

MEDIA OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND MEDIA FREEDOM IN TURKEY  
ANALYZED FROM  
A REPUBLICAN CONCEPTUALIZATION OF FREEDOM

MERT KÖKSAL

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

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Mert Köksal

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Mert Köksal, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
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Date .....20.05.2019

## ABSTRACT

### Media Ownership Structure and Media Freedom in Turkey Analyzed From a Republican Conceptualization of Freedom

This thesis demonstrates how and why contemporary media ownership structure in Turkey damages the internal freedom of journalists. After explaining the emergence of the ownership structure, which is monopolistic, the three motivations of media owners in violating the internal freedom of journalists will be elaborated: individual, economic and ideological. The methods and strategies deployed by owners to further their dominative power will be explained but include wage differentials and de-unionization. Interviews conducted by the researcher for this study and other statements made by journalists, media bosses and politicians will be used to demonstrate violations of the internal freedom of journalists. The exposition of the harmful effects of the ownership structure will be strengthened by a content analysis of media (primarily newspaper and additionally TV broadcast). Two effects of domination as alienation and normalization will also be demonstrated and discussed. It will be shown that with respect to the internal freedom of journalists, Marxian concerns from the critical political school related to media research are more explanatory and comprehensive in comparison with the Weberian arguments and beliefs in managerialism of the liberal pluralist school assumptions.

## ÖZET

### Türkiye’de Medya Sahipliği ve Medya Özgürlüğünün Özgürlüğün Cumhuriyetçi Kavramsallaştırılışı Açısından İncelenmesi

Bu tez günümüz medya sahiplik yapısının Türkiye’de medya özgürlüğüne nasıl ve neden zarar verdiğini göstermektedir. Tekelci nitelikteki sahiplik yapısının oluşumu açıklandıktan sonra medya sahiplerinin gazetecilerin içsel özgürlüklerini ihlal edişlerindeki üç motivasyon kaynağı üzerinde durulacaktır. Bunlar bireysel, iktisadi, ideolojik kaynaklardır. Medya sahiplerinin tahakküm güçlerini artırmak için başvurdukları yollar ve stratejiler incelenecektir. Bunlar temel olarak sendikasızlaştırma ve maaş farkıdır. Tahakkümün açıklanışı, serimlemesi, medya içeriğinin analizi ile geliştirilecektir. Tahakkümün iki etkisi, yabancılaşma ve normalleşme/normalleştirme gösterilecek ve tartışılacaktır. Gazetecilerin içsel özgürlüğü söz konusu olduğunda medya çalışmalarında eleştirel okulun benimsediği Marksgil kaygıların, liberal çoğulcu okulun var saydığı Webergil argüman ve yöneticigil kanıyla kıyaslandığında daha açıklayıcı olduğu gösterilecektir.

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CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION: THE QUESTION, THE ARGUMENTS,  
AND THE METHODOLOGY

This purpose of this thesis is to examine how the contemporary media ownership structure in Turkey affects the internal freedom of journalists utilizing (1) elite interviews conducted for this research, along with the memoirs and statements of media people, and (2) content analysis (primarily newspaper and additionally TV broadcast). Media people refer to TV and newspaper journalists, media managers and media owners. I elaborate on the mechanisms deployed by owners to dominate media workers in the production process: de-unionization and wage differential. I present and categorize cases in which the ownership structure causes violations of the internal freedom of journalists. These cases are strengthened by content analysis. Finally, I briefly evaluate the observable effects of the domination caused by the ownership structure over journalists.

This study provides an extension to the debate between the liberal pluralist (LP) and critical political economy (CPE) schools of thought. While CPE grounds its criticism in the very nature and results of the capitalist mode of production, LP focuses mostly on the decreasing number of media owners; the underlying assumptions and evaluations of LP about media production exhibit a belief in balance between producers and consumers where even monopolization is unexpected. Concerning the internal freedom of journalists, CPE defends a more Marxian position, and LP argues for Weberian and Managerial claims. The former insists that private interest has a detrimental effect on media while the latter assumes the autonomy of media managers

and elites from owners and their interests. I examine conglomerate media in Turkey from the 1980s to the 2010s to determine which school's claims have more explanatory power.

The primary focus of the study is the internal freedom of journalists. Internal freedom essentially refers to the intra-institutional relationships and internal conditions of media institutions in which media workers produce media content. It requires that journalists produce media content depending solely on their conscience and reverence for media ethics. More specifically, it is dependent on being free from any other barrier or pressure within media institutions with regard to production that contradicts the conscience of media workers, the principles of journalism, the freedom of expression and media ethics. A high level of internal freedom indicates that a journalist is free from structural constraints and actors in media institution seeking to prioritize the private interests of the media owner over journalism.

This focus also requires the consideration of two types of relationships that media conglomerates have: their relationship with non-media actors, mostly the state, and their relationship with sectors other than media. The first type refers to the external freedom of media, which is the freedom of the media from the state. The second one is the cross-industry ownership. These two types of relationships are interrelated since the state has determinative power over certain sectors in which media conglomerates in Turkey operate. Therefore, to the extent that the external freedom of media affects the way media conglomerates are governed, hence affecting the internal freedom of journalists, it will be under examination. However, the interest of the research in external freedom is not primary; it is limited. The political economic basis of it has a

place in the thesis, but the research does not include the legal frame and judiciary processes.

Figure 1 describes the main structure, arguments, and sub-arguments of the research. Two ways used by owners to weaken the internal freedom of journalists will be analyzed and their interrelation presented. Cases will be used to highlight violations of the internal freedom of journalists and content analysis will strengthen the argument about the harmful effects of the ownership structure on media freedom and media production. Violations of internal freedom due to the capitalist interests of the owner have noticeable effects on journalists. These effects will be elucidated.

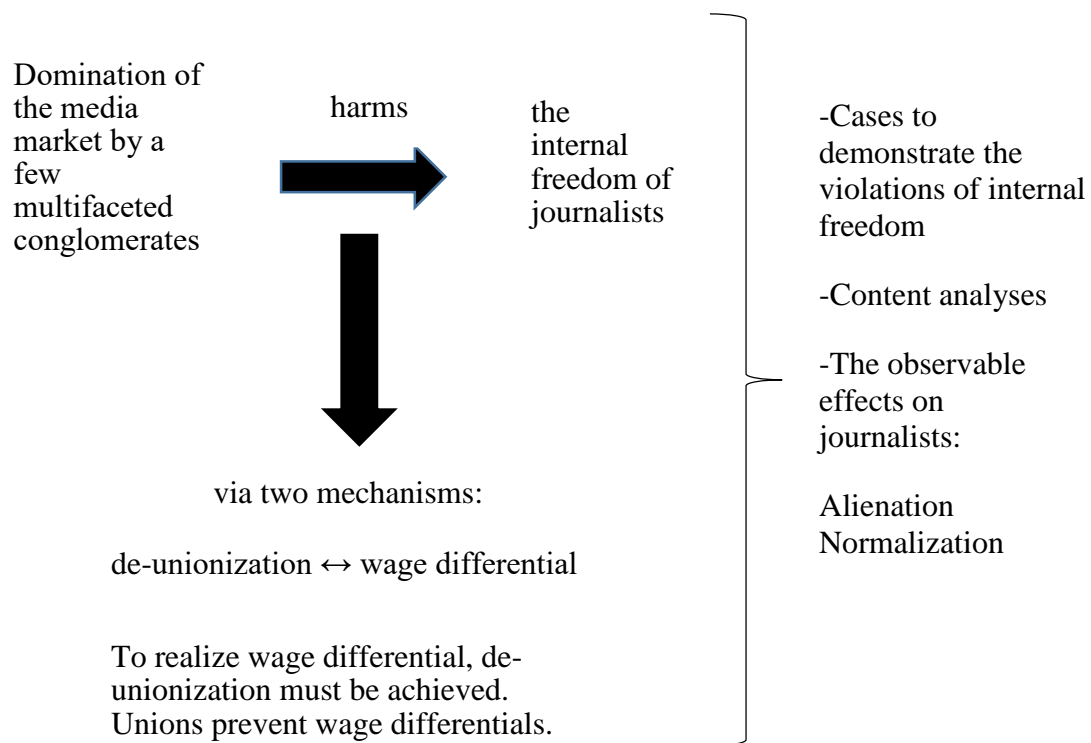


Fig. 1 Schematic summary of the thesis

In Chapter 2, after elaborating on the liberal pluralist and critical political economy schools' opposing claims and arguments about the effects of the ownership

structure on the internal freedom of journalists, other categorizations that pertain to the conditions that restrict the internal freedom of journalists will be given. The chapter ends with the studies on Turkey. In Chapter 3, the emergence of the contemporary media ownership structure will be detailed through a periodization in which 1980 is taken as the critical turn. The chapter ends by assessing the period of one party rule between 2002 and 2019. Chapter 4 provides a categorization of various cases in which media owners violated the internal freedom of journalists. The chapter ends with a content analysis to test whether and how certain factors related to the owners' role in dominating media production.

Chapter 5 describes the two ways by which owners further their dominative power over journalists and the production process. These are de-unionization and wage differentials; the link between them is also detailed. Chapter 6 pertains to the consequences for journalists of the violations caused by the ownership structure: alienation and normalization. Chapter 7 summarizes the findings and discusses whether the critical school or liberal pluralist approach is more correct concerning the case of Turkey. It ends with new questions concerning big media in Turkey after the radical changes of recent periods

This research primarily uses qualitative methods, along with some descriptive statistics, articles of law and a brief comparative content analysis. Data consist of the experiences of media people. Elite interviews with journalists constitute part of the data. Interviews were carried out in November and December, 2016. Then, in order to enlarge the scope of the data, or more precisely the size of the sample, other sources such as memoirs, statements and other interviews and articles of media people are included.

During the research, the most significant issue was convincing journalists to give an interview. The specific focus of the research is big media, so this already restricts the options for constructing the data. Furthermore, many academic studies on media in Turkey commonly underline a well-known obstacle to gathering information from journalists working in big media (Özsever, 2004; Sönmez M. , 2003, p. 48; Adaklı, 2006). Even a famous media manager of a well-known media conglomerate in Turkey admits to its existence and, furthermore, appreciates it (Özkök, 2002b). This obstacle is the entente between a small number of dominant media owners regarding a cooperative employment policy, sometimes called the law of omertà (Adaklı, 2006, pp. 240, 306-307) or gentlemen's agreement (Sönmez M. , 2003, p. 48; Özsever, 2004, pp. 121, 162) between media owners.

This cooperation between media owners specifically restricts journalists who work for a media conglomerate. When a journalist opposes the interests of an owner that endangers her or his internal freedom by speaking out, she or he may be blacklisted within the industry due to this cooperation among owners (Şık & Tekelioğlu, 2015). It creates fear and silence. It is named as the law of omertà. It refers to the code of silence inspired by mafia groups in Italy. If any member of a mafia group endangers the mafia leader's authority by disclosing information to law enforcement or disrespecting the authority of the mafia leader, then this member is marked for retribution by all mafia leaders. It also entails the silence of all mafia groups regarding a common interest, such as the silence of the mafia when questioned by the state. Its use in media literature is slightly different: Journalists should be silent about the secrets of the owner, or else, they break the code of silence and are marked by all media owners and blacklisted.

However, the fear of being fired and continued unemployment is not the sole obstacle to gaining journalists' consent for an interview. Unfortunately, the legal and political environment creates further unfavorable conditions for journalists. Between 2016 and 2018, the topic of the research was decided, the research was designed, and the major part of it was conducted. During this period, imprisonment was as likely for a journalist as getting fired. One of the interviewees even warned me against studying media freedom for a master's thesis in a period that he termed an "intermediate regime." Specifically, he said, "You should not study media freedom in Academia especially as the topic of your thesis is in the period of intermediate regimes" (Interviewee no. 3). In 2016, there were 81 journalists in prison (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2016). By 2019, according to the Journalists Union of Turkey, this number raised to 134 (Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası, 2019).

Moreover, following a failed coup d'état attempt in 2016, a state of emergency was declared that lasted two years. Not only did the number of imprisoned journalists remain high during that time but more media outlets were additionally closed down. Briefly, the climate made it difficult for me to find additional journalists to interview, and, given journalists' perception of the risks, it seems understandable. The rate of acceptance per interview request decreased gradually. Furthermore, especially since 2018, the number of journalists who initially consented to an interview then later declined shows a continuous increase. They gave a variety of reasons; some openly declared feelings of concern and fear related to the current circumstances.

Along with the friendly warning from the third interviewee, I faced a dilemma. On the one hand, the difficulties associated with obtaining interviews also indicated the acute importance of the question of media freedom in Turkey. From one perspective,

this is appealing for a researcher and even creates more motivation to continue the research. On the other hand, in terms of the methodological requirements and other risks that make journalists averse to talking, the process of constructing the qualitative data was difficult and encountered barriers. I chose to continue researching the issue of media freedom rather than quitting, enlarging the qualitative data pool through the inclusion of memoirs and other statements that show the experiences of journalists, media bosses and media managers. I use memoirs written by journalists, their statements, commission reports, and interviews in newspapers and other academic studies or journalists' books. I translated the quotes that are cited in the thesis into English. The original versions of the quotes will be given in footnotes if they are less than or equal to 40 words. Otherwise, they will be given in Appendix A.

The table in Appendix B presents a complete picture of the data. In the table, the "indirect" label indicates that the media person concerned was evaluated in a source based on another person's perspective, while the label "direct" indicates a first-person perspective where the journalist is the source of the material. When a claim is grounded on an indirect reference, further confirmation is sought as much as possible through statements given by the referenced actor or through other indirect references or sources for the same actor or event.

The table in Appendix B only lists book references. Sources other than books and interviews conducted by the author for this research will be given in-text. These are indicated in the table with the label "other". Interviews conducted are semi-structured and the questions may vary depending on the interviewee. However, questions that were common to all three in-person interviews are listed in Appendix C. The sample consists of 28 media people, including three journalists who were interviewed personally, and

four media bosses. The remainder of the sample consists of journalists (whether TV, newspaper or both) and media managers.

The in-depth interviews and memoirs, by definition, are based on personal experience and subjective perceptions. Not all information provided is taken as reliable though its validity is assumed in many cases. Then, in order to deal with the subjectivity inherent in the nature of the qualitative data, content analysis is used for triangulation. These methods are complementary to each other, each providing what the other lacks. The necessarily subjective nature of journalists' experiences is complemented by the content (news, columns and broadcasts) media provides. Both methods are used to demonstrate the harms caused by the ownership structure to the internal freedom of journalists during the production process. In-depth interviews and memoirs highlight these harms through the experiences of individuals. In other words, the violation of media freedom is detailed through the description of the relationship of production in big media. The content analysis allows a demonstration, explanation and discussion of these harms through the objective content of media as the end product of this relationship of production. Individuals' interpretation of their experiences have the benefit of showing the harmful effects of ownership through a direct description of the dominative relationship between the media owner or manager and journalist but have the drawback of relying on subjective perceptions. The content analysis examines directly data, which can be analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. It has the benefit of being independent of subjective perceptions and the drawback of elaborating the harm indirectly, through the consequences of the dominative relationship. Using both methods allows data triangulation as a methodological cross check. In addition to these two

methods, I also address articles of laws and regulations as well as providing certain descriptive statistics.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Freedom of the press is directly related to two civil rights: freedom of information and freedom of expression. Thus media freedom is important not only for those who work in media but for all of society. Media freedom as a civil right has been underlined by many philosophers and writers from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century through today (Asgill, 1712; Locke, Klibansky & Gough, 1968; Priestley, 1771; Paine, 1791). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948 also underlines this right. Article 19 states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” (UN General Assembly, 1948).

Furthermore, a viable democracy requires media freedom because of two other reasons. First, a free media is supposed to play the role of a watchdog, functioning as a check on power (including political, economic, etc.) through the provision of facts and information to the public, including information that might annoy those in power. Second, for the democratic formation of public opinion, the media is supposed to voice different opinions, again including those that might annoy those in power. Consequently, free media appears as an indispensable property of democracy (Kızıl, 1998, p. 18). The reverse is also true: free media becomes possible only under democratic conditions (Tartanoğlu, 1994, p. 62).

That being said, however, freedom of media is a broad topic. While Freedom House annually measures the level of media independence across the globe, it divides

media independence or freedom into three subcategories. Media freedom requires an appropriate political, economic and legal environment. Hence these are also the three subcategories that Freedom House measures to evaluate the level of media independence in each country (Freedom House, 2019).

Reporters Sans Frontières, on the other hand, utilizes seven categories or criteria in order to evaluate media freedom. The first category is pluralism, which is the capacity of the media to represent different views. The second is the independence of media, which means whether it functions independently from different political, governmental, business or religious sources of power. The third one is the environment and self-censorship, which measures whether the environment in which media production takes place enables or hinders the free flow of information. The fourth one is the legislative framework. The other criteria are transparency, infrastructure and abuse. The last subcategory of media freedom measured by Reporters Sans Frontières focuses on abuses, violence and physical attacks against journalists (Reporters Sans Frontières, 2019).

The literature on media freedom and journalism explicates a number of factors related to the presence or absence of media freedom around the world. The studies might focus, for example, on diversity and plurality (Czepek, Hellwig & Nowak, 2013), the legal framework that envelops the professional life of journalists (Ukrow & Iacino, 2016; Zelezny, 2011; Moore, 2000; Horrie, 2008), the physical or other kinds of attacks journalists experience (Nerone, 1994; Committee to Protect Journalists, 2013; 2017), or how governments restrict journalism and use various direct and indirect ways to censor or oppress the media.

However, the specific focus of this research pertains to the relationship between media ownership and media freedom in Turkey. Thus, its scope is more related to the economic and political environment than the legal one. Consequently, the political economic conditions that are related to the freedom of journalists within media institutions, more specifically in large media conglomerates, are the main interest of this study.

In the academic world, especially from the last quarter of the twentieth century, the concentration of media ownership, its relationship with the way media functions, and its effect on media freedom have become hot topics. Two major approaches among various understandings and analyses appear dominant regarding the monopolization or ownership issue in media. These are the liberal pluralist approach and critical political economy approach. First, these schools' main arguments about the relationship between media freedom and monopolized ownership will be elaborated. Second, their views on the internal freedoms of journalists will be presented. Third, other options and categorizations for evaluating the conditions that restrict journalists in the workplace will be noted. Lastly, studies regarding the case of Turkey will be described. Before providing a detailed examination in the next two sections, Table 1 presents a summary of the main assumptions, claims and positions of the two schools.

Table 1. Summary of Literature Discussion

	Liberal pluralist approach	Critical approach
Economic analysis	Liberal political economy assumptions: capitalistic free market and competition provide the best result in media.	Critical /Marxian political economy is based on class conflict and a critique of capitalism.
The relationship between the free market and media	The free market provides plurality; consumers have determinative power over the market share of different media companies.	Profit-driven control over media content makes journalism fragile. Media loses its capacity to inform people and critical views are marginalized. Those who first adapt the newest technology and lower its costs (and are also helped by the state through different mechanisms) dominate the market without being primarily dependent on the demand side of the market.
Media production /producing media content	Media mirrors society. It publishes newsworthy occurrences. It disseminates current plural views of society. Capitalists' interests do not constitute an obstruction between the news and people.	Propaganda model of Chomsky: filtering mechanisms work in producing and publishing media content in favor of the dominant class and state. News is exposed to certain filtering mechanisms.
Concentration in media ownership, its evaluation and meaning	Normative stance against concentrated ownership, based on defense of the liberal right to be informed and emphasis on pluralism. Concentration of media is a danger to democracy. It is not due to capitalism; it is more due to lessening the number of suppliers and is plucked out of thin air.	Concentrated ownership increases the dominance of capitalists, state and ideology over media production. It is a further danger for democracy, which always exists in monopoly capitalism.
Internal freedom, freedom of media and media worker	The views of managerial school are held: media elites defend liberal democratic values and, hence, media freedom.	Media elites serve the capitalist interests. Media workers are dominated during the production process, and the role of media elites is to ease this domination.

## 2.1 Liberal pluralist approach

The liberal pluralist approach, occasionally called the mainstream approach, highlights liberal democratic values such as pluralism, freedom of the media, and freedom of expression, as its name suggests. Further, it emphasizes the watchdog function of the media (Kaya, 2016, pp. 93-95). On the other hand, in spite of this school's alignment with these norms, it does not sufficiently question the socio-economic mechanisms behind media economics with relation to the capitalist system and ideology.

Consequently, it has difficulties and limitations when it comes to the underlying mechanisms of concentrated media ownership structure that violate media freedom. Liberal pluralists appear to miss the difference between “what is” and “what ought to be” because of the distance between what they defend as norms and their assumptions regarding the socio-economic system that shapes media organization.

This approach evaluates the performance of mass media more positively in comparison with the critical political economy school. Kaya and Çakmur (2012) note that the pluralist school understands media as the mediator of what occurs in society. Pluralists evaluate the function of media as mirroring society (Kaya & Çakmur, 2012). Consequently, the media informs people objectively since it is itself a reflection of a pluralistic society. Curran, Gurevitch and Woollacott (1977, p. 5) explain the positive attitude of the school:

The pluralists see society as a complex of competing groups and interests; none of them predominant all of the time. Media organizations are seen as bounded organizational systems, enjoying an important degree of autonomy from the state, political parties and institutionalised pressure groups. Control of the media is said to be in the hands of an autonomous managerial elite who allow a considerable degree of flexibility to media professionals.

This school does not elaborate on the drive toward monopolization as a continuous process in which different socio-economic and political actors or classes tend to concentrate the ownership structure, conforming to the structural features and the expected results of capitalism. Here, concentration seems an unwanted result, yet the mechanisms that are related to capitalism and cause this are not focused on as much as issues associated with directly state-owned or governed media. The primary attitude is blaming the result without considering the process. Hence, the issue that this school cannot capture emerges from the difference between what ought to be and what is; that is to say, the difference between what ought not to be, i.e., monopolization, and why it occurs.

The liberal pluralist approach, as a political philosophy, takes a valuable and respectable stance for the defense of rights and democratic norms, opposing concentrated media ownership. Nevertheless, the economic doctrine in which it grounds its views and assumptions regarding society seem to be its weakness. Liberal mainstream economic understandings miss the power relations in the economic system due to its exclusion of capitalism from its critical evaluation. Schutz (2001) explains this based on the way mainstream economics evaluates capitalism. It takes capitalism as a natural, power-free, de-socialized mode of the economic functioning of society. First, it assumes an ideal market structure that is perfectly competitive, the perfect market, and assigns corresponding agency to this structure. Then second, it concludes that “there can be no power relationships among people exchanging in an assumed system of ‘perfect’ markets, and the ramifications of power in economic activity simply cannot be considered in such a world” (Schutz, 2001, p. 7). However, in the capitalist economy and market, especially in capital intensive sectors, monopolization seems to be the rule

rather than the exception, thus competition ends competition (Foster, McChesney, & Jonna, 2011). Under the pressure of competition, profit-driven actions of economic actors create this result of monopolization as a reality of capitalism (Schumpeter, 2003, pp. 104-105; Mandel, 1976, pp. 314,316-318).

Another assumption of this school is the belief in a balance between consumer and producer. This attenuates the importance of the ideological and socio-economic characteristics of owners; after all, owners are bounded by consumers comprising a heterogeneous mix of tastes and interests. This is again based on an economic assumption of the school. Just as the liberal economic school argues there exists a balance between consumer and producer, the liberal pluralist school argues, regarding media production, that the audience has the power to check the producer (Seiden, 1974, p. 5), and further, that the relationship between them is not one of dominance but rather an equal one based on voluntariness (McQuail, 1979; 2010, pp. 87-88; Murdock, 1982, p. 125; Topuz, Kaya, Kurtböke, & Öрки, 1989, p. 4). This power assigned to media consumers by the school lessens the power and effect of owners, their interests and their relationships with the capitalist system regarding media production. Consequently, the media becomes solely a mirror of society. In the words of British journalist Whale (1977, pp. 82-85), the liberal pluralist school believes that:

The central truth about newspapers is that they cannot go beyond the range of their readers. It is, therefore, the readers, in the end, who are the figures of power. That is the answer to the riddle of proprietorial influence. Where it survives at all, it must still defer to the influence of readers.... The broad shape and nature of the press is ultimately determined by no one but its readers. (pp. 82-85)

These assumptions exhibit the myopia of the school. It is against monopolization, yet it does not expect its emergence in market societies because it does not include capitalist domination over the working class and society in its analysis. Furthermore, it

tends to give too much credit to the market in the democratic representation of different views. Concerning this research, this school's central assumptions about the internal freedom of journalists are based on Managerial or Weberian-cultural assumptions (Adaklı, 2006, pp. 66-72). The first assumption claims that the power of managers in control of the production and decision-making process reaches such a level that they are able to control the production process and make decisions concerning production independently from the owners of capital. Dahrendorf (1959), Berle and Means (1932) and Veblen (1921) argued that the twentieth century would be a revolutionary one regarding the rising power of managers. Managerialism currently argues that managers have already been freed from the influence of owners. With regard to media studies, "managers" refers to professional media managers and professional journalists. Liberal pluralists expect the protection of media freedom from managers of media and professionalism, both of which entail the autonomy of journalists from media owners. These are the two main elements in which the liberal pluralist school grounds its views on the internal freedom of journalists vis-à-vis the capitalist interests of media owners.

Murdock (1982) categorizes these managerialist views into two groups: structural and agent-based. While the former is based on the managerial revolution literature (Berle & Means, 1932; Veblen, 1921), which argues that a structural change in modern corporations was the main factor in freeing managers from owners, the latter provides a more agency-based explanation with respect to the media, which is the presence of journalism's own professional codes. Journalism has its own professional culture that serves as a source of power, increasing the autonomy of journalists and restricting the influence of owners' interests and the ownership structure. While Murdock terms the former category "structural managerial," I prefer the term

“managerial” because the managerial revolution approach strongly emphasizes the structural changes of the corporation. While Murdock uses “agency-based managerialism,” to describe the second category, I believe that the adjective Weberian is more suitable because individual journalists who have prestige because of their career are expected to limit owners’ influences rather than the structure itself. Nevertheless, in both cases, as Curran, Gurevitch, and Woollacott (1977) underline, this school mainly argues that journalists act independently of the owners’ aims, wants and interests in news production.

## 2.2 Critical school or critical political economy school

The other main school of thought is the critical political economy school, which stresses the negative influence of capitalist interests and owners on media production and, hence, on the internal freedom of journalists. First, according to this approach, the function of mass media, which is dominated by a few mega conglomerates, is to serve the ideological dominance of the capitalist class over society. Instead of being a mirror of society, the critical political economy school argues that the function of mass media is to sustain and strengthen the ruling ideology, serving the class that dominates the material force of society: capitalists. In making major and crucial decisions regarding production, either for the overall economy (Engels, 1987, p. 261) or specifically for media production (Chomsky, 2002, p. 19), the consumer and the capitalist are never taken as equals that are equally free and influential in this approach. Capitalist domination is emphasized instead of balance, harmony and a pluralist representation. Marx and Engels (1998, p. 67) state:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas. (p. 67)

Critical political economy is distinguished from the liberal pluralist approach, first, by starting its criticism with capitalism itself. Its emphases are on class conflict and a critique of capitalism that dominates the media and makes it unfree. Here, the dominant ideology, state and capitalist interests are taken as interrelated factors that all damage media freedom and the internal freedom of journalists. In other words, the concentrated ownership structure, state and ideology go hand in hand to make media content produced by “big” media conglomerates serve the interests of big investment groups, the dominant ideology and the state. Monopolization is not a surprise but rather a result of the logic of accumulation (Marx, 1976, pp. 776-780) in any capital intensive sector (Schutz, 2001, p. 61; Stolyarchuk, 2008; Foster, McChesney, & Jonna, 2011), including the media (McChesney, 2003, p. 300). It is seen as the expected outcome of the capitalist mode of production (Mandel, 2002, p. 36). The critical political economy school points out the dangers of profit-driven control over media content for democratic society and the media itself (O’Neill, 2006; Chomsky & Hermann, 2002; McChesney, 2008; 2015).

The critical approach criticizes the direct association between the free market economy approach to the press and freedom of expression made by the liberal pluralist approach. The critical school does not consider the free market to be the guarantor of the

freedom of expression for a whole society (Garnham, 2000, pp. 41,42,44-48,52) nor a sufficient mechanism to assure diversity (Glasser, Awad, & Kim, 2009).

O'Neill (2006) elaborates on what is lacking in liberal pluralists' overconfidence in the market and explains how money or monetary interests lead to censorship and thereby endanger what democratic life requires from journalism for its survival. He makes three points. First, in terms of costs, no guarantee can be provided by the free market that each view will find a way to be voiced and published. Second, even if the exaggerated power of the consumer were true, market pressure for profit-oriented production would still push media to produce content that is more in accordance with the views, demands and desires of the median citizen, hence marginalizing dissenting viewpoints. Third, the marketization of journalism might endanger the public responsibility of the profession, which O'Neill argues is "telling the truth" (O'Neill, 2006). To clarify the third point, O'Neill draws an analogy between journalism and medicine. In either activity, if monetary aims outweigh the very meaning of the profession, it creates a violation of professional ethics and precludes the realization of the internal good of the profession, improving health for medicine and revealing the truth for journalism (O'Neill, 2006).

Murdock finds two patterns in critical political economy studies of media, structural and instrumental; instead of considering them as necessarily separate approaches, he conceptualizes them as different emphases within the same school (Murdock, 1982). The first sub-category focuses more on the structural conditions and properties of the capitalist system that make capitalist media owners do what they are supposed to do. Here, the focus is more on the broad ideological influence on media production. In the instrumentalist approach, capitalists are argued to be individuals who

have their own interests in the media sector and the capitalist system. Murdock's (1982) use of these two categories provides a symmetrical counterpoint to the categorization of managerialism as agent-based or structural he also provided. He suggests a combination of the two sub-categories or emphases of the critical school is the best option (Murdock, 1982).

The classic example of the instrumental approach is provided by a 2002 study by Chomsky and Hermann. They emphasize factors related to control over media, including the culture imperialism, the media's role in "manufacturing consent" and the effect of neoliberalism on the international media industry (Chomsky & Hermann, 2002). In their own words, they look at the role of "...ownership and control, dependence on other major funding sources (notably, advertisers), and mutual interests and relationships between the media and those who make the news and have the power to define it and explain what it means" (Chomsky & Hermann, 2002, p. xi). They provide five headings, each of which indicates a filtering mechanism between what media publishes and the facts. In order to understand what "big" media does to serve private interests, one should be aware of these filters in reading or watching media.

A propaganda model focuses on this inequality of wealth and power and its multilevel effects on mass-media interests and choices. It traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public. The essential ingredients of our propaganda model, or set of news "filters," fall under the following headings: (1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) "flak" as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) "anticommunism" as a national religion and control mechanism. (Chomsky & Hermann, 2002, p. 2)

They focus on different cases using qualitative and quantitative content analyses to show the influence of these filtering mechanisms (Chomsky & Hermann, 2002). Chomsky (1989) explicitly underlines that the primary function of big media as an instrument of the dominant class is to instill the necessary illusions in the public. However, Chomsky adds, it performs this function not by force, in a direct, vulgar or openly propagandist way, but in subtler ways that neither close nor block the discussion while keeping it within “proper” boundaries (p. 71). Proper implies two things in this context. In order to maintain the necessary credibility to be a useful instrument of the dominant class, the media must include diverse and even opposing views and evaluations. At the same time, however, these views must be presented selectively, in a limited and controlled manner, within the range represented by different views of the elites and the limits allowed by the interests of the capitalist system (Chomsky, 2002, p. 13).

To give examples of structural concerns in the critical school, Murdock (1982) mentions neo-Marxists like De Vroey, and Adaklı (2006, p. 27) mentions Hall. De Vroey (1975) criticizes managerial school within a structural perspective and Hall (1980) emphasizes on the culture and the ideology as main structural factors. However, Murdock criticizes the dichotomy of structure-based and agent-based as separate emphases and defends a synthesis (Murdock, 1982).

Bagdikian (2002) is another important name in this school who shows how a monopolized ownership structure and profit-driven production of media endanger media freedom and democracy and restrict journalists in their work. In his books *Media Monopoly* (2002) and *the New Media Monopoly* (2004)—the latter being an updated version of the former—he first details the background of the rise of monopolistic media

and describes the monopolistic structure of the market with a specific focus on the major actors. Here, Bagdikian shows how the big five (Time Warner, Viacom, Disney, Bertelsmann, and News Corporation) dominate all media sectors, including print publishing like books, newspapers and magazines as well as visual media like TV and movies (Bagdikian, 2004, pp. 27-54). In the first part of the book, he also shows how these dominant actors interact with political figures to circumvent or invalidate anti-monopolistic restrictions, regulations and laws to dominate the market (Bagdikian, 2004, pp. 39-41). The main cases he concentrates on are the U.K., U.S., Germany, and France (Bagdikian, 2004).

After describing the overall picture, in the second part of his book, Bagdikian examines the negative effects of these major actors' domination of the sector on media freedom and journalists, showing the pro-corporate bias of media. This bias means that big media becomes more tolerant of corporations and their effects on society and the environment. At the same time, the very same media conglomerates do not miss any occasion to assail the government at any time the government has problems applying any social policy (Bagdikian, 2004). This pro-corporate bias also creates pressure on journalists. Bagdikian takes a closer look at the cases to show how journalists who oppose the interests of big actors in the oil, finance and energy industries in their reports are oppressed by the power of those big investment groups that influence the media institutions where they work and can even be influential in professional associations of journalists (Bagdikian, 2004, pp. 173-176, 178-180, 198-203).

The claims the critical political economy school makes regarding the internal freedom of journalists constitute another essential and distinctive feature that distinguishes it from, and puts it in opposition to, liberal pluralists. It directly opposes

managerial views. Marx appears to be among the first to highlight the increasing importance of managers in directing and controlling the production process, even before the managerial school was born (Marx, 1981, pp. 567-568). However, he also underlines that managers who are appointed to the function of control of capitalists on production still exist to serve the interests of capitalists rather than to create a revolution as the managerial school argues (Marx, 1976, p. 449). He even compares managers with non-commissioned officers in the army in terms of the similarity of their functions (Marx, 1976, p. 450). Bottomore (1993) argues that professional managers are part of the capitalist class, and they are already owners of companies due to having substantial shareholdings. Even in the case that professional managers are not shareholders, their economic existence is still fused with the ultra-rich class. Finally, in terms of roles and goals, the owner and the manager are the same. Thus, he criticizes managerialist views that differentiate managers from owners and claim the former revolutionize the system of the latter (Bottomore, 1993, p. 61).

Consequently, for critical approaches, media elites and managers are considered within their function of keeping the media institution within the boundaries determined and drawn by the interests of owners (Murdock, 1982; Adaklı, 2006). As De Vroey (1975, p. 6) states “While Managerialists just ask the question ‘who rules the corporations?’, Marxists’ main question is: ‘For which class interests are the corporations ruled?’”

It is not the autonomy of journalists that limits the capitalist influence on media production; the critical school argues that the reverse is true. It is the capitalist interests of owners, their relationships and functions in the system that restrict journalists within the institution in performing their jobs and the news-making process. Consequently,

professionalism seems to be the point of discussion between liberal pluralists and critical political economy scholars. Hallin, for example, criticizes the work of Chomsky and Hermann for not valuing the importance of professionalism in their analysis (Hallin, 1994). In return, Herman replies to Hallin with a demonstration of how the professionalism of journalists indeed works for those who hold power and how it naturalizes the internalization of corporate values, principles and interests in the very activity of journalism (Herman, 2018). A similar position is also held by Bagdikian (2004, p. 216).

McChesney's insightful and concise analysis of the U.S. case astutely explains the position of the critical political economy approach vis-a-vis the internal freedom of journalism (McChesney, 2003). His critical analysis of professionalism is notable because professionalism constitutes a major part of the liberal pluralist position that provides grounds for a positive belief in the internal freedom of journalists from owners (Tılıç, 1998, p. 54). Professionalism implies adherence to the professional codes of journalism, which is supposed to protect the freedom of journalists from capitalist interests and make journalism a non-ideological, impartial and, thus, high-quality profession (İnal, 1993).

McChesney (2003) makes three points about how the characteristics of the socio-political and economic systems negatively affect the media. First the professionalism of journalism in the U.S. has always had problematic aspects with respect to its biases favoring the status quo and property owning class. Though the notion entails and stresses editorial and reporter autonomy from owners and even from their own views while they perform their job, McChesney argues that professional journalism was born according to the needs of monopolized media owners to solve their credibility problem

(McChesney, 2003, pp. 301,307). To elaborate on the limitations of professionalism, he explains its three biases and evaluates them through examples.

Second, he argues that commercial attacks on journalism in the late twentieth century have already downgraded the codes of professionalism in the U.S. that emphasize the wall between the owner of the newspaper and professional journalists. In other words, he asserts that the current picture is already worse than the already existing limitations of professional journalism (McChesney, 2003).

Third, he shows how, as an official opposition, conservative critiques of media have functioned both to push journalism and media production and content to a more right-wing position in the political spectrum as well as to cover over features of the current media order that led to corporate media's pro-business biases (McChesney, 2003, pp. 318-322).

For the first point he makes (McChesney, 2003), his emphasis on political economic analysis to understand the limitations of professional journalism is critical. Here, it is essential to underline that monopolization in the ownership structure has appeared as a continuous trend during the twentieth century, especially from the beginning of the second half. According to McChesney (2003), this trend was not a surprise, but was due to the logic of accumulation (p. 300). This trend also meant a sea change in media organizations and the way journalism was performed and evaluated. Prior to the late nineteenth century, various newspapers, each reflecting their owner's views and taking a political stance, were still suited to a democratic context because newspaper ownership did not require being a big investment group. Therefore, expressions of plurality, diversity and democratic representation by newspapers were

still the case (McChesney, 2003, pp. 301-302). However, this plurality changed and had to be removed due to the logic of capitalism, which is accumulation.

The new environment was defined by huge entry costs to own media outlets along with concentrated ownership. Along with this change came the professionalization of journalism, which indicates a belief in two types of journalistic independence. The first one is the independence of what journalists do from what they believe. The second is the independence of journalism from what the owners of media institutions have interests in. Without such a belief in this independence, it would be impossible to sustain the media as a profitable industry. Because of a few dominant media owners, professionalism has become indispensable for sustaining the profitability of media production. McChesney also adds that this is the reason why the rise of “professionalism” is supported, wanted and eased by monopolies who themselves dominate the media. It is, in a sense, their invention (McChesney, 2003, pp. 301-303).

McChesney (2003) elaborates on three deep-seated biases within the concept of professionalism that hinder the way media should function for the viability of democratic life. The first bias is the reliance of journalists upon official sources to avoid being accused of introducing their own views in the news. These sources are already pre-determined and the available information already restricted by the perspectives and demands of elites. This bias pushes journalists to be stenographers to those in positions of power, both economic and political (McChesney, 2003, p. 303). Drawing on experts from the establishment furthers the process in which media neutrality becomes direct or indirect support for the status quo, weakening its capacity to be critical (McChesney, 2003, p. 304). Besides losing its watchdog function, examining major social and

economic issues becomes less likely for media unless these intersect with elites' attention and interests.

The second bias is avoiding contextualization. McChesney (2003) points out that journalists avoid evaluating the issues according to the political and socio-economic context surrounding the event and based on the economic, social and political features of society (pp. 304-306). This avoidance by "professional" journalists is also to protect themselves from accusations of being ideological. These two biases, reliance upon official statements and avoidance of contextualization, as McChesney (2003) points out, led to the birth and rise of "public relations" to the extent that it became influential in the very logic of media production (p. 304). Additionally, these two biases further media depoliticization and, according to McChesney (2003), "at its worst," they "feed a cynicism about the value and integrity of public life" (p. 304). The last but most important bias is media's pro-capitalist and pro-corporate attitude, which pushes media toward significant selection biases regarding events considered newsworthy or to criticize. When a social policy of a U.S. government causes problems, big media does not miss the opportunity to investigate such a case. However, when a wealthy capitalist or a powerful financial organization are involved in severe corruption or harmful economic activity, even causing scandalous levels of damage to the environment, the economy or more generally to society and its democratic life, rights and capacity (most of the time in cooperation with political actors), then the radar of big media does not seem to be working (McChesney, 2003, pp. 305, 310, 313, 314, 321).

These three biases appear to have already lessened the critical capacity and watchdog function of the media; McChesney (2003) adds that the late twentieth century, which witnessed the rise of neoliberalism, caused a two-pronged attack on journalism by

commercialism that worsened the environment and the quality of journalism from the 1980s onward in comparison with the period of rising professional journalism. These two harmful effects of commercialization are financial cutbacks to discipline journalists and financial motives that push journalists to act in accordance with the interests of big investment groups in making news (McChesney, 2003).

Budget-cutting mania (McChesney, 2003, p. 309) disciplines the investigative capacity of journalists through allocative control over resources for an increase in short-term profits. This effect is also strengthened by making the same journalists work in many different subcategories of the profession (from newspaper columnist to TV anchor) and for different types of media (TV, newspaper), all of which are owned by the same group. The indirect effects of commercialism can be observed when advertisers push journalists to write, and make news according to their interests or when non-media business groups provide journalists personally extra economic benefits to publish media content that favors their interests (McChesney, 2003, pp. 308-310). The direct effect is just the opposite of the intended “wall” between media owners and journalists built by the professional codes: journalists “use their privileges to report favorably on their owners’ commercial venture[s] or investment” (McChesney, 2003, p. 311).

McChesney (2003) finishes his analysis with a critique of the conservative critique of “liberal” media, arguing that the conservative critique is instead a pseudo-critique. He shows, first, the incoherence and unrealism within this line of argumentation about the influence of professional journalists (being supposedly free from owners’ interests) on the news, which claims that they favor a liberal agenda. Then, second, McChesney (2003) shows how this conservative critique has nothing to say about the pro-capitalist stance of media with regard to its structure, content and employment

policy. Third, he convincingly shows how emphasis on the word “liberal” is used to cover up how media elites are actually right-wing in terms of economic policies despite their leftist attitude towards cultural and individual rights; this also functions to push journalists away from expressing liberal views in order to convince their audience that they are professionals. Alongside the many examples he gives, he finishes his criticism of the pseudo critique by comparing professional journalists’ caution in criticizing former U.S. President Bush while feeling free to assail Bill Clinton. This pseudo-critique seems to strengthen the already right-wing attitude of big media, because of this pressure, journalists who hold already right wing position in economic issues feel pushed to appear less left wing as their caution against Bush shows. (McChesney, 2003, pp. 318-324).

Finally, McChesney (2003) demonstrates contrary to its appearance, how professionalism in the U.S. is not indeed intended to protect the journalism from capitalist interests in a monopolized era, but rather to keep the industry making profit for the few media owners, how its biases limit the practices of journalism and lessens its power to criticize the dominant class, and how commercial attacks and conservative critiques make the situation worse. It is essential to consider his insistence on the necessity of a political economic perspective to detect these problems and find solutions to them. His analysis shows the structural reasons behind “lousy journalism” are the basis of the problem; instead of focusing on “the moral bankruptcy of journalists”, he insists on examining the causes rather than merely discussing the results to solve the problems facing journalism (McChesney, 2003, p. 324).

### 2.3 Other options and categorizations

Briefly, the two schools of thought examined above, critical political economy and liberal pluralism, have opposite claims, assumptions and arguments regarding the effects of the ownership structure on media freedom and specifically on the internal freedom of journalists. However, in addition to these two major schools, there are other categorizations and ways of analysis that enrich the discussion regarding the causes of restrictions on journalists in media production and provide different insights on the factors that condition, specify and influence the internal freedom of journalists, the routines that journalists conform to, and the choices they make during the news-making process. These are the culturalist approach and occupational sociology.

Schudson (1989), for example, provides an overall discussion on different approaches that aim to discover whether observable patterns in news-making exist and, if so, the reasons behind them. After exploring the gatekeeper approach as the first attempt at examining this issue and criticizing it because of its unsuitability for sociological analysis, he critically evaluates three major approaches: the political economy approaches (critical political economy), mainstream (occupational) sociology, and anthropological/cultural approach (Schudson, 1989).

The first approach focuses on the economic basis of news production and its effects on producing news. The school argues that this makes media production conform to, support, and prioritize private interest, pro-profit, and pro-conservative views, attitudes and evaluations. While agreeing that this approach appears useful at the macro-level to understand and detect general patterns of news, Schudson underlines that a more specific look at the dynamic conditions in the workplace is needed to understand whether and why they produce conformity, submission or a contestation by journalists in

the newsroom and how organizational elements in the media institution restrict journalists (Schudson, 1989, pp. 267-269).

Here, Schudson (1989) says, the sociological approach enters into the picture, focusing more on the occupational perspective, daily routine, and institutional and social relationships in places news is produced. The interactions between the political bureaucracy and journalists and between reporters and editors seem to be crucial to understanding what factors are influential in the news-making process or, in other words, effect journalists who participate in the process of socially constructing the news (Schudson, 1989, pp. 270-274). Schudson (1989), however, argues that the third alternative, which is culturological or anthropological, is the most fruitful (pp. 275-277).

The anthropological approach focuses on “the constraining force of broad cultural symbol systems regardless of the details of organizational and occupational routines” (Schudson, 1989, p. 266). These systems have power in news production, as this school suggests. Schudson argues this school provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors restricting journalists within media institutions and during news-making because it includes various sources of power that interact in the social realm which consequently enables the researcher to consider various ruling groups that restrict journalists in making the news. Schudson gives the examples of racism and patriarchy in this comprehensiveness (Schudson, 1989, pp. 276-279).

Breed (1955 b) provides a structural analysis of the internal freedom of journalists based on a more occupational focus. Breed (1955 b) examines how executives maintain the conformity of new journalists and staffers in the newsroom to the publishing policy determined by the publisher or owner. By grounding his analysis

in a functionalist frame of Merton's sociology (Breed, 1955 b, p. 328), he explains how a newsroom, as a social organization based on a certain hierarchy, secures and maintains such a conformity.

He elaborates on the process in two parts: the process of learning the policy and structural causes for conforming to the policy. First, Breed explains how staffers, who are in a lower position in the hierarchy, learn the publishing policy. This learning process includes a variety of socialization processes in the workplace instead of an open and direct exposition and explanation of the policy by executives (Breed, 1955 b, pp. 328-329). Second, Breed (1955 b) explores various structural causes by looking at the individual position and ambition of the staffer and the structural properties of the newsroom (pp. 329-332).

Breed (1955b) presents six factors that push staffers to conform: (1) sanctions and institutional authority (especially the fear of them rather than their actual occurrence); (2) subordinates' feeling of esteem for their superiors; (3) staffers' career goals and mobility aspirations; (4) journalists' professional association's disinterest in, and even avoidance of, the newsroom's internal policies; (5) the pleasure staffers receive while they perform their jobs because of the feeling of in-groupness, finding the operations the profession requires from them interesting and non-financial perquisites (such as a sense of prestige from performing their job); and (6) evaluating the news as the most valuable element of the job with a disregard for other matters related to the norms of the profession that might put the policy in question (Breed, 1955 b, pp. 329-331). Briefly, Breed (1955 b) states that "the cultural patterns of the newsroom produce results insufficient for wider democratic needs. Any important change toward a more

‘free and responsible press’ must stem from various possible pressures on the publisher, who epitomizes the policy making and coordinating role” (p. 335).

In another piece, Breed (1955 a) shows how the decisions journalists take in the news-making process are influenced by not only the hierarchy within the newspaper but also by the hierarchy among newspapers in terms of circulation numbers. He emphasizes an arterial pattern: journalists from small newspapers look toward, read and are influenced by the big newspapers. This leads to an arterial pattern in selecting topics, and even styles. Here, Brand argues that the process is not mere copying but rather an occupational routine that has an influence on journalists and leads to standardization, noting that reading newspapers is an indispensable part of editors’ activities (Breed, 1955 a).

Furthermore, the arterial effect is also related to career preferences of journalists; those working for small newspapers generally aspire to work for the big newspapers in the future. Thus big newspapers represent a justified, credible standard for preparing a newspaper. Hence, Breed finds this arterial pattern from big newspapers to small ones to be another important factor that affects journalists in performing their jobs. This shows that the monopolistic nature of ownership is not the sole problem, there are journalistic processes—including the arterial pattern— that push editors and journalists toward a more undemocratic way of making the news. Because of this arterial pattern, a small number of big newspapers have an effect on many newspapers with small circulation numbers. This seems to further the harmful effects of the monopolized ownership structure on democracy (Breed, 1955 a).

To sum up, liberal pluralist views and critical views are two major and opposing approaches that elaborate on the relationship between ownership and media freedom.

While the former believes the pluralistic composition of media, which mirrors the nature of society, is best sustained through market mechanisms, the latter insists monopolization is a reality of capitalism and the logical conclusion of the inherent drive toward accumulation rather than a surprise. The former argues for the importance of journalistic autonomy, which is ensured by professionalism, and that managerial power protects the internal freedom of journalists from owners. The latter criticizes the harmful effects of the ownership structure on media freedom, considers media managers and elites to be in the service of owners' interests and declares professionalism a deception that lessens the power of critical media and makes it serve the property owning class.

While there are other ways to analyze the factors related to the freedom of journalists within the media institution, the main discussion of the thesis will be between the liberal pluralist and critical political economy approaches. The reason is question specific; this research seeks to determine the influence of the ownership structure on media freedom and the internal freedom of media workers. After analyzing the case of big media in Turkey, I will evaluate which school provides a more useful frame to examine the case of Turkey and why.

#### 2.4 Studies on Turkey

The media market in Turkey is a concentrated one in terms of ownership. Media monopolization, including horizontal and vertical, cross-media ownership and cross-industry ownership<sup>1</sup> are accepted as a fact with consensus between many different

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<sup>1</sup> Horizontal expansion means a conglomerate owns various products in the same specific market, for example it owns various newspapers. Vertical expansion means that the conglomerate also owns its own distribution company. Cross media ownership is related to the monopolization of media such that from Tv

authors (Sönmez M. , 2010; Adaklı, 2006; Özsever, 2004; Topuz, Kaya, Kurtböke, & Örki, 1989; Sözeri & Güney, 2011; Kaya, 2016, pp. 273,276; Kuyucu, 2012). Media freedom and its relationship with the state and capital is a topic that has attracted increasing interest, especially after 1980 with the neoliberal transformation of the Turkish economy. In the following decade, concentration of media ownership intensified. Thus from 1990 to the 2000s, various studies (Kaya, 2016; Kuyucu, 2012; Adaklı, 2006; Özsever, 2004; Tılıç, 1998; 2001; Sönmez, 2010; Yeşil, 2016) focused on monopolization in the Turkish media and its effects on the way media functions.

These various studies have had a variety of interests and emphases, though many point out a number of issues in analyzing the effects of a monopolized media ownership structure on media freedom. These issues include economic details and causes of monopolization and its relationship with the neoliberalization of Turkey; a description and analysis of post-1980 non-journalist media owners; the influences and strategies of the state in this monopolization process; the state-media relationship due to the business operations of market-dominant multifaceted media conglomerates in various sectors; the transformation of working relationships within media institutions; professionalism under the monopoly capitalistic ownership structure of media; the effect of owners' interests on journalism; and the influence of the ownership structure on the unionization of journalists. Thus, the review will be a classification of studies based on their primary areas of emphasis among these common points. The three categories will be general-evaluative, technical-economic, and journalism-oriented from the political economy

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to newspapers, various sub-sectors of media are dominated by few conglomerates. Cross industry refers to the fact that these conglomerates have also non-media businesses.

perspective. The third category includes a specific subcategory in which studies place a stronger emphasis on evaluating union problems.

The first category consists of studies that evaluate each of these aspects in a balanced yet concise way. Topuz (1973) seems to be a typical example. He evaluates changes and continuities in the social, political, economic and other structural conditions that affected the freedom of journalists in Turkey, from the late imperial period to the late twentieth century, through an analysis of the legal framework, political culture and the process of conglomeration as fundamental factors (Topuz, 1973; 1996).

Another example of the general evaluative category is an article by Christensen (2007), which emphasizes three characteristics within the Turkish media system that endanger media freedom: monopolized media ownership, the successful efforts of media moguls to de-unionize journalists, and legislation that worsens the conditions for news workers. Christensen argues that the danger to media freedom from a combination of market mechanisms, media moguls in oligopolistic markets and the state is neither a paradox nor a surprise when the state is both patrimonial and clientelist and when the instrumentalization of media is more beneficial in monetary terms than performing journalism for the benefit of a democratic structure for media owners (Christensen, 2007).

Christensen (2007) further criticizes the consideration of the Turkish media system as an idiosyncratic case, noting studies about the media system of Turkey that show its similarities to states in Southeastern Europe, especially Spain and Greece, and certain Latin American countries (Christensen, 2007). Briefly, he argues that a three-pronged attack occurred against free media: monopolization, a restrictive legal

environment that suppress freedom of speech, and weakening organizational capacity of journalists by government and media owners (Christensen, 2007).

The second category consists of studies with more of a focus on detailed economic analysis. Görgülü (1991); Sönmez (2010); and Kuyucu (2012); and Sözeri and Güney (2011) are four significant examples. Their analyses of the effect of a monopolized media ownership structure on the way media functions are more economic-oriented.

Görgülü (1991) provides the first detailed economic analysis of monopolization of print media of Turkey. Focusing on 1970-1990, he examines social and economic factors, especially those related to the reading habits of society, and the increase in the costs of production in the printed press that resulted in monopolization of the newspaper sector (Görgülü, 1991). He provides a statistical demonstration of this monopolization through circulation numbers and market shares along with a description of the new non-journalist owners of the press (Görgülü, 1991).

Sönmez (1992) evaluates the economic environment of Turkey with a specific emphasis on the monopolized structure of various sectors in the early nineties. In this study, he also touches upon the dominant conglomerates in the media sectors (Sönmez, 1992). In a more recent study, Sönmez (2010) also analyzes the transformation of the working relationship due to structural changes in the media economics of Turkey, particularly from 1980. Big investment groups who are involved in various sectors, like energy, construction, tourism, and banking, dominate the media market. He explains how this transformation affects the de-unionization and alienation of journalists (Sönmez, 2010). With a closer look at the economic properties of each sub-sector of media, newspaper, broadcast, book and magazine, Sönmez underlines the rise of

İstanbul over Turkey in the media economy through monopolization and industrialization of the sector (Sönmez M. , 2010).

In another work, Sönmez (2003) analyzes an essential division in the monopolized media of Turkey that occurred under the influence of the financial and economic crisis in 2001 between one conglomerate, Doğan Media, and all others. He considers this polarization and its reflection into the opposing political positioning of different media conglomerates between 2001 and 2003 (Sönmez M. , 2003).

Kuyucu's (2012) study is more of a structural analysis of the media economy in Turkey, yet it is the one that includes the most details about the change in ownership structure, underlying reasons for monopolization, shares of big groups in the media market over time, and changes in the revenues and costs of various dominant groups and branches of the media. The study covers the period between the mid-twentieth century and the early 2010s (Kuyucu, 2012). Sözeri and Güney's (2011) study looks at the more limited period between 2010 and 2011 but still gives a detailed evaluation of the economic picture of monopolization along with related issues such as the de-unionization and job insecurity of journalists.

Journalism-oriented studies, as the last category, do not differ from the previous categories in terms of their examination of the general environment of journalism that produce problems and obstacles for media freedom. Their analyses, however, contain a more journalistic focus, with industry-specific concerns and processes added to the political economic perspective that is shared with the previous category. They particularly emphasize journalistic practices that are endangered by capitalist interests and the ownership structure, with an analysis of journalists' experiences and various types of content analyses. They also elaborate more on the question of internal freedom

of journalists. Adaklı (2006), Kaya (2016), Yeşil (2016), Özsever (2004), Tılıç (1998; 2001) are some authors who provide such studies.

Adaklı (2006), for example, provides a genuinely elaborate, insightful and detailed analysis of the question of control in the Turkish media from a political economy perspective. She explicitly underlines the transformation of Turkish media, including both its continuities and its novelties, with the neoliberal turn in the Turkish economy. The study provides a comprehensive description of media actors, from media managers to media owners, along with their social relationships and personal, economic, and cultural backgrounds. She analyzes the monopolized media of Turkey through new professionalization, a new division of labor and its effects on the way corporations control media production (Adaklı, 2006).

In addition to its concern with describing media economics, this study evaluates the outcome of the political economic conditions in media institutions on journalists. Briefly, Adaklı (2006) provides a detailed description of the following three points related to the question of media control and the ownership structure from a political economy perspective: the changing characteristics of media owners, changes in the way media institutions are governed; and changing relationships within media institutions.

In other, relatively short pieces, Adaklı (2010; 2015) underlines multifaceted media conglomerates' instrumentalization of the media and its effect on the state-media relationship and media freedom. While sectors other than media can provide more tangible benefits, media may be instrumentalized solely to create closer ties with the government; with a one-party government for more than a decade beginning in the early 2000s, this instrumentalization has created further state oppression of the media through the government's economic stick and carrot policy (Adaklı, 2015). More specific to the

first years of AKP rule, between 2002 and 2008, Adaklı (2010) also elaborates on the uneasy relationship between one major part of the media conglomerates and the government, along with the government's restructuring of the Turkish media and its ownership structure to an ideologically more Islamist or pro-government one.

Tılıç (1998) evaluates the factors that affect the way journalists perform their jobs in a comparative study of the conditions of journalism in Turkey and Greece. His field research is based on interviews with journalists from both countries (Tılıç, 1998). He finds that the following major factors negatively affect journalism in these two countries: the state-media relationship, concentration of media ownership, organizational capacity or incapacity of journalists, job security or insecurity, competitiveness, and nationalist ideology. He also finds that in market conditions, journalists become more and more alienated during their professional careers (Tılıç, 1998). Lastly, he remarks that editorial independence is not solely eroded by direct pressure from the state. The hegemony of corporate logic mark the profession through a few dominant monopolies in the sector. Editorial independence is harmed by the capitalist interests of media owners (Tılıç, 1998).

In another study, Tılıç (2001) focuses solely on Turkey. He explores whether journalists are more prone to support the status quo or change, their positioning between nationalist ideology and peace, and the effects of tabloidization, underlining how media is in the grip of a monopolized ownership structure (Tılıç, 2001).

Bilge Yeşil's studies, a book published in 2016 and an article published in 2018, constitute another example for this category. Yeşil (2016) conceptualizes a frame to understand and analyze the problems of media in Turkey under neoliberal authoritarianism. She argues that neoliberalization of the economy requires neither the

democratization of the state nor free media production (Yeşil, 2016, pp. 10-14). She points out that during the period of AKP government, political pressure on journalists and media institutions underwent a negative qualitative and quantitative change in comparison with the previous governments (Yeşil, 2016, p. 92).

Yeşil takes the whole AKP period, from 2002 to 2018, as a continuous line through which the neoliberal authoritarian state increases in the level of despotism and creates a more monolithic structure of media that publishes creates pro-government materials (Yeşil, 2018). She states that the period between 2002 and 2007 was a calmer period regarding the relationship between the ruling party and mainstream media (Yeşil, 2016). She adds that the situation worsened after three events: the Gezi protests (2013), division within the ruling bloc (2013), and failed coup d'état attempt (2016) (Yeşil, 2016).

Yeşil (2016) provides a combination of the political, legal and economic aspects of media freedom and details direct and indirect ways that political power oppresses media, grounding her analysis from a political economic perspective. In addition to the legal framework and judiciary processes, economic and political methods used by the AKP to control the media are noted as: the instrumentalization of the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund to reshuffle ownership structure; channeling of state advertising to sympathetic outlets; using public banks for such advertising expenditures and provision of cheap credit to such outlets; appointing managers from the circle of the leader of the party to mainstream media; and tax fines (Yeşil, 2016).

The last example of the journalism-oriented critical approach in media studies is that of Oğuzhan Taş (2012) who explains the function of professionalism in journalism in the Turkish media. Taking a critical position in his evaluation, Taş (2012) argues a

similar set of claims to those of McChesney (2003). Professionalism is an ideological tool which functions simultaneously in two ways: downplaying criticisms against capitalist influence on media production, because of the capitalist interests of media owners, and helping make the process of news-making conform to a publishing policy that accords with both the private interests of the owner and the views of the dominant class (Taş, 2012). He demonstrates the ideological influence of professionalism over media content through a specific focus on the Doğan media conglomerate and explains how ethical norms are indeed constructed to serve profitability (Taş, 2012). One of the two examples he gives to prove his point is the promotion war among media conglomerates during the 1990s. Journalists justified the promotions as in service to the public responsibility of satisfying the needs of people, though the main concern was the market struggle for more profit by gaining readers. The second example he provides is from the early 2010s. Big media published and broadcasted scandalous news about certain politicians related to their intimate relationships (Taş, 2012). As Taş (2012) shows, the professional and ethical codes of the Doğan conglomerate did not prevent a serious disregard for privacy without a relationship to the public good.

The last category is a subcategory of the third, critical studies on media ownership structure with a specific focus on news-making processes. Here, the extra emphasis is on unionization and the organizational capacity problems of journalists. Atılgan (2001) provides a detailed description of the transformation of legal rights of journalists throughout the history of the Republic of Turkey, with a specific interest in the negative effects of conglomeration and monopolization on the unionization level of journalists. Atilla Özsever's (2004) analysis is a more political economic one. He explains how monopolization restricts journalists in media with a specific focus on the

transformation of journalists' organizational power. The harmful effect of monopolization on media freedom is analyzed in relation to the organizational power or, more correctly, organizational weakness of journalists (Özsever, 2004).

With this study, I aim to provide an extension to the debate between the liberal pluralist and political economy schools. This extension to the existing literature will focus on the conglomerate media in Turkey, mostly from the 1980s to 2010s, to show which school's claims hold more explanatory value for the internal freedom of journalists in the Turkish case.

CHAPTER 3  
THE EMERGENCE OF THE CONTEMPORARY MEDIA OWNERSHIP  
STRUCTURE IN TURKEY

This chapter provides background information for the oligopolistic structure of big media and the domination of multifaceted conglomerates in Turkey. In the post-1980 period, the conglomeration of media in Turkey meant that capitalist owned conglomerates that both dominate the media sector and own corporations in sectors such as finance, energy, and construction became the new rule. In this chapter, I show that conglomeration of the media leads to a loss of media freedom in Turkey. The interests of the media owner and his/her dependence on the state to protect his/her business interests in other fields results in increasingly negative effects of the media ownership structure on media freedom.

There are two points of clarification in this research that should be noted. First, capitalist domination over the media sector did not emerge after 1980. With respect to “big press” and in terms of ideology, capitalist dominance over “big press” has long been a fact in the general sense. The difference is that the nature of companies and owners of media changed after 1980. Before the 1980s, the leading authors, themselves journalists, were also the owners of the newspapers. However, this changed in the post-1980 period, and the owners are no longer journalists but large-scale investors who also own corporations in non-media sectors. This has increased the level of capitalist control over the media, making journalists increasingly dependent on owners. In this new period, media has become a way for capitalists to forge closer ties with the government and benefits from them. The internal good of journalism, revealing the truth, becomes

more easily replaced by the external benefits of the owner, which does not prioritize a concern for journalism or consideration of media ethics. The new owners instrumentalize their media without hesitation, which works against the internal freedom of media workers.

The second note is that the political powers ruling the state seem to control “big” media successfully. However, this power to control goes hand in hand with the rise of capitalist dominance over media. The state or, more precisely, the different political powers of different periods plays a substantive role in this transformation. The capitalist dominance is a product of the capitalist system that favors capitalist interests and which is fostered and empowered by the state itself. During the 1980s, liberalization of the economy and elimination of subsidies coupled with an extreme increase in paper prices, leading to concentration of the media ownership structure and acting as a mechanism to discipline media owners.<sup>2</sup>

Even though the post 2010s exhibit a more unilateral dominance of the political side of the table over media actors, this chapter will first provide a periodization of media ownership structures. The recent government clampdown on media will be elaborated at the end of the chapter.

### 3.1 Media in Turkey: A description of newspapers and prominent journalists

Mustafa Sönmez (2010) denotes three different stages for Turkish media in terms of the relations of production: the newspaper stage (between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the 1970s), industrial media stage (the 1980s and 1990s) and media industry complex stages

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<sup>2</sup> Özal, a former prime minister and president of the republic, declared his wish that there would only be two and a half newspapers in Turkey (Alan, 2015, p. 125)

(1990s onwards). Sönmez (2010) states that there are three characteristics of the newspaper stage. First, the lead writer and editor-in-chief is the boss<sup>3</sup> and has journalistic concerns. Second, media convergence is not realized. Third, the media consists of printed media. The relationship of production is appropriate for more horizontal relations among those who participate in the production process. Adaklı (2006) underlines that the main characteristics of this period are print media, small scale production, and artisanship. There is a low level of capitalization and technical development in the production process. Journalists working in print media were expected to be experienced enough to have developed various skills and journalism—mostly opinion journalism—was more of an intellectual enterprise. The working relations were more horizontal compared to the subsequent periods (p. 109). This period is relatively more open for the functioning of journalism as a profession protected from external economic influences in comparison with the post-1980 era.

Even though Adaklı (2006) indicates that the capitalist influence on newspapers began in the late 1940s,<sup>4</sup> Sönmez (2010) underlines that it was in the 1980s, the media

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<sup>3</sup> Prior to the mid-twentieth century in Turkey, journalist bosses who owned the newspaper and, at the same time, were the lead authors of the newspaper include: Yunus Nadi (*Cumhuriyet*), Necmettin Sadak (*Akşam*), Halil Lütfü Dördüncü, Zekeriya & Sabiha Sertel (*Tan*), Ahmet Emin Yalman (*Vatan*), Ali Naci Karacan (*Milliyet*), Cihat Baban ve Ziya Ebüzziya (*Tasvir*), Hakkı, Tarık ve Asım Us (*Vakit*), Cemalettin Saraçoğlu (*Yeni Sabah*), Selim Ragıp Emeç (*Son Posta*), Etem İzzet Benice (*Son Telgraf*), Faruk Gürtüna (*Hergün*), Şevket Bilgin (*Yeni Asır*), Sedat Simavi (*Hürriyet*), Falih Rıfkı Atay (*Dünya*) (Kuyucu, 2012, p. 243).

<sup>4</sup> Parallel to Adaklı's periodization, Hıfzı Topuz (1996) notes that the first attempt by a non-journalist capitalist to own a newspaper was Sefa Kılıçoğlu in 1948 (pp. 159-160). Malik Yolaç and Habib Edip Törehan are two other examples of business people of the same period who bought or founded newspapers. Malik Yolaç, born into a rich family, was a business person, former deputy and former minister. Before becoming a deputy and minister, he bought the *Akşam* newspaper in 1957. After 1965, the circulation numbers of the newspaper started to decrease, and he had to sell the newspaper in 1971 (Adaklı, 2006, pp. 133-135). Habib Edip Törehan was a lawyer who had also imported wool for a while from Germany. Before founding *Yeni İstanbul* in 1948, he had been a correspondent for *Cumhuriyet* newspaper (Çankaya, 1969, p. 1341). His career as a newspaper boss lasted an even shorter period of time than Yolaç's. He sold the newspaper in the late 1950s (Adaklı, 2006, p. 133). These three, Kılıçoğlu, Yolaç and Törehan, were the first three capitalists to enter the printed press sector in the history of the republic, yet none of them were as influential as journalist newspaper owners, e.g., Simavi and Karacan.

industry period, that media institutions became conglomerates.<sup>5</sup> In the 1980s, when liberalization, privatization, and deregulation became the de facto mottos of the Turkish government, media companies started to expand their business to other sectors and big capital owners entered the media sector.<sup>6</sup> Advertising revenues became an essential revenue item and technological improvements deepened the division of labor, consequently increasing both the level of owner control over the editorial board and the commodification of media products along with establishing more hierarchical work relationships. Media owners developed ties based on mutual political and economic interests with those holding political power. This was the period in which commercialization started to increase rapidly. The third and contemporary stage – media industries complex – refers to the period in which technological advances reached its contemporary level (Sönmez M. , 2010).

In the 1940s, the leading newspapers in terms of circulation numbers were *Cumhuriyet*, *Ulus*, *Tan*, *Yeni Sabah*, *Vatan* and *Zafer* (Topuz, 1996, p. 172). The development of *Hürriyet* (founded in 1948 by Sedat Simavi) and *Milliyet* (founded in 1950 by Ali Naci Karacan) newspapers in the twentieth century parallel the history of industrialization of the media in Turkey (Adaklı, 2006, p. 129).<sup>7</sup> Adaklı (2006) underlines two primary characteristics of these newspapers. Firstly, the owners and

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Adaklı ascribes this difference to these two journalist bosses' ambition and persistence in continuing and sustaining journalism as their career, along with their serious professionalism (Adaklı, 2006, p. 135).

<sup>5</sup> The new scene was marked by the replacement of import substitution growth with an open economy and export-led growth strategy. The decrees of 24 January 1980, and military coup on 12 September 1980 were significant moments in the initiation of this radical transformation of economic policy (Gürçan & Mete, 2017, p. 70; Sönmez S. , 2009, p. 25).

<sup>6</sup> Some important examples in the post-1980 era of the entrance of banking capital or other non-media businesses to the media sector and the expansion of media conglomerates to the finance sector are Kozanoğlu-Çavuşoğlu, Asil Nadir, Dinç Bilgin, Uzan, Karamehmet, Erol Aksoy, and Aydın Doğan (Adaklı, 2006; Sönmez M. , 2003; Görgülü, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> The first newspaper founded with the name *Milliyet* is not the same *Milliyet* known by the general reader, thus I directly start with the second and better known one.

founders of both newspapers belonged to the bourgeoisie, yet they preferred journalism as a career. Secondly they are leading in technological improvement. *Hürriyet* in particular, was a leading actor in terms of technological investments in publishing and product differentiation from the beginning of its publishing history. From the very beginning, *Hürriyet* exhibited new types of products, using the advanced technology of its time, as well as using chauvinist and anti-communist language and publishing policy (Adaklı, 2006, pp. 114,121).

With the improvement in the distribution capacity of newspapers in the 1950s,<sup>8</sup> popular newspapers emerged (Özükan, 1983, p. 230). *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* increased their circulation to a hundred thousand in the late 1950s (Gevgilili, 1983, p. 222). Along with these two mass-circulation newspapers, Ilıcak's *Tercüman* – a right wing newspaper–and Nadi's *Cumhuriyet*<sup>9</sup>–a left-wing Kemalist newspaper–are other influential newspapers of the period.

The 1960s saw social movements by oppressed classes in Turkey.<sup>10</sup> Parallel to this social and political vibrancy, opinion journalism was effective in the first half of the decade (Topuz, 2003, p. 238). Abdi İpekçi, appointed as general manager despite his young age in 1954, İpekçi became head author of *Milliyet* in 1961, remaining in that position until his assassination in 1979. The son of Ali Naci Karacan, Ercüment Karacan, who studied engineering and worked for the İstanbul Directorate of Water became the owner of *Milliyet* after his father. His career plans did not include journalism

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<sup>8</sup> Highway improvements during the 1950s seem to play an important role in this (Özükan, 1983, p. 230).

<sup>9</sup> The founder of *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, Nadir Nadi, his son and the second boss at *Cumhuriyet*, Yunus Nadi, the founder of *Milliyet* newspaper, Ali Naci Karacan, and the founder of *Hürriyet* newspaper, Sedat Simavi, are all alumni of *Lycée de Galatasaray*.

<sup>10</sup> For instance, the Workers' Party of Turkey, founded by unionized workers as a socialist party, entered the parliament for the first time in the history of the republic following the 1965 election.

(Adaklı, 2006, p. 131); however, after his father unexpectedly passed away, he found himself the new boss of the newspaper. This unexpected and unfortunate event resulted in Abdi İpekçi easily taking control of *Milliyet*. Adaklı (2006) notes that *Milliyet* was published with exceptional media professionalism during this time (p. 115). The end of the Karacan period was marked by another unfortunate event, İpekçi's assassination, a critical moment that symbolizes the transition of journalism from a period of artisanship to a more industrialized one. Adaklı (2006) underlines the importance of the close relationship of these two newspapers with the state,<sup>11</sup> along with their prioritization of professionalism and technical development:

*Hürriyet* and *Milliyet*, which were always in cohesion with governments, thanks to the advantages coming from this web of relations, increased their circulation numbers by a vast scale. On the other hand, these newspapers, in terms of their organizational structures and professionalization, also played a leading role. In the course of the history of newspapers that were managed by professional journalist families, it is seen that technicism shaped their world perception/view. From the owners of newspaper to the heirs, and from them to professional managers, all those in a position of decision making lay emphasis upon the development of the technical infrastructure. (p. 115) (See Appendix A, 1)

The 1970s constitute a transition period of the Turkish economy and media sector;<sup>12</sup> at the same time monopoly capitalism emerged and big conglomerates began dominating the economy, there was also a merger between banking capital and industrial capital<sup>13</sup> (Silier, 1976, p. 13). Kazgan (1983) asserts that from 1970 to 1981, the number

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<sup>11</sup> The Burla family was said to be the creditor for Simavi to found *Hürriyet* (Adaklı, 2006, pp. 122-123), while for Karacan, it was the government directly (Kuyucu, 2012, pp. 325-326). When Arçelik—the biggest white goods company in Turkey – was established by Koç family, the Burla family held 20% of its shares (Güngör, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> According to Gevgilili (1989), the process of monopolization began in the 1960s, but the dominance of big conglomerates and firms in the economy became apparent in the 1970s (pp. 73-75).

<sup>13</sup> Finance capital is a term used by Hilferding, which implies close ties and even mergers between industrial capital and banking capital, to indicate the monopoly stage of capitalism (Hilferding, 1981). For a relatively concise explanation of the role of finance capital in monopoly capitalism, see Hilferding (1981, pp. 223-226).

of firms owned by particular groups in the top hundred industrial firms of Turkey increased as follows: Koç from six to eight, Sabancı from three to seven, Çukurova from zero to four, and İş Bankası from one to four (p. 2401).<sup>14</sup> In 1971, the owners of such conglomerates founded TÜSİAD (Türkiye Sanayi ve İşadamları Derneği—the Turkish Industry and Business Association) in order to defend their interests more effectively. Öztürk takes this as a sign of expansion of the monopolistic nature of capitalism in Turkey (Öztürk, 2010).<sup>15</sup>

The immediate effects of this rising monopoly of capitalism in media ownership started to appear in the late 1970s. The first long-lasting – and even longest-lasting – media mogul who entered the sector was Aydın Doğan. His first action was buying *Milliyet* in 1979. This is a very notable event in the history of Turkish press, since one of the two most circulated newspapers was for the first time owned by a person who initially had nothing to do with journalism.<sup>16</sup> Aydın Doğan began his career as a supplier of automotive spare parts. When the Koç group began working with Italian automotive company Fiat, Aydın Doğan’s acquaintance with Koç led his business to grow. He became one of the dealers and distributors for Koç Group and took part in the manufacturing of the Koç Magirus truck. With the support of Demirel<sup>17</sup> in the 1970s, he

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<sup>14</sup> See also Öztürk (2010, p. 116).

<sup>15</sup> There is agreement within the literature that the 1970s mark the establishment of monopolies in Turkey (Küçük, 1980, p. 471; Öztürk, 2010, pp. 88,89,92,116-118; Arıkan & Akad, 1976, pp. 20,21,25,44; Adaklı, 2006, pp. 135-136). Tekeli, Aksoy and Kepenek (1981) demonstrate that with regard to the private sector, in 66 out of 115 sectors, the one-firm concentration ratio is greater than 25%. In 106 of 115 sectors, the four-firm concentration ratio is greater than 30% (pp. 40,42). In 1979, in the metal industry, in 65 out of 370 products, one firm had 100% market share. In 82 of them, one firm had over 50% market share. In 76 of them, at most five firms controlled the whole supply. In 120 of them, the market shares of the top four firms were over 50%. Öztürk concludes that 343 of 371 products are produced in monopolistic conditions (Bağnaçık, 1983, pp. 37,134; Öztürk, 2010, p. 116). Öztürk also adds that in Marxist terminology, monopolistic conditions and monopolized sectors or economy includes cases defined as duopolies and oligopolies by mainstream economics (Öztürk, 2010, p. 116).

<sup>16</sup> Aydın Doğan is the son of a former mayor of Kelkit, İrfani Bey (Karaca, 2003, p. 33).

<sup>17</sup> A former prime minister and president of republic of Turkey.

took part in the administration of the chamber of commerce and industry. In 1978, he became the head distributor of Unilever (Kuyucu, 2012, pp. 597-598).<sup>18</sup> Doğan himself appeared to be aware of the potential for criticism when he entered the media sector as a non-journalist. In order to alleviate the anticipated reactions, he first bought 25% of the shares of *Milliyet* in 1979. Then, one year later, he became the only owner of the newspaper. Kuyucu (2012) notes that Doğan's purchase of *Milliyet* symbolizes the beginning of industrialization in Turkish media (p. 589).<sup>19</sup> Doğan group is the classical example of vertical and horizontal expansion along with ultra-cross ownership (Adaklı, 2006, pp. 264-265).

Doğan entered the TV sector when Kanal D began to broadcast in 1993. This is a critical moment in cross media ownership of the group. Another action of the group to expand in media regarding the printed press was buying *Hürriyet* from Erol Simavi in 1994.<sup>20</sup> The growth period of the Turkish economy between 1989 and 1993 was followed by an economic crisis in 1994. The crisis led to the elimination of some actors from different sectors. For others, however, it indicated an opportunity to become more dominant. In a sense, this is what Schumpeter calls creative destruction (Schumpeter, 2003, pp. 81-86) and what Marx calls depreciation of capital (Marx, 1968, p. 496). Both see crisis and monopolization as twin products of capitalism, and the former destroys the way in which the economy functions in order to restructure itself. When it comes to the

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<sup>18</sup> He asked for help from his close friend İnan Kırış, CEO of Koç group at that time, to convince Ercüment Karacan to sell *Milliyet* to him. Kırış asked for help from his and Karacan's mutual friend Vedat Ural (Karaca, 1995, pp. 272-273).

<sup>19</sup> Sönmez (2010) notes that the beginning of the industrialization of media was eased by the import substitution policy (p. 36). The example of Doğan confirms this claim as Doğan significantly benefitted from this policy. His network connections with those who applied this policy or benefitted from it—Demirel, Koç, Kırış – made his professional career and entrance in media possible.

<sup>20</sup> 1994 marks the end of the oldest journalist family in the media sector.

Doğan group, the crisis represented an opportunity; they had a huge amount of cash that enabled them to expand their businesses during the crisis. Mustafa Sönmez (2003) quotes the coordinator of the group, Barmanberk: “We welcomed the crisis with a significant amount of cash, and our cash was mostly invested in short-term financial instruments. Most firms were experiencing financing difficulties. We had money and we bought the *Hürriyet* newspaper in that period” (p. 45).<sup>21</sup> 1994 is also the year the Doğan group bought Dış Bank, and they provide an example of Sönmez’s statement (2003, p. 10) regarding the merger between finance and the media sector.

There are other business people who expanded their investments into the media in the process. Kozanoğlu and Çavuşoğlu, who were in the construction business, had accumulated notable wealth from their activities in Libya since the late 1970s and owned Odibank and Hisarbank (Sönmez M. , 2003, p. 36). In 1982, they founded *Güneş* newspaper. Mehmet Ali Yılmaz took over ownership following the Kastelli Crisis (Sönmez M. , 2003, p. 37). Cypriot businessman Asil Nadir provides a paradigmatic example of the ambition of finance capital to expand into the media sector.<sup>22</sup> As the owner of Poly Peck International—a textile company—he bought *Güneş* from Mehmet Ali Yılmaz and Gelişim Grubu publications from Ercan Arıklı in 1989. More importantly, the year before, he had bought the Veb Offset Group from Haldun Simavi. Haldun Simavi is the son of Sedat Simavi.<sup>23</sup> He had left his shares in *Hürriyet* to his brother Erol

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<sup>21</sup> “Biz krize ciddi cash ile girdik. Ve cash’imizi de kısa vadeli plasmada değerlendirdik... piyasada pazara birçok mal geldi. Şirketler finansman sıkıntısına girdi. Bizim paramız vardı o dönemde. *Hürriyet* gazetesini o dönemde aldık.”

<sup>22</sup> Özal, the then-prime minister, mediated Nadir’s entrance into media; his close relationship with Özal eased his rise in the sector (Adaklı, 2006, pp. 160,161).

<sup>23</sup> Before buying Veb offset, Nadir had bought Export and Import bank of Turkey (Adaklı, 2006, p. 161).

Simavi and founded the Veb Offset Group, which publishes *Günaydın* and *Tan* as nationwide newspapers as well as other local newspapers (Görgülü, 1991, pp. 37-38).

Dinç Bilgin exemplifies the expansion from the media sector to finance, which distinguishes him from other examples of that period. Bilgin was the son of the former owner of *Yeni Asır*—a local newspaper—and a journalist. Dinç Bilgin founded *Sabah* as a nationwide newspaper in 1985 (Kuyucu, 2012, pp. 368-369). The 1990s witnessed the market dominance of these two groups—Doğan and Bilgin—in the printed press. The circulation shares of their newspapers reached more than 70% (Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası, 1998, p. 129). In 1998, together with Cavit Çağlar, Bilgin bought Etibank<sup>24</sup> which had formerly been owned by the state. By 2000, Bilgin became the only owner of both Etibank and the Sabah media group (Sönmez M. , 2003, p. 97).

The Uzan family, who owned a bank and companies in the construction and energy sectors, was the first private broadcaster. Through a partnership between the Uzan family and Ahmet Özal—son of then-President of the Republic of Turkey Turgut Özal—a private TV channel began broadcasting in 1989. Adaklı notes that this was the first major step in the transformation from the printed press to broadcast media (Adaklı, 2006, p. 136). Karamahmet, the owner of Çukurova group, owned Yapı Kredi Bank and Pamukbank, was active in the construction business when he entered the media sector. In the 1990s, he incorporated Digitürk, bought Show TV from Erol Aksoy (Sönmez M. , 2003, p. 43), owned the *Bulvar*, *Tercüman*, *Güneş* and *Akşam* newspapers; in the 2000s, he also established SKYTürk newschannel.

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<sup>24</sup> Etibank was founded as a state bank in 1935 and privatized in 1998. In 2000, Bilgin also bought the shares of Çağlar.

To sum up, it should be noted that the influence of monopolies on the economy in the 1970s resulted in a new media structure dominated by big multifaceted conglomerates. This process went hand in hand with the neoliberal transformation and an extreme increase in paper prices. With the removal of subsidies, paper prices quadrupled in 1980 (Adaklı, 2006, p. 140).<sup>25</sup> Between 1980 and 1988, paper prices increased 79 times (Kuyucu, 2012, p. 90). This was not the only tool the state used to shape the new monopolistic media structure. Sönmez (2003) sorts out the sticks and the carrots used by the state: public advertisements and announcements, cheap credits from public banks and investment incentives (p. 34).

The 1980s witnessed a radical transformation in the economic policies of Turkey. Real wages and domestic demand decreased (Boratav, 2005, pp. 42,44), which implies a more uneven distribution of wealth and income. The role of the media, as seen by the state, was to legitimize liberalization policies and affect public opinion. Media that supported the liberal economic policies in their publication policies seemed to be rewarded. Interviewee no. 1 claims that:

After 1980, all was good for those in the press that supported liberalization and a liberal economy. The press seemed to recover with Özal, but obviously for those who found close bonds with the government – usually with center-right governments, the *Sabah*, *Milliyet*, and *Hürriyet* are the classical examples. The eighties was a good period in that sense; it was one of the best periods for making money [he implies the press having close ties with governments and supporting liberalization]. *Sabah*, for example, was founded in 1983. The eighties were marked by a more apolitical press, more yellow press, and the support of the press for a liberal economy. There was only freedom for the press in some areas, no freedom for the left (Interviewee no. 1) (See Appendix A, 2).

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<sup>25</sup> According to the numbers Görgülü gives, from 1980 to 1989, the increase in the overall price level–total inflation – was 21.6 times while the price of newsprint paper was 106.9 times and the price of newspapers were 80 times. The increase in the price of newspapers outweighs inflation but falls behind the price of paper. This means that newspaper consumption became more difficult for major segments of society (Görgülü, 1991, p. 62).

Table 2 shows examples of the incentives that were given to the relevant media institutions during this period. This is from Kuyucu’s (2012) notable study of media economics of Turkey; it shows the two leading groups in media who are also the leading ones in receiving incentives (p. 91).

Table 2. Incentives Given to Major Groups in Media

Name of the group	Incentive (Million \$)	Years 1983-1997	
		1983-1993	1994-1997
Basın Holding (Dinç Bilgin)	292.1	278.4	13.70
Doğan Holding (Aydın Doğan)	626.3	581.0	45.4
Total:	918.4	859.4	59.1

Source: Kuyucu (2012, p. 91)

Koloğlu (2009) underlines that the *Milliyet* newspaper was the most notable supporter of the Republican People’s Party (CHP) in the press during the late 1970s (Koloğlu, 2009, p. 63) and adds that the assassination of editor-in-chief Abdi İpekçi rendered the democratic left movement of that time vulnerable and “unprotected” against big capital owners (p. 63). At the time, CHP was positioned as a social democratic party yet never broke its connections with business circles. On the other hand, Koloğlu argues that with the absence of İpekçi, business groups could more easily use the big press for their cause. Koloğlu notes that business circles spent 2.1 million dollars to dominate the big press with ads and announcements assailing the Republican People Party’s economic policies and pressuring the government (Koloğlu, 2009, p. 63). However, it was not only the demand of big capital owners that led to the integration

between financial and industrial capital and the ownership of big press; the economic costs of the printed press also play a role in this transformation.

Even in the beginning of the 1970s, Topuz talked about a depression of the printed press, emphasizing three points: (1) the mismatch between the population and circulation numbers; (2) the mismatch between cost and price; and (3) the unbearable economic conditions for journalist bosses or newspaper owners who weren't big capital owners. The first two are structural and social factors that leads to monopolization by eliminating small scale firms from the sector or making them dependent upon big actors. The third point he makes about the depression of the printed press is a result of the first two. The first point he makes is the mismatch between the population and number of newspaper readers; while the former increases, the latter remains nearly constant. The second one is the mismatch between cost and price. While the costs were increasing at a rapid rate, there was not a proportional increase in newspaper prices. The third one is that newspapers were acquired by big economic powers because it was not possible for groups other than big capital owners to continue business in the context of these rising costs (Topuz, 1973, pp. 252-253). Monopolization of media in Turkey thus means that due to the large economies of scale, the media industry was becoming profitable only for big investment groups operating in many different sectors. This is demonstrated empirically by Görgülü (1991) for the period 1970 to 1990. He categorizes newspapers owned by five groups and others not owned by a group to compare them in terms of their market share (Görgülü, 1991). These groups are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Main Groups between 1970 and 1990

Group name	Media owned	Owner
Veb Group	<i>Tan, Günaydın</i> and some other newspapers	Haldun Simavi (until 1989) Asil Nadir
Hürriyet Group	<i>Hürriyet, Kelebek, Tempo, Hafta Sonu, Tv'de 7 Gün, Çarşaf, Elele</i> and some other newspapers and magazines	Erol Simavi (until 1994)
Bilgin Group	<i>Sabah, Bugün</i> and <i>Yeni Asır</i> , and other newspapers and magazines	Dinç Bilgin
Tercüman Group	<i>Tercüman</i> and <i>Bulvar</i> newspapers	Kemal Ilıcak
Newspapers that are not part of a group	<i>Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Güneş</i> <sup>26</sup> , <i>Türkiye</i>	Aydın Doğan's <i>Milliyet</i> , Kozanoğlu and Çavuşoğlu's <i>Güneş</i>

Source: Görgülü (1991)

The relative weight of “other newspapers” –smaller newspapers whose circulation numbers run between 10,000 and 60,000–is given in Figure 2. There is a continuous decline in the market share of “others” over the years (Görgülü, 1991, p. 39). This is the first aspect of monopolization which can be seen in Figure 2. I should also add the second aspect that some journalist owners in the big five had already started to lose ownership even before the 1990s (Simavi) while others expanded to the finance sector (Bilgin). This process was completed in the 1990s.

<sup>26</sup> *Güneş* newspaper passed from the fifth group to the fourth in 1989 when it was purchased by Nadir.

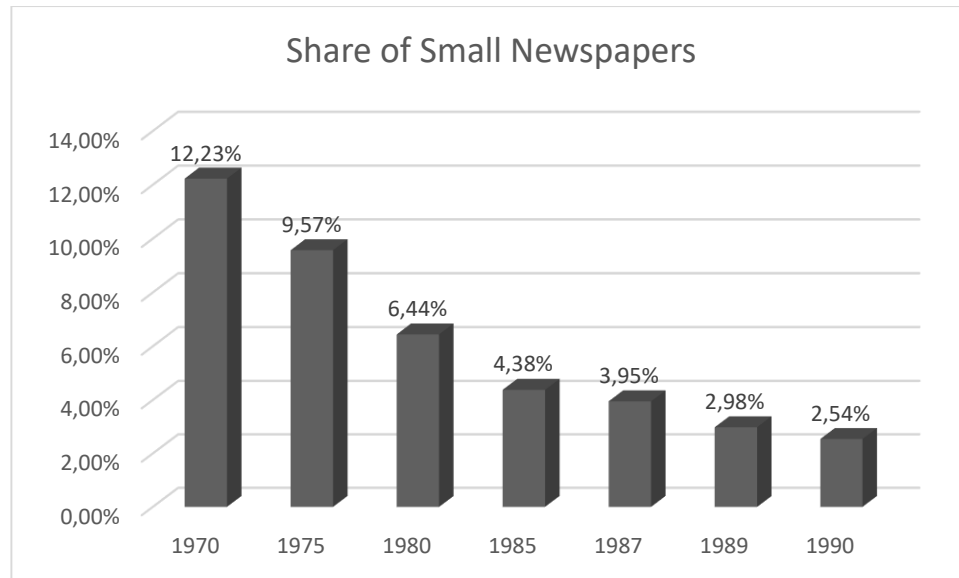


Fig. 2 Monopolization in the printed press

To highlight the transformation in the media sector, Sönmez (2010) notes that in 1990, just before the transition to electronic publishing, the printed press was dominated by two groups—Doğan and Bilgin – while Nadir and Aksoy withered away from the sector (p. 38). The 1990s witnessed a vertical expansion in the ownership. Doğan’s yay-sat and Bilgin’s United Press Distribution (Birleşik Basın Dağıtım) became two major nationwide distributors. Though it was short-lived, they even merged their distribution companies for a while. The other important change is that all owners of “big” newspapers were also owners of TV channels.<sup>27</sup> This means that horizontal expansion, along with cross and even ultra-cross ownership, increased as well. Bilgin and Doğan, in addition to trying to form a distribution cartel (Sönmez, 2003, p. 46), formed a gentleman’s agreement: they limited the transfer of employees between their media

<sup>27</sup> As was already mentioned, Kanal D started to broadcast in 1993; before Doğan, Uzan had already entered the sector. ATV is another example. It was also founded in 1993 by a partnership between the owner of the *Sabah* newspaper (Dinç Bilgin), the owner of Finansbank (Hüsnü Özyeğin), and the owner of the Çukurova Group (Karamahmet). Their respective shares are 40%, 30% and 30% (Kuyucu, 2012, p. 112).

properties. They cooperate on their employment policy and agree not to transfer journalists between each other, not hiring a journalist whom one of them has fired. This thus strengthened the domination of a few owners over journalists (Sönmez M. , 2010).

## 5.2 Media ownership structures in the new millennium: Transformation years

The 2000s started with an important economic crisis that created a turning point for the banking industry. Many actors were subject to mergers, acquisitions and liquidation. Obviously the media sector, which was already intertwined with the banking industry, was affected by this process. The Justice and Development Party's (AKP) moves to expand its control over media by reshuffling the ownership structure makes this moment more critical. The dominant media groups' shares<sup>28</sup> for 2001 (before the AKP effect) are shown in Figure 3.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The values are based on Kuyucu (2012).

<sup>29</sup> Doğan group's leading position is not an exception for 2001, but a rule for the 2000s until its departure from the market. For example, the group's market share of advertisement revenues for the year 2010 was 36% for TV, 58% for newspaper, 30% for magazine, and 54% in total. In each media type and in the total, its share is bigger than the sum of the two groups just after the Doğan conglomerate in the ranking (Sözeri & Güney, 2011, p. 46). For 2008 and 2009, its dominance in the TV sector was even more apparent with 43% and 41% shares, respectively (Kuyucu, 2012, pp. 269, 271).

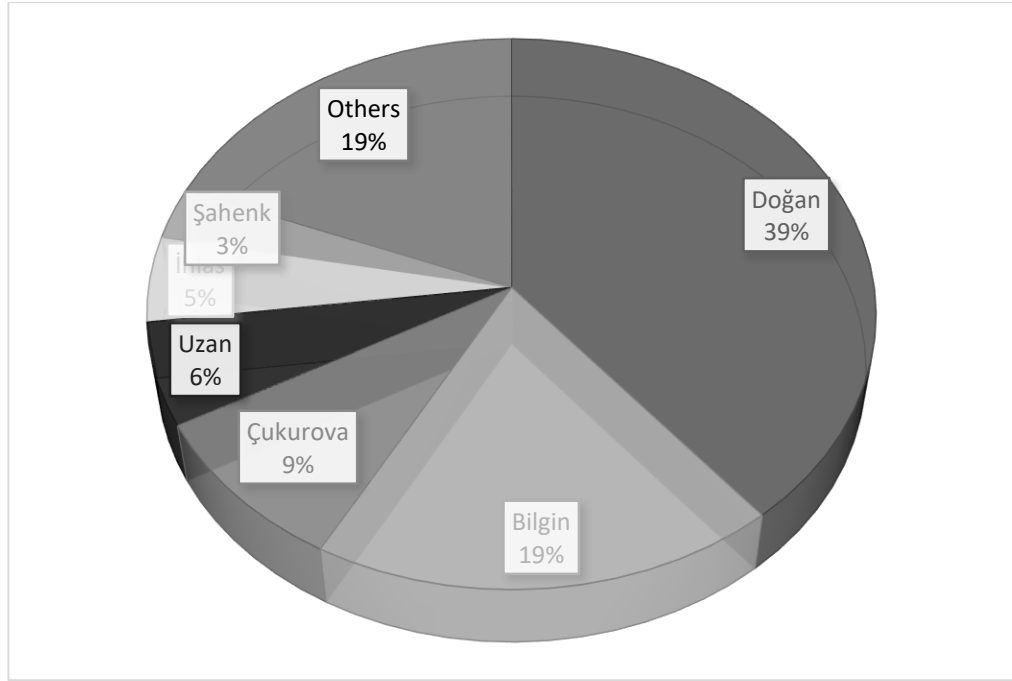


Fig. 3 Market share of advertisement revenues

Table 4 shows the market share of advertisement revenues and non-media activities of selected dominant groups in the sector:

Table 4. Market Share and Non-Media Businesses of Major Groups

Groups in 2001	Market share %	Non-Media Sectors
Doğan	39	Industry, finance, commerce, energy, tourism
Bilgin	19	Finance
Çukurova (Karamehmet)	9	Transportation, aeronautical, energy, commerce, construction, finance
Rumeli (Uzan)	6	Energy, Sports, Banking, Finance, Construction, Cement, Telecommunication,
Doğuş (Şahenk)	3	Banking and Finance, Construction, tourism, energy, real estate, Automotive

In the media sector, the 2000s witnessed a radical change in the ownership structure in terms of the dominant actors. The nature of certain sectors that media moguls operate in necessitated a subordinate relationship of media owners to the state, especially when political power “concentrates” in one party. Energy and finance are the two primary examples of this type of sector, which are regulated and supervised by the state. One-party rule since 2002 in Turkey makes the political power more dominant in the relationship between the media and state. Four main actors, Karamehmet, Bilgin, Uzan, and Doğan, were excluded during this period and replaced with pro-government capitalists. Government primarily oppressed media conglomerates in two ways: (1) the government created its own dependent media, with new owners organically related to the government, and (2) punished/rewarded non-government backed media owners through clientelism. The first two liquidations I will explore provide an example for the use of the first way and Doğan provides a combination of the two.

The Sabah ATV case is the first prominent example of how the ruling party expanded its control over the media by replacing certain media moguls, creating new media owners who were organically related to itself. Dinç Bilgin’s Etibank was expropriated in 2000. The bank was transferred to the Saving and Deposit Insurance Fund, which took control over *Sabah* newspaper and ATV channel in order to generate revenue to meet the potential losses of the bank. The sale of the newspaper and TV channel led to enormous debate (Esendemir, 2008). First, Ciner, who already owned shares in the media group, acquired the whole media company. Then in 2005, Ciner bought Merkez Group (Sabah-ATV). He became the new owner of the Sabah-ATV media group by promising to pay 433 million dollars over ten years. However, in 2007 the Saving and Insurance Fund again expropriated media institutions under the Merkez

Group (Adaklı, 2010, p. 580) due to a secret deal between Bilgin and Ciner, which was made ten days before the sale of *Sabah* and ATV to Ciner, presented by Ciner to the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund just after the sale. Thus, this was deemed an irregularity, and the sale had to be repeated (Adaklı, 2010, pp. 581-583).

Turkuaz Media Group, part of the Çalık conglomerate, was the only bidder and became the new owner of Sabah ATV. The sale price was 1.1 billion dollars. However, besides being the only bidder, the Çalık Group and sale of ATV-Sabah to it were hugely criticized because of the organic link between Çalık Group and Erdoğan. Berat Albayrak – Erdoğan’s son-in-law – and his brother were part of the managerial board of the group.<sup>30</sup> Albayrak was seen in public discussions as by-passing the law of Radio and Television Supreme Council because the Article 19 indicates that

A broadcast license cannot be granted to political parties, labor unions, professional organisations, cooperatives, associations, societies, foundations, local administrations, any companies which are established by them and of which they are direct or indirect shareholders and capital market institutions and real persons and legal entities who are direct or indirect shareholders of these institutions. These companies cannot be direct or indirect shareholders of media service providers. (T.C. Resmi Gazete, 2011)

Another public discussion emerged when Çalık took a large loan from two public banks in order to finance this purchase. Vakıfbank and Halkbank loaned out a total of 750 million dollars to Çalık Group for the purchase of Sabah-ATV. At this point it, is essential to note that Çalık Group has large investments in non-media businesses, including textile, energy, construction, finance and telecommunications (Kuyucu, 2012, p. 512).

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<sup>30</sup> Berat Albayrak is the Minister of Treasury and Finance in 2018.

Çalık Group's media service was evaluated as "toady media" by journalists (Interviewee no.1). First, its media content flatters the political powers and eliminates any kind of criticism. Second, the group benefits from credits provided by public banks. Third, its organic relationship to the government became helpful regarding its interests in other sectors. Based on these three points, it can be argued that the Çalık case is a clear example of political power's influence on the media by creating a dependent media conglomerate. In 2013, the ownership of Sabah-ATV changed again. Zirve conglomerate, which belongs to the Kalyon Group that operates in the energy and construction sector (Kalyon Group, 2013), became the new owner of Sabah-ATV. The group owns *Yeni Asır*, *Takvim* and *Fotomaç* newspapers in addition to *Sabah*.

Uzan Group is another example of media ownership liquidated from the media sector. Even though the family business had gotten along well with all political parties up to that point (Kuyucu, 2012, p. 429), when Cem Uzan ran for political office and received significant electoral support, the governing party began a war of attrition against the family and their businesses (Kuyucu, 2012, pp. 436-437) Uzan's bank went bankrupt, and it was expropriated by the Saving Deposit Insurance Fund along with other businesses owned by the group, including their media business. However, what seems problematic in this expropriation is that the critical attitude towards the government seen in the publishing policy of Uzan's media took the completely opposite direction when the Saving Deposit Insurance Fund governed it. Although the Fund is defined as autonomous by law, bureaucrats are appointed according to the preferences of the political authority. The Fund is free from expedient checks on its actions; this provides the Fund a largely free space in determining the content of the *Star* newspaper (Erdem, 2015, p. 41). Öztekin's (2008) study compares the contents of the *Star*

newspaper in 2002 under Uzan’s ownership and 2004 under the rule of the Saving Deposit Insurance Fund, showing that the content produced by *Star* totally changed during the Fund’s rule in favor of political authority. This example also shows that when a media owner is involved in other sectors, it opens the door for government influence in media content. A common aspect of the Bilgin and Uzan cases is that they had investments in the banking industry, and the troubles that their banks faced affected their media business.

Karamehmet constitutes another example of a business person who could not continue in the media sector due to the problems that he faced in his banking business, which led to another intervention by the Saving Deposit Insurance Fund (Yalçın, 2017). SKY and SHOW TV, which belonged to the Çukurova Group, were transferred to Esmedy; the chairman of the executive board and the founder of Esmedy is Ethem Sancak (Erdem, 2015, p. 47).

Ethem Sancak confirms the main hypothesis of the study in the sense that he is the founder and chairman of the executive board of Hedef Alliance Conglomerate. The conglomerate operates in non-media sectors.<sup>31</sup> In 2017, Sancak also become a member of the central executive board of the Justice and Development Party. It is also important to note that during his ownership of the media group, Ethem Sancak won very important government auctions. British Motor Company Turkey, a large commercial vehicle manufacturer in Turkey, is a distinctive example. Sancak’s conglomerate, as the only

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<sup>31</sup> Ethem Sancak is also the business person who said, “I’m in love with Erdoğan; this is such a divine love that can only happen between two men,” and also said “all of my family members should be sacrificed in favor of Erdoğan” (Sancak, 2015). “Erdoğan’a aşığıım. Bu öyle ilahi bir aşk ki, ancak iki erkek arasında gerçekleşebilir.”, “Anam, babam, çocuklarım sana feda olsun Erdoğan.”

bidder, purchased BMC Turkey and become the monopoly that sells vehicles to public utility institutions (Uğur, 2016).<sup>32</sup>

It is plausible to argue that the Saving Deposit Insurance Fund was instrumentalized (Erdem, 2015) along with public banks in order to form a new media ownership structure, introducing government-backed capitalists as the new owners, who also operate in non-media sectors. Additionally, the content produced by these government-backed media outlets seem loyal to political authority and disloyal to the requirements of media ethics, including media freedom. The structural reason for this is media conglomerates' existence in non-media sectors, which makes media institutions belonging to multi-faceted conglomerates fragile against the state and its bureaucratic organizations. In the event any bank owned by the conglomerate declares bankruptcy, there is no law to protect the integrity of already existing media institutions belonging to the conglomerate, thus the political authority easily controls them and determines their new owners.

To complete the picture that describes the ownership structure of the media in Turkey and the influence of political power on it in the 2010s, Doğan media is the last and most important case. It provides useful clues to understanding how media owners' dependence upon the government is used by the government through rewards or punishment of the groups' activity in other sectors. Doğan media group's relationship

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<sup>32</sup> Sancak sold "ES Medya" to Hasan Yeşildağ in 2017. Two properties of this new owner are worth pointing out. The first point is related to political power. Yeşildağ is a friend of the individual who became President of the Republic of Turkey in 2019 and has led the party in government, the AKP, since 2002. Their bond of friendship was established in 1998, in prison at Pınarbaşı. Yeşildağ is claimed to have arranged the connection between Erdoğan and his entourage during his imprisonment. The second property, however, is related to a crime against the press in Turkey. The bill of indictment pertaining to the assassination of Abdi İpekçi refers to Yeşildağ. Adnan Ağca claimed that Yeşildağ was a partner in crime of Mehmet Ali Ağca who assassinated İpekçi (Övür, 2006; Bianet Haber Merkezi, 2017; Cumhuriyet Newspaper, 2017).

with the AKP constitutes an interesting example in which economic interests and/or worries promote or endanger media's duty to provide reliable information in a realm of freedom of expression.

When it came to power in 2002, the AKP promoted pro-European Union discourse and a pro-privatization, neoliberal economic policy; Doğan media group and AKP relations seemed to be harmonious but always included the possibility of tension, which eventually came to the surface. The tax debt of POAŞ<sup>33</sup>, belonging to Doğan Group, was due August 2005 but was restructured and the due date was postponed to 2007. In 2005, Doğan bought the remaining shares of POAŞ from İş Bankası and also bought Star TV, exhibiting a continuous tendency toward both vertical and horizontal monopolization (Adaklı, 2010, p. 567).

During the first part of AKP rule, Doğan media's publishing and broadcasting policy toward the AKP seemed cautious (Adaklı, 2010, pp. 563-569) due to the group's economically dependent position and the positive relations with the political power required to achieve its economic aims. As a general economic policy, the group supported the neoliberalism of the AKP and the privatization that occurred in the AKP's first period in power. Aydın Doğan restricted journalists and columnists who were critical of the AKP's economic policy. Doğan, bypassing editorial control, intervened directly in what the authors could publish and declared his support for the government's economic policy which had benefitted him (Çölaşan, 2007, p. 24).

In February 2008, the law aiming to lift the headscarf ban in universities led to another point of tension. Society was sharply divided into two camps on the headscarf

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<sup>33</sup> Petrol Ofisi, abbreviated POAŞ, is a joint stock company that purchases and imports petroleum products.

issue; the *Hürriyet*, one of the main newspapers belonging to the Doğan Group, published a headline reading “411 Votes for Chaos”<sup>34</sup> (Hürriyet Newspaper, 2008). Erdoğan directly and harshly criticized Doğan Group in his speeches.

Deniz Feneri is another example of events that caused rising tension. It was a charity foundation accused of fraud for using donated funds in the service of particularistic interests and a trial was launched by prosecutors in Germany. The foundation had organic links with the political power, and Doğan media group published news about the trial. This was one of the main “*éléments déclencheurs*” bringing the tension to the surface (Adaklı, 2010, p. 567).

Consequently, in March 2008, the officials/controllers of the Ministry of Finance determined that there was a difference between the declared and the actual tax basis of certain companies owned by Aydın Doğan, and sent documents prepared by the ministry to the prosecutor (Kuyucu, 2012, p. 604). Çölaşan<sup>35</sup> reported Aydın Doğan’s explanations on a TV program to argue that today’s structure of economy-state relations is such that regardless of the real context, it is always possible for the state to punish a big conglomerate through financial control if state wants to do so. This statement seems to explain the dominance of media owners’ economic worries over concern for media freedom because they do not feel secure from the state. (Yanardağ, 2016):

There is a phrase that Aydın Bey told me: ‘Government can sink the most robust bank – at that time Dış Bank belonged to Aydın Doğan – even if the bank is [as] robust/strong as stone, it [be sunk] by only sending two tax officers, two controllers and [they can] sink the bank in one day.’ This is exactly what Aydın Doğan told me. (Yanardağ, 2016, p. 87) (See Appendix A, 3)

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<sup>34</sup> 411 el (411 hands) indicates the number of deputies who voted in favor of lifting the ban.

<sup>35</sup> A journalist and columnist who worked in Doğan media. More specific details will be given in subsequent parts of the thesis.

Erdoğan claimed that Doğan had asked him to renew city plan related to floor area ratio of Hilton Hotel in Taksim Square belonging to Doğan conglomerate. Because this was not allowed by government, Erdoğan argued that Doğan media then decided to publish content about Deniz Feneri scandal and take a negative attitude to headscarf issue (Akner, 2008). Whether Erdoğan's explanation is an objective reflection of what happened between them does not matter. Neither side denies having conversations about business. Doğan (2009) states that, naturally, he asked Erdoğan for permission for certain businesses including the oil refinery construction in Ceyhan but was refused as the refinery project was reserved for the Çalık group (Avcı, 2008). The Doğan case clearly shows that a media owner who has business interests other than media is pushed to find a way to deal with the political authority. As the Hilton Hotel and Ceyhan refinery examples show, Doğan was unable to get what he wanted and was forced to sell POAŞ (Kuyucu, 2012, p. 628)

The multifaceted nature of conglomerates dominating a major part of media seems to be a reason for the weakness of media owners. In the case of Doğan, the operations of a non-government backed media group in non-media sectors provides a tool for the political power to punish or control Doğan Group. On the other hand, for media organically related to the political power, such as Çalık, the clientelistic relations between media and politics become opportunities for extra gains. The political authority creates new businesses for these media owners as a reward for their publishing policy.

One of the climaxes in the uneasy relationship between the Doğan conglomerate and AKP came with the tax fine levied against the Doğan Group in February 2009, which was around 826 million Turkish lira (Turan, 2009). The year following the AKP's initial tax levy was marked by Erdoğan's open criticisms of the group at rallies calls to

Doğan products (Önderoğlu, 2008). Doğan sold POAŞ (Kuyucu, 2012, p. 628) and also underwent contraction in the media sector, selling *Milliyet* and *Vatan* newspapers (Kuyucu, 2012, p. 645). AKP seems to punish the group not only through the infliction of taxes but also by restricting its participation in public tenders. In May 2015, the Energy Ministry banned the Doğan Group from participating in tenders issued by the government (T.C. Resmi Gazete, 2015).

The election for the national assembly on June 7, 2016 opened the last episode in the relationship between Doğan media and the government, which would end with the elimination of the group from the media sector in 2018. The ruling party lost the majority for the first time since 2002. Then the pro-government media criticized and criminalized Doğan media, accusing it of helping the opposition. This increasing tension resulted in a violent attack: One of the journalists and TV anchors of the group was physically attacked, as was the *Hürriyet* newspaper building. Lastly, the media claimed that Doğan would be prosecuted related to the indictment of February 28. In 2017, it was discussed in the media that Aydın Doğan would be investigated and the pro-government media declared him a partner in crime. In 2018, Doğan sold Doğan media, including all media organs (except Doğan book publishing and BluTV), to Demirören group (Arslan, 2018). The enterprise value was declared at 1.1 billion dollars. The sale was realized at equity value, which was 890 million dollars. In the sale, again a public bank—Ziraat Bankası—was used to provide credit for the purchase. In the media, it was written that Demirören received a low interest loan for ten years with a two year grace period (Sputnik Türkiye, 2018). The loan was for about 700 billion dollars. With this, more than three-quarters of the media sector were under the apparent control of pro-

government capitalists like Demirören (Pitel, 2018) or Doğuş, or directly owned by capitalists organically related to the government.

### 3.2 Concluding remarks

This chapter provided an overview of the different periods of media ownership in the case of Turkey. Furthermore, it showed the monopolization of media ownership and the declining share of small newspapers over the years. This monopolization of the media paralleled the rise of monopoly capitalism in Turkey during the 1970s. However, the process of concentration in media ownership was hastened by the neoliberalization of the Turkish economy from 1980 onward. This monopolization includes vertical and horizontal ownership, but more importantly, cross-industry ownership. This cross-industry ownership, or media owners' businesses in non-media sectors, causes the following two characteristics of media owners. First, they tend to instrumentalize their media. The reason is the following: they might gain more than what can be gained from directly and solely from media production because they invest in energy, banking, construction, tourism and other sectors. Second, however, they are more sensitive to what the government might do because of its weight in these sectors. These two characteristics have two negative and interrelated impacts on media freedom that I will briefly introduce here and will be elaborated on in the next chapter.

First, it creates a tendency for owners to instrumentalize their media outlets to gain more in these sectors by maintaining a close relationship with government officials who might help them in receiving new tenders, new incentives, or credits. Second, when one-party rule endures longer than a decade, with further structural transformations that increase state power and its centralization at the top, the state can more easily use a

carrot and stick policy toward media conglomerates to the extent that it can even replace owners with by new players who are more loyal to the political authority.

When Table 4 is considered, it is apparent that with the Justice and Development Party as the ruling party since 2002, the ownership structure has dramatically changed. Media owners, who have 71% of the media regarding the total market of advertisement revenues in 2001, now, have been replaced with pro-government media owners. Yeşil categorizes how AKP disciplines and captures the media into non-coercive and coercive practices; the former implies indirect economic methods of oppression like tax fines or public tenders, while the latter includes prosecutions against journalists and their imprisonment, as well as the expropriation of media outlets (Yeşil, 2018, p. 247). Some of the points she makes regarding the disciplinary methods of the AKP provide a useful way to conclude this chapter as an overall analysis of the AKP period regarding the ownership and control question in the Turkish media.

Of the non-coercive ways Yeşil elaborates on, four points are essential to the interest of this study. First, the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund is instrumentalized by the AKP to reshuffle the media ownership structure. Second, the state channels public advertisements to pro-AKP media conglomerates. Third, public banks are used by the state both to cover the costs of these advertisements and to provide credit for media buyouts. These pro-AKP and mostly Islamist media owners are rewarded with tenders for new construction and energy projects. The fourth point, on the other hand, exhibits a different characteristic that pertains to the question of media control. Here, the AKP seems to bypass or have control over the owners regarding media production when it sees this as necessary (not the Islamist media but the so-called center media). Yeşil states that the AKP appointed media managers from Erdoğan's circle, as the leader of

the Party, to control publishing and broadcasting according to what the AKP wants and dictates in media conglomerates (Yeşil, 2016). In addition to this point underlined by Yeşil, Interviewee no. 1 states that in different periods of one-party rule by AKP, different ministers and other officials have performed weekly checks of what the big newspapers from the so-called center media were publishing, directly calling the editors (Interviewee no. 1). Interviewee no. 1 explicitly gives the names of those who call his colleagues to account and come down on them, including different ministers (Interviewee no. 1).

After the Gezi protests in 2013, and particularly after the failed coup d'état attempt in 2016, Yeşil underlines that the coercive, direct ways of discipline have been more brutally applied by the AKP (Yeşil, 2016). This, along with the fourth point mentioned above, implies new aspects of the relationship between the control of media and the ownership structure; it does not totally remove the ownership question but transforms it. Now, the government has more direct control over the ownership structure – which has intensified compared to previous periods—and over owners, along with methods of control that directly bypass the hierarchy within the institution. The internal freedom of journalists seems to be violated more intensely with these structural changes: pro-state owners, government-appointed managers and even the direct expropriation of media outlets.

## CHAPTER 4

### OWNERS' MOTIVATIONS TO LIMIT MEDIA FREEDOM

This chapter examines how concentration in media ownership or a monopolized media structure violates media freedom through domination of media workers, production processes and product. In this section, I will delineate the motivations for domination based on my fieldwork and secondary sources. This chapter will use two types of evidence. First, from memoirs and interviews, I will focus on experiences of journalists. Second, I will use content analysis. These motivations of media owners will be categorized. The ownership structure, along with the legal and political frame that envelops media conglomerates, is the major underlying reason for these motivations; in other words, it is the foundation that enables these motivations to occur and be realized. These motivations are merely the surface level and superficial cause of owners' actions that violate the internal freedom of media workers.

Following a discussion on the sources of domination and showing how it happens in the media, in the subsequent chapter, Chapter 5, I will show that there are two interrelated processes through which media owners further their dominative power: de-unionization and wage differentials. These processes explain why and how media elites working for big conglomerates appear to be the servants of media owners and prioritize capitalist interests over media ethics. This will constitute the key to understanding the debate on internal freedom of the media among the major schools of thought, at least for the case of Turkey. The Weberian and managerial schools (LP) argue that professionals' control power on media makes the ownership structure less important while the Marxian approach (CPE) argues just the opposite. After discussing

these two processes and detailing the findings of this study, in Chapter 6 I will focus on two consequences of this capitalist domination over media workers: alienation and normalization.

#### 4.1 The sources of domination of media workers due to the ownership structure

The source of domination refers to that which initiates and causes it, i.e., the prime mover. From the interviews and memoirs, I detected three sources that initiate or activate the owners' domination of media and media workers. These are personal interests, economic interests, and class/ideological interests as shown in Figure 4. These three sources indicate three different, yet interrelated, characteristics of capitalist media owners, and all three cause violations of media freedom in Turkey. In categorizing these sources, I focus on the different characteristics or aspects of media owners that appear in their social relationships. These are the capitalist as a person, an economic actor and a member of a class or ideological actor. Then I categorize the examples by locating them under these different interrelated aspects or characteristics. All characteristics add onto each other to complete a picture of the capitalist owner's negative effects on media freedom and of her/his domination of media workers. Each aspect falls into a different source of domination. If the owner, directly or through "media elites," specifies or determines or conditions or hinders the process of writing and publishing media content, it is domination par excellence. It implies arbitrariness and the absence of the principles of journalism. Only when these principles overcome any other factor during the media production process can the journalist be truly "free," not only not interfered with but also non-dominated. Following the use of specific cases to exemplify each source of domination, I will show how these can be detected together through a content analysis of

*Habertürk* newspaper. Here, my goal is to present how the interplay of these sources of domination affects people's right to be informed by creating a filtering mechanism in *Habertürk* publications.

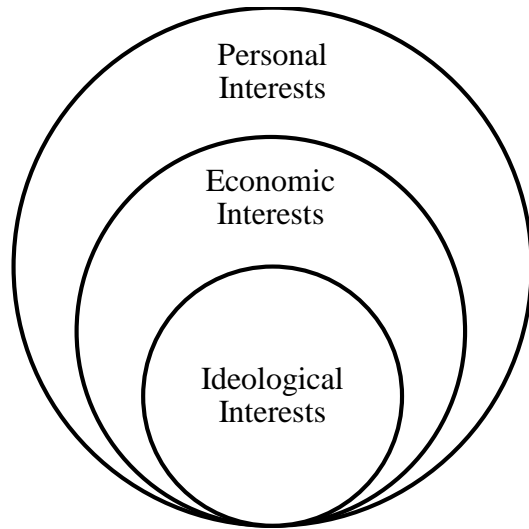


Fig. 4 Sources of domination

A capitalist is first a person and has personal interests. Personal interests include any type of wants, preferences, or choices that a capitalist has as a person. Showing a capitalist owner's domination of media workers stemming from a merely personal interest, in which capitalistic and economic aspects seem non-existent, would demonstrate the limitless nature of capitalists' domination over media workers in Turkey.

Second, a capitalist is also an economic actor, who owns a firm and competes or does business with other capitalists. She or he might aim to obtain a bigger piece of the pie compared to other capitalists in a given sector. To show how economic interests function, I focus on the multifaceted conglomerate rather than just the media corporation

because, as an economic actor, the media owner mostly uses his<sup>36</sup> media to maximize profits in sectors such as energy and finance.<sup>37</sup> These sectors are subject to heavy state regulation, and the capitalist competes with others to get public tenders through clientelistic relations with political figures in power. The economic position of the capitalist might require him not only to compete but also to form alliances at times with different actors. I focus on cases in which the narrow economic gains or worries of the media owner related to his non-media businesses push him to violate media freedom. In elaborating this category, I will focus on two types of cases: those in which media freedom is violated due to the owners' relationship with the state in order to protect its economic interests, and those in which the media owner exhibits a similar violation of media freedom unrelated to the state. In order to differentiate ideological interests from economic interests, I focus mostly on instances where the media owner, on his own, pursues only his economic goal(s) without considering a common policy or position with other capitalists against non-capitalists.

Third, a capitalist is also a member of a class. She or he has common interests with other capitalists against non-capitalists in terms of economic and social policies and in terms of sharing and even propagating a set of pro-capitalistic ideas as a worldview in a broader sense. Capitalists, for example, are likely to support neoliberal transformation, privatization, and deregulation even though they might compete against each other in various sectors. More importantly, it would not be an exaggeration to state that with respect to the question of an economic system, they support (1) private ownership of the means of production and (2) the capitalist functioning of economic activity. To show

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<sup>36</sup> I do not include "her" because all of Turkish media is owned by men.

<sup>37</sup> This is what Sönmez indicates are the external benefits of owning media (Kuyucu, 2012, p. 297).

how ideological interests function to restrict media freedom, I consider the capitalist media owner's general attitude regarding macro-economic policy and how it leads him to oppress journalists so that they do not cause trouble for his class interests while producing media content. My main focus is on the owner's attitude toward events related to social rights, neoliberal policies and his oppression of journalists in writing or publishing about these topics. This category is thereby related to the whole society; if ideological class interests influence media content, then in a media system where ownership is concentrated in the hands of a few, the axis of the political discussion might partially be set by the agenda setting power of the media. This influence on socio-political life might result in these media sources not covering issues that challenge the dominant capitalist functioning of social and economic life.

A media owner has the power to control his/her worker such that even very individualistic, private relations or issues of media owner can result in the journalist being fired. Media owners' very private issues might limit what journalist can publish as news or express as opinions. To demonstrate "personal interest" as a source of domination—the first category – I examine a case from the 1980s where the freedom of the journalist was limited because of an intimate relationship between the owner of *Hürriyet*, Erol Simavi, and a pop singer, Nükhet Duru. Any news about Duru was a red line that no journalist working for the *Hürriyet* should cross. Journalist Oktay Şengüler, who published a photograph of Nükhet Duru showing her spotty face, was fired. Interviewee no. 2 notes the following, related to the limitation of journalists' freedom with respect to this issue:

I was working at *Hürriyet* newspaper in the 1980s. At that time, Erol Simavi was our boss. Then, friends told me "you cannot publish on one topic." On which topic can I not make news? They say, "You cannot make news related to Nükhet

Duru.” I said, “I am an economics correspondent, I don’t have any interest in Nükhet Duru.” (He laughs.) “But,” they said, “be informed.” At that time, Erol Simavi’s girlfriend was Nükhet Duru. One colleague, a photojournalist, took a picture of Nükhet Duru. Nükhet Duru said to Erol Bey, “In my photo I look like I have a spotty face. How could you make me look like that?” For that reason, they fired Oktay Şengüler. (Interviewee no. 2) (See Appendix A, 4)

This love story proves a point: in Turkish media, the sole fact of being a media owner brings the power to control the product and the producer. The owner’s domination might be actualized even when the media content is unrelated to the economic or capitalistic interests of the owner. Although the Simavi-Duru case shows the power of a media owner over the content of the media product and worker, this can be seen as relatively innocent when compared with examples of bosses during the media industry complex stage, as I will show later in this chapter. In the 1980s, media ownership was not yet concentrated, and, as Interviewee no. 2 suggests, Erol Simavi did not interfere with media content even when it was related to his economic interests in sectors other than the media:

Now, at that period, we were working in economic news. At the same time, Erol Simavi did not have that many economic activities yet, a bit of tourism and a bit of poultry business; you see what I mean? We were making some news about eggs; indeed this was unfavorable toward Erol Simavi, unfavorable toward his poultry firm. However, Erol Simavi never called us and said, “You are harming my business.” I mean, the censorship about the very private condition of the media boss was at stake in that period, because it concerned him in a very direct, immediate way. One might acknowledge him to be right or not, that is another story, but it was a very private case. However, except this, even related to some of his small businesses, he never interfered with us. He kept his hands off; he did not interfere. (Interviewee no. 2) (See Appendix A, 5)

Erol Simavi demonstrates two facts of media ownership’s influence on media freedom in the 1980s. Job security can easily be eliminated, and the media owner can be arbitrary because of very private issues. However, Simavi still represented conventional journalism where journalistic ethics were widespread. In terms of economic interests as

a source of domination, he seems distinctively tolerant compared to the 1990s. Simavi's relatively higher tolerance level with regard to news related to his non-media businesses is not an indicator of freedom but only a sign of tolerance.

In cases where economic interests drive media owners to violate media freedom, the limitations imposed on journalists' freedom are more critical in terms of the public's right to have access to facts and opinions than the issue of photographs of a pop singer. Media owners, as simultaneous owners of big conglomerates, are performing business in other sectors. Interviewee no. 2 gives an example that concretizes how the source of economic interests endangers media freedom:

After that, I worked at *Milliyet*; it was the period of Aydın Doğan. At that time, the owner of *Milliyet* newspaper was also the owner of Dışbank. Our colleagues in economic news made news about the textile industry. You see, some people in the textile business launder money abroad. However, suddenly, a very serious warning was made by the owner to us. Warning about what? To my surprise, all those textile business people had their money in Dışbank. You see, they had said to the boss, "Look in your newspaper, news that assailed, discredited us was published as if we launder money. If we withdraw our money, then it will be you who finds himself in a bad situation." Thereupon, of course, the boss told us to "clean" this news immediately (he laughs). So what I mean is that a media boss having some relationships and connections, owning a bank, and having a problem related to the bank [has influence], whereas the news we made was true. However, in such a case, it [has an effect]. (Interviewee no. 2) (See Appendix A, 6)

Though the news in this example was correct with respect to objective reality, its publication was apparently not the "correct" option for the capitalist media owner's economic interests. The businessmen involved in money laundering held large sums of money that they threatened to withdraw from Dışbank, owned by Aydın Doğan. Doğan, without hesitation, violated media freedom in favor of his economic interests.

With respect to economic interests, media owners' clientelistic relationships with the political sphere is also a problem. As I explained in Chapter 3, in the post-1990

period, multifaceted conglomerates began to dominate the media sector. The owner of any such conglomerate, as an economic actor, needs to have a close relationship with the government, which also causes violations of media freedom. A close look at Doğan conglomerate is useful in understanding the limitations such relationships bring about to media freedom.

Interviewee no. 1 underlines 2007 as a distinctive year in terms of the intensification of the government's pressure on media, stating that Doğan's other businesses constituted the fundamental basis for limiting media freedom where oppression came from political power (Interviewee no. 1).<sup>38</sup> The reason seems to be that the AKP was able to achieve a second victory in the national elections and felt more relaxed in its actions.

Çölaşan (2007), a former columnist at the *Hürriyet*—which belonged to the Doğan conglomerate – underlines more precisely the hypothesis of this study, which claims that media dominated by big multifaceted conglomerates that form an oligopoly and also operate in non-media sectors constitute the main hindrance of media freedom:

[The] [b]oss also bought *Vatan* newspaper this year. At the end of 2007, the newspapers that [the] boss owned were: *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Posta*, *Radikal*, *Fanatik*, *Referans*, and *Vatan*. Nearly half of the print press... This is exactly what is called monopolization. On the one hand, TV channels he owns—I might forget some—Kanal D, CNNTURK, STAR, on the other hand, POAŞ, İstanbul Hilton... He is waiting for allowance to erect a skyscraper on Hilton territory... Tenders in [the] energy sector, privatization issues, companies bought abroad... [The] [g]roup has grown too much and the more it has grown, the more its need for AKP government [has] increased. Opposing is no longer possible. Publishing/broadcasting the news that [is] unpleasant to [the] government [will be] growing very difficult from now on. (pp. 90-91) (See Appendix A, 7)

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<sup>38</sup> Interviewee no. 3 also confirms such periodization (Interviewee no. 3).

I find that the negative effects of political power's dominance can be categorized under two major types. The first one is determining the content of media production through direct pressure on media owners and, consequently, on media workers. This is what literature refers to as censorship of money (Murdock, 2008, p. 574). The second one is to directly oppress media owner until he dismisses journalists who "create trouble" for the government.

The first type – censorship of money – consists of two methods: directly oppressing writers or journalists until they limit the content they provide and censoring content through the control of the editorial board. In his memoirs, Çölaşan (2007) explains why and how he was expelled from *Hürriyet*. Çölaşan asserts that his columns were censored without notice before publication, and he underlines that he was warned many times by Doğan and Özkök, the head of the editorial board at Doğan Media Group and manager for Doğan conglomerate. Çölaşan argues that most of the time, his criticisms of the AKP worried Doğan about the possibility that his ties with the government would be harmed such that it would hinder his economic opportunities in sectors that are regulated, supervised, or affected by the state (Çölaşan, 2007).

One conversation between Çölaşan and Özkök seems astonishing in the way it exposes the negative effects of clientelistic relations between media and politics on media freedom (Çölaşan, 2007):

Çölaşan: "I mean, you always force me to compromise my personality, my journalistic principles. When do we leave behind this troublesome period?"

Özkök: "When Tayyip [Erdoğan] becomes president, then Abdullah will be the prime minister. He [Gül] is a more moderate man; he understands what we said, and we should continue for a little period with moderation, with caution. Until the bear passes the bridge. Abdullah will not beleaguer us that much. Now Tayyip is trying to sink us. [...] We're suffering a trillion losses per week and we'll start new dismissals."

Çölaşan: “So, what kind of attitude will you—as Doğan Group—have regarding the presidency of Tayyip?”

Özkök: “We will remain silent; we will not provide support, but we will not go against it, they will leave us. Please realize a little, remember how they came at us in this POAŞ incident, but on the other hand, Aydın Bey also is nourishing hatred day by day (...) when the time comes... My request from you is to show a little understanding. All our other writers accepted this. You are the only one who does not, you're the only problem.” (p. 112) (See Appendix A, 8)

Doğan’s hope that Erdoğan would become president and Gül become prime minister stems from his economic interests requiring close ties with the government.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, Doğan tries to prohibit an author of his newspaper from criticizing Erdoğan (Çölaşan, 2007). Consequently, the economic interests that make Doğan dependent upon the government led to violations of the internal freedom of media workers in the group. Özkök’s evaluation of government pressure on the Doğan conglomerate through POAŞ constitutes a distinctive example to substantiate the main argument of this study. Özkök had requested that media workers either not write about certain political actors or else quit their job (Çölaşan, 2007):

Look friend, you see how the government comes at us on the POAŞ incident. Then, we must take precautions. Now I come to you for a very important issue. Aydın Bey has greeted you and has a very important request from you [...] Now I report it to you, exactly what happens and want you to give a decision. First, you shall not write about Prime Minister [R. T. Erdoğan], Minister of Finance [K. Unakıtan] and, the government. Second, if you want, you can take a long-term leave. Third, if you want, you can leave the newspaper entirely. (pp. 94-95) (See Appendix A, 9)

Ertuğrul Özkök’s warnings to Bekir Coşkun (Coşkun, 2011) and Emin Çölaşan (Çölaşan, 2007), particularly related to the risk that the conglomerate might be punished by the government via tax penalty on POAŞ and banks—a risk that was actualized—

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<sup>39</sup> Prior to instituting a presidential system in Turkey, the prime minister had a larger role in the economic management of the state and in taking economic decisions.

supports the claim that the economic interests of media owners negatively affect media freedom.

Another example is the direct and pro-active interference of media owner Aydın Doğan who pushed Emin Çölaşan to write about and criticize the actions of Uzan. By direct and proactive interference, I mean: an owner of “big” media may push a journalist against her/his will to dwell on specific issues in which the owner has a particular economic interest. A media boss such as Aydın Doğan can perceive it as normal to push his/her own columnist to write a piece castigating his adversary and accusing him/her of fraud and corruption. Uzan, as a capitalist, is Doğan’s adversary in the media, energy, construction and banking sectors. Çölaşan, who was the journalist in this instance, describes what Doğan asked of him and his response (Çölaşan, 2007):

Aydın Doğan: “In recent days, in addition to this, an “Uzan” case broke. These guys have defrauded in such ways that even the devil cannot think of. They have stolen public wealth. But still, they keep cruising along Türkbükü in their sixty meter private yacht. Also, they are helicoptering to their yacht in order to drive people crazy. The Turkish media and people are talking about that. However, there is no word from our journalist Emin Çölaşan who uncovered all frauds. Believe me, these criticisms I am facing are sticking in my gizzard.”

Çölaşan: “There are people in newspapers who persistently write on certain topics. These people are writing in order to protect the interests of the boss; they are the mouthpiece of the boss. Publicly, they are known as a “hit man,” or a “button man.” I cannot accept being a hit man and neither could I do it well. On the other hand, I have a very specific condition which binds me, and the boss knew it. My wife was at that time the vice president of the Council of State and the president of the administrative law chambers. All courts cases related to all media bosses—including the Uzan family—bankers and businesses were being determined by the board which Tansel [Çölaşan’s wife] was leading. Now, think about the picture here! Her husband is a journalist and writes on certain topics while his wife makes judicial decisions on the same topics. Because of this condition, I cannot write as I want on certain topics. And Aydın Doğan knew it. (p. 23) (See Appendix A, 10)

Aydın Doğan is not the sole example of an owner’s economic interests leading to violations of media freedom. Uğur Dündar, another well-known and experienced

journalist, notes similar problems both in the Uzan Group and the Bilgin Group. When he moved from Doğan's media group to Uzan's media, Dündar notes that due to the pressure coming directly from the owner, Cem Uzan, to investigate and criticize the Doğan Group, he could not continue working for Uzan media group (Şener, 2010, pp. 281-282). Dündar claims that Uzan's instrumentalization of his own media against Doğan was the main reason he left the company, and it constitutes an example of economic interests caused by intra-capitalist relationships or competition (Şener, 2010, pp. 281-284).

The experiences of Dündar also include an example to the relation between capitalist and state that harms the internal freedom of the journalist. Dündar notes that Mesut Yılmaz, leader of the Motherland Party that was part of a governing coalition in Turkey for several years in the 1990s, pushed both Bilgin and Uzan not to employ Dündar. The problem stemmed from news related to Beyaz Enerji Operasyonu (White Energy Operation), a corrupt operation that was also related to a former minister from the Motherland Party. Dündar claims that a manager of the Bilgin Group told him that if the government ever sent tax officers to the group, they would not stand a chance (Şener, 2010, pp. 292-295). Through these examples, it is possible to see that the economic interests of owners lead them to dominate journalists because of the contentious relationships journalists often have with state officials. The examples of Dündar, Coşkun and Çölaşan also showcase the two types of the censorship of money: (1) forcing a journalist to limit content and applying censorship, and (2) pushing the owner to dismiss a journalist. In the 2000s, the government-media relationship unfortunately provides a

richer set of examples of the second method. Ayşenur Arslan (2012),<sup>40</sup> Kadri Gürsel (2018) and Banu Güven (Güven, 2011)<sup>41</sup> are just a few of the journalists who lost their jobs as a result of direct government intervention.<sup>42</sup>

For the third interest, ideological, I should first denote that when I refer to the word ideology, it is mostly to point out the capitalistic ideology in the most comprehensive sense. Thus in this sense, capitalist ideology does not necessarily exclude extremist anti-secularism or exclusivist nationalism. Unless it favors the interests of people against those of capitalists—especially oligopolies or monopoly capitalists as a class – then I consider it a capitalist ideology. Secondly, I find that this source, which damages media freedom, insistently and unfortunately at least remained intact or grown stronger from 1980 to the mutually reinforcing monopolizations period.

Ideological/class interest<sup>43</sup> is related, albeit in a broader sense, to the economic sphere. Rather than being limited to the particular interests of a singular capitalist

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<sup>40</sup> Ayşenur Arslan's TV program on CNN Türk (belonging to Doğan Media) was first suspended and Arslan was eventually removed from the program following the events of 28 December 2011, when an airstrike led to the death of a number of civilians in Uludere. Arslan ignored the editorial board's insistence that she not broadcast what had happened in Uludere. In opposition, Arslan, spoke about the incident in Uludere live on the air. Since it meant opposing the state and government, the program was suspended for a while. Then Akif Beki, an AKP supporting journalist, became co-moderator of the program through a decision by the editorial board of CNN Türk. In the end, Arslan was forced to leave the program (Arslan, 2012).

<sup>41</sup> According to Güven, she lost her job because her program received guests who opposed the government. These guests led to the government's anger, and Güven's program was removed because of the oppression by government over the owner of the channel (Güven, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> In the post-2007 period, following three consecutive election victories—two general and one local election—the political power apparently no longer feels obligated to appease media owners and thinks that they no longer need media owners' consent; instead of clientelistic bargaining, the political power has become unilaterally dominant over the media.

<sup>43</sup> This is also the most universalizable part of the problem of the thesis. The Final Report of the Royal Commission on the Press in the United Kingdom (McGregor, 1977) provides an example of a very honest affirmation of this third source. Further, it proves that even a country whose liberal democracy is taken as paradigmatic by some scholars suffers from the same ideological partiality problem due to capitalistic ownership of the media: "There is no doubt that over most of this century the labour movement has had less newspaper support than its right-wing opponents and that its beliefs and activities have been unfavorably reported by the majority of the press" (McGregor, 1977, p. 110). Another example is provided by Glasgow University Group. Their research, published as series of Bad News, demonstrates how this source is the most systemic in capitalist dominance of media content. In their extensive documentation of media content, Glasgow University Group shows "how labor unions, rather than

pertaining merely to her/his own company, profits and relationships with other capitalists as competition or cooperation, it addresses a common social basis for a common preference of one set of actions over others for a whole class. It further indicates a conflict of interests among different classes—capitalists and non-capitalists. The former are the owners of the means of production. If this source has a negative influence on media freedom, then as Chomsky and Hermann (2002) point out, media conglomerates owned by oligopolies publish or broadcast news and views through a filtering mechanism. This mechanism limits news such that it does not challenge the capitalist ideology.

The media owner is the actor who dominates the production process, as a capitalist, which results in media production that is in accordance with the capitalist system and its dominant characteristics in terms of its ideological nature (e.g., neoliberalism, globalism, etc.). However, this shows both the dominative power of the media owner over the production process and capitalism's power as a system over the whole production process, including the owner. That is the reason why this source might be discovered in the relationship between the media owner and media production but should be considered broader than this.<sup>44</sup>

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corporate management, were blamed for industrial disputes in Ireland: Labor positions were 'demands,' whereas management positions were 'offers'" (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014, p. 65).

<sup>44</sup> Marx (1976) examines this power of the capitalist functioning of the economy—valorisation of capital—on the owner of the means of production, stating that the capitalist is “personified capital” or, more precisely, “capital personified and endowed with consciousness and a will” (p. 254). It means that capitalist domination is not merely an unmediated, direction of the personal power of the owner, as a person, on the production process and laborers, but that as a system, the capitalist mode of production inculcates capitalists with a set of preferences and ways of thinking and acting based on the capitalist logic of the economy. The mode of production always has commonalities despite its different contexts, yet different modes of accumulation - Fordism, Keynesianism, neoliberalism, and so on – do not change the capitalist nature of the domination but merely give it different forms. So in this source of domination, arbitrary power over the media worker still belongs to the owner but there is also the determinative power of the system over the owner himself/herself.

The effect of the decline in the number of news outlets—especially economic ones—on workers and employees is one of the indicators of domination caused by ideological/class interests. The first page of mass-circulation newspapers, even those whose publication policy was right wing, used to contain news related to labor and civil servants, yet with monopolization and neoliberalization since 1980, this type of news has been removed from mass-circulation newspapers. Interviewee no. 2 states this in the following quote:

In the period of September 12 [1980 coup d'état] neoliberal policies were at the top of the agenda. Media institutions are, of necessity, businesses, and [owners] already have their various activities in various non-media sectors such as petroleum, movies, and textiles. Then they create demand for their own products via their media organs by making their own publicity... This becomes a function of the media, making publicity for products and services related to the owner's businesses. At the same time, in the past, until the 1980s, each newspaper, including the right-wing ones, certainly employed a labor journalist. News related to labor was made. I mean, there is a rule of journalism. In the first page, nearly thirteen or fourteen news items are shown; thirteen to fourteen news items are on the first page as headings. This is a rule of journalism; I am talking about mass-circulation newspapers. Three or four of these thirteen to fourteen news items should be related to workers, civil servants, or retirees—these are called “mass news.” So, this is mass news, you should make this news related to workers, to civil servants, because they are the ones who will buy your newspaper. They are your customers; that is the reason why each newspaper, even right-wing ones, including *Tercüman* newspaper, hired a journalist, a person whose work related to labor news. However, after 1980, when the economic structure of media changed, all these labor pages were removed. At the end, I was making one for *Milliyet* newspaper; it was removed too (He laughs). (Interviewee no.2) (See Appendix A, 11)

In addition to being less vocal about labor related issues, it is also possible to detect the direct interference of the owner that proves how she/he pushes the journalists to defend or at least not oppose her/his ideological position.

The second indicator of ideological interest impacting media freedom is the attitude of media owners towards economic policy issues such as privatization. Aydın Doğan warned one of the authors working for his newspaper because of the journalist's

criticism of the privatization policy of the government. This warning was related but not limited to whether the owner himself would take more tenders through privatization. Obviously he saw his own personal and, more specifically, economic interest in privatization, but he sees this as a capitalist. He supports privatization as a general policy, and because of this he warned Çölaşan for his criticism of the AKP's privatization policies:

Look, listen to me. The economy works well. I support privatization. I have some worries, but still, even if these exist, why should I get in trouble with the government for no reason because of you? I do not agree with you or with those like you. (Çölaşan, 2007, p. 23) (See Appendix A, 12)

Due to its major domination of the market during its existence in the media sector, the Dođan conglomerate is already representative of the importance of the ideological source in violations of media freedom due to the ownership structure. However, Ően and Avőar's (2012) study offers further support for the findings of this research by including more than one media mogul in the picture. They conduct both a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of two mass-circulation and market-dominant newspapers that have always been owned by different media moguls, *Sabah* and *Hürriyet*. Ően and Avőar (2012) take September 23-30, 2012 as the interval for economic news and November 1-30, 2012 for news that pertains to neoliberal policies, privatization and poverty. Their findings are presented in Table 5, showing the distribution of economic news in these two newspapers.

Table 5. Distribution of Economic News in *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet*

Newspapers (Website)	News on banking and finance	News on the business world and sectoral investment	News on foreign currency, interest, stock markets and gold	News on workers' rights, labor problems and poverty	News on working life, social security rights and unemployment	News on price raises, taxes, fees, inflation
<i>Hürriyet</i>	7	42	2	1	7	14
<i>Sabah</i>	23	87	21	4	11	20
Total	30	129	23	5	18	34

Source: Şen & Avşar (2012, p. 55)

Their argument becomes even more convincing when they provide the distribution of the number of different people who are addressed as authorities or whose ideas and statements are reported in the newspapers' publications on economic news; see Table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of Pundits Interviewed by the Media According to Profession

Newspapers (Website)	Politicians who represent the political party in power	Managers and bosses in the business world	Employed people, workers, union representatives, unemployed people and the poor
<i>Hürriyet</i>	10	15	2
<i>Sabah</i>	24	13	-
Total	34	28	2

Source: Şen & Avşar (2012, p. 56)

The third example that Şen & Avşar (2012) give as evidence for the argument that the closeness of media and capitalism, through monopoly capitalistic ownership in

the Turkish media, leads media to filter news in accordance with capitalist class interests as opposed to the interests of working people. It falls parallel with what I previously discussed: Aydın Doğan’s oppression of a journalist on the privatization issue. Moreover, newspapers consistently present privatization as a positive process. The quantitative distribution of the news on privatization and poverty presented by Şen & Avşar (2012) further support my argument; see Table 7.

Table 7. Distribution of News on Privatization or Unemployment and Poverty

Newspapers (Website)	News on privatization	News on unemployment and poverty
<i>Hürriyet</i>	11	2
<i>Sabah</i>	13	-
Total	34	2

Source: Şen & Avşar (2012, p. 55)

In 2014, 16.5 million Turkish citizens – 21% of the population – were under the poverty line (Uras, 2015). *Hürriyet* and *Sabah* reported 17 times more frequently on privatization than poverty in Turkey in November 2012.

Briefly, the freedom of media in Turkey is diminished or even erased by these three sources of domination. I have provided examples of the arbitrariness of media owners over media workers while they produce media content. These sources tend to indicate that the critical political economy school’s perspective regarding media is more accurate in representing how the state and capitalist functioning of the economy hinder media freedom, rejecting the assumption that media is a mirror of society. According to

this school, media provides an ideologically distorted picture of what occurs and unevenly allows different views to be voiced.

The discussion so far has been limited to the personal, economic and ideological interests of the media owner and their impact on the internal freedom of the media worker. However, the gradual monopolization of political power since 2002 has resulted in strategic changes to media ownership, such that the share of pro-government media sources increased significantly. Violations of external freedom through the capitalistic ties that make media owners dependent upon the state (along with the increasingly authoritarian attitudes of the government and its willingness to use other tools of coercion) means more damage to the internal freedom of media workers and media freedom.

4.2 How do these sources interact? A short and comparative content analysis: One newspaper, two events

*Habertürk* newspaper is owned by Ciner, a business person, who also invests in the energy and mining sector; his major adversary in the mining sector is Gürkan. A comparison will be made between the publication policy of the newspaper with respect to two different events in which workers lost their lives due to the unsafe working conditions, absence of necessary equipment, and the disregard and even omission of public checks on these conditions: Soma event, and Şirvan event.<sup>45</sup> On May 13, 2014,

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<sup>45</sup> I decided to pick these two events because the second interviewee misremembered the publishing policy of *Habertürk* regarding the case of Soma. During the interview, he stated that Ciner media deemed Soma a natural disaster without evaluating the responsibility of the company or giving any information about its owners and businesses (Interviewee no. 2). After I checked and saw that the reverse was true, I understood that the interviewee had probably confused this incident with another one involving the death of mine workers in the workplace. The confusion appears to be caused by the fact that the owner of *Habertürk* and the owner of the company that was working the mine in Soma were adversaries in the mining sector. The

the first event occurred in Soma. According to the official statement, 301 miners lost their lives. The owner of the company, Alp Güven Gürkan, was prosecuted. Public reaction was huge; political figures were protested by local people but the “big” media did not broadcast or publish information about these moments or scenes. The main attitude of the newspaper was rightly one of questioning the recklessness and responsibility of the company and the owner, with an important focus on the failure of the company to provide secure and necessary conditions for the workers. However, the only way newspaper referred to the politicians, like other conglomerate owned media do, was by presenting their statements and even describing their concern about the event, totally dismissing the protests that targeted them and even confrontations that occurred between politicians and the local people and were published by foreign media. Briefly, *Habertürk* discussed Gürkan but omitted anything that showed criticism of the government (Habertürk Newspaper, 2014a; 2014b; 2014c; 2014d).<sup>46</sup>

This attitude seems to conform to the economic interests of the owner. First, he opposes Gürkan, and, second, he does not criticize the government. However, to

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interviewee was likely thinking that the Soma mine was still being worked by Ciner, which was the case before Gürkan became its owner. Thus I looked for another case where Ciner was the owner in order to compare whether and how it affected the publishing policy of *Habertürk* under Ciner. Unfortunately, while there were many cases of worker deaths in the workplace involving Ciner, only one seems to be an appropriate comparison since it occurred after Ciner purchased *Habertürk*. After I found the case in Şirvan and started to compare the newspaper’s publishing policy regarding the two cases, I realized that this comparison had already been made and posted at the online news portal OdaTv (Özcan, 2014; Odatv, 2016). Therefore, in order to enrich the comparison and make an original contribution to it, I added columns published in the newspaper to the comparison. I analyze three authors’ evaluations of these two cases. I also add the sequence of events that happened to one author of the newspaper, because he insisted on criticizing both owners instead of focusing solely on the adversary of the owner’s newspaper.

<sup>46</sup> Newspaper headlines included: “The claim that burns the CEO” (“CEO’yu yakan iddia”), May 16, 2014; “Defending the murderers?” (“Katilleri mi savunuyorsun?”), May 18, 2014; “Erdoğan spoke in Soma: ‘We can reach both Soma and Somalia’” (“Erdoğan Tika’da konuştu: ‘Soma’ya da ulaşırız, Somali’ye de’”), May 19, 2014; “Voila, the money that they made from Soma!” (“İşte Soma’dan kazandıkları para!”), May 20, 2014; “Taner Yıldız [minister of energy] bursts into tears” (“Taner Yıldız gözyaşlarına hakim olamadı”), June 9, 2014 (2014c; Habertürk Newspaper; İşte Soma’da tazminat miktarı; 2014a). Also see a broadcast by Haberturk TV channel, owned by the same group (Habertürk TV, 2014).

strengthen the claim that the economic interests of Ciner determine the publishing policy of *Habertürk* newspaper and endanger journalism, a comparative element is needed. An analysis of the second event will provide this comparative element. On November 17, 2016, in Şirvan, a district in Şanlıurfa, Turkey, workers lost their lives at Park Elektrik belonging to Ciner holding. The owner of the holding is Turgay Ciner. The front page of *Habertürk* on November 18, 2016 had a small news item on the bottom right of the page with the title “Extreme rainfall led to landslide” (Habertürk Newspaper, 2016).<sup>47</sup> The content on the front page also indicated that sixteen workers remained under the earth and had yet to be saved, three workers had lost their lives, and one injured worker had already been saved. The news also gave the information that the event occurred near a mining zone yet did not provide any information about whether the workers were miners, whether they had been killed while working or whether it had occurred because of the unsafe working conditions. More importantly, the name of the holding was not given on the front page. In one of the inside pages of the newspaper on the same day, the related news was still at the bottom, the event was still called a natural disaster, and the efforts of officials in saving the workers were also noted. Only at the very end of the news, the name of the company was given (Park Elektrik Üretim Madencilik Sanayi AŞ) in order to publish its declaration to Public Disclosure Platform. This declaration describes the event, obviously without indicating any responsibility of the holding itself. Moreover, the reader would only find the name of the company involved, without information about the owner.

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<sup>47</sup> “Aşırı yağış heyelana neden oldu”

The comparison of the attitude of the newspaper in these two instances shows that the interests of the owner, economic ones in this case, have a clear determinative power over the content of the news. A look at the ways in which some authors for the newspaper evaluated both events will also provide complementary evidence. Three newspaper authors wrote vehement criticisms against Gürkan with respect to the Soma case. They even sometimes pointed out the savagery of today's capitalism in Turkey for the working class. While two of them, Fatih Altaylı (2014a; 2014b) and Serdar Turgut (2014) underline how limitless capitalist drive for profit is bad and argue that it causes such catastrophes, they never forget to mention good examples of capitalism and imply the existence of good capitalists. The only exception is Umur Talu, who openly terms Soma as a tragic disclosure and exposure of nearly 30 years of neoliberalization as the capitalist class' increasing domination over society which is strengthened by the legal framework along with the state's support and policies (Talu, 2014a; 2014b; 2014c; 2014d). He specifically argues that it would be a huge mistake to use Gürkan as a scapegoat (Talu, 2014e).

However, when it comes to the event in Şirvan, Altaylı and Turgut were silent and omitted the incident from those worthy of reporting about. A truly interesting coincidence, on the other hand, occurs when it comes to Talu. Noted where Talu's columns are usually published was that the author, due to a health problem, was on leave. It is worth remembering that when Çölaşan and Coşkun experienced problems with media owners, Ertuğrul Özkök typically asked them to go on leave; Çölaşan also repeatedly notes that he was frequently made to go on leave when there was increasing tension between the Doğan conglomerate and the government (Coşkun, 2011; Çölaşan, 2007). Another interesting coincidence was that Talu (2016) published his last article in

the newspaper a month after the event in Şirvan and stated that he was quitting his position as a columnist because of three reasons: his health problems, the health problems of the media, and the health problems of Turkey. In the article, he referred to his past experiences with being fired (from *Milliyet* and *Sabah*) and stated that all were caused by his insistence on “the normal of journalism” in opposition to media owners and the existing order (Talu, 2016). Just after these statements, Talu (2016) directly pointed out that at *Habertürk* newspaper, he never stopped writing about the problems of miners and oppressed journalists.

## CHAPTER 5

### PROCESSES THAT STRENGTHENED THE DOMINATION OF OWNERS OVER MEDIA WORKERS

Based on my research, I will expose and analyze two processes that enabled media owners to further their capacity for domination. The first process relies on diminishing the organizational power of journalists and rendering journalists more fragile. This weakened organizational power of journalists increases the ways owners can dominate media workers, decreasing freedom for media workers and, consequentially, media freedom. The second process is the creation of a pro-owner hierarchy in media. The media owner creates a hierarchy that favors his interests over journalistic principles and transforms the media manager into a business minded servant of capitalism through wage differentiation. While I provide details that include specific statements by media elites and information about wage differentials to demonstrate this process, I will also underline the link between de-unionization and the creation of a pro-owner hierarchy and media elites. The second process also substantiates my position in the debate over the internal freedom of media owner under capitalist domination. It will also provide information about the actual role and function of media elites with respect to capitalist domination of the media.

#### 5.1 De-unionization and the organizational weakness of journalists

The level of capitalistic control of the production process, workers and necessary societal conditions for reproducing the system depend on the conditions of the class struggle. At this point, the unionization problem in media or, more specifically, in

monopolistic media is crucial for understanding the level of domination by the capitalist media boss/owner over workers/journalists. Before I elaborate on this problem and its relationship with concentrated ownership, I will state my conclusion: the concentration of media ownership means greater de-unionization. Capitalist media moguls' policies and demands, combined with the general neoliberal transformation of Turkey after 1980, has resulted in increasing levels of de-unionization. Here, I argue that de-unionization is used by media bosses to increase their dominative power over journalists, which endangers media freedom. Greater de-unionization means a larger set of options available to media owners and less media freedom. The 1990s were marked by the pressure Aydın Doğan put on media workers employed by his media companies to de-unionize and the 2000s furthered the process.

De-unionization is promoted and strengthened through cooperation between media moguls and the state, rendering the internal freedom of media workers and journalists more fragile. It is easier to dominate a de-unionized worker because he or she loses the legal and organizational instruments necessary to defend or increase job security and the rights that protect them from the owner. A union is an important resource for journalists to defend the principles of the profession, particularly “telling the truth,” against (1) media owners' non-media purposes and capitalist interests and (2) political authority; thus, both media owners and political authorities agree with making the union ineffective. I elaborate on the topic with a focus on (1) the organizational power of journalists; (2) specific legal transformations throughout the history of the republic; and (3) the special efforts of media moguls – primarily Aydın Doğan and also Dinç Bilgin – to push for de-unionization of journalists.

The organizational problems of journalists seem to be related to many significant events in Turkey's history; three of which are particularly remarkable. First, the 1970s were marked a military memorandum and the beginning of industrial financial capitalists' ownership of the media. Second, the 1980 military coup institutionalized the neoliberal economic transformation through a violent, bloody and radical attack against workers' rights, real wages, and organizational power. Third, the 1990s were a period of further concentration of media ownership. Despite the negative effects of these on unionization, the organizational problems of journalists in Turkey did not begin in the 1970s. This issue already existed at the very beginning of the history of the republic, inherited from the imperial period.<sup>48</sup> Journalists' organizations were weak and ineffective in terms of protecting journalists' freedom and rights against media owners and the state due to dependency on the state, owners' influence on these organizations and their corporatist character.

Atilla Özsever notes that in the history of the republic, the first law that formed the legal framework of workers' rights and duties was Law no. 3008 of 1936, which

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<sup>48</sup> I should indicate that by "inheritance," I do not mean an archaic despotic state tradition that was transmitted to the republic, nor do I agree with ideas of Küçükömer (2007) that are shared by some. These ideas take this "archaic despotic state tradition" as the sole scapegoat. This line of analysis tend to take the bureaucracy as unchanged, intact for hundreds of years, tending to explain social phenomena not by looking at social dynamics but by a fantastic center and periphery dichotomy and using bureaucracy as a scapegoat. Those who follow Küçükömer misleadingly evaluate the modernization process between the late imperial period and early republican one as an expression of the dichotomy between people and the bureaucracy. I disagree with both arguments of those who follow Küçükömer. What I mean by "inheritance" is instead related to the contradictory process of bourgeois democratic revolutions in Turkey, which started in the first decade of the twentieth century. This process clearly showed social character. It had social grounds. It provided notable and undeniable improvements in social rights. Most importantly, it included the foundation of a modern republic. It was a progression and a radical revolution. However, it contradictorily included regressions and restrictions. For example, tax revolts were a significant factor in the 1908 revolution, yet after the revolution, faced with an increasing number of workers' strikes, they were banned by the revolutionaries (Savran, 2002, pp. 5-6). These kinds of contradictions are the "inheritance" and, as Savran (2002) also argues, they are not a surprise in a bourgeois democratic revolution nor do they invalidate its revolutionary and progressive nature.

remained in force until 1946. This law excluded journalists; they were not seen as workers with respect to physical work and there were no labor laws regulating those employed for intellectual work (Özsever, 2004, pp. 33-35). Instead journalists' work relationships were regulated by the law of obligations (Atılğan, 2001, p. 40). In either case, strikes and unionization were not authorized. The first organization of journalists of the republic was the state-led "press corporation" founded in 1939, in which membership was mandatory for journalists. In managerial cadre of the corporation, state officials take place and the corporation can defrock journalists from the profession (Koloğlu, 1999; Özsever, 2004, p. 268).

The very first attempt at a non-state led organization of journalists was realized by Sedat Simavi (Özsever, 2004, p. 23), a media boss that founded and owned *Hürriyet* newspaper. Thus the first organization free from direct state rule was an association of journalists, not a union. It was not founded by workers but by an owner in 1942.

Although this association made some attempt to improve journalists' organizational and other rights, it nevertheless retained a corporatist character in the sense that it was under the control of the owners and directors of media institutions. This corporatist character, as Atilla Özsever (2004) plausibly argues, rendered the class characteristic weak and made the owner stronger against the worker. In 1947, workers gained the right to establish a union, yet this would only pertain to journalists when a related law change was made in 1952 (Özsever, 2004, p. 38). Referring to Mim Kemal Öke's (Öke, 1994, p. 170) study, Atilla Özsever noted that the tradition of internalizing and "domesticating" the active and prestigious editor-in-chief and lead writers in well-known newspapers by assigning them to public functions and making them deputies showed a continuity from Hamid II through the early republic that lasted until the 1950s (Özsever, 2004, p. 57).

Briefly, this dependence of media elites on the state, along with their influence on a corporatist professional association, makes media workers fragile against media owners and the state even before the monopolization that followed 1980.

The period 1950-1960 was vital and vibrant in terms of journalists' attempts at organization. This parallels the whole society; the rate of workers' unionization rose from 26.65% in 1950 to 45.57% in 1960 (Tokol, 1994, p. 63). The rights and duties of workers were regulated by Law no 5018 instead of Law no 3008 (Özsever, 2004, p. 71). Though this new law allowed workers to establish unions, it still prohibited political activities and strikes. Law no 5953—the law regulating the relationships between the employer and employees in press jobs – came into force in July, 1952 (Özsever, 2004, p. 76). Under this law, journalists are entitled to the same rights as workers, including the right to establish a union that is defined by Law no 5018. With Law no 5953, enforcement of the letter of agreement for payment is improved. Additionally, this law obligated employers to provide a contract of service for journalists, independent of the duration of the service. Employers are forced to pay wages in advance to journalists and any overdue wages require the employer to pay interest to the journalist.

The first union for journalists was founded in 1952 by Hıfzı Topuz, İstanbul Gazeteciler Sendikası [İstanbul Journalists Union] (Özsever, 2004, p. 79). In 1955, Menderes, the Prime Minister of the republic of that period, asked the governor of İstanbul to close down the union because it had organized a conference on the rights of journalists. In order to prevent this, the union board had to issue a declaration apologizing to the government. The fear at the time was the dissemination of leftist views. Interviewee no. 2, who is a journalist, a unionist and also an academic who

studies media freedom, monopolistic media and the union struggles of journalists

explains the event as follows:

In the first years of the Democratic Party, there was tolerance. Menderes' relations with press started well; a law passed in 1952 to allow a press union. The governor of that period Fahrettin Kerim Gökay called journalists. As you know, the governorship and journalists were both at Babiali during that period. He told them now that Turkey had transitioned to democracy, a law was passed, a union comes out, and now journalists could form a union but then warned them not be communists or do communist activities (komünistlik yapmayın). The irony of the life stands out against governor's and state's wishes. It is necessary to write the statute of the union. Look at the coincidence, three individuals wrote this statute, Hıfzı Topuz, İhsan Ada, and another one, I hope I will remember the name [The one whom he could not remember is Burhan Arpad]. Alas, (he laughs), all three have Marxist origins. Hıfzı Topuz, francophone and alumni of Lycée de Galatasaray had already translated the statute of the Journalists Union of France, he benefits from this exemplar. All three were communists. Some activities were done by the union and then, it held a congress to demand the right to strike for journalists. At that time, strikes were not legal; they were prohibited. Then they said how dare you, how dare you demand such rights, and they are threatened to close the union down. The others in the union said, "let us send a telegram to express commitment, dependency to Menderes." You see, this dependence/commitment issue comes around again and again through the history of journalism in Turkey. Hıfzı Topuz and İhsan Adalı objected to this telegram. The former was the general secretary and the latter the secretary of financial issues. Both were removed down from the administration. Despite all this, the union criticized police violence against journalists in 1957, then it was closed down for nine months in the Menderes period. (Interviewee no. 2) (See Appendix A, 13)

Briefly, until the 1960s, the union struggle was not much help to journalists in protecting/strengthening their internal freedom against media owners and external freedom against state. Two leading figures in the press, Ada and Topuz, who resisted the authority for the sake of press freedom and rights of journalists ended up losing their positions in the union. The 1960s seem to be a remarkable period in terms of social struggles in Turkey and also for the professional rights of journalists and freedom of the press. The 1960 coup led to the draft of a new constitution that enlarged the scope of social and organizational rights. Interviewee no. 1 claims that

Improvements occurred in the sixties. The Democratic Party jumped down the press' throat. After they left power, the press could relax. Again, the constitution was effective in opening the way for struggle, then the left became stronger, and even influenced the army. (Interviewee no. 1) (See Appendix A, 14)

The relationship of these improvements with the new constitutional order is also underlined by Interviewee no. 2. With new rights and without monopolization of the media, press freedom and union struggles seems to be progressing:

Specifically, along with the 1961 constitution, through which press workers acquired new union rights, and with the absence of monopolization, the 60-80 period can be evaluated as a positive period in terms of press freedom. (Interviewee no. 2) (See Appendix A, 15)

The 1961 Constitution guaranteed the following rights of workers: establishing unions, being a member of unions, and making collective agreements. Laws no 274 and 275 related to unions, strikes and other workers' rights passed in 1963. Atilla Özsever (2004) notes that during the process of making this law, in 1961, Türk-İş held a meeting and the Journalists Union of İstanbul was very active in organizing this meeting. Another notable improvement of the 1960s is Law no. 212 that came into force on January 10, 1961 and was prepared by the National Union Committee before the new constitution. It improved the conditions of written agreement enforcement and hence provided a relative increase to the rights and job security of journalists. Özsever (2004) underlines four specific points in the law that created this improvement. The first three—requiring the employer to add the type wage and level of seniority of the journalist's job to the letter of agreement, requiring overtime periods and pay to be specified, and increasing weekend holidays to two days—related to the material conditions of the profession (Özsever, 2004, p. 40).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> For Law no. 212, see [http://eski.tgc.org.tr/mevzuat\\_212.asp](http://eski.tgc.org.tr/mevzuat_212.asp)

The most important stipulation of Law no. 212 shows that it is exactly a “law” in the republican sense that protects journalist from the arbitrariness of owners. Under this law, a journalist has the right to receive severance pay in the event of resignation because of any action taken by the owner that violates the principles of journalism, creates censorship, or puts pressure on the professional ethics of journalism (Yanardağ, 2008, pp. 175-178; Tılıç, 2001; Özsever, 2004; Atılğan, 2001).

These improvements in favor of press workers provided by Law no. 212 led to a significant reaction by employers. The bosses of *Akşam*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Dünya*, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Tercüman*, *Vatan*, *Yeni İstanbul*, and *Yeni Sabah* newspapers published a common declaration in protest against the law. Then they decided not to publish newspapers for three days. However, journalists replied to this employer reaction by furthering the power of collective action. Journalists united and collectively published a newspaper called *Basın* on 11, 12, and 13 January, 1961 (Özsever, 2004, pp. 44-45; Alan, 2015, p. 72) just after the day they marched—January 10, 1961—to protest the employers. To this day, 10<sup>th</sup> January is celebrated as Working Journalists’ Day. The chief editor of *Basın* was Abdi İpekçi.<sup>50</sup> Ziya Sonay, former president of the Journalists Union of Turkey spoke about the event in his January 10, 2000 speech, with specific emphasis on the importance of the union in the social struggle for rights and freedoms (Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası, 2001):

January 10 is the day when Law no 212, which bettered the rights of journalists against employers, was effectuated. 39 years ago today, while employers who were reacting against this law decided not to publish their newspapers, the workers of the period, denying that decision, under the leadership of unions,

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<sup>50</sup> These examples of collective action show how the organizational strength of journalists improved in the 1960s.

acted in solidarity and resisted against employers by publishing their own newspaper called BASIN (PRESS). (p. 125) (See Appendix A, 16)

The Journalists Union of Turkey experienced significant improvements during the 1960s. Based on Law no. 274 that allowed the establishment of a nationwide union, the Journalists Union of İstanbul transformed into a nation-wide union, merging with the Federation of Journalists Union of Turkey. In just one year, in 1964, the union proved its effectiveness in helping draft Law no. 202. The union achieved its first collective bargaining agreement the same year, with *Milliyet* and *Cumhuriyet* newspapers. The union became a member of the International Federation of Journalists in 1966 (Özsever, 2004, p. 91).

Interviewee no. 2 claims that the improvements which started in the 1960s should always be considered in a relative sense; despite the progress in journalists' union struggle, oppression and limitation by the state and owners remained. This improvement, however, transformed the legal environment, making it more conducive to the social struggle for rights and freedoms. This is accompanied by additional activism and the increased capacity of collective action by journalists to demand more legal rights. During this same time, however, Interviewee no. 2 notes that Aziz Nesin was detained by the National Union Committee (Milli Birlik Komitesi), which demonstrates the limits of this improvement. Restrictive policies returned by the beginning of the 1970s and the state pushed journalists to de-unionize:

Consequently, after May 27, along with the new constitution, obviously there happened to be an emancipatory climate. However, despite this, the general characteristic of the state, its tutelage continued. The National Union Committee, for example imprisoned Aziz Nesin in 1961. (He laughs) The press was both free and also... So, in a nutshell, we uncovered the period of from the foundation of the republic to the 1960s. Here, we see a tutelage relationship of the state; all political powers want to control the press. There was one-party rule, Menderes rule, National Union Committee. Though a relatively democratic environment in

the 60-80 period, unionization and some rights exist, you know March 12 happens. On March 12, 1971, a military memorandum was issued and again some journalists' rights were restricted, journalists were pushed, forced to resign from the union. (Interviewee no. 2) (See Appendix A, 17)

Interviewee no. 1 highlights that there were restrictions of freedoms and rights starting with the 1970s. However, the social struggles for rights and freedoms were not totally eliminated by state oppression. The 1970s witnessed vibrant and active groups in political life, including movements that represented extra-parliamentary opposition.<sup>51</sup>

1971 also marks the year when a change occurred in line-of-business regulations that made it possible to organize both technical workers in printing and intellectual laborers under the same union. While this seems a positive development, Özsever underlines that union membership had dropped to less than one third of the total number of employees in the whole sector. According to a 1971 law that regulates the conditions and properties of collective bargaining agreements, this meant that the union could not undertake collective bargaining. In order to ensure the minimum proportion of members necessary for collective bargaining, the union had to enlarge its membership structure to include these technical workers. However, Özsever adds that the union increased its organizational power again by merging with the Technician Journalists Union of Turkey and reaching collective bargaining agreements with *Akşam*, *Son Havadis*, *Hergün*,

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<sup>51</sup> The picture that Interviewees no. 1 and 2 and studies describe about the organizational power of journalists 1960-1980 again shows parallels to the general level of organizational power of the working class and its influence on social and political life. In 1961, union leaders came together and founded a socialist workers' party, the Workers' Party of Turkey. 1965 denotes the year when, for the first time in the history of the republic, a workers' party (the Workers' Party of Turkey) with a socialist program wins seats in the parliament. June 15-16, 1970, is a notable moment in Turkey's history of social struggles. During these two days, numerous workers in İstanbul marched to protest a new law that aimed to restrict union rights. As opposed to ungrounded belief in the spontaneity of the movement, the union's influence in organizing this protest seems obvious; the reunion that the union held three days before the protest disproves the spontaneity claim (Yurtsever, 2016, p. 106). This is an indication of the increased power of an organized society. Though the military memorandum in 1971 tries to suppress these socially active and vibrant political groups and protests, this vitality continues during the 1970s. The unionization level in the overall society shows an improvement in the period between 1960 and 1980, along with political vibrancy.

*Cumhuriyet, Hürriyet, Yeni Gazete, Milliyet, Tercüman, Dünya, Son Saat, and Ekspres ve Ekonomi* newspapers, *Hayat Mecmuası* (magazine), and Anadolu Ajansı and Türk Haberler Ajansı (agencies) (Özsever, 2004, pp. 91-92).

The negative influence of the 1971 military memorandum and changes to the legal environment seems to have been met with resistance based on a dynamic union struggle. Atilla Özsever remarks that during the period between 1970 and 1980, the Journalists Union of Turkey had organized nearly all mass-circulation newspapers, with the exception of *Günaydın* newspaper owned by Haldun Simavi (Özsever, 2004, p. 95). The only successful de-unionization operation by a media owner before 1980 was in 1978, at *Yeni Asır*, a local and well-known newspaper in İzmir owned by Dinç Bilgin (Özsever, 2004, p. 96).

The 1982 constitution removed the right to strike, obviously had a negative impact on media workers (Özsever, 2004, p. 109). In the beginning of 1980 coup d'état, military rule privileged journalists in comparison to other workers: they put a cap on senior indemnity for all workers except journalists. Interviewee no. 2 evaluates this event as “September 12 gave press workers apple candy” (Interviewee no 2.).<sup>52</sup> The putschists seem to be aware of the possible influence of the press and wanted the press on their side at first.

1983 marked an important change in the law that categorizes lines of workers in terms of which union they need to belong.<sup>53</sup> Then, in 1984, press workers and printing workers were again defined separately from journalists; this division weakened the

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<sup>52</sup> “12 Eylül askeri yönetimi de basına elma şekeri verdi.”

<sup>53</sup> Related to this law, Law nos. 2821 and 2822 strictly forbade the same union from organizing different lines of workers.

Journalists Union of Turkey in terms of the number of members. While it was the opposite of the 1971 line-of-business regulation changes, both had the result of lessening the power of the Journalists Union of Turkey. Hasan Ercan (2002), worker at *Cumhuriyet* newspaper and financial secretary of the Journalists Union of Turkey states that:

In the early 1980s, the number of union members of the Journalists Union of Turkey was six thousand. According to the laws of the period, we could also organize in unions in related business lines. I mean, those who are not in the business line of journalism, like press workers, print workers were also our members. A change made in 1983 in the law of business lines, separated them from us. When Law nos. 2821-2822 were effectuated, we lost our members working in print work, and the number of our members decreased to 3500-4000. (See Appendix A, 18)

The 1990s brought a different mechanism for the de-unionization of journalists. As privatization became the motto after 1980, the function of de-unionizing journalists has also been privatized by the concentration of media ownership. Aydın Doğan's expansion in media ownership seems the eminent example. During the 1990s, media moguls and specifically (but not only) Aydın Doğan pushed journalists to quit their unions. Aydın Doğan (2002) explicitly stated his opposition to journalists who were union members working for the press and declares that they decided together to quit their union (p. 129). His statement is interesting because when he uses the word "we," he is including himself with the workers/journalists at the conglomerate he owns. He implies a consensus between journalists and himself as the organic unity, "we." Of course, he does not explicitly state whether being a union member remained an option for journalists or if they democratically reached this final decision. His use of "we" allows him to equate himself with the other constituents of the subject of his sentence,

providing a direct and simple way to cover the existence of domination, absence of freedom, arbitrariness and hierarchy. Doğan's (2002) words are:

They say, "due to the technological development, you are to pay indemnity during 36 months"... What will I do, then I will accept that it works without union. [...] That is the reason why we got out from union, and with journalists, we voluntarily got out. I will not, as much as I can, rejoin the union. (p. 129) (See Appendix A, 19)

He does not specify whether those journalists who disagree with the owner's decision to de-unionize could retain their jobs in his company, because the answer, as I will show at the end of this chapter, is obvious. His statement is a good example of domination in which direct interference is not always detectable nor is it necessary to be detected in order to conclude that the freedom of workers was violated. As the republican theory suggests, where there exists domination and where one's set of action is arbitrarily at the mercy of another, then there exists no freedom. This is valid even when those who are dominated accept domination, since they are not provided secured options otherwise nor are they considered by the "dominator" as rational beings whose decisions should not be constrained according to their particularistic wants and private interests.

Beyond being a specific instance of domination that can be derived from Doğan's statement, the de-unionization of journalists working in capitalist-owned media also serves to ease further domination. It limits the potential power of journalists' collective action that can take place against other dominative acts and demands against workers. It renders journalist more fragile, removes job security and increases the fear of being unemployed. It is a domination that permits further domination and violates media freedom. Interviewee no. 2 underlines that de-unionization causes the absence of a

unionized journalist as a representative on the disciplinary board of the newspaper and hence removes journalists' security:

Managers of newspapers were unavoidably sensitive to topics related to unions. Later, this changed. At first, the union was removed from *Hürriyet* newspaper in the mid-1990s. Friends resigned and so on. Consequently, the freedom of the press was influenced by it, because at that time newspapers had disciplinary boards. To dismiss a journalist required a decision of the disciplinary board. The boss could not do it unilaterally. On the board, there were union members. So, let's assume that a journalist is reporting the news. [...] Consequently, because only by the decision of the board, a journalist might have been sacked, because it was making firing journalist difficult, and union were playing a role in it, so that means, journalists might have used freedom of press more easily, am I right? It was as follows, "I can report on news, because you cannot fire me" [...] She / he had security. However, when the union is gone, security is gone too, I mean being a member of a union has such a connection [to media freedom], a type of security. (Interviewee no. 2) (See Appendix A, 20)

On the other hand, the "famous" media elite, who deserves my scientific interest for the sake of this research in various chapters of this thesis, Ertuğrul Özkök, does what being an overseer or "non-commissioned officer" of a capitalist who serves the owner in dominating workers requires from him. He openly declares his hatred of Law no. 212 and his negative opinion of unions (FIJ/EFJ, 2002). As a commander under the service of Doğan he is clear to those he needs to dominate (Cumhuriyet Newspaper, 1994): "In today's circumstances of Turkey, it is impossible to work with unions. We defend always paying wages according to meritocracy. If other newspapers continued with unions, I do not know if we would do so" (p. 17).<sup>54</sup>

He underlines the economic costs of union activities for owners—bargaining and struggling for rights and better conditions. I will elaborate further on this in the subchapter about the creation of a pro-owner hierarchy and the media elite through wage

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<sup>54</sup> "Türkiye'nin bugünkü ekonomik koşullarında sendika ile birlikte yürümek mümkün değildir. Biz eskiden beri liyakate göre ücret verilmesini savunuyoruz. Öbür gazetelerde (*Sabah* ve *Milliyet*) sendika devam etseydi böyle bir işe gidilir miydi, onu bilmiyorum."

differentiation. He continues (Cumhuriyet Newspaper, 1994): “Union affects us negatively. The contract that we made now, already protects all of existing rights. The union has to work according to the circumstances of the existing age” (Cumhuriyet Newspaper, 1994).<sup>55</sup>

Ertuğrul Özkök seems to use “meritocracy” as a theme to tempt journalists, underlining the need for competitiveness and possible privileges for those who merit them by competing. Aydın Doğan uses the same emphasis (Doğan, 2002, p. 130). Underlining the competitive characteristics of journalism and emphasizing meritocracy are clichés to propagate counter-arguments to unionization and undermine the importance of cooperation among press workers. Özkök seems to address “the cultural prestige of journalism” to convince others of the idea that differentiating oneself as a journalist is the type of success that each journalist should care the most about. By promoting “distinction” à la Bourdieu to journalists, Özkök, as any “good capitalist” does, aims to make workers compete with each other. Furthermore, Interviewee no. 3 points out information about Özkök that is related to the main hypothesis of this thesis (Interviewee no. 3). Rather than expecting media elites in media conglomerates to defend media freedom, as the Weberian and managerial schools assume, it is more reasonable to see them as serving the capitalist owner’s interest even though it violates media freedom. Özkök’s reward of being an elite in a media conglomerate does not seem to be due to media professionalism but the managerial professionalism of defending the owner against the worker in this de-unionization issue. This detail is also supported by other journalists’ interviews and statements about the media mogul led de-

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<sup>55</sup> “Sendika bizi olumsuz etkiliyor. Bizim şu anda yaptığımız sözleşme, toplu sözleşmede varolan bütün hakları koruyor. Sendikanın çağın gereklerine göre çalışması gerekirdi.”

unionization experience in Turkish media which I present also in this subchapter.

Interviewee no. 3 says about Özkök:

One of the most concrete obstacles for editorial independence should be remembered. I should state that media bosses prevent unionization, liquidate bargaining agents [those enabled by the union to engage in collective bargaining]. It was even written in the history of the press that one boss of a newspaper promoted the chief clerk who ran a de-unionization operation successfully to editor-in-chief. (Interviewee no. 3) (See Appendix A, 21)

The media boss he mentions is Aydın Doğan and the bureau chief whom Doğan rewards by promoting him to the editor-in-chief position is none other than Ertuğrul Özkök. The former is described by Interviewee no. 3 as an important actor in preventing the unionization of journalists, and the latter spent “valuable” energy to realize this prevention and was hence promoted by the former. Ümit Alan (2015), a journalist and researcher on journalism, reiterates Interviewee no. 3’s claim of Doğan rewarding Ertuğrul Özkök (p. 142). Aziz Çelik, who is both journalist and an expert on union struggles in Turkey, also confirms the role of Özkök (Çelik, 2018):

However, from the mid-1990s, this order has changed. In the press, diversification started to be replaced by an oligopoly market, competition stiffened. The press was hand in glove with governments, this state was intensified. And, in the climate of hatred and hostility towards labor during 1990, one of the primary targets in the press happened to be unions. Starting with the flagships of Doğan Group, *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* newspapers, the union was liquidated. It is known that the process was carried out by Ertuğrul Özkök. (para. 8) (See Appendix A, 22)

Atilla Özsever remarks that the first media business to quit Turkey’s Journalists’ Union was *Milliyet* newspaper in 1991, just after Aydın Doğan took ownership of the newspaper (Özsever, 2004, p. 171). In other words, any increase in Doğan’s media ownership went hand in hand with further de-unionization. Ercan states that de-unionization in *Milliyet* newspaper was realized slowly and started with the heads of the

establishment, managers and directors. Each manager was expected to coerce those who worked under them to de-unionize. Ercan (2002, para. 8) describes this experience:

Aydın Doğan, the owner of *Milliyet* newspaper, stated that collective agreement placed a burden on him, and that he would not want to sign a collective agreement anymore. He removed the union from the newspaper by extending the process to one year. De-unionization started with managerial positions. Kemal Kınacı happened to be the institution manager. Doğan first, ordered managers / directors to resign from the union. After they resigned, they pressed those who worked under them. Each manager, by pressing her/his own worker, got workers to resign from the union one by one. At that period, Doğan himself paid journalists' notary fees of 48000 TL. (para. 8) (See Appendix A, 23)

Here, Ercan also help elucidate what kind of “we” Aydın Doğan was using when he explained how he and the newspaper workers quit the union. What seems intuitively obvious is also what occurred; those who resisted de-unionization could not continue to work for *Milliyet*. Aydın Doğan's “we” referred to those who remained under his umbrella of domination:

A very small minority who did not agree to resign were dismissed from the job with their end-of-service indemnity paid. At the end of the day, we lost our 51 percent majority in *Milliyet* newspaper. After 1992, we did not have a bargaining agent there anymore. (Ercan, 2002, para. 9) (See Appendix A, 24)

However, Yanardağ notes that explanations for de-unionization at *Milliyet* newspaper cannot be reduced merely to Aydın Doğan's oppression. As Adaklı cites, Yanardağ (Adaklı, 2006, p. 301) states that most journalists did not sufficiently resist. Yanardağ and adds that, in his another piece, this does not mean that there was no oppression but that there was not enough resistance (Yanardağ, 2008, p. 62).

Another critical moment in terms of de-unionization under the influence of Doğan's expansion in media ownership took place from 1994 to 1995. From 1995 onwards, *Hürriyet*, referred to as the flagship of Turkish press is owned by Doğan. It also means further de-unionization. Hasan Ercan (2002) states: “Aydın Doğan imposed

one condition when he wanted to buy *Hürriyet* from Erol Simavi in 1994 for 7 trillion TL with the currency of the period, ‘I [will] buy this newspaper from you, but first the workers must resign from [the] union’” (para. 10)<sup>56</sup>

He adds that:

Resignations had already started before Aydın Doğan bought *Hürriyet*. Ertuğrul Özkök organized this process. At that time our friends [colleagues who were members of the union] were working at *Hürriyet* Haber Ajansı, *Hürgün* and *Hürriyet*. *Hürriyet* had just moved to its new building in İkitelli and we shuttled from here to there, day after day. We told our friends the reasons why they should not quit the union. [...] After leaving Babı-Ali, our journalist friends lost their cooperation. People enter through the doors with their cards. Alienation among workers was huge. Furthermore, they are too scared of losing their jobs. (Ercan, 2002, para. 11) (See Appendix A, 25)

Ercan emphasizes Ertuğrul Özkök’s role as well:

At that time, Ziya Sonay was the head person of the İstanbul branch of the Journalists Union of Turkey; he told Özkök to stop the resignations. But Özkök replied, “we pay those people more than what you pay.” We rejected this statement; if the security/guarantee is removed, then any gain/recovery/achievement will just be fleeting, ephemeral. Özkök did what he said he would do. But this recovery has not continued. Our friends work many years for the same wage. (Ercan, 2002, para. 13) (See Appendix A, 26)

In 2001, 1,000 workers at Doğan media were fired without any collective organization to protect them (Adaklı, 2006, p. 301).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> “1994 yılında Aydın Doğan *Hürriyet*’i Erol Simavi’den o zamanın parasıyla 7 trilyon liraya satın alırken bir şart koşmuştu: “Ben bu gazeteyi sizden satın alırım ama, önce işçilerin sendikadan istifa etmesi gerekir.””

<sup>57</sup> Media owners’ negative attitude towards unions was prevalent in the pre-monopolization of media in Turkey. Haldun Simavi is an example par excellence. He was a conventional journalist who was born in a journalist family—one of the two sons of Sedat Simavi. He was also one of the two former owners of *Hürriyet* before Doğan. He passed his part in *Hürriyet* to his brother, founded *Günaydın* newspaper in 1968 and also founded the Veb Offset Group in 1971. Akgün Tekin (2006), a journalist who worked for *Günaydın* for many years, clearly states Haldun Simavi’s opposition to unionization among journalists in his memoir. Akgün Tekin does not seem to be uncomfortable with Simavi’s approach. He states that Simavi even considered closing the newspaper when he saw some activities to start the unionization process at the newspaper (Tekin, 2006, p. 155). Even though he was more of a conventional journalist than Doğan, Simavi was also a capitalist owner and on the same page as others regarding the de-unionization of journalists. In 1976, the Journalists Union of Turkey protested Simavi’s negative attitude toward unions and his firing of journalists (Özsever, 2004).

The influence of monopolized media ownership on de-unionization can also be illustrated through statistics. The Ministry of Labor and Social Security publishes statistics pertaining to January and July every year. According to these statistics, during the 1990s, any increase over one percentage in the rate of journalists' unionization occurred only when total employment decreased (T.C. Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı, 1992; 1995; 1997; 1999). Table 8 shows the rate of unionization from the end of the twentieth century to the beginning of the 21st.

In the 2000s, the de-unionization drive by media moguls since the 1990s reached such a high level that the overall rate of journalist unionization radically changed. To see the immediate and long-term effects of the processes of de-unionization, the following statistics might be useful: in January 1992, the unionization rate was 64.17%; in January 1997, 59.67%, in January 2002, 38.34%; and in January 2007, 30.04% (T.C. Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı, 2000; 2003; 2005; 2006; 2007).<sup>58</sup> In 2012, the law concerning the categorization of professions changed again and journalism was integrated under a "press" category—including journalism and published and printed material – as it was previously. That is the reason why I stopped the list of statistics at

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<sup>58</sup> Ercan İpekçi (2006), chairperson/president of the Journalists Union of Turkey in 2006, in an interview with Ahmet Tulgar, states that they, as the union, might hide information about members from employers. They seem to protect those who are members of the Journalists Union of Turkey from any instance of job loss or other oppressive attitudes (İpekçi, 2006). However, this lack of precision in numbers is not limited to the information shared or hidden from the employer. Secondly, Hasan Ercan (2002) indicates that their information about the actual number of members and the number that official statistics declare are meaningfully different from each other. He gives an example for the number in 2002. According to their information, Ercan states that the number of members of the Journalists Union of Turkey is 1000-1200 yet the Ministry of Labor declared there were more than 3000 members (Ercan, 2002). In consequence, both Ercan's and İpekçi's statements lead me to evaluate the unionization statistics with caution. Although it might partially explain the picture, the overall rate may be misleading. However, both what İpekçi states and what Ercan explains support my argument about weakening the organizational power of journalists through de-unionization: unionization has become increasingly risky, dangerous and difficult for journalists, some have to be hidden from official statistics and some can only be formal members without actively participation in the union. On the other hand, Otan (2006) notes some members of the union argue that the state reports higher numbers to make a good impression internationally.

2007. To provide a more complete picture, I should state that during the 1990s, the unionization rate fluctuated at roughly 50-65%, with the exact range of 47.34-65.81%. Nevertheless, the 2000s witnessed an undeniable decrease. Then again, it should be kept in mind that the overall rate might be misleading or cause us not to realize what exactly was happening. Because I claim that capitalistic media moguls led to an increase in de-unionization from 1980 to the 2000s, and that the 1990s in particular witnessed a dramatic acceleration in that, then looking at these owners' conglomerates might provide a more accurate evaluation of my claim than the overall statics, though these do provide corroborating evidence for my argument.

Table 8. Rate of Unionization

Total employment	Number of unionized workers	Year/month	Rate of unionization
8184	3874	1990, July	47.34%
8043	4184	1991, January	52.02%
7506	4600	1991, July	61.28%
7084	4546	1992, January	64.17%
6778	4387	1992, July	64.72%
-	-	1993, January	-
6808	4467	1993, July	65.61%
6919	4554	1994, January	65.81%
6973	4571	1994, July	65.55%
6571	4362	1995, January	66.38%
-	-	1995, July - 1996, July	-
7527	4491	1997, January	59.67%
7303	4.736	1997, July	64.85%
7724	4773	1998, January	61.79%
7812	4827	1998, July	61.79%
7913	4891	1999, January	61.81%
7956	4915	1999, July	61.78%
9029	4953	2000, January	54.86%
9184	3599	2000, July	39.19%
9228	3683	2001, January	39.91%
-	-	2001, July	-
9828	3768	2002, January	38.34%
9834	3793	2002, July	38.57%
11929	3830	2003, January	32.11%
9955	3829	2003, July	38.46%
10969	3930	2004, January	35.83%
12508	4008	2004, July	32.04%
12577	4142	2005, January	32.93%
13199	4174	2005, July	31.62%
14439	4217	2006, January	29.21%
14494	4324	2006, July	29.83%
14524	4363	2007, January	30.04%
15640	4900	2007, July	31.33%

Note. Compiled by the researcher from semiannual statistical reports of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security of Turkey (T.C. Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı, 1992; 1995; 1997; 1998; 1999; 2000; 2003; 2005; 2006; 2007)

When I move from the unionization rate of journalists overall to the media companies where unions are excluded or have lost the capacity to conduct collective bargaining, it becomes easier to detect how the concentration of media ownership causes de-unionization. To negotiate collective bargaining agreements, union had reached a sufficient number of members in 18 workplaces before 1994. Atılğan (2001) lists them as follows:

Hürriyet Gazetecilik ve Matbaacılık a.ş, Hürriyet Haber Ajansı, Hürgün Gazetecilik ve Matbaacılık a.ş, İdeal Yayıncılık a.ş, Milliyet Gazetecilik a.ş, Tercüman Gazetecilik ve matbaacılık a.ş, Cumhuriyet Matbaacılık and Gazetecilik a.ş, Yenigün Haber Ajansı Basın ve Yayıncılık a.ş, Çağdaş Yayıncılık ve Basın Sanayii a.ş, Anadolu Ajansı a.ş, Anadolu Radyo ve Görüntü Hizmetleri a.ş, Güçlü Gazetecilik Yayıncılık ve Matbaacılık a.ş, Daily News Gazetecilik ve Matbaacılık a.ş, Milliyet yayın a.ş, Karacan Yayınları a.ş, Ankara Ajansı a.ş, Akdeniz Haber Ajansı a.ş, Ulusal Basın Ajansı a.ş. (p. 138)<sup>59</sup>

After 1994, the number of unionized workplaces decreased to four: Yenigün Haber Ajansı Basın ve Yayıncılık a.ş, Ankara Ajansı a.ş, Anadolu Ajansı a.ş, Anadolu Radyo ve Görüntü Hizmetleri a.ş. Big media conglomerates seem to succeed in the de-unionization process of their journalists (Atılğan, 2001, p. 138). This is not only the case for Doğan Media or the printed press. The TV sector and other conglomerate media exclude unionized workers. Özsever notes that not only in Doğan companies but also in Uzan, Bilgin and Çukurova Groups, both in their TV and newspaper outlets, there are no unionized workers by the late 1990s (Özsever, 2004, pp. 19-20).

This transformation strengthens my point about media owners de-unionizing journalists to further their dominative power over media; in pursuing their non-journalistic interests, the low level of organization of journalist clearly enables owners to violate more the principles of journalism. With journalists' lowered organizational

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<sup>59</sup> Since all words in the quote are proper nouns, i.e., company names, this is not be translated.

power, the violation of media ethics and freedom become easier to realize.<sup>60</sup> Removing the union means removing the tool for journalists to defend, strengthen, protect and improve the “law”. With its more comprehensive meaning, law is a common name that includes all the necessary circumstances for the freedom to perform journalism in accordance with journalistic principles. The absence of law is arbitrariness. The absence of law includes all sources, factors and powers that are opposed to journalistic principles. A media owner pursues and aims for de-unionization to strengthen his despotic rule, removing the freedom of media; this process is also supported by the legal environment and state policy from the 1980s onward. Aydın Doğan severely restricts the number of journalists at the top cadre contracted according to Law no. 212 and the majority of the workers at his conglomerate are excluded from the rights defined by this law (Yanardağ, 2008, pp. 178-179). He terms the law a “monster”: “And they brought out such a monster. Law no. 212 is a monster; such a thing cannot happen” (Doğan, 2002, p. 122).<sup>61</sup>

In addition to this, de-unionization not only makes domination of media workers easier by increasing their insecurity but might also strengthen, diversify or enrich the sources of domination themselves, since what owner does cannot be objected to or limited by any workers’ organization. Dinç Bilgin is a good example. He is a former owner of *Yeni Asır* and, later, of *Sabah*. The newspaper’s publishing policy was right-wing like that of *Hürriyet* – its major adversary in the market (under both Simavi and Doğan) – yet it attracted readers’ attention by taking a right-wing opposition stance

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<sup>60</sup> Montesquieu (1777) states “one man, without law or rule, can do anything through his will and whims” (p. 39) to describe despotism.

<sup>61</sup> “Ve böyle bir ucube çıkardılar. 212 Sayılı Kanun bir ucubedir, böyle bir şey olamaz.”

against the right-wing political party in power, i.e., the Motherland Party (Kuyucu, 2012, pp. 368-369).

Bilgin entered the banking sector by buying Etibank when it was privatized in 1998. It is an example of conglomeratization of a media business. By enlarging his business, he added further sources of domination that increased his tendency to violate media freedom. His banking adventure ended catastrophically. Due to financial irregularities relating to his ownership of Etibank, he was sentenced to nearly five years in prison (Habertürk Newspaper, 2011).

Ümit Otan, journalist, union member and union organizer, writes in his memoirs that when he met Bilgin to oppose, discuss and change his attitude and policy on the issue of the union pertaining to journalists working at *Sabah*, Bilgin boldly stated his disagreement with those who wanted to unionize and that he would not let them be a member of a union. In the chapter of his book titled “Did the labor union bankrupt Bilgin,”<sup>62</sup>Otan (2006) reports Bilgin’s answers as follows:

Dinç Bilgin stated that the union is an institution of workers, he has no interest in it. About the astronomic payments those who are close to administration receive, he said “would it be bad if you were a journalist doing her/his job well and then got a lot of money from this?” (pp. 138-140) (See Appendix A, 27)<sup>63</sup>

Otan (2006) examines the negative effects of de-unionization through what happened to Bilgin with business enlargement:

If a group of organized workers had existed at *Sabah* newspaper, Dinç Bilgin would not have gotten caught up in the banking business. The ones who caused the greatest losses for him also showed him the banking business as a last resort

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<sup>62</sup> “Bilgin’i sendika mı batırdı?”

<sup>63</sup> At this point, it is worth remembering that as Piketty shows in *Capital*, using a comparison of “old” capitalist countries, the wage differential or, more specifically, the extreme wages of “super managers” in the U.S. do not seem to be the result of differentiation in production techniques or productivity/technology but is instead mostly related to ideological discourses and norms in which “meritocratic emphasis” plays a key role (Piketty, 2014, pp. 315-335). Meritocracy, in terms of productivity and utility, does not create the wage differentiation, but the meritocratic discourse is used to legitimize this difference.

to fall back upon. Now they are chirpy in a different world; the bill was charged to Bilgin. (p. 140) (See Appendix A, 28)

Briefly, Otan implies that high-salaried media elites might lead, propose and even direct the media owner to undertake non-media business. Actually, Zafer Mutlu, who studied journalism at university and started his career as a journalist, was already an executive board member at Etibank.

Beyond his implicit accusation of media elites as responsible for Bilgin's entrance to the banking sector and what happened to him as a result, which is not so well founded, Otan's explicit interpretation of de-unionization seems more valuable. Without any check by the collective power of journalists, a media owner can more easily enter a non-media sector. Then the end result is catastrophic in two senses. In terms of journalism, media workers become exposed to more burdens due to the banking issue and in terms of particularistic interest, Bilgin is ruined. A sycophant of the despot – media elite or star – might damage the despot–media owner – more than unionized journalist who resists his domination over them. Bilgin (2010) also makes a self-criticism of his assuring privileges to media stars of his own media and regrets having done so. Actually, what he states is an approval of the main arguments of my thesis. Hence his regret seems valuable since it is an approval of my claims of this thesis by an actor who is exposed to criticisms generated by these claims:

If I knew then what I know now, I would not do so. [...] Turkey, along with all its institutions, was totally out of kilter. Journalists should solely do journalism without any other relationship with public [tenders] so that they can do true journalism. (Bilgin, 2012, para. 9) (See Appendix A, 29)

In an oligopolistic media structure, as I already pointed out, different capitalists – being both owners of multifaceted conglomerates and owners of media – compete and unsurprisingly experience conflicts of interests between them. When this is the case, it

becomes easier to see the hypocritical attempts to defend media ethics and freedom coming from within these conglomerates. Authors/journalists might accuse the adversary group (with its owner and journalists who work for the group) of violating the principles of journalism by pursuing a closer relationship with the state to get economic advantages. Or they simply criticize the lowered quality of journalism and worsening conditions of journalists in a general way with a sense of nostalgia. I find important to emphasize this because de-unionization is related to these violations, worsening conditions and lowering quality, making their occurrence more likely. In order to protect their despotism and limit or remove the internal freedom of media workers, media owners show a common attitude. In their own media, they eliminate the possibility of discussing journalists' unionization and revealing the importance of journalists' organizational power for media freedom. Otan (2006) in his book, which includes his memoirs and analysis of de-unionization in Turkish media, gives the examples of columns written by Oray Eğin, Fatih Altaylı and Hıncal Uluç. They never examine the union issue when making a pseudo-critique of what is going wrong in contemporary media (pp. 163-165,174-177).<sup>64</sup>

In 2018, Demirören Media bought Doğan Media. The conditions of journalists in terms of job security and organizational power for 2019 might unfortunately be summarized with the declaration of the G-9 platform, formed by nine professional organizations of journalists including associations and unions. The headline presenting

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<sup>64</sup> I might add Otan's examples, which include critiques by Ertuğrul Özkök that sometimes target Zafer Mutlu at *Sabah* – as employees of adversarial newspapers and conglomerates (Özkök, 1995) – or that pertain to the overall conditions of the sector—including a self-critique in terms of media ethics and principles of journalism (Özkök, 2003) – yet without mentioning the organizational problems of journalists. The issue of unionization for journalists is directly related to problems of media ethics and freedom but taboo for lead authors in big media conglomerates.

the declaration was “Doğan de-unionized, Demirören will de-journalize” (Bianet Haber Merkezi, 2018).<sup>65</sup> After Doğan created a rose garden without thorns through mechanisms to strengthen domination, one of which is de-unionization, Demirören rapidly started dismissing journalists.

## 5.2 Creating new media managers and elites: Wage differentials & pro-capitalist/pro-owner professionalization

The second way or process that furthers the capitalistic domination over media workers is related to the changing relationship in media institutions and new dominant characteristics of media elites. These media elites’ roles become more suited to the domination of owners’ capitalistic interests over media freedom. I will not enumerate all of these pro-capitalist characteristics of the new professionalization but instead focus on the points that make or show media elites as more integrated with the capitalistic logic. My goal is to illuminate the question of whether media elites defend media freedom against media owners or further capitalistic dominance.<sup>66</sup> Consequently, this is to substantiate the debate between critical political economy’s critique of media and the internal freedom assumptions of the Weberian and managerial approaches.

I evaluate how wage differentials constitute an important point in further inculcating media elites with capitalist logic and provides additional illumination regarding the systemic influences behind Özkök and other media elites in media oligopolies. I will add further examples based on statements of actors in critical

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<sup>65</sup> “Doğan sendikasıztırdı, Demirören gazetecisizleştirecek.”

<sup>66</sup> Actually, some of the specific examples that I have provided with regard to Ertuğrul Özkök give an idea of whether media elites are there to protect liberal democratic rights and freedom in media or rather further domination over the media due to its ownership structure.

positions in media showing this integration. According to Mümtaz Soysal, the balance between the media owner (medya sahipleri) and the workers (ecirler), which is to be assured by middle positions has been totally lost in favor of boss domination and against the protection of media workers who are located in a fragile position (Otan, 2006, pp. 106-107).

To create such a hierarchy, it seems logical to first create a manager who has a capitalistic mindset that surpasses journalistic principles and concerns. The distinctive feature in this process is that the journalist in the leading position transforms himself into a business person.<sup>67</sup> Interviewee no. 3 argues this is the formation of a new type of journalist that is industrialist-business minded (Interviewee no. 3). My research shows that wage differentials seem to be an important means of making media managers and elites closer to the capitalist owner and creating the hierarchy. Obviously, I do not intend to reduce the whole transformation making media managers closer to owners to this but my research detected this as a contributing factor in this transformation.

In 2002, the national per capita income in Turkey was \$3,650, according to the World Bank (Worldbank, 2018). Özsever notes that according to Capital magazine's November 2002 issue, the wages of managerial positions with the highest income in the Turkish media sector, including chief editors Mehmet Yılmaz and Ertuğrul Özkök of the *Milliyet* and *Hürriyet* (the two market-dominating newspapers owned by Doğan at the time), is between \$100,000 and \$180,000 per year. (Özsever, 2004, p. 161). It should be kept in mind that this is solely the expected income, based on the research of the magazine not official figures. The Journalists Union of Turkey asserts that in 2001, more

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<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, now journalists have to not only be interested in the media business of the owner but also show concern for other non-media businesses.

than half of journalists in the sector worked for less than the minimum wage (Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası, 2001, p. 126). In her doctoral thesis, Gülcan Seçkin (2004) presents a three-stage pyramid to describe the distribution of labor income. At the top of the pyramid are a very few journalists such as top managers, anchor persons and authors who are paid astronomical wages and have a very high standard of living, yet whose total income is not completely captured by the payroll figures (Seçkin, 2004). The next level is made up of those who are paid relatively better than those under them, however the earnings at this middle stage are strictly under subsistence level, with the bottom level including journalists who have just started their careers and are paid extremely low wages (Seçkin, 2004).

Bottomore (1993) argues that professional managers are in the capitalist class and are already owners of companies; even in the case that professional managers are not company shareholders, their economic existence is still fused with that of the ultra-rich classes and the owner and manager are on the same page with regard to goals and roles. Hence, a wage differential seems to be a way to strengthen this assimilation in terms of lifestyle, worldview, habits and, most importantly, interests. However, this wage differential is also related to another way used by media bosses to strengthen their dominative power over media production: de-unionization. In propagating de-unionization Dinç Bilgin (Otan, 2006, p. 139), Ertuğrul Özkök and Aydın Doğan (Doğan, 2002, p. 130) underlined the importance of meritocracy and why it should be supported, along with dramatic increases in the wages of those in managerial positions, chief editors and leading columnists. Meritocracy is the key word to used legitimize this difference. To defend and propagate very high incomes of “superstar” journalists or chief editors is also to convince journalists to take a competitive attitude instead of a

pro-union one. These superstars with high wages encompass not only managerial/editorial positions but also columnists, which Adaklı (2006) explains is a new phenomenon for Turkish media that began in the 1980s.

Wage differentiation is propagated by media bosses to create a pro-owner hierarchy and replace cooperative habits with competitive ones in the work place. Reducing the organizational power of journalists parallels the creation of this hierarchy. However, the relationship of de-unionization with this wage differential-based hierarchy is more than simply serving a common end. De-unionization is a necessary step to be taken in order to create the pro-owner new elites of media; the highest paid journalists can only be paid very high wages if there is no union at the workplace. As Interviewee no. 3 points out, performance in the de-unionization process might be the reason for upward mobility in conglomerate media, e.g., Özkök's promotion from chief in the Ankara bureau to the position of chief editor.

Otan (2006) cites Dinç Bilgin as saying: "would it be bad if you were a journalist doing her/his job well and then got a lot of money from this (p. 139)"<sup>68</sup> This dialogue between Otan and Bilgin occurred during Otan's debates with him on his de-unionization policy. The power of the union prevents the owner from unilaterally raising the wage for a specific worker/position. It creates limits on the owner and the owner's dominative power in order to protect media workers. It serves as protection against oppression due to the ownership structure, limiting any attempt to create a hierarchy based on monetary differentiation that works against workers' rights and conditions in the interests of the owner. This reason is explained by Interviewee no. 2 as follows:

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<sup>68</sup> "Yönetime yakın olanların aldıkları astronomik paralar ile çalışanlar arasındaki ücret uçurumuyla ilgili olarak da "Siz işinizi yapan iyi bir gazeteci olsanız ve çok para alsanız kötü mü olur?" diyordu."

But in a unionized period, let's say, for example, when we were to make a contract with the boss of *Hürriyet* newspaper or *Milliyet* newspaper, we could put such a clause into the contract. We were saying that, if the employer gives a pay raise outside of the contract, for the editor-in-chief or editorial department and such, let's say a pay raise over 5%, then this raise has to be reflected in the wages of all workers. That is to say, you bind the boss. Well, he/she might pay on hush hush, this is another story, but still, in a way, the boss cannot say openly that this is my editor-in-chief; I can give any amount of money I want. She/he could not say so, I mean. Consequently, since the editor-in-chief was also a union member, this also binds her/him. You, as a boss, can make a fair increase in wages as 5%; if you exceed it, it reflects into all employees' wages. Thus, unionization affected these. (Interviewee no. 2) (see Appendix A, 30)

Briefly, unions are the main obstacle to creating such a wage differential. Those who want to be in higher positions and those who need to create this hierarchy to control production process more efficiently jointly agreed to remove this obstacle.

Serkan Seymen (2001) reports a statement by Zafer Mutlu, editor-in-chief of *Sabah* newspaper. It shows how this wage differential, as a method and a source of motivation provided by the owner to the manager, eases the transformation from a conventional journalistic approach to an officer of a corporation. In other words, it shows how it is more reasonable to expect media elites to defend owners' capitalistic interests rather than the principles of journalism:

I have a different character in comparison with other editor-in-chiefs that Babıali has witnessed. I did not consider myself to be an editor-in-chief who has to make a newspaper. I see myself as a corporate manager who is charged with making money for my boss. That is the reason why I see myself as no different than a chief executive of Arçelik company. My main job is to make my boss a lot of money. My company will grow, it will make a lot of money, so I can earn money that is extraordinary with respect to the typical wage level. (p. 48) (see Appendix A, 31)

Metin Münir (1993), a journalist who started his career in 1967 and worked for many years with the BBC and Financial Times, asserts based on his experiences related to *Sabah* newspaper that an important increase occurred in Zafer Mutlu's earnings in the 1980s. Münir (1993) adds that this affected not only his mind but his body as well:

In January 1981, his wage increased from 11,000 liras to 80,000 liras. This raise happened to be a milestone in his finances. After that time, the money he received would always increase, he would never be hard up for money. Along with his wealth, his weight also started to increase. He was already tall and bulky and bad with sports; he was predisposed to gain weight. When his second daughter, Zeynep, was born in 1983, his weight was 99 [kg]. Later on, when his weight was nearing 130 [kg], he would try to get back to the level of 90 with a strict diet. (p. 127) (See Appendix A, 32)

This transformation in the mindset of a journalist in a managerial position is so extreme that the profit driven attitude of media managers of media conglomerates forget the necessary objectivity and public function of media that are essential for democracies. Zafer Mutlu and Ertuğrul Özkök competed with each other in exhibiting this shameless promotion of profit. Zafer Mutlu stated in 1995, “*Sabah* newspaper exists for making money, not for enlightening the Turkish people. We came into the market with fake news, fake pages. We play with everyone. This is a game. This is the masturbation of the job” (Tılıç, 1998, p. 241).<sup>69</sup> In comparison with what makes money, journalistic principles, standards and concerns mean literally nothing to *Sabah*’s managerial journalist; it should be remembered that *Sabah* and *Hürriyet* dominate nearly 70% of the market.

Ertuğrul Özkök, too, highlights that talking about the journalism of Abdi İpekçi nothing more than nostalgia for Babı-Ali and a mere dream now (Adaklı, 2006, pp. 315,327). Actually, this statement by Özkök is not merely a realistic description of the monopoly capitalistic stage of journalism. He insists that this model of journalism, which is symbolized and remembered in names such as Uğur Mumcu and Abdi İpekçi should be left behind (Özkök, 2004). He propagates this transformation and supports

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<sup>69</sup> “Sabah gazetesi para kazanmak için vardır. Sabah gazetesi Türk halkını aydınlatmak için var değildir. Piyasaya sahte manşet, sahte sayfalarla çıktık. Biz önümüze gelenle oynarız. Bu iş bir oyundur. Bu, işin masturbasyonudur.”

media owners doing businesses unrelated sectors. He argues that this makes media institutions stronger and hence makes media more independent. In his column in *Hürriyet*, dated November 2, 2002, Özkök criticizes those who criticize the owner–Doğan–for his conglomerate’s business in other sectors and those who criticize him for his follow-up role in these businesses. He embraces the notion of a journalist following up business openly. His vision appears to be on the same page as the owner’s in terms of capitalistic interests; he declares that he stands by his position without doubt or hesitation (Özkök, 2002a).

I have already provided examples of Özkök’s statements that exemplify oppression over journalists, authors of the media conglomerate where he has a managerial post, on the issues related to the media owner’s business in other sectors.<sup>70</sup> In two of his columns in *Hürriyet*, dated October 24, 1995 and January 12, 2002 (Özkök, 2002a; Tılıç, 1998, p. 264), Özkök emphasizes his belief that the economic power of media institutions keeps media free from the state; however, the businesses that he supports media conglomerate’s existence in are the ones over which the state has heavy regulatory control. Even this proves that the opposite of what Özkök argues is true. The non-media business of Doğan might push the chief editor to warn the authors and journalists in the newspaper on what to say or criticize, as detailed by Çölaşan (2007):

Put aside drawing the sword on AKP. They will be in charge for the next four years. This is not a newspaper where you can fight. We have a hundred and one businesses with them. Go on leave for a while. You are tired enough already. (p. 144) (See Appendix A, 33)

“This” refers not only to a newspaper but to a conglomerate that has many businesses requiring close ties with the government. Özkök does not hesitate to be

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<sup>70</sup> See Chapter 5.

interested in businesses and prioritize them (even with non-journalistic purposes) over journalism. Özkök clearly declares that he spends more energy on business affairs related to the whole conglomerate than on journalism: “I can afford only fifteen percent of my time to the activity of journalism; in the rest of the time, I do businesses related to the conglomerate, businesses related to executive committee membership” (Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası, 2001, p. 186).<sup>71</sup>

To convince the reader that the wage differential plays a role in creating this pro-owner business-oriented approach of media editors/managers, I believe that a detailed look at Özkök’s backstory is useful. If all of the examples I have given related to Özkök are kept in mind, some specific details of Özkök’s life story may further explain my argument regarding the influence of the wage differential in creating a business-minded, pro-capitalist journalist. Özkök completed a doctorate in Paris with a fellowship provided by the state (Özkök, 2012, p. 1). He seems to be a good example for the Weberian media type. He is “middle class,” a media elite who tries to access cultural power, he was not born in a capitalist family nor feel himself part of the proletariat, and is expected to defend media freedom as a right from the liberal perspective. Thus we should—as the Weberian assumptions of liberal pluralist media school suggest – see no influence from the owner and capitalism on media; media freedom ought to be safe in the hands of media elites. However, the examples I have given indicate the opposite is true. Ertuğrul Özkök himself writes that he is *nouveau riche*, a *parvenu*; in his column in *Hürriyet*, he considers this a noble part of his personality:

I am a *parvenu* too. Yes, I am a true *parvenu*. All that I got, I got after I was 45. My childhood, my youth passed always with moderate means. I could drive a

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<sup>71</sup> “Ben gazetecilik faaliyetine yüzde on beşlik bir zamanımı ayırıyorum, geri kalan zamanlarda holdingle ilgili işleri, holding icra kuruluğu üyeliği işlerini yapıyorum.”

good car after I was 50. The first time when I drank good quality wine was after my forties. When it comes to good caviar, it was only over the last two decades. When I moved into a very good house, I was at the end of my forties. When I dressed in clothes from a good designer clothing brand for the first time, the flaws of my body had already become inconceivable. I bought my first Macintosh when my life was nearing half a century. I am a parvenu, and now I want to declare a short manifesto of *parvenu*. Yes, I am a true parvenu. (Özkök, 2007, para. 4) (See Appendix A, 34)

The primary characteristic of “The manifesto of parvenu” that can be derived from this article is “For I am a parvenu, my most developed human feeling is indebtedness, gratefulness” (Özkök, 2007, para. 5).<sup>72</sup>

He feels thankfulness, indebtedness, and gratefulness for his status as *parvenu*; he feels a debt to Doğan. He pays this debt by being a business follower, by warning journalists, censoring them, and firing them if they make trouble for Aydın Doğan in his businesses, made possible through the de-unionization of journalists in the Doğan conglomerate. He talks about knowing and respecting the rights of the owner (Adaklı, 2006, p. 342), yet he never remembers or recognizes the organizational rights of journalists, openly saying “We hate laws related to [the] social rights of journalists [Law no. 212]; we do not like unions<sup>73</sup>”(Özsever, 2004, p. 168).<sup>74</sup> Both Zafer Mutlu and Ertuğrul Özkök are members of TÜSİAD.<sup>75</sup> They exhibit a greater willingness to be part of the capitalist class rather than a media elite à la Weber, tasked with defending journalistic principles to such a level that the internal freedom of media workers is not endangered by capitalist owners’ interests. TÜSİAD membership is not a proof on its

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<sup>72</sup> “Sonradan görme olduğum için en gelişmiş insanlık duygum, minnet duygusudur. Şükran duygusudur.”

<sup>73</sup> “212’den nefret ediyoruz ve sendikadan hoşlanmıyoruz.”

<sup>74</sup> A typical problem for a researcher studying media is the verification of certain claims. Because of fear of unemployment, information pertaining to these claims—though banal within journalist communities—remains difficult to document. These types of claims are shared mostly off the record by journalists and generally not easily shared with a researcher. Özkök, with his own statements and actions helps me to strengthen my claims.

<sup>75</sup> The Turkish Industry and Business Association [Türkiye Sanayi ve İşadamları Derneği]

own for transformation of media managers but it is corroborating evidence, along with what media elites choose when making a decision between the business relationships of their bosses with the state and journalism or when it comes to making a decision between the social organizational rights of journalists and furthering the owners' dominative power. Their mindset seems to accord with capitalist ideology and priorities, not with defending the freedom of media in their institution when it conflicts with the interests of the owner.

Here, I should reiterate that media elites are not limited to managerial positions and include famous leading authors and columnists. Interviewee no. 3 points out recent news about millionaire journalists:

I do not know whether you have noticed, in the winter of 2013, a columnist published the names of 23 journalists who are dollar millionaires. No one said "oh, what is happening." How come it is not worth talking about \$3 or \$5 a boss gave to his beloved favorites. I do not know if you will believe me, if I tell you that there are a very few of journalists that are editors-in-chief and do not receive a villa as a gift. Once, kings had their jesters. They served their kings by entertaining them. In return, they are rewarded well. Nowadays, prime ministers have their bosses and bosses have their journalists. (Interviewee no. 3) (See Appendix A, 35)

The article he refers to was written by journalist Önkibar.<sup>76</sup> Listed at the top is Zafer Mutlu. There exists no clear way to verify this assertion, however, other columnists' names appear on the list as well. One of them seems critical to support one of the main arguments of this study. What if a media elite working for a multifaceted media conglomerate resists against a media owner? Çölaşan is in this list. Putting aside the news and the list, his family background already shows that he has wealthy ancestors. His grandfather was a member of the Committee of Union and Progress, a

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<sup>76</sup> For the list Haberdar (2013).

political group that played an essential role in the 1908 bourgeois democratic revolution of Turkey. Çölaşan's grandfather was in a leadership position and organized important activities of the committee in Aleppo against the power of Sultan Hamid II. Çölaşan is also the cousin of politician Hüsametdin Cindoruk, a well-known political figure in the right-wing backed Democratic Party and a close friend of Demirel, a former president and prime minister of the republic. Çölaşan's wife is the former vice president of the Council of State (Çölaşan, 2007). In Turkish, the word "*devletlu*" seems to be appropriate for Çölaşan. The word comes from the root "devlet" –state – and means wealthy. However, as a media elite, he also has important characteristics of the Weberian type of media elite, an experienced media professional who is a well-known journalist and appreciated by his loyal readers. He opposed many of the government's policies, including economic ones, and then was fired by Doğan after many instances of censorship and warnings from editors that underline how he endangered the owners' economic interests (Çölaşan, 2007). This shows that media elites in media conglomerates who are purposefully created through wage differentials do not tend to protect media freedom. If there are elites that do not owe their prestige to the owner, they are not able to limit the ownership structure's influence on media freedom, as claimed by the Weberian assumptions of the liberal pluralist school, rather they are themselves limited by this structure.

Briefly, the purpose of a wage differential is to create a hierarchy in which the top managerial cadre are in agreement with the capitalist owner's perspective. It serves to strengthen the dominative power of media owners over media workers, making it easier for owners to violate the internal freedom of media workers and limit, restrict and

even remove the possibility of conducting journalism with respect to journalistic principles when this is in opposition to the interests of the owners.

## CHAPTER 6

### TWO EFFECTS OF DOMINATION ON MEDIA WORKERS: NORMALIZATION AND ALIENATION

I find important to discuss two effects of the contemporary media structure in Turkey on media workers or journalists: normalization and alienation. The former is the result of domination and even an effect aimed for by owners and all those who dominate media workers. The latter is also a result that stems from the ownership structure and a reflection of domination into the mindset of workers. I will start by defining these terms.

#### 6.1 Meanings of normalization and alienation

By the normalization, I mean that it seems reasonable to expect that a monopolized media structure might push journalists working in media conglomerates to normalize media owners' influence over media products. Here, it is essential to understand the distinctive meaning of normalization, which is slightly different from legitimization.<sup>77</sup>

The way I use it in the thesis implies that the one who normalizes "A" knows that "A" is not something that should be appreciated but does not criticize it. The "A" here is mostly the harmful effects of the media ownership structure on media freedom. However, it also includes any principle that is necessary for media freedom and violated by the state, media owner or both.

By alienation, I mean that media workers' freedom and possibility to act according to journalistic principles are eroded more day by day under the monopolized

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<sup>77</sup> It is broader than legitimization. Legitimization is its extreme form.

media ownership structure. The mutually reinforcing monopolizations doubles the burden on the journalist. This means that the power of journalists to have control over their work is weakened in oligopolistic media conglomerates.

The first principle that produces alienation in the media sector is, then, the ownership structure itself parallel to the first instance of the control of the capitalist: the media owner owns the media product. The second principle is also a transliteration of the second instance of capitalist's control over the media sector; this is the control over the production process. Owners' motivations – termed sources of domination within this thesis – direct the production process. The media owner organizes or makes the media elite organize the process such that his interests (independent of whether they endanger journalism) precedes anything else. These two principles create the alienation process of journalists and are exact transfers of Marxian emphasis on the two faces of capitalist's control of the media sector. The strength of this process, based on these two principles, depends on the conditions that are necessary for the reproduction of capitalist production, the sustenance of capitalist system. These conditions, including the level of class struggle, directly show and affect the level of control of capitalists. That is the reason why the legal, political and social frames matter.<sup>78</sup>

The next section deals with normalization. I will show the normalization effect from my data. Here, I will first elaborate on portraits based on interviews I personally conducted during the research and on other interviews with, or statements by journalists. After discussing normalization, I will expose how the media ownership structure of Turkey leads to the alienation of journalists and also, not to be an absolute pessimist,

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<sup>78</sup> According to a Turkish proverb, the one who gives the money is the one who whistles. As long as capital – the owner and her/his interests – whistles against labor—the integrity of workers – alienation will continue.

discuss one interviewee's experience with finding interesting ways to resist—though in a limited manner – this domination of the media conglomerate. At the end, further interpret the relationship between these two effects.

## 6.2 Normalization

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (2002) states:

Slaves lose everything in their chains, even the desire to escape from them; they love their servitude as the companions of Ulysses loved their brutishness. If, then, there are slaves by nature, it is because there have been slaves contrary to nature. The first slaves were made by force; their cowardice kept them in bondage. (p. 152)

I do not claim that this description is analogous to my topic; no analogy is truly apt for any social research. Neither do I argue that in an absolute sense this pessimistic description of Rousseau represents all people in all media conglomerates. However, I do consider Rousseau's depiction as an extreme point of extreme – an ideal type in a sense – when analyzing a moving social reality whose distance to this extreme changes or is open to change constantly; this social reality should never be taken as monolithic. There will always be those who resist the domination/exploitation of slave owners, feudal lords or capitalists and lessen, or even remove the domination/exploitation. Yet, what I argue is that the current circumstances of the Turkish media pushes journalists to normalize what is going on, making them forget to escape their chains.

The interviewee who started his career after monopolization seems relatively more willing to confirm and legitimize the ownership structure in the media and does not perceive media owners as actors that hinder media freedom (Interviewee no.1). On the other hand, the other two interviewees, who have also experience in the non-monopolized stages of the media sector, intensely oppose the monopolization process

and media owners' attitude against media freedom (Interviewee no.2 & no.3). Though deriving a causal pattern for the normalization effect from such limited number of interviews is not possible, it is still useful to draw a portrait of Interviewee no. 1 in order to analyze the aspects of normalization along with its contrast with the other two interviewees. This portrait will be strengthened by statements or interviews made by different journalists for other researchers. At the end, by referring to another study, I will provide a more comprehensive and quantitative image of the level of normalization in current media of Turkey.

Interviewee no. 1 started his career in Turkey, directly for Doğan Media, at the CNN Türk television channel in 2002. Before that, he asserts, he studied in the U.S. and worked there for a short time. After a job training period in Doğan conglomerate, he took many different positions, from reporter of foreign news to editor, in magazines, newspapers, and TV. Consequently, his educational formation and the start of his career perfectly overlap the period when the media structure in Turkey became more similar to the globalized oligopolistic media structure described by the general literature. Briefly, the characteristics of the monopolized media structure pointed out by Interviewee no. 3 were already present when Interviewee no. 1 started his career and built his professional identity.

During the interview, Interviewee no. 1 clearly shows the attitude I term normalization. Though he seems to be accepting of the negative and restrictive aspects of monopoly capitalistic media ownership, he changes his tone when he talks about it and performs a type of normalization which I prefer to call normalization through dehumanizing universalization. It is normalization by ignoring the actors' responsibilities, expanding the circumstances to the whole world. At first, when he

answers the question about the meaning of media freedom for him, he approves of the belief that journalists should be free from any source of power, including economic power:

Journalism is not a technical profession. It has its own mission and morals. To say it simply, this is checking / monitoring the political power, economic, political, social power groups. No one will start journalism with the expectation that she or he will be rich. No one enters into the profession with economic/financial worries/interests. To protect, to realize, to succeed in the professional ethics of the job, one needs to be free. (Interviewee no. 1) (See Appendix A, 36)

Then following, he takes, I detect, an interesting defensive position, just after stating the above, to alleviate the crucial role of the ownership structure with respect to media freedom:

There is no place in the world it [journalism, the press] is 100% free, due to the financial structure. Bourdieu also says this, even if a journalist is free, she/he can only be free in the journalistic field, in a certain frame. You cannot write on socialism every day in the New York Times. (Interviewee no. 1) (See Appendix A, 37)

Just after explaining power groups, including the economic ones, opposed to media freedom, he needs to refer to the whole world. I will show that this is something more than a realistic description by the interviewee. This is a specific attitude he has during the whole interview. He discloses the names, in a truly specific and explicit way, of those from the government who push, oppress, or interfere with journalists working in the media (newspapers and TV) owned by Doğan. He uses the words “the most,” “the utmost,” and “the primitive”<sup>79</sup> to criticize these people and explicitly states their names. Yet he speaks of “they,” instead of naming them, when he talks about – rarely and unwillingly – the non-journalistic monetary concerns and interests of media owners,

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<sup>79</sup> “En”, “ilkel”

including his own boss. “It would not be wrong to say such”<sup>80</sup> is the structure he prefers to use when talking about something which is related to the ownership issue, without forgetting to point to “the global culture” or “the global conditions.”<sup>81</sup> His tone and passion change; he seems to want to say only a few words about it, then spends effort to skip it quickly.

Those who oppress Doğan are pointed out and this seems right in terms of defending the external freedom of media, but when there seems to be a possibility that the problem is caused by the owners’ side, Doğan becomes one of “them” of the “normal” world. Doğan becomes an irresponsible part of the world or the universal. This world might include some problems, yet this is not a big deal. The problems related to the internal freedom of media workers seem to be normalized unless they are due to the government (Interviewee no. 1). Thus Interviewee no. 1 presents an example of semi-normalization.

When he talks about how the government oppresses Doğan, he repeatedly uses Doğan’s name with a clearly explicit emphasis, like he is talking about a hero or martyr who does his best to resist the government; yet Doğan becomes a constituent of “they” when he is referred to as an owner of a multifaceted conglomerate, a constituent whose name Interviewee no. 1 does not see fit to mention. It resembles a highly discussed criminal principle: “no body, no murder.” In this case, it becomes “no name of the actor, no violation of media freedom.”

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<sup>80</sup> “Söylemek yanlış olmaz”

<sup>81</sup> “Global kültürden bakarsan,” “artık dünya böyle”

“Yes, there happen to be some businesses other than media” (he does not even refer to any subject for the sentence);<sup>82</sup> “They would not let you write on this”<sup>83</sup> (referring to the media as a whole, not only Doğan, though he started by talking of specific institutions); “No one is completely independent, here self-censorship steps in”<sup>84</sup> are the sentences he uses when he explains issues related to both external and internal media freedom within his own company. “Aydın Doğan is a symbol for laic segments of the country”<sup>85</sup> is what he says in reference to external freedom (mere and direct state-media opposition) (Interviewee no. 1). On the other hand, it seems not that unreasonable to prioritize the AKP government’s direct role in the media freedom problem, especially after 2007.<sup>86</sup> Yet he never provides any specific responses on concrete issues of internal freedom. Though he briefly mentions the necessity of protecting journalism from economic power groups and accepts the reality of this power group, he never forgets (multiple times) to quickly add that this is the case everywhere. As a media worker in a big media monopoly, he seems to make an effort to tacitly trivialize the danger due to the economic power of monopolistic media owners on media freedom. It is a means of defense, saying everybody does it.

First, he discounts the possible role played by media moguls, foremost including Doğan, considering them as natural existences but not responsible, nameable individuals. After trivializing media mogul’s responsibility, he even starts to praise Doğan. In one moment during the interview, he seems to realize what he is doing: “You

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<sup>82</sup> “Medyada sahiplik yapısından kaynaklanan başka işler de oldu.”

<sup>83</sup> “[...] bir süre sonra yazdırmazlar.”

<sup>84</sup> “Kimse bağımsız değil, burada otosansür devreye giriyor.”

<sup>85</sup> “Aydın Doğan bir sembol. Türkiye elitinin, laik kesimin sembolü.”

<sup>86</sup> “Especially” implies an intensification in a relative/comparative sense, not meaning that the prior period was acceptable in terms of media freedom.

know, we are integrating with our boss, we unite, we feel like we share a common fate with him, we see that we are all in the same boat, this process gets us closer to him” (Interviewee no. 1).<sup>87</sup>

The emphasis on being in the same boat is primarily a tactic to hide the responsibility and responsible actors among others, as well as the conflict of interests among groups. After saying this, he stops talking for long moment. It seems to be not only a moment of silence but also a moment of self-awareness. Then he adds: “Still, it needs not to exaggerate of course.”<sup>88</sup> Diminishing, neglecting, and normalizing the role played by Doğan ends with an exaggerated account of his heroism, generosity, and equality with workers in his conglomerate in terms of destiny.

He seems to realize how tableau of “a hero” and an equal among the workers/journalists in the same conglomerate he tries to describe with regard to Doğan can be seen as a caricature. It is not possible to clarify why this twist occurs. Maybe, remembering Doğan’s willful silence when other media moguls were eliminated from the sector during the AKP government might have helped the Interviewee no. 1 not exaggerate this “capitalist hero.” Or else his selectiveness in taking his boat (only de-unionized journalists) might be another clue. The only thing which was clear during the conversation was that all problems related to media ownership were represented as non-essential issues that occur everywhere.

What I call normalization through dehumanizing universalization is also something that journalist Mustafa Alp Dağıstanlı (2014) complains about in his memoirs. Ignoring a problem through normalization is not only the responsibility of

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<sup>87</sup> “Aydın Doğan’la kader birliği yapmış gibi hissettik, aynı gemide olduğumuzu hissettik.”

<sup>88</sup> “Abartmamak lazım yine de tabi.”

media bosses but also includes the self-responsibility of journalists. He calls this a “snake,” drawing an analogy with a Turkish saying “the one who falls into see hugs the snake.” In his memoirs, it means that there exists no other option but to embrace what it is, and there exists nothing to do, because everyone does the same thing. Individuals do not matter. He (Dağıstanlı, 2014) explains how this type of naturalization is actually an example of depersonalization:

Another snake our journalists, our comprador journalists, hug is the following: “Ha, under these circumstances, there is not much to do. We are all on the same boat. Little differences are not changing the situation. Whereas, you work in “big media,” you play into the hands of existing dirty order, you feed it, no one is innocent. (p. 33) (See Appendix A, 38)

The same boat that we are all on comes again when a normalization process occurs, though this time it has a clearly pejorative connotation rather than heroism.

Dağıstanlı (2014) concludes that the end result of this process of “depersonalization” is normalization:

As one of the logical conclusions of this depersonalization process, journalists first start to depersonalize themselves when they are doing their work. You are responsible yourself at first. In fact, “whatever we do, we are the same and the situation does not change” approach pushes a human being to disengage from her/his own responsibility. This logic ends in the following stance: This is the problem of the system, let us not bother / deal with people. (p. 33) (See Appendix A, 39)

This also constitutes the basis of my reasonable belief that as long as concentrated media ownership becomes more settled those who experience most of his/her career under this institutional frame tend to see it more as something inevitable and irresistible. I must be cautious and remember not to talk in absolute terms, rather in possible tendencies that are always open to change, otherwise, I would exhibit myself as another example of the depersonalization of journalists.

The fact that Interviewee no. 1's normalization is a semi-normalization is also not surprising. What he seems to normalize is the economic structure of the media; what he does not seem to normalize is the new balance of power between the media and government. It is not something that he is habituated to since he started his career in 2002 and had his education before that period.<sup>89</sup> Actually, the direct result of this normalization seems to be the key to understanding how Interviewee no. 1 evaluates these two processes: the absence of any code, rule, groundwork to protect the democratic nature within the media institution and the whole country. Distinguishing these two as completely separate is to hide the antidemocratic nature of the corporation and prevent seeing the interrelationship and parallels (though not identity) between them.

The other two interviewees agreed with Interviewee no. 1 on the worsening conditions of media freedom under the influence of political power since the 2000s. One did not hesitate to name different bosses who help construct this anti-democratic sphere by oppressing the internal freedom of journalists hand-in-hand with the political authority. The other, pointing out the role of bosses and media elites as their useful "tools," took the opposite route; not naming them but giving such specific details about them that it was quite clear whom he talked about. They both distinguish the features of the 2000s without accepting that they simply appeared.

This interpretation does not stop them from mentioning the oppression by the political authority bosses are faced with lately. They both started their careers in the mid-1970s, when the organizational power and socio-political vibrancy were strong and the union organized many newspapers. Furthermore, the concentrated ownership

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<sup>89</sup> In Bourdieu's terms, the economic structure is in his habitus yet the new balance of power is not.

structure dominated by industrialist and financial capitalists was not something they had confronted yet. Lastly, 1961, when journalists were able to unite against employers to defend their rights and collectively published *Basın*, was not yet lost in the dusty pages of history for them. They do not evaluate the dominance of the media boss with his non-media purposes over journalism as being negligible or normal. For them, internal freedom and external freedom are not totally separate things, nor is it possible to coherently defend the latter by diminishing the importance of the former.

The second example of normalization is an extreme form of it, a legitimization. I have already stated that the employee structure of the conglomerates might be such that those who tend to normalize might experience upward mobility in the hierarchy and become more dominant in the workplace. Again, I will address the example of Ertuğrul Özkök. He not only normalizes but legitimizes, defends, and propagates the right of the owner over the media product. Adaklı (2006) interviewed him for her book, which was published at a time when media conglomerates did not experience problems with the political power in terms of their publication policy. This helps to isolate the normalization of the monopolized ownership structure from the influence of the political sphere and shows it cannot be limited to a problem of priority. According to Ertuğrul Özkök:

I am, in character, a person who knows what the rights of the one – who is called the owner – are. I mean, I am a person who knows very well what the rights of the employer (patronluk hakkı) are. I mean, at least, I can tell you that this is not the property of my father, I know this. It is Aydın Doğan's shop/store. (Adaklı, 2006, p. 398) (See Appendix A, 40)

Ertuğrul Özkök seems to ignore the difference between a media institution and a grocery store or a clothing shop. The former produces products which have public

characteristics that are essential for democracy and the right to be informed. He continues:

Most of the chief editors cannot realize this difference, because there is such a mythology, journalists own media, it does not exist anywhere in the world. Believe me, it does not exist in the world, it is a myth. Now, you cannot publish news in the *New York Times* against Israel because their owners are Jews. (Adaklı, 2006, p. 343) (See Appendix A, 41)

Interviewee no. 1 and Özkök's common reference to the *New York Times* newspaper for normalization through universalization is also self-explanatory.<sup>90</sup> The media that they appreciate are the media that Chomsky & Herman (2002), Bagdikian (2004), McChesney (2008) criticize as being controlled by the military industrial complex, big energy, and oil companies and distorted by them ideologically. Briefly this is the ideal of capitalistic dominance over media and my two examples for the normalization of the media ownership structure refer to this ideal.

However, I am totally aware of the fact that as a study relying on qualitative data based on interviews and memoirs, my search for a correlation among normalization and media structure is impossible. Again, I defend at least, the transferability of my study. For a qualitative study, this means that the study's questions and results may be applicable for further studies. Though this refers mostly to a transfer among different qualitative researches, here I will strengthen what my findings by referring to quantitative survey data from a study by Yılmaz Esmer, conducted in 2007 which is cited in Dağıştanlı's work (2014). Dağıştanlı is himself a participant with whom Esmer

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<sup>90</sup> More than 40% of the newspaper is owned by big investment groups that have financial interests in energy, finance, telecommunication, technology, and so on. The top two, who own more than 20%, are the well-known companies Vanguard and Blackrock (www.nasdaq.com, 2019).

shares some interesting findings of the research (Dağıstanlı, 2014, pp. 217-228).<sup>91</sup> This study does not provide an exact correlation, since the existing structure of monopolized media is not possible to codify as quantitative variations. However, it still helps me, at least, provide a “quantitative” picture of what media researchers might discuss regarding the level of normalization of the monopolized media structure or, in other words, how much media moguls and the state succeeded to make journalists lose the desire to escape their chains.

Esmer’s study (Dağıstanlı, 2014, pp. 217-218) statistically strengthens my claim regarding normalization. An interesting coincidence is that the survey was conducted in the first half of 2007, which is the date I prefer as the start of the period of mutually reinforcing monopolizations. Thus it is just before that moment when Interviewee no. 1 argues that AKP feels unchallenged in the right-wing spectrum and much more independent from critics of “non-openly Islamist”/ “secular apparent” media after consecutive election victories.

The participants’ answer to the question “How much of a role do these factors have in limitations on media freedom in Turkey”<sup>92</sup> shows the level of normalization. When it comes to the monopolization in media, it is worth noting that only 6.5% find this a “very important”<sup>93</sup> problem and 63.3% consider it “not so important.”<sup>94</sup> The attitude and the oppression of media owners, on the other hand, is only perceived by 12.7% of participants as a very important problem and 47.6% consider it not so

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<sup>91</sup> Yılmaz Esmer’s study is Turkish Values Survey for 2007. The part related to the media was the Boğaziçi Media Elites Research. 226 face to face interviews were conducted for the research, and Dağıstanlı (2014) notes that nearly one third of the sample are media managers (p. 218).

<sup>92</sup> “Türkiye’de basın özgürlüğündeki kısıtlamalar üzerinde aşağıdaki faktörlerin ne kadar rol oynadığını düşünüyorsunuz?”

<sup>93</sup> “Çok önemli.”

<sup>94</sup> “Pek önemli değil.”

important (Dağıstanlı, 2014, p. 226). These findings of Esmer's study, described by Dağıstanlı (2014), confirms my definition. Of the journalist participants, 69.9% assert that “media are dependent on certain investment groups and essentially it serves the interests of those groups” (Dağıstanlı, 2014, p. 226). They know what it is and declare it sincerely, yet they do not see it as a problem. This is normalization par excellence. At the expense of self-contradiction for journalists,<sup>95</sup> both of these statements are congruent with my claim.

Normalization is also an effect required by the logic of domination. That is the reason why I find it plausible to underline that normalization is beyond a mere effect of domination it is also an aimed effect. A journalist, whose statement was reported by Dağıstanlı (2014), seems to indicate an extreme level of the normalization of oppression over media. This statement also shows how normalization serves those who dominate media such that direct interference becomes unnecessary:

The censorship mechanism is so ingrained that, you bet, Erdoğan or [someone else] does not need at all to call and ask what is going on. He does not even need to do this. The editor-in-chief, general coordinator, editor, editorial department, editorial cadre charged with news, news editor, Ankara office, all editors... There exists such a trivet that in each “pod,” everybody applies auto control. If I cannot detect it, the one who is in a superior position to mine catches it, or the editor-in-chief catches it. (Dağıstanlı, 2014, p. 92) (See Appendix A, 42)

### 6.3 Alienation

I want to briefly reiterate that alienation is a process in which the worker is broken apart from his work, though this is the basis of alienation, as a repetitive process it provides feelings of estrangement of one to her work, to herself and to other people. Since the

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<sup>95</sup> As Dağıstanlı (2014) asserts in his book.

internal good of journalism as telling the truth relies on commitment, critical thinking and evaluation, it consists of emotional and ideational aspects. Denying those aspects under the domination of the capitalistic interests of the media owner, along with other related or independent source of oppression, creates a heavy psychological burden. It affects the integrity of the journalist. Interviewee no. 1 relates the journalist's submission to power groups to the violation of his own integrity: "If power groups walk all over on you, you become unable to do your job. Internal conflict arises. You start questioning your identity, your integrity (Interviewee no. 1)."<sup>96</sup>

Here, a journalist becomes unable to do his job, as it must be, because of the domination of capitalistic interests or any other source which is alien to the journalistic principles and which violates them. This shows how one's alienation from her/his work also means one's alienation from oneself. Interviewee no. 1's statement seems an echo of Marx (1978) in the media sector: "the spontaneous activity of the human imagination, of the human brain and the human heart, operates independently of the individual—that is, operates on him as an alien [...] so is the worker's activity not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of his self" (p. 274).

To show how dramatic this violation of integrity might be during the alienation process, the statements by journalist "Selim" reported by Dağıstanlı (2014) are enlightening. A friend of journalist Mustafa Alp Dağıstanlı – Nihat Bek – asked one of his friends to help Dağıstanlı by related anecdotes of censorship and self-censorship for the book he was writing. In his book, Dağıstanlı (2014) does not give the individual's name but calls him by the pseudonym "Selim." Selim, as Dağıstanlı describes, does not

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<sup>96</sup> "Güç odakları tepenize binerse, işinizi yapamaz hale gelirsiniz. İç çatışma doğar, kimliğinizi, integrity'nizi sorulamaya başlarsınız."

seem to want to talk. However, Dağıstanlı (2014) Dağıstanlı (2014, p. 35) adds “He also seems uncomfortable with not being able to tell”<sup>97</sup>(p. 35). Dağıstanlı (2014) continues:

The man, I had never met him before, with a sincerity and honesty that I never expected, like it was not him talking but his unconsciousness was talking, seeming like a bhikkhu–Buddhist monk – in trance, who walks doucely on extremely hot cinders, said the following: “Every day my personality is oppressed, my dignity / honor is broken. I have two children; I meet their education costs. I put up with this for them, you see. So what to do. If I die, I’m saved, I will be salved. (p. 35) (See Appendix A, 43)<sup>98</sup>

The distinctive nature of the alienation in journalism relies on the dramatic difference between the ideal and the reality. In different workplaces where a capitalist appropriates the product of the labor, workers might make demands regarding the social-material-economic working conditions (wages, workplace, codes of work relations and all rights necessary to defend their dignity). However, if they demand at the very beginning of the working process to have a decisive position in what to produce, it indicates that they reject – in a conscious way, as a member of working class for itself – the capitalist control. It is the norms of capitalism that they reject. It is not expected nor the ideal picture of capitalism. Yet, in journalism, numerous invaluable principles, rights and respected qualities, such as the principles of journalism, media freedom, freedom of expression, public value and function of journalism, and the watchdog function of media evolve around “the expected normal” of the profession. This is because of the specific nature of the content media produces with regard to society and in terms of democracy. These values then create an ideal picture in which media workers and journalists are supposed to do their best, with their imagination, commitment, intellectual creativity,

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<sup>97</sup> “Fakat Selim anlatmamaktan da rahatsızdı.”

<sup>98</sup> This is the first time Selim starts talking when he is asked to talk about censorship experiences. It shows that how any moment of censorship, oppression, fear, etc. are related to the increase in the distance between the journalist and the media content (i.e., the laborer and the product), which creates a burden that accumulates through the process reproduced by the current structure of the media.

patience, and respect for the code of ethics, to provide a check on power groups through editorial independence. So the ideal norms appear to describe a non-alienated process of labor for journalists. On the other hand, owners' influence on the production process, on the product, and, hence, on the producer, constitute a direct and harsh opposite of this ideal picture. When the normal "ideal" is that much opposed to the "real" lived in ownership structure, or other words, when journalism meets the reality of monopoly capitalism, it intensifies the degree of burden and disappointment. With Tılıç's (1998) description, relying on his study about journalism practices in Greece and Turkey, as long as journalists consider journalism an essential and "sine qua non" job, their disappointment increases (Tılıç, 1998, p. 114). When the concentration of ownership increases, the dominative power of a few firms increases over media workers through their determinative weight in employment of the sector, then alienation and normalization become more probable.<sup>99</sup>

#### 6.4 Attempts at resistance

I believe that systemic circumstances might push for normalization and the very basic nature of contemporary media ownership structure leads to alienation. Nevertheless, I will not end this chapter with such pessimism. There will always be those who find ways to resist the effects of the dominative relationships in media institutions over personal integrity. This resistance may emerge in two ways. At times, the radical way is preferred at the expense of anything that might happen. Other times, journalist might push, as

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<sup>99</sup> The gentlemen's agreement among different conglomerates make the dominative power of media owners harsher and more unbearable for media workers (Adaklı, 2006, p. 345; Özsever, 2004, p. 162). If one conglomerate puts a "mark" on a journalist, then she or he loses the possibility of finding a job in another conglomerate. One example I will discuss soon is a journalist named Şık.

much as possible, against the limits placed by the oppressive source. In either case, the systemic oppression is not removed; to talk about the autonomy of a journalist to the point that making journalism without any influence from dominative sources of the contemporary media structure in big media conglomerates seems unrealistic. However, they prove that the normalization effect is not absolute for all journalists working in big media conglomerates. Interviewee no. 2 relates how he insisted on presenting news about a protest by Petrol İş Workers. During the privatization process of Petrol Ofisi, the Workers of Petrol İş Union wanted to be listed with the Treasury Undersecretary as a related party but was exposed to police violence. Petrol Ofisi was bought by Doğan, yet the editorial board of the Doğan conglomerate did not publish news about this protest. Though Interviewee no. 2 could not publish it, he found another opportunity to discuss the event when the SEKA paper mill was privatized, and he underlines how it was a matter of personal integrity and dignity to at least make an effort to do so:

Now, you see, I am a labor writer, I mean I must write this to have a clear conscience. Then, we found such a solution. At that period, the SEKA paper mill was being privatized. There was a SEKA paper mill in İzmir (Smyrna). It was being privatized too. Thereupon, Türk İş union members started a march, called the March for a Social State, from Kocaeli. Now I made this a headline on my page in the newspaper, yet under this, with a smaller font, I noted that workers – members of Petrol İş Union – appealed to the Council of State to object to the privatization of POAŞ, Parties to POAŞ privatization were sued. (Interviewee no. 2) (See Appendix A, 44)

Another example is journalist Şık (Şık & Tekelioğlu, 2015):

On May 3, 2005, World Press Freedom Day, I got sacked from *Radikal* newspaper<sup>100</sup> where I had been working for eight years. It was due to a struggle for rights. They did not sack me only from the newspaper but from the whole industry, only because I said no to some policies that would pave the way for more violations of our rights, because I said no to censorship of our news which was continually increasing, because I struggled against censorship by myself and because of my union activity. They even said “you know, we will not let you

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<sup>100</sup> A newspaper owned by former media mogul Aydın Doğan at that time.

work anywhere, don't you?' Serdar Akinan, editor-in-chief of SKY Türk channel at that period, said to me, "Come here, I will not make you do anything, you will do only editorial job, if you accept." However, he could not employ me, because when he mentioned my name, a thick file was given to him. It was said to him that Doğan conglomerate provided the file. (p. 202) (See Appendix A, 45)

## 6.5 Concluding remarks on the effects of capitalist domination on journalists

Two effects are observable as the consequences of the monopolized ownership structure on journalists in the research: normalization and alienation. The former serves to render journalists more in conformance with the publishing policy of the media conglomerate, designed and determined by the interests of the owner or at least limited by it. It means a tendency for journalists to see the capitalist influence of media owners and their relationship with the capitalist system in Turkey, including the state, on media production as a phenomenon that is not essential to worry about. Though it is difficult to reconcile it with the professional codes of journalism, neither is it possible to deny its existence. The way to become habituated to it is to normalize, legitimize or at least not be concerned with it that much. However, this should not be taken as an absolute or inevitable condition as there are also examples of resistance.

The second effect is alienation. It is caused by the definitional feature of the production process that alienates media workers from their work, limits their control and decision making capacity, directing them to act according to the needs of owners. This is a fundamentally systematic effect and as long as the mode of production is a capitalist one, it exists with varying intensity depending on the level of social struggle. Similar to normalization, this effect is also neither absolute nor inevitable; it does not affect all journalists working in media conglomerates at all times, and there are examples of

resistance. Unfortunately, these acts of resistance do not yet seem sufficient to overwhelm the conditions that reproduce this effect.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

In a passage of Shakespeare's *Athens of Timon*, Timon states:

With thy most operant poison! What is here? / Gold? Yellow, glittering, precious gold? / No, gods, / I am no idle votarist: Roots, you clear heavens. / Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair, / Wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant. / Ha, you gods! Why this, what, this, you gods? / Why, this / Will lug your priests and servants from your sides, / Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads. / This yellow slave / Will knit and break religions, bless th'accursed, / Make the hoar leprosy adored, place thieves, / And give / them title, knee, and approbation, / With senators on the bench. This is it / That makes the wappened widow wed again. / She whom the spittle house and ulcerous sores / Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices / To the April day again. Come, damned earth, / Thou common whore of mankind, that puts odds / Among the rout of nations; I will make thee / Do thy right nature (Shakespeare, 1966, 4.3.25-44)

The internal freedom of journalists is violated because of the contemporary media ownership structure of Turkey. This thesis has argued that the structure of media ownership in Turkey is a monopolistic one that multifaceted conglomerates have dominate since the 1980s. Both economic and political factors interact and play a role in the emergence of this structure. The repetitive periods of one-party rule, which indicate a concentration of political power, mark the period between 2002 and 2019; this has dramatically restructured and reshaped the media order in Turkey. Monopoly capitalism reaches, in a way, its ultimate end. Thus, those who had been dominating are dominated, and the violation of the internal freedom of media workers seems to have doubled.

Under the current ownership structure of the media, along with the legal, social and political frames, three sources of domination—owners' motivations to violate media freedom—are observed: personal, economic, and ideological. The first one shows the limitless of the dominative power of the owner. The second one mostly ensures the

fragile position of media owners against the state due to their non-media businesses, but also includes their businesses with other capitalists and the competition among themselves. All these constitute another source that motivates or pushes the owner to limit, restrict or block journalists during the production process. The third one is the most systemic, which describes the dominative power and effect of the owner that favors capitalist ideology.

The domination caused by the ownership structure is reflected in the publishing policy of media outlets. This is shown by a comparative analysis of *Habertürk* newspaper's publishing policy concerning two events, both of which are similar in nature—worker deaths in the workplace—but opposite in terms of the effects on the owner of the same media institution. As opposed to the position of the liberal pluralist school regarding media as a mirror of society, this domination also implies that media content provided by big media seems to be filtered such that it more reflects the concerns of a limited number of elites, especially in the ways economic issues are represented.

Two ways that media owners use to dominate media workers are observed. First, unions were removed from conglomerate media. This renders the position of journalists more fragile vis-à-vis the owner and capitalist interests. Second, media owners deploy a wage differential policy to make journalists in managerial positions adopt pro-owner and business-minded perspectives. With a new hierarchy in the workplace from 1980, the owner could more easily dominate media workers and media production through these new professionals.

For the case of Turkey, it can be said that unfortunately, in terms of internal freedom, media elites and managers, especially but not limited to those on editorial boards, prove the critical political economy school correct in comparison with the

Weberian assumptions of the liberal pluralist school. Though quite harsh, one interviewee draws an analogy between these media elites and the capos of the Nazi period (Interviewee no. 3), prisoners selected and trained by the Nazis to supervise other prisoners in perverse and violent ways (Friling, 2014, p. 32).

Normalization and alienation are two observable effects of the domination of the owner over journalists. The former is related to a goal required by the logic of domination and the latter means the psychological effects of the end result of capitalist production. The production process is based on the exclusion of labor from the control over the product; instead, labor is controlled for specific aims determined by capital. Journalist's labor has been increasingly excluded from the power to control, bind and decide the main goals, characteristics and limits of production. Here, the editorial board's pro-owner attitude seems to be crucial. As the process reproduces itself day by day, it creates a psychological burden on journalists.

At the end of the day, the dialog of this scene from Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* becomes significant for this study. As long as journalism remains a tool of the owners of big media conglomerates to obtain monetary interests as goods external to the practice of journalism, the internal good of revealing the truth becomes less and less possible. "Thus much of will" for "yellow, precious, glittering gold, makes "wrong" "right," "base," "noble" (Shakespeare, 1966, 4.3.25-44), and "management of media" an "opponent of media freedom."

The weakness of media institutions vis-à-vis the state because of the non-media businesses of media owners has become more crucial in the recent period because the one-party rule does not hesitate to use formal, informal, direct, and indirect coercive tools, sticks and carrots to oppress and control the media. These include legal judiciary

processes but also include, more pertinent to this study, political economic mechanisms; AKP reshuffled a major part of the ownership structure, replacing main actors with new ones who were more loyal to political authority.

Recent periods are always more challenging to study since it requires one to elaborate on what is still happening. However, after the exclusion of Doğan from the Turkish media, new issues related to big media have seemed to emerge in addition to the harmful effects of the ownership structure on media freedom. For further research, the credibility of big media appears to be a hot topic. Chomsky (1989; 2002) has always emphasized the subtle nature of the ways media uses to control public opinion. However, Doğan's replacement with Demirören decreased the subtlety and increased the level of partisanship in big media favoring the ruling party. The case of Turkey, now, seems to be very distant from Chomsky's emphasis. The new question might not be solely about media freedom and big media but related more to the end of big media.

APPENDIX A

DIRECT CITATIONS TRANSLATED FROM TURKISH

(LONG QUOTES THAT ARE MORE THAN 40 WORDS)

The number of the quote	Turkish Original
1	“Siyasi iktidarla her zaman uyum içerisinde olan Hürriyet ve Milliyet, bu ilişkiler ağının getirdiği avantajlarla tirajlarını büyük ölçüde artırmışlardır. Öte yandan bu gazeteler, organizasyon yapıları ve profesyonelleşme bakımından da öncü bir rol üstlenmişlerdir. Meslekten gazeteci ailelerin yönettiği bu gazetelerin serüveninde teknisizmin de yaygın bir dünya algısı olarak şekillenmeye başladığı görülmektedir. Gazete sahiplerinden, veliahlara ve oradan profesyonel yöneticilere kadar karar alma mercii işgal eden herkes, teknik altyapının geliştirilmesinin üzerinde durmuştur.”
2	“1980 sonrası Özal, liberalleşme, liberal ekonominin savunan basına her şey ok. Toparlanma var basında ama hükümetle yakın ilişki kuranlarda. Genelde merkez sağ hükümetleriyle, sabah, hürriyet, milliyet işte hep bunlara örnektir. İyi bir dönem seksenler, en çok para kazanılan dönem. Sabah mesela 1983’tür tarihi. Öyle olması lazım, biraz daha apolitik. Magazin, spor sayfaları bu dönem giriyor. Biraz apolitikliğe yönelme biraz da liberal ekonomiyi savunma, böyle geçiyor, böyle bir eğilim var seksenlerde. Solla molla ilgisi yok, sadece bu alanlarda belli bir özgürlük yaşanıyor.”
3	“Aydın Bey’in bana söylediği bir laf vardır; “Hükümet en sağlam bankayı bile –Dış Bank o dönemde Aydın Doğan’ındı- taş gibi sağlam bankayı bile istese iki tane maliyeci gönderir, iki tane müfettiş gönderir bir günde batırır.” Aynen böyle dedi.”
4	“Ben 1980’li yıllarda Hürriyet gazetesinde çalışıyorum. O zaman Erol Simavi patronumuz. Ondan sonra gazeteye girdim, arkadaşlar dediler ki, bir konuda haber yapamazsın dediler. Ne konusunda haber yapamam? Dediler Nükhet Duruyla ilgili haber yapamazsın. Dedim ki ben ekonomi muhabiriyim magazin muhabiri değilim (gülüyor) Nükhet Duruyla ilgili bir durum yok. Ama dediler bilgi sahibi ol. Efendim o zaman Erol Simavi’nin kadın arkadaşı olarak n duru kadın arkadaşı ve o zaman bir foto muhabiri arkadaşımız Nükhet Duru’nun resmini çekiyor. Nükhet Duru Erol beye diyor ki benim resmim sivilceli çıkmış, ondan sonra, sen nasıl böyle bir resmimi gazetede gösterirsin diye işten atıyorlar. Oktay Şengüler diye bir arkadaşımız işten çıkartılıyor.”

5	<p>“Şimdi biz tabi ekonomi servisinde çalışıyoruz. Aynı zamanda Erol Simavi'nin de öyle çok ekonomik faaliyetleri yok, ama biraz turizm biraz da böyle işte tavukçuluk şirketi falan var, tamam mı? Biz şimdi haber yapıyoruz, yaptığımız yumurta haberleri aslında, Erol Simavi'nin aleyhine yani şimdi, tavukçuluk şirketinin aleyhine. Fakat hiçbir zaman Erol Simavi bize telefon açıp da ulan benim şeyimi, bana zarar veriyorsunuz falan demiyor. Yani o dönemdeki medya patronunun yani çok özel bir yaşantısıyla ilgili diyelim, bir sansür söz konusu, medya patronunu bir şekilde doğrudan doğruya ilgilendirdiği için. Hani hak verilir hak verilmez ayrı hikâye ama çok özel bir durum, ama onun dışında, yani medya patronunun çok küçük iş ilişkilerinde dahi bize hiçbir şekilde karışmamıştır. Bir müdahalesi olmamıştır.”</p>
6	<p>“Ondan sonra Milliyet'te çalıştım Aydın Doğan zamanı ondan sonra. Tabi o dönemde de işte Milliyet Gazetesinin patronu Dışbank'ın sahibiydi. Bizim ekonomi servisindeki arkadaşlarımız, bir tekstil haberi yaptılar, işte yurtdışında kara para aklayan tekstilciler diye bir haber yaptılar. Fakat birdenbire, biz farkında değiliz, patronajdan çok ciddi uyarı geldi bize. Ne uyarısı geldi. Meğerse o tekstilcilerin hepsinin paraları Dış Banktaymış. Yani şimdi demişler ki patrona bak sizde bizim aleyhimize haber çıkıyor kara para aklama diye biz paralarımızı dış banktan çekeriz, sen güç durumda kalırsın diyor. Tabi bunun üzerinde patron hemen bu haberi temizleyin dedi (Gülüyor) yani düzeltin dedi. Yani dolayısıyla medya patronunun doğrudan doğruya bir ilişkisinin olması bir bankasının olması ve bankasıyla ilgili bir sorun yaşaması. Halbuki yaptığımız haber doğru bir haber. Fakat burada etkiliyor”</p>
7	<p>“Patron bu yıl Vatan gazetesini de satın aldı. Sahip olduğu gazeteler 2007 sonunda şöyle: Hürriyet, Milliyet, Posta, Radikal, Fanatik, Referans, Vatan.</p> <p>Yazılı basın yaklaşık yarısı. Tekelleşme denilen olayın ta kendisi. Sahip olduğu televizyon kanalları (eksiğim olabilir): Kanal D, CNN Türk. Star, öbür yanda POAŞ, İstanbul Hilton... Hilton arazisine gökdelenler dikmek için beklenen izinler... Enerji ihaleleri, özelleştirme işleri, yurtdışında satın alınan şirketler... Grup çok büyümüş, büyüdükçe AKP hükümetine olan ihtiyacı (!) artmıştı. Muhalefet yapmak mümkün değildi. onların hoşuna gitmeyecek haberleri kullanmak, büyütme, arlık çok zordu.”</p>
8	<p>Çölaşan: “Yani beni hep kişiliğimden, gazetecilik çizgimden ödün vermeye zorluyorsun. Peki ne zaman bitecek bu sıkıntılı dönem?”</p> <p>Özkök: “Tayyip cumhurbaşkanı olunca bitecek. Abdullah başbakan olacak. O daha ılımlı bir adam. Söylediğimizi anlar. O zamana kadar biraz ılımlı gidelim. Köprüyü geçene kadar... Abdullah üzerimize bu kadar gelmez. Şimdi Tayyip bizi batırmaya çalışıyor. [...] Bu yüzden haftada bir trilyon zarar ediyoruz. Yine adam çıkarmaya başlayacağız.”</p> <p>Çölaian: “Peki Tayyip'in cumhurbaşkanlığı konusunda siz nasıl bir tavır alacaksınız Doğan Grubu olarak?”</p> <p>Özkök: Sessiz kalacağız. Destek vermeyeceğiz ama-karşı da çıkmayacağız. Bunlar bizi batıracak. Şu POAŞ olayında üzerimize nasıl</p>

	geldiklerini gör. Ama Aydın Bey de kinle-niyor. Zamanı gelince bunların (...) Senden ricam, biraz anlayış göster. Bunu bütün yazarlarımız kab'yl ediyor, bir tek sen etmiyorsun. Tek sorun sensin."
9	“Bak arkadaş, hükümetin POAŞ'ta üzerimize nasıl geldiğini görüyorsun. Biz de önlem almak zorundayız. Şimdi bugün sana çok önemli bir şey için geldim. Aydın Bey'in sana çok selamları var ve ayrıca senden çok önemli bir ricası var. [...] Şimdi sana onları aynen aktaracağım ve karar vermeni İsteyeceğim. 1) Başbakan, Maliye Bakanı ve hükümet hakkında yazı yazma. Bizim bunlarla işimiz var. 2) İstersen uzun süreli izne çık ve bir süre yazma. 3) İstersen gazeteden tümüyle ayrıl.”
10	Aydın Doğan: “Son günlerde bunlara ilaveten bir de Uzan olayı patladı. Adamlar şeytanın aklına gelmeyen sahtekârlıklar yapmışlar. Türk halkının 5 milyar dolarını soymuşlar. Ama halen Türkbükü'nde 60 metrelik özel yatlarına binmeye devam ediyorlar. Hem de insanları çıldırtırcasına bir de helikopterle gidip geliyorlar. Türk medyası ve Türk halkı bu işi konuşuyor. Fakat bizim bütün soygunları ortaya çıkaran gazetecimiz Emin Çölaşan'dan çıt yok. İnan karşılaştığım bu eleştiriler ağrıma gidiyor.” Çölaşan: “Gazetelerinde belli konuları ısrarla yazan, patron sözcülüğü yapan adamları vardı. Bunlar talimatla yazı yazıp patronun çıkarlarını koruyor ve onun sözcülüğünü yapıyordu. Kamuoyunda onların adı "tetikçi" idi. Ben tetikçi olmayı hem içime sindiremezdim hem de beceremezdim. Ancak bu konuda benim elimi bağlayan çok önemli bir husus daha vardı ve patron bunu biliyordu. Karım Tansel Çölaşan, Danıştay Başkanvekili ve İdari Dava Daireleri Kurulu Başkanı İdi. Uzan ailesi dahil bütün medya patronları, bankacılar ve iş adamları tarafından açılan önemli davalar, son merci olarak Tansel'in başkanlığını yaptığı Kurul tarafından karara bağlanıyordu. Şimdi buradaki manzarayı düşünün! Kocası gazeteci ve belli konuları yazıyor; karısı aynı konularda yargıda karar veriyor! Belli konulara, bu engel nedeniyle, ne yazık ki istediğim ölçüde giremiyordum. Ve bunu Aydın Bey biliyordu.”
11	“Evet. 12 Eylül döneminde neoliberal politikaların gündeme gelmesi ister istemez, medya kuruluşlarının birer işletme olması, bunların kendilerinin zaten çeşitli, medya sektörü dışında, petrolünden sinemasından, gazetesinden filmine kadar bir sürü sektörde faaliyet göstermesi, tekstilde faaliyet göstermesi sonucu bu sefer kendi ürünlerini kendi medya organları kanalıyla topluma talep yarattılar bir şekilde. Bu anlamda da bir şey oldu, bir fonksiyonu oldu. Yani doğrudan doğruya da kendi ürünlerinin reklamını yapma noktasına (Gülüyor) gittiler. Aynı zamanda, tabi eskiden, hani 1980'lere kadar her gazetede, sağcı gazeteler dahi her gazetede mutlaka bir işçi muhabiri vardı. Emekle ilgili haberler yapılırdı. Yani gazetecilikte şöyle bir kural vardır. Birinci sayfada aşağı yukarı 13-14 haber gösterilir, 13-14 haber vardır başlık olarak birinci sayfalarda. Bu

	<p>genel gazetecilik kuralıdır hani kitle gazetelerinden bahsediyorum. Bu 13-14 haberin 3-4 tanesi mutlaka işçiyle, memurla, emekliyle ilgili -kitle haberi derler buna. Dolayısıyla hani bu kitle haberi sen bir haber yap ki işçiyle memurla ilgili çünkü senin gazeteni onlar satın alıyor. Onlar müşteri diyelim, satın alan insanlar, hiç olmazsa bu 14-13 haberin 3-4 tanesi de mutlaka bu kitle haberi olurdu. Onun için mutlaka her gazete, hani sağcı gazeteler, Tercüman gazetesinin dahi bir işçi muhabiri, emekle ilgili bir çalışan insan bulunurdu. Fakat 80'den sonra medyanın bu ekonomik yapısı değişince tüm bu emek sayfaları falan kalkmıştı. En son ben de Milliyet'te yapıyordum, benimki de kalktı. (Gülüyor)”</p>
12	<p>“Bak dinle beni, ekonomi iyi gidiyor. Ben Özelleştirmeden yanayım. Bazı kaygılarım var ama bunlar olsa bile niye senin yüzünden durup dururken iktidarla kavgaya edeyim? Sen ve senin gibilerle mutabık değilim.”</p>
13	<p>“Demokrat Parti iktidarında, Demokrat Parti'nin ilk yıllarında basına karşı bir müsamaha var, hoşgörü var. Menderes'in basınla ilişkisi gayet iyi hatta 1952 yılında işte basın sendikasının kurulması için bir kanun çıkıyor. Ondan sonra o zaman zamanın valisi Fahrettin Kerim Gökay gazetecileri çağırıyor. Biliyorsunuz o zaman vilayet valilik orada yani şu anda da orada da gazeteler de Babıali'de. Ondan sonra diyor ki artık diyor demokrasiye geçtik bir basın çıktı, sendikalar kanunu çıktı, gazeteciler de sendika kurabilirler ama sakın komünistlik yapmayın diyor. (Gülüyor) Tabi orada da hayatın bir cilvesi, tabi sendikanın bir tüzüğünün yazılması lazım sendikanın tüzüğünü de üç kişi yazıyor. Sendikanın tüzüğünü yazanlar Hıfzı Topuz, İhsan Ada, bir kişi daha vardı, hatırlarım. Ondan sonra fakat bu üçü de Marksist kökenli adamlar. Yani ondan sonra dolayısıyla çünkü Hıfzı Topuz ve Fransızca bilen, Galatasaray'da okuyan Fransa'yla, Fransa'daki gazeteciler sendikasının tüzüğünü tercüme eden adam. Tabi ister istemez onlardan yararlanıyor ama Marksist yani komünist adamlar, dolayısıyla böyle bir durum var. Tabi, ilk önce İstanbul'dan gazeteciler sendikası olarak kuruluyor. Sonra birtakım faaliyetleri soluyor sonra 1955 yılında bir kongre düzenliyorlar. Grev hakkı falan istiyor gazeteciler, grev yasağı var. Ondan sonra, vay sen nasıl böyle haklar hukuklar istersin. Onun üzerine diyorlar ki bak şeyi, sendikayı kapatırlar ha, hani kapatırlar onun için Menderes'e bir bağlılık telgrafi çekelim. Gene bir bağlılık geliyor. Ondan sonra, tabi Hıfzı Topuz, İhsan Ada ondan sonra buna itiraz ediyorlar. Tabi bu yönetimden düşürüyorlar onları. Hıfzı Topuz genel sekreter İhsan Ada mali sekreter yani mali işlerden sorumlu. Dolayısıyla onları görevden düşürüp Menderes'e bir bağlılık telgrafi çekiliyor. Fakat bütün bunlara rağmen, 1955'teki bu olaya rağmen, 1957'de yine sendika şeyi eleştiriyor, polislerin gazeteciler üzerinde bir saldırısı söz konusu, mukavemeti söz konusu. Polislerin, güvenli bu tutumlarını eleştirdiği için sendika bu sefer gene sendikayı 9 ay kapatıyorlar Menderes döneminde.”</p>

14	“60’larda iyileşme var. DP basının boğazına yapışıyor. 60larda iyileşme var. DP basının boğazına yapışıyor. Tabi anayasa da etkili, önünü açıyor. 60ların ortasında sol güçleniyor, orduda bile etkili oluyor.”
15	“Özellikle 1961 anayasasıyla birlikte basın özgürlüğü de basın çalışanlarının sendikal haklara kavuşmasıyla birlikte, henüz daha tekelleşme söz konusu olmadığı için, 60-80 dönemi basın özgürlüğü açısından olumlu bir dönemi kapsar.”
16	“10 Ocak gazetecilerin işverenler karşısındaki haklarını iyileştiren 212 sayılı yasanın yürürlüğe girdiği gündür. Bundan 39 yıl önce, 20’inci yüzyılın ortalarında çıkarılan bu yasaya ta o tarihte tepki gösteren işverenler gazetelerini yayımlamama kararı alırken, o dönemin basın emekçileri, işverenlerin bu kararını tanımayarak, Sendikaların öncülüğünde, tam bir dayanışma içinde hareket etmişler ve “BASIN” adlı kendi gazetelerini çıkararak işverenlere direnmişlerdir.”
17	“Dolayısıyla yani bir de yani hani 27 Mayıs’tan sonra tabi anayasa da özgürlükçü bir ortam. Fakat ona rağmen yine o devletin genel karakteri vesayeti devam ediyor. Hani Milli Birlik Komitesi 1961’de mesela Aziz Nesin’i hapse atıyor. (Kahkaha eşliğinde) Yani hem basın özgür hem de... Dolayısıyla yani bu çok kısa cumhuriyet tarihinden almışlara kadar getirdik. Burada da devletin bir vesayet ilişkisini görüyoruz her zaman için. Yani bütün iktidarlar basını kontrol etmek isterler. Tek parti iktidarı olsun, Menderes iktidarı olsun, işte efendim Milli Birlik Komitesi olsun, ondan sonra işte diyelim diğer 60-80 arasında nispi tabi bir demokratik ortam var orada sendikalaşma var bir takım hak da var ama o arada da biliyorsunuz işte bir 12 Mart geldi. 12 Mart 71’de askeri muhtıra verildi yine birtakım gazetecilerin hakları sınırlandırıldı sendikadan istifaya zorlandı gazeteciler.”
18	“1980 yılı başlarında TGS'nin üye sayısı 6 bin kadardı. O dönemin yasaları uyarınca bağlantılı iş kollarında da örgütlenebiliyorduk. Yani, gazetecilik iş kolunun dışında basın işçileri, matbaa işçileri de bize üyeydi. İş Kolları Yasası'nda 1983 yılında yapılan bir değişiklikle bu iş kolları bizden ayrıldı. 1984 yılında, 2821-2822'nin yürürlüğe girmesiyle matbaalardaki üyelerimizi kaybettik, üye sayımız 3 bin 500, 4 bine düştü”
19	“Teknolojik gelişmeden dolayı adam çıkarırsan 36 ay tazminat vereceksin’ diyorlar... Ne yapacağım; o zaman ben içime sindireceğim ki, sendikasız da olunur. [...] Onun için sendikadan çıktık ve gazeteciler isteyerek çıktık. Ben elimden geldiği kadar tekrar sendikaya girmem.”

20	<p>“Gazete yöneticileri de ister istemez sendikal konulara duyarlı oluyorlardı. Sonradan bu şey değişti, bu sistem değişti, önce işte bu sendikayı, Hürriyet gazetesinde 1990lı yıllarda ortadan kaldırdılar. İşte arkadaşlar istifa etti falan filan. Dolayısıyla o zaman basın özgürlüğü de etkilendi. Çünkü şimdi o zaman, gazetelerde disiplin kurulları vardı. Bir gazeteciyi işten çıkarmak için mutlaka disiplin kurulu kararı gerekirdi yani. Patron uluorta adamı işten çıkaramazdı. Disiplin kurulunda sendika temsilcisi var. Dolayısıyla gazeteci yani bir haber yazdı diyelim, [...] Yani disiplin kurulu kararıyla gazeteci çıkarıldığı için hani bir bakıma, gazetecinin işten çıkarılması zorlaştığı için sendikanın da bunda rolü olduğu için, o zaman gazeteciler basın özgürlüğünü daha rahat kullanabilirlerdi değil mi? Ben yazarım haber sen beni çıkaramazsın gibi. [...] Güvencesi vardı yani. Ama bu sendika gidince, bu güvenceler tamamen ortadan kalktı yani sendikalı olmanın böyle de bir bağlantısı, bu güvencesi oldu.”</p>
21	<p>“Editöryal bağımsızlığın önündeki en somut engellerden birini unutmamak gerek. Medya patronlarının sendikal örgütlenmeyi engellediğini söylemeliyim. Yetkili sendikaları rahatça tasfiye edebildiğini ve hatta “bir gazete patronunun sendika temizleme operasyonunu başarıyla yürüten bir büro şefini genel yayın müdürü yapmasının ayrıntıları” basın tarihine yazıldı.”</p>
22	<p>“Ancak 1990’ların ortalarından itibaren bu düzen değişti. Basında çok renkliliğin yerini oligopol piyasası almaya başladı, rekabet keskinleşti. Basının hükümetlerle içli dışlı hali derinleşti. Ve 1990’ların emek ve sendika karşıtı ikliminde basında ilk hedeflerden biri sendikalar oldu. Doğan grubunun amiral gemisi Hürriyet ve Milliyet’ten başlayarak sendika tasfiye edildi. Bu sürecin Hürriyet’te bizzat Ertuğrul Özkök eliyle yürütüldüğü biliniyor.”</p>
23	<p>“Milliyet gazetesi sahibi Aydın Doğan toplu sözleşmenin kendisine yük getirdiğini, bundan sonra toplu sözleşme imzalamak istemediğini söyledi. Bir yıllık bir sürece yayarak sendikayı gazeteden uzaklaştırdı. Sendikasızlaşma, Milliyet’in yönetici kadrolarında başladı. Kemal Kınacı müessese müdürü olmuştu. Doğan önce müdürlerin sendikadan istifasını istedi. Bu kişiler istifa ettikten sonra kendi altlarındaki kişilere baskı yaptı. Her yönetici kendi çalışanına baskı yaparak teker teker sendikadan istifa ettirdi. O dönemde, gazetecilerin 48 bin liralık noter parasını bile Aydın Doğan karşıladı.”</p>
24	<p>“İstifa etmeyi kabul etmeyen çok küçük bir azınlık tazminatları ödenerek işten çıkarıldı. Geri kalanlar ise herhangi bir direniş örgütlenmeden üyelikten ayrıldı. Sonuçta, Milliyet gazetesindeki yüzde 51 çoğunluğumuzu kaybettik. 1992 yılından sonra da orada toplu sözleşme yetkimiz kalmadı. (Ercan, 2002)”</p>

25	“Aydın Bey satın almadan Hürriyet'ten istifalar başlamıştı. Bu süreci Ertuğrul Özkök örgütlüyordu. O zaman Hürriyet Haber Ajanjı, Hürgün ve Hürriyet'te çalışıyordu arkadaşlarımız. Hürriyet İkitelli'deki binasına yeni taşınmıştı ve biz sendikadan arkadaşlarla birlikte günlerce oraya gidip geldik. Arkadaşlarımıza, sendikadan ayrılmamalarının gerekçelerini anlattık. [...] Babıali'den ayrıldıktan sonra gazeteci arkadaşlar arasında dayanışma kalmamıştı. İnsanlar kapıdan kartlarla girip çıkıyordu. Çalışanlar arasındaki yabancılaşıma çok fazlaydı. Üstelik, işlerini kaybetmekten de çok korkuyorlardı.”
26	“Ertuğrul Özkök ne derse o oluyordu. O dönemde TGS İstanbul Şube'nin başında Ziya Sonay bulunuyordu. Ziya Bey, Ertuğrul Özkök'e istifaları durdurmasını söyledi. Ancak Özkök, "Ben bu insanlara sizin verdiğiniz paradan fazlasını vereceğim" dedi. Bizler bu söze karşı çıktık ve güvence ortadan kalktıktan sonra kazanımların geçici olacağını söyledik. Özkök söylediğini yaptı. Önce ücretleri artırdı, sonra arkadaşların sendikadan istifa etmesini sağladı. Ancak, bu iyileştirmenin devamı gelmedi. Arkadaşlarımız senelerce aynı ücrete çalıştılar.”
27	“Dinç Bilgin sendikaların işçilerin bir kuruluşu olduğunu ve kendi dışında olduğunu söylüyordu. Yönetime yakın olanların aldıkları astronomik paralar ile çalışanlar arasındaki ücret uçurumuyla ilgili olarak da “Siz işinizi yapan iyi bir gazeteci olsanız ve çok para alsanız kötü mü olur? [...]” diyordu.”
28	“Eğer Sabah'ta örgütlü bir çalışan topluluğu olsaydı, Dinç Bilgin banka işine bulaşmazdı. Dinç Bilgin'e en olmadık masraf kapılarını açanlar çare olarak bankayı gösterdiler. Şimdi onlar başka dünyalarda şen şakrak, fatura Dinç Bilgin'e.”
29	“Şimdiki aklım olsaydı, yapmazdım. Türkiye bütün müesseseleriyle ayarı kaçmıştı. [...] Gazetecilerin saf gazetecilik yapması, kamuyla ilişkisi olmaması lazım ki gerçek gazetecilik yapsın.”
30	“Ama sendikalı dönemde, biz diyelim mesela Hürriyet'in patronuyla, Milliyet'in patronuyla sözleşme yaparken şöyle bir madde koyduruyorduk. Diyorduk ki eğer işveren işte genel yayın yönetmenine, yazı işlerine falan, sözleşme dışında, mesela yüzde beşi aşan bir zam yaparsa o zam aynen bütün çalışanlara yansıtılır. Yani şeyi bağlıyorsun, patronu. Ha çok gizli verebilir o ayrı hikâye ama bir şekilde bir patron yahu kardeşim bu benim genel yayın yönetmenim ben buna istediğim parayı veririm diyemez, diyemiyordu yani. Dolayısıyla genel yayın yönetmeni de sendikalı olduğu için aynı zamanda dolayısıyla onu bağlıyor. Sen buna patron olarak adil yüzde beş zam verebilirsin, onu

	aşarsan verdiğin zam bütün çalışanlara yansır. Dolayısıyla o zaman ki sendikal örgütlenme bunları da etkiliyordu.”
31	“Benim Babıalı’nın bugüne kadar gördüğü yayın yönetmenleri dışında bir yapım var. Kendimi gazeteyi yapmakla görevli bir genel yayın yönetmeni olarak değil patronuma para kazandırmakla görevli bir şirket yöneticisi gibi gördüm. Onun için kendimi hep Arçelik Genel Müdürü’nden farksız gördüm. Benim ana işim patronuma çok para kazandırmaktı. Şirketim büyüyecek şirketim çok para kazanacak ben de klasik maaşın dışında para kazanacağım.”
32	“Ocak 1981’de maaşı 11.000 liradan 80.000 liraya çıktı. Bu zam onun para durumunda bir dönüm noktası oldu. Ondan sonra aldığı paralar hep artacak, hiç para sıkıntısı çekmeyecekti. Maaşıyla beraber kilosunda da artmaya başladı. Zaten uzun boylu, iriyarı ve sporla başı pek hoş olmadığı için kilo almaya müsaitti. İkinci kızı Zeynep 1983’te doğduğu zaman 99 kiloydu. Daha sonra kilosunda 130’a merdiven dayayınca sıkı bir rejimle tekrar 90’lara dönmeye çalışacaktı.”
33	“Bırak artık AKP’ye kılıç çekmeyi. Herifler dört yıl daha başımızda olacak. Burası kavga verilecek gazete değil. Bunlarla bizim bin tane işimiz var. Sen bir izne çık. Yoruldun artık.”
34	“Ben de sonradan görmeyim. Evet, gerçek bir sonraan görmeyim. Ne gördüysem, 45 yaşından sonra gördüm. Çocukluğum, gençliğim hep mütevazı imkanlarla geçti. İyi bir arabaya 50 yaşından sonra bindim. Çok iyi bir şarabı hayatımda ilk defa 40 yaşlarımdan sonra içtim. Havyarın iyisini dersiniz, son 20 yılda. Çok güzel bir eve taşındığımda 40’lı yaşlarımda sonundaydım. İlk ciddi marka elbiseyi giydiğimde, gövdemin defoları çoktan saklanamaz hale gelmişti. İlk Macintosh müzik setimi, hayatım yarım yüzyıla dayandığında alabildim Ben bir sonraan görmeyim ve şimdi size küçük bir sonraan görme manifestosu açıklamak istiyorum. Evet ben sonraan görmeyim.”
35	“[...] bilmem gözünüze çarptı mı, 2013 kışında bir köşe yazarı “medyanın dolar milyoneri 23 gazetecinin” adlarını yayınladı. Ama ne oluyor diyen olmadı. Nasıl olsun ki bir patronun sevdiği beş on kişiye verdiği üç beş dolar konuşulmazdı. Genel yayının müdürlüğü yapan gazeteciler arasında patronundan villa armağanı almayan çok az gazeteci var desem bilmem inanır mısınız? Kralların soytarıları vardı. Onlara, onları eğlendirerek hizmet ederlerdi. Karşılıklarını da alırlardı. Şimdilerde başbakanların patronları, patronların gazetecileri var.”

36	“Gazetecilik teknik bir meslek deęil. Kendine ait bir misyonu, ahlakı vardır. Bu çok basitçe kamu yararı adına siyasi iktidarı, ekonomik, politik, toplumsal güç odaklarını denetlemektir. Kimse ben zengin olacağım diye gazetecilik yapmaya başlamaz. Ekonomik kaygılarla bu işe girmez. Mesleğin iş ahlakını muhafaza etmek, gerçekleştirmek için özgür olmak gerekir. Basın özgür deęilse, güç odakları tepenize binerse, işinizi yapamaz hale gelirsiniz. İç çatışma doğar, kimliğinizi, integrity'nizi sorulamaya başlarsınız.”
37	“Dünyanın hiçbir yerinde özgür deęil finansal yapıdan ötürü. Bourdieu de der bunu, journalist özgür olsa bile ancak journalistic field'in içinde belli çerçeve içinde özgürdür. NY Times'da da her gün sosyalizmi yazamazsın (onu öven ya da nötr) övgü düzen içerik yapamazsın orada da öyle.”
38	“Gazetecilerimizin, “işbirlikçi” gazetecilerimizin sarıldığı bir başka yılan da şudur: “Eh, bu şartlarda yapılabilecek bir şey yok. Hepimiz aynı gemideyiz. ‘Küçük’ farklar bu durumu deęiştirmiyor. Madem ki bu büyük medya içinde çalışıyorsun, sen de bu kokuşmuş düzenin ekmeğine yağ sürüyorsun, besliyorsun. Hiçkimse masum deęil.”
39	“Bu kişiliksizleştirme sürecinin mantıkı sonuçlarından biri olarak, gazeteciler de, işlerini yaparken öncelikle kendilerini kişiliksizleştiriyor. Halbuki, insan, öncelikle kendine mukayyet olmakla sorumlu ve yükümlüdür. Sen öncelikle kendinden mesulsün. Oysa, “ne yaparsak yapalım aynıyız ve durum da deęişmez” yaklaşımı, insanı sorumluluklarından sıyrılıyor. Bu mantık şöyle bir duraęa çıkıyor: “Sistemin suçu. Kişilerle uğraşmayalım.” Bu öyle sihirli bir klişedir ki, bir olumsuzluk içindeki kişi ve olay bu “açıklama” ile bütün sorumluluklarından arınabilir.”
40	“Patronluk hakkının ne olduğunu çok iyi bilen bir insanım. Yani en azından şunu söyleyeyim, burası benim babamın malı deęil, onu biliyorum ben. Burası Aydın Doęan'ın dükkanı”
41	“Çoęu genel yayın yönetmeni bu farkı yapamaz şey olarak, yani çünkü şöyle bir mitoloji vardır, gazeteciler oranın sahibidir, dünyada yok böyle bir şey. İnanın dünyada yok, bu bir efsane. Şimdi, New York Times'da da İsrail aleyhine haber koydurtamazsınız, sahipleri Yahudi'dir.”

42	“Sansür mekanizması o kadar gelişmiş durumda ki şu an, emin ol, Erdoğan veyahut herhangi başka birinin telefon açıp da ne oluyor demesine gerek yok hiçbir şekilde. İhtiyacı da yok adamın bunu yapmaya. Genel yayın yönetmeni, genel koordinatör, yazı işleri kadrosu, haberlerden sorumlu yazı işleri müdürü, istihbarat şefi, Ankara büro, editörler... Öyle bir sacayağı var ki, bütün bu sac ayaklarında herkes otokontrol uyguluyor Benden kaçarsa benim üstümdeki yakalıyor, ondan kaçarsa genel yayın yönetmeni yakalıyor.”
43	“İlk kez karşılaştığım bu adam hiç ummadığım bir samimiyetle ve açıklıkla, sanki kendisi değil de bilinçaltı konuşuyormuş gibi, kızgın korlar üstünde sakın sakın yürüyen transa geçmiş Budist rahip edasıyla şunları söyledi: Her gün kişiliğim eziliyor. Onurum kırılıyor. İki çocuğum var ve onları okutuyorum. Onlar için katlanıyorum, anlayacağın. Ne yapayım! Ölse kurtulsam rahatlayacağım.”
44	“Ben de emek yazarı bir adamım, yani şimdi benim vicdanen de bir şekilde bunu yazmam lazım. Ondan sonra, sonra da şöyle bir formül bulduk, o sırada, SEKA fabrikası da özelleştiriliyordu. SEKA kâğıt fabrikası vardı İzmir’de. O da özelleştiriliyordu. Onun üzerine Türk İş üyeleri sosyal devlet yürüyüşü falan diye Kocaeli’nden bir yürüyüşe başladı. Ben şimdi benim sayfaya bunu manşet yaptım, ama altına da küçük olarak, Petrol İş (Sendikası) Danıştay’a başvurdu POAŞ özelleştirmesine karşı dava açıldı, Danıştay’a başvurdu.”
45	“2005 yılında, tam da 3 Mayıs Dünya Basın Özgürlüğü gününde sekiz yıldır çalıştığım Radikal’den atıldım. Nedeni de bir hak mücadelesiydi. Yasal haklarımızın daha da gasp edilmesinin önünü açan bir takım uygulamalara itiraz ettiğim için, haberlerimizin giderek daha fazla sansürlenmesine itiraz ettiğim için, birebir sansürle boğuşmak zorunda kaldığım için ve sendikal faaliyetlerde bulunmak nedeniyle beni sadece işten değil sektörden attılar. Hatta “Seni bundan sonra hiçbir yerde çalıştırmayacağız, biliyorsun değil mi?” dediler. Serdar Akinan SKY Türk’ün genel yayın yönetmeniydi [...], “Hiç birşey yapma sadece editörlük yaptracağım sana, kabul eder misin?” dedi. Ama beni işe alamadı. Çünkü ismimi bildirdiğinde şöyle kalınca bir dosya çıkarmışlar. [...] Doğan Grubu’nun iletmişti bir dosya olduğu söylenmiş.”

APPENDIX B

A SAMPLE OF THE RESEARCH

Names	Profession	Direct/Indirect/ Interview by researcher	Sources
Interviewee no. 1	Newspaper journalist and TV journalist in big media conglomerate, editor	Interview by researcher	Interview
Interviewee no. 2	Newspaper journalist in big media conglomerate, academician, expert on media freedom, unionist	Interview by researcher	Interview
Interviewee no. 3	Newspaper and TV journalist who has work experience in various branches of the profession including managerial/editorial positions in both public and private media	Interview by researcher	Interview
Aydın Doğan	Former owner of a multifaceted media conglomerate	Direct & Indirect	(Doğan, 2002; Özsever, 2004; Yanardağ, 2016; Yanardağ, 2008) & Other
Ercüment Karacan	Media boss in <i>Milliyet</i> newspaper	Indirect	(Adaklı, 2006; Kuyucu, 2012)
Mustafa Alp Dağıstanlı	Newspaper and TV journalist in big media, researcher on media	Direct	(Dağıstanlı, 2014)
Dinç Bilgin	Media mogul	Direct & Indirect	(Otan, 2006) & Other
Ertuğrul Özkök	Newspaper and TV journalist and manager	Direct & Indirect	(Doğan, 2002; Adaklı, 2006) & Other
Zafer Mutlu	Newspaper journalist and manager	Direct & Indirect	(Münir, 1993; Seymen, 2001; Tılıç, 1998) & Other
Ümit Otan	Newspaper journalist and a union activist	Direct	(Otan, 2006)

“Selim”	TV journalist	Direct	(Dağıstanlı, 2014)
T9	Newspaper journalist	Direct	(Tılıç, 1998)
Unnamed	TV journalist and general editor in big media	Direct	(Dağıstanlı, 2014)
Kadri Gürsel	TV and newspaper journalist in big media	Direct	(Gürsel, 2018)
Ercan İpekçi	Lawyer, former chairperson of the Journalists Union of Turkey, journalist	Direct	Other
Ziya Sonay	Journalist, former chairperson of the Journalists Union of Turkey	Direct	Other
Hasan Ercan	Journalist, union activist and former secretary of finance in the Journalists Union of Turkey	Direct	Other
Metin Münir	A TV and newspaper journalist in big media	Direct	(Münir, 1993)
Serkan Seymen	Correspondent and interviewer in big media	Direct	(Seymen, 2001)
Banu Güven	TV journalist, anchorwoman, moderator	Direct	Other
Ayşenur Arslan	TV journalist, anchorwoman, moderator	Direct	Other
Ethem Sancak	Media mogul	Direct	Other
Ahmet Şık	Journalist in big media	Direct	(Şık & Tekelioğlu, 2015)
Emin Çölaşan	TV and newspaper journalist in big media	Direct	(Çölaşan, 2007)
Bekir Coşkun	Newspaper journalist in big media	Direct	(Coşkun, 2011)
Uğur Dündar	Newspaper and TV journalist in big media	Indirect	(Şener, 2010)
Oktay Şengüler	Newspaper journalist in big media	Indirect	Interviewee no.2
Umur Talu	Newspaper journalist in big media	Direct	Other

APPENDIX C  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) When did you start your career in journalism? Can you give information about your work experience?

2) What do you think about the role of media freedom in the way media functions?

3) How do you describe the general circumstances for press freedom in Turkey? Do you believe that there are obstacles to press freedom? If so, what do you think about the major factors hindering media freedom? Which mechanisms, do you think, cause and reproduce these obstacles?

4) When you consider your professional experience, what would you say about the transformation of press freedom in Turkey? Which years and events do you consider to be decisive in this transformation? What are the critical moments throughout the historical formation of the contemporary media ownership structure in Turkey with respect to media freedom?

5) What do you think about the entrance of non-journalist business people into the media sector? How does it influence media freedom?

6) How did the coup d'état of September 12, 1980 affect media freedom? Did the economic policy applied following the coup have positive or negative effects on media freedom? What do you think about the relationship between economic policy and media freedom?

7) Do you believe there is a link between a) social and organizational rights and organizational capacity of media workers and b) media freedom? Could you please elaborate on this regarding the case of Turkey?

8) How did the start of TV broadcasting and private TV channels affect your work life? Did it have an effect on journalists in expressing their views, and if so, in what direction were these effects? What do you think about the effects of privatization on media freedom?

9) How does interference in media freedom occur? What are the mechanisms that cause censorship, self-censorship, and other types of oppression and violation of freedom? Have you ever been exposed to such mechanisms? If your answer is affirmative, then could you please talk about your experience(s), or cases you witnessed?

10) “Conglomeration,” “monopolization,” and “media conglomerates’ running non-media businesses” are expressions that are frequently used when the transformation of the media ownership structure is discussed. Could you please share your personal work experience and observations on the effects of such processes on journalism? As a media worker, what are the things that you cannot do as these processes progress, but could do before them?

11) What do you think about the impact of the development of visual media, internet technology and other media technologies on press freedom in Turkey and in the world?

12) How did the quality and the form of the relationship between the media owner and journalists change? Does this relationship have an impact upon media freedom, if so, how?

13) What would you like to say about editorial freedom in the contemporary media order of Turkey?

14) If you evaluate the periods 1960-1980, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s in terms of media freedom, how would you compare them? When you consider both types of factors, those that favor and those that disfavor media freedom, what would you say for press freedom overall; did it worsen, did it get better, or not change much?

15) What do you think about the role played by media elites with respect to media freedom? (By media elites, I mean journalists holding managerial positions in big media institutions in terms of the financial and economic structure)

16) What do you think about the ways to overcome the obstacles to media freedom; are they possible to overcome or not? Why?

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