

Elif Asude Tunca*

The Role of Media in Development of Democracy: A Field Survey Among The Students of Journalism in Kyrgyzstan

Özet

Bu çalışma ile, demokratikleşme sürecinde, bağımsızlığını elde ettiği 1991 yılından bugüne değin geçen 16 yıllık cumhuriyet ve demokrasi tarihinde; 2005 yılında yaşadığı halk devrimi ve o tarihten beri devam eden siyasi istikrarsızlık ve ülkede varlığını uzun yıllardır sürdüren ekonomik bozukluk içerisinde var olmaya çalışan Kırgızistan'da basın, demokratikleşme sürecindeki rolü, ülkedeki iletişim fakülteleri gazetecilik bölümü öğrencilerinin bakış açısıyla aktarılacaktır.

Bu çalışma ile, Kırgız basınının potansiyel profesyonellerini yetiştiren iletişim fakültesi öğrencilerinin gözüyle Kırgızistan'ın demokratikleşme sürecinde medyanın rolü ele alındı. Çalışma, temelde Kırgızistan ve Türkiye Cumhuriyetleri'nin ortak kurduğu ve başta Kırgız ve Türk öğrenciler olmak üzere tüm Orta Asya ve Rusya Federasyonu'ndan çok çeşitli kültürlerle ve uyruklara mensup öğrencilerin eğitim gördükleri Manas Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi öğrencileri arasında gerçekleştirildi. Araştırmanın güvenilirliğini test etmek ve bulguları karşılaştırabilmek için aynı anket soruları, yine aynı üniversitenin başka fakültelerinde eğitim gören öğrencileri arasında da yapıldı ve böylece bir kontrol grubu oluşturulması hedeflendi.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Demokrasi, medya, Kırgızistan, Kırgızistan – Türkiye Manas Üniversitesi

* Kyrgyz - Turkish Manas University
Faculty of Communications
elif.funca@manas.kg

Abstract

Kyrgyzstan which is governed democratically has gained its independence in 1991. Despite the "Tullip Revolution" occurred in May of 2005, and the political and economic instability that exists in country since then, Kyrgyzstan has been trying to recover from them. Undoubtedly, media plays an important role and has great influence on development of democracy in Kyrgyzstan and this process delegates responsibilities to media.

In this paper, through the point of view given by the students of Journalism in other words future potential employees of Kyrgyz media, the role of the media in the development of democracy and the democratic process of Kyrgyzstan will be criticised. A field survey will be done among the students of Kyrgyz - Turkish Manas University Faculty of Communications. The same research will be done in the coming days among the student of the other 7 Journalism Departments/Faculties in the country.

Key Words

Democracy, Media, Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyz - Turkish Manas University

1. Introduction

Media stand between the people and their governments. While informing the people on government practices media also reflect their expectation from their administrations. While implementing its task media should remain neutral and independent from outside pressures in its function of forming the public opinion. In fact that is why media are considered as the 4th power in democratic countries.

In our world at present democratic practices are not limited by the boundaries of a country or a group of countries but they have an international effect beyond the frontiers. In our time, the request of democracy leads to sanctions such as political and economical sanctions as well as various trade embargoes.

This paper is aiming at identifying the influence of media in the process of evaluation of democracy in Kyrgyzstan.

In this context democracy in Kyrgyzstan will be questioned. Tullip revolution occurred in the recent past and efforts for stabilization of the political structure, economic difficulties, injustice of distribution of wealth of Kyrgyzstan affect not only Kyrgyzstan but the regional countries as well. An other aim of this research is to depict the views of the youth of the country in general and the views of the Communication Faculties students in particular on the contribution of the Kyrgyz media to the democratic development process of the country.

2. Democracy And The Role Of Media In Democracies

The centerpiece of a representative democ-

atic system is the process of selection of representatives by the public through elections. Elections are intended to be the principal form of political participation on the part of the public (Alger, 1996: 7). Giovanni Sartori emphasizes it as, "in order to have democracy there must be to some degree, a government of the people" (Sartori, 1987: 86).

Elections are the centerpiece but there are other vital dimensions of the democratic political process. The very way people come to respond to political communications and to perceive political leaders, institutions, and issues are clearly vital elements in how the political system works (Alger, 1996: 7).

According to Alger (1996: 9), two elements are essential if democracy is to be truly operative:

- Alternative choices must be available to the public
- The public must have in its hands the information it takes to make political decisions, to make choices, as they relate them to their own values, beliefs, and concerns, as effectively as their mental powers and inclinations allow.

According to him, choice is at the core of democracy, and the absence of choice means democracy is, to one degree or another, lessened (Alger, 1996: 9).

To have a substantial and accurate information is an other important, specific necessity and public need for democracies and the elections. The nature of politically relevant communications sent through the mass media are the central conditions under which the citizen gets the information and images and is exposed to the pressure

of opinion makers (Alger, 1996: 10).

As Robert Lineberry summarized in *Government in America* (1983:42), as the principles of a traditional democratic theory, information should be fully available to all. Information and full access to it is a cardinal principles of a democratic system. That is why a review of the concept of a democratic system is vital to establish an adequate framework for thinking about the media's role in the American and other political systems.

Communication is vital to any political system; it is the lifeblood of a political system attempting to operate through the democratic process. Alger calls it as "the dialogue of democracy" and says that such a dialogue must be achieved and maintained through means of the mass media. He believes democracy cannot remain healthy without such a dialogue and the political participation that flows from such communication (1996: 428). As political theorist Benjamin Barber has said, "strong democracy", working as intended, requires institutions that will involve individuals at both the neighborhood and the national level in common talk, common decision-making and political judgment, and common action (Barber 1984: 261, 235; translated by Alger, 1996: 428).

As Lippmann mentioned in his book; *Public Opinion*, the mass media are increasingly, the central way people develop their information on and impressions of candidates, government, and so on. According to him, people respond to political matters according to the pictures that are mostly selected and arranged by the media (Lippmann, 1922).

John F. Kennedy also mentioned in his

speech to the nation's broadcasters how important and powerful media: "The flow of ideas, the capacity to make informed choices, the ability to criticize, all of the assumptions on which political democracy rests, depend largely on communications. And you are the guardians of the most powerful and effective means of communication ever designed" (Barnouw, 1970:196; translated by Alger, 1996: 9).

Carl J. Friedrich in his major work "Constitutional Government and Democracy" (1968: 502) considers freedom of the press as a cornerstone of constitutional democracy and says that the emergence of constitutional government, and in particular the crystallization of the systems of popular representation are inextricably interwoven with the growth of the modern press. Without it constitutional government is unimaginable.

Fiss also mentions the importance of freedom of expression and freedom of the press. According to Fiss, freedom of expression and the press are indispensable elements of democracy which can generally be defined as "a system of government that assigns the ultimate responsibility to the public to decide how it wishes to live, but presupposes that the public is fully informed when it makes that judgment" (Fiss, 1996: 92).

According to Walter Bajohr (177 – 187) 1, latitude of thought, freedom of the press is one of the three main components of media. The other two components are;

- State governed by the rule of law (human rights, independent judg-

1 www.konrad.org.tr <http://www.kas.de/proj/home/home/44/12/index.html> (20.12.2007).

ments)

- Political contribution (contribution of people to administration, free elections, political parties)

According to Bajohr, media have an independent role among those components and it is the first and the only way for a proper functioning of democracy. Public opinion is mainly shaped by media. Besides that media,

- Convey information for an independent public opinion
- Make development and improvement of a country consciousness of, give voice to public, reveal the defects, ferret out the truth
- By demanding reforms encourage the political process

Since the invention of the printing press in Europe in the fifteenth century, the powerful elite dominated the press. The state, the church controlled the exchange of opinions and information in the political, religious, cultural and scientific domain. The press was considered a tool for enhancing the power, ideology and legitimacy of the dominant or absolutist elite. At the end of the 17th and in the 18th centuries, under the influence of the new political theories and the philosophy of the Enlightenment, arguments were developed as to why the freedom of the press was a necessary instrument in the struggle against despotic government and the oppression of the people. It is only after a period of social and political struggle, however, that at the end of the 18th century *de jure* the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press were recognized as fundamental rights in a democratic society. In the Declaration of Rights of the State of Virginia in 1776 it was men-

tioned in Article 12 that the freedom of the press is one of the greatest bulwarks of liberty and can never be restrained by despotic government. Freedom of speech and of the press was also formally recognized in the constitutions of the parliamentary democracies in Europe (Voorhoof, 1999: 35).

In the late 20th century freedom of expression and information is generally considered as one of the essential principles of a democratic society and one of the basic conditions for its progress and for the development of every one. National and international law is protecting freedom of the press against censorship or interference by public authorities. Several kinds of regulations are aimed at guaranteeing free and pluralistic media. Legal frameworks are developed in order to guarantee access to information and newsgathering (Voorhoof, 1999: 36).

The right to freedom of expression is also mentioned in the case-law concerning Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Freedom of Expression and Information of the European Commission and Court of Human Rights (Gomien, Harris, Zwaak, 1996; Voorhoof, 1995) as:

- Freedom of expression constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society and one of the basic conditions for its progress and for each individual's self-fulfillment,
- Freedom of expression affords the opportunity to take part in the public exchange of cultural, political and social information and ideas of all kinds,
- Freedom of the press affords the public one of the means of disco-

vering and forming an opinion of the ideas and attitudes of political leaders.

Freedom of the press is a civil liberty under law, logically justified for the specific purpose of the development of an objectively informed or intellectually vigorous democracy (Catlin, 1962: 197).

When we go deeper into the issue of media and democracy, we have citizenship as the foundation of the edifice of democracy, and the democratic state and civil society as the “walls”, keeping each other in its place and preventing the edifice from collapsing. And the public sphere is at the top; as the roof of it. According to classical liberal theory, the public sphere (or in more traditional terminology, public forum) is the space between government and society in which private individuals exercise formal and informal control over the state: formal control through the elections of governments and informal control through the pressure of public opinion. The media are central to this process. They distribute the information necessary for citizens to make an informed choice at the election time; they facilitate the formation of public opinion by providing an independent forum of debate; and they enable the people to shape the conduct of government by articulating their views. The media are thus the principle institutions of the public sphere or, in the rhetoric of 19th century liberalism, “the fourth estate of the realm” (Curran, 1994: 29). In other words, the public sphere is a forum of public debate where citizens can debate issues of common concern, voice and act on their views and seek to arrive at a consensus on matters of general interest. As with civil society in general, the public sphere should be based on the

principle of inclusion, of equality of access to the public sphere for everyone (Jakubowicz, 1999:12 – 13).

The classical model of the public sphere, developed by Jürgen Habermas, posits the public sphere’s autonomy from both the state and the market. Public sphere institutions can neither be controlled by the state, nor can they operate according to strict principles of profit maximization. These institutions mediate between these two realms of social life, constituting a third social space in which citizens can come together to debate critically issues ranging from public policy to group needs and identities (Jakubowicz, 1999: 13).

The functions of media in a democracy are many and varied. A general, though not necessarily exhaustive list of the tasks that the media ought to fulfill in a democratic system has been adopted by Jürgen Habermas (Jakubowicz, 1999: 14). According to Michael Gurevitch and Jay G. Blumler, democracy is a highly exacting creed in its expectations of the mass media. It requires that the media perform and provide a number of functions and services for the political system. Among the more significant are (1990: 270);

- Surveillance of the socio-political environment, reporting developments likely to impinge, positively or negatively, on the welfare of citizens
- Meaningful agenda-setting, identifying the key issues of the day, including the forces that have formed and may resolve them
- Platforms for an intelligible and illuminating advocacy by politicians and spokespersons of other causes

and interest groups

- Dialogue across a diverse range of views, as well as between power holders (actual and prospective) and mass publics
- Mechanisms for holding officials to account for how they have exercised power
- Incentives for citizens to learn, choose, and become involved, rather than merely to follow and kibitz over the political process
- A principled resistance to the efforts of forces outside the media to subvert their independence, integrity, and ability to serve the audience
- A sense of respect for the audience member, as potentially concerned and able to make sense of his or her political environment.

It is no easy to achieve and serve these goals. Gurevitch and Blumler say, at least four kinds of obstacles (1990: 270 – 272):

- Conflicts among democratic values themselves may necessitate tradeoffs and compromises in the organization and performance of the media
- Authoritative political communicators often appear to exist in an elite world of their own, distanced from the circumstances and perspectives of ordinary people.
- Political messages are doubly vulnerable; for one thing, they must jostle and compete for limited time and space with other, often more entertaining and beguiling, kinds of messages. For another, their ultimate dependence on winning and holding the attention of a heterogene-

ous audience can inhibit the media from committing themselves wholeheartedly to the democratic task

- The media can pursue democratic values only in ways that are compatible with the sociopolitical and economic environment in which they operate

However constraining such pressures and problems, symbolically, the press in a democratic society can be seen as performing an indispensable, bridging function in democratic politics. And, the existence of a free press enshrines the democratic concept of the political accountability of power holders to ordinary citizens (Gurevitch and Blumler, 1990: 272 – 273).

Walter Bajohr mentions the role of independent media act and the responsibility in democracies as well. Besides that he outlines that democracies protect independent media. According to him, democracies need (Walter Bajohr, 177 – 187);

- Journalist who have this responsibility
- Well-educated journalists
- Journalists who believe and act in ethics
- Independent and free media in every areas and respondentss

Curran expresses in his article “Mass Media and Democracy: A Reappraisal” that by discussing media; especially in the light of the new perspectives in media organizations and ownership of media, the historical analysis advanced by Habermas should be re-analyzed in contemporary context and the development of broadcasting. In concept of the classic liberal theories media act as a watch-dog of citizens and

have information role, professional responsibility role, public representative role etc., and Curran discusses these important properties of media in the concept of 'the organizations and ownership of media' and bring new expansions (Curran, 1992: 82 – 117). All these expansions put the power of media's impact on societies and political areas forward.

In fact, democracy, media and their tools are so telescoped that, it's sometimes too difficult to figure out which one is the component of the other.

In the light of the essential role in democracies, media ensure the functioning of the democratic process by effecting the two-way exchange of information between the public and the government; it is through the media that the public is informed of the activities of government and the government is made aware of the interests and concerns of citizens (Darbishire, 1999: 80).

As already mentioned above, media stands between the people and their governments. It is the 4th power in developed societies and multi party parliamentary systems besides legislative, executive and judiciary. It not only controls and checks the performance of the governments but also informs the societies about the performance and the practices of the governments.

Democracy in Kyrgyzstan and the role of media in Kyrgyz democracy have not been criticised up to now from the point of view of students in general and from the point of view of communication faculties' students in particular. In the same context, this research is also the first survey to identify the views of the students of Communication Faculty of Manas University about democracy and media in the country.

But before giving the details about the research and the methodology some information about Kyrgyzstan and Kyrgyz media will be given.

3. About Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyz Republic is a country in Central Asia. The total area of the country is around 198,900 km². The capital and the largest city of the country is Bishkek. The population of Bishkek is 770.000 and the total population of the country is more than 5 million. The nation's largest ethnic group is the Kyrgyz, a Turkic people. The other ethnic groups include ethnic Russians (9.0%) concentrated in the North and Uzbeks (14.5%) living in the South. The other but minorities ethnic groups are Tatars (1.9%), Uyghurs (1.1%), Kazakhs (0.7%) and Ukrainians (0.5%). The official language of the country is Kyrgyz language and Russian. Kyrgyzstan is one of two of the five former Soviet republics in Central Asia to retain Russian as an official language (Kazakhstan is the other) 2.

Kyrgyztan is a secular state. The dominant religion in the country is Sunni Islam (about % 70). The main Christian churches are Russian Orthodox and Ukrainian Orthodox. A small minority of Germans are Protestant Christians, mostly Lutherans and Baptists.

Kyrgyzstan is divided into seven provinces (oblast - Batken, Chui, Jalal-Abad, Naryn, Osh, Talas, Issyk Kul.) administered by appointed officials.

2 Kırgızistan Ülke Bülteni, DEİK – Dış Ekonomik İlişkiler Kurulu (Foreign Economic Relations Board), DEİK/Türk Kırgız İş Konseyi, Şubat 2006, Ankara.

The Politics of Kyrgyzstan take place in a framework of a semi – presidential representative democratic republic, whereby the President is head of state and the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan is head of government, and of multi-party system in development.

3.1. Political History Of Kyrgyzstan Since Independence

After the independence (1991) President Askar Akayev who received the majority cast (%96) administrated the government till March 2005.

Objections to Akayev have occurred in the country. The subsequent protests led to a bloodless coup - known as “Tulip Revolution” - on March 24, after which Akayev fled the country and was replaced by acting president Kurmanbek Bakiyev.

The economical and social differences between the north and south parts of the country are shown the overriding reason in the back of that “Tulip Revolution”.

On December 2007, the new election has been held in the country which is declared to be the first democratic election and the current main party won the elections.

3.2. Economy Of Kyrgyzstan

Despite the backing of major Western donors, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, the Kyrgyz Republic has had economic difficulties following independence. Through economic stabilization and reform, the government seeks to establish a pattern of long-term consistent growth (<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyrgyzstan#Economy>).

4. Media in Kyrgyzstan

4.1. Brief History of Media in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyz perestroika meant a new radical reform of the political system, which brought with it a drastic change in various spheres of life. State and society were facing the most difficult task: To develop from a monistic structure of domination into a system of pluralism and to convert from a planned economy to a market-oriented one. The radical changes in journalism were no less important and the process itself turned out to be extremely difficult (Kulikova & Ibraeva, 2002: 20).

For a newly independent, ethnically and culturally diverse, mountainous country, the media and communication is of utmost importance. The media have a crucial role to play in the building of a nation and the functioning of a democratic system. The access to and quality of public information and debates is crucial to the development of a sense of national belonging and participation (Kulikova & Ibraeva, 2002: 3).

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kyrgyzstan, like other Central Asian states, underwent over the last ten years political, economic and social changes that shaped the media landscape, moulded its ambivalent relationship with the political power, and led to the poor material conditions and limited professional freedom of journalism in today's Kyrgyzstan. However, for the two years of independence through late 1993, Kyrgyzstan's newspapers enjoyed the greatest freedom of publication in any of the Central Asian nations. Newspapers were able to discuss issues of public interest closely, in spite of the power of a sta-

te secrecy committee to require submission of materials in advance of publication. But since 1993, the government has moved increasingly to impose control over the access to news and production resources (Kulikova & Ibraeva, 2002: 3).

Openness and orientation to democratic development of the state in external politics at the beginning of the 1990s gave Kyrgyzstan an opportunity to enter the globalizing world community. The national media of Kyrgyzstan during this period “opened up” the world, wrote articles covering the life of faraway and unknown countries and people and explaining how Kyrgyzstan is perceived and accepted in the world community. However, such dazzling opportunities lasted only until the mid-1990s. By the end of the 1990s, the historical opportunities mostly due to the actions of the national elites were lost, and the entry of Kyrgyzstan into the world community became indeed no more than political phraseology for domestic use. Analyzing the reasons for the change in approach to coverage of Kyrgyzstan and international events, the reason for decreasing coverage of international issues was not the low interest of readers to external political issues but the resource poverty of the domestic media ((Kulikova & Ibraeva, 2002: 7 – 9).

The media landscape in Kyrgyzstan has significantly changed; starting from the very moment the country obtained the sovereign status. But the rapid media growth in terms of figures during the post-perestroika period did not guarantee media stability or longevity. A large number of media outlets terminated their existence after only a brief period of operations.

The period of 1990-2001 was quite unequal and heterogeneous for the me-

dia. It included several mutually related and conditioned but different phases of Kyrgyz journalism activity. On the whole, up to the second half of the 1990s, the processes taking place in Russian journalism directly predetermined the information processes in Kyrgyzstan. Even today the phenomena and events in Russia in the information field influence Kyrgyzstan’s experiences to a large extent. As researchers and analysts of journalism point out, Kyrgyzstan, as well as Kazakhstan, reflects mostly the Russian model in the information field, which is characterized by broad privatization of media and pluralism in the political sphere. According to Kulikova and Ibraeva (2002: 22 - 36) the historical phases of media development in independent Kyrgyzstan has been as following:

- Phase 1 / 1991-1992: Declaration and institutionalization of freedom of press
- Phase 2/ 1993-95: Turning point in relations with the government and own roles and functions.
- Phase 3 / 1996-1999: Final “divorce” with the government
- Phase 4 / 1999 - 2001: Redistribution and concentration of media ownership through creation of media holdings.

4.2. Current Status of Media in Kyrgyzstan

Similarly to other modern societies, in the structural aspect the system of journalism in Kyrgyzstan is represented by several groups of mass media, which are differentiated by the production technology and a number of other characteristics ((Kulikova &

Ibraeva, 2002: 71 – 83):

- Electronic media (television, radio, internet)
- Print media (newspapers, magazines, entertainment periodicals)
- Information services – agencies, press services, public relations agencies
- Professional associations, unions

Most of the operating newspapers in the country are published weekly. There is only one newspaper daily, even which is published 5 times in a week. Some specialized and professional newspapers are published biweekly. The rest of the newspapers are mostly published weekly. Bishkek; the capital city of the country is the heart of the printing media. There are newspapers published in the regions but they have great structural and technical problems to suffer, which are not less than the problems of the capital city's newspapers have. Main national newspapers including the daily one have coverage of population above 10.000 copies. Most of the rayon and oblast newspapers are circulated up to 10.000 copies. Being depended on the official language of the country, the newspapers are published either in Kyrgyz language or in Russian. But besides that there are newspapers and electronic media that use both languages and, languages of ethnic minorities, and English. The only daily newspaper of the country is published in Russian. It is a joint stock company. The ownerships of the most of the print media and electronic media are private individuals, private legal entities, public non-profit organizations and state structures; which are government mouthpieces.

There are national and local news and information agencies in the country. Certa-

in print media have their own information services. Besides, local media use information from Russian and international information and web-resources.

4.3. The Journalism Faculties/ Departments in Kyrgyzstan

In the last 15 years there has been a transformation in the way in which young people in Kyrgyzstan have become journalists. Not only journalism has become a graduate occupation but there has also been a steady increase in the number of courses and degrees of journalism universities/departments.

There are 8 journalism faculties/departments in Bishkek; the capital city of Kyrgyzstan, and 2 in Osh; an oblast in the south of the country.

The journalism faculties/departments in Bishkek are;

- AUCA – The Central Asian American University, Journalism and Mass Communication Department
- BGU – Bishkek Humanitarian University, Journalism Faculty
- Kyrgyz National University, Journalism Faculty
- Arabaev State University, Journalism Faculty
- Kyrgyz Technical University, Economic Journalism Department
- Kyrgyz Kuvveyt University, Journalism Faculty
- Kyrgyz – Slavian University, International Journalism Department
- Kyrgyz – Turkish Manas University, Communication Faculty, Journalism Department

The increase in the number of journalism universities/departments makes their students' point of view about media and the role of media in the development of democracies more important.

5. About the Research

In order to point out the role of the Kyrgyz media in the development of democracy and the democratic process of Kyrgyzstan through the point of view given by the students of Journalism a field survey has been done among the students of Faculty of Communications of Kyrgyz - Turkish Manas University (KTMU); which has been established in partnership of Kyrgyz and Turkish Republics. The students of KTMU are not only coming from the 7 regions of Kyrgyzstan, and from Turkey but from the other countries of the region as well. And this is why the priority has been given to KTMU. The same research will be implemented in future to the students of 7 other communication faculties/departments in Kyrgyzstan in order to be able to make a comparison among the all communication faculties in the country.

For the time being, in order to ensure the reality of the research the questionnaires of the research has been introduced to the students of other faculties of the university. Thus, a "control group" was established through the participations of students outside the Communication Faculty; among the students of Economics and Administrative Sciences Faculty and the Faculty of Science and Letters. The answers of the students of Communication Faculty are expected to be more attentive and aware of the role and importance of media for the democracies.

There are 3 departments at the Faculty of Communication;

1. Journalism
2. Public Relations and Advertisement
3. Radio, Tv and Cinema

and 305 students in total who educate in these departments in BD level.

There are 433 students who educate in 3 departments (Economics, Finance and Management) of Economics and Administrative Sciences Faculty and 199 students in 2 departments (History and Turkology) of Faculty of Science and Letters in BD level.

The questions are to identify 3 main respondentss:

1. What students understand from the term democracy
2. Democracy in Kyrgyzstan from the students' point of view
3. The role and problems of media in Kyrgyzstan

Besides these questions, others are to be answered such as; how students have learned the terms related with democracy, and what kind of news/respondentss students like to read/watch in media.

In this context; the components of democracy such as3;

- Human rights
- Existing law and the functioning of the apparatus of justice
- Enhancement of the role of civil society and its capacity building

3 Handbook On Promoting Good Governance In EC Development And Co-Operation www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/governance-democracy/

- Public administration reform, management of public finances and civil service reform
- Decentralisation and local government reform/capacity building
- Support for development of democracy and democratic process

have been questioned and underlined by other questions. These questions that persist:

- questioning the human rights in the country, equal education rights and health services among the people, and freedom of expression,
- questioning the existing of law in the country, equality in law, trust to the independency of the courts and the court decisions, trust to the justice in the country, freedom in applying to the courts,
- questioning the enchancement of the role of civil society and its capacity building, the efficiency of civil societies and NGOs in administering the country, freedom of association in social and political areas, the effects of affecting the political decisions,
- questioning the public administration reforms, practices in paying taxes, overhauling law
- questioning the decentralisation, services like education, health, etc are local or centralized
- questioning the support to the development of democracy and democratic process, the role and the power of media, reliability of media in the country, labour situations of media

6. Methodology

By purposed sampling method, the survey has been implemented to 505 students of Faculty of Communication, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and Faculty of Science and Letters by face to face.

After the advance canvass, 214 students' survey sheets among the 217 students of the Communication Faculty, 75 students' of the Faculty of Science and Letters (total number of students who educate in the departments of History and Turkology are 199) and 191 number of students' of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences (total number of students of Economics, Finance and Management are 433) have been taken into consideration. The total number of survey sheets which have been considered are 480. 214 of it belong to main respondents and the rest 266 belong to the control group.

The paper sheets have been pre-tested among the 20 students of the main respondents. After the last controls and improvements it has been finalized. The main interviewer is the owner of this paper. Besides that, 2 survey takers have been in charge who have been educated and informed in detail about the questions.

Besides the 6 questions to determine demographical characteristics of the students like; age, sex, faculty, class, nationality and regions, there exist 22 items to learn the views about the effects of Kyrgyz media to democratic process of Kyrgyzstan. 1 to 5 – Likert scaling has been used to bring up the democracy mentality in Kyrgyzstan. The 1 to 5 – Likert scale consists of answers like;

1. = Strongly disagree

2. = Disagree
3. = Undecided
4. = Agree
5. = Strongly agree

The following question (Q 30) is to determine the democracy notion of the respondents. And it has been asked to choose the statements that exist in democracies.

The questions from 31 to 35 are to learn the source of power, from where they have learned/heard the democracy notion, mass media they watch/read/listen and the problems of media.

Among the questions; there exist an option “other” in each and every question, in order to determine the view of the respondents but no original and noteworthy answers have been taken and because of that these answers have not been considered.

Datas have been processed by frequency analyze, correlation analyze, nonparametric test (chi square test) and one way ANOVA.

By the survey and the methods used; those questions were tried to be answered:

1. Is there a relationship between the degree of development of media and democracy of a country?
2. Is there democracy in Kyrgyzstan?
3. Do media in Kyrgyzstan have reliability?
4. Do the students know the existence of democracy notions?
5. Are Kyrgyz media independent in transmitting the news?
6. Do journalists in Kyrgyzstan report independently and sponte sua in every respondents they want?

7. Do media in Kyrgyzstan easily criticise the government?

The cross tabulations of these questions have been done according to the sex, faculty (main respondents and control groups) and the region.

6.1. Findings

The reliability analysis is;

N of Cases 476,0

N of items 85

Being related to the questions mentioned below; those datas have been determined:

6.1.1. Properties of the Respondents

6.1.1.1. Percentage of distribution of the respondents according to their sex

%57.3 female (275)

%42.7 male (205)

6.1.1.2. Percentage of distribution of the respondents according to their faculties

%44.6 Faculty of Communication (214 students)

%55.4 Control Group (266 students)
(%39.8 Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences – 191 students, %15.6 Faculty of Science and Letters – 75 students)

6.1.1.3. Age

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
17 – 20	1,00	286	59,6	59,6
21 – 24	2,00	179	37,3	96,9
25 – 28	3,00	15	3,1	100,0
	Total	480	100,0	

6.1.1.4. Class

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	,00	1	,2	,2
Class 1	1,00	190	39,6	39,8
Class 2	2,00	153	31,9	71,7
Class 3	3,00	66	13,8	85,4
Class 4	4,00	70	14,6	100,0
	Total	480	100,0	

6.1.1.5. Nationality

%71.7 of the respondents (344 students) are Kyrgyz students while %9.6 are Turkish. The rest percentage of the respondents (%18.7) is from the other nationalities.

6.1.1.6. Region

129 of total 478 students (2 missing results) are from region Chui; where Bishkek - capi-

tal city of Kyrgyzstan lays in.

6.2. Democracy Notions

Here are some answers to the questions that were asked to determine the democracy notions of the students:

6.2.1. MEDOZG30 Independent reporting conditions

%72.9 of the students believe that journalist should have independent reporting conditions in democracies.

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	,00	129	26,9	26,9
	1,00	350	72,9	100,0
	Total	479	99,8	
Mis- sing	System	1	,2	
Total		480	100,0	

6.2.2. HUKMET30 Media should report what the governments want them to

%7, 7 students believe that media should report what the governments want them to, in another word %92.1 of the respondents believes that media should not report what the governments want them to

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	,00	442	92,1	92,3
	1,00	37	7,7	100,0
	Total	479	99,8	
Missing	System	1	,2	
Total		480	100,0	

6.2.3. KIAMER30 In democracies mass media should be under control of the governments

While %16, 3 students believe that in democracies mass media should be under control of the governments %83,5 students believe that in democracies mass media should not be under control of the governments.

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	,00	401	83,5	83,7
	1,00	78	16,3	100,0
	Total	479	99,8	
Missing	System	1	,2	
Total		480	100,0	

6.2.4. KAVGA30 Conflict should be in democracies

%74, 4 students believe that there should not be conflict in democracies.

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	,00	357	74,4	74,5
	1,00	122	25,4	100,0
	Total	479	99,8	
Missing	System	1	,2	
Total		480	100,0	

6.2.5. IHAK30 Human rights should be in democracies

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	,00	42	8,8	8,8
	1,00	437	91,0	100,0
	Total	479	99,8	
Missing	System	1	,2	
Total		480	100,0	

437 of 480 students (181 male and 256 female) believe that human rights should be in democracies and it's percentage is 91 and it's valid percentage is 91.2 According to faculties the percentage of students who believe in hu-

man rights is very close to each other: %90,7 students of the respondents from Communication Faculty and % 91,7 from the other faculties believe in human rights.

6.2.6. SEX* HUMAN RIGHTS (IHAK30) Crosstabulation

According to Pearson Chi-Square, there has been determined a statistical relationship between sex and human rights beneath the level of %10. Analytical relationship is shown in the table below:

SEX	HUMAN RIGHTS 30			Total
			,00	1,00
Female	1,00	Count	19	256
		% within SEX	6,9%	93,1%
		% within HUMAN RIGHTS 30	45,2%	58,6%
		% of Total	4,0%	53,4%
Male	2,00	Count	23	181
		% within SEX	11,3%	88,7%
		% within HUMAN RIGHTS 30	54,8%	41,4%
		% of Total	4,8%	37,8%
Total		Count	42	437
		% within SEX	8,8%	91,2%
		% within HUMAN RIGHTS 30	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	8,8%	91,2%

6.2.7. FACULTY * HUMAN RIGHTS (IHAK30) Crosstabulation

FACULTY	HUMAN RIGHTS 30		No	Yes	Total
			,00	1,00	
Communication Faculty	1,00	Count	20	194	214
		% within FACULTY	9,3%	90,7%	100,0%
		% within HUMAN RIGHTS30	47,6%	44,4%	44,7%
		% of Total	4,2%	40,5%	44,7%
Control Group	2,00	Count	22	243	265
		% within FACULTY	8,3%	91,7%	100,0%
		% within HUMAN RIGHTS30	52,4%	55,6%	55,3%
		% of Total	4,6%	50,7%	55,3%
Total		Count	42	437	479
		% within FACULTY	8,8%	91,2%	100,0%
		% within HUMAN RIGHTS 30	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	8,8%	91,2%	100,0%

6.2.8. Q22 Journalists in Kyrgyzstan report independently and sponte sua in every respondents they want

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	,00	4	,8	,8
Strongly disagree	1,00	82	17,1	17,9
Disagree	2,00	192	40,0	57,9
Undecided	3,00	98	20,4	78,3
Agree	4,00	96	20,0	98,3
Strongly agree	5,00	8	1,7	100,0
	Total	480	100,0	

6.2.9. Q23 Media in Kyrgyzstan easily criticises the government

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	,00	10	2,1	2,1
Strongly disagree	1,00	81	16,9	19,0
Disagree	2,00	209	43,5	62,5
Undecided	3,00	75	15,6	78,1
Agree	4,00	97	20,2	98,3
Strongly agree	5,00	8	1,7	100,0
	Total	480	100,0	

209 of 480 students disagree that media in Kyrgyzstan criticize the government easily. Only 97 students agree that media in Kyrgyzstan criticize the government easily.

6.2.10. Q24 Kyrgyz media has reliability

218 students of 480 disagree that Kyrgyz media have reliability. 133 female and 83 male share this idea (2 missing). 130 students undecided if Kyrgyz media have reliability. Approximately half of it are female (65 female, 62 male).

Valid		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	,00	5	1,0	1,0
Strongly disagree	1,00	85	17,7	18,8
Disagree	2,00	218	45,4	64,2
Undecided	3,00	130	27,1	91,2
Agree	4,00	40	8,3	99,6
Strongly agree	5,00	2	,4	100,0
	Total	480	100,0	

6.2.11. FACULTY * EDUCATION 31

The students have been asked to set the source of powers like education, knowledge, technology, money, and statute in order. The percentages of Money and education are indicated below according to the faculties: As it is seen from the tables while % 46,

7 of the main group thinks that education has an importance as number one, the control group thinks its percentage is % 64,3.

%18,7 of the main group think that Money is the most important source of power while %10,5 of the control group are in the same idea.

6.2.12. Where have they learned the “democracy”?

The students have been asked to set in order the source like family, high school, faculty, friends, NGOs, books and media where they have learned democracy and notions of democracy. The percentage of media – is listed below:

FACULTY * MEDIA32 Crosstabulation

FACULTY	MEDIA32									Total
		,00	1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	5,00	6,00	7,00	
Commun.	Count	4	41	39	30	28	22	24	26	214
	% within FACULTY	1,9%	19,2%	18,2%	14,0%	13,1%	10,3%	11,2%	12,1%	100,0%
	% within MEDIA32	44,4%	46,6%	45,3%	45,5%	41,2%	40,7%	47,1%	44,8%	44,6%
	% of Total	,8%	8,5%	8,1%	6,3%	5,8%	4,6%	5,0%	5,4%	44,6%
C. Group	Count	5	47	47	36	40	32	27	32	266
	% within FACULTY	1,9%	17,7%	17,7%	13,5%	15,0%	12,0%	10,2%	12,0%	100,0%
	% within MEDIA32	55,6%	53,4%	54,7%	54,5%	58,8%	59,3%	52,9%	55,2%	55,4%
	% of Total	1,0%	9,8%	9,8%	7,5%	8,3%	6,7%	5,6%	6,7%	55,4%
Total	Count	9	88	86	66	68	54	51	58	480
	% within FACULTY	1,9%	18,3%	17,9%	13,8%	14,2%	11,3%	10,6%	12,1%	100,0%
	% within MEDIA32	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
	% of Total	1,9%	18,3%	17,9%	13,8%	14,2%	11,3%	10,6%	12,1%	100,0%

6.2.13.

%60,2 – watch tv

%24,2 – use internet

%9,6 – read newspapers

%1,7 – read magazines

%4,6 – listen to the radio

6.2.14. The most important problem of media:

According to the groups; %45 of the main group and %55 of the control group believe that the lack of qualified journalist is one of the main problem of media while %56.3 of the main group and % 43.7 of the

control group think that clash of interest is another main problem of Kyrgyz media.

7. The Result:

As seen in the tables;

- Respondents believe the importance and independence of media for democracies. But unfortunately, the same respondents also declare that journalists in Kyrgyzstan are not independent and don't criticize the government easily.
- As the components of democracies;
 - %92.1 respondents believe media should not report what the governments want them to
 - %91 respondents believe that human rights should be in democracies
 - %83,5 respondents believe that in democracies mass media should not be under control of the governments
 - %74, 4 respondents believe conflict should be in democracies
 - %72.9 respondents believe in independent reporting conditions
- Respondents do not believe that democracy and it's tools function properly in Kyrgyzstan.
 - %9 of the respondents agree and strongly agree that people are respectful to the decisions of law courts
 - %5 of the respondents agree and strongly agree that people in Kyrgyzstan pay their tax exactly and on time
 - %8.7 of the respondents agree and strongly agree that people trust media in Kyrgyzstan

- %94.4 of the respondents agree and strongly agree that there is corruption in Kyrgyzstan

- Including strongly disagree and disagree answers; while 290 students (% 60,4) believe that media in Kyrgyzstan criticize the government easily, 105 students (% 21, 9) agree and strongly agree to that.
- % 63,1 of the total respondents (303 students) think the reliability of Kyrgyz media while % 8, 7 (42 students) don't think. The answers given by the main respondents (students of Communication Faculty) and the control group are close to each other: % 64, 9 of the main group strongly disagree and disagree that Kyrgyz media have reliability while % 61, 6 of the control group strongly disagree and disagree it.
- %57.1 of the total respondents strongly disagree and do not agree that Journalists in Kyrgyzstan report independently and sponte sua in every respondents they want, while % 21.7 of them agree and strongly agree to that.
- %60,2 of the all groups watch tv, while %9,6 of them read the newspapers.
- According to the respondents; the most important problem of media is as below:
- According to the groups; %45 of the main group and %55 of the control group believe that the lack of qualified journalist is one of the main problem of media while %56.3 of the main group and % 43.7 of the control group think that

clash of interest is another main problem of Kyrgyz media.

Conclusion

In order to point out the role of the Kyrgyz media in the development of democracy and the democratic process of Kyrgyzstan through the point of view given by the students of Journalism a field survey was done among the students of Faculty of Communications of Kyrgyz - Turkish Manas University (KTMU). In order to ensure the reliability of the research the questionnaires of the research a “control group” was established through the participations of students outside the Communication Faculty; among the students of Economics and Administrative Sciences Faculty and the Faculty of Science and Letters of the same university. The total number of survey sheets which have been considered were 480. 214 of it belong to the students of the Communication Faculty and the rest 266 belong to the control group.

The questions were asked to identify 3 main respondents:

- What students understand from the term democracy
- Democracy in Kyrgyzstan (from the students’ point of view)
- The role and problems of media in Kyrgyzstan

The answers of the students of Communication Faculty were expected to be more attentive and aware of the role and importance of media for the democracies. But the answers of the both group were too close to each other. This is another interesting result of this survey. It means that there is no difference in the way of thinking between

the students of Communication Faculty and the other Faculties of the same university about media and its role in democracies. The students who are having education at Kyrgyz - Turkish Manas University are sensitive to democracy and the role of media in democracies. Highly percentage of students; including both the main respondents and the control group knows the notions of democracy, what should have and what should not have in democracies. This means that the answers given to the questions to determine their knowledge about the existing of democracy in Kyrgyzstan are cognitive and the journalism students are conscious about the democracy and its tools. The same high percentages of the students think that there is no democracy and the components that democracies have in Kyrgyzstan.

These results display the relationship between the degree of development of media and democracy of a country. According to the students of Communication Faculty (main group) and the Economics and Administrative Sciences Faculty and the Faculty of Science and Letters (control group of this survey) of Manas University, there is a relationship between the role of media and the existence of democracy in Kyrgyzstan. Because democracy in Kyrgyzstan does not work properly and does not concern the components of democracy, media in the country aren’t effective.

The most important part of this survey is that; the journalism faculties/departments students – ‘the potential journalists’ of Kyrgyzstan believe that media are the most important fact of a proper functioning democracy. It is hopeful. But on the other hand it is depressing that they express there is no democracy in Kyrgyzstan.

Nonetheless, the situation expressed by the respondents is the reality of the country. It is now big questions mark what they will do and how they will react when they begin to work in key jobs.

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