The Failure of Turkish Mainstream Media: A Framing Comparison of The Web Versions of Turkish Newspapers

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ABSTRACT   *The objective of this study is to define the notion of mainstream/professional journalism by comparatively exploring the historical conditions of media systems development to contrast it with the infrastructure of political culture and professional culture of the past century in Turkey. After this theoretical background, we implemented a comparative framing analysis of an actual policy debate in the Turkish press to conclude on the changing and not changing conditions that prevail in the politics/media system and culture. In the light of the framing analysis, we found that the current state of the Turkish media system constitutes still a mostly dysfunctional social interaction platform that is caught between media parallelism and tabloidization and represents a largely underdeveloped professionalism that is still insufficient for the development of a civil society. Nonetheless, we found on the other hand that the fundamental values and notion of mainstream media is still represented to make hope for a future development towards a functioning media system.*

Keywords   *: mainstream journalism, Turkish media, journalism ethics, political culture, framing analysis.*

Anaakım Türk Medyasının Başarısızlığı: Türk Gazetelerinin İnternet Versiyonlarının Bir Çerçeveleme Karşılaştırması

ÖZET   *Bu çalışmanın amacı, ana akım/profesyonel gazetecilik kavramını, medya sistemlerinin tarihsel gelişim koşulları bakımından karşılaştırılmasıyla tanımladıktan sonra Türkiye'de medya sisteminin alt yapısını oluşturan siyasal kültür ve profesyonel kültürün bir yüzyıllık değerlendirmesini elde etmektir. Sonra, bu teorik arka plan üzerinde, internet çağında medya sisteminde değişen ve değişmeyen koşulları değerlendirmek için, günümüz Türk basınında yer almış aktüel bir politika tartışması üzerine karşılaştırmalı bir çerçeveleme analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çerçeveleme analizinin sonuçları olarak, genelde az gelişmiş bir profesyonellik anlayışına sahip, bağımlılık ile tabloid arasında sıkışmış Türk medya sisteminin mevcut durumda hala büyük oranda işlev göstermeyen, dolayısıyla sivil toplumun gelişimi için yetersiz olan bir toplumsal etkileşim zemini oluşturmaya devam ettiğini bulduk. Bununla birlikte araştırma sonuçlarımız, ana akım medyanın temel değerlerinin ve fikrinin de temsil edilmeye devam etmesiyle gelecekte işlev gösteren bir medya sisteminin gelişimine doğru hala ümit olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.*

Anahtar kelimeler: *ana akım gazetecilik, Türk medyası, habercilik etiği, siyasi kültür, çerçeveleme analizi.*

Introduction

Seymour-Ure (1974) has observed that as political parties were developing in 19th century Europe, the newspapers as their partners developed in tandem with them and so constituting the media systems as complements of the political systems. Chalaby (1996) compared Anglo-American journalism and French journalism between the 1830'ies and 1920'ies and concluded that professional journalism as a notion was an Anglo-American invention. Chalaby stated that the modern news concept has been invented by them, and that British and American newspapers included more news and information than contemporary French newspapers and that their news gathering services were much better organized. He further maintained that proper reporting techniques have been developed by these and that French journalists were continuously following these techniques like all other journalists of other nations were doing. Chalaby (1996) listed various reasons for this: He stated that the tradition of French authors commenting as regular staffs in French newspapers impeded the development of a news oriented journalistic ideology, he further observed that in the US and also in Britain, the revenues that the newspapers gained from newspaper sales and advertising were sufficient to maintain a financial independence, he pointed also to the protracted fundamental cultural-political clash that raged in the French political and media

system that possibly was not very suitable for the cultivation of professional disinterest. He further thought that the linguistic peculiarities of English and the imperial engagement of the Anglo-American realm had possibly an effect on this. These factors constitute a beginning point to a study of media systems from a problematic of the fragile and temporal conditions required for the establishment of a mainstream-professional media.

Traditionally, virtually all scientific media system critic has been a critic of mainstream media. The fundamental symbiosis of media systems with the political systems has resulted that these values and principles were not able to live up to the high expectations they have inspired which in turn resulted in a continuous criticism of mainstream/professional media from various aspects by various stakeholders. On the other hand, the very term of mainstream itself can be criticized as being an attitude of consent to the cultural-political status quo in general, thus it constitutes a most important static force that systematically precludes dynamic democratic development (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). As another notion that is important for being mainstream, homogeneity itself can similarly transform into a mechanism of limiting alternative voices.

As differences between nations and eras in political culture and other conditions result in the development of different media systems and cultures and as these changes also don't cease to continue, it makes not much sense to insist on the mainstream/professional journalism model as an ideal stage for all media systems. The implementation of mainstream/professional journalism during it's lifecycle that arguably passed its nadir in the 1970'ies in the US media system and society (Hallin, 2006), was not able to overcome its shortcomings, nonetheless, the values and ethics, the professional journalism ideology and pedagogy that have been established in this era of high modernism will continue to form the most important foundations of every functioning media system and also it's criticism.

The impediments to the establishment of a mainstream Turkish media

We think that the "media denominators" that Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) identified in a number of southeastern European and Latin American countries were also valid in defining the developmental circumstances of the Turkish media:

> "… low levels of newspaper circulation, a tradition of advocacy reporting, instrumentalization of privately-owned media, politicization of public broadcasting and broadcast regulation, and limited development of journalism as an autonomous profession" (2002: 176).

> "… The greater prevalence of clientelism in southern than northern Europe is intimately connected with the late development of democracy" (2002: 184-5).

Beyond its foundation as a primarily partisan communication media, it was to be expected that the Turkish media would sooner or later produce representatives that would rather relatively follow universal journalism values as the other media systems on continental Europe did and establish a media whose professional merits would be appreciated by a mainstream audience.

It can be stated that this developmental trap could only exist by the absence of a mainstream

democratic press but after nearly a century of miseducation by continuous severe censorship, the very notion of mainstream professional journalism with its related functions in the political system based on its values of objectivity, news vs. commentary, comprehensive and balanced information, was possibly somewhat out of place for of the mass audience. The paradox of political engagement in Turkey allowed not a neutral area along the border, thus fighting for a political cause, however just it was, has paradoxically compromised the notion of objectivity for all Turkish newspapers and their audiences that upheld a serious approach to journalism (Kaya and Çakmur, 2010).

The introduction of the multiparty system brought in 1948 a novel press with the *Hürriyet and Milliyet* that defined itself beyond party associations and thus retrospectively was classified as *commercial press* (Gürkan, 1998; Alver, 2011).

It could have been a promising foundation for the cultivation of professionalism and thus the institutionalization of a reputable mainstream press when it was not for financial independence. The total number of the Turkish readership had never been sufficient to maintain a free press. Those newspapers that potentially could establish a mainstream press, bowed more or less to the government party because of the regular income of government proclamations. But from time to time, they did not decline opportunities to make the politicians feel their public opinion power. It was only after the 1960'ies that increasing urbanization and economic growth sustained the institutionalization of a commercial press which however was not willing to break away from the close ties to economic and political elites and thus missed a crucial starting opportunity. The second half of the 1980'ies changed much in Turkey, however it is still a debate how much fundamental these changes were. From the view of a media political economy, there was for the first time a worthwhile readership that could make printing and broadcasting a viable business. Three newspapers came to account for nearly 80 % of the readers (Kaya and Çakmur, 2010).

Paradoxically none of these newspapers that appealed to the least politicized large middle of the readership could resist falling to tabloidization and thus they themselves undermined the establishment of an audience that could be cultivated to appreciate professional journalism values (İnal, 1992).

Although the economics of the Turkish press only gained appeal towards the 1990'ies, it has ever been the norm entrepreneurs having accumulated their wealth in other sectors to venture into the press as a tool for aiding their economic political objectives in relation to their parties. Thus media cross-ownership with interwoven interest relations has been a character of the Turkish media system. From the second half of the 1980'ies to the 1990'ies, Neo-liberalism reached the shores of Turkey with deregulation and the emergence of media groups that rapidly grew into conglomerates with big investments in the most various sectors as energy and mining. The largest of them, nicknamed *the Doğan media*, came to owning seven dailies and a number of TV channels (Kaya and Çakmur, 2010; Alver and Çağlar, 2013).

Deregulation and achievement of financial stability did not lead to a relative increase in professional autonomy of journalists in Turkish media as it would be expected in view to western examples. The well-paid top media managers attained high levels of professionalism only in tailoring their news policies along the complex financial political negotiations of their

organizations, up to the point to act as actual middlemen in bargaining with politicians. Working journalists have adverted editorial pressure aiming story suppression, frame selection and frame valence (Kaya, 2009).

This evolution of such a media structure happened in parallel to a transformation in the political system. As the power-producing traditional center of Turkish party system was virtually vacant for nearly a decade, the voter base of the religious-right party that was denied power as an alternative movement by way of media-military orchestrated interventions, was carried over with approval of the elites as a "conservative-liberal" center party (Özbudun, 2014). The new party navigated competently around crises and cemented increasing political support.

Yet, after it's second general elections victory, the government party engaged into redesigning the media system that had produced among other interest groups, the *Doğan media*. As the *cartel*'s wide expanded business interests were threatened by the government's own designs of a new political economy and media system (Alver and Çağlar, 2013), a confrontation ensued, resulting among others with temporal banning from government tenders, denials of major refinery and real estate projects etc. for the group. A traditional threatening attack of a media that itself had compromised its reputation was too weak for a confrontation that was prepared for the restructuring process in the Turkish media. Facing a dire prospect of economic future and a pressure by all means of government, the group was compelled to sever itself from a part of its media assets (Kaya and Çakmur, 2010; Alver and Çağlar, 2013). This might have been celebrated as an important step towards a long due autonomy of Turkish mainstream media from being a tool of interest groups, if new rising investment groups would not have proceed to procure their own media.

> "*Throughout the 1990s, the Turkish press was depicted as competitive and vibrant, despite the attempts by an oppressive state apparatus to prune it back. The implication in the annual reports of organizations concerned with press freedoms, such as the International Press Institute (IPI), was that if the press does not speak out more openly, it is because it is confronted by an antediluvian statute book and the deep-seated illiberality of the Turkish establishment. These organizations have been slow to take on the proposition that there may be something rotten inside the media itself. Indeed, a strategy only to criticize the state and not consider the corporate cultures of media organizations themselves has led to an erosion of press freedom and legitimated bad practice*" (Finkel, 2005: 24).

As mainstream/professional journalism is founded on the grounds of liberalism, it requires that real professionalism makes explicit reference to liberalism. While this attitude understandably lacks the historical-cultural foundation in Turkey, a more practicable kind of mainstream liberalism has been tried in the Turkish media by representing writers from various political convictions in their selection. The representation ratio can arguably be used as a measure of the local liberality of the media outlet. Nevertheless notably exceptions evolved and made promising appearances in Turkish journalism. The daily *Taraf* introduced itself into the Turkish media by it's outspoken antimilitarist stance against the *Ergenekon* militarist coup attempt that contrasted the reluctance of most of the media at the time. Consisting largely of disillusioned leftist intellectuals who preferred to be classified as "democrats", however, the paper was labeled by its readership as "radical-liberal"

(Gürpınar, 2012). Although *Taraf* made a name for its outspoken antimilitarist stance during the thwarting of the plot, its engagement was not met with a reciprocal mainstream audience. Nevertheless, we feel tempted to envision that political/ideological disillusion may be a precondition to liberalist stances.

Although the systemic events leading to the polarization between the administration and *the community* is nonetheless relevant for our study, it would not be possible to restrict the discussion to the scope limits of our study. Thus we contend to note to the implications in relation to the media system, namely all of the chronic shortcomings of Turkish political system: An irresistible inclination in the political imagination of the masses for establishing patriarchal trust cults beyond all criticism that legitimizes the suppression of alternative voices.

The Study

To very briefly assess the journalism functions of the present-state Turkish media from a mainstream/professional media approach we have implemented a framing analysis on three typical representatives of the Turkish press in a public policy dispute.

Framing is considered the cognitive process of the individual of organizing everyday events and people along continuously reforming schemata that they would produce social meanings and relations to the individual (Goffman, 1974). Framing in communication which includes media frames, is the very process of every storytelling, thus framing is a unavoidable and also indispensable function of journalism (Scheufele, 1999) and it's conscious and principled practice is placed at the heart of professional ethics in journalism. Frames are used by professional communicators and actors as well with the intent to make their preferred version of social reality prevail in public opinion. Audience resonance of a particular frame is dependent on many preconditions of persuasive communication including source credibility, polarization conditions and affiliation, resonance with pre-owned individual frames, framing consistency, framing persistence etc (Snow and Benford, 2000). As framing analysis is used frequently in public debates to show the political stances of the media and the social actors, in the context of our study we used it to showcase briefly the Turkish media system in their present state of media professionalism.

The event of the study: The public debate over the closure of the preparatory courses.

The public debate that constitutes the subject of our study is an educational policy issue that normally should have been addressed as a relatively apolitical engagement. But because the very huge economic consequences at stake and because also it was related to a major political confrontation brooding in the background, it happened to be addressed as another major incision into redesigning Turkish political economy.

The Turkish educational system has evolved into an organization that primarily aims university education. A university placement exam for the whole country is a "to be or not to be" finale for all students and their families. While the common need for adjunct education

may be taken as an indication of the inefficiency problem of public schools, nevertheless, the preparatory courses enabled the advantage of private tuition to wide masses and so evolved into an essential part of the Turkish education system. The preparatory courses have been subjected to controversies over the financial burden they pose for parents. However, as a solution that the market system had produced itself, no alternatives had been proposed. The issue was put forward by the government under a shadow of a looming political confrontation that facilitated it's public conception of the issue as related to a political operation towards reducing the funding base of *The Community*.

Method and Sample

A framing analysis usually begins with a pre-study of potential frames where recurring rhetorical stances indicate frames in the narrative. The so obtained set of media frames are sought out in the media coverage. While this approach may not preferable for studying all of the potential frames in relation to an issue or a media outlet, for the aim of our study we contented with the most prevailing frames that readily form a group of frames that manifest an endorsed stance of the communicator/newspaper. The existence of frames in communication or media frames are only determined and proven by the perception statistics of the audience, with other words by inter-coder reliability. Multiple frames are frequently intertwined in a single story and even in a single utterance, and thus require multiple counting. The usage of actors in news stories does not implicate the framing intent of the newspapers since in the Turkish media system, newsroom politics are paramount in newsworthiness choices. We choose the web issues that typically included more news stories than the printed issues of the daily *Zaman* as the representative of the media against the closure of the courses, the *Sabah* as a staunch proponent of all administration policies including the closure, and the *Hürriyet*, the disengaged veteran of the old media establishment in Turkey. As a time frame, we choose the issue-related news coverage of a month (17.11.2013-17.12.2013) of intense debate on the digital issues of the newspapers. A content analysis aimed for the use in framing analysis requires that coders read the news by the direction of certain questions that aim to verify the existence of certain frames.

Examples of Frames in Favor of the Courses

- The education freedom frame

"*The closure of the preparatory courses violates those rights*

> *As a human, everybody owns a kind of basic rights and freedoms. The freedom to education is one of these basic human rights. As the first article of the United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" is said 'All humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights'. The second article follows by asserting that everybody without distinction is entitled to all of the rights and freedoms written on this declaration. The 26.th article is about the right to education: 'Everyone has the right to education. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their*

children'. As is seen, the right to education is declared a human right and the parents are given choice priority in the usage of this right" (Zaman, 10 December 2013).

- Enterprise freedom frame

"Closing courses by force of law is a blow to private enterprise

To explain that the closure of the preparatory courses is wrong, 16 NGO's in Tokat gave a joint press conference protested the draft of a law aiming the closure of the preparatory courses. The NGO's noted that the courses were private enterprises and that the hindrance of this freedom would consist a blow to private enterprise" (Zaman, 27 November 2013).

- Rule of law frame

"The course owners asked, the declining Education Ministry officials responded with note taking

After the meeting, the Bursa city representative of the participatory courses owners association ÖZ-DE-BİR, İnanç Düzgün evaluated the meeting and expressed their demands that the institutions should stay in their present situation inside the education system and concluded 'We are expecting that the issue comes to conclusion without entailing any injuries and legal consequences. Otherwise we announce here again that we will use our legal rights to utmost extent" (Zaman, 28 November 2013).

- Education equality frame

"Course outcry of the eastern mother

Türkiye Askar emphasizes that she is a Kurdish woman from the east and explains that deficits in education requires the preparatory courses. 'And not only during the elementary school, it is also needed during high school and university. This is the hope and future of our children. My child is poor. We have only hope with the courses. If the courses are closed, my child will never be able to compete with better income children. They can only compete with the courses' she said" (Zaman, 19 November 2013).

- Economic consequences in favor of the course frame

"Proposed in-school courses cost much as preparatory courses!

As a proposed alternative to preparatory courses that are criticized as costly, in-school courses' costs are totaling to thousand Lira a year. Schoolchildren that get courses in Turkish, Arabic, mathematics, sciences, social studies and English pay 960 lira annually. For the meals are nearly an additional 3 thousand liras demanded". (Zaman, 5 December 2013).

- Human interest frame

"The uneasiness among parents is continuing: Why should we send our children to the courses when we would not yield performance?

Mother Ümmühan Koçak from Gaziantep said that she had to send her child to the course because school didn't yield success. 'We sacrificed our most vital needs and sent our child to the course for three years. And we saw the success. My child competed with children from private schools and private tuition. That's grave. Why should we have sent if we

couldn't yield results? Have we money to throw away? They should confer with the teachers in the schools that our children achieve more. An orderly system should be established' she said" (Zaman, 29 November 2013).

- *Responsibility attribution frame*

"Does closing courses solve the problems of the education system?

The dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences at SD University Professor Menderes Coşkun: 'Albeit students work hard from the elementary school up to the university, it is a reality that our education system has not been able to produce a qualified individual type. However this is not the fault of the preparatory courses. What is more, the courses are the most functioning, the most useful parts in the present irrational education system. If our aim is to teach knowledge, the best places for this are the courses. The students are learning more than in schools in a more peaceful environment" (Zaman, 24 November 2013).

- *The employment frame*

"Course administrators in Muş requesting answers to eight questions.

Private courses in Muş/Eastern Anatolia came together for a joint press release in relation to 'the transformation of the courses initiative' of the Ministry of Education. A question in the press release was such: 'As for the present situation, more than 250 thousand candidate teachers (38 have committed suicide) are awaiting appointment and the government's need is estimated around 127 thousand. While the government is not able to employ for it's needs, how will more than 75 thousand course teachers be included into the public system?" (Zaman, 29 November 2013).

- Terror prevention frame

"Instruction from Hizbullah (an organization prosecuted of terror acts mostly in eastern Anatolia) fill the void.

Security forces have learned that in the event of the closure of the courses and study centers, not only the terror organization PKK, but also the Hizbullah group planned to capitalize on the void. In a conversation that was mentioned in intelligence reports, fugitive Hizbullah executives ordered to their followers that the youth in the region may be 'unattended' in the event of the closure of the courses and study centers and 'it is required to look after unattended youths one to one by going to their homes/schools" (Zaman, 3 December 2013).

Examples of Frames against the Preparatory Courses

- *Source of profit frame*

"The courses are monetizing factories

The preparatory courses that are to be closed have evolved into a complete business. This monetizing industry of courses is the nightmare of parents. The total wages for a student from the 6th grade up amounts to 100 thousand TL." (Sabah, 19 November 2013).

- Economic consequences frame against the courses

"1 Billion TL to the courses

150 thousand students in the capital Ankara go to 350 courses. Annual expense of parents amounts to 1 billion TL." (Sabah, 25 November 2013).

- Human interest frame against the courses

"She punches the TV screen as the courses are shown

Emine Sipahi, the mother whose son committed suicide because his mother was imprisoned due to debt to a preparatory course said 'shut down the killing courses. They have deceived us to enroll my son to the course and then sent me to prison. They have taken my son. Save other poor people, close down the courses." (Sabah, 21 November 2013).

- Source of education inequality frame

"Courses are similar to illegally built slums'. Children that have the opportunity to attend to courses catch an advantage over these who don't have the means and this impedes opportunity equality in university education" (Sabah, 18 November 2013).

- Employment frame against the courses

"Their growth comes with off the books employment. The wages are even below the minimum. The numbers show that the sector grows by unregistered income around 16 billion TL annually. The majority of the teachers are employed on internship quotas, uninsured and out of payroll". (Sabah, 22 November 2013).

- Environmental and physical conditions frame

"Disconcerting course facts

Of the preparatory courses that are to be transformed, most are located in office blocks. They give education near to bars, cafes and poop rooms that have to be 100m away according the law." (Sabah, 23 November 2013).

Table: Frame frequencies of newspapers

Frames	Zaman	Sabah	Hürriyet
Educational freedom frame	44	1	13
Enterprise freedom frame	36	1	4
Rule of Law frame	33	1	8
Source of profit frame	0	40	0
Economic consequences against the courses	1	26	8
Economic consequences in favor of the courses	0	0	10
Human interest frame in favor of the courses	57	0	14
Human Interest Frame against the courses	0	49	7
Source of educational inequality	0	16	3
Education equality	30	1	11
Constitutional breach	1	0	7
Responsibility attribution against the courses	0	46	2
Responsibility attribution in favor of the courses	48	0	27
Employment frame against the courses	0	6	4
Employment frame in favor of the courses	31	0	11
Environmental and physical problems	0	1	1
Terror prevention frame	6	0	0
TOTAL	287	188	130

Conclusion

Our study's main aim was to establish a theoretical framework for assessment of the availability of infrastructural conditions for a mainstream/professional media establishment in the Turkish media/political system. Then we wanted to know if something in this cultural and structural system showed an indication of change in view of the basic values. To achieve this, we directly conducted a framing analysis for classifying by way of their basic framing approaches of three representatives of the media which are known as opposite parties thus having particular interests with the issue on hand, and a third as representative of relative disinterest. This sample should be fairly representative to the whole of the Turkish media since broadcast channels are also related to the respective newspapers.

The framing analysis indicates for the two polarized adversaries a very heavy framing attitude of the respective camps with favoring and opposing frames polarized most clearly. Each side omitted opposite viewpoints thus balanced reporting is completely absent. Frame source choice also is clearly along the communicative interests of each side. And as another indicator of non-professional journalism, both sides most frequently used the *human interest frame* that appeals to human affection and empathy by sharing individual tragedies. We would suggest that this frame is most abundant documented in the research only because it is simply a personalized dramatic presentation form of the other endorsed frames by means of a human tragedy and so trying to surpass the cognitive filters of the audience by empathy, a most effective way of framing that seldom fails its intended effect. The *responsibility*

attribution frame addresses one of the four basic functions of framing while showing the culprit of the social problem. Both sides of the debate blamed the opponent as being the source of the problem.

The *Zaman* champions a clear, fully defensive public relations strategy in favor of the courses, generally cautiously refraining from offending accusations. The frames have been organized as mostly press releases of NGO's that were mostly stakeholders in the issue. The coverage of the issue exceeds that of the adversary by nearly 50%, thus it is understood that this issue is of utmost significance and relevance to the paper. The resulting slant, while not defamatory is ultimately indicative for a common understanding of journalism beyond professionalism, as a social mission as a newspaper and news worker. While the *Zaman* was considered as the "most liberal" among the religious-right Turkish media and was aspiring towards a mainstream position backed by financial independence, yet by intervention of the twist in Turkish politics, the polarizing approach of the Turkish political system and culture is reducing it increasingly to a marginalized position as a loss for the Turkish media system.

The *Sabah,* on the other hand, seemed fully compliant to the stance of the government that also reflects itself in the aggressive mudslinging approach of the reporting style. The notable single exceptions that endorsed the frames of the adversary, namely the frames of *educational freedom, educational equality, enterprise freedom, rule of law* frames, were not part of the news coverage and were used by columnists that were known as established, free-thinking authors who were not shying away of frequently criticizing the government. These staff writers of the paper were inherited from the previous era as the *Sabah* was known as "mainstream" with more liberal tendencies. As nearly frequent as *Zaman*, *Sabah* blamed the course defenders for everything. The *Sabah* endorsed most frequently the *Source of profit frame* that denigrates the issue to an issue of greedy entrepreneurs who were capitalizing on the future concerns of desperate students and parents. The *economic consequences frame against the courses,* attributes the total economic burden to the courses. The other favored frame of *educational inequality* tries to counterframe a most relied argument of the course defenders as a source of inequality. *The employment frame* as another issue of mass relevance was a frame that the *Sabah* not omitted but counterframed with a narrative of sweatshops exploiting unemployed desperate teachers. The framing of *Sabah* shows a slanted framing as characteristic of the partisan press by omitting frames that are relevant and significant aspects of this public debate as the general frame counting suggest.

After so much framing warfare, the framing of the *Hürriyet* comes as a pleasant surprise to the eye. First, the paper did not omit any of the relevant and significant aspects of the debate and also maintained a balanced reporting by covering the opposing parts of the debate. From a mere framing view of point, we would not begrudge her claims of being "the flagship of Turkish press" and would have embraced her as mainstream if only the other requirements had been eligible. As being a remnant of the Doğan-Media group, the implications of former executives in political deals and also the dramatic part that the paper played in the fall of the journalists' unions are not yet forgotten. Also her inherent tendencies to tabloidization may constitute a resident impediment to the development of professional journalism. But for the moment of the Turkish media, the *Hürriyet* tries to maintain a center of objectivity which is not of less value for the development of mainstream journalism.

As a most grave outcome in the context of our study, we have to submit that the very function of the Turkish media in relation to agenda setting and opinion forming is obviously rendered useless. The media is not functioning as a creditable system communication platform, it is merely degraded to a communication channel under the command of political establishment where also the opposition media is only to playing it's part.

The governing party came to power by rejecting the founding secular-religious divide that impeded for a century the development of civil society in Turkey and also the institutionalization of professionalism as a culture. Yet, the present situation is showing that in order to being able to resist the conveniences of polarizing politics, more cultural maturation is needed in the society. Fundamental systemic change is surely expected in Turkey, yet the time span is not sufficient to conclude on structural and cultural reforms that would enable an escape from the vicious cycle of the previous century. The whole political culture in Turkey must come to an understanding of democracy beyond mere as a means for power. The founder had understood democracy as a mere esthetic issue of looking as a modern nation. After nearly a century, we are still to understand that democracy can be the most versatile and sustainable approach in fast changing, challenging adverse political situations. Power agreements are written on water unless there is a sustaining social cultural structure that would maintain the power, nothing short of a complete civil society. But no genuine viable civil society can be established by sacrificing a participating opposition. We find this climate of underdeveloped professionalism in the Turkish press a much bigger threat to development than the underdevelopment of professionalism among other elites of the political system.

It is required for the handling of the challenges of the 21th century that surely will not tolerate the loss of another century.

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