

## EMERGENCE OF THE POPULAR - OPINION PRESS DIFFERENTIATION IN THE WEST

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### INTRODUCTION

"The press like any other institution in being the product of its history." (Roscho, 1975: 23)

"The newspaper has a history, but it has, ....., a natural history. The process, as it exists, is not as our moralists sometimes seem to assume the wilful product of any little group of living men. On the contrary, it is the outcome of a historic process in which many individuals participated without foreseeing what the ultimate product of their labors was to be..." (Agee at all, 1982: 60).

As it is claimed by Roscho and Park, press is the product of certain historical societal development. For the advent of proper newspapers, there must be a satisfactory level of paper production and appropriate printing techniques. In the actual social life, there must be a mass of people who consume the end products, easily newspapers (Kaya, 1985).

One of the prerequisite conditions for such a public is an adequate income level that the people can afford to buy a newspaper continuously. An other condition of it, is a certain educational

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level that makes reading possible. And there must be the societal reasons and motives that provide the continuous reading (Kaya, 1985).

These prerequisite conditions show that press as a mass medium emerged within the certain era of historical- societal development. This era can be called **capitalism**. (Boyce et al., 1978; Kaya, 1985). With the capitalist development, new powerful class was "bourgeois class". With the industrial revolution, capitalist development came to new stage and "working class" emerged as a new section of society, who can be candidate of the shaping power. This type of social formations together with the change in technology effected the development of the press. For instance the aim of sensationalism and human interest in the newspapers rooted from the appealing the newly emerged and less educated working class (Berkman and Kitch, 1986; Boyce et. al., 1978; Smith, 1979). And this was provided by the advance technology which maintained color in printing, fast writing, cheap paper and ink and easy communication in nineteenth century.

When it is looked to the development of the press, it is seen that first regular papers were published in seventeenth century. It is claimed by most of scholars, who deal with history of the press, first regular newspaper, "**Nieuwe Tydinghen**" was published in 1605 in Anvers Holland. It was followed by Germany, England, America and France.

Before the first regular newspapers of seventeenth century, there were some communication networks. In the era of Old Greek, singers, in Medieval Europe, poets and African artists both sing a song and poets and at the same time, they were translating what they see and hear.

In Medieval Europe, kings and lords gave importance to the news which were transmitted to them. Because of this fact, they established a primitive communication networks, which were called in France "occasional", in Germany "Zeitngên", in Italy "Relationes", "Gazetta" or "Corantas". Their contents mostly related with the wars, ceremonies, deaths and so on. These documents were all irregular.

#### PRESS IN 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY :

In 17<sup>th</sup> century; with the rise first regular newspapers; the change in the content was also about internal politics (Kaya, 1985;

Mott, 1962; Smith, 1979). Before that time, newspapers mostly gave the news about foreign affairs and external markets. Later on they began to give news about internal politics and as a result of this fact; press became both area of political struggle and the means of this struggle (Kaya, 1985). So, it became a social political force especially in Britain and France where political mobility reached upward points. The heavy taxes and censorship were implemented in Britain, where struggle for the freedom of press began.

In that era; in **Britain** first weekly news bulletins were seen. First of them was published by Thomas Archer among 1625-1626 with the Latin names; "**Mercur'us Britannicus**" (Smith, 1979). It was followed by the "**Mercurius Aulicus**", "**Mercurius Politicus**", "**Mercurius Publicus**" and "**Mercurius Civicus**" (Smith, 1979). In 1665 British formal newspaper; "**The Oxford Gazette**" was published. It continued its publication with the name; "**London Gazette**". After the Glorious Revolution (1688), with the effect of the abolishment of censorship; British Press began to develop and (1690) "**Worcester Post Man**", province paper and (1696) "**Lloyd's News**" were published. But when they made any opposition towards the government they always faced with some sanctions.

**In France** at that time four important newspapers were published. These were; "**La Gazette**" (1631), "**Gazette**" (1650), "**Journal-des Savants**" (1669) and "**Mercure**" (1672).

**In Holland**, there were some newspapers; "**La Gazette d' Amsterdam**", "**La Gazette de Leyde**", "**Nouvelles de La Republique des Letters**", "**La Bibliotheque Universella et Historique**", "**Historic des ouvrages des Savants**".

**In Germany**, in 1665 "**Frankfurter Post Zeitung**" was published regularly. But first daily paper was published in 1660 with the name "**Leibziger Zeitung**" (Smith, 1979).

In this century; **America** was partially governed by the Britain. The press was also under the control of British governers. In this century "**Public Occurences**" (1660) was published by one of the English man. In other countries like Switzerland, Spain and China; there were also some attempts to publish newspaper (Smith, 1979).

#### PRESS IN 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY :

In 18 century; important developments took place mainly in Europe and America. In this century; the rise of daily newspapers,

the rise of opposition journalism, entrance of the advertisements into the newspapers, the rise of literary journalism, development of American Press and implementation of stamp tax were seen in Britain and then spreaded to other countries. Again first signs of the popular - opinion papers were also seen in Britain. **In Britain**; with the effect of the abolition of the censorship law; Licensing Act and establishment of the political parties; Tory and Whig (today's conservative and liberal parties) continuity of the daily newspapers gained importance (Smith, 1979). The first daily newspaper was "**The Daily Courant**" (1702). Later on, the newspapers; "**The Tatler**" (1709) and "**The Spectator**" (1711) were published. These two newspapers aimed to give artistic and entertaining news, gossips and novels. And they were sold for "one penny" cheaper than the other papers. These two papers are accepted as the beginning of popular journalism (Berkman and Kitch, 1986; Schramm, 1988; Smith, 1979). At the same time "party journalism" began in Britain. The supporters of Conservative Party; "**Examiner**" (1710) and "**Craftsmen**" (1726) and the supporter of Liberal Party; "**Guardian**" (1713) were began to publish at that time. Another important newspaper of this century of Britain, was "**The Daily Advertiser**" which began to publish in 1730. It was the best example of opinion papers of that time with its content based on political, social and economic news. (Mott, 1962; Smith, 1979). Again in this century, the very old newspaper of Britain; "**Morning Post**" which supported Conservative Party was published. And lastly the origin of the today's "**The Times**"; "**The Daily Universal Registrar**" was published in 1788. This paper also based its news on serious, objective and informative news. So, it can be said that very important developments of British Press took place in 18<sup>th</sup> century. But press always faced with the heavy taxes (stamp taxes) of the monarchy. This fact also affected their prices and circulations.

As a general points of this century 18<sup>th</sup> century; it can be said that the varieties emerged in the contents of the newspapers such as political papers, entertainment papers, women papers (Smith, 1979). That type of variations led to the specialitions among them. Later on these specialitions were categorized as **popular journalism** (Smith, 1979).

**In France**, up to Revolution and after it; in the era of Convention and Directuvar, it was seen that press faced with the heavy

pressures of governments. Because of this fact, its development was too slow. In this century; **La Gazette** was belonged to the Ministry of Foign Affairs with the name; "**Gazette de France**" (1762). In 1791 it became daily and changed its name to "**Gazetta Nationale de France**". First daily paper of France was "**Le 'ournal de Paris**" (1777). Another papers of that hime were; "**Journal des Debats**" and "**Moniteur Universal**". As a summary of this century it can be said tahat; there were too many restrictions on press, including the cencorship and the act of closing the newspapers.

18<sup>th</sup> century of **America** was under the colony of Britain. Up to Independence war of America. There were few papers. Important of them were; "**Boston Gazette**", "**Boston News Letter**," and "**New England Courant**". They were like the copy of British Press. (Mott, 1962). **Frank Lutter Mott** described them;

"The two - thirds of these papers were filled with the news taken from London Journals and dealing chiefly with English polities, court and with Eurrepean Wars. The remainder spaces filled with items usually very brief about the arrival of ships, deaths sermons, political appointments, storms, Indian depredations, privateering, piracies, fines, accidents, court actions and so on. Maritime news had always importance." (Mott, 1962; 11-12). For the form and content of "**News Letter**" **Mott** said that;

"In apperance, and in some features of news treatment, the paper was not unlike the London Gazette" (Mott, 1962; II).

**The New - England Courant** looked like **Spectator** and **Guardian** (Mott, 1962). **Mott** explains its way as:

"It was less anxious to be informative than to be amusing and with its apperance entertainment may be said to enter the history of American Journalism as a definite newspaper function." (Mott, 1962; 16).

Its policy was explained with editorial statement by **Benjamin Franklin** in Feb. II, 1723 :

"The main design of this weekly paper will be to entertain the town with the most comical and diverting incidents of human life, which in so large a place as Boston, will not fail of a universal exemplification." (Taken from Mott, 1962: 16).

It can be said that American Press was under the influence of British Press in 18<sup>th</sup> century. And it can be also said that first signs of popular journalism were also seen as if it is seen as "**British Copy**"

## PRESS IN 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY :

The real development of the press and the emergence of mass-circulation press were seen in 19<sup>th</sup> century. As it was mentioned before, the emergence of the press is the product of certain historical process and this historical process was capitalist development. In 17<sup>th</sup> century where capitalist development began and press emerged, the technology was not well developed and reading audience was very small group of people; mainly old aristocratic and new middle classes. With the capitalist development mass press emerged. Change in technology was provided and new section of a society emerged, that is working class. And the reasons of people's reading was changed. In the past, papers were written to take news about trade and declarations of kings. Up to 19<sup>th</sup> century; there were struggles with the old monarchies and old feudal structures. Monarchies were overthrown, French Revolution was made and spreaded to the other countries and democratic institutions were tried to be established. As result, "political participation" increased. In America; there was Independence war. These facts led people's continuous reading. But the apparent factor that led to the rise of the mass press was the reduced price. And the main factor of decrease in price of papers was the radical changes in technology, entrance of advertisements in to the newspapers and decline in taxes. Change in technology of press was seen at three levels; printing, communication network and distribution. **Change in printing technology** were seen as emergence of the rotary press, fast-dry ink (which make printing faster); the use of half-tone (which make possible using visual materials in the press), use of color and use of cheap paper and ink. All these changes provided fast and cheap printing and the use of color. At the level of distribution; the widening of postal networks and railways were seen. They provided easy distribution of papers in a large space, which was a problem in the past. As a technological change which provided mass consumption of the press; home lighting factor can be added, (it provided reading in the night).

Another important factor that led to the reduce in the price of papers was the huge increase in the profit gained from the advertisements. With the effect of this profit; newspapers aimed to increase their circulations to get more advertisements.

And there was also ready audience who want to consume cheap papers. This audience was less educated lower - middle and working classes of the urban-industrial society (Boyce et al., 1978; Berkman and Kitch, 1986; Schram, 1988; Smith, 1979).

**Berkman and Kitch** describe this audience of United States like that;

"The penny press did not appeal to any specific interest but aimed to the newly-literate and growing middle- and working classes. The penny press developed as part of the emerging the nineteenth century. As Americans and immigrants flocked to the cities to find work in the new industrial order, traditional sources of information were weakened. Few could know local leaders directly. People from a variety of back-grounds were crowded together, without ties of family, religion or tradition. In contrast to their rural or European experience, city life was a world of strangers and of the strange and colorful. The penny press offered local news, human interest stories and sensational reports of crime, disaster and other lurid happenings. This was information and entertainment of a new sort." (Kitch and Berkman, 1986: 20).

And **Wilbur Schramm** describes this audience like that;

"The elite papers in America and Europe appeal mostly to upper-class readers. They are not written for great mass of readers. On the other hand, the most prosperous dailies in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries have been written for the mass; largely working class people; the more recently educated and audience looking for short paragraphs, big headlines and entertainment along with enlightenment. Some publishers found they could sell that kind of paper for a penny, attract a large readership and huge profits. (Schramm, 1988: 169).

Indeed, these papers were sold for one penny and huge circulation and profit were maintained. This era called "**penny journalism**" started in America. And later on, with the effect of development took place in American Press papers with a cheap price based on sensationalism and human interest called "**Yellow Journalism**" and sometimes used interchangeably with "**Boulevard Press**" and "**Popular Press**". But it should be mentioned that popular press was exist in Britain before the penny press emerged in America.

It was mentioned before 19<sup>th</sup> century penny press firstly emerged in America. In 1833 penny press was first trained by Benjamin Franklin with the "**New York Sun**", which was sold for one penny. **Schramm** describes its emergence like that;

"He took a paper that had six narrow columns of small type and redesigned it with three wide easy to read columns. Rather than filling the paper with political debate on business news, he filled it with crime, human interest anecdotes, "inside" stories of well-known people, sports and other exciting stuff readers could drift over. Within three years he was selling 30,000 copies a day". (Schramm, 1988, p: 171).

The New York Sun was followed by a James Gordon Bennett's "**New York Herald**" (1885). It is suggested that real sensationalism in the press began with Bennett's journalism (Berkman and Kitch, 1986; Mott, 1962; Schramm, 1988; Smith, 1979; Roscho, 1975). Bennett's journalism described as;

"Bennett was the forerunner of sensational journalism; his copy was blatantly vulgar; covering the high life and the low life. He created what we now called "society news" (Kitch and Berkman, 1986: 22).

"Bennett introduced a new kind of journalism by publicizing his private affairs. There was nothing detached in tone or 'objective' in view point about his style of presenting news" (Roscho, 1975: 26).

After six years later, Horace Greely's **New York Tribune** was joined to the parade of penny papers 1841. Greely followed a different way than the Benjamin and Bennett. He was more serious in his news. He based his news on social problems, workers' problems and he defended scientific agriculture (Mott, 1962). In 1851 another serious paper joined in to the American Press that was the **New York Times** under the publisher of Ochs.

Its journalism was based on the principles of objectivity, decency and fairness. Its audience and content described by **Berkman and Kitch** like that;

"Its snob appeal attracted the upwardly mobile and newly educated people. Their news was information not the entertainment" (Berkman and Kitch, 1986: 25).

Indeed, it became the most reading for the better educated classes and of the politicians. It is still the politically influential and having prestige together with **Washington Post**, **Wall Street Journal** and **Los Angeles Times**. The **New York Tribune** and **New York Times** became very informative at the American Civil War.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century; two more news papers became important to the information industry; "**The New York World**" (1883)



and "**The New York Journal**" (1895) under the editors of **Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst**. They have been deemed as the creators of "Yellow Journalism" best remembered by illustrations, comic strips, oversized headlines, scandals, gossips. They are accepted as the real example of popular journalism. The name has the story; The World published a daily cartoon "**The Yellow Kid**" which became enormously popular. Than journal stole it from the World and Pulitzer hired another cartoonist to draw another "Yellow Kid" and counter attempts gave a name to the kind of competitor among Hearst and Pulitzer; "**Yellow Journalism**". They reached very high circulation at the time. The reason of their popularity is based on their combination of sensationalism and crusading (Berkman and Kitch, 1986; Mott, 1962; Schramm, 1988; Smith, 1979)

**Berkman and Kitch** described this fact like that;

"Sensationalism came in the form of illustrations, cartoons, larger and darker headlines, the use of color and the promotion of exclusive features. At the same time Hearts and Pulitzer repeatedly focused attention on political machines and big-business monopolies. They understood their working and lower middle class audience and know how to appeal to both their desire for the sensational and their political interests." (Berkman and Kitch, 1986: 23).

Indeed, they attracted the monopolies like Standard Oil, Bell Telephone and New York Central (Schramm, 1988). By the Spanish-American War, they sold more than one million copies a day (Schramm, 1988).

What those papers brought to the news contents can be summarized as; an increase of local news, a much greater emphasis on sensational news, especially that of crime and sex; the appearance of 'human interest', news - stories of persons who are interesting merely as human being, and not for their connection with either significant on sensational news (Mott, 1962).

When we look the situation in **Britain** there were trains of popular journalism before the emergence of penny press.

It was mentioned before that **Spectator** and **Tattler** sold for a penny and based on human interest stories. The first penny paper of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was the **Daily Telegraph (1861)**. But most succesful paper of penny press was the **Daily Mail**. It was sold for

“half one penny”. But it is claimed by Schramm that most successful examples of the popular papers of Western Europe of that time were the “**Sunday Papers**” (Schramm, 1988). These were **Sunday Monitor, Observed, Sunday Times, News of the World** and **Lloyd’s Weekly News**. Other popular papers of that time were the **Daily News, Daily Post, Pall Mall Gazette** and **Evening News**. They reached very high circulations. For instance, Daily Mail sold one million in 1901. **Times** and **Guardian** followed the way near to opinion papers.

When it is looked to 19<sup>th</sup> century’s **France**, it is seen that the press was under the very serious pressure of governments. They were oftenly closed and faced with taxes. But with the effect of French Revolution and spreaded ideas and political struggles, press kept its importance in the daily life of French people. In this century; it can be seen both developments of popular and opinion press. The examples of popular press were; **La Constituionnal, La Presse, La Nation, La Reforme, Le Siecle, Le Petit Journal, Le Petit Parisren, La Croix, La Matin, Le Journal, ’echo de Paris**. Except **La Croix** which was religious one, they reached very high circulations. Among them **Le Petit Journal, Le Petit Parisien, Le Matin** and **Le Journal** was in very serious competition. Their total circulation reached for four million (Bayce et. al. 1978). Although in America and Britain opinion press made an attack with First World War; in France, there were also too many opinion papers from different ideologies. Important of them and their worldview like that; **L’Aurone** (Left), **Le Figaro** (conservative), **Le Journal Des Debats** (Libertian), **L’Humanite** (socialist), **L’action Française** (Royalist), **Le Gaulans** (royalist) (Boyce et. al., 1978).

## CONCLUSION :

We saw the historical development of popular and opinion press. Because of their audience is certain, they continued up to our time. Although both of them have been try to increase their circulation, succesfull one is the popular press. Their development brought the concept of “popular” and “opinion” journalism as we use into the literature of the press. To give general characteristics of them, we can say that, opinion papers aim to give news with is background and explanation with more serious discourse. They mainly have the well educated and upper-middle class audience. They are less colorful and they use small widths. Their price is expensive

and circulation is low. They give news in an explanatory sense. They are mainly remembered with the principle of "objective news" And their news gathering is based on interpretative and investigative reporting (Roscho, 1975). They usually have specialized pages in addition to columnists.

Popular papers have the audience from less educated lower classes. Their price is cheap and circulation is high. They use more photographs and color and big widths in headlines. They don't give the news with their background. Their news are based on the issues related with human interests and sensationalism such as sex, violence, crime, gossip, court and so on. And they usually use unserious discourse.

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