



# **Citizen Journalism: A Dilemma for Professional Journalists**

The Perception of Citizen Journalism among Professional Journalists in Turkey - 2018

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# Introduction

The research report “The Perception of Citizen Journalism among Professional Journalists in Turkey – 2018” is the second part of a 3-step research series that was initiated by Media Research Association (MEDAR). The first part of this research series was conducted in 2016 using online methodology to survey the active followers of citizen journalism platforms. This report, the second part of the series, aims to understand the ways in which professional journalists perceive citizen journalism and the possibilities of collaboration between these groups. The third part of the research, “The Profile and Motivation of Citizen Journalists in Turkey” will be conducted in 2019 as the final part of the project. When all three steps are completed, a comprehensive report will be published and shared with the wider public.

I thank all of the stakeholders of this survey and hope they will enjoy reading this.

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# Executive Summary



## Executive Summary

Journalism in liberal democracies, as Carlsson and Pöyhtäri state (2017: 12) "has been made dysfunctional through new mechanisms of censorship, pressure, self-censorship, surveillance, profiling and control, regulating the information flow, propaganda and misinformation, acts of terror, [and] anti-terror laws, outlawing anonymity, hate speech, harassment and organized crime". This dysfunctionality is more apparent in semi-democratic countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Russia and Venezuela (Hem, 2014). Turkey, as a country with immense experience of such things, has become a dangerous country where the rule of law, citizens' liberties and democratic governance have suffered rapid deterioration (The EIU, 2017; WJP, 2018). The governing Justice and Development Party (AKP), since it assumed power in 2002, has not been deterred from targeting the media with policies to stifle them nor from authoritarian policies in line with its neoliberal market capitalism (Kurban & Sözeri, 2012; Topak, 2017; Yeşil & Sözeri, 2017; Yeşil, 2018). Since the widely supported Gezi Park protests in 2013, the state response to political uprisings or insurgence has been a heavy policy of suppression which has targeted all opposition movements (Freedom House, 2013; HRW, 2016).

The political and legal actions that have permitted the parliamentary system to become a presidential system, especially the failed coup attempt of July 15, 2016 which was followed by a State of Emergency regime, have become the first steps in the transition from an authoritarian democracy to a single-party state (Topak, 2017: 541). Many international publications, reports and indexes confirm that Turkey's democracy has been steadily weakening. The alternative voices that were able to survive have been weakened by widespread attacks against critical journalism, the narrowing of oppositional networks, and the increasing concerns and worries under surveillance. Some of the arrests that have been made are connected to leaked reports written by government officials; many writers who have been imprisoned for penning articles about these documents that concern the public have been accused of "propagating terrorism" and arrested. Despite this, multiple alternative media initiatives can be seen online, continuing independent journalism through the internet and the social media.

Many professional journalists who used to work for mainstream media organisations but had to leave their work for various reasons and become activists can present themselves only as part of the new media initiatives, where they build solidarity and cooperation with other citizens and/or alternative media platforms. Some of these journalists have established "hybrid" alternative media platforms where professionals and citizens work together. Few of them still make effort to write as individual journalists using their personal accounts on the social media.

Within this framework, the questions on journalism in Turkey become significant. One of the first questions that come to mind is whether journalism is going to turn into a public relations effort that operates within the comfort zone and under the auspices of pro-governmental business owners; or will it remain a profession that is based on free expression and a citizen's right to be informed, despite all kinds of threats and pressure, present on all the available platforms? Can it operate in "survival mode" with reference to the professional codes of its last 100 years, updated through a focus on human rights, inclusiveness and interactivity? In order to answer this challenging question, the present research submits that the perception of and attitude to their own profession among professional journalists must first be measured. Surveys conducted through face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews with 306 professional journalists living in Turkey have sought by eliciting quantitative data to understand these journalists' perception of the new media and new journalistic platforms as well as their affinity with citizen journalism.

We believe that the findings of this research could contribute to the efforts to understand the transformation of journalism a profession where political and commercial threats are increasing day by day. Analysis with similar surveys that approach the future of journalism by devising new ways of collaboration between professional journalists and citizens, combined with new technology-based media platforms, could teach us more about the magnitude of the transformation on a global level.

## Research Methodology



306 journalists were interviewed as part of the research who were working on platforms with nation-wide or regional scope (TV, newspapers, the internet) in mainstream and regional media or alternative/oppositional media or were journalists who were not employed full-time by an institution. The journalists who were interviewed included news curators (correspondents and editors) and executives who managed news production (chief editors, news coordinators, etc.). The fact that present-day media ownership in Turkey is prevalently pro-government in its composition and this has forced us to use quota-sampling to increase the representativeness of alternative/oppositional

media in this study. Finally, to increase the representativeness of the survey, the interviews were conducted in 6 different cities of Turkey (see the methodology section).

## In What Circumstances Do They Work?

It is obvious that working conditions for journalists are getting worse in Turkey. In addition to the journalists who are already working without proper registration and thus lack social rights, as well as those whose wages are not being paid on time, there are also many more journalists who have lost their jobs and their civil rights following the closure of hundreds of media platforms through State of Emergency decrees of the year 2016. The numbers of journalists thus left without employment also create tension for those who are still working in the field, in terms of the “prospective continuation of employment or possibility of being laid off”. The findings of the study reveal that **half the journalists who participated in the research are not happy with their monthly income**. Meanwhile a similar percentage of journalists are reluctant to be part of a professional assembly fighting against the injustices of the media sector or standing in solidarity with their peers. The research, conducted at a time when the need for journalists’ right to assemble is at its highest, reveals that **half the professional journalists do not wish to be part of a “journalistic union or association”**.



Another finding of the research is about the difficulty for professional journalists of accessing training courses that would up-date their knowledge of journalism. Almost half the working journalists have never participated in a training session at the institution where they work. Most of those who had participated in a training session had been given only institutional orientation programmes. Lack of the kind of institutional training that would yield crucial information on developments in the field of journalism in Turkey and the world acts as a barrier to professional development and improved skills in the field. Journalists are, in a sense, tied to conventional methods and tools in the absence of proper development tools.

## How Do They Make News?

Despite all the above conditions, it seems that the **integration of journalists with the internet world is almost complete**. More than 90% of journalists are constantly online and watch the developments globally on social media, through Twitter and Facebook. They primarily follow breaking news and gather information through these platforms, sharing also their original content with the same platforms. Social networks have become the “primary source of information” for journalists; followed by news portals and independent news platforms. The results of the survey also reveal that conventional platforms (newspaper and television networks) are gradually losing their importance as the main source of information for journalists. The monodical structure of existing newspaper and TV networks in Turkey, contrasted with the increasing variety of online information flow through new media technologies, pushes the former into a secondary position as a source of information for the participants. **But citizen journalism platforms are still not among the highly referred sources of information for journalists in following the news agenda.**

The impact of the social media and new media technologies in the news curation process is obvious in the findings of the survey: **Twitter remains the dominant platform for conducting basic journalism practice, both for gathering information and publication, as well as keeping in touch with readers and followers of the news.** Facebook and WhatsApp are far from replacing Twitter these days in the process of information gathering and news publication. Platforms such as Instagram, Periscope and Telegram currently have no significant presence in the stages of journalists' news curation. Journalists also state that they generally follow readers' comments, not, however, regularly engaging directly with these comments and mostly avoiding any response to them. The level of interaction between journalists and news-readers is quite low.



Long-term political pressure on the mainstream media in Turkey has led to a change in the content of what journalists share on the social media: **professional journalists mostly share “social content” or “human stories” and avoid sharing “political content” online.** We must recollect that a State of Emergency was still in operation during the fieldwork for this research and journalists' social media habits were constantly impacted by the implications of the regime. Almost half the journalists asserted that their social media habits were affected by the pressure of the time. A big proportion of those who reported a change in their social media habits also said that they were avoiding content they considered to be politically risky. A substantial group also claimed to have been either assaulted or threatened on the social media due to what they shared.

### How Do They Define “Journalism”?

The results of the survey confirm that engaging in journalism in Turkey, especially in the mainstream media, is hard if one aims to uphold the ideals related to journalism. When asked about the style of journalism they had adopted, some of the journalists responded with another striking question: **“Which journalism are we talking about: the one that we have to practise in this institution or the one we actually want to practise?”** This counter-question indicates the questioning attitude of professional journalists to the mainstream media and shows us that they associate the question more with the ideals of journalism than the journalism that they are currently restricted to. Idealized definitions such as “objective, rights-focused, unbiased journalism” do not correspond to anything among the journalists working on mainstream media platforms. In Turkey these definitions can have space only on alternative/oppositional media platforms. The research also shows that there is a clear differentiation between the profile and attitudes of journalists working in mainstream media and those of the journalists on alternative/oppositional media platforms.

### Profile of Journalists in Mainstream and Alternative/Oppositional Media Platforms

Negative developments in the mainstream media have led to a legion of small-scale alternative/oppositional media platforms that engage in independent and creative journalism practices, albeit still in the process of emerging. The profile of journalists working for independent news portals and oppositional newspapers' websites differs significantly from that of the staff of the mainstream media, reflecting the dynamics of the sector. The research findings show that young journalists have a bigger presence in alternative/oppositional media platforms, as do female journalists, as an outcome of the platforms which concentrate on rights-focused and social-gender-oriented news. **The ability of female and young journalists to find (or search for) more**



**opportunities in alternative/oppositional media**, also increases the possibility that journalism will in future develop new tendencies to appear on these platforms – assuming, of course, that these platforms will be able to guarantee themselves economically.

Another surprising finding of the survey is that the level of satisfaction regarding working conditions in alternative/oppositional media is almost at the same level as the level for the mainstream media. The fact that working conditions and income levels in mainstream media have been subjected to an erosion over the years is confirmed by the participants. **Journalists working for alternative/oppositional media are as discontented with their income as the journalists in the mainstream.** Because the alternative/oppositional media cannot develop sustainable financial models, they cannot offer satisfying economic conditions for journalists; the mainstream media, meanwhile, are cutting their budgets for wages because of the ongoing crisis that they are experiencing. It can be concluded that the journalists who work for the alternative/oppositional media are compensated for the low wages by the chance of working towards their idealized view of journalism.

When the overall results are considered, alternative/oppositional media journalists are much closer to understanding the “definition of citizen journalism”; they follow global publications more closely and use the social media more actively than mainstream media journalists do. Hence, creating alternatives to the currently existing conventional journalism in Turkey and the pluralization of platforms will be possible only through the energy and intention of these pluralistic practices.

### How Do They Perceive Citizen Journalism?

When asked if they knew what ‘citizen journalism’ meant as a concept, a considerable percentage (29.7%) of the journalists surveyed had never heard of the term, though most were aware of it. Almost half the journalists said that they first heard of this term after the 2013 Occupy Gezi protests, which marked the rise of citizen journalism in Turkey and another group (11.6%) said that they had first heard it during their university years or at the time of other political events (global ‘Occupy’ movements and the Arab Spring).



In spontaneous conversation, many professional journalists do not refer to “activism-focused”, “rights-focused” or “local” aspects of the definition of citizen journalism. This coupled with the fact that few references are made to “journalism as witnessing” shows that **such responses tell us more about the journalists’ own professional perspectives than about the different practices and main motivations of citizen journalism.** However, when we introduced definitions of citizen journalism from academic literature in the same

question, professional journalists’ answers showed more variety: almost half the journalists referred to definitions of “**voluntary journalism**”, “**rights-focused journalism**”, “**journalism through the use of new technological opportunities**”, and “**journalism as witnessing**”. Responses which do not appear as often as the above, using concepts such as “activism-focused journalism”, “citizens curating news with any motivation”, “local-focused journalism”, “journalism as a hobby” can still be heard, creating more variety in the definition of ‘citizen journalism’.

### Citizen Journalism: What It Is and What It Is Not?

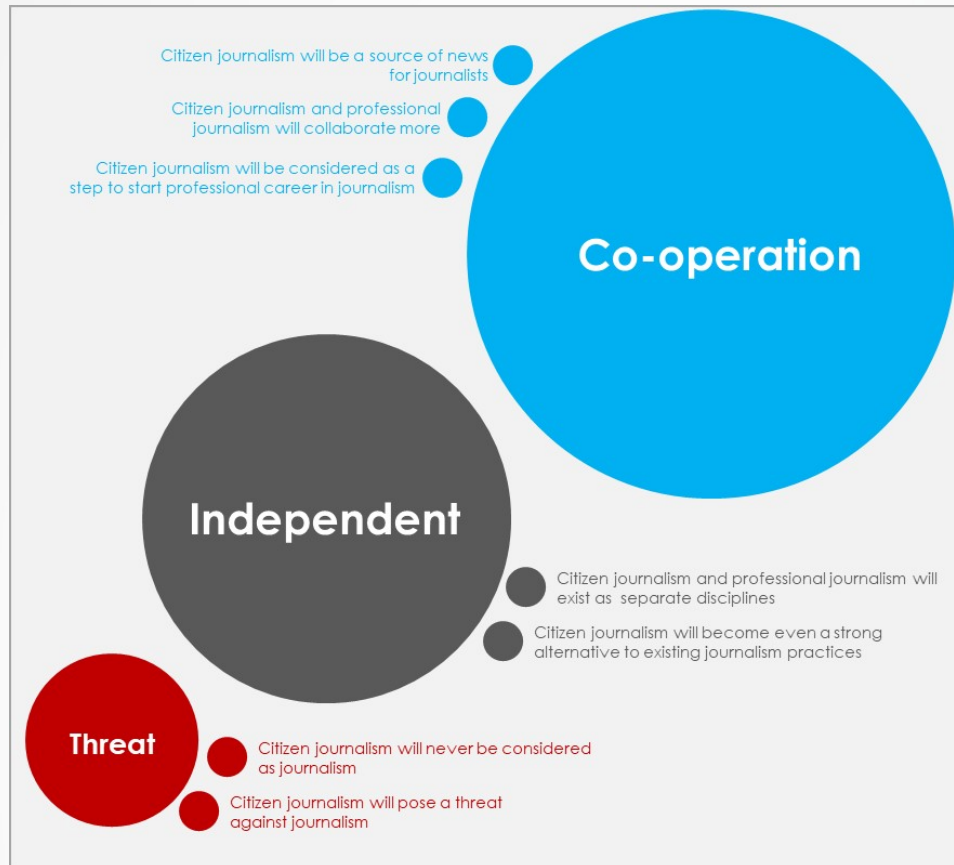
In the various research projects in the literature around the world that focuses on the relationship between citizen journalism and professional journalism, the connection between the two areas is defined by both in positive and negative ways. Professional journalists in Turkey also emphasize the opportunities presented through the potential offered by citizen journalism, while also touching upon the risks presented through its relation to professional codes of journalism. Statements such as “*citizen journalism enabling citizens to access information and news on social movements which is omitted by mainstream media*” embody the greatest advantage of citizen journalism for professional journalists. Again, professional journalists do accept that this

branch of journalism presents information which *“carries news value”*, and *“is curating content to reconsider the concept of journalism”*. A considerable percentage of journalists who believe that *“it helps circumvent censorship in Turkish mainstream media”* add that *“citizen journalism is becoming more popular than mainstream media”*. However, professional journalists also acknowledge that because *“these platforms are mainly available only online, [it] presents a problem of access to a wider audience”*.

The list of negative comments regarding citizen journalism is topped by the *“ethical mistakes that are made by citizen journalists”*; according to professional journalists, this impacts on the credibility of these platforms. In addition, they believe that *“the content curated by citizens is still raw and needs to be developed”*. Moreover, professional journalists consider *“citizen journalists as inexperienced and lacking journalistic skills”*. One of every two journalists also state that they are worried since *“citizen journalism may become a method that paves the way for fake news to spread”*.

## Future of Citizen Journalism

The topics of whether or not citizen journalism will be able to present itself as an alternative source of news in the future of journalism; if citizens will be actively incorporated into news curation and publication processes and will support the process of democratization and free expression; and whether there will be a closer relationship in future between mainstream journalism and alternative media, are being discussed with increasing momentum in the literature of journalism.



The answers to the question of the future relationship between professionals and citizen journalists in our survey reveal three major tendencies among professional journalists:

- **Co-operation:** The most commonly cited tendency sees citizen journalism as part of current professional journalism practice, either “in the form of cooperation with it or as an extension of it”. From this perspective, professional journalists do not see citizen journalism holding its own principles and news standards; instead, they tend to add more meaning to the term by associating it with professional journalism practices. This perspective assumes that “citizens will continue to supply conventional media platforms with necessary information and data to support professional journalists and it will be professional journalists who ultimately curate and publish the news.
- **Independence:** The second tendency focuses on citizen journalism as independent from professional journalism and assumes that citizen journalism will continue to hold its own practices and definitions. The diffraction and contradictions of mainstream media globally and in Turkey leads many journalists to consider citizen journalism as a viable alternative to conventional journalism as a way to overcome these difficulties.
- **Threat:** The third tendency among professional journalists is to think that “citizen journalism practices cannot be considered as journalism and it poses a threat to professional journalism”. Since the proportion of professional journalists who think citizen journalism is a threat is quite low, it suggests that the risk of citizen journalism being perceived as a threat to the future of journalism is quite low.

Analysing these tendencies together with their levels of acceptance among professional journalists, we can conclude that citizen journalism will continue to be discussed in Turkey, together with its potential to cooperate with current journalistic practices and will determine its own borders as an independent area.





# Theoretical Framework

## Professional Outlook on Citizen Journalism in Turkey

### Introduction

Journalism in liberal democracies, as Carlsson and Pöyhtäri state (2017: 12) "has been made dysfunctional through new mechanisms of censorship, pressure, self-censorship, surveillance, profiling and control, regulating the information flow, propaganda and misinformation, acts of terror, [and] anti-terror laws, outlawing anonymity, hate speech, harassment and organized crime". This dysfunctionality is more apparent in semi-democratic countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Russia and Venezuela (Hem, 2014). Turkey, as a country with immense experience of such things, has become a dangerous country where the rule of law, citizens' liberties and democratic governance have suffered rapid deterioration (The EIU, 2017; WJP, 2018). The

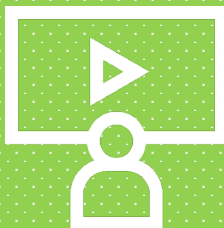


governing Justice and Development Party (AKP), since it assumed power in 2002, has not been deterred from targeting the media with policies to stifle them nor from authoritarian policies in line with its neoliberal market capitalism (Kurban & Sözeri, 2012; Topak, 2017; Yeşil & Sözeri, 2017; Yeşil, 2018). Since the widely supported Gezi Park protests in 2013, the state response to political uprisings or insurgency has been a heavy policy of suppression which has targeted all opposition movements (Freedom House, 2013; HRW, 2016).

The political and legal actions that have permitted the parliamentary system to become a presidential system, especially the failed coup attempt of July 15, 2016 which was followed by a State of Emergency regime, have become the first steps in the transition from an authoritarian democracy to a single-party state (Topak, 2017: 541). Many international publications, reports and indexes confirm that Turkey's democracy has been steadily weakening. According to Reporters Without Borders RSF Press Freedom Index 2018, where Russia ranks at 148th and Venezuela assumed 143<sup>rd</sup> place, Turkey has ranked 157th among 180 countries.

These reports confirm that the alternative voices that were able to survive have been weakened by widespread attacks against critical journalism, the narrowing of oppositional networks, and the increasing concerns and worries under surveillance. Some of the arrests that have been made are connected to leaked reports written by government officials; many writers who have been imprisoned for penning articles about these documents that concern the public have been accused of "propagating terrorism" and arrested. Despite this, multiple alternative media initiatives can be seen online, continuing independent journalism through the internet and the social media.

Many professional journalists who used to work for mainstream media organisations but had to leave their work for various reasons and become activists can present themselves only as part of the new media initiatives, where they build solidarity and cooperation with other citizens and/or alternative media platforms. Some of these journalists have established "hybrid" alternative media platforms where professionals and citizens work together. Few of them still try to write as individual journalists using their personal accounts on the social media.



It can be said that we owe much to these new alternative and activist platforms in Turkey which allowed new media outlets (still very small and unorganized in structure) to emerge together with the cooperation of sector professionals and citizens. It may be stated also that those institutions have the additional mission of empowering society and defending basic rights and liberties, such as free expression and the right to be informed, given the weak mainstream media of the country.

Within this framework, the questions on the "future of journalism in Turkey" become significant. One of the first questions that come to mind is whether journalism is going to turn into a public relations effort operating within the comfort zone and under the auspices of pro-governmental business owners; or will become a profession based on free expression and a citizen's right to get information despite all kinds of threats and pressure, present itself on all available platforms, and operating in "survival mode" with reference to the professional codes of its last 100 years, updating them through "rights-focus, inclusiveness and interactivity" (Alankuş, 2009; Deuze, Bruns, Neuberger, 2007; Thurman & Hermida, 2010).



This research has not been designed to find an answer to such broad and comprehensive questions. However, it does aim to reach some quantitative conclusions that would enable us to think about questions of this kind



from different perspectives. The data of this research project have been collected through face-to-face and telephone interviews with 306 journalists in Turkey, who answered the questionnaire that was designed to evaluate the journalists' perception of their own style of journalism and their thoughts on the

dynamics of evolving citizen journalism practices. Theoretically the research has two goals in sequence: the first is to determine the profile of journalists operating in Turkey, in relation to their normative professional ideology (Curran, 2011; Deuze, 2005; Waisbord, 2013); the second is to evaluate professional journalists' perception of and attitude to citizen journalism, bearing in mind the relationship they have with new media tools. To this end, the participants were asked about their approaches to the new media and new journalism platforms and their perception of citizen journalism in a fully structured questionnaire design to obtain quantitative data.

We believe that the findings of this research, when analysed together with other research reports hypothesizing that journalism will be based on a collaboration between media-based professionals and citizens, will contribute to everyone who thinks that professional journalism is under serious political and financial threat and needs new perspectives to tackle its difficulties.

### ***Shattering Walls***

Conventional journalism and modern professionalism ideology have for some time been at crisis point (Deuze, Bruns, Neuberger, 2007; Kus et al. 2017). While there are many reasons behind this, two are especially significant. Primarily, the editorial independence of journalism, which is considered a sacred entity, has weakened over time against financial concerns and is no longer considered to have any depth (Carroll & Hackett, 2006). Confidence in the content of newspapers in the Western world has been deteriorating for some time (Ardèvol-Abreu & de Zúñiga, 2016). Readers think that the news media and journalists are not keeping their promise of objectivity – unbiased, truthful, factual coverage based on a balance of views; not fulfilling the representativeness requirement of a pluralistic democracy and not meeting society's right to be fully informed. In addition, the increasing wave of fake news is also putting mainstream media into jeopardy (Bennett, 2017; Starbird, 2017; Tandoc Jr., Lim & Ling, 2018).



The second reason is the pressure of competition due to emerging developments on the internet and social media platforms. Google (Google News App), Microsoft News, Facebook (Newsroom, The Facebook Journalism Project), Apple (News App), Yahoo (Yahoo News) and many other new media companies such as the globally operating news portals (Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, Vice, Mashable etc.) and ever-changing social media applications are putting pressure on conventional media (Nicholls, Shabbir & Nielsen, 2017). Although some of these companies have made commercial agreements with current media institutions, it is a fact that the share of advertisement revenues for media institutions has gradually shrunk (the gap is widening on the part of



technology companies). Moreover, the budget spent on important types (such as investigative journalism) and methods (such as global news coverage) of journalism keeps shrinking and the demand for information is being met by contractor institutions (news agencies, independent freelancers, local citizen journalists and social media, etc.) in these times (Menke et al., 2018).

In addition to these two major trends, competitive pressure is coming from the grassroots. Millions of citizens are systematically supplying content on their social media accounts thanks to living in a place which becomes newsworthy (Bruns, 2005; Allan, 2009; Hermida, 2014). Primarily this content contains still visual images or video sequence, which is accompanied by text, accounts of interviews, audio recordings, valuable documents, etc. The pressure caused by citizens who curate news content on social networks puts an economic burden on media companies because professional material is devalued as a result of viewers following social media as primary sources of news information. The transparency of dissolved, interactive, networked news curation and the sharing process which takes place in front of social media users shows that the conventional roles of "Fourth Estate", "threshold", "watch-dog" and "agenda-setter" attributed to professional journalists have become obsolete in terms of society's perception.

### ***Citizen Journalism***

Furthermore, as Stuart Allan points out, there are many items of journalistic terminology that show citizens' active intervention and inclusion in the field of journalism (2013). Among them the most comprehensive and the most often used is "citizen journalism"; however, the transformation through the processes of contemporary journalism is also described in such adjectives as "inclusive", "open-source", "amateur", "hyper-local", "distributed", "grassroots", "Do-It-Yourself" etc. (Glaser, 2006). Among the many definitions of citizen journalism as a concept, Rosen's definition stands out as the most-referenced one due to its inclusiveness and user-oriented qualities: **"When people, formerly known as the audience, start to inform many others of a newsworthy event by employing the press tools they have, that's citizen journalism"** (2008). Alongside Rosen's definition is one of the most frequently cited studies, that by Bowman and Willis (2003). Here the writers proffer an "inclusive journalism" definition that puts the citizen at the centre of news-curation and dissemination. The emphasis on the most basic motivation for this inclusion is the most striking part of their definition: **"to supply the independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that democracy relies on"** (2003:9).

### ***Cooperation with Citizens***



The mainstream media, following a period of resistance against it, has started to accept citizen journalism as a mechanism that may alleviate ongoing crisis conditions (Lewis, Kauffhold & Lasorsa, 2010: 163-164). Many media platforms operating locally, regionally, nationally and internationally are developing methods of owning the content that citizens produce from their advantageous positions (see

also Hauser, 2018; Hujanen, 2016; Ostertag & Tuchman, 2012). There are many media institutions, such as iReport of CNN and the UGC Hub of the BBC, that offer online guidelines for training regular citizens wishing to share their content with such platforms. A more superficial relationship is emerging from the mainstream media's dependence on breaking news. From time to time the news agencies paying small amounts, as the news agencies in Turkey do, to secure the copyright to rare content (Högerl, 2010).

Various studies to determine professional journalists' attitude to and perception of citizen journalism (Chung, Kim & Nah, 2018; Chung, Nah & Yamamoto, 2017; Hermida & Thurman, 2008; Lewis, Kaufhold & Lasorsa, 2010; O'Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008) analyze journalists' positive and negative attitudes together with their perception of the opportunities and threats that citizen journalism provides. Despite the small group that considers citizen journalism as part of the media habitat and positively considers this type of journalism within the framework of a "service to democracy", negative views of citizen journalism seem still to maintain their dominance among professional journalists, who talk of the "lack of formal education, skills and experience of citizen journalists" and "its distance from professional values".

### ***Relations Between Mainstream Media and Citizen Journalism in Turkey***

Conditions in Turkey differ greatly. Except for a few institutions, the corporate media that have become apologists for the government cannot be said to be under great pressure. Corporate owners have not been aiming to make profits in the media sector nor been offering unbiased, balanced, honest and factual news to the audiences for a long time, but, thanks to the government, they have been exploiting gains from other sectors where they have invested, and have reduced journalism to a public relations effort for the benefit of the government and their companies (Yeşil, 2018; Coskuntuncel, 2018). Consequentially, in the monochrome atmosphere of mainstream journalism in Turkey, there is no competition to improve content.

The mainstream media in these circumstances is not outstanding for following a news-making concept based on the norms of conventional journalism or expanding a sense of collaboration to offer news that would open doors for citizens. Mostly, they want citizens to send them raw information through the "informant hotline", not as news-curators or reporters but as "informants" (Kıyan and Törenli, 2018). We also see some examples of professional journalists who think that the positive aspects of citizen journalism are "direct reach to the content, fast reach and share of the content, diversification in the source of content, etc." (Devran & Özcan, 2017: 164). In fact, some short-lived attempts have in the last few years called upon citizens as news-curators. In 2008, CNN Turk initiated "My News", which ended after a short while; state-owned TRT started "You are the News" between the years 2012 and 2014. Even though we cannot know what kind of content was sent by citizens to the programme crew, the content shared by those programmes shows that the broadcast items were formed from everyday matters such as natural phenomena, musicians, animal videos, etc. (Çevikel, 2011; Ünal, 2014).

### ***Alternative/Oppositional Media and Alternative/Activist/Citizen Forms of Journalism in Turkey***

The unfavourable conditions in the mainstream media have brought the relationship and collaboration between professional and citizen journalism to a new position. Today the most liberal, autonomous and creative forms of this collaboration are small-scale independent initiatives and the alternative/oppositional media habitat. Because alternative/oppositional media studies consider revolutionary struggles and social movements history together with their media, their historical approach is different from the mainstream liberal approach. Citizens are a natural part of the news gathering, curation and distribution processes in alternative media, in the form of comrades, militants, volunteers, activists, etc. and are considered to be taking leading parts in the creative media process (Atton and Hamilton, 2008; Downing, 2001; Harcup, 2013; Forde, 2011; Lievrouw, 2011; Rodriguez, 2001). When we look at the history of the alternative/oppositional media in Turkey, we realize that they have been an authentic part of this general history (Çoban & Ataman, 2015: 9-52).

In these studies, the definition of alternative media often coincides with citizen journalism, public journalism, participatory journalism, citizen-focused journalism, and judicial journalism. Since the emergence of the new media as a concept, the terms "networked", "open-source", "collaborative journalism" have also been included in the theoretical framework. In the meantime, this kind of approach refers not to a polarized dichotomy of two worlds of mainstream media, either an elitist democracy or an anti-capitalist, oppressed class as egalitarian alternatives, but to the rhizomatically vibrant habitat of a nested world which is hybridised through its goals, principles and applications (Bailey, Cammaerts & Carpentier, 2008). It is clear, then, that many definitions of citizen journalism from a perspective that includes alternative media rely on conventional media norms while defining them critically with reference to more inclusive varieties for the purpose of strengthening democracy (Forde, 2011; Radsch, 2016). In fact, many researchers such as Rodriguez (2014) – who are not Eurocentric –

have defined citizen journalism from the beginning in relation to alternative/oppositional media, social movements and demands for justice.

Within this framework, in Ataman & Çoban's work, which focuses on the popular Gezi Park protests of June 2013, the definition of "**activist citizen journalist**" (2015: 107) brings out its local qualities. It is based on a citizenship approach which follows the anarchic-socialist tradition, pointing towards the "citizen as a medium" as opposed to Rodriguez's (2001) terminology of the "citizens' media". Gezi park protests were the turning point for citizen journalism in Turkey. We can see many initiatives, some of which will be described further below, defined as "a networked social movement" (Castells, 2012) as well as a "movement of the movements" (Klein, 2011) which amplifies the impact of Occupy Gezi through news-curation and public access (see also. Tunç, 2014; Yeşil, 2016; Koçak, 2015; Saka, 2018; Yanardağoglu, 2015; Ataman & Çoban, 2015; Yılmaz & Ataman, 2015; Öğün & Şener, 2015; Furman, 2015; Elpeze Ergeç & Çam, 2015; Doğanay & Kara, 2014).

It is possible to see that citizen journalism has various (individual or professional) motivations when these initiatives are considered in terms of their backgrounds, the news curation methods they use, their organizational structures and their fundraising methods. In order to understand and classify these different citizen journalism practices, we have studied various initiatives in Turkey between 2012 and 2018 and observed that some criteria need to have a common ground for segmentation:

- **Relationship with journalism:** One of the primary differentiation points in this classification is the relationship of the people who lead these initiatives to journalism. Some of these initiatives have been founded by "*people who are not journalists*" or who are motivated to curate news by coming from an activist background. Other initiatives have been taken by "*people who have journalistic backgrounds*" and come from the mainstream or alternative/oppositional media platforms. Those who come from the mainstream media have gathered either due to their inability to continue working in their current institutions or because they have wanted to experiment with new types of journalism after the Gezi protests in token of the new era in journalism that they discern.
- **Continuity:** Some of these platforms were seen to emerge as legitimate sources of information in the eyes of millions of people after they multiplied during the Occupy Gezi protests despite their short history in Turkey. However, in the months following the protests, these platforms lost their energy and most stopped active news-curation after a while. The few platforms that have continue news publication so far have diverged from their original missions as set out in when they were founded.
- **Transitivity:** Another important issue is the people leading these initiatives (whether journalists or not) still curate news individually on their platforms and share the same content with other media platforms. It is not easy to monitor this transitivity of interaction. Some of the citizen journalists and many professional journalists also have a habit of publishing on their personal pages and at the same time on various other platforms. Moreover, some of them curate news simultaneously for the mainstream media and for alternative/oppositional media platforms.

We believe that a general panorama can be outlined in which to understand how the citizen journalism platforms in Turkey relates to alternative/oppositional media sites in light of the notes above.



## 1 – Citizen Journalism Initiatives Led by Non-Journalists



### 1a) Collectives

Collectives are small-scale media initiatives that are founded by a group of friends in reaction to the biased publication policies and censorship in Turkey's mainstream media. These groups have been publishing news content on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Livestream etc., mostly without a legal body, based on flat organizational structures. They mainly started to produce content during the Gezi protests – although some started before them – and there was extensive coverage of news during the protests. Park Postası, Kamera Sokak, Seyri Sokak, Park Gazetesi, Ankara Eylem Vakti, Ötekilerin Postası, 140 Journos, Naber Medya were the primary examples of those collectives, yet most lost their energy after the protests were over and most of them stopped publication and are not at present producing any content.

### 1b) Individual Experiences: Activist Citizen Journalists

The second group is composed of young activist citizens who were involved in journalism through their social media accounts and web pages during the Occupy Gezi protests. Most of these citizens are people who share videos, photos and news articles about events that have excited strong public interest (such as protests, rallies, manifestations, trials, etc.).



There are two qualitative surveys conducted by Ataman & Çoban (2015; 2019) concerning the individuals who have been publishing news-related content over a period of time: they write about Occupy Gezi protests in their own individual social media accounts, although they do not call themselves citizen journalists, the accounts listed in the 2015 study shared photos, videos and instant news during the Occupy Gezi protests. However, after the decline of the Gezi Movement, most of these accounts either closed or stopped producing items for the media.

### 1c) Networked Witness Journalism

In times of crisis, unconnected and independent citizens on social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Ekşi Sözlük etc.) are seen to start simultaneously curating and sharing news in an unorganized manner about an ongoing situation or a new event. In literature, this is a sub-category referred to as "witness journalism". It is codified by Stuart Allan that individuals want to describe and comment on crises, accidents,

tragedies or disasters and temporarily assume the role of journalist to curate news (2013: 9). Witness journalism, which is also from time to time referred to as “random journalism”, is being integrated into mainstream media platforms through various means such as “WhatsApp Informant Hotlines”.

**Witnesses of an incident who have become part of the news networks through the opportunities presented by new media tools, lessen the cost of news curation for the newsrooms and increase the pluralistic approach in terms of news material.**

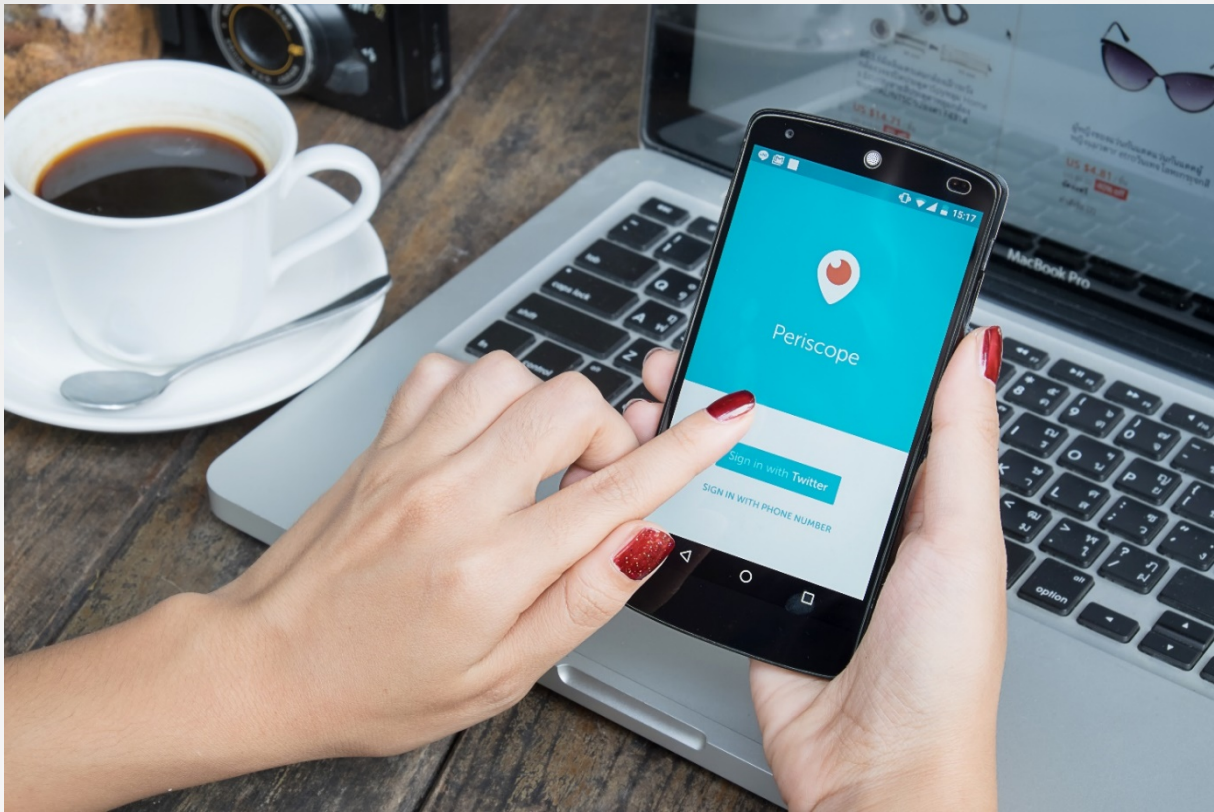


## **2 – Citizen Journalism Initiatives Led by Professional Journalists**

### **2a) New Practices of Journalists Who Quit Mainstream Media**

**Platforms founded with a focus on citizen journalism:** These are critical new media platforms that give voice to the liberal values and new axis of professional-citizen collaboration. These platforms have adopted the principles of professional journalism, following the loss of ranking for mainstream journalists that come from corporate media; they feature citizens who have become activists in the past decade in reaction to the loss of their rights and liberties. Mostly citizens and journalists who have had to become activists occupy the gravity point of this collaboration and they also become citizens in active pursuit of their rights and/or “news-activists”.

Many online critical and alternative media platforms, some older than others, have been founded by former mainstream media professionals in the last few years; examples are *T24*, *Diken*, *Bianet*, *Gazete Duvar*, *Gazete Karınca*, *Demokrat Haber*, *Özgürüz* and *Medyascope*. Most of these platforms do not conform to the predominant economic model of the media sector. While some of these platforms have adopted the news curation mechanisms of the mainstream media in a digital atmosphere, others are engaging in more experimental new models which criticise the qualities of the mainstream media. Some were founded with contributions from volunteers and define their vision through collaboration with citizens, while others adopt the news curation methods of the mainstream media and continue their activities through the support of international funding mechanisms.



**Independent citizen journalists and crowd sourcing experiences:** Especially after 2011, the few critical voices who were still able to operate on the basis of professional journalistic principles in the mainstream media – which had not fully been transformed to the AKP mentality in spite of heavy pressure and attacks – were unemployed (Freedom of the Press 2017, RSF- 2018 World Press Freedom Index). Some of these names were employed on conventional alternative media platforms.

However, some names such as Elif Ilgaz and Kumru Başer insisted on journalism through their personal social media accounts. As “**independent activist journalists**” they were free from any media institution and held professional journalistic ideology as their basis. These accounts, which have thousands of followers, have mostly followed the trials of people struggling for human rights and conducted rights-focused journalism after the Gezi protests. Their news reached millions of people through re-shares of alternative/oppositional media, popular journalists’ accounts and regular users. The weakening or disappearance of the relationship to professional journalism in the field has led to the emergence of a new kind of journalist which could be defined as “citizen journalist”. Of course, this position is not stable and has even higher transivity with the other ways of practising journalism. From time to time, they have an opportunity to work for international news organisations.

Some names, including Ünsal Ünlü, Gökhan Özbek, Şükrü Küçükşahin and Ece Sevim Öztürk conduct “individual journalism” on various social media accounts and applications that are independent from institutions. They use crowd-sourcing, through their Patreon accounts, to allow them to conduct independent/individual journalism in a sustainable fashion and they ask for support from their followers on social media.

## **2b) Alternative/Oppositional Media Journalists' Initiatives in Citizen Journalism**

Like other contemporary social movements and spontaneous and loosely formed rights-focused movements, the Occupy Gezi movement has also presented a heterarchical appearance that is based on citizens' assembly in solidarity, sharing and participation in egalitarian structures. As the movement takes its energy from its egalitarian and heterarchical grassroots involvement, the active hierarchical structures within the movement have also been inspired by this transformative wave.





Among the organizations that are accustomed to these discussions and have been prepared to welcome Occupy Gezi is Halkevleri. The organization's media crew has managed to transform the experiences accumulated since 2001, with a professional journalism mentality and voluntary contributions on Sendika.org, to the Occupy Gezi movement. This crew founded the "**Çapul TV**" on June 3, 2013 in reference to the one and only word that hundreds of thousands of heterogeneous people could identify with, "**çapulcu**" ('marauders'). From the outset, Çapul TV has presented itself as the "resistance media" representing the pluralistic identity of protesters (Yılmaz & Ataman, 2015).

Our second example is the dokuz8NEWS collective. The collective claims to be a platform that conducts rights-focused journalism and presents a space for social movements to express themselves. It practices a "hybrid form" of new journalism understanding that combines the alternative media – in which professional journalism is more active and professional editorial intervention shapes the language, style and framework of the content (Forde, 2011) –with "activist citizen journalism" (Ataman & Çoban, 2015).



The democratic and media freedom front in Turkey has been attempting in the past few years to create a network which would enable professionals, citizens, alternative, oppositional and individual journalism practices to work in collaboration. In the international literature, it can be seen that field of "new media and new journalism studies" has evolved with many studies of the transformation within journalism through the overlapping and intertwining of many trends, rather than contrasts of ideas. A new perspective that focuses on mutual interests and collaboration has become more and more significant in theory and practice, as explained through several examples from Turkey. Hence, we expect that this research report will be an important step in understanding the potential transformation of journalism if it can analyse in depth professional journalists' perceptions of and attitudes to some paradigm shifting innovations, including the practices of participatory citizen journalism.



# Research Design

*Citizen Journalism: A Dilemma for Professional Journalists*



## Background

In this research, we try to understand the perceptions of and attitudes to citizen journalism among professional journalists in Turkey, within the framework of the struggle for democracy and media freedom. We believe that, given the harsh conditions that they operate in, the professional journalists will provide valuable insights into the future of journalism in Turkey. Their approach to professional journalism, together with the collaboration with citizens and citizen journalism, is a signifier of the professional journalists' openness to the transformation of their industry over the last few years.

The questionnaire in this research was designed according to the guidelines in the literature, with a comprehensive approach that took account of the relationship between professional journalism and citizen journalism along the axis of opportunities and threats.

The questions in the questionnaire can be clustered into three main groups:

- 1- questions to determine their professional relationship with the new media and thoughts on the transformation of journalism in connection with the developments in communications and transport technology (the main new sources of information for professional journalists in the new media; the use of social media to gather items of news; the curating and dissemination such items);
- 2- questions focusing on the participation and interaction of citizens in journalism which are carried into the field of professional journalism by the practices of citizen journalism (awareness of alternative/oppositional new media platforms; definitions of citizen journalism; evaluation of citizen journalism within the context of professional principles);
- 3- questions to understand their perceptions of the state of journalism in Turkey in the context of its crisis of democracy and media freedom (the impact of state of emergency on the use of social media).



In summary, this research aims to understand the new developments presented to professional journalists by citizen journalism, and their evaluations of the opportunities and risks of the newly developing practices of citizen journalism within the framework of professional criteria. Additionally, the survey focuses on the journalists' positioning of citizen journalists in the journalism field by looking at the correspondence between professional activities and citizens' news practices.



## Preparation of the Questionnaire

The final structured questionnaire was prepared in four steps:

**a**—First, two focus group meetings of 10 people were organized in November 2017 to bring together mainstream media journalists, those from alternative/oppositional media and academics focusing on media studies in Turkey.

## Methodology



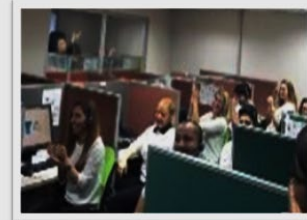
### Data Collection:

- CATI & CAPI (Computer Assisted Telephone & Personal Interviews)

**Fieldwork :** February - May 2018

### Recruitment of Respondents :

- Database of Turkish Journalists' Union & Faselis Ltd.
- Network lists of professional journalists

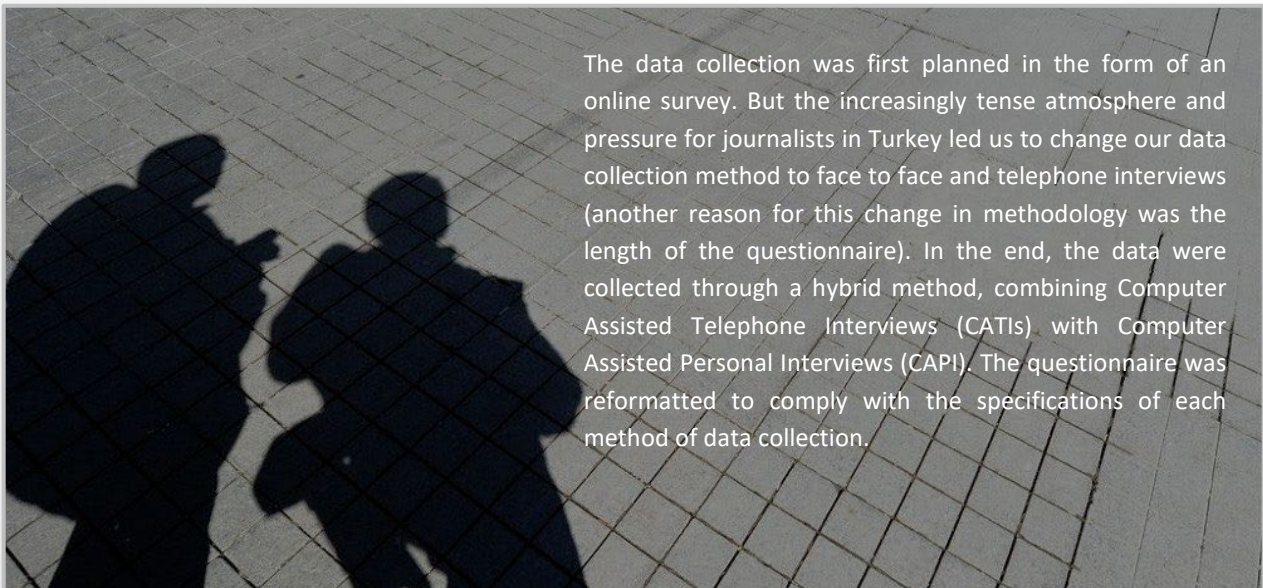


**b**—Next, in December 2017, 6 in-depth interviews were conducted with freelance journalists who were considered to have much in common with citizen journalists. All the data derived from these focus group discussions and in-depth interviews formed the basis for the draft of the structured questionnaire.

**c**—The literature on similar topics was reviewed in order to appreciate the perspective of international debates in this field.

**d**—Finally, seven pilot interviews were conducted with journalists from mainstream and alternative/oppositional media, to gauge the flow of the questionnaire. A questionnaire with 42 questions was finalised, to learn about the participants' views of the main topics and their demographic details.

## Data Collection



## Sample Structure

The difficulty of selecting a proper sampling method for the survey was one of the most challenging parts of this research project, since the overall total of journalists in Turkey at present has not been updated since the decrees laying off thousands of media professionals in the two years of the state of emergency. We decided to use the overall figures published by the Journalists' Union of Turkey and narrowed the target group of the survey down to the following groups:

1. Mainstream media professionals
2. Alternative/oppositional media professionals
3. Journalists who currently do not hold a full-time job contract: independent freelance journalists, journalists who were dismissed but want to continue working in the media.

## Distribution of Sample

**Sample Size :** A total of 306 journalists were interviewed

- **Cities Covered :** 6 provinces (İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Diyarbakır, Adana, Antalya)
- **Positions Covered :** Editors, correspondents and executive roles
- **Media Platforms Covered :** National & regional platforms of TV's, newspapers, news agencies, news portals and other institutions)



### Distribution of Sample (Employed by...)

National Media	207
Regional Media	94
As Freelancer	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>306</b>

### Distribution of Sample (Working Position)

Editors	92
Correspondents	109
Chief Editors	29
Executive Roles	76
<b>Total</b>	<b>306</b>

### Distribution of Sample (Cities)

Adana-Antalya	31
Ankara	43
Diyarbakır	30
İstanbul	171
İzmir	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>306</b>

### Distribution of Sample (Media Platforms)

News Agency	24
Television	42
Newspaper	166
News Portal	52
Other	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>306</b>

The fieldwork of the survey was completed in mid-May 2018 with **306 interviews of professional journalists** living in Turkey. 254 interviews out of 306 were conducted through Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI), whereas the rest of the interviews (52 out of 306) were done through Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI).

In order to increase the representativeness of the survey, we decided to use some additional quotas in the following areas:

- **Platforms:** to represent the majority in the industry, only journalists who were working in news agencies, television channels, newspapers and news portals were interviewed in the survey. We did not conduct any interviews with journalists working from other platforms such as the radio and magazines.
- **Roles:** the affinity of the roles of journalists to those in citizen journalism was another criterion in the research sampling. Four main groups were identified as the sub-categories of sampling, namely, **editors, correspondents, chief editors and other executive roles**. Correspondents and editors who were actively taking part in news curation and chief editors and executives who were managing the news curation process were selected for this survey, since these roles were assumed to give more insight into the questions of citizen journalism with respect to the other roles of journalism.
- **City:** concentration of mainstream media is basically in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir and these three cities were widely represented in the sample. Moreover, in order to cover regional and alternative/oppositional media representation, we added Adana, Antalya and Diyarbakır to the survey to increase its representativeness.

## Analysis and Reporting

The T-test, within 95% of confidence interval, was applied in order to understand the statistically meaningful differentiation of the research results to compare the several breakdowns mentioned above.





# Research Findings



## **Profile of Journalists**

The journalists were asked to give demographic information such as their gender, age, educational background and information that would amplify their professional profiles in terms of professional training, membership of any professional associations, their satisfaction with their monthly income and the amount of time that they had spent in the media sector. When all the answers to these questions were evaluated together, the profile of the professional journalists who participated in this survey showed the following characteristics:

- Most of the respondents were male (67%) and only one-third of them were female (33%),
- 7 out of 10 of the interviewed journalists were between the ages of 26 and 45 (with 35.6% in the 26-35 age group and 34% in the 36-45 age group). Only one-fifth of the respondents (21.9%) were older than 46.
- Most of the journalists (68.3%) stated that they were university graduates while 20.6% said that they had graduated from high school. Only 11.1% of them had a postgraduate degree.
- 92.8% of the interviewed journalists were working at the time in a media organisation; 5.2% of them stated that they were currently working freelance or as an intern, part-time or independently. The remaining 2% of journalists were unemployed and were currently seeking employment in the media sector.

It has been observed that journalists who had been laid off in the last two years, when their media institutions were shut down or suppressed or the media platforms they were working for were sold to another owner due to the state of emergency decrees, with other substantial change in the platform, continue to produce as freelancers in the industry or seek new job opportunities there.

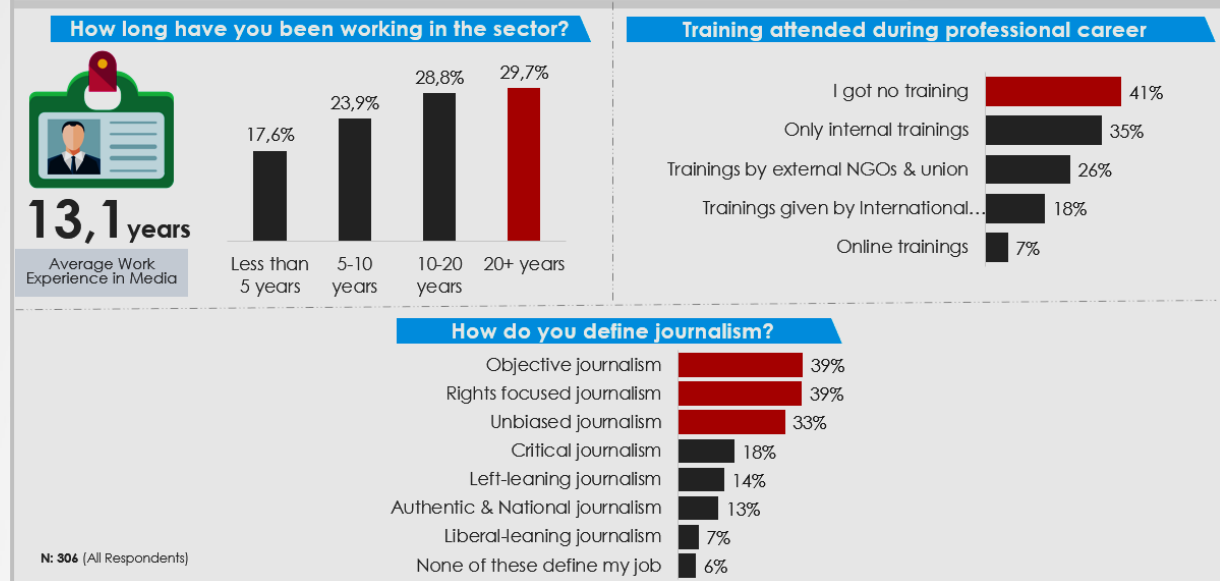
## **Professional Identity**

The seniority of journalists in this research (the duration of their professional experience) in the media industry was found to be 13.1 years, on average. Those who had been working in the sector for over 20 years make up the biggest group among the respondents (29.7%). Of these, 58.2% stated that they occupy executive roles, such as chief editors, news coordinators and department heads; showing that they had been promoted to executive roles after gaining enough experience in various levels of journalism. Journalists who stated that they were relatively new to the profession (with experience of less than 5 years) make up 17.6% of the total sample.



We asked journalists whether they had been receiving any professional training to discover if they had had any chance to equip themselves in various fields of the profession to follow recent developments. 4 out of 10 journalists stated that they had not received any training throughout their career in journalism (40.8%). Those who stated that they had received some training basically defined the content of the sessions as "orientation programs of the institutions". The percentage of professional training taken from internal and external sources seems from their responses to be quite low.

## Professional Identity



The statements of the professional journalists in Turkey revealed that it put them in a dilemma to be asked to describe the journalism that their institutions involved them in at the moment. When we asked “**How would you define the journalism that you do**”, many of them responded with a counter question: “*Are you asking about the journalism that I currently do in this institution or the kind that I want ideally to do?*” Analysing the answers of the journalists to this question readily suggested that journalists working in mainstream media generally define “**their idealised version of journalism**” rather than the one that they currently do in their institutions.

The most frequent answer describing their kind of journalism was “**objective journalism**” (38.9%); followed by “**rights-focused journalism**” (38.6%) and “**independent journalism**” (33.3%). It is also interesting to note that the proportion of people who define their journalism as “rights focused journalism” is almost the same as the proportion describing it as “objective journalism,” which is a basic criterion for mainstream media ethics. Given the ownership of media outlets and the quality of news that is offered, it can be said that the statements describing journalism reflect more an idealisation of journalistic quality and values than the professional limitations placed on the journalists by their current institutions.

It is widely known that media professionals are being employed without any official registration and the companies operating in the media sector have not adequately conceded the social rights of the employees; even wages have sometimes remained unpaid for months. Media ownership has since 2002 systematically been tilted towards pro-government businesses, especially under the rule of the governing AKP; and this has made working conditions in the sector even worse. Under the last two years of the state of emergency, hundreds of media organisations have been shut down and many journalists have lost their social rights; these conditions represent the biggest threat to job safety. When the journalists were asked how satisfied they were with their monthly income, almost half of them declared that they were not content with it (49% of the participants indicated on a 5-point scale that they were absolutely discontented or discontented). 22.9% of the participants stated that they were “neither content nor discontent”, and the remaining 27.8% of the journalists seemed to be happy with their monthly income.



Professional unionisation in media industry in Turkey has been under discussion from various perspectives. As part of this research, the journalists were also asked whether or not they were members of a professional association. Almost 4 out of every 10 respondents (38.9%) stated that they were not members of any professional group or union. According to the journalists who declared themselves to be members, the two main professional bodies defending the rights of professional journalists were the Journalists' Union of Turkey (23.9%) and the Turkish Journalists' Society (17%).

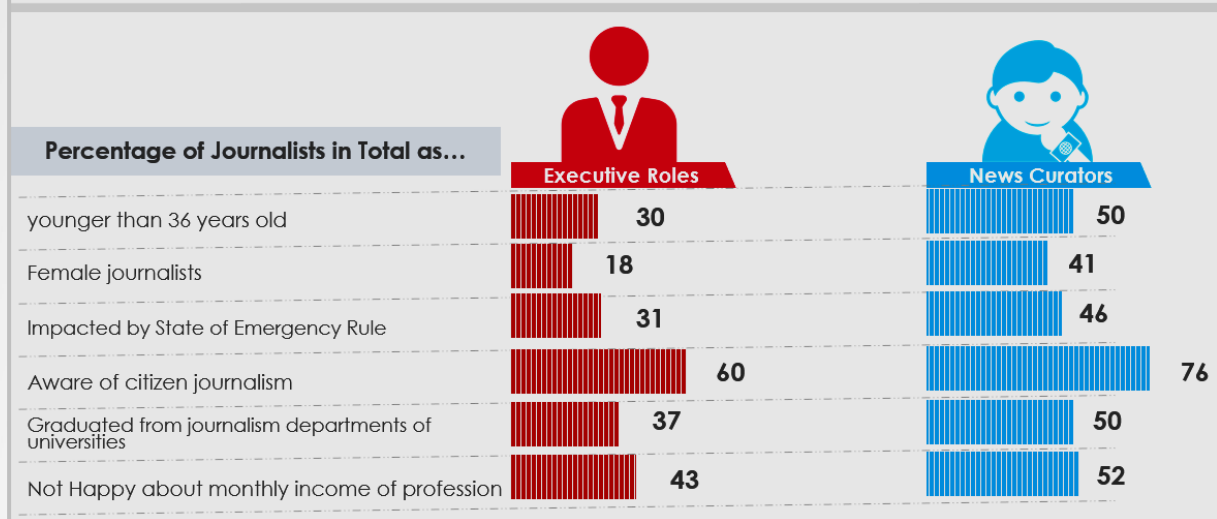
### Differences in Profiles of News Curators and Executive Roles

As noted above, during the interviews for this project, executives such as chief editors, news coordinators and news editors took part, as well as those with news curator roles, such as editors and correspondents. We observed that the profiles of those two types of role were different regarding the specifications of demographics and attitudes to the profession listed below:

- **Age:** As expected, professional journalists who had spent many years in the profession had more chance of being represented in executive positions in journalism. More than half of the correspondents and editors who took part (55.2%) were below the age of 36 and in this age group, only 22.9% of the respondents stated that they occupied executive positions. This shows that the representation of younger journalists in executive roles is even lower.
- **Gender:** More male employees than female is found in executive roles in the Turkish media. The ratio of women in executive roles was found in the present research to be 18.1%. According to the Turk-Stat's 2016 Household Workforce Research, only 16.7% of executive roles in Turkey are given to females (<http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=27594>). Among news curators, however, this ratio goes up to 40.8%, a much higher percentage.
- **Education:** Journalists who work as editors and correspondents have a higher percentage of graduates from journalism departments (51.2%) than the percentage in executive roles (37.1%).
- **Use of the social media during state of emergency rules:** the social media habits of correspondents and editors have been *impacted more* by the state of emergency conditions than those of staff occupying executive roles. (45.8% for news curators vs. 30.5% in executive roles).
- **Awareness of Citizen Journalism:** Citizen journalism is being used more often among mainstream media professionals in the phases of news production. As a natural consequence of this, news curators (editors and correspondents) have a more accurate idea of citizen journalism than is possessed by those in executive roles. Among the executive professionals, 59% stated that they were aware of citizen journalism, while among news curators, the awareness ratio went up to 76.1%.



### Differentiation of Profiles : Executive Roles vs News Curators (%)

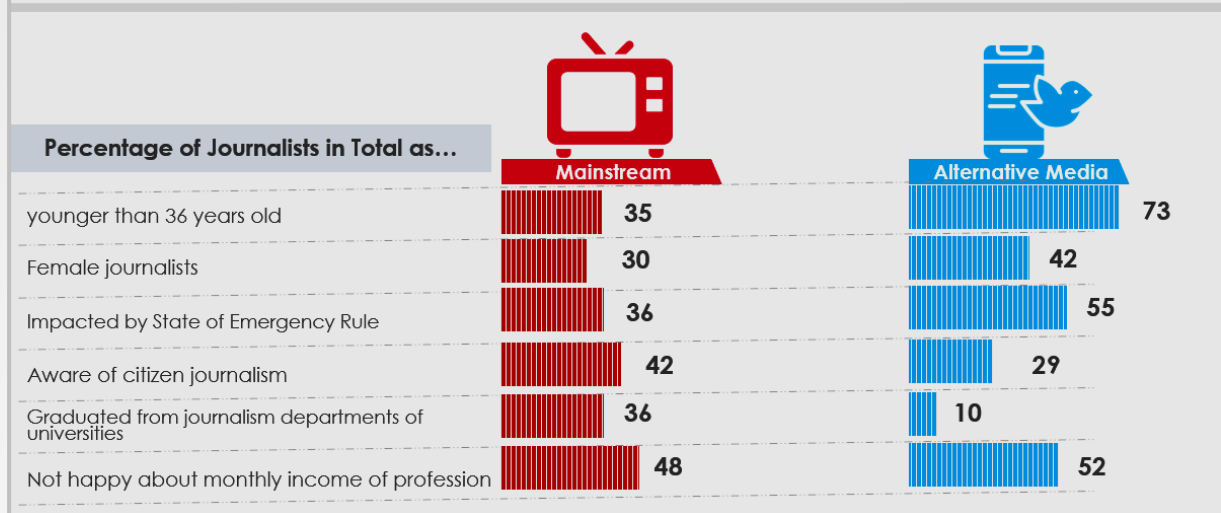


### Differences in The Profiles Of “Mainstream and Alternative/Oppositional Media” Journalists

The research results also show some important differences between the profiles of journalists who work in the mainstream media and those in the alternative/oppositional media. We know from many different developments in the last decades in the mainstream media that these differences in profile are merely the outcome of the many constraints that have been placed on journalists. For this reason, the following differentiation must be read with caution, bearing in mind the constraints:

- **Age:** the findings of the study reveal that young journalists have more chances to work in the alternative/oppositional media than in the mainstream media. Of the participants of the survey who are below the age of 36, 72.6% stated that they worked for alternative/oppositional media, leaving 35.2% working in the mainstream media.
- **Seniority:** 36.9% of the mainstream media professionals had been in the sector for over 20 years, while this was the case for only 6.8% of the alternative media professionals.
- **Gender:** the ratio of female employment in mainstream media was lower than the ratio working on alternative/oppositional media platforms (30% vs. 42.5%).
- **Monthly Income:** more than half (52.1%) of the alternative media professionals stated that they were dissatisfied with their monthly income; whereas this ratio was 48% for mainstream media professionals. It is interesting to see that the alternative/oppositional media, although faced with financial sustainability issues, have begun to be perceived as “more secure” than the mainstream media in Turkey which traditionally offered journalists better economic conditions.
- **Membership of Professional Organizations:** according to the findings of the research, the mainstream media and alternative/oppositional media journalists may also be differentiated by their approach to the practices in connection with `right to assemble. More than 4 out of every 10 mainstream media professionals stated that they were not members of any professional association or union (42.1%), whereas the ratio was 28.8% for alternative/oppositional media journalists.
- **Use of Social Media during state of emergency Rules:** alternative/oppositional media professionals have been more heavily affected by the state of emergency conditions (54.8%) than have mainstream media journalists (36.1%). The effect of the state of emergency rules on journalists is investigated thoroughly below.
- **Awareness of Citizen Journalism:** we saw that alternative/oppositional media journalists had a higher awareness of citizen journalism than had mainstream media professionals. The ratio of journalists who stated that they had never heard of citizen journalism values and practices was very low (9.6%) among alternative/oppositional media journalists (this ratio was 36.1% among mainstream media professionals).

## Differentiation of Profiles : Mainstream & Alternative Media Journalists (%)

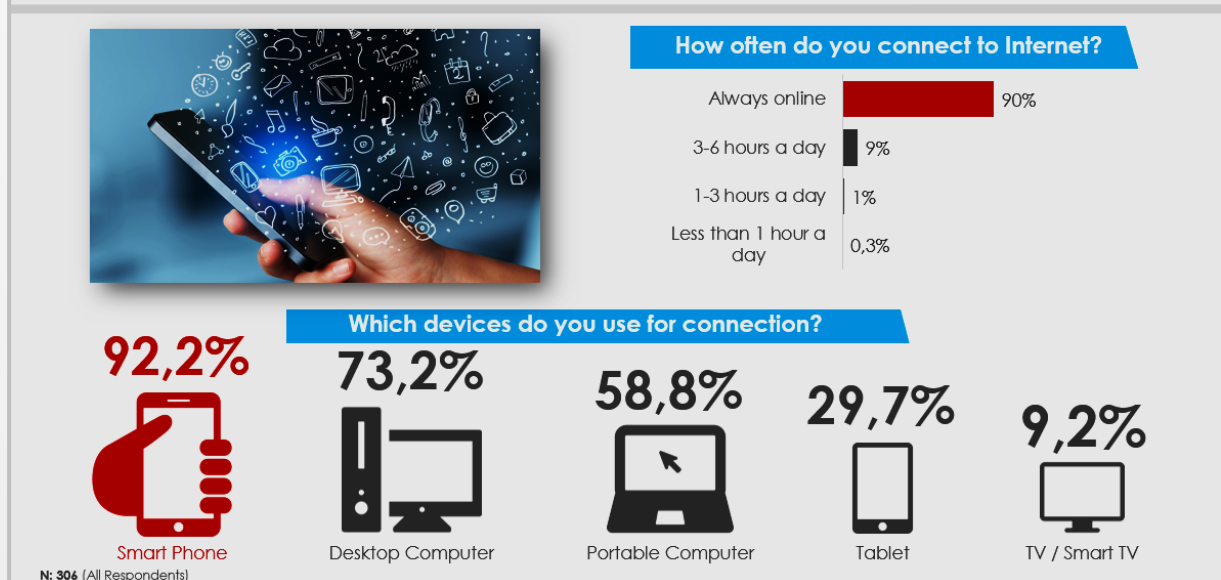


## Relationship of Professional Journalists with Technology

### Internet Use

Questions to determine the journalists' involvement with technology started with their use of the internet in their professional lives. A big majority of the journalists (89.5%) stated that they were *always online*; whereas only 9.2% of them stated that they went online between 3 and 6 hours per day. All the chief editors participating in this survey asserted that they were always online whereas among correspondents the ratio who were always online was lower, due to spending more time in the field (82.6%). Professional journalists mainly used their smart phones to connect to the internet (92.2%), and from there they preferred to use a desktop computer (73.2%) or a portable computer (58.8%). The device used least often by journalists for browsing online content was a smart TV (9.2%).

## Internet Usage

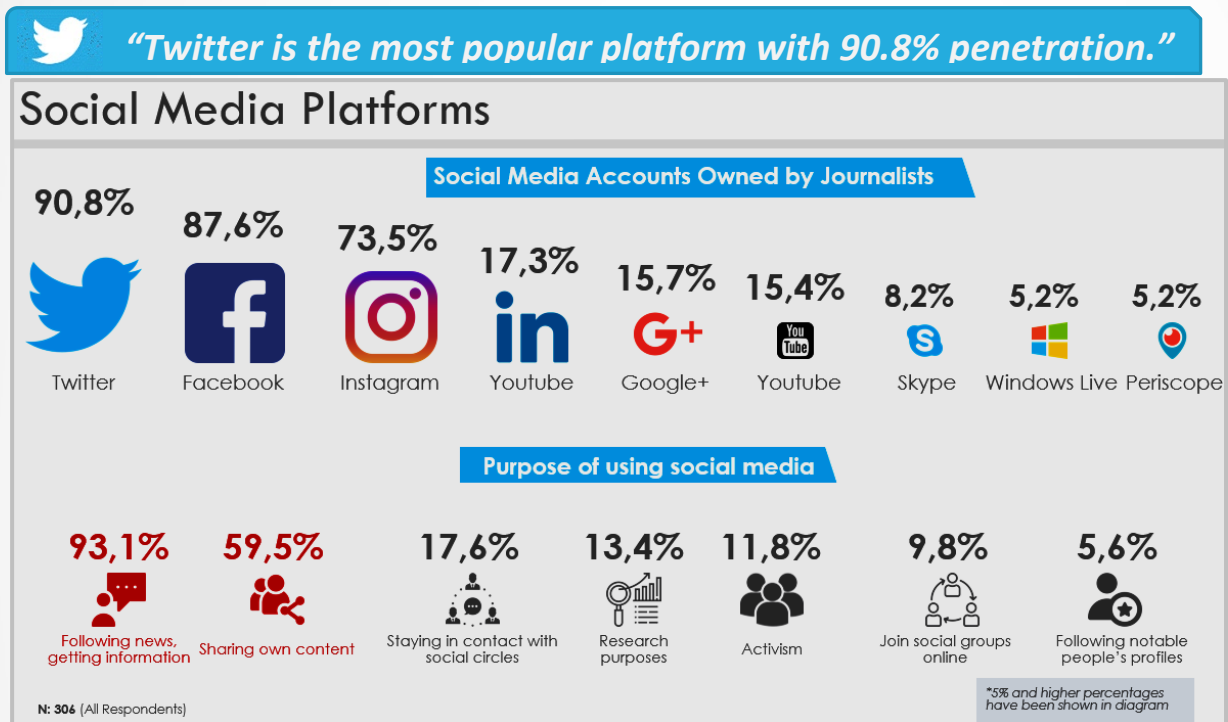


### Platforms Used Most Frequently

When journalists were asked which social media platforms they used most frequently, it emerged that "Twitter" was the main platform for them (90.8%), followed by Facebook (88.6%) and Instagram (73.5%). Journalists living in Istanbul had the highest usage ratio of Twitter (94.7%), while those living in Izmir scored lowest (77.4%).

A big majority of journalists stated that they used the social media to follow news items and get and share information (93.1%); share their own content online (59.5%); to contact members of their social circle (17.6%); for research purposes (13.4%); and finally for activism (11.8%).

- The social media usage habits of mainstream and alternative/oppositional media professionals were significantly different, according to the findings. Only 54.9% of the mainstream media professionals used social media “to share their own news” whereas this ratio was rather higher for those in the alternative/oppositional media (74%). Moreover, more of those in the alternative/oppositional media use social media for the purposes of activism (23.3%), whereas 8.2% in the mainstream media do this. These differences were basically outcomes of the use by alternative media workers of online channels and social media platforms to curate news and disseminate information.



- The scope of media organisation also impacted on the journalists’ approach to the use of social media. The percentage of journalists who worked in *national media institutions* and stated that they used the social media for activism (with the weight of the alternative/oppositional media) was higher than the percentage of those working in *regional media institutions* (15% vs. 5,3%).

### Platforms to Follow News

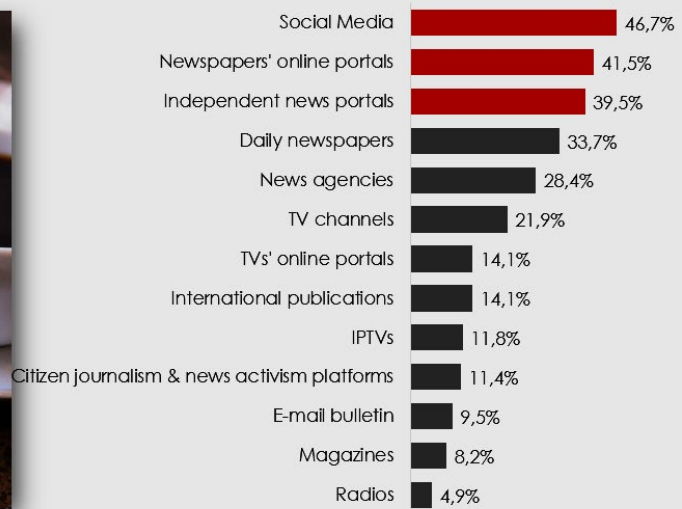
Professional journalists generally followed the news through the social media (46,7%), online portals of newspapers (41.5%), and independent news portals (39.5%). Daily newspapers (33.7%) and TV channels (21.9%) as conventional platforms are losing their importance as the main source of news for professional journalists. The *credit given in Turkey to “citizen journalism platforms” as a source of news for professional journalists was even lower* (11.4%).



## Platforms to Follow the News



N: 306 (All respondents)

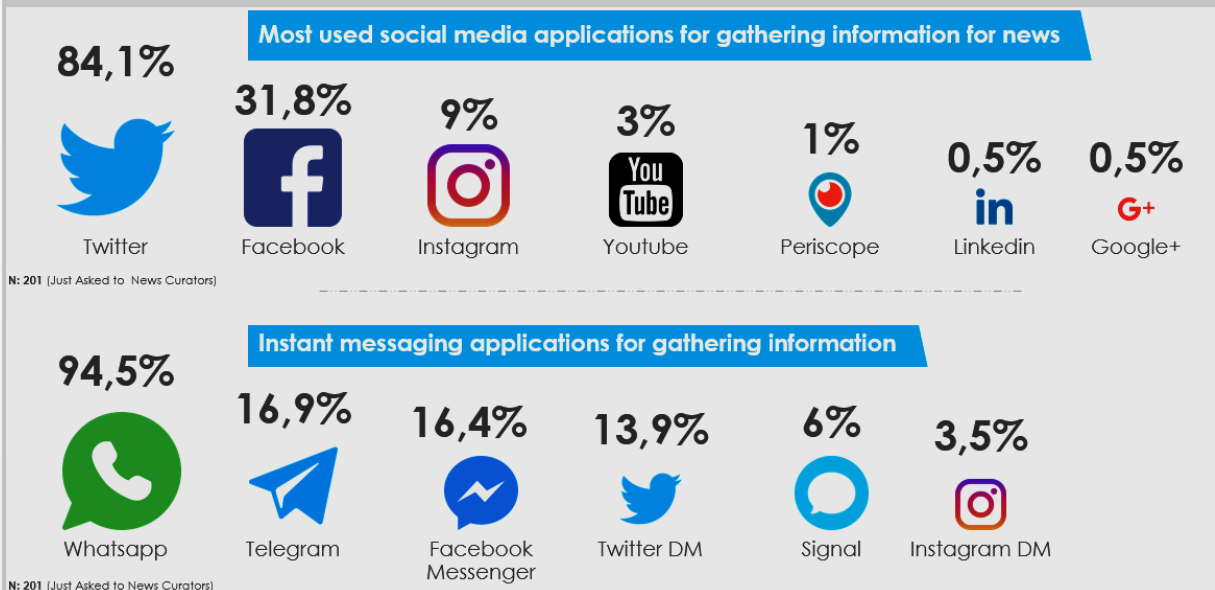


### Applications Used for Gathering Information

In addition to questions about the platforms that journalists used as sources of news, questions were asked about the applications they used to propagate news, how they used the social media to share their own content and how they interacted with readers/viewers (These questions were put only to journalists who actively curated news; not to those in executive roles).

Editors and correspondents in Turkey generally gathered information through Twitter (84.1%). Facebook (31.8%) and Instagram (9%) were the other platforms, but they were used less widely by news curators. Video-sharing portals such as YouTube and Periscope were not used actively among journalists in curating news.

## Applications Used for Information Gathering



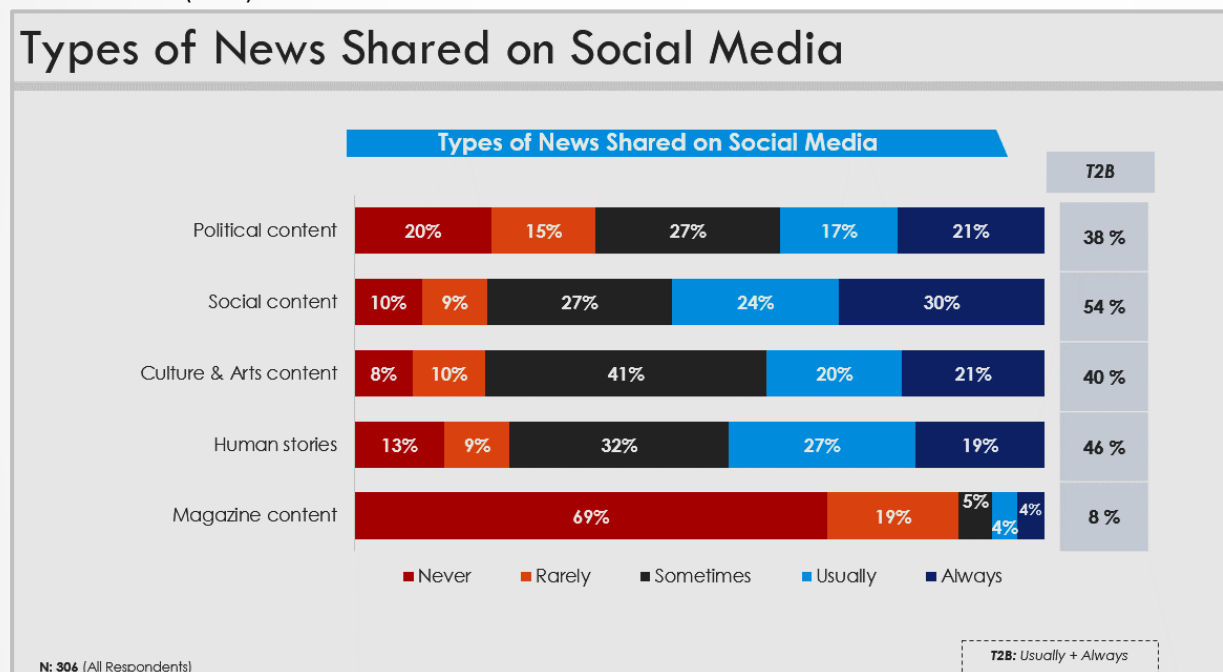
- The most commonly used messaging application among journalists was WhatsApp (94.5%), followed by Telegram (16.9%), Facebook Messenger (16.4%) and Twitter DM (13.9%). The use of signal application, which is considered more secure, is quite limited among journalists in Turkey (6%).

## How the News Is Shared?

Twitter, again, was the platform most used by journalists for sharing their news (79.1%). The share of Facebook increases when it comes to online news sharing (51.7%). When journalists were asked which criteria were important when they shared another journalist's news through their accounts, 61.2% of them stated that their basic criterion was the "factuality of the news story". Some journalists looked for the authenticity of the news (46.1%), and some considered the significance of the news item for the public (43.4%). "Trust in the name of journalist" who provided the information seemed to be less important as a factor than others (22.4%) which shows that professional journalists consider a news story more significant in itself than the name of the journalist who has written it.

## Types of News Shared on Social Media

News with "**Social content**" (53.9%) is the highest rated type of news that journalists share on the social media (*top2 scores of people saying that they "always share" or "usually share" them*). "**Human stories**" are the second most favoured type of content (45.8%) followed by "**culture and arts content**" (40.2%). The share of political content comes next (38.2%). Very few of the journalists stated that they shared "*magazinish*" content on social media (7.5%).



- It can be seen that the journalists in the mainstream media had been under pressure for a long time and the quality of the content they shared online had changed over time. While the journalists in the mainstream media had less political content these days in their social media accounts, journalists working for alternative/oppositional media shared more political content than those working for the mainstream media (65.8%). The hesitation of the mainstream media journalists to share political content on their social media accounts is the outcome of the level of censorship and self-censorship in play in Turkey's mainstream media. Only 3 out of 10 mainstream media journalists (29.6%) were able to share the political content from their personal accounts.

## Social Media Usage by Journalists During the State of Emergency

After the declaration of the state of emergency following the failed coup attempt on the eve of July 15, 2016, press freedom and journalists' working conditions deteriorated drastically. In this period, when press freedom was brought into jeopardy, journalists who could "still" continue working in an institution reported being under extreme pressure from the government and the owners of the media corporates. Some of the questions in this research were designed to reveal how journalists' social media habits had changed in this period of unusual pressure and whether the journalists had been subjected to legal proceedings of any kind.

4 journalists out of every 10 participating in our survey (40.5%) claimed that their use of the social media had been impacted during the two years of the state of emergency. When the demographic and professional backgrounds of these journalists were analysed, the following distinctions indicated statistically meaningful differences between journalists:

- 53% of the journalists who live in *Diyarbakır* stated that they were heavily impacted by the rules of the state of emergency, whereas only 16.1% of the journalists living in cities such as Adana and Antalya had felt their impact, a lower percentage.
- The use of the social media by journalists who worked for the *alternative/oppositional media* had been impacted highly (affecting 54.8%), compared to the effect on mainstream media journalists (36.1%).
- Another important result concerned the journalists who worked for *news portals*: 53.8% of them stated that their use of social media had been more highly impacted than the use by journalists working on other media platforms.
- News curators working as *editors or correspondents* seemed to be impacted more during the state of emergency (45.8%) than those in executive roles (30.5%).

Among the journalists who stated that their social media habits had been impacted under the state of emergency rule, a big majority (82.3%) said that they had been avoiding risky political content since the period began.



Other journalists had added that they had checked their former content and *deleted some of the risky entries* (15.3%). Another precaution of journalists was to stop curating any content online and to share only other people's content (8.1%). Only 4% of those who described their social media habits as impacted during the state of emergency said that *they had completely deleted their social media accounts*. It is also important to note that most of the journalists who participated in the research had already, in response to the climate of pressure, started to take these measures before the state of emergency was declared; they mentioned that they had simply continued their practice of self-censoring since it had started.

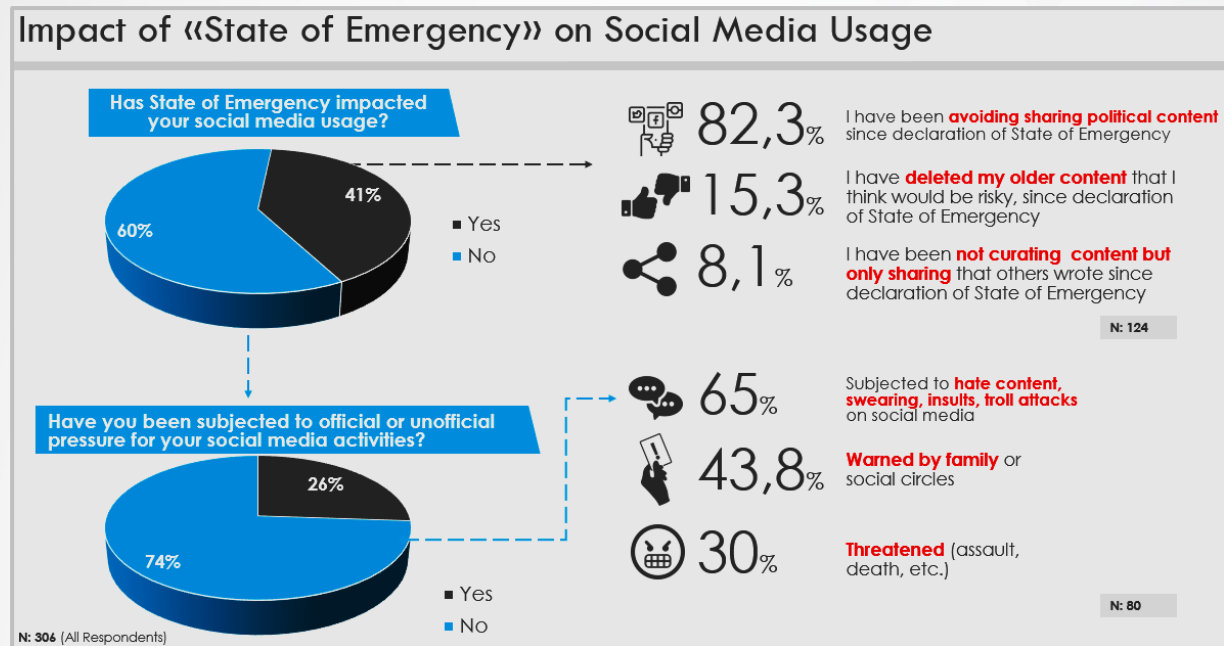
- *Diyarbakır* city has a rather high percentage (18.8% of those who claimed to have completely deleted their social media accounts. Moreover, the ratio of alternative/oppositional media journalists who stated that they had deleted content they assumed to be risky (27.5%) was higher than the ratio of journalists working in the mainstream media (9.5%).

More than a quarter of the journalists impacted by the state of emergency rule (26.1%) also declared that they had been subjected to **official or unofficial pressure, for example, investigation, warning, insults**, etc. in this period. According to the research findings, this pressure is felt more intensely by the journalists who live in *Diyarbakır* (36.7%), younger journalists between ages of 26 and 35 (35.8%), journalists who hold a post-graduate degree (32.4%), news agency journalists (33.3%), news portal journalists (34.6%), correspondents (33.9%) and relatively junior journalists who have 5-10 years of experience in the sector (31.5%).

When asked what kind of pressure they had been subjected to, the journalists who stated that they had been subjected to different types of pressures listed **insults and troll attacks on the social media** (65%), *being warned by family members and social circles* not to share (43.8%), and **death threats** on the social media (30%). Almost 3 out of every 10 journalists (28.8%) also stated that they had been *warned by their colleagues at work*.



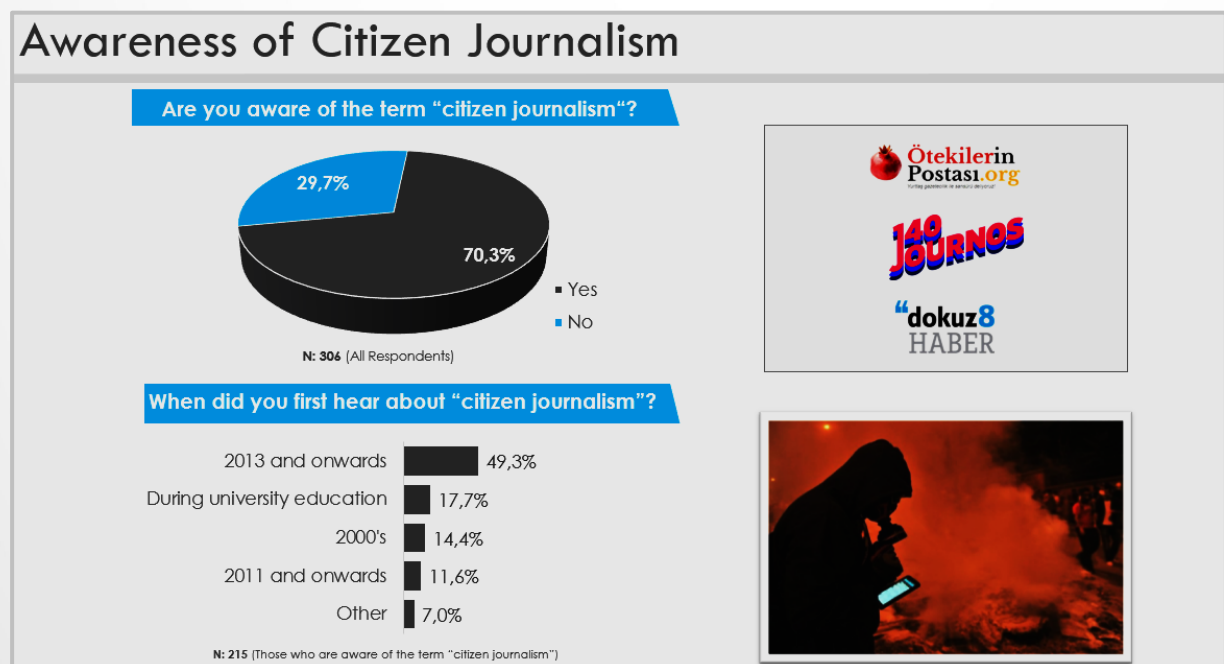
The ratio of journalists in our sample who had been subjected to judicial investigation was 16.3%. Some journalists also stated that they had received an official warning from an executive in the media organization (13.8%), they had been detained (11.3%), and they were currently on trial (11.3%).



## Professional Journalists' Relationship with Citizen Journalism

### Awareness of Citizen Journalism

This part of the study focuses mainly on the perception among professional journalists of citizen journalism, which has also been globally under heavy discussion for the last 20 years by professional journalists in different contexts. When the participants of our survey were asked whether they were aware citizen journalism, we found that most of the Turkish media professionals were aware of it (70.3%), whereas the rest (29.7%) stated that they had never heard of the term before.



Of the journalists who stated that they had heard of citizen journalism, almost half (49.3%) declared that they had come across the term for the first time during and after the popular Gezi Park protests in June 2013. While no specific year range was mentioned, 17.7% of journalists said they had heard it for the first time during their

courses at university. Another group of journalists (14.4%) mentioned that that they had first heard the term during the 2000s, when citizen journalism has gained momentum due to anti-globalisation movements such as Occupy. The protests in the Middle East and Northern Africa in 2011, more commonly known as the “Arab Spring,” provided another context in which journalists became familiar for the first time with the concept of citizen journalism (11.6%).

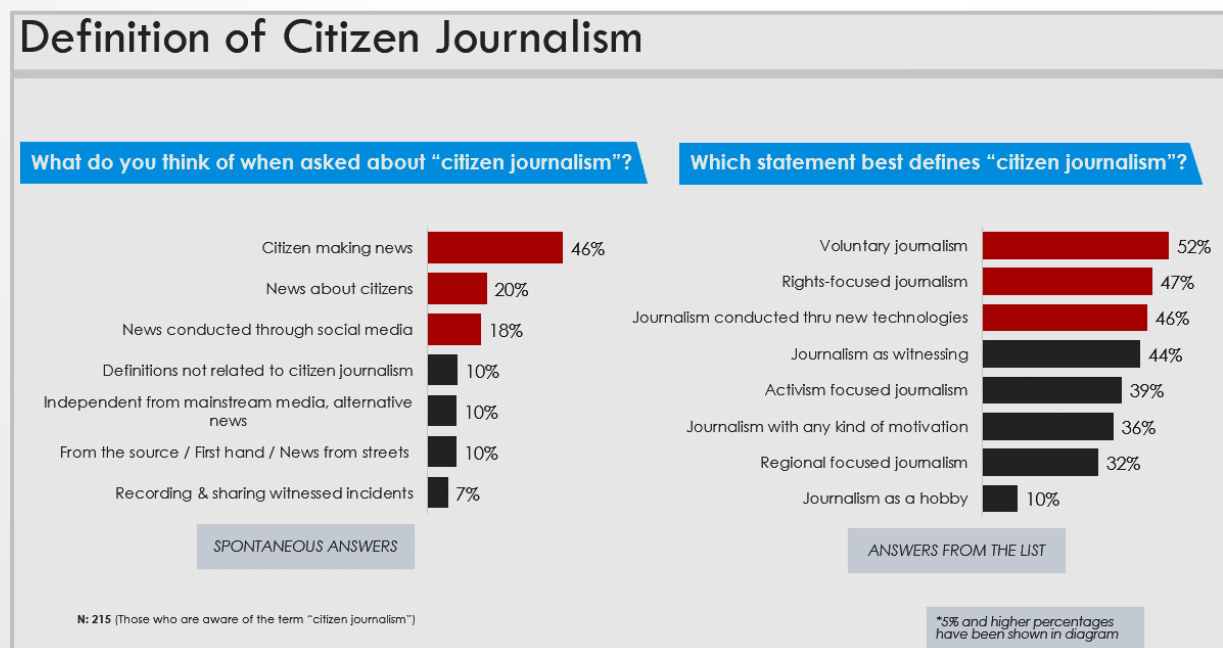
## Definition of Citizen Journalism

Professional journalists were asked in two different questions to describe the citizen journalism. Initially, a spontaneous question was asked regarding what citizen journalism meant and the answers were recorded (spontaneous awareness). Following this, another question asked them to choose the statements that best define citizen journalism (aided awareness). These statements were prepared before the fieldwork during the phase of desk research on the literature and were collected from the different definitions of citizen journalism around the globe.

When asked spontaneously, almost half of the journalists defined citizen journalism as “**citizens making news**” (45.6%). When journalists put the main emphasis on the word “**citizen**”, they generally defined people who are producing such items of those news as “*not-journalists*”, “*basic citizens*” and “*individuals*” (due to the regular appearance of such people in their everyday lives). Second, the most frequent spontaneous answer was that citizen journalists contributed “**news that was made for the interest of citizens**” (20%). When the emphasis fell on public interest, journalists used such notions as “*society*” and “*people*” referring to the many areas of public interest. Some of the phrases about journalism that they used spontaneously are listed below:

- “news that is made to resolve the people’s problems”;
- “news that has citizen content/is about citizens/is positive news for people.”

The third commonly defined aspect of citizen journalism states that such “**news is made through the social media**”. This definition puts the emphasis on the digital and new media perspective of citizen journalism, developing rapidly with the help of social media tools (18.1%). A group of journalists also defined citizen journalism as “**independent from the mainstream media**”, as an alternative kind of journalism (9.8%). The same percentage of answers also defined citizen journalism as “**news from the source, news from the streets**” thus putting the emphasis on the main sources of the news. It is also interesting to see that about 1/10<sup>th</sup> of all the answers came from journalists who were not associated with any definition related to citizen journalism. They formed a separate category of “**answers from unrelated people**” (10.2%).



When we asked the same question using statements prepared beforehand to define citizen journalism, the responses of the professional journalists changed drastically. They defined citizen journalism as voluntary journalism (51.6%), rights-focused journalism (47%), journalism conducted through the use of new

technologies (45.6%), journalism as witnessing (43.7%), activism-focused journalism (38.6%), citizens making news with any kind of motivation (36.3%), regionally focused journalism (32.1%). From the analysis of the results of this question into sub-segments of journalists, we observed statistically significant differences in their understanding of citizen journalism:

- Female journalists (56.3%) were more inclined than male ones (41.5%) to define citizen journalism as “rights-focused journalism”. Citizen journalism practices give special importance to the struggles of women and other disadvantaged groups in Turkey as part of their news flow and female journalists are clearly more aware of this tendency.
- Another difference was between those in executive and those in curator roles in journalism; the percentage of news curators who defined citizen journalism as “voluntary journalism” was significantly higher than the percentage of journalists in executive roles (58.2% vs. 35.5%). Editors and correspondents seemed to be more exposed than executives were to the efforts of citizens. More alternative/oppositional media journalists defined citizen journalism as voluntary journalism (65.2%), journalism as witnessing (57.6%), activism-focused journalism (53%) than did mainstream media journalists (45.6%, 37.6% and 32.2% respectively).
- The last differentiation was found between national and regional media journalists. The percentage of regional media journalists who stated that citizen journalism provided more “**local news**” was significantly higher than the percentage of national journalists (43.1% vs. 29.6%).

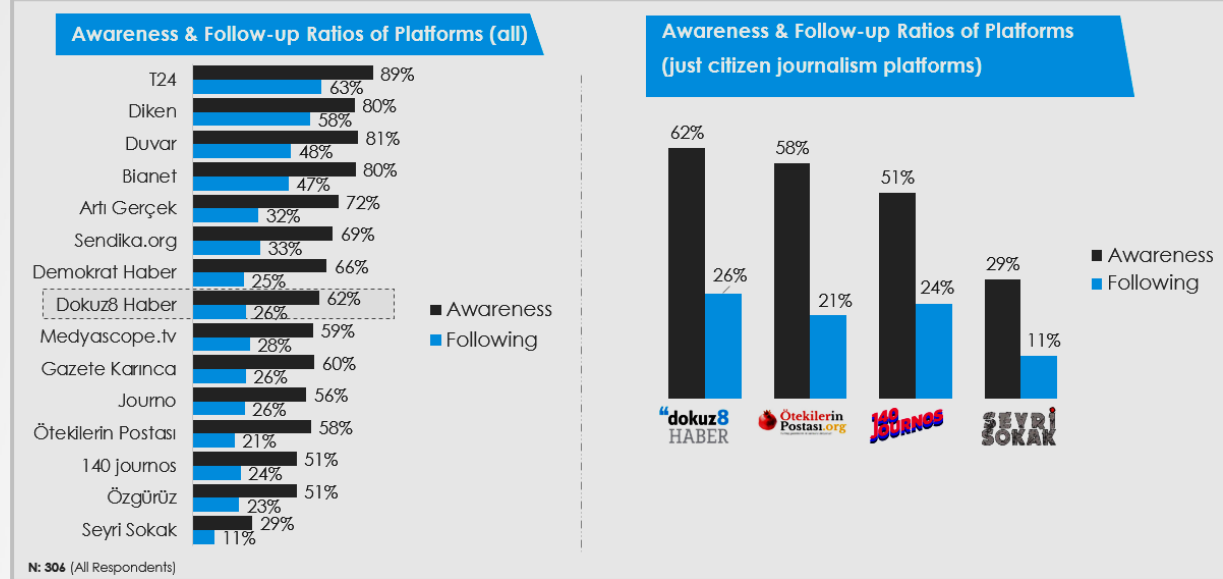
### Platforms that Journalists are Aware of and Follow

It is well known that the Gezi Park protests led to two major movements in the field of journalism in Turkey. The first one affected the professional journalists who could no longer find a place for themselves in the mainstream media and concerned their efforts to create alternative media platforms making use of new technological developments. The second trend was the increase in awareness of citizens whose voices had previously not been heard and who started to publish their news themselves, with the development of citizen journalism platforms on which to publish news. This movement is strong even though five years have passed since the Gezi protests and we have witnessed the start of many alternative media platforms, including citizen journalism networks, which have since been shut down. We selected a list of **currently active platforms** (a mix of alternative media platforms and citizen journalism networks) and asked the sample of professional journalists which platforms they were aware of and followed as sources of news. Additionally, it was important to note that the lists provided for journalists in this survey contained alternative media initiatives founded with different motives and with different styles of presenting news and different funding mechanisms, etc.

According to the results, the best-known platforms for alternative media initiatives in Turkey were **T24** (88,6%), **Duvar** (81.4%), **Bianet** (80.1%) and **Diken** (79.7%). These were followed by Artı Gerçek (71.6%), Sendika.org (69%) and Demokrat Haber (66%). Awareness of citizen journalism networks is lower than the awareness of other online media platforms as mentioned above. **dokuz8NEWS**, which has been actively operating in the field of citizen journalism since 2013, is the platform best-known among journalists (62.1%), followed by **Ötekilerin Postası** (58.2%) and **140 Journos** (51%).



## Platforms That Journalists Are Aware of and Follow

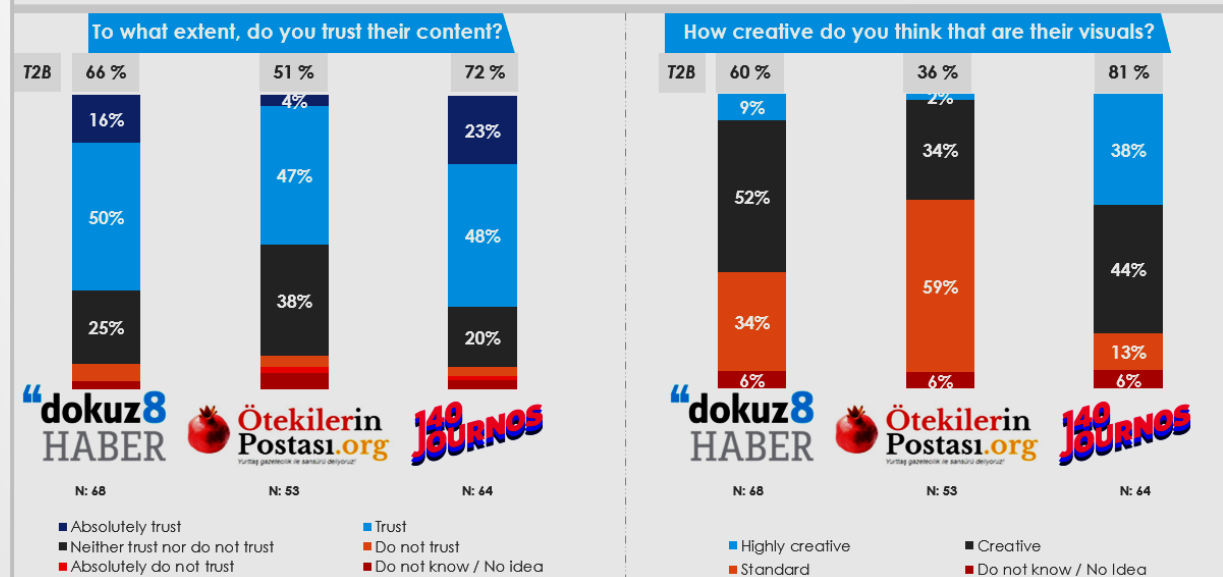


When journalists were asked which of these platforms they actively followed, a similar pattern of awareness was shown, with a slightly different ranking: T24 (63.4%), Diken (57.8%), Duvar (48.3%), Bianet (47.1%) were the first four platforms followed by journalists. Sendika.org (33.3%), Artı Gerçek (32.4%) and Demokrat Haber (25.2%) were the other alternative media platforms that journalists followed. dokuz8NEWS (26.1%), 140 Journos (23.5%) and Ötekilerin Postası (20.6%) were the citizen journalism platforms also followed by journalists in Turkey.

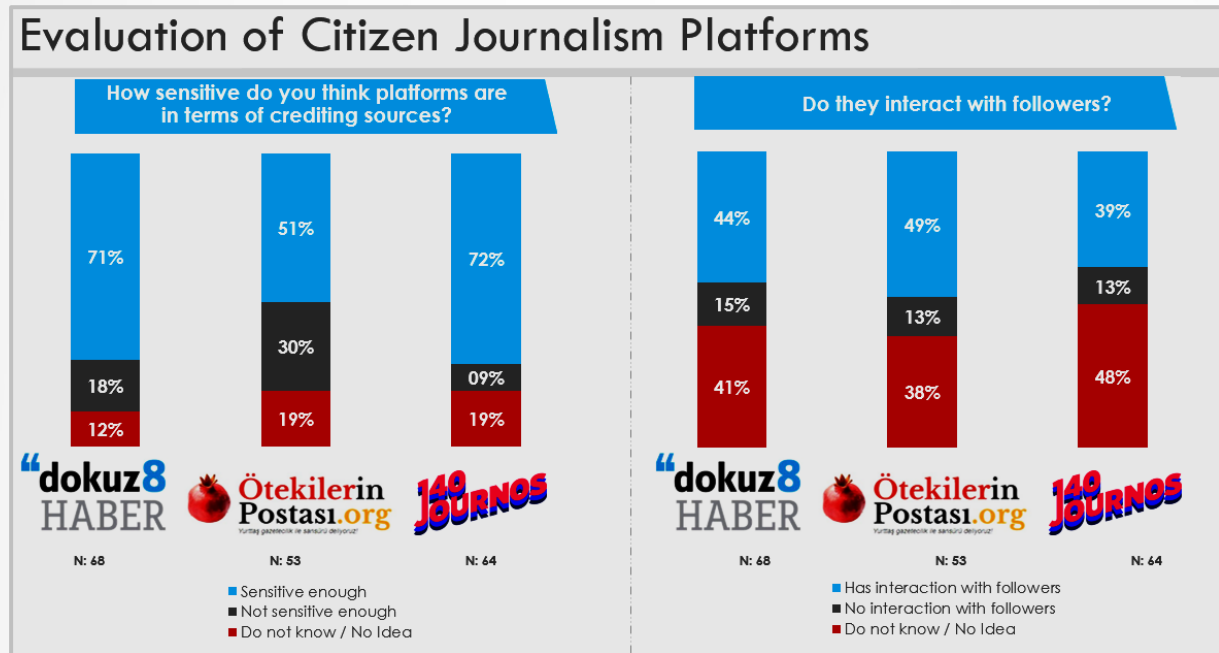
### Evaluation of the Service Provided by Citizen Journalism Platforms

Ötekilerin Postası, 140 Journos and dokuz8NEWS are the 3 most important citizen journalism platforms in Turkey; in reaching their audiences they use different styles of news curation, control of circulation and presentation of content. All these platforms had developed different styles of their own and were now offering types of citizen journalism that were not the same as their original grassroots versions in 2013. In order to understand how they were perceived by professional journalists and how they differed from each other, we asked four questions regarding **trust** in their content, the **creativity** of their visuals, the **credit** extended to their sources and finally their **interaction** with their audience.

## Evaluation of Citizen Journalism Platforms



**Trust in Content:** Globally, one of the gravest criticisms made against citizen journalism platforms has concerned the reliability of the information curated by citizens. When journalists were asked to assess the reliability of the news provided by these three citizen journalism platforms (according to the *top2 scores of people who said the platforms deserved ‘Trust’ and ‘absolute trust’*); 140 Journos turned out to be the most reliable news platform (71.8%) followed by dokuz8NEWS (66.2%) and Ötekilerin Postası (51%). The percentage of journalists who stated that they “absolutely did not trust the platforms” was quite low indicating that ***citizen journalism platforms in Turkey had gained a certain level of credit among professional journalists for their reliability***. Another finding of the research was that Ötekilerin Postası – which directly publishes the content contributed by its followers without subjecting it to any editorial filtering – had the lowest scores for reliability from the professional journalists.



**Creativity of Visuals:** During the foundation period of these three citizen journalism platforms, they discussed possible methods for the publication of news, the channels on which news would be presented and the style in which the news would appear. Each of them had its own solution to the question of presenting content. Of the three platforms, 140 Journos was deemed the most creative news visualisation platform (81.3%), followed by dokuz8NEWS (60.3%) and Ötekilerin Postası (35.9%), which used no visual images for its publications (the other gained the *top 2 scores of people finding them ‘creative’ and ‘highly creative’*)

**Crediting Sources:** In the modern Turkish media there is ongoing discussion about “click bait journalism” between the mainstream media and the alternative media spheres. The main topics of discussion among journalists are “who publishes a piece of news first?”, “who services it to the rest of the media?”, “how do other platforms use this piece of news and credit it”. When journalists were asked how sensitive citizen journalists are in crediting their sources, 140 Journos was again found to be the most sensitive platform in this regard (71.9%) followed by dokuz8NEWS (70.6%) and Ötekilerin Postası (50.9%).

**Interaction with Audience:** Interaction with followers was the topic of the last question put to professional journalists about citizen journalism platforms; the findings showed that journalists have no clear idea how these platforms interact with their followers. Among journalists who think that the most interactive platform from this standpoint was Ötekilerin Postası (49.1%), followed by dokuz8NEWS (44.1%) and 140 Journos (39.1%).

### Positioning of Citizen Journalism in Relation to Professional Journalism

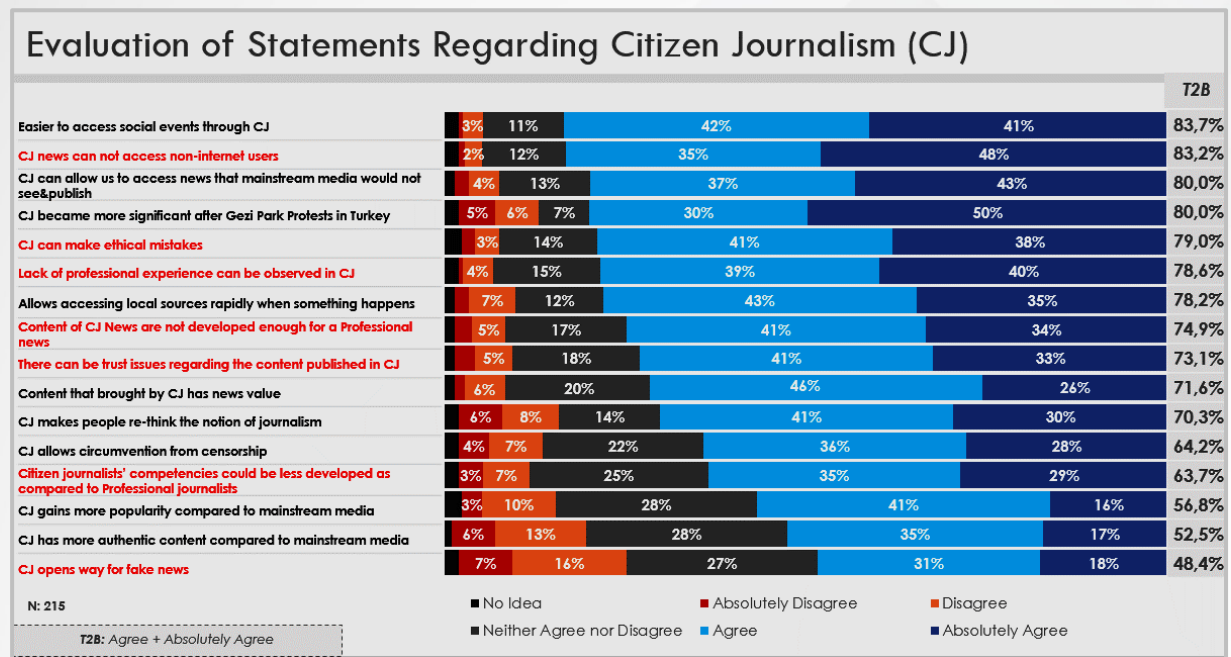
When the task force of this research project starts to design the questionnaire, various aspects of the perception by journalists of citizen journalism in the world and in Turkey were discussed and the opportunities and challenges of citizen journalism in different countries were identified in the literature review. From the many statements on the topic, the most significant 13 which would correspond to developments in Turkey

were re-phrased as the most relevant statements in our research to ask questions about. These statements were presented to journalists together with a 5-item scale (from 'absolutely disagree' to 'absolutely agree') and each respondent was expected to indicate his/her level of agreement with all the statements.

When we looked at the results of their evaluation of statements (aligning the *top2 scores with people who said 'agree' and 'absolutely agree'*), we concluded that **professional journalists in Turkey put emphasis on all the aspects of citizen journalism, with its potential, but also considered the risks to professional journalistic codes**. Since citizen journalism in Turkey is still developing and has vague borders between certain practices, we saw that journalists evaluated the progress of citizen journalism with caution and understood that risks and opportunities could coexist as the field developed.

- A big majority of the journalists thought that citizen journalism **"allows much easier access to the news of social events"** (83.7%), but they also thought that it was *"less accessible for non-Internet users"* (83.2%). The access to news was considered easier through citizen journalism but it was also thought to be heavily dependent on digital technology.
- 4 out of 5 journalists thought that citizen journalism **"allows access to news items that are not published on the mainstream media"** (80%), and they considered that *"it has become a significant notion in Turkey after the well-known Gezi Park protests"* (80%). The Gezi protests were a significant watershed for the mainstream media and people formed a tendency to create their own media instruments afterwards when they could not see any of those protests in the mainstream media.
- Most of the professional journalists pointed out that there could be **"ethical mistakes in the curation of news in citizen journalism"** (79%) and also thought that *"the lack of experience can be observed in the news curation processes of this type of journalism"* (78.6%). Some of the journalists also added that *"the competencies of citizen journalists could be less developed than those of professional journalists"* (63.7%). These evaluations show us that the journalists signified the importance of border limits in professional journalism and citizen journalism by underlining the role of professional experience and ethical codes.
- They also thought that **"citizen journalism allowed rapid access to local sources"** (78.2%), but they also stated that the *"content of those items of news is not developed enough"* (74.9%) and reiterated their *"lack of trust in the shared content"* of this type of journalism (73.1%).
- More than 7 out of every 10 who participated in the survey thought that **"whatever citizen journalists curated has news value"** (71.6%), and they also gave credit to the statement that *"citizen journalism practices allow us to re-think the notion of journalism"* (70.3%).
- The ratio of journalists who thought that **"citizen journalism was a way to circumvent censorship"** was 64.2%.
- More than half of the journalists stated that **"citizen journalism is gaining more popularity than the mainstream media"** (56.8%); and also thought that *"it has more authentic content than the mainstream media have"* (52.5%).
- The least supported statement by journalists was the claim that *"citizen journalism opens the door to fake news"* (48.4%).

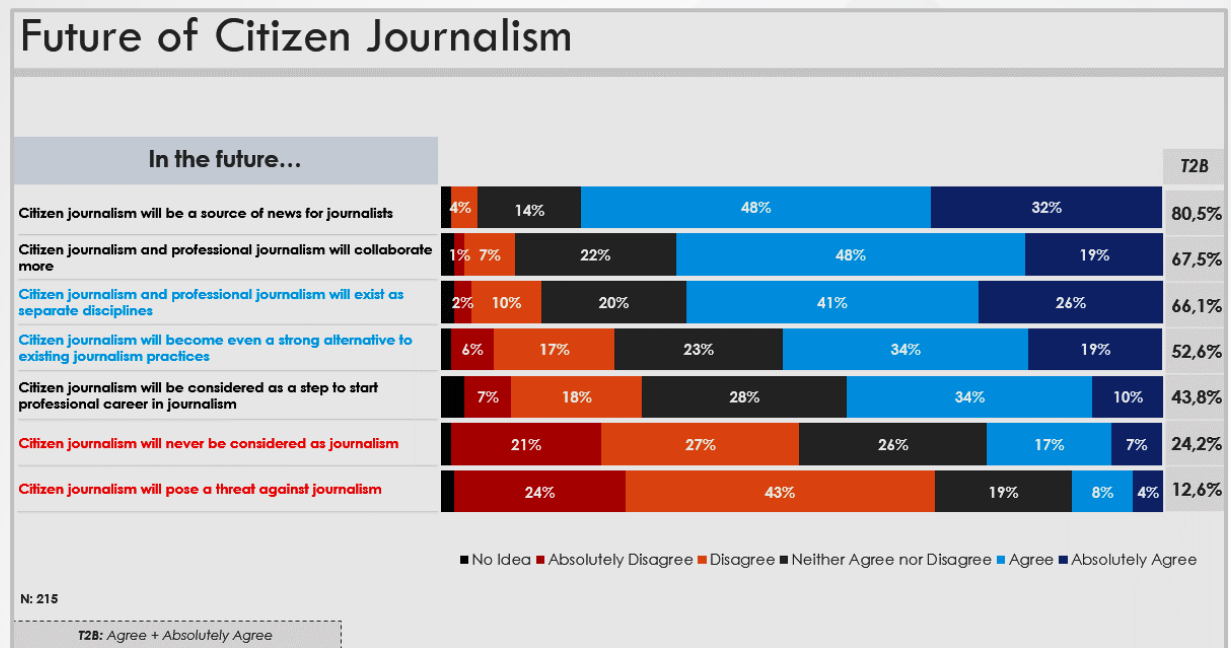




## Future of Citizen Journalism

There are many discussions around the future of citizen journalism as an inspiration to journalism as a whole; its relationship with mainstream journalism, its potential for providing alternative ways of thinking in journalism and its contribution to democratization and freedom of expression through news curation, etc. With the same methodology as in the previous part of this survey, we identified seven statements for evaluating the future of citizen journalism with respect to its relationship with professional journalism. Journalists were again asked to evaluate the statements on a 5-item scale (from 'absolutely disagree' to 'absolutely agree'). When the results were analysed (assigning the *top2 scores* to people who said 'agree' and 'absolutely agree'), the following outcomes were reached:

- 4 out of 5 journalists thought that **"citizen journalism will become a source of news for journalists"** (80.5%); which is an extension of the understanding that the mainstream media benefit from citizens' gathering and sharing information with them. Almost two thirds of the journalists thought that **"citizen journalism and professional journalism will collaborate more"** (67.5%) and there would be more interactions between the two groups. Some of the journalists also stated that *"citizen journalism will be considered as a step towards a professional career in journalism"* (43,8%).
- To a lesser extent, but still a majority, journalists thought the opposite. They believed that **"citizen journalism and professional journalism will exist as separate disciplines"** (66.1%) and also surmised that *"citizen journalism will be a strong alternative to existing journalism practices in Turkey"* (52.6%).
- The least defended contention by journalists was the statements that **"citizen journalism will never be considered as journalism"** (24.2%) and *"it will pose a threat to journalism"* (12,6%).



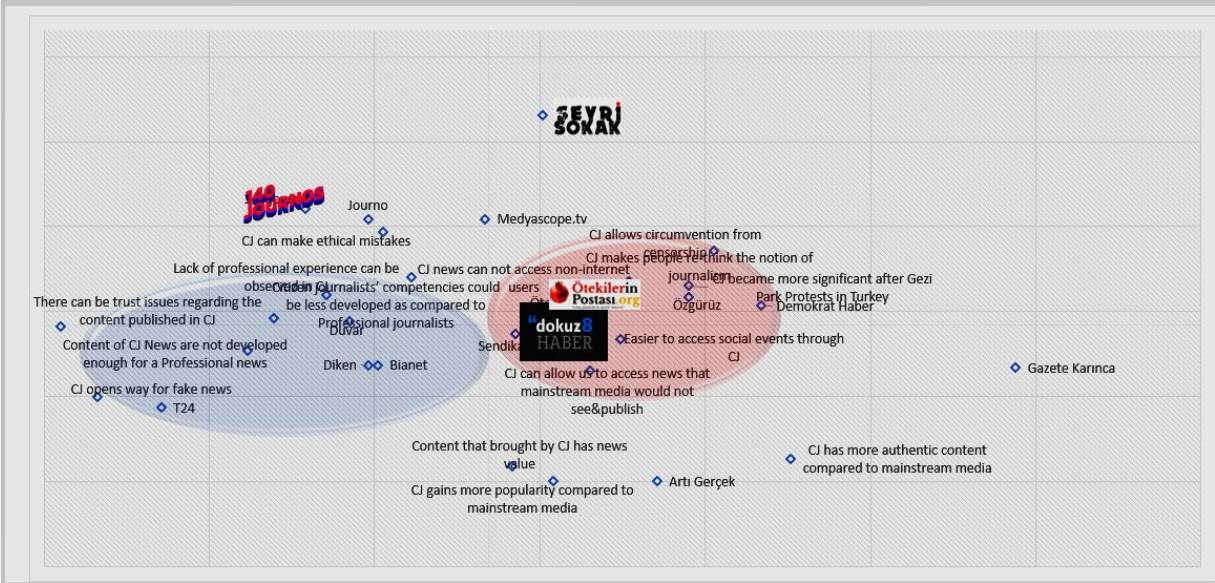
The evaluation of statements by journalists reveals three different approaches with differences of scope regarding the future of citizen journalism:

- Cooperation:** The first of these approaches is to view citizen journalism as an extension of professional journalism within the remit of current practices. Most journalists still do not yet consider citizen journalism a combination of fully developed practices with its own principles and news standards and therefore they tend to define it using the current perspectives of conventional journalism. They think that citizen journalism will serve as a news source for professional journalists (a data provider) since they still consider citizen journalism to be far from able to define its own positioning and relationship with journalism. Surveying the support for cooperation between citizens and professional journalists, this tendency seems to be higher among journalists who have a PhD, who are more likely to be in executive positions than their colleagues.
- Independence:** The second tendency defended by journalists to a limited extent, suggests that “**citizen journalism will develop its own practices and continue as a separate and independent entity**” presenting little opportunity for cooperation. Journalists who think that professional journalism and citizen journalism practices will continue to preserve their own separate news-making practices, also think that citizen journalism will continue to present a strong and viable alternative to the existing media structure in Turkey. Among the journalists who think that citizen journalism will continue as an independent entity, the weight of journalists working for regional media (with high school graduates), younger journalists (below the age of 25) and female journalists is higher than that of other professionals.
- Threat:** This is the least supported opinion about citizen journalism among professional journalists in Turkey. It argues that “citizen journalism is not to be considered journalism and will pose a threat to professional journalism” by defining its own borders. Although its support level is low, the groups of journalists who work for news agencies and those who have been working in the sector for over 20 years have relatively higher ratios of people who make these statements than other groups have.

### Positioning of Alternative Media and Citizen Journalism in Turkey (Correspondence Analysis)

Correspondence Analysis is an advanced method of statistical analysis that allows categorical data to be cross-examined by comparing various segments in terms of differentiation and clustering, through practical graphical representation. It allows correlation between different categories of similarities and differences of various data sets to be expressed, in order to see which categories and sub-categories resemble one another. Within the framework of this research, correspondence analysis was done to determine the positioning of alternative/oppositional media outlets and citizen journalism networks (variable 1) in relation to a total of 13 statements (variable 2) regarding the relationship of citizen journalism with professional journalism.

## Statements on Citizen Journalism – Correspondence Analysis



- Duvar, Diken and Bianet which are considered to be the best-known and most regularly followed platforms among the alternative/oppositional media, make up a cluster that is close to the centre of the map. The closeness of their positioning to each other shows that journalists have a relatively higher rate of evaluating these platforms in similar profiles concerning the statements. [This statement is perfectly grammatical, but not at all clear. Can you make it easier to understand?] These platforms are mainly positioned close to the statements which are associated with negative aspects of citizen journalism such as “lack of competencies among citizen journalists compared to professional journalists”, “lack of professional experience”, “content that is not developed enough”. This can be interpreted to mean that journalists make more of a distinction between these platforms than between citizen journalism platforms by looking at the specifications of the content they produce and being more distant from citizen journalism.
- Ötekilerin Postası and dokuz8NEWS are positioned close to each other (alongside sendika.org) towards the centre of the map, implying that their perception on the part of the journalists again shows (relative) similarity in terms of evaluation of the statements. Journalists who follow these two platforms find a relatively high ratio of similarity in the state of these platforms corresponding to such statements as “Easier to access news about social events; became more significant after the Gezi Park protests in Turkey; makes people re-think the notion of journalism”.
- Journos also appears as a cluster (probably because of the similarity in names) and is closely positioned to the statement “citizen journalists can make ethical mistakes”.

### Future of Citizen Journalism in Turkey (Correspondence Analysis)

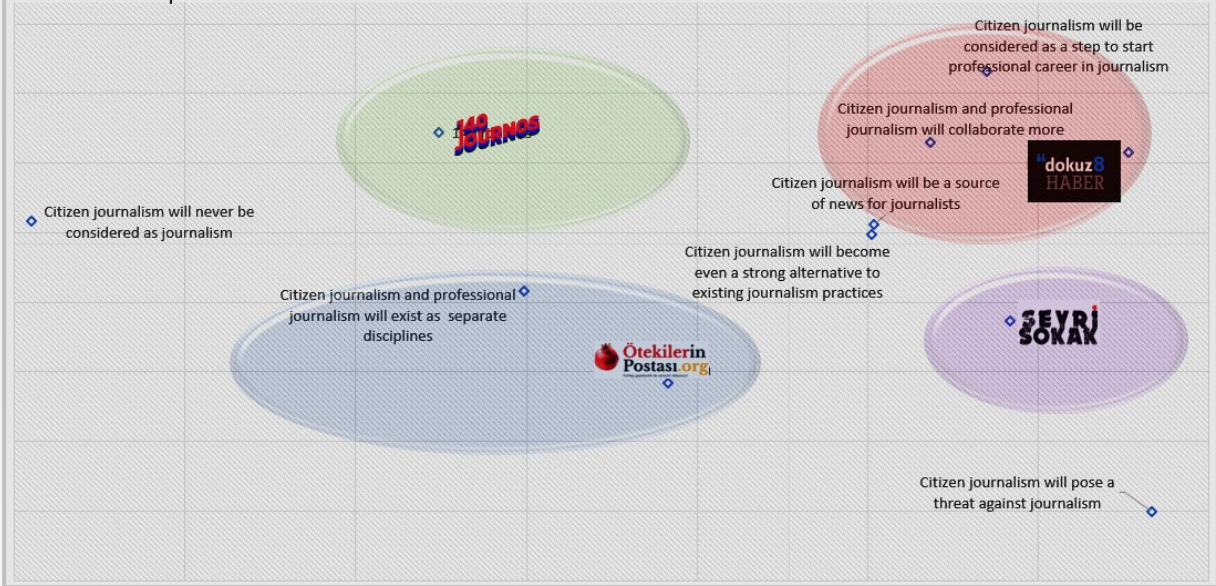
Some of the statements concerning the future of citizen journalism that we have analysed in previous chapters assume that citizen journalism could have one of three future tendencies in relation to professional journalism: it could cooperate as an extension of it; or continue independently as a significant alternative to it; or pose a threat to it.

This time, the same correspondence analysis was repeated with a total of seven statements showing the future tendencies of citizen journalism in relation to 4 citizen journalism networks.



## Future of Citizen Journalism– Correspondence Analysis

On the basis of platforms



- **dokuz8NEWS** is positioned closer to the statements suggesting “journalism and citizen journalism will collaborate” in the responses of professional journalists. Journalists who state that “citizen journalism is going to be used as a source for professional journalists in the future”, and even “become a step for people on their way to becoming professionals”, associate those statements more highly with dokuz8NEWS than with other platforms.
- Professional journalists who declare “citizen and professional journalism will exist as separate disciplines” have a relatively higher tendency to associate this statement with **Ötekilerin Postası**. Ötekilerin Postası is the only citizen journalism platform in Turkey that has no editorial filtering of the news that comes from its citizen followers.
- 140 Journos stands alone in the map and is not closely associated with any of the statements by professional journalists. 140 Journos started to publish content from citizens during the Gezi Park protests in 2013 but has changed its news format in mid-2017 to focus more on special news formats such as video-documentaries and turned its back on citizen journalism.
- Statements that consider citizen journalism to be a threat to professional journalism are placed towards the outside edges of the mapping, meaning that they do not associate closely with any of the existing platforms.



## Concluding Remarks

This study has been designed to present new openings for discussions about citizen journalism and civil society organizations, citizen journalists, journalists and academics, which provide varied content in the fields of the new media and alternative media platforms. As with every study, this one defines the attributes of the project while discussing the restrictions and opportunities of the field from all angles. Following interviews with 306 journalists, the findings together present us with different ways of thinking about citizen journalism. They lead us to believe that the following topics are the important ones to consider:

- The condition that the Turkish media are in now makes it very hard to conduct a research project focusing on journalists. In our study of “citizen journalism” the fieldwork has been rather easier, but the concerns that journalists in general cite in interviews must be mentioned here. We may infer that these concerns have an impact in the end on the findings of the research. As a result, our first suggestion would be for researchers “to have a prepared set of questions for research studies focusing on journalists, to determine interview techniques, [and] to prepare interview conditions, based on the conditions of the period.”
- Another suggestion that concerns researchers but is not limited to them is the lack of a database of information on journalists currently active in Turkey. We believe that journalists’ associations and chambers should prepare an updated database of this kind and share it with researchers. This would increase the representativeness of studies conducted by researchers that produce data in this field and increase the quality of the data.
- We have mentioned that there are various approaches in the literature to the definition of citizen journalism. The main approach by professional journalists targeting citizen journalism in Turkey is to define it as a “cooperative activity consisting of citizen journalists and professional journalists”. The opportunities in this field seem to be based on the mainstream media’s positioning of citizen journalism as the “enabler of raw data curation”. Moreover, we know that present-day journalism is facing a serious challenge within the conceptual framework furnished by not-yet-professional news-curators. For this reason, professional journalists in Turkey may be able to look more positively at the prospect of cooperating with citizen journalists and see it as a window of opportunity; and the subject of the opportunities presented by citizen journalists to professional journalists may be studied further. Workshops adopting various definitions and discussions of citizen journalism can present examples to dispel the concerns over citizen journalism. These can eventually aim to open new doors to the chance of creating a collaborative work atmosphere. In these joint efforts, opportunities can be encouraged for both professional journalists and citizen journalists’ to work together and develop. The coordination of such efforts by professional bodies may be helpful for increasing journalists’ participation and strengthening their cooperation.
- The working space of joint projects can be designed to overcome the present-day structural disadvantages of the Turkish media, based on investigative journalism and data-driven journalism formats. The design of joint working models can incorporate mechanisms to monitor the news-curation processes and common platforms to share the curated joint news with audience can be created. Thus, the significance of the media’s pluralistic and participatory structure would be reinforced through news examples and these would be encouraged to multiply.
- The research findings show that in the first circle of this cooperation, journalists from the “alternative/oppositional media” would want to play a part. In these platforms, in particular, women and young journalists have a more positive attitude to citizen journalism and this would allow cooperation to develop. In the second circle “regional journalists” would feature, strengthened through cooperation with citizen journalists from the provinces. With such a movement, the development of the term “participatory citizen journalism” could be supported and a model for the “regional media and citizens” could be the basis of an original type of cooperation for curating news.

One of the primary reasons underlying these suggestions is the need for studies focusing on the formation of a “professional identity” for citizen journalists. It is clear that professional journalists’ contributions to developing the perception of their kind of news-curation in society would be immense. In an atmosphere where the voices of the media are constantly being silenced, studies that aim to strengthen the perception of citizen journalists would improve the image of their function in the eyes of professional journalists and other citizens, conferring dignity on the field. Such studies would become reference points for those seeking to report the truth and the facts, which would contribute immensely to re-establishing the democratic process in Turkey.





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