



THE IMPACT OF THE CHANGES IN MEDIA OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE  
IN TURKEY ON JOURNALISTIC PRACTICES:  
A CASE STUDY OF IZMIR



OYA ALTAR YAVUZ

MAY 2017

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OYA ALTAR YAVUZ

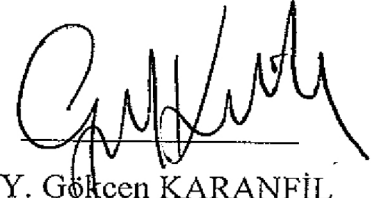
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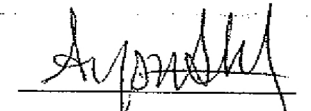
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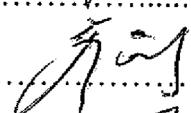

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## ABSTRACT

# THE IMPACT OF THE CHANGES IN MEDIA OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE IN TURKEY ON JOURNALISTIC PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF İZMİR

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With the ever-present involvement of the state from the Ottoman Empire to the current era, the press has continually been in a mutually dependent relationship with political power. Under this relationship, as well as having benefited from assistance in the form of legislations and subsidies, it has also been forced to contend with a great deal of legal and economic sanctions. Particularly, following the military coup of 1980, the press underwent a substantial structural transformation. Turkey, having come under the influence of neoliberalism that was making gains in the world, saw the acceleration of technological advancement and improvements in transportation and communication that led to the industrialisation of the press. During this process, the supplanting of families from journalistic backgrounds concerned solely with the sector by businesspeople who invested in different sectors resulted in a structural transformation. As part of this transformation, alongside a new approach to journalism, the emergence, at the level of the individuals, of

a new journalist profile was also observed. This study aims to analyse the changes to the professional practices of individual journalists that were brought about by the transformation of the ownership structure, in the case of journalists working in İzmir.

**Keywords:** Press, journalist, journalistic practices, political economy of media



## ÖZET

### TÜRKİYE’DE SAHİPLİK YAPISINDAKİ DEĞİŞİMİN GAZETECİLİK PRATİKLERİNE YANSIMASINDA İZMİR ÖRNEĞİ

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Osmanlı İmparatorluğundan bugüne daima devlet eli ile hayata geçirilen basın Türkiye’de sürekli olarak iktidar ile karşılıklı bir bağımlılık ilişkisi sürdürmüştür. Bu ilişki içinde basın devletin gerektiğinde yasal ve sübvansiyonel desteklerinden yararlandığı gibi iktidarlara muhalefet ettiği durumlarda pek çok hukuki ve ekonomik yaptırımlarla da mücadele etmek durumunda kalmıştır. Özellikle 1980 yılında yaşanan askeri darbenin ardından basın, yapısal olarak önemli bir dönüşüm geçirmiştir. Dünyada süregelen neo-liberal ekonomi anlayışının etkilerini yaşayan Türkiye’de teknolojik gelişmelere hız verilmesi, ulaşım ve haberleşme olanaklarının artması, basın sektöründe de endüstrileşmeye doğru bir evrime neden olmuştur. Bu süreçte sektöre hizmet eden gazeteci ailelerin yerini farklı sektörlerde yatırımları bulunan işadamlarının alması, yapısal bir dönüşüme neden olmuştur. Bu dönüşüm içinde habercilik anlayışı ile birlikte birey düzeyinde de yeni bir gazeteci profili oluşmuştur. Bu çalışma, sahiplik yapısındaki dönüşüme paralel olarak birey düzeyinde gazetecinin habercilik pratiklerinde yaşanan dönüşümü

derinlemesine mülakatlar aracılığıyla İzmir’de çalışan gazeteciler özelinde incelemeyi hedeflemektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Basın, gazeteci, gazetecilik pratiği, medyanın ekonomi politikası





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## LIST OF ABRREVIATIONS

AK Party	Justice and Development Party
ANAP	Motherland Party
AP	Justice Party
ANA-YOL	Motherland Party-True Path Party
Basın-İş	Turkish Press, Publication, Journalism, Graphic-Design, Edition, Package, Industry Employees Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBD	United Press Distribution
BİRYAY	United Publications Distribution Incorporation
BRT	Flag Radio Television
CD	Compact Disk
CHF	Republican People's Side
CHP	Republican People's Party
CNN	Cable News Network
DİSK	Confederation Of Progressive Trade Unions Of Turkey
DP	Democrat Party
DSP	Democratic Left Party
DTP	Democratic Society Party
DYP	True Path Party
EU	European Union
FM	Frequency Modulation
G	Journalist
GAMEDA	Newspaper Magazine Distribution
Hak-İş	Trade Union Confederation
HBB	Has Information Accumulation

IMF	International Monetary Fund
İGC	İzmir Journalists Association
Medya-İş	Media Employees Union
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party
MS	Microsoft
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NTV	Nergis Television
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
POAŞ	Petrol Office Corporation
PTT	Post Office
REFAH-YOL	Welfare Party-True Path Party
RP	Welfare Party
RTÜK	Radio and Television Supreme Council
RTYK	Radio and Television Supreme Council
SCF	Free Republican Side
SEKA	Turkish Cellulose and Paper Factories
SHP	Social Democratic Populist Party
TCF	Progressive Republican Side
TEM	Trans-European Motorway
TGS	Turkish Journalists' Union
TMSF	Savings Deposit Insurance Fund
TRT	Turkish Radio and Television Corporation
Türk-İş	Confederation Of Turkish Trade Unions
TÜSİAD	Turkish Industry and Business Association
TV	Television
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States

USA United States Of America  
YAYSAT Publication Sales, Marketing and Distribution Incorporation



## CHAPTER 1

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In building a democratic society, individuals who carry out journalistic work have a crucial duty. A journalist who reaches their news source within the shortest time possible and who delivers their news to the readers objectively and in all its aspects, fulfils not just the function of conveying information, but also the role of shaping and guiding public opinion, when needed. This is the reason why, of the prestigious Pulitzer Prizes regarded as one of the most significant accomplishments in the field of journalism, the grand prize is given in the category of “Public Service”.

However, in Turkey, where such an understanding has never been part of the national culture, starting with the Ottoman Empire the state has always been involved in the founding of the press, which was forced to fulfil its role circumscribed by the opportunities given and the supervision imposed by the political establishment. As well as receiving the backing of governments the press, which at times opposed the political establishment to the level of confrontation, was also forced to struggle for its existence when faced with punitive measures.

Following the military coup of 1980, in particular, the press sector in Turkey underwent substantial transformations. Technological advances and the new opportunities brought about by improved transportation and telecommunication infrastructure led to the evolution of the press into a media industry, while significant changes took place in its ownership structure. The replacement of journalist families that had so far served the sector, such as the Simavi brothers, the Karacans, the Ilıcaks and the Nadis with businesspeople holding investments in various other sectors caused significant changes to the

notion of journalism. The newfound interest of the new investors in the sector was brought about by the potential of using the press to gain stature and/or exert pressure within political circles, as well as to harness the power of the mass media to control public opinion; to exert influence in obtaining loans and state tenders in order to minimize risks to capital investments in other sectors; and to be able to exercise self promotion without expenditure on advertising. Thenceforth, in a consistently close relationship with the political establishment, the press became transformed into giant media conglomerates via horizontal, vertical and diagonal integration. This change in its ownership structure has made the press and the political establishment even more interdependent.

Just as it has created a new breed of newspaper boss, this new form of the media has without doubt created a new breed of executive that duplicates and endorses the bosses' mentality while relaying it to their employees, as well as "its own journalists", who have to work in harmony with this attitude, and, consequently, a new approach to journalism. Therefore, focusing on the case of journalists in İzmir, this study examines the political economy of the relations of the press with the political establishment and the ways in which this relationship influences the working practices of journalists; the impact of the transformation of the press on the journalism profession in general; and, within the Turkish press sector, which exists in a permanent state of economic crisis, the impact flexible employment policies have on professional practices and on the "individual journalist" in particular.

İzmir has a special place in the history of the press in Turkey. As Turkey's third largest city, after its political capital Ankara and economic capital Istanbul, İzmir witnessed the publication of the first foreign language newspaper in the history of the Turkish press. *Yeni Asır*, a prominent regional newspaper printed in İzmir has been in circulation for over 120 years and having made a success in the field of regional journalism with *Yeni Asır*, the



Bilgin family published the daily Sabah in Istanbul, which was the first newspaper to make use of computer technology. At the same time, during a period when efforts to deunionise/disorganise the press were underway and lottery promotions were employed to increase circulations, students at the Journalism Faculty of Ege University started a petition with the call “We want newspapers, not lotteries” and the students’ rebellion against the newspaper bosses gained the support of other students, university employees, health sector workers and citizens of numerous other towns, especially in Ankara and Istanbul. It is because of these reasons that this study, based on in-depth interviews conducted with journalists working in İzmir, bears a special significance in terms of understanding the changes in the practices of journalists who, unlike workers in any other sector, personally play a role in providing reliable information to the public and in shaping public opinion.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In their book “Four Theories of the Press”, widely used at journalism schools, Siebert, Peterson and Schramm argue that in order to see the difference between press systems, one should first look at the social system in which the press functions (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1963 in Arsan, 2005; p. 147). Stating that to see the true relationship of the social system to the press it is necessary to look at the basic beliefs and assumptions held by the society, Siebert, Peterson and Schramm suggest that the natures of man, society and the state, the relation between the individual and the state, and the nature of truth and knowledge should be analysed and propose a theory of four press systems (Arvas, 2010). Their study, which can be described as a political and philosophical characterisation of the press systems that exist in the world, identifies these four systems as Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility and Soviet Communist. Within the Authoritarian System, in which the ruler and/or government has unlimited power, the aim of the press, whether it is private or state run, is to support, advance and serve the state’s

governmental policies. Kept under check by the granting or withholding of state permits, through licenses, trade guilds and censor mechanisms, the press is forbidden from criticising those in power and the political system. In the Libertarian system, founded on the writings of Milton, Mill and Locke and a general philosophy of rationalism and natural rights, the media are by and large privately owned. While fulfilling the duties of uncovering the truth and monitoring the state, in addition to informing and entertaining the public, the press is regulated by law when necessary and defamation, obscenity, sedition during wartime and indecency are forbidden. In the Social Responsibility System, based on the writings of W. E. Hocking, the work of the Commission on Freedom of the Press, individual practices and media guidelines, in addition to informing and entertaining the public and selling newspapers, a broader purpose for the existence of press is promoting an open debate of different viewpoints. Regulated by ethical codes, community opinion and consumer action, the press is privately owned, unless taken over by the state to ensure the continuation of this public service. Invasion of recognized private rights and vital social interests is forbidden. Finally, in the Soviet Communist System, founded upon Marxist, Leninist and Stalinist thoughts and Hegelian idealism, the primary aim of the press is to contribute to the success of the state, and to help perpetuate party dictatorship and the Soviet Socialist system. The press is entirely owned and controlled by the state. The tactics of the party may be criticized but not its objectives (Arvas, 2010).

On the other hand, Arsan argues that examining the current workings of media systems reveals typologies that differ from each other to a greater extent and claims that the three models of media systems developed by Hallin and Mancini after taking several variables into account is better suited to understanding the press in Turkey (Arsan, 2005; p. 148). Basing their assessments on the dimensions of the structure of media markets, media-politics relationship, the development of professional journalism and the nature

and the scope of state intervention in the media system, Hallin and Mancini have come up with three media models, which are the “Polarized Pluralist or Mediterranean Model”, the “Democratic Corporatist or North Europe Model” and the “Liberal or North Atlantic Model”. Identified by Arsan as the model that best suits Turkey, the Polarized Pluralist or Mediterranean Model has the following characteristics:

Characteristically, there is an elite oriented press. The freedom of the press has come about late and so has the development of commercial media. Circulation figures are low. The newspapers are usually economically barely viable and need government subsidies. There is high political parallelism. Rather than conveying information, the focus is on commentary oriented journalism and public advocacy. There is a prevalent instrumentalisation of the press by governments, political parties and politicians. The professionalization of journalism is incomplete and is not universal. Journalism is not perceived as different from any political activism and its autonomy is limited. The state plays a major role as owner, regulator or founder of the media. However, it fails to intervene in an effective manner and contents itself with limited regulations.

Expounding on Hallin and Mancini’s Polarized Pluralist model in terms of the development of a mass press and of political parallelisms in Turkey, Gencel Bek (2010; p. 109) points out that in harmony with state centred policies prevalent in the country, a weak local press focuses on news concerning the government and business circles, in an uncritical manner. Addressing the existence of the members of the Turkish parliament who are journalists, indeed, even newspaper owners, as is the case in other countries within this model, such as Italy and Spain, Gencel Bek underlines the fact that a great variety of mechanisms of political pressure against the media are nonetheless still present. In keeping with the development and support of Turkish capital by the state, media organisations are either subsidised or penalised with the

introduction of new regulations; oral or written directives given by the military through various means regarding what and what not to write about and in which manner; distribution of official ads and announcements; the price of paper; cheap loans given by state owned banks; advertising budgets of state institutions; investment incentives; and through hidden payments by the government (2010; p. 110). Especially after the military coup of September 12, 1980, with the implementation of neo-liberalism the role played by the social state in the economy was reduced. As a consequence of neo-liberal policies, by leaning more on each other both the State and the market have acquired new shapes, whereby the State was reshaped according to the logic of the market, while the market was politicised. In particular, as can be seen during the Özal era after 1980, the market has developed in a wild, irregular manner. The founding of Turkey's first private television channel, which began broadcasting in 1990, by Prime Minister Turgut Özal's son Ahmet Özal, is among the prime examples of the irregularities of this period. This will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

Continuing her assessments in terms of professionalization and news media coverage, Gencil Bek draws attention to the fact that Turkey had started its attempts to professionalize the press before many Southern European/Mediterranean countries (2010; p. 115). Journalism education started in 1965 at Ankara University with the support of UNESCO and the foundation in 1986 of the Press Council, which was regarded as an institution instrumental in media accountability and transparency, exemplify these efforts. However, the fact that journalist that serve as the Chair of the Press Council work, at the same time, as columnists or executives in the mainstream media delimits the Press Council's response to criticism directed against large media groups. Similarly, in a majority of cases where an ombudsman or a readers/audience representative is present, these individuals have been observed to advocate for their "workplaces". The influence of the neo-liberal structure and mechanisms

on the news finds its most visible expression in the economy pages. Focusing on the world of business and finance, instead of trade unions and issues such as poverty, columnists of the economy pages have also changed after 1980. Whereas, prior to 1980, these pages had experienced civil servants as columnists, today they feature private sector managers or academics with close ties to the commercial world. The news also personalizes politics and presents it in tabloid form. Promotion of the media group's media and non-media investments is presented in the guise of news, and rich celebrities, gossip and a life of glamour have all become newsworthy. In general, a form of "interpretative reporting" that makes use of a polemical tone has been adopted, as well as politically engaged headlines and news formats (Gencel Bek, 2010; p. 117). However, when it comes to professionalization, as Gencel Bek also underlines, Turkey occupies a different position to other countries that fall under the same model, in terms of the prevalent deunionisation/disorganisation of labour. Except for the employees of the Anatolian Agency and the daily *Cumhuriyet*, since the 1990's journalists in Turkey work without recourse to their trade union rights, unorganized and without job security. As will be further elaborated in the following chapters, whereas in Turkey the media environment is not conducive to enabling unorganised journalists to stand up to the pressure exerted by media owners or advertisers, journalists in Italy and Portugal can be active in editorial councils, participating in the appointment of their executive editors and in the examples of Italy and Spain have the right to resign from a newspaper when its ideological standpoint has changed (Gencel Bek, 2010; p. 116). But more importantly, the editors in chief that identify strongly with media owners in Turkey, regard the institutions in which they work as any "company" where they would be responsible for maximising profits. Consequently, the liberal approach's claim to separation of ownership and management does not exist in practice. Not limited to the managerial staff and editors, this kind of identification is also seen among journalists, resulting in censorship and self-censorship.

The debate on the role of the media in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has, for the main part, been grouped under two paradigms. At this point, an elaboration of the liberal pluralist approach mentioned by Gencel Bek and the critical political economy approach that critiques the former's perspective of the media, the news and its production would be of benefit, since this study attempts to determine which of the two paradigms provides more substantial answers to the issues and challenges in the field of communication as seen through eyes of journalists, who are the producers of news.

According to the liberal pluralist approach, in addition to the legislative, the executive and the judiciary, the mass media serves as the "fourth estate" in a society. Professional organizations of the press and their employees, who possess the skills to uncover the "truth", inform rational citizens of the events in their countries and/or in the world and help them make "correct" decisions by transmitting information. Journalists, who can put aside their own viewpoints and political tendencies and approach their news subjects in an "objective" and "impartial" manner, possess the skills to produce "balanced" and "non-biased" news stories (İnal, 1994 and Robins, 1993 in Özkaya, 1997). According to Erdoğan (2010), the classical proponents of this approach, such as McQuail, Blumler and Halloran, describe media organisations as organisational systems that have gained autonomy from the state, political parties and organised pressure groups. Seeing industrial societies not as structures that have integrated on a common ground but as a coalescence of numerous interest groups that compete with each other, this approach regards the media as a structure that encourages a Western-style capitalist model of development (Tılıç, 1998; p. 38). Besides, it assumes that the management of media lies in the hands of an autonomous managerial elite that bestows a considerable degree of freedom to media professionals. In addition, the audiences are seen as "free and independent, making pluralistic analysis in front of the TVs". Starting from the point of view that a symmetrical

relationship exists between the media organizations and their audiences, it is assumed that the audience can manipulate the media according to their own desires and attitudes, since they share the "pluralistic values of the society" which renders them free to "opt in, agree or refuse"(Erdoğan, 2010).

The political economy approach is a counter view that is critical of the liberal pluralist approach to the media, news and production of news. Curran distinguishes three main perspectives within the critical approach based on conflicting standpoints regarding the power of the media and delineates the nature and terms of their disagreement (Curran, Gurevitch and Woollacott, 2005; p. 11). According to this division, the structuralist perspective has focused on the text-ideology relationship. While structuralist studies perceive the media as an ideological power, the political economy approach problematizes the dynamics of capitalist production, emphasizing the economic infrastructure instead of ideology. Cultural studies, on the other hand, identify the media as a field of struggle where social consent is gained or lost. Murdock, meanwhile, divides the political economy perspective into an instrumentalist and a structuralist approach (Murdock 1980 in Dursun, 2001; p. 20). The instrumentalist assumption evaluates the media within the framework of its commitment to the ruling classes or even individuals. Meanwhile, by examining the links between class, power and ideology within the framework of the mode of production or the political economy, structuralist analysis ascribes certain constraints to the actions and choices of the owners and employees of media. In addition to these, the Frankfurt School, which developed a critique of the culture industry as part of mass communication, is also among the critical theories of media. As the common ground of all these perspectives is their criticism of the capitalist economic and liberal political systems, in general they are considered to have emerged from Marxism (Dursun, 2001; p. 21).

Distinct from classical economics, Marxist political economy is based on social classes and a theory of value. According to the Marxist view, inequality in a society is born from class inequality and history in its entirety is the history of class struggles. Golding and Murdock state that *German Ideology*, published in 1845, constitutes a "programmatically outline" for the political economy of mass communication (Golding and Murdock 1979 in Adaklı, 2006; p. 22). The section from German Ideology quoted below points at the "dependencies" of ruling ideas:

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 classes] rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age. Consequently their ideas are the ruling ideas of the age. (Marx and Engels, 1990 in Adaklı, 2006; p. 22)

Golding and Murdock underline three propositions that they derive from the passage above: the production and distribution of ideas is controlled by the capitalist owners of the means of production; as a consequence of this control, their worldview begins to dominate the thoughts of subordinate groups; this ideological domination plays a key role in maintaining class inequalities. As stated by Dursun (2001; p. 26) within the framework of this viewpoint that conceives ideology as "false consciousness" in the conventional Marxist sense, the media is situated entirely as an instrument of ideological hegemony/dominance, where the economic (base level) class interests and ownership/property relations are transferred to or mirrored by the superstructure and hence the revolutionary potential of the working class is erased. As part of this process, the media is analysed in terms of the effective role it plays in shaping mass consciousness to protect the interests of the ruling class or classes, which lies in the preservation of capitalist relations of



production. As such, while serving their interests, the media is open to direct intervention from the ruling classes.

In their 1973 article *For a Political Economy of Mass Communication*, Golding and Murdock, underline the following basic assumptions (Boyd-Barrett, 1995):

The political economy of mass communications must recognise that mass media are first and foremost industrial and commercial organizations that produce and distribute commodities. Different media sectors cannot be studied in isolation, as they are already interlinked through corporate control and their activities can only be understood with reference to the broader economic context. Analysis must extend also to the ideological work of the media, in their dissemination of ideas about economic and political structures. A political economy of the media cannot focus only on the production and distribution of commodities, but must also take full account of the peculiar nature of these commodities and the ideological work that they do.

Taking this aspect into consideration, Golding and Murdock (1997) state that critical political economy is concerned with the "culture industry and construction of meaning" dimensions of an economy (Tekinalp, 2002; p. 20). That is, critical political economy concentrates on how the "powerful are able to fix the premises of discourse, decide what the public shall see, hear and think, and 'manage' public opinion by regular propaganda campaigns," and the relationship between the economy, power and politics (Herman and Chomsky 1988 in Mullen and Klaehn, 2010; p. 217). According to Schiller catchwords such as "freedom of speech" or "free markets" that one finds in the liberal pluralist approach are part of a deliberate state policy to use the power of mass media to influence and dominate the powerless. Focusing on the propaganda model under critical political economy, Chomsky on the other hand, argues that the power elite exercise outright control of the media and public's consent is manufactured through propaganda (Morley and Robins, 1997 and Chomsky 1993 in Tekinalp, 2002; p. 21).

According to this perspective, the assumption that the press could be an independent force in society, the claim that news is "truth" itself and the view that the press constitutes a professional field of expertise become questionable. Such questioning repudiates the "view that the media is the fourth estate" asserted by liberal pluralist researchers. Instead, particularly due to time constraints, the mass media gives regular coverage to the hegemonic ideological discourses and discursively reconstructs its own credibility. Although, there appears to be some level of diversity in the mass media's content and, in particular, in the text of news, this stems from an illusion. People that are described as experts in the media are the leading figures of various institutions, businesspeople, top officials from the government or members of organized pressure groups. Consequently, how powerful individuals and institutions define situations are featured prominently by the news text. The media faithfully reproduce the power structure that exists in the institutional order of the society, in a symbolic manner (İnal, 1994 in Özkaya, 1997; p. 568).

According to Golding and Murdock, for a critical political economy of culture, four historical processes should be studied: the growth of the media, the extension of corporate reach; commodification; and the changing role of state and government intervention (Golding and Murdock, 1997 in Adaklı, 2006; p. 29). Schiller argues that the mass communication industries intervene in the cultural domain in two ways: by expanding within the sectors in which they are producers, such as newspapers, magazines, television, film and music, as well as entertainment venues; and, by the role they play as advertisers and sponsors (Schiller, 1989 in Adaklı, 2006; p. 30). Garnham states that as creators of surplus value through commodity production and exchange, the mass media plays a *direct* economic role. Moreover, through advertising, they also fulfil an *indirect* role in the creation of surplus value within other sectors (Garnham, 1990 in Adaklı, 2006; p. 30).

Taking Golding and Murdock's suggestions into consideration, in this day and time, in which culture is increasingly commoditised by corporations that are becoming more and more horizontally and vertically integrated, studying new forms of commodification bears a particular significance. According to Vincent Mosco, in addition to its ability to produce surplus value, like all other commodities, the mass media also contains symbols and images that help shape consciousness and should thus be studied as a special and powerful kind of commodity. Contributing to the thoughts on commodification, Dallas Smythe, on the other hand, argues that the audience is the primary commodity of mass media. Adding a new dimension to the debate, Smythe claims that media corporations produce audiences and sell them to advertisers (Mosco, 1996 and Smythe, 1977 in Adaklı, 2006; p. 30).

In a capitalist society, investments in infrastructure vital to the growth of the overall capital constitute the most important area of activity for the State. Hence, the fourth historical process that Golding and Murdock highlight for analysis, that is the changing role of state and government intervention, is of particular importance in understanding the quintessentially neo-liberal turn from the 1980's onwards. Neo-liberalism was implemented in the 1990s and 2000s, with the withdrawal of the State from public investments in many strategic sectors like energy and telecommunications. Within this context, in line with 'deregulation' policies introduced in the United States and the United Kingdom, especially in the field of television broadcasting, public monopolies were ended and limitations were introduced to the State's intervention in broadcasting (Golding and Murdock, 1983 in Adaklı, 2006; p. 31).

Garnham draws attention to the fact that media studies show little interest in the labour processes and class relations in the sector (Garnham, 1990 in Adaklı, 2006; p. 32). From the 1980's onwards especially, along with the changing ownership structure in the media sector brought about by the macro strategies of mergers, acquisitions and horizontal, vertical and diagonal

integration, the status of workers underwent a significant transformation. Particularly within the framework of the structure that emerged in Turkey, with the replacement of traditional media owners by businesspeople from non-media sectors, the multifaceted relations between company owners, wage workers and professionals in managerial roles, who reproduce media owners' hegemony, comprise an important topic of a political economy analysis.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 The Research Process and Data Collection**

This study aims to identify the ways in which journalistic practice is influenced by the political economy of the media and its relation to political power. The Ottoman-period was specifically chosen as the starting point of this study, which attempts to demonstrate the changes to the ownership structure that have taken place since then to the present day. Nevertheless, the main focus of the study is the impact the transformation of the ownership structure of the press in the 1980s had on journalistic practices. The effects of the transformation of the press into a mass media industry, with the ownership of newspapers passing from journalist families to businesspeople who invested in different sectors, on the relations between the media and the political power and on the news practices are examined. For the purposes of this study only qualitative research methods were used, while quantitative research methods were ignored. Instead of quantitative methods and statistics used to examine circumstances or cases, and the relations between them, the choice of a qualitative methodological approach that aims to identify, describe and explain the relations between the cases was made in order to seek answers to “why” and “how” questions (Marshall, 1996 in Firestone, 1987 adapted by Yeşil, 2015; p. 59).

Pointing out that qualitative research differs significantly from quantitative in its purposes, in that it does not aim to establish objective

generalisations Yeşil states (2015; p. 60) that, even though causal connections might be found between events, no claims are made to generalise such causal relations. Each event or situation, and the relationships between them, are meaningful in themselves. On the other hand, in qualitative research, aims are expressed in the form of questions. Open-ended questions are preferred, in general. This, in turn, allows the researcher some flexibility.

Interviews were conducted with journalists in order to determine the repercussions of the media structure that emerged after 1980 and the media's relation to political power on journalism practices. To this end, three categories were established depending on the duration of journalists' professional experience, as longer than 20 years, between 10 and 20 years, and less than ten years.

A semi-structured in-depth interview technique was used in this study. Geray, describes the semi-structured interview technique as follows (Geray, 2006 in Demir; 2013; p. 119):

In terms of obtaining information, although in general pre-determined topics exist, these are not presented in a specific definite order. To the extent that this is possible, the researcher tries to obtain information, without asking questionnaire type questions. In-depth interviews should allow for the supplementing of topics or questions chosen to illuminate the subject at hand by new ones, unforeseen by the researcher, arising from the respondent's answers. When considered from this point of view, fully structured or short directed interviews will not be able to provide depth. Hence, to this end, unstructured or semi-structured in-depth interviews would be more appropriate.

The features of the in-depth interview, as Arıkan also indicates (Arıkan, 2011 in Demir, 2013; p. 119), such as the limited number of informants and the long length of interviews; being able to present numerous in-depth questions and ask about every detail and comment; the possibility of posing why and how questions; and the interview taking the form of a mutual conversation, a dialog were the reasons for choosing this method. Accordingly, interviewing

sufficient number of informants and obtaining information and views that can uncover facts are determined as the measures of the success of a study.

Conducted to investigate the impact of the transformation of the ownership structure on the structure of the media, media-power relations and on journalism practices, the interviews attempted to determine the journalists' outlook on their profession, views on professional organisation and unions, as well as on news and on the relations between their employers and power.

In order to show the impact the transformation that took place after 1980 had on journalistic practices, comparisons were made between the old school and newer generation journalists and whether a difference existed between their journalism styles was investigated.

The interview transcripts were analysed with the descriptive analysis method. In line with this method of analysis, in which the obtained data is summarised and interpreted according to pre-determined categories, direct quotations are frequently made, in order to reflect the opinions of interviewed journalists, in a salient manner (Şahin, 2010 in Demir, 2013; p. 120).

### **3.2 The Universe and the Sample**

According to Karasar the universe is, in a broad sense, the whole set for which the research outcome is sought to be generalised (Karasar, 1999 in Yeşil, 2015; p. 60). Accordingly, the universe of the section “Analysis of the Post 1980 Structural Transformation’s Impact on the Labour Environment and Relations” is identified as journalists working in all newspapers in Turkey. The sample, on the other hand, is a small group chosen from a specific universe, according to specific rules (Kaptan, 1993 and Balcı, 1997 in Yeşil, 2015; p. 61). The most significant property for a sample to have is that it is representative of the universe. The sample's representativeness of the universe suggests that the designated sample bears all of the characteristics of the

universe. The sampling method used in this study is the one described by Yeşil as "controlled member sampling" (2015, p. 61-62). By using this method that focuses on the member, individuals in the sample were chosen according to certain characteristics they bear in a manner fitting the purposes of this study. The sample, determined according to Yeşil's controlled member sampling method, includes 9 journalists who have worked in local and national newspapers and news agencies, in İzmir.

Regarding the sample size Yeşil writes:

In determining the sample size, qualitative studies' lack of concern for generalising [their outcomes] is an important factor. It is possible to work with a sample that has fewer members. Another important reason for working with a small sample size is that qualitative studies are focused on depth and not breadth of scope. The researcher works with fewer individuals or events, but studies them in-depth. The researchers spend their time and effort, not by reaching a large sample size, but by explaining a small number of events or situations in various ways, in their apparent and hidden aspects. (Yeşil, 2015; p. 64)

Hence, the analysis section of this study was written using data obtained from interviews conducted with a total of 9 individuals. All 9 are reporters. All of the reporters were chosen from among journalists working in the İzmir branches of regional and national newspapers or news agencies, while broadcast reporters were excluded to keep a narrow research scope. Two of the reporters interviewed have over 20 years of experience and recently retired from a news agency. Another reporter interviewed has been working for over 20 years, in the same regional, pro government newspaper. Of the remaining reporters, while two were actively working in newspapers oppositional to the government, one was recently laid off, as a consequence of the shutting down of the İzmir branch of a national, oppositional newspaper. Interviews were also carried out with a reporter working for the mainstream media, another that had recently left the mainstream media and one reporter that works for a regional financial paper. Since the study focuses on the ways in which journalism practices were influenced by the transformation of the

media ownership structure, reporters working in the fields of education, law, economy, domestic politics and working life were chosen, while direct relations established by these reporters with the political establishment influenced this choice. For this reason, reporters working in areas such as sports and magazine were excluded from the scope of this study. None of the reporters invited to participate refused to be interviewed.

The reporters to be interviewed were informed in detail in advance of the subject of the interview, its purpose and the questions that would be asked. None of the reporters refrained from answering questions regarding the establishment they worked at or its relations to power. The researcher ended the interviews once it was decided that the number of informants interviewed was sufficient. This was because after a certain while the informants had started to give similar answers. In other words, there was reason to believe that interviewing 15 instead of 9 informants would not have yielded a different outcome. Moreover, while answering many questions, the reporters have expressed not just their own views, but also the views of other reporters they have worked with, from various different institutions. Since they expressed the view that a majority of reporters shared the same opinions, it is possible to generalise from the data obtained. The reporters also produced a broader picture of the current media environment, by relating not just the opinions, but also the experiences of other fellow reporters.

Interviews were made using a voice recorder. During the recording, the reporters did not ask for any of their views to be kept confidential. Only two of them were interviewed at the newspaper buildings that they work at, and on their own volition. The rest of the interviews were conducted outside of their workplaces. All of the reporters responded with great enthusiasm to all the questions and did not refrain from going into details, thus making a significant contribution to this study. The assurance that their names would never be used in this study may have also been effective in this. Although some of the



reporters stated that they would not mind if their names were mentioned, for the uniformity of analysis no names were used. Therefore, the reporters were identified as G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8 and G9. The G code denotes "journalist". Journalists with over 20 years of experience are coded as G1, G2 and G3, with 10 to 20 years of experience are coded as G4, G5, G6 and with less than 10 years of experience are coded as G7, G8 and G9.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF TURKISH PRESS**

#### **1. THE PRESS BEFORE 1980**

In order to be able to evaluate the structural transformation of the press after 1980, which can be counted as a milestone, it is necessary to address the political, social and economic changes in the country before 1980. The press in this country, that respectively adopted absolute monarchy, constitutional monarchy, single-party regime and then multi-party democracy, has always been intended to be shaped and controlled by the political establishment. Besides, the reflections of the constantly developing interaction between the economic order and the political order have always been influential on the press. The suppression of the press, which is manifested by the deprivation of economic resources and the new censorship laws during periods of increasing democratisation and demands for greater freedom, provided a relative freedom of expression when the crisis in the political system is resolved. At this point, not only the internal dynamics of the country, but the new capitalist order that has started to spread all over the world should be taken into account. Evaluating the media, that is to be considered as a sector in itself, in the context of a “media industry” rather than just “the press” when considering the interaction with other sectors, would be only just. In the context of this historical transformation, the section below will refer to the period before the transition from “the press sector to the media industry”.

##### **1.1 The Ottoman Period**

The economic problems of the 17<sup>th</sup> century played an important role in the decline of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire, which could not keep up with the changing economic order of the world, was not able to make

geographical discoveries in these circumstances; the economic problems also included changing trade routes, capitulations to European countries, having to import more than to export and the burden of long war years. The task of rallying the citizens, who had lost interest in the production of goods because of the increased tax burden, remained in the hands of the powerholders. Because the country did not have a press and journalism culture, journalism was not an income-generating profession in these years. Due to the inadequacy of advertisement income, the press was supported by the palace and the journalists continued to work at the palace offices at the same time. (Topuz, 2015; p. 21).

The situation of the Ottoman Empire until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century led to the birth of the first newspapers in Turkish. As in other reform movements, the state was the driving force in the launch of Turkish newspapers and it was aimed to announce the work done with the thought that it was in the interests of the state. The first Turkish newspaper was *Vakayi-i Misriye* published in 1828 by Governor Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt. This newspaper, which was published in order to monitor the developments in agriculture, industry and other fields and to take measures to protect society, was also used for the propaganda of the new order in Egypt. After *Vakayi-i Misriye*, which was in Turkish and in Arabic, Muhammad Ali Pasha published another newspaper in 1830 in Crete: *Vakayi-i Giridiye* (Topuz, 2015; p. 13-15). Mahmud II, who was considered a revolutionary in the press sector as compared to other Sultans as a result of social developments in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, took the initiative of publishing *Takvim-i Vakayi* for the first time in 11 November 1831 in İstanbul, in order to announce his projects to the public. *Takvim-i Vakayi* newspaper was followed by *Ceride-i Havadis*, which was published by William Churchill in 1840 and included more political and economic news and special announcements than *Takvim-i Vakayi*. It was aimed to announce the Imperial Edict of Reorganisation via *Ceride-i Havadis* (Gürkan, 1998; p. 26).

*Tercüman-ı Ahval*, which was published in 1860 by İbrahim Şinasi and Agâh Efendi, became the first newspaper that the Turks made under their own initiative. *Tercüman-ı Ahval* was followed by *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, which was also published by İbrahim Şinasi in 1862. Private Turkish newspapers before the First Constitutional Monarchy helped to form the idea of public opinion in Turkey, shaping intellectual political opposition (Gürkan, 1998; p. 27). Those who published *Tercüman-ı Ahval*, which was also considered as the first true idea and culture newspaper, demanded to benefit from the privileges granted to foreign media in the period and made radical criticisms of the established order (Adaklı, 2006; p. 97).

Since the beginning, the Turkish press has been in relations that are shaped by the needs of the regime with the state and its governments. New laws and bans and press control and suppression practices in the face of intensified crises and increasing democratic demands were also seen in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first example in this period was the closing down of newspaper agencies as a result of the decree by the Grand Vizier Ali Pasha in 1867, and opposition voices were sent to exile. Although a temporary atmosphere of freedom was provided with the declaration of the First Constitutionalist Period and the The Ottoman constitution of 1876, this situation did not continue for a long time. After Abdulhamid's ascension to the throne, the 1877 press law draft was brought to the First Parliament. The draft's first part contained provisions concerning the establishment and operation of the printing houses, the second part concerning newspapers and periodicals and the third part concerning the crimes committed through the press and penalties to be imposed. However, although the bill was accepted by the First Parliament after the amendments, it was not approved by Abdulhamid. In the period of 30.5 years of oppression, called "İstibdat Dönemi" (meaning: Period of Autocracy) in Ottoman history, Abdulhamid had the authority to close the newspapers when he deemed necessary with the Martial Law

Regulation published on 20 September 1877. In this period newspapers published in Turkish, minority languages and foreign languages were censored, while various methods were used to silence the press and pay journalists off. Among these methods, the main ones used were the provision of funds to journalists from various sources and giving them medals (Topuz, 2015; p. 59). Announced on 24 July 1908 in İstanbul through newspapers, the Second Constitutionalist Period provided an atmosphere of freedom again that was better compared to the Period of Autocracy. The atmosphere of freedom, which began with journalists not letting censorship officers into their building and publishing newspapers uncensored starting from 25 July 1908, continued until the Law on Printing that was issued on 14 July 1909. Although the Law on Printing issued in 1909 removed the necessity of obtaining a license in advance to publish a newspaper, the law included articles protecting the Ottoman nationality, the sultan and religion and restraining newspapers from publishing articles provoking crime and rebellion (Gürkan, 1998; p. 33). This law, which remained in force for 22 years until 8 August 1931, was amended 15 times.

## **1.2 Armistice Years**

Gülseren Adaklı, following an idea from Aykut Kansu (Adaklı, 2006; p. 86), describes the Second Constitution, which was declared on 24 July 1908, as a bourgeois revolution. The Declaration of the Second Constitution, which – according to this idea – was one of the important steps in the process of the bourgeois democratic revolution of the Republic of Turkey, led to changes in class and property relations that had significant influences on the social lower-upper class relations. One of the basic approaches to the direction of economic politics from the outset of the bourgeois revolution that introduced Turkey to a capitalist nation-state path had been the idea of the creation and development of an autonomous “national bourgeois” class from the state integrated within the concept of “national economy” (Adaklı, 2006; p. 88). The need to create a “national bourgeois class” became essential, since the Turkish bourgeois

tradesfolk, which consisted of non-Muslims, would have been inadequate in terms of industrialisation and development. Economic politics that emerged after the Second Constitutionalist Period accommodated capitalist features and the actual period of nationalisation took place in the Republican years. Reserved, protected and nationalised economic politics were intensively observed in the period after 1929, when the world economic crisis started and affected Turkey as well.

Some of the newspapers published in İstanbul with various tendencies during the Armistice, which started following the defeat in World War I, supported the National Movement while some others opposed the National Movement. Other than these, there were also a couple of others that were close to the ongoing struggle in Anatolia and changed sides from time to time. In this period, the press in İstanbul under occupation was under great pressure. *Akşam*, *Atı-İleri*, *Yeni Gün*, *Vakit*, *Peyam-ı Sabah*, *Alemdar*, *Türkçe İstanbul*, *İkdam*, *İstiklal*, *Yeni Tasvir-i Efkar ve Tevhid-i Efkar*, *Tercüman'ı Hakikat*, *Tanin* and *Minber* were among the major newspapers published in İstanbul. Others like *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* (Ankara), *Anadolu'da Yeni Gün* (Ankara), *İrade-i Milliye* (Sivas), *İzmir'e Doğru* (Balıkesir), *Yeni Adana*, *Albayrak* (Erzurum), *Millet Yolu* (Bursa) represented the press in Anatolia.

The Anadolu Agency, founded on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's request on 6 April 1920 and also named by Mustafa Kemal, constitutes the most important example of both the significance given to the press during the Armistice and the efforts to keep news flow under control. As stated by Topuz, the aim of the Anadolu Agency was to take precautions against provocations threatening national unity, and to publicise the news about the War of Independence and its action (Topuz, 2015; p. 139). In addition, communication was one of the first issues dealt with in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, which was established on 23 April 1920. The Anadolu Agency was affiliated to the General Directorate of Press and Intelligence by the government.

### 1.3 The Republican Period

In the process starting with the declaration of the Republic, the emphasis on nationalism in economic policies increased even more. The statist economic policies of the 1930s gave way to the war economy in the 1940s, with the Second World War. Boratav defines this period marked by measures such as the increase of defence expenses, the National Protection, the Capital Tax, the Farmer's Land Provision Law, as a period of stagnation in the sense of 'economic development'. According to Yalçın Küçük, the Capital Tax dated 12 November 1942 emerged as one of the ways of providing the financial need of the industrial bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the Capital Tax was applied to journalists at a minimum, and even the million lira tax levied on Yunus Nadi was not collected (Adapted from Boratav and Küçük by Adaklı, 2006; p. 90).

The relationship between the press and the government during the period which started after the declaration of the Republic on 29 October 1923 and lasted until the 1950s, had been quite tense. While a part of the press was defending the Sultanate and the Caliphate, the support of those who hoped that the new regime would bring freedom to all ideas was reflected in the newspapers (Topuz, 2015; p. 143). Gürkan interprets this situation as support for the new structure, rather than criticism; and states that the press had to adapt to the limits of the official ideology that dominated the state (Gürkan, 1998; p. 34). Tunçay reviews the process as follows:

It is not enough to say that there was no freedom of the press in this period. In Ottoman absolutism, too, the press could not write what the government did not want. At the time of the Republic of Turkey's Single-Party period, the press wrote what the government wanted (Adapted from Tunçay by Kocabaşoğlu, 2007; p. 573).

Although Kocabaşoğlu considers the period from the beginning of 1923 until the declaration of the Republic a lively, free and uneventful period for İstanbul and the Anatolian press, the point at which the delicate balance

deteriorated was the abolition of the Caliphate (Kocabaşođlu, 2007; p. 576). The removal of the Caliphate on 3 March 1924 led to an increase in opposition movements and reactions. In this period, two meetings were organised in İzmit and İzmır in order to correct the relations between the İstanbul press and the Ankara administration. However, this came to a breaking point in 1925 with the support provided by the İstanbul press for the Progressive Republican Party (Gürkan, 1998; p. 43). As a result of the Sheikh Sait Rebellion that took place in the East, the newspapers were closed on the basis of the Law for the Maintenance of Public Order, which came into force on 4 March 1925 and gave the government powers of extraordinary restrictions for two years. Kocabaşođlu states in his work that, only in 1925, over 30 periodical publications were suspended and/or prohibited (Kocabaşođlu, 2007; p. 583). The atmosphere of oppression and fear created by the the Law for the Maintenance of Public Order and the Independent Courts, which put a great deal of pressure on the press with its decisions in this period, continued until 1929.

While the pressure on the print media continued in these years, a radical breakthrough made by the state was the radio that started in 1927, which is an early date when compared to other examples in the world. For the radio, which did not show any significant improvement until 1938, this situation was evaluated by Kocabaşođlu as the absence of a special need for this new medium for legitimizing the Republican revolutions (Adapted from Kocabaşođlu by Kaya, dorduncukuvvetmedya.com, Access date: 08 April 2016). A serious breakthrough in radio broadcasting occurred at the end of the 1940s.

An attempt to take the Turkish press out of the control of the single-party regime also occurred in 1930. The multi-party system practice after the Free Republican Party, which was established on 12 August 1930 and closed on 17 November 1930, and the Progressive Republican Party, was evaluated as a



period in which the media was relatively free. In this period, a reflection of the competition among parties was also seen in newspapers, and the political atmosphere prepared an environment for new newspapers to start publishing. However, the support given to the Free Republic Party by the *Yarın*, *Son Posta* newspapers in İstanbul, *Hizmet*, *Halkın Sesi* and *Yeni Asır* newspapers in İzmir caused dissatisfaction in the Republican People's Party. Some members brought this up as a question in Parliament, which formed the basis of the 1931 Law on Printing with the idea of "introducing a good law that provides freedom to the press and prevents misuse" (Topuz, 2015; p. 158).

Kocabaşođlu regards the year 1931 as important for the establishment of the single-party administration, the provision of party-state identity, and the establishment of a more "totalitarian" state and politics structure. Within the framework of this idea that many academicians (Koç, 2006, Topuz, 2015, Gürkan, 1998) agree that press freedom was provided within the boundaries drawn by the government and by the 1931 Law on Printing. Undoubtedly, the most striking article of the law, which has 68 articles, 2 provisional articles and 23 sections, is Article 50. In Article 50 "Newspapers and magazines may be closed down temporarily by Cabinet Decision, because of texts that concern the general politics of the country. Article 18 (Article 18: A fine of 100 liras to 500 liras is given to the closed newspaper, and a penalty of one month to six months in the case of repetition of the offence) shall be imposed on those who continue to publish the closed newspaper or magazine. Newspaper officials cannot publish newspapers under other names during the temporary shutdown" (Koç, 2006; p. 23). The first newspaper to be closed under Article 50 was *Yarın* newspaper which supported the Free Republican Party; newspaper authors Arif Oruç and Şemsi Bey had to flee to Bulgaria (Gürkan, 1998; p. 47). After obtaining the authority to close newspapers under Article 50, the government added to the law that Article 51 prohibited the introduction and distribution of foreign publications in Turkey, by a Cabinet decision

(Kocabaşođlu, 2007; p. 590). The law, which naturally put great pressure on the press, did not only include these regulations. Other important items of the 1931 Law on Printing can be listed as follows (Koç, 2006; p. 21-22): “The publication of newspapers by foreigners in the country is subject to the permission of the government and these newspapers and magazines are prohibited from publishing anything against the internal and external policies of the Republican government (Article 13). Chief editors and managing directors of newspapers are required to have a higher education diploma (Article 15). Newspaper ownership and managing directorship positions cannot be undertaken by the same or even different parliament members (Article 16). It is forbidden to issue publications that support the Sultanate and Caliphate and incite communism and anarchism; and those who opposed it shall be imprisoned for six months to three years as punishment (Article 40). It is forbidden to publish texts sent by the ‘150 personae non gratae of Turkey’ and the Caliph as well as the Ottoman dynasty who were removed from office and sent abroad. Offenders against this provision will be sentenced to six months to three years imprisonment and at least 300 liras of fine; and if the offence is found to be a crime, an investigation shall be conducted (Article 44).”

The absence of a judicial authority for the newspapers and magazines to apply to in the face of such broad authority of the government is interpreted by Ceyhan Koç as a demonstration of the authoritarian attitude toward the press (Koç, 2006; p. 24). Back then, the government support for the financing of broadcasting organs was more significant than it is today. Official advertising, paper subsidies, incentive certificates, customs discounts, the occasional direct transfer of printing and similar equipment, or the sale of it at a discount, were vital in order to ensure the continued publication of newspapers. Government aid also functioned as a mechanism of punishment for regime-opposing media organs (Adaklı, 2006; p. 107). After the introduction of the law, the political establishment ensured control and even enforcement by means such as the

distribution of state advertisements, paper allocation, the import and distribution of all types of printing equipment and supplies, and incentives to print local newspapers in state-run print shops in the country. Although opposition newspapers significantly influenced public opinion despite all the obstacles, this opposition was limited to an limited part of the population due to the low number of readers. On the other hand, the most important of the law items that were changed many times up to 1946 was the decision in 1938 to make relicensing for the publication of newspapers and magazines obligatory. The leading newspapers of this period were *Cumhuriyet*, *Akşam*, *Tan*, *Son Posta* and *Ulus*.

The re-establishment of the General Directorate of Press and Intelligence two years after it was closed down, and the Press Congress that was held on 25 May 1935 “In order to maintain a more coordinated manner in the field of press in the country, to resolve the problems of the press and to connect the press to the principles of the revolution” are also remarkable developments. One of the most important decisions taken at the 1st Press Congress was the establishment of a press union that will provide unity, cooperation and bring solutions to their problems (Koç, 2006: 44). With the establishment of the Turkish Press Union, the influence of the government on the press increased; in other words, a professional organisation was established to ensure that the people the government did not accept were kept away from the journalism profession. Metin Toker expresses, in the following words, the martial law pressure in İstanbul after 1940 (Adapted by Gürkan, 1998; p. 52):

...a file locked in the closet. The file was a file of banning decisions. The day did not come when a civil servant came from the first branch and did not make a banning decision and did not make the file bigger... What was not there ... on the few pages on which the news should be shown in which pinto letters on the page, or an order not to write about the weather.

One point that should not be overlooked at this point is the journalist parliament members. Since the beginning of the Republican era, the majority of the newspapers that had influence on the Turkish press were directed by the deputies of the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet*: Yunus Nadi, *Vakit*: Asım Us, *Tanin*: Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın) (Adaklı, 2006; p. 100). According to a study by Frederick Frey, who studied the Turkish political elite, the Turkish Grand National Assembly had 75 journalist members between 1920 and 1957, 53 percent of which were newspaper owners, writers and editors, and 39 percent were reporters. Frey described these journalists as “propagandists of the official ideology” (Adapted by Gürkan, 1998; p. 80). Gürkan believes that the journalists close to the ruling party during the Republican era were made parliament members as a reward, while Adaklı links this situation to the lack of traditional journalistic codes of ethics in Turkey.

#### **1.4 The Democratic Party Period (1950-1960)**

The year 1946, when the multiparty system was adopted, was a turning point in terms of economic policies. The ‘conservative’ economic policies implemented for 16 years were relaxed as of this date; import activities were liberalised; and a foreign trade policy in which agriculture, mining, infrastructure investments and construction were given priority started to be followed. Since then, the incentive policies for foreign capital gained intensity and Turkey became firmly attached to the ‘Anglo-American world’ in both economic and political terms in a world order that had been reshaped by war (Adapted by Adaklı from Boratav and Küçük, 2006; p. 90). The Democrat Party (DP) came into power using the rhetoric of political and economic liberalism and from the beginning of the 1950s expanded its control in both areas; it had to increase public investments far from fulfilling the promise of ‘transferring state enterprises to the private sector’. From the 1950s onwards, the party took part in Turkish political life as a Menderes type figure, that made political investments in rural areas and adopted the policy of transferring

existing resources to the countryside without any planning. The Turkish economy became stuck in the second half of the 1950s since it remained distant from the policies needed to strengthen the industrial sector, which had no structure and should have been the locomotive for development.

The political establishment had monopolised the press power a long time before, having taken control it did not want to share it. The sharing of this power by the civilians occurred in a series of struggles and disputes. The printed press in Turkey before 1950 acted as a control tool of the single-party administration; sales and advertisement revenues played a secondary role for most of the newspapers published at that time, and to preoccupy masses with newspapers and to transmit certain messages became the primary objective (Sönmez, 2003; p. 33). With the 1946 elections, the single-party period in Turkey ended and the multi-party period began. As a result of the elections in 1950, Turkey entered a new phase with the Democratic Party coming into power.

From the Republican years until the end of the Second World War, the journalist-patron tradition continued in Turkey. Hıfzı Topuz states that in 1948, until Safa Kılıçoğlu bought *Yeni Sabah*, there was no newspaper boss who was not a journalist in the Turkish press. The transition to the multi-party period in Turkey was also a period of revitalisation of the press. The journalists and newspaper patrons who maintained the journalist-patron tradition until then were (Topuz, 2015: 329): Yunus Nadi (*Cumhuriyet*), Necmettin Sadak (*Akşam*), Zekeriya and Sabiha Sertel (*Tan*), Ahmet Emin Yalman (*Vatan*), Ali Naci Karacan (*Milliyet*), Cihat Baban and Ziya Ebüzziye (*Tasvir*), Hakkı Tarık and Asım Us (*Vakit*), Cemalettin Saraçoğlu (*Yeni Sabah*), Selim Ragıp Emeç (*Son Posta*), Etem İzzet Benice (*Son Telgraf*), Faruk Gürtunca (*Hergün*), Şevket Bilgin (*Yeni Asır*), Sedat Simavi (*Hürriyet*), Falih Rıfkı Atay (*Dünya*).

The multi-party period started the period of pluralism in the press. The growth of the advertising pie as a result of the high growth strategies aimed at the domestic market, the rapid growth of circulation supported by the developing newspaper printing technologies and the ability to reach more readers with the advances in transportation and communication infrastructures opened the way for making money with the press. In this sense, the Simavi brothers became commercial journalists in the Turkish press; they formed the *Hürriyet* and *Günaydın* groups and built up remarkable funds. *Milliyet*'s former owner, the Karacan family and *Tercüman*'s owner, the Ilıcak family joined them. Founded by Yunus Nadi, *Cumhuriyet* was the representative of the Kemalist left wing of these journalism-based family businesses. These families ruled their newspapers like a family business and did little to force themselves to move their business to an industrial basis. Nevertheless, they did not miss the opportunity to undertake horizontal and vertical expansion that consolidated the family business (except for *Cumhuriyet*) and steps towards building holding companies (Sönmez, 2003; p. 33). To give an example, Kemal Ilıcak, who bought *Tercüman* at the beginning of the 60s, made various attempts to overcome the economic crisis the newspaper entered into. In the name of horizontal growth, Ilıcak added Kervan Publishing and Encyclopaedia Publications to the *Tercüman* Journalism and Printing Partnership. Ilıcak was involved in various initiatives ranging from Meriç Textile to Tarımsan, Ter-Oto to Mor-Su Industrial Products in the sense of vertical growth (Topuz, 2015; p. 330- 331). The holding companies period during the process of transition from the press to the media will be examined in the following sections.

Until the multi-party period, the Turkish press continued its life under heavy pressure from the Republican People's Party governments. The Democrat Party, which was established when the multi-party period started, immediately took steps to set up a newspaper which reflected its standpoint.

The newspapers *Hürriyet* on 1 May 1948 and *Milliyet*, two days later, started to be published. The launch of these two newspapers marked the beginning of a new era for the Turkish press. With these newspapers, the Turkish press tended to rely on mass media instead of the publications of a particular party; modern printing techniques were also introduced in the country. In the second half of the 1950s, these two newspapers had a print run of more than 100 thousand; and in the middle of 1960, *Hürriyet* became the first Turkish newspaper with a circulation of over 1 million (Tılıç, 1998; p.80).

As soon as The Democratic Party came to power, one of the first things they addressed was the press problem. Immediately, a draft law was prepared and presented to Parliament. The 1950 Press Law, which came into force on 21 July, was a liberal law. The strict controls established by the 1931 law and the amendments afterwards were removed and the government's control over the press was virtually abolished. As Hıfzı Topuz mentions (2015; p. 193): It was no longer necessary for the government to issue permits and licences to publish newspapers and magazines. The trial of press offences was given to special courts. Thus journalists would be free from lawsuits that took years to resolve and a great deal of paperwork. Newspaper owners were freed from their criminal responsibility. In other words, the writer and the editor-in-chief would be responsible for any text that was considered an offence. The newspaper owner only had legal and financial responsibility.

The first years of The Democratic Party government made history as a period of relative freedom for the press. The government and journalists established close relations; no journalists were prosecuted or arrested. In addition, "law no. 5953 of 13 June 1952, regulating the relations between employees and employers in the press," which recognised the social rights of journalists, was introduced. With this law, journalists obtained the right to establish unions, benefit from social insurance, get weekly holiday and annual paid leave; employers became obliged to make written contracts with

journalists, pay compensation according to seniority if the newspaper owner wanted to break the employment agreement and in cases of military duty, criminal conviction and closing of the newspaper. Newspaper owners also tried to establish good relations with the government (Topuz, 2015; p. 194).

The Democrat Party's populist rhetoric was backed by the liberalisation demands of the masses. The liberal attitude towards the press continued for a while, but this happy period did not last long. The fact that people's income did not increase while prices did not get cheaper either, the high cost of living, caused disappointment in people's expectations of the The Democratic Party period. The heavy criticism against government policies expressed at various meetings and party conventions was being conveyed to newspaper centres by reporters. These criticisms were widely reported in the newspapers by secretaries and writers. Reporters, photo-reporters, secretaries and editors did not confine themselves to Prime Minister-newspaper relations, even though Prime Minister Menderes was expecting news reports not to contain critical reports on government policies, relying on his close relations with newspaper owners. On the other hand, the patron power was not enough to limit them either. This environment caused tension between the government and the press and the DP prepared a new draft law. Issued in 1954, law no.6334, "on some crimes to be committed by publications or radio" aimed to prevent the press from including any subject that could violate honour and dignity, harm reputations, contain defamation, give damage to reputation or wealth (Topuz, 2015; p. 196). Although these are crimes falling within the scope of the Criminal Code, the government gathered these provisions together under a special law and increased punishments. Another feature of this law was that when an article was published that could be considered a criminal offence, the prosecution could be initiated directly by the prosecutor, even without complaint.



The Cyprus demonstrations that started as a result of provocations on 6-7 September 1955 and which turned into a series of raids on the goods of Greek citizens in İstanbul, resulted in The Democratic Party declaring martial law. And martial law opened the way for the closing of newspapers and the silencing of the press. On the other hand, especially the mass demonstrations of university students began to put pressure on the Democrat Party government and the press supported student activities, too (Tılıç, 1998; p. 81). In the beginning of the process which caused the resulted in the closure of newspapers with great repression and for no reason, the following explanation was made about the press (Topuz, 2015; p. 198):

The press is guilty! The newspapers provoked the people and caused all this! There is also communist interference in this! The leftists wanted to disrupt Turkey's international reputation!

The press restriction laws no.6732 and no.6733 of 1956 followed law no.6334 issued in 1954. In the process that began with these laws, the arrest and imprisonment of journalists as well as the closure of newspapers increased, and the reactions to this were not limited to domestic ones. In 1957, the police drove away reporters for following the visits of the opposition leaders and sealed the İstanbul Journalists Union, which then wanted to protest this. The union remained closed for 9 months. Between 1954 and 1988, 1161 journalists were prosecuted, of which 238 were convicted. In 1958-60, numerous lawsuits regarding the press were filed all over the country (Topuz, 2015; p. 204-205).

### **1.5 27 May 1960 Coup D'etat**

Along with all events, after 1950 Turkey became a free market economy and entered a new era. This led to changes in the society. Increased industrialisation and reduced economic advantages in rural areas accelerated urban migration. This caused the new individuals to express their social and

political demands on the streets in the most vigorous way, using the rights given to them by Constitution (Adapted from Uyar by Erol, 2010; p. 5).

As the end of the prosperous period following the war period, with the deterioration of the economy over time, increasing unemployment while inflation became a serious problem, and the continuing political crisis, the National Unity Committee seized control on 27 May 1960 and a new process began. The National Unity Committee dealt with the problems of the press, which also brought an end to the many pressures on it. The press had had the most extensive freedom environment ever, and many new newspapers were launched in this climate.

The abolition of law no.6334 and law no.6732, the recognition of the right of proof and the establishment of the “White Collar Workers” law no.212 provided a working environment in which pressure and censorship were reduced by law. With law no.212, journalists obtained many rights such as seniority rights, death indemnity, compensation in the event of closure of newspapers, severance pay for journalists who resigned, two days of weekly leave for night employees and a bonus salary for journalists if the newspaper was profitable. These rights given to journalists led to immense reaction from newspaper owners and they protested the situation by not printing newspapers for three days on 11-13 January 1961 (Topuz, 2015; p. 229).

The fact that 9 newspapers, including *Akşam*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Dünya*, *Milliyet*, *Tercüman*, *Vatan*, *Yeni Sabah*, *Hürriyet* and *Yeni İstanbul* were not printed for three days caused all journalists to protest strongly. They organised protests against their bosses and published the newspapers using their own means for three days.

From 1960 to March 1971, during the Justice Party period, important developments in the way technology was used in the Turkish press took place. As printing techniques developed, daily newspapers started to be offset printed.

This introduced newspapers with brighter colours and magazine-based news, which moved ahead of the serious and comment-based newspapers. This development increased *Hürriyet*'s circulation to 600 thousand and Haldun Simavi's *Günaydın*'s circulation to 350 thousand. On the other hand, the circulation of *Cumhuriyet* increased to 160 thousand, the circulation of *Akşam* to 150 thousand, and the circulation of *Milliyet* to 200 thousand. The Conservatives' newspaper *Tercüman* reached a print run of over 300 thousand copies.

On the other hand, the 1960 Constitution Article 22 "The press is free and can not be censored", "Publishing can not be prohibited", "Newspapers and magazines can not be recalled from stores", "Newspapers and magazines can not be closed down"; Article 23 "Prior permission and financial guarantee are not required to publish newspapers and magazines", "Publishing news, ideas and opinions can not be prevented"; Article 22 and 23 "the State provides facilities for the exercise of the right of communication"; and Article 25 "Publishing houses and printing equipment can not be confiscated" brought freedom to the press in numerous ways.

The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) was founded on 1 May 1964 by the state, just like newspapers. Kaya evaluates the establishment of TRT as a demonstration of the government's need for ideological support tools, with the help of international sources of inspiration (Kaya, dorduncukmedmedya.com, Access date: 08.04.2016). However, television broadcasting showed the real breakthrough after the 1971 Memorandum. The power of television broadcasting as an ideological weapon was recognised in this period and used extensively by the political establishment.

### **1.6 The 12 March 1971 Memorandum**

Right before 12 March 1971, an atmosphere of despondency began to be experienced again with the political situation of the country deteriorating.

Social and economic inequalities, increases in prices, strikes and dismissals, student uprisings and boycotts, and the closure of universities caused a high level of unrest in the country.

Inflation made income distribution entirely unfair while unemployment became a serious problem. In the aftermath of the outbreak of social violence that took place, a state of emergency was declared and the press's turn came. First, *Cumhuriyet* and *Akşam* newspapers were closed for 10 days, and then *Ant* magazine, *Today* and *Yeni Sabah* newspapers were closed. The government of Nihat Erim, who ruled the country under the shadow of army commanders, changed the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> articles of the 1961 Constitution; the authority to recall newspapers from the market was given to prosecutors. Many journalists, including Altan Öymen, Uluç Gürkan, Ali Sirmen, Turhan Selçuk, Uğur Mumcu, Çetin Altan and İlhan Selçuk were detained, arrested, tried and tortured (Adapted from Kabacalı, by Topuz 2015; p. 251).

Industrialisation of the press, which started in the 1970s, was also reflected in the content of the press. Mass journalism replaced idea journalism, while mass journalism targeted bigger sales and advertising revenue. The reflection of this situation to the content was tabloidisation (Erol, 2010; p. 18-19). Magazine-based journalism was supported by an apolitical approach, and the legitimisation of this process was attempted by means of a popular, political conflict-oriented publishing rhetoric.

After the general elections in 1973, the country returned to normal in political terms. In the process when Demirel was in power, and then Ecevit-Erbakan, then Demirel again, then Sadi Irmak and finally Demirel again, the danger for the press came not from the government this time but from underground forces. Many scholars and opinion leaders were being attacked; journalists and members of the press such as Abdi İpekçi, Aydın Engin, İsmail Gerçeköz, Ümit Kaftancı, Muzaffer Feyzioğlu – which provided a favourable

environment for the army for a new coup. The process that lasted until 12 September 1980, when confidence in democracy was lost and the government was on brink of collapsing, was the worst crisis in all the years of the republic. On the morning of 12 September 1980, the radio broadcast a message by the Military Commanders informing the populace that they had taken over the administration; and the country entered a new era (Adapted from Topuz, by Erol 2010: 7).

## **2. THE TRANSITION FROM THE PRESS SECTOR TO THE MEDIA INDUSTRY**

Since its foundation, the Turkish press has had a one-to-one kind of relationship with the state. The Turkish press, which does not have a press culture in its geographical background and was formed by the Sultans in the Ottoman era and by government support later in the Republican period, naturally can have the freedom it needs to exist only to the extent permitted by the rulers. The understanding of journalism expected from newspapers for the announcement of reforms in the Ottoman period expanded during the Republican period into the expectation of creating public opinion in order to increase public support for reforms. At this stage, the relationship between the state and the press, which Gramsci explains by ‘consent and coercion’, Galbraith names ‘prize and punishment’, Gamson calls ‘incentives and threats’, and Doğan Tılıç (1998; p. 90) exemplifies as ‘carrot and stick’ has always been going on. The government was satisfied with the support given by the press in this form of relationship, thus increased its financial support (carrot), while the press continued to operate in a relatively free environment. However, when the press opposed to the government’s actions, its voice has always been silenced with denial of access to financial support, legal prohibitions and censorship (stick). At this point, the concept of liberal economic development adopted in the early years of the Republic was removed; the implementation of the statism

policy in the economy, due to the economic depression in the world, had also been a big influence.

In this section, the 24 January decisions, which are considered to have had significant place in the background to the 1980 military coup in Turkey and the effects of the military coup on the press; also the monopolisation through holding companies which led to a new structuring in the sector; the nonunionisation/nonorganisation, which caused significant changes in the working conditions of the journalists; the promotional methods that newspapers referred to in reaching large masses will be examined in detail.

### **2.1. The 24 January decisions and the 12 September Coup D'etat**

Tılıç defines 1980 as a milestone in terms of socio-economic and political analysis in Turkey (1998; p. 84). It would not be wrong to accept 1980 as a milestone for the press, given that the 1980s military coup caused a total transformation in the country. As of 1980, the press had entered a process of structural transformation. This transformation took place especially in the ownership structure of the press, and small-sized press organisations could not survive in the competitive environment and abandoned their positions to large non-press groups. Thus, the press, which was under the control of journalist families until the 1980s, came under the control of other people who invested in different sectors and whose main interest was not journalism. This situation, which started in the 1970s and developed in the 1980s, gained momentum in the 1990s and caused massive monopolisation in the sector.

Towards the end of the 1970s, the domestic market capital-accumulating model, which forms the basis for the development of the Turkish industry based on state support and protectionism, was cracking under the strain. Various stabilisation programmes prepared by the OECD, the IMF and the World Bank were implemented in Turkey in the period until 1980. The economic conditions that caused this structural transformation in Turkey were

provided by the 24 January 1980 Stability Program prepared by Turgut Özal, the Undersecretary of the Prime Ministry and State Planning Organisation, in the Justice Party (AP) government established under the prime ministry of Süleyman Demirel. With the influence of the military administration following the 12 September 1980 military coup, the 24 January Decisions were implemented more effectively than previous stabilisation programmes, and had a rather favourable environment for implementing the structural transformation demanded by the economy. Even Özal, who was known as the architect of the 24 January Decisions, said: “If the 12 January (military coup) had not happened, the 24 January Decisions would not have succeeded” (Demir, 2013; p. 13).

From the 1980s onward, Turkey has undergone economic changes in parallel with capitalism’s new strategic preferences in the world. As Adaklı expresses, one of the most important issues of structural adjustment programmes proposed by international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank was the withdrawal of the state from traditional intervention areas, starting from the market, and the privatisation of service sectors with strengthened infrastructure, especially telecommunication (Adaklı, 2006; p. 138). The 1980s economy was evaluated by Oğuz Oyan as follows:

Turkey has been a country that has been trying to articulate itself in the world of developed countries before completing the industrialization process, and has always been directed by international financial institutions in this direction. The political model is aimed at transforming the allocation of resources from production to services and, in particular, to an outward-oriented economic structure, narrowing the public sector and reducing/eliminating market interventions (deregulation) (Oyan, 2009; p. 273).

Describing 1980 as the “press period”, Kaya states that a new phase had begun with the concept of “media” (2009; p. 233). According to Kaya, one of the consequences of this market-oriented and external strategy for the economic modernisation of this period was Turkey’s transition to a more

knowledge-based economy and the compatible transformation of the media structure (Adapted from Kaya, by Adaklı, 2006; p. 137). In this period when it was anticipated that the subsidies given to the press would be withdrawn, new incentives and facilities were provided to foreign capital, and measures were taken to encourage exports and to facilitate imports. With the decision taken on 25 January, all customs tax and duties on newsprint were removed; and from 16 July, all customs duties on print works, writing paper and chromo board were removed as well. Following this application, SEKA, which had a significant role in the newsprint production of Turkey, became dysfunctional and the market became largely dependent on imported paper (Adapted from Sönmez, by Adaklı, 2006; p. 139). Adaklı talks about the heavy blow newsprint underwent, as follows:

The state subsidies on newsprint, the basic raw material of the press industry, were also abolished on 25 January 1980 and newsprint prices increased by 300%. The increase in newsprint prices broke a record; while coal was marked up by 100%, iron and steel products by 50%, bottled gas by 45% and fuel by 45%. Newsprint, which had cost between 30-35 TL per kilo until then and was given to newspapers operating in the press sector from 9 TL, was removed from subsidies and became as expensive as 41 TL. During the 1980s, newsprint saw the highest price rise among all basic goods, which was an important factor in the deterioration of the financial structure of the press. From 24 January 1980 to 1988, the highest increase in the 8-year period was made on newsprint, with 7.890% (Adaklı, 2006; p. 140-141).

On the other hand, the export-oriented economic policies also had a significant effect on the labour force; the 12 September military regime was effective in reducing labour costs and preventing an effective trade union movement against wage policies. At this stage, the pressure of nonunionisation/nonorganisation, which the press experienced, will be examined in detail in the next sections.

In this period, the role of the mass media grew. The collective news and information transfer function was relegated to a secondary position and profit became the dominant target of the media organisations (Kaya, 2009; p. 233).



And in the context of democracy, press organisations moved away from their historical mission in the name of democracy. In this environment, the professional practice of journalists changed, and as Demirkent said, reporters of the time had to start thinking very carefully about what to write and what not to write (Adapted by Tılıç, 1998; p. 84). While friendship with government officials was not something to be proud of in the past, it became a source of prestige for journalists after 1980, and every word said by any politician became significant because of such relationships. However, the composition of the press capital changed; accumulated capital especially in the banking and contracting sectors took over media institutions; all sorts of information production as well as publishing became a commonplace activity for media organisations. Kaya emphasises that the founding element of the concept of public interest turned from freedom of thought and expression to “free enterprise freedom” and the understanding of the “social responsibility of the press” was abandoned.

### **2.1.1. The influence of the change in capital structure on the sector**

Until the 1980s, four families from Turkey’s journalism profession dominated the Sublime Porte: the Simavis (*Hürriyet*), the Karacans (*Milliyet*), the Nadis (*Cumhuriyet*) and the Ilıcaks (*Tercüman*). The first development that brought the transition from the press to the media was with Ömer Çavuşoğlu and Ahmet Kozanoğlu, both of whom had earned money in the construction sector and who first moved in to the finance sector and then entered the media business in 1982. This duo established *Güneş* newspaper, and another contractor-businessman-politician, Mehmet Ali Yılmaz followed their lead and took over the newspaper. A further development was the establishment of a major media group by Asil Nadir, the head of London-based Polly Peck company, who purchased Haldun Simavi’s web group, *Tan* and *Günaydın* newspapers, Gelişim Publications and *Güneş* from Mehmet Ali Yılmaz (Adapted from Kaya, by Demir, 2013; p. 8). Dinç Bilgin, the owner of *Yeni*

*Asır* newspaper, which started to be published in Thessaloniki in 1895 and moved to İzmir in the following years, moved the newspaper to İstanbul – which was another progress that upset the balance in the Sublime Porte (Sönmez, 2003; p. 36). Bilgin, who continued on his way in İstanbul with *Sabah* newspaper, also made good use of the advantage of owning the first newspaper that used computer technology. In addition, having boundless understanding of sectoral growth, Bilgin transferred the leading professionals of the press to *Sabah*, which in turn caused wages to rise. Turgut Özal’s support of *Sabah* and *Güneş* newspapers through public announcements, official announcements, special statements and credits made the other established newspapers feel threatened. With the purchase of *Milliyet* and *Hürriyet* newspapers by Aydın Doğan, families such as the Simavis, the Karacans and the Ilıcaks abandoned their places in the press sector to Asil Nadir, Dinç Bilgin and Aydın Doğan (Adapted from Tuncel, by Demir, 2013; p. 9).

The paradigm that the mass media is the “fourth estate”, the power to create reputation and pressure in political circles, the reduced risks of capital accumulation in the non-press sectors, the prestige in getting loans and state tenders, the reduced advertising expenditures through media organisations were effective in the concentration of the accumulation of capital in the media sector after 1980.

In fact, after 1980, relations between the press and the governing party generally did not present a different picture from previous periods. Goerning party representatives, who expected support for their policies like they did in the Republican period, often met with newspaper administrators and provided detailed information about their work at these meetings. However, in the period of Turgut Özal, who became the prime minister with the Motherland Party (ANAP) following the elections in 1983, significantly intense relations developed between the press and the governing party. Turgut Özal had served

as the undersecretary during Süleyman Demirel's AP period, as the prime minister during the ANAP government between 1983 and 1989 and as president until 1993. Özal raised newsprint prices 19 times by 1988, and the price of one tonne of newsprint rose from 10.750 liras to 859.000 liras during this period (Adaklı, 2006, 148). The press had to contend with limitations on fulfilling its public responsibility, while the increase in newsprint prices heightened the tension between the government and the press day by day. The Turkish Penal Code No.765, the Law No.1117 on Protection of Minority from Obscene Publications, the Press Law No.5680 and the Code of Criminal Procedure No.1412 had been very effective with punishments that prevented publications against the government and the formation of a new media. Özal, who prioritised the economy rather than democracy in his policies, actively used laws and regulations to discipline the press. Topuz (2015; p. 275) reports that the number of press cases opened between 1980 and 1990 was over 2.000; 3.000 journalists, writers, artists and publishers were tried as defendants; chief editors got more than 5.000 years in prison; and media publications were banned 850 times from 1980 to 1989. Adaklı (2006; p. 150-151) states that Özal did not hesitate to take action against the press personally either, and summarises the situation as follows:

Turgut Özal personally filed the most frequent and highest compensation claim cases in Republican history against newspapers and journalists... The title of a news article in Milliyet newspaper dated 12 April 1992 reads: "Özal has received 200 million in damages". President Özal, who sued many people most of whom were journalists on the grounds that they attacked his personal rights, said, a few days before this article was published, that he earned a portion of his wealth from compensation cases.

Özal's commitment to the IMF programmes during his prime ministry and presidency periods, as well as his firm stance in implementing the policies of stability, also influenced the formation of a press in line with government policies and coined the concept of "the princes of Özal" in the Turkish press

(Adaklı 2006; p. 152). With Özal gathering newspaper managers and columnist ‘princes’ around him and becoming closely associated with private sector representatives, a different style was adopted in Turkish politics. The stressed relations between the government and the press that continued until the 90s changed with this relationship. Many newspaper executives and columnists felt free to express their support for Özal. Adaklı (2006; p. 153) states that press groups that had a good relationship with Özal and his circles could materialise their expansion strategies through large-scale incentive certificates; and that in the light of the research Tellan and Sönmez conducted in 1998, the government issued a total of 629 incentive certificates to support the investments in the service sector – 48 of which were given to the Doğan group companies and 26 to the *Sabah* group.

Along with all of these, in contrast to the press period, there had been a change in the meaning of the target group in the “media” period. In the words of Kaya (2009; p. 234), the target group of media organisations became “consumers” and not readers or an audience of citizens. The marketing strategy naturally shifted to media consumers (customers) as the operation started to be driven by commercial logic. And as the end consumers of the media become customers, advertisers and sponsors became the sources of funds. This transformation enabled “the media organisations” to give news and information in a way that reinforced the power of those who were economically, politically and ideologically strong, instead of “the press” informing the public in an accurate, impartial, balanced, fast and adequate way. Under these circumstances, the contents of the press became tabloidised for entertainment. These changes led to the comments that the press was entirely exhausted under the concept of “the fourth estate” and with the influence of the original dynamics of the country (Kaya, 2009; p. 235). The changes in the practice of journalism starting from this period, such as the “killing off of the holiday newspaper”, will be evaluated in detail in the following sections.

In addition to the developments in the printed media, the main striking development in this period was in the areas of radio and television broadcasting. Turkey's atmosphere changed from 'single-channel, monochrome television and a few radio stations under public monopoly' to 'more than 250 television channels and over a thousand radio stations' (Kaya, 2009; p. 236). According to Tılıç's review, the state monopoly legislation in radio and television broadcasting that was protected by Article No.133 of the 1982 Constitution, which was in force until June 1993, was actually 'flouted' in March 1990 (Tılıç, 1998; p. 86). The first initiative in this area was Star TV, which was launched on 1 March 1990 by Magic Box Incorporated, founded in August 1989 by Cem Uzan, owner of Rumeli Holding, in Liechtenstein (Demir, 2013; p. 10). According to the Turkish Radio and Television Law No.2954 of the 1982 Constitution, only the state was given the right to establish radio and television stations in Turkey; thus the establishment of any private television besides TRT was prohibited – which raised serious controversy also in the Parliament. In other words, the first private television in Turkey started broadcasting in illegal ways. Çatalbaş summarises the chaos created by this situation as follows (2009: 369):

Once Star TV started broadcasting, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTYK) filed a criminal complaint at the Ankara Public Prosecution Office against PTT (Mail and Telegram Org.) for facilitating the Magic Box company's transponder lease from Eutelsat F5 satellite; however RTYK's application was inconclusive as the Prosecution Office ruled that Star was no different from foreign channels such as CNN or BBC according to Turkish law.

In other words, the tradition was kept alive with the way Turkey's first private TV channel Star started broadcasting. The support of the political establishment given to the setting up of the first newspaper in the Ottoman period manifested itself with the Magic Box Inc. partnership of Ahmet Özal this time, the son of the then prime minister Turgut Özal. Likewise, as Çatalbaş also reports, Özal's comment during an overseas trip that the broadcasting legislation in Turkey did not prohibit satellite channels, strengthened the belief

that the privatisation of electronic publishing had the support of the ANAP government.

Many other private TV channels such as *Show TV*, *Tele-On*, *HBB*, *Kanal 6*, *ATV* and *Kanal D* followed *Star*, which exploited the loophole in the law by broadcasting from abroad. *Teleon*, owned by Uzan started broadcast in 1992; *Show Tv* again owned by Uzan on 1 March 1992. *Show TV* was established with a capital of 36 million dollars; 20 percent each belonging to *Hürriyet* and *Sabah* groups, more than 50 percent to Erol Aksoy, and the remaining minor percentages belonging to businessman Ahmet Ertegün, Profilo and Grundig groups. Ahmet Özal, excluded from the *Star* partnership, established the *Kanal 6* group of companies, which included Artı Broadcast and Film-making, Artı Television and Marketing, Artı Film-making and Production Industry and Artı Television News Agency. *Kanal 6* started its broadcasting life on 4 October 1992. Ahmet Özal made his brother Efe Özal the coordinator of *Kanal Market*, which was established in December 1992 as a marketing channel. Owned by Has Holding group, *Has Bilgi Birikim TV (HBB)* started broadcasting on 9 October 1992 and *Flash TV*, owned by Göktuğ Group of Companies went on air for the first time in Bursa on 1 December 1992. *Cine 5* started broadcasting in March 1993, *ATV* in July; and *Kanal D* was launched in December by Aydın Doğan, the owner of *Milliyet* newspaper (Adapted from Dursun-Alemdar, by Demir 2013; p. 11). Nevertheless, the holding groups mentioned merged with companies that owned the media industry in the world: Doğan group became partners with Time Warner and launched *CNN Turk*, while Doğuş group became partners with NTV and launched *NTV-MS (Microsoft) NBC (General Electric)*, as well as with NBC and launched *CNBC-E* (Adapted from Tılıç, by Demir, 2013; p. 20).

The boom year for private radios was 1992 (Tılıç, 1998; p. 89). This numerical increase similar to the boom in the field of private television started with *Kent FM* and continued with Turkuaz Holding's *Genç Radyo*. The radio

rush that began with the launch of radio stations such as *Power FM*, *Energie FM*, *İstanbul FM*, *Number One FM*, *Radyo Tek*, *Metro FM* and *Best FM*, continued with numbers almost impossible to follow (Çatalbaş, 2009; p. 371).

Despite the uncertainty of their legal status, many of these companies were generously provided with public resources. For example, 25 billion TL was given to *Star TV* during its foundation and 116 billion TL was given to *Teleon*; 30 percent investment reduction and import tax exemption were provided for private channels. In spite of this, *Star* declared a loss of 29 billion TL in its first year of receiving 25 billion TL of support (Adapted from Yengin, by Çatalbaş, 2009; p. 371).

Throughout the 1990s, the press sector transferred considerable amounts of resources to the electronic publishing sector. All major media groups moved their activities to the electronic media sector either by establishing their own channels or acquiring shares from existing channels. Çatalbaş explains that the need to get a share from the growing advertising pie caused this situation (2009; p. 387). In this period, the concept of “consumption society”, which had been fuelled by Özal’s great transformation, corresponded with the field of advertising in the media. Compared to previous years, there had been a noticeable increase in advertising expenditures. The holding companies also benefited from this increase; they got the chance to broadcast ads for their newspapers free of charge on their own TV channels during prime time (Tılıç, 1998; p. 86).

The first four years of the actual process, which developed with the rapid increase of private radio and television channels following their establishment, went by without any legal basis. The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), established with Law No.3984 on Radio and Television Establishments and Broadcasts, adopted on 13 April 1994, was given authority such as broadcasting suspension and frequency planning (Adaklı, 2006; p.

236). As of the end of the 90s, Dođuş (Şahenk family), Çukurova (Karamehmet family) and Park (Turgay Ciner) ambitiously entered in the sector, which was in the hands of the Dođan, Bilgin, Aksoy, İhlas and Uzan families during the 1990s.

As of the 90s, every monopoly in the marketplace had invested in sectors other than the press, such as finance, tourism and/or marketing. Especially the banking sector came to the fore as an area where every monopoly existed. At the beginning of the 1980s there were 43 banks; only in 1998 did the number of banks increase from 72 to 81 with the permission of the Council of Ministers. In this process, almost all media owners also became owners of one or more banks (Adaklı, 2006: p.210). The Uzan family made investments in construction, cement and electricity in addition to establishing İmarbank and Adabank. Owned by Mehmet Emin Karamehmet, owner of Show TV, Çukurova Holding became active in the telecommunication, chemistry, mining, construction, automotive and tourism fields, as well as having shares in Yapı Kredi Bank, Pamukbank and Halk Insurance. Dođan Holding, in addition to Dışbank, made investments in import, tourism and automobiles. Dinç Bilgin expanded his investment field with Interbank, Etibank and Halk Insurance (Adapted from Adaklı, by Demir, 2013; p. 12). Enver Ören, owner of İhlas Holding, also included Yurtbank in his investments along with construction, automotive and marketing (Topuz, 2015; p. 332).

The transition from the press to the media within the holding-monopolised environment also had an important impact on the broadcasting policies of the media organisations. Since government tenders and incentive credits for new investments were the focus of attention for holding company owners, these had become “priorities” of the press organisations as of the 90s, replacing the responsibility to accurately inform the public and mould public opinion. For this reason, the press organisations often exhibited an attitude that moved in



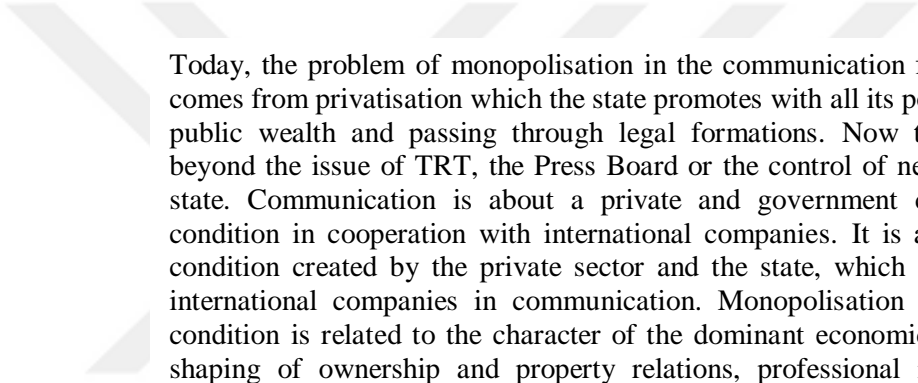
line with the interests of these holding companies and, if necessary, broke journalism ethics, but protected the economic and political interest groups.

#### **2.1.1.1. Monopolisation in the Press**

Conglomeration is a phenomenon that emerged in the form of the growth and development of companies that existed through industrialization since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the disappearance of small or medium-sized ones (Tokgöz, 2012; p. 33). The growth of conglomerations and monopolies in the press sector first manifested itself in the US and later in various European countries since the last quarter of the 19th century. Today, conglomerations and monopolies are found in all the printed, verbal and visual media in the media sector. Tokgöz states that in addition to the political reasons, the connexion between profitability and the flow of capital in world markets, as well as technological developments, should be taken into account when considering the formation of conglomerations and monopolies; and states that it is possible to talk about commercial monopolies and conglomerations rather than political monopolies in the media sector.

The rules established in the communication field to meet the needs of the market structure and the public needs were changed through the neo-liberal policies applied worldwide since the 1980s. According to Erdoğan, monopolisation in the media was an inevitable result of the nature of the capitalist market devoted to growth and control (2002; p. 418). The formation of public monopoly by the media, taking its source from the idea of public service, before the private radio and television exemplifies one type of monopolisation in the media, while the establishment of private radio and television channels and the change in ownership structure after the 1980s exemplify the other type of monopolisation in the media. In other words, private companies developed various strategies with the aim of achieving control over supply, distribution and demand in the capitalist market, and

achieved growth through materialisation of these strategies. In this process, small-scale media owners; who could not compete with others that monopolised the production area, made sales from one main centre and dominated the prices; were forced to withdraw from the market. Continuous profit seeking made the economic functioning of enterprises compulsory, while mergers and acquisitions between businesses also manifested themselves as a natural consequence of this development. Erdoğan explains this situation as follows:



Today, the problem of monopolisation in the communication field in Turkey comes from privatisation which the state promotes with all its power by selling public wealth and passing through legal formations. Now the problem is beyond the issue of TRT, the Press Board or the control of newsprint by the state. Communication is about a private and government created market condition in cooperation with international companies. It is about a market condition created by the private sector and the state, which cooperate with international companies in communication. Monopolisation in this market condition is related to the character of the dominant economic structure, the shaping of ownership and property relations, professional ideologies and business manners, configuration and application of legal rules. Through monopolisation of the media, effective power can be gained and applied in the production, distribution and direction of consumption of media products; competitors can be eliminated directly and indirectly with horizontal and vertical integration methods in the relevant market; entries into the market can be prevented through specific organisational forms and policies. Also, with the claim of information abundance, monopolisation in the media actually creates lack of information and feeds consumption ignorance that has a pedantic attitude (2002; p. 418).

Behind this new system, according to Erdoğan, is the capitalist order and the industrialisation that transformed the press into the media. Industrialisation led to monopolisation in the communication sector through the formation of oligopolies and monopolies in the collection, distribution and dissemination of information. In addition to Erdoğan's review, Tokgöz suggests that the major investments made in journalism technology rather than human education since the 1970s formed one of the key pillars of monopolisation in Turkey (2012; p. 45), because media owners who made these big investments wanted to use these investments for more than one

newspaper and get more output. The advanced formatting and printing technologies brought to Turkey increased the content and quality of newspapers, which led to an increase in circulation and, accordingly, the share of the advertising pie. At the same time, the development of communication and transportation infrastructures opened the way to earning money from journalism.

Looking at the situation in Turkey, we see media conglomerates where intra-sectorial and inter-sectorial integration are exhibited intensively. At this point, Tellan and Güngör argue that the oligopoly of conglomerates integrated with the international system, operating in the media sector, should be mentioned, not the “media monopolies” or “press groups” anymore (2009; p. 343). Looking at this structure of the media, media holdings exhibit similar structures with examples of horizontal, vertical and cross monopolisation. If a media group monopolises all the production steps of a newspaper, from printing to distribution, it means that vertical monopolisation is taking place here. For example, both the Doğan group and the Bilgin group perform all stages of production within the body of their own holding companies – from the printing of newspapers and magazines to the distribution phase until they reach the reader. On the other hand, horizontal monopolisation, which takes place in various areas of activity, also exists within all the groups in the media. For example, the owner of *Star* newspaper, the Uzan group, also owned Adabank and İmarbank in the financial sector; made investments in Kepez Elektrik and the field of football with İstanbulspor and Adanaspor (Sönmez, 2003; p. 237). In addition, the media sector in Turkey has many examples of cross monopolies as well. In cross monopolies, holding companies own both printed media such as magazines and newspapers and audiovisual media such as radio and television. At this point, Doğan group (Topuz, 2015; p. 337) constitutes one of the best examples of cross monopolisation in Turkey with its ownership of *Hürriyet*, *Posta*, *Milliyet*, *Vatan*, *Tercüman*, *Gözcü*, *Radikal*,

*Fanatik, Finansal Forum, Daily News* newspapers; *Tempo, Aktüel* and *Burda* magazines; *Kanal D, CNN Türk* and *Euro D* television channels; *Hür FM, Radyo D* radio stations; Doğan Kitap and DN-R bookstores. Having declared his real profession as journalism, Aydın Doğan explains the reasons for the horizontal, vertical and cross monopolies that he entered to keep his media alive:

There is one very important factor for the freedom of broadcast in the world; economic freedom. Broadcasting organisations can not have any freedom if they do not have economic freedom. They can not have freedom in the face of power groups and they can not have freedom in the face of politicians. Afraid of the banker, for he might not give credits; afraid of the employer, for he might not advertise; afraid of the politician, for he might put the heat on. For this reason, the economic freedom of publishing organs is in itself... When I talk about earning money, I do not mean going for it greedily; you only need to make sure you don't need anyone. (Adapted by Sönmez, 2003; p. 140)

The reasons for monopolisation of the press are based on economic and political developments. In addition to economic reasons such as having to upgrade the technology that is necessary for further production, which increased production costs, non-press capital entering the sector and unequal distribution of state incentives; the government's intensive use of the support-punishment mechanism, summarised by Tılıç as a 'carrot and stick' relationship, provided the grounds that Aydın Doğan claimed make monopolisation necessary.

At this point, of course, announcements and advertisements became important income sources for the media. The circulation of a newspaper or the rating of a TV channel forms the key criterion for private organisations with the freedom to advertise as many times as they want. However, at this stage, a fair approach was to be expected from the Press Advertising Agency. Having followed a fair distribution policy in the early 1980s, the Press Advertising Agency changed its policy after 1980 in favour of major media conglomerates (Adapted from Alemdar and Dursun, by Demir, 2013; p. 19). As of 1994, the largest share of private and official announcements and advertisements

distributed by this institution was given to the newspapers of major media groups such as *Sabah*, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Türkiye*. Television channels such as *ATV*, *Show TV*, *Kanal D* and newspapers such as *Sabah*, *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* received the most number of announcements distributed by public banks to the press, in the first half of 1995. It can be seen in this distribution that it was made proportional to the size of the press organisations, again. The size of the shares from announcements and advertisements increased the revenues of major media groups, causing significant power losses and making it harder for small-scale groups to survive in the sector.

Another topic that certainly should be mentioned when discussing the issue of monopolisation in the press, is the problem of distribution. The distribution of newspapers, which has an important place in the reader's right to be informed, had become increasingly fast and systematic in the process. The distribution problem also influenced the monopolisation that multiplied during the 1980s; created a major obstacle to the introduction of new publications (Uzun, 2009; p. 447). The newspapers started their own distribution companies in the 1960s. Before this date, each newspaper was responsible for its distribution too, ie reaching the reader. However, the difficulties that these distribution companies, established by major newspapers to deliver their products, raised for other publications and the monopolisation of these major companies brought many problems to the market. Formed by *Tercüman*, *Günaydın* and *Milliyet* in 1960, GAMEDA (Newspaper Magazine Distribution) (Adapted from Dursun, by Demir, 2013; p. 20), was followed by *Hürriyet* Holding Inc. Marketing and Distribution Coordination founded within the body of *Hürriyet* Holding in 1979 to distribute *Hürriyet* Holding publications (Uzun, 2009; p. 447). Following the elimination of Hür Dağıtım, in 1991, *Hürriyet* and *Sabah* groups formed the United Press Distribution Inc. (BBD) with a 50 percent share each. In 1994, the Feza group purchased the shares of *Hürriyet*, which separated from BBD because of purchasing *Milliyet*.

GAMEDA was closed in 1992, and in the same year *Milliyet* and *Türkiye* established in partnership the Publication Sales, Marketing and Distribution Inc. (YAYSAT). YAYSAT grew rapidly in the publication distribution market with the participation of the founding publications and the purchase of *Hürriyet* by Doğan group in July 1994. In 2001, while Doğan Distribution and Marketing Inc., which was established in partnership with YAYSAT Inc., Doğan Publications Holding, *Hürriyet* Journalism and Printing Inc., *Milliyet* Journalism Inc., Simge Publishing Inc., handled the marketing and financial matters; YAYSAT carried on the distribution function. In 1996, two distribution companies BBD and YAYSAT, which monopolised the market, merged and established the United Publications Distribution Inc. (BİRYAY). The delicate matter of equality between media monopolies was closely monitored in the establishment of BİRYAY; 49 percent of the shares was given to BBD, 49 percent to YAYSAT, 1 percent to Aydın Doğan and 1 percent to Dinç Bilgin. BİRYAY was used for distributing publications other than that of Doğan and Bilgin. The *Siyah Beyaz* newspaper, which decided to undertake its distribution on its own because of the harsh contract terms imposed by BİRYAY, was overwhelmed by these conditions and forced to close down; which exemplifies the results of the oligopoly in distribution (Uzun, 2009; p. 449). Other disputes in distribution in addition to these also led to the establishment of new distribution companies. The radical increase in the circulation of *Star* newspaper, which reduced its price and was distributed in partnership with the National Press Journalism Printing and Publishing Inc. and BBD, was not welcomed at all by its competitors. With the aim of overcoming the issue regarding the distribution of this newspaper, Media Marketing Organisation Services Import Trade Inc. (Media Inc.) was established in 1999. Reaching 16 thousand end stores in Turkey, Medya Inc. did not distribute newspapers other than the *Star*.

Another topic that should be addressed in detail after discussing the distribution problem and monopolisation, is the unequal distribution of state incentives. Tellan and Göngör (2009; p. 341) report the oligopolyism tendency in the Turkish press, which is supported by financial subsidies provided by the state:

For example, between 1983 and 1993, the support provided by the state to Basın Holding within the Bilgin Group was 194.9 million US dollars; this figure was further increased between 1994-1997 reaching a total of 200.4 million US dollars. Similarly, while the state support given to Doğan Holding between 1983-1993 was 406.7 million US dollars, and it increased to 424.8 million US dollars with an increase of 18.1 million dollars between 1994-97. The total amount of support provided by the state for these two media groups is 625.2 million US dollars according to the 1997 data. It is understood that the incentives continued in 1999, for example, the Undersecretariat of Treasury granted incentives of 18 trillion 865 billion TL to three companies affiliated to the Doğan Group, between 1 March 1999 and 31 March 1999. The incentives were not limited to press-related activities of the mentioned organisations; these were also given to them regarding non-press services.

Many examples of the incentives and practices that Tellan and Göngör referred to as “non-press services” were experienced in the privatisation period that started in 1984. Adaklı (2006; p. 218) points out that media holdings entered into a major mobilisation by way of their media organs, especially in order to win privatisation tenders in the energy field. For example, Petrol Office Corporation (POAŞ), which carried out oil exploration and production activities as a result of the regulations made in the this period, is one of the largest public companies that the Doğan Group incorporated. The privatisation of the 51 percent public share of POAŞ was declared on 17 November 1999 and İş Bankası Inc.-Doğan Group of Companies Holding Inc. Joint Venture Group won the tender made on 3 March 2000 with 1 billion 260 million dollars. Doğan Group General Coordinator İmre Barmanbek explained the contributions of this tender to Doğan Group in the October issue of *Capital* magazine in 2000, in the following words:

Once we reached this size, we had to manifest new goals and visions for the group. Thinking what could be our new vision and what our new targets might be, we identified energy and telecommunication as the target sectors... We started out with the privatisation of electricity distribution in 1997... Electricity distribution is both energy and retail business... I mentioned that we had targets in retail. For example, food falls under this topic. Not food industry, but food retail is possible. It could be a store chain... The oil business is a branch of energy business and a very serious retail business. Today, Petrol Ofisi has 4 thousand 600 dealers around Turkey. This is an unbelievable chain... A distribution network like this will bring great advantages to us in the future. If you open newspaper&magazine corners in only 10 percent of Petrol Ofisi dealers, it makes 460 dealers. There's a point where banking and retail intersect, too... Doğan Group is planning to organise the existing energy, telecommunications, finance and media areas to create a synergy. We aim to make the sectors more profitable and expand further by adding to the synergy among them. (Sönmez, 2003; p. 35-36)

The media groups' interest in privatisation tenders continued in the 2000s as well.

It will be an appropriate assessment to refer to the effects of monopolisation before moving to promotion battles because of monopolisation and nonunionisation/nonorganisation of media workers. One of the first questions that comes to mind when looking at the press, which became the stage of a new structure with the horizontal, vertical and cross monopolies of company holdings, is whether the media is worth investing in this much. Sönmez answers this question as follows:

If the profit rate is low in an invested sector, the entrepreneur turns to the sector he sees to be more profitable. This general rule of capitalism, based on the maximum profit motive, is not always valid for the media industry. Because, other than financial gain, there are other benefits that the media can offer to the investor. It is the chance to reach the masses, give them the desired message, influence them; therefore, to use and share power against your rivals or the political power as a defence or attack force (2003; p. 32).

Adaklı (2014; p. 18) draws attention to the traditional function of the press in the stage of social reflection of the monopolies in the media:



The media should consider the public interest, not the interests of the government or the companies; it should serve for an egalitarian, libertarian and democratic social order. However, public service is not fully regarded in the new media architecture, barely being put in second place. The relation of the media with non-media sectors, ie its direct or indirect relation to manufacturing, trade, energy, retail, defence, “sensitises” companies to any content that may damage the mutual interests in all of these areas.

Also Sönmez (2003; p. 48) underlines the public interest, like Adaklı, and considers the fact that the freedom of information of media consumers is defined by the dominant groups of the sector as one of the most significant adverse outcomes of monopolisation. Approaching the issue from a democratic point of view, Sönmez argues that it is not possible to make the right political choices in a country where voters can not receive accurate and free news, to ensure effective participation in the decision-making process and therefore to develop democracy.

Mentioning that the media groups have the power to select the news to be delivered via newspapers, magazines, radio or television prevented freedom of expression, Topuz (2015; p. 347) argues that although major newspapers employed writers with opposing views to create the appearance of pluralism, it is only for show. Sönmez (2003; p. 48) evaluates the idea of Topuz from the perspective of intellectuals, thinkers, artists and writers who want to share their ideas with the public by taking part in the media; and underlines that the products of these people can only find a place on newspaper pages or on the screens if they fit the media moulds, and that opinion owners can not find an environment to express themselves, while the public is thus deprived of different perspectives.

Considering the situation economically, many small and medium-sized media that do not have the financial conditions required by the environment are forced out of the sector. But the most striking result of monopolisation is that the media, claiming to be the “fourth estate” besides legislative-executive and

judicial powers, has built relationships with politics in a way that is incompatible with democracy. Just like the media expecting economic interests in return for the support given to politics, the elected politicians who promised to represent the whole country share the power they get from the media with the media with various financial supports and consolidate their power in an way that does not conform to democracy.

#### **2.1.1.2. Nonorganisation/Deunionisation**

Although the history of the press was started by the state because the region did not have a press culture, the Turkish press started to organise at an early date; the Ottoman Press Society was established in 1908 after the declaration of the Second Constitutionalist Period (Topuz, 2015; p. 356). However, this attempt was not successful and the Ottoman Press Society was then re-established in 1917. Although the name of the association was changed to the Turkish Press Society in 1920, it continued to operate as the Press Society from 1923 to 1930, and it was transformed into the İstanbul Press Society in 1930. In 1935, the name of the organisation was changed to the Press Association at the request of Atatürk. The Turkish Journalists Organisation, which was established in Ankara in the same period, only existed between 1930 and 1935. Established in 1938 under a special law, the Press Organisation divided Turkey into five media regions: İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Adana and Trabzon. Although the name of the Press Association in İstanbul was changed to the “İstanbul Press Organisation” during this period, the association was closed down in 1946 by the government, showed the reason given was the atmosphere in other press organisations in the world in the aftermath of World War II.

After the elimination of the Press Organisation, the board of directors came together on 10 June 1946 to establish the Journalists’ Association (Topuz, 2015; p. 358). Burhan Felek and Cevat Fehmi Başkut took the chair in

the following years of the Journalists' Association which was established under the chairmanship of Sedat Simavi; during the 12 March and 12 September periods, the Felek presidency maintained an attitude that did not support harmonious and democratic resistance to military coups. Nezih Demirkent, who was elected to the presidency after Felek, achieved significant successes for the journalists in the 10-year period. The association, which was granted the right to publish a "Holiday Newspaper", obtained a substantial income this way and used it for social assistance like small pensions for retired journalists, marriage, child and death aid. The Press Dispensary, the association established, looked after 70 thousand patients in two years; also the Press Museum and a nursing home were established. The association newspaper *Bizim Gazete* was published and it was a period when the journalists' rights were defended.

Similarly, the Ankara Journalists' Association and Press Organisation Association were established in 1946. In his book, "These Last Forty Years of the Sublime Porte", Recep Bilginer talks about how deprived journalists were of job security in the 1950s; says that the journalist's future depended on just one word from his boss. Giving the information that the Journalists' Association was not active, Bilginer emphasises that there were no unions in those years and even mentioning its name was dangerous (Otan; 1995; p. 25). Following the issuance of Law No.5953 on "Relations Between Employees and Employers in the Press Profession" in 1952, the first union was established in İstanbul and it was given the name: İstanbul Journalists' Union. The union addressed issues such as minimum wage acknowledgement, collective contracts, annual leave, damages, resolution of labour disputes, the right to strike, on-the-job training and the need for freedom and social security in journalists' work environment; and with the Turkish Journalists' Conference held in 1955 witnessing important debates on the issue of freedom of the press, this caused raised eyebrows in the Democrat Party of the government. After the

closure of the union by the government, in 1963 the İstanbul Journalists' Union was changed to the Journalists' Union of Turkey (TGS) (Topuz, 2015; p. 360-361).

The amendment no. 212 to Law No. 5953 on "Relations Between Employees and Employers in the Press Profession" was approved on 4 January 1961 and entered into force on 10 January. According to the law, severance pay would be based on the starting date for the profession, not the starting date for any media organ. This situation resulted in an unacceptable cost to newspaper owners, while protecting the journalists' acquired rights and expanding the field of professional organisation. The owners of *Akşam*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Dünya*, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Tercüman*, *Vatan*, *Yeni İstanbul* and *Yeni Sabah* newspapers protested this change in the legislation for three days (11-12-13 January) by not printing newspapers. The journalists resisted this lockout action of the newspaper owners by publishing a newspaper called *Basın* (Adaklı, 2006; p. 296).

Until the '70s, as in other workers' sectors, press and publishing (printing) employees were organised in three unions, namely TGS affiliated to Türk-İş, Basın-İş and DİSK member Basın-İş. In these years, when collective contracting was in effect and the union rights were exercised, the organisation reached a size big enough to cover big news agencies such as *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Tercüman*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Yeni Asır*, *Anadolu Agency* and 10 local newspapers and large public printing houses in İstanbul and Ankara (Soner, 2003; p. 340). The rights journalists acquired in this period extended further than the gains of Law No.212. According to Özsever, the most important rights earned during this period (2004; p. 98) were as follows: two weekly leave days; working time reduced from 8 hours per day/48 hours per week to 7 hours per day/35 hours per week; overtime pay increased by 75 percent and not 50 percent; night shift pay increased by 150 percent; in the case where the service contract is proved by the court decision of unfair termination by the employer,

basic salary as compensation for each year in the profession in addition to the worker's legal rights; payment of compensation even in the case of resignation; severance pay calculated for 50 days of one year and not 30 days; annual paid leave increased up to 1,5 months.

Another journalist organisation, the Progressive Journalists' Association, was established in 1978 in Ankara. The number of association members who opened branches in İstanbul, İzmir, Bursa, Antalya and Eskişehir reached 2 thousand in a short time. The same year, however, was also the first time when journalists were collectively dismissed. The first example of liquidation of a union in the media sector was experienced in the *Yeni Asır* newspaper in 1978 (Özsever, 2004; p. 96). A strike decision was taken by the Turkish Journalists' Union (TGS) on the grounds that only half of the bonus was paid to *Yeni Asır* employees, and the employer who collected signatures for the strike vote sustained a legal defeat and had to sign the collective contract. After that, a full bonus was distributed to the journalists, but a month later *Yeni Asır* newspaper employees were forced to resign from the union, since they were unable to resist the pressure for collective resignation. Thus, the first example of deunionisation policies implemented by the employer occurred in *Yeni Asır* newspaper before 1980.

As Aksoy pointed out, the most dramatic development for journalists in the process of monopolisation, where the press era came to an end, was the eradication of unions. The unions were reorganized by the law enacted by the 12 September military administration on 7 May 1983 (2009a; p. 626). With the amendment made in 1983, printing house workers were separated from the journalism branch of activity; the union and social rights of media sector workers were limited by Law No.2821 on Trade Unions introduced in 1984 and Law No.2822 on Collective Labour Agreement Strikes and Lockouts (Adaklı, 2006; p. 297). These regulations caused the number of members of the TGS to decrease from 6 thousand to 3 thousand 500, while paving the way to

many forms of arbitrary treatment, such as subcontracting in the press sector, low-wage policies, change of workplace, and unfair dismissal.

The 12 September administration's most important amendment that concerned workers was the limit on severance pay. The efforts of the TGS to protect journalists from the limit did work for those working under Law No.212; press employees working under Law No.1475 were included within the severance limit and lost the right to get severance pay in case of separation, as required by the rule of law (Soner, 2003; p. 344). This situation, which is true today, can be exemplified by newspaper owners, who managed to avoid the contract liabilities, relocating their employees among other companies in the group so as not to have to pay severance pay. Newspaper owners who employ the minimum number of journalists under Law No.212 in order to be able to receive official advertisements from the Press Advertisement Authority, cover the fact that they show other workers as employees of subcontracting companies or reduce compensation costs by several employment-dismissals. Today, unionised working conditions are offered in very few press organisations such as Anadolu Agency and Cumhuriyet newspaper, but rights such as collective bargaining can not be exercised because the TGS in *Cumhuriyet* newspaper has been on strike for more than 10 years. Examples of such treatment will be explained in detail in the last part of the study.

Soner draws attention to the development of employers' organisations in terms of organisation, ideological determination and preparation, in the period following 12 September (2003; p. 347). During this period, the identity of collective contracts that improved workers' rights was destroyed; and bonuses, acquired social rights, division of labour were reversed via the labour act and other laws. While contracts exist for the improvement of rights on legislation, the alliance of employer-government has turned them into texts that reduce rights to legal boundaries. Along with all these developments, employees of the new press sector order are defined under two interrelated

sectors called press-publication (printing) and journalism (Soner, 2003; p. 350). In addition, the fact that some journalists did not want to be under the same trade union framework as the printing workers led the printing staff to join Basın-İş union, which caused the TGS to lose a large number of members.

In 1989, the trade union movement experienced a significant growth; the advances made by the workers' movement coming to a height caused uneasiness among fund holders. In this period, *Güneş* and then *Tercüman* newspapers closed down due to financial reasons, which made Doğan and Sabah groups the rulers of the market. The 90s were not only the years when the trade union movements declined; the number of pages about working life, which included the actions taken in the newspapers, was reduced by half, and in fact, these pages were later transferred on the economy pages (Adapted from Hasan Maksud, by Erol, 2010; p. 37).

What happened in the collective bargaining process with *Milliyet* newspaper in 1990 represented a significant step in the deunionisation of Turkish press workers. According to the statement (<http://bianet.org/bianet/emek/12428-yanardag-gazeteciler-sendikaya-sahip-cikmadi>) of Merdan Yanardağ, the then TGS İstanbul Branch Secretary, the TGS and the Turkish Newspaper Owners Union did not encounter any problems at the meetings with regard to collective bargaining and wage increases; however, the negotiations remained inconclusive as they failed to agree on the establishment of a “Business Security Council” composed of two employer representatives, two union representatives and an impartial legal expert. In response to the decision of the TGS to strike in *Milliyet*, *Tercüman* and *Cumhuriyet* newspapers, Aydın Doğan, who was also the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Turkish Newspaper Owners Union at that time, announced a lockout in *Milliyet* newspaper and in 1991 he delegated the technical section of the newspaper to his own subcontractors. With this move, the delegation of technical staff to subcontractors prevented the workers from

becoming union members again. The dismissal of 128 employees from *Milliyet* newspaper in 1991 was the turning point of the deunionisation process in the press (Adaklı, 2006; p. 298). The most important development leading to Yanardağ's reproval of "Journalists not protecting the union" was the resignation of the administrators followed by journalists not being able to withstand the pressure and willingly resigning from the union. In this process, when the journalists' 48 thousand TL notary expenses were even paid by the newspaper owners, a very small group of journalists refused to resign and they were dismissed for payment of their compensation. Once the union had lost the 51 percent majority share in *Milliyet* newspaper and the collective bargaining authority after 1992, a large number of workers resigned from *Hürriyet*, too, which the Doğan Group purchased in 1994. Hasan Ercan, who was the General Financial Secretary of the TGS back then and worked for *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, reports that the liquidation of the union in *Hürriyet* newspaper was organised by Ertuğrul Özkök, who was the Executive Editor of the newspaper for many years. (<http://bianet.org/bianet/emek/12444-ercan-sendikasizlastirma-mudurlerden-basladi>):

Employees were already resigning from *Hürriyet* even before Mr. Aydın Doğan purchased it. This process was organised by Ertuğrul Özkök. Fellow colleagues worked for *Hürriyet* News Agency, Hürgün and *Hürriyet* at that time. *Hürriyet* had just moved to the new building in İkitelli and we commuted there for days with our friends from the union... Back then, Ziya Sonay was the head of TGS İstanbul Branch. Mr. Ziya Sonay told Ertuğrul Özkök to stop the resignations. However, Özkök said: "I will give these people more money than you give to them." We opposed this statement and expressed the view that the gains would be temporary once the assurance is over. Özkök did what he said. First he increased the wages, then he made sure they resigned from the union. However, this improvement did not continue. Our friends worked for the same salary for years.



### **2.1.1.2.1. Closure of the Holiday newspaper**

At this point, it appears necessary to elaborate on the issue of the closure of the Holiday newspaper, which opened the way for the disfranchisement of journalists by newspaper bosses.

The Journalism Profession Act of 1952 prohibited the publication of newspapers on the second, third and fourth days of the Sacrifice Feast, and on the second and third days of the Ramadan Feast; and this right was given to each city's journalist communities with the largest number of members with a press card. The purpose of the legislation was to provide journalists with the opportunity to rest during the holidays and to provide income to the journalists' associations for social assistance to their members. Journalists' associations used this opportunity to provide jobs for unemployed journalists; provide social benefits and support to their members through the advertisement income from the Holiday newspaper. In 1992, Dinç Bilgin, owner of *Sabah* newspaper, announced that he would publish newspapers on public holidays although this was against the law. The Journalists' Association lodged an appeal with the Constitutional Court; the Newspaper Owners' Union, established by 18 newspaper owners in 1954, supported the association; 9 newspaper owners opposed the unfair competition of Bilgin with a protocol. However, the Holiday newspaper disappeared with the appeals remaining inconclusive and also with the statement of the State Minister in charge of the Press, Gökberk Ergenekon, that he was not comfortable with the fact that daily newspapers were not published during Holiday days. Although the Press Cards Commission cancelled the press cards of Dinç Bilgin and Güngör Mengi, as of 1993 daily newspapers started to be published again during religious holidays (Topuz, 2015; p. 286-287).

However, it is noteworthy that both newspaper owners and other administrators, who played active roles in the liquidation, emphasised that

journalism was an “individual” occupation. This gained momentum due to the irregular financial structures of the newspapers and the union’s lack of a contemporary structure. Ümit Otan, who worked in *Cumhuriyet* newspaper for many years, reports the remark of Ergun Babahan, the then Editor-in-Chief of *Sabah* newspaper:

Journalism is a profession where individual skills outweigh others. These skills come to the fore both in the editorial office and in the field of reporters. This sector is not really suitable for collective bargaining. Now looking at the newspaper, ‘Wage imbalance has distorted the professional tradition’ says the chairman of the association. What does this mean? I will work hard, 12 hours a day. The other one will come and get the same wage to just look at a news item... As for deunionisation, we left the *Söz* newspaper. We had a union; we had a community. We were unemployed for months. Back then, both the union and the community were powerful, too. Nobody came out and did anything. Anyone who failed in journalism became organisers and unionists. There is no successful, somewhat brilliant, respected man in the community or at the head of the union. These areas have become places where disaffected journalists go. I am not a member of the community, why would I be? It is like a council of elders there. General unorganised state is not just about journalism. Problems arise because the general legal structure of the country does not fall into place. It is not about being organised or unorganised. So, people in the press sector either do not need any organisation at this time, or do not trust existing organisations. Speaking for myself, I am not in favour of the union undertaking collective bargaining on my behalf. Whether you are a member of the union, and however organised you are, economic rules always apply (1995; p. 105).

Ümit Alan, a columnist who evaluates the job satisfaction of journalists in his post-graduate studies at Anadolu University, refers in his article (<http://journos.com.tr/sendika-gider-gazetecilik-biter>) titled “The union goes down, journalism ends” to Ertuğrul Özkök’s statement: “It is not possible to walk together with the union in the present conditions of Turkey. We will think of something for those who do not resign from the union.” Ertuğrul Özkök was leading the second wave of deunionisation operation, which started with Aydın Doğan purchasing *Hürriyet* in 1994. Alan argues that Özkök, who served as the editor-in-chief of *Hürriyet* newspaper, called “the flagship of the Turkish press” for 20 consecutive years, was awarded this position as a prize for fighting in harmony with his boss during the deunionisation efforts. Those who

did not follow the employees who resigned from the union were also eliminated in the process. 90 percent of the union employees in the three separate companies of *Hürriyet* quit their jobs, and the union lost about 800 members.

At this point, Doğan Tılıç, who also served as the chairman of the Progressive Journalists' Association in the past years, draws attention to one important point. According to Tılıç, the fact that there are more than 60 press organisations in Turkey actually indicates a lack of organisation. The fragmented structure, the association on paper, the society, the trade union memberships are all signs of an actual unorganised state (1998; p. 2010). Unions such as Parliamentary Correspondents' Association, Prime Ministry and Presidency Correspondents' Association, Magazine Journalists' Association, Economy Correspondents' Association, Crime and Jurisdiction Correspondents' Association, Magazine Correspondents' Association and the TGS, Medya-İş are among the current professional press organisations in Turkey, constituting the parts of this unorganised state. Ercan Sadık İpekçi (Karahisar, 2006; p. 83), who was the chairman of the TGS in the 2000s, describes this as a reflection of the general a lack of tradition of struggle in the public, represented here as journalists not being able to become organised:

Journalists have no tradition of struggle, which the public generally lacks anyway. They do not attempt to express their demands all together, acting collectively and improving their rights. Behind all of this is the economic reasons that discourage people. Apart from that there are ideological reasons. Sometimes journalists identify themselves with the workplace way too much. They even show the 'I will work for free if necessary' approach. This may not be very common for the major media. Worries related to earning a livelihood might be significant but there are also small media organs. Media organs that mostly gather opinion-oriented groups. They do it for the ideal, so a professional organisation does not even come into their minds.

Within the context of the problem of the lack of organisation, which will be discussed in the analysis section of the study in detail and exemplified

in interviews with journalists, ideas such as the individual and competitive nature of the profession and the income injustice among journalists make it more difficult for them to adopt a common approach, as well as the existing ownership structure and the lack of organisation leading journalists to become ineffective against dismissals. However, Kaya expresses a criticism that should not be ignored at this stage. According to Kaya, a significant number of non-press associations are concerned with the nonprofessional interests of their members, rather than dealing with problems of their profession (2009; p. 241). The basis for this this effort takes place is “passing the hat” around political and economic power holders. This situation creates a suitable environment for both capital and politics to influence the media.

#### **2.1.1.2.2. Anti-union consensus: ‘Gentlemen’s agreement’**

The removal of the trade union rights of press employees led to many arbitrary practices, such as low wages and unfair dismissal. The ‘gentleman’s agreement’, made by rival media groups, about not stealing staff from each other, also eliminated the possibility of a dismissed journalist finding a job in another institution. This anti- union consensus made between the Doğan and Bilgin groups (Sönmez, 2003; p. 48) manifested itself as a common wage policy for employees. The sector exhibited a dual structure in which some “star” journalists and television people were paid high salaries, while the group called “mediocre” earned a low salary. Another deunionisation method used by employers was subcontracting. While some steps of the production process were shown to be fulfilled by different companies so that employees can not benefit from the same rights in the same company, the personnel registrations were also distributed to these companies. The ‘gentleman’s agreement’, which prevents the increase of salaries through transfers between groups, resulted in a narrowing of the supply of labour. This agreement came to mean that the employer had more say on salaries and could put the brake on salary increases. Otan (1995; p. 27), who reports that the salaries of chief editors of the time

reached figures like 500-600 million and that columnists received millions of dollars or marks, confirms that some “media stars” of *Sabah* group owner Dinç Bilgin received astronomical figures of money. In addition to these astronomical figures, another practice that guaranteed the domination of the employer was to give the journalist his resignation by having him sign an “undated” paper with his contract (Tılıç, 1998; p. 218). This treatment was applied regardless of the salary rate and it made clear in writing that the job security of an unorganised journalist depended on one word from the boss. On the other hand, the ‘gentleman’s agreement’ was not limited to the two group’s newspapers; it was also applied to their TV channels such as Kanal D and ATV. Even the producer companies that made TV programmes for the sector got their share of this agreement. While these two television channels agreed on not transferring staff from each other, they also included in this agreement not transferring programmes. This exposed small and medium-sized producers making programmes for television to a monopolised market. Small-sized producers, who cancelled their agreement with either channel, would have no chance to work with the other channel.

#### **2.1.1.2.3. The Pool System**

Another challenging factor that had an impact on the contraction of the labour supply was the media pools that holding companies created for newspapers, television and radios. The “pool system” (Alemdar and Uzun, 2013; p. 260) describes the employment of journalists working under the same boss for all newspapers, magazines, supplements, agencies, radio, television and web sites of that publication group. These media pools had an immense affect on the exploitation of journalists, through problems such as non-covered employment, working under Law No.1475 instead of 212, continuing journalism despite not being considered as intellectual workers because they were working at another company on paper, thus not being able to organise in a union. Metin Aksoy, on the application areas of the pool system, which

continued to rise in the 2000s, reports an article from the service contract of a reporter working for *Sabah* newspaper under Law No.212 (2009a; p. 628):

The employer (Sabah Publications Inc.) has the right to print, publish periodically and transfer to third parties for printing and publishing, the articles, photographs, drawings, cartoons or news articles produced and published by the journalist in country or abroad, personally or indirectly. In this case, the journalist will not receive any payment.

This legislation condemned journalists to work in a system of slavery. While the labour of journalists, who were shown to be working within all companies of the holding instead of just one, was being exploited, the employers were able to broadcast and publish in all fields with a single set of staff they had established.

What is noteworthy is that the people who adopted journalism as a profession to address social problems, also adopted a general sense of silence in the face of injustices and inequity. Journalists who became unemployed during the crises in 1994 and 2001 did not even apply to the law offices established by the Progressive Journalists' Association and did not choose to benefit from this free attorney service. According to the year 2001 data of Progressive Journalists' Association, 5 thousand journalists, and according to the Journalists' Union of Turkey, 3 thousand 900 journalists became unemployed during the crisis; and this attitude of the journalists during this period reveals the effects of this ongoing exploitation system on journalists.

Alemdar and Uzun point out in their "Journalism for All" work, that the dismissal of journalists may not be about their performances only, but that the pressure of power circles may also cause employment termination (2013; p. 262). However, Alemdar and Uzun also emphasise the other reason for dismissal, that is unionisation attempts. Unionisation attempts have been one of the most important reasons for dismissal of journalists since the 90s, despite the fact that both the Constitution and the relevant legislation clearly state that

becoming a union member can not be a reason for employment termination. Former TGS chairman İpekçi confirms this fact and states that dismissal, maintaining a family and the necessity to keep one's head above water are the most important reasons for journalists to stay away from unionising (Karahisar, 2006; p. 82).

It is stated in the introduction of the "Journalist's Handbook" (2010; p. 3) prepared in 2010 by the TGS for beginners in the profession, that press freedom is one of the tools of using freedom of expression that is among the basic human rights. It is stated in the same work that freedom of the press includes both people's right to learn the facts, receive information and journalists' right to freely access information and news sources. It is also noted that for the protection of freedom of expression and the press, the media should be independent of financial and administrative aspects of the state power, ie they must be legally protected against all kinds of pressures of the legislative and executive bodies and the government (civilian, military, police bureaucracy). Secondly, it is stressed that members of the press need to be protected against the ownership structure of the media organs they work with in order to secure their editorial independence, and that this is possible only if the employees have job security and are supported economically and socially by trade union rights.

Nonunion professional life, which comes with flexible employment that will be described in the following sections, has many negative effects on journalists, such as the inability to take annual leave and weekly holiday rights and the uncertainty of daily working hours. The fact that newspaper ownership fell into the hands of capital owners with no journalism background transformed journalism practice; it also enabled an understanding that does not demand a fair share from media bosses, and even chooses to not demand justice because of fear of unemployment. Deunionisation/nonorganisation caused journalism that is actually an intermediary for other segments of society

to demand their rights, to become a profession that can not demand its own rights. This has not only made the interests of media bosses unilaterally deterministic, but also naturally validated today's journalism concept that adopts the media owner's interest and not the professional codes.

### **2.1.1.3. Promotion Battles**

Another headline that caused further pressure on media workers in this system of exploitation was the promotion battles. The sector, which was monopolised by the holding companies established after non-media capital entered the sector, has been the scene of relentless battles among media groups aiming to maximise their profits. In this period, when it was aimed to protect the interests of employers and increase group incomes instead of protecting the rights of people to express themselves, to learn facts and to receive information, governments also paved the way via regulations. The period of promotion madness, which cause journalists to face the problem of unemployment with the monopoly not investing in people or even when the promotions were stopped, was a period in which the media's ethical problems also increased the most.

Generally speaking, activities for introducing a product are called "promotion". In the press, this concept means newspapers giving presents or organising lotteries. Atilgan points out that promotions, which are an expensive item for newspapers, increase the income of a newspaper when done effectively. Atilgan states that despite pushing up the expenses, promotions increase the circulation, thus reduce average cost of printing; and that the newspaper achieves a significant decrease in cost when it sells 1 million copies with the same staff instead of the usual 300 thousand (1995; p. 143). Variable costs such as paper and ink reduce the profit share, but in addition to the increase in the total profit volume, promotion costs are recorded as expenses and deducted from the tax base, which forms an indirect element. In addition,



thanks to promotions, advertising revenues, which are important income items for newspapers, increase too as sales revenues increase.

Another concept that should be explained, before elaborating on the negative effects of promotion battles in the Turkish press on the working conditions of journalists, is circulation figures. Circulation refers to all copies of a newspaper, book or magazine printed at one time. Excluding faulty copies and returns, the numbers of a printed publication that are purchased by readers is called “net sales” (1996 p 188). However, the main point that Cangöz, who wrote this definition, draws attention to is the following: Nowhere in the world, is having a high circulation regarded as the criterion for providing reader confidence and earning the title of ‘good newspaper’. It is a known fact that the circulation figures of serious newspapers, which are considered to be more effective in guiding public opinion, are lower than the circulation of tabloid newspapers. In this context, circulation is not a measure of effectiveness for the newspaper. This important reminder should be taken into consideration when evaluating this part of the study.

The first example of promotional sale, which started to be implemented in Western countries with the aim of keeping the number of readers high and creating reader loyalty, was experienced with *Hadika* (Garden) newspaper on 24 April 1870; subscription to this newspaper used to come with nursery trees and flower seeds (Gül, 2013). The type of promotion, which changed over time, continued with the announcement of *Şehbal* magazine that readers who collected the coupons given by the magazine would enter the draw and one winner would get 2 thousand kurus (piaster). Following this practice, which increased the price and circulation of *Şehbal* magazine, *Vakit* newspaper gave pencils and books for coupons in 1925. The Alphabet Reform, which took place in 1928, also had an influence on the newspapers’ approach to promotion. The concern that some newspapers would lose circulation, due to the adoption of Latin letters, led to new approaches (Topuz, 2015; p. 349).

*Cumhuriyet* newspaper gave away over 1 thousand coupons worth 7 thousand liras and offered discount shopping opportunity in return for these coupons. *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, which organised another campaign in 1929, enabled readers to obtain a 10 percent discount at certain stores for readers who clipped the coupons. That same year, *Vakit* newspaper organised one of the first competitions. The newspaper published an excerpt from Reşat Nuri Güntekin's "The Fall of Leaves" book and asked readers to find the deliberate typos in the text; the winner was given "The Wren" novel by the same author.

Later, the same newspaper continued this treatment with free subscriptions, calendars and small gifts. On 3 March 1931, *Son Posta* newspaper launched a bingo competition in return for coupons. *Akşam* was another newspaper that followed the coupon trend in this period.

The government's first action against promotions was taken in the framework of the Law on Printing on 25 July 1931, and the distribution of these prizes was strictly forbidden (Topuz, 2015; p. 350). However, this law, stating that violation would come with a fine, was not included in the Press Law issued in 1950, laying the groundwork for new lottery practices.

At the beginning of the 1960s, *Milliyet* newspaper launched a small gift campaign; in 1962 *Akşam* newspaper launched a "prizes to all readers" campaign. Starting quite major campaigns in 1985, *Milliyet* gave its readers home appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines and ovens as well as cars, houses and even land (Topuz, 2015; p. 350). Haldun Simavi's *Son* newspaper started to be published in 1966; it raised its circulation to 350 thousand by 1967, through giving cars and houses for coupons. The promotional sales of newspapers during this period were also supported by advertisements on television.

As explained in the previous chapters, the change in the form of capital due the liberal policies in the 1980s and the free market concept combined with

the economic troubles journalist families experienced in the 1980s in affording the printing and publishing costs, resulted in major monopolisation activities. Monopoly has become a marketing tool for multinationals to get involved in, the press to create and inform the public, and the newspapers to protect the interests of their bosses and to make more profit for the conglomerates they are affiliated with. With monopolisation, diversity suffered; the functions of the media in moulding public opinion and informing the public were pushed into the background; newspapers became marketing tools that protected the interests of their bosses and operated so that their holding companies could make more profit.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the TRT board of directors decided to ban the advertisement of newspaper campaigns on television, but this ban was defied especially by privately owned TV companies. 1988 was the year of ‘cardboard battles’ initiated by *Milliyet* newspaper. In the period that escalated to a level of madness by the middle of the 90s, newspapers gave away prizes such as houses, cars, land, tableware, stoves, motorcycles, Lego toys, bags, make-up kits, coal, music sets, white goods, bed covers, calculators, pillows, lottery tickets, videos, magic necklaces, acupuncture devices, the Qurans, foreign language course lessons, Pinar milk, Chinese made folding fans, super caravans, slimming equipment, toys, encyclopaedias, books, calendars, villas, fully furnished homes with a maid, airplane, bicycle, money, carpets, televisions, cameras, ping pong tables, ventilators, 7-storey apartments, pension and insurance. To poke fun at all of this, *Olay* newspaper in Gaziantep announced burial plot as the prize for its readers, while *Yeni Ufuk* newspaper in Aydın’s Çine district promised to give away condoms (Topuz; 2015; p. 353).

The “encyclopaedia wars” that broke out between *Sabah*, *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* newspapers in 1992 raised the cost of these three major newspapers to astronomical levels. Having a circulation of 592 thousand before the encyclopaedia distribution, *Sabah* newspaper increased this figure to 1 million

486 thousand and the circulation of *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* decreased on the same days. In response, *Hürriyet* initiated the Encyclopaedia Britannica campaign, which was followed by the Grand Larousse campaign by *Milliyet*. Along with these encyclopaedia campaigns, came big fights and a constant battle of words among the columnists and in the headlines. This competition, that exceeded commercial dimensions, caused newspapers to lose considerable prestige.

The Journalists' Union of Turkey reacted to these promotion battles that reached an excessive level and warned that the press was losing its respectability. The newspapers signed a protocol on 2 March 1993, and decided not to make any new promotions until 1 September 1993, but this decision was ignored. The ongoing promotional sales increased total newspaper circulation to 5 million at the beginning of 1994, but once the promotions stopped, the circulation decreased to 4.5 million and then to 2.5 million. Some of the newspapers that spent 4 trillion liras on promotions in 1993 according to Topuz (2015 p 353) and 6 trillion liras according to Otan (1995; p. 52), became unable to pay salaries, bonuses and compensation to their employees. In 1994, these figures increased even more. In fact, the promotion madness reached such a level that the sector experienced takeovers. In 1994, Aydın Doğan lent a hand to the Simavis, who were in economic difficulties due to the expenses made to the promotion battles; and Doğan group became partners with Hürriyet Holding Inc. with 50 percent share (Otan, 1995; p. 49).

Adaklı reports the legislative arrangements made concerning promotions in this period, as follows (2006; p. 242-243): A notice was issued to ban newspapers from collecting money from the public in return for the goods they would deliver to the readers within the scope of the campaigns. 1 August 1996: The 'Promotion Act' prepared by the REFAH-YOL government was adopted. The law prescribed heavy penalties and sanctions. The opposition

claimed that the act was made to economically ruin the press, which brought corruption cases to light. The Motherland Party (ANAP), Democratic Left Party (DSP) and Republican People's Party (CHP) requested an extension of time for the practices, but it was rejected by Refahyol votes. The Turkish Grand National Assembly banned promotion campaigns with the Law on the Protection of Consumers on 15 January 1997. Article 11 of the law restricted promotional products to be provided by periodical publications to cultural products that were not contrary to the purposes of periodical publishing such as books, magazines, encyclopaedias, banners, flags, posters, oral and visual magnetic tapes or optical discs; it was legally recorded that media organs could not promise and distribute goods or services other than those previously stated. The law also included provisions regarding the price and duration of the product to be promoted: "The market value of the goods and services can not exceed 50 percent of the total price the consumer pays to purchase the periodical for the duration of the related campaign. Campaign duration can not exceed 60 days."

At this point, it would be appropriate to elaborate further on the article of legislative amendments that took effect in 1997. While guaranteeing the money flow for the newspaper owner even after one year, the length of the promotion period was actually a trap for the consumer. The Former chairman of the TGS and editor-in-chief of the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, Orhan Erinç, described how the extra cost brought by the lottery to newspapers was handled by the press and the readers (Otan, 1995; p. 119-120):

In Turkey, where the minimum wage is 2.5 million and the average salary is 8 million liras, the monthly sum of a newspaper makes 20 percent of the income of the minimum wage and 8-9 percent of the average wage. There is also the contribution of those, who do not read the newspaper, in lottery expenses. And the taxes, which are not paid to the state but recorded as expense, are paid by the people in some way. It is true that the subheadings are all designated for lottery products instead of the news and lottery corrupts the profession. Not the journalists, but the marketers occupied the front row. It is imperative for the Turkish press and readers to give up the lottery.

The promotions that caused unreasonable increase in newspaper prices were restricted but led media executives to develop new promotion tactics. This time, the marketing companies distributed ‘newspapers’ as promotions (Adaklı, 2006; p. 243). In this period, the Ministry of Industry filed a lawsuit against *Milliyet* and *Hürriyet* newspapers on the grounds that they continued the practice that was prohibited by the Law on the Protection of Consumers. At the beginning of 1997, this time the newspaper prices were reduced while promotions continued. Major newspapers like *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah* were priced at 190 thousand liras with coupons and 40 thousand liras without coupons. Again, these groups produced good quality and left-oriented newspapers within their own structures and sold them for cheaper prices. Tılıç states that a *Cumhuriyet* administrator claimed that this policy aimed at stealing their 45 thousand readers (1998; p. 352).

Throughout these years, Turkey witnessed newspapers losing credibility because of promotion campaigns, as well as their ethical values, and being ranked according to the bonuses they gave, rather than their content and good news reports. This period was considered both positive and negative by newspaper bosses, administrators and employees, as people bought newspapers not for reading news but for coupons, not for the perspective but for the promotion, and even stopped buying once the promotion ended.

Thanks to the campaigns, on 28 July 1995 the press broke a record in its 164 years of history and sold 6 million 262 thousand 173 newspapers. While 54 out of every thousand Turkish people read newspapers before, this number jumped to 626 in a short time. This number was 590 in Norway around the same date, 570 in Japan, 540 in Finland, 505 in Sweden, 400 in Switzerland, 375 in the UK and 340 in Germany and Denmark (Adapted by Tılıç, from Erinç, 1998; p. 353). Can Aksın, the General Coordinator of *Akşam* newspaper, whose circulation increased from 100 thousand to 1 million with the campaign “A television for every reader”, argued that the number of readers in Turkey

increased to over 5 million from 2.4-2.6 million with promotions, and even if the people who just clipped the coupons and threw away the newspaper were excluded, that a readership of 500 thousand people was created. Ertuğrul Özkök (1998), the editor-in-chief of *Hürriyet* Newspaper, even wrote in his column several times, that in addition to the profit these promotions brought to newspapers, the social service of the practice should be appreciated as well. Özkök, who defended the music set and CD campaign made by *Hürriyet* newspaper in his column entitled “To those who despise newspaper promotions”, wrote:

So how did the CD sales rocket? What happened in the last six months that led to such a leap in Turkey in the technical infrastructure of culture? *Hürriyet* Newspaper, made a great promotion campaign throughout 1997. *Hürriyet* gave Roadstar music sets to their readers. And 410 thousand people in Turkey joined this campaign and were gifted CD-playing music sets. If you include other newspapers, this figure could go up to 550 thousand.

However, as Tılıç also reports, research conducted by the Anadolu University’s Faculty of Communication reveals that the promotion campaigns resulted in readers losing confidence in the newspaper, and *Cumhuriyet* newspaper was considered as the most reliable newspaper because it stayed away from these campaigns (1998; p. 354).

Although journalists, who could face unemployment if promotions came to an end, favoured the continuation of promotion campaigns, newspaper patrons felt otherwise, which is noteworthy. For example, Dinç Bilgin, owner of *Sabah* newspaper, stated that he would be pleased with the end of promotion campaigns, in these words (Otan, 1995; p. 109):

Promotions are tools that we use to increase newspaper sales. Many newspapers in Turkey use this tool. It is true, however, that it got out of hand. I mean, I think it would be a good idea to give it a long rest. But of course, one would appreciate the difficulties in all the newspapers coming together and agreeing about this. We talk among ourselves, about lotteries; whether we should minimise, limit, take a break, you know, ideas like giving it a rest. So I think it would be better. Because now we can not benefit from it anymore. Newspapers are just getting stuck in a rut. Big amounts of money are being spent, but we can not say that we get the same yield. It will be slow, but with good sense, and let me make it clear I object to state bans that are sudden and unexpected. We can talk about it and come to terms. As Sabah's owner, I agree that if large newspapers come to terms with each other and give lotteries a long break, we will gladly do it.

Nezih Demirkent, who became the boss of *Dünya* newspaper after many years in journalism, management and the chairmanship of the Journalists' Association of Turkey, supported Bilgin with this statement (Otan, 1995; p. 111):

I am totally against lotteries. If newspapers ended this practice today, maybe they would sell 300 thousand less copies, but they could gain prestige and reduce costs. If active journalists start publishing their own newspaper, then the situation will change. If the structure of newspaper ownership in Turkey is taken out of the discussion and transformed into some kind of a trust, a solution process may begin to be reached. In other words, if newspapers aim to inform the public rather than to sell more and earn more, and if a similar economy is created, then circulation of information will be born in Turkey.

The owner of *Akşam* newspaper, Mehmet Ali Ilıcak, who told Otan that the lottery campaigns drove the sector to forming trust companies, and newspapers such as *Cumhuriyet*, *Akşam* and *Günaydın* experienced difficulties because of the campaigns (1995; p. 113):

One of them goes and says, 'I'm giving 77 thousand 700 toys'. But, did he give or not? There is no control over this. Restricting promotions is not restricting the freedom of the press. The newspapers should fulfil their real mission. Supplements, for instance. *Cumhuriyet* newspaper is a good example. The supplements they give are quite nice. *Cumhuriyet* published article series and gets 20 thousand circulation on Sundays. That's real journalism. One gives beads, the other gives puppets, it is not possible to get anywhere like this.



Sönmez referred to the situation which caused newspaper managers and bosses to make contradictory statements, as “promotion addiction” (2003; p. 41). This period, which accelerated the need to increase technological innovations and physical investments in the sector, also led to the need for nonstop promotion so the physical capacity was driven by promotions in order to operate profitably. It became imperative to find other supports for profitable operation of the capacity, to take all sorts of cost-cutting measures and even to eliminate other initiatives that shared the market. The understanding that the readers gained by promotions were not going to stay made the promotion industry an indispensable element of the sector. Promotions also brought press groups to establish marketing companies, marking an important step in the monopolisation process via vertical integration.

Since the late ‘90s, newspaper owners faced significant problems because of promotions. For example, in 1998, both *Akşam* and *Günaydın* newspapers were convicted in cases initiated by readers who did not receive the prizes that had been promised. *Akşam* newspaper’s former owner Mehmet Ali Ilıcak, editorial board chairman Can Aksın and former member of the board of directors Emin Şirin were arrested on the grounds of unpaid stamp fees for TRT, for the televisions the newspaper gave away the same year. Again in the same year, the Ministry filed a lawsuit at the Consumer Court against the newspapers *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah*, *Posta*, *Takvim*, *Bugün*, *Akşam* and *Yeni Günaydın*, for continuing promotions that were not cultural. *Yeni Günaydın* newspaper owner Mehmet Saruhan was sentenced to 6 years 9 months imprisonment by the Şişli 4th Criminal Court of First Instance (Topuz, 2015; p. 355), on charges that he did not give the refrigerators he promised to readers who collected the coupons. The media, which obtained astronomical sales figures and profit shares thanks to promotions within the same 10-year period, did not enter such a competition again because of all the legal

problems, and in the 2000s, promotions became a stable element of the media (Adaklı, 2006; p. 246 ).

Increasing monopolisation as a result of the acquisition of media corporations by major capital, and promotions, which became one of the actors of monopolisation, prevented the press from fulfilling its ethical responsibility towards the public. The struggle for profit and power caused many small press operations to be eliminated from the sector. Cangöz argues that freedom of expression was censored in this period when the giant media holdings organised what the reader would listen to and read and watch (1996). Atılgan (1995), who agrees with Cangöz that the unrestricted market competition led to market censoring, argues for the necessity of public intervention in the media market. Political science theorist John Keane, states in his book “Media and Democracy”, that many legal regulations can be made to facilitate the freedom of expression and access to information for citizens, and that if there is a written constitution of the country, the freedom of expression and the media should be protected both by that constitutional text and by national legislation (1992; p. 120).

## **2.2. THE EMERGING SITUATION AFTER 2000**

Until this section of the study, the 1990s have been mostly discussed under headings such as monopolisation, promotion battles, and deunionisation efforts, which caused significant regression in the press. However, in order to better understand the new era shaped as of the 2000s, this section begins with a more detailed analysis of the political and economic situation of the 1990s period.

Özal’s 24 January decisions had a great influence on the Turkish press losing its independence from the state, and especially from the non-press capital. The neo-liberal economic and political restructuring programme that was implemented following the 1980 military coup led to the removal of

principles of freedom and equality from the social agenda. The press played an important role in the execution of the programme and the provision of social consent (Adaklı, 2006; p. 339). The year 1993, when President Turgut Özal died of a heart attack in Çankaya Palace, was the beginning of the “coalition governments” era in Turkey, which would continue until the elections on 3 November 2002. The economic problems fuelled by the lack of political stability brought about the crises of 1994 and 2001, which caused great damage to Turkey. The Turkish economy, shaken by the 24 January decisions and neo-liberal policies carried out in the framework of harmonisation with the world, tried to overcome the crises with prescriptions of the IMF and the World Bank, and the crisis that started in this period with the financial sector spread to every area, millions of people were became unemployed. The press, which started to industrialise in the 1950s and continued to represent the structure of an ‘artisan-like’ family business in the ‘80s, adopted a completely ‘factory-like’ production process in the 90’s (Adaklı, 2006; p. 340). This situation also caused the industry to be more affected by crises.

### **2.2.1. The period of coalition governments**

The period of coalition governments, which was established in 1993 by True Path Party (DYP) leader Tansu Çiller and Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) leader Erdal İnönü, witnessed economic crises as well as devastating events in society such as the death of 37 writers, poets and artists who attended the Pir Sultan Abdal Festival in Sivas, as a result of a mob setting the Madımak Hotel on fire. In 1994, many journalists were arrested or became victims of unsolved murder cases. Newspapers such as *Özgür Ülke* and *Özgür Gündem* were confiscated. Events continued as the Welfare Party won the first elections following the coalition of CHP and SHP under the People’s Party in 1995. This time, a traditional coffee shop that Alevis went to in Gazi district in İstanbul was raked with automatic weapons and one person died. Upon the failure of the Welfare Party’s (RP) efforts to form a government, President

Demirel appointed DYP leader Tansu Çiller for the job, which resulted in the establishment of the ANA-YOL (ANAP-DYP) government in partnership with the ANAP leader Mesut Yılmaz. However, this government remained in power for only 3 months, and this brought a new period of partnership between the RP and the DYP in 1996 and this time the REFAH-YOL government was established under the leadership of the Welfare Party leader Necmettin Erbakan as Prime Minister. The Susurluk accident that resulted in the death of police chief Hüseyin Kocadağ, right-wing nationalist Abdullah Çatlı and Gonca Us in Susurluk in November, also injuring DYP deputy Sedat Bucak, caused something like an earthquake in the state and major social events. The Susurluk case, which was on the agenda for a long time with the news of state-police mafia-drug trafficking and politicians, has not been satisfactorily concluded. Another important social event that occurred in the same year was “the indefinite hunger strikes” in prisons. The hunger strikes, which killed many people as a result of the government and the protesters not being able to come to an agreement, also received widespread coverage in the foreign press and television. *Hürriyet*'s building in İstanbul and Doğan Group's printing house in Ankara were raked with gunfire by unidentified people in 1996. Newspaper and magazine buildings were raided 33 times; newspapers, magazines and radios were banned 165 times. 91 press cases ended with convictions while 21 others were absolved. 111 new cases were filed. RTÜK issued 115 warnings and 38 bans for radio and television channels (Topuz, 2015; p. 303).

The Anti-Terrorism Act was actively used against intellectuals and journalists these years. In 1994, 65 of the 104 “prisoners of thought” were journalists. In October 1995, the number of journalists in prison increased to 112, and the number of closed newspapers increased to 15. According to a report published by the Journalists' Association of Turkey on 27 March 1996, 4 journalists were killed, 4 journalists were kidnapped, 22 journalists were arrested, 40 journalists were taken into custody, 13 media organs were closed

and 77 publications were pulled off the shelves in 1995 (Adapted by Topuz, 2015; p. 304). The murder of *Evrensel* newspaper reporter Metin Göktepe while he was under police custody in 1996 took its place in Turkish press history as a disgrace.

The year 1997 witnessed economic crises created by the coalition changes and the social and political events, which would affect the country for long years. In January, Prime Minister Erbakan gave religious community leaders an iftar meal in the Prime Minister's Residence. After the Jerusalem Night organised by Ankara Sincan Municipality of the Welfare Party, Turkish Armed Forces tanks were passed through Sincan in convoy. The National Security Council held an emergency meeting on 28 February, which would later be known as "a postmodern coup"; and a new process started in Turkey with the recommendations the council stated. Prime Minister Erbakan had to resign following these events which brought about the 8-year uninterrupted education decision, headscarf bans, persuasion rooms, and the Ergenekon case. Mesut Yılmaz, who was appointed to form a new government, came up with the ANAP-DSP-DTP (Motherland Party-Democratic Left Party-Democratic Society Party) coalition. The year 1997 was a dark year for the press, which carried political and social events to its headlines for weeks. 49 newspapers, 29 magazines and 23 books were pulled off the shelves and 147 lawsuits were filed. A total of 89 convictions were issued following the lawsuits, and 75 broadcast bans were given to radio and television channels (Topuz, 2015; p. 307).

After witnessing the closure, re-establishment and coalitions of many political parties, Turkish political life in 1998 carried on with the closure of the Welfare Party and its members continuing with the Virtue Party, which had previously been established as a substitute. This year, when Necmettin Erbakan's political disqualification period started, İstanbul Metropolitan Mayor Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was sentenced to 10 months imprisonment for a speech

he made in Siirt. In this year, too, new cases were opened against journalists and newspapers were closed down while journalists also felt quite unsafe. The USA Freedom of the Press Foundation recorded Turkey as the fourth worst country for freedom of information (Topuz, 2015; p. 309). On 17 January 1998, Turkey called elections with DSP President Bülent Ecevit's minority government and the next coalition government was established by Ecevit, again, in partnership with the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and ANAP. The year 1999 was also tough on journalists who reported news such as the arrest and return of terrorist organisation leader Abdullah Öcalan in Kenya; the 17 August earthquake; the Nawruz feast events in Gazi; the murder of former CHP deputy and Minister of Culture Ahmet Taner Kışlalı, who was an academician and had a column in *Cumhuriyet* newspaper.

With the election of Ahmet Necdet Sezer as president, Turkey entered a new phase and started the 2000s with an economic crisis. Economic and social events such as the bankrupt banks operation and hunger strikes in prisons accompanied bombs and armed attacks on *Hürriyet* and *Sabah* newspapers. The problem of unemployment in the press reached an extraordinary level; according to the 2000-2001 Working Report by Journalists' Association of Turkey, more than 2 thousand press employees from the administrative-technical-service and publishing units were left unemployed in the media institutions (Adapted by Topuz, 2015; p. 311). The year 2001 dragged Turkey into an unprecedented economic depression with the constitutional crisis which arose among President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit and Deputy Prime Minister Hüseyin Özkan, in addition to the establishment of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) and the Felicity Party following the closure of the Virtue Party. Kemal Derviş, who left the World Bank after working there for 22 years and returned to Turkey with the title of State Minister in charge of Economy, reorganised the economy in line with IMF policies and also resulted in the reporting of important events in the media.

The first breaking point in the property relations of the Turkish press was the domination of non-press funds in the 1980s, while the second breaking point was the industrialisation of the sector through holding companies in the 90's. The third major break occurred in 2001. The Press Council explained that in the 2001 crisis, 3 thousand journalists became unemployed (Adapted by Topuz, 2015; p. 314). The Journalists' Union of Turkey announced that this figure was 3 thousand 900, while the advertising revenue during the crisis decreased by about 50 percent from 1 billion dollars to about 500 billion dollars (Sözeri and Güney, 2011; p. 39). In the December 2001 report published by the Progressive Journalists' Association İstanbul Branch, this figure was reported as 4 thousand 815. According to the report, 786 people from Doğan Group, 1 thousand 626 from Media Holding Group, 307 from İhlas Group, 332 from Doğu Group, 549 from Uzan Group, 253 from Çukurova Group, 962 people from the Anatolian press and other press organisations were dismissed during the crisis (bianet.org, 9 January 2002). In addition to these figures, the report also emphasised that press workers' wages had gone down by 90 percent. Of course, the low circulation rates had a great impact on the media patrons' decision to take such major contraction measures. As noted in the report, the circulation of 19 newspapers went below 2.8 million in December from 3.7 million in January, even though the number of newspapers increased to 25 in December. The total circulation rate declined by 24.1 percent; this decline was 33.7 percent in *Hürriyet* and 39.6 percent in *Sabah*. The decrease in circulation led the newspapers back to promotions; however, this time it caused more loss than gain. *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah*, *Star* and *Akit* newspapers, which were found to be violating the legislation on consumer protection by the promotional campaigns, were fined a total of 5 trillion. It was also mentioned in the early 2000s concerning the sector that the competition between media groups was not only limited to promotion battles but influenced the political arena as well, and that media owners grew strong enough to claim that they had a say in determining the ministerial board

(Adapted from Mutlu, by Sözeri, 2015; p. 11). In his work, Sözeri mentions that the media, which was closely related to the army, was carrying out a balanced policy between the army and the political parties.

As a result of the bankruptcy of media patrons' banks in consequence of the economic crisis, the TMSF (Savings Deposit Insurance Fund) confiscated the assets of these media companies, and after 2005, handed these over to different businessmen. The media ownership structure underwent significant changes with these handovers. These groups were active in the sector before the handovers by the TMSF: Medya Holding (Dinç Bilgin), Merkez Holding (Turgay Ciner), Çukurova Group (Mehmet Emin Karamehmet), Doğu Group (Ayhan Şahenk-Ferit Şahenk), Doğan Group (Aydın Doğan), Uzan Group (Cem Uzan), İhlas Group, Kanaltürk (Tuncay Özkan).

Karamehmet, whose banks were seized by the fund, entered into new television channels and a distribution organisation with new business initiatives. İhlas Finance's seizure traumatised the Türkiye Group. Erol Aksoy's İktisat Bank was seized by the fund and Cine-5 channel was shut down; after the seizure of Kamuran Çörtük and Süzer's banks, BRT and Kent TV were closed down; also the seizure of Ceylans' Bank Kapital pushed CTV out of the sector (Sönmez, 2003). Sabah Group owner Dinç Bilgin was among those sent to prison during the state's seizure of the banks and arrest of their administrators due to corruption. Dinç Bilgin was sent to prison on the grounds that he had drained all the funds from Etibank in 2000 and the TMSF seized the media group that included *Sabah* newspaper and ATV (Demir, 2013; p. 39). This is how the media dominion of the Bilgin family, which started out in Thessaloniki and continued in İstanbul, came to an end.

The Press Council, which stated in its report that in 2001 the Turkish press experienced one of the most troublesome periods with the closure decisions, attacks on journalists, pressures and lawsuits, also added that the government



became the ‘biggest media boss’ with the bankrupt banks (Adapted by Topuz, 2015; p. 316). United Press Distribution Inc., Bir Numara Publishing, Sabah News Agency, Gelişim Publishing, Kiss FM, Radio Sport, Şık FM, Gala TV, Vira TV, Cine-5, Multicanal, Playboy TV, Super Sport, Maxi TV, Radio 5, Radio Vira, Kablonet, Anet, Medya Marketing (MEPAŞ), CTV (cable), C News Agency and BRT came under the control of the Banking Supervisory Board together with the banks that were seized. *Yeni Gündem* and *Akit* newspapers ended their publishing life due to economic problems and high compensation costs. Many newspapers were punished with official announcements, while television and radio stations received a total of 2 thousand 651 days of broadcast suspension.

The decisions “on the unification of conflicting judgments” issued by the Council of State in 2001 is also important for the press. This decision aimed at preventing monopolisation and limiting the direct or indirect commitment of the state to companies with more than 10 percent share in radio and television establishments; and was intended to bring public welfare and freedom to private enterprises. Holding companies reacted strongly to the decision (Topuz, 2015; p. 315). In addition, although Law No.4676 to “Amend the Law on the Establishment and Broadcasts of Radio and Television” was rejected by President Ahmet Necdet Sezer in 2001, it was put on to the agenda again in 2002 again and came into force. Some of the reasons Sezer had for rejecting the law included fines, the affiliation of RTÜK to the Supervisory Board of the Prime Ministry, monopolisation and internet publishing (Topuz, 2015; p. 314). The heavy penalties imposed by the legislation started to be implemented right after it came into force.

The election on 3 November 2002 was a milestone for Turkey. AK Party won the election, which ended the period of coalition governments, with over 30 percent of the votes cast; the parliament was composed of CHP and AK Party only. However, what is interesting at this point is that the Young Party,

established by *Star* newspaper owner Cem Uzan, received 7,27 percent of the votes and completed the elections as the fifth party. The Turkish press, which had been represented by journalist-parliament members in various political periods, also witnessed an example of a media patron who set up a party to gain political power. There was another interesting development in the press. Media Group President Zafer Mutlu, who accompanied Dinç Bilgin throughout his rise in the press sector, left the group and established *Vatan* newspaper with *Sabah* newspaper lead writer G ng r Mengi, editor-in-chief Tayfun Deveciođlu, writer Selahattin Duman, Bilal etin, Yavuz Donat, Tayfun Hopalı, Z lf  Livaneli, Ercan Arıklı and cartoonist Salih Memecan, with the support of Aydın Dođan (Topuz, 2015; p. 322).

After the handovers that took place through the TMSF, the media obtained a new structure and these new groups entered the sector in the new order that was predominated by businessmen who had close relations with the government: Koza-İpek Group (Akın İpek), Star Media Group (Ali  zmen Safa-Ethem Sancak-Fettah Tamince-Tevhit Karakaya), alık Group (Ahmet alık), Demir ren Group (Erdođan Demir ren), *Taraf* newspaper (Ahmet Altan-Alev Er).

Turkey, which had been unable to establish social peace during the 90s and was far from assuring economic stability, kept appearing in the foreign news with its constantly chaotic environment and then entered another single-party period after the 2002 elections. The media adopted a dual stance, as in pro-government and anti-government, with the transformation caused by the media handovers, while the position of administrators and columnists also changed. Within the framework of ‘ethics’, the organisation and division charts of broadcasting organisations underwent a radical transformation, too. Management models were established in line with the needs of the new era, and the traditional distinction between publication management and business management was dissolved in favour of business management principles

(Adaklı, 2006; p. 343). While the visibility of columnists who were close to the government increased and such individuals were also appointed to positions, the dissidents were eliminated from media groups. In addition, the transfer of new names that were close to the government followed the elimination of dissident journalists and these new government-compatible administrators and columnists found their place in the media (Demir, 2013; p. 75). At this point, the media groups under the threat of financial pressure and tax burden, as they were in every period, felt the need to restructure themselves according to the governing party. What was most affected by this situation was “the people’s freedom of information”. Adaklı argues that the relative distance between ownership and content in the process of restructuring the media, which began in the 1980s, gradually narrowed and editors started to prioritise advertising, sales and profits instead of content (2006; p. 343). Adaklı argues that the relation of the media with non-media sectors, ie its direct or indirect relation to manufacturing, trade, energy, retail, defence, “sensitises” companies to any content that may damage their mutual interests in all of these areas (2014; p. 18). Along with the change in political power in the 2000s, the media became further integrated with the manufacturing and service sectors, and also became more integrated with the governing party than in previous years. Sözeri states that the most important cause of self-censorship and the media’s discouragement of critical publishing and even journalism, was the need for media patrons to be close to the ruling party because they had investments in other areas (2015; p. 16).

Media owners and journalists, who were extremely weak against the state, were negatively affected by the disintegration in the media sector. Journalists had been working in extremely insecure and precarious conditions in the then current political and economic environment of oppression. The unionisation rate of the TGS fell back 20 points at once and decreased to 34.94 percent on 1 July 2001. The power of Media-Sen was at the level of 4 percent.

Approximately 10 percent of the unionised journalists worked at the Anadolu Agency. The TGS was able to gain the support of half of the journalism workers until the middle of the 1980s, while after 2001 the union was only able to continue in the state-controlled Anadolu Agency, *Cumhuriyet* newspaper and ANKA Agency. No effective collective bargaining was accomplished in these establishments (Aksoy, 2009a; p. 627).

The structural obstacles to unionisation and the lack of professional solidarity led to weak content quality in journalism and violations of media ethics. Salary represents the primary way of putting pressure on employees by the media organisations which operate for low profits and some of which are affected by concentration and competition. Sözeri points out that the average years of seniority of media workers was less than 5 years and adds that the high rate of employee turnover caused some qualities to be pushed into the background, such as expertise and experience, which are very important for social functioning (2015; p. 97).

AK Party came first, once again, in the local elections of 2004, which had various effects. Although the coexistence of government and local administrations, which came into the society years later, created an economic and social sense of stability, it also sharpened the distinction between pro-government and anti-government attitudes, especially in the business world, and indirectly in the media. Turgay Ciner, Fettah Tamince, Akın İpek and Ahmet Çalık, who have been mentioned above and did not take part in the sector with any media investments until this period, entered the sector with the aim of providing more political support for the government via their investments in the business world. This connexion, as in previous periods, also brought, in return, the government's support for the non-media investments of businessmen. However, the opposite was experienced, too; media companies that were not pro-government or sustained publications that failed to satisfy expectations faced heavy tax penalties and some were eliminated from the

sector. Thousands of journalists who became unemployed in the process suffered the greatest loss in this situation, again.

At the point of new characters entering the media sector, the media's power to shape the perceptions, thoughts and values of people, in particular, was influential. And at the point of shaping economic and political expectations, the media can be regarded as a propaganda tool as it is during war periods. For this reason, the media has been used by some circles as a source of power and it has been taken under control to influence the expectations, thoughts and perceptions of the society.

On the other hand, another key role of the media is its part in the democratisation of the society. The media encourages people to be informed about themselves and their societies. Accelerating the time-consuming learning process with its news and discussion programmes, the media also brings about the shaping and spreading of social thoughts and opinions. The double-pole structure of the media, which is an essential part of the democratisation process of societies with these features, had negative effects on society, like it did for sector after 2000.

### **2.3. İZMİR**

Izmir holds a particular significance in the history of the Turkish press. Hence, the subject matter of this study are the journalists working in Izmir, which has always been paid special attention by the press as Turkey's third largest city and for both its political stance and its place within the national economy, instead of the political capital Ankara or the economic capital Istanbul.

A special case that was not mentioned in the preceding sections, while addressing the history of the Turkish language newspapers published in Turkey, took place in İzmir. Whereas the first foreign language newspaper

printed in Turkey was the *Bulletin des Nouvelles* published in Istanbul by the French Embassy, Izmir's first ever newspaper *Le Smyrneen* had begun to be published by a French man named Charles Tricon. Although the editorial stance of *Le Smyrneen* was met with disapproval, on account of being contrary to Turkish interests, the State could not interfere due to the capitulations; however the French consulate in İzmir had intervened. Having suspended its publication, the newspaper had changed hands after some time (Lagarde, 1950 in Arıkan, 2006; p. 10). Renamed *Spactateur Oriental* following the change of ownership, it was published in Izmir from 1801 onwards by Alexander Blacque, a French counterrevolutionary who fled his country after the revolution (Tılıç; 1998 p. 78). The newspaper adopted a stance against the great foreign powers that supported the Greek independence movement, which sought to permeate the Aegean islands as well. Following the *Spactateur Oriental*, Alexander Blacque started publishing *Courrier de Smyrne* in 1828, once again in Izmir. Also promulgating a pro-Turkish position *Courrier de Smyrne* had gained public favour (Arıkan, 2006; p.11).

In the 1860's Izmir had a truly cosmopolitan make-up. With a sizable Levantine population living alongside Turks, Greeks, Armenians and Jews, Izmir's port served as the country's outlet for export goods. In addition to enterprises in coal gas, railways, docks, schools and hospitals, foreign investors made important industrial investments. As an industry linked to exportation developed, economic power remained in the hands of non-Muslims.

Printed in Aydın provincial printing house established in 1868, *Aydın Vilayet Gazetesi* [Aydın Provincial Gazette] was published by Asım Efendi, in 1869. According to Huyugüzel, the founder of Turkish journalism in Izmir was Mehmet Salim, the editor in chief of *Aydın Gazette*, who had worked for a while as the director of Aydın Provincial Printing House (Huyugüzel, 2004 in Arıkan, 2006; p. 19). Another newspaper published in İzmir by Mehmet Salim was the *Devir* [the Times], in 1872. Improving the legal rights and freedoms of

the Muslim populace was the expressed purpose of its publication. Following *Devir*, which can be qualified as the first privately owned newspaper in Izmir, Mehmet Salim published the *İntibah* [Rebirth] (Arıkan, 2006; p. 20). *Devir* gave voice to public grievances and adopting an attitude of policing the actions of the state, it upheld the progressive mentality of the period. After the closures of *Devir* and *İntibah*, during the liberal climate of the last months of Abdülaziz's and the early days of Abdülhamit's reigns, in 1877, Grigorios Karydis published a newspaper named *İzmir*. *İzmir* endeavoured towards moulding a public opinion committed to the principles of constitutionalism (Arıkan, 2006; p. 30-31). Paying particular heed to economic and commercial topics, the newspaper advocated unity of language in the Ottoman domain. *Hizmet* [Duty], published by Halit Ziya, was also among the newspapers printed in İzmir. Through the efforts of its columnist Tevfik Nevzat, *Hizmet* initiated a movement for the simplification of language. Giving space on its pages to the problems of the city, the newspaper admonished the authorities and promoted the creation of a caring public. It contributed greatly to the emergence of a literate populace in the city (Arıkan, 2006; p: 44-45).

That the first issue of *Ahenk* [Harmony], which began to be published in 1895, by Mehmet Necati and with Tevfik Nevzat as its editor in chief, corresponded to the anniversary of Abdülhamit II.'s birthday was indicative of this newspaper's political leanings (Arıkan, 2006; p. 46). After *Hizmet* and *Ahenk*, the third newspaper to be printed during the period of despotism was *İzmir* published by Bıçakçızade Hakkı, in 1896. This paper remained in circulation until 1907 (Arıkan, 2006; p. 62-63). Conservative in his outlook, Bıçakçızade's newspaper echoed his advocacy of Islamic morality.

During the second constitutionalist period [II. Meşrutiyet] newspapers such as *Çapkın*, *Kâve*, *Sedat* [Truth], *İttihat* [Union], *Köylü* [Villager] and *Anadolu* were published in İzmir. *Köylü* was added to İzmir's press in 1908, by Aydın deputy Avukat İsmail Sıtkı. Began to be published in the same year and with

Hafız İsmail, known for his dissenting views, as its editor in chief, *İttihat* on the other hand, served as the mouthpiece and the media organ of the Committee of Union and Progress. After Hafız İsmail, first Tevfik Rüştü and then Haydar Rüştü Öktem were installed at the helm of the paper. Having acquired the title rights to the newspaper, Haydar Rüştü changed its name to *Anadolu* (Arıkan, 2006; p. 77). With a liberal attitude that sided with the oppressed and addressed issues fearlessly, *Anadolu* began its print life in 1911. He also published *Duygu* [Sentiment], an evening paper, in order to support the state, which had come out defeated in the World War I. Haydar Rüştü, who was the elected İzmir deputy for the 8<sup>th</sup> Term of the Grand National Assembly, founded the Turkish Press Union and served as its director. Haydar Rüştü, participated in the foundation of İzmir Journalists Association (İGC), as well (<http://igc.org.tr/igc/baskanlar/>). During the occupation that followed the Armistice Agreement of Mudros signed in 1918, for their advocacy of Turks' legal and natural rights, *Anadolu* and *Duygu* were criticised by newspapers that backed the occupation, such as *Islahat* [Reformation] and *Alemdar* [Standard-Bearer]. Due to embracing a similar position, *Köylü* daily was closed down numerous times during the armistice period. An important newspaper of the armistice years, *Hukuk-u Beşer* [the Rights of Man], could not continue being published, as its owner and editor in chief Hasan Tahsin was killed in the first hours of the occupation. During this period, when *Ahenk* struggled to remain in print, *Medeniyet* [Civilisation], *Sada-yı Hak* [the Just Voice] and the occupation endorser *Islahat* remained in print (Arıkan, 2006; p. 141). As the Turkish press came under intense pressure, *Şark* [the East] was the only Turkish language newspaper published alongside French and Armenian papers that were permitted.

The first newspaper printed in Turkish in İzmir after the liberation was *Türk Sesi* [the Voice of Turks], the first issue of which was published in 1923 (Arıkan, 2006; p. 144). Publishing news about agriculture and economics, this



paper also covered the peace conference at Lausanne. The place and duties of women in the modern Turkish society and the championing of female suffrage were among the noteworthy topics addressed by the paper. Meanwhile, continuing its print life during the republican era, *Anadolu* closely supported the Republican People's Side (CHF) (Bayazıt, 1922 in Çakırbaş, 2015; p. 14). Huyugüzel points out that during the Republican era Haydar Rüştü, the publisher of this paper that functioned like CHF's media organ, received financial support from the government and the party (Huyugüzel, 2000 in Çakırbaş, 2015, p.14). Additionally, *Ahali* [People] with Ağâh Sabri as its managing editor and *Türk İli* [Country of the Turks] with Nazmi Sadık as its publisher began their print life in 1924. Current and political affairs were among the issues prioritised by *Türk İli* (Arıkan, 2006; p. 151).

Yunus Nadi, who occupies a special place in the history of the Turkish press for both his journalism and the newspapers he introduced to the publishing life of the country, began to print a paper named *Yeni Gün* [New Day] in İstanbul, in 1918. Its initial pro-American stance changing over time, *Yeni Gün* became one of the first publications to support the national independence movement that emerged in Anatolia. Seeking the support of the newspaper, which was published as *Anadolu'da Yeni Gün* [New Day in Anatolia] until May 1924, against the pro-sultanate and pro-caliphate advocates in İstanbul, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk asked Yunus Nadi to publish, in İstanbul, a newspaper that would champion the foundational principles of the Republic. Thus, the first issue of the daily *Cumhuriyet* [the Republic] was published on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1924 in İstanbul. Having closed down *Yeni Gün* a few days prior to the launching of *Cumhuriyet* and suspended the publication of *Anadolu'da Yeni Gün* that same year, Yunus Nadi started publishing *Yeni Gün* in İzmir. The paper defined itself as a political daily (Arıkan, 2006; p. 156-157). News championing the Turkish reforms was frequently featured in its pages.

The year 1924, when the first attempt at a multi-party system introduced the Progressive Republican Side (TCF) to Turkish political life, gave new life to the press thanks to factors such as the party's liberal understanding and Islamic leanings. Named after the great fire of İzmir, *Yanık Yurt* [Burnt Homeland] began to be issued in 1925 as a publication of the İzmir Fire-Victims Association. Its editor in chief was Zeynel Besim. Adopting an anti-Semitic attitude towards Jewish citizens, the newspaper claimed that the Levantines were detrimental to the country's economy (Arıkan, 2006; p. 161). Purchasing the newspaper some time later, Zeynel Besim first changed its name to *Hizmet-Yanık Yurt*, and from 1926 on it was printed under the name of *Hizmet* only (Akkoyun, 1993 in Çakırbaş, 2015; p. 15).

About *Sada-yı Hak*, which was first printed after the Greek occupation and which continued to be published into the early Republican era, an investigation was opened in 1925, on grounds of contemptuous coverage of the members of the parliament (Koç, 2006; p.85), and following the enactment of the Law on the Maintenance of Order the newspaper was closed down. According to Arıkan, the prevailing factor for the papers closure was its pro-TCF stance; for *Sada-yı Hak* had published the manifesto of the party after its establishment and interviews made with the leading figures of the party, enhanced with their photographs, were featured in its pages (2006; p. 167). Martial law proclaimed during the course of events that began with the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1924 and the changes in government had a negative impact on the press. In spite of Mustafa Kemal's claim that the Law on the Maintenance of Order would not affect the press adversely, *Sada-yı Hak* took its place among the newspapers that were closed down around the country, and particularly in Istanbul, to silence the oppositional press (<https://www.guncelkaynak.com/nedir/cumhuriyet-donemi-ve-sonrasi-turk-basini/>). During this period some chief editors were condemned to lifelong exiles, while in the later stages death sentences were given.

The alphabet reform of 1928 had a negative effect on the press. In response to this, with the 1575 numbered law issued on 27th March 1930, the government took some steps to secure newspapers' endorsement of the reform by introducing subsidies for the duration of three years (<https://www.guncelkaynak.com/nedir/cumhuriyet-donemi-ve-sonrasi-turk-basini/>). *Hizmet*, which Zeynel Besim had begun to publish once again in 1926, was among the papers that supported the reform. At the same time, the annulment of the Law on the Maintenance of Order in 1929, had led to a short-lived climate of freedom in the press. Articles that appeared in *Yeni Asır* [the New Age] and *Hizmet* reflected this positive atmosphere (Koç, 2006; p. 12).

During the second attempt at transitioning to a multi-party system, with the establishment of the Free Republican Side (SCF) in 1930, *Hizmet* distinguished itself by giving support to the party. Commenting on this support, the paper emphasised that lacking a newspaper of its own the party was in no position to publicise its manifesto and underlined the necessity of providing the party with a basis for canvassing (Koç, 2006; p. 59). Founded by Fethi Okyar, the party's organisation in İzmir was assisted by Zeynel Besim (Çakırbaşı, 2015; p. 15). In this period, the most heated debates between the pro-government and oppositional press concerned the question of whether an opposition party was requisite to review and oversee the actions of the government and the state. The assertion of the pro-government press that the country needed no party other than the one standing up for the revolutionary principles exposed the government to accusations of fascism (Koç, 2006; p. 99). While *Serbes Cumhuriyet* [Free Republic] and *Hizmet* columnists argued that a fascist mentality was in contradiction to the Republican regime, *Anadolu* maintained that the accusations were baseless. Also among the papers that backed the SCF in İzmir were *Halkın Sesi* [Public Voice] and *Yeni Asır*. Pro-government *Anadolu*'s featuring of an article written by the Denizli Deputy Haydar Rüştü Bey to criticise the support Fethi Bey received at a rally in İzmir aroused public

indignation. A child was killed in the ensuing tumult and the people gathered in front of the daily *Anadolu* in protest of the article (<https://www.guncelkaynak.com/nedir/cumhuriyet-donemi-ve-sonrasi-turk-basini/>). Among the newspapers that were critical of the opposition against the CHF, in a similar vein to *Anadolu*, also was the (*Vatan ve Millet İçin*) *Hürriyet* [Freedom (for the Motherland and the Nation)], published in 1930 by Mahmut Reşat (Arıkan, 2006; p. 199).

The *Serbes Cumhuriyet*, which began to be published in İzmir on 26 October 1930, as a publication that supported the SCF, as its name implied, sought to bolster support for the party. In a statement printed on its first issue, which underlined the fact that its choice of name was not accidental, the newspaper said, “Our aim is to walk on that hopeful path opened by the great leader. Since the people of İzmir and Anatolia are marching on that very path, our newspaper shall always take pride in being for the people and the truth” (Arıkan, 2006; p. 203). The paper featured heavy criticism aimed at the CHF government and claimed that a chasm separated the top brass of the party from the public (Koç, 2006; p. 92). In the period leading up to the SCF’s self-dissolution, the punitive attitude against the oppositional press once again manifested itself. *Yeni Asır* columnist Behzat Arif and its managing editor Abdullah Abidin, as well as *Hizmet*’s editor in chief Zeynel Besim and its managing editor Bedri Bey were arrested. Behzat Arif and Abdullah Abidin were then sentenced to a heavy imprisonment of 3 years and 6 months (<https://www.guncelkaynak.com/nedir/cumhuriyet-donemi-ve-sonrasi-turk-basini/>). Judging the self-dissolution of the Free Republican Party unfavourable to the advancement of democracy in the country, *Hizmet* described it as “an affair that should be lamented for” (Koç, 2006; p. 74-75).

In the section on the SCF rally held in İzmir in 1930 of his book, *Tek Parti Döneminde Basın İktidar İlişkileri* (1929-1938) [The Press Government Relations During the Single Party Era (1929-1938)], Koç explains that while

İstanbul dailies such as *Cumhuriyet*, *Milliyet* [Nation] and *Akşam* [Evening] had İzmir correspondents, even in those years, these journalists worked also for the local dailies *Hizmet* and *Yeni Asır* (2006; p. 67).

With the Press Law of 1931, discussed in detail in the previous sections, the government sought to effectively discipline the press and the papers kept under pressure were to a large extent prevented from publishing critical articles (Koç, 2006; p. 111). During this period, in which articles affirming government policies appeared more frequently in the pro-government papers, a piece titled “How About the Press Law?” in *Anadolu* argued that the law was not going to “muzzle” anyone as the opponents alleged, but, on the contrary, it provided those consciously and sincerely striving to work for public good with ample opportunities (Koç, 2006; p. 30).

*Ege* [the Aegean], *Sabah Postası* [Morning Post], *Yürgü* and *Akın* [Surge] can be named among the newspapers that began to be published in İzmir, in 1935. As it is still in circulation, the daily *Yeni Asır* will be addressed in detail in the following sections of this study. Nevertheless, the changes in the paper’s political viewpoint over the course of its print life do warrant a mention. The paper, which had one of its writers, Behzat Arif and its managing editor Abdullah Abidin sentenced to heavy imprisonment because of the support it gave to the SCF around the time the party self-dissolved, backed the party-state identity imposed by a circular issued in 1936. As a matter of fact, this identity was regarded as a highly significant development in terms of populism, which was one of Kemalist regime’s six basic principles (Koç, 2006; p. 135).

Continuing its print life as a regional newspaper today, *Ticaret* [Trade] was established by Süha Sukuti Tükel, in 1942. In the period prior to the founding of the Democratic Party (DP) in 1946, the repression of the press endured. Indicative of this repression was the closing down of the İzmir paper *Yeni Ekonomi* [the New Economy] for covering a traffic accident involving the

governor's son. The paper was allowed to resume publishing upon persistent demands from the press.

It has been argued that the *Demokrat İzmir* [Democratic Izmir], established in 1946 by Adnan Dvenci, had a significant impact on the course of events that carried the Democratic Party into power. In her article titled "Bir Gazetecilik ve Siyaset Okulu: Demokrat İzmir Gazetesi", [Demokrat İzmir: A School of Journalism and Politics], published in *İzmir Life* (2008; p. 86), Duygu zsphandađ Yayman states that the paper, which gathered such prominent, influential writers of the DP like Burhan Belge and Osman Kapani among its cadres, was described as the newspaper that "made the DP in the Aegean region", until their relations soured due to differences in political views in 1950. Hence, after the DP came into power, Dvenci was among the journalists invited by Adnan Menderes to a meeting held in Ankara with editors in chief and managing editors of newspapers. Representing *Yeni Asır*, Őevket Bilgin was also among the attendees of this meeting (Topuz, 2015; p. 193). The divide between the paper and the party was caused by conflicting views of Adnan Dvenci and Adnan Menderes, regarding the actions of İzmir's Mayor Rauf Onursal. Following this division *Demokrat İzmir* was closed down numerous times according to the publication prohibitions introduced by the DP and its executives were imprisoned. In fact, during the Yassıada Trials, the raid of the newspaper building and its attempted arson by a group of party members from İzmir, with İzmir deputies and executives among them, was presented as one of the ultimate proofs of party's violation of the constitution. Having reached a circulation of 100 thousand by the end of the 1950's, the paper adopted a leftist oppositional stance, despite its owner Dvenci's right-wing political views. Such names as Naci Sadullah, Kemal BilbaŐar, Attilâ İlhan, Cevat Őakir, Aziz Nesin and Rıfat Ilgaz have been among its writers. Although leftist views were championed in the paper, where Atilla İlhan was the chief editor and lead columnist for long years, many journalists were laid off on

account of being unionised. Failing to keep up with the technological change over the years, it was bought by Dinç Bilgin in 1979, published under the name *Rapor* [Report] for a while and then sold to Selahattin Beyazıt in 1985. With the capital obtained from this sale, Bilgin bought the computers for the daily *Sabah* [Morning] (Özsüphandağ Yayman, 2008). *Ege Ekspres* published by Nihat Kürşad and Jerfi Yener, both of whom had served as the chair of the İGC [İzmir Journalists Association] (<http://igc.org.tr/igc/baskanlar/>) and supported financially by the İzmirian industrialist Selçuk Yaşar, and *Gazete İzmir* and *Sabah Postası* have also been part of İzmir's press. Selçuk Yaşar has made a second attempt at publishing in the second half of the 1990's with *Gazete Ege*, yet this undertaking had failed. *Ege Telgraf*, founded in 1960 by Nedim Çapman, Gürbüz Kipkurt and Süha Tekil has reached a circulation of 35 thousand, under the ownership of Sezer Doğan, as an evening paper. In the second half of the 2000's it shifted its printing hours to match other newspapers and is still in circulation.

A decree issued by the National Unity Committee established after the Coup of May 27<sup>th</sup> revealed the role mechanisms of punishment and reward played in the government and press relations, during the DP rule. After *Demokrat İzmir* parted ways with the DP in 1950, the support received from *Yeni Asır* was rewarded with official ads and led to the emergence of *Yeni Asır* as the newspaper that received the highest number of official ads in İzmir (Topuz, 2015; p. 203). The power of *Yeni Asır* also influenced the position of Istanbul newspapers in İzmir. *Akşam*, which had become, in 1962, the first Istanbul paper printed in Ankara began also to be printed in İzmir, in 1963. However, as a consequence of Dinç Bilgin's dissuasion of the newsagents in İzmir, *Akşam*'s İzmir issue did not succeed (Topuz, 2015; p. 241). Due to the growing local strength of the daily *Yeni Asır*, in the 60's the dailies *Akşam*, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Tercüman* opened offices in İzmir and started printing their İzmir issues.

With the arrival of the 70's, the ground gained by the unionisation movement nationwide, had an impact on the İzmir press too. A heavy traffic of employee swapping took place between newspapers, such as the local *Demokrat İzmir* and *Ege Telgraf*, and the national papers that had branches in İzmir, such as *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Tercüman*, *Günaydın* and *Güneş*. According to G1, during that time frame, reporters who worked uninsured and on a low wage transferred to papers which offered better working conditions and the papers that did not want to lose good reporters strived to improve those conditions (Interviewed on 22 November 2016).

The 1980's, when the press sector became transformed into the media industry and experienced the beginnings of monopolisation, with media ownership passing into the hands of businessmen, were also a dynamic period for the İzmir press. Çetin Gürel, who had worked in the dailies *Ege Ekspres*, *Demokrat İzmir* and *Yeni Asır* and was involved in the foundation of the daily *Sabah* as its general manager, established in 1991 the first nationwide economy paper based in İzmir, called *Gözlem* [Observation]. During this period, while national dailies *Tercüman*, *Günaydın* and *Güneş* closed their İzmir offices before the year 2000, papers such as *Star*, *Zaman*, *Yeni Şafak*, *Türkiye*, *Evrensel*, *Sabah*, *Akşam* and *Birgün* opened offices in İzmir and others that did not have an office employed at least one İzmir correspondent and featured news concerning the city.

Aydın Bilgin, nephew of Şevket Bilgin who owned *Yeni Asır*, began publishing *Haber Ekspres* [News Express] in İzmir, in 2001 ([http://ra65.org/ogrenciler/Bilgin\\_Aydin.htm](http://ra65.org/ogrenciler/Bilgin_Aydin.htm)). Around the same time Hamdi Türkmen, who was a close friend of İzmir's Metropolitan Mayor Ahmet Priştina and who, for long years, worked as a columnist, news manager and general manager at *Yeni Asır* began publishing the daily *Yeniğün*. Both papers are still in circulation.



An elaboration of the long chain of events that began with *Yeni Asır*, which has been in circulation for 122 years as an important constituent of the İzmir press, and led up to Dinç Bilgin's publishing of the daily *Sabah* in İstanbul, would be beneficial to better understanding the working conditions of reporters in İzmir, which will be evaluated in the next sections.

*Yeni Asır* was founded in Thessalonica in 1895, by Fazıl Necip and Abdurrahman Arif, who was Dinç Bilgin's grandfather (Topuz, 2015 p287). During the population exchange between Turkey and Greece, Abdurrahman Arif's son, Şevket Bilgin emigrated from Thessalonica to İzmir, with his mother and five siblings, where he began to publish *Yeni Asır*. When the newspaper went into a financial crisis in the 1930's, Şevket Bilgin fixed the economic conditions by partnering with Abdi Sokullu (Münir, 1993; p. 28). Dinç Bilgin took over *Yeni Asır* in 1960, when its circulation number was below 10 thousand and turned it into the most influential, the best selling and the richest regional newspaper in Turkey. Reaching a circulation of 120 thousand in the 1980's, in the Aegean region the paper surpassed every İstanbul paper in terms of both sales and advertisement income (Münir, 1993; p. 16). Dinç Bilgin attempted to carry the success he achieved over to *Rapor*, the economy paper he published, however failed to do so in the long term. Having started working in *Yeni Asır* at the accounting department, Bilgin also supported the editorial department by translating James Bond novels from English and preparing horoscopes. With the improvements he brought to the distribution of the paper and his strategy of enhancing print quality paying off before long, by increased circulation numbers, Bilgin became the first person to start active marketing of newspaper ads by employing pretty, young girls in the advertising department (Münir, 1993; p. 44). Introducing changes to its publishing policy regarding national as well as regional news, *Yeni Asır* was among the Turkish dailies that covered Yassıada trials in a fair and well-rounded manner. Unable to withstand the burgeoning *Yeni Asır*, the first paper

to close down was *Sabah Postası* in 1965, followed by *Demokrat İzmir* and *Ege Ekspres* in 1979 (Münir, 1993; p.45). Opening offices in Manisa, Denizli and Aydın, in order to strengthen its presence in the Aegean region, *Yeni Asır* covered regional soccer teams in its sports pages and featuring magazine news with plenty of pictures of local celebrities its society pages introduced the expression “can can” [which was the name of these pages] to the Turkish press. *Yeni Asır* daily, which has always prioritised the income generated from classifieds and adverts over news coverage, reached a circulation of 120 thousand by the 1980’s and its ad revenues surpassed that of many Istanbul papers. By printing a page composed entirely on a computer, without typesetting, stripping or paste-up in 1981, as a first in the world, and thus computerising his newspaper, Bilgin reduced his expenses by 25-30% and at the same period parted ways with numerous employees (Münir, 1993; p. 48). Bilgin’s success made it necessary for many Istanbul newspapers to launch new initiatives to sell more papers in İzmir, since the fact that İzmir papers hit the newsstands sooner had a negative impact on their circulation numbers. The efforts of *Akşam*, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Tercüman* to overcome this timing problem by printing issues in İzmir has led, over time, to the founding of their İzmir branches. At a time when the Istanbul papers turned their gazes to İzmir and the Aegean region, in the early 1980’s Dinç Bilgin made an attempt to publish a national newspaper in İstanbul. Having established the daily *Sabah* in İstanbul in 1985, Bilgin also started publishing *Yeni Asır* in İstanbul in 1986, yet the paper had a print life of less than 4 months in this city (Münir, 1993; p. 140).

Sympathising with the DP prior to the coup of 1960, but changing its political stance and emphasizing the impartiality of its news coverage, in the wake of the hardships experienced after the coup, *Yeni Asır* has not refrained from making its pro-government slant explicit since the 2000’s. From active ad marketing to investing in computer technologies, having broken new grounds

in Turkey, *Yeni Asır* also constituted, in 1978, the first instance of the elimination of unions in the press (Özsever, 2004; p. 96). Unable to withstand the Journalists Union of Turkey (TGS), which decided to go on a strike when only half of bonuses were paid, the newspaper's management was forced to sign a collective agreement and paid full bonuses to their employees, yet a month later, coerced them to resign en masse from the union. Because of the failure of the employees to stand their grounds against this coercion, *Yeni Asır* set the first bad example of deunionisation of journalists, prior to 1980.

Bilgin family's journalism history that began in Thessalonika, has gone through all of the stages of the transformation of newspaper publishing from family owned businesses to corporations within a media industry, explained in the former sections of this study. During this process, all of the issues addressed by this study, such as the monopolisation efforts, the deunionisation of employees and the promotion wars waged with other newspapers via *Sabah*, being displayed by a single family and their newspapers, constitute a special case from İzmir.

Another point that should be elaborated in the İzmir section of the study is the "We want newspapers, not lottery" action initiated by the students at the Ege University's Faculty of Communication. In 1994, at a time when deunionisation practices peaked and newspaper circulations reached millions due to promotion campaigns addressed above in detail, students at the Faculty of Communication of the Ege University started a petition with the slogan "We want newspapers, not lottery" (Otan, 1995; p. 88). Pointing out to newspaper managements that they wanted to see the large sums of money spent on lotteries diverted to good journalism and better news coverage, the students explained that the collected signatures were to be delivered, along with a declaration, to all the newspapers. Emphasizing that the newspaper prices rising due to lotteries hindered national education, culture and reading habits, the students received support from non-governmental organisations like the

Progressive Journalists Association. While the developments were covered day by day solely by the daily *Cumhuriyet*, large newspapers chose to remain silent on the problems of the press. University students in İstanbul and Ankara adopted the movement that began in İzmir, while civil servants working at universities, health workers and citizens contributed with their signatures.

By March 2016, according to the data from the Provincial Directorate of Press and Information, 89 newspapers are published in İzmir. However, this number includes publications made by non-governmental organisations and institutions, which are published in the Aegean region. Meanwhile, İzmir and regional Aegean offices of national newspapers are not included in this number. At this time, the dailies *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Posta*, *Sabah*, *Habertürk*, *Aydınlık*, *Yeni Şafak*, *Star*, *Akşam*, *Güneş* and *Türkiye* have representative offices in İzmir. The national newspapers *Milat* and *Sözcü*, on the other hand, have only correspondents working in İzmir. In addition, *Star*, *Akşam* and *Güneş* belong to ES Medya, *Hürriyet* and *Posta* to Doğan Medya, and *Vatan* and *Milliyet* to the Demirören media groups. ES Media and Demirören groups only have representative offices in İzmir, where no reporters are employed. A similar situation also applies to the daily paper *Türkiye*. More than one reporter has worked at the papers *Zaman* and *Bugün*, which at some point had representative offices in İzmir.

In İzmir the İGC has 900, İzmir Branch of the Economic Reporters Association has 140, the Aegean Magazine Journalists Association has 23, İzmir Court and Security Reporters Association has 73, and the İzmir Branch of Turkish Photojournalists Association has 68 members.

However, especially among the members of the İGC, there exist many journalists who have ended their active careers a long time ago. Due to the requirement of possessing a “yellow press card” for membership, journalists who actively work at local, regional or national newspapers but do not possess

this card are not among the members of the association. On the other hand, the fact that 450 members of the İGC are employed by or retired from the TRT calls for attention. Hence, the İGC which has the largest membership number and which would be expected to provide an insight to the total number of journalists does not in truth reflect their true numbers. Meanwhile, considering that individuals employed by the TRT at numerous positions unrelated to journalism, like sound technicians or drivers, are given yellow press cards, the situation becomes even more complicated. Additionally, since most TRT employees are civil servants, they organise in unions other than the TGS, with memberships in BİRLİK HABER-SEN (Birlik Trade Union of Telecommunication and Communication Workers), TÜRK HABER-SEN (Union of Public Employees in Telecommunications, Paper and Press and Publishing Sector of Turkey) and HABER-SEN (Media, Communication and Postal Employees Union).

Another point that needs to be considered is the inability of journalists working in İzmir to specialize, due to underemployment. It is not possible for journalists that work in İzmir to become exclusive specialists as economic, political, health reporters, and so on. As a consequence, journalists who cover more than one field may become members in more than one association.

Among the organizations founded in İzmir by journalists but abolished themselves over time are the Health and Education Reporters Association, and the Young Journalists Platform. Established by journalists under 30 who could not qualify for a yellow press card, since the newspapers they worked at did not cover the required “journalism insurance” and thus could not become İGC members, the platform organized contact meetings for its members and gave statements to the press regarding the problems experienced by journalists, in its early days. However, as they were not sufficiently informed or equipped, when it came to organizing and refused the support offered by the TGS representative office, in time, the platforms activities became limited to shared

messages on social media. Platform founders and members quitting journalism and starting to work as press consultants at local administrations, universities and public institutions has also influenced this state of affairs to a large extent.

In the following sections, the state of the press sector in İzmir after 1980 will be conveyed through the viewpoints of the interviewed journalists.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE ANALYSIS OF POST-1980 STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION'S REFLECTION ON JOURNALIST IDENTITIES AND JOURNALISM PRACTICES**

In this chapter of the study, the definition of journalism will be discussed based on its social nature as its products influence public opinion. In addition, how it is affected by the structural transformation detailed in the previous section and changes in journalism practices will also be discussed in the framework of the interviews and definitions in the literature.

The journalist is included in the general definition of the working class for the reason that he sells his labour for a price. In this sense, he is in not in a different situation than an agricultural worker or a factory worker. However, the social nature of the product generated by the journalist means special importance is attached to the definition of the journalist in this study. As Özsever emphasises (2004; p. 53), individuals of a society read newspapers, watch mass media to gain insights and use this information in the selection of those who govern them, that is, democratic processes. So, the product of the journalist is of great importance in society at the local and national levels, unlike the products of other working people. The product of an agricultural worker can only meet the vital needs of its recipient, while a newspaper or television programme has a broader influence. It has influence in the uncovering of a social problem, in the solution of an existing problem, or if it is the right time, in the absence of the right choices as a consequence of misguided masses. For these reasons, the definition of journalist, his rights and the transformation of these rights over time, need to be evaluated separately as they are in a close relationship with social rights and freedoms.

## 1. WHO IS THE JOURNALIST?

Journalism has been described many times. However, there are contradictions in defining it as a “profession” such as attorney, physician, teacher, accountant, due to lack of conditions such as education level, employment and leaving the job. Journalism can also be carried out by graduates who are not from communications faculty, on the grounds that journalism is based on individual skills rather than educational skills. While The Economist magazine supports this notion with its statement that journalism has become an industrial profession from a time when it was based on artisanship, Kapuscinski, the master of contemporary journalism, says that the profession has undergone profound changes over the past 20 years. According to Kapuscinski, in the past, journalists were experts and there were a few famous names in the profession. The number of journalists was limited (Ramonet, 2000; p. 60).

While Alemdar and Uzun do not define journalism as a profession because it is “a job that any bored person can do”; Oktay Ekşi expresses his definition of journalism as an “occupation” ie a pastime, in the light of his experiences (2013; p. 18). According to Tokgöz, journalism (2012; p. 126) is the process that includes the gathering, writing, editing and dissemination of information considered as news material. A journalist is the person who collects the information that he finds the most important for the mass he wants to reach and makes individuals think by getting information. Tokgöz’s definition corresponds to Duran’s definition. Duran also makes the definition that reporting/journalism is the whole process, carried out by professionals, from the emergence of the news to the citizen’s access to it; and that a journalist or reporter is the person who performs this work (Adapted by Şuğle, 2001; p. 28). Similarly, as Şuğle states, according to Derieux, a journalist is the person who explores, chooses, prepares, shapes, presents, explains and interprets the information in a written, drawn, verbal or visual manner at the editorial



department of an information or communication business, primarily, regularly and on a salary basis (2001; p. 29). The definitions made up to this point generally emphasise the technical side of journalism.

According to Şahin, however, the journalist has important duties from the standpoint of social democracy. For Şahin (2012; p. 22), it is extremely important that the journalist, who knows that his task is a very important one within the democratic system, has a sense of mission to convey the truth to the public. Mete Çubukçu describes journalism as “the art of asking questions” and conceptualises his mission as “asking questions for the public and its interest, not for himself” (2013; p. 231). Uğur Mumcu, a respected figure in the Turkish press, gave the following definition of journalist in his column entitled “Observation” in *Milliyet* newspaper: “The journalist refers to the person who reaches the source of news and information in the shortest time and presents to the readers the information and news he obtained from these sources” (3 May 1992). However, further into his definition of journalist, Mumcu also mentions the journalist’s part in the system and said “...the journalist has to be a reliable person. He must be a person who can keep secrets, knows how to hide sources of news and information, and should be able to fight against governments and power groups, if necessary;” emphasising that the journalist should be independent of ethics and power. According to the communication theorist O’Neil, the intrinsic and indispensable purpose of journalism is “to tell the truth” (Tılıç, 1998; p. 95). The journalist has the obligation to convey the events in the society in an objective way, to inform the citizens correctly and to contribute to the creation of critical citizens. The journalist is not limited to just conveying the news, but is obliged to reflect the causes of the current situation, how it happened, the invisible side and the background, to the readers/viewers.

At this point, theoretical approaches to news and reporting come up. Likewise, if we define the news as “the latest, newest and most interesting information about events, people or things that occur somewhere in the real

world,” the reporter is “the person responsible for ensuring or at least maximising the impartiality, objectivity and the balance of the information it contains” (Dursun, 2005; p. 69). The fact that the journalist can reflect or the idea that he has the chance to reflect the information about the fact or the situation just like a “mirror”, is called a Liberal Pluralistic Approach. Liberal Pluralists often ignore the subjective nature of the journalist and the structural boundaries of the media institution. According to them, there are many different opinions in a democratic and pluralistic society and they can be expressed freely, the news centres work democratically and the journalist speaks as an autonomous and objective professional (Tılıç, 1998; p. 95). At this point, as can be seen in the interviews carried out with journalists in the next chapter, there is a distinction in the describing of journalism by journalists, between *how it is* and *how it should be*. The basis of this distinction is found in Critical Approaches. These approaches, which doubt that news are texts that reflect the truth and journalists are only mediators between the event and the public, emphasise that “objective and impartial journalism” can not exist as it operates in a capitalist society, which reflects certain class interests (Dursun, 2005; p. 70). The Economic-Political Approach in Critical Approaches points out that the media is related to the state and that the economy is dominated by giant economic corporations (Tılıç, 1998; p. 48). According to these approaches, the journalist’s work is to “distort” the truth to the extent that the media boss and his class interests will be maintained. In other words, the media manipulates the truth to mask the real economic and political situation. The role of the media in the work of increasing the number of audience/readers, profits and minimising the risk, is to legitimise the interests of the media owner and those who control them, by creating false consciousness. This understanding, naturally, is quite contrary to the ideal journalism understanding of the Liberal-Pluralist Approach. Because in democratic societies, according to the Liberal-Pluralist Approach, the main task of the reporting media is to create a counterpower on the public’s side against the existing political-

economic power. According to this idea, the first aim of the journalist is to announce, question and warn the masses about the things that are being done in the name of the public, for the public. This aim gives the journalist a permanent responsibility to always be in pursuit of the truth. And this responsibility confronts the journalist with the powerful and dominant class that tries to hide some information from the public. The task of journalists is to reveal this hidden information (Arsan, 2005; p. 146).

Tokgöz (2012; p. 142) states that today's newspapers that require big investments since they are being operated as large-scale enterprises or even monopolies also determines the role of journalists who work in these institutions; and emphasises that journalists have become people who work at these companies or group companies that own so many newspapers as never seen before. What is controversial is that journalists are not influenced by the interest of newspaper owners' interests, and that journalism, which is an intellectual activity, is not damaged.

Journalist Murat Çelikkan (2013; p. 190), who says "We are reporting under various obstacles and restrictions on both general and human rights issues," explains the current situation as follows:

If your organisation's boss invested in energy or education, for example, your chances of being able to independently report on energy and education are reduced. Because, whether you are aware of it or not, these topics will automatically become taboo zones as this news might conflict with the interests of your boss. In fact, nobody tells you "Do not report this news". But in practice, this becomes a reality.

Self-censoring, which has become one of the biggest problems of journalists in "operation" that Çelikkan refers to, will be referred to in detail in the following sections.

Interviews carried out with reporters for this study also confirm the dilemma set out above. The situation has not changed for journalists whether

they have been in the profession for less than 10 years or 10 to 20 years, even more than 20 years. Reporters that started their work with the journalism definition of the Liberal-Pluralist Approach, evolved into the Economy-Political Approach through a critical perspective over time. G7, who works in a newspaper at the centre of the mainstream media in Turkey, has described the definition of journalism, idealised in communication faculties but reshaped in journalistic practice, as follows:

When I was in high school, dreaming of becoming a journalist, the definition of being a journalist for me was: impartial, tells people the truth, gives them an idea about the world they live in and allows them to oppose. As the university years came down hard on me I figured that the definition of journalism in my head was equal to my own world view. We were talking about a subject, that brings awareness to people, wakes them up, tells them the truth, and knows all the facts... If you question the truth, you question journalism. I felt relieved when I understood that it was not my mission to bring awareness to anyone. Is journalism a mirror? ... Then I realised that concepts such as impartiality and balance are only methods that middle ground journalists found to justify themselves. I realised that these are the adjectives of a game set up by Continental European newspapers and American television to replicate the concept of approval, to make others believe in their statement: "Look, we reflect you the truth to you, there is no political interest. We do not have a capital relationship with any monetary, power groups." When you learn not to believe those adjectives, you also lose faith in the profession. What are you going to do? You think your own facts can change, too. For example, I would have liked to say to you that "Journalism is partiality; it is to always take the side of the right thing, the oppressed, the wronged." Especially in Turkey, the concept of the oppressed changes a lot. Including the group that I work for, the past's powerful newspaper, the one with headlines I had found against human rights, is now the newspaper that we must defend in the face of oppressed freedom of the press. What are we going to do when what is right is also changing? So, we can establish the definition of journalism as follows: Journalism is relative. It is something we can perform by taking care of what we have, in a relative soul-searching, and as far as possible, away from power relations, economic relations, sexist, racist statements... Because when one graduates and gets a job in the sector, all questioning is forgotten. (Interview date: 25 October 2015)

G4, who is a correspondent of both the public and the holding companies, and got involved in trade union movements all through his professional life, believes that the universal definition of journalism is not valid in Turkey:

My definition of journalism, recalling universal criteria, is that freedom of press is one of the means of using freedom of expression that is among basic human rights. And reporting is also a job that aims to give accurate information, to announce news of what is done on behalf of the public. I do not think there should be any leeway should be given. No government, no political power, no editorial point of view of any press organisation should be influential on it. Journalists should be free. I'm on this side of it all. Each institution has different publishing policies, applied to the same news and we need to inform the public correctly. So I have a universal point of view that is in line with the Press Labour Law, the Journalists' Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities of the Journalists' Association of Turkey and the international qualifications of the International Federation of Journalists. Well, is it possible? According to this point of view, I practiced journalism according to these principles, but we know that broadcasting organisations no longer have this perspective. Journalism in Turkey should target peace, aim at equality, democracy and freedom. But there is increased bias in Turkey now. On the one hand, the government-controlled media, on the other hand, the opposition media. This has been experienced by the effects of the polarisation of the country. But our focus should have been on a form of journalism based on democratisation, freedom and equality. Turkey has never been a place with truly peaceful journalism. The political power and other power groups, the state, the authority, the bureaucracy have always put visible and invisible pressure on the press, the media, private and public institutions. (Interview date: 7 October 2015)

Some of the interviews point to journalism as a profession that needs to fulfill social justice. G3 expressed this situation as “You know how they say ‘If you can not do it, you can at least write about it, talk about it’; similarly, if I can not achieve justice, I feel an urge to write about it, draw it, mention it in the newspaper, to express rebellion in this way” (Interview date: 9 January 2016 ). According to G9, the correspondent's sense of justice is interfered with in news that is written under editorial pressure depending on the friendship between the newspaper and the government:

I told myself ‘I can do this, I can write what I want.’ It turns out, I can not... I got that over time. When I first entered the newspaper, I wrote the article and gave it a caption, too. The news involved negative comments against the government and that was what I used in the caption. The secretary came and asked me: ‘What are you doing?’ ‘What am I doing? This is what they said’ I said. ‘Girl, what are you doing, you can not write that. Do you want to be reprimanded by the news centre, by the news director?’ she said. ‘Why would I be? I’m not making things up’ I said. And she said ‘No. Delete this and write this and that’. I said ‘But that did not happen.’ She said: ‘It did happen.’ Then I felt like they had hit me with a hammer. There have been many examples of this. (Interview date: 27 November 2015)

According to G2, the most important breaking point came when newspaper ownership moved from journalist families to media holdings. This has impacted the quality of journalists working in the sector:

Journalists were people who did their job best, did it right, did not take advantage of it, and reflected all the problems. A journalist is a mirror for society. We did this very well in the first 10 years but the quality of journalists began to decline in the next 10 years, so these characteristics faded away in the second decade. It started to be a mirror for corporations, not society. And then it started to be a mirror for individuals. In the second decade, self-iinterested journalism became important. Journalism that gives priority to the interests of individuals instead of the society has begun. The breaking point is quality journalists rejecting low wage, which is a result of deunionisation caused by monopolisation. (Interview date: 17 November 2016)

The Journalists' Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities defines journalism as follows: (Journalists' Union of Turkey, 2010; p. 5):

The journalist is a person who is regularly engaged, daily or periodically, in a written, visual, audible, electronic or digital press and broadcasting organisation; who is on the permanent staff, on contract or copyright agreement, in charge of receiving, processing, communicating news or expressing opinions and ideas; and whose main livelihood and main job is this, and whose position before the laws that concern the company is in accordance with this definition.

Law No. 5953 Amended by The Law No.212 on the Regulation of the Relations Between the Employees and the Employers in the Press Profession (Press Labour Law) defines the journalist as follows (Journalists' Union of Turkey, 2010; p. 7):

The provisions of this law shall apply to the employees of newspapers and periodicals published in Turkey performing all kinds of intellectual and artistic work in news and photo agencies, and others that are excluded in the definition of "worker" in the Labour Law, and their employers. Employees who work on a salary basis in intellectual and artistic jobs that fall under this law, are called journalists.

On the other hand, the study titled "Who is a Journalist?" (Press Council, 1993; p. 5) prepared by the Press Council, emphasises the contradictions, on the question of who the state considers as journalist, between Press Law

No.5680, Law No.5953 on the the Regulation of the Relations Between the Employees and the Employers in the Press Profession and the Press Card Regulation. A person who can not take the title of “newspaper owner, responsible manager or correspondent” according to Law No.5680 and who is not actually a journalist (for example the Press Consultant of the Ministry) can still obtain a Press Card and can define himself as a “journalist”. However, since the title of journalism is not exclusive to “newspaper owners, responsible managers or correspondents”, a person who is excluded by the Law on the Press can prove that he is a journalist by stealing and writing in another branch of the profession or by drawing a cartoon. Moreover, Article 13 of the Law No.5953 says “Unless stated otherwise in the contract with the employer, the journalist is allowed to hold additional jobs outside, whether press-related or not;” invalidating the condition that the person must earn his/her main livelihood from this to be a journalist. In addition to this, the Prime Ministry Directorate General of Press and Information gives yellow or blue press cards, which are considered sufficient for the acquisition of a journalistic identity.

Another heading that should be added to all this legal confusion is the lack of any requirement to graduate from a communications faculty or the press academy, to give its former name. The difficulty in defining journalism starts here. While graduation is required to practice professions such as lawyer, doctor, engineer, pharmacist and teacher, such conditions are not sought for journalism. This situation has important consequences: Firstly, those who work in journalism but did not study it, influence the quality of journalism. Again, journalism practiced by untrained people means that the journalist can not fulfill his social responsibility at the point of “undertaking responsibility for the news and information he communicates.” After all, the main responsibility of the journalism profession is to tell the truth, to convey the facts. Another important result is that thousands of young journalists graduating from

communication faculties every year can not find opportunities for themselves in the sector.

As can be seen, regardless of the reporter's experience and the position of the institution in relation to the government, the journalist's independence and veracity constitutes the common point in the definition of journalism. The responsibilities of journalists are defined in the Journalists' Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities (<http://www.tgc.org.tr/bildirgeler/turkiye-gazetecilik-hak-ve-sorumluluk-bildirgesi.html>). What is clearly emphasised in the Declaration is that the journalist's responsibility to the public comes before his responsibility to his employer and public authorities.

## **2. THE TRANSFORMATION IN JOURNALISM PRACTICE**

Given the influence of neo-liberal policies dominating the world over the past 30 years on Turkey, the press is one of the sectors most affected by this situation. Looking at the process after 1980 especially, the press organisations that were initially operated by journalist families became part of the conglomerates of businessmen who invested in different sectors, which led to a monopolised and new understanding of newspaper operation. Moving away from journalism, the press has become a medium that defends the interests of the business and the owner, with a publication policy and agenda determined by the relationship with the state.

The ethical/moral understanding of the press has also evolved into a changing structure in the process. While the 90s were the height of false and/or fabricated news based on worries about circulation, reporters had to write news that would distance them from the profession. G3 talks about the news he/she had to make during this period:



What do you practice journalism for? You do it to inform the public. It is an educational tool. You give people the news but you also mean 'Get this. And get it as we tell it.' Otherwise, there is no point in revealing and highlighting this person or that person. The Chief, giving us advice, said one day: 'Take photos of pretty women.' Why? Because then the news get prettier... I don't think I have talked about 'skirts' that often ever in my life. I felt like a pervert. You know, I will find pretty women and picture their face... They say 'Just get the name right and we'll type the rest'... So I did. And the chief got her name from the court hearing list. The woman made no statement. I read on the next day's newspaper: 'Lady with blue eyes seeks increase in support payment.' I thought to myself that I didn't know this woman at all and yes we got the name right but we didn't know if it was a maintenance case. I was shocked by this... And I felt sick; this was not the journalism I knew. (Interview date: 9 January 2016)

Umur Talu, who writes the "Dead Well" column in *Habertürk* newspaper, finds national journalism in particular being more ethical than the past and criticises the fact that today's journalism has reached "sterile" or even "pasteurised" dimensions (Talu, 2013; p. 55). Talu mentions that the investigative journalists who sought and revealed the truth in America at the beginning of the 20th century were called "mud crackers", and argues that journalism is "spotless" in Turkey. According to Talu, today there is no way for reporters to question political, military or capitalist power in Turkey. However, at this point, the situation is mainly about the mainstream media and organs. Likewise, the interview with G9 reveals that the limited opportunities for local and regional media still necessitate unethical practices. G9 states that the ongoing unethical practices in the internet environment are caused by limited possibilities offered by the capital owner for the journalist:

Cut-copy-paste journalism does exist; I figured. Make the page with no subscription to any agency and not enough reporters. Hürriyet newspaper made news, find online and copy-paste. The website of our newspaper is the little Hürriyet. Unable to generate authentic content because you don't have qualified staff to run the internet channel..."Steal images," your boss tells you. He wants you to find the photo he saw online, of a TÜSIAD meeting – which took place in Ankara. I have no reporter in Ankara and no agency memberships at all. So what to do? Google the meeting, find a high-resolution image and steal it. (Interview date: 27 November 2015)

With monopolisation, the “market” has become one of the most sacred concepts in the media – which has put the concept-appropriate journalist employment on the agenda. (Özsever, 2004; p. 149). As Talu noted, investigative journalists who do not hesitate to go down into the sewer, have been replaced by magazine-based, “fixer” journalists who take on the commercial interests of the media boss, assume involvement with political power and bureaucracy. In this case, some of the journalists with classical press credentials were eliminated while some of them continued to work in the institutions in line with the understanding of their newspaper, without really accepting it. For example, G5, one of the journalists who works at one of the newspapers that started publishing with a pro-government position and then changed its position to anti-government, replies with the words “I am trying to keep my impartiality” in response to the question of how the practice of journalism is affected by the attitude of newspaper bosses. (Interview date: 11 October 2015)

On the other hand, the “star journalist” mentality, which corresponds to the publication of Sabah newspaper in İstanbul by Dinç Bilgin, has led to high level managers and writers becoming more powerful, wealthy and prestigious. This understanding probably had the most negative effect on newspapers reporting news for the benefit of the public. Because, for such journalists, the interests of the newspaper boss has taken precedence over the benefit for the public. James Fallow, the author of “Breaking the News: How the Media Undermines American Democracy?” explains this situation in these words: “The most well-known journalists were the ones who most damaged the quality of the news and the respectability of the profession” (Özsever, 2004; p. 150).

With increasing monopolisation, the senior executives and editors of the media started to take their places on the “executive” boards of media organisations. The journalists’ responsibilities on executive boards have been

the responsibility of publishing in accordance with the market strategies established by business managers. This also made it possible for these senior managers who abandoned most of their journalistic identity to become members of the big capital institutions in the country. For example, Ertuğrul Özkök, former editor-in-chief of *Hürriyet* newspaper, and Zafer Mutlu, former editor-in-chief of *Sabah* newspaper, became TÜSİAD (Turkish Industry and Business Association) members. During a chat show on CNN Türk, the TV channel affiliated to the Doğan Group, Özkök stated that since he was involved more closely with the business and marketing activities, he could spend 15 percent of his shift on producing the newspaper (Özsever, 2004; p. 151). The following words of Zafer Mutlu also support Özkök (Demir, 2010; p. 61):

If I'm giving 10, I'm expecting to get 15 back. Anyone who claims otherwise is lying. Morality, order, democracy – all rubbish. *Sabah* newspaper does not exist to enlighten the Turkish people. *Sabah* is not doing this job for the benefit of the public; it is doing it to make money.

Dinç Bilgin, owner of *Sabah* newspaper, who is very pleased with the attitude of this journalist-manager attitude adopted by Mutlu, summarises the situation as follows (Münir, 1993; p. 140):

I gradually made him a 'business manager' rather than a general editor. In the practice of the classic Sublime Porte there is an executive editor who wants to spend continuously, and a general director who manages the boss's money. We struggled not to let this happen in *Sabah* and we were good. Zafer usually stood by the 'management' because he knew about the money issue.

Kaya categorises journalists in this period into two types according to their location. The first category is composed of writers and managers who receive astronomical salaries because of the circulation they bring. In the second category, although they can not attract an extraordinary circulation, there are names who are "functional for the business" due to the relations they established with their journalist identities (Kaya, 2009; p. 204). Kaya points out that most of the real news producers in the second category, which is the vast

majority, are people who work for a much lower salary than the market rate, and without a labour contract according to Law No.212. Güneri Civaoğlu, Çetin Altan, Mehmet Altan, Hasan Cemal, Zülfü Livaneli, Osman Ulagay, Cengiz Çandar and Meral Tamer are among the names Kaya included in the first category, in 1992 in *Sabah* newspaper (Münir, 1993; p. 162).

However, the concept of “star journalism” has been criticised not only by functional journalists but also by important figures who worked in the press for many years. The “Arena” programme producer and *Hürriyet* newspaper columnist, Uğur Dündar, is among the names criticising the journalists who became rich after the 1980’s with the competition and the understanding of rising values. Dündar, who advocates that individuals that might be stars must be remunerated, but that it is necessary to distinguish between gaining economic power and living among the economically powerful (Otan, 1995; p. 29):

If you are just one of the guests of the rich, and your life is spent listening to what the rich and the powerful are talking about, then you have to see our country and the world through their eyes. Today, unfortunately some journalists live like this... Journalists shall not model themselves on politicians, power circles.

This situation had a similar effect in İzmir, where this study took place, where it was manifested in different ways. G1, adding to Fallow’s view that the quality of news and prestige of the profession are damaged by journalists the most, points out the role of journalists with the title of manager in the deunionisation of newspapers:

After the 90s, executive editors, who had a passion for living in a mansion, pulled the fastest one on journalists. The deunionisation process, in particular, was started because of this after the 90s. In the past, journalists, journalist-executive editors and journalist-bosses knew what they were doing. 80 liras of the 100 liras which came out of the boss’s pocket was given to newspaper employees and 20 liras to higher level employees. The managers were happy, too. Greedy managers eliminated the union from the newspaper after the 90s; took 80 liras for themselves and distributed 20 liras to the employees. Unfortunately, that structure is still in place. Back then, we experienced such a drop in our salaries. (Interview date: 22 November 2016)

12 September 1980, as Umur Talu says, started a “spotless” period in journalism, but pushed the main task of journalism that is “the art of asking questions and researching”, into the background (Çubukçu, 2013; p. 231). The anecdote of a prominent journalist, who shared a memory of the post-1980 period with Tılıç, reveals the point where journalism came to even in the first and foremost task of “asking questions” (Tılıç, 1998; p. 103-104):

After the death of Özal in 1993, Demirel, who succeeded to Çankaya, held his first press conference in the press room of the palace. After he finished his words, he turned to journalists and said, ‘Now I will answer your questions.’ There was a silence that lasted for 30 seconds maybe. It was so bizarre and disturbing that Demirel felt the need to push the journalists: ‘Do not be afraid, do not be afraid! Ask.’ The problem is, according to a prominent journalist, that this 30 seconds of silence was evidence of a 15-year deformation in the journalistic profession.

The same journalist likens the post-1980 journalists to “copper wire” for the reason that they turned into people who record what politicians say and transmit it as news, since copper wire has the best conductivity. Emphasising that journalists lost their will to question the world they live in, the journalist complains that journalists became people who trade the information they get in politics to derive benefits (Tılıç, 1998; p. 104).

In the post-1980 period, building special relations with the source replaced the keeping of power centres at a distance and protection of the journalist’s position in the relations established with the source. In fact, connexion to power centres became the preferred situation, contrary to the past. This situation was not very different in İzmir. The CHP mayor performed the marriage ceremony of G5, who was a political correspondent on a local television channel, while CHP and MHP provincial chiefs were the witnesses. G6 experienced this situation in a different way:

The son of the İzmir representative studied at Deniz Koleji; for 7 years we reported news about Deniz Koleji. At that time, a colleague was doing the culture-arts page and graduated from Dokuz Eylül Fine Arts Faculty. The representative used to tell us ‘Oh forget about this arty-farty stuff.’ Then his son entered Dokuz Eylül Fine Arts Faculty. In the next 5 years we reported news about the successes of Dokuz Eylül and about the academy. Then he bought a summer house in Karaburun. We used to travel 3 days a week for the Ege supplement; we wrote about what was good and beautiful about Karaburun as well as the achievements of its mayor. (Interview date: 23 March 2016)

Journalist Murat Çelikkan argues that the matter of changing journalistic practice should be approached from another angle. Çelikkan points out that the borders of “tabloid journalism” and “serious journalism” are gradually fading away in the field of printed media, and he emphasises the point about the “tabloidisation” (2013; p. 193). Stating that material that would almost certainly never make it onto a tabloid newspaper is now among the daily news items even in serious newspapers, Çelikkan states that news of the NATO Summit, which was organised in Turkey and involved important topics such as Afghanistan and Iraq, was only heard relating to the jokes and the food the presidents enjoyed during the summit, even in the bestselling newspapers.

While the mission to provide accurate information to the public is seen as the main task of journalism by all of the journalists interviewed, the way G7 describes it “...If you question the truth, you question journalism. I felt relieved when I understood that it was not my mission to bring awareness to anyone,” reveals what journalism has turned into, for journalists. As Mete Çubukçu says, “... the most important driving force of this profession is to be the correspondent” and a journalist has to be a reporter throughout his life (2013; p. 230). However, journalism has become a profession that many young journalists want to practice immediately, becoming a columnist or an opinion leader without any experience in the streets and without the mission of bringing awareness to the public. While the media should be the “fourth estate” in monitoring legislative, executive and judicial powers in the name of the society

and the citizens, it has become, in Duran's words, the "fifth arm" of rulers and property owners (Duran, 2005; p. 93). However, the statement of the American Political Scientist Alexis de Tocqueville for citizen journalism is very striking: "You can not have real newspapers without democracy and you can not have democracy without newspapers" (Cangöz, 2005; p. 107). Today, however, the media has become a power centre for itself, with relations established with both economic and political sources of power (Cangöz, 2013; p. 75).

### **2.1. Precarisation (Flexible Employment)**

The common point that is revealed in both the literature search for the study and the interviews done with reporters, is that the practice of journalism suffered huge losses as it was modified with the changing ownership structure of the press. One of the primary elements of these losses was precarisation, which can be reworded as "flexible employment".

The change caused by the shift from industrial capitalism to information capitalism, and the neoliberal policies that have been implemented globally since the early 1980s, have had adverse effects on all forms of labour. Vatansever and Yalçın, who state that the vital elements that were not capitalised in the previous period are commodified now, argue that the human labour that produces that product is included in capitalist wage labour relation, meaning that it also became a commodity to be sold in the market (2015; p. 36-37). Therefore, the more aspects of human life that are involved in the market conditions, the greater the chance that capital dominance will take over the human forces of production, and the more self-alienation occurs. Assuming that the visible side of commodified labour is the precarisation of labour, Ulrich Beck recognises this as a sign of "transition from labour society to risk society", depending on deregulation and flexibilisation (Vatansever and Yalçın, 2015; p. 48). Flexibility, which can be evaluated within the new practices of the global competitive environment, is supported by practices such as part-

time, flexible or temporary contract-based employment and hiring interns instead of professionals. The shift from full-time employment to flexible workforce use was put into practice by switching from the standard working week, which covered five working days from Monday to Friday and approximately from 08.00 to 17.00, to unspecific working hours and days. In addition to this, in parallel with the change in demand an enterprise is allowed to employ workers within other departments of the enterprise or in other workplaces outside the enterprise for certain periods of time. Daily and weekly working time limits are removed and insufficient work of one period started to be compensated by intensive work in another period, while the start and end of working hours becomes ambiguous and the work can not be completed within the altered start and end of working hours (Erol, 2010; p. 47). Erol states that the forms of flexible employment as well as the definitions of part-time work, on-call work, temporary (indentured) work relation, make-up work, fixed-term work, short-term work, sub-employer (subcontractor) relation entered business law within the scope of new Labour Law No.1475, which was published in the Official Gazette dated 10 May 2003. Erol explains that flexible employment practices are used as a tool in burdening employees and the state with the risks of enterprises in dynamic markets of the globalised and violent competition environment; also in eliminating the bargaining power of the ordinary, unprotected, insecure and nonunionised class by enlarging them (2010; p. 47). Tiliç claims that the combination of flexible working conditions with the absence of trade unions and the absence of a strong organisational structure against bosses causes journalists to seem helpless in their relations with business professions and institutions (1998; p. 2018).

What is noteworthy here is that labour, confronted with the constant threat of unemployment, is willing to accept flexible practices. This socio-psychological pressure mechanism, which Bourdieu (Vatansever and Yalçın, 2015; p. 48) calls “the structural violence of fear”, forces labour to accept all



kinds of working conditions with the fear that labour will never find a job again.

Vatansever defines precarisation (becoming insecure, unprotected) as a process in which the rights of labour are violated, the qualities of labour are made insignificant and suppression is taken to such level that labour internalises exploitation at any moment in fear of being thrown out of the system in the ruthless competitive conditions of labour markets (Vatansever and Yalçın; 2015 p 49). Bourriaud, on the other hand, describes precarisation, its position and its aftermath in the system, as the groups which became uncertain due to the structural transformation of capitalism (Vatansever, 2013; p. 3). This fear of anxiety and losing control experienced in different layers of labour leads to the perception that the possibility of regular income and employment guarantee is a “privilege”. “Internship” is the top precarious employment method among the flexible working conditions, which are applied most in the press sector in Turkey. The Journalist’s Handbook, prepared by the Journalists’ Union of Turkey in 2010, says that “the testing period for beginner journalists is maximum three months” based on Law No.5953 ie Law No. 212. The statement also notes: “Even during the ‘3 month-internship’ or the ‘trial period’ the employer must pay your insurance premium. It is illegal to employ ‘illicit labour’ by not paying the insurance premium of journalists in the ‘trial period’.” Furthermore it says: “It is obligatory that a written contract is made at the end of this period. The number of interns can not exceed over 10 percent of the editorial staff on contract (2010; p. 11). However, the interviews with reporters show that the law does not apply whether in a state institution or a local/conglomerate press organisation. Monopolist bosses who want to increase their profit rates adopted the flexible employment model that reduces employment, thus labour costs. In other words, it was aimed to make the highest profit for the boss by employing the intern journalist under the name of “stamped work”, without permanent employment, without insurance, without

social security and without organisation. G4, who had been paid per disclosed news for 5 years although he/she had been working in a state press organisation and was sent to all sorts of quite dangerous reporting tasks without insurance so that the employer was saved from the insurance burden, talks about the ongoing lawsuit process:

Imagine, you are invisible, but actually everywhere. Back then I won awards, for example, I went to training missions out of town in the name of the agency. But you are not seen, you work without insurance. I will prove that period. I worked in the same office with the same people for 14 years. So it was not hard for me at all to prove it, no problem. (Interview date: 7 October 2015)

G7 expresses the fear of unemployment that reaches the extent of “willingness to internalise the exploitation”, as Vatansever points out, and talks about how it is applied in local newspapers:

In local newspapers, ‘Let’s insure you’ means something like ‘We are promoting you’. They already pay a salary above the minimum wage. Predicting that a reporter has 6 months of professional life in a local newspaper, a local paper that is not institutionalised or has bad reputation; 3 months of it is what they call the ‘trial period’. If at the end of that trial period they decide to insure you, you feel like a very successful reporter. And that is not by (law no.) 212, only (law no.) 1475. (Interview date: 25 October 2015)

As can be guessed, few journalists who start to work in the media industry as interns get the chance to become permanent staff. On the other hand, flexibility does not come to an end at all even for those who get the chance of permanent employment, and this “lucky” segment is employed under Law No.1475, not Law No.212 on Press, as G7 explains.

This submissive state of acceptance of what Bourdieu calls ‘the flexible exploitation of labour’ is felt more intensely in the mental/cognitive/cultural sectors identified with creativity. Gill and Pratt argue that the degree of identification of cultural/creative labour with professional identity and the personal pleasure supposedly taken from work make it easier for voluntary

acceptance of long shifts and devastating work intensity in these sectors and blur the boundaries between work and private life. Similarly, the “mind set that is a mixture of bohemia and entrepreneurship” in the creative sectors and the sense of class privilege arising from the higher education requirement of the job, result in labour’s voluntary acceptance of negative conditions such as low wages, task switching, lack of employment security and unions (Vatansever and Yalçın, 2015; p. 51). According to Vatansever, *precarisation*, unlike the proletariat, is a class that fulfills most of the requirements for achieving a “good life” according to highly educated, bourgeois criteria, and in principle does not define itself within the contradiction of capital (2013; p. 8). Ergun Babahan, who was the executive editor of *Sabah* newspaper, is among those who supported the definition of this class as non-ideological, non-political and highly individualistic/selfish. Looking at the first part of Babahan’s statement that defends deunionisation, selfishness among journalists becomes even more visible (Otan, 1995; p. 105):

Journalism is a profession where individual skills shine out. These skills come to the fore both in the editorial office and in the field of reporters. This sector is not really suitable for collective bargaining. Now looking at the newspaper, ‘Wage imbalance has distorted the professional tradition’ says the chairman of the association. What does this mean? I will work hard, 12 hours a day. The other one will come and get the same wage to just look at a news item...

Mesching and Stuhr take this definition one step further and define the new workforce profile that has been glorified for white collar employees: “Flexible enough to be able to bend all around, a performance freak enough to exploit self... Runs to work at any moment, accessible at all times” (Bora and Erdoğan, 2015; p. 24). The interview with G1, who talks about his working conditions, follows exactly the definition of Mesching and Stuhr:

I've been working for Regional News for years. I am responsible for publishing in 11 cities except for the Aegean region. I reported news for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea offices, also Ankara when they needed help. I posted an average of 188 to 255 news items a day. The average of the others was 30-35. But how did I do that? I would take my spot at my desk at 08.00 am and leave the chair at 10:30 pm. (Interview date: 22 November 2016)

On the other hand, G1, despite the fact that he/she worked for 11 cities apart from his/her own region and supported the centre, which is about 10 times that of his/her position, expresses this as his/her normal work routine, while he/she has done it by his/her own efforts; this, in fact, refers to the work culture formed among journalists. Ignoring the negative working conditions leads to both ignoring the responsibilities and working more. But the fact is that success and profits are absorbed by newspaper bosses, while failure is given to the working reporter only.

Fear of unemployment is one of the most important factors triggering the tendency to overwork. The affect of being enough of a performance freak to exploit oneself on home life is explained in G4's comments on his marriage that ended with divorce:

My ex was also a journalist, so he was aware. And he saw my struggle. He was a journalist working in the private sector. But in one period my work tempo increased a lot. I heard one day, when I came home at 4 am, I remember he said it was enough. If we had not been colleagues, it would have been a very difficult marriage. I saw that there was a limit even to his patience. (Interview date: 7 October 2015)

### **2.1.1. Increasing fear of unemployment with technological improvements**

The way the economy grows is of great importance for journalists who feel anxious about unemployment, which is a cause of great concern for them and may be the greatest pressure on them. One of the primary causes of unemployment is that the economy has a structure that grows not by increasing

but by reducing employment. In situations when the increase in productivity is not equal to the increase in employment, this anxiety reaches its highest level. A study conducted in the United States in 2004 revealed that the number of workers required by 100 enterprises for the same amount of production decreased by 10 percent when compared to 3 years before (Bora and Erdoğan, 2015; p. 14). The extraordinary rapid development of automation and computerization, and the fact that it is the main determinant of profitability, led to a steady decline in the labour force share in production. When we look at Turkey, we see that the need for human labour as opposed to technology began to decline much earlier. In 1981, for the first time in the world, *Yeni Asır* newspaper introduced the new technology of printing pages from the computer without typesetting, without pikage and without set up; Münir talks about its influence: “The cost of newspaper preparation decreased between 25-30 percent. This also meant unemployment for many workers” (1993; p. 48).

Examples of technology that causes unemployment among journalists, as Münir points out, are experienced intensely in the media industry today. 10 years ago, a state agency correspondent, sent to the scene, would only gather information, while the accompanying photojournalist took photographs to be used in the news and the cameraman shot the scene. Correspondents working in non-governmental agencies were, however, expected to collect information, take photographs and occasionally record films. Reporters of both institution types returned to the office once they were done and prepared the news, too. Today, the progress of technology and high-speed news flow have brought a new kind of stress on reporters. Today, the reporter has the technology to report the news that he gets on his laptop computer during the meeting, or to keep his notes in the news form already and forward the news without going back to the office. The reporter, who also edits the news he reports and saves time, actually supports the employer’s reduction in employment this way. This pace makes it possible for news agencies or media organisations to “scoop

news” in their internet sites, but for the reporter’s working conditions, this is really stressful. G8, who spent 1.5 years of his 5 years of experience as a reporter in the news agency of the flagship mainstream media, expresses the stress he experienced:

The first job I attended was an economy summit in İzmir and a lot of ministers were attending. I went to the meeting and I was overwhelmed. I didn’t know where to look and what to write down. The cameraman was with me as well. They gave me a laptop. And a camera. Ahmet Davutoğlu was then the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Then came Binali Yıldırım, Ertuğrul Günay. My close friends were at the same meeting, we helped each other. One of us was writing the news while the others photographed the meeting. I was given the laptop but I only started to learn F-keyboard 8 months ago by myself and at home; I could not catch up. I thought I would be fired that day, but I was not. (Interview date: 14 November 2015)

New technologies have minimised the employee’s command over production. Especially when it comes to the reporter’s struggle against time in the internet age, high and advanced technology become an important source of stress for the employees, which can be described as disease of the century. Of course, this source of stress is more of a crucial one for middle-aged journalists who are slower than the next generations in keeping up with the technological advances. For journalists who can not afford this stress, this time the anxiety of “loss of worth/not being needed” is a concern.

From another point of view, the meaning of “resting” also changed in the industrial society. From being a right or luxury, resting has turned into a task that must be fulfilled to recharge the power to continue production. In the later stages of modern industrial capitalism, a recreational activity to discharge the mind is added to the task of resting. Vatansever (2013; p. 9) notes that in the modern industrial society, both shifts and time-off are regulated according to the needs of the market. At this point, however, the infinite command of technological developments especially on journalistic activity is being redefined. With the new communication technologies, business in information

capitalism can enter every moment of life (Vatansever, 2013; p. 9). The journalist must be able to be constantly available for the institution he works for, as well as for news sources. With the mobile phone that he does (can) not put down and the inbox he has to check constantly for this reason, the journalist's rest and relaxation time is held captive by the employer through technology. It is advanced technology that provides the most suitable climate for uncertain working hours and the fact that the journalist is always on stand by for work.

### **2.1.2. The need for lifelong education**

Standing notes that the features causing insecurity such as taking short-term jobs, the temporary nature of professional titles, lack of social insecurity, obligation to fulfill multiple and undefined tasks at the same time, income insecurity, vulnerability to sudden events in life due to lack of savings, drop in social status, loss of control over work and life, getting bogged down with instrumental tasks that lack personal satisfaction, are felt more or less in all layers of labour (Vatansever and Yalçın, 2015; p. 50). Also, statements made by media bosses, referring to the growing army of the unemployed, such as “If you don't want to work, there are many more waiting in line,” reinforce Harvey's “disposable labour” metaphor for journalists (Bora and Erdoğan, 2015; p. 30 ).

One of the alternatives that journalists face, whose professional practice and personal life illustrate uncertain features, as opposed to permanently unemployed new graduates and declining employment despite developing technology, is the “lifelong education” enforced on them by the capitalist system. Many journalists pursue an academic career starting from post-graduate studies, because continuing academic studies at this level both increases personal capability and leverage at the bargaining table with the employer, and might open the university's doors to them in case they are

pushed out of the sector. Bora and Erdoğan also point out that the need to work when older and the necessity of adapting to new technologies and information are among the reasons for the continuous training of employees (2015; p. 19). But at this point, the uncertainty of journalists' working time and the fact that "work" covers all areas of life cause many journalists to fail to benefit from this alternative. While G4 describes post-graduate education for active journalists as a "luxury" (Interview date: 7 October 2015), G5 talks about the regret of giving up graduate education:

After university, I started my post-graduate studies. I took the exams and I passed, meaning to study communications again. But I started with the prep year, I had lessons every day from 5 to 9 in the evening. I was not on the permanent staff, but I was working. I got out of work at 6.30 pm. I left work early every day and it just did not happen anymore. I would get an assignment and I would stay. It wasn't going well. I thought, "Am I going to be an academician?" I said to myself I did not want such a thing. Why bother? I focused on work again. Those times felt so beautiful, as a journalist. As time goes on, you see what is what. If I knew then what I know now, I would not have given up my studies. (Interview date: 7 October 2015)

Post-graduate education also means postponing the job search or getting additional training to find a better job. The concept of "investing in the future" is an example of the market-oriented idea that suggests individuals see themselves as products to be marketed, to have an "updated" resume and see life as a "business plan" (Vatansever and Yalçın, 2015; p. 184). G7's goals for post-graduate education involves the low salaries, the desire to raise professional status and the need to eliminate embarrassment to the family:



I was on the minimum wage. I was insured as well but but if your family is away... Even if they were in İzmir, they had no chance of reading the news I reported. The newspaper I worked for was not sold in stores, it was a complimentary publication for the ferry. Especially in a field like journalism... 'What does your son do?', 'He is an engineer'. 'Oh, which institution?' And it does not matter whether you say 'Petkim' or 'Can Kardeşler', people's perspective does not change. They ask 'What kind of engineer?', then hear 'Mechanical' and approve 'Nice'. But if you tell them you are a journalist and they ask where you work, the impression you give changes according to whether you said *Gazetem Ege* or *Hürriyet*. Your family experiences this five times more than you do. Your husband, your brother, they all do. Maybe even your friends. Even the journalist ones. I always thought I would work at a local organisation like this. I wanted to paint a bright picture for my family. I wanted this, with a bit of hope. Secondly, I wanted this to be my reason for staying in İzmir. Such ridiculous reasons. And thirdly, I lost all hope later but I always thought of the academic side when I was studying. I criticised the profession a lot; I criticised its practice, its ideology, the media... I didn't want to get in there. This was another source of anxiety. I wanted to keep the university on the side, like a spare wheel. All communications graduates think like this. Especially if you got a very intense theoretical training, this idea is more powerful. If you graduated from an academy that is allergic to the sector, it's even more powerful. Everybody dreams of becoming an academician. My subjective reasons were of first priority. Anxious thoughts like, 'if nothing happens here in the market, I can focus on the academy.' (Interview date: 25 October 2015)

One of the elements that supports the precarisation of the media industry is the 'gentlemen's agreement', signed among the media holdings, which is explained in detail in previous chapters. The 'gentlemen's agreement' that is about rival media groups not recruiting staff from each other prevents dismissed journalists from finding a job in another workplace. The fact that there is no unemployment problem due to the absence of a gentlemen's agreement in İzmir does not change the fact that this problem is experienced especially in the national media in İstanbul and Ankara.

With its effects such as the uncertainty of job description, working days and hours; the wage policy far from being satisfactory; the emotional devastation it creates with anxiety about unemployment that is constantly fuelled, precarisation has the biggest impact on journalists, as in loss of organisation and union struggle. The influence of the system, which suppressed

journalists to such an extent that they internalised exploitation, on the nonorganisation of the media industry will be detailed in the analysis section of the study.

## **2.2. The Changing Spatial Structure**

Businessmen operating in different sectors taking over from journalist-bosses resulted in the Sublime Porte press moving to the media plaza in İkitelli. In the process that started with the *Sabah* leaving (29 November 1990), then *Hürriyet* (6 October 1993) and *Milliyet* (1 May 1993) from the Sublime Porte (Aksoy, 2009b; p. 607), technology-equipped skyscrapers initiated changes in journalism practices; and the plaza ambition of the monopolised media holdings caused the public to become separated from journalists. Plazas have become places that symbolise the power of the media but destroy professional values.

These ‘technological bases’, which became the symbol of the transition from the press sector to the media industry, are like ‘bell jars’ of the media holdings that incorporate many newspapers, television, magazine, radio and news agencies via horizontal and vertical growth. Can Ataklı’s (2000) statement reveals how the psychology of journalists was affected by the advanced technology and luxury, as well as the spatial change:

... one day I realised that all of us, including myself, always talked about the technology when we were telling others about SABAH, we praised it. Whoever visited the newspaper, we would grab them with great enthusiasm and show them around. We repeated things like: “Look we swim here, we ride here; the fax machine here sends the page to the other end of the world; this colour system is used here for the first time in the world; even the Americans couldn’t use this printing machine yet, they come here and watch.”

The departure of newspapers from city centres brought about the change of many journalistic practices. Özsever claims that desktop journalism, where the columnist directly connects with news sources and power groups

prefer contacting columnists instead of reporters and the reporter gets the news by telephone instead of going to the scene, triggered the end of news-reporting, which is the basis of journalism (2004; p. 152). At this point, Ahmet Tulgar draws attention to the situation of journalists learning the profession in the plazas. Unlike the previous generations, the plaza generation journalists do not master the profession in the streets, do not go after news in the field, rather they hang around by the corner of the editor's desk where the news is generated and the preordered news is fabricated. Executive managers of this generation, called "plaza journalists" by Tulgar, also do not prefer them to seek news outside the plaza. Because if the reporter works outside the plaza, this means that he might get out of control, also there would be the question of transport. Shuttle buses or other transportation services that bring correspondents to the centre would be an additional burden to media holdings. But more importantly, plaza reporters also do not prefer to work outside of the media plazas because of the psychology of 'being powerful' and 'being at the centre of power'. Young reporters who leave their modest homes every morning and go to the plazas, where they can find everything they need from cafe to bank, satisfy the feelings of luxury and wealth shared with them, while these feelings lead them to accept, even feel gratified by, the power of their boss (2013; p. 241). At the same time, this psychology influences the perspective of journalists, who do (can) not empathise with the people in the streets, on life and on the news. For the reporter who does not participate in social life in the city centres due to financial difficulties, and does not take the bus because the media plaza has a shuttle bus service, the bell jar creates a sense of safe space at the same time and destroys the empathy between society and the reporter.

On the one hand, media plazas form a basis for journalists to feel stronger, while on the other hand, they cause journalists that work for the same

institution to dissociate from each other. Can Ataklı (2000) talks about the disengagement among journalists in his disclosure:

I want to make a confession. Our building in İkitelli resembled a space station, it was technologically great. We had everything, from the restaurant to the health centre, from the indoor swimming pool to the barber. But I did not love it. I missed Mecidiyeköy all the time.

These words by Cezmi Ersöz reveal the drama the reporters experience:

I saw great depression in people in İkitelli. I saw immense unhappiness. We would wait outside smoking cigarettes. Over the TEM road, it gets very windy. I saw beautifully dressed young men and women there, watching the highway with great unhappiness. The wish to go back home as soon as possible. Feeling stuck in a remote place, deadlocked, fear. I saw the helplessness and unhappiness of those hearts in the size and unpleasantness of the building, in the glass spaces, in the mechanical environments where nobody is anybody's friend and anybody can be hostile to anybody any given time. I saw poor spirits in expensive places with good food and stylish lighting. I saw people being reprimanded and cursed, spreading fear. (Otan, 1995; p. 141-142)

In the media plazas, the spatial dissimilarity experienced by the star journalists who have rooms as stylish as those of ministers, and reporters who increasingly became anonymous in reporting as their news is harshly interfered with, impaired the master-apprentice relationship that is a tradition of the profession. This ending of the way of transferring experience also caused journalists to be alienated from each other like they were from the profession. Aksoy conveys the most striking point that expresses the dramatic stage alienation reached (2009b; p. 609):

Mete Akyol, who dedicated his book *Hem Yaşadım Hem Yazdım* ('Both Lived and Scribed') to Zafer Mutlu, for whom he addressed as "The reason and source of my latest enthusiasms, newest passions, my dear brother and director", would only understand that he was dismissed from *Sabah* when his electronic card did not open the gate. The media organisation, which claims that it is representing the ascending values, has begun to implement the method of dismissing even experienced journalists without any notification.

These words by *Sabah*'s editor-in-chief Zafer Mutlu, spoken after this incident, summarise the point reached (Otan, 1995; p. 24):

Mr. Mete Akyol is a very respected person for me. He took special care of me as a brother as well. Beyond me, he was dismissed at the behest of the daily newspaper administration, and they could not send the notification. They were ashamed. Everybody blamed each other for it. At the end of one month, the staff assumed that notice had been given and canceled the card in the normal procedure. No other incident like this ever has happened in this establishment.

Mustafa Kuleli, General Secretary of the Journalists' Union of Turkey, suggests that beneath the psychology created by the media plazas lies under the fact that journalists consider themselves above and "indispensable" despite their lack of any organisational structure:

...I think there is the influence of living in those plazas. They are so European in terms of the way they consume things. The outfits, the drinks, the trips, the mobile phones, the computers and the plazas are extremely Western. But when we come to the point of being organised, there is the very oriental, highly provincial type of journalist. (Tekelioğlu, 2015; p. 196)

Tulgar, like Kuleli, argues that nonorganisation plays a big role in the fact that plazas have such a big effect on journalism. Tulgar expresses the view that the news reported by journalists that have internalised the plaza life was also affected by this situation, suffering a reduction in quality. Tulgar adds that being organised is the only way to regain the ability to empathise with society and to understand life on the streets again (2013; p. 243).

When human identity is considered to be made up of the symbols given to a person by life, it is naturally possible that the journalist is influenced by the spatial change both personally and professionally. However, those who became executives in the media with the change in the ownership structure after 1980, had broad authority given to them by the new owners. The very high salaries paid to these executives took precedence over their journalist identities, making them advocates for the media owners, surrogates of the boss' interests. As a

result, protecting and implementing journalism principles was pushed into the background, while journalism itself witnessed significant changes.

### **3. THE JOURNALIST PROFILE OF THE NEW ERA**

The newspaper, that is among the oldest of the modern mass media is a periodical publication containing news, information, advertisements and announcements with the aim of informing the public about current events (Alemdar and Uzun, 2013; p. 235). In terms of the media tools that are a part of it, a newspaper in a democracy is designed for tasks such as constantly informing the public, setting up platforms for comments and discussions about public issues, fulfilling the ‘fourth power’ or supervisory function and giving the social agenda on the news to cover the whole country (Şahin, 2012; p. 129). However, the change in the ownership structure of the press, which has been emphasised since the beginning of the study, and the indirect transformation in its ideological function caused various changes in journalists’ professional lives.

Marx and Engels argue, in their book *German Ideology*, that the class possessing the material means of production is also dominant in the cultural and intellectual sphere of society, including the media. In other words, this class, which possesses the means of production and distribution of contemporary ideas, holds and uses media tools to maintain its sovereignty on an ideological level. Thus, the ideas of the ruling class are made into sovereign ideas of the time. The purpose of the media, which Althusser regards as the ideological apparatus of the state, is to infuse the ideas of its owners into society. According to Gramsci, all mass media are ideological struggles. Gramsci argues that, within the ideology of ‘hegemony’, in addition to political and economic control, the ruling class also attempts to infuse its world view to the society on the ideological level; and that the lower classes must also agree that an ideology that reflects the interests of the upper class can be dominant or

hegemonic in the society. In other words, in this process, which aims at maintaining the sovereignty of the dominant class in the intellectual and cultural field, the media corresponds to the field of ideological struggle in which the interpretations serving the interests of the dominant class are reproduced and consent is gained or lost (Özsever, 2004; p. 136-137 ).

As explained in detail in the previous chapter of the study, the press has undergone significant changes over the years in terms of ownership structure, as well as in relation to the government and economic power. The press, which stood out with its lead writers and newspaper-owner families in the 1950s, went through a phase where journalism was of great importance in the 1960s. In the early 1970s, with the introduction of technological developments in the sector, the first steps towards monopolisation were taken and journalism experienced the first structural change from intellectual labour to commercial labour. This restructuring also changed the perspective on news, and journalism entered a period in which magazines were highlighted rather than news reports and advertisements/announcements became more important. The 1990s and 2000s, where the press literally turned into a weapon and the journalist into the hitman, followed the 1980s infested with political turbulence and bans brought along by the changes in ownership.

Along with all these structural changes, significant changes in the journalist profile also occurred. In the new era, new columnists and editorial staff were formed, who prioritised the bosses' interests, entered into close relations with the government and handled the boss's other non-press business. Reporters who worked under this very well-paid staff that were advocates to the boss, could not fulfill the function of informing the public, worked for low wages and increasingly gravitated towards making tabloid news and reports that would not be expurgated because they conflicted with the boss's businesses in other sectors. Ertuğrul Özkök, the editor-in-chief of *Hürriyet* newspaper, argues that the change in the management understanding of

newspapers was 'inevitable', and summarises his experience as follows (Adaklı, 2006; p. 327):

So what happened now? The journalist type has changed. (...) On the one hand, journalists such as myself came forward, in other words, journalists and managers who accepted journalism as a *business*. And on the other hand, there are people who are trying to live with nostalgia for the Sublime Porte. Of course, I must add that people who think like me started to make better money than normal. Because they increased the profit of the institutions they worked for. And the bosses began to feel like at least sharing a portion of the money with them.

Umur Talu, points out that the times are long gone, when the public had a bond with newspapers; maybe not quite like the public figure Abdi İpekçi but journalists were out on the streets and understood the street; relations in newspaper agencies were horizontal and not hierarchical, while everybody contributed to each other's development. Umur Talu describes the profile of the new era newspaper manager as follows (2013; p. 58):

...executive editors and the journalists in their circles grew away from the life of the remaining 70 million people, with their lifestyles, with their expectations, with their dreams. Their attention can only extend to big disasters such as earthquakes, traffic accidents, and occasionally, honour killings. In other words, they are involved in life only enough to produce a few words. Other than this, journalists who were interested in issues such as trade union organisations, working conditions of agricultural workers, the dimensions of the slums, immigration in big cities, poverty and unemployment all vanished.

Calling new senior journalists of the new age 'the executive elite' who maintain close ties in terms of lifestyle with the media bosses and economic and political elite who manage the country, Doğan Tılıç (1998; p. 143) states that this situation inevitably affects journalists' world view and that the media managed by them began to offer a way of living that the public could never keep up with. Comparing what Talu and Özkok say, it can be argued that today, the distance between company interests and the news content is increasingly becoming ambiguous and that there is no longer an autonomous



correspondent or manager model that can work independently from the newspaper owner.

This situation, which can be called a ‘professional shift’, is not only about the ‘executive elite’, but also about the correspondent. In other words, while the mindset of police-crime reporters, who spend most of their working hours with police forces, shifts to police matters, economics reporters can approach the unemployment problem or the economic crisis from the perspective of employers. Establishing close relations with the news sources are naturally welcomed in terms of the area of expertise, but in fact this is a dangerous situation in terms of journalism ethics. The “identification” headline within the Journalists’ Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities prepared by the Journalists’ Union of Turkey, which argues that the relations established with the news source should be limited in terms of ethical values, has been regulated as follows (<http://www.tgc.org.tr/bildirgeler/turkiye-gazetecilik-hak-ve-sorumluluk-bildirgesi.html>):

A journalist is primarily a journalist, regardless of his area of expertise. A police correspondent should not act like the police or their spokesperson, a sports correspondent should not act like the club manager or their spokesperson, any reporter responsible for any party should not act like a member or spokesperson, and should not publish any such article.

Another point that needs to be discussed about this professional shift is the situation in which it is preferable to report the news or not. It is now possible for journalists, who work with the mission to inform the public accurately and enlighten them, to take a stand at the point of not reporting some news with the pressure of media bosses as well as political and economic power sources. In this case, the fact that news that puts the interests of the ruling class on the agenda, such as employee-employer disputes, are not included in the media organs, also misleads the public. Expanding entertainment culture, or fuelling the “televole” culture, which is defined as

hollow journalism, is also in conflict with the ethical values of journalism, while keeping society away from problems.

Looking at the dimension the situation takes on with the media bosses and politics, the kind of politician who interferes with the domestic affairs of the media more and more, can be seen today. Politicians who can get any journalist they dislike fired over the phone, can also assign their favorite journalists in the desired media organisation (Balçı, 2003; p. 106). The media boss, who is actually running the risk of corrupting the profession, still aims at protecting his own interests by fulfilling the politician's wishes.

It is unlikely that the journalist will show an honourable attitude in this environment where the media boss is trying to secure his own future instead of protecting the rights of his employees in the face of the politician or businessmen. Again, in this environment where dismissed reporters can not be employed by another media organisation because of the 'gentlemen's agreement', the typical reporter experienced various changes. Journalists who have no organisation, no union and considerable fear of unemployment developed a short-term, selfish, anytime-anywhere, circumstantial working mentality, with no occupational and sense of spatial belonging.

As the new correspondent profile increasingly weakened within the media industry, writers who became stars in the eyes of media bosses and managed to keep newspaper columns with high salaries thanks to the close relations they established with the political elite as well as economic power, must be evaluated in the journalist profile of the new period. These writers, who share their personal contact information in their columns with a smiling photo attached so that their readers can directly get in touch with them, become the visible face of the newspaper, and this has gained importance for media bosses and power holders, as they can directly convey their comments. This situation has led media owners to defend their interests through columnists and

power holders to engage in personal relationships with columnists (Demir, 2013; p. 97).

Tılıç states that the direct engagement of news sources with columnists is a turning point for the decline in the significance of reporting and noted that İlhan Selçuk, during a panel discussion, commented that some columnists decided the contents of their articles with the involvement of politicians and businessmen (1998; p. 104). Bali, who states that being a columnist was considered as a mark of ‘social status’ among journalists, adds that the writers who are included in the protocol lists of special events organised by the business community had the privilege of accessing some information and reports before everyone else, while the ‘experts’ were employed as members of the faculty by foundation universities that have difficulty finding faculty members (2003; p. 187).

The most important reflection of the new period journalism profile at the correspondent level was experienced in the master-apprentice relationship, which served as a kind of internal control in the transfer of the profession from generation to generation. The master-apprentice relation in the field of news reporting is no longer seen in this period, where the correspondent became more selfish with lessened institutional and spatial belonging and is ‘marketing’ himself to the media boss with his work or the relations he established. G1 talks about how, in the years when he started his career, he had learned this profession from his masters who used to edit the same news 3-4 times according to the institution’s news language and format; and adds that especially after the 2000s the master-apprentice relation faded quickly. “We learned from our masters, and we could teach a little. Then nobody wanted to learn. The chain is broken. Now, you can not find any” says G1 (Interview date: 22 November 2016). G2 supports G1 by linking the drop in the quality of reporters to the ending of the master-apprentice relationship:

We used to learn by experience. But now there is nobody left to teach in the business or out on the street. After university I started working for someone and I went to the news scenes with him for 3 years. He would write the news and we would learn by looking at his text. I was sent to the governor's office alone for the first time after 5-6 years in the job. It was the same in the municipalities. You must learn how to write, how to ask, and so on, before you go. Now the interns are going straight to it, so the quality is low. (Interview date: 12 November 2016)

Like G1 and G2, who have worked in the profession for over 20 years, G4 expresses the view that he has been trying to convey what he knows to young journalists as much as possible and complains that his efforts were not adopted by experienced journalists in the sector. His statement summarises the present situation:

...experienced journalists seem like they have forgotten what they know. There were others who trained them too; they would say "I'm this or that journalist's student" but they do not train others anymore. Now they say "He'll learn somehow." They do not share what they know. Maybe because the master-apprentice relationship does not exist anymore, or they may be afraid of losing their job, or afraid of losing status... (Interview date: 7 October 2015)

Only G9, who can be considered as a member of the new generation and whose professional experience is even less than 5 years, reported that he experienced the master-apprentice relationship in the regional newspaper that he works for. What is noteworthy in his statement that the journalist, who is expected to be an editor in addition to being a correspondent, is inexperienced, which means that an employee would be given another job that is not included in his job definition, because of lack of staff:

They assigned me to page editing too. "I know how to write the news, but I do not know how to make a page. Help me with my inexperience," I said. "Don't you worry at all" they said. They taught me like a baby. (...) They worked to train me. How long did it take? Maybe a month, maybe two months. That was it. So you can teach anything to anyone if you want to because the person wants to learn it, craves that knowledge. That knowledge will work for him, and that will be good for you. It's a cycle, they follow each other. (Interview date: 27 November 2015)

Conveying the views of the ‘executive elite’, columnists and reporters on the subject would have no grounds unless the perception of journalists in the eyes of media followers/readers/the public opinion is also mentioned. Tılıç emphasises that every profession sociologically depends on the trust relationship between those who perform it (2003; p. 439). You trust a journalist to convey the truth for the same reason as you trust a doctor to provide health.

Evaluating the results of the PİAR-Gallup survey, entitled “Confidence crisis in the public” and published in *Milliyet* newspaper on 8 November 1999, İrvan (2003; p. 390) reports that the public had confidence in journalists only after the Turkish Armed Forces, the Police, the President, the Constitutional Court, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, the Prime Minister, the President of the Assembly, the Parliament, the Parliament members, the Opposition Parties and the Politicians. İrvan argues that, apart from the politicians, one of the most important reasons for the lack of confidence in the media is that the media came under the sphere of influence of capital and became a power that can not be controlled. Tılıç, who reported the results of another research study on the credibility of professions in 2000, regards the problem that the most unreliable professionals are politicians and journalists, as the problem of not only the journalism profession and the media but also the democracies of the 21st century (2003; p. 439).

Among the 126 professions that were included in the “Working Life and Professions Research in Turkey” (<http://turkeyses.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/%E2%80%9CT%C3%BCrkiye%E2%80%99de-%C3%87al%C4%B1%C5%9Fma-Ya%C5%9Fam%C4%B1-ve-Mesleklerin-%C4%B0tibar%C4%B1%E2%80%9D-Ara%C5%9Ft%C4%B1rmas%C4%B1-Tamamland%C4%B1.pdf>), which was shared with the press in May 2015, journalism is ranked 45th. Parliamentary membership was ranked 22nd in the survey while the most trusted professionals were medical doctors. It seems that, if this rapid loss of

confidence continues, this will be endangering the free press, that is one of the most basic foundations of not only the journalism profession and the media, but also democracies. Golding, who is among the supporters of the function of creating a well-informed critical citizenship being fulfilled by the ‘independent and dynamic academy’, defends his view as follows (Tılıç, 2003; p. 439-440):

Contrary to the claims of media profession ideologies meeting the information needs of the public, the results of the research findings indicate that the media does not provide a sufficient basis for citizens to fulfil their citizenship duties. The popular press has been thoroughly integrated into the entertainment industry, and public broadcasting is greatly damaged, both in terms of form and purpose. New technologies feed a media society where the gap between the rich and the poor deepened, rather than creating an ‘information society’. These failures put greater responsibility on critical social research in terms of witnessing history. However, our success depends on whether we are able to defeat the threats to independent research both within the academy and outside the academy.

G2 tells from experience that people deliberately move away from journalists in order to be able to ignore the damage. He reveals the point arrived at social perception by saying “I can no longer say that I am a journalist. I tell them that I am a retired worker” (Interview date: 12 November 2016). Highlighting that the loss of reputation of the printed press is reflected in newspaper circulation, G1 complains that the reader does not want to read newspapers which he is no longer trusts:

Journalists used to have reputations; there was confidence in the journalist and in the newspaper. When the population of Turkey was 45-50 million after the 90s, we were selling 4.5 million newspapers, the population reached 80 million now and the circulation is the same. We never reached 5 million. To me, the most important reason for not reading the printed media is the loss of trust newspapers and journalists have undergone. In the past, the Turkish Armed Forces was the most trusted institution in the surveys, while the press got 60-70 percent confidence. Currently, it is between 14 and 17 percent. The rate of confidence in journalists is even lower, 10-11 percent. The loss of reputation in printed media is also reflected in the circulation, people do not want to read. (Interview date: 22 November 2016)

Journalists form the younger generation state that not only the ownership structures but also business strategies of newspapers have a negative

effect on their professional reputation. Describing the ad-news that he had to do with his signature attached as “a loss of reputation”, G7 comments on the question of “Does journalism still have a reputation?”:

It’s your personal reputation. If there is something that makes you say “I am pleased with myself” when you put everything into perspective, including the ways of making the news and relations with colleagues, it is your sum. (Interview date: 15 October 2015)

The transformation of journalism caused by the change in ownership structure following the breakdown at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s has been defended by star executive editors, the ‘executive elite’ and the columnists, and a new journalist profile that sees journalism as ‘business’ emerged. This understanding, which justifies and regenerates the system and protects the interests of the media boss at every level and platform, has greatly distanced journalism from the point of public disclosure and the fulfilment of its mission in democracy. The new era journalist profile – that is positioned in the sector according to his level of advocacy for the boss’s interests, that exists under the favour of the relations established with the ruling power and economic power groups, that does not hand down his experiences to new generations so that he secures his place – does not promise an honourable future for the next generations at all.

### **3.1. Self-censorship**

Defined by the Turkish Language Association as the “pre-auditing, strict supervision of all kinds of publications, cinema and theatre pieces, by the government”, “censorship” ([http://www.tdk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com\\_gts&kelime=SANS%C3%9CR](http://www.tdk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_gts&kelime=SANS%C3%9CR)) has been hanging like a sword of Damocles over the Turkish press starting from the Ottoman era. Regardless of the period, it has always manifested itself in a carrot-stick relationship with the government and in other practices such as legal restrictions, tax fines, closure and confiscation, detainment and arrest of

journalists. In addition to legal measures restricting freedom of thought and expression, as well as direct and indirect pressure from governments and other power centres, censorship in modern democracies threatens the freedom of the press and the freedom of the people to receive information. Philips and Harslof define censorship as mechanisms power groups use to knowingly and intentionally block some information from the public, while Fairchild says it is “the attempt to control the content of a publication concerning public interest and private interest in the public realm” (Arsan, 2012). In his book, *Media and Democracy* (2015; p. 34-35), Keane defines censorship as a tendency to create a mutually protective, non-democratic process within and/or between modern capitalist societies. The obvious threat of censorship to democracy, according to Keane, is the sum of repressive methods to prevent free circulation of information that citizens need about state activities. But what is more dangerous than all this is “self-censorship”, which is a form of censorship that does not need to be systematically regulated and controlled by journalists. The definition of “self-censorship” ([http://tdk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com\\_bts&arama=kelime&guid=TDK.GTS.586c9fcb3a4115.64673790](http://tdk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_bts&arama=kelime&guid=TDK.GTS.586c9fcb3a4115.64673790)) according to the Turkish Language Association is “the self-restriction of individuals and institutions” and it constitutes one of the most important threats faced by the press, or the post-1980 media industry, when considered as an essential element of the democratic society and a demonstration of freedom of expression. As one of the most important features of the new-era journalist profile, self-censorship has become a journalism practice increasingly popular among journalists and is on the increase in the sector as well when compared to previous years. Now journalists find themselves in need of more self-censorship than they did in previous years, in order to get approval by the editors for the news they prepared, not to conflict with the boss’s interests, not to cause a conflict of interest with political or economic power holders, and to avoid being indirectly unemployed. Journalists in this process constantly experience the responsibility of having a profession



that has certain principles, and the stress of being a paid worker of an employer (Tılıç, 1998; p. 139). The statement made by the former editor-in-chief of *Radikal* newspaper, also former columnist at *Hürriyet* newspaper, İsmet Berkan's statement on the "Ayşenur Aslan'la Medya Mahallesi" ("The Media Street with Ayşenur Aslan") show on CNN Türk TV, is interesting:

The EU report says that journalists of the Doğan Group are applying self-censorship. I can not speak on behalf of all employees of the Doğan Group, but speaking for myself, yes I do feel such pressure. When I write something today, I can not stop thinking without fear that I might be putting my boss in a more difficult situation, whether the government would be angry about it, or would I be dismissed... This fear is very normal, of course. (Arsan, 2012)

In this part of the work, it might be beneficial to give details of the survey conducted by Esra Arsan (2012) in İstanbul and Ankara with 67 newsmen working on sensitive social, political, economic and defence/security issues, from *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Radikal*, *Yeni Şafak*, *Zaman*, *Birgün*, *Habertürk*, *Evrensel*, *Star*, *Sabah*, *Günlük*, *Hurriyet Daily News*, *Akşam*, *Vatan*, *Birgün*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Sözcü*, *Taraf* newspapers as well as *Hayat TV*, *CNN Türk*, *NTV* and *TV8* television channels. Arsan's work, entitled "A Research within the context of civil disobedience: Censorship and self-censorship from the eye of Turkish journalists" gives remarkable details concerning the dimensions of censorship and self-censorship in Turkey. In Arsan's study, the grading of the series of problems journalism had to face shows that the "Government's pressure/censorship on news content" option comes first with 84.5 percent, and the second ranking option is "journalists' self-censorship on news content" with 77.6 percent." The answers given by journalists to the question of whether they back down in their daily journalism practice from writing news about some important events that have public benefit, reveal the severity of the situation. 91.4 percent of the journalists who answered this question said "yes" and thus stated that they do (can) not write news about some important events/situations that would be of public benefit. The answers given by the newsmen about what caused this situation

illustrates the main point of this chapter of the study. Journalists explain the reasons for not reporting some news despite its public benefit as “domestic political pressure” with 96.2 percent, “not complying with the financial interests of the media owner” with 92.4 percent and “knowing that the news they make will not be published” with 84.6 percent. In another question of the survey, journalists were asked to rank the “actors influencing news content in Turkey” according to their importance. In the responses, the “government” ranks first with 81 percent. Some 90.9 percent of the journalists “agree/strongly agree” that the fact that a large number of journalists are behind the bars constitutes an atmosphere of fear for journalists outside, while none of the journalists expressed disagreement with this idea – which summarises the predicament. As can be seen in the results, journalists in Turkey are exposed to the censorship of the government and then the media institutions. The number of journalists who are afraid of being sent to prison, becoming unemployed and thus adopt self-censorship on themselves, and therefore their news, is increasing day by day. This shows that self-censorship has become a journalistic practice as a form of censorship that does not need to be systematically regulated and controlled because it is internalised by journalists.

Indicating that enterprises that run advertisements from Akbank, Koç, Turkish Airlines come to the mind when the “major media” is in question, Talu (2013; p. 59) points out that if the ‘employees’ of these enterprises do not take out ads, then the problems of those employees’ are not included in the newspapers as news. Self-censorship is more intense in countries where the media environment is less democratic and totalitarian aspects of the political system have a strong influence (Tılıç, 1998; p. 197). It is preferred that the editorial independence is greatly reduced and a writing staff to continue the publishing activity in line with the interests of the media owner is formed. Talu expresses how politicians interfered with the functioning of media

organisations and posed a threat to journalists by exemplifying the situation: “...Has not Emin Çölaşan been fired as a gesture? Yes, he has” (2013; p. 69).

Supporting Talu, Özsever refers to the fact that the process of news production differs according to the concrete interests of the media owner because of the prevailing cross media ownership; Özsever points out that journalists learn what to write, how to write and what not to write, and those who can not learn this are removed from the system (2004; p. 147). Similar to Çölaşan’s dismissal from *Hürriyet* as a “gesture to the government”, the news of the protests that involved the dismissal of one thousand 200 workers and halt of production at Petrol Ofisi Inc., a 51 percent share of which was transferred to the Doğan group, were not included in the Doğan Group publications.

G3, who states that a similar situation also applies to police-crime news and not only to political or economic news, expresses the self-censorship he implements as follows:

If I report the divorce case of Aziz Kocaoglu, this newspaper will headline this news. I should know that. If I do not know this, I have to act as if I’m not working for this newspaper at all. But in the same way, if I bring Binali Yıldırım’s divorce case to this newspaper... I am obliged to apply self-censorship. I have to know how the newspaper works. I look at the “cancan” of the newspaper if necessary. There are people on those pages that have good relations with the newspaper. I try not to run into them, or if I do, somehow I manage to ignore them. (Interview date: 9 January 2016)

Journalist İpek Çalışlar (2013; p. 296) felt the need to tell journalist candidates that she met at the programme From the Academy to the Newsroom, which was held for fourth graders and new graduates of communication faculties, “Get to know the institution you work for. In the end, you will compile their rules when preparing the news. Unfortunately, the news is shaped according to the newspaper. You are not that free”. G7, who started

reporting after 2000, talks about how Çalışlar's warning and this situation reflected on the journalist's professional reflexes:

One says "Why should I waste time on something that's not going to be published when I'm swamped with all this preordered news?" This is dangerous, but every week people like us go through this at least 2-3 times. Things that are definitely worth making it to the news, most certainly, but I do not even think about suggesting it. The social benefit of the news, informing the public, feeling pleasure are long gone. (Interview date: 25 October 2015)

Journalists who entered the profession before 1980 have said that they were censored neither by businessmen, nor their journalist-bosses, thus never felt the need to apply self-censorship. G1 expresses the view that the journalists started the practice of self-censorship as of 12 September 1980, and describes the changing practice of journalism since then:

On 12 September 1980, factual journalism has disappeared and facile journalism arrived. Magazine journalism arrived. Politics diminished and started to be shaped only in Ankara. In the second half of the '80s, financial journalism began to develop. (...) Instead of the fact journalism that covered public order events, which were printed on the first page, after 85, financial journalism and speech journalism took over. People's problems about the sewer system, water and roads were sidelined. People were informed, back in our day. Things like what the local authority thought of the neighbourhood issues, water not running in the school or power being cut were the first sources of news for the journalist. Desktop journalism developed. A method of journalism was adopted, where for the news they edit in İstanbul, they would request 'you should do this from the İzmir office', 'you do this from the Adana office', and 'you you do this from the Ankara office'. Then gradually journalists started censoring themselves. 'If I report this news, I can not be on the first page or they might misconstrue it'. 'Where do I stand out from the others more quickly?' Journalists focused on that direction. (Interview date: 22 November 2016)

Emphasising that journalist-bosses and businessmen did not censor them, G1 states that even when asking questions to Turgut Özal, who was said to interfere with the news content and the working conditions of journalists, they did not need to apply self-censorship.

On the other hand, the fact that reporters working for dissident newspapers do not feel the support they need from the newspaper for the news they report, is also an important cause of self-censorship. G6, who served for 13 years in the office of a dissident national newspaper in İzmir, reports the following situation:

(About the news on Urla Villas) They filed two lawsuits. In both cases, the prosecutor decided there was no case to answer, based on freedom of press and freedom of expression. Despite this decision, our newspaper published a correction notice. I also did. I sent the document given by the prosecutor, to İstanbul. Then they published the corrections I sent for the correction they published. (Interview date: 23 March 2016)

Journalists who find the news, communicate with the source, take the news/situation/people to the headlines of newspapers, maybe even the national agenda, may be caught up in the illusion of “free will/being one’s own boss” that the system of precarisation they are in gives them from time to time. Vatansever and Yalçın (2015; p. 160) state that, in fact, this is “controlled autonomy” ie an individualised responsibility chain in which everyone can always be accounted for under the pretence of freedom and flexibility. G5, who experienced this illusion and normalises the internalisation of censorship as being “experienced”, responds to the question of whether he was censored:

Censorship is not the question, because you are already an experienced journalist, you know very well which news will make it. You are aware. You’re writing according to this, in an appropriate language, by self-censorship. (Interview date: 11 October 2015)

The fact that none of the interviewed reporters stated that they did not apply self-censorship makes the point reached in the profession very clear. Self-censorship, which began with pressure from the ruling party and continued with the boss’s political benefits and interests in different sectors, and which was embodied by the editors that “guard the threshold” deciding on the news content, caused a major change in the practice of journalism especially after 1980, while a new journalist profile that internalised self-

editorial censorship and voluntarily practiced it appeared in the sector. However, as Ramonet emphasises (2000; p. 52), the only tool in question for a citizen to question the accuracy of the news is to compare the same news from different media. However, if there is a “single” statement that is common to the media, the citizen will have to agree that the news is correct.

The interviews show that journalistic practice is directly influenced by the media’s general economy-politics, and by the relationship between the media and political power. This makes the ground slippery for journalists, while the media becomes unable to criticise political and economic power sources, hesitates to ask questions and loses its different voices. And this indicates that the media, which is expected to be an essential element for democracy, a ground of freedom of expression and the fourth power, has lost its theoretical stance in practice.

### **3.2 The Non-Organised Journalist**

One of the most prominent features of the changing journalist profile in the process of transition from the press sector to the media industry is the nonorganised journalism. The tradition of organisation, which was already weak in the press, has been completely weakened by monopolisation. The tendency of nonorganisation, which started especially after 1980 in the newspapers, most recently has become a “presupposition” for journalists. G5 expresses this in the following words:

I have never even made such an attempt. Because... There are many reasons. First of all, we did not know about the trade union. Secondly, there is no such thing as unionised working in our sector. Everybody knows. Only in the Anadolu Agency and that no longer exists I guess, TRT is probably unionised. It all died with the Simavis, so no unionists are left. Since being unionised was the equivalent of a reason for dismissal, nobody ever attempted to do it. I know very few unionised journalists. I do not even know any. Not even 2-3 people. (Interview date: 11 October 2015)

As G5 also states that the union is now synonymous with unemployment for journalists. The anticipation of unemployment that affects the individual's relationship with the world, time, and space adversely, and more importantly, destroys his hope, destroys his faith in the future, is effective in distancing many journalists from the idea of being organised. Erdoğan (2015; p. 113) states that journalists working under precarious and casual conditions with the fear of becoming unemployed are expected to accept exploitation under these circumstances; and claims that, considering that the individual needs hope and faith for collective struggle, while this is precisely what neoliberalism aims at by running a programme aimed at destroying systematic solidarity or collectivism.

However, as Vatansever and Yalçın point out (2015; p. 194), while the echo of presupposition in daily life can be seen in the widespread belief that "it's every man for himself", also manifests itself in a different perception before the individual and collective struggle. For journalists who identifies their interests with the boss's interests and think of the profession as a business of personal skills, the union refers to an organisation that benefits the employees of state institutions only. G3 thinks that the media boss provides for the employer in line with his own personal profit, and expresses his opinion about trade unions as follows:

I'm not even talking about the 'What if we had all the benefits they have..' dimension of it, because the Anadolu Agency has the state behind it. And the Treasury has a lot of money. The man I work for does not have that kind of money. I guess he is giving as much as possible. Maybe he is squandering it, I can't know. But this is what you can give, since there is no authority that says 'How much did you make? Give here half of it.' Just don't object to it. Well but you are. Have a heart! It's not like this anymore but in 2008, those guys would work 22 days and get 60 days of insurance premium. We are working our asses off here to get 30 days. They are journalists, too. And you are a state institution. (Interview date: 9 January 2016)

This understanding of G3 is based on the individual mobility strategy that Wright calls “tokenism” (Wright, 2010 in Vatansever and Yalçın, 2015; p. 250-251). According to Wright, people of groups that experience problems or are discriminated against because of being a member of a particular category, are more likely to seek success in the community by developing their individual abilities and skills, working very hard, applying a strategy to be treated like higher status members, rather than trying to solve them. The meritocratic system reveals such a tendency in people with the ideological emphasis that the effort made or the good one is already at advantage. Thus, whenever the journalist’s work is not remunerated, he normalises his exposure to further exploitation despite the disadvantages he experiences, reinforcing his belief that his personal success and better relations with his boss – when compared with the other journalists in the same institution – will benefit him financially in the long run. At this point, as Özsever points out, when the income gap between journalists is added to the individual and competitive structure of the profession (2004; p. 2005), it is becoming more and more difficult to establish a of common approach.

On the other hand, a turning point in the trade union struggle, similar to the dismissal of 128 union journalists working in the *Milliyet* newspaper in 1991, was experienced in 2012 when the TGS was dismissed from the Anadolu Agency and Medya-İş affiliated to the Trade Union Confederation (HAK-İŞ) was established. The pressure by administrators on journalists to leave the TGS and become a member of the Medya-İş resulted in many agency employees leaving or their retirement. G4, who worked as the workplace representative during this process and refused to change unions, states that he had to quit his job at the Anadolu Agency after working there for 15 years, as a result of the harrassment he experienced, and that the lawsuit was still continuing (Interview date: 7 October 2015). In the same period, G1, who retired in the same year, conveys his experience as follows:



Because, in the agency, fellow journalists were forced to resign from the TGS and to switch to Medya-İş. And they thought it would be the same as the TGS. Of course, it was not. The district manager found fault with everybody and threatened their livelihood. The journalists lost all their rights as soon as they resigned from the TGS. The general manager knew this was going to happen, he intentionally made them resign. Now they ask me when something's going on. In our time, an agency employee would be sent out of the region for a maximum of 45 days in a calendar year. There would be no relocations outside the city. We had 2 free days a week and overtime that was no longer than 26-30 hours per month. Now people are forced to relocate. Now those who resigned from the TGS come back and tell us what is going on. (Interview date: 22 November 2016)

The manager profile, which was embodied in the example of Ertuğrul Özkök in the 90s, supported the elimination of the trade unions from the newspapers in accordance with the interests of the boss; and this profile prevails. G2, who states that journalists lost most of their union benefits with the change of organisation, explains that managers who supported nonorganisation were affected by the new order as adversely as reporters:

Those who did not resign were made miserable, but even the district manager, who explained how good the new union was, was hurt. Once they were done, they got rid of the district manager first thing, and exiled the new union's members to Afyon, to Erzurum. They assigned them to other cities. They laid down dismissal of employees at any desired time as a condition. Things were not like that on our side. We could not make them hear us; they did not want to listen. "Our children are studying in private schools; we have credit card debts; we just got a house. What if we get fired?" We said "You can not get fired. There is the union security." But none listened. If the union continued, the press in İzmir would never be like this. (Interview date: 17 November 2016)

Along with all this unfavourable situation, G7 explains the reason for being unionised as a "need for an ethical stance" despite the fact that he works in the mainstream media and his workplace has no union representation; he also expresses his discontent with today's unions. G7, who states that although he is a member, he does not participate in the activities of the TGS because he finds their activities too local, says (25 October 2016): "... the umbrella organisation that I am a member of should be producing policies that are one

step ahead of me, so that I can follow.” In addition to all this, G6, a journalist who was a union member from the first day at work until the last day, during the 13 years he worked at the İzmir office of a local newspaper, is among the ones who are disturbed by the practices of the TGS. G6, who complains about the lack of union support at work and at separation from the media organisation, too, talks about his experiences in the process of leaving his job:

We became members of the union, they charged us 50 liras per month. That makes something like 5-6 thousand liras in 10 years. I did not benefit from any advantages at all. When I was quitting the job, I called the union chief. He said we should consult a lawyer. We did and he wanted money. This is the reality of Turkey. Then why did we pay these dues for many years, are you crazy? Apparently we paid them so that the retired folk can come and have tea at the union offices. When we tried to leave the union because we saw it was completely empty, they argued us out of it by using jargon like “labour, left, organised”. After all, you damn it and stay. Let us at least be union members, let us set examples, but an ineffective union has no meaning. (Interview date: 23 March 2016)

These and similar practices of the union are causing young journalists to lose confidence in the organisation. G9 talks about another young journalist who sought help from the union with a problem about his rights, and he explains why he does not want to be unionised anymore, beginning with what he experienced:

He went to the union and asked, “How many days is my annual leave?” They said, 21 days. However, normally it is 28 days for a journalist. The union is defending the boss’ rule instead of defending the truth. I lost confidence in them when I heard this. “Why are they doing this? So they also cooperate with the boss at some point,” I would say. So why bother becoming a member, I thought. I don’t know maybe they do good work. (Interview date: 27 November 2015)

These adverse events caused the need to build a new structure among young journalists in İzmir. Established under the name ‘Young Journalists Platform’, this group brought together active journalists under the age of 30, and it ended after a short while due to the fact that the three journalists who

started the movement soon left their jobs in the newspaper and started working at the municipal press units. While young journalists did not join the Journalists' Association of İzmir is because the union rules require yellow press card for membership, which young journalists do not have, the TGS also did not have workplace representation in any press organisation in İzmir. G8, who is one of the young journalists that took part in the founding phase of the platform, responded to the question of why the journalists did not join the existing association but preferred to establish another platform with the goal of organising many activities from news writing training to information meetings on journalists' rights:

I guess the association was not reaching the young people. I think neither the union nor the association knows much about the young people working in this field. If you are not a member of the association, they wouldn't come and try to connect. The bond is there if you form it. I think the union is a little bit like that too. That is why we wanted to organise this formation and do whatever is necessary. We tried, we failed. (Interview date: 14 November 2015)

G1, who states that he got together with the young journalists during the establishment of the platform and tried to acquire legal status for them by unifying them under the union roof, says that the negotiations were inconclusive. G1, expressing his reproach for the lack of grounds for the young journalists of İzmir to be organised, summarises the recent situation as follows:

The TGS has 109 members in the Aegean Region currently. There are 60-65 members in İzmir, but no collective contracts. Since we do not have any collective contracts, we can not collect membership fees. There is no income because of this. The fees of other cities are only enough to cover İstanbul. All the expenses of this region reach 10 thousand liras a year. I will keep doing this as long as I can. My wife says it's enough. But if we close it down, there's no chance that the young journalists will open it again. And unfortunately I fail to attract young journalists here. (Interview date: 22 November 2016)

Looking at the example of İzmir, it can be seen how the situation in Turkey stands in stark contrast to the situation in Europe. General Secretary of the TGS Mustafa Kuleli, who notes that the TGS has sister unions in many

countries of Europe and that they make reciprocal visits occasionally, reports the contradiction:

When I ask “Why do you want to be unionised?” they snap. “This question will be asked if you are not a member of the union... Meaning: Why are you not a union member?” Being unionised is a requirement for work in Western countries. If you are a journalist, join the union. There is no other way. Being unionised in Turkey is seen as being a Marxist, Leninist. It is seen as something very shameful, so confidential. “Don’t you dare, you’ll be hurt” and so on... (Tekelioğlu, 2015; p. 196)

The general outcome of the interviews shows that the understanding of unionisation is maintained among journalists who started the profession before 1980, but that this understanding can not be transferred to new generations. Among the contributors to this situation are the change in the ownership structure of newspapers, from journalist-bosses to businessmen; the new order brought in by monopolisation; the connexion of trade unions with governments and malpractice. The fact that the media, which is one of the most influential organs in the defence of democratic rights, has never had a tradition of organising since the first day and the changing organisation structure of the media seem to indicate that fewer journalists will become unionists in the future.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In Anatolia, which has no journalism culture, the first steps taken towards setting up the press were taken by the government in the Ottoman Empire period and it has always been intended to be shaped and controlled by political power. The interaction between the economic order and the political order in Turkey, which respectively adopted absolute monarchy, constitutional monarchy, single-party regime and then multi-party democracy, has had the greatest impact on the press. The efforts to control the press by deprivation of economic resources, new censorship laws, broadcast bans, closing down

newspapers, arresting journalists during periods of increasing democratisation and demands for more freedom, provided a relative freedom of expression in times of resolving the crises in the financial life and the political system. These relatively good periods when journalist-bosses' relations with the government were getting better meant liberation for the press, while in the years to come, businessmen-bosses would have provided an environment for themselves to increase different economic investments.

The press in Turkey experienced the biggest transformation in the 1980s. The change in the capital investing in the press pushed the journalist-bosses out of the press sector and their places were taken by businessmen who had investments in different sectors. There has been a great deal of deformation in the press with the approach of businessmen into the sector, who had nothing to do with journalism and aimed at using media power to influence governments and gain privileges for their investments in other sectors. The press has grown away from its missions of creating public opinion, informing and enlightening the public – that constitute its most important function – and became an arena for news that are made in line with the boss' interests and for the relations of the boss with power groups and economic resources.

The monopolisation via holding companies established by the businessmen who appreciated the power in building relations with the government by incorporating different press organs, the “gentlemen's agreement” signed among the owners of media holding companies and the “promotion battles” that do not care about journalism but about maximising profits, created a working environment that becomes more difficult for journalists each day.

Executive editors who were made shareholders in the media group and columnists who helped settle the new world order at very high salaries emerged in this process, and the “star journalism” mentality was established in the

media. Aiming to serve more for the interest of their bosses, senior newspaper executives were influential in their efforts to strip the journalists of their union rights and to make them nonorganised. Journalists, who were deprived of their union and deprived of their rights to resist and react to the conditions, had to adapt to the new regime.

This state of interdependence, where the media becomes dependent on the governing party because of its economic interests and the government wants to keep relations with the media boss under control in order to be able to lead the public to the desired way, became accentuated after the 1980s. Today, this interdependent relationship still continues. While the continuation of this relationship caused the disappearance of different voices over time, it created a media environment that was shaped by the demands of the government and the needs of the economy.

Journalists have had to adapt to the existing structure in order to avoid unemployment or to lose freedom in this process, where the control of the political establishment went beyond the media bosses and directly reached journalists. Interviews with the journalists reveal that there is a great difference between the journalism they believe they should be doing and the journalism they are currently doing. Journalists who question the current media order acknowledge the mistake in the operation, but they say they can only do their job to the extent allowed by the media structure. Journalists, who say that their sense of professional belonging is becoming lower each day, say that reporters are becoming increasingly unqualified, ineffective and unnecessary.

The correspondent, who thinks that “enlightening the society is not the primary task” in this media environment, has now adopted an understanding that makes him avoid reporting the news because it can not overcome the threshold guards anymore and will not be published, and also avoids him to bring the news that might conflict with his boss’s interests to the news desk,

not even as a suggestion. For the reporters, who change their understanding of journalism and shape the news language according to the institution they work for, the basic motive has changed from reporting to fear of unemployment. The greatest output of this fear is self-censorship. Among the interviewed journalists, only the retired journalists who could be called the old generation stated that they did not apply self-censorship and they were not censored either by the institutions they worked for. While all journalists with under 20 years of professional experience accepted that they are applying self-censorship, they normalise the situation, giving as the reason that it is a reality and a necessary part of the media operation.

This transformation in the practice of news reporting has also caused a change in the sense of news value. It is no longer the information that will be useful for society that carries the news value, but it is the magazinish, sensational and interesting information that does. This reporting style, which is shaped by the institution's publishing policy, often leads them to make "preordered" news that reporters often do not want to do but have to use because of its benefit to the institution and to the boss. In the interviews, there have also been reporters who say that it is normal for newspapers to need such preordered news so that they can remain economically viable, as there are reporters who disapprove but say they got used to it.

Although they think that the only way out of these negative working conditions is through organisation and trade unions, nonunionisation is quite dominant among reporters because of the belief that it will not have any influence and that the existing structure will not change. This belief shows that the trade union structure within the press, which already does not have strong bonds with organisation since the past, is gradually weakening. While false consciousness, ignorance and indifference are seen intensely and especially among young people, the understanding that unionism has the same meaning as unemployment is established. It has been observed that the old generation of

journalists, who keep their understanding of their organisation as if it is a local society even during their retirement years, can not transfer their experiences to the young generation. In this case, it is thought that the absence of the master-apprentice relationship within the profession is quite strongly related to the self-centered understanding, which emphasises individual achievements in journalism.

The interviews revealed that unemployment, which is the priority of journalists, takes precedence over the political stance of the media establishment and its relations with the political power. Nevertheless, reporters who identify themselves with the institution they work for base this on individuals and the journalistic practice. It has been observed that reporters who have defined themselves – and not the institution – as impartial, continue to work in these media organisations for economic reasons, even though they have the opposite opinion, instead of being unemployed.

For all reporters, there is a difference between the current journalism practice and how it actually should be. Reporters find that the qualities of both the news and the journalists, especially those who are starting out in the profession, remain inadequate. However, they are making efforts to protect their reputation at least by not using their bylines in the “preordered” news that they have to write.

The increase in internet access as a result of technological developments has also caused significant changes in journalists’ working practices. The goal of delivering the most up-to-date news from mobile phones, tablets and laptop computers to the readers has aggravated the working conditions of journalists over the past years. The race for giving the most up-to-date and the most number of news items by employing the least number of reporters in this environment, continues to wear the journalists down each and every day.



Professional satisfaction differs between the new and the old generation journalists. While collecting useful information and informing the public provide professional satisfaction for old-generation journalists, individual reasons such as their name on the page create professional satisfaction for new generation journalists. In addition, old generation journalists agree that their earnings in the past years were satisfactory, but now both the new generation and the old generation journalists agree that their wages do not compensate them adequately.

Insecure working conditions that last for years decrease interest in the journalism profession each year. Despite all the negative conditions, journalists who started working in the sector before 1980 define journalism as a job that is performed with love and passion, while new generation journalists aim to move away from the sector as soon as possible by creating alternatives such as working for the press departments of companies, or educational and public institutions. Seven of the nine journalists who were interviewed for this study, have undergone changes in their careers within a year after the interview. One of them retired; two of them became unemployed due to the closure of their institutions; three of them quit the media organisations they worked for and started to do press counselling. And the other journalist decided to continue his career in İstanbul, the reason being that he could not find a press agency in İzmir that offered him satisfactory working the conditions.

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