MERT CAN YILMAZ

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Experience

Research Engineer & Senior Analyst at Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)
Uppsala University Department of Peace and Conflict Research (DPCR), Uppsala, Sweden (Sep 2018 – Present)
Since November 2023, I have been serving as a Research Engineer, collaborating with the Peace Science Infrastructure at PRIO to develop automated coding applications for conflict data. This role involves enhancing UCDP's capabilities by creating tools for efficient data processing and leveraging advanced AI techniques to improve data accuracy and usability. I joined UCDP in July 2019 and was promoted to Senior Analyst by July 2023, bringing almost five years of experience in assessing and annotating conflict data from various global regions.

Previous positions at the DPCR:
Representative of the TA Staff at the DPCR Board (Oct 2021 – Jun 2023) | Analyst at UCDP (Jul 2021 – Jun 2023) | Junior Analyst at UCDP (Jul 2019 – Jun 2021) | Teaching Assistant at the Violence and Impacts Early-Warning System (Feb 2019 - Jun 2019) | Intern at the Violence and Impacts Early-Warning System (Nov 2018 - Jan 2019) | Intern at UCDP (Sep 2018 - Oct 2018)

Co-Founder
Yapay Gundem, Türkiye (Jan 2024 – Present)
As a Co-Founder of Yapay Gundem (www.yapaygundem.com) since January 2024, I lead an innovative platform dedicated to exploring the ethical dimensions and societal implications of artificial intelligence. I am responsible for overseeing content strategy and development, engaging with key stakeholders in the tech and ethics communities to foster insightful discussions. My work focuses on raising awareness about the potential impacts of AI on society, including issues of transparency, fairness, and accountability in AI deployments. I actively contribute articles and participate in panels and conferences, positioning the platform as a critical voice in shaping responsible AI practices globally.

Other previous positions
Teyit, Ankara, Türkiye (Mar 2018 – Dec 2023)
I began my journey at Teyit, an independent fact-checking organization, as a Contributor in March 2018, producing content to counter misinformation. I was promoted to Editor in January 2019, where I led editorial initiatives and developed content strategies to boost information accuracy and public trust. In September 2021, I became a Research Consultant, spearheading research projects that investigated the dynamics of misinformation and its societal effects. My work involved collaborating with academic and professional entities to innovate fact-checking approaches and promote media literacy, significantly aiding Teyit's mission to uphold truth in media.

Education

MA in Theology - Master's Programme in Religion in Peace and Conflict
Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden (Aug 2022 – Jun 2023)
Master's Thesis: Yilmaz, Mert Can (2023). Divine Alignment: A Survey-Based Study on How Religion Influences Expectations for AI Alignment.

MSSc in Peace and Conflict Studies
Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden (Aug 2017 – Jun 2019)
Master's Thesis: Yilmaz, Mert Can (2019). Justifying Rebellion: A Study on When Individuals Justify Rebellion-Related Political Actions.

BA in Political Science and International Relations
Bogazici University, Istanbul, Türkiye (Sep 2012 – Jun 2017)

Certificates (Selection)

Ethics of AI, London School of Economics, 15 May 2024.
Value-Based Leadership Training, Scouternas Folkhögskola and H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf's Foundation for Young Leadership, 19 May 2024.
IBM Data Science Professional Certificate, IBM, 5 Jul 2022.

Skills and Languages

Data Management & Analysis: Python, SQL, R
Data Visualization: Tableau, Power BI
Design and Publishing: Photoshop, InDesign, After Effects
Web Technologies: HTML, CSS, JavaScript (Basic)

Languages: Turkish (*Native*), English (*Fluent*), Swedish (*Elementary*)

Publications (Selection)

Vesco, P., Randahl, D., Hegre, H., Högbladh, S., & Yilmaz, M. C. (2024). The underreported death toll of wars: A probabilistic reassessment from a structured expert elicitation. arXiv.

Cavus, Gulin and Mert Can Yilmaz (2024). Democracy Rewired? A Mid-Year Assessment of the AI-Media-Democracy Nexus with Insights from the 2024 Turkish Local Elections. Yapay Gündem.

Yilmaz, Mert Can and Muratcan Zorcu (Eds.) (2023). Cumhuriyet'in Yüzüncü Yılında Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Üzerine Makaleler (*Articles on the Republic of Türkiye in the Centenary of the Republic*). Turkiska Student- och Akademikerföreningen.

Yilmaz, Mert Can (2023). The State of Information Disorder: 2023 Turkish Presidential and General Elections. Teyit.

Yilmaz, Mert Can and Berrak Pinar Uluer (Eds.) (2021). İkidillilik Çalışmaları ve Avrupalı Türkler (*Bilingualism Studies and European Turks)*. Turkiska Student- och Akademikerföreningen.

Cavus, Gulin and Mert Can Yilmaz (2021). "Covid-19 Pandemisi Sürecinde Yanlış Bilgi Sorunu: 5G Komplo Teorilerine İlişkin Bir Vaka Çalışması" (*Misinformation in the midst of Covid-19 Pandemic: A Case Study on 5G Conspiracy Theories*) in Pandemi Neoliberalizm Medya (*Pandemic Neoliberalism Media*). Ayrinti Yayinlari.

Media Appearances/Interviews (Selection)

Deutsche Welle, Yerel seçimlerde yapay zeka risk yaratıyor mu? *(Does AI pose a risk in local elections?)* 24 Mar 2024.

Fortune Türkiye, Yapay Gündem, yapay zeka etiğine odaklanacak, (*Yapay Gundem will focus on AI ethics*), 14 Feb 2024.

Uppsala University Researching Peace podcast, AI, Peace, and Conflict, 13 Oct 2023.

BBC News, İsrail-Filistin: Gazze, Google haritalarında neden bulanık görünüyor? *(Israel-Palestine: Why is Gaza blurry on Google Maps?)*, 17 May 2021.

Boğaziçi University, Koronavirüs günlerinde doğru bilgiye nasıl ulaşmalı? *(How to find reliable information during the coronavirus pandemic),* 23 Mar 2020.

Editorial Works (Selection)

Producer at Uppsala University's Researching Peace podcast (Feb 2021 – Sep 2024) and Department of Peace and Conflict Research YouTube channel (Feb 2023 – Sep 2024)

Podcaster at the 2nd season of Teyit's t cetveli

Co-editor of the Teyit's mini documentaries: *Let us burst your bubble* (19 May 2020), *R.I.P Turkish mainstream media* (5 Aug 2019), *Algorithms: Friends or foe?* (8 May 2019), *Syrian refugees: Could they influence Turkey's local elections outcome?* (28 Mar 2019), *Why we believe fake news* (27 Dec 2018)

Turkish editor of Craig Silverman's "Verification Handbook for Disinformation and Media Manipulation" (*Dezenformasyon ve Medya Manipülasyonu üzerine Doğrulama El Kitabı)*, Oct 2020.

Conferences, Workshops, and Summer Schools (Selection)

Presentation on AI ethics, 5 Nov 2024, Education Counsellor's Office of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Stockholm, Sweden.
Presentation on UCDP, 15-16 Aug 2023, Peace Science Infrastructure Workshop, Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway.
Participant of the Summer Institute in Computational Social Science, 16-29 Jun 2019, Kadir Has University, Türkiye.

Current Civic Affiliations

Member of Svenska Freds (Mar 2024 - Present)
President of DPCR Alumni Association (Jun 2021 – Present)
Board Member of Turkiska Student- och Akademikerföreningen (Oct 2021 – Present)