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## ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATION RESEARCH in RADIO and FILM STUDIES: REVIEWING the AUDIENCE CONCEPT

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### Abstract

In the early 20th century, the emerging field of communication research embarked on a transformative journey, focusing on the public sphere, democracy, and the rise of public opinion. Scholarly inquiries predominantly centred on the profound impact of mass media on audiences, with a particular emphasis on key milestones in radio and film studies that laid the groundwork for understanding audiences. While radio studies paved the way for comprehensive audience research within the realm of television studies, audience studies within the cinematic context advanced, gradually asserting their autonomy and forming a distinct identity. Despite significant support from foundations for both mediums, film studies eventually diverged from the broader umbrella of mass communication studies, establishing itself as an independent academic field. Conversely, radio studies remained within the framework of mass communication research, akin to another facet of television studies. This article explores the nuanced dynamics of this transformative journey, exploring the evolving landscape of studies supported by foundations. Adopting a literature review as a research method, it contextualizes and analyses the evolution of audience studies, film studies, and radio studies within the broader landscape of communication research. The study probes into shifts in the orientations of audience studies and considers potential transformations in the conceptualization of audiences, particularly in the digital age. Building upon overarching themes and potential conceptualizations, the narrative offers a comprehensive exploration of audience studies, film studies, and radio studies within the dynamic realm of administrative communication. Moving beyond historical contexts, the examination enhances understanding of how these fields have adapted and shaped their identities over time, contributing to the broader discourse on communication research.

**Keywords:** audience studies, film studies, radio studies, administrative communication, audience

### Öz

İletişim araştırmalarının doğuşunda izleyici kavramsallaştırması en önemli unsurlardan birisidir. Kamuoyunun nasıl yönlendirileceği ve kitle iletişim araçlarının ne tür etkiler yarattığı sorusu ilk dönem araştırmaların çıkış noktasını oluşturur. Bu döneme damga vuran radyonun ve sinemanın kitlelerin fikir, davranış ve tutumlarında önemli etkilere yol açtığı varsayımı ile sıklıkla analiz edildiği, hatta alana damga vuran iki mecra olarak konumlandığı ifade edilebilir. Bu tarihsel süreç ve çerçeve radyo ve film araştırmalarının iletişim çalışmalarının kurucu mecraları olarak konumlandığını göstermektedir. Bu iki kanalın potansiyeli kitleleri etkileme ve belirli davranış kalıplarına yönlendirmesinden temellenmiş ve yürütülen çalışmalar önemli vakıflar tarafından desteklenmiştir. Ancak, zaman içinde radyo çalışmalarına verilen desteklerin niceliksel ve niteliksel olarak hız kazandığı görülürken, film çalışmalarına vakıflarca verilen desteklerde önemli bir düşüş yaşanmıştır. Bu süreç kitle iletişim çalışmalarında radyo mecrasının televizyonun bir diğer versiyonu olarak konumlanmasıyla ve film araştırmalarının ise kitle iletişim araştırmalarından sıyrılarak, kendine özerk bir alan edinmesi ile sonuçlanmıştır. Film araştırmalarının zamanla kitle iletişim çalışmalarından ayrılarak bağımsız bir akademik alan oluşturmasının nedenleri arasında radyonun ve sinemanın ontolojik farklılıkları bulunmaktadır. Radyo ve sinemanın ontolojik farklılıkları vakıfların verdiği desteklerin çehresinin neden

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değiştirdiğini anlamakta ve kitleleri yönlendirmede ve izleyici araştırmalarına verdikleri desteklerin nasıl yön değiştirdiğini analiz etmekte bir izlek oluşturur. Zira radyo çalışmaları hala kitle iletişim araştırmaları çerçevesinde değerlendirilen bir alan olarak varlığını sürdürürken, film çalışmaları için benzer bir durumdan söz etmek mümkün gözükmemektedir. İlk dönem radyo ve film araştırmaları her ne kadar kitle iletişim çalışmaları kapsamında yürütülmüş olsa da zamanla alanda yaşanan bu değişim ve dönüşümler ile adeta bir paradigma değişimi gerçekleşmiştir. Bu dönüşümlerin izlerini literatür analizi ile ele alan bu metin vakıflar tarafından desteklenen yönetsel çalışmaların değişen yüzlerini mercek altına almakta ve alanda yürütülen çalışmaların zaman içindeki yönelimlerinin dijitalleşme süreci ile beraber nasıl bir gelişim geçirdiğini tartışmaktadır. Bu bağlam izleyici kavramsallaştırmasından temellenmekte ve izleyici kavramsallaştırmasındaki olası dönüşümleri ortaya koymaktadır. Böylece bu çalışma ilk dönem çalışmaların açtığı izleği takip ederek izleyici kavramsallaştırması çerçevesinde iletişim araştırmalarına dair geniş bir perspektif sunmayı hedeflemektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** izleyici araştırmaları, film çalışmaları, radyo çalışmaları, yönetsel müdahaleler, izleyici kavramsallaştırması

## Introduction

Communication studies emerged in the 20th century with the motivation to comprehend the influence of media on the masses. From the early 1900s onward, the way communication is understood enticed scholars from various disciplines. Over the following decades, these scholars dedicated themselves to empirical studies, seeking to not only explore the intricacies of the communication process but also to construct viable theories around it (Terason, 2005, p.131). Popularity of radio and film during the 1920s and 1930s not only increased public awareness but also captured scholarly interest in the rise of mass media and the associated concerns regarding its impact on public opinion. The extensive use of propaganda as a strategic tool by various parties in World War I, along with the active involvement of social scientists in its development, acted as a catalyst for the progress of both mass communication and international communication studies. This era placed significant emphasis on investigating micro-level effects, particularly delving into the nuances of the persuasion process. The strategic considerations in the lead-up to and during World War II further highlighted and strengthened this focus (Hanson, 2017). During this era, it is clear that considerable support was provided for radio and film research, establishing lasting methodological and theoretical foundations in the field of communication studies. Meanwhile, the field saw significant milestones in radio and film studies related to audience exploration.

While research in radio remains integral to the field of mass communication studies, the trajectory of film research diverged progressively from this domain. Film studies, over time, evolved into an autonomous discipline characterized by a distinct methodology and theoretical framework, setting it apart from the broader context of mass communication studies. Despite this divergence, both fields received support from foundations during the 20th century. Particularly, financial support for radio studies experienced a notable upswing, whereas film research encountered impediments and interruptions. In 1935, the Rockefeller Foundation endorsed research on film audiences as part of the Communication Program (Ramirez, 2009). Following this historical trajectory, the Radio Project commenced in 1937 with Rockefeller Foundation support. However, as support for film research shifted direction, there was a notable surge in funding for Radio Project (1937). Examining the factors influencing this shift, it becomes evident that representatives from Rockefeller were dissatisfied with the outcomes of film and propaganda research. Radio research, in turn, presented a conducive laboratory setting for the study of propaganda. In this historical context, this framework has led to a parallel understanding of radio studies with television studies, categorizing them under mass communication studies. In essence, there is an interconnected perception between these two fields. Conversely, the context of film research is rooted in the question of whether a film qualifies as a work of art.

Understanding, analysing, and categorizing audience diversity require different methodological approaches. Selberg (1998, pp. 106-107) argues that the connections and distinctions between various media practices manifest in three distinct realms: “space, time, and social relations.” When we consider radio and cinema, spatial and temporal distinctions are evident. This provides insight into why radio and film audiences need to be conceptualized differently. Not only through spatial and temporal differences but also through the non-homogeneous structure of the audience, some difficulties arise in the effort to define audience. In other words, challenges not only arise from spatial and temporal differences but also from the non-homogeneous structure of the audience, making the definition effort more complex. In this vein, for example, it is impossible to define audiences born in the twentieth century with the variables of the previous century. These audiences exhibit significantly distinct characteristics from each other (Livingstone, 2003, p. 3).

This study explores the traces of this transformation and divergence within communication studies, focusing on the changing facets of the supports for radio and film studies. In this realm, it undertakes literature review as a method to explore the audience concept within the realm of early administrative communication research in radio and film studies. It will delve into the historical development of radio and film research in the early years of communication studies and explore the functional roles attributed to these mediums in conceptualizing the audience. It aims to elucidate the distinctions between radio and film research and discuss how administrative research shaped significant paradigms within communication studies. Within this framework, the study will examine why film studies in early years of communication studies diverged from mass communication research and how it evolved into a different field, providing insights into the background and conceptualization of the audience. In this context, the discussion delves into the changing patterns in audience research and explores possible shifts in how audiences are perceived, arising from the impact of digitalization.

### **1. Exploring Audience Dynamics in 20th-century Communication Studies: A Conceptual Framework**

In the early 20th century, the intellectual debates and political atmosphere of the time played a crucial role in social sciences (Haskell, 1977, pp. 1-4). Within communication studies, the majority of research was solidly grounded in the social sciences, while sporadically incorporating contributions from the humanities (Dahlgren, 2018, p. 185). In this context, the inquiry into mass communication and the dynamics of mass behaviour within the social sciences indirectly gave rise to the emergence of communication studies. The emergence of communication studies in this realm is closely tied to the social changes experienced in the 20th century. These changes gave rise to a new conceptualization, namely, the “audience”. With the advent of mass communication tools, a discourse on a novel social structure became discernible. The transformations in societies created a laboratory setting for researching mass communication, prompting inquiries into how the masses were influenced by media tools.

The Industrial Revolution engendered unforeseen transformations in societal structures in the 20th century. Among the most consequential of these changes was the emergence of mass media. Mass communication emerged as the central framework for comprehending the media and its effects during an era captivated by the increasing sway of advertisers and propagandists. This prevailing trend, particularly noticeable in the first half of the 20th century, saw a convergence of societal factors that harmonized effectively with the distinctive features of newly industrialized communication methods such as print, radio, and film. These characteristics encompassed the ability to reach an entire population in a

quasi-simultaneous manner, as if they were collectively gathered yet dispersed. (McQuail, 2013, p. 217).

Communication studies first emerged under the social sciences paradigm, rooted in the 20th century's behaviourist tradition, as researchers attempted to understand how the masses, informed by media, began to perceive their surroundings. During the early 20th century, communication studies were conducted within behavioural paradigm. Within this paradigm, human behaviours were understood as the outcomes of external stimuli. In this context, the potential effects generated by variables such as mass communication tools formed the foundational basis for communication research and the conceptualization of audiences. Therefore, the dynamics of changing and evolving media and new social structures provide a roadmap in conceptualizing the audience. McQuail (1997) explores the diverse social structure of the audience and explains it by emphasizing the audience's ability to reshape the social context. The non-homogeneous structure of the audience also indicates a dynamism. In the historical context, significant changes occurred in the social structure of the audience in 20th century. While privileged classes like aristocrats had access to works expressed as "high art", the advent of mass media allowed numerous contents to reach everyone simultaneously.

Notably, during this era, administrative interventions in communication research became evident, propelled by an underlying motivation to guide individuals. Research endeavours from the inception until the late 1930s, investigating the functioning and effects of the mass media, constitute a series of studies grounded in the assumption of potent effects emanating from mass communication tools (Hall, 1994, p. 59). The early studies in the field of communication, asserting the direct nature of effects and the reception of messages as encoded, can be categorized as insufficient in identifying consent mechanisms generated by the messages disseminated by communication tools, neglecting to question social inequalities and potential impasses in social structures (Volčič, 2001, pp. 51-52).

In the initial decades of the 20th century, the advent of radio marked the emergence of the first significant nonprint mass media platform, experiencing a surge in popularity. By the 1920s, radios, being more affordable than telephones, became widely accessible, boasting the unprecedented capability of enabling vast audiences to simultaneously tune in to the same event. In 1924, Calvin Coolidge's pre-election speech, for instance, reached an audience exceeding 20 million people. The ubiquity of radio proved advantageous for advertisers, granting them access to a sizable and captive audience (Luke, 2017, p. 12). On the other hand, the feature film stands as the significant contribution of the twentieth century to leisure-time activities, serving as a form of entertainment that has garnered popularity (Cull, et al., 2003, p. 129).

Both the studies on film and radio were carried out with the motivation to understand the impact on the masses through issues such as propaganda and education. The Radio Project of 1937, officially known as the Princeton Radio Research Project, was a significant initiative in the early days of communication research. It was conducted by a team of social scientists led by Paul Lazarsfeld and Hadley Cantril at Princeton University. The project aimed to investigate the effects of radio broadcasting on public opinion and social behaviour. On the other hand, researchers also explored the various effects of cinema on people during this time. Carl Hovland (1949), along with his research team, conducted a series of experiments to understand the impact of films on soldiers' attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours. The research was driven by the recognition of the influential role that films could play in military training and education. The findings of the study had important implications for the use of visual media, such as films, in educational and persuasive contexts.

Significant funds were provided for radio and film research in the development of the field of communication. However, relatively less support provided to film research in time. In order to comprehensively grasp the motivations of the foundations, it seems meaningful to explore administrative communication studies. Following this analysis, next step involves nuanced examination of audience conceptualization in the field.

## **2. Literature Review as a Research Method**

This study adopts a literature review approach to explore the relatively unexplored concept of the audience in early administrative film and radio studies. Examining previous, pertinent literature is imperative across all academic disciplines and research endeavours. Kennedy (2007) delineates three fundamental components within academic research literature. Firstly, researchers conduct and publish primary studies. Secondly, there are reviews of these studies, whether systematic or conceptual, which provide condensed summaries and novel interpretations extending beyond the original literature. Finally, informal conversations among scholars contribute to the informal lore of the field, shaping perceptions, conclusions, and interpretations. In resonance with Kennedy's second step, this study embarks on a comprehensive review of existing literature pertaining to audience concepts in early radio and film studies. By delving into primary studies and subsequent reviews, encompassing both systematic and conceptual analyses, the research follows historical perspectives alongside contemporary insights. Moreover, it expands beyond the confines of the original literature, exploring the transformative influence of digital technology on audience dynamics. Through this process, the study endeavours to provide interpretations and perspectives on how digital advancements have shaped audience concept and behaviours within the realms of radio and film studies.

## **3. Administrative Interventions in Communication Studies**

Administrative research in American mass communication studies rose to prominence in the 1930s-1950s with the support of the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations (Pooley, 2011, p. 211). The Rockefeller Foundation significantly influenced the field, with a broader perspective and organizational structure. In this vein, Rockefeller's pivotal research initiatives at the University of Chicago, Columbia, and Yale, establishing a domain for studies in mass media and its effects, are noteworthy. The studies carried out in these research centres were based on understanding the notion of audience. Since these studies were supported by various funds, framework was blended with non-critical inquiries. The attempt was to comprehend the circumstances of the era by elucidating the evolving social structure and audience conceptualization through the use of media tools. Halloran (1981, p.34) argues that earlier media research adhered to the prevailing dominant paradigm, aligning itself with the needs of modern, industrial, urban society. These studies were designed to provide empirical, quantitative, and policy-related information about the operations of this societal context. In an effort to lend scientific rigor to mass communications research, administrative researchers steered the study towards positivism and empiricism.

During the mid-20th century, while television audience research dominated mass media studies (Lazarsfeld and Katz, 1955; Katz and D. Foulkes, 1962), film and radio research received comparatively less attention but remained significant within the field of communication studies. Despite being analysed to a lesser extent, radio and film were among the first to be studied in tandem with the historical progression of administrative communication studies. In other words, while they may not be as prominently studied in literature, the foundational roots of communication research include significant exploration and understanding of film and radio. Therefore, it seems meaningful to first explore the administrative interventions in audience studies conducted within the framework of radio broadcasts and then address the support for film studies.

### 3.1. Administrative Interventions in Radio Studies

The Rockefeller Foundation played a crucial role in supporting radio studies during mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The Princeton Radio Research Project (1937), led by Paul Lazarsfeld, was a pioneering research initiative. It aimed to study the impact of radio on society, focusing on the effects of mass communication, particularly in the political context. The project marked a significant contribution to the emerging field of media studies and communication research. At the helm of the project, Lazarsfeld played a crucial role in empirical administrative research. This study was grounded in the problematic of interpreting the sociological and psychological positions of radio listeners as variables within the framework of radio listening behaviour (Livingstone, 2016, p. 238). Essentially, the initiation of the Radio Project began in 1937 when Lazarsfeld was appointed as its director, and this research continued for approximately a decade (Katz, 1987, p. 25).

Orson Welles's "The War of The Worlds" broadcast in 1938 stands as a seminal example of the powerful influence and societal impact that radio dramas can have, prompting widespread panic and sparking discussions about the relationship between media portrayal and public perception. It is important to understand why the Rockefeller Foundation placed emphasis on this, as their support for radio research was integral to comprehending the implications of such influential broadcasts on public behaviour and perception. Adapted from H.G. Wells's novel, the broadcast was presented as a series of news bulletins, describing a Martian invasion in a realistic and convincing manner. The broadcast created widespread panic and confusion, as some listeners believed the events described were real. This was partly due to the realistic format and Welles's skilful delivery. The ensuing panic and the public's reaction to the broadcast sparked discussions about the power of mass media and its potential effects on the audience.

The broadcast along with its portrayal as a phenomenal event that reinforces the assumption of radio having unforeseen and significant effects on the listening audience, can be interpreted as a pivotal occurrence. In the Radio Project, detailed interviews were conducted with listeners of the "War of the Worlds" broadcast (Tracy, 2012). Cantril's graduate thesis was evaluated by John Marshall, an employee at the Rockefeller Foundation, adding another important figure to the project. With the renewal of the Rockefeller Foundation's Radio Project fund for Columbia University, Lazarsfeld began conducting his studies under the auspices of Columbia University. Here, along with Merton, whom he met during this period, he engaged in research not only in marketing and social studies but also in mass communication and personal impact (Erdoğan, et al., 2005, p. 9).

The support from the Rockefeller Foundation appears crucial in conceptualizing the radio listeners, as the Foundation aimed to reveal potential strong effects between radio research, propaganda, and the ways listeners were influenced. Unexpectedly, the research results indicated resistance in the listening practices of radio audiences (Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1948). The motivation behind radio research becomes apparent when considering its deliberate focus on the issue of propaganda. In this context, the Rockefeller Foundation provided support for radio studies with a mission to suppress widespread unrest, particularly in Latin America. The Rockefeller Foundation extended its support as the effectiveness of propaganda campaigns came under scrutiny due to the political failures of Franklin Roosevelt's administration. In such a political climate, the Rockefeller Foundation supported research and projects at institutions like Princeton University, Stanford University, and the New School for Social Research. These researchers in these centres examined shortwave radio broadcasts from foreign countries.

In their 1943 study published in the “Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences,” Lazarsfeld and Merton presented the results of their radio research, revealing that government-distributed propaganda had failed to achieve the expected impact. The study provided recommendations on the functional aspects of propaganda texts, highlighting which points were effective and advising on which discourses and textual tactics to avoid. Using content analysis and in-depth interviews, Lazarsfeld and Merton indicated that radio texts with intense discourse and propaganda had limited effects on the audience (Jeřábek, 2001, p. 1198). They recommended that radio broadcasts use relatively simplified content to encourage listeners to reflect on the topics presented.

Another significant aspect in Radio Project research was the preferences of the audience. Lazarsfeld and Merton, in the updated version of their research, focused on the consumption of music in radio broadcasts. In this context, listeners were presented with a radio program featuring classical music, assuming that their interest in higher forms of art would increase. However, the research revealed that listeners tended to lean more towards the works of popular artists, indicating that the expected interest in classical music could not be generated in the music preferences of the radio audience, challenging the assumption (Merton and Lazarsfeld, 1948, p. 20).

The Radio Project stands as a crucial endeavour, its importance rooted in its groundbreaking contributions to mass communication research through pioneering empirical methodologies, a transformative shift towards qualitative methods via in-depth interviews, and its pivotal role in unravelling the intricate dynamics between public opinion and mass communication tools, providing valuable insights into the shaping of societal perspectives (Barton, 2001, p. 252).

### **3.2. Administrative Interventions in Film Studies**

Foundations also supported film studies and, in this context, cinema initially was regarded as a mass communication tool. However, ontological inquiries contributed to a deeper understanding of cinema as a unique and complex form of artistic expression, enriching discussions on its role in shaping perceptions, conveying meaning, and engaging with the human experience. Arnheim (1932/2010), Münsterberg (1916) and Bazin (1967, 1971) contributed to this evaluation. At a critical juncture, these inquiries prompted a re-evaluation of cinema’s relationship with the photographic image, exploring commonalities. Philosophical inquiries into the nature of cinema involved the examination of fundamental questions about the essence, meaning, and significance of the cinematic medium. These inquiries often revolved around the ontology of cinema, exploring its nature as an art form, its relationship with reality, and the ways in which it influences perception and culture. Administrative film studies, on the other hand, focused on the organizational, regulatory, and institutional aspects of the film industry. This interdisciplinary field combined elements of film studies, cultural studies, and management, examining how administrative structures and policies impact the production, distribution, and exhibition of films.

In administrative film studies, cinema was considered as a mass communication tool, in contrast to philosophical inquiries into cinema as a medium, and discussions on audience and propaganda were crucial. This prominence was underscored by a series of audience research studies conducted by the Motion Picture Research Council, supported by the Payne Foundation. These studies (Edwards, 1915, Phelan, 1919) designed to reveal the potential effects of cinema films on young audiences, exploring the relationship between crime rates and films and the educational role of films in guiding the behaviour of young individuals illuminate the intricate ways in which cinema engages with audiences. Conducted through content analysis and in-depth interviews, these studies seem to follow the stages applied by Lazarsfeld and Merton in their radio research (1943). While the research results were

insufficient in establishing a direct cause-and-effect relationship between watching films and engaging in criminal activities (McDonald, 2004, p. 186), a meaningful connection was identified among young people's film preferences, viewing the frequencies, and their ethical/moral values (Charters, 1933, p. 13).

Rockefeller Foundation's involvement in the educational role of films becomes evident in its support for research specifically focused on film audiences. Research on cinema audiences supported by the Rockefeller Foundation began in 1935 with the "Communication Program," aiming films to influence public taste and enhance education and entertainment. Within this program, two interconnected areas of action were identified: influencing public taste through films and using films for educational purposes to enhance material resources (Ramirez, 2009, p. 2). The Rockefeller Foundation also established the American Film Center, an endeavour that aimed to encourage documentary and educational film production but was not entirely successful. With a grant of \$120,000, the foundation laid the support for the country's first film library, marking the inception of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

The library at MoMA focused on collecting historically and critically significant films, preserving them for use by historians, film communities, and students. In the Rockefeller Foundation's involvement in Film Studies, John Marshall emerges as a significant figure who joined the foundation in 1933 as the Assistant Director for Humanities and later rose to the position of Assistant Director for the Division of Humanities in 1940, a role he held until 1962. Marshall, responsible for film studies and the library, emphasized the importance of examining cinema as a cultural force and made significant contributions to film studies, particularly advocating for the serious historical investigation of propaganda (Culbert, 1993, p. 496).

According to Wasson's account in 2008, John Marshall conveyed the following thoughts about MoMA:

If it succeeds, (MoMA) will organize a new audience for films much as the Carnegie Library organized a reading public which was previously non-existent. And, if such an audience exists for films that cannot now be shown theatrically, its existence should give substantial encouragement to the production of new films of educational and cultural value.

The Rockefeller Foundation sought to instigate structural transformations in both the form and function of film. This initiative aimed to depart from the traditional concept of entertaining the masses, redirecting the focus towards envisioning film as a central element for specialized audiences and civic intervention. The Rockefeller executives observed that the cost of filmmaking exceeded most of the foundation's projections. Additionally, beyond the cost considerations, there was uncertainty regarding the demand for educational films. Raymond Fosdick asserted, "The American Film Center could not overcome the challenges posed by public taste, box office dynamics, and the high cost of production" (Iacobelli, 2022).

Rockefeller's support provided crucial support for prominent figures in film research. This includes the initiative led by John Marshall to invite Siegfried Kracauer for conducting comparative studies on German propaganda films (Culbert, 1993). These studies, involving the structural analysis of Nazi newsreels and using quantitative research methods, were designed as part of "process studies" and were later critiqued methodologically by Kracauer himself (von Moltke, 2022, p. 8). The support allocated to the field of cinema transitioned away from concerns related to propaganda and research designs that might yield practical outcomes, primarily due to a misalignment between costs and anticipated results. Instead, there has been a growing inclination towards backing research initiatives that concentrate on film archives and the historical aspects of cinema. Simultaneously, the



character of administrative interventions has undergone transformation, with motivations centred on directing audiences and gauging potential effects.

Philosophical inquires within film studies has been dedicated to exploring and understanding the aesthetic aspects of the cinematic medium. This underscores the necessity to comprehend cinema audiences through different perspectives. In this sense, cinema, as an art form, distinguishes itself from other mass communication tools in communication studies. While the historical context has seen radio audiences transitioning into television audiences, such a shift cannot be generalized for film studies. The spatial and temporal distinctions inherent in cinema and its audience necessitate analysis through different conceptual frameworks. This context simultaneously establishes the cinema as a different academic sphere. Therefore, a closer examination of the evolving conceptualizations of radio listeners and film viewers has become meaningful.

#### **4. Exploring Distinct Perspectives in Communication Studies: Radio Audience Vs. Film Audience**

While Rockefeller's support for radio research takes place within the framework of universities, the foundation adopted a different approach for film studies. The Rockefeller Foundation's support for film studies was channelled through MoMA (Museum of Modern Art). The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) has established a significant film collection. MoMA was established to increase access to modern art, promote awareness of the visual arts of the modern era, and introduce audiences to the visual arts of the modern age (Bandy, 1994, p. 26). MoMA's film collection is extensive and diverse, encompassing a wide range of genres, styles, and periods. It includes classic and contemporary films, documentaries, avant-garde cinema, and international works, making it one of the most comprehensive film archives globally. A significant mission of the MoMA Film Archive is the preservation of cinematic heritage. The institution employs advanced preservation techniques to safeguard films, ensuring that they remain accessible to present and future generations. MoMA, as an institution, not only serves as a repository for film archives but also offers educational programs (Wasson, 2008). The MoMA is actively involved in educational programs, offering lectures, workshops, and seminars on various aspects of filmmaking and film history. These initiatives aim to enhance public understanding and appreciation of the art of cinema. Its goal is to create an intersection point between audiences inaccessible to avant-garde artists and the institution itself. Therefore, the support provided in the fields of radio and film studies sheds light on the dynamics shaping the conceptualization of audiences within communication studies.

The distinct nature of audiences in radio and film is intricately connected to the ontological characteristics inherent in each medium. In the realm of radio, the audience is primarily composed of listeners who engage with the content through auditory reception. Radio, as an auditory medium, relies on the transmission of sound waves, emphasizing spoken words, music, and sound effects to convey its messages. The ontological characteristics of radio involve the immediacy of sound and its ability to evoke mental imagery, fostering a more intimate and imaginative connection with the content. The radio listener, without the visual element, often relies on the power of narration and sound design to construct mental images and interpret the intended meaning.

The ontological characteristics of film encompass visual storytelling, where the combination of cinematography, editing, sound, and performance creates a narrative that unfolds in both spatial and temporal dimensions. Unlike radio, film provides a comprehensive sensory experience that includes visual cues, facial expressions, and the physical environment. Film audiences engage with content through the audio-visual medium, experiencing a synthesis of moving images and sound. Film audiences, in this

context, are immersed in a more visually explicit and dynamic form of storytelling, allowing for a richer and more layered reception of narrative elements. On the other hand, the total number of individuals listening to the radio cannot be precisely determined. However, in the context of cinema, it is possible to present a picture based on ticket sales figures in an audience evaluation. However, it is impossible to accurately determine how many people the radio reaches simultaneously within a household.

Films are typically spread over a specific duration, often divided into two parts, such as pre-film and intermission. The experiences of watching a film and listening to the radio are marked by distinct temporal dimensions, primarily due to the contrasting roles of advertisements. In the context of cinema, films typically follow a linear and continuous narrative structure, occasionally divided into pre-film and intermission segments. The temporal flow is driven by the storytelling arc and cinematic elements, and any interruptions, if present, are strategically placed within the film's structure. Unlike the seamless continuity of a film, radio broadcasts incorporate regular breaks for advertisements, which can disrupt the narrative flow. These interruptions create a unique temporal rhythm in radio programming, where the narrative or content is temporarily set aside to accommodate commercial messages. The audience's engagement with the radio experience is, therefore, characterized by a more fragmented and episodic temporal structure.

Radio functions as a mass communication tool used within households, and the audience can engage in multiple activities simultaneously. As a distinct perspective, Cantril and Allport (1935, p. 13) contend that radio listeners are individualistic. Within this framework, they draw comparisons between radio broadcasts and speeches delivered to the masses by leaders, asserting that radio functions as a unidirectional communication tool. While radio listeners can communicate with each other and exchange ideas, the ideal setting in a cinema is one of silence. The "invisible" listener of the radio underscores the medium's ability to create a personal and private connection, as individuals listen within the domestic sphere, often engaging in multitasking or immersive activities. Television, as the successor to radio, further refines this spatial usage. The visual nature of television introduces a new layer to the medium's spatial dynamics, as audiences become both listeners and spectators within their domestic environments.

The distinction between film viewers and radio listeners, as revealed by this contrast, illuminates its impact on communication studies. The traces of the divergence of film studies from the context of mass communication research are apparent in the discussions on the ontological inquiries into cinema as a medium. During this period, discussions emerged around whether cinema should be regarded as a representation of reality or as an art form. The prevailing approach suggests that cinema should be understood not merely as a mass communication tool but as a significant revolution, projecting reality through optics. The focus is not on cinema's power to politically influence the masses but on questioning the essence of cinema, that is, its ontology. Münsterberg (1916) delves into the cognitive processes of the audience to analyse how cinema should be understood as an art form. On the other hand, Kracauer, adopting a realist perspective contends that the camera makes the hidden facets of nature visible, expressing "Film, in other words, is uniquely equipped to record and reveal physical reality and, hence gravitates towards it" (1997, p. 28)

Whether film studies adopt formalist or realist theories, the question of how cinema's political inclinations are different than radio studies. When exploring the potential of cinema, the inquiry into how its political orientations is determined often lingers in the background, going beyond mere propaganda and empirical research designs. Unlike radio studies, the fact that early/classic period film studies were not conducted within the framework of

universities, choosing to sprout independently and shield itself from administrative interventions, reflects why cinema was not evaluated as a mass communication tool akin to radio and television. This circumstance is one of the reasons in establishing film studies as a different field.

### **5. Digital Transformations in Audience Concept**

The digitalization in communication has paved the way for significant conceptual shifts in the understanding of audiences. In the digital age, digital media and new technologies have profoundly altered the way people think. The nature of these changes is such that, in the era of digital communication, the possible “passive” audience of early mass communication tools has transformed into audiences who now make their own choices and, moreover, have become storytellers in their own right, relinquishing their passive roles to individuals in a creative position (Zhao, 2019). Wireless technology and digitalization have deeply transformed people’s consumption patterns, turning lifestyles and leisure into a more expansive perspective (Livingstone, 2016). In this sense, the impact of digitalization on the audience, particularly in their active role as information producers, marks a significant departure from the traditional characterization of the audience as “passive.”

In administratively-oriented research, the focus was on mass media’s effect on audiences. However, the advent of digitalization introduces noteworthy distinctions in the designs of administrative studies and the conceptualization of audiences. While traditional administrative studies concentrated on conventional mass communication channels, the digital era presents a shift in the landscape. Digitalization introduces a diverse array of platforms, from social media to online streaming services, altering the ways in which audiences engage with and consume content (Webster, and Ksiazek, 2012).

Consequently, contemporary administrative studies grappling with digitalization often need to adapt their methodologies and frameworks to account for the evolving nature of audience interaction and influence within the dynamic digital media environment. Instead of focusing on the extent of the impact, the question of what the content producers and audiences’ patterns of using media tools are becomes crucial. In this regard, there is a newfound dominance of the audience in the construction and even dissemination of meaning, unlike what was observed in previous eras. Taking a close look at the transformations brought about by digitalization in the contexts of radio and cinema provides a roadmap for understanding the shifts in the conceptualization of the audience.

Digitalization has significantly influenced the radio industry, making a substantial contribution to the development of radio broadcasting. In addition to traditional AM and FM radio waves, digital radio technologies have been developed. Particularly, High-Definition Radio (HD Radio) enables the digital transmission of radio broadcasts, introducing features like higher sound quality, increased channel options, and data services. Another significant transformation is in digital data services. Digital radio has expanded its range to transmit text, images, and data streams. In this sense, online radio broadcasts emerge as another crucial transformation. It allows radio stations to provide listeners with song information, traffic updates, weather conditions, and other details. With the widespread adoption of the internet, radio has gained immense popularity, providing access from anywhere globally with devices connected to the internet. This breaks the confines of local boundaries, reaching a broader audience. It offers the opportunity to communicate with a wide range of listeners independent of local restrictions, allowing the radio industry to integrate traditional broadcasting methods with digital technologies to reach new audience bases.

The Radio Project (1937), considered one of the most impactful radio research endeavours in communication studies, gains a deeper understanding of transformations in

audience conceptualization when interpreted through the lens of digitalization. The Radio Project began with the Rockefeller Foundation allocating funds to Princeton University, aiming to investigate the effects of radio on American society. The radio play caused widespread panic, influencing the methodological approach of the research. This impact led to in-depth interviews with individuals who had listened to the broadcast (Tracy, 2012). Today, with digital technologies, discussing such a passive audience seems less applicable. Instead, it is more plausible to talk about programs shaped by active listener participation and content creators.

Digital cinema, replacing traditional film reels and analogue film technology with digital cameras, projection systems, and post-production processes, offers a new format (Manovich, 2017). This involves recording and projecting films not on traditional film strips but as digital files. Examining the transformed cinema and audience through digitization reveals a more accessible cinema experience. Digital cinema audience have the freedom to choose and access films through different streaming services. Watching digitally rented or purchased films online offers a personalized film-viewing experience. While digital cinema signifies a shift in the film industry, it also sparks controversial discussions among traditional cinema supporters and artists. Particularly, debates on aesthetic values and originality emerge as essential issues in the evolving conceptualization of the audience in the digital age. In the early days of film research, studies focused on how audiences were affected by content rather than their preferences (Edwards, 1915, Phelan, 1919). Specifically, research designs shaped around how children were impacted by violent films in that era still resonate when evaluating films produced with digital technology today.

### **Conclusion**

Research on audiences has evolved under the influence of administrative interventions. Administrative research often adopts a positivist methodology, conceptualizing audiences based on specific variables. Critique of media studies gradually replaced dominant paradigm, especially in the 1970s. Before this transformation, support was initially provided for film and radio research, marking the emergence of the initial nuances in the conceptualization of audiences. In the twentieth century, transformations and developments raised pivotal questions about the linear connection between the ways audiences were influenced and their behaviours. Studies conducted on audiences faced specific challenges, evident in projects supported through various foundations. The challenges inherent in these domains arise from methodological approaches and also the assumption that the audience is homogeneous.

This research highlights the foundational support that early film and radio studies, emphasizing the central role of audience dynamics in shaping these media throughout the 20th century. While both mediums were pivotal in early communication studies, their paths diverged over time. Employing a literature review method, this study explored the trends and found that radio's enduring role as a mass communication tool underscored its importance in administrative communication studies, unlike film, which didn't show the same level of influence in determining mass behaviour. This divergence highlights the evolving priorities in media research funding and underscores the unique trajectories of radio and film as mediums of communication.

Although initial support was evident for film studies, it was limited. The support for film research aimed to achieve pragmatic results through the use of empirical positivist research methods. It waned, possibly due to its less pronounced impact on mass behaviours such as voting and purchasing, areas where radio continued to exert a significant influence, thereby attracting increased attention and funding. According to the findings of this study,

the limited support for film research, particularly in terms of conceptualizing and influencing audiences, is corroborated by statements found in the Rockefeller archive records. In this vein, this research emphasizes the perception of film as a less effective medium for understanding audiences. The establishment of MoMA by Rockefeller and the conceptualization of cinema as an art form in film studies parallel the ontological shift in how cinema was regarded as an art form (Arnheim, 1932/2010, Münsterberg, 1916). This ontological divergence was related to the formal characteristics of cinema.

On the other hand, radio research followed a different trajectory, witnessing a rapid increase in financial assistance starting from the 1930s, akin to film research. However, as funding for film research dwindled, there was a marked increase in support for the Radio Project in 1937. This shift was largely influenced by Rockefeller representatives' dissatisfaction with the results of film and propaganda studies. Conversely, radio offered a more suitable laboratory environment for examining propaganda techniques. Radio studies were mainly conducted within university frameworks, with the most notable being the "Radio Project" led by Lazarsfeld and supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. This extensive study, spanning over a considerable period, shed light on changing methodological approaches and later contributed to studies focusing on television. Supported by the Payne Fund, studies in the education domain questioned the potential of cinema. Similarly, in 1935, under the Rockefeller Fund's "Communication Program," financial support aimed to influence public preferences and promote educational use of films. However, these supports were eventually stopped due to inefficiency and costliness. This resulted in different conceptualizations of film audiences and radio listeners, leading to the separation of film studies from mass communication research. The support for radio studies from administrative research saw an increase, primarily because radio, a medium commonly used at home, played a significant role in influencing voting and purchasing behaviours. Over time, this support transitioned to television, reflecting its growing prominence. Within the communication studies, television now still dominates much of the literature today. This suggests that the initial focus of administrative research on radio contributed to define the direction of studies in subsequent periods.

The findings of this research highlight the significant influence of foundation support on shaping the trajectory of communication studies. The research findings suggest that a key reason for the increased support for radio studies and the diminished backing for film studies relates to the venues where these investigations took place. The Anglo-American studies, often referred to as the dominant paradigm, unfolded within university settings, whereas film studies primarily took place in archival centres. Radio studies conducted within university frameworks gained considerable momentum, thus guiding the course of communication research. Conversely, archival records suggest that film research, conducted primarily in institutions like MoMA, struggled to effectively comprehend and engage audiences. However, it is important to note that foundation support alone is not the sole determinant of such shifts in the field's direction. The flourishing status of cinema as an art form, often likened to the ultimate form of artistic expression and frequently compared with preceding artistic disciplines, juxtaposed with the inherent ontological nature of radio as a household medium, play pivotal roles in shaping this dynamic landscape.

Building upon the preceding discussion, the advent of digitalization has brought about significant transformations in the conceptualization of radio listeners and film audiences. Digitalization has fundamentally altered the essence of radio and film as media, with films now primarily consumed via online platforms, and radio extending its reach beyond traditional home use. This blurring of boundaries between mediums has led to increased discussions on the heterogeneous nature of audiences, spurred by simultaneous

access to content and evolving roles of content creators. Thus, it is apparent that digital technologies have played a significant role in audience concept, as emphasized by the research findings. This indicates an increasing focus on comprehending diverse audiences in both film studies and communication research, mirroring the changing patterns of media consumption in the digital era.

### Genişletilmiş Özet

İletişim çalışmalarında izleyici alanın şekillenmesinde en önemli kavramlardan birisidir. Yirminci yüzyılda yaşanan dönüşümler ve gelişmeler ile beraber dinler/izler kitlenin etkilenme biçimleri ve davranışları arasındaki doğrusal bağın ne olduğu sorusu belirleyici olmuştur. Bu bağlamda izleyiciyi merkeze alan araştırmalar yönetsel müdahaleler ile şekillenmiştir. Bir dizi fon sayesinde dinler/izler kitle üzerine yürütülen çalışmalarda belirli zorluklarla karşılaşıldığı görülür. Karşılaşılan bu zorlukların merkezinde çalışmaların hangi yaklaşımla yapıldığı ve bu bağlamda izleyicinin nasıl tanımlandığının belirsiz olması yer almaktadır. Bu süreç, 20. yüzyılda gerçekleşen tarihsel, sosyolojik ve ekonomik dönüşümlerden kaynaklanır ve buna paralel olarak ortaya çıkan “izleyici” kavramıyla ilişkilidir. Bu dönemde sosyal bilimlerde önemli değişimler yaşanırken, tartışma konuları genellikle kamusal alanın ve kamuoyunun nasıl belirleneceği üzerine odaklanmıştır. Bu dönüşümlerin en önemlilerinden biri demokrasi tartışmalarıyla birlikte kitle iletişim araçlarının olası etkilerinin ne olduğu sorusunun araştırılmasıdır.

20. yüzyılın başında ilk dönem iletişim araştırmalarının, kamusal alan ve demokrasi meseleleri çerçevesinde kamuoyunun nasıl şekillendirileceği ve kitle iletişim araçlarının dinler/izler kitleyi nasıl manipüle edeceği, hangi yönde harekete geçireceği sorusu üzerinden şekillendiği görülmektedir. İletişim çalışmaları bu bağlamda sosyoloji ve siyaset bilimi gibi diğer disiplinlerden beslenerek serpilmiştir. Fakat özerk bir alan kurulmasında “izleyici” nosyonunun merkeze alınarak çalışmaların yürütülmesi belirleyici olmuştur. Bu nedenle alanın kurulmasında izleyici kavramsallaştırması kilit bir mesele olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Dinleyici/izleyici kavramsallaştırmasının izlerinin ilk örüntüleri radyo ve film araştırmalarında görünürlük kazanır. Aynı zamanda, alanın kurulmasında radyo ve film çalışmaları dinleyici/izleyici kavramsallaştırmasında önemli yol ayrımlarına işaret eder. Radyo ve film araştırmalarında belirli kopuşlar meydana gelmiştir. Bunlardan belki de en önemlisi vakıfların verdiği desteklerin niteliksel ve niceliksel boyutlarındadır. Radyo araştırmalarına verilen destek zamanla yükselişe geçmiş fakat film çalışmalarına verilen desteklerde önemli kısıtlamalara gidilmiştir. Bu durum iletişim çalışmalarında zamanla radyo araştırmalarının hakimiyetini televizyon çalışmaları kapsamında yürütülen izleyici araştırmalarına bırakmasıyla, sinema alanı özelinde yürütülen izleyici araştırmalarının ise kendisine daha özerk bir alan inşa etmesiyle sonuçlanmıştır.

Bu araştırmaların yönetsel olması önemli bir meseledir. Yönetsel araştırmalar pozitivist metodolojiyi sıklıkla benimsemekte, belli başlı değişkenler üzerinden dinler/izler kitleyi kavramsallaştırmaktadır. Özellikle 1970’li yıllarla beraber etki çalışmaları yerini eleştirel medya çalışmalarına bıraktığı görülür. Bu dönüşümün öncesinde ise ilk etapta film ve beraberinde radyo araştırmalarına destekler verildiği ve dinler/izler kavramsallaştırmasına dair ilk nüansların ortaya çıktığı dönem dikkat çeker. Her iki mecra üzerinden yürütülen çalışmalara Rockefeller ve Ford gibi vakıfların önemli destekler verdiği görülmektedir. Bu iki mecra üzerinden yürütülen çalışmalara vakıflarca önemli destekler verme biçiminde bir kesişim noktası olsa da zamanla film araştırmaları kitle iletişim çalışmalarından sıyrılmış ve kendisine akademik kürsüde özerk bir alan bulmuştur. Radyo çalışmaları ise televizyon araştırmalarının bir diğer versiyonu olarak hala kitle iletişim araştırmaları çerçevesinde değerlendirilen bir mecra olarak karşımıza çıkar.

Film ve radyo arařtırmalarının detaylarına bakıldığında, arařtırmaların yürütüldüğü merkezler önem kazanır. Bir diđer ifadeyle, 1930’lu yıllarla beraber film arařtırmaları ile aynı dekatta başlayan radyo çalışmalarına verilen finansal yardımların hızla arttığı görülmektedir. Bu bağlam çalışmaların nerede yürütüldüğü ile yakından ilgilidir. Radyo çalışmaları üniversite ve vakıfların ortaklığı ile gerçekleşmiş ve bu bağlamda çalışmalar üniversite merkezlerinde yürütülmüştür. Radyo çalışmalarının üniversitelerin çatısı altında yürütülenleri arasında belki de en dikkat çekenin Lazarsfeld’in öncülüğünde Rockefeller Vakfının desteği ile gerçekleştirilen 1937 yılında başlatılan “Radyo Projesi” olduğu ifade edilebilir. Bu çalışmanın oldukça uzun bir süreye yayılması ile beraber deęişen metodolojik yaklaşımlar ve beraberinde ileriki dönemde televizyonu temel alan çalışmalara ışık tuttuğu görülmektedir. Rockefeller Vakfı’nın sinema ve film izleyicisi bağlamında verdiği en önemli desteğin ise “Radyo Projesi’ne benzer bir motivasyonla başlatıldığı görülmektedir. 1935 yılında Rockefeller Fonu’nun “İletişim Programı” kapsamında filmler ile kamunun beęenisini etkilemek ve filmin eğitim amaçlı kullanılması hususunda finansal destekler sağladığı görülmektedir. Fakat zamanla verilen bu destekler görece başarısız ve maliyetli olması nedeniyle durdurulmuştur. Bu durum sinema filmleri izleyicilerinin ve radyo yayınları dinleyicilerinin farklı kavramsallaştırılması ve alanda radyonun televizyon çalışmaları ile kol kola giderken, film çalışmalarının kitle iletişim arařtırmalarından ayrışması ile sonuçlanmıştır. Zira etki paradigması olarak da adlandırılan Anglo-Amerikan çalışmalar üniversitelerin çatısı altında yürütülmüş, film çalışmaları ise daha özerk bir ses olarak ilk/klasik dönemde üniversite dışındaki arařtırmalar ile şekillenmiştir.

“Radyo Projesi” hız kesmeden yıllara yayılan uzun soluklu bir arařtırma projesi olarak alanda yerini alırken, sinema alanında böylesi bir serpilmeden bahsetmek mümkün gözükmemektedir. Payne Fonu destekli çalışmalarda eğitim alanında sinemanın nasıl bir alan açabileceği sorusu öne çıkar. Sinema filmleri üzerinden desteklerin sağlandığı görölse de bu alandaki destekler sınırlı tutulmuştur. Bir başka ifadeyle film arařtırmalarına sağlanan desteklerin biçim ve içeriklerinin salt ampirik pozitivist arařtırma yöntemleri ile pragmatik sonuçlar ortaya koymadaki başarısızlığı ön plana çıkmıştır. Rockefeller’ın MoMA’yı kurduğu senelerde sinemanın bir sanat olarak kavranışı ile film çalışmaları literatüründe sinemanın sanat olarak kavramsallaştırılması (Arnheim, 1932/2010, Müstenberg, 1916) paralellik gösterir. Diđer yandan, radyo arařtırmaları ise farklı bir seyirde ilerlemiştir. İlk dönem çalışmalarının gösterdiği bu seyir dijitalleşme ile beraber farklı bir seyir göstermiştir.

Radyo ve film arařtırmalarının ilk dönemdeki tarihsel gelişimin ve izleyici kavramsallaştırmasında bu araçlara atfedilen işlevsel rolün ele alınacağı bu çalışmada radyo ve film arařtırmaları arasındaki farklılıklar ortaya konulacak ve yönetsel arařtırmaların iletişim çalışmaları içerisinde önemli bir paradigma olarak hangi bağlamlar üzerinden şekillendiği tartışılacaktır. Diđer yandan dijitalleşme ile beraber radyo dinleyicisi ve film izleyicisi kavramsallaştırmasındaki önemli deęişimler izleyici kavramsallaştırmasının nasıl bir süreç olarak gelişim gösterdiği yine bu arařtırmanın meselesidir. Dijitalleşme ile içeriğe eş zamanlı olarak ulaşım sağlama ve içerik üreticisi konumları ile beraber izler/dinler grupların heterojen yapılarından görece daha yoğunlukla bahsedilmeye başlanması önemli bir deęişken olarak karşımıza çıkmakta ve dijital teknolojilerin izleyici kavramsallaştırmasını deęiřtirdiği görülmektedir. Alandaki bu dönüşüm ve kopuşun izlerinin vakıflarca verilen desteklerle yürütülen yönetsel çalışmaların deęişen çehreleri etrafında ele alınacağı bu metinde izleyici arařtırmaları kapsamında yürütülen çalışmaların yönelimlerinin nasıl deęiřtiği ve dijitalleşme ile beraber izleyici kavramsallaştırmasındaki olası dönüşümler ilk dönem çalışmaların açtığı izlek ve olası kavramsallaştırmalar çerçevesinde literatür analizi yöntemi ile tartışılmaktadır. Bu çerçevede film arařtırmaları özelinde gerçekleştirilen arařtırmaların kitle iletişim arařtırmalarından neden ayrıldığı ve

kendine özerk bir alan olarak nasıl şekillendiğinin arka planı ve izleyici kavramsallaştırması analiz edilmektedir. Bu bağlamda dijitalleşme ile beraber değişen/dönüşen izleyici kavramsallaştırmasına radyo ve sinema mecraları üzerinden bir değerlendirme ve olası izleyici nosyonuna dair bir içgörü sunulacaktır.

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**Destekleyen Kurum/Kuruluşlar:** Herhangi bir kurum/kuruluştan destek alınmamıştır.

**Çıkar Çatışması:** Herhangi bir çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.