



THE ORHAN PAMUK CASE: HOW MAINSTREAM TURKISH MEDIA FRAMED HIS FREEDOM OF SPEECH

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Abstract

The debates surrounding historical relations between Armenians and Turks have become an important issue in recent years. Internationally well known and Nobel winner Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk's interview with a Swiss newspaper has caused temptatous debates both in Turkey and around the world because of his words about matters of Armenian and Kurdish minorities in Turkey. Finally he was front of the judge and accused of "insulting Turkishness". Reconstruction of his expressions in Turkish newspapers is examined in the study. Discourse and content analyses on news of Pamuk's expression show how his point of view is framed by the mainstream media. We subjected 4 largest national mainstream Turkish newspapers-Posta, Hurriyet, Zaman, Sabah- which have 2.183.652 total circulation.

Key Words: Framing, Hegemony, Status Quo, Othering, Illegitimizing, Marginalizing, Demonizing.

ORHAN PAMUK DAVASI: TÜRK ANA AKIM MEDYASI PAMUK'UN İFADE ÖZGÜRLÜĞÜNÜ NASIL ÇERÇEVELEDİ?

Özet

Türkler ve Ermeniler arasındaki tarihsel ilişkiler etrafında cereyan eden tartışmalar son yılların önemli politik konuları arasındadır. Uluslararası düzeyde tanınan Nobel ödüllü Türk yazar Orhan Pamuk'un Türkiye'de yaşayan Ermeni ve Kürt azınlıklar üzerine bir İsviçre gazetesine verdiği demeç hem ülkemizde hem de dünyada büyük tartışmalara yol açar. Pamuk bu demecinden dolayı 'Türklüğü aşağılamak' suçundan mahkemeye verilir. Bu çalışmada Pamuk'un konuyla ilgili ifadelerinin gazetelerdeki yeniden inşaları incelenmektedir. Bu ifadelerin söylem ve içerik analizi bize Türk ana akım medyasında Pamuk'un konu hakkındaki görüşlerinin nasıl çerçvelendiğini göstermektedir. Araştırmada Türkiye'de toplam 2.183.652 sayı ile en çok satan 4 gazetede ki -Posta, Hürriyet, Zaman, Sabah- konuyla ilgili haberler ele alındı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çerçeveleme, Hegemonya, Statüko, Ötekileştirme, Marjinalleştirme, Şeytanileştirme, Kanundışılaştırma.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

UDHR Article 19.

Introduction

In the Globalization era, relation between human rights and media has a particular importance. As a very important part of globalization media need a solid and universal human rights perspective in order to heal the wounds of the wild globalization. Since media have a specific role to build a peaceful, just and reconcile globe and language, media professionals should be aware of the perspective of human rights while framing the news. So media can be a forum for freedom of expression and free speech. In doing so, media contributes to establish a liberalistic, pluralist and universalistic world based on human rights.

Relation between human rights and media is a considerable but neglected study field. In today's political, economical, social, and cultural climate, studying on media from the perspective of human rights has a priority both in east and west, in south and north of the globe. Particularly in the societies like Turkey, where transition of human rights and democratization process is intensive and fast, studying on this relationship may give us remarkable data. In this context; news examination that based on framing research exposes the dynamics of the relationship. International echo of the Orhan Pamuk case from Turkey deserves such a framing examination. This is the first part of the study that is textual examination of media frames. Second part of the study is audience research that is in progress.

Who is Orhan Pamuk, What is the Case?

Orhan Pamuk (born on June 7, 1952 in Istanbul, Turkey) is a leading Turkish novelist of post-modern literature. His readership around the globe continues to grow. As one of Turkey's most prominent novelists, his work has been translated into more than forty languages. He is the recipient of major Turkish and international literary awards, including Nobel literature price 2006.

He made an interview in February 2005 with the Swiss publication Das Magazin, a weekly supplement to a number of Swiss daily newspapers: the Tages-Anzeiger, the Basler Zeitung, the Berner Zeitung and the Solothurner Tagblatt. In the interview, besides a lot of subjects, Pamuk stated, "Thirty thousand Kurds and a million Armenians were killed in these lands and nobody but me dares to talk about it." Lawyers of two Turkish professional associations brought criminal charges against Pamuk after the author made a statement regarding the Armenian Replacement of 1915-1917 during WWI and the lost of 30,000 Kurds during low intensive war after 1980's in Turkey. After the sensations of this interview in Turkey, a Turkish governor of Isparta/Sütçüler town decided to collect and burn Pamuk's books in town on 29 March. On 31 August, Pamuk was accused of art.301 which states: "A person who explicitly insults being a Turk, the Republic or Turkish Grand National Assembly, shall be imposed to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of six months to three years." Then came the hearing day on 16 December. The Turkish news agency BIA reported that nationalist protesters outside the courtroom booed when they heard of the trial's suspension and attacked Pamuk's car as he was driven away. There were some explicit violation against Orhan Pamuk. The charges were dropped because of technicality on 22 January 2006.

He has subsequently stated his intent was to draw attention to freedom of expression issues. On 13 December, eight world-renowned authors— José Saramago, Gabriel García Márquez, Günter Grass, Umberto Eco, Carlos Fuentes, Juan Goytisolo, John Updike and Mario Vargas Llosa—issued a joint statement supporting Pamuk and decrying the charges against him as a violation of human rights.

News Framing and Power Relations, How About Human Rights?

According to Entman (1993, 5) to frame is “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating texts, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.”

In our case, as it is in Entman’s statement, mainstream Turkish media selected and made more salient only one sentence from the interview: “Thirty thousand Kurds and a million Armenians were killed in these lands and nobody but me dares to talk about it.” In doing so, mainstream Turkish media suggest what is at issue, as Gemson and Modigliani (1989,3) stress, framing is “central organizing idea....for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue.”

Researches on framing examines how frames are sponsored by political actors, how journalists employ frames in the construction of news stories, how these stories articulate frames, and how audience members interpret these frames. “Framing therefore”, concludes Pan and Kosicki “may be studied as a strategy of constructing and processing news discourse or as a characteristic of the discourse itself” (1993, 57).

Frames, as imprints of powers, are central to the production of hegemonic meanings. Examination of the relationship between hegemony and framing also draws attention to the uncontested realm of media discourse; within this realm, particular frames so dominate the discourse that they are taken as common sense or as “transparent descriptions of reality not as interpretations (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes & Sasson 1992, 382). Such dominance of course is a result of considerable ideological work.

Status Quo and Framing, Hegemony-Political/Social Power

Status quo is described in dictionaries, as social situation as it is now. Current status quo in Turkey doesn’t support human rights (EU development report for Turkey, 2005).

Support for the status quo is the product of influences that have been classified into several categories, including the biases of individual journalists; professional conventions, practices, and ideologies; organizational imperatives; economic ties; socio-cultural world views; and hegemonic ideology (Berger and Chaffe 1987, Dimmick and Coit 1983, Hermen and Chomsky 1988, Hertog and McLeod 1995, Hersch 1977, Shoemaker and Mayfield 1987, Shoemaker and Reese 1996, Tichenor et al 1973).

The mass communication literature provides many studies that lead to the conclusion that the mass media can “illegitimate” or “marginalize” protesters that challenge the status quo. (Cohen, 1980; Gitlin, 1980; Mc Leod&Hertog, 1992; Shoemaker,1984)

Subsequent studies have explored the connection between media frames and ideological hegemony (Ashley and Allson 1998, Carriagee 1991, Hellin 1987, Herzog and Schamir 1994, Kellner 1990; Carriagee and Roefs 2004)).

Hegemony, a concept derived from Gramsci (1971), refers to the process by which ruling elites secure consent to the established political order through the production and diffusion of meanings and values. According to Gramsci dominant groups and classes struggle to maintain their ideological hegemony resistance occurs and hegemonic ideology evolves.

Problematic(s) of the Study

Essential to the ideological struggle to establish and maintain the legitimacy of the existing political order is the production of meanings and values by cultural institutions including churches, schools, and the media. Following Gramsci, considerably scholarship has focused on the news media's ideological role. Some of this scholarship has integrated the concepts of framing and hegemony. Most significantly the media hegemony thesis directly connects the framing process to considerations of power and to examinations of the relationship between news media and political change.

As a major human rights issue, freedom of speech is fundamental for democracies and so is journalism practices. Therefore, we examined the case whether or not Pamuk's interview is framed as a freedom of speech issue by mainstream Turkish media which reflects the interest of the existing power structure/status quo ("Inal, 1996). In this study we exposed how mainstream media frame and reconstruct the issues related to human rights and freedom of speech.

Research Questions of study are as following:

Q1: Do mainstream Turkish media challenge to or support of the status quo related to freedom of expression & speech right?

Q2: Do mainstream Turkish media frame ethnic issues as a part of human rights issue?

Q3: Is mainstream Turkish media fed by status quo supporter or challenger news sources?

Q4: How do mainstream Turkish media portray status quo challengers?

This study investigates 4 largest national mainstream Turkish newspapers' framing structure on the case of Orhan Pamuk. Investigated 4 largest national Turkish newspapers are 43% of the total circulation. The period of examination is February 2005 to January 2006. The data were subdivided into five periods:

I. 9-16 February 2005 reflections of interview,

II. 29 March - 5 April 2005 reflections of reactions,

III. 31 August – 7 September 2005 reflections of criminal charges,

IV. 16-21 December 2005 reflections of hearing,

V. 22-29 January 2006 reflections of the dropping the case.

The total numbers of the examined news are 210. Two coders searched each news for "the context" reported in Table 1, "news sources" reported in Table 2, and "depictions of Pamuk" reported in Table 3. Inter coder reliability was 97.9%.

"Framing involves several aspects of a story, including how it is structured, what information is included, and what tone is adapted (Pan & Kosicki 1993, Shah, Kvak,

Schmierbach & Zubrich 2003). In general, framing is defined in terms of the organizing principals used to construct press accounts.

Research has shown that news frames are structured to support the status quo (Table 1), included information is lack of human rights aspect of the case (Table 1), adapted tone of the news is “othering”, “illegitimizing”, “marginalizing” and “demonizing” (Table3).

RESULTS

Table 1: Contexts of the News

Contexts	Denying	Accepting
Human Rights (Freedom of Expression. & Speech)	113	155
Armenian Quest.	37	9
Kurdish Question	25	2
Total	175	166

R 1: Even if numbers of accepting news are close to denying ones, since we apriori accept that as a fundamental human rights, the freedom of expression & speech can not be denied, because denying and accepting human rights as a context of news are not morally equal. So, Table 1 shows that mainstream Turkish media included 113 news contexts that denies freedom of speech of Orhan Pamuk, in doing so main stream media take position of supporting status quo. But there is also a tendency for mainstreaming human rights in dominant discourse that is new for Turkey. Although this dominant discourse includes no significant content of human rights. Even in this case it can be said that this is a development for Turkey. **R 2:** Armenian Question and Kurdish Question are denied as ethnic problem in 62 (37 and 25) news and mentioned in the context of national security and unity of the state. It can be said that mainstream Turkish media don't frame ethnic Questions as a part of human rights issue and with it's status quo supporter position, reproduce dominant ideology.

Table 2: Sources of the News

Turkish News Sources				Foreigner News Sources			
Status quo supporter		Status quo Challenger		Status quo supporter		Status quo Challenger	
Official	Civil	Official	Civil	Official	Civil	Official	Civil
51	94	48	56	1	0	52	73
146		104		1		125	

R3: When we look at the Turkish and foreigner news sources, foreigner news sources has only one official sources who supports status quo (who is a member of Turkish

Parliament and he is charge in one of EU Comissions), more than 95% of foreigner official status quo challenger news source are EU officials who keep human rights on agenda by their statement, on the other hand, among 250 Turkish sources 146 of them (more 50%) take the position of status quo supporter. Research, by having 104 official and civil status quo challenger Turkish news sources, exposes that human rights as a subject finds a “humble” voice in mainstream Turkish media discourse.

Table 3a : Depictions of Orhan Pamuk in News

Negative Depictions	Repeat number
Insults Turkishness	57
Arm. Genocide Claimer	55
Controversy/Conflict Maker	25
Traitor	22
Slanderer	18
Collaborator of west/upper class/enemy	14
Unread writer	14
Anti-patriotic	14
Virtual/ western hero	10
So-called writer	7
Self interested (award-money)	6
Coward	6
Ethnic racist	5
Terror accessor	5
Ignorant	3
Forger	3
Jewish	2
Marginal	2
Homosexual	1
Unbeloved	1

Table 3b:

Positive Depictions	Repeat number
Admired-great writer	11
Pro h.r.	9
Mistreated	9
Intellectual	5
Celebrity-famous	5
Most translated writer	3
Most selling writer	2
Virtual	1

R4: As seen in Table 3, 20 negative most of them are emotional and 8 positive depictions are diagnosed in news' texts. 270 repeats for negative ones, 45 repeats for positives show the dominant tone of the news. So, Turkish media have reconstructed the nationalist, discriminatory discourse with the depictions like genocide claimer, traitor, slanderer, anti-patriotic, ethnic racist, Jewish, by emotionalizing the case. By doing this as a signifier, mainstream media signifies Orhan Pamuk as illegitimate, marginal and demon character.

Conclusion

Mainstream Turkish media don't challenge but support the status quo related to freedom of speech right. On the other hand, the concept of human rights circulates in mass mediatic discourse. By the way, it can be seen that, status quo challenger EU official news sources have a particular effect on Turkish government. Nevertheless, AKP Government follows a two sided politics about human rights. For example, while a state minister says Orhan Pamuk has a right to say wrong things, minister of justice makes a thief analogy and uses an old proverb about Pamuk "please is there no any fault of the thief".

Besides this, Turkish media don't frame ethnic questions as a part of human rights issue. Instead of human rights; national security, unity of the state and potential internal and external threats are emphasized in contexts.

Turkish media is fed by both status quo supporter and challenger news sources. Here, most important data is contribution foreigner news sources to the challenger front.

Despite of Orhan Pamuk's international positive reputation in the news, he is demonized, marginalized and his human rights approach is illegitimated because of one sentence. With this process mainstream media have contributed to growing lynching tendency in Turkey. Because of their ties to the power structure, the mainstream media framed Pamuk's case from the perspective of dominant ideology.

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