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From political economy of the media to press freedom: obstacles to the implementation of peace journalism in Turkey

Kurzfassung: In diesem Aufsatz geht es um Journalismus als einem gewaltfreien und kreativen Ansatz der Konflikttransformation. Friedensjournalismus unter dem Gesichtspunkt der Nachrichtenwertanalyse betrachtend, werden politische und ökonomische Aspekte der Nachrichtenmedien und deren Auswirkungen auf die Pressefreiheit ins Visier genommen. Auf Grundlage theoretischer Überlegungen und der Ergebnisse von 30 semi-strukturierten Interviews mit türkischen Journalisten wird der Versuch unternommen, die Hindernisse herauszuarbeiten, die der Implementierung des Friedensjournalismus entgegenstehen. Im Lichte der türkischen Erfahrungen skizzieren wir einen Fahrplan nicht nur für die Türkei sondern auch für andere Länder, die mit politischen, sozialen, religiösen und Rasse- oder Gender-bedingten Problemen kämpfen, die Konflikt und Gewalt auslösen können.

Abstract: In this article, we consider journalism as a nonviolent and creative approach to conflict transformation. Considering peace journalism from the viewpoint of news values analysis we try to understand the political and economical aspect of news media and its effects on the freedom of the media. Following a set of theoretical discussions and our findings based on 30 semi-structured interviews conducted with journalists from Turkey, an attempt is made to define and delineate the obstacles to the implementation of peace journalism. In light of the Turkish experience, we look to draw a road-map not only for Turkey, but also for other countries, which struggle with political, social, religious, race and gender-oriented problems, all of which may trigger and induce both conflict and violence.

1. Introduction

Today, we live in a tense world, where conflicts give rise to violence. The resulting violence and atrocities have been diffused through media outlets. The reproduction of such atrocities tends to perpetuate new conflicts. So, today, millions of people live in a conflict-oriented and vulnerable world, where they continually are exposed to the violence through the media. Besides, on a daily basis, people watch and digest news about conflicts, which are fueled by cultural, religious, political, social, and racial discord; as Susan Sontag (2004) said, the pain of others and the atrocities, which give effect to that pain, have become domestic constants: the unvarying sights and sounds of our living rooms. While people's perception of conflict is shaped and sustained by the media, the media also serve to normalize violence through their persistent use of hate speech and discriminative discourse, employing images of dead and wounded people, or videos of those who are in desperate need of help (e.g. refugees who have escaped from war). In order to prevent or negate this process of normalization, journalists should look to practice a different type of journalism, one that focuses on peace.

Johan Galtung, who coined the term, 'peace journalism', defines 'peace' as nonviolent and creative conflict transformation (1996:9). In this article, we see journalism as a nonviolent and creative approach to conflict transformation and by analyzing semi-structured interviews conducted with 30 journalists (broadcast and newspaper journalists, including those from conservative Islamist newspapers and the left-wing 'alternative' newspapers – publications, located at opposite ends of the putative journalistic and political spectra) about peace journalism and journalistic practices in Turkey, we look to identify those obstacles to peace journalism that should be overcome.

2. Methodology

In order to determine the obstacles to the implementation of peace journalism, we contacted journalists using the snowball-sampling method. We requested interviews with more than 50 journalists, but many of them declined to be interviewed. One of the journalists that we contacted stated unequivocally that he did not want to be a part of the proposed study because he was afraid he would lose his job. As a result of the challenges we faced, it took more than two years to arrange and conduct 30 semi-structured interviews.

In order to make contact with a number of journalists, we first approached a well-known investigative journalist in Turkey and requested the names of other journalists from different media companies, whose allegiances ranged across the full political spectrum, from conservative Islamist newspapers to left-wing alternative publications; our requirements also ran from mainstream news broadcasting channels to their nationalist counterparts. During the interviews, we put several questions to them in relation to peace journalism and journalistic practices in Turkey. At the end of the interviews we asked them to define obstacles to the practice of peace journalism in Turkey and to provide us with a road map that might help resolve the problems currently facing peace journalism practitioners.

After the interviews were completed, they were decoded and analyzed through the use of Nvivo Qualitative Data Analysis Computer Software. The software, makes it possible to identify some nodes with respect to specific issues and to then create relevant sub-nodes, as per journalists' comments and observations. This particular study will look to analyze data on the node entitled 'obstacles to the implementation of peace journalism' and related sub-nodes.

3. Why peace journalism is needed

The media have always provided a convenient conduit to the masses. As such, throughout history, from the first published newspapers to radio broadcasting, and from radio broadcasting to television, the media and news outlets have consistently been utilized as a tool by authorities, especially in the pursuit of economic or political interests. Sometimes, the results have been catastrophic, the Ruanda Genocide[1] being a case in point, one of the best-known examples of the negative impact of media outlets. But, in contrast, news outlets can often be instrumental in fostering peace, as seen during the Vietnam War[2].

UNESCO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racialism, Apartheid and Incitement to War (1978) highlights the importance of the role of mass media in relation to peace. Article 1 clearly underlines this role and article 3 explains the duties of mass media.

Jörg Becker (1982) affirms that there is a link between the two social science categories of peace and communication. As Becker explains, despite its scope, this relationship is not free from problems, because mass media's dependency on the economic value of information results in the reproduction of structural violence.

At this point, reference should be made to the relationship between violence and conflict. In the *Violence Triangle* of Galtung (2004), the formation of violence can be seen to be differentiated into direct violence, which has visible effects, and structural and cultural violence, whose impact is invisible. As Galtung suggested, the *Violence Triangle* (cf. Fig. 1) has built-in vicious cycles, with the invisible effects of violence possibly even more vicious than their visible counterparts, because direct violence reinforces both structural and cultural violence.

Figure 1: The violence triangle

At this juncture, with respect to the impact of mass media on peace and conflict, it behooves us to ask: 'How could the reproduction of violence by mass media be prevented?'. In response, we propose peace journalism as a gateway to make the world more peaceful through better journalistic practices.

4. Economical and political impact of news value: from news value to peace journalism

Peace journalism is not only a theory; it is also a professional practice that is inextricably related to news value. For this reason, we should first ask what makes a story or an event newsworthy.

Galtung and Ruge's widely cited article, entitled '*The Structure of Foreign News: The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers*', is one of the most important studies in relation to news value. In this study, Galtung and Ruge put forward a number of hypotheses by utilizing a radio metaphor to explain gatekeeping criteria and to identify twelve factors that make an event newsworthy. In the context of the metaphor employed by the authors, as logically a choice of event must be made, the theory proposes that the radio frequency or event selected is determined by the attributes of that frequency; the list and characteristics being enumerated as frequency (F1), threshold (F2), unambiguity (F3), meaningfulness (F4), consonance (F5), unexpectedness (F6), continuity (F7), composition (F8), reference to elite-nations (F9), reference to elite-people (F10), reference to people (F11), reference to something negative (F12) (Galtung & Ruge, 1961: 65-70; Harcup & O'neill, 2001: 262-263, Lynch & Galtung, 2010: ix-xi).

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[1] More than 800.000 people were slaughtered in just 100 days as a result of radio broadcasts inciting genocidal violence (BBC, 2014).
[2] The images of the Vietnam War (1957-1975) seen all over the world, drew attention to the war, and changed public opinion through the generation of widespread anti-war sentiment.

Since 1965, there were many studies on news values, which criticize or test the factors that Galtung and Ruge put forward. With the development of information technology, considering the effect of the transition from traditional media to new media new values should be reexamined. In 2001, Tony Harcup and Deidre O'neill examine news values considering the extent to which news values may be changing and updated set of contemporary news values. In 2017, Harcup and O'neill revisited Galtung and Ruge's theory one more time and redefined news values according to their sampling of UK as the power elite, celebrity, entertainment, surprise, bad news, good news, magnitude, relevance, follow-up, news organization's agenda (Harcup & O'neill, 2001; Harcup & O'neill, 2017).

Teun van Dijk, examine news values considering the effects of political economy of media and ideology. van Dijk states that news values reflect economic, social and ideological values in the discourse reproduction of society through the media, arguing that a distinction can be made between different types of news values. He first underlines how news values are impacted by the economic contingencies of sales and subscriptions, news budgets, and advertising, among other elements. He then discusses the constraints imposed on the social routines of newsgathering and organizational production from an economic standpoint – the constant pressure to 'scoop' a rival outlet or to consistently deliver news on time and of a recognizable quality.

Teun Van Dijk explains what the news is:

> '…economically, news is also a market commodity that must be promoted and sold. Ideologically news implicitly promotes the dominant beliefs and opinions of elite groups in society. Pragmatically, however, it is not primarily the type of global speech act that pertains to the actions of the speaker (like promises or threats) or to those of the reader (as in accusations)…' (Van Dijk, 1988:83)

So, news value is inextricably related to the economic, ideological, and social, dependencies of media and journalists as well.

As Richard Lance Keeble, John Tulloch and Florian Zollman noted, one of the major inspirations for the media activists of the peace movement has been the propaganda model of Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman (2010: 4). Chomsky and Herman (1988) define five filters to explain how people's ideas are manipulated and how the public's consent to political, social and economic policies are manufactured. Those filters are ownership, advertising, sourcing, flak and anti-communism/fear. The first three filters are based on the political economy of the mass media and the relationship between media, economy and power, in other words, these are related to the market mechanism of news media.

The fourth filter concerns the manipulation of public information through the efforts of business organizations, and the last comprises fear and the common enemy created by authority/power. Chomsky and Herman wrote 'Manufacturing Consent' during the Cold War, when the communism was seen as a pervasive threat, as such, they decided to name the fifth filter anti-communism. Today, the threat of communism, having long since receded, has been replaced by that of the *'war on terror'.*

In 'the order of discourse', Michel Foucault also asserts that the production of discourse is controlled by power:

> 'Here is the hypothesis which I would like to put forward tonight in order to fix to terrain – or perhaps the very provisional theatre- of the work I am doing: that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and distributed by certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance event, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality.' (1984: 109)

Consequently, Foucault (1984) underlined, discourse has an order, and as Chomsky and Herman (1988) pointed out, power manufactures consent. At this point, before thinking about how peace journalism can be implemented in Turkey, the relationship between media and authority and its effects on freedom of press should be rethought.

5. The relationship between media and power in Turkey

The history of the media in Turkey has always been replete with discussions about the nature of the relationship between media and power with the owners of conglomerates dominating news media companies at national level. Dilek Kurban and Ceren Sözeri argue that media independence and freedom of press in Turkey are not just a matter of an analysis of the regulatory framework governing media content and structure, but also call for a critical assessment of media-state relationships with a historical perspective. (2011: 37)

In 2012 TESEV's (Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation) reports on media and democracy Kurban and Sözeri note that:

> 'Media policy in Turkey has shaped the media-state relationship since the establishment of the first newspaper in the late Ottoman period. While regulations were often employed as an effective disciplinary tool against the press in processes of state formation and modernization, opponent

journalists have constantly been suppressed by state and non-state actors who claimed to act in the name of 'state interests.' (2012: 10)

The power of media owners both within industry and the media has been the subject of extended discussion for some time. As Ceren Sözeri and Zeynep Güney make clear, it was not just at national level that neoliberal economic ideas and deregulation policies had an impact, the effect was essentially global. This resulted in newspaper and magazine publishers taking steps to become holding companies; with investors, active in other areas, keen to acquire a foothold in the media sector. With the launch of private television and radio broadcasting in the 1990s, media groups increased their power through both vertical and horizontal mergers (2011: 15)

Some five years after the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002, criticisms of the limitations placed on both freedom of expression and the press have become gradually more pointed and trenchant.

According to Kurban and Sözeri, media regulation in Turkey is a centralized and bureaucratic process, where priorities are set by the executive (2013: 2). Please see Figure 2.

Not only national reports but also international reports show media's dependencies on both economical and political power. Freedom House's Reports on Turkey indicate that between 2002 and 2013, Turkey rated as a partly-free country. Since 2014, Turkey's score declined from partly free to not-free. The 2015 report from Freedom House noted that Turkey's score on press freedom had been in continual decline and in 2016; it underwent a further drop from 65th to 71st place; in 2017, it underwent from 71st to 76th place. *Reporters without Borders* also highlighted the effect of the political regime on the media in Turkey, noting that in the 2016 *Word Press Freedom Index*, Turkey had fallen to 151st, a drop of two places from the previous year and in 2017 Turkey had fallen to 155th.

6. Press freedom in Turkey: censorship/self-censorship

The media have always struggled with censorship in Turkey, but in recent years specific incidents have clearly shown that both the media companies and the journalists have repeatedly faced censorship/self-censorship.

The Uludere (Roboski) Airstrike was one of the most important examples of censorship in Turkey. On December 28, 2011 two Turkish F16 fighter jets fired missiles on 34 civilians (cigarette smugglers) assuming them to be PKK members. The main Turkish news channels (NTV and CNN Türk), didn't make any reference to the event and even after people learned about the airstrike on social media, there was no coverage of the incident on either television news channels and on newspapers websites; an omission regarded as a prime examples of media censorship in Turkey.

A second example of censorship in Turkey was that which occurred during the Gezi Park protests. In early days of the protests, the main news channels in Turkey did not allude to them at all. CNN Türk aired a documentary about 'penguins', NTV showed a documentary about 'Hitler', and Habertürk TV broadcasted a program on 'schizophrenia'. Only a few television channels (Halk TV, Artı 1, IMC TV, and Ulusal Kanal) broadcasted the protests. The TV channels, however, were not alone in failing to make any reference to what was happening, several newspapers also omitted to mention the protests while others strove to work within the narrow constraints of the boundaries defined by power and patronage. The majority of government-oriented newspapers did not acknowledge what was occurring, as can be seen in the table below, which covers 15 of the main national newspapers. Star and Yeni Şafak newspapers did not make any reference on their front pages to the protests for the first three days, while Sabah, Yeni Akit, Star and Habertürk Newspapers each provided no account of what was happening for two days. On June 7, 2013, seven newspapers (Sabah, Yeni Şafak, Star, Türkiye, Bugün, Zaman, Habertürk) all gave prominence to a speech by the Prime Minister. Finally, the protesters began to stage protests outside media companies themselves (cf. Tab. 1 and Fig. 2).

A short time after the start of the Gezi Park Protests, allegations of significant corruption were made against three ministers of the Turkish Republic. As stated in the Freedom House special report on corruption, media and power in Turkey pointedly noted, reporters and news organizations have practised self-censorship to avoid angering the government, in particular Prime Minister Erdoğan. According to the Freedom House report:

At least 59 journalists were fired during the Gezi protests for criticism of the government, and more have lost their jobs in recent weeks for criticizing the government over corruption.'

The number of journalists who had been fired or resigned stood at 59 in July 2013. In the second half of 2013, 131 journalists lost their jobs as a direct result of their activities during the Gezi Park Protests. According to data from Disk Basın İş Sendikası [the Press Union in Turkey], in the first half of 2014, 319 journalists had lost their jobs.

Newspapers	May 29, 2013	May 30, 2013	May 31, 2013
Akşam	X	✓	✓
Birgün	✓	✓	✓
Cumhuriyet	✓	X	✓
Habertürk	X	✓	X
Hürriyet	✓	✓	✓
Milliyet	✓	X	✓
Posta	✓	✓	✓
Radikal	✓	✓	✓
Sabah	X	X	✓
Sözcü	✓	X	✓
Star	X	X	X
Taraf	✓	✓	✓
Yeni Akit	X	X	✓
Yeni Şafak	X	X	X
Zaman	✓	✓	✓

Table 1: 15 Turkish newspapers' front page publishing policies on Gezi Park during the first three days of the protests
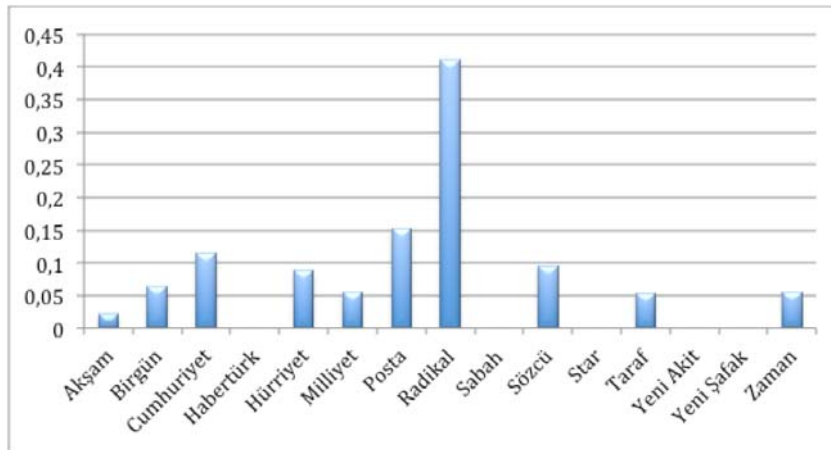

Figure 2: Front-page coverage devoted by news outlets to the Gezi Park Protests based on the front-pages of 15 Turkish newspapers during the first three days of the protests

On July 15, 2016, a military coup attempt occurred in Turkey. Soldiers and tanks moved into key positions around Istanbul and Ankara, people poured into the streets and 248 of them were killed. On July 20 2016, the President Erdogan declared a three-month state of emergency, which had been, extended several times and since then Turkey remains in a state of emergency. Since July 20, 2016, Turkey is in a state of emergency. After the failed coup attempt the crackdown on media has worsened. Tens of thousands of websites have been blocked by Telecommunications Communication Presidency and over one hundred journalists had been arrested so far (İnceoğlu, Sözeri & Erbaysal Filibeli, 2017). According to BIA Media Monitoring Report April-May-2017, 136 journalists were in prison, 78 of them were members of Gülen Community media, 30 of them from Kurdish media. Besides, 11 staffs of Cumhuriyet Newspaper are under arrest on charge of "aiding and propagandizing for FETO Terror Organization. On July 29, seven people from Cumhuriyet Newspaper had been released. In the same period, 301 journalists stand trial for participating coup, membership of FETO/PYD Organization, propagandizing for organization (Önderoğlu, 2017).

The analysis of international and national reports on media's situation in Turkey show that especially political power affects freedom of media in Turkey. At this point it should be asked how PJ could be possible in the countries such as Turkey.

7. Obstacles to the implementation of 'peace journalism' in Turkey

According to the research based on semi-structured interviews conducted with 30 journalists, the main problems that make the practice of peace journalism almost impossible in Turkey can be summarized as follows:

- The political economy of the media and the power (relationship between power, media and ownership which affects press freedom)
- The employment security of journalists
- Censorship and self-censorship
- The utilization of the discourses of the political power (propaganda, manipulation or/and the manufacturing of consent)
- Usage of discriminative and conflictive language
- The absence of media pluralism

7.1 The political economy of media and the power

Robert A. Hackett touches upon the issue of the market mechanism of media companies and says that:

> 'Within the dominant western countries, social and economic changes are also shifting the nature of journalism, as it increasingly dissolves within profit-driven media and entertainment and information conglomerates; its economic basis threatened by audience fragmentation; its governing ethos shifting from public service and "objectivity" (however conservatively defined), to one of consumerism and commercialism.' (2006: 10)

In Turkey, a further relevant factor is that the media act as ideological apparatuses of the state (Althusser, 2001). Our field research shows that 26 of the 30 journalists talked about the negative effects of market presence and the political economy of media companies. According to these journalists, because of the media company owners' investments in other sectors, media and of course news outlets are deeply dependent on the political power.

Anonymous 2 (personal communication, 5 November 2015) says that, newspaper owners are businessmen, but not journalists. She/he affirms that, in the past, people with economic power had utilized the media as a tool with the aim of capitalizing on their economic power within the political arena. While previously, those with economic power had, through their use of the media also tried to attain a degree of political influence and power; now, it is those with political power, who exert pressure on the news media.

Anonymous 3 (personal communication, 24 April 2014) gave an example of the political pressure, which can be exerted in Turkey. When, during the Gezi Park Protests, she/he refused to talk to a politician, who had called to warn him off, his employer was then called. In noting the political pressure, which can be brought to bear, she/he referred to the close links between companies and government and how commercial pressure by state-related institutions such as the banks can affect media companies. For example, anonymous 11, (personal communication, 13 June 2015) echoed this point in a reference to the 2.5 billion USD tax penalty imposed on the Doğan Media Group as a result of its conflict with AKP.

Anonymous 14 (personal communication, 27 November 2015) also highlighted how commercial enterprises were often subject to concerted and sustained pressure from government to withdraw or withhold advertising from certain media groups. The resultant struggle to survive was sometimes exacerbated by the fact that the significant advertising budgets of government were the sole preserve of government–friendly publications.

Anonymous 10 (personal communication, 6 December 2015) referred to economic inequality in Turkey. She/he also alluded to the declaration of press unions that 80% of media companies in Turkey were government-oriented. Additionally, anonymous 25 (personal communication, 18 November 2015) claimed that the owners of newspapers should be journalists not businessmen; otherwise one can't criticize the government. At this point, anonymous 9 (personal communication, 18 June 2014) said that for press freedom, the economic self-legitimization of media companies should be based on independence; in other words, the audience/the readers should finance the media companies.

Anonymous 16 (personal communication, 22 February 2014) made an historical analysis and asserted that history provides examples of government-established media groups, although not necessarily pro-government, but that these had always at least served the interests of the dominant class (hegemony) of the day, just as they do today. Consequently, anonymous 30 (personal communication, 15 April 2014) from Habertürk said that it is hard to implement peace journalism where the entire agenda is set and consent is a product of those in authority.

7.2 The employment security of journalists

The second problem, which also relates to the issue of media economics, is the unemployment rate for journalists. 13 of the 30 journalists mentioned its deleterious effects, noting that unemployment significantly impeded their ability to do their work. On the other hand, they were of the view that if they were to write something that antagonizes those who have political and/or economic power, this could result in their dismissal from their posts.

Our research would appear to vindicate these viewpoints. One of the journalists that we interviewed was a freelancer, who had lost his job some time prior to our interview with him. In addition, 20 of the 29 interviewees had lost their jobs since the Gezi Park Protests. Most of them had been fired; some of them had resigned because of harassment and bullying in the workplace, some of them had lost their jobs because the newspapers, which they had worked for, were shut down by the government or the newspapers were taken over and administered by trustees.

Anonymous 24 (personal communication, 16 April 2014) wondered why the media in Turkey were so contemptible and immoral, given the apparent existence of so many brave and committed journalists. She/he answered his question by saying that *'If journalists are struggling to make their living we cannot expect them to act as heroes'*. By the way, anonymous 6 (personal communication, 15 June 2015) referred to state-imposed news-outlets and concluded that in Turkey, in addition to the usual assortment of *professional liars*, there were also journalists, who although they deeply regretted the state of their profession, were unable to try to affect change, as they feared losing their jobs.

Anonymous 13 (personal communication, 4 April 2015) and Anonymous 15 underlined that journalists should have their economical independency to do their job. Anonymous 13 said that journalists should be able to work like other people, as they too have bills to pay and must also deal with demands on their resources. Additionally, anonymous 15 (personal communication, 10 November 2015) said that journalists have to survive, but she/he was at a loss as to how they might extract themselves from the current vicious cycle in which they languished.

On the other hand, anonymous 1 (personal communication, 4 April 2015) from an alternative left-wing newspaper, claimed that journalists have endeavored to avoid problems by keeping their nose clean and just getting on with their work.

7.3 Censorship and Self-Censorship

According to the interviewees, because of state-imposed censorship, and a genuine fear of losing their jobs, journalists confessed that they censor themselves. In light of such statements it could reasonably be argued that the presence of censorship and self-censorship, coupled with the lack of freedom of expression make it exceptionally difficult for journalists to serve the public's right to know.

Our results show that 21 of 30 journalists regard censorship and self-censorship as the primary obstacles to the implementation of peace journalism.

Anonymous 2 (personal communication, 5 November 2015) indicated that journalists were conscious of the boundaries of the politically imposed framework within which they operated.

Some of the journalists gave examples on their personal experiences to explain the situation of censorship in Turkey. Anonymous 27 (personal communication, 28 August 2014) mentioned the censorship on his documentary on the Gezi Park Protests, which culminated in his resignation. When management informed him that there had been a misunderstanding and that the documentary would be aired some two days after its original proposed airtime, she/he withdrew his resignation.

Anonymous 29, (personal communication, 9 April 2015) also talked about his censored article and about how 'gate-keeping' within a Turkish context can be regarded as very much the reverse of that, which prevails elsewhere. If something is deemed to have news value, there is scant chance that it will be pass muster. She/he concluded that during the Roboski [Uludere] Airstrike, the Gezi Park Protests and many other incidents, the extent of the censorship imposed was apparent even to the wider public.

By the way, according to anonymous 4 (personal communication, 4 December 2015), as a result of the censorship imposed during the Gezi Park Protests, the TV could no longer be regarded as a reliable source of information.

Some of the journalists touch upon their experiences on self-censorship. For instance, anonymous 22 (personal communication, 30 October 2015) explained how she/he had to revise all his articles before publishing from the beginning of the Gezi Park Protests, and she/he added that even if she/he hadn't been fired, she/he had planned to resign anyway.

Anonymous 6 (personal communication, 15 June 2015) also underlined the dangers resulting from journalists' self-censorship especially, when they ask themselves the question 'if I publish this news item, will I get into trouble?'. Anonymous 6 also indicated that this situation cause the utilization of the discourses of political power.

7.4 The utilization of the discourses of political power

As already noted, normally, the principal role of the press is to further people's right to know. However, it is not just in Turkey alone, but globally that the media are used mostly for perception management. In light of the Propaganda Model of Herman and Chomsky, Stuart Allan says that;

> '...reducing the news media to tired ideological machines confined to performing endlessly, and unfailingly, the overarching function of reproducing the prerogatives of an economic and political elite through processes of mystification. Journalists would then become little more than well-intentioned puppets whose strings are being pulled by forces they cannot fully understand.' (2010: 23)

What did journalists say about the situation in Turkey? Based on our interview results, 18 of 30 journalists regarded incidents of propaganda, manipulation, and the manufacturing of consent as the most important challenges to be overcome if peace journalism were to be implemented in Turkey.

According to anonymous 5 (personal communication, December 12, 2014) the profession of journalism, born as a result of the industrial revolution, had as its objective the dissemination of news within the main cities of Empire. However, in time, journalism, press media or what we now call the media strove to hide and manipulate the truth instead of revealing it.

To explain how manipulation works in Turkey, anonymous 6 (personal communication, June 15, 2015) gave an example on an incident during the Gezi Park Protests, the so-called Kabataş incident allegedly involving the harassment of a veiled woman by the Gezi Park protesters. Sometime following these claims, on February 13, 2014, one of the mainstream TV channels in Turkey, Kanal D released footage from nearby surveillance cameras showing that there was no evidence that any Gezi protestors had attacked a veiled woman. Anonymous 6 is of the view that if one considers the benefits to be gained from the criminalizing of the Gezi Park Protestors, that alone throws a different light on the Kabataş incident.

Anonymous 4 (personal communication, December 4, 2015) poses the question *'Is journalism a profession based on perception management?'.* To answer his/her question, she/he gave an example on how government-oriented newspapers often claim that foreign agents are at work within the Turkish political domain.

7.5 Usage of discriminative and conflictive language

One of the most significant reasons for conflict, is the use of discriminative, racist, gender-oriented, and insulting language, in addition to the hate speech employed by opinion leaders or socially trusted groups and institutions. According to our field research, 22 of the 30 journalists defined the utilization of discriminative and conflictive language as a problem of particular gravity. Additionally, most of the journalists said that their colleagues employ many clichés in Turkish, which are both discriminative and conflictive.

According to anonymous 20 (personal communication, 29 September 2014) peace journalism, which she/he regards as almost impossible in Turkey, is a journalism practice that defends peace language while at the same time opposing hate speech; it does not produce hate speech and refuses to engage in discrimination.

Anonymous 6 (personal communication, 15 June 2015) expressed the point that the language used by journalists should not be discriminative, *othering*, conflictive, or insulting and that it should eschew defamation. Besides, anonymous 4 (personal communication, 4 December 2015) stated that journalists must discourage wording that triggers prejudgments and should also be careful while in relation to the use of adjectives.

Anonymous 22 (personal communication, 30 October 2015) was quite specific in his declaration that peace journalism avoids discriminative and conflictive language. She/he criticized the Yeni Akit Newspaper for the construction of a language profile that was largely hate-invested, and discriminative; points noted in the *Hrant Dink Foundation's* reports on *Media Watch on Hate Speech*. On the other hand, anonymous 23 (personal communication, 23 April 2015) from a radical-Islamist right-wing newspaper, also said that the media draw on violent language and provide prurient details about murders because this is what their readership demands. Here, she/he explained how news value affects news-outlets.

Anonymous 24 (personal communication, 16 April 2014) mentioned the propaganda model of Chomsky and Herman. She/he said that in Turkey there had been a low intensity war for some 30 years (the armed conflict between the PKK and the state) and as a result of the resolution process the media had started to employ peace language. Anonymous 27 (personal communication, 28 August 2014) also referred to the changes that were apparent in the language used throughout the duration of the resolution process. Prior to that, during the

previous 30-year period, the very concept of 'peace' had come, in its usage, to be regarded as the anti-thesis of government policies and there was a risk that its use in discourse could be held to be supportive of the PKK cause. Anonymous 11 (personal communication, 13 June 2015) emphasized the universal code of journalism ethics and said that hate speech and discriminative language were unacceptable. She/he also claimed that although 'peace discourse' during the resolution process of the Kurdish problem had started to be practiced, after the cessation of negotiations, a re-emergence of hate speech and discriminative discourse was evident.

As a result, anonymous 9 (personal communication, 18 June 2014) said that the media have a long way to go since journalists are still using hegemonic language.

7.6 The absence of media pluralism

As noted in the Hrant Dink Foundation's *A New Discourse: Dialogue and Democracy Against Discrimination* report, the monopolization of media ownership and the cross-ownership resulting from investments by media conglomerates outside the media, have posed a threat to pluralism in the media and the freedom of the press (Erbaysal Filibeli, 2016:14).

During the course of our research, many journalists mentioned the importance of media pluralism, citing numerous examples. But only one journalist, anonymous 8 (personal communication, 22 April 2014) held the absence of media pluralism to be a risk and an obstacle to the implementation of peace journalism in Turkey. She/he gave an example about her/his experiences during the Gezi Park Protests and added that during the protests, even though she/he was working for the *X* Newspaper; sometimes she/he used the *Y* Newspapers' (mainstream newspaper) card in order to gain access to the conflict area or Gezi Park. She/he also admitted that she/he did not have a press card and that when trying to access the park she/he had been stopped by a policeman; however, when his superior saw the *Y* Newspaper's card, she/he let her through.[3] In the view of this journalist, if she/he had been attached to either the alternative medias such as BirGün or Bianet, she/he would not have been able to gain access to the park.

This is just one example in relation to media pluralism. Others can be adduced: alternative media, the gender-oriented employment policies of media companies, access to the media by minorities and people with disabilities etc.[4] Without doubt, one of the most fundamental underpinnings of a democratic country is media pluralism. Given, this and in light of Anonymous 8's experience, all journalists, irrespective of their viewpoint, should have access to news-related incidents equally. Unfortunately, in Turkey, journalists, who are not from mainstream media companies, struggle to obtain press cards, and as such, are excluded from news-generating incidents.

8. Conclusion

In countries, such as Turkey, which have borne witness to political, religious, and cultural, as well as gender and race-oriented conflicts throughout their history, a harmonization of peace and journalism is critical. Therefore, given the barriers to this goal, the question as to how peace journalism can be implemented, in a media environment where newspapers and television channels tend to cleave to the motto 'if it bleeds it leads?', is particularly germane. Regarding our findings based on the semi-structured interviews conducted with thirty journalists, we believe that a road-map can be drawn to implement the peace journalism in countries such as Turkey.

Galtung states that the first definition of peace journalism should be derived from the policy, which seeks to counteract all the factors that affect news value (2008: 25). However, news value is an economic trigger for media. Media should economically survive, for this reason media professionals cannot totally ignore those factors. But for some of the factors as *negativity* the acceptance of Galtung's definition of peace journalism might be helpful to improve a better journalistic practice. Because, sometimes the incidents with the greatest news value are those that may be most generative of conflict-oriented problems. So, as a first step, journalists try not to give primacy to news value, but should instead always prioritize peace at all kind.

According to our findings, one of the obstacles mentioned by journalists is *the usage of discriminative and conflictive language*. This obstacle is deeply related with the news value, because in common vision people mostly believe that the conflict oriented news draw attention. Hence, in our days, with the new media technologies, media professionals are inclined to use this kind of language to get one more 'click'. We think that to resolve this problem journalists should do their job responsibly and eschew the use of discriminative and conflictive language of any kind and avoid hate speech as well.

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[3] To keep anonymity of interviewees, newspapers are coded as 'X' and 'Y'.
[4] Detailed information about media pluralism in Turkey can be found in Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom's country reports on Media Pluralism Monitor through the link
http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/46816/Turkey_EN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

The most cited obstacle to the implementation of peace journalism is *the relationship between power, media and ownership*, which also affects press freedom. At this point we propose that there should be some restrictions to organize cross-ownership and safeguard the political independence of the press. Unless, in this way media patronage can be free from pressures and journalists can do their job independently.

The other important obstacle is *the absence of media pluralism* at all kind. Without doubt, media pluralism and freedom is the hearth of the democracy. This is why, to implement better journalistic practices, from community media to minority media, we think that the government should guarantee the market presence of all media equally and not interfere with news outlets to safeguard the freedom of expression.

Censorship and self-censorship is the other problematic issue to the implementation of peace journalism. In an ideal world where the political independence of the press, media pluralism and freedom safeguarded well, there shouldn't be censorship or self-censorship. However, we don't live in an ideal world. Therefore, to minimize negative effects of censorship and self-censorship, we think that journalists have to struggle as hard as they can go.

Well, how can journalists struggle with censorship/self-censorship, if they are fearful of losing their jobs? This question makes us to think about another obstacle defined by the interviewees: *the employment security of journalists.* Since there are many unemployed journalists in Turkey, this problem may affect the freedom of expression of journalists and it makes really hard to guarantee media freedom. At this point, to solve this problem, we think that the government should work with the press union and as a first step the employment security of journalists should be secured by the law.

In an environment where journalists have the employment security, we think that the other obstacle that journalists mentioned '*the utilization of the discourses of political power'* will be overcome as well. In any case, journalists should try to do their best and not to use the discourses of the power to manufacture consent, but rather try to cover them objectively by eschewing conflictive language.

At the end, we have to ask one more time, "Are such suggestions even possible or practicable in the current media ecology?". There is no clear answer to this question but, we know that since it is almost impossible to practice general journalistic standards in Turkey, the implementation of peace journalism seems like a utopia. Even so, despite the implementation of PJ is still a distant prospect, nonetheless, a consideration of those elements necessary to give effect to it, is a very important and critical first step to take, both for the academy and journalists themselves.

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