online discussions have two differences from face-to-face discussions. First, identities such as age, race, and gender can be hidden online, which can lead to the elimination of various prejudices. This anonymity can lead to minorities or disadvantaged individuals participating in political discussions. Secondly, individuals may not express some of their opinions in face-to-face discussions in the institutions they work for or in their social environments due to various social concerns.

In the online environment, individuals can express their thoughts more freely thanks to the advantage of anonymity or independence from the environment.

In the transition from traditional media to online media, individuals have had the opportunity to choose a wider source and news story. Moreover, individuals can use this way to combine traditional media with online media. This usage has been conceptualized as dual-screening which allows the subject to be discussed in the online media, mostly in parallel with the live broadcast on television. There is a correlation between dual screening and multi-media usage. For example, a topic related to political news on television can also be searched on websites. In this way of using the media, there is no hierarchical order like television comes first and then the social media. On the contrary, this form of media use is much more complex (Vaccari et al. 2015, p.1044). In addition, this usage pattern has changed the definition of news consumers. Individuals seeking news or researching on a political issue are defined as active users, while individuals who are only exposed to news are defined as passive users, while dual screening or multi-media users blur this distinction because a user can adopt a passive attitude while watching television and an active attitude in the online environment (Vaccari, 2015, p.1056). (See the part 2.1 News Consumers)

In media diets in a high-choice media environment, it is also an important point that users trust which media environment more. For example, according to interviews conducted among Canadians in a study, Dubois (2015) concluded that mainstream media and face-to-face discussions are more reliable than posts on social media (Dubois and Blank, 2018, p.733).

1.1.3. Media Diversity

The first hypothesis proposed by Dubois and Blank is about media diversity.

Hypothesis 1: As the number of media environments used by individuals increases, the situation of being in the echo chamber will decrease (Dubois and Blank, 2018, p.734).

Here, the question can be asked whether there is a situation in the echo chamber across the platforms. According to the authors, such a situation is unlikely for three reasons. Firstly, according to Weeks et al. (2016) even users with strong partisan tendencies use both public and private news sites. General news sites contain non-partisan topics. Secondly, according to Wojcieszak and Mutz (2009) there may be accidental exposure to political information and news. Thirdly, politically inclined content can be found across platforms (Dubois and Blank, 2018, p.734). However, there is a problem at this point. Although the number of media used by the individual is high, is the same situation valid in countries where the media structure and media ownership are more concentrated and relatively monolithic? For example, if a person receives news from a large number of media platforms, but these platforms show parallelism with a certain ideology, can we say that the person is not in the echo chamber? This is one of the points to be tested in this thesis. Some of the questions and answers in the survey will open the way to analyze this situation. The following questions aim at measuring the relationship between plurality of media choices, the nature of this plurality and the notion of being in an echo chamber: How often do you use a different news source than usual?. How often do you use different online media platforms (such as blogs, news sites, Facebook - Twitter - Youtube) for following news?, How often do you come across news that changes your political viewpoint?.

1.1.4. Political Interest

People with a high interest in politics want to learn more about political issues and better understand counter-arguments. Therefore, individuals who are aware of opinions different from their own are less likely to be in the echo chamber.

Hypothesis 2: As individuals' interest in politics increases, they will be less likely to be in the echo chamber (Dubois and Blank, 2018, p.735).

Another important point is how much time individuals can devote to following the news as well as their interest in politics. There may be a positive correlation between their increased interest in politics and the length of time they follow the news. This is also

related to users' media repertoires. It can be predicted that users who spend more time following political news will increase their repertoire. In terms of use here, the question is about how the repertoire is increased. Users can create their media repertoire by diversifying them in line with their own views or different from their own. In addition, traditional media has also changed with technological developments. Some channels or newspapers have also been transferred to the online platform. Thus, the user can use certain publications both offline and online.

Why do people need information and news on political issues? In general, there are 4 reasons for this need. The first arises from the human need to understand the uncertainties created by the events in his environment and in the world. The second comes from helping him learn how to do certain things. The third is about validating existing attitudes. Finally, it provides guidance on how one should feel in the face of certain events. The relationship of the last reason to media use is in an emotional context. For example, it is important to understand the use of media that an individual can take an attitude about the news that he or she feels anxious about. A person who is anxious about a topic may be content with enough information to relieve their anxiety or may do more research to fully understand the event. In the first case, the concept of biased information comes to the fore, and in the other, the concept of balanced information comes to the fore. According to the findings, it has been seen that people who are concerned about a political issue are confine with enough information to solve the problem. Still, it could be argued that anxious people will search for political information more to defend their current position than non-anxious people. Anxiety and its incentive to research depend on the degree of political event encountered and its importance to the individual (Valentino et al. 2009).

Another emotional dimension concerns the status of social endorsements. Accordingly, online users can share news stories that can be shared by many people. The issue here is, is the shared news source a source that the user is already using, or did he/she share a source different from the sources he/she uses? Is news source selection or social endorsements more important for users? One study hypothesizes that social

endorsements will become more preferable to news outlets (Messing and Westwood, 2014).

Does having both easier access to information and wider diversity in the online media environment increase the interest in politics in general? What are the differences in the click-through rates of political sites compared to other sites? According to Gandy (2002, as cited in Wojcieszak and Mutz, 2009, p.41), commerce and entertainment-oriented websites were clicked more than political sites.

In another study, it was concluded that individuals use blogs for activities such as hobbies, entertainment, and common interest. One of the important points here is how users are distributed online because blog readers or online discussion groups may constitute a small fraction of Internet users (Wojcieszak and Mutz, 2009).

1.1.5. Interacting In The Environment In Ways That Avoid Echo Chamber

In echo chamber studies, it was measured whether people encountered different opinions in the online environment. In this situation, which is discussed in the survey studies, the respondents should remember that they encounter different opinions. According to Prior (2009), this requirement puts survey studies in a dubious position (Dubois and Blank, 2018, p.735).

1.2 METHODOLOGY

I conducted an online survey with 810 randomly selected people between November 2022 and May 2023. Both snowballing and random selection techniques were used for the the sampling and announcement of the survey. Initially, I used my personal acquaintances and network. Then, the social networks and acquaintances of these people provided to enlarge the sample. The third way to reach out the anonymous survey

participants was officially sending the survey link (together with the Ethics Committee permission, and the research information) to the other universities in Türkiye via Social Sciences University of Ankara's emailing web. In the last way, the survey link was announced to students, academic staff and university employees. Therefore, the survey could access to diverse socio-economic and political segments in Turkish society, but mostly to university students and/or higher education-related professionals

1.2.1. Variables and Measurement

As the methodological technique in this research, I conducted a qualitative survey. 27 questions were asked. 7 of them were control variables which are age, gender, marital status, diploma degree, monthly income, employment situation, and place of residence. Dubois and Blank (2018) considered dependent variables as attitudes and behaviors that prevent individuals from being in echo chambers. In this thesis, the dependent variables are used in the same way. In addition, the reflexive thinking added as dependent variable.

- 1) The frequency of ***agreeing*** with an individual's friend. In Dubois and Blank's (2018) article, this question was asked as disagreeing. The reason why the question is asked in the form of agreeing in this thesis is that it is thought that questions asked in the negative way may lead the participants to mark the opposite option. Therefore, the question was asked in an affirmative way. The person can be found in the echo chamber if they mostly approve of the posts of their friends. Because having similar thoughts with the opinions of the people around them can lead to ignorance of opposing views.
- 2) Using ***different*** news sources. If the person mostly uses the same news source, they may be exposed to one-sided information flow. In this case, the attitude of the news source also plays an important role. Do they present news that is appropriate to their political positions and according to their audience, or are they impartial? If they are presenting in a biased way, the audience that follows them can be found in the echo chamber.

- 3) **Confirmation** of political information. An individual can be found in the echo chamber if he or she does not resort to other means to confirm the knowledge gained on a political issue. This information can be a politician's discourse, a media outlet, a friend's, or a popular person's share. Thus, this can lead to a consolidation of a particular view and being in the echo chamber.
- 4) Using **offline** sources. The use of offline media against misinformation and disinformation in online media affects whether users are in the echo chamber in terms of confirming the news. If users do not consume offline media news, they may be in the echo chamber.
- 5) The frequency of **changing an opinion** about political issues. If the individual rarely changes her/his own views, s/he may be in the echo chamber because part of this may be due to frequent exposure to similar views and reinforcing a one-sided viewpoint.
- 6) The **reflexivity** of an individual's thought about political issues will be measured. Opinions accepted without question can also encourage the individual to be in the echo chamber, as they can exclude opposing views. If individuals reflect on the knowledge they have acquired on a political issue, they can develop opposing arguments and avoid being in the echo chamber.

Dubois and Blank (2018) considered media diversity and political interest as independent variables. In this thesis, 7 independent variable questions, which are used in the same way, were asked. Three questions were asked to measure political interest. These are the frequency of watching political news (question 8), how many hours of news are read on average in a day (question 12), and in which situations or situations a news attracts attention (question 25). Media diversity was measured with 4 questions. These were asked as the most used news source (question 9), frequency of using different online media platforms (question 11), according to which criteria media platforms are selected (question 26), and finally whether there is a news platform/source that is never preferred (question 27). As additional control variable 7 more questions were asked. These were tolerance (questions 18 and 19), skills in using the Internet (questions 20 and 21), how individuals define themselves in terms of political ideology (questions 22 and 23), and finally the extent of polarization in Türkiye (question 24).

1.3 TURKISH CONTEXT

1.3.1 Polarization and Echo Chamber in Türkiye

Since the echo chamber has connections with polarization and the use of social media, this connection should also be examined in the context of Türkiye. In this section, political polarization in Türkiye, the politics followed by the Justice and Development Party (JDP) government, how citizens use the media, and the relationship between media organizations and politics will be discussed. Studies in the literature to measure polarization will be discussed at the macro and micro levels. It is important to examine the JDP as it has been ruling the country for 20 years and this period goes hand in hand with the widespread use of both the Internet and social media. In this way, it is argued in this thesis that polarization, the use of social media, and the existence of echo chambers cannot be considered separately from political culture and agenda.

Political polarization in Türkiye has three main historical dimensions. These are conflicts between the center and the periphery, the secular and the religious, and the Turks and the Kurds (Erdoğan, 2018). The dimensions of polarization in the last 20 years of the JDP rule in Türkiye are historical; the micro-polarization of the period 2002-2006, the first political events in 2007 when the polarization between secularists and Islamists reached a macro level, the period of 2008-2013 when the JDP and others formed, and 2014 and beyond can be divided into those who support Erdogan and those who are against him (Somer, 2019). The secular/Islamic divide can also be observed in micro-events. Ural (2022) discussed the commemorations of the conquest of Istanbul as a case study in terms of the discourse in the mainstream media. He argued that at the time of these celebrations there was two opposing rhetoric. He claimed that while Islamists attributed greater meaning to the conquest of Istanbul, secularists treated the event more condescendingly.

Another study in which polarization was observed on a micro scale was conducted by Özdoğan and Korkut (2020) on an event that became a trending topic on Twitter. The polarized parties in the incident took place among the defenders of LGBTI+ rights against

the JDP defenders. Examining hashtags and mentions, they found out that Twitter spreads conservative discourse and contributes to polarization.

The historical analysis of political power and media relations is important to understand how polarization in Türkiye emerged. In this way, it will be shed light that polarization and the formation of echo chambers cannot be considered separately from political culture and political agenda. The separation of media organizations into camps are one of the factors that pave the way for polarization. Thus, a new dimension has been added to the polarization situation in Türkiye in the form of JDP and others who are opposed to the JDP, and it has also become evident in the media environment especially in terms of cross ownership in the media and concentration of ownership² in the hands of a few companies which are assumed to have political links. Turkish media started to transform into a new phase after the JDP came to power in the 2002 elections. (Bulut and Yörük, 2016, p. 4093).

After the 2007 elections, JDP intervened in various media groups in order to take control of the media. Two of these interventions that stood out were what they did to the Merkez and Doğan groups. Media organs of the central group, such as Sabah and ATV, were seized by the state and sold to the Çalık Group. The CEO of Çalık group, Berat Albayrak, later served as energy minister in the 64th government. The JDP put pressure on Doğan Media Group by imposing a tax penalty of 3.75 billion Turkish liras. As a result of this penalty, Doğan Group had to sell or close its various newspapers and TV channels (Bulut and Yörük, 2016, p.4098).

The power of the offline media was shaken by the Gezi protests in 2013. The objection to the municipality's decision, which tried to demolish the Gezi Park, which is close to Istanbul Taksim Square, and turn it into a shopping center, turned into an anti-government protest within a few days. Activists, who found the mainstream media unreliable, organized their protests through social media. The influence of social media platforms, especially Twitter, on Turkish politics continued after the Gezi process. In the process of 17-25 December 2013, the records that brought up the allegations of corruption and bribery spread via Twitter. Many politicians who were at the forefront of these allegations were mentioned (Bulut and Yörük, 2016, p.4098). Burak Doğu (2020)

² See <https://mulksuzlestirme.org/>

conducted a study investigating how news organizations that are also active on Twitter affect clustering and polarization in Türkiye. After the Gezi protests in 2013, Twitter has become an important platform for news media. Through network analysis, he examined the accounts of organizations such as the mainstream media, opposition media, and civil media on Twitter. He stated that among these organizations, the mainstream media accounts have the most followers and that's why they work as gatekeepers. While non-mainstream media is also promising, mainstream media is in a much more dominant position. According to his findings, the mainstream media works in the form of clusters and can cause the formation of an echo chamber.

In 2015, there were two elections in Türkiye in June and November. Since the coalition could not be formed after the June election, the government could not be formed either. In the November elections, the JDP gained the majority in the parliament and came to power. The political agenda between the two elections was extremely hot and tense. The effects of the Syrian war, the ISIS threat, and terrorist attacks were among the main causes of this tension. Therefore, it is an important research topic how such an environment has an effect on polarization, tolerance, and anxiety and how/whether this affects the election results. Erisen (2016) conducted a study to investigate these issues. In his study, he used the least liked method to measure intolerance. This method tries to capture groups that people dislike most. Thus, it paves the way for measuring how much people can tolerate opposed groups. The increase in the events and uncertainties mentioned in this period led to an increase in the intolerance of the HDP (People's Democratic Party). Because the HDP did not condemn the terrorist attacks of the PKK. The JDP's policy against terrorism during this period may have been an important factor in increasing its votes. In times of increased fear, anxiety, uncertainty and instability, the likelihood of being in the echo chamber may also occur.

Twitter can be used as an important tool in agenda setting. Doğu and Mat (2019) investigated how media organizations and policies affect each other in a polarized political environment. They conducted their research on events that took an important place in the political agenda such as the coup attempt, constitutional amendment, and the Syrian war. Their findings revealed that political figures set the agenda and the media included this news. The importance of this result in the context of Türkiye is the ability

of the media to be used as a propaganda tool. Since the mainstream media is suppressed by the government in Türkiye and there is political parallelism between the media owners and the government, the media is used through the spread of the dominant discourse. This propaganda tool can lead the government to set up its own echo chamber. Audiences following the mainstream media may encounter the situation of not being exposed to various views by being manipulated. Therefore, Doğu and Mat's study needs to be extended to measure how individuals use the media. How individuals follow the news, and how they use the media. This contribution will be made in this thesis.

A study has been conducted by Ozaydin (2021), for measuring the political polarization and fragmentation in Türkiye. It has been investigated through the 2019 İstanbul mayoral elections which has a great historical importance since JDP has lost some of the metropolitan municipalities for the first time since they elected as ruling party in 2002. Another important dimension of this election is that it was highly politicized on online platforms. The study has been made on Twitter. According to the findings of the research conducted on the tweets sent via hashtags and the geographical location where the tweets were posted, it was concluded that 1) local elections can have an effect of increasing political polarization and 2) the effect of local elections can spread throughout the country. While thousands of tweets posted to hashtags reflecting opposing views reveal polarization, the fact that tweets are also posted outside of Istanbul is an indication that the election attracted nationwide attention (Ozaydin, 2021, p.548). An important issue that needs further research is whether tweets polarize the political environment or whether polarizing tweets are posted because of an already polarized environment (Ozaydin, 2021, p.554).

The level of polarization in Türkiye was investigated in the eyes of the society. An important study was conducted by the Association of Corporate Social Responsibility to measure the extent of polarization in Türkiye. According to Emre Erdoğan (2016), the extent of polarization has reached very serious levels. Among the questions asked of the respondents were which party they felt close to and which they felt distant from. Apart from this, they were also asked what they thought about the people who supported other parties. According to the findings, the participants are quite distant from those who voted for other parties on issues such as marriage, doing business, and children playing. The

situation is similar for those who take part in political parties. Partisan politics is at a very prominent level. One reason for this polarization stems from the center-periphery conflict, which has a historical origin. Emre Erdoğan (2018) later shared the results of a similar survey study. According to the results of this survey, 91% of the participants emphasized that those who support the same party as themselves are morally superior, while 80% emphasized that those who vote for other parties are 'arrogant'. Another consequence is political intolerance. Approximately 50% of the respondents did not see any harm in tapping the phones of other party supporters. Another result shows that the echo chamber is effective. Partisans are isolating themselves from different views, preferring news content close to their own. Social media has not had an effect to reverse this situation. On Facebook and Twitter, users follow or become friends with people close to their views. When the subject is foreign political relations, it has been found that there are relatively common points. The majority has a negative view of the EU and the USA. The situation is similar for the return of Syrian refugees.

Another study measuring polarization in Türkiye was done by Furman and Tunç (2020). The study was carried out on the tweets posted within the scope of the Constitutional Referendum held on April 16, 2017. More than one million tweets sent on election day were examined. Although the result of the referendum (51,4 percent of the electorate voted yes in the referendum) gave a sign that the polarization was high, this situation became clearer with the tweets. According to the tweets they analyzed, negative views, polarization, and homophily were found against the opposing group.

One reason for the polarization in Türkiye may be due to partisanship. According to the Laebens and Ozturk (2021), those who voted for the same party in the last two elections in Türkiye and those who participated in the rallies during the elections showed partisan tendencies. Another reason for the emergence of partisanship is the concern that the voters will disrupt the lifestyle or economic order of the party that will come to power, other than the party they vote for. At this point, the question of whether the voters are in the echo chamber comes to the fore. If being in the echo chamber is in question, it may be the subject of research: do polarized or partisan voters form the echo chamber, or do people who are already in the echo chamber polarize or show partisan tendencies?

What are the elites' thoughts on polarization? Aydin-Duzgit and Balta (2019) made these studies from two branches. First, a workshop was held with 24 people working in bureaucracy, academia, and non-governmental organizations. Secondly, 8 deputies of the parties in the parliament were interviewed. According to their findings, they revealed that the people who defended the government claimed that there was no polarization in society, while the opponents revealed that polarization was one of the most important issues. This result shows us that the government and the opposition live in different realities. One of the reasons for this may be that the elites also have their own echo chambers.

1.3.2 Social Media Use and Echo Chamber in Türkiye

How people use social media in Türkiye is one of the factors affecting polarization and therefore echo chambers. What are the differences between generations in the use of social media? How do young people use the media? What do citizens think about polarization? What kind of studies have been done about echo chamber in Türkiye?

First of all, it has emerged that social media is now the primary news source in Türkiye. This finding is also consistent with the survey result in this thesis. Yanardagoglu (2021) conducted a study examining the news consumption behaviors of the United Kingdom and Türkiye's college students between the ages of 18-24. In this study, the differences between the traditional and online news consumption of young people were examined. According to the findings, they concluded that the use of online media has replaced traditional media. Participants stated that they did not use the traditional media because its modality did not fit with their daily lifestyle. In addition, it was emphasized to the participants that the most newsworthy content was political issues. In the light of these findings, it can be assumed that social media will be the most used tool for political news in the future.

Ozaydın and Ryosuke (2021) have made a research on official political youth organizations to measure and compare the level of echo chamber effect between these groups. The study has been made through Twitter. They have gathered tweets, between the years 2016 and 2018, from official youth organizations' accounts of the ruling party

(the JDP), main oppositional party (the RPP- Republican People's Party), and one independent groups (Youth Union of Türkiye). It has been investigated on i) whether is there a strong echo chamber effect between these fragmented groups ii) if yes, is the effect of the echo chamber weakened or strengthen over time iii) how has been an official party's organization or independent group affected the echo chamber level (Ozaydin and Ryosuke, 2021, p.20). According to findings i) there is a strong echo chamber effect in JDP's youth organization. Youth Union of Türkiye has a slightly stronger echo chamber effect than RPP and much weaker than JDP, ii) Although important events in Turkish politics such as the military coup attempt and the transition to the presidential system took place between 2016 and 2018, there was no significant change in the level of being in the echo chamber. In this context, it has been shown that the state of being in the echo chamber has a more permanent effect rather than a temporary one, iii) Finally, the fact that the Youth Union of Türkiye has a slightly stronger effect on the echo chamber than the RPP and less than the JDP can be explained by the fact that it is an independent group. This reveals the contribution of independent groups to democracy (Ozaydin and Ryosuke, 2021, p.29).

Another study by Kutlu (2021) focused on 20 respondents who are interested in politics, for measuring i) how they look for political news online and offline ii) what are their feedbacks about selective exposure to political news iii) the existence of echo chambers. The author used qualitative approach. According to the result of the first research question (i), respondents reported that they use digital media, especially Twitter to get political information. Since they have reliance on Twitter users and can come across different views other than their own. They don't trust conventional media. The second question (ii) refers to why respondents use media as a selective exposure way. The main reason is that they want to access unbiased political information and they think that their sources are impartial and reliable. Respondents reported that they sometimes use opposing news sources for confirming their existing views. Also, they indicate that online media cause political polarization and make it visible. The last research question (iii) tries to measure the degree of echo chambers. Although they reported that exposure to one-sided news sources has negative effects, they use online and offline media as reinforcing their existing opinions. Although there is not a high degree of political polarization, it is

possible to state that there is some degree of echo chambers (Kutlu, 2021, p.744-745). According to the research, another important finding is that the participants refrain from making a political posts online. One of the main reasons for their reservations is that they do not want to get into an argument. The fear of being isolated in the social environment if they share their views evokes the theory of the spiral of silence (Kutlu, 2021, p. 751).

How do social media users manage their network diversity in a polarized environment in Türkiye? What strategies do they follow? Do they behave differently on various platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Whatsapp? Finally, are there any differences in social media usage between election or politically tense periods and normal times? Bozdağ (2020) conducted an interview with 29 people based on these questions. This study was conducted between March and August 2016. Since there was a coup attempt on July 15, it is important that the study be carried out between these dates. Users who do not want to be exposed to various views in a polarized environment follow different strategies. Considering these strategies as disconnection, the researcher observed two strategies. These are visible/invisible. The visible form of disconnection is unfriending (Facebook), and unfollowing (Twitter). In this way, users break ties with other users they follow or be friends with. The invisible form of disconnection is muting or ignoring (Facebook and Twitter). Those who follow this strategy, on the other hand, do not want to break their ties with the users they follow or be friends with, but they do not want to coincide with their views. In terms of the difference between the platforms, Facebook has been seen as a family environment, and therefore, the shares are made more carefully according to it. In other words, users' Facebook friends are mostly people they know offline. While Twitter is seen as a more political environment, users said they interact more with people they do not know. Whatsapp, on the other hand, is a medium for communicating with people with closer ties than interviewees. Political debates are often held between people with similar views. Finally, in periods when the political climate is intense and tense, people are more sensitive and angry about their sharing, while in regular times they can be more tolerant. In other words, in an environment where polarization increases, users cut off interaction with other users who have different views.

Different metrics can be used within research to measure the diversity of perspectives. Bozdag et al (2014) analyzed the diversity of source, output,

openness/minority, and input-output correlation metrics in a study they conducted on Twitter. The analysis was done on Turkish and Dutch Twitter users. Thanks to this method, different definitions of diversity can be handled in a more inclusive way and the existence of complex concepts such as filter bubbles or echo chambers can be examined from different points. For example, while they could not find segregation in terms of resource diversity in their study, they found that diversity was low when viewed as output. Those on the left of the political spectrum also retweet or reply to people from the left. The same applies to right-wing users. Another result revealed by this research method is that minorities cannot make their voices heard enough in the Turkish Twitter environment. One reason for this is strongly linked to political culture. Since the Netherlands is less polarized and more pluralistic than Türkiye, the voices of minorities can be heard better. There are many parties in the parliament and one party does not have absolute power. In Türkiye, unlike the Netherlands, there are fewer parties in the parliament and the power of a single party is in question. In this case, it can be assumed that Dutch social media users can come across more diverse posts. Thus, it can be argued that the presence of echo chambers or filter bubbles may have a strong link with political culture.

There may be differences in tolerance for diversity between generations in the use of social media. These generations can be roughly divided into Baby boomer (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1979), Generation Y (1980-1999), Generation Z (2000-later). Tutgun-Ünal (2021) surveyed 516 people to analyze the differences between generations in accepting diversity in social media. Research questions include gender, daily use of social media, and when social media use began to examine the differences between generations. According to the results of the research, it has been stated that users generally use social media moderately. According to the comparison between generations; it has been revealed that Generation Z is the least tolerant, Generation Y is the most, and X and Baby Boomers are less tolerant than Y. The other result is that women are more tolerant than men, and the level of tolerance increases when users' time to use social media increases.

1.3.3 Fake News, Fact-Checkers And Fact-Checking in Türkiye

Fake news can strengthen the formation of the echo chamber and the belonging of people to the echo chambers (Karadağ and Ayten, 2020, p.483). This can be done consciously or unconsciously. Politicians can strengthen the beliefs and belongings of their masses through fake news. For instance, images spread online are also included in the scope of fake news. Images that have not been investigated whether they are correct or not can be used as a manipulation tool to influence voting behavior at election times. Yerlikaya and Aslan (2020) argue that fake news spread over Facebook or Twitter can affect voting behavior during election times, and that Internet technologies pose a danger to democracy. On a simpler level, it can be observed that voters share a news without investigating whether the fake news they come across on online platforms is true. Thus, those who follow them or those who are friends can make the wrong judgment by reading these fake news. Moreover, such fake news can lead to an echo chamber situation if it parallels their own views. Therefore, fact-checking is a tool that can be used to prevent echo chamber. Since fact-checking and echo chambers concepts have a correlation with each other, it is important to analyze this connection in Turkish context from the perspective of media users, institutions, and organizations. A detailed report about fact-checking issue in Türkiye has been published by Akin Unver in 2020. According to report investigating fact-checking systems in Türkiye have a great importance because it is polarized, information-constrained, and prone to censorship (Unver, 2020, p.1).

At this point, the question of how widespread fake news is in Türkiye comes to the fore. What do social media users think about this? Newman et al. (2018, 2019 as cited in Taskin et al. 2021, p.2360) published two reports on this subject. According to the results of this report, 49% of social media users encounter a very high level of fake news compared to other countries. Again in the same report, it was determined that 87% of the news in Türkiye is followed through social media and online sites. In the report they published in the next year, 55% of the people in the countries they researched were worried about distinguishing between fake and true news, while this situation was 63% in Türkiye.

Although there are fact-checking platforms against fake news, even if these platforms reveal that the news is false, the fake news has already spread. In other words, verification platforms cannot reach the rate of spread of fake news. At this point, automatic fake news detectors can be developed, as suggested by Taskin et al. (2021). In this way, while the spread of fake news can be intervened in a shorter time, it can be one of the effective methods in terms of preventing the formation of an echo chamber.

Exposure to fake news is linked to what percentage of citizens use the Internet and social media. Internet usage in Türkiye doubled from 2006 to 2009 and reached 36.4%. As a result, the use of social media has also become widespread. In these years, mis/disinformation mostly came to the fore in health-related issues compared to political issues. The first fact-checking site, YalanSavar.org, which is still active in this misinformation environment, was established. Its purpose is to address false claims on medical/scientific issues. Later, 'Muhtesip' (watchdog), which was active in 2010, was established. The aim of this initiative was to investigate the accuracy of the columns in the print media. This initiative was closed in 2015 due to political turmoil. Its founders later made a new attempt under the name of 'Malumatfuruş' (know-it-all) for the same purpose. According to this initiative, the source of dis/misinformation in Türkiye is the mainstream media. According to them, the news of the mainstream media should be checked regularly from the outside (Unver, 2020, p.3-4). One of their findings is that the quality of news and columns has deteriorated due to polarization. In connection with this newsreaders can look for columns that are parallel to their views. Thus they may end up reinforcing their echo chambers. Another initiative 'Evrin Ağacı' (Tree of Evolution) was established on November 5 to reveal the falsehood of unfounded claims about evolution. These initiatives can be interpreted as first wave of fact-checking platforms in Türkiye (Unver, 2020, p.6-7).

The second wave has been started by establishment of Doğruluk Payı (<https://www.dogrulukpayi.com/>) in 2014. After the presidential elections in the same year, the polarization were increasing in Türkiye. So the purpose of the initiative was to verify the claims of all politicians who competed to be elected. Also, they wanted to increase the accountability and transparency of political campaigns. Later, they expanded their objectives to confirm most allegations and statements in Turkish political life

(Unver, 2020, p.8). After the Doğruluk Payı, Teyit.org, which is an important initiative, was included in the fact-checking system. One of the events that led to their establishment was the explosion of an ISIS terrorist at Ankara Train Station on October 10, 2015, and the political climate became increasingly harsh as a result of this event. Apart from the increase in polarization, various restrictions were also realized in the flow of information. After these developments, dis/misinformation was also used by politicians to develop various strategies. Because of this situation, Teyit.org created the aim of overcoming dis/misinformation in the media with the principle of catch-all agenda. In addition, besides the fact-checking role, they also provide information such as how digital media users can verify the news. Thus, they raise awareness about issues such as dis/misinformation in the online environment (Unver, 2020, p.9-10).

The following differences and similarities can be observed if a comparison is made between the Doğruluk Payı and Teyit.org. Both organizations have come to the fore in terms of international standards. They are similar in terms of organizational structure or how they are financed. It is not necessary to have a journalism education to work on both platforms. The education level of the employees on both platforms is high. Their differences stem from their scope and verification processes. While Doğruluk Payı fact-checks the claims of politicians, Teyit.org has a more comprehensive field of study, such as known falsehoods and suspicious information. In terms of verification processes, Doğruluk Payı does not use specific software but examines open sources shared on political issues. Teyit.org, on the other hand, has a broader fact-checking methodology using various research tools. As an example of their work, Teyit.org detected 14% of fake news circulating on Facebook in the 2018 presidential election and caused this news to be banned. Doğruluk Payı has collaborated with Google to verify political news. The two challenges facing both organizations are, first, that the polarization is too intense. So much so that even if the news is proven to be false, users may not believe it. Secondly, it concerns the language used by politicians. Since politicians emphasize values more, it is difficult to fact-check what they say (Karadağ and Ayten, 2020).

Initiatives that emerged as the third wave were either funded by the government or formed as pro-government. Some of the aims of these initiatives are; rebutting the opposition's claims (Doğrula.org 2017, Lies of the Day 'Daily Lies in Türkiye' 2015), and

defending government policies in the international media (Anadolu Agency 2019, Fact-Checking Türkiye 2016) (Unver, 2020, p.13-14).

What is the fact-checking situation for media consumers in Türkiye? According to a study conducted by Turkiyeraporu.com in 2020, while 37% of the respondents do not access the news over the Internet, 17.4% do not check the accuracy of the news they encounter on the Internet. However, it was concluded that most of the respondents confirmed the news. This verification is done through other news sites (25.6%) or through family and friends (9.7%). When a comparison is made in terms of age groups, it has been found that the elderly who participated in the survey use the Internet less than the young people, but there is no significant difference in terms of fact-checking. In terms of parties, it has been revealed that the 'People's Alliance' (JDP + NAP) is the least fact-checking political group (Unver, 2020, p.17-18). As a result, it can be concluded that there is some awareness of fact-checking but old-school methods are used for this. A third way, rather than verifying from another site or talking among friends, is fact-checking platforms (Unver, 2020, p.20-21).

Andı et al. (2020) conducted a study to reveal the relationship between the use of social media and getting information about political news in Türkiye. The study was based on a survey conducted in 2015. They concluded that while social media is the second source of news after television (Yanatma 2018, as cited in Andı et al, 2020, p.579), the use of the Internet increases political knowledge. Another result is that users who follow political news on social media are more open to misinformation. In other words, while social media users may be more knowledgeable on political issues than non-users, their information is more likely to be inaccurate. Since misinformation is also associated with the echo chamber, the importance of reliable sources, fact-checking and social media literacy comes to the fore at this point.

How do people react to misinformation on social media or news outlets in a highly polarized Türkiye? How does polarization affect social media use? What strategies do they develop to measure the accuracy of news or information? Bozdağ and Koçer (2022), who conducted research on these questions with 48 people before the March 2019 elections, reached the following findings. First, they found that users developed various strategies to verify the news, such as reading the comments under the news and looking

at the number of followers of the account that shared the news. Secondly, in a polarized environment, users tend to adopt more passive attitudes towards news that is close to their own views, while they are more skeptical of partisan news content. In other words, users show more emotional approaches rather than a rational attitude at the point of trust in the news. Based on this finding, the relationship between the echo chamber and homophily can be reconciled. Emotional states may have more critical roles, as feelings such as belonging come to the fore in homophily. If emotional affiliation is more important than rational arguments for users in Türkiye, this may encourage being in the echo chamber. The situation may be the subject of research in future studies.



CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework will be examined under three parts. The first part is about how users consume media. Here, I will examine how concepts related to social psychology connect with political communication. In this regard, I will survey the following concepts respectively: cognitive dissonance theory, selective exposure theory, homophily, confirmation bias, false consensus effect and so on. In addition, I will be explain what kind of changes news consumption has undergone from the past to the present. These changes namely the transition from traditional media to online media platforms, the adaptation of media organizations to this transition, and how news consumers are affected by these developments will be discussed. Especially the change in news consumption will be one of the main points of this study. In the second part, the relationship between news consumption and media structure with politics will be discussed. The differences between online/offline media platforms, how new technological developments change the presentation of news and the use of the online environment will be examined. In the last part, the relationship of these two parts with the debated concept, echo chambers will be discussed.

2.1 News Consumers

Do echo chambers that supposedly lead to or result in political polarization exist? How do echo chambers -if they exist at all- affect voting behavior? To what extent do like-minded people act and behave similarly on social networking sites? Scholars studying on the hotly-debated and popular concept of echo chamber have recently been analyzing these sort of questions and trying to collect scholarly evidence on country/platform-specific cases. With the widespread use of online social networks, although individuals are exposed to more diverse ideas, it also causes some attitudes to be excessive and current events to be misunderstood. This led to the emergence of a concept such as the echo chamber (Bakshy et al., 2015, p.1130). This concept is based on

several social psychology theories and concepts such as cognitive dissonance theory, selective exposure theory, homophily, confirmation bias, and so on.

According to the cognitive dissonance theory as put forward by Festinger in 1957, when individuals encounter an inconsistent situation for themselves, they try to rationalize this situation with various explanations, even if they are aware of it. Anyone who smokes knows that this is harmful to their health. However, s/he can make a rational explanation for this situation. S/he may continue to smoke, thinking that smoking gives them too much pleasure and therefore it is worth it, or that the weight s/he would gain if s/he quit smoking would still harm their health. There are also consistent behaviors in an individual's life. For instance, if a parent who likes a public school education advises their child to attend a public school, it will be a consistent behavior. Examining this type of consistent and inconsistent behavior, Festinger (1957) used the word consonance instead of 'consistency', and the word dissonance instead of 'inconsistency'. He used the word cognition in the general sense as knowledge, idea, or belief about one's behavior. From this point of view, according to the cognitive dissonance theory, just as a person falls asleep when he/she falls asleep, he/she will tend to reduce this situation when he/she encounters a dissonance situation. In connection with this, he put forward two hypotheses in his study. The first is that situations where dissonance occurs, that is, situations where there is psychological discomfort, will encourage the person to try to reduce this dissonance and obtain consonance. Secondly, in cases where dissonance occurs, the person can avoid information and situations that may increase dissonance while trying to reduce this situation (Festinger, 1957, p.1-3).

Selective exposure theory, which is based on social psychology study the cognitive dissonance theory, has been used in media studies. Klapper (1960, as cited in Valentino et al. 2009) assumed that individuals would not want to be exposed to differing views put forward by others. However, there are studies where this situation is different in practice. It has been revealed that while individuals reinforce their own opinions, they do not avoid different opinions in terms of attitude. Later on, several studies has been reviewed by Sears and Freedman in 1967. Accordingly, individuals may know that they need information different from their own to defend their current views or to be prepared

for what may happen in the future. According to the results they found, individuals may prefer information that is close to their current views attitudinally (Valentino et al. 2009, p.593-594). Previous researches on selective exposure have been revealed that individuals do not encounter information that challenges their attitudes. The reasons for this may be related to unawareness that it can be beneficial to seek information outside of social environments, habits, or current opinions. Mutz (2004, as cited in Messing and Westwood, 2014) found in a study that people rarely engage in arguments that challenge their attitudes. But in another study he and Martin did in 2001 (as cited in Messing and Westwood, 2014, p.4) they found that people give more chances to debates that challenge their attitudes in the media environment than face-to-face discussions. According to the selective exposure theory, reinforcing or strengthening existing views was seen as tantamount to inhibiting different views. One of the basic assumptions here is that people prefer certain information over others. But the world of knowledge is more complex than that. Even if a person follows a particular, different perspective can be blended into news stories or news presentations. Thus, the problem with selective exposure is not only how users select a particular view or evidence, but also how the views contained in a news story affect an individual's media use (Garrett, 2009, p.267). According to the theory, selective exposure occurs when individuals' beliefs influence media choice. However, the idea that media selection is based on beliefs alone is not true either. Because beliefs may not be as a whole. Some beliefs have a greater share in the choice of media exposure than other beliefs. Other factors that affect selective exposure are related to whether individuals find the subject interesting and how the subject creates an emotional response. Thus, political events may be likely to encourage selective exposure for those with strong political leanings (Stroud, 2008, p.344-345). Although the concept of selective exposure was introduced in the 1960s, its influence has waned in later literature. Because, in later studies, studies that did not support this concept were made. However, with the innovations in the media environment, the concept was revived (Stroud, 2008, p.342).

One of the reason for the revival of the concept is the expansion of consumers' choices in the online media environment. Another reason is that users in the online media environment may encounter different users on blogs or social media platforms. Do users encounter different opinions more often in the online media environment? Even if they

do, how does this affect their use of the media? According to Garrett (2009, p.266-268), the reason why users do not filter different opinions is that people's desire to reinforce their existing beliefs is more dominant than opinions that challenge their beliefs. According to this view, individuals who can control the news online will prefer to be exposed to news that reinforces their current views, although they may encounter other opinions. Those who use online news are faced with political news that challenges opinions as much as those who do not. Thus, although users consume online political news media in a way that reinforces their views, they do not show a strong reluctance to avoid other viewpoints.

According to cognitive dissonance theory and selective exposure theory, people tend to use news outlets to get close to other like-minded people. In other words, people tend to dismiss other people who have different perspectives than them. So they will expose to similar thoughts. The Internet has provided tremendous opportunities to get information about many political subjects. How do individuals react to that much information? Do they reinforce their ideas or challenge them (Garrett, 2009, p.265)? Cognitive dissonance theory has presented that individuals have been more positive attitudes when they faced with information that is similar to their existing beliefs or opinions. Therefore, when this theory is applied to the news environment, it can be hypothesized that individuals will prefer to read the news that is close to their views or that they hope will be similar. According to research that is made by Mutz and Martin (2001) individuals seek news which are in parallel to their political beliefs. These seekings are not limited to traditional sources but also enlarged towards new media environments. Except for this preference the length of exposure is another important point to understand the exposure selectivity. It is important for 2 reasons. First, not all information is visible in the story selection. Often there is incomplete information that is not detailed, such as the title, short excerpts. Second, if the readers find information that reinforces their opinions, they can take more time off reading that news. So another hypothesis can be that when individuals find the news that reinforces their ideas, they will spend more time reading it. According to the results of a study (Garrett, 2009, p.266-269) on two partisan online news sites, people's tendency to reinforce their existing beliefs are stronger than challenging to them. Selective avoidance is synonymous with selective

exposure. Selective reinforcement describes behavior that reinforces current views and can be repeated in the future. Why selective avoidance has occurred less likely than selective reinforcement? Firstly, individuals may determine the counter-arguments on their own instead of reading opinion challenging news. This way is easier than avoiding all challenging opinions. Secondly, individuals may want to appear confident and knowledgeable in their views. The first of the two hypotheses to emerge from here is that readers may prefer to read the news that is questioning opinion less. Second, looking at news stories that challenge existing views is less likely than reading news stories that reinforce them.

It is an important question that how people access information because it is not clear whether people's exposure is motivated by their beliefs. There could be other factors about exposure except for their beliefs such as access to information through their daily environment. Another factor that may stir up selective exposure is some media types' diversity of content and accessibility. There are conflicting results of selective exposure studies. One of the important reasons is that the diversity of topics and research platforms (Stroud, 2008, p.343). Another reason is there was a limit to the earlier work of selective exposure theory. This stemmed from not measuring the distinction between whether individuals were exposed intentionally or more randomly (Iyengar and Hahn, 2009, p.21). Also, past researches about selective exposure have been mostly based on single instances such as movies, political speeches, etc. Although they were useful to explain single-exposure decisions, it was limited to explain from the social point of decision-making about exposure. So it is critical to determine whether or not patterns of selective exposure differ across media types. Also, they failed to explain how people's media consumption habits change over time (Stroud, 2008, p.344-346). In the new media environment, especially with the development of the Internet, the way for confirmation-biased selective exposure has been paved (Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman, 2012, p.171). The fact that access to information has become easier in the new media environment has also paved the way for users to be selectively exposed. People's political preferences influence their choice of political talk radio, cable news, and Internet websites. The findings of two research are that the media is used in the form of reinforcing and supporting existing beliefs (Iyengar and Hahn, 2009, p.34; Stroud, 2008, p.359). It is also shown that the

people who have partisan political attitudes may use media as appropriate to selective exposure. Also, selective exposure may increase in processes such as the presidential election where there are politically intense partisan tendencies (Stroud, 2008, p.346).

The principle of homophily is one of the concepts that help us to understand the social world. According to this principle, when sociodemographic characteristics such as education, age, income, and gender are taken into account, it has been revealed that friends, colleagues, and couples who become a group tend to resemble each other more (Goel et al. 2010, p.1). Race and ethnicity are the main factors that constitute homophily. These are followed by age, religious belief, education, residence, and gender (McPherson et al. 2001, p.415). According to Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954) there are two types of homophily. Firstly, status homophily is where the similarities are informal or formal, and secondly, what they call value homophily is the type based on norms such as values, beliefs, and behaviors. The homophily of networks in terms of sex and gender stands in stark contrast to that of race and ethnicity. The strong structural effects of category size and category differences on many socially important features dominate the race and ethnic homophily (education, income, residence, etc.). Men and women, on the other hand, are about equal in number and are tied together in homes and kinship networks, resulting in significant parallels in residency, socioeconomic class, and other features (McPherson et al. 2001, p.419-422). Age homophily varied relatively depending on the type of network examined. Religious homophily, on the other hand, shows itself where there is religious diversity, although not as strong as race and ethnicity. Neighborhood residence forms the basis of social class, education adapts people to the school setting, and occupation affects one's environment, which constitutes the workplace. These features can also lead to homophily. According to Marsden, neighborhood homogeneity is built on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, and religious belief inherited by parents. In organizational areas such as school and workplace, homophily ties are connected from different dimensions (McPherson et al. 2001, p.424-430). However it is claimed that there are similar beliefs and views within the group, such as friends and acquaintances, there are conflicting studies about how much information or awareness individuals have about the opinions of their neighbours. In a research which was made on Facebook, a survey was conducted on both the political attitudes of the participants and the political attitudes

of their friends. The results of this survey revealed that the political attitudes of individuals and their friends were less similar than assumed. Therefore, comparison and analysis were made between actual and perceived attitudes (Goel et al. 2010, p.1). Also, it was found that close friends agreed more on political issues than foreigners, while even close friends disagreed at a rate of 30%. Even if this shows that individuals are prone to homophily, it has revealed that they are not closed to various views. In perceived attitude agreement, it was also revealed that friends had less similar ideas than they thought. As a result, although friends in the group are surrounded by like-minded friends, they are not very aware of the issues on which they disagree on political issues (Goel et al.2010, p.5-9).

One way of examining the individual's relationship with news information is to consider the concept of confirmation bias and information utility. The first one is the tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of one's existing beliefs or theories while the latter is a service bureau that maintains up-to-date databases for public access. The need for information arises because it shows how to respond to or adapt to the environment in uncertain situations.

Why do individuals need information? There are four functions of information. First is the observation which serves to the individual for knowing about what changes happen in the environment. The second one is the performance which shows the individuals how to do things. The third one is guidance about how individuals may feel about things they come across. The last one is reinforcement which is confirm attitudes. According to Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory, individuals' behavior of avoiding situations that conflict with their current beliefs and attitudes is not always supported, on the contrary, it has been revealed that these contradictions are addressed in some cases. To better interpret these contradictory findings, Sears and Freedman introduced the concept of informational utility to reveal how exposure behaviors might be affected. According to the Information Utility, if the information is useful to the individual, they will be less concerned with whether that information is consistent with current beliefs and attitudes. One of the functions of information utility is it affected users about how people will react to the information they disagreed with. They can avoid or search those views.

The motivation behind the information seeking could be uncertainty in difficult times or to control moods (Valentino et al. 2009, p.594-595). Thus, the information utility will be superior to the confirmation bias (Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman, 2012, p.171-172). Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman (2012, p.175-176) investigate the impact of information utility on media exposure decisions right before a presidential election in 2008. According to Smith (2009, as cited in Knobloch and Kleinman, 2012), for the first time, more than half of those who voted in the 2008 elections followed the campaigns online. This showed that the Internet has become similar to the newspaper in terms of getting news. Many studies on the Internet have produced conflicting results. According to a study on habitual Internet news use, the following results were found. First of all, the partisans of the party that is likely to win the elections give political messages in line with their political tendencies before the election. This confirmation bias is more pronounced among media users with low or high online news consumption habits. This difference has arisen from interaction with online news sites resulting from more time spent on a news page or more selections at a given time. Secondly, the partisans of the party that seems to lose the elections may prefer to give political messages with the views of the leading party (Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman, 2012, p.175-176). A study that examines people's Internet information-receiving behavior demonstrates that individuals support confirmation bias and that, in some cases, information utility trumps confirmation bias, paving the way for selective exposure (Knobloch-Westerwick and Kleinman, 2012, p.188-189).

In the Internet age, it has been researched according to what people seek balanced information or biased information. What is meant by balanced information is the handling of opposing views in the media environment. Biased information, on the other hand, is when certain types of news and sources are covered more, while others are covered very little or not at all. This leads to incomplete information. Previous studies on motivated selectivity have been synthesized with emotional factors such as anxiety and information utility. Based on this synthesis, it has been concluded that anxiety triggers the purpose of reaching useful information that will solve a problem in a way that will solve a problem for one's benefit, rather than increasing the search for information. So, anxiety alone does not guarantee a balanced search for political information. Nonetheless, anxiety may

encourage people for learning more about political events or activities than others because the information will be needed for them to defend their views. Under what conditions do citizens seek balanced partisan information rather than being selectively exposed to their current opinions? What is the relationship between a particular emotional concern and political interest, participation, and information seeking (Valentino et al. 2009, p.591-593)? If an individual senses a threat in the political environment, this can trigger anxiety. This may increase the need for information. According to the content of the problem s/he encounters, it is determined whether s/he will seek balanced information. Her/His pursuit of balanced knowledge is determined by whether it will be useful or not (Valentino et al. 2009, p.597).

Another social psychology term associated with the echo chamber is the false consensus effect (FCE). According to this cognitive bias, some people think that their views are more accepted by society. In other words, there is a tendency to exaggerate one's own views. One of the reasons leading to this situation is the fact that the person has a homogeneous environment. FCE is also linked to other social psychology terms. One of them is the term 'Law of Small Numbers' coined by Tversky & Kahneman (as cited in Luzsa & Mayr, 2019, p.325). This term can be associated with the online environment as follows: users with a homogeneous network may think that their views are accepted by the majority, but the misconception here is that the user's own online environment may not be enough to generate public opinion. Therefore, if people do not come across opposing views, they can be found in the echo chamber. Curiosity is also linked to FCE. Curious individuals may come across more diverse views and see that their own views may not be accepted by different segments. This leads to the conclusion that the sense of curiosity may be an important factor in avoiding the echo chamber. These social psychology-related terms can be observed not only offline but also online. In a study by Luzsa and Mayr (2019), they found that users with a homogeneous online environment have the impression that their views are also supported by the public. In other words, individuals who think that their views are accepted by society can be in the echo chamber if they do not come across opposing views.

Opportunities to receive news have diversified through the Internet. In this diversified media environment, media owners and organizations who want to increase their ratings have created a more competitive environment. This, in turn, leads to a more fragmented information environment. Individuals may also display a partisan attitude by choosing news platforms that are close to their views while seeking information (Iyengar and Hahn, 2009, p.20), but the prior researches about news audience fragmentation mostly focused on specific media outlets or platforms. Therefore, it is difficult to locate whether to what extent partisans use similar sources or not (Weeks et al. 2016, p.249). Observing the increase in partisan attitudes is one of the indicators of political polarization (Iyengar and Hahn, 2009, p.20). Fragmentation can be studied with three different perspectives which are media-centric, user-centric, and audience-centric approaches. The media-centric approach measures the total number of visitors across all outlets or products. The user-centric approach' focal point on individual consumers' media repertoires. The audience-centric approach measures the distribution of audiences through television and Internet users about the same topics. One of the reasons for fragmentation is the mutual effect between media and audiences. The dynamics of this effect are caused by both the macro-level impact of media structure and the micro-level usage of audiences. Another important reason for fragmentation is the increase in media outlets and products. This increase takes place when traditional media such as television expand or new platforms emerge on the Internet such as websites, blogs, etc. Napoli (2003), has described this situation as intra- and intermedia fragmentation (Webster, 2012, p.40). One of the reasons for the fragmentation in the online environment comes from selective exposure to political views. If users consume resources that strengthen their viewpoints and exclude others, they can use the new ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) for information seeking and filtering purposes. This, in turn, can create change in political discourse and pose a threat to political discourse (Garrett, 2009, p.278).

Many studies about polarization and selective exposure indicate that the Internet increases fragmentation of society and media but these studies neglect how the advance of social media differentiates the habit of news consumption. While the diversity of information through widespread of the Internet increases, yet the fragmentation turns this

situation to the opposite side. Fragmentation paves the way for polarized individuals, a homogeneous stance that limits the diversity of opinions within the party, etc. In the times when traditional media have used more, news content and sources were accepted as equivalent hereof an individual was following a particular news program, newspaper, or news website. Regularly followed sources formed the person's news environment (Messing and Westwood, 2014, p.1-2). Also, for instance, as a traditional media, the availability of television viewers to many channels and programs has severely fragmented them. For theorists, this could have two social consequences. First, citizens may be deprived of social integration in matters of national concern. Second, there is the concern that advertising and technology-based programming will mute dissenting voices and thus lead to small communities that will not encounter different perspectives. These concerns can lead to polarization and fragmentation (Webster, 2005, p.366). On the other hand, another important factor is how the channel selection is made on political and non-political issues. According to the findings of a research, while channels close to polarization and ideology were followed in hard political matters, channel separation was observed less in non-political matters (Iyengar and Hahn, 2009, p.33). However, worry that the Internet will increase polarization or divide society, even more, may have been exaggerated. Because, although individuals are more likely to read the news that reinforces their ideas, they may prefer to read the news that challenges their thoughts to refute opposing ideas. This will have been increasing political awareness (Garrett, 2009, p.281). In another study, the authors argue that widespread Internet news makes newsreaders exposed to politically heterogeneous news. To support this argument, it has been suggested that social endorsements, which is a distinctive feature of social media, will lead individuals to search for information other than their views (Messing and Westwood, 2014, p.2).

Social media services have developed a new technology so that people can easily share the news content they want to share. This way of validating news content is built into major news websites. Icons of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Reddit placed around a news story made it easy to share endorsed news content. The effect of social media on users and the media environment has been in two ways. First, thanks to websites and platforms, users had the opportunity to directly select the news

story itself instead of choosing the news source. In this way, there has been a transformation from the usual news consumption ways when traditional media was widely used. Instead, social media users can choose news content shared by various sources that other users, friends, Internet users find interesting. Therefore, it can be argued that social media will reduce selective exposure. Secondly, with these developments, users may see endorsements about the content as recommendations when they visit the website. This is true even for traditional news sources (Messing and Westwood, 2014, p.3).

It is more important to be able to measure whether users prefer various news content rather than the opportunity to choose various news stories on social media platforms. It has been suggested that ideology and interest in politics are determinants when choosing a news story. For example, in a survey of American audiences, conservatives and republicans may prefer Fox News, while Democrats and the left may prefer CNN or NPR (Iyengar and Hahn, 2009, p.24). Also, if the source is the prominent factor in the selection of news in the social media, the effect of selective exposure is reflected on the social media, but if the social endorsements affect the news selection more than the source, then the possibility of users to encounter different opinions increases. People use heuristics based on source, narrative placement, the inclusion of an image, and other editorial signals to help them rate the relevance, reliability, and importance of a news story, according to models of news consumption (Messing and Westwood, 2014, p.5). Partisan users of news content make their choices based on source content. In other words, they turn to news that has the content they expect. However, it can also be expected that social approval cues may prevail over partisan cues in news selection. One reason for this is that a well-documented story will give more relevant information. It has revealed that consumers of news content will make content decisions based on social endorsements. According to research, the authors predicted that users' attention would shift from resource cues to social endorsements because social endorsements contain more information than resource cues about the decision. Although a user may choose the information because he or she sees it as interesting and socially valuable, the influence of source credibility should not be forgotten. It was found that news consumers would prefer social endorsements to partisan news sources, that is,

selective exposure and social endorsements cues would eliminate the effect of source cues (Messing and Westwood, 2014, p.6-7).

When the media choice environment has enlarged, the news users' interest also increased for political issues. Much research has been made about the relationship between demographic data and media use but the research about psychological and motivational factors which are stronger and weaker in the sense of individual-level media use has not been made compared to last decades (Strömback et al. 2013, p.415). Media use and news consumption have often been linked to civic participation and political interest. This connection is divided into two opposing views in research and theory, positive and negative. In positive connection, people are included in the news, and news motivates people to participate. This theory is called the 'virtuous circle'. On the other hand, there is an inverse relationship in the negative link that news consumption decreases participation. Theories called 'time displacement' and 'narcotizing dysfunction' have explained the negative relationship. One problem in measuring the relationship between civic engagement and news consumption is platform selection. One study may focus on cable news, another study on broadcast news. This made it difficult to compare one result with another. In Ksiazek et al. (2010, P.552-554) study, new ways of news consumption have been researched through various media platforms and associated with civic participation. Users in the United States are divided into 'Avoiders' and 'News-Seekers'. The first is defined as users who do not follow news magazines, Web sites, and television channels much, while the second is defined as users who follow the news closely on various media platforms. To measure this classification, the Total News Consumption Index was developed by using 6 different news media which are a) the cable television news variable b) the magnitude of network television news viewing c) local television news d) the newspaper variable e) frequency of news magazine readership f) the magnitude of Internet news Web site use. The development of new technologies and delivery systems has changed the way of news consumption. This showed that they could reach more news sources. In addition, non-news media also tries to attract the attention of users. So users have options to avoid the news altogether or to investigate further.

The question of how political interest has affected news media use across the last decades has been researched. More specifically a) how news-seekers and the news-avoiders ratio has been affected by changing of the media environment, b) whether the effect of political interest has made total news media use stronger or not, c) whether the effect of political interest on news media use has increased the other media platforms or not, questions have been conducted. There are correlations between news media or political learning and opportunity, motivation, and ability. Here, opportunity means access to different kinds of news or non-news media, motivation is about the interest of people to news media use and, ability refers to the people's skill for understanding news media. The first one is more dependent on contexts and media environment while the last two are more about individual level. This categorization is important because of two reasons; a) it shows that news consumption couldn't be explained only with an individual's attitude, b) when the media environment changed it has also affected individuals' media use. It has been revealed that i) the ratio of news-seekers and news-avoiders in the population will increase over time, ii) political interest will have an increasing impact on overall news media use over time, iii) political interest will have a greater impact on news media use overtime for all media types (Strömback et al. 2013, p.415-418).

According to Ksiazek et al. (2010) study, 'Avoiders' preferred cable TV very little, but followed network TV, newspapers, and local TV. News-Seekers followed a wider variety of media platforms. For example, some preferred cable TV, while others preferred Internet news. In addition, news-seekers tended to be older, more educated, and higher-income than Avoiders (Ksiazek et al. 2010, p.557). The findings show a strong positive relationship between Total News Consumption and civic involvement, with exposure to news having a much bigger impact on avoiders than on news-seekers. The consumption of news appears to have a high potential for activating the inactive, both in terms of involvement and knowledge (Ksiazek et al. 2010, p.563).

One reason for it may be there are more effects of political interest to online news compared to traditional media platforms. Because exposure to the news by accident on online platforms is greater than television or newspaper. However, in a study conducted by Boulianne (2011) it was determined that the effect of political interest is greater on

watching TV news than reading online or print news. Boulianne answered the question of 'Is the news media already a tool for those interested in politics, or can the news media stimulate interest in politics?' as fulfilling both functions. According to the findings, television news is a tool for those who have previously been interested in politics, while online and print news can stimulate interest in politics. The media can shape people's sense of duty, their interest in public affairs, their motivation to participate in political events, their behavior, and attitudes. She argued that online news had a stronger effect in stimulating political interest than in strengthening people's political benefits. However, as the Internet facilitates access to information, it can reduce the motivation needed to access information, as was once expected from television. It takes some interest to use online news sources, and the sources used to generate more interest, creating a causal relationship. Apart from the rapid access to information, it can be said that the Internet facilitates the rapid dissemination capacity of information compared to television or print media. Online news sources can help them bypass the biased and prejudiced coverage of traditional media. It can also help to arouse and perpetuate interest in topics that are more personally relevant. That is, the relationship between online media and political interest may be reciprocal, but online news may reduce the effort required to access information and encourage a political interest that promotes personal benefits (Boulianne, 2011, p.147-150). In another study, Stromback and Shehata (2010) found that the effect of political interest was more effective in following public service television news and radio news than the Internet and print news (Strömback et al. 2013, p.417-418).

At this point, a new situation arises for news consumers. The concept of 'dual screening' has emerged as users can have the opportunity to use both traditional and social media. Dual screening is the combination and switch between social media and live broadcast media. This way it is an opportunity for people to check political news across multiple media platforms these days. Also, the usage of classic broadcast media by media professionals or political leaders has changed with the rise of social media. When doing the dual screening, there is no order such as television first and then social media. On the contrary, the dual screening process is more complex (Vaccari et al. 2015, p.1044). There is a relationship between dual screening and multiple media use. It is adapted multiple media use approach rather than a single platform for accessing the news in research. News

users do not use traditional or online news sources in a single way, they use both in combination. There are two types of audiences which are passive and active receivers. In other words, they are called 'lean-back' (passive) and 'lean-forward' (active) audiences. While the first one receives information in a passive way the latter control the flow of information and intervene in it. Dual screening has made this separation ambiguous because an individual may be in a passive manner while watching television but s/he can be in an active manner while searching for information in an online environment. It has been discovered that respondents who read about the discussions on social media were more likely to be highly educated and politically interested than those who watched or listened to them live and that dual screeners are more likely to be highly educated and politically interested. Thus, while the users' news repertoires are being formed, their media usage can be examined in more detail (Yuan, 2011, p.999 & Vaccari, 2015, p.1044, p.1056).

There are media use approaches that see individuals as active viewers. According to them, individuals autonomously choose the type of media they will watch or use. It can be assumed that there is a direct correlation between the time spent consuming the news and the interest in the news. In other words, it can be predicted that as individuals spend more time-consuming news, their interest in the news will increase. Another consequence of this situation is that individuals who consume the news more and become more interested in the news will increase their media repertoire. Another hypothesis concerns the reliability of the media environment. If users find a media medium to be reliable, they can add it to their repertoire. There are three important questions about citizens' media repertoires. First, how do people integrate media from various outlets into their total political media diets? Second, to what extent do media diets include both general interest and political sources? Third, to what degree do the media environments of partisans continue to resemble one another? It is expected that individuals use general interest and partisan outlets sort of in a complementary attitude. People may focus more on general interest outlets because they are catering to broad, less-partisan content to the audiences. Therefore partisan media outlets may be in the periphery for people's preferences to media outlets (Weeks et al. 2016, P.252).

Chaffee (1986) introduced two forms of multimedia use. He conceptualized these as complementary patterns and convergent patterns. When news consumers utilize different news media for different sorts of news, complementary patterns emerge. Because every news may not be presented in-depth in the news media or may not be found at all. The convergent model, on the other hand, occurs when news consumers use different media outlets parallel to the news they come across. One way to measure these two patterns is to explore individuals' news media repertoires. A study investigates the relationship between news consumers' media repertoires and their news agendas. What is the relationship between news users' current news and media selection? This study was conducted in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, the largest telecommunications companies in China. According to the findings, most of the news consumers in these cities use more than one media medium. Television is the most preferred means of receiving news by those who use a single media medium (Yuan, 2011, p.1004-1006). As indicated by Wenner (1985) one shortcoming of these approaches was that they neglected how media structures affect media choice but according to de Sola Pool (1983) with the development of technology, the difference between media networks has decreased, and this has paved the way for news content to circulate among various media platforms. Changes in the organization and methods of news creation and delivery have been assisted by technological advancements. Traditional media has expanded its news coverage beyond television and newspaper, thanks to the Internet and smartphones (Yuan, 2011, p.1003-1004).

The relationship of the media between politics and citizens can be explained with the concept of the political information environment. The concept often relates to the mass supply of political information or news that is outside. There are two types of information sources in the political media environments which are general interest and specialized outlets. These are classified according to their audience and content. General interest outlets such as broadcast network television news, Web portals, newspapers cater to a demographically varied readership and give general, less politicized material aimed at meeting the demands of a diverse audience and the general public. Specialized media channels give information to more homogeneous, narrow audiences who share a common trait, such as lifestyle hobbies, or political ideology (Weeks et al. 2016, p.250).

The concept of political information environment also has implications for how people use the media and acquire information on political issues. For democracy to function properly, citizens need knowledge of political issues such as political leaders, government affairs that affect society. It is argued that it is important to include not only the supply side but also the demand side for understanding the political information environments. Because there is a tie between the supply and demand side in any market-based affairs. The supply side includes the quantity and quality of political news and information available through various old and new media, as well as the structure of that information. The demand side includes how various segments of society use political news and information, as well as the quality of that information. It can be assessed that the supply side is more important than the demand side in the context of political media environments. The reason behind that when people expose to more political information they will learn more about them but this mechanism has two problems. First, although there is a high choice media environment people may choose the news according to their existing beliefs or they can simply ignore them. Second, in a competitive media environment providers can supply the news according to their target groups' preferences and this will make an unbalanced situation between supply and demand (Van Aelst et al. 2017, p.4-5). Although it has been argued that social media ensures for users to reach information, the proliferation of the ideas, and influence opinions, because of social and algorithmic filterings, users may not encounter the diverse point of view. The proliferation and development of the Web, has made people use it as the source of information and social domain but it has become more difficult for people to control the flow of news and information. As a solution for this problem, content providers have improved a filtering system for the flow of information, and users have adopted some behaviors such as ordering these many information inputs. One of the differences between social media and blogs and other websites is that these platforms are loaded with social connections. The questions of what this difference is and how this situation affects information consumption are open to research. According to findings of an article, a) the results show that people reach information over social media and email which have limited sources, instead of using a search baseline, b) online social space and personalization which may lead to filter bubbles don't have that much effect out of the

political domain, c) access to the diversity of information over social media is a lesser level than a search baseline (Nikolov et al. 2015, p. 1-9).

Van Aelst et al. (2017, p.6-16) analyze the changes in the political information environment and how they relate to democratic practice. Due to these changes in the media environment, 6 concerns were focused on. 1) Declining amount of political information: There can be three reasons for concern about the declining amount the political news. First, there are many television channels and websites which do not provide political news. People can prefer entertainment, sport, or magazine news rather than political news. Second, although the amount of political news is increasing, it is only a part of the total media supply. In other words, the increase in political news does not equal the increase in other news and programs. Third, there may be a concern that people's interest in political news is waning. 2) Towards declining quality of news: The decline in the quality of the news is mostly related to economic-based restrictions and incentives. In an environment of increased competition, media institutions and companies may tend to shrink their budgets, and they may prefer more popular and cheap news instead of expensive news to produce. There is no common consensus on what quality news is. But basically, it can be argued that political news should be substantial, factual, and diverse according to Jandura and Freidrich (2014, as cited in Van Aelst et al. 2017, p.8) due to principles such as people's right to access news and transparency. Substantial news means that individuals can access the political information necessary to do their part as citizens. Factual news is the investigation of the accuracy of this information. Diverse news, on the other hand, is the presentation of news about various political leaders, parties, issues. 3) Towards increasing power concentration and decreasing diversity: Profit-oriented and growth-oriented goals among media companies may lead to narrower political debates, but empirical studies have revealed conflicting results as to whether this is the case. 4) Towards increasing polarization and fragmentation. 5) Towards increasing relativism: The fact that there is more debate than factual news and news research has discredited the evidence and empirical findings. Therefore, this can lead to more conspiracy theories, misinformation and rumors, and the opposing groups' disagreement on even basic facts. 6) Towards increasing inequalities: As the access to political news and information

becomes easier with the Internet, information asymmetry may arise between individuals, which may lead to inequality.

2.2 Media Environment

What kind of changes have the political debates undergone in terms of news consumers with the spread of the Internet? In this case, the question of whether the Internet can increase the interest in political discussions more than non-political areas may come to the fore. According to a study by Gandy (2002, as cited in Wojcieszak and Mutz, 2009, p.41), most of the 100 most clicked websites are related to commerce and entertainment. However, the spread and development of the Internet and online platforms has affected political discussions. One of the contributions to political deliberation comes from online chat rooms and discussion boards. They might be underestimated because of difficulties in searching for political disagreements. There are two reasons why online groups can stimulate political debate. First, the fact that identities such as age, race, and gender cannot be seen in online discussions may increase the participation of minorities or disadvantaged individuals. This, in turn, can lead to a diversity of opinions expressed. Second, in online groups, people can act independently of the institution they are affiliated with. The situation of not being able to express their own opinions due to social concerns within the institution is not seen in online groups (Wojcieszak and Mutz, 2009, p.41-42). Political scientists and theorists have produced many studies on the participation and deliberation of citizens in political matters. Blogs have also created an environment to test these studies. When examining the relationship between blogs and political behavior, two questions came to the fore. The first concerns whether political blogs (national or local daily blogs) facilitate political discussions. According to some political theorists, deliberations help people due to reasons such as hearing different opinions and reworking their thoughts. The second question concerns whether blogs stimulate political debate. While researches on blogs lead us to better understand concepts such as political participation, deliberation, and polarization, they also change traditional media. Political participation through blogs takes place in a non-elite way, much easier and cheaper than traditional media (Lawrance et al. 2010, p. 142-143). Political participation has been

hypothesized in 3 different ways. The first, following Delli Carpini et al (2004), is the formal or informal involvement of citizens in public affairs, which is discursive. Second, following Heidar (2006), partisan attitudes and behaviors on behalf of political parties or candidates. The third, starting from Putnam (1994), is civic engagement, which is the way citizens come together to solve their common problems (Vaccari et al. 2015, p.1046). All three forms of participation can be seen in blogs. With the 2004 American Presidential election, blog reading and writing increased significantly. Although weblog readers are in the minority, they have influenced the national mainstream media. Because political blogs can quickly share breaking news, mainstream media has looked to blogs (Adamic and Glance, 2005, p.36-37).

One function of blogs is to work as a reporter. They select some information, interpret it, expand it and so on. While highlighting the important points of the news they received from the mainstream media, they interpreted this news according to their ideological positions and helped their readers to understand the subject better. What is the relationship between political polarization and participation among blog readers? According to the results of two pioneering studies on blogs (Adamic and Glance, 2005; McPherson et al. 2001) before this article, bloggers tend to homophily, that is, to associate with others who are close to their views. Sunstein (2008, as cited in Lawrance et al. 2010) argued that blogs reinforce the existing views of writers and readers, and this increases political polarization. Polarization can occur in two ways. The first results from the emergence of situations that lead to clustering according to ideological position in homogeneous networks. The second is since already polarized individuals enter homogeneous networks with their preferences. Individuals may not want to have conflicts with others because of their political views within their social networks. Therefore, they may not want to be active in terms of political participation because they may encounter a negative situation in their social network (Lawrance et al. 2010, p. 142-144). According to the results of research which is conducted on American Blog readers, it was concluded that blog readers are more partisan and more politically aware. Another result of this research, blog readers are inclined to political participation, and readers' interest in political issues increases through blogs and also it has been revealed that those who read

blogs are more polarized than those who do not read blogs or those who follow television news (Lawrance et al. 2010, p. 146).

According to the findings of another article by Wojcieszak and Mutz (2009, p.44-50), online users participate more in activities such as entertainment, hobbies, and common interests rather than political discussions. In addition, it has been found that political discussions are made quite a lot on non-political online platforms. This shows that the Internet is not a suitable environment for political discussion. The gathering of participants of different views in these online groups has reduced the impact of exposure to similar views and this has a positive contribution to daily political discussions. One limit of online groups relates to the small proportion of Internet users who use them.

How has political participation been affected by the greater integration of the Internet into people's lives? In what way have political campaigns, debates, in short, online mobility in the political sense changed political participation? Has the tendency of individuals to vote increased due to this mobility? Finally, what are the differences between online mobility and offline mobility? Let's start with the last question, while the limits of direct and indirect mobility are clearly drawn in environments where citizens come together face to face, this situation becomes blurred in the digital environment. Because users can forward a political actor's post to others, like it, and thus spread the post or add their own comments on this post. In both cases, the user's intention may not be clearly known. For example, retweeting a tweet can be seen as support, or it can be done to inform his/her followers. In addition, class, status, or social differences between individuals may differ less in the digital environment compared to the face-to-face environment. Therefore, it can be argued that the digital environment has a more inclusive feature. Despite these differences, offline as well as online mobility can encourage political participation. Whether this participation can have a wider meaning other than voting is still unclear due to the lack of sufficient research on this subject. Vaccari (2017, p.69-71) conducted a study to examine the relationship between online mobilization and political participation. This study was conducted on the 2014 European election campaign in Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. According to the results of the study, digital mobilization positively affects political participation.

How new information and communication technologies (ICTs) have affected political communication? New ICTs have changed the way of researches about political communication studies in three dimensions. First of all, researchers can use the manipulation method for measuring new experiments such as manipulating the sources of instant news stories. Secondly, the way of data collection has expanded further because the number of international and online users has increased. Finally, new analytical methods have emerged, such as social network analyses, agent-based modeling, etc. The research area has expanded a lot and the methods that can be used have been enriched. Perhaps researchers should consider interdisciplinary collaboration, as there is still a lot of information unknown and still to be learned. From a sociotechnical standpoint, new ICTs can change the way politics is done, from political participation and deliberation to democratic discourses and practices. How should the theory of political communication proceed, as technology develops and becomes more involved in practical life? First, new technological developments can fundamentally change or deepen existing theories about political communication. This should encourage the use of new opportunities that may arise. Secondly, with the spread of the Internet and new technologies, it can help us to understand the world better and to complete the missing information and views. With the ICTs, the ways of political deliberation and communication have changed and improved. This has created new research opportunities. For example, well-attended discussions that can be held online in blogs may not be held offline. Discussions between these two environments may be the subject of investigating the difference between each other. The second research topic can be done in terms of the sociology of organization, collective knowledge, common norms, and values. What changes occur before and after ICTs can be analyzed. Finally, examining political communication in a global context can be a research topic (Garrett et al. 2012, p.215-222).

Until the developments of new ICTs, between 1986 and 2010, media use and the environment changed significantly. Examples of these changes are the development of cable and private satellite television, digital television, commercial radio, and the Internet (Strömback et al. 2013, p.421). The role of traditional media, namely television and print media, in presenting the news is decreasing inversely compared to the Internet (Messing and Westwood, 2014, p.3). Thanks to the Internet, individuals have transcended the

traditional boundaries such as time, place, and ways of getting news through online platforms. Although the ways of getting news of individuals to change, they can be biased when making personal comments about the issues (Himmelboim et al. 2013, p.160).

Ahlers (2006, p.29-32) analyzed the transition of news from traditional media to online news media, the transition from offline to online was around 12%. The author found that traditional media outperforms online media in terms of the advertising market. Many media analysts have seen online journalism as a threat to traditional media, especially television programs and newspapers. Technology allows creating new alternative products and this is also the case in online news media. There is a significant difference in cost between online newspapers and print newspapers. While there is a certain marginal cost for each copy in the print newspaper, the same cannot be said for online newspapers and magazines. Television also has a near-zero cost of copying. Another important difference in terms of costs arises in distribution. While print newspapers, magazines, or cables and connections for broadcast television have certain costs, the same cannot be said for online media. Therefore, it can be argued that the producers and consumers of traditional media will switch to less costly online media.

It does not mean that online news products are substituted for offline news products, as advertisers bear a large part of the costs for newspapers and televisions. Because there is no significant cost reduction. According to Valentino et al. (2009, p.591), there is not much difference between online and offline news media in terms of benefits. 49% of online news consumers say they don't care much whether they get information from websites or offline. They said the key benefit of online is quick access to news. One of the functions of the Internet is it makes passive exposure more difficult for users. Also, it makes research for information easier than before.

The way we receive news and information has changed. We now reach news and information from a variety of ways, not from a single source. Instead of distinguishing between online and offline, consumers can use them in a complementary way (Ahlers, 2006, p.33-34). The biggest threat to the Internet is to newspapers. Because Internet news sites find the Internet better in terms of accessing information, some of their advertising budgets can be transferred here. Still, the traditional media industry continues to grow,

albeit slightly, in terms of advertising. Despite the decline in ratings and circulation, advertising expenditures continued to increase. While some of their advertising budgets go to online media, most still go to traditional media. The good news for offline news brands is that people tend to use the same brands for online news as well. One concern arises from the new generation's lack of interest in the news and their greater use of online sources (Ahlers, 2006, p.39-47).

To understand whether there is an interaction between political ideologies online, it is necessary to examine users' social networks. These social networks are generally structured by actors such as individuals or organizations in daily life. These relationships in daily life are also transferred to the online environment. According to the results of self-reported national surveys on political issues, individuals are more likely to disagree with their connections in their online social networks than with their friends (Messing and Westwood, 2014, p.4). Online platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, or blogs are used not only for political discussions but also for developments in many other fields. As users from many different segments come together, they may encounter very different perspectives on various issues. For this to happen, they must either follow or be followed by other users, or the topics shared must contain different perspectives (Himmelboim et al. 2013, p.158). Twitter has become an important tool for political communication. Because the posts can be seen by everyone, they can be easily shared (retweet) and spread quickly (in cases where users do not use features such as hiding their account). Moreover, the use of hashtags and mentions creates a public and opens the way for discussion of specific topics. It is also very easy for a user to follow other users because the followed person does not need approval (Colleoni et al. 2014, p.319). According to a finding of research which is conducted on Twitter in the context of the 2010 US elections, Twitter users act homogeneously in terms of political ideology. Also, it is found that there are groupings as liberal and conservative views about the specific political subjects but when the topic is enlarged conservatives become the dominant side. Also, although Twitter users may encounter other people who do not share their political ideologies, these interactions do not indicate that they are exposed to cross-ideological ideas (Himmelboim et al. 2013, p.171).

People may be exposed to information in a way that reinforces their current views. This selective exposure can lead to their being in echo chambers, which can lead to political polarization and social extremism. In studies on this subject, some researchers reported that users were in the echo chamber, while others reported that they were more open to different ideological views. Barbera et al. (2015, p.1-8) analyze whether users share in parallel with their current thoughts in the online media environment and whether liberals and conservatives similarly use social media, more retweets are emphasized. Retweets can be viewed as dissemination of information, but they do not necessarily constitute an endorsement of the message. They also focused on polarization in Twitter in their work. Three different measures of polarization were used: (a) the percentage of retweets that occurred among ideologically similar individuals, (b) the degree of ideological homogeneity in user communities detected on the retweet network, and (c) the excess of content disseminated through average ideological retweets. According to their findings, they found that the level of polarization changed significantly depending on the time and subject. They found that there was no ideological similarity in the dissemination of content related to non-political events, and thus no echo chamber image in the discussion of current events. Their research yielded 3 main results: 1) They found that liberals were more likely to retweet than conservatives. 2) Cross-ideological retweeting rates were generally higher for non-political topics than for political topics but in any case lower than expected in the absence of ideological topics. 3) Ideological asymmetry in cross-ideological retweets was generally smaller for non-political than for political issues.

Although there is a cluster on Facebook according to political affiliations, there are also friendships that transcend ideological ties. The extent to which individuals are exposed to overlapping topics depends on who their friends are and what kind of information they share. Another issue as important as who users are friends with on Facebook and their sharing is how algorithms rank the news feed. This ranking depends on many factors such as the stories users see, how often they go on Facebook, how much they interact with other friends, etc. According Bakshy, Messing, and Adamic's article (2015, p.1130), the news feed ranking was not found to be consistent with ideologically overlapping content. The algorithmic behavior of individual preferences on Facebook

limits exposure to compelling content. This study showed that although users encounter ideologically aligned news, individuals can be exposed to different ideological perspectives on social media. One of the limitations of this study is that research was conducted only on a single platform, Facebook. Because the audience on this platform is younger, educated, and predominantly female compared to the entire American population. It is also controversial how algorithms will advise based on our preferences or profile. Because users' actions on political and non-political issues may not overlap. If we have a heterogeneous network, it is not possible for algorithms to suggest any particular direction (Bruns, 2019, p.6).

2.3 Echo Chamber

Two factors came to the fore in the emergence of the concept of echo chamber. The widespread use of the Internet and new technological developments and the articulation of the new dynamics created by this change with the concepts of social psychology. The relationship between the social psychology literature and the concept of the echo chamber has been mentioned in the previous sections. The topics to be examined in this section are as follows: 1) The relationship of the echo chamber with the spread of the Internet and technological developments. 2) Definitions of the echo chamber. These definitions will be gathered under the headings of i) Echo chamber as a cluster, ii) Philosophical definition of the echo chamber, iii) Echo chamber as integration into a subject. These definitions will be given together with the reasons for the formation of the echo chamber. 3) New possibilities in measuring people's consumption of news with technological developments. 4) The relationship between social media platforms and echo chambers. 5) The echo chamber and misinformation and its connection with polarization and fragmentation. 6) The connection of the echo chamber with other concepts and theories such as conspiracy theories, trench warfare dynamics, and filter bubbles. 7) The discussion on what can be done to avoid the echo chamber.

1) The relationship of the echo chamber with the spread of the Internet and technological developments. According to Sunstein (2001), thanks to the widespread use

of the Internet, with the removal of physical and geographical restrictions, people can more easily form a community with people close to their views. This can lead to the formation of echo chambers. Echo chambers can arise when online users do not deal with or block opposing views (Karlsen et al. 2017, p.258). Especially as an online environment with the spread of social media, the ways of information consumption have changed. Information which traditionally delivered through journalists has shifted to a more unmediated selection of information. The transition to the online media environment has brought about important changes in terms of the source of news and journalism. The news source is diversified or in some cases ambiguous. For example, the fact that a newsworthy event shared by a citizen on social media becomes news may lead to a diversity of sources, or it may not be known by whom a news that occupies the agenda is shared. Therefore, the problem of trust arises at this point. The issue of which news sources citizens can trust is becoming more complex. Because factors such as commercial interests and algorithms in the media and political conflicts that can shape the media from outside, such as political polarization and distortion of information on political issues, bring along the problem of which media organizations and journalists can be trusted. There are two major concerns here. The first is that individuals will only consume the news sources they trust, thus being exposed to one-sided reporting of news. This can lead to the situation of being in echo chambers. The second is that they will follow news sources that are perceived as reliable without questioning them. So, do citizens search for news sources they can trust, or do they develop more practical solutions? According to the results of a research conducted on young people, users are looking for more practical solutions by developing various tactics to predict the reliability of the news source (Swart & Broersma, 2021, p.396-397). This, relatedly to the echo chamber, can have many consequences. Two of the highlights of these results may be as follows: first of all, individuals can obtain information in this direction by adhering to their own views. This is about confirmation bias. Secondly, like-minded individuals may form a group and others may exhibit an attitude that excludes individuals and groups, leading to polarization. This causes echo chambers to form (Del Vicario et al. 2016, p.1).

People with similar views in terms of political ideology can connect more in the online social environment. Mosleh et al (2021) conducted a study on how American users

of Twitter engage with partisans. According to the results of this research, it was determined that the Democratic or Republican partisans followed each other more than the people with opposing views. Based on this finding, it can be argued that the formation of an echo chamber is due to partisan behavior. The views of the partisans may be consolidated as they follow each other.

The argument that online social networks and algorithms developed based on the work to create an echo chamber has been tested in a study. Accordingly, how online social networks affect polarization compared to traditional media has been investigated in the context of EU politics. According to the results of this study, it has been revealed that the use of online social networks does not have an increasing effect on polarization. The existing opinions of users are not reinforced (Nguyen & Vu, 2019, p.8).

Törnberg (2022) reached different results in the research examining the relationship between polarization and digital media. While there are intersecting conflicts at the local level, there are many balancing factors due to the common areas. Therefore, elements that balance heterogeneity at the local level can prevent partisan tendencies and polarization from going to extremes. On the other hand, the effect of digital media is that individuals are aligned in such a way as to display partisan tendencies by interacting with other individuals close to their own views. This alignment is not due to individuals or groups creating an echo chamber. On the contrary, digital media leads us to encounter opposing views. By aligning these encounters, it encourages individuals to cluster according to this alignment. In short, individuals are polarized by encountering opposing partisans in the digital media. Therefore, being exposed to different opinions does not prevent polarization.

2) Definitions of the echo chamber.

i) Echo chamber as a cluster. Cinell et al. (2021, p.1) defined echo chambers as the repetition of similar views, political tendencies, or beliefs in a cluster. This clustering may result from a certain peer circle or from the shared resources used. In this way, echo chambers are formed by reinforcing similar tendencies, thoughts, and behaviors. Groups formed within echo chambers can also shift to an extreme position. In the online

environment, echo chambers may appear on forums, social media, or blogs. In the social media, echo chamber formation can occur due to selective exposure and confirmation bias (Cinelli et al. 2021, p.1). The definition of the echo chamber is made in the way that people who make up a certain group prefer to establish connections among themselves and exclude strangers. The more this group connects and expands within itself, the more it becomes disconnected from other views. Thus, in-group views become stronger or consolidated. An important point in echo chamber research is related to the extent to which groups exclude foreign tendencies, as well as clustering tendencies in social media (Bruns, 2017, p.3-5).

One of the reasons echo chambers occur on social media is because users want to keep their content preferences consistent. A user can share on social media according to his/her age, socio-economic status, and place of residence, and can create a profile accordingly. This can lead to the separation of values and norms of a particular group from other groups. By creating an echo chamber, the group can promote polarization and thus a social risk (Malinen et al. 2018, p.353). One of the factors in the formation of the echo chamber or filter bubble may be which news source the individual chooses according to what. Factors such as sociodemographic, personality or political views may also have an impact on this election. An important point of distinction in the choices that can be made is the choices between online and offline news sources. Sinderman et al (2020) investigated what kind of situations it would cause if the news was followed only through the news provided by the news feed in the online social networks to the users. According to the results of this research, it was revealed that sociodemographic, personality, and political tendencies affect the choice of news source and that those who follow the news only on the online news feed are in the echo chamber or filter bubble.

Policy makers can also use echo chambers to support their views (Goldie et al. 2014, p. 284). A feature of echo chambers is the active exclusion or discrediting of other views on the subject. In making this exclusion, it resorts to the manipulation tool. Thus, it undermines trust and belief. According to Jamieson and Cappella (2008, as cited in Nguyen, C. 2020, p.2), those in a particular echo chamber share arguments based on common belief and reason to avoid relying on differing views. Thus, those in the echo chamber isolate themselves from other points of view. As a result, they become dependent

on sources inside their echo chambers. This could lead to a better understanding of groups such as climate change deniers who do not trust them even when the available evidence is there (Nguyen, C. 2020, p.2).

ii) Philosophical definition of the echo chamber. One of the reasons the person is in the echo chamber may be due to structures that are beyond their control. For example, the individual may have been brought up in an environment that would encourage being in the echo chamber. So a philosophical definition of the echo chamber can be; unequal trust in members and non-members within a community united on information-based issues. This inequality is created by excluding those who are not in the echo chamber and by reinforcing the dependence of those who are in the chamber. There is a presumption of various prejudices when entering echo chambers. One of the prejudice is to be prepared not to trust sources outside the current echo chamber (Nguyen, C. 2020, p.2-7).

iii) Echo chamber as integration into a subject. Echo chambers can manifest not only as exposure to certain content but also as integration into a topic. For example what is the relationship between echo chambers and rumors in terms of being involved in a topic? How do echo chambers affect the spread of rumors? In a study by Choi et al (2020, p.1), the groups that spread rumors online were conceptualized as rumor echo chambers. Groups that spread rumors create an echo chamber. Therefore, it can be argued that rumors can be associated with selective exposure and homophily. According to the results of this study, it has been revealed that users in the rumor echo chamber use social media are more inclined to selective exposure and have a homogeneous political view. Therefore, it has been suggested that the rumor echo chamber can be used as a propaganda tool. Because, according to another result of the research, it was revealed that the members of the rumor echo chamber spread propaganda faster and reached a wider audience, thus suppressing the counterarguments (Choi et al. 2020, p.2).

Another example can be groups such as those who are against vaccines or those who reject climate change can be given. Individuals belonging to such groups can create an echo chamber by excluding opposing views or reinforcing their own. At this point, the following situation may arise: the individual may create an echo chamber on an issue such as anti-vaccination but may adopt a different attitude on political issues. Therefore, how determining the boundaries of the echo chamber concept becomes an important topic of

discussion. Herein, whether the news source of the subject is checked or not also affects the situation of being in the echo chamber. Therefore, echo chambers can also be described as liking, sharing, or commenting on various posts as a social media practice. The constant repetition of a view without checking its source can lead to the spread of false information while creating the echo chamber. This may lead individuals to think that their views are generally accepted in society (Garrett, K. 2017, p.371-372).

People may use a filtering system about the political posts. This attitude can lead to echo chambers but also there are signs that those filtering systems are not effective (Bruns, A. 2017, p.2). Echo chambers can also show a functional feature in cases where the information flow is intense. If the information flow is such that the parties can reinforce their own views, then individuals in the echo chamber can strengthen their membership. Therefore, the data claiming that the echo chamber is not effective can be viewed with suspicion (Nguyen, C. 2020, p.13).

3) New possibilities in measuring people's consumption of news with technological developments. Thanks to the development of technology, social scientists have made significant progress in measuring how people consume information, how this information affects their way of thinking, and how people affect each other. These developments were realized by analyzing the data obtained from social media via computers. Social media users can access news in three ways. The first is coverage of national news, which is mainstream news. The second is news or details that are not presented in the mainstream media, which is alternative news. Finally, there is online political activism that delivers news via the Internet (Quattrociocchi, W. 2017, P.61-62).

Three types of usage can be suggested in terms of information sharing and social interaction in social media. These types can be divided into conformist, provocative, and protective. Those who adopt a conformist attitude on social media try to use social media in a way that does not engage in arguments, tries to make a good impression on social media, and supports other users. Those who take a provocative attitude engage in more arguments with other users and make others share more irritating. Finally, those who adopt a protective attitude selectively protect themselves from harmful sharing. A study was conducted to measure these attitudes in Finland between December 2017 and January

2018 (Malinen et al. 2018). In this study, it was investigated how social media users take an attitude towards unwanted content and what they prefer. In addition, the relationship between social media use and sociodemographic factors was examined. According to the results of the research, it was determined that women use social media in a more protective and conformist way, while men use it more provocatively. In addition, it has been found that younger and more educated users use social media in a conformist and protective manner (Malinen et al. 2018, p.350-353).

In a later study by Koiranen et al. (2022) on Finnish citizens, these three social media behaviors were associated with their political party preferences. Furthermore, they examined the extent to which politically active users displayed these three behaviors. According to their findings, they revealed that supporters of different political parties use social media in different ways. They also found that those who actively use social media politically display these three behaviors (mostly conformist) more prominently. Therefore, they concluded that the formation of the echo chamber is not directly related to the active use of social media. They also stated that political party preferences can affect the use of social media. Therefore, the question may be asked whether political parties can follow a policy that can lead to the formation of an echo chamber.

As stated earlier, according to Dubois and Blank's (2018) argument, studies focusing on a single platform are not sufficient to measure the effect of the echo chamber. While the general use of the media covers more broadly whether individuals are in an echo chamber or how effective an echo chamber is, social media platforms such as Twitter can also pave the way for exposure to different views (Matuszewski and Szabó, 2019). Except of this, what kind of results can an examination of how a user consumes different social media platforms reveal about the effect of echo chamber? Kitchens et al. (2020) conducted a study to measure how social media platforms affect an individual's news consumption. They carried out this study on Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit social media platforms. Through these platforms, they investigated whether the use of social media widens or narrows the consumption of information resources and whether this consumption leads individuals to more moderate or more partisan tendencies. According to their findings, they could not detect a situation that increases or decreases the information source on Twitter. For Facebook and Reddit, they found that news source

consumption was expanding. They found the following results on how platforms affect the political spectrum of individuals: while Twitter again did not show a clear trend, they concluded that Facebook had partisan tendencies in those who used it more, while Reddit led to more moderate tendencies. Therefore, one of the important results of this study in terms of echo chamber and filter bubbles is that different platforms may affect individuals' media usage differently. Whether individuals are in the echo chamber or filter bubbles may differ due to the structural differences of the platforms.

One of the factors that cause the person to be in the echo chamber or accelerate this situation as indicated by Sasahara et al. (2021, p.384-385) is an act of unfollowing or unfriending performed online. This action can lead to both polarization of opinion and network aggregation. Moreover, the algorithms of the platforms can contribute to the faster realization of both situations. According to the unfriending/unfollowing action, users who comply with the suggestions of the algorithms can interact with people close to their views and find themselves in the echo chamber. In order to prevent or mitigate the situation in the echo chamber due to the unfriending/unfollowing action, the authors suggest that users use social media in a way that distances them from their own views.

4) *The relationship between social media platforms and echo chamber.* It has been investigated how social media platforms affect the formation of echo chambers. This research was conducted by Cinelli et al. (2021, p.5-6) on Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, and Gab. According to the findings, it was determined that Facebook and Twitter caused the emergence of the echo chamber. The social network structure and the use of a news source algorithm by both platforms have a role in the emergence of this result. Because algorithms take into account the current trends and preferences of users and present news in this direction to the user. Thus, it shapes the user's perspective on political issues by influencing the social perceptions of the user. Therefore, users with similar opinions can create an echo chamber. This, in turn, can increase polarization and lead to the spread of misinformation. Apart from this, another finding is that homophilic clustering dominates the online environment. In a comparison of news consumption between platforms, it was found that there were differences between them. The degree of homophilic aggregation shows different values between platforms in terms of network structure or access to

information (Cinelli et al. 2021, p.5-6). The relationship of digital media with the public sphere also affects political homophily. Although there is an interaction of different views and information in the public sphere, echo chambers can also emerge with the further reinforcement of close views in the same environment. Homophily leads to a worldview that is shared. In a political sense, homophily occurs in a shared political view or attitude. This can lead to political polarization. The homogeneity of these political views creates echo chambers (Colleoni et al. 2014, P.317-319). Colleoni et al.'s study (2014, p.320) has been investigated the structure of Twitter in general, that is, the entire network of users. Based on the tweets of Democrats and Republicans in America in 2009, a comparison of political homophily was made. The reason for choosing 2009 is because it has the opportunity to access all data. According to the findings in this study, it was seen that Democrats shared 10 times more. In other words, Democrats express their opinions more. Apart from that, it has been found that they follow official Democratic accounts less. For Republicans, the opposite was seen. Republicans are less likely to share their views when following official accounts. According to another result, Democrats were found to be more in political homophily than Republicans. More specifically, Democrats who post on Twitter interact more with other Democrat users. These are users who do not follow official Democrat accounts. For Republicans, it's the opposite. Republicans have less influence with other Republican users who don't follow official accounts. In the comparison of users following official accounts, Republicans follow official accounts at a higher rate than Democrats. When conducting an analysis on Twitter, it is important how it is handled. When considered as a social environment, a high degree of homophily and echo chambers can be seen, while when it is considered as a news environment, it can be concluded that it is fewer echo chambers and a more public space where various opinions are spread (Colleoni et al. 2014, p.325-328).

Do online political campaigns reinforce existing political attitudes, creating an echo chamber, or are they changing them? Vaccari (2012) analyzed how the online environment affects the persuasive power in politics through this question. He addressed this issue through the receive-accept-sample (RAS) model that Zaller introduced in 1992. According to this model, it states that in order for the individual to change their attitudes, the message must first be received and then accepted. However, individuals can show

resistance in 3 ways when they encounter events that may go against their current attitudes. The first has to do with recognizing that messages have aspects that are inconsistent with their own inclinations and rejecting them. This was called partisan resistance. The second reason for resistance is related to the fact that the dominance of existing views can overshadow new ones. This is called inertial resistance. Finally, they may show resistance as it is known that different views may be encountered in the media, which are contrary to the internalized existing views. This is called countervailing resistance. Thus, it can be concluded that individuals with high political awareness may be more resistant to accepting messages even though they receive them more. Conversely, those with low political awareness are more likely to accept messages but are less likely to receive them. Thus, individuals with moderate political awareness are more likely to be the most persuasive, both in terms of receiving messages and accepting them (Vaccari, 2012, p.3).

In his study, Vaccari wanted to reevaluate the claim that e-campaigns reinforce attitudes. He claims that online campaigns evolve to lead to attitude change and persuasion. His work to measure this situation has two purposes. The first is about how far the users of the online campaign can reach and persuade the voters. The second is about the conditions under which online campaigns attract attention and whether their viewers receive and accept the message. Examining these issues together with the RAS model will lead to a better understanding of the effects of online campaigns (Vaccari, 2012, p.5).

In the narrow definition of the echo chamber, the act of excluding foreign thoughts is indicated. At this point, the question of how accidentally coming across news or arguments with different views on social media will affect one's political participation and political information may come to the fore. Valeriani and Vaccari (2015) have done a study on these issues. According to the hypothesis they put forward in their research, there is a positive correlation between encountering different political views on social media and political participation. Apart from their hypotheses, there are also two research questions. These are related to interest in politics and country of residence. They explored how interest in politics affects political participation and accidental exposure to political news (Valeriani and Vaccari, 2015, p 7-8). According to their findings, considering all

other factors equal, as political interest rises, so does the strength of the association between unintentional exposure to political content on social media and online political activity. The second research question concerns the comparative analysis of the relationship between accidental exposure to political information and political participation. This comparison is made over the 2014 European Parliament elections between Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom. One of the results of this research is that accidental exposure can lead to a narrowing of the gap between citizens with high and low participation in political affairs. This is especially true for German respondents, who have a lower level of participation than the others (Valeriani and Vaccari, 2015, p 13-14).

Even though users on online news sites or social media platforms have the opportunity to follow people or organizations close to their views, can they be accidentally exposed to content from a different viewpoint? Do people who actively use social media come across more diverse news content than people who use it passively? Masip et al. (2020) conducted a study investigating these issues on Spanish news consumers. According to Hallin and Mancini's (2004) study (as cited in Masip et al. 2020, p.56), Spain is an important country in terms of showing how social media affects polarization, as it has a polarized media system. According to the results of their studies, it has been revealed that although most participants follow content close to their own views online, those who are exposed to different content should not be underestimated. Therefore, it can be argued that the online environment has a more pluralistic character in a country with a polarized media structure. According to another result of their study, they showed that people who use Facebook are more exposed to similar views, while people who use Twitter can come across content that both reinforces their current views and is exposed to different perspectives. Therefore, at this point, we again come to the conclusion that the algorithmic structure of the platforms affects exposure to similar or opposing views.

Not only the distinction between similar and opposing views but also what type of content users may be exposed to can be guided by algorithms. In other words, the content that users are exposed to in the news source depends on the algorithms, apart from the behavior of the person in the online environment or the attitudes of his/her social

friends. The extent to which this situation is effective was discussed in the study by Thorson et al. (2021, p.193). In this study, the structure of the algorithms on the Facebook platform was examined. Two results stood out from their findings. First, Facebook algorithms show relevant content in the news feed based on people's likes, friends, or followers. Secondly, because Facebook also has commercial relations, it can deliver the advertisements it has contracted with to the users. These ads are also directed according to the behavior of the users on Facebook. Therefore, people's behaviors in social media and platform algorithms work in a complementary way.

5) Echo chamber, misinformation and their connections with polarization and fragmentation. Echo chamber has been associated with the spread of misinformation on social media. The spread of misinformation may increase partisanship and polarization. An extreme dimension of polarization is affective polarization. According to this emotional state, individuals belonging to a group feel strong negative emotions towards other groups. This situation prevents rational discussions on political issues because it is based on loyalty to the group rather than reason (Gillani, 2018, p. 823).

One of the important functions of the echo chamber can be to spread misinformation quickly to go viral. Törnberg (2018, p. 2-3) tried to reveal the causal relationship between false information and the echo chamber in his study. According to his findings, he concluded that false information goes viral faster in networks with an echo chamber. Therefore, the polarization of users also accelerate. In his work, he made an important distinction in terms of both the definition and the structure of the echo chamber. He treated the echo chamber as both opinion polarization and network polarization. Opinion polarization can be defined as individuals with similar views on a subject forming a cluster, separating from people with other views, and this leads to polarization. At this point, network polarization puts network structure or platforms in the forefront rather than individual actions and ideas. For example, effects beyond the individual's control, such as algorithms or people in a particular location, coming across similar news feeds.

Thanks to these definitions, the way for research that may lead to a better understanding of the concept of echo chamber, which has a complex structure, has been

paved. But this definition has also shortcomings such as in terms of network and opinion dynamics, we can not talk about a simultaneous effect as it will take more time for behavior to change (Baumann et al. 2020, p.2).

Cota (2019, p.2) conducted a study to measure how polarization is reflected in political communication. This study is based on the dismissal process of Dilma Rousseff, the former president of Brazil, in 2016. In the study conducted on Twitter, 12 million tweets sent by half a million users were examined. Through these tweets, the relationship between the supporters and opponents of the president's accusation with the echo chambers was analyzed. It has been suggested that the presence of echo chambers can be measured through the network structures of pro-accusation and anti-accusation users. One way to measure this is to look at the number of RTs. Cota argued that there is a strong relationship between political orientation and users' capacities. In the case under consideration, it was determined that the pro-accusation users spread more than other users. In addition, it has been found that users with greater dissemination capacity can reach users who tend to receive various information.

The main problem in accessing political information through social media platforms such as Twitter is whether users seek information unilaterally or in a multi-faceted way. If a one-sided search is made, does it show partisan tendencies? Matuszewski and Szabó (2019) conducted a study on Twitter to explore these issues. One of the important points of this study is that they make a comparative analysis on Twitter users in Poland and Hungary. They examined whether the users were in the echo chamber by taking their followers and the accounts they followed. Therefore, they tried to explain one of the reasons for political polarization. According to their findings, they found that most of the users interacted with a cluster in Twitter usage, that is, with like-minded users. However, the authors took a neutral position in the polarization effect of Twitter by revealing that other users follow accounts with different views. In other words, although there is a tendency for polarization among users of both countries, they also stated that Twitter has the potential to reach a pluralistic structure since there are users who take various opinions into account.

One way of preventing fake news is fact-checking. But can political misinformation on social media be eliminated through fact-checking? According to the

results of a study by Porter and Wood (2022), it has been revealed that fact-checking reduces the spread of misinformation, but this alone is not enough to eliminate misinformation. Factual verification is necessary to dispel the belief of news consumers in misinformation. Because without factual evidence, individuals may continue to believe misinformation.

Rhodes (2022) has another study on the effect of echo chambers and filter bubbles in disseminating misinformation or fake news. The aim of the study, which was carried out with the survey experiment method, was to reveal whether users with a politically homogeneous flow or users with a heterogeneous flow believed more in fake news. According to one of the findings of the study, it was revealed that users with a politically homogeneous flow were more likely to believe fake news. Therefore, it can be argued that two methods can be followed in order to prevent echo chambers and the spread of misinformation. First of all, the accuracy of the news needs to be proven with factual evidence in order to prevent the spread of misinformation. Secondly, it has been revealed that it is necessary to have flows containing different views in order to prevent the formation of echo chambers.

One of the methods developed by social media platforms to prevent the spread of fake news is flagging systems. According to this system, if users report a news content beyond a limit, its accuracy will be investigated by experts. But a practical issue is the extent to which users report dissenting content impartially and tolerantly. Because users with lower tolerance levels may flag opposing news sources more (Westermann & Coscia, 2022). Users who are biased and intolerant about their news sources in this way could be in the echo chamber. Perhaps the cause of the echo chamber is 'simply' based on intolerance. This issue can be addressed in future studies.

6) The connection of the echo chamber with other concepts and theories such as conspiracy theories, trench warfare dynamics, and filter bubbles.

Conspiracy theories & echo chamber. Del Vicario et al. (2016, p.2) conducted a study to analyze the level of echo chambers of Facebook users in Italy. Accordingly, those on the side of science and conspiracy theorists, which are divided into two poles, were

chosen as examples. The emotional and participatory behavior of users within these communities was also measured. Whether the news is considered true or not can be determined by social norms and beliefs within the group. The acceptance or rejection of the news may also be affected by the extent to which it fits with the common beliefs of the community. According to the results of this study, both communities show similarities in terms of attitudes. When they choose a group, they act in accordance with the dynamics of the community, regardless of the topic. In addition, being in echo chambers affects the emotions of users. Regardless of the group, active users have been found to make emotionally negative comments. As a result, it has been revealed that Facebook encourages echo chambers, being in echo chambers affects the emotional state of users and the community, and active users have a negative emotional attitude (Del Vicario et al. 2016, p.5-8).

Trench Warfare Dynamics & echo chamber. The Internet does not just cause people to interact with others who have similar views. It also opens the way to interact with other people with different perspectives. In this sense, it has been suggested that public debates will develop positively from the Habermasian point of view. However, being exposed to different opinions may not cause the person to question their current opinion. On the contrary, it may lead to a further strengthening of his current opinion. This situation is conceptualized as trench warfare dynamics. A survey study was conducted by Karlsen et al. (2017, p.258-261) in Norway in 2014, to test the echo chambers and trench warfare situations. Two questions emerged in this survey study. One is whether users interact only with like-minded people, and the other is how online discussions have an impact on users. It is analyzed whether the arguments, which can be contradictory, non-contradictory, or balanced, reinforce or change one's current view. According to the findings, firstly, one-sided discussions will reinforce the existing views or beliefs of individuals, whether they are of the same or different views. Second, impartial discussions that include the views of both sides will reinforce individuals' current views and beliefs less than one-sided debates. Finally, individuals who are more attached to their past beliefs and views are more affected by one-sided and self-affirming discussions than moderates.

It was emphasized in another study that exposure to different views would not be enough to avoid echo chambers. According to Garrett (2017, p.371-372), it has been revealed in many studies that people come across different opinions online. While there are studies to support the existence of echo chambers, Garrett argues that there is a more significant threat than echo chambers. This threat is misinformation that politicians, self-interested, or foreign powers use to obtain various gains through technology. Thanks to this false information, public opinion is misinformed and manipulated. This misinformation is further encouraged by echo chambers. Three ways have been proposed to combat this misinformation. The first is about education. To create a change in public opinion, training programs can be created in which people will be more questioning of their views and open to change. Second, the spread of misinformation through search engines can be prevented. Various algorithms can establish source reliability and validity of claims. In this case, a path that will be sensitive to censorship and the right to speak freely can be followed. A balanced stance should be taken to protect the rights of minorities and dissident voices, as well as to prevent misinformation that threatens social life. Finally, one reason for the spread of misinformation may be due to the overexploitation of emotions. To reduce partisanship or extremism, the spread of hateful or polarizing expressions can be reduced. This situation also brings ethical problems with it.

Filter Bubble & echo chamber. The concept of filter bubble was coined by the technology entrepreneur Eli Pariser in 2011. Among the issues that he tries to explain with this concept, the ones that come to the fore are as follows; how users' preferences in social media (in areas such as political, social, entertainment) are personalized by algorithms, search engines make suggestions for these preferences, and as a result, users are framed by their own opinions and thus polarization increases due to less encounter with other ideas. Therefore, it has been claimed that in the social media environment, opposing views and balanced information will be encountered less frequently. This will result in information asymmetry. The users will learn more about their views and reinforce them. The parallel use of the concepts of filter bubble and echo chamber emerges at this point (Bruns, 2019, p.1). However, as in the echo chamber concept, the definition of the filter bubble concept is not given clearly. Due to the ambiguities in the

definition of the concept, it becomes difficult to conduct scholarly research. This difficulty in testing the validity of the concept, as in echo chamber research, keeps it at the level of observation. Another reason why the definitions of these concepts cannot be made clear is that new definitions (as mentioned above) are loaded on the concepts as a result of various research. Therefore, the boundaries and definitions of the concepts become more complex (Bruns, 2019, p.2-3). An important difference between the echo chamber and the filter bubble is that the filter bubble has no direct effect in the offline environment (Sinderman et al. 2020, p.7). Studies on filter bubbles and echo chambers have not clearly revealed the existence of the concepts, but since these concepts are used in the mainstream media, discussion programs, or at the individual level, they have a discursive level of reality. Therefore, academic studies on the effect of concepts are re-measured over and over again (Bruns, 2019, p.8).

Another problem in measuring the effect of the filter bubble is that various homogeneous groups do not exist singularly in online environments. For example, users who can be found in filter bubble on specific topics such as partisan groups, and anti-vaccine groups may take a different attitude on different issues. Because users may have different views on political or non-political issues, the filter bubble situation can be found in ways embedded in the complex nature of the online environment. Therefore, although filter bubbles may not have wide coverage in online environments, they can be effective in more extreme situations such as partisan groups (Bruns, 2019, p.5).

Although they are used together, can a distinction be made between these two concepts? Bruns (2019, p.29) draws attention to a 'small' difference while defining these two concepts in his book. According to him, both concepts emerge by excluding people with different opinions and forming a group of like-minded users. In the echo chamber, this occurs as a result of users '*connecting*' with each other (for example, by adding as friends on Facebook or following on Twitter), while in the filter bubble this occurs as users '*communicate*' with each other. (for example, commenting on a post on Facebook or mentioning on Twitter) (Bruns, 2019, p.4).

According to Bruns (2019, p.9), polarization in the media environment is not due to the filter bubble or echo chamber effect. On the contrary, there is polarization due to

the fact that these concepts do not exist. Because socio-cultural or economic differences are more easily expressed or observed in the online environment.

7) Discussion of what can be done to avoid the echo chamber. To avoid echo chambers, members must be aware that they are inside these chambers (Nguyen, C. 2020, p.18). An experiment was conducted by Gillani (2018, p.823) to measure the awareness of social media users whether they are politically in echo chambers. An application called social mirror was used in this experiment. The function of this app is to help experimenters discover a sample of politically active Twitter users in their social network. Networks from different ideologies are presented so that they can make this discovery. According to the preferences of the participant in the experiment, the Twitter shares of the person and his/her political position were matched. According to the results of this experiment, it was determined that there was a disconnect between the belief and actions of the participants. When the participants were asked to find their networks from the samples in which various ideological sharings were made, they tended to increase their ideological beliefs. Conversely, there was variation in follower numbers when they discovered an ideologically grouped network and were advised to follow people with differing views. Researchers have suggested that this will make users interested in a wider variety of topics and perspectives in the future.

The need for more research on echo chambers stems from the threat to ordinary social media users by people or institutions with agenda-setting power, such as politicians or journalists, who are present in echo chambers or vice versa. One of the reasons why this situation poses a threat is that fake news can find an environment where it can spread. For analyzing if there is such a situation or not, a study has been conducted which is based on 55 million tweets posted by 255,000 Australian Twitter users in 2017 (Bruns, 2017, p.2). According to the results of this research, it was determined that the tendency to be in the echo chamber is very low among Australian Twitter users. Although users form clusters, they are not closed to different ideas (Bruns, 2017, p.8).

CHAPTER 3. DATA ANALYSIS

As stated under the 1.2 Methodology section, an online survey was conducted with 810 participants. The survey remained open from November 2022 to May 2023. Various ways were followed for the announcement of the survey. First, I sent the survey link to my personal acquaintances and network. Afterward, the survey link was delivered to wider participants thanks to the acquaintances of these people and their social networks. Accordingly, the survey link was announced to other Turkish universities through Social Sciences University of Ankara's institutional email network, and the survey link was available to those who were affiliated members of this network such as university students, faculty members, academics, and administrative staff at the Turkish universities. As the data illustrate, these sampling strategies could reach out to a representative sample that contains respondents from different backgrounds and age groups even though a considerable amount were also from higher education.

During the data collection process via the survey, the agenda in Türkiye was quite intense. The economic measures that came with the rise in inflation, the earthquake on February 6, 2023 and the elections held on May 14 may have potentially been some of the limitations to reaching out relatively higher survey turnout. However, compared to other studies conducted in the context of Türkiye and due to the lack of sponsorship for the research, unlike the study of Dubois and Blank (2018), 810 participants seem sufficient to retest the concept of the echo chamber in a single case study.

In the following, firstly the research topic and the findings of the research will be given. Then, the purpose of the survey questions and the distribution of the answers will be examined. Finally, data analysis and discussions will be provided through the visualisations of the data.

Do individuals use social media in a way that creates echo chambers in Türkiye? How effective are echo chambers in the Turkish context? How does social media affect polarization and how is it affected by polarization? These questions constitute the research agenda of this thesis. It is aimed to retest Dubois and Blank's (2018) study on

echo chambers in the context of Türkiye. Based on their findings, the researchers concluded that the echo chambers are exaggerated. According to their hypotheses in the article, they argued that if political interest and the variety of media used increased, being in echo chambers would be less likely. These hypotheses are valid according to the results of my study as well.

According to the results of my survey, two findings came to the fore. The first of these is that echo chambers are only partially effective in the context of Türkiye because both political interest and media diversity are high. It is partial because some respondents do not constitute the majority but tend to be in echo chambers. Although there is no obvious effect of echo chambers reported in the findings, it is claimed in this thesis that this situation does not trivialize the concept because in countries like Türkiye where the dimensions of polarization are high, how much of the voters who support the government or the opposition are in the echo chambers can be an important factor potentially affecting the election results.

The second finding is based on the relationship between the polarization environment and social media. While analyzing this relationship, the opinion/network polarization distinction made by Törnberg (2018) to address the echo chamber is used. According to previous studies conducted so far and the results of this thesis, it has come to light that polarization of opinion is at a very high level in Türkiye. Although the results in this thesis are consistent with other studies on Türkiye in terms of polarization and echo chambers (Erdoğan 2016; Erdoğan, 2018; Laebens and Ozturk, 2021; Furman and Tunc, 2020; Kutlu 2021; Ozaydin 2021; Ozaydin and Ryosuke 2021), the difference is in the making of network/opinion polarization distinction. According to this distinction, opinion polarization can be defined as the clustering of individuals with similar views and their distance from other opinions. Therefore, in this thesis, the echo chamber is not considered to be integrated into a subject or philosophically, but as a cluster, as Cinelli et al. (2021) suggests. The polarization in Türkiye may have reached the level of affective polarization (Gillani, 2018) due to partisanship (Erdoğan, 2018; Laebens and Ozturk, 2021) because partisans have a tendency to use the media as selective exposure (Stroud, 2008). Network polarization, on the other hand, refers to the algorithmic features that are

beyond the control of the individual or the structure of the platform used. This polarization environment is not due to social media. On the contrary, opinion polarization has moved to online platforms and social media. Therefore, the cause of polarization in Türkiye is not network polarization. Nevertheless, although it can be claimed that the majority of the survey participants do not use social media to create echo chambers, there is also a tendency for network polarization to occur.

Network polarization is partially effective based on the results of questions 10, 11, 13, 25, and 26. According to the results of question 10, there is no precedence in not using different news sources. From this, it can be concluded that some of the users are exposed to different opinions. According to the results of the 11th question, it is seen that the participants obviously use different online media platforms for news. It is possible to come across news from different views on the Internet news sites and social media platforms. One of the limitations of this study is to try to reach this situation indirectly since the survey did not include a question measuring the frequency of exposure to different views. How often participants are exposed to differing views can be a matter for future studies. Nonetheless in the answers, there are implications that the users come across the news representing different views. In the 13th question, it was asked how often users agree on the political content of their friends on social media. It was observed that a clear majority (approximately 60 %) did not agree. This shows that homophily is not predominantly effective in the online environment in Türkiye. In question 25, participants were asked in which situations they read or watch the details of the news they encounter. At this point, the attractiveness and popularity/virality of the news play a dominant role. From this point of view, it can be argued that if the news is interesting or popular/viral, the participants can expose to news from different views as the 48% of the informants point out that the news attract their attention if they see they are posted frequently in a platform, and 40% of them state if they see more than one place. In the 26th question, the participants were asked according to which criteria they choose their news sources. The reliability of the news source and its being based on information have come to the forefront. These results indicate a sensitivity to misinformation or disinformation. Paying attention to the fact that news sources are based on information is an indicator of interest

in politics. The answers to these five questions show that users can come across news from different views.

Do exposure to different views lead to a change of opinion or belief? According to the results of the survey, it was emphasized that the network polarization condition was not significant, as the participants coincided with the news with different opinions. However, it is seen that meeting different opinions does not necessarily lead to a change of opinion and therefore there is a considerable amount of opinion polarization as stated by the participants. The results of the 16th and 17th questions in the questionnaire clearly reveal this situation.

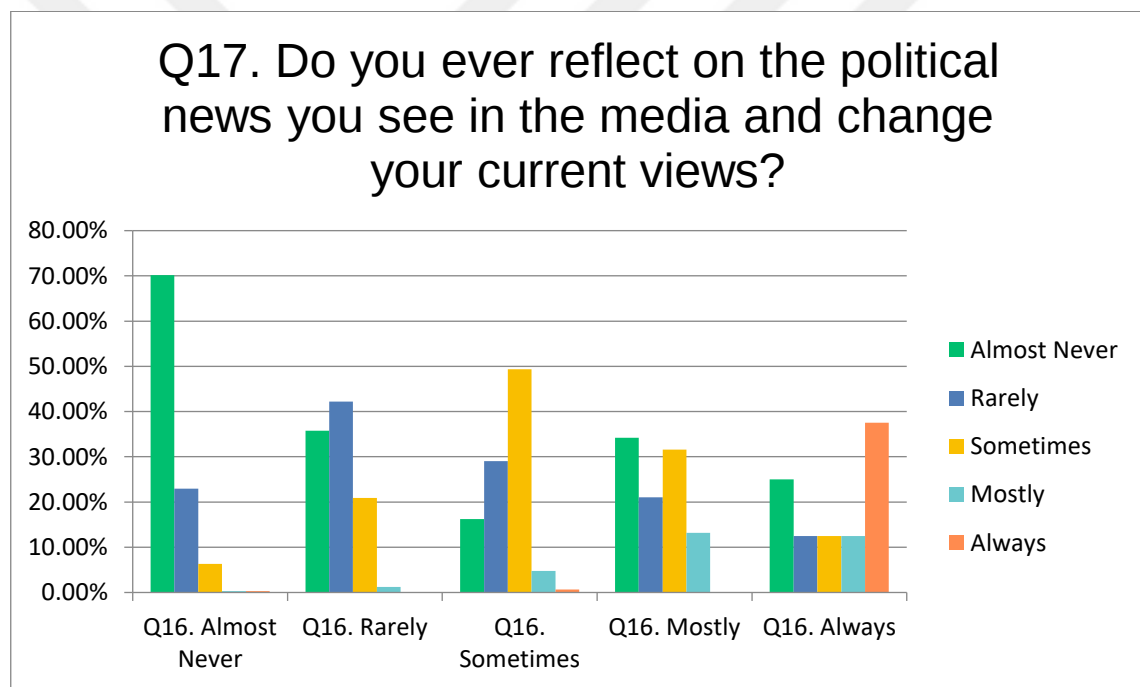


Table 1. Frequency of political opinion change

According to 16th and 17th questions, it was asked how often the news that changed the political view was encountered and how often the political view changed by reflecting on the political news in the media. The sum of those who marked 'Almost never' and 'Rarely' in both questions is between 75-80%. The extent to which people in Türkiye are tolerant of each other's political views was asked in the 19th question. According to the results of this question, the sum of the choices 'Almost never' and 'Rarely' reaches 85%. Whether there is political polarization in Türkiye was directly asked in question 24.

Nearly 90% of the participants marked the 'Always' and 'Mostly' options. In question 26, the rate of those who say that they choose the channels or platforms whose news is followed according to their compatibility with their political views is 35%. Finally, in the 27th question, 60% of the participants stated that there is a media platform that they cannot tolerate/will never watch. Based on all these results, it has been revealed that opinion polarization is at an extreme level. Although network polarization is not very effective, it has been observed that this situation does not lead to a change of opinion when exposed to different views. This result is consistent with previous studies (Sears and Freedman, 1967; Garrett, 2009).

Although individuals are exposed to different opinions, this situation can lead to the reinforcement of existing views (Garrett, 2009) or the strengthening of partisan tendencies (Törnberg, 2022). One of the reasons for this situation can be found in the distinction between biased information and balanced information. According to Valentino et al. (2009), individuals tend towards balanced or biased information according to the benefit of the information. Individuals may also be selectively exposed to different views in order to understand how to oppose opposing views. This idea is intended to strengthen the existing idea rather than change it.

The reason for reaching such a result from the survey may be the measurement of general media usage. According to Dubois and Blank's (2018) argument, the focus of echo chamber research on a single platform i) makes generalization difficult, ii) ignores the attitudes and behaviors of individuals across platforms, and iii) ignores offline media influence. One of the problems in measuring general media usage is that platforms or offline media are used in parallel or complementary to the current views of the individual in a monolithic media environment like Türkiye. One of the limitations of this thesis is that it has not investigated whether general media use is monolithic. For example, political leaders, parties, or newspapers read offline or television channels watched could be asked on social media. In other words, individuals' media repertoires could be examined. Most of the studies on Türkiye are based on a single platform (Dogu, 2020; Ozaydin, 2021; Furman and Tunc, 2020; Ozaydin and Ryosuke, 2021; Bozdog et al. 2014).

Another result of this research is that the Internet news sites and social media platforms are the primary news sources. The most used news source was asked in Question 9, and almost 80% of the participants stated that they use social media platforms (56.56%) and Internet news sites (22.77%). These results are also consistent with previous studies (Kutlu, 2021; Yanardagolu, 2021).

After the findings are given, the purpose of asking the survey questions and their connection with echo chambers are provided. The first seven questions asked in the questionnaire were control variables. The purpose of these questions was to reveal the demographic characteristics of the participants. Thus, it was investigated whether there is a connection between the echo chambers and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and monthly income. The results of the demographic questions are given in detail in the Appendix-2 with graphics. According to the findings, the network/opinion polarization distinction is valid. When the concept of echo chamber is considered as network/opinion polarization, it is seen that age, gender, marital status, diploma degree, monthly income, employment status, and place of residence do not affect this distinction. According to the findings, network polarization is partially effective. Opinion polarization is highly dimensional.

The age range of the participants was asked in the first question. Accordingly, approximately 55% of the participants were between the ages of 20-40; 10.55% respondents in the 18-20; 31.51% in the 21-29; 25.19% in the 30-39; 16.38% in the 40-49; 10.42% in the 50-59; and finally 5.96% in the 60+ age range. With fast-evolving technology, the inability to keep up with the changes in the way of getting news between generations can affect whether individuals are in the echo chamber or not. Therefore, the relationship between age and echo chambers in the context of Türkiye has been analyzed. Accordingly, the correlation between age and dependent/independent variables was analyzed with graphics. In the following parts, firstly, graphs that reveal the relationship between political interest and media diversity with age groups will be given. Then, graphs showing the relationship between age groups and dependent variables will be given and finally their analysis will be provided.

The graphic describing the relationship between age and political interest is given in Table 1. Accordingly, in the 8th question (How often do you follow political news?), it is seen that the majority of those who mark the "Mostly" option, regardless of age, are in the majority. According to the results of the 12th question (How many hours on average do you read political news online (online, Internet News Sites, Blogs, Social Media Platforms) in a day?), which measures political interest, the majority of the people, regardless of age, follow the news for an average of 1-2 hours a day (Table 2). These results illustrate relatively high political interests of the participants.

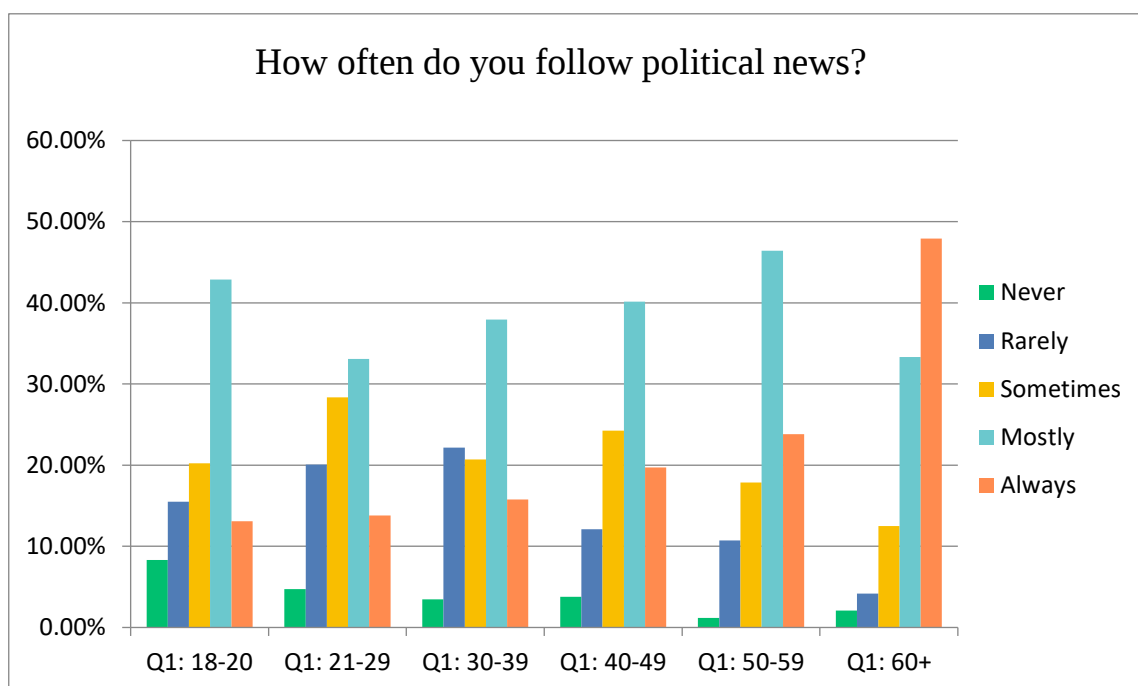


Table 2. The relationship between political interest and age

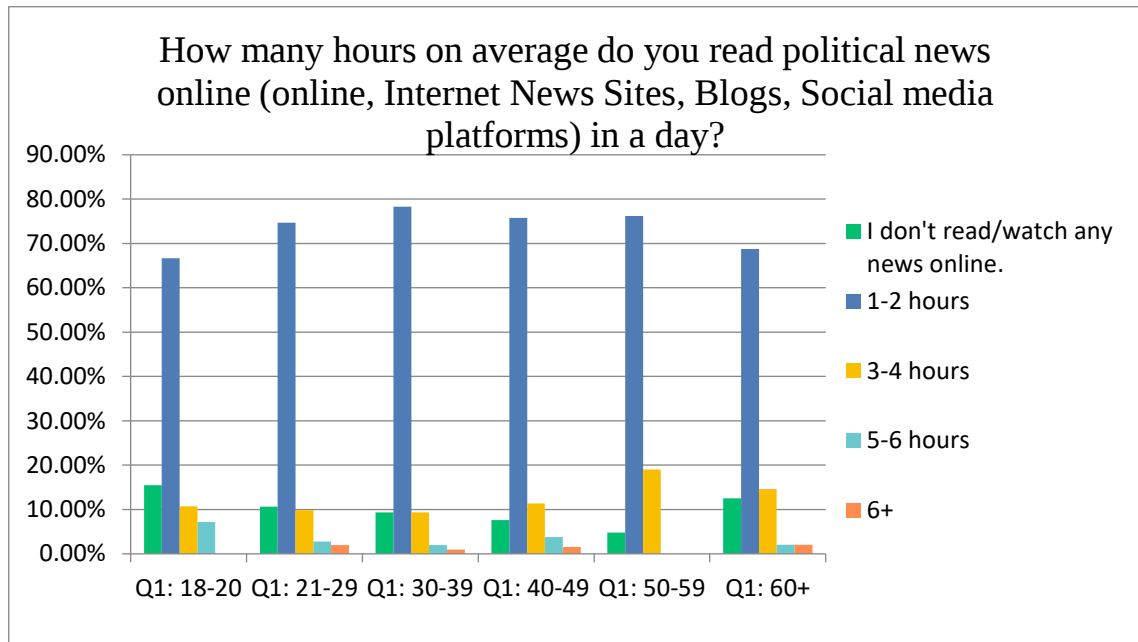


Table 3. The relationship between political interest and age

The following two graphs show the relationship between media diversity and age groups. First, the 9th question (What is your most used news source?) measuring media diversity and the graph showing the distribution among age groups are given in Table 3. According to the results, it is seen that those under 50 clearly use Social Media Platforms and Internet News Sites more. Although it is seen that the online environment is used for those over 50 years old, television is their most preferred news source. The relationship between media diversity and age groups was examined with the 11th question (How often do you use different online media platforms (such as blogs, news sites, Facebook - Twitter - Youtube) to get news?). According to Table 4, it is seen that the participants mostly use different online media platforms to get news. The results of both questions show that media diversity is high.

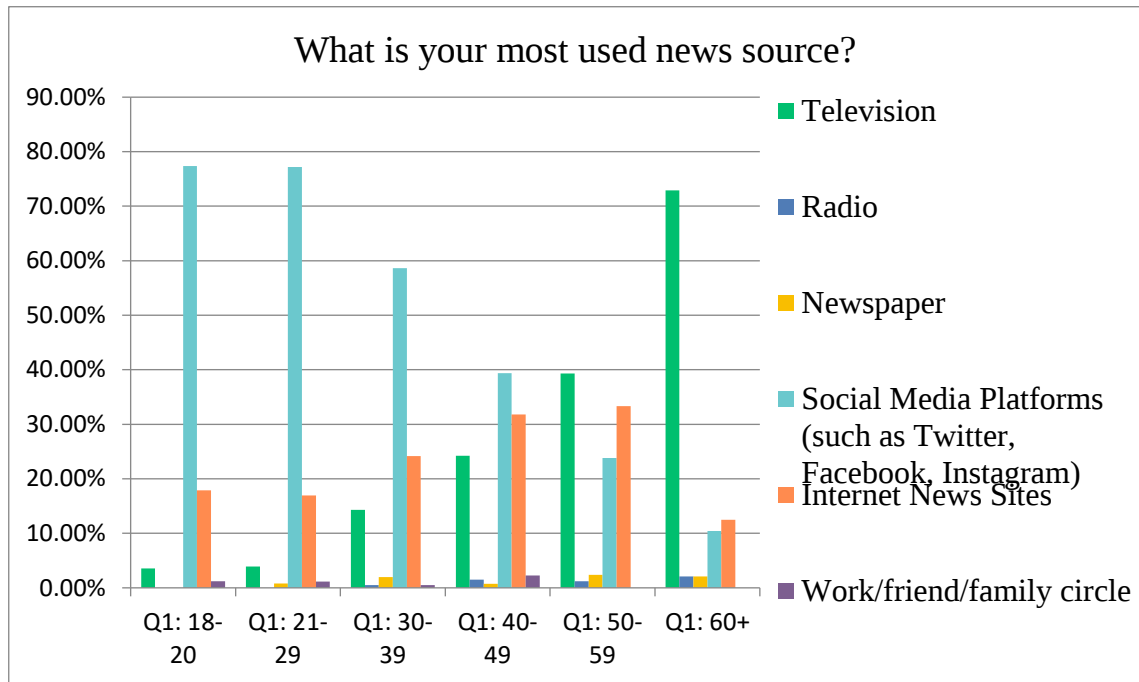


Table 4. The relationship between media diversity and age

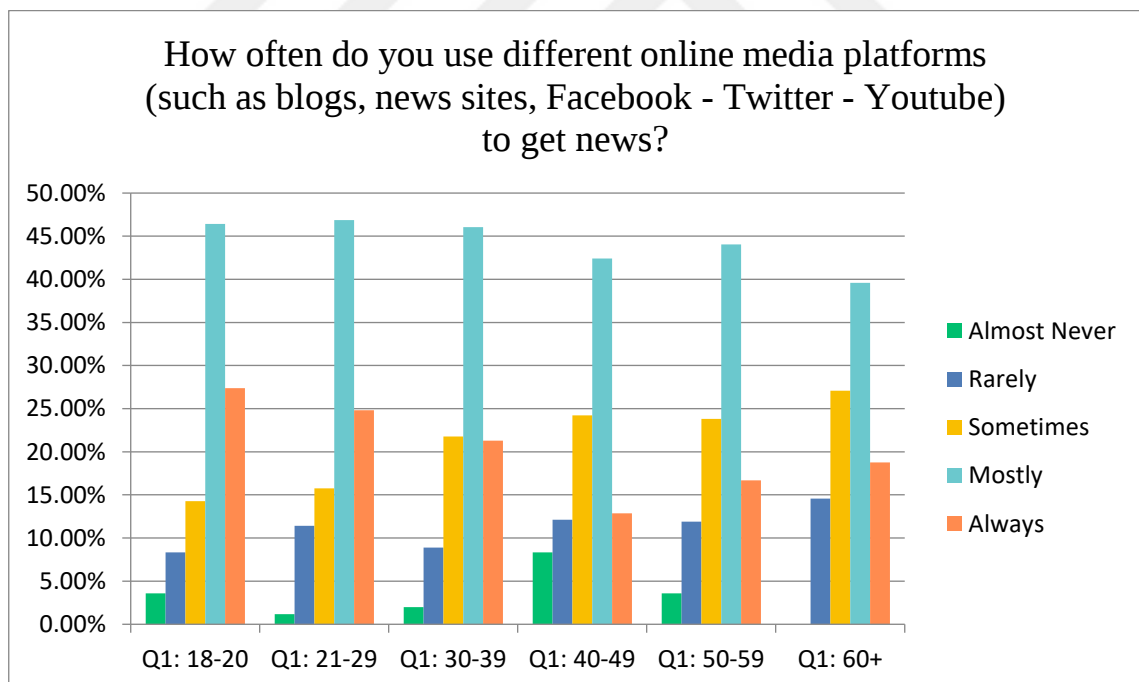


Table 5. The relationship between media diversity and age

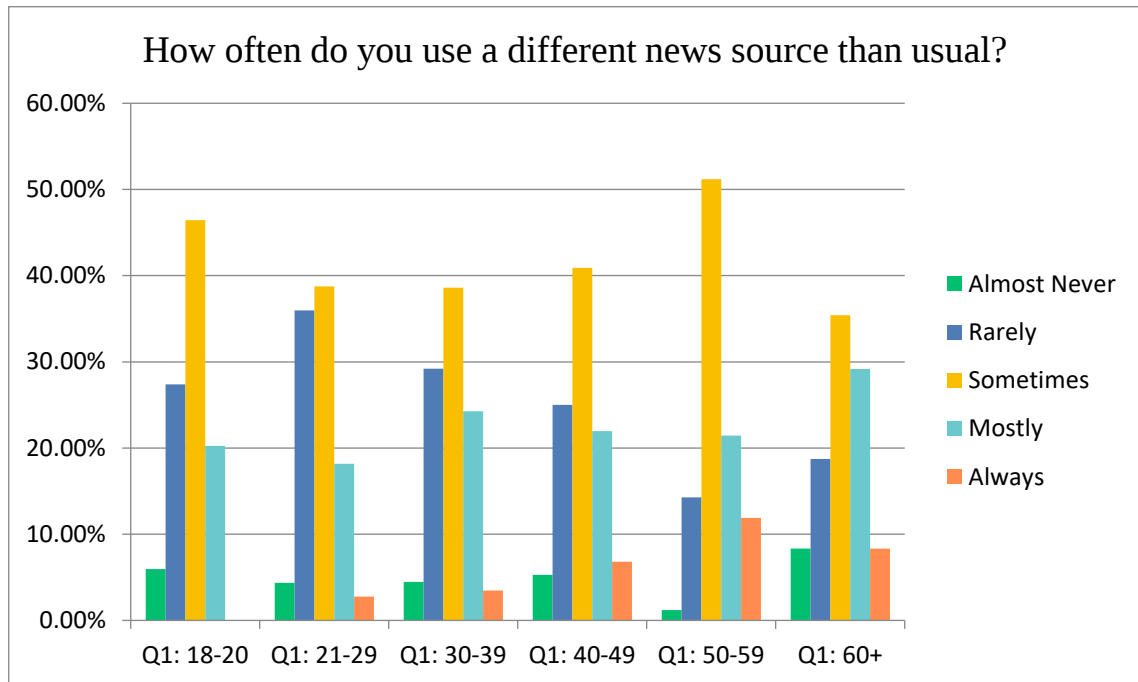


Table 6. The relationship between different news source and age

After the independent variables, the relation of age groups with the dependent variables is given. First, the age groups and the graph of the 10th question (How often do you use a different news source than usual?) are given in Table 5. It is seen that the 'Sometimes' option is dominant in all age groups. For this reason, there is no direct relationship between age groups and network polarization, since the choices 'Almost Never' or 'Rarely' do not predominate. However, the tendency to use different news sources under the age of 40 is less than that of those over 40, although there are no significant differences. Therefore, a trend of network polarization is observed, although it is not in statistically significant amounts.

Secondly, the graph showing the relationship between age groups and the 13th question, which asks how often the participants approve of their friends' political posts on social media, is given in Table 6. The answer of 'Almost Never' predominates in all age groups except the age of 60 and above. From this point of view, regardless of age group, the homophily effect is not seen in a large majority. It can be argued that the participants are mostly not friends with or follow other users close to their views on social media.

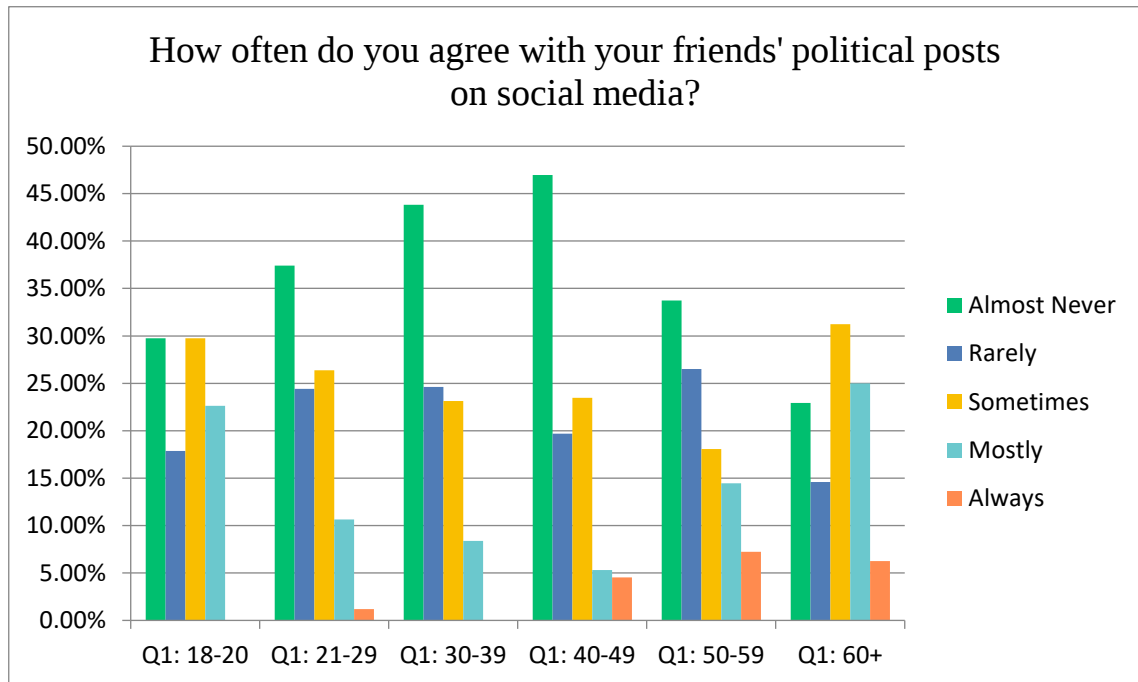


Table 7. The relationship between agreement with friends and age

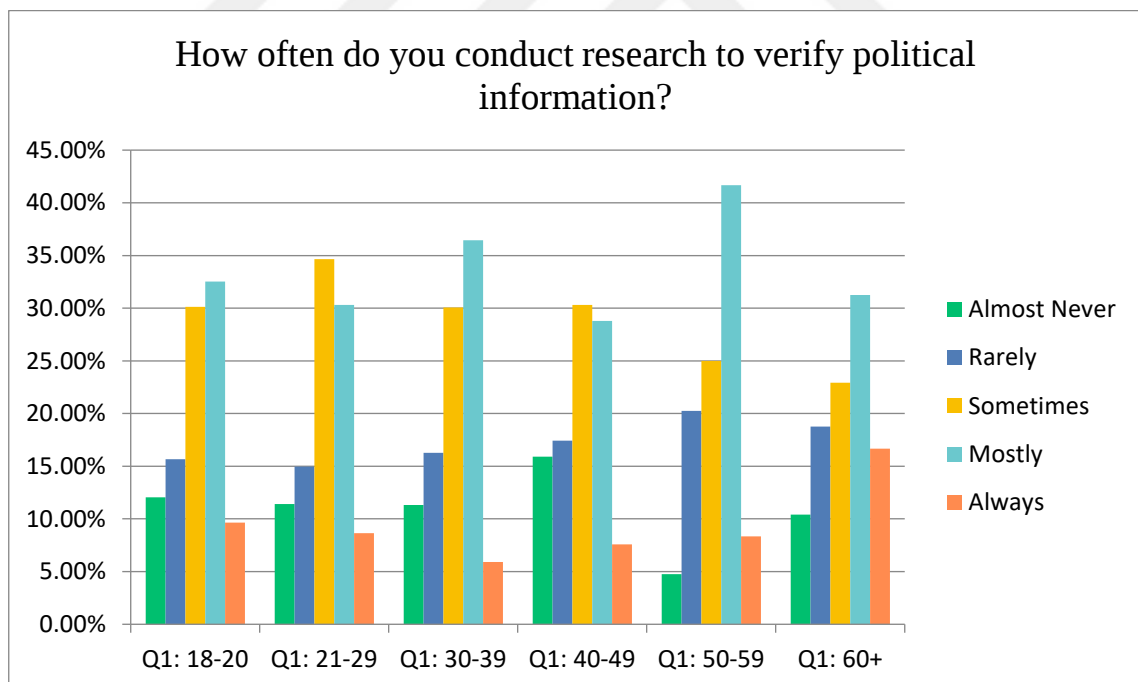


Table 8. The relationship between confirmation and age

Thirdly, how often research is done to verify political information, question 14, and its distribution by age groups are given in table 7. It is observed from the table that 'Sometimes' and 'Mostly' answers outweigh. Therefore, it can be argued that the

participants were attentive to mis/disinformation. This can prevent the formation of echo chambers caused by mis/disinformation.

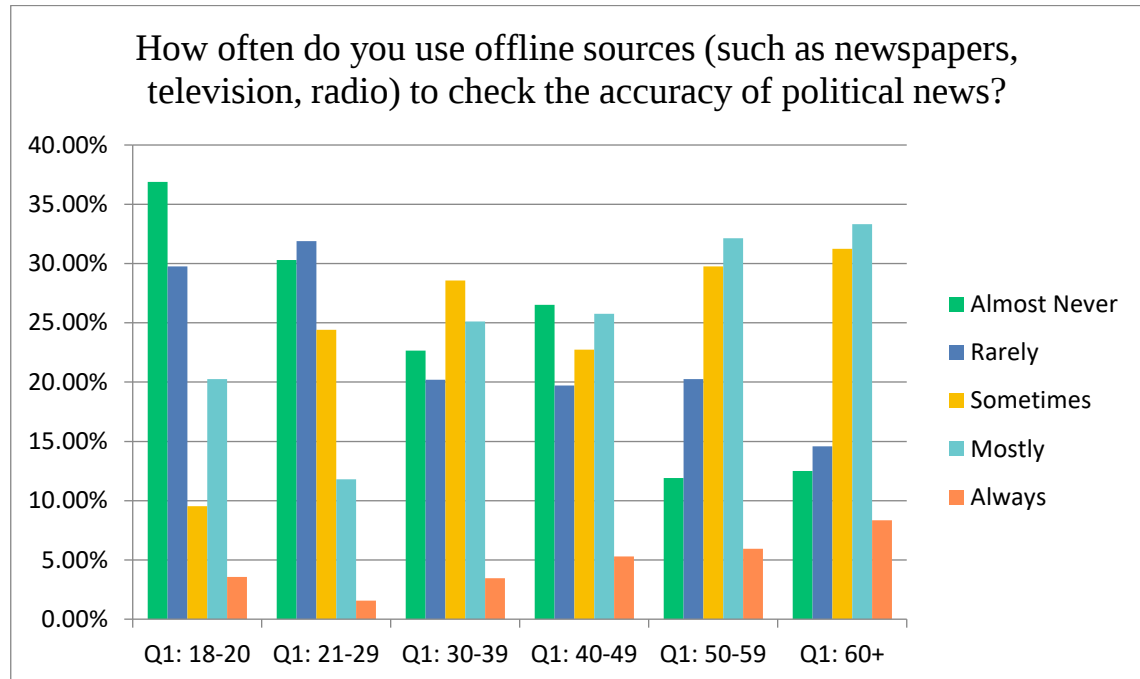


Table 9. The relationship between 'offline media' and age

Fourthly, the distribution of the answers given to the 15th question, which asked how often the participants check the accuracy of political news using offline sources, by age groups is given in Table 8. Looking at the graph, it is seen that the use of offline resources under the age of 30 is low. The choices 'Almost Never' and 'Rarely' are predominant. One reason for this may be that using the online environment is easier and faster to access than the offline environment. It has been observed that the use of offline resources is mostly realized over the age of 50. This may be due to the fact that this age group mostly uses television for news reception. Between the ages of 30-50, whether or not to use offline resources is more moderately distributed.

Finally, the frequency of encountering news that changed the political view and its distribution by age groups are given in Table 9. As can be seen from the table, it can be seen that most of the participants, regardless of age group, do not come across political news that will change their political views. This supports the hypothesis put forward about opinion polarization.

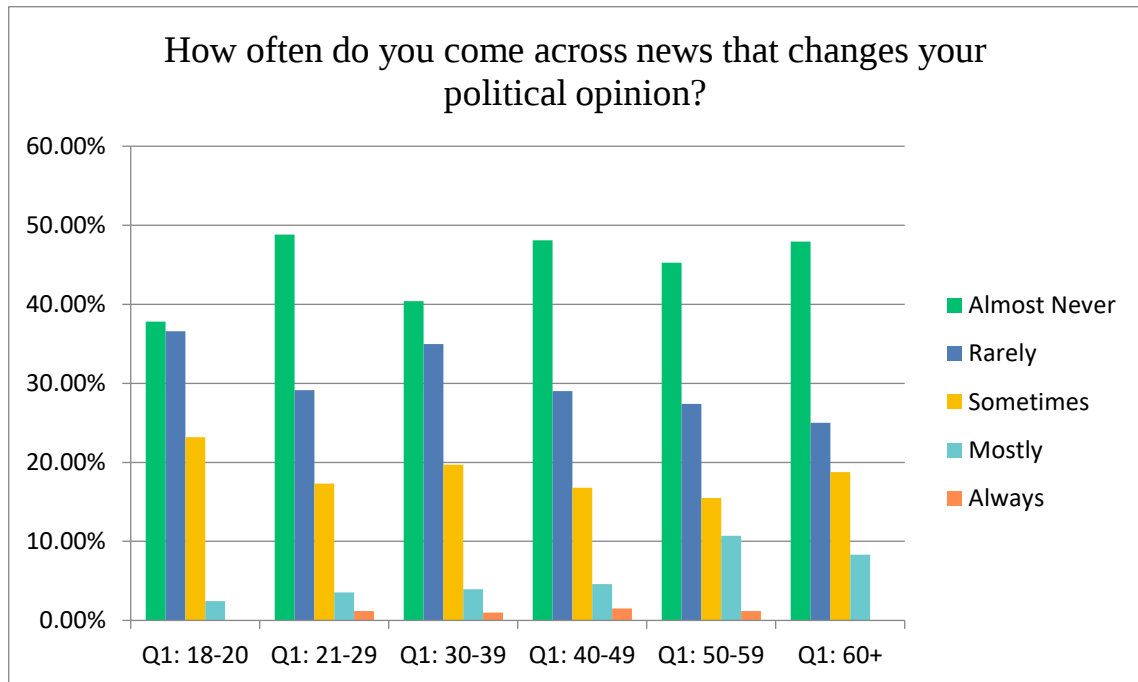


Table 10. The relationship between changing political opinion and age

As a result, when the issue of age groups and echo chambers is examined, it can be argued that political interest is high and media diversity is seen regardless of any reported age difference. In the study of Dubois and Blank (2018), no correlation was found between echo chambers and age groups. Their findings were that in situations of high political interest and media diversity, being in the echo chamber is unlikely. In this thesis, echo chambers are considered as network/opinion polarization. Accordingly, it is argued that network polarization is not intense, but opinion polarization is high, regardless of age groups.

In the second question, the gender of the participants was asked. Accordingly, 52.74% were male, 45.90% were female, and 1.37% did not want to appear. The third question asks for marital status. While 43.87% of the participants stated they were married, 53.28% stated they were single, and 2.85% chose the other option.

Question 4 asks for education levels. 0.74% are primary school graduates and 0.62% are secondary school graduates. While 17.55% are high school graduates, 9.77% are college or associate degree graduates. Most participants are undergraduates (44.62%) and graduates (26.70%). What is the connection between the education level and the echo

chamber? Does the presence in the echo chamber decrease as the education level increases? Is presence in the echo chamber based on more complex issues than the level of education? In order to analyze whether there is a connection between diploma degree and echo chambers, graphs containing dependent and independent variables are given below.

First of all, two graphs measuring political interest and diploma degree are given in Tables 10 and 11. According to these two graphs, which measure the correlation between the 8th (How often do you follow political news?) and 12th (How many hours on average do you read political news online (online, Internet News Sites, Blogs, Social Media Platforms) in a day?) questions and the diploma degree, it is observed that the political interest is high regardless of diploma degree. Participants stated that they 'mostly' follow political news and read political news for an average of 1-2 hours a day. Therefore, it has been found that political interest is not directly related to a diploma degree.

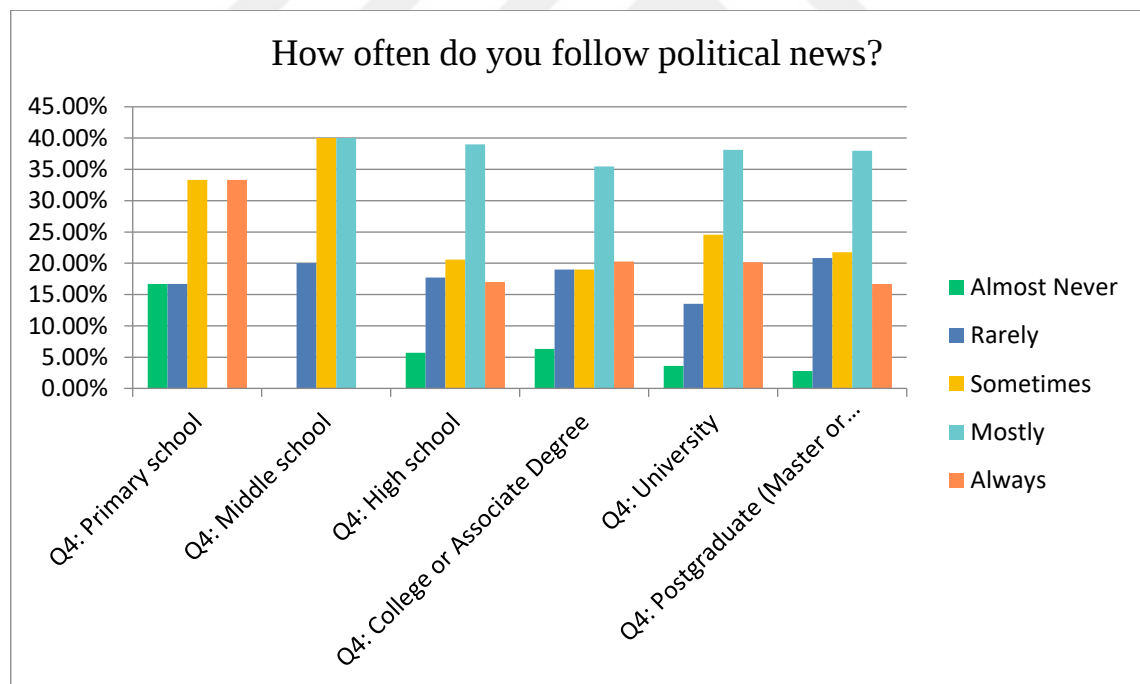


Table 11. The relationship between political interest and diploma degree

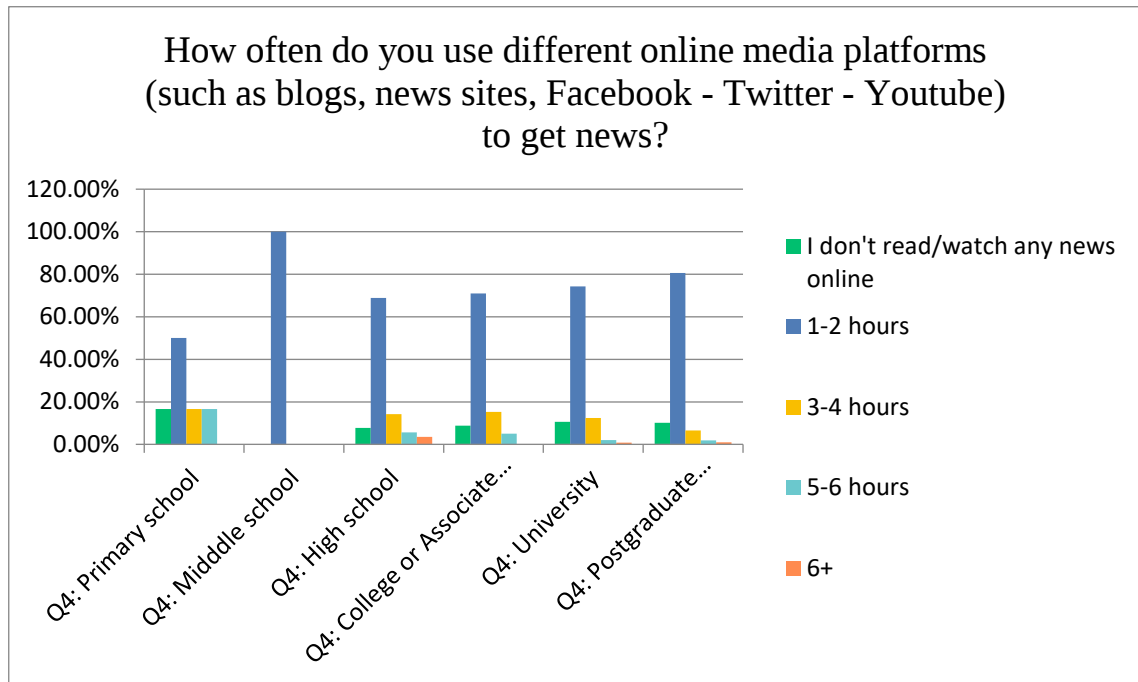


Table 12. The relationship between political interest and diploma degree

Two questions were addressed to examine the relationship between a diploma degree and media diversity. In question 9, "What is your most used news source?" asked. According to the graph in Table 12, primary and secondary school graduates prefer television, while high school, college, undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral graduates predominantly use social media platforms. Regardless of the degree of diploma, it has been revealed that social media platforms play a dominant role in receiving news. Table 13 is given to examine the relationship between the 11th question, which measures media diversity in the online environment, and the degree of diploma. The answers show that regardless of the level of education, the majority mostly use different online media platforms.

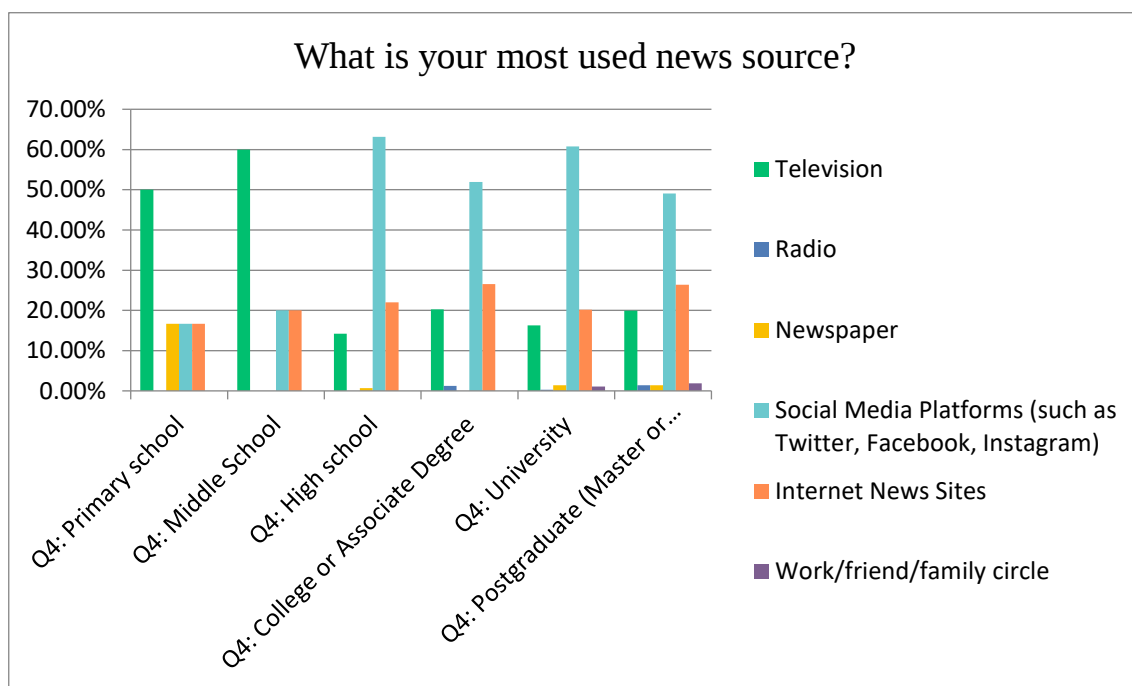


Table 13. The relationship between media diversity and diploma degree

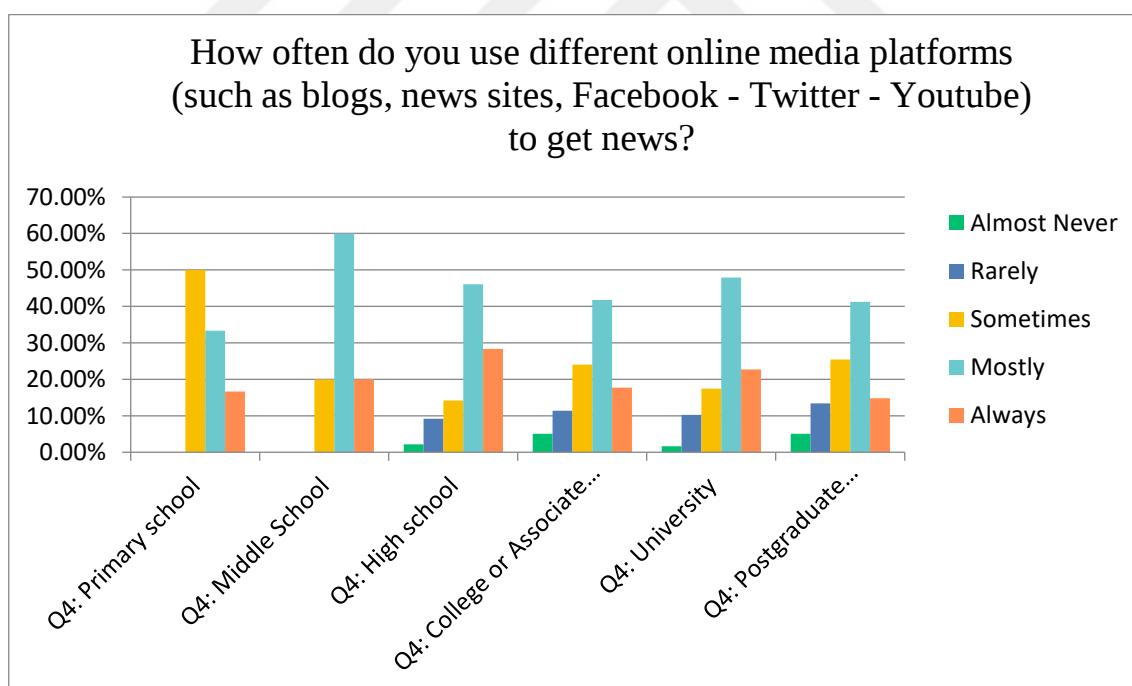


Table 14. The relationship between media diversity and diploma degree

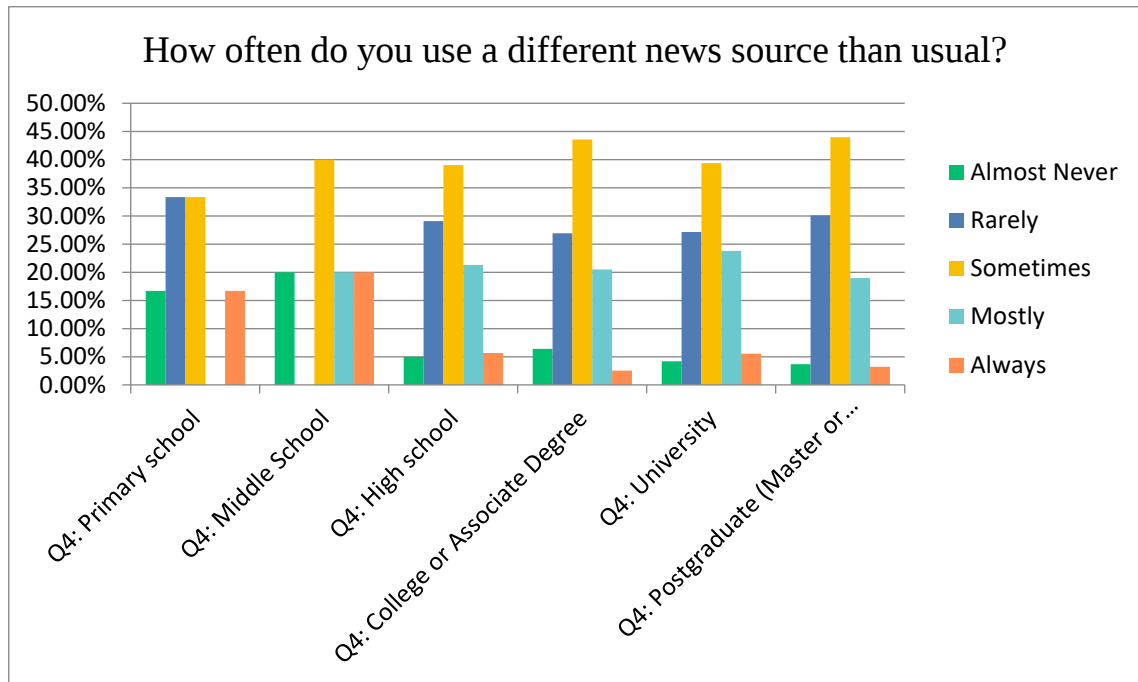


Table 15. The relationship between different news source and diploma degree

After the independent variables, the connections between the dependent variables and the degree of diploma are given. First, Table 14 shows the relationship between diploma degree and how often a different news source than usual is used in question 10. When the graph is examined, it is seen that the answer of 'Sometimes' is dominant regardless of the degree of diploma. It is therefore difficult to speak clearly in the case of selective exposure or presence in echo chambers.

Secondly, the graphic table 15 showing the relationship between diploma degree and how often the participants approve the political posts of their friends on social media is given (Question 13). According to the graph, regardless of the degree of diploma, it is seen that the majority do not approve of their friends' posts with political content. From this point of view, we can conclude that a significant homophily effect and network polarization does not appear considerably in the answers.

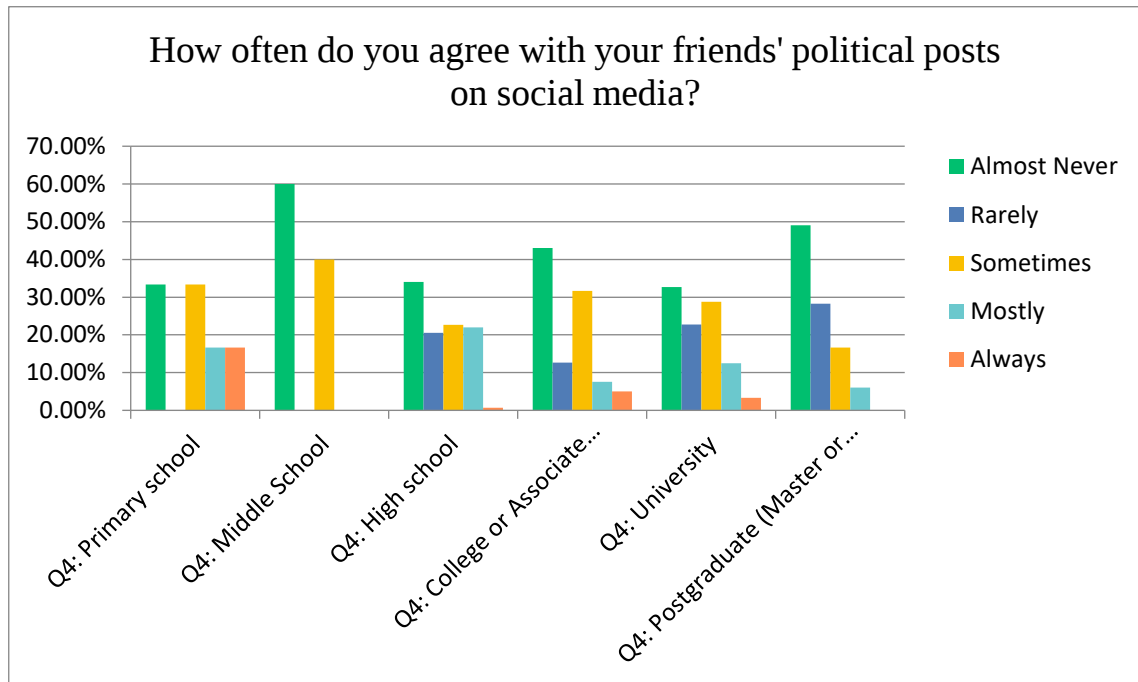


Table 16. The relationship between agreement with friends and diploma degree

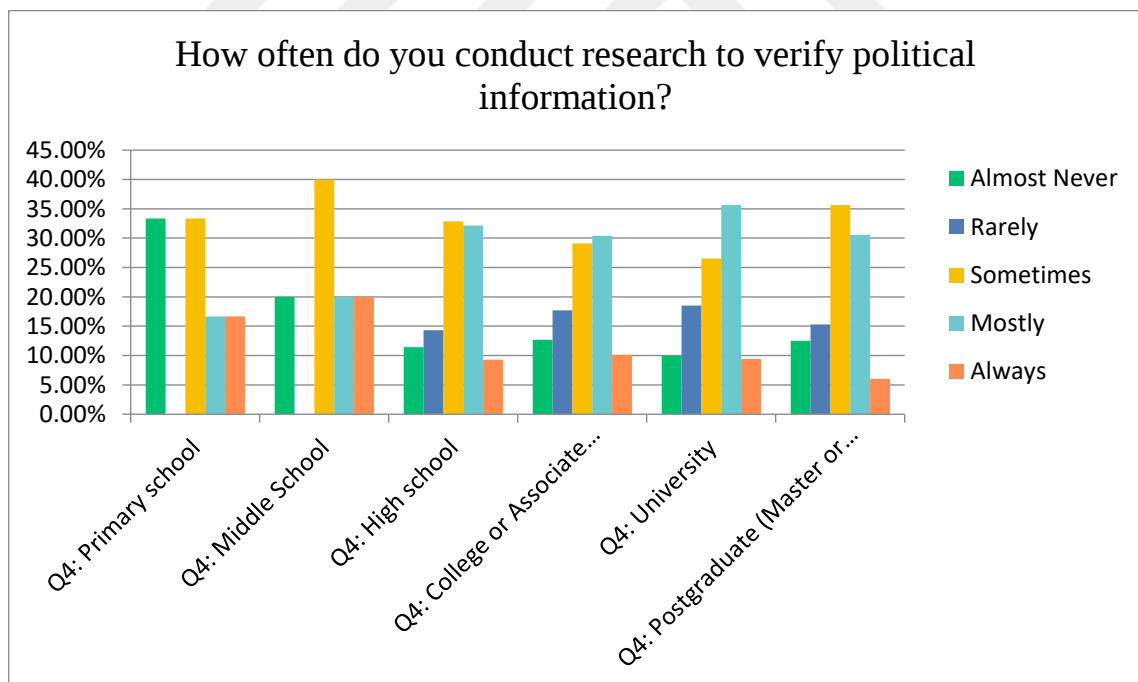


Table 17. The relationship between confirmation and diploma degree

Thirdly, the graph of question 14, which measures how often the accuracy of political news is investigated by diploma degree, is given in table 16. According to the results, participants with high school and higher diploma degrees were slightly more

inclined to verify, but in general, there was no significant difference between their diploma degrees and investigating the accuracy of the news.

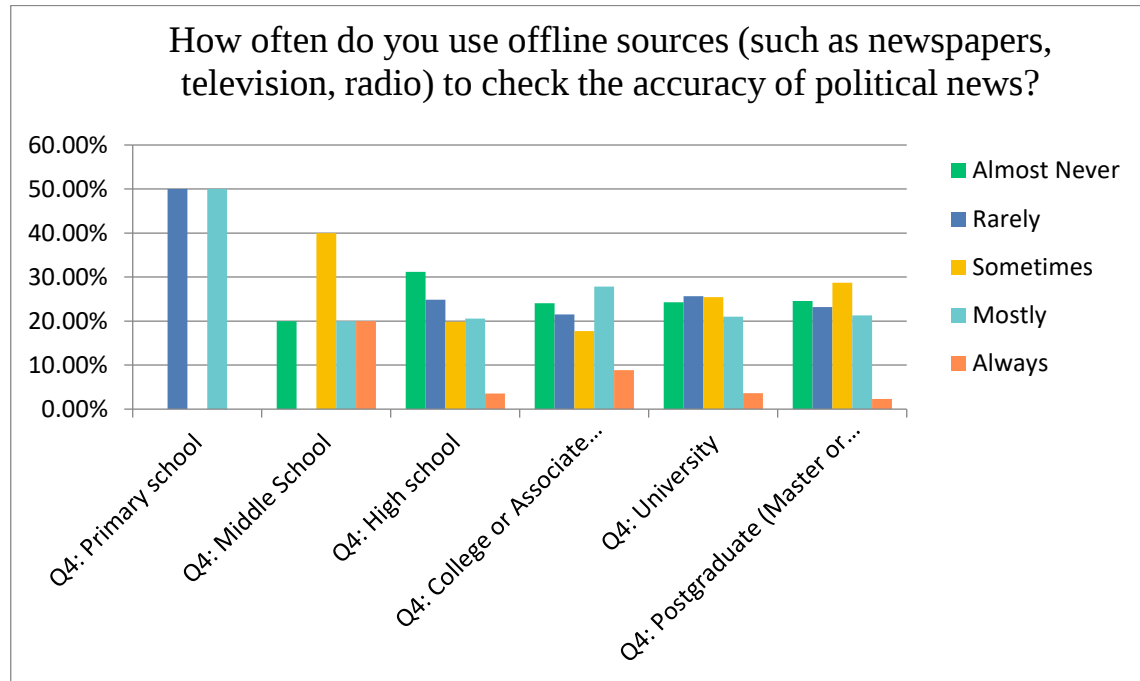


Table 18. The relationship between ‘offline media’ and diploma degree

Fourthly, the chart showing how often the diploma degree and the accuracy of the political news are made over the offline sources (15th question) is given in Table 17. Although the results seem to be evenly distributed according to the choices, the trend shows that offline resources are not used much. Based on this distribution, it is seen that there is no significant difference between diploma degrees in terms of applying to offline resources.

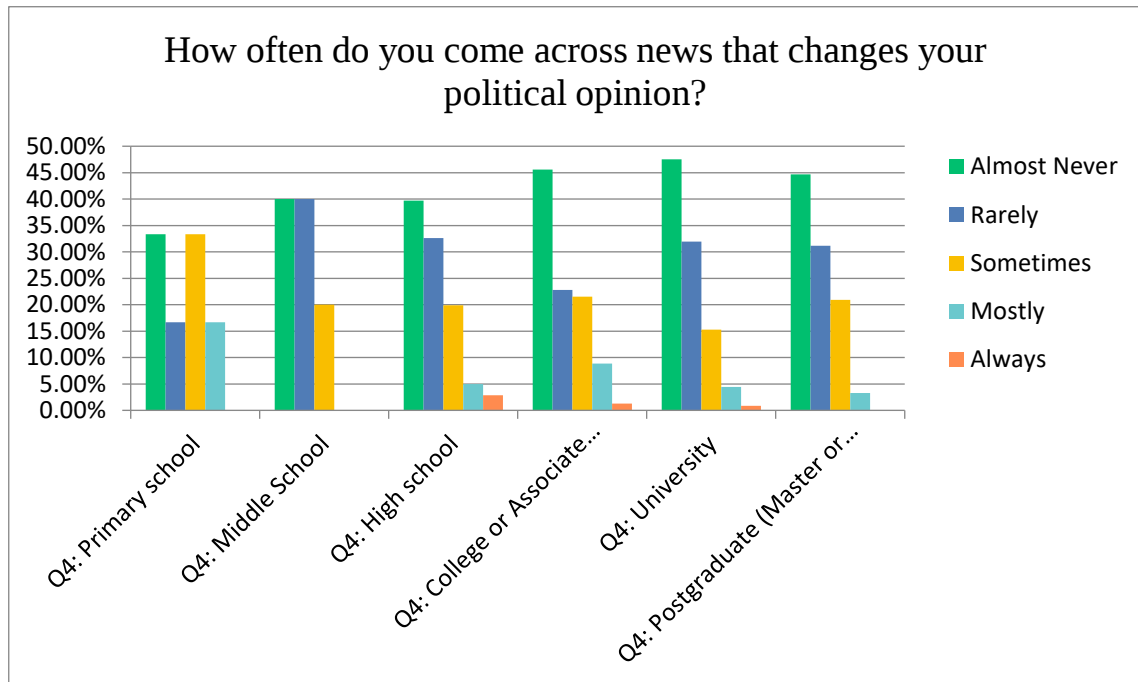


Table 19. The relationship between changing political opinion and diploma degree

Finally, the degree of the diploma and how often the participants encounter news that changes their political views (16th question) is given in Table 18. According to the results, most of the participants, regardless of their diploma degrees, did not come across news that would change their political views. This shows the robustness of the opinions of the participants.

As a result, there is no direct relationship between diploma degrees and echo chambers. Unlike studies (Ksiazek et al. 2010; Yuan, 2011; Vaccari, 2015), according to findings in this thesis there is no direct connection between diploma degree and political interest in the context of Türkiye. Regardless of diploma degree, the media is used to increase diversity and that political interest is high. On the other hand, it has been demonstrated once again that network polarization is not very effective, but opinion polarization is high.

In the 5th question, the monthly income of the participants was asked. While the options for this question were being prepared, the minimum wage was 5500 Turkish Liras. With the increase made in 2023, the new minimum wage has become 8500 Turkish Liras. Since updating the options during the survey would cause the loss of previous data,

no change has been made. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that the income distribution of the participants is balanced. The choices that started with 0-5500 (26.46%) Turkish Lira continued as 5500-10.000 (17.76%), 10.001-15.000 (22.11%), 15.001-20.000 (16.89%), 20.001 and above (16.77%). In the 6th question, the employment status of the participants was asked in parallel with the previous question. Accordingly, 62.21% of the participants are working, 22.55% are unemployed, 8.30% are retired, 6.94% are working part-time or when they find a job.

The 7th and final control variable question in my retest is one which was not present in the original study of Dubois and Blank (2018). Accordingly, participants were asked where they lived. The purpose of adding the question was the assumption that there may be greater community or group pressure in smaller places of residence such as villages or towns. According to the results, 80.45% live in the city center, 17.70% live in the town center, 1.24% live in the village and 0.62% live in the town. No connection was found between the place of residence and the echo chambers.

In the following questions, the dependent-independent and additional control variables were asked. Dubois and Blank (2018) took political interest and media diversity as the main elements in their arguments. As mentioned before, in one of the two hypotheses they put forward, they claimed that as individuals' interest in politics increased, their presence in the echo chamber decreased. In their other hypotheses, they stated that the possibility of being in the echo chamber would decrease as the diversity of individuals in media use increased. Depending on these independent variables, there are 6 dependent variables. In the next paragraphs, the questions asked in light of these dependent/independent variables and the result of the survey will be discussed in detail. In terms of the semantic integrity of the questionnaire, the questions were not asked in order like dependent-independent-control variables.

Political interest is measured in the 8th question. Accordingly, the participants were asked "How often do you follow political news?". Responses were measured from 'Never' to 'Always' according to a 5-category Likert scale. According to the results, 37.75% of the respondents stated that they 'Mostly', and 18.56% stated that they were 'Always' related to political news. Although this group constitutes the majority of 56%,

the high level of political interest alone does not clearly reveal whether individuals are in the echo chamber or not. Therefore, the relationship between the 8th question measuring political interest and the dependent variables was examined. First, Table 19 is given, which shows how political interest correlates with using a different news source than usual (Question 10).

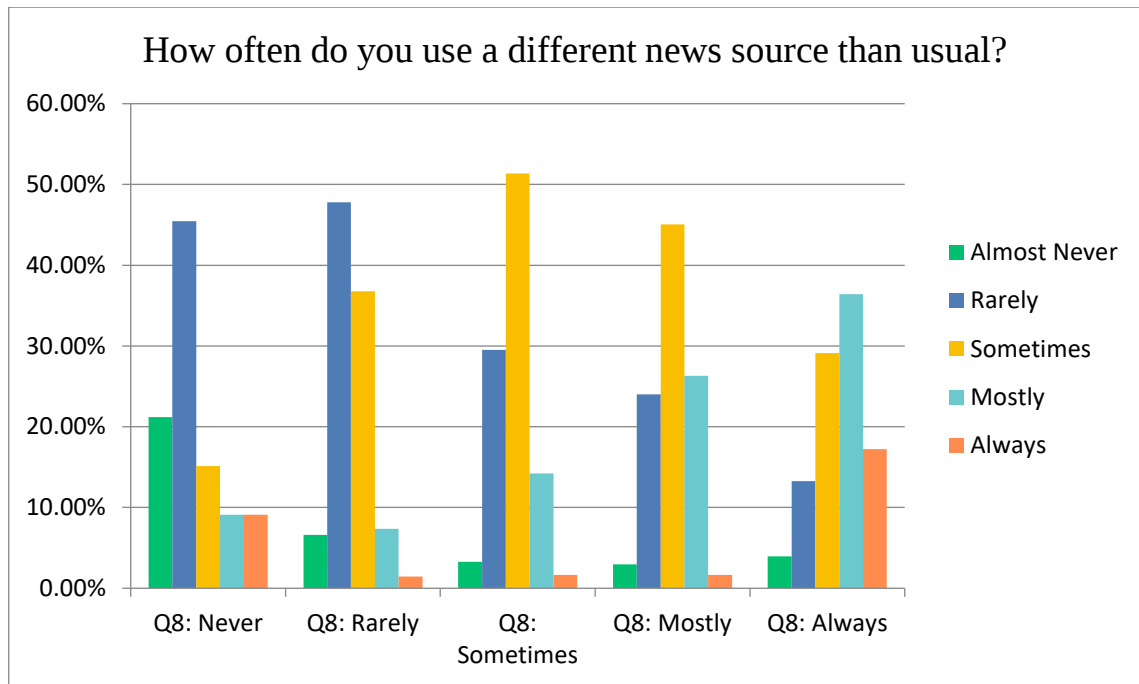


Table 20. Political interest and different news source

According to this graph, it is seen that those who answered 'never' to the question of how often they follow political news, marked 'almost never' or 'rarely' answers to the question of how often they use different news sources. The important point is that as the follow-up of political news increases, the frequency of using a different news source than usual also increases. Individuals may be less likely to be present in echo chambers as the use of a disparate news source increases. This confirms the hypothesis proposed by Dubois and Blank (2018), that is, as political interest increases, individuals are less likely to be in echo chambers.

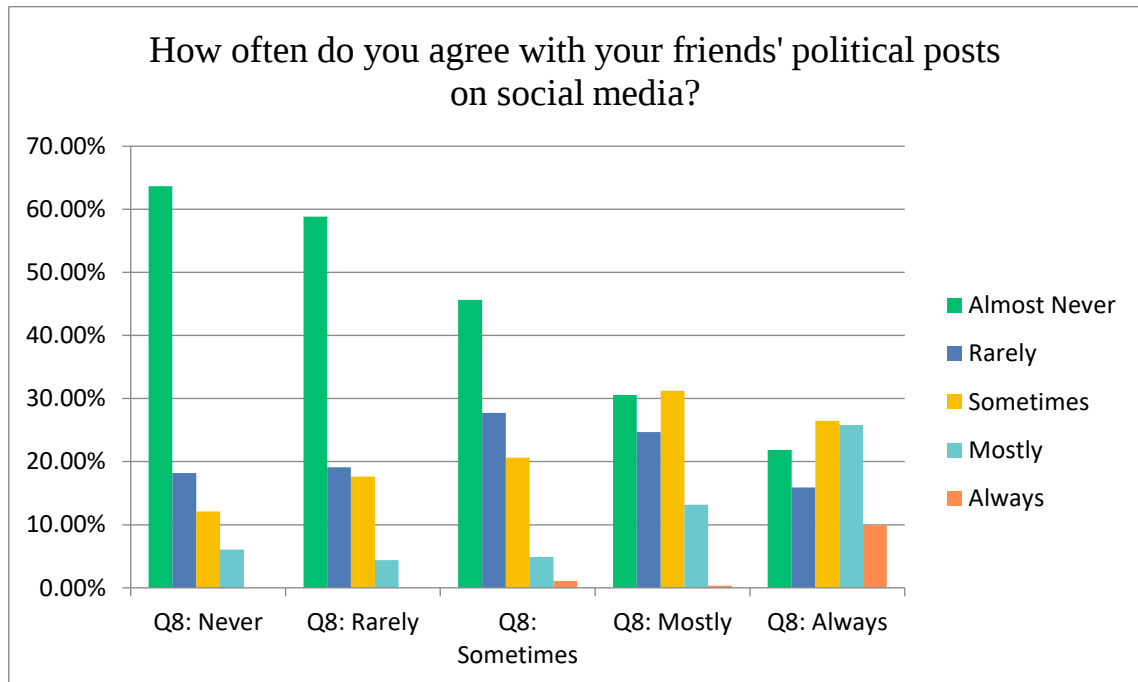


Table 21. Political interest and agreement with friends

Another graph that examines the presence of echo chambers with political interest is given in Table 20. When the question of how often do you approve the political content shared by your friends on social media (Question 13), which measures the effect of homophily, the following conclusion is reached; as the political interest increases, the tendency of friends to approve their posts with political content also increases.

There may be a connection between the political interest of individuals and their presence in echo chambers due to mis/disinformation. Individuals with a high interest in politics may be exposed to mis/disinformation. Therefore, it is important how often they conduct research to check the accuracy of political news. The graph showing the connection between the investigation of the truth of the news (Question 14) in this direction and the political interest is shown in Table 21. As individuals' political interest increases, their research to verify political information also increases. Thus, the formation of echo chambers from mis/disinformation will be less likely. Thus, the hypothesis of being less likely to be in echo chambers with increased political attention has been proven once again.

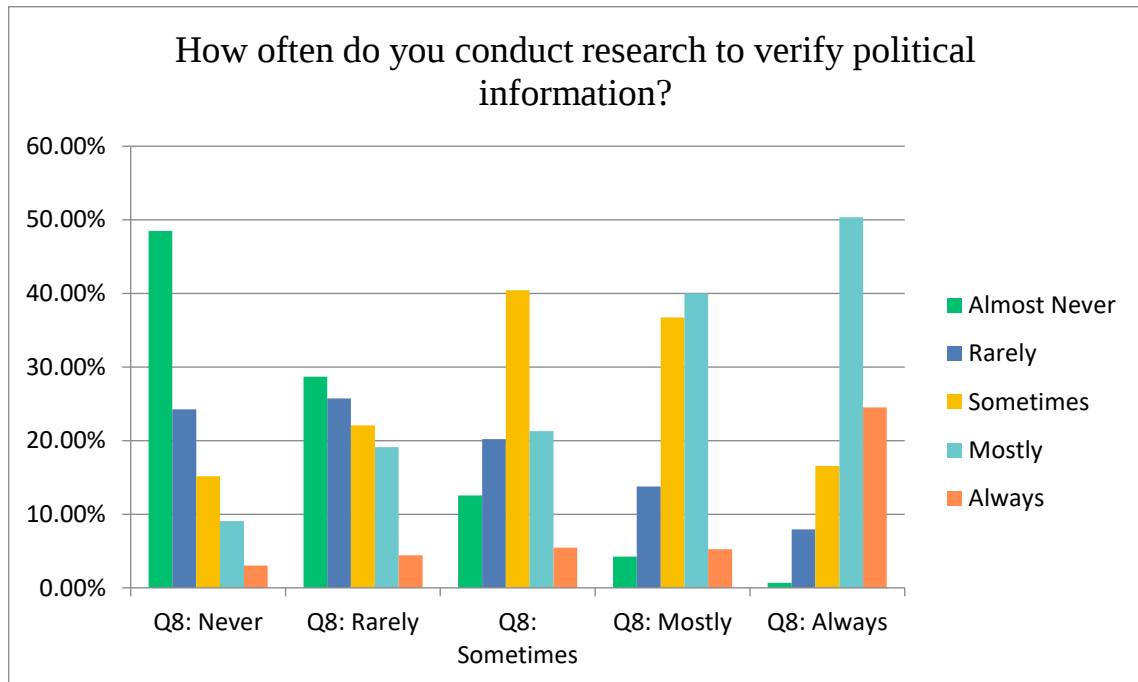


Table 22. Political interest and confirmation

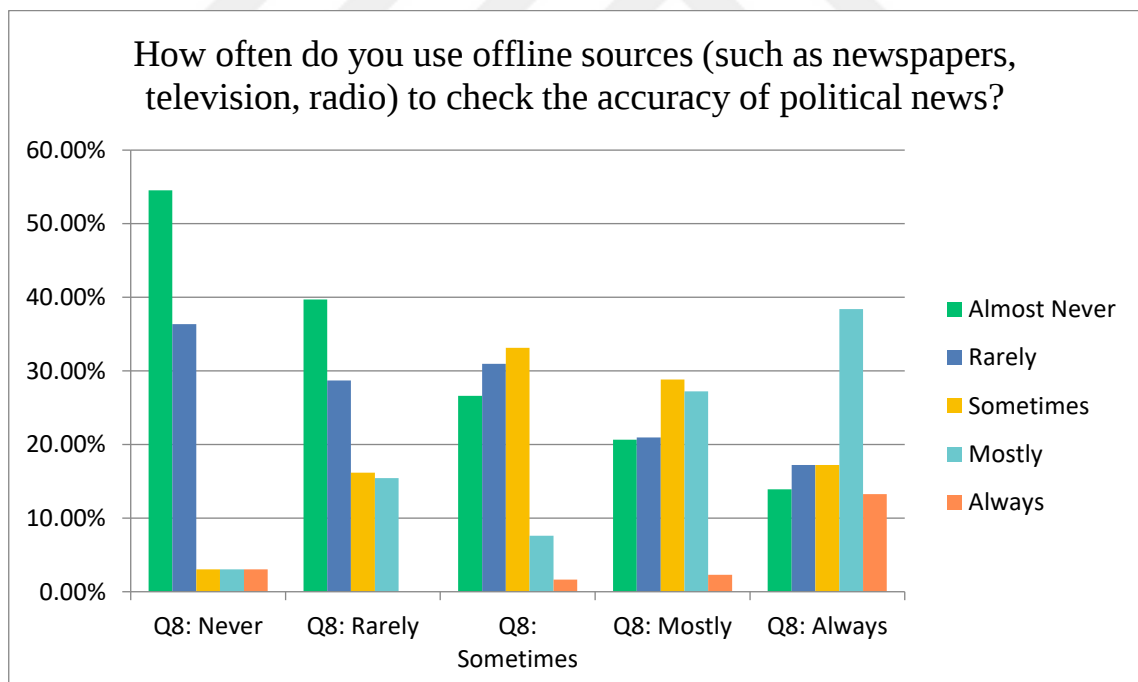


Table 23. Political interest and ‘offline media’

Another situation that measures whether or not to be in echo chambers with political interest is how often individuals refer to offline news sources. In this direction, the 22nd table shows the graph of political interest and how often the participants use

offline sources to verify their political information (Question 15). According to the table, as the political interest increases, the frequency of confirming the news via offline sources also increases.

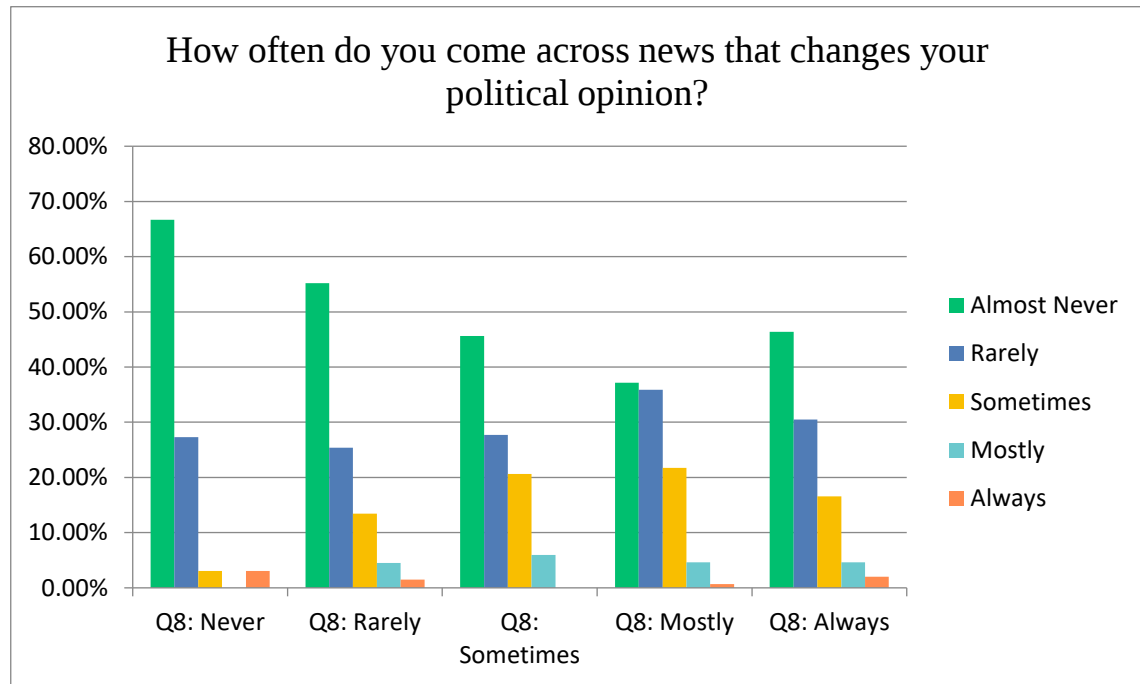


Table 24. Political interest and changing political opinion

Finally, the chart showing the relationship between political interest and news that will change the political view (Question 16) is given in the 23rd table. When political interest increases, there is a slight increase in the frequency of changing political views. However, it turned out that the political view in general did not change much. If the echo chambers are considered as network/opinion polarization, it has been proven once again that the opinion polarization is high.

Another independent variable is related to media diversity. It is also important on which platforms the political news is followed and whether it leads to diversity. In order to measure diversity, first of all, it is necessary to examine which news sources individuals use. For this reason, the 9th question asked as; 'What is your most used news source?'. Accordingly, a large majority use social media platforms (56.56%), and the Internet news sites (22.77%). Based on these results, we can state that online media is now the primary news source for news readers in Türkiye. For this reason, the importance of investigating

how individuals use social media and the Internet has been proven once again. Therefore, together with the 9th question that measures media diversity, graphs are given to reveal the relationship between dependent variables.

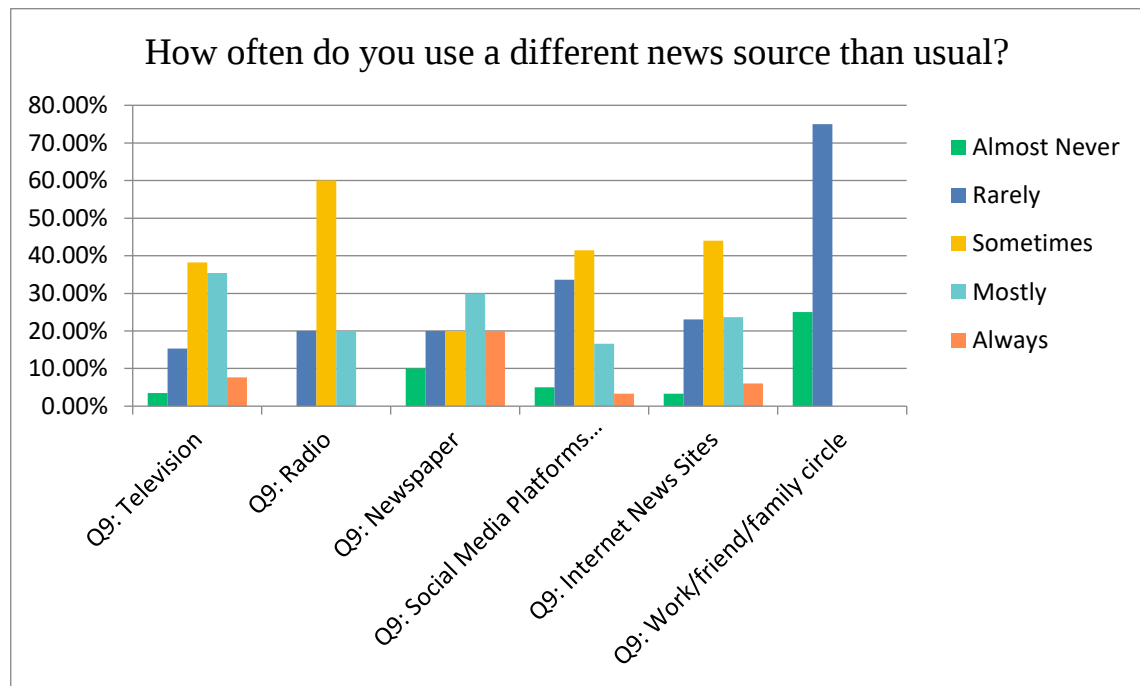


Table 25. Media diversity and different news source

First, the chart showing the correlation between media diversity and the frequency of using a different news source than usual is given in the 24th table. The answers were collected close to the 'Sometimes' option. Therefore, participants are not clearly exposed to a single platform's algorithm or unilateral news reception.

Secondly, the graph showing the relationship between the media platform used and the frequency of approval of political posts by online friends is given in Table 25. The results are parallel to each other. Regardless of the news source, respondents often disapprove of their friends' political content. There is no connection between the news source used and homophily and therefore echo chambers.

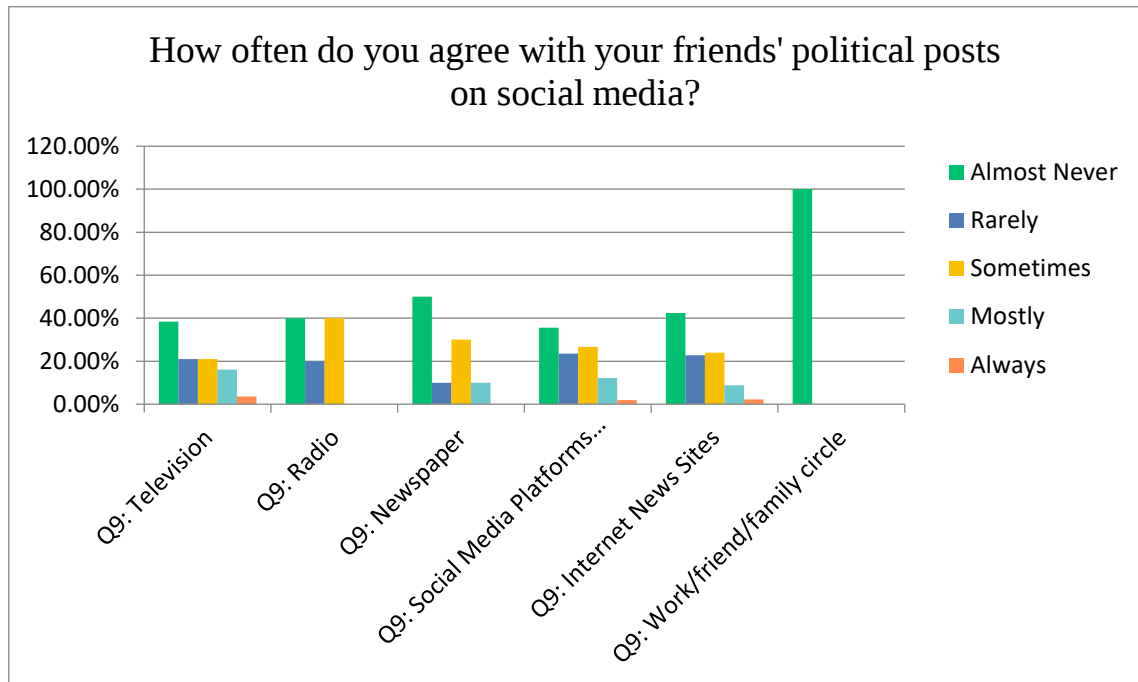


Table 26. Media diversity and agreement with your friends

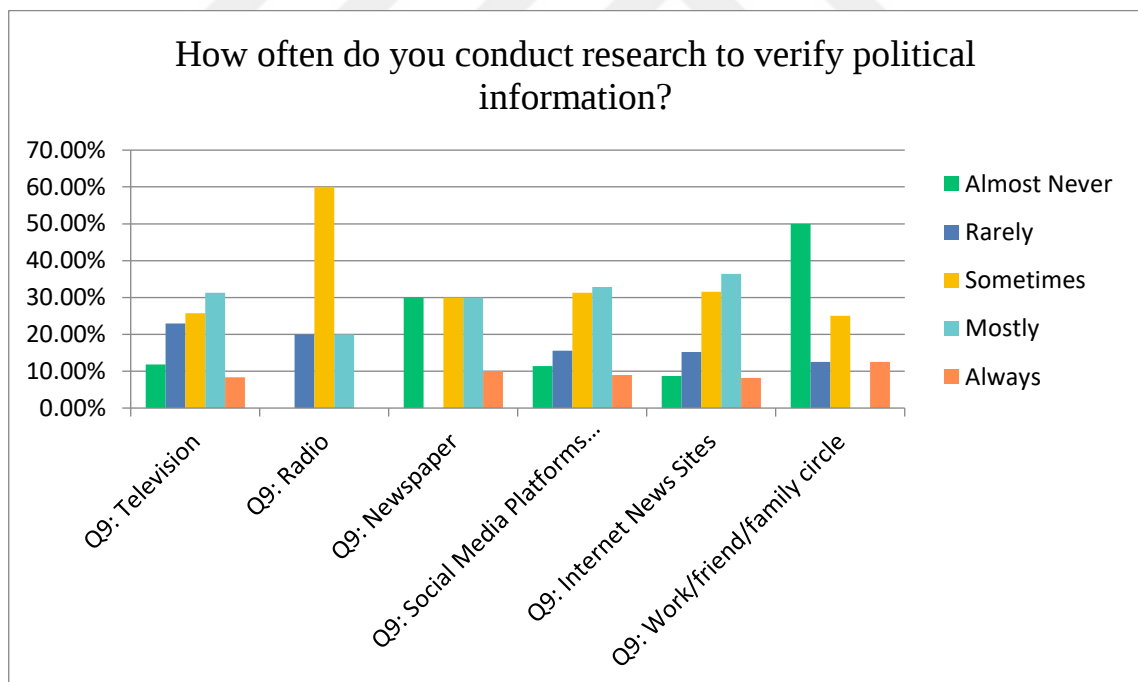


Table 27. Media diversity and confirmation

Investigating the accuracy of the political information encountered in the most used news source by the individual may affect whether or not to be in the echo chamber. Among the reasons for this effect, algorithms, the structure of the platform or biased

programs can be shown. Therefore, how often they do research to verify their political information and its correlation with the news source they use most are given in the 26th table. The distribution of the answers given depending on the most used social media platforms, Internet news sites, and television is quite parallel to each other. In general, it is seen that research is carried out to verify political information. This can have a preventive effect on the formation of echo chambers depending on the news source.

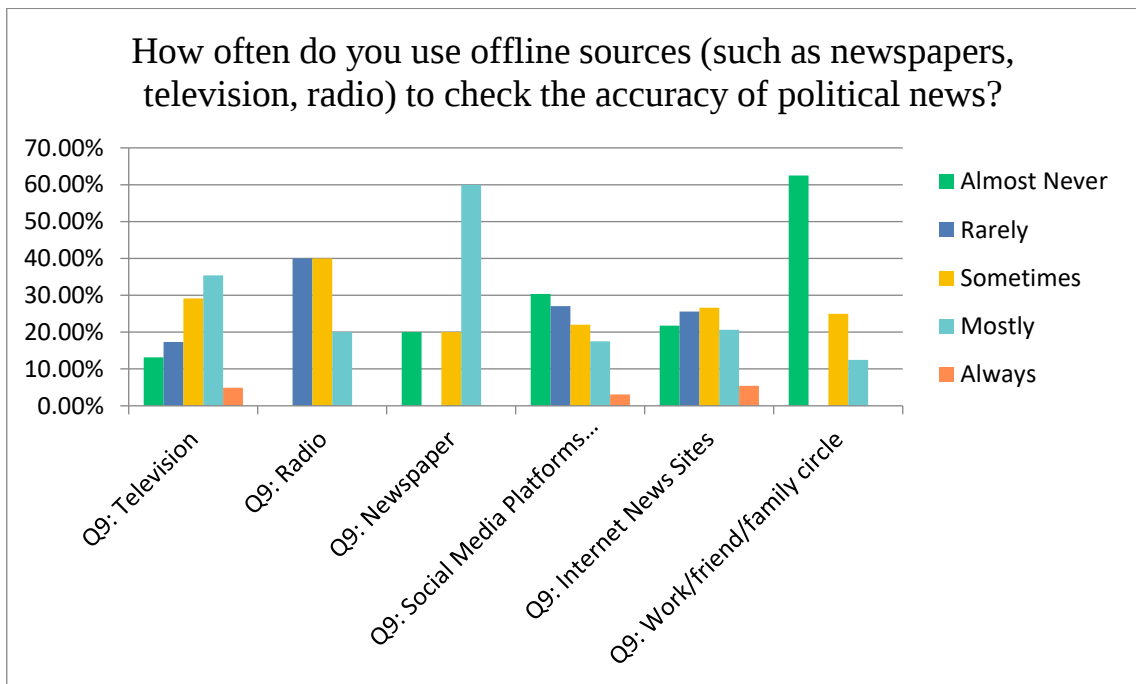


Table 28. Media diversity and ‘offline media’

Two of the three most used news sources are online. Accordingly, offline sources can be used to investigate the accuracy of the news encountered on social media platforms and Internet news sites. Table 27 shows how often this happens. It is seen that those who prefer the online environment as a news source are not inclined to use offline sources to check the accuracy of the news. An important reason for this -not measured in this survey though- may be due to the easy and fast access to the online environment.

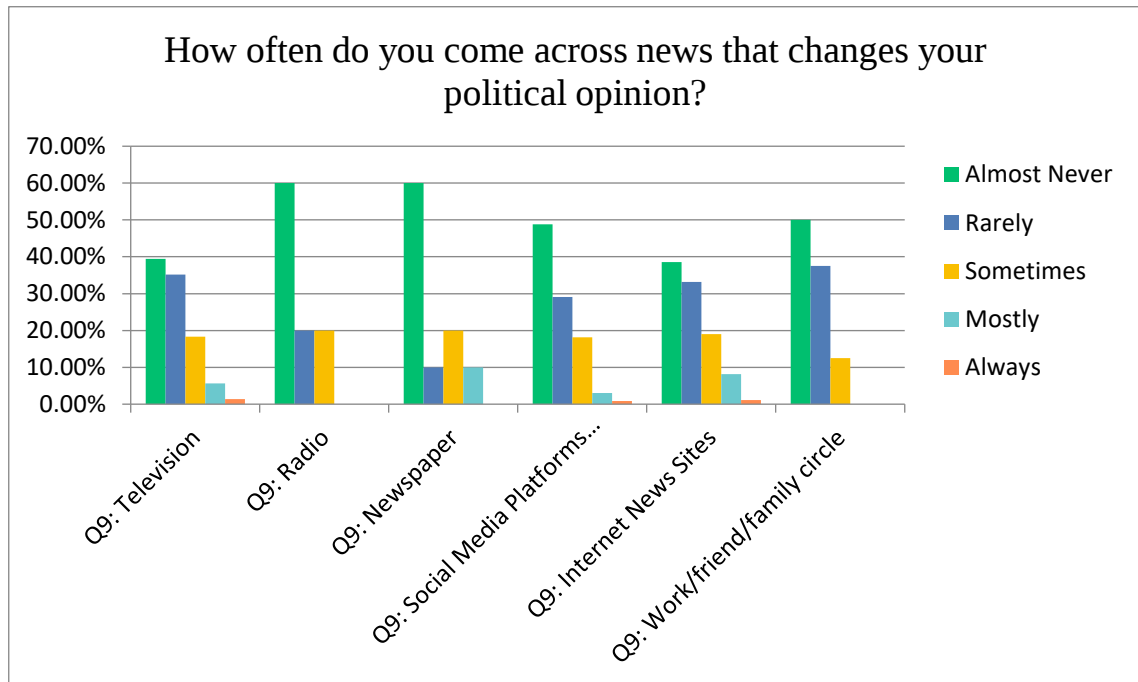


Table 29. Media diversity and changing political opinion

Finally, the chart showing the relationship between the most used news source and the frequency of encountering news that changes political views is given in the 28th table. According to the results, the answer 'Almost Never' ranks first when all news sources are examined. Therefore, there is no connection between the most used news source and the change in political opinion. Once again, it can be concluded that opinion polarization is seen rather than network polarization in the context of Türkiye.

The uniformity of the news source may cause individuals to be in the echo chamber. To measure whether such a situation exists among social media users in Türkiye, the 10th question 'How often do you use a different news source than usual?' was asked. The answers are similar to the results of Dubois and Blank's (2018) research. Responses were measured from 'Almost never' to 'Always' using a 5-category Likert scale. Accordingly, the participants' answers were 'Almost never' 4.59%, 'Rarely' 28.16%, 'Sometimes' 40.94%, 'Mostly' 21.46%, and 'Always' 4.84%. Based on the results, it can be argued that the participants who marked the answers 'Almost never' and 'Rarely' tended to be in the echo chamber.

It is necessary to analyze the use of a single type of news source in more detail. Hereby, the 11th question is, 'How often do you use different online media platforms (such as blogs, news sites, Facebook - Twitter - Youtube) to get news?' was asked. The aim of this question was to measure whether individuals adhere to a single platform. Because, as mentioned before, the algorithms of different online platforms also differ. While it is important how individuals use the online environment, individuals exposed to a single platform's algorithm may tend to be in an echo chamber. According to the results of the survey, it can be argued that such a situation does not exist. Responses were measured from 'Almost never' to 'Always' using a 5-category Likert scale. The participants' answers were 'Almost never' 2.97%, 'Rarely' 10.90%, 'Sometimes' 19.83%, 'Mostly' 45.23%, and 'Always' 21.07%. Therefore, it is seen that the majority use different online media platforms to receive news. In this case, it is seen that this dimension of echo chambers is not effective, since a uniform media platform is not used by the majority.

Another factor that measures individuals' interest in politics is how many hours a day they read political news. In this regard, the 12th question 'How many hours on average do you read political news online (online, Internet News Sites, Blogs, Social Media Platforms) in a day?' was asked. From the answers, it is seen that a very high majority (%74.60) read political news for 1-2 hours a day. The distribution of the other answers is as follows: 'I don't read/watch any news online' is 9.79%, 3-4 hours 11.40%, 5-6 hours 2.97%, and finally 1.24% for 6 hours or more. Therefore, we can say that people who use the online platform in Türkiye are interested in politics.

Another way to measure whether individuals are in echo chambers is to see how often they approve or disapprove of their friends' posts on social media. At this point, the homophily effect is pointed out with echo chambers. If individuals accumulate people who think like themselves and have similar views, they can stay in echo chambers by excluding foreign ideas. In order to measure the attitudes of social media users in Türkiye, the 13th question " How often do you agree with your friends' political posts on social media?" was asked. At this point, unlike Dubois and Blank's research, the question was asked as 'agree', instead of 'disagree'. The reason for this was the thought that asking the question in a negative way would also be directing the respondents into giving negative

answers. The question was asked as 'agree' to avoid such cognitive bias. The results are striking. According to the answers prepared in the form of a 5-category Likert scale: 38.54% marked 'Almost never', 22.55% marked 'Rarely'. In other words, the majority state that they do not approve of their friends' political posts on social media. This reveals that the homophily effect in social media is weak in the context of Türkiye. As for the distribution among the other choices, 'Sometimes' was 24.91%, 'Mostly' was 11.90%, and 'Always' was 2.11%.

One of the reasons for being in echo chambers is misinformation. Misinformation can spread on social media platforms for many reasons. Such information can be used to manipulate the masses or be shared by individuals unconsciously. Therefore, it is an important issue whether the accuracy of the news encountered on social media is investigated. Therefore, the 14th question is "How often do you conduct research to verify political information?" was asked. Responses were measured from 'Almost never' to 'Always' using a 5-category Likert scale. The results were distributed as “Almost never” 11.40%, “Rarely” 16.60%, “Sometimes” 30.36%, “Mostly” 32.96%, and finally “Always” 8.67%. From this point of view, it is possible to say that the accuracy of political news has been investigated in general and that a clear answer has not come to the fore. However, to repeat the previous argument, approximately 30% of the participants marked 'Almost never' and 'Rarely' answers. This shows that it cannot be emphasized that this ratio is not remarkable if 30% of the population is in the echo chamber.

One of the tools that should be used to investigate the accuracy of political information is to turn to offline sources. Since newspaper or television journalism is carried out as a professional profession, it can be more reliable in terms of the source compared to citizen journalism that we encounter on online platforms. Investigating and revealing the accuracy of the news by individuals whose profession is journalism can prevent the spread of fake news. At this point, it comes to the fore whether the investigations are followed by the news readers. If individuals do not research the accuracy of the news and believe the news is in line with their views, they can be in the echo chamber. To investigate whether such a situation is valid in Türkiye, the 15th

question "How often do you use offline sources (such as newspapers, television, radio) to check the accuracy of political news?" was asked. The distribution of answers is as follows: "Almost never" 25.37%, "Rarely" 24.38%, "Sometimes" 24.50%, "Mostly" 21.91%, and finally "Always" 3.84%. According to the results, it is seen that offline sources such as newspapers, television, and radio are not used much to verify the news.

One of the important indicators of understanding whether individuals are in the echo chamber is how often individuals change their political views. At this point, the question of how effective the online environment is in changing political ideas comes to the fore. Based on Törnberg (2018), one of the reasons for the emergence of echo chambers may be due to the separation of network polarization and opinion polarization. In other words, it is an important point whether the online environment is effective in changing or consolidating the political ideas of individuals or whether it is due to existing policies. To gauge this point, question 16 "How often do you come across news that changes your political viewpoint?" was asked. According to the results, the rate of those who marked the "Almost Never" option is 44.97%. Those who marked "Rarely" were 30.93%. From this, it emerges as a result that a very large majority did not change their political views. This means that the opinion polarization in Türkiye has reached a very important point. These findings show parallelism with the findings of Emre Erdoğan (2016, 2018). In this case, it cannot be said clearly that the polarization in Türkiye stems from social media. Another hypothesis is that the majority in Türkiye does not use social media in a way that creates an echo chamber. However, this does not necessarily mean that echo chambers are exaggerated.

As an additional control to question 16, question 17 "Do you ever reflect on the political news you see in the media and change your current views?" was asked. This question aims to measure whether individuals have a reflexive way of thinking. One of the reasons why individuals are in echo chambers may be that they believe the news they see in the media without investigating their veracity. In such cases, individuals may have a tendency to be more vulnerable to fake news or to show fanatical approaches by supporting the political view or party they are close to without questioning. This, in turn, can reinforce existing views and lead them into echo chambers. Responses were measured

from 'Almost never' to 'Always' using a 5-category Likert scale. The results were distributed as follows: "Almost never" 47.46%, "Rarely" 29.86%, "Sometimes" 19.83%, "Mostly" 2.23%, and "Always" 0.62%. The results show parallelism with the answers in question 16. It has been found that the frequency of people changing their political views in Türkiye is quite low.

The relationship between individuals being in the echo chamber and tolerance was mentioned in the previous sections. One of the reasons for the formation of echo chambers is the exclusion of divergent views. This may be due to intolerance of other ideas. Since this situation can lead to polarization, questions 18 and 19 have been added. For this, the 18th question; "How tolerant would you be to people with different political views?" was asked. Responses were measured from 'Almost never' to 'Always' using a 5-category Likert scale. The results are distributed as follows; "Almost never" is 3.60%, "Rarely" is 9.06%, "Sometimes" is 17.62%, "Mostly" is 46.40%, and finally, "Always" is 23.33%. According to the results, it is seen that most of the participants are tolerant of other people's opinions. At this point, it can be claimed that people will tend to have a cognitive bias towards not ascribing a negative situation to them. Therefore, in question 19, individuals were asked how they see society in terms of tolerance, apart from reporting themselves. 19th question; "Do you think people in Türkiye are politically tolerant of each other?" was asked. Responses were measured from 'Almost never' to 'Always' using a 5-category Likert scale. The results are distributed as follows; "Almost never" 55.89%, "Rarely" 29.74%, "Sometimes" 12.27%, "Mostly" 1.98%, and finally "Always" 0.12%. Therefore, the following conclusion can be reached; While individuals often see themselves as tolerant, they see society on the contrary, mostly intolerant. Based on these results, it can be argued that one of the important causes of opinion polarization is a high level of intolerance.

In the formation of echo chambers, how much information individuals have about online environments is as important as their attitudes and behaviors. As mentioned in the previous sections, algorithms and platform structures are also very important in the formation of echo chambers. Since it cannot be measured directly how much knowledge the participants have about the Internet, questions 20 and 21 were added as additional

control variables in a self-reporting way. In this direction, the 20th question; "How often do you get information to use the Internet better?" was asked. Responses were measured from 'Almost never' to 'Always' using a 5-category Likert scale. The results are distributed as follows; "Almost never" is 3.86%, "Rarely" is 12.06%, "Sometimes" is 28.73%, "Mostly" is 40.55%, and finally "Always" is 14.80%. The 21st question was asked as follows; "There is a scale below with '1' very bad, '10' very good. According to this scale, where would you position yourself in terms of using the Internet/technology?". According to the self-report of individuals, the majority think that they use the Internet 'well'.

As another control variable, the right/left political position and political ideologies of the participants were asked in questions 22 and 23. In this direction, the 22nd question was asked as follows; "Below is a 10-point scale of left-right political views. Here, '1' represents the far left, and '10' represents the far right. Where do your own political views fit on this scale?". As can be seen from the table, although the center and left tendencies are slightly more in terms of political views, there is no significant difference with the right view. Therefore, it can be argued that the individuals participating in the survey are evenly distributed in terms of political views. In order to express the distribution in the chart ideologically, the 23rd question was asked as follows; "How would you describe yourself politically?". As can be seen from the table, although 'Social Democrats' was the most preferred option with 27.69%, 'Nationalists' was the second most preferred option with 16.17%. Therefore, it is observed that one side does not have a significant weight in the ideological distribution. In this study, it is thought that the connection between echo chambers and political views has special importance. Although the segments that voted for other parties are important, when the vote rates of the two parties that received the most votes in the last 20 years in Türkiye are examined, it is seen that the JDP is 40-50% and the RPP is 20-25%. Therefore, it is important to examine the voting behavior and presence in echo chambers on the basis of voters. As a result of such research, both the effect of the echo chambers and the network/opinion polarization distinction can be revealed more clearly.

It was examined whether there was a connection between the ideologies of the participants and the echo chambers. In the analyzes made on the independent and

dependent variables, no significant differences were detected in the use of media. The biggest difference in usage is seen in the answers to questions 13 and 27. If we look at the graph in Table 29, it is seen that socialists and social democrats are more inclined to approve their friends' posts with political content on social media than those who adopt other ideologies. Similarly, the distribution of the answers to question 27 by ideologies is given in the 30th table. According to the graph, socialists and social democrats lead the question of whether there is a platform or channel that you cannot tolerate seeing. Therefore, it can be argued that socialists and social democrats use the media more inclined towards network polarization.

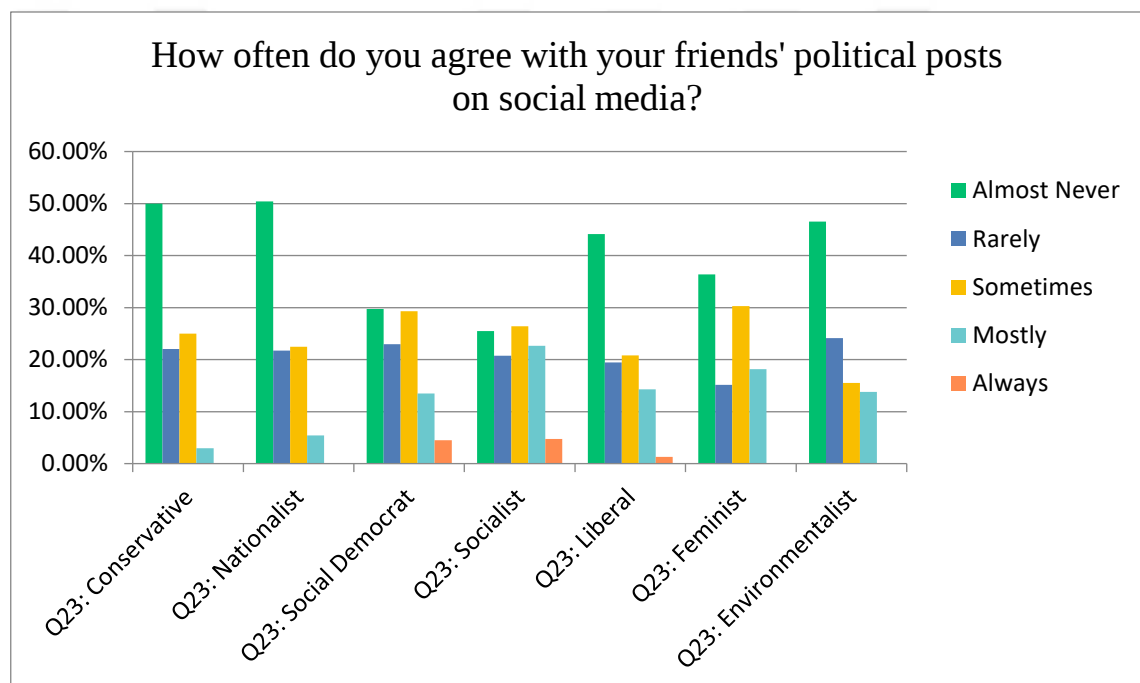


Table 30. Political ideology and agreement with friends

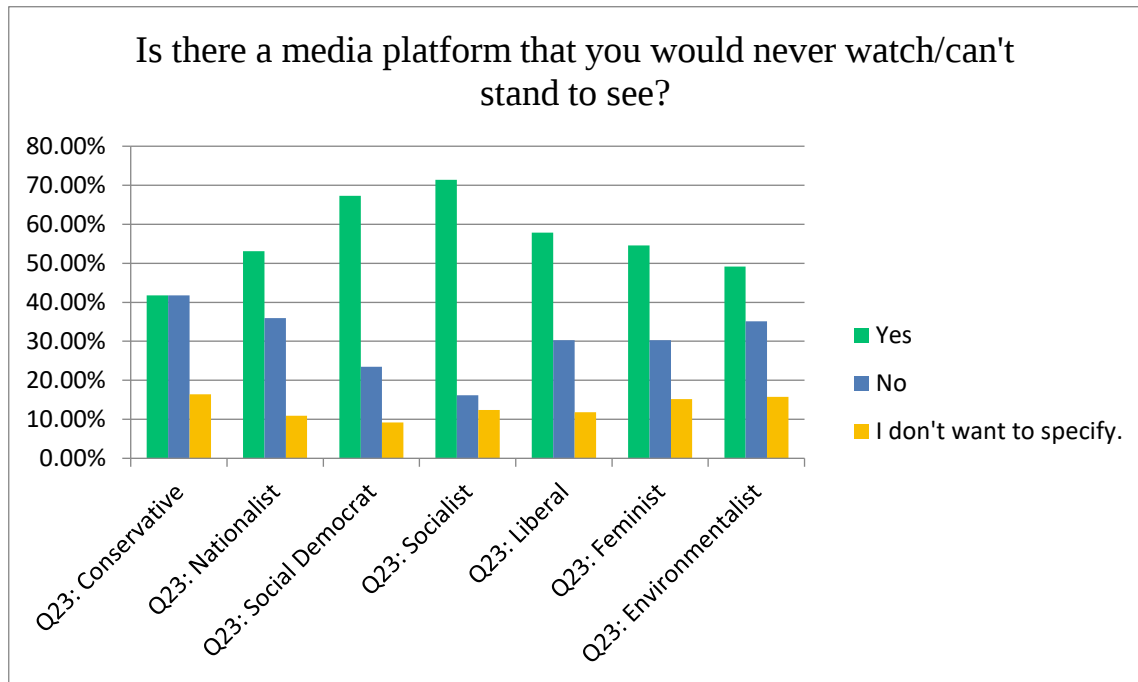


Table 31. Political ideology and platform that is never preferred/watched

25th question was asked as follows; "In which situation or situations the news catches your attention and you read and watch the details of the news? (You can tick more than one box that suits you)" The purpose of this question was to determine the reasons that lead individuals to follow the news. The reasons that lead people to follow the news may also be the reasons that create echo chambers. The answers given to the question asked to measure this situation are distributed as follows; 'If I start seeing it shared frequently (on Twitter, Facebook, etc. on one of the social media platforms) somewhere.' 48.01%, 'When I see it in more than one place.' 40.82%, 'The first time I see it if the subject interests me.' 62.82%, 'When someone from my environment (family, friends, acquaintances, etc.) shares/suggests' 36.10%, 'I usually try to read/watch all the news I come across.' 22.95%, 'No idea.' 1.86%, 'I'm not interested in the news.' 2.48%. There are three outstanding results for news readers in Türkiye. Two of them are to read the news if it is interesting and popular. Considering that the online environment is the primary source of news in Türkiye, the rapid virality of the news has led to its popularity is important. The rapid virality of the news can either lead to the formation of temporary echo chambers depending on the subject, or individuals who are already in the echo chambers can quickly integrate into the subject and perform a reinforcing function.

However, revealing the interestingness of the news in Türkiye can be one of the ways to measure whether an echo chamber is formed in terms of integrating with a subject. The last important result is related to the environmental effect of following the news. Suggestions or shares from individuals' environment may have the potential to create a homophily effect. This can lead to the formation of echo chambers. Another option is to be exposed to shares or suggestions that will contain different opinions. The environment of individuals can also have an effect that does not create homophily. Therefore, investigating the effect of homophily in other studies will be important in revealing how strong the echo chamber is in Türkiye. In addition, if the argument put forward in this thesis is repeated hypothetically, if 20% of the individuals who follow the news with the influence of their environment have a homophily effect, does this show that echo chambers are exaggerated?

The criteria by which the channels or platforms that are followed by the news are selected can also pave the way for measuring whether echo chambers are formed or not. To measure this point, question 26 was asked as follows; "I choose the channels/platforms that I follow the news according to the following (You can tick more than one box.)". The results are distributed as follows; "The compatibility of my political view with the approach of the news platform/channel." 35.46%, "The popularity of the channel/platform is high." 16.29%, "The high number of followers or followers of the channel/platform." 12.91% "The content of the news made by the channel/platform is reliable." 80.83%, "The content of the news made by the channel/platform is based on information." 66.29%, "The content of the news made by the channel/platform is not boring." 17.67%, "Channel/platform is free" 27.82%, and finally "Channel/platform is paid" 0.50%. The most prominent factors for the respondents are that the news content is reliable and based on information. From this point of view, it is concluded that the participants are sensitive to fake news. This can be an attitude that prevents the spread of the echo chamber effect. But there is another remarkable result. The fact that 35.46% of the people pay attention to the compatibility of their political views with the approach of the channel/platform indicates the existence of echo chambers in Türkiye.

One of the reasons for the formation of echo chambers is the deliberate/selective avoidance of different opinion media channels or platforms. In cases where polarization reaches extremes, individuals may not be able to tolerate seeing some news platforms or channels with different views. To measure this situation, the 27th and last question is as follows; "Is there a media platform that you would never watch/can't stand to see?". While 60.18% of the participants marked "Yes", the rate of those who marked "No" was 27.81%. "I don't want to specify." Those who marked the answer are 12.01%. These results support the arguments put forward earlier. First of all, the polarization has reached considerable dimensions. Although opinion polarization precedes network polarization, there is also network polarization that cannot be underestimated.

CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, Dubois and Blank's (2018) research on the echo chamber is retested in the context of Türkiye. According to the hypotheses they put forward, as individuals' interest in politics and media diversity increase, their presence in echo chamber will decrease. In their research, they concluded that the concept of the echo chamber is exaggerated. The findings in my thesis which is conducted on 810 respondents via online survey technique reveal that individuals' interest in politics and media diversity are high in Türkiye regardless of age group and diploma degree. However, different from Dubois and Blank's, in this study, the echo chamber is handled in a different way. Based on Törnberg (2018), the concept of the echo chamber is divided into network/opinion polarization. Accordingly, opinion polarization refers to the grouping of people with similar views and excluding individuals or communities with different views. Network polarization is about algorithms, the structure of platforms, and how individuals use the online environment. The structure of algorithms and platforms exceeds the control of the individual. News or suggestions that individuals may encounter in the online environment may determine whether network polarization will occur.

The most prominent finding is that in the context of Türkiye, network polarization is low or only partially effective, while opinion polarization is quite high. The reason for the low network polarization is due to the participants' high media diversity. How often they use different news sources than usual is moderate. They frequently use different online media platforms to get news. They do not approve of their friend's political posts on social media, and sensitive to the accuracy of political news. The reason why opinion polarization is high is that participants rarely encounter news that changes their political views, or the frequency of thinking about the political news they come across and changing their current views is quite low. Therefore, although network polarization is only partially effective, the fact that opinion polarization is quite high and this does not trivialize the concept of echo chamber.

The low homophily effect is another striking finding in this study. Individuals do not approve of the political content of their friends on social media. When this situation is considered in terms of political ideologies, it has been found that socialists and social democrats are more inclined to approve their friends' political posts on social media than individuals who adopt other ideologies.

At this point, a hypothetical argument can be put forward. In terms of its simple definition, if the voters of the political parties with 20-30% of the votes are in the echo chamber, then it will be difficult to say that the effect of the echo chambers is exaggerated or not influential. Especially when we look at the general elections held in Türkiye in the last ten years, the vote distribution is approximately as follows: Justice and Development Party 45%, Republican People's Party 25%, Nationalist Movement Party 12%, People's Democratic Party 10%. The fact that the vote distribution has not changed much in the last ten years may be another indicator of high political opinion polarization. Although echo chamber can be integrated into different subjects as mentioned before, the relationship between voting behavior and echo chamber requires a more comprehensive investigation.

According to other findings in this study, the two prominent reasons for individuals to read the details of the news are the attractiveness and popularity/virality of the news. Two factors that come to the fore when individuals choose a news source are that the source is reliable and informative. This shows that individuals are sensitive to fake news. On the other hand, what people really meant by a 'reliable source' is still open for further debate and research.

Another finding is that social media platforms and Internet news sites are the primary sources of news. Those aged 50 and over use television and newspapers, and those under 50 use social media and Internet news sites as their main source of news. In addition, primary and secondary school graduates mostly use television, and participants with high school and higher degrees use social media and Internet news sites as a way of getting news.

One of the limitations of this research is that the participants were not asked how often they were exposed to political news from different views. If individuals are less

exposed to news from different views than to political news close to their own, this may reduce the frequency of change in their political views. This situation can be addressed in future studies.

One reason the opinion polarization is high may be due to the balanced/biased information separation. Although different news sources are used in countries where the mainstream media is monolithic, such as Türkiye, there may be parallelism in terms of news content or opinion. Individuals can reinforce their own views by being exposed to news from different views, as in trench warfare dynamics. In this case, individuals' media repertoires can be researched. Future studies may consider revisiting this point.

Similarly, high political interest can have two consequences. The first is linked to the fact that who read the news for longer periods of time are more likely to be exposed to different ideas. Thus, the tendency of individuals exposed to different ideas to be in echo chambers may decrease. Secondly, if those who read the news for a longer period of time are exposed to one-sided content, their state of being in the echo chambers may be reinforced. This issue can be explored in future studies.

The education level of the people who participated in the survey is high. Although there were also participants who graduated from primary school, secondary school and high school, the majority had a university or postgraduate degree. Although it is not within the scope of this thesis how conscious these participants are about media literacy, different results can be found in studies with less educated participants. Finally, for echo chamber research, interviews with participants may produce different results instead of an online survey. Thus, different results may be obtained in future studies due to the confusion arising from the concept itself.

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APPENDIX-A

Q1. What age range are you in?

Q2. What is your gender?

Q3. What is your marital status?

Q4. What is your Diploma degree?

Q5. Which group does your monthly income belong to?

Q6. What is your employment status?

Q7. Where do you live?

Q8. How often do you follow political news?

Q9. What is your most used news source?

Q10. How often do you use a different news source than usual?

Q11. How often do you use different online media platforms (such as blogs, news sites, Facebook - Twitter - Youtube) to get news?

Q12. How many hours on average do you read political news online (online, Internet News Sites, Blogs, Social media platforms) in a day?

Q13. How often do you agree with your friends' political posts on social media?

Q14. How often do you conduct research to verify political information?

Q15. How often do you use offline sources (such as newspapers, television, radio) to check the accuracy of political news?

Q16. How often do you come across news that changes your political opinion?

Q17. Do you ever reflect on the political news you see in the media and change your current views?

Q18. How tolerant would you be to people with different political views?

Q19. Do you think people in Türkiye are politically tolerant of each other?

Q20. How often do you get information to use the Internet better?

Q21. There is a scale below with '1' very bad, '10' very good. According to this scale, where would you position yourself in terms of using the Internet/technology?

Q22. Below is a 10-point scale of left-right political views. Here, '1' represents the far left, and '10' represents the far right. Where do your own political views fit on this scale?

Q23. How would you describe yourself politically?

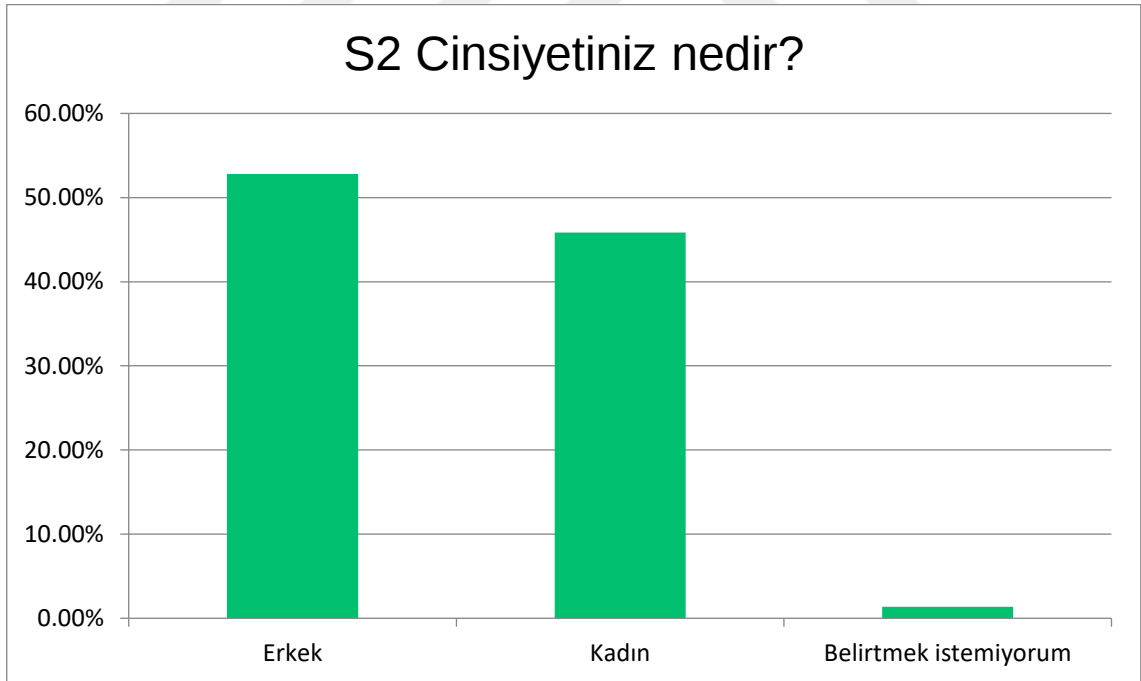
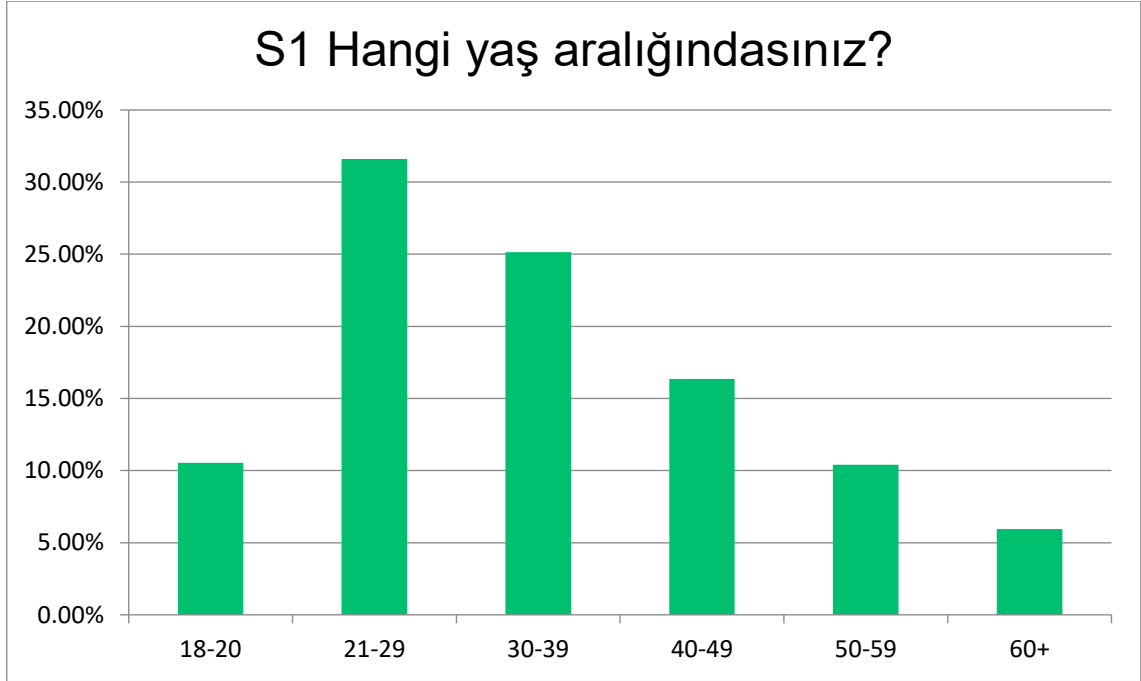
Q24. Do you think there is political polarization in Türkiye?

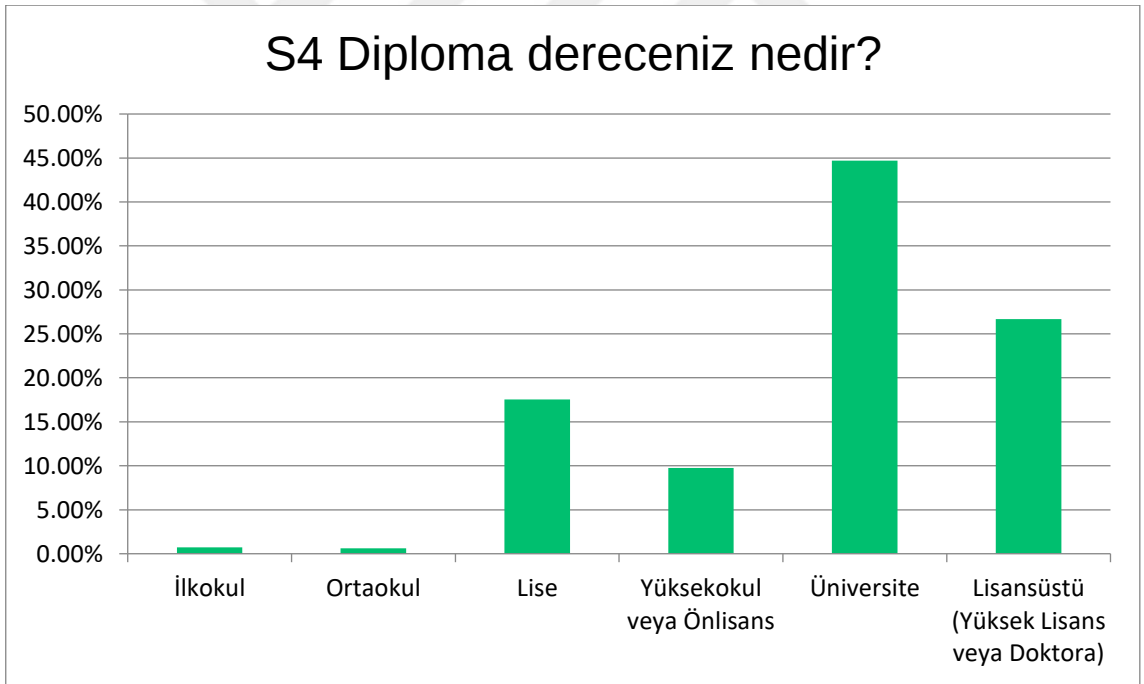
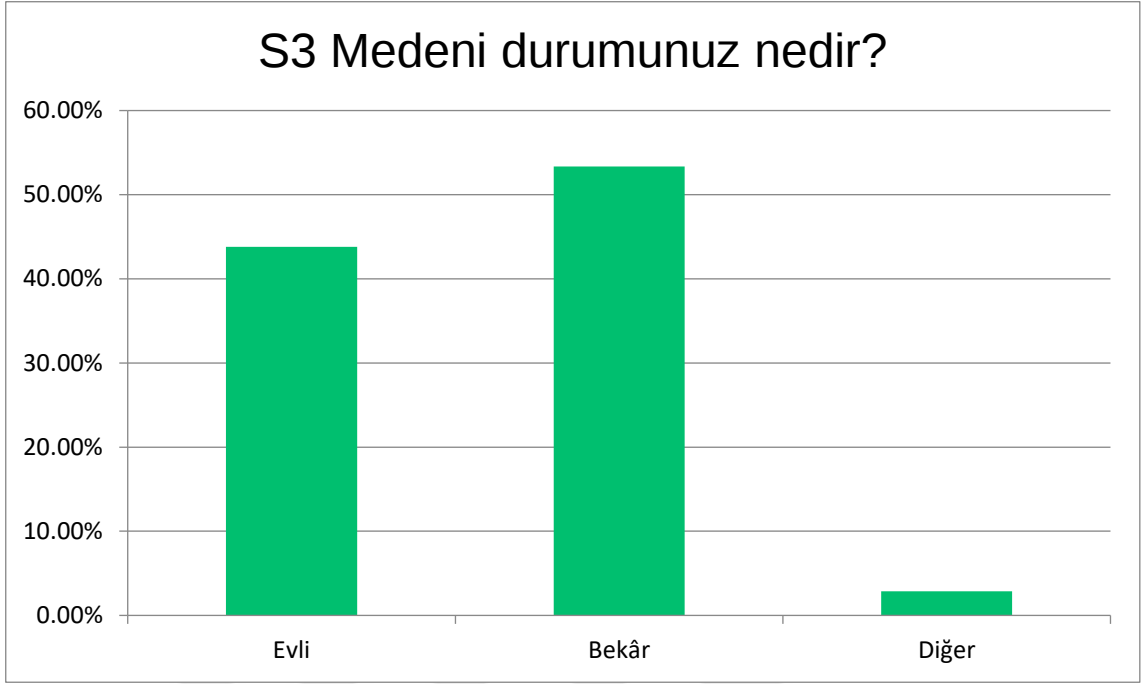
Q25. In which of the following situations or situations a news catches your attention and you read-watch the details of the news? (You can tick more than one box that suits you.)

Q26. I choose the channels/platforms I follow the news according to the following. (You can tick more than one box.)

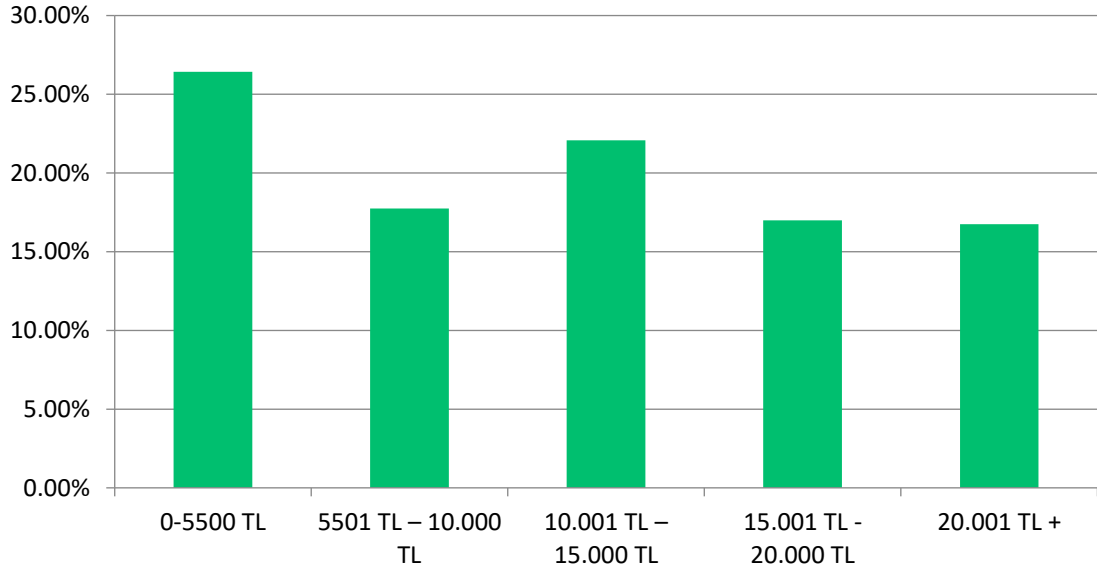
Q27. Is there a media platform that you would never watch/can't stand to see?

APPENDIX-B. The Original Survey Questions and Answers

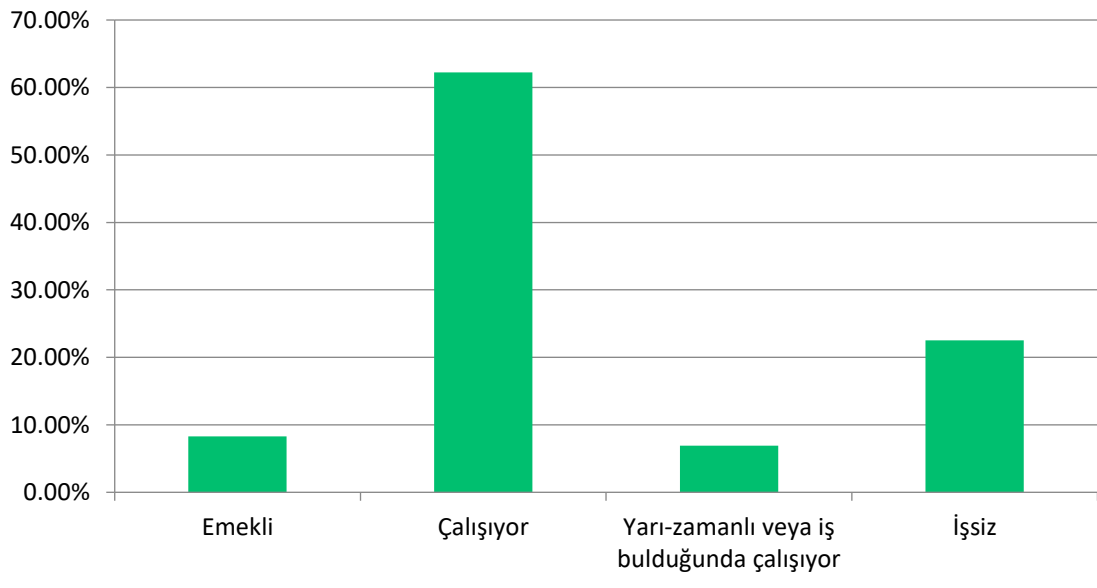




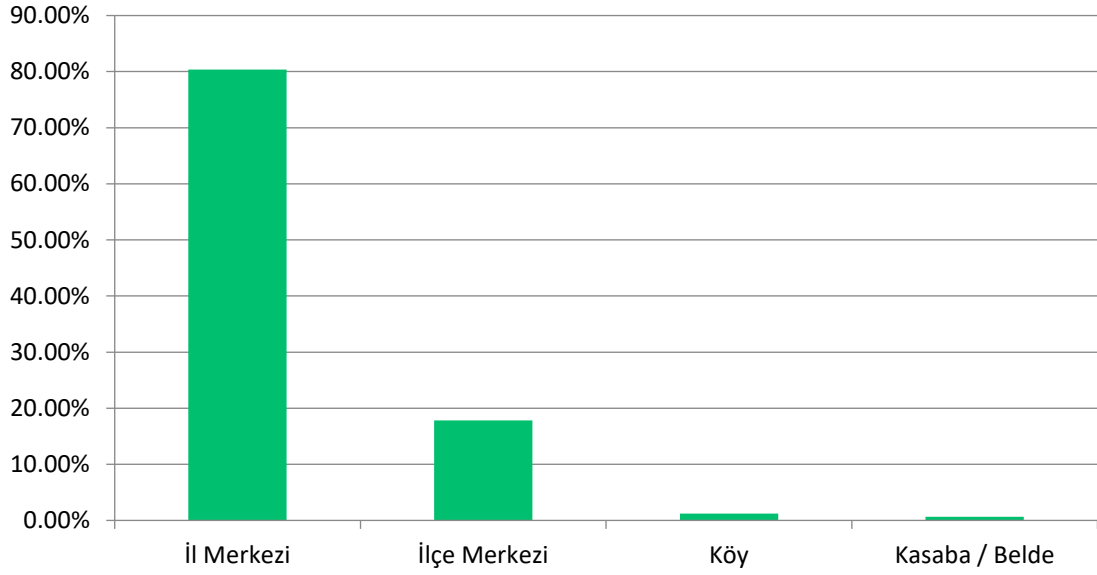
S5 Aylık geliriniz hangi gruba dahildir?



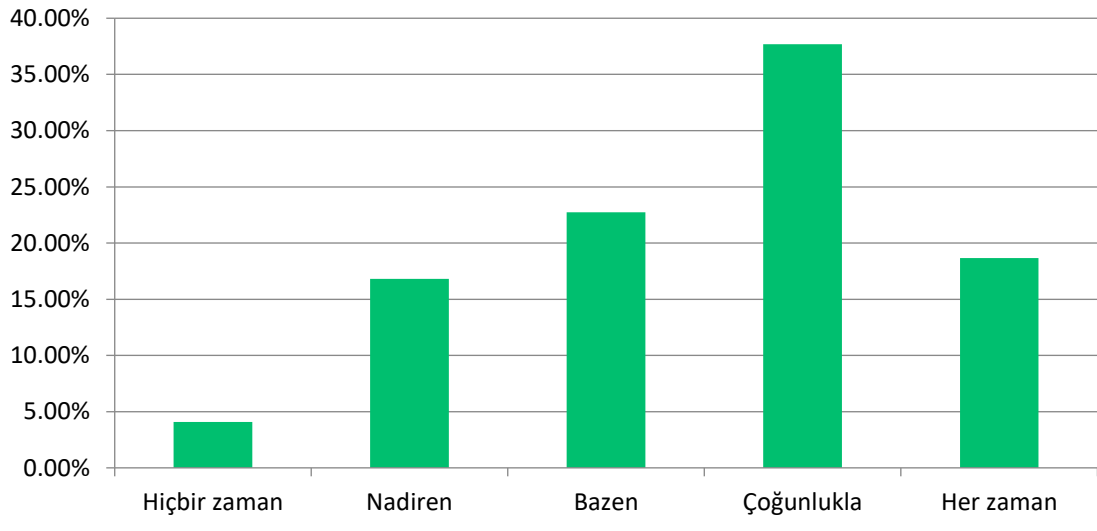
S6 İstihdam durumunuz nedir?



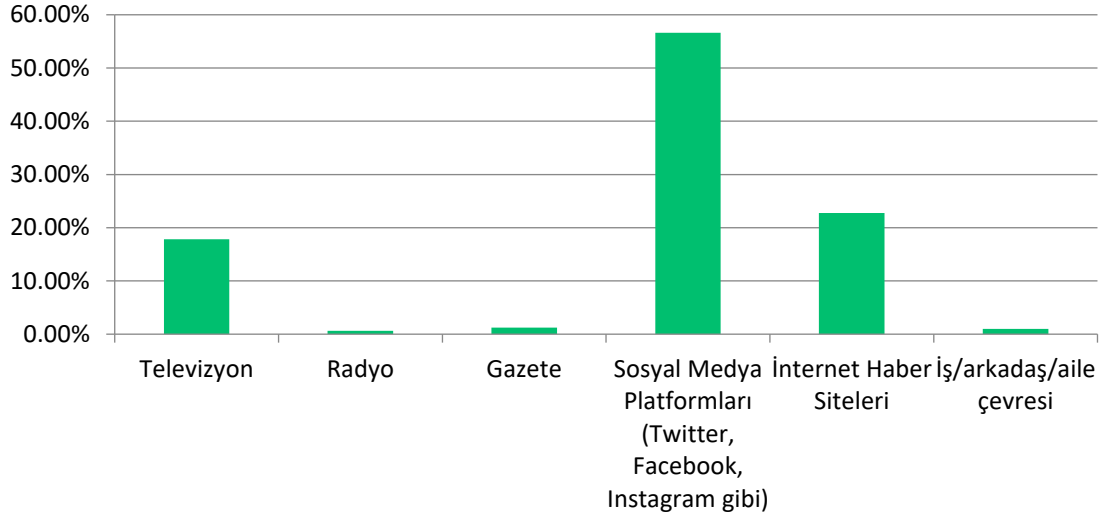
S7 Nerede yaşıyorsunuz?



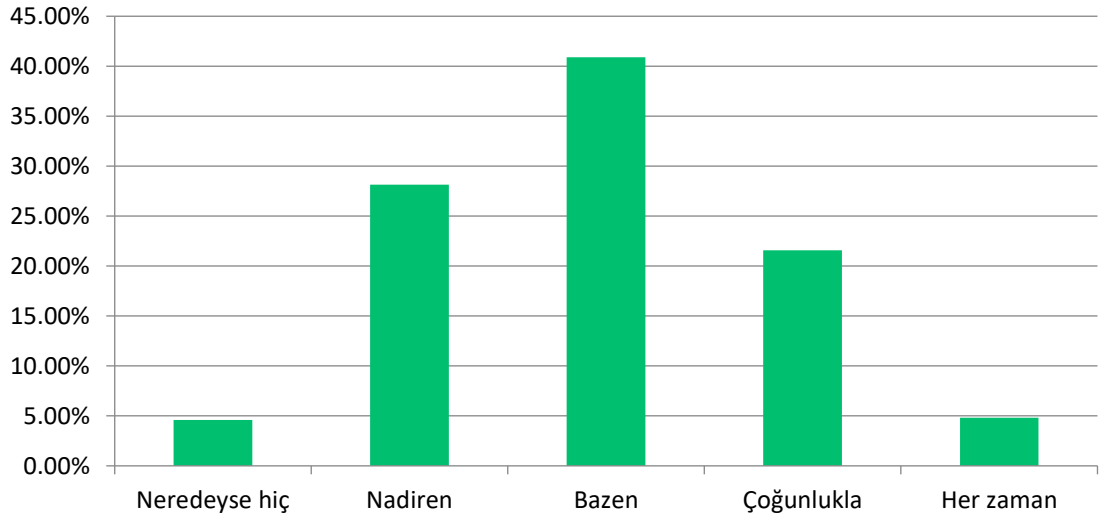
S8 Siyasi haberleri ne sıklıkla takip ediyorsunuz?



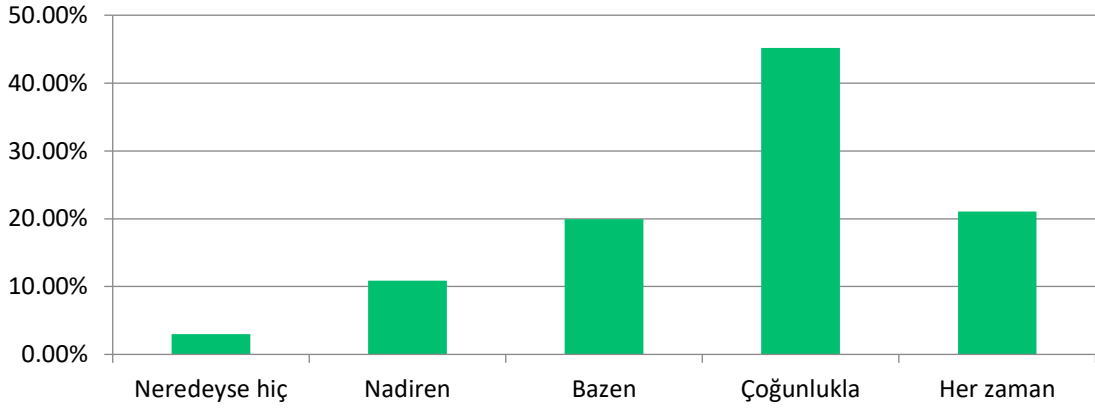
S9 En çok kullandığınız haber kaynağı nedir?



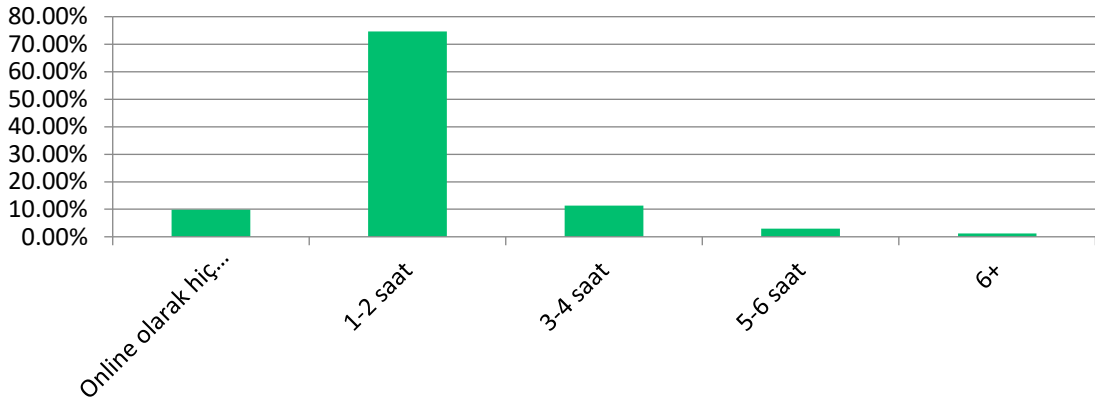
S10 Ne sıklıkla her zamankinden farklı bir haber kaynağı kullanıyorsunuz?



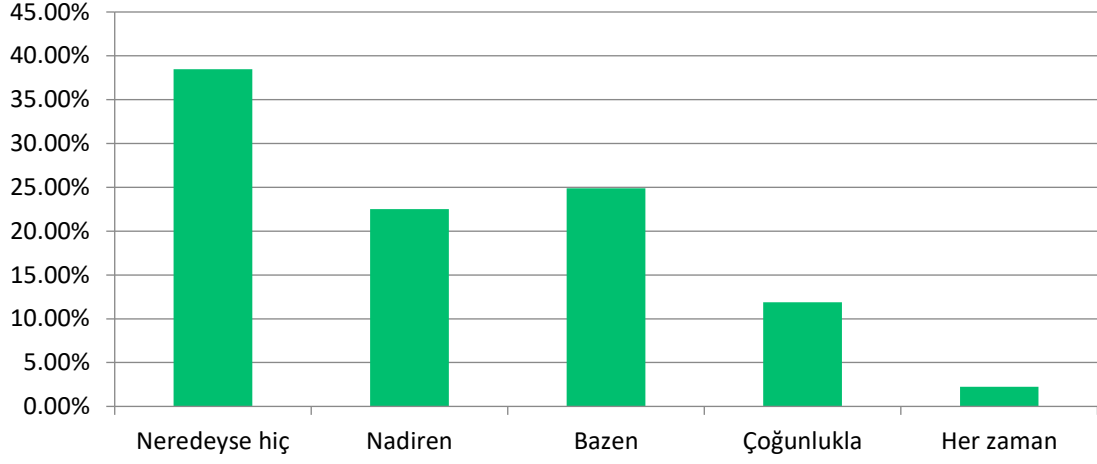
S11 Ne sıklıkla haber alımı için farklı çevrimiçi medya platformlarını (bloglar, haber siteleri, Facebook - Twitter - Youtube gibi) kullanıyorsunuz?



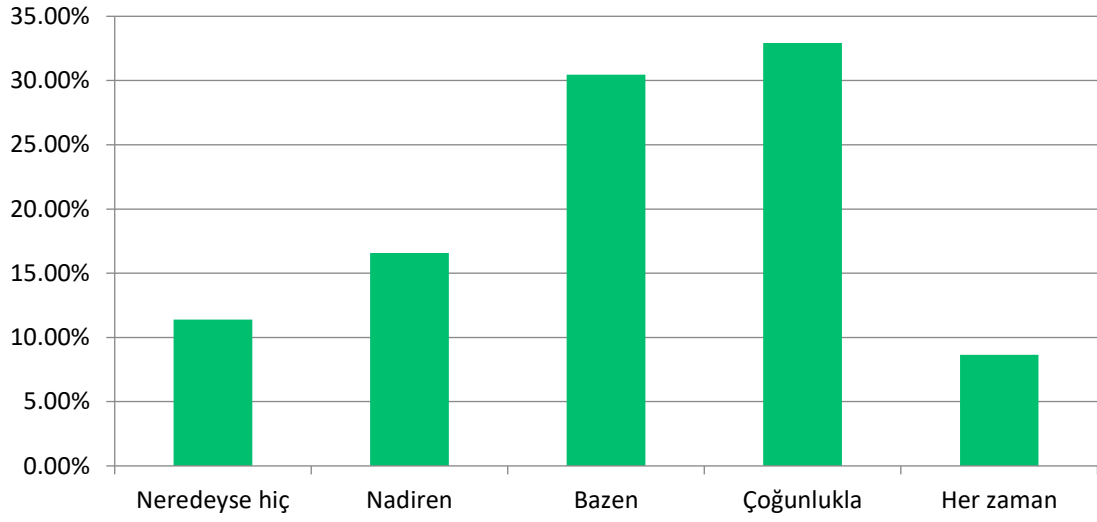
S12 Bir günde çevrimiçi (online, İnternet Haber Siteleri, Bloglar, Sosyal medya platformları gibi) olarak ortalama kaç saat siyasi haber okuyorsunuz?



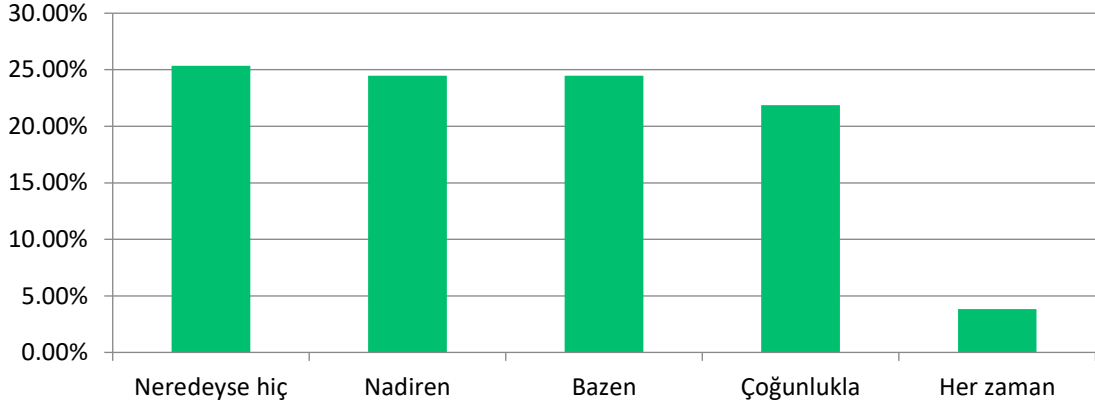
**S13 Sosyal medyada arkadaşlarınızın
siyasi içerikli paylaşımlarına ne sıklıkla
katılırsınız?**



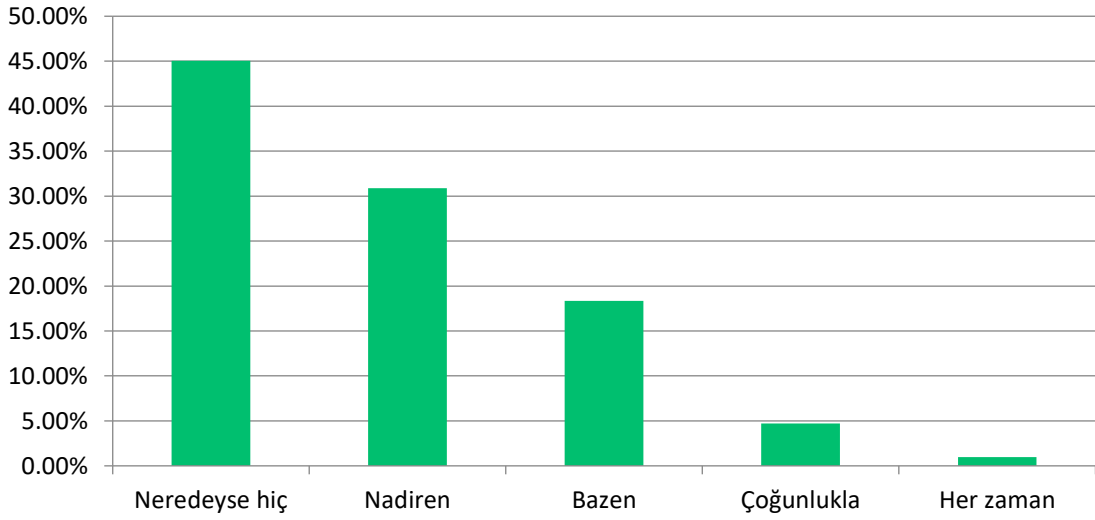
**S14 Siyasi bilgileri doğrulamak amacıyla
ne sıklıkla araştırma yapıyorsunuz?**



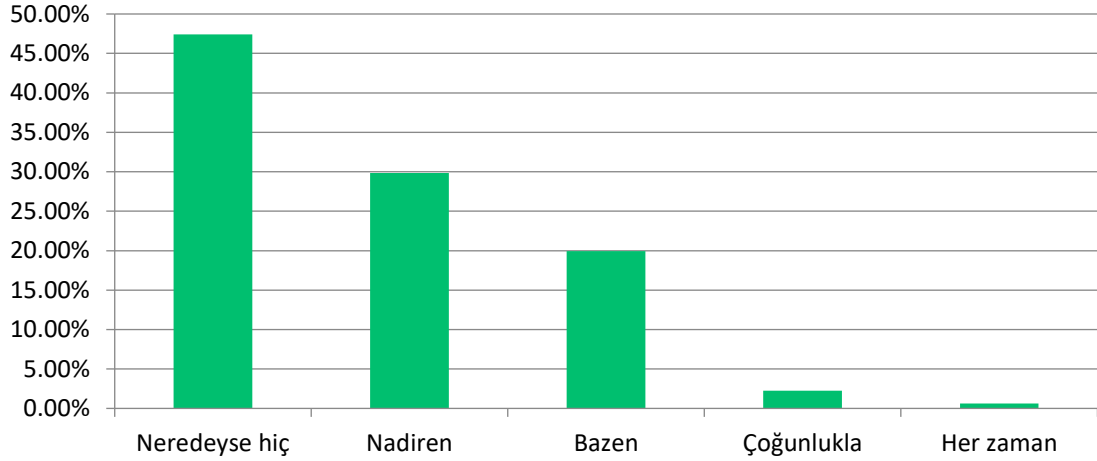
S15 Siyasi haberlerin doğruluğunu kontrol etmek için ne sıklıkla çevrimdışı/offline (gazete, televizyon, radyo gibi) kaynak kullanıyorsunuz?



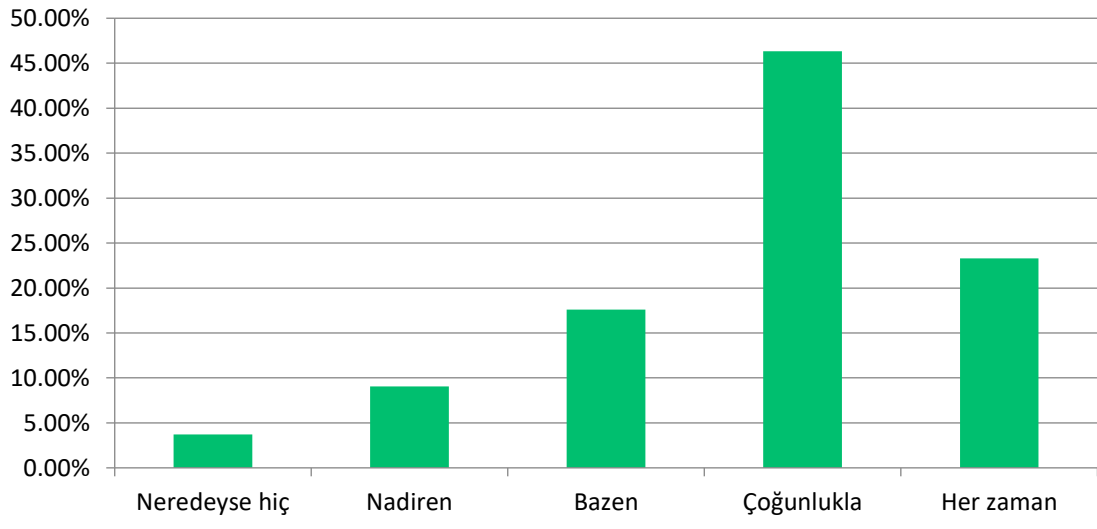
S16 Ne sıklıkla siyasi görüşünüzü değiştiren haberlerle karşılaşırsınız?



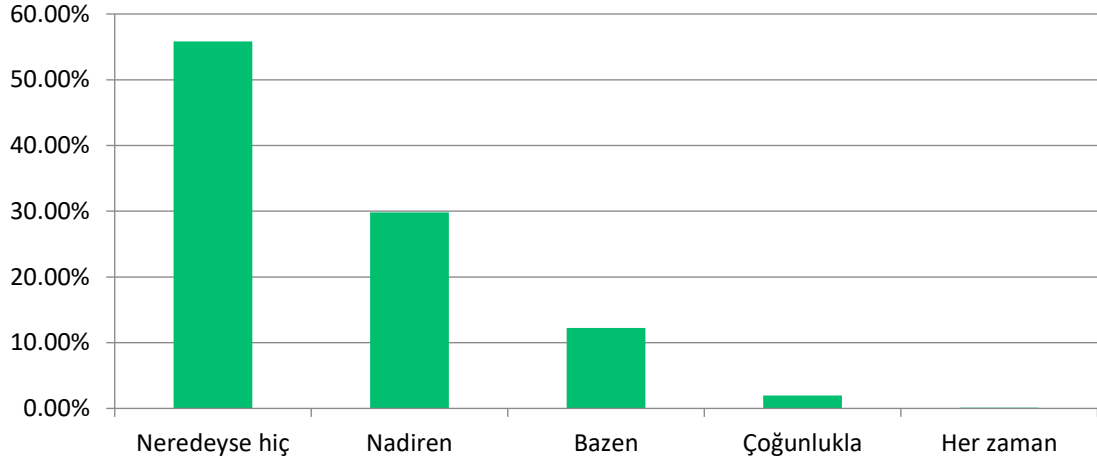
S17 Medyada gördüğünüz siyasi haberlerin üzerine düşünüp mevcut görüşlerinizi değiştirdiğiniz oluyor mu?



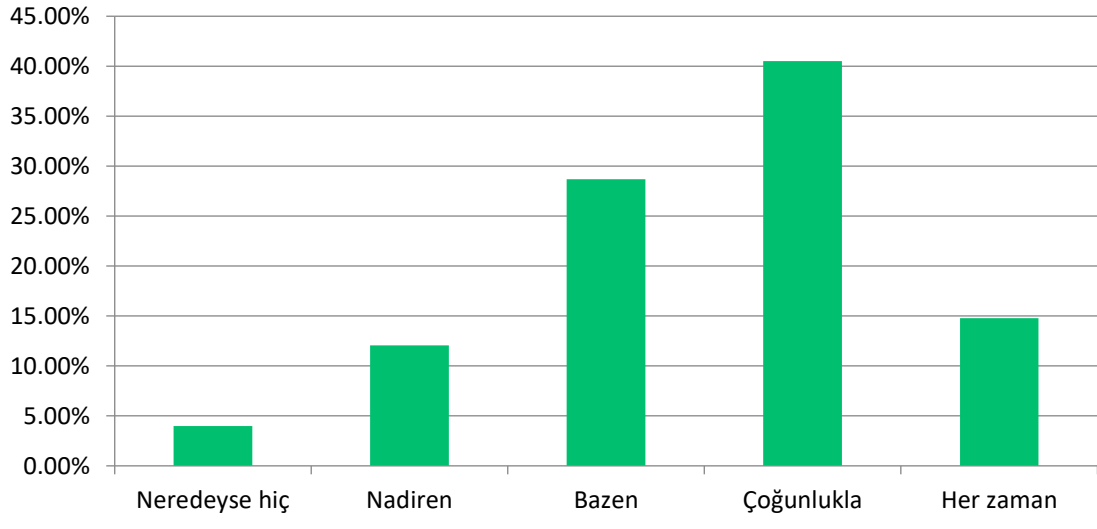
S18 Farklı siyasi görüşlere sahip kişilere ne derecede hoşgörölü davranırsınız?



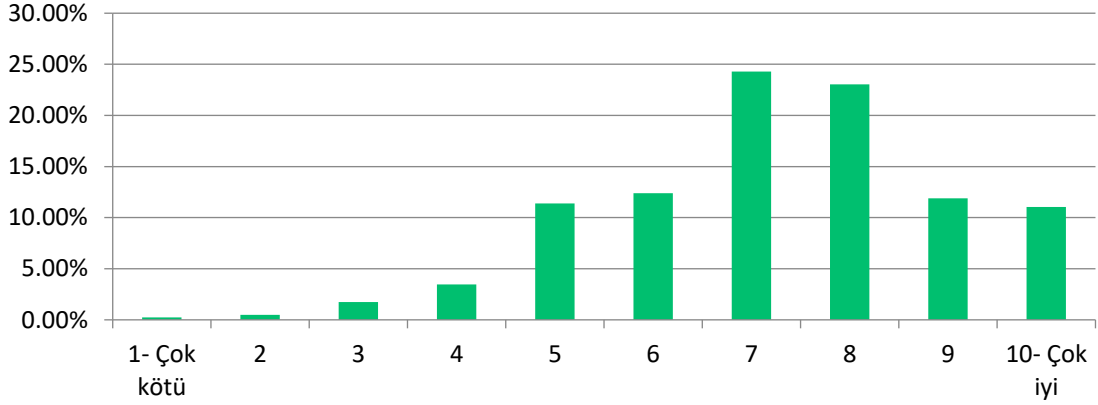
S19 Sizce Türkiye'de siyasi açıdan insanlar birbirlerine karşı hoşgörölü müdür?



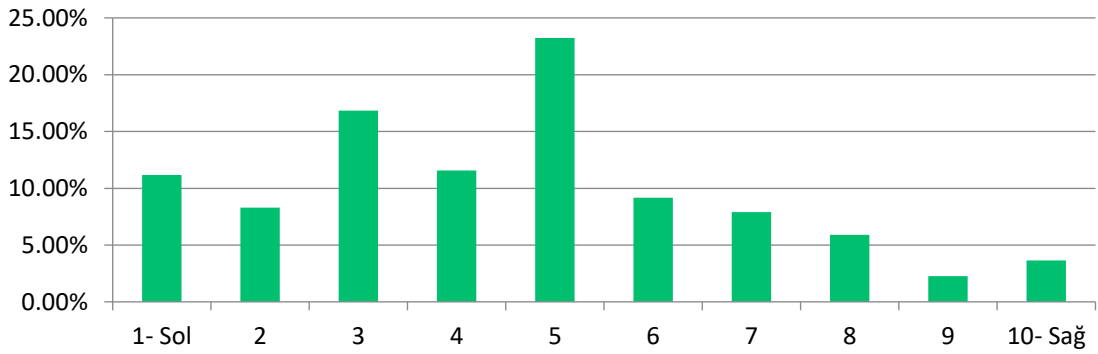
S20 İnterneti daha iyi kullanabilmek için ne sıklıkla bilgi edirsiniz?

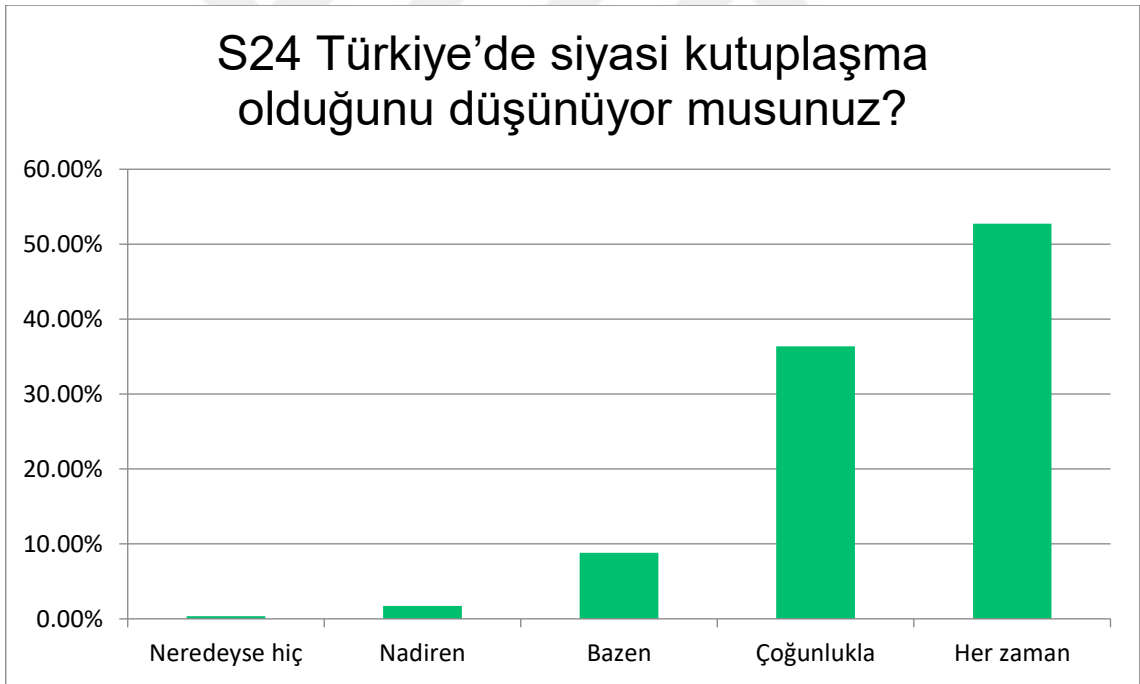


S21 Aşağıda “1” çok kötü, “10” çok iyi şeklinde bir cetvel var. Bu cetvele göre kendinizi interneti/teknolojiyi kullanma açısından nerede konumlandırırsınız?

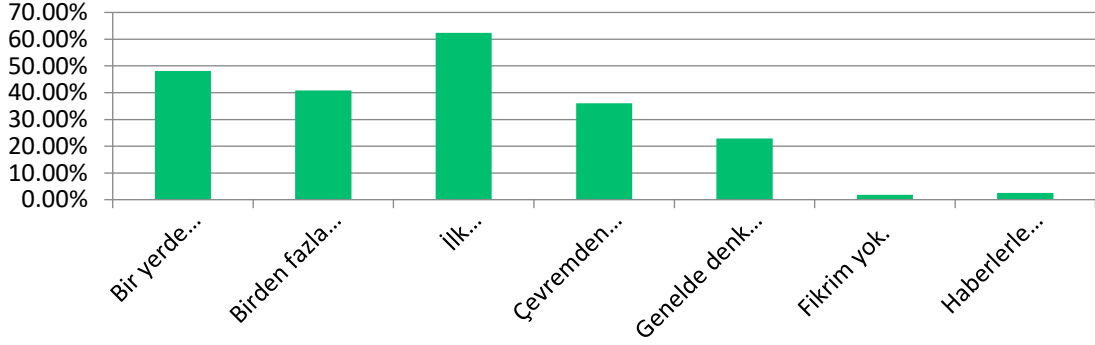


S22 Aşağıda 10 puanlık bir sol-sağ siyasi görüş cetveli var. Burada “1” en solu, “10” en sağı göstermektedir. Sizin kendi siyasi görüşleriniz bu cetvelin neresinde yer alır?

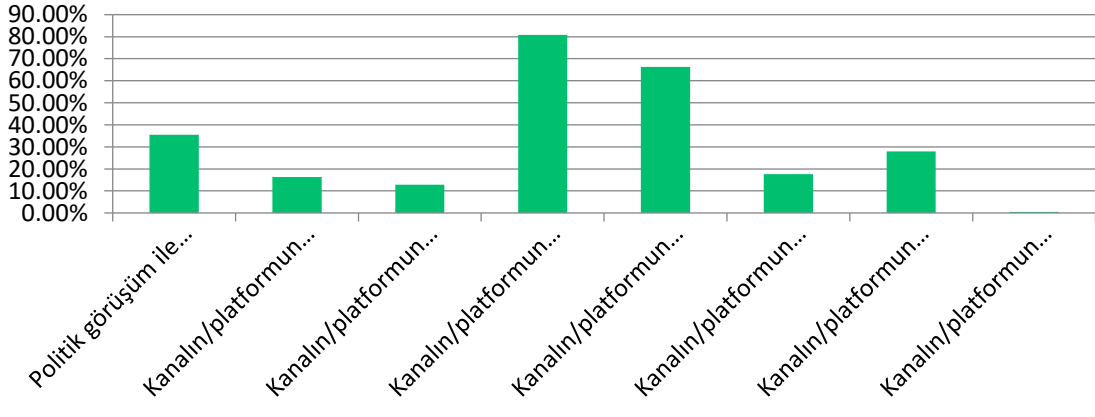




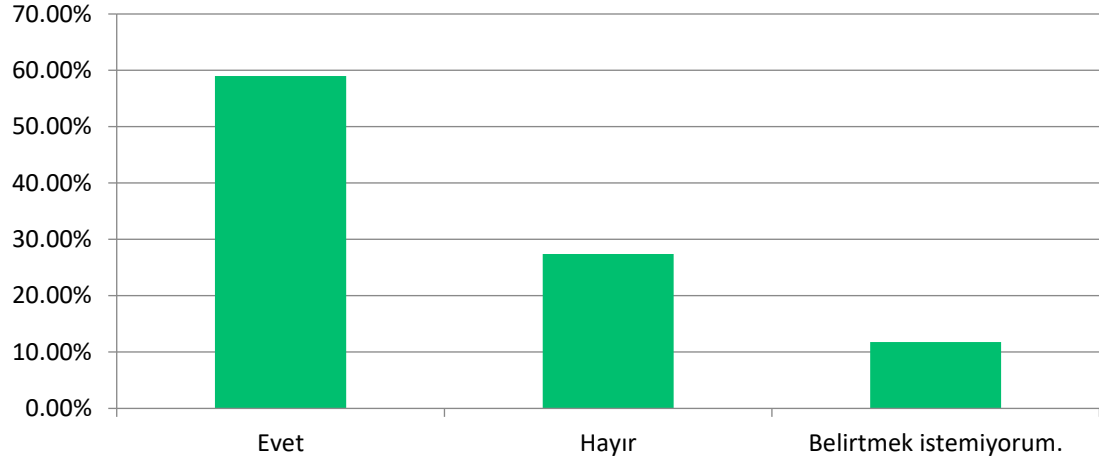
S25 Bir haber aşağıdakilerden hangi durum veya durumlarda dikkatinizi çeker ve ilgili haberin ayrıntılarını okur-izlersiniz? (Size uyan birden fazla kutucuk işaretleyebilirsiniz.)



S26 Haber takibi yaptığım kanalları/platformları aşağıdakilere göre seçerim. (birden fazla kutucuk işaretleyebilirsiniz.)



**S27 Asla izlemem/görmeye tahammül
edemem dediğiniz bir medya platformu
var mıdır?**



CURRICULUM VITAE

Cagatay BURCU

He was born on December 23, 1996 in Antalya. He graduated from the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Istanbul University. He is doing his master's degree in Political Science (English) at Ankara Social Sciences University. He started to participate in chess tournaments at the age of 10. He has been a sportsman in school teams throughout his education life. He represented the country on behalf of the Turkish Chess Federation in the European Age Groups Chess Championships in 2010, 2012 and 2014, in the World Under-16 Olympics in 2010 and in many international tournaments. He started to work as a chess coach in 2014 and has trained many students with national/international degrees. He is also an advanced level lindy-hop dancer.

Individual Achievements:

2010 Türkiye Age Groups Under 14 2nd Place

2010 World Interschool Chess Tournament 6th place

2011 European Interschool Chess Tournament 5th Place

2011 Türkiye İş Bankası Chess League 2nd Place (Yapı Kredi Sports Club)

2012 Türkiye Age Groups Under-16 2nd Place

2013 Türkiye Age Groups Under 17 2nd Place

2016 Turkish Universities Chess Championship 2nd Place

2017 Turkish Super League Championship (Besiktas JK)

2017 FIDE Master (FM) title at the Palic International Open

