

**GALATASARAY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF RADIO TELEVISION AND CINEMA**

In international joint supervision with

**SORBONNE UNIVERSITY
ECOLE DOCTORALE 433 - CONCEPTS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES**

**JOURNALISM IN THE WEB 2.0 ERA, NEW BUSINESS MODELS AND
DIGITAL LABOUR: LESSONS DRAWN FROM DIGITAL-BORN NEWS SITES
FOUNDED BY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS IN TURKEY SINCE 2000s**

VOLUME I

PhD Thesis

Laura AVADAR

**Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Dilruba Çatalbaş Ürper
Prof. Dr. Valérie Jeanne-Perrier**

December 2022

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RESUME

JOURNALISME A L'ERE DU WEB 2.0, NOUVEAUX MODELES COMMERCIAUX ET TRAVAIL NUMERIQUE : LEÇONS TIREES DES SITES D'INFORMATION NES DANS LE NUMERIQUE FONDES PAR DES JOURNALISTES PROFESSIONNELS EN TURQUIE DEPUIS LES ANNEES 2000

À l'ère du Web 2.0, les journalistes peuvent exercer leur métier et continuer à partager leurs histoires et leurs réflexions par le biais des services de médias sociaux ainsi que des sites d'information numériques qu'ils ont eux-mêmes créés et gérés. Le nouvel écosystème numérique apparaît comme l'une des plus grandes opportunités pour inventer de nouvelles façons de pratiquer le journalisme longtemps limitées par les intérêts capitalistes hégémoniques des conglomérats. Les sites d'information nés sur le numérique avec un modèle commercial réussi et durable permettent non seulement de trouver un équilibre entre les valeurs journalistiques et les intérêts commerciaux, mais ont également le potentiel d'ouvrir une nouvelle ère pour libérer les journalistes et le journalisme, en particulier dans des environnements médiatiques opprimés tels que celui de Turquie.

En Turquie, la concentration du pouvoir politique sur les seuls gouvernements du Parti de la justice et du développement (JDP) depuis 2002 a accru l'oppression des médias principalement d'opposition et des journalistes critiques. Depuis 2007, plusieurs journalistes professionnels frustrés par l'environnement médiatique restreint et la violation des droits du travail dans les médias grand public ont commencé à chercher de nouvelles façons de pratiquer le journalisme via Internet et les plateformes de médias sociaux.

De nombreux journalistes professionnels qui ont été contraints de quitter ou ont volontairement quitté les institutions médiatiques grand public ont utilisé leur capital économique et culturel (c'est-à-dire leurs connaissances et leurs compétences, la propriété de biens culturels, une autorité ou une expertise reconnue) pour construire leurs propres espaces de médias sociaux personnels, puis indépendants sites d'information qu'ils ont pu trouver grâce à internet et aux nouveaux médias numériques et technologies de communication. Par exemple, les journalistes utilisent les plateformes de médias sociaux pour la collecte et la diffusion d'informations ainsi qu'une partie de leurs stratégies commerciales. Alors que certains sites d'information fondés par des journalistes professionnels adopteraient une logique entrepreneuriale, d'autres présentent les caractéristiques d'un média d'information à but non lucratif et/ou alternatif.

Cette thèse vise à explorer les sites d'information nés du numérique fondés par des journalistes professionnels en Turquie dans les années 2000 dans un cadre ethnographique. L'échantillon du travail de terrain de cette thèse se compose de dix sites d'information qui ont été fondés par des journalistes professionnels. Celles-ci sont classées par ordre chronologique : Oda TV (2007) de Soner Yalçın ; T24 (2009) de

Doğan Akın ; Diken (2014) de Harun Simavi ; ABC Gazetesi (2015) et Tele 1 (2018) de Merdan Yanardağ, Medyascope.tv (2015) de Ruşen Çakır ; GazeteRed (2016) de Hakan Gülseven ; Artı Gerçek (2017) et Artı TV (2017) de Celal Başlangıç ; et Özgürüz (2017) de Can Dünder. Les données qui éclairent l'analyse proviennent d'observations hors ligne et en ligne et d'entrevues approfondies en face à face et en ligne avec un total de 32 journalistes.

La thèse vise également à fournir des comptes rendus approfondis de leur démographie, de leurs structures organisationnelles, de leurs opérations quotidiennes, de leurs politiques éditoriales, de leur position idéologique, de leurs valeurs professionnelles, de leurs formats, de leurs modèles commerciaux, de leurs conditions de travail et de leurs nouvelles façons de pratiquer et de percevoir le journalisme. Ce faisant, cette thèse espère faire la lumière sur la manière dont les sites d'information nés du numérique ont un impact sur le travail et les pratiques de travail des journalistes, ainsi que sur le journalisme en tant que profession.

Cette thèse se compose de cinq chapitres. Le premier chapitre tente de fournir une base théorique aux discussions sur la transformation du journalisme à l'ère du web 2.0 et l'autoproduction de la profession. Il examine le journalisme en tant que profession et idéologie professionnelle tout au long de son histoire en Europe et aux États-Unis (US). La nature, le rôle et les fonctions sociales du journalisme sont étudiés du point de vue des théories libérales et critiques. Les théories libérales soutiennent que les journalistes sont autonomes et exercent leur profession conformément à leur propre identité et idéologie professionnelle.

Les théories critiques affirment qu'une fois employés, les journalistes ne peuvent jamais être totalement libres en raison d'un certain nombre de facteurs structurels intégrés dans les environnements sociaux, économiques et politiques dans lesquels les médias d'information jouent un rôle central.

Par conséquent, le but de ce chapitre est, tout d'abord, d'examiner le potentiel des journalistes à se libérer des constructions traditionnelles telles que les institutions médiatiques commerciales. Le second est de jeter les bases de discussions sur la manière dont les journalistes peuvent créer leurs propres médias et continuer à travailler librement en dehors des frontières des systèmes médiatiques d'entreprise.

Dans le deuxième chapitre, le développement historique d'Internet, du Web 2.0 et des médias sociaux est examiné pour comprendre le nouvel écosystème médiatique qui a profondément affecté le journalisme. Ce chapitre aborde des concepts tels que la convergence des médias, l'interactivité, la participation et le contenu généré par les utilisateurs qui jouent un rôle majeur dans les formes émergentes de journalisme, d'un point de vue critique. En outre, la numérisation du journalisme à l'ère du Web 2.0 est explorée en se concentrant sur des concepts tels que le reportage assisté par ordinateur, le journalisme numérique/en ligne, le journalisme mobile, le journalisme de données, l'automatisation, les bots et les algorithmes, le journalisme alternatif et le journalisme citoyen.

Ces discussions conceptuelles sont nécessaires pour comprendre l'évolution des nouvelles techniques de collecte d'informations et de narration et les relations producteur-consommateur. Le deuxième chapitre soutient que les échanges directs entre les producteurs de nouvelles et les consommateurs aident à libérer le journalisme

des entreprises de médias commerciaux. Cela promet une opportunité aux journalistes et même aux gens ordinaires de pratiquer le journalisme sur Internet et sur les réseaux sociaux à un coût minime. Les journalistes sont habilités à s'auto-organiser en dehors des institutions journalistiques traditionnelles via des outils en ligne tels que des blogs et des sites Web qui, ironiquement, sont fournis par des sociétés technologiques commerciales géantes.

Le troisième chapitre soutient qu'Internet et les technologies des médias sociaux permettent aux journalistes de créer leurs start-ups d'information indépendantes nées numériques. Cependant, l'immatérialisation et la décentralisation du travail à l'ère du Web 2.0 et la montée du capitalisme informationnel remettent en question les relations de travail dans les secteurs des médias. Par conséquent, les journalistes professionnels qui travaillent pour leurs propres start-ups journalistiques de manière plus indépendante et flexible peuvent également se retrouver dans une position de plus en plus précaire en tant que travailleurs numériques. Ici, le chapitre souligne l'importance d'un modèle commercial durable pour les organes d'information nés sur le numérique, qui permettra un équilibre sain entre les valeurs journalistiques et les exigences économiques, ce qui peut libérer les journalistes des intérêts économiques et commerciaux des institutions médiatiques capitalistes et des pressions politiques des gouvernements.

Par conséquent, le troisième chapitre se concentre d'abord sur l'évolution des relations de travail dans les médias d'information en définissant le travail indépendant, la pige, l'image de marque et le journalisme entrepreneurial. Et puis il passe à de nouveaux modèles commerciaux et à de nouvelles sources de revenus basées sur la publicité et d'autres sources de revenus à but lucratif comme l'abonnement, le financement participatif ainsi que les modèles de revenus non commerciaux comme le modèle coopératif. Le chapitre soutient que le capitalisme informationnel, le travail numérique et la précarisation de la main-d'œuvre journalistique détermineraient les potentiels et les limites du journalisme numérique pour briser les anciennes hiérarchies discutées dans les chapitres précédents. Le quatrième chapitre commence par une brève histoire du journalisme depuis la fondation de la République turque en 1923 jusqu'à la fin des années 1990 afin de mettre en lumière les facteurs structurels qui ont ouvert la voie à un nouvel ordre des médias numériques en Turquie. Cette section suit un ordre chronologique qui transmet les développements politiques qui affectent le journalisme et présente les développements technologiques tels que l'imprimerie, les agences télégraphiques, la radio et la télévision.

Plus tard, la transformation du système médiatique depuis les années 2000 est expliquée en relation avec des développements majeurs tels que les crises économiques de 2000 et 2001, la conglomération du système médiatique et les mesures prises par les gouvernements JDP pour créer des médias partisans. Les relations conflictuelles entre les journalistes de l'opposition et les gouvernements du JDP sont également couvertes par un examen de la législation sur les médias et de certains événements symboliques tels que les manifestations du parc Gezi qui restreignent les droits des journalistes.

L'un des principaux arguments de ce chapitre est que la nature décentralisée et alternative des médias de Gezi Park est devenue le catalyseur des start-ups d'information créées par les journalistes. Étant les premiers exemples de points de

presse Web 2.0, ils produisent et distribuent du contenu interactif de n'importe où, à tout moment en utilisant les réseaux de médias sociaux.

La dernière section du quatrième chapitre se concentre sur les problèmes structurels du journalisme en Turquie. Il est divisé en deux parties : politique et économique. Les questions politiques sont les facteurs affectant la liberté de la presse, tels que les pressions judiciaires, les interdictions d'accès à Internet et la suspension des plateformes de médias sociaux. En ce qui concerne les problèmes économiques, la plupart des journalistes sont employés au salaire minimum et/ou ne sont pas employés en tant que journalistes, l'inefficacité des syndicats, les politiques agressives de désyndicalisation des entreprises de médias traditionnels et les problèmes auxquels sont confrontés les journalistes en matière d'accréditation et de la délivrance de cartes de presse et la diminution des opportunités d'emploi dans les médias conventionnels pour les journalistes professionnels méritent d'être mentionnées.

Le cinquième chapitre contient l'étude de terrain de cette thèse. Après avoir présenté les objectifs et la méthodologie de la recherche, il révèle en détail les principaux résultats et leurs analyses. Basé sur une approche ethnographique, ce chapitre explore les potentiels et les faiblesses des organes d'information nés sur le numérique fondés par des journalistes professionnels. Se concentrant principalement sur leurs modèles commerciaux et leurs relations de travail numérisées, il s'interroge sur leur durabilité à long terme ainsi que sur leur pouvoir d'expansion de la main-d'œuvre journalistique et de la liberté de la presse en Turquie. Sa section finale fournit des suggestions aux niveaux théoriques et pratiques pour les start-ups journalistiques nées du numérique en ce qui concerne les nouveaux modèles commerciaux, la numérisation du travail et l'expansion du précarat dans le domaine du journalisme.

Sur la base des résultats du travail de terrain, cette thèse soutient que bien que les start-ups de journalistes aient le potentiel de libérer le journalisme des intérêts commerciaux et des pressions politiques directes, en particulier dans les environnements médiatiques opprimés où les mécanismes de censure et d'autocensure sont bien établis, leur ressources et des modèles économiques précaires menacent leur pérennité à long terme, restreignant largement leur contribution à la main-d'œuvre journalistique et au développement du journalisme indépendant.

Malgré les efforts des journalistes pour équilibrer les valeurs journalistiques et les exigences économiques en utilisant des modèles commerciaux d'information tels que la publicité en ligne et le financement participatif de manière hybride, les journalistes possédaient des organes d'information avec la devise de « l'indépendance » ne pouvaient pas complètement se libérer des pressions économiques. De même, l'émergence du précarat chez les journalistes numériques limite leurs revenus, leur stabilité économique et leurs droits du travail.

Dans les sites d'information appartenant à des journalistes, le contenu est produit avec une petite équipe car leurs moyens sont limités. Ces sites dépendent des plateformes de médias sociaux pour faire des nouvelles et générer des revenus. Comme la majeure partie de leur travail numérique est consacrée aux flux de médias sociaux pour produire des nouvelles et à la publicité en ligne et aux fonds et dons pour générer des revenus, ils ont très peu de temps, voire aucun, pour se rendre sur le terrain pour recueillir des informations et mener des entretiens en face à face.

La plupart de ces sites d'information misent sur l'externalisation dans le cadre des possibilités offertes par les plateformes de médias sociaux. Ils ne peuvent pas utiliser d'autres outils technologiques tels que les logiciels de salle de rédaction numérique pour la narration et la collecte de données, et pour l'engagement des utilisateurs, car ils ne disposent pas de fonds suffisants. Bénéficier des médias sociaux lors de la création d'actualités nécessite un travail plus organique. Parallèlement à leur charge de travail éditoriale, les journalistes gardent les comptes de réseaux sociaux des sites d'information ouverts sur leurs smartphones et ordinateurs de bureau, et créent de la valeur avec des clics sans fin comme la recherche, le téléchargement, le partage et les commentaires. Ainsi, une bonne partie de leur travail numérique passe sur les réseaux sociaux.

De plus, parce que les journalistes indépendants gagnent peu, ils deviennent économiquement et juridiquement vulnérables. Comme ils ne peuvent pas faire de publicité sur Google et Facebook, leur contenu reste en marge d'Internet. Par conséquent, ils ne peuvent pas atteindre un public plus large. De plus, ils n'ont pas les moyens économiques de s'opposer aux poursuites intentées contre eux à cause d'un fait divers, ainsi, ils essaient de ne pas trop attirer l'attention au détriment de la liberté de la presse.

Les restrictions économiques et politiques affectent explicitement la liberté éditoriale et les conditions de travail des journalistes. Dans ces circonstances, les journalistes ne peuvent même pas prévoir s'ils seront en activité dans les cinq prochaines années. Tout cela laisse les journalistes dans une grande incertitude, ce qui se traduit par une réglementation précaire du travail journalistique et un avenir incertain pour les valeurs journalistiques contre les intérêts commerciaux. Pour un ordre des médias d'information plus démocratique et durable, les revenus directs et/ou le soutien financier du public sont considérés comme une nécessité plutôt qu'une option.

Mots Clés : Web 2.0, journalisme, Turquie, sites d'information nés dans le numérique, travail numérique, modèles commerciaux et ethnographie.

ABSTRACT

JOURNALISM IN THE WEB 2.0 ERA, NEW BUSINESS MODELS AND DIGITAL LABOUR: LESSONS DRAWN FROM DIGITAL-BORN NEWS SITES FOUNDED BY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS IN TURKEY SINCE 2000s

In the Web 2.0 era, journalists can report their stories and share their thoughts through social media platforms as well as independent digital-born news sites that they themselves found and manage. The new digital ecosystem emerges as one of the biggest opportunities for inventing new ways of practising journalism which had long been restricted by the hegemonic capitalist interests of conglomerates. Digital-born news sites with a successful and sustainable business model have the potential to bring about a balance between journalistic values and commercial interests potential and liberate journalists especially in restricted media systems such as that of Turkey.

In Turkey, the concentration of political power on solely Justice and Development Party (JDP) governments since 2002 increased the political pressures on oppositional media outlets and critical journalists. Since 2007, several professional journalists, frustrated by the restrictions over freedom of press and the nearly non-existent protections for their labour rights in mainstream media began to search new ways of practising journalism via the Internet and social media.

Many professional journalists who were either forced to leave or willingly left mainstream media institutions used their economic and cultural capital (i.e. their knowledge and skills, the ownership of cultural goods, recognized authority or expertise) to build their own personal social media spaces and then independent news sites. Journalists use social media platforms not just for news gathering and dissemination but to help achieve their business strategies. While some news sites founded by professional journalists adopt an entrepreneurial logic, the others present the characteristics of non-profit, and/or alternative news media.

This thesis explores digital-born news sites founded by professional journalists in Turkey in the 2000s in an ethnographic framework in order to reveal their strengths and weaknesses to sustain independent journalism and freedom of press. The sample of the fieldwork consists of ten news sites that have been founded by professional journalists. These are in chronological order: Oda TV (2007) by Soner Yalçın; T24 (2009) by Doğan Akın; Diken (2014) by Harun Simavi; ABC Gazetesi (2015) and Tele 1 (2018) by Merdan Yanardağ, Medyascope.tv (2015) by Ruşen Çakır; GazeteRed (2016) by Hakan Gülseven; Artı Gerçek (2017) and Artı TV (2017) by Celal Başlangıç; and Özgürüz (2017) by Can Dündar. The data informing the analysis derive from offline and online observations and face-to-face as well as online in-depth interviews with a total of 32 journalists.

The fieldwork provides in-depth accounts of the demographics, organizational structures, day to day operations, editorial policies, ideological stance, professional values, formats, business models, working conditions of these news sites. By focusing on their perceptions of journalism and novel ways of news reporting it hopes to shed light on how the digital-born news sites transform journalism as a profession, journalistic values and practices as well as labour relations in the media.

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter provides a theoretical basis for the discussions on the transformation of journalism in the web 2.0 era and the self-production of the profession. It examines journalism as a profession and professional ideology throughout its history in Europe and the United States (US). The nature, role, and social functions of journalism are investigated from the perspective of liberal and critical theories. Liberal theories argue that journalists are autonomous and pursue their profession in line with their own identity and professional ideology. Critical theories claim that once employed, journalists can never be totally free because of a number of structural factors embedded in the social, economic, and political environments in which news media play a central role.

Therefore, the aim of this chapter is, first of all, to examine the potential of journalists to liberate themselves from traditional constructs such as commercial media institutions. The second, is to lay the groundwork for discussions on how journalists can create their own media and continue to work freely outside the boundaries of corporate media systems.

In chapter two, the historical development of the Internet, Web 2.0 and as social media are examined to understand the new media ecosystem which affected journalism deeply. This chapter discusses concepts such as media convergence, interactivity, participation, and user-generated content that have a major role in the emerging forms of journalism. In addition, the digitalization of journalism in the Web 2.0 era is explored by focusing on concepts such as computer-assisted reporting, digital/online journalism, mobile journalism, data journalism, automation, bots and algorithms, alternative journalism, and citizen journalism.

These conceptual discussions are needed to understand the changing new newsgathering and storytelling techniques and the producer-consumer relationships. Second chapter argues that direct exchanges between news producers and consumers helps liberate journalism from the commercial media companies. This promises an opportunity for journalists and even ordinary people to practice journalism on the internet and on social media with a minimal cost. Journalists are empowered to self-organize outside the traditional journalistic institutions via online tools like blogs and web sites which, ironically, are provided by giant commercial technology companies.

The third chapter argues that the Internet and social media technologies enable journalists to set up their born-digital independent news start-ups. However, immaterialisation and decentralisation of labour in the Web 2.0 era and the rise of informational capitalism challenges the employment relationships in media sectors. Therefore, professional journalists who work for their own journalistic start-ups in more independent and flexible ways may also find themselves in an increasingly precarious position as digital labourers. Here the chapter emphasises the importance of a sustainable business model for digital-born news outlets, which will allow a healthy balance between journalistic values and economic requirements which may

liberate journalists from economic and commercial interests of capitalist media institutions and political pressures from governments.

Therefore the third chapter first focuses on changing employment relations in the news media by defining self-employment, freelancing, self-branding and entrepreneurial journalism. And then it moves on to new business models and new advertisement-based and other profit-oriented revenue sources like subscription, crowdfunding as well as the non-commercial revenue models like co-operative model. The chapter argues that informational capitalism, digital labour and precarisation of journalistic labour force would determine the potentials and the limits of digital journalism to break down old hierarchies discussed in the previous chapters. The fourth chapter starts with a brief history of journalism from the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923 until the end of 1990s in order to shed light on the structural factors that paved the way for a new digital media order in Turkey. This section follows a chronological order that conveys political developments that affect journalism and introduces technological developments such as the printing press, telegraph agencies, radio, and television.

Later the transformation of the media system since 2000s is explained in relation to major developments such as the 2000 and 2001 economic crises, conglomeration of the media system and the JDP governments' moves to create a partisan media. Conflictual relationships between oppositional journalists and the JDP governments are also covered through an examination of media legislation and certain symbolic events such as Gezi Park protests that restrict journalists' rights.

One of the main arguments of this chapter is that the decentralised and alternative nature of Gezi Park media has become the catalyst of the news start-ups established by the journalists. Being the first examples Web 2.0 news outlets they produce and distribute interactive content from anywhere, at any time by using social media networks.

The last section of the fourth chapter focus on the structural problems of journalism in Turkey. It is divided into two parts: political and economic. Political issues are those factors affecting freedom of the press, such as judicial pressures, and the bans on internet access and suspension of social media platforms. As far as economic problems are concerned most journalists' being employed with the minimum wage, and/or their being employed not as journalists, the ineffectiveness of unions, the aggressive de-unionization policies of traditional media companies and the problems journalists face concerning accreditation and press card issuance and diminishing employment opportunities in conventional media outlets for professional journalists are worth to mention.

The fifth chapter contains the field study of this thesis. Having introduced research aims and methodology, it reveals in detail the main findings and their analyses. Based on an ethnographic approach this chapter explores the potentials and weaknesses of digital-born news outlets founded by professional journalists. Focusing mainly on their business models and digitalized labour relations, it questions their sustainability in the long run as well as their power to expand the journalistic work force and freedom of press in Turkey. Its concluding section provides suggestions at theoretical and practical levels for born-digital journalistic start-ups with regard to new

business models, digitalisation of labour, and the expansion of precariat into the field of journalism.

Based on the findings of the fieldwork this thesis argues that although journalists' start-ups hold the potential to liberate journalism from commercial interests and direct political pressures, especially in oppressed media environments where censorship and self-censorship mechanisms are well-established, their limited resources and insecure business models threaten their sustainability in the long run, largely restraining their contribution to the journalistic labour force and development of independent journalism.

Despite the efforts of journalists to balance journalistic values and economic requirements by using news business models such as online advertising and crowdfunding in a hybrid way the journalists owned news outlets with the motto of "independence" could not completely free from economic pressures. Similarly, the emergence of precariat among digital journalists limits their income, economic stability and labour rights.

In journalist owned news sites the content produced with a small team as their means are limited. These sites are dependent on social media platforms in news making and generating revenues. As most of their digital labour is spent on social media feeds to produce news and on online advertising and funds and donations to generate revenue they have very little, if any, time go out to the field to gather information and conduct face-to-face interviews.

Most of these news sites rely on outsourcing within the framework of the possibilities offered by social media platforms. They cannot use other technological tools such as digital newsroom software for storytelling and data collection, and for user engagement since they do not have adequate finances. Benefiting from social media during news making requires more organic labour. Alongside their editorial workload, journalists keep the social network accounts of the news sites open on their smartphones and desktops, and create value with endless clicks like searching, uploading, sharing, and commenting. Thus, a good part of their digital labour spent on social media.

Moreover, because independent journalists earn little, they become economically and legally vulnerable. Since they cannot advertise on Google and Facebook, their content remains at the margins of the internet. Therefore, they cannot reach wider audiences. Also they do not have the economic means to oppose the lawsuits filed against them because of a news story, thus, they try not to attract too much attention at the expense of the freedom of press.

Economic and political restrictions explicitly affect the editorial freedom and working conditions of journalists. Under the circumstances journalists cannot even foresee whether they will be in business in the next five years. All these leave journalists with a lot uncertainty, which results in a precarious regulation of journalistic work and an uncertain future for journalistic values against commercial interests. For a more democratic and sustainable news media order, direct income and/or financial support from the audience is seen a must rather than an option.

Key Words: Web 2.0, Journalism, Turkey, Digital-born News Sites, Digital Labour, Business Models, and Ethnography.



ÖZET

WEB 2.0 DÖNEMİNDE GAZETECİLİK, YENİ İŞ MODELLERİ VE DİJİTAL EMEK: 2000'Lİ YILLARDAN BU YANA TÜRKİYE'DE PROFESYONEL GAZETECİLER TARAFINDAN KURULAN DOĞUŞTAN DİJİTAL HABER SİTELERİNDEN ÇIKARTILAN DERSLER

Web 2.0 döneminde gazeteciler mesleklerine kendi kurdukları ve yönettikleri dijital kökenli haber siteleri aracılığıyla devam etmekte, haberlerini ve düşüncelerini sosyal medya platformlarını kullanarak paylaşmaktadırlar. Yeni dijital ekosistem, holdinglerin hegemonik kapitalist çıkarları tarafından uzun süredir kısıtlanmış olan gazeteciliği uygulamanın yeni yollarını icat etmek için büyük fırsatlardan biri olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Başarılı ve sürdürülebilir bir iş modeline sahip dijital kökenli haber siteleri, yalnızca gazetecilik değerleri ile ticari çıkarlar arasında bir denge kurulmasına olanak sağlamakla kalmıyor, aynı zamanda özellikle Türkiye gibi baskı altındaki medya ortamlarında gazetecilerin ve gazeteciliğin özgürleşmesi için yeni bir dönem açma potansiyeline sahip olduğunu da ortaya koymaktadır.

Türkiye’de 2002 yılından bu yana siyasi gücün sadece Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) hükümetlerinde toplanması, ağırlıklı olarak muhalif medya kuruluşlarının ve eleştirel gazetecilerin üzerindeki baskıyı artırmıştır. 2007’den bu yana, kısıtlı medya ortamından ve ana akım medyada işçi haklarının ihlal edilmesinden bıkan birçok profesyonel gazeteci, web siteleri ve sosyal medya platformlarını kullanarak gazetecilik yapmanın yeni yollarını aramaya başlamıştır.

Ana akım medya kuruluşlarından ayrılan veya çeşitli sebeplerden dolayı ilişkisi kesilen birçok profesyonel gazeteci, ekonomik ve kültürel sermayelerini (yani bilgi ve becerilerini, kültürel malların mülkiyetini, tanınan otorite veya uzmanlıklarını) kendi kişisel medya alanlarını oluşturmak ve ardından bağımsız hale gelmek için kullanmışlardır. Örneğin, gazeteciler kurdukları haber sitelerine ek olarak sosyal medya platformlarını haber toplamak, haber yaymak ve ticari stratejilerinin bir parçası olarak kullanmaktadırlar. Profesyonel gazeteciler tarafından kurulan bazı haber siteleri girişimci bir mantık benimserken, diğerleri kar amacı gütmeyen ve/veya alternatif haber medyası özelliklerini sergilemektedir.

Bu tez, 2000’li yıllardan günümüze dek Türkiye’de profesyonel gazeteciler tarafından kurulan dijital kökenli haber sitelerini etnografik bir çerçevede incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu tezin alan çalışmasının örneklemini profesyonel gazeteciler tarafından kurulmuş on haber sitesi oluşturmaktadır. Bunlar kronolojik sıraya göre: Soner Yalçın tarafından kurulan Oda TV (2007); Doğan Akın tarafından kurulan T24 (2009); Harun Simavi'nin kurduğu Diken (2014); Merdan Yanardağ tarafından kurulan ABC Gazetesi (2015) ve Tele 1 (2018); Ruşen Çakır tarafından kurulan Medyascope.tv (2015); Hakan Gülseven'in kurduğu GazeteRed (2016); Celal Başlangıç tarafından kurulan Artı Gerçek (2017) ve Artı TV (2017); ve Can Dündar

tarafından kurulan Özgürüz (2017). Tez kapsamında elde edilen veriler, çevrimdışı ve çevrimiçi gözlemlerden, toplam 32 gazeteciyle gerçekleştirilmiş yüz yüze ve çevrimiçi derinlemesine görüşmelerden elde edilmiştir.

Haber sitelerinin demografik özellikleri, organizasyon yapıları, günlük operasyonları, yayın politikaları, ideolojik duruşları, profesyonel değerleri, biçimleri, iş modelleri, çalışma koşulları ve gazeteciliği uygulama ve algılamadaki yeni yolları hakkında derin bilgiler içermektedir. Tüm bunların ışığında, doğuştan dijital haber sitelerinin gazetecilik çalışmaları, emek uygulamaları ve bir meslek olarak gazetecilik üzerinde nasıl bir etkisi olduğuna ışık tutmayı hedeflemiştir.

Bu tez beş bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölüm, web 2.0 çağında gazeteciliğin dönüşümü ve mesleğin kendini üretmesi tartışmalarına teorik bir temel oluşturmaktadır. Gazeteciliği Avrupa ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ndeki (ABD) tarihi boyunca bir meslek ve profesyonel ideoloji olarak inceler. Gazeteciliğin doğası, rolü ve sosyal işlevleri, liberal ve eleştirel teoriler açısından incelenir. Liberal teoriler, gazetecilerin özerk olduklarını ve mesleklerini kendi kimlikleri ve mesleki ideolojileri doğrultusunda sürdürdüklerini savunur. Eleştirel teoriler, haber medyasının merkezi bir rol oynadığı sosyal, ekonomik ve politik ortamlara gömülü bir dizi yapısal faktör nedeniyle, gazetecilerin bir kez istihdam edildikten sonra asla tamamen özgür olamayacaklarını iddia etmektedir.

Bu nedenle, bu bölümün amacı, her şeyden önce, gazetecilerin kendilerini ticari medya kurumları gibi geleneksel yapılardan kurtarma potansiyellerini incelemektir. İkincisi, gazetecilerin kendi medyalarını nasıl oluşturabilecekleri ve kurumsal medya sistemlerinin sınırları dışında özgürce çalışmaya devam edebilecekler mi gibi tartışmaların zeminini hazırlamaktır.

İkinci bölümde, gazeteciliği derinden etkileyen yeni medya ekosistemini anlamak için internetin, Web 2.0'ın ve sosyal medyanın tarihsel gelişimi incelenmektedir. Bu bölümde, medya yakınsaması, etkileşim, katılım ve yeni ortaya çıkan gazetecilik biçimlerinde önemli bir rolü olan kullanıcı tarafından oluşturulan içerik gibi kavramlar eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla tartışılmaktadır. Ayrıca, Web 2.0 çağında gazeteciliğin dijitalleşmesi, bilgisayar destekli habercilik, dijital/çevrimiçi gazetecilik, mobil gazetecilik, veri gazeteciliği, otomasyon, robotlar ve algoritmalar, alternatif gazetecilik ve yurttaş gazeteciliği gibi kavramlar incelenmektedir.

Bu kavramsal tartışmalar, değişen yeni haber toplama ve hikâye anlatma tekniklerini ve üretici-tüketici ilişkilerini anlamak için gereklidir. İkinci bölüm, haber üreticileri ile tüketiciler arasındaki doğrudan ilişkinin, gazeteciliği ticari medya şirketlerinden kurtarmaya yardımcı olduğu üzerinde de durmaktadır. Bu durum, gazetecilere ve hatta sıradan insanlara internette ve sosyal medyada minimum maliyetle gazetecilik yapma fırsatı vaat etmektedir. Gazeteciler, ironik bir şekilde dev ticari teknoloji şirketleri tarafından sağlanan bloglar ve web siteleri gibi çevrimiçi araçlar aracılığıyla geleneksel gazetecilik kurumlarının dışında kendi kendilerini organize etme fırsatı bulmaktadırlar.

Üçüncü bölüm, internet ve sosyal medya teknolojilerinin gazetecilerin doğuştan dijital bağımsız haber girişimlerini kurmalarına olanak sağladığını tartışıyor. Bununla birlikte, Web 2.0 çağında emeğin gayrimaddileşmesi ve ademi merkezileşmesi ve enformasyonel kapitalizmin yükselişi, medya sektörlerindeki istihdam ilişkilerine

meydan okuyor. Bu nedenle, kendi gazetecilik girişimlerinde daha bağımsız ve esnek şekillerde çalışan profesyonel gazeteciler de dijital emekçiler olarak kendilerini giderek daha tehlikeli bir konumda bulabilmektedir. Bu bölüm, gazetecileri kapitalist medya kurumlarının ekonomik ve ticari çıkarlarından ve hükümetlerin siyasi baskılarından kurtarabilecek gazetecilik değerleri ile ekonomik gereklilikler arasında sağlıklı bir denge sağlayacak, doğuştan dijital haber kuruluşları için sürdürülebilir bir iş modelinin önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Bu nedenle, üçüncü bölüm ilk olarak serbest meslek, serbest çalışma, kendi markasını oluşturma ve girişimci gazeteciliği tanımlayarak haber medyasındaki değişen istihdam ilişkilerine odaklanmaktadır. Ardından yeni iş modellerine yani dijital reklama dayalı, abonelik, kitle fonlaması, kooperatif model gibi kâr odaklı ve kar odaklı olmayan gelir kaynaklarına değinmektedir. Bu bölüm, enformasyonel kapitalizmin, dijital emeğin ve gazetecilik işgücünün güvencesizleştirilmesinin, önceki bölümlerde tartışılan eski hiyerarşileri yıkmak için dijital gazeteciliğin potansiyellerini ve sınırlarını belirleyeceğini tartışmaktadır. Dördüncü bölüm, Türkiye'de yeni bir dijital medya düzeninin oluşmasını sağlayan yapısal faktörlere ışık tutmak amacıyla, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kurulduğu 1923 yılından 1990'ların sonuna kadar kısa bir gazetecilik tarihi ile başlamaktadır. Bu bölüm, gazeteciliği etkileyen siyasi gelişmeleri aktaran ve matbaa, telgraf ajansları, radyo ve televizyon gibi teknolojik gelişmeleri tanıtan kronolojik bir sıra izlemektedir.

Daha sonra medya sisteminin 2000'li yıllardan itibaren geçirdiği dönüşüm, 2000 ve 2001 ekonomik krizleri, medya sisteminin holdingleşmesi ve AKP hükümetlerinin partizan bir medya yaratma hamleleri gibi önemli gelişmelerle bağlantılı olarak açıklanmaktadır. Muhafız gazeteciler ile AKP hükümetleri arasındaki çelişkili ilişkiler, medya mevzuatı ve gazetecilerin haklarını kısıtlayan Gezi Parkı protestoları gibi bazı sembolik olaylar incelenerek de ele alınmaktadır.

Bu bölümün ana argümanlarından biri, Gezi Parkı medyasının ademi merkeziyetçi ve alternatif doğasının, gazeteciler tarafından kurulan yeni haber şirketlerinin katalizörü olduğudur. Protestolar sırasında karşılaşılan ilk örnek gazetecilerin tıpkı sıradan insanların yaptıkları gibi Web 2.0 ve sosyal medya ağlarını kullanarak her yerden, her zaman etkileşimli içerik üretip dağıtmış olmalarıdır.

Dördüncü bölümün son bölümü ise Türkiye'de gazeteciliğin yapısal sorunlarına odaklanmaktadır. Siyasi ve ekonomik olmak üzere ikiye ayrılır. Siyasi konular, yargısal baskılar, internet erişiminin yasaklanması ve sosyal medya platformlarının askıya alınması gibi basın özgürlüğünü etkileyen unsurlardır. Ekonomik sorunlar kapsamında, gazetecilerin çoğunun asgari ücretle çalıştırılması ve/veya gazeteci olarak çalıştırılmaması, sendikaların etkinsizliği, geleneksel medya şirketlerinin saldırgan sendikasılaştırma politikaları ve gazetecilerin akreditasyon ve basın kartına ulaşım güçlüğü ve profesyonel gazeteciler için konvansiyonel medya kuruluşlarında azalan istihdam fırsatları bahsetmeye değerdir.

Beşinci bölüm bu tezin saha çalışmasını içermektedir. Araştırma amaçlarını ve metodolojisini tanıttıktan sonra, ana bulguları ve analizleri ayrıntılı olarak ortaya koymaktadır. Etnografik bir yaklaşıma dayanan bu bölüm, profesyonel gazeteciler tarafından kurulan dijital doğumlu haber sitelerinin potansiyellerini ve zayıf yönlerini araştırmaktadır. Ağırlıklı olarak iş modellerine ve dijitalleşen çalışma ilişkilerine odaklanarak, uzun vadede sürdürülebilirliklerinin yanı sıra Türkiye'de gazetecilik iş

gücünü ve basın özgürlüğünü genişletme güçlerini sorgulamaktadır. Sonuç bölümü, yeni iş modelleri, emeğin dijitalleşmesi ve prekaryanın gazetecilik alanına yayılmasıyla ilgili olarak, doğuştan dijital gazetecilik girişimleri için teorik ve pratik düzeyde öneriler sunmaktadır.

Saha çalışmasının bulgularına dayanarak bu tez, gazetecilerin kurduğu yeni girişimlerin gazeteciliği ticari çıkarlardan ve doğrudan siyasi baskılardan kurtarma potansiyeline sahip olmasına rağmen, özellikle sansür ve otosansür mekanizmalarının iyice yerleşmiş olduğu baskı altındaki medya ortamlarında etkilerinin sınırlı olduğunu savunmaktadır. Öyle ki, maddi kaynakların yetersizliği ve güvensiz iş modelleri, uzun vadede haber sitelerinin sürdürülebilirliklerini tehdit ederek, gazetecilik işgücüne katkılarını ve bağımsız gazeteciliğin gelişimini büyük ölçüde kısıtlamaktadır.

Gazetecilerin çevrimiçi reklamcılık ve kitle fonlaması gibi iş modellerini hibrit bir şekilde kullanarak gazetecilik değerleri ile ekonomik gereksinimleri dengeleme çabalarına rağmen, “bağımsızlık” sloganıyla haber sitelerinde mesleklerini sürdüren gazeteciler, ekonomik baskılardan tamamen kurtulamamıştır. Benzer şekilde, dijital gazeteciler arasında prekaryanın ortaya çıkması, onların gelirlerini, ekonomik istikrarlarını ve çalışma haklarını sınırlamaktadır.

Gazetecilerin sahip olduğu haber sitelerinde küçük bir ekiple üretilen içerikler de kısıtlıdır. Bu siteler haber yapma ve gelir elde etme konusunda sosyal medya platformlarına bağımlıdır. Dijital emeklerinin çoğu, haber üretmek için sosyal medya aktivitelerine ve gelir elde etmek için çevrimiçi reklamlara ve fonlara ve bağışlara harcadığından, bilgi toplamak ve yüz yüze görüşmek ve röportajlar için sahaya inmeye çok az zamanları vardır.

Bu haber sitelerinin çoğu, sosyal medya platformlarının sunduğu olanaklar çerçevesinde dış kaynak kullanımına dayanmaktadır. Yeterli finansmana sahip olmadıkları için hikâye anlatımı, veri toplama ve kullanıcı katılımı için dijital haber odası yazılımı gibi diğer teknolojik araçları kullanamazlar. Haber yapılırken sosyal medyadan faydalanmak daha fazla organik emek gerektirmektedir. Gazeteciler, editoryal iş yükünün yanı sıra akıllı telefonlarında ve masaüstü bilgisayarlarında haber sitelerinin sosyal ağ hesaplarını açık tutuyor ve arama, yükleme, paylaşma ve yorum yapma gibi bitmek bilmeyen tıklamalarla bu platformlar için değer yaratmaktadırlar. Böylece dijital emeklerinin önemli bir kısmı sosyal medyaya harcanmış olmaktadır.

Dahası, bağımsız gazeteciler çok az kazandıkları için ekonomik ve yasal olarak savunmasız hale gelmektedirler. Google ve Facebook'a reklam veremedikleri için içerikleri internetin ücra köşelerinde kalmaktadır. Bu nedenle daha geniş kitlelere ulaşamazlar. Ayrıca bir haber nedeniyle haklarında açılan davalara karşı çıkacak ekonomik imkânları da olmadığı için basın özgürlüğünü riske atmak pahasına fazla dikkat çekmemeye çalışmaktadırlar.

Ekonomik ve siyasi kısıtlamalar, gazetecilerin editoryal özgürlüklerini ve çalışma koşullarını açıkça etkilemektedir. Bu şartlar altında gazeteciler önümüzdeki beş yıl içinde gazeteciliğe devam edip etmeyeceklerini öngörememektedirler. Tüm bunlar, gazetecileri pek çok belirsizlikle baş başa bırakmaktadır. Gazetecilik mesleği belirsiz bir şekilde düzenlenirken ticari çıkarlar karşısında gazetecilik değerlerinin akıbeti bilinmez hale gelmektedir. Daha demokratik ve sürdürülebilir bir haber

medyası düzeni için izleyiciden doğrudan gelir ve/veya finansal destek bir seçenek değil, bir zorunluluk olarak görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Web 2.0, Gazetecilik, Türkiye, Dijital Doğuştan Haber Siteleri, Dijital Emek, İş Modelleri ve Etnografya.



RESUME ETENDU

JOURNALISME A L'ERE DU WEB 2.0, NOUVEAUX MODELES COMMERCIAUX ET TRAVAIL NUMERIQUE : LEÇONS TIREES DES SITES D'INFORMATION NUMERIQUES DANS LE NUMERIQUE FONDE PAR DES JOURNALISTES PROFESSIONNELS EN TURQUIE DEPUIS LES ANNEES 2000

L'ère du Web 2.0 promet l'opportunité de faire du journalisme sur les start-ups journalistiques créées par les journalistes eux-mêmes à des coûts très bas. Les journalistes peuvent désormais partager leurs histoires et leurs réflexions sur des sites d'information numériques qu'ils ont créés en utilisant également des plateformes de médias sociaux. Cette transformation permet aux journalistes d'auto-organiser la profession au-delà des limites des médias traditionnels. Ainsi, la profession, par l'intégration de la propriété et du journalisme, revient à ses racines où les journalistes n'étaient pas seulement reporters et pamphlétaires, mais en même temps propriétaires, éditeurs et distributeurs du contenu journalistique (Splichal and Dahlgren, 2016: 6). Cette intégration a également le potentiel de transformer le journalisme d'une profession d'entreprise en une profession plus indépendante et autonome.

Du point de vue des théories libérales et grâce à leur identité professionnelle et leurs idéologies, les journalistes ont toujours eu la possibilité d'être autonomes et de poursuivre leur carrière en dehors des médias d'entreprise. Cependant, le nouvel écosystème des médias numériques, avec son espace convergé, sa nature participative et son accès facile aux outils de production et de distribution, a facilité ce processus et est devenu l'une des plus grandes opportunités pour de nouvelles façons de pratiquer le journalisme longtemps sous contrôle des entreprises médiatiques commerciales, qui considèrent les journalistes comme des travailleurs et limitent leur liberté, comme le soulignent les théories critiques.

L'énorme transformation technique et sociale a également été interprétée comme un signe de libération et de démocratisation du journalisme. Ce comportement « progressiste » du journalisme était motivé par trois logiques différentes. La première est une logique d'autonomie qui vise à faire en sorte que les journalistes professionnels qui ont leur mot à dire sur les questions publiques puissent s'exprimer librement sans avoir à passer par un média. Deuxièmement, une logique de transparence vise à éclairer les coulisses du processus de production des connaissances. Troisièmement, une logique de participation qui cherche à mobiliser un public qui serait autrement passif ou inactif (Matheson, 2004).

Cependant, du point de vue des théories critiques, tous ces développements offrent non seulement des opportunités aux journalistes, mais les entravent également. Les journalistes travaillent donc cette fois dans un environnement colonisé par des géants de la technologie. Par exemple, la montée du capitalisme informationnel à l'ère

du Web 2.0 transforme de plus en plus le travail en un processus mobile et décentralisé en immatérialisant le travail. Certains affirment que le travail numérique (le fruit du capitalisme de l'information) comporte le risque de confiscation du travail du journaliste, qui est perçu comme un nœud de plus sur Internet (Bardoel and Deuze, 2001: 91-103). Vincent Mosco et Christian Fuchs (2014 : 62) soulignent que la numérisation peut transformer le travail journalistique rémunéré en non rémunéré. On peut dire que l'un des points de départ de cette transformation est un article publié en 2000 par la chercheuse Tiziana Terranova. L'auteur définit le travail non rémunéré ou gratuit en jouant sur le double sens des mots anglais « free », « libre » et « gratuit ». Ainsi, gratuit signifie volontaire et non rémunéré apprécié et exploité (Broca, 2015: 7).

Le point crucial de l'analyse de Terranova, qui constitue la base de la critique du travail numérique, est de souligner que ces activités « gratuites » créent de la valeur pour certaines plateformes de médias sociaux ou entreprises technologiques plutôt que pour le travailleur et/ou l'ouvrier numérique (Broca, 2015: 8). Ainsi, les technologies Web 2.0 ont été créées pour transformer tout type d'activité intellectuelle (y compris de nombreux aspects de la vie quotidienne des internautes, et les contenus qui sont créés) en données, puis les monétiser (Cukier and Mayer-Schöenberger, 2013: 28-40; Smyrniotis, 2016: 61).

Les modèles commerciaux des plateformes de médias sociaux dépendent du modèle de « troc » (van Dijck 2014: 200; Yeung 2018: 514; Cohen, 2019: 16). Selon van Dijck (2014 : 200), dans le modèle du troc, les utilisateurs individuels fournissent des informations personnelles à des entreprises ou en d'autres termes à des plateformes telles que Google, Facebook, etc., puis reçoivent des services en retour tandis que les plateformes reçoivent des revenus publicitaires de cette activité. Le modèle défini est considéré comme l'essence du système capitaliste contemporain (Jeon, 2010 : 89).

Cependant, il convient de garder à l'esprit que la plus grande part des revenus de la publicité numérique n'est pas transférée aux organes de presse numériques, mais aux plateformes qui assurent la médiation ou la distribution du contenu qu'elles produisent. Les agences de presse numériques reçoivent une part inférieure des revenus de la publicité numérique que les plateformes mondiales (Çevikel, 2020 : 37). De ce point de vue, il est clair que les plateformes mondiales peuvent être conditionnées à générer des revenus publicitaires en exploitant les contenus produits par les start-up de journalisme nouvellement créées, tant que les start-up ont besoin d'utiliser ces plateformes pour toucher un large public. Ainsi, du fait de cette relation problématique, les journalistes indépendants seront potentiellement menacés. Cette menace peut être décrite comme la perte de revenus ou les difficultés à générer des revenus.

En conséquence, les sites d'information fondés par des journalistes professionnels travaillant en harmonie avec les plateformes de médias sociaux et les entreprises technologiques peuvent avoir besoin de réduire les coûts de main-d'œuvre en mettant en œuvre des stratégies d'efficacité et de rationalisation, tant qu'ils perçoivent de faibles revenus publicitaires numériques. À ce stade, l'utilisation de reporters robots et d'algorithmes peut entrer en jeu. Ils peuvent recourir à la pige et à l'externalisation tout en réduisant la taille des employés permanents (Cohen, 2015). Ou, ils peuvent simplement fermer les médias. Par conséquent, les journalistes professionnels à l'ère du numérique risquent de se retrouver dans une position de plus en plus précaire et de perdre leur autonomie. Néanmoins, un modèle commercial

durable pour les organes de media de journalistes nés dans le numérique, qui permettra un équilibre sain entre les valeurs journalistiques et les intérêts économiques, pourrait potentiellement ouvrir une nouvelle ère pour la libération des journalistes et du journalisme, en particulier dans des environnements médiatiques opprimés.

Par exemple, en Turquie, le journalisme a toujours été confronté à des contraintes politiques et économiques (Sözeri, 2015a : 6 cité dans Avadar, 2019 : 44). Cependant, la concentration du pouvoir politique, uniquement sur les gouvernements du Parti de la justice et du développement (JDP) depuis 2002, a accru l'oppression des médias principalement d'opposition et des journalistes critiques. Les gouvernements JDP, utilisant leur soutien populaire et leur pouvoir économique, ont pris des mesures pour mettre la pression sur les médias grand public, en particulier, et pour contrôler le contenu des informations (Sözeri et Güney, 2011 : 7).

Sözeri (2015a : 6 cité dans Avadar, 2019 : 44) a fait valoir que bien que le JDP ait été soutenu par les propriétaires de médias au cours de leur premier mandat, les relations ont été troublées après la deuxième victoire électorale du JDP aux élections municipales de 2004. Depuis lors, le JDP a adopté une double stratégie pour éliminer l'opposition des médias. Premièrement, il a mis en place de lourdes amendes fiscales pour les hommes d'affaires/propriétaires de médias ayant des idées politiques concurrentes. Ensuite, il a reconfiguré le système médiatique en vendant les médias saisis par le fonds d'assurance des dépôts d'épargne (Tasarruf Mevduatı Sigorta Fonu, TMSF) à des hommes d'affaires qui ont une opinion favorable de leurs politiques. Le JDP a également soutenu des propriétaires de médias amis par le biais d'appels d'offres publics dans le cadre de leur stratégie d'investissement dans l'économie. Par conséquent, la plupart des organes de presse grand public qui ont des intérêts commerciaux dans d'autres domaines essaient de plaire au gouvernement à chaque occasion possible. Les pressions politiques, économiques et juridiques ont encore aggravé l'équilibre entre les valeurs journalistiques et les intérêts commerciaux en faveur d'une autocensure accrue.

En raison de la pression exercée par le JDP sur les propriétaires de médias, de nombreux journalistes et chroniqueurs ont perdu leur emploi en raison de leurs opinions critiques et de leurs reportages sur les politiques gouvernementales (Sözeri, 2015a : 6). Selon les rapports de surveillance des médias d'Independent Communication Network (BİA), en 2014, 339 journalistes, chroniqueurs et caricaturistes ont perdu leur emploi en raison de pressions politiques. De plus, 22 journalistes et 10 éditeurs ont été emprisonnés en 2015. 21 des 22 journalistes emprisonnés et tous les éditeurs emprisonnés ont été arrêtés pour des motifs liés à des « organisations illégales » selon le Code pénal turc (*Türk Ceza Kanunu*, TCK) et l'Anti-Terror Loi (*Terörle Mücadele Kanunu*, TMK). Un autre journaliste a été emprisonné pour « résistance à la police ». Treize journalistes, un chroniqueur et un caricaturiste sont toujours jugés pour avoir insulté le président Erdoğan (Önderoğlu 2015; cité dans Sözeri 2015a, 6-7).

Tutuklu Gazetecilerle Dayanışma Platformu (La plateforme de solidarité avec les journalistes détenus/emprisonnés) a déclaré qu'au moins 116 journalistes étaient en prison le 23 octobre 2016. L'Union des journalistes de Turquie a annoncé que 10 000 (près d'un tiers) avaient perdu leur emploi depuis 2013. Parmi eux, 3 000 se sont retrouvés au chômage après la tentative de coup d'État du 15 juillet 2016 (*Tutuklu Gazetecilerle Dayanışma Platformu*, 2016).

Le coup d'État manqué de juillet 2016 a accru les pressions politiques sur les médias. Le 20 juillet, le président Erdoğan a déclaré l'état d'urgence pour trois mois et suspendu partiellement la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme. Depuis lors, le gouvernement turc a pu gouverner par décret et peut adopter des projets de loi ayant force de loi : 16 chaînes de télévision, 23 stations de radio, trois agences de presse, 45 quotidiens, 15 magazines et 29 maisons d'édition liées à le mouvement d'opposition Gülen a reçu l'ordre de fermer ses portes. Fin septembre, 12 chaînes de télévision et 11 stations de radio, pour la plupart pro-kurdes, ont été fermées par le décret n°668, qui permet la fermeture sans décision de justice au motif qu'elles sont liées à des organisations terroristes ou qu'elles sont menace pour la sécurité nationale (White 2017, 46).

En plus des pressions politiques et juridiques, les journalistes en Turquie ont dû travailler sous des menaces croissantes pour leurs droits en tant que travailleurs depuis les années 1990. L'anti-syndicalisme qui domine le paysage médiatique turc depuis les années 1990 a affaibli les organisations professionnelles et les mécanismes de solidarité et d'autorégulation intra-occupation dans le journalisme. Dans ces circonstances, les journalistes ont dû travailler sans la protection des syndicats et dans des conditions précaires (Sözeri 2015b, 23).

Selon les données publiées par le ministère du Travail et de la Sécurité sociale, 95 442 personnes travaillaient dans le secteur des médias en juillet 2014. On estime que 30 000 d'entre elles étaient des journalistes. Il existe actuellement trois syndicats dans lesquels les journalistes s'organisent. Parmi ceux-ci, des syndicats tels que Medya-İş compte 1 273 membres, TGS compte 1 033 membres et Pak Medya-İş compte 47 membres. Ces chiffres suggèrent que la majorité des journalistes en Turquie ne sont pas membres d'un syndicat et sont forcés de travailler dans des conditions précaires (Sözeri 2015b, 23).

En outre, en Turquie, les journalistes travaillant dans la presse écrite et visuelle sous le champ d'application de la loi no. 5953 deviennent éligibles à une carte de presse peu de temps après avoir commencé à travailler. Selon les données obtenues auprès de la « Direction des communications de la présidence de la République de Turquie », la possession d'une carte de presse parmi les employés assurés du secteur des médias en Turquie est considérablement faible (Sözeri et Güney 2011, 33-34). Ne pas être titulaire d'une carte de presse a des conséquences telles que ne pas être accrédité pour des réunions organisées par des associations d'État, être bloqué pendant la poursuite de nouvelles, être attaqué, être arrêté et clairement, ne pas être considéré comme un journaliste (Medyatava 2015; cité dans Sözeri 2015b, 23).

En outre, la majorité des journalistes et rédacteurs en chef de premier plan en Turquie sont des hommes. Selon la journaliste Nurcan Akad (2016), ancienne rédactrice en chef du journal Akşam : « Les hommes journalistes ne veulent pas partager leur pouvoir avec les femmes journalistes du secteur ». Les médias en Turquie adoptent une attitude de plus en plus machiste envers les femmes journalistes en général, et les femmes journalistes aux opinions même légèrement dissidentes en particulier. Un ton patriarcal envers les femmes journalistes est en train de devenir la norme plutôt que l'exception. Les femmes journalistes se font régulièrement dire de « connaître leur place » par des représentants de l'État, des rédacteurs en chef et des leaders d'opinion qui sont aux commandes au sein de l'establishment politique et des

médias. C'est comme si, à chaque incident, un message fort était envoyé aux femmes : laissez le champ politique à celles qui savent le manier avec le soin qu'il mérite. Autrement dit, laissez faire vos collègues masculins (Genç 2014, 88 cité dans Avadar, 2019 : 45).

Depuis 2007¹, plusieurs journalistes professionnels frustrés par l'environnement médiatique restreint et la violation des droits du travail dans les médias grand public ont commencé à chercher de nouvelles façons de pratiquer le journalisme via Internet et en se diffusant notamment sur les réseaux sociaux. Les réseaux de médias sociaux jouent un rôle essentiel dans la formation de ces médias. Par conséquent, les journalistes utilisent ces plateformes pour recueillir des informations pour leurs reportages, vérifier les dernières nouvelles, trouver de nouvelles idées pour leurs articles ou recueillir des informations et des sources supplémentaires. Rester en contact avec leur public cible est un autre objectif (Weaver, Willnat, Wilhoit, 2018 : 119-120).

Ainsi, de nombreux journalistes professionnels qui ont été contraints de quitter ou ont volontairement quitté les grands médias ont utilisé leur capital économique et culturel (c'est-à-dire leurs connaissances et leurs compétences, la propriété de biens culturels, une autorité ou une expertise reconnue) pour créer leur propre média. Les journalistes ont créé des sites d'information à très bas coûts sans se spécialiser techniquement, grâce à de nouveaux outils de communication multifonctionnels et faciles d'accès, comme Internet et les réseaux sociaux.

À l'heure actuelle, les sites d'information fondés par des journalistes professionnels qui ont été exclus des médias grand public en Turquie par des démissions et/ou des licenciements sont, par ordre chronologique : Oda TV (2007) de Soner Yalçın, T24 (2009) de Doğan Akın, Zete (2011-fermé) de Nurcan Akad, Diken (2014) de Harun Simavi, ABC Gazetesi (2015) de Merdan Yanardağ, Medyascope.tv (2015) de Ruşen Çakır, GazeteRed (2016) de Hakan Gülseven, Artı Gerçek (2017) et Artı TV (2017) de Celal Başlangıç et Özgürüz (2017) de Can Dündar. Certains de ces sites d'information fondés par des journalistes professionnels adoptent une logique entrepreneuriale alors que d'autres présentent des caractéristiques de médias associatifs et/ou alternatifs.

Les principales raisons pour lesquelles les journalistes professionnels se lancent dans de nouvelles entreprises journalistiques en Turquie sont brièvement la

¹ Selon Eylem Yanardağoglu (2015, 259), en 2007, l'oppression et l'intervention du JDP au pouvoir sur les journalistes et les médias sont devenues observables. Au cours de cette période, le principal «agent de limitation de la liberté d'expression était l'État», notamment par la mise en œuvre des articles 141 et 142 du Code pénal turc. Malgré plusieurs amendements lors des réformes d'eupéanisation, l'article 301 du code pénal, qui traite des infractions commises pour "insulte à la turcité", a été largement utilisé pour poursuivre des journalistes, des écrivains tels que le prix Nobel Orhan Pamuk, Hrant Dink l'ancien rédacteur en chef de journal turco-arménien, Agos, et d'autres intellectuels bien connus tels que İsmet Berkan, Murat Belge et Haluk Şahin. Le 13 février, Hrant Dink écrit un article sur Agos et suggère que les Arméniens doivent pouvoir se débarrasser de leur « obsession » des Turcs pour s'émanciper de leur identité. Un simple citoyen a ouvert une action en justice contre Hrant Dink en invoquant un article du code pénal 301. Dink a été accusé de six mois de prison, mais il a été suspendu. Hrant Dink a décidé de faire appel devant la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme. Agos et Hrant Dink avaient été la cible et les victimes de la xénophobie même qu'ils essayaient d'éliminer. Hrant Dink a été abattu à Istanbul en janvier 2007 en plein jour devant les bureaux de son journal par un adolescent de 17 ans parce qu'il avait insulté la «turquicité» dans l'un de ses essais dans le journal (The Economist 2007; cité dans Yanardağoglu 2013, 95).

destruction d'emplois dans les entreprises de médias conventionnels et le mécontentement croissant des journalistes professionnels face à l'état actuel du journalisme. Plusieurs journalistes ont également vu dans les opportunités offertes par Internet et les médias sociaux un moyen de poursuivre leur profession en toute liberté et indépendance.

Cependant, ces sites d'information ont rapidement connu les mêmes contraintes politiques et économiques que les médias historiques, notamment après la tentative de coup d'État du 15 juillet 2016. Au lendemain de la tentative de coup d'État, plus d'une douzaine de sites d'information, dont Gazeteport, ABC Gazetesi, Dokuz8Haber et Medyascope.tv ont été bloqués par le régulateur turc des télécommunications (TİB). Suite aux plaintes déposées auprès des autorités, Gazeteport, ABC Gazetesi et Medyascope.tv ont pu poursuivre leurs émissions après un certain temps (T24 2016).

GazeteRed est un autre site d'information soumis à une interdiction de diffusion. En septembre 2016, les comptes de messagerie du ministre de l'Énergie et des Sources naturelles, Berat Albayrak, ont été piratés et le contenu a été publié par un groupe de pirates informatiques communistes appelé RedHack, fondé en 1997. GazeteRed, qui a publié ces e-mails, a été interdit avec l'accusation d'être lié à RedHack. Hakan Gülseven, membre du comité exécutif du United June Movement² et fondateur du site d'information GazeteRed a été détenu (BirGün 2016). Gülseven a été libéré le 17 octobre 2016, cependant, l'interdiction du site s'est poursuivie jusqu'aux premiers mois de 2017.

La journaliste Tunca Öğreten, l'une des anciennes rédactrices en chef du site d'information Diken, a également été arrêtée le 25 décembre 2016. Le domicile de Tunca Öğreten a été perquisitionné à 03h00 par la police. La police a perquisitionné la maison pendant trois heures et a détenu le journaliste pour « appartenance à une organisation terroriste » (Cumhuriyet 2016).

Malgré les contraintes politiques et les difficultés économiques, certains de ces sites d'information nés en numérique fondés par des journalistes professionnels tels que T24, Diken et Medyascope.tv ont réussi à prospérer et à créer d'importants abonnés numériques, d'autres ne se sont pas révélés être des entreprises stables pour diverses raisons. Par exemple, Zete fondée par Nurcan Akad a été fermée en 2016 pour des raisons économiques.

Par conséquent, bien que les sites d'information numériques se développent et que les start-up innovantes puissent contribuer à la libéralisation et à la démocratisation des médias d'information en Turquie, il n'est pas encore certain de leur durabilité à long terme. Il n'est pas non plus encore certain de la résistance de ces entreprises face à la tendance actuelle à la précarité dans le journalisme.

² Le « United June Movement » est une coalition politique rassemblant des partis de gauche, communistes et socialistes, des organisations politiques marxistes-léninistes, des individus indépendants et diverses organisations non gouvernementales de gauche en Turquie (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, entretien approfondi , 21.04.2018).

Objectifs de la recherche, hypothèses et questions de recherche

Cette thèse se propose d'explorer les sites d'information nés des numériques fondés par des journalistes professionnels en Turquie dans les années 2000 dans un cadre ethnographique. Il vise à fournir des comptes rendus détaillés de leurs structures organisationnelles, de leurs opérations quotidiennes, de leurs politiques éditoriales, de leur position idéologique, de leurs formats, de leurs modèles commerciaux et des nouvelles façons de pratiquer le journalisme afin de déterminer leurs forces et leurs faiblesses en termes de fourniture d'alternatives durables à libérer les journalistes et le journalisme en Turquie. Ce faisant, il espère également faire la lumière sur l'impact des sites d'information nés sur le numérique sur les relations de travail dans le journalisme dans le nouvel écosystème des médias numériques en Turquie.

La thèse vise à tester deux hypothèses :

Hypothèse 1 : Les sites d'information nés sur le numérique fondés par des journalistes professionnels ont le potentiel de libérer les journalistes et le journalisme en Turquie ; cependant, le plus grand obstacle auquel ils sont confrontés en raison des modèles commerciaux qu'ils utilisent est la durabilité.

Hypothèse 2 : Sur la base de la durabilité, un déséquilibre potentiel entre les valeurs journalistiques et les intérêts commerciaux contraindra les pratiques du journalisme combinées au travail numérique et/ou créera un éventuel agencement précaire du travail journalistique.

Les principales questions de recherche sont les suivantes qui guideront l'analyse des résultats :

Question de recherche 1 : Quelles sont les principales raisons et motivations qui ont incité les journalistes professionnels en Turquie à fonder et à travailler pour des sites d'information nés numériques ?

Question de recherche 2 : Quelle est l'importance des sites d'information numériques pour les journalistes professionnels et la transformation du journalisme en Turquie ?

Question de recherche 3 : Quel type d'impact les sites d'information nés en numérique ont-ils sur la profession de journaliste et la production d'informations ?

Question de recherche 4 : Quels sont les principaux modèles économiques et sources de revenus de ces sites d'information ?

Question de recherche 5 : À quels obstacles et opportunités les sites d'information sont-ils confrontés en ce qui concerne leurs modèles commerciaux ?

Question de recherche 6 : Quels plans les sites d'information appartenant aux journalistes ont-ils pour assurer leur durabilité ?

Question de recherche 7 : Quelles sont leurs structures organisationnelles, leurs conditions de travail et leurs relations de travail ?

Question de recherche 8 : Comment se déroule la production d'informations sur les sites d'informations appartenant à des journalistes ?

Question de recherche 9 : Quel est l'impact des plateformes de médias sociaux sur la production et le contenu des informations ?

Question de recherche 10 : Comment les sites d'information appartenant à des journalistes définissent-ils leurs politiques et normes éditoriales ?

Question de recherche 11 : Quelle est leur position par rapport à la liberté d'expression et à l'autonomie professionnelle ?

Question de recherche 12 : Dans quelle mesure les sites d'information nés en numérique sont-ils capables de rester des organes d'information indépendants où les décisions journalistiques priment sur les décisions commerciales ?

Question de recherche 13 : Les sites d'information nés sur le numérique sont-ils capables de présenter une contre-force contre l'oppression politique ?

Question de recherche 14 : Quels sont les principaux obstacles et opportunités auxquels sont confrontés les sites d'information nés en numérique fondés par des journalistes professionnels concernant leurs modèles commerciaux et la numérisation du travail dans le journalisme à l'ère du Web 2.0 ?

Cadre théorique : redéfinir le journalisme en tant que profession et idéologie à l'ère du Web 2.0

A la lumière des écrits de Karl Marx et de ses successeurs, cette thèse considère les médias d'information traditionnels comme un mécanisme de domination et de contrôle. Par rapport au pouvoir, le journalisme peut être considéré à la fois comme base et comme superstructure. Considérés comme une base, les médias d'information sont définis comme des sociétés visant à générer des revenus. Lorsqu'il est considéré comme une superstructure, il est souligné comment les médias d'information en tant que structures culturelles et idéologiques sont façonnés par les intérêts commerciaux des élites dirigeantes (Marx et Engels, 1992).

David Harvey soutient que les groupes dominants qui détiennent la propriété des moyens de production recherchent un contrôle et un pouvoir hégémoniques sur le terrain de la culture (Harvey, 2015 : 330). Le concept d'hégémonie met l'accent sur la façon dont les élites dirigeantes renforcent leur pouvoir, leur richesse et leur statut en utilisant le journalisme, et comment elles sont utilisées pour diffuser leur propre philosophie, culture et morale.

L'hégémonie telle que décrite par Gramsci est une théorie politique élaborée mais incomplètement développée. Gramsci a tenté de définir l'hégémonie comme suit :

« Le consentement spontané donné par les grandes masses de la population à la direction générale imposée à la vie sociale par le groupe fondamental dominant ; ce consentement est historiquement causé par le prestige (et la confiance qui en découle) dont jouit le groupe dominant en raison de sa position et de sa fonction dans le monde de la production » (Gramsci, 1971 : 12 cité dans Evans, 2002 : 312).

Dans cette perspective, l'hégémonie est une lutte constante qui peut être gagnée et perdue. Gramsci considère « l'idéologie » comme instrumentale dans l'établissement et la durabilité de l'hégémonie et « intellectuelle » dans la formation et la transmission de l'idéologie au reste de la société. Gramsci identifie également les intellectuels comme des « experts en légitimation » qui mettent en œuvre la pensée politique et économique du groupe dominant. Les intellectuels, dans leur ensemble, produisent des théories sur les conditions d'existence d'un ordre social complet, proposent des politiques et leurs justifications, voire participent à leur application (Robinson, 1996 : 42).

La conceptualisation de l'intellectuel de Gramsci peut être appliquée aux journalistes qui travaillent pour des entreprises capitalistes dont l'objectif principal est

de créer du profit, ce que même les journalistes doivent accepter et se conformer (Tönnies, 1992 : 179-180 cité dans Splichal et Dahlgren, 2016 : 8). Les conditions économiques du capitalisme obligent les médias commerciaux à se conformer à la logique des grandes organisations capitalistes. « Les pouvoirs du capital ont l'intention non seulement de susciter une opinion favorable sur leurs produits... mais aussi de promouvoir une opinion publique généralisée qui est destinée à servir leurs intérêts politiques et commerciaux » (Tönnies, 1923 : 88 cité dans Splichal et Dahlgren, 2016 : 8). Par conséquent, au début du XXe siècle, Bücher, Tönnies et de nombreux théoriciens critiques se sont préoccupés de la forme appropriée de réglementation publique du journalisme, « pour garantir des nouvelles et des informations sur les affaires publiques qui soutiennent et nourrissent l'information, la compréhension et l'engagement des citoyens et ainsi une politique démocratique » (Cushion et Franklin, 2015 : 75 cité dans Splichal et Dahlgren, 2016 : 8).

La montée du professionnalisme dans le modèle libéral du journalisme est considérée comme une réponse à la perte d'indépendance politique des médias commerciaux. Ainsi, le professionnalisme du journalisme est associé à des concepts tels que l'objectivité, l'indépendance et l'autonomie. L'éthique libérale et les principes de travail du journalisme donnent la priorité à l'intérêt public, à la liberté, à l'indépendance, à l'estime de soi, à l'honnêteté/conscience personnelle, au respect de la vie privée et à l'honneur/l'égalité, et à l'exhaustivité et à la proportionnalité des informations. Cependant, les théories critiques soutiennent qu'une fois que les journalistes sont définis comme des travailleurs, leur indépendance et leur contrôle sur leur travail sont perdus. De ce point de vue, tant qu'il est employé, un professionnel ne peut être indépendant (Freidson, 1986 : 111 cité dans Pasti, 2007 : 32 ; Pasti, 2007 : 32).

L'idéologie professionnelle du journalisme, comme l'explique Pierre Bourdieu, est le résultat d'une « double détermination », d'un côté soutenir les bénéfices de l'économie capitaliste, des élites dirigeantes et des propriétaires de médias ; de l'autre, défendre cinq traits ou valeurs idéal-typiques (Inal, 1996 : 86-88). Deuze (2005 : 447), Golding et Elliott (1979), Merritt (1995), et plus récemment Kovach et Rosenstiel (2001) décrivent ces valeurs comme suit :

- Service public : les journalistes fournissent un service public (en tant que chiens de garde ou « dénonciateurs », collecteurs et diffuseurs actifs d'informations) ;
- Objectivité : les journalistes sont impartiaux, neutres, objectifs, justes et (donc) crédibles ;
- Autonomie : les journalistes doivent être autonomes, libres et indépendants dans leur travail ;
- Immédiateté : les journalistes ont le sens de l'immédiateté, de l'actualité et de la rapidité (inhérent au concept de « nouvelles ») ;
- Éthique : les journalistes ont le sens de l'éthique, de la validité et de la légitimité.

Cependant, l'idéologie du journalisme est également perçue comme un processus (intellectuel) dans le temps, par lequel elle se façonne comme la somme d'idées et de points de vue - notamment sur des questions sociales et politiques - d'un groupe particulier, mais aussi comme un processus par lequel d'autres les idées et opinions sont exclues ou marginalisées (Stevenson, 1995 : 37-41 ; Van Ginneken, 1997 : 73 cité dans Deuze, 2005 : 445). Le journaliste professionnel reste aujourd'hui

un intellectuel qui détermine ce que le public doit voir, entendre et lire sur le monde (Fulton, 1996 ; Singer, 1998 cité dans Deuze, 2005 : 451), même s'il est sous l'influence de les puissances du capitalisme. Le rôle démocratique et les responsabilités du journalisme sur les questions de régulation publique suscitent de vives inquiétudes dans de nombreux environnements médiatiques (Coyer, Dowmunt et Fountain, 2007 cité dans Sözeri, 2015a : 4), en particulier dans les pays opprimés, où les valeurs journalistiques sont devenues inutiles.

Depuis les années 2000, Internet et les nouvelles technologies médiatiques émergentes remettent en question l'emprise des grands intérêts commerciaux dans le journalisme. À l'ère du Web 2.0, une combinaison de nouvelles techniques de collecte d'informations et de narration peut être obtenue dans tous les formats de médias. L'intégration des technologies de réseaux numériques avec une refonte de la relation producteur-consommateur d'informations et un accès facile aux moyens de production et aux mécanismes de distribution tend à être considérée comme l'une des plus grandes opportunités pour ceux qui recherchent de nouvelles façons de pratiquer le journalisme (Bardoel and Deuze 2001; Pavlik et al. 2001; Teoh Kheng Yau and Al-Hawamdeh 2001; cited in Deuze 2005, 451) ; qui avait été limité par l'intérêt capitaliste hégémonique des media conglomérats pendant des siècles. Aujourd'hui, les journalistes peuvent continuer à exercer leur profession sur les sites d'information numériques qu'ils possèdent et partager leurs histoires et leurs réflexions sur les services de médias sociaux. Les journalistes utilisent ces plateformes pour rapporter ce qu'ils veulent avec l'agenda qu'ils se sont fixé (Charles, 2013 : 390 cités dans Sözeri, 2015a : 5).

Si certains sites d'information fondés par des journalistes émergents comme des entreprises à but non lucratif et caritatives qui exercent un caractère de sphères alternatives, d'autres sont fondés dans une logique entrepreneuriale. La nouvelle forme entrepreneuriale de travail implique que les journalistes créent leurs propres petites et moyennes entreprises pour produire du contenu et établir leurs mécanismes de distribution via des sites Web et des services de médias sociaux (Rottwilim, 2014 : 4). Ces sites d'information indépendants ont une économie politique autonome avec des formes alternatives de propriété et d'organisation (Olsson et Viscovi, 2013 cité dans Picard, 2014 : 278).

Qu'elles soient entrepreneuriales, à but non lucratif, alternatives ou indépendantes, toutes les entreprises de presse sont tout aussi redevables aux impératifs économiques que les entreprises de presse commerciales. Les nouvelles formes de fournisseurs de nouvelles nécessitent également un capital de démarrage et un fonds de roulement, qui ont tous des implications pour leurs opérations (Picard et Van Weezel, 2008 cité dans Picard, 2014 : 275) ; ils encourrent des coûts qui doivent être couverts par des revenus ; et elles ont besoin de réinvestissements pour maintenir leurs opérations (Picard, 2014 : 275). Cela montre à quel point il est important pour les nouvelles formes de journalisme à l'ère du Web 2.0 d'avoir des modèles commerciaux durables.

Le projet SuBMoJour, réalisé en 2012, cartographie des modèles commerciaux durables dans le journalisme à l'ère du Web 2.0. Selon les résultats de la recherche, les modèles commerciaux durables sont divisés en deux catégories principales : les modèles axés sur la narration et les modèles axés sur les services. Dans les modèles commerciaux axés sur la narration, les sites d'actualités se concentrent sur le gain

d'argent en produisant du contenu original, des actualités et des histoires pour leur public. La différence du modèle des médias de masse est que le public cible est plus petit dans le monde numérique. Dans ce journalisme de niche, il existe une relation étroite entre le contenu journalistique et les produits annoncés (Sirkkunen et Cook, 2012 : 5 cité dans Avadar, 2019 : 43).

L'autre groupe est constitué de modèles commerciaux orientés services, de sites d'information qui ne cherchent pas à monétiser leur contenu journalistique. Les sites de journalisme citoyen, par exemple, ressemblent davantage à des plateformes qui organisent et modèrent du contenu axé sur les citoyens, ou à des agrégateurs de nouvelles qui compilent des articles à partir d'autres sources. Certains sites d'information se sont spécialisés dans la vente de technologie, d'information, de formation ou de diversification pour redéfinir ce que signifie faire l'actualité (Sirkkunen et Cook, 2012 : 5 cité dans Avadar, 2019 : 43).

Le projet a également pu identifier diverses sources de revenus utilisées. Par exemple, dans la publicité, l'affichage était la source la plus utilisée, y compris le coût par vue, le coût par clic ainsi que les tarifs hebdomadaires, les réseaux publicitaires et le parrainage. Les *paywalls*, les abonnements et les modèles *freemium* sont des méthodes éprouvées de facturation du contenu. Les sources de revenus telles que le marketing d'affiliation, les dons, la vente de données ou de services, l'organisation d'événements, le travail indépendant, la formation ou la vente de marchandises étaient moins courantes (Sirkkunen et Cook, 2012 : 5-6).

Le projet a révélé que bien qu'il soit difficile de trouver des sources de revenus entièrement nouvelles, il est possible de trouver de nouvelles façons de combiner ou de reconfigurer les sources de revenus. Cela signifie qu'il existe un potentiel d'innovation dans les nouveaux modèles commerciaux en combinant les sources de revenus de manière intéressante pour rendre les sites d'information rentables à long terme (Sirkkunen et Cook, 2012 : 5-6). Ainsi, il est clair que le développement des revenus, la concentration sur l'audience, une mission d'inclusion et la technologie pour soutenir cette mission sont des éléments clés d'une initiative d'information durable qui a le potentiel d'inaugurer une nouvelle ère pour libérer les journalistes et le journalisme.

Méthodologie, échantillon et collecte de données

Cette thèse adopte une approche qualitative de l'analyse. Il utilise une combinaison de méthodes, y compris l'étude de cas, la recherche ethnographique critique sur le terrain (traditionnelle et numérique) et l'enquête documentaire sur les sources secondaires. Pour le travail de terrain de cette thèse, des méthodes de recherche ethnographique à la fois conventionnelles et numériques, principalement des entretiens approfondis semi-structurés et l'observation participante (à la fois en ligne et hors ligne) sont utilisées pour étudier les sites d'information fondés par des journalistes professionnels.

Dans une étude ethnographique, le chercheur se rend sur le terrain et revient pour rendre compte des interactions des personnes dans des contextes quotidiens avec une attention particulière au processus de fabrication de sens du participant (Anderson-Levitt, 2006). Cette culture partagée de la façon dont les humains interagissent et apprennent les uns des autres dans une communauté a traditionnellement été au centre

des ethnographes (Gobo, 2008). D'un autre point de vue, John W. Creswell (2009 : 13) décrit l'ethnographie comme « une stratégie d'enquête que le chercheur étudie dans un groupe culturel intact dans un cadre naturel sur une période de temps prolongée en collectant des données d'observation et d'entretien ».

Nouveau champ de pratique anthropologique, l'ethnographie numérique s'intéresse particulièrement aux constructions et reconstructions culturelles sur lesquelles reposent les nouvelles technologies et qui contribuent à leur tour à les façonner (Escobar et al. 1994 : 211). Le point de départ de cette enquête est la conviction que toute technologie représente une invention culturelle, dans le sens où elle fait surgir un monde ; elle émerge de conditions culturelles particulières et contribue à son tour à en créer de nouvelles (Budka, 2011 : 3).

L'ethnographie numérique diffère de l'ethnographie traditionnelle en ce que la collecte de données est effectuée grâce à l'utilisation de la communication assistée par ordinateur ou de la technologie numérique (Murthy, 2011). L'ethnographe numérique utilisera souvent un ensemble d'outils pour comprendre et enregistrer l'espace numérique (Hemmi, Bayne et Land, 2009 ; Kozinets, 2010), qui peuvent inclure des logiciels de capture d'écran, des outils d'archivage de sites Web, des systèmes de gestion de contenu, des e-mails, services de messagerie instantanée, plateformes de médias sociaux, applications mobiles de diffusion en direct, etc.

Pour le travail de terrain, des méthodes de recherche ethnographiques traditionnelles et numériques, principalement des entretiens approfondis semi-structurés et l'observation des participants (en ligne et hors ligne) sont utilisées. Cette thèse utilise Periscope, un service mobile de streaming en direct, pour mener des entretiens approfondis. Par exemple, le 15 mai 2016, le chercheur a posé des questions aux participants lors d'une entrevue en utilisant la fonction de messagerie instantanée sur Periscope.

Dans ses premières années, en particulier les fondateurs de Medyascope.tv et Özgürüz ont organisé des chats pour interagir avec leur public sur Periscope. Cette méthode, qui a été incluse dans la recherche, a été appliquée dans l'un de ces entretiens. La chercheuse a participé à la conversation en tant que spectatrice en dissimulant son identité. Cela offrait au chercheur un espace de liberté. Cependant, les journalistes ont laissé certaines des questions du chercheur sans réponse. Il a également été constaté que les journalistes préfèrent parler des sujets qu'ils ont préparés au préalable plutôt que de répondre aux questions du public. Pour cette raison, il convient de noter que cette méthode est insuffisante et ne répond pas aux attentes de la recherche. Et il doit être soutenu par une méthode traditionnelle ou par d'autres méthodes numériques.

L'échantillon du travail de terrain de cette thèse se compose de dix sites d'information qui ont été fondés par des journalistes professionnels. Celles-ci sont classées par ordre chronologique : Oda TV (2007) de Soner Yalçın ; T24 (2009) de Doğan Akın ; Diken (2014) de Harun Simavi ; ABC Gazetesi (2015) et Tele 1 (2018) de Merdan Yanardağ, Medyascope.tv (2015) de Ruşen Çakır ; GazeteRed (2016) de Hakan Gülseven ; Artı Gerçek (2017) et Artı TV (2017) de Celal Başlangıç ; et Özgürüz (2017) de Can Dünder. Outre les sites d'information répertoriés, il y avait aussi des sites, mais ils ont été fermés au fil du temps en raison d'insuffisances économiques.

Les données qui informent l'analyse proviennent d'observations hors ligne et en ligne et d'entretiens approfondis en face à face et en ligne avec un total de 32 journalistes d'Oda TV, Diken, Medyascope.tv, Özgürüz, GazeteRed, T24.com, ABC Gazetesi /Tele 1 et Artı Gerçek/Artı TV entre le 12 mars et le 30 avril 2018, ainsi qu'entre le 5 mai et le 12 juillet 2019, en deux phases. Six des enquêteurs étaient des fondateurs et 26 étaient des rédacteurs/reporters. Le chercheur a continué à interviewer des journalistes jusqu'à saturation des données concernant les principaux aspects mesurés par cette thèse. Ainsi, le chercheur s'est arrêté lorsque les informations recueillies et les résultats des entretiens sont devenus redondants pour mieux comprendre quels aspects suivre. L'échantillon de la thèse correspond largement à la composition globale des professionnels de l'information qui ont trouvé une start-up journalistique dans le pays.

Parmi les journalistes interviewés, 22 étaient des hommes et 10 des femmes. Six des personnes interrogées étaient des fondateurs et 26 étaient des rédacteurs/reporters. La majorité des journalistes âgés de 23 à 57 ans étaient diplômés en journalisme ou dans des branches universitaires similaires, tandis que certains d'entre eux poursuivaient une maîtrise. Par ailleurs, 38 % des journalistes interrogés pratiquent le journalisme depuis plus de dix ans, tandis que 33 % depuis cinq à dix ans.

Avant de commencer à travailler sur un site d'information, 50 % des journalistes avaient travaillé dans un média d'information grand public. Les institutions dans lesquelles ils ont travaillé ont été des journaux (versions imprimées et numériques), des agences de presse et des chaînes d'information. 45% des journalistes interrogés avaient travaillé pour des journaux, des chaînes d'information et des sites d'information opposants. Ceux qui n'ont pas travaillé pour les médias grand public ont travaillé dans des agences de publicité/production et de relations publiques. Les principales raisons de la cessation d'emploi des journalistes dans les anciens lieux de travail se révèlent être des insuffisances financières. Il s'ensuit, la fin du projet sur lequel ils travaillent, les licenciements/détentions, les démissions et l'achèvement du stage.

Les journalistes interviewés ont été choisis au hasard. Les journalistes ont été contactés par l'intermédiaire de leurs institutions basées à Istanbul. Soit les organisations ont été appelées par téléphone, soit par e-mail, soit les journalistes ont été contactés via leurs comptes Twitter. Il n'était pas facile de joindre les journalistes en raison de leurs horaires de travail intenses. Parfois, le cercle d'amis du chercheur, qui connaissait bien ces journalistes, intervenait. Dans la plupart des cas, c'était le seul moyen d'obtenir un rendez-vous.

Les journalistes ont également déclaré qu'ils n'avaient pas rencontré toutes les personnes qui souhaitaient faire des recherches. C'est parce qu'ils craignent que leurs paroles soient déformées. Pour cette raison, il est très important pour eux que le chercheur à qui ils exprimeront leur opinion soit fiable. Pourtant, certains journalistes avaient des doutes. Par exemple, de nombreux journalistes participant à cette recherche ont souhaité rester anonymes.

Les journalistes qui ont accepté de participer à la recherche ont dirigé leurs collègues vers le chercheur afin qu'un échantillon plus important puisse être obtenu avec la méthode boule de neige. Environ une semaine a été passée sur tous les sites d'information. Les journalistes ont été observés pendant leurs heures de travail dans leurs bureaux, accompagnés pendant les pauses café et déjeuner, et leurs activités en

ligne (notamment via Twitter et Periscope) et hors ligne ont également été observées tout en faisant l'actualité.

À l'exception de deux interviews réalisées dans un café à Kadıköy/Istanbul, toutes les interviews ont eu lieu dans les bureaux des sites d'information. Chaque entretien a duré environ 50 minutes. Tous les entretiens ont été enregistrés via un enregistreur vocal intégré au smartphone du chercheur. Un guide d'entretien a été élaboré, composé de questions semi-structurées sur :

- Parcours professionnels des journalistes
- Les pratiques et les compétences impliquées dans la création et le travail sur un site d'actualités
- Organisation et gestion du travail et du processus de production des nouvelles
- Le contexte matériel du site d'information comme espace de travail, logiciels, outils technologiques, plateformes, etc.
- Modèles de financement
- Identité et valeurs professionnelles
- Stratégies de distribution et priorités éditoriales

Plan de thèse

Cette thèse se compose de cinq chapitres. Le premier chapitre tente de fournir une base théorique aux discussions sur la transformation du journalisme à l'ère du web 2.0 et l'autoproduction de la profession. Il examine le journalisme en tant que profession et idéologie professionnelle tout au long de son histoire en Europe et aux États-Unis (US). La nature, le rôle et les fonctions sociales du journalisme sont étudiés du point de vue des théories libérales et critiques. Les théories libérales soutiennent que les journalistes sont autonomes et exercent leur profession conformément à leur propre identité et idéologie professionnelle. Les théories critiques affirment qu'une fois employés, les journalistes ne peuvent jamais être libres.

Par conséquent, en utilisant deux perspectives différentes, le but de ce chapitre est, tout d'abord, d'examiner le potentiel du journalisme pour le libérer des constructions traditionnelles telles que les médias commerciaux. Ensuite, avec l'aide des développements technologiques, il s'agit de jeter les bases de discussions sur la manière dont les journalistes peuvent créer leurs propres médias et exercer librement leur profession en dehors des frontières des entreprises médiatiques.

Dans le deuxième chapitre, le développement historique d'Internet et du Web 2.0, ainsi que des médias sociaux sont examinés pour comprendre l'écosystème d'un univers qui a profondément marqué le journalisme. Les technologies référencées sont également examinées à travers leurs principes de fonctionnement et leurs économies en mettant l'accent sur les entreprises technologiques auxquelles elles appartiennent. Ce chapitre aborde également des concepts tels que la convergence des médias, l'interactivité, la participation et le contenu généré par les utilisateurs d'un point de vue critique. Le chapitre souligne que ces concepts jouent un rôle majeur dans le nouveau type de journalisme qui émerge. D'autre part, la transformation du journalisme à l'ère du Web 2.0 est explorée en se concentrant sur des études contemporaines telles que le reportage assisté par ordinateur, le journalisme numérique/en ligne, le journalisme

mobile, le journalisme de données, l'automatisation, les robots et les algorithmes, le journalisme alternatif et le journalisme citoyen.

Toutes ces approches, tout d'abord, orientent le chapitre vers les nouvelles techniques de collecte d'informations et de narration du journalisme, puis vers l'évolution des relations producteur-consommateur. Dans le chapitre, il est affirmé que l'intégration entre producteurs et consommateurs sépare également le journalisme du capital des entreprises de médias. Ainsi, le retrait du journalisme de la capitale, promet une possibilité pour les journalistes et même les gens ordinaires de pratiquer le journalisme sur Internet en diffusant gratuitement des reportages sur les réseaux sociaux et en auto-organisant la profession en dehors des frontières des institutions journalistiques traditionnelles ; cependant, cette fois dans un environnement colonisé par des entreprises technologiques géantes.

Le troisième chapitre soutient que les facilités fournies par les technologies des médias sociaux permettent aux journalistes de travailler sur leurs start-ups journalistiques nées numériques de manière plus indépendante et flexible. Cependant, à l'ère du Web 2.0 avec la montée du capitalisme informationnel, le travail et le travail apparaissent sous des formes plus immatérielles et décentralisées. Cette transformation remet également en question et modifie les relations d'emploi des médias.

Dans le contexte de l'évolution des relations de travail des médias, dans le troisième chapitre, il est discuté que les journalistes professionnels, tout en travaillant sur leurs start-ups journalistiques auto-établies de manière indépendante et flexible, peuvent également se retrouver dans une position de plus en plus précaire. Ici, le chapitre souligne l'importance d'un modèle commercial durable pour les organes d'information nés sur le numérique, qui permettra un équilibre sain entre les valeurs journalistiques et les intérêts économiques. En outre, le chapitre souligne qu'un modèle d'entreprise durable peut potentiellement ouvrir une nouvelle ère pour la libération des journalistes et du journalisme de tout type de distractions.

Par conséquent, le troisième chapitre se penche d'abord sur l'évolution des relations de travail dans les médias d'information en définissant le travail indépendant, la pige et l'image de marque dans le journalisme, ainsi que le journalisme entrepreneurial. Ensuite, le chapitre se concentre sur les nouveaux modèles commerciaux et les sources de revenus du journalisme, tels que les sources de revenus basées sur la publicité et autres sources de revenus à but lucratif, les abonnements, le financement participatif et le modèle coopératif. Le chapitre aborde tous les sujets pointus à la lumière du travail numérique et du précarat pour déterminer le potentiel et les limites du journalisme numérique pour briser les anciennes hiérarchies qui sont discutées dans le contexte des chapitres précédents, entre les frontières du capitalisme informationnel.

Pour comprendre les facteurs qui ont ouvert la voie à un nouvel ordre médiatique en Turquie et les conditions dans lesquelles ce nouvel ordre médiatique a émergé, le quatrième chapitre commence par la brève histoire du journalisme depuis l'Empire ottoman jusqu'à la fin des années 1990. La section suit un ordre chronologique qui transmet les développements politiques qui affectent le journalisme et présente les développements technologiques tels que l'imprimerie, les agences télégraphiques, la radio et la télévision.

Dans un deuxième temps, le quatrième chapitre pèse sur la transformation du système médiatique en Turquie depuis les années 2000. Des sujets tels que les crises économiques de 2000 et 2001, le conglomerat des médias et les médias partisans qui ont émergé juste après l'arrivée au pouvoir du gouvernement JDP sont abordés. Les conflits, en particulier entre les journalistes de l'opposition et les gouvernements du JDP, sont également définis à travers le prisme des réglementations légales et des événements emblématiques qui restreignent ou détruisent les droits des journalistes.

D'autre part, la numérisation des médias d'information commence par la transformation numérique des organes d'information conventionnels et se termine par l'émergence de sites d'information nés numériques et fondés par des journalistes en réponse à l'environnement médiatique restreint de la Turquie. Ici, le chapitre décrit également les médias qui ont émergé pendant et après les manifestations du parc Gezi. Surtout dans la section des organes d'information nés numériques, l'argument principal est que les caractéristiques décentralisées et alternatives des médias de Gezi Park sont le catalyseur des start-up créées par les journalistes. Et bien sûr, ils peuvent être considérés comme les premiers exemples de médias qui fonctionnent avec la logique du Web 2.0, car ils produisent et distribuent du contenu interactif de n'importe où, à tout moment en utilisant également les réseaux sociaux. À la fin de la section, des exemples de journalistes qui poursuivent leur carrière sur les réseaux sociaux en tant que pigistes sont également donnés.

Les dernières sections du quatrième chapitre se concentrent sur les problèmes structurels du journalisme en Turquie. Il est divisé en deux parties, politique et économique. Les questions politiques se concentrent sur les facteurs affectant la liberté de la presse ; les pressions judiciaires auxquelles les journalistes sont confrontés, les interdictions d'internet et les plateformes de médias sociaux ressortent également dans la section. Les problèmes économiques vont de pair avec les relations de travail. Dans cette section, des sujets tels que l'emploi des journalistes au salaire minimum et/ou leur travail non déclaré, l'émergence et les fonctions des syndicats, les politiques de désyndicalisation des médias traditionnels, les problèmes rencontrés lors de la délivrance des cartes de presse et la rareté des journalistes titulaires d'une carte de presse sont également abordés. Et, le chapitre traite de la diminution des opportunités d'emploi dans les médias conventionnels pour les journalistes professionnels dans le but de révéler les conditions qui ont forcé les journalistes à fonder et à employer leurs propres *start-ups* nées numériques en Turquie.

Et enfin, le cinquième chapitre contient l'étude de terrain de la thèse. Après avoir présenté les objectifs et la méthodologie de la recherche, ce chapitre révèle en détail les principaux résultats et l'analyse du travail de terrain. Ce chapitre explore les hauts et les bas d'une profession à l'ère numérique, notamment à travers la pérennité des sites d'information fondés par des journalistes professionnels en Turquie. S'appuyant sur une recherche ethnographique de terrain, il propose principalement de faire la lumière sur la démographie des journalistes, les structures organisationnelles des sites d'information, les valeurs, les modèles économiques, ainsi que les conditions de travail et les relations de travail des sites d'information fondés par des journalistes professionnels en Turquie.

La section finale fournit des suggestions potentielles aux niveaux théoriques et pratique pour les *start-ups* journalistiques nées numériques liées aux nouveaux modèles commerciaux du journalisme, ainsi qu'au travail numérique, et au potentiel

d'incarnation du précarier dans cette nouvelle forme de travail. Le résumé des principales conclusions est le suivant :

Selon la majorité des journalistes, en Turquie, asseoir l'indépendance éditoriale n'est pas si facile. Par exemple, les journalistes osent traiter de nombreuses affaires ouvertes contre eux par le gouvernement ou par le président Erdoğan, suite aux histoires qu'ils ont couvertes. Le gouvernement intervient à chaque occasion pour les journalistes avec des blocages par des décisions de justice, ou en ralentissant la connexion internet et/ou les services de réseaux sociaux.

Malgré tout, les journalistes qui travaillent sur un site d'information estiment qu'ils contribuent à établir le nouvel environnement journalistique de la Turquie. Le nouvel environnement des médias d'information est indépendant et libre en termes de contenu et de capital en raison du modèle commercial sélectionné, ainsi que sans patron. Comme l'ont appris les journalistes, ils contribuent également à l'auto-construction d'un nouveau concept de médias hors du sens conventionnel qui fait référence au nouveau courant dominant des médias numériques.

Offrir un espace autonome aux journalistes et exercer un journalisme indépendant sont les principales motivations qui ont poussé les journalistes à créer des start-up d'information pour pérenniser la profession. Via ces start-ups journalistiques, tout en préservant le rôle de gardien, les journalistes agissent également en tant que défenseurs et participent à la promotion de leur propre profession contre les violations telles que les droits syndicaux, la précarité de l'emploi et la liberté des médias.

Selon des journalistes qui travaillent pour un site d'information, ces nouveaux médias accordent plus de place à un journalisme de qualité que les médias traditionnels ou autres médias numériques qui soutiennent le JDP. Étonnamment, gagner de l'argent est toujours hors de l'agenda des journalistes jusqu'à ce qu'ils croient que la réalisation d'un journalisme de qualité pourrait résoudre les obstacles financiers dans un avenir proche, lorsqu'ils attireront pleinement l'attention du public. En termes de contenu, les journalistes estiment que les sites d'information reflètent différents intérêts, ainsi que différentes valeurs de la société dans les aspects culturels, démographiques et religieux.

Par exemple, les sites d'information ont stoppé la diffusion des stéréotypes de genre et des discriminations tout en prônant les violations des droits. Ils couvrent également les histoires de minorités telles que les Kurdes, les Alévis, les Arméniens et les LGBTQ en sortant de la position masculine des médias hérités. Les histoires de tous les partis politiques d'opposition font également partie des nouvelles qui sont couvertes. Il s'agit d'une stratégie que les sites d'information utilisent pour se démarquer en public. Par conséquent, l'environnement médiatique actuel de la Turquie ne permet pas à l'opposition de s'exprimer. Selon les journalistes, les sites d'information contribuent également à la culture de l'information, en motivant le public à rechercher des informations, en améliorant leur capacité à trouver, identifier et reconnaître les informations, ainsi qu'en les aidant à effectuer une évaluation critique (Malik et al., 2013 : 8 -9).

Pour les fondateurs de ces sites d'information, l'implantation d'un média dans une logique entrepreneuriale est un retour aux sources du journalisme où les journalistes étaient reporters, rédacteurs, diffuseurs et propriétaires des médias. Les

journalistes sont désormais responsables à la fois du côté commercial et du côté éditorial du journalisme. Cependant, pour des projets durables, le désir d'être autonome, de préserver les valeurs journalistiques et l'identité du journalisme ne suffit pas pour créer un média d'information dynamique, rappelant que le journalisme en Turquie lutte contre les restrictions et la précarité depuis des décennies. Les fondateurs des sites d'information, doivent tolérer l'ambiguïté des enjeux financiers.

Lorsque les modèles économiques des sites d'information sont remis en question, on constate qu'au début, les sites d'information étaient conditionnés à gagner des revenus publicitaires comme un réflexe journalistique traditionnel. Cependant, comme le soulignent les fondateurs, généralement les détenteurs du capital ne voulaient pas faire de publicité sur les sites d'information, pour ne pas tomber dans l'opposition au parti au pouvoir. Les conflits en cours entre le gouvernement et les journalistes, ainsi que les poursuites intentées contre les journalistes, ont renforcé cette situation.

Dans un deuxième temps, les fondateurs se sont concentrés sur deux principaux modèles de publicité en ligne, et, les fonds et les dons, en divisant les tendances commerciales des sites d'information en à but lucratif et à but non lucratif. Parmi les sites d'information à but lucratif qui utilisent la publicité en ligne comme modèle de revenus, Oda TV, Diken, GazeteRed, ABC Gazetesi, T24, Artı Gerçek et Artı TV sont examinés.

Sur les sites d'information, la publicité en ligne est dominée par des formats basés sur des plateformes, et principalement contrôlée par Google et Facebook. Dans les conditions de la Turquie, selon les journalistes, la publicité basée sur les plateformes expose une distinction positive, en libérant les sites d'information du front du capital, car elle démolit la dépendance possible à l'annonceur au sens traditionnel. Cependant, cela entraîne également certains inconvénients, tels que la vente d'espaces publicitaires à bas prix ou l'entraînement du journalisme dans le *clickbait*.

Comme nous l'avons remarqué, l'augmentation du trafic sur les sites Web est l'un des principaux objectifs des organes de presse afin d'augmenter leur part de publicité en ligne. Ce faisant, les journalistes doivent produire un contenu original et le diffuser rapidement sur les réseaux sociaux. Le trafic sur les sites d'actualités provient principalement des plateformes de médias sociaux telles que Facebook et Twitter. Ainsi, les sites d'information devraient également inciter leurs audiences à partager et commenter leur contenu sur les réseaux sociaux pour éviter une baisse du trafic. On peut dire que ce modèle dépend de la participation des utilisateurs (tant les journalistes que le public) aux réseaux sociaux.

Le contenu des nouvelles devrait également être optimisé pour les moteurs de recherche et les services de médias sociaux. On constate que les sites d'information utilisent certaines stratégies pour survivre :

- Faire une recherche de mots-clés sur le web avant de rédiger un article pour les moteurs de recherche et les réseaux sociaux
- Présenter des reportages avec des titres simples, pleins d'esprit ou même sensationnels, et des photos ou vidéos précédemment inutilisées
- Marquer les photos et les vidéos et créer des hashtags
- Partage multiple des nouvelles les plus cliquées via les réseaux sociaux

- Cibler n'importe qui en ligne
- S'engager avec les abonnés

Toutes ces stratégies font du journalisme une profession orientée vers les réseaux sociaux. Cependant, parfois, ces stratégies ne fonctionnent que pour les géants de la technologie. Par exemple, sur Facebook, le public ne voit que le titre d'une histoire et appuie sur le bouton J'aime ou partage la publication sans ouvrir le contenu. Cela permet d'augmenter les revenus de Facebook, mais pas des sites d'actualités.

Medyascope.tv, Özgürüz et Tele1 sont classés comme des organes de presse à but non lucratif. Leurs modèles économiques reposent principalement sur les fonds et les dons. Comme l'ont appris les fondateurs et certains journalistes, le financement n'est pas un obstacle car ils n'entrent dans une relation contraignante avec aucune organisation. Par conséquent, la seule attente des organisations qui soutiennent les médias est leur pérennité. Cependant, la durabilité n'est pas un cas pour les sites d'information qui reçoivent des fonds pour l'instant, en raison de l'instabilité politique du pays. Comme l'a dit un fondateur, le gouvernement peut facilement couper les fonds (Interviewé 14, Mediascope.tv, entretien approfondi, 02.04.2018).

Il y a aussi des fondateurs qui s'opposent à recevoir des fonds en particulier de l'Union européenne (UE). Les fondateurs pensent que les organisations aux caractéristiques impérialistes telles que l'UE pourraient essayer de supprimer la position idéologique des sites d'information allant de la gauche au libéral (Interviewé 25, GazeteRed, entretien approfondi, 21.04.2018). Ainsi, pour la plupart des journalistes, obtenir un financement n'est pas la solution pour maintenir le journalisme en vie.

C'est pourquoi, les journalistes cherchent des moyens d'établir des liens directs avec les donateurs. Cet effort pousse les sites d'actualités au financement participatif via des plateformes de collecte de fonds en ligne. Cependant, dans les conditions de la Turquie, ces plateformes ne donnent pas beaucoup d'autonomie aux journalistes pour maintenir leurs propres médias, car le public n'a pas de pratique de don. Pour les journalistes, le financement participatif est une sorte de "travail de l'espoir" qui leur permet de créer leur propre marque et d'attirer l'attention du public. Ainsi, ils pourront bénéficier de sources de revenus plus durables, telles que le modèle d'abonnement, dans un avenir proche.

Parmi les sites d'information et les journalistes indépendants, Patreon est la plateforme de financement participatif la plus populaire. Malgré sa popularité, la plateforme apporte aux journalistes un revenu régulier mais pas stable. Selon les journalistes, cela est fortement corrélé à la perception de leur public qui considère le journalisme numérique comme une activité anti-économique. À tel point que, pour toucher un large public, de nombreux organes de presse et portails d'information en Turquie proposent leur contenu gratuitement depuis des années. Évidemment, cette habitude est difficile à briser. Pendant ce temps, Patreon génère des revenus en prenant une part de 5 ou 12% du contenu des créateurs, selon les services de l'entreprise qu'ils utilisent. Cela réduit également considérablement les revenus des journalistes.

Lorsque les journalistes sont interrogés sur leurs projets futurs concernant la durabilité des sites d'information, que les sites d'information soient à but lucratif ou non, les réponses se concentrent principalement sur la publicité au sens classique et le modèle d'abonnement. Les journalistes pensent qu'ils ne rencontreront aucune

difficulté lorsqu'ils passeront au modèle d'abonnement, par conséquent, les sites d'information produisent déjà du contenu original et font des reportages de qualité. Cependant, préparer les publics à payer reste une priorité, et pourtant un obstacle.

La structure organisationnelle des sites d'information diffère également des organes d'information classiques. Ces médias numériques ont une structure participative, dans laquelle le pouvoir et l'autorité sont étendus vers le bas. Les salles de rédaction de ces médias ont un rédacteur en chef, un directeur de l'information (facultatif) et des rédacteurs (sur les sites d'information, les journalistes sont appelés rédacteurs), dans certains cas, il y a un rédacteur SEO. Parallèlement à leur travail journalistique, les journalistes sont responsables de toute tâche telle que l'analyse des données d'audience, la conception du site Web et/ou (si nécessaire) le codage. Les questions financières et la gestion des lieux de travail font partie des fonctions du rédacteur en chef.

Les sites d'information sont majoritairement composés de petites équipes. Le nombre de journalistes employés (journalistes rémunérés par la sécurité sociale) sur les sites d'information se concentre sur cinq à dix personnes. Bien qu'ils affirment qu'ils diffèrent des médias grand public traditionnels, seuls 40 % de la main-d'œuvre des sites d'information sont des femmes, et il n'y a que quelques femmes cadres supérieurs. De nombreux journalistes sur les sites d'information travaillent à temps plein avec un salaire et des avantages sociaux. Les sites d'information respectent les délais de paiement des salaires et charges sociales. L'objectif même n'est pas de tomber dans une situation similaire à l'environnement médiatique traditionnel de la Turquie, où les journalistes souffrent du précarat depuis des décennies.

De plus, 70% des journalistes interrogés ont déclaré que l'argent qu'ils gagnent sur les sites d'information est suffisant pour subvenir à leurs besoins. Ce qui est frappant, c'est qu'il y a de jeunes journalistes entre 18 et 24 ans dans les rédactions des sites d'information. La plupart des jeunes journalistes ont déclaré qu'ils vivaient avec leurs parents et qu'ils n'avaient pas de dépenses obligatoires telles que le loyer et les factures. De plus, la plupart des fondateurs sont à la retraite et n'attendent pas de salaire car ils ont des pensions.

En revanche, 20% des journalistes sont syndiqués alors que 80% ne le sont pas. Seuls 20% des journalistes ont une carte de presse. Les 20% représentent des journalistes expérimentés avec des cartes de presse à long terme. Par conséquent, les journalistes ont obtenu ces cartes alors qu'ils travaillaient dans les médias grand public. Les journalistes travaillant dans les médias numériques ne peuvent pas demander de carte de presse car ils ne sont pas soumis à la loi n° 5953. C'est pourquoi de nombreux journalistes détiennent une carte de presse internationale de la Fédération internationale des journalistes (FIJ). Pour avoir cette carte, il suffit d'être membre de l'Association des journalistes turcs (TGC) et de payer les frais d'adhésion.

Cependant, la carte de la FIJ ne fonctionne pas dans les institutions officielles. Les cartes de presse délivrées par la Présidence sont considérées comme valables. Ces journalistes, qui n'ont pas pu bénéficier de la loi sur la presse et qui ont été confrontés aux phrases « Vous n'êtes pas journaliste » dans tous les environnements bureaucratiques où ils sont entrés, déclarent avoir été expulsés du système.

Les syndicats qui soutiennent les journalistes en Turquie sont le Syndicat des journalistes turcs (TGS), DİSK/Basın-İş, Türk-İş et Hak-İş. Selon les journalistes, ces syndicats ne peuvent pas représenter les journalistes numériques et les organes d'information. Pour cette raison, les journalistes évitent d'être membres de ces syndicats, et il y en a même qui ne postulent pas du tout. L'objectif des journalistes est de créer leur propre syndicat une fois que l'écosystème du journalisme numérique en Turquie sera bien établi.

Tous les sites d'information, à l'exception d'Özgürüz, ont un bureau à Istanbul et les journalistes exercent leur métier dans ces bureaux. En général, les journalistes travaillent plus de huit heures, six jours par semaine, en équipes de jour et de nuit. Les horaires de travail flexibles représentent Özgürüz, le seul média décentralisé sans bureau qui maintient ses activités via des plateformes de diffusion en direct où que se trouvent les journalistes. Tous les sites d'information disposent d'ordinateurs, de serveurs et d'équipements techniques accessibles tels que la connexion Internet via des modems ou des monopodes. En plus de leurs smartphones personnels, que les journalistes utilisent comme appareil professionnel lorsqu'ils travaillent dans des salles de rédaction numériques. Il existe également des caméras, des microphones et des programmes tels que Microsoft Office, Adobe, Photoshop et Premier.

Selon les journalistes, les plateformes numériques telles que Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Periscope, Skype, YouTube, Ekşi Sözlük (Dictionnaire aigre), Nabız, Telegram, les lignes de sites d'information WhatsApp et le moteur de recherche Google sont parmi les principales sources d'informations utilisées pour la production de nouvelles, et en même temps pour la diffusion de contenu.

Medyascope.tv et Özgürüz en sont de bons exemples car ils exercent toutes leurs activités en utilisant les outils de diffusion en direct de plateformes telles que Skype, Periscope, YouTube et Facebook. Ces deux personnes effectuent des tâches telles que la collecte d'informations, la production de nouvelles et la distribution de nouvelles sur ces plateformes de médias sociaux. Leurs sites Web ne sont que des archives.

Par exemple, Medyascope.tv diffuse depuis son propre studio sur des plateformes de streaming en direct. Les journalistes se connectent avec des invités du monde entier. Ils invitent également des invités dans leur studio. Le média produit des programmes à contenu intellectuel, notamment en format vidéo, basés sur des discussions. Özgürüz diffuse en direct où que se trouvent les journalistes, via des plateformes et des appareils mobiles. Les journalistes ont défini cette pratique de production d'information mobile et décentralisée comme du «journalisme de guérilla». Selon les journalistes, l'agenda chargé de la Turquie y est pour quelque chose.

La production de nouvelles diffère également entre les journalistes centralisés et décentralisés, tandis que les journalistes décentralisés sont toujours sur le terrain, les journalistes stables font des interviews via des appels téléphoniques ou des e-mails répétitifs (Interviewé 4, Diken, entretien approfondi, 10.04.2018). Ou, comme le raconte un journaliste, ils accèdent simplement à l'information via les médias sociaux. Il est clair que la pratique définie des journalistes stables réduit la fonctionnalité du journaliste en termes de recherche sur le terrain. En outre, lorsqu'on leur a demandé de comparer les pratiques de production d'informations des sites d'information et des médias grand public en Turquie, de nombreux journalistes ont répondu « nous n'avons

aucune différence ». Cette réponse laisse l'impression que les journalistes en général ne sortent pas pour l'information en Turquie. Ce fait rappelle l'idée que, malgré les prétentions d'originalité des contenus des sites d'actualités, l'actualité produite sur un bureau pose un problème de type « copier-coller ».

Cette situation laisse soupçonner que des informations similaires circulent à la fois dans les médias grand public et dans les médias numériques. Cependant, certains journalistes ont démolé cette idée. Les journalistes ont déclaré qu'ils recevaient des informations de bien plus de sources que les médias grand public. Comme ils ne craignent pas d'être licenciés, ils peuvent librement publier n'importe quelle information. Ainsi, contrairement aux médias grand public, les sites d'information évitent également de bloquer le flux d'informations, et parfois les nouvelles peuvent surgir de l'intérieur des nouvelles.

Twitter, en particulier, aide beaucoup les journalistes lors de la production de nouvelles. Les journalistes peuvent ainsi accéder à des informations intéressantes. Les journalistes perçoivent Twitter comme une plate-forme plus professionnelle pour la production de contenu et l'atteinte du public que Facebook, Instagram, etc. Les journalistes, en particulier, décrivent Twitter comme une énorme agence de presse et un décideur d'agenda. De nombreux journalistes ont déclaré que Twitter est le premier endroit qu'ils regardent lorsqu'ils font des recherches sur un sujet.

Vient ensuite la capacité de la plateforme à réduire les coûts. Les journalistes pensent que la production de nouvelles est une activité très coûteuse. Afin d'annoncer l'actualité, les journalistes doivent employer une grande équipe éditoriale, ils doivent également couvrir les frais de déplacement lorsque le journaliste est sur le terrain, ou du moins ils doivent acheter des abonnements aux agences de presse. Cependant, la plupart des sites d'information ne peuvent pas employer plus de dix journalistes. Les journalistes ne sont pas actifs sur le terrain ou ne peuvent pas devenir membres d'agences de presse car ils n'ont pas assez d'argent.

Ainsi, le recours à l'externalisation (via Twitter ou d'autres réseaux sociaux) est perçu par de nombreux sites d'information comme une alternative aux pratiques journalistiques traditionnelles pour abaisser les coûts de production de l'information. Réduire les coûts de production de l'information aide à survivre, en particulier pour les sites d'information qui sont en formation avec une petite équipe éditoriale et qui ne peuvent pas générer suffisamment de revenus pour survivre.

De plus, des plateformes telles que Twitter et Ekşi Sözlük influencent ce que les journalistes couvrent. Par conséquent, les journalistes préfèrent particulièrement utiliser des sujets tendance pour faire des nouvelles, et cela est perçu comme une garantie que les nouvelles seront diffusées parmi le public et obtiendront beaucoup de clics. Faire circuler les actualités les plus cliquées équivaut à générer des revenus en augmentant le trafic du site, en particulier pour les sites d'actualités qui continuent de fonctionner avec des publicités en ligne. Cependant, dans les conditions de la Turquie, cette pratique se transforme également en un obstacle. Par exemple, en 2021, les fondateurs d'Oda TV ont été arrêtés pour avoir partagé une nouvelle sur les funérailles d'un membre de Agence nationale de renseignement (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*, MİT) sur leurs comptes de médias sociaux, qui était auparavant partagée par différents journalistes et organes de presse sur Twitter et autres réseaux de médias sociaux (Esen, 2022).

Néanmoins, comme l'ont souligné les journalistes, la participation des utilisateurs joue un rôle important, de la définition de l'agenda aux stratégies de collecte de revenus des sites d'information. Comme le définissent les journalistes, les caractéristiques participatives des réseaux sociaux ont profondément influencé les salles de rédaction. Par conséquent, la nouvelle forme de journalisme a rendu possible la convergence entre le contenu journalistique professionnel et celui produit par des amateurs. Dans l'univers de la recherche, on a assisté à une collaboration entre des journalistes professionnels, des journalistes citoyens, des utilisateurs de médias sociaux, des militants, des universitaires, des trolls et des groupes anti-trolling (Cohen, 2018 ; Avadar, 2019).

Ces nouvelles composantes du journalisme contemporain, avec leur capacité à transmettre des informations depuis l'épicentre d'un événement via des comptes de médias sociaux, des blogs et/ou des applications de messagerie, ont transformé le concept de contrôle d'accès en contrôle d'accès. Les utilisateurs des médias sociaux sont considérés comme les pierres angulaires de la circulation des histoires. Des militants et des universitaires ont été trouvés pour aider les journalistes à créer une discussion éclairée sur l'ordre du jour. Ils aident également les journalistes à interpréter les nuances d'un problème particulier. Par conséquent, la production collaborative de nouvelles permet aux journalistes d'établir des relations étroites avec la société car ils gardent le pouls de la société avec leurs analyses. Ce nouveau type de journalisme est appelé « journalisme à perspective arrondie » par les journalistes.

Cependant, à ce stade, certains journalistes ont déclaré que quelle que soit leur position politique, sociale ou économique, ils devaient rester en équilibre pour maintenir leur objectivité hautement respectée. Dans les organes d'information professionnels, la discussion sur la participation ne peut se dérouler sans un encadrement journalistique. Par conséquent, selon la plupart des journalistes, les fournisseurs de contenu non journalistes risquent d'ignorer le concept d'objectivité et d'éthique journalistique (Avadar, 2019 : 50).

Comme l'a noté un fondateur dans un discours sur la structure de fonctionnement d'un site d'information et le rôle de ses rédacteurs, les journalistes doivent veiller à ne pas confondre contenu amateur et contenu professionnel (Avadar, 2019 : 50). Cependant, la vérification des informations reçues via les réseaux sociaux reste également un défi. Dans ce cas, les journalistes inventent leurs propres méthodes de vérification. Par exemple, contacter le propriétaire des messages via la messagerie directe est une méthode de vérification unique aux réseaux sociaux.

Cependant, lorsque des manipulateurs tels que des groupes de trolls apparaissent devant des journalistes, l'équilibre entre contenu professionnel et amateur est rompu. Ces groupes diffusent de fausses informations et/ou manipulent des documents (images, vidéos et textes) sur les réseaux sociaux et les rendent facilement partageables (Donovan et Friedberg, 2019, 9 : 37).

En Turquie, ces informations sont souvent partagées par *Aktrolls* (un groupe de trolls dirigé par le parti au pouvoir) avec des partis politiques d'opposition, des politiciens, des journalistes, des médias d'information, des femmes, des Kurdes, des LGBTQ, etc., partagés contre. Aktroller vise à nuire à ces groupes. Ainsi, les journalistes compromettent leur impartialité et collaborent avec les utilisateurs des médias sociaux, les universitaires et les militants pour former des groupes de contre-

trolling. L'objectif est de lutter contre les informations fausses et manipulatrices circulant sur les réseaux sociaux et de changer l'opinion publique.

Bien que certains journalistes puissent s'y opposer, tous ces exemples prouvent qu'un certain nombre d'acteurs non journalistiques sont désormais profondément ancrés dans la production journalistique et ont une grande influence sur l'agenda du pays ainsi que sur les conditions de création et de diffusion des contenus journalistiques (Ananny et Crawford 2015, 193 cité dans Cohen, 2018). Cette nouvelle situation s'oppose également au point de vue monolithique des anciens médias en évaluant un sujet sous différents angles et en apportant quelques changements aux valeurs journalistiques (Avadar, 2019 : 52).

Le système, qui est tenté d'être expliqué pour la production et la distribution de contenus, rappelle également de ne pas ignorer le pouvoir décisif des plateformes de médias sociaux tant pour les journalistes que pour les sites d'information. Il est clair que les journalistes obtiennent plus de service lorsqu'ils fournissent plus d'informations aux plateformes. Avec l'aide de ces outils, la plupart des journalistes ont déclaré qu'ils étaient habilités à organiser leur propre couverture de l'actualité indépendante et autonome, et à faire des nouvelles de dernière minute.

Les journalistes sont passionnés par la gestion de sites d'information, sans parler de la charge de travail potentielle, des pressions et des contraintes de temps. Cependant, dans ce nouveau paysage médiatique, les nouvelles n'ont pas de date limite et sont toujours à la minute près. Les sites d'actualités n'ont pas assez d'argent, ils ne peuvent pas investir dans des infrastructures technologiques et, par conséquent, ils n'utilisent pas d'outils tels que des logiciels robotiques ou des algorithmes pour capturer les actualités sur Internet ou personnaliser les histoires en fonction des préférences du public. Au lieu de cela, ils donnent la priorité à l'édition manuelle de contenus d'actualités allant de 40 à 80 reportages par jour, ce qui nécessite une plus grande main-d'œuvre de journalistes. Le nombre de nouvelles partagées varie selon l'intensité de l'agenda.

De plus, les journalistes sont actifs 24h/24 sur tous les comptes de réseaux sociaux des sites d'information. Les experts des médias sociaux ne sont employés sur aucun des sites d'actualités. Parallèlement à leur charge éditoriale, les journalistes font face à une autre charge de travail, comme la gestion des comptes de réseaux sociaux des sites d'information. Les journalistes qui gardent les comptes de réseaux sociaux ouverts sur leurs smartphones et ordinateurs de bureau créent de la valeur avec des clics sans fin comme la recherche, le téléchargement, le partage et les commentaires. Les pratiques susmentionnées sont nécessaires pour maintenir à un niveau élevé les taux de trafic des sites d'actualités à but lucratif. Par conséquent, une diminution du trafic d'un site Web signifie également une diminution des revenus publicitaires en ligne.

Lorsque les principes des sites d'information sont remis en question, on constate que les sites d'information se concentrent sur des informations précises, objectives et indépendantes pour le bien public. Éviter les conflits d'intérêts, respecter l'honnêteté et la diversité dans les reportages, comprendre le public cible et adopter ses goûts sont particulièrement mentionnés par les journalistes. Les journalistes évitent également de recevoir des cadeaux et des paiements, en particulier de la part des entreprises ou des partis politiques. Les sites d'information ont des règles strictes

contre tout contact possible avec le gouvernement, les partis politiques et les entreprises qui tentent d'influencer les sujets traités :

- Pas de cadeaux des entreprises : voyages gratuits, dîners et entrée gratuite aux événements.
- Ne pas accepter de paiements : du gouvernement, des organisations financées par le gouvernement et des partis politiques.

Les mécanismes décisionnels des sites d'information reposent sur trois structures :

- Hiérarchique/autoritaire
- Participatif
- Autonome

La structure hiérarchique/autoritaire représente Oda TV, qui a été fermée à plusieurs reprises ou dont les journalistes ont été emprisonnés. Les journalistes en structure hiérarchique/autoritaire présentent d'abord le sujet qu'ils souhaitent suivre pour l'avis de la rédaction. Si le sujet n'est pas jugé convaincant ou si des lacunes sont détectées, il n'est jamais pris en compte par l'équipe éditoriale. Une nouvelle préparée dans une routine quotidienne doit d'abord être approuvée par le directeur de l'information, puis par le rédacteur en chef. Si le sujet est très dramatique, par exemple, avec le potentiel d'emprisonner des journalistes, l'approbation du propriétaire du site d'information est toujours requise avant que l'histoire ne soit diffusée.

D'autre part, T24, Diken, ABC Gazetesi, Tele 1, Medyascope.tv, GazeteRed, Artı Gerçek et Artı TV représentent un style de prise de décision participative. Dans la structure participative, les journalistes présentent généralement oralement le sujet qu'ils souhaitent suivre à l'équipe éditoriale. Travaillant ensemble à de grandes tables, les équipes éditoriales ont la possibilité d'échanger verbalement sur leurs idées d'actualité, leur communication n'étant jamais interrompue dans la journée. Ou ils transmettent leurs idées par écrit via des e-mails.

Lors des réunions de rédaction, qui se tiennent tous les matins sur tous les sites d'information sans exception, les idées d'articles de chaque rédacteur sont présentées à l'équipe éditoriale. Si un journaliste soutient l'idée de nouvelles dans ces réunions, d'autres journalistes peuvent également produire des arguments contre cette idée. Si les données entre les mains du journaliste présentant l'idée d'actualité sont plus fortes que l'antithèse, l'idée est acceptée et produite en tant qu'actualité. Le cas échéant, la décision finale concernant l'orientation, la correction ou le développement de l'idée est laissée au rédacteur en chef.

Özgürüz représente la structure autonome avec ses caractéristiques décentralisées. Le point de presse offre une vision rhizomatique car il n'a pas de bureau. Les rédacteurs et rédacteurs en chef du site d'information travaillent dans différentes villes de Turquie et d'Allemagne telles qu'Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Diyarbakır et Berlin. Dans une structure autonome, les journalistes sont libres de faire des reportages sur n'importe quel sujet dans la région qu'ils dominent. Les journalistes sont également libres de mener des interviews sur le sujet de leur choix, de leur plein gré. Dans une structure autonome, les journalistes prennent leurs propres décisions et fixent leur agenda dans le cadre de leurs propres projets. Par exemple, via des groupes WhatsApp, ils partagent leurs plans quotidiens avec le reste de l'équipe éditoriale. Le

devoir du rédacteur en chef n'est que de conseiller, le rédacteur en chef n'interfère jamais avec les journalistes, ne fait que donner des idées.

Les facteurs affectant les décisions éditoriales des journalistes sont : les valeurs journalistiques universelles, l'audience et les oppressions politiques. D'autre part, les intérêts commerciaux de l'organisation ne sont jamais mentionnés en premier lieu. Les données obtenues donnent également une idée sur le fonctionnement des sites d'information. Par exemple, selon un journaliste, contrairement aux grands médias turcs traditionnels, les sites d'information respectent les valeurs journalistiques universelles lorsqu'ils prennent des décisions.

Pour de nombreux journalistes, l'accent mis sur les valeurs journalistiques empêche les sites d'information de succomber aux pressions économiques et politiques. Les journalistes affirment qu'avec l'aide des modèles commerciaux des sites d'information (principalement la publicité en ligne et les dons), les organisations ont libéré leurs intérêts commerciaux des pressions potentielles des propriétaires de capitaux sur l'information au sens traditionnel.

Cependant, sur la base des observations, il est entendu que dans les sites d'information où les modèles commerciaux sont basés sur la publicité en ligne, les intérêts commerciaux sont remplacés par les préférences du public. Les décisions éditoriales sont façonnées en fonction des tendances du public cible, en particulier dans les sites d'actualités qui génèrent des revenus de Google en raison des taux de clics.

De manière générale, les journalistes décrivent Internet comme un média puissant et indétectable. Cependant, pour certains journalistes, les pressions politiques conduisent les journalistes à s'autocensurer. Ainsi, tout en exerçant l'autocensure, le but des journalistes n'est pas d'être arrêté, de ne pas faire face à une sanction de fermeture et de ne pas payer d'amende.

Ce sont des journalistes qui ont été arrêtés à plusieurs reprises, ou des journalistes qui ont payé de lourdes amendes. Par ailleurs, les fondateurs des sites d'information ont rapporté avoir développé certaines pratiques pour éviter une sanction de blocage ou une poursuite judiciaire ouverte contre eux, telles que :

- Changement constant du nom du site d'actualités
- Hébergement du domaine du site d'information hors du pays
- Ne pas donner les noms de l'équipe éditoriale ou de leurs homologues

Malgré tout, les journalistes continuent de s'inquiéter de l'avenir du journalisme numérique indépendant en Turquie. Bien que les journalistes affirment qu'ils peuvent éviter les pressions politiques en s'appuyant sur les développements technologiques, comme l'utilisation d'un réseau privé virtuel (VPN) en cas de fermeture, de nombreux journalistes ont déclaré qu'ils s'autocensurent pour ne pas être emprisonnés ou au chômage. Par conséquent, les pressions politiques continues sur les sites d'information ont le potentiel de déstabiliser la profession, forçant les journalistes à l'incertitude par des fermetures et/ou des poursuites judiciaires, voire l'exil.

Alors que les modèles commerciaux des sites d'information se concentrent sur la publicité en ligne ainsi que sur le financement et les dons, les journalistes affirment

qu'ils sont libres sur le plan éditorial parce qu'ils n'ont aucune préoccupation commerciale. Cependant, la pression sur l'autonomie des journalistes vient des forces politiques. Les journalistes ont tellement peur d'être emprisonnés ou de payer une amende. C'est pourquoi la plupart des journalistes pensent que leur liberté est encore limitée malgré le caractère sans patron des sites d'information.

Concernant différents acteurs tels que les politiciens, les partis politiques, le gouvernement, et même le président Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, les journalistes rapportent des sanctions telles que :

- Pénalités de blocage (pour les sites Web et les reportages, jusqu'à présent plus de 200 reportages ont été bloqués)
- Interdictions (médias sociaux et diffusions)
- Intimidation via des groupes de trolls
- Obtenir une amende
- Cibler les journalistes par le biais de médias parrainés par le gouvernement
- Poursuites intentées contre des sites d'information et des journalistes
- Détention de journalistes
- Crainte que les fonds et les dons soient bloqués par le gouvernement

Les sanctions rapportées obligent de nombreux journalistes à restreindre leurs activités journalistiques, pour une « liberté durable ». En d'autres termes, l'autonomie et le contrôle du travail des journalistes dépendent de l'équilibre entre normes et valeurs professionnelles. Et, le degré d'orientation vers le service public dépend de la capacité à se battre avec le système politique actuel.

Au nom de la durabilité, certains journalistes ont déclaré qu'ils s'abstenaient de couvrir certains faits divers qui pourraient ébranler les structures politiques en Turquie. Certains des journalistes ont déclaré qu'ils transmettaient leurs propres reportages aux médias étrangers, puis faisaient des nouvelles en référence à des médias étrangers. Malgré l'image révélant que les journalistes ne sont pas les seuls acteurs qui décident du contenu des médias, étonnamment, les journalistes se décrivent toujours comme libres et autonomes lorsqu'ils produisent des informations par rapport aux médias d'information grand public traditionnels.

Les journalistes pensent que leur impact sur l'actualité et l'agenda du pays sera bien plus fort dans un futur proche. Selon la majorité des journalistes (85%), s'ils sont soutenus économiquement par la société, l'influence politique va progressivement diminuer. Jusque-là, les journalistes semblent soutenir l'idée d'une « liberté durable » pour survivre.

Malgré tout, il est clair que les organes de presse que les journalistes ont créés promettent un système médiatique plus indépendant que celui fourni par les médias grand public traditionnels de Turquie. De plus, le rapport de l'IPI sur les médias numériques en Turquie (Kızılkaya et Ütücü, 2021) appelle les sites d'information qui constituent l'échantillon de cette thèse le nouveau courant dominant de la Turquie qui recherche le soutien du public et des médias internationaux. Cependant, il convient de noter que le concept de grand public utilisé pour décrire les médias numériques qui ont acquis la capacité d'atteindre de larges masses dans le nouvel environnement

médiatique pourrait changer dans un proche avenir et un mot différent pourrait être utilisé pour ce nouvel ordre.

On peut dire que les efforts de plaidoyer des journalistes peuvent faire entendre leur voix auprès du public, des médias internationaux et des associations, dans un proche avenir. Les journalistes affirment que le journalisme n'est pas un crime et demandent une aide locale et internationale pour protéger leurs droits. Les syndicats existants ne représentent pas bien les journalistes. Ils veulent créer leurs propres syndicats axés sur le journalisme numérique. Beaucoup n'ont pas de carte de presse car la législation actuelle ne compte pas les reporters numériques parmi les journalistes, surtout s'ils sont dissidents. Ces raisons obligent les journalistes à être représentés par un syndicat qui connaît tous les aspects du journalisme numérique.

Les modèles commerciaux des organes de presse se concentrent sur la publicité en ligne, ainsi que sur les fonds et les dons. Force est de constater que ces deux modèles ne sont pas rentables et empêchent les journalistes de faire des projets d'avenir. Les journalistes ne sont pas payés ou travaillent pour de bas salaires. La situation est dans l'impasse, étant donné que la production de nouvelles est une activité coûteuse. Les sites d'information survivent grâce aux efforts de journalistes idéalistes et aux plateformes de médias sociaux, dont l'utilisation est gratuite. Ces plateformes accompagnent les journalistes dans de nombreux domaines tels que la production, la distribution et la génération de revenus de l'information.

En particulier, les sites d'actualités qui tentent de survivre grâce à la publicité en ligne et au financement participatif dépendent de ces plateformes. Les journalistes créent une valeur infinie sur les réseaux sociaux et les plateformes de financement participatif pour générer des revenus, mais ils n'obtiennent pas un rendement complet. Ces plateformes exploitent à la fois le travail des journalistes et augmentent leur charge de travail.

Ainsi, les modèles commerciaux des sites d'information ne sont pas durables. Les journalistes en sont conscients et l'objectif des journalistes dans un avenir proche est de passer à un modèle économique basé sur l'abonnement. Cependant, le problème ici est que le public n'est pas encore habitué à un tel système. En Turquie, les utilisateurs paient pour des plateformes comme Netflix ou Spotify mais ils réalisent à peine que les plateformes de journalisme numérique doivent être payantes. C'est un réflexe des premières années d'internet. Pendant de nombreuses années, les journaux et les créateurs de contenu se sont vu offrir leur contenu gratuitement afin d'obtenir du trafic. Par conséquent, les journalistes qui souhaitent passer à un modèle commercial basé sur l'abonnement doivent d'abord trouver des moyens de détruire cette habitude du public.

Les sites d'information diffèrent sur le plan rédactionnel et organisationnel des médias traditionnels. Ils sont horizontaux et collectifs voire autonomes. La hiérarchie n'apparaît que sur un site d'actualités. Ce site d'information a été bloqué à plusieurs reprises par décision de justice et ses journalistes ont été arrêtés à plusieurs reprises. Il est entendu qu'ils préfèrent une structure hiérarchique pour se protéger des dangers éventuels.

Deux types de production d'actualités émergent sur les sites d'actualités : au bureau et en déplacement. Dans le cadre de la production documentaire, les

journalistes rapportent en utilisant les informations qu'ils ont obtenues auprès des médias traditionnels, des agences de presse et des plateformes de médias sociaux. D'autre part, la production d'informations en déplacement est effectuée par les journalistes à tout moment, presque de n'importe où, en utilisant les outils de diffusion en direct des plateformes de médias sociaux. C'est ainsi qu'est né le journalisme de guérilla. Une autre innovation qui a émergé lors de la production de l'information est le journalisme à perspective arrondie, qui a légitimé la participation d'acteurs autres que les journalistes à la production de l'information, et l'externalisation notamment via les réseaux sociaux. L'externalisation fonctionne car les sites d'information gagnent très peu via des modèles économiques sélectionnés, ils emploient de petites équipes éditoriales, néanmoins ils doivent réduire certaines de leurs dépenses, comme les coûts de main-d'œuvre.

L'une des plus grandes préoccupations est que les journalistes déclarent toujours utiliser les mêmes sources que leurs collègues journalistes travaillant dans les médias numériques ou traditionnels. Surtout dans un pays où ses principaux organes d'information s'efforcent d'ignorer la vérité et d'imposer des coupures de presse sur tous les problèmes graves, cette situation a eu le pouvoir de rendre les nouvelles du pays similaires les unes aux autres et de réduire leur qualité et leur diversité. Cependant, le résultat est surprenant, car parfois, les informations produites par différentes composantes (journalistes indépendants, journalistes citoyens, militants, etc.,) et partagées sur des plateformes telles que Twitter peuvent être uniques et changer complètement l'agenda du pays.

La situation politique du pays affecte profondément les journalistes. Presque tous les sites d'information ont une pénalité de fermeture. Il y a des poursuites et des ordonnances de blocage de nouvelles déposées au nom de nombreux sites d'information. Pour cette raison, il a été révélé que les journalistes pratiquent l'autocensure, même s'ils prétendent se concentrer sur des valeurs qui garantissent leur liberté, leur indépendance et leur autonomie, telles que le service public, l'objectivité, l'autonomie, l'immédiateté et l'éthique. Dans l'ordre politique actuel, ce n'est qu'une question de temps avant que les sites Web soient fermés et que les journalistes soient arrêtés en raison d'un fait divers que le gouvernement pourrait ne pas aimer. Dans un tel cas, seuls les comptes de médias sociaux restent comme moyen de faire entendre la voix des journalistes au public. Cela n'apporte aucun revenu aux journalistes, au contraire, cela exploite le travail du journaliste pour ses propres intérêts. Ainsi, appliquer l'autocensure devient une nécessité pour continuer le journalisme.

Par conséquent, il est entendu que ce nouvel ordre médiatique créé par des journalistes professionnels avec la devise de l'indépendance ne pourrait pas complètement libérer les journalistes en raison de problèmes de durabilité. Malgré les efforts des journalistes pour équilibrer les valeurs journalistiques et les intérêts commerciaux en utilisant divers modèles commerciaux de manière hybride, le précarat émerge tant au niveau économique que politique. L'émergence du précarat limite les pratiques professionnelles, les droits du travail et même la liberté personnelle des journalistes en raison du manque de revenus. Le dernier était imprévisible avant de commencer la thèse.

Par exemple, les journalistes continuent leurs activités avec une petite équipe car leurs moyens sont limités. Ils dépendent des réseaux sociaux à chaque occasion. Comme le travail des journalistes sur les réseaux sociaux alimente leurs modèles

économiques, la publicité en ligne et une sorte de fonds et de dons, ils ne peuvent pas quitter l'univers numérique et descendre sur le terrain et recueillir des informations, ou ils ne peuvent pas mener d'interviews en face à face. Ils n'ont recours à l'externalisation que dans le cadre des possibilités offertes par les médias sociaux tout en faisant l'actualité. Ils ne peuvent pas utiliser d'autres outils technologiques qu'ils n'ont pas assez d'argent. Bénéficier des médias sociaux pendant la rédaction des nouvelles signifie plus de travail organique. Parallèlement à leur charge de travail éditoriale, les journalistes gardent les comptes de réseaux sociaux des sites d'actualités ouverts sur leurs smartphones et ordinateurs de bureau, et créent de la valeur avec des clics sans fin comme la recherche, le téléchargement, le partage et les commentaires. Ainsi, les conditions de travail des journalistes sont étroitement liées à une forme de travail basée sur les médias sociaux.

De plus, parce que les journalistes gagnent peu, ils deviennent vulnérables. Par exemple, puisqu'ils ne peuvent pas faire de publicité sur Google et Facebook, le contenu qu'ils produisent reste dans les coins les plus reculés d'Internet. Ils ne peuvent pas faire entendre leur voix de manière adéquate auprès d'un large public. Soit, ils ne trouvent pas le pouvoir économique de s'opposer aux poursuites intentées contre eux à cause d'un fait divers qu'ils ont couvert, et alors ils essaient de ne pas trop attirer l'attention, ce qui se traduit par une restriction de la liberté d'expression. Les restrictions économiques et politiques affectent explicitement la liberté et les conditions de travail des journalistes. Sur une base politique et dans les conditions décrites, les journalistes ne peuvent même pas prédire s'ils seront capables de faire du journalisme dans cinq ans. Tout cela laisse les journalistes dans l'incertitude, ce qui se traduit par une réglementation précaire du travail journalistique même s'il n'y a pas de déséquilibre clair entre les valeurs journalistiques et les intérêts commerciaux. Le bout du tunnel se voit dans l'augmentation du soutien financier du public.

Néanmoins, le potentiel des journalistes à établir des modèles commerciaux durables soutenus par les revenus d'audience pour leurs organes d'information auto-fondés peut être exploré dans le cadre d'une étude future, en incluant des pays ayant des commandes médiatiques similaires à l'univers de recherche actuel. Une étude utilisateur peut également être ajoutée. Ainsi, on peut mesurer si les efforts de plaidoyer des journalistes sont entendus par le public, ainsi que si le public est prêt à soutenir le journalisme libre. On espère que cette étude conduira à de nombreuses autres études en dehors de l'étude exemplaire que ce soit en Turquie ou ailleurs.

INTRODUCTION

Web 2.0 technologies enable journalists to carry on their profession outside media companies. Journalists can now share their stories and thoughts on digital-born news sites that they found at very low costs, using social media platforms as a part of their work routines and commercial strategies to reach a wide audience. This enables journalists to self-organize the profession beyond the confines of traditional news organizations. Thus, the profession, through the integration of ownership and journalism, goes back to its roots where journalists were not only reporters and pamphleteers, but at the same time owners, editors, and distributors of the journalistic content (Splichal and Dahlgren, 2016: 6). This integration also holds the potential to transform journalism from a corporate profession to a more independent and autonomous one.

From the perspective of liberal theories journalists have always had the opportunity to be autonomous thanks to their professional identity and ideologies. The new digital media ecosystem, with its converged and participatory nature, and easy access to production and distribution tools, has facilitated new ways of practising journalism that has long been under the control of commercial media enterprises, which consider journalists as employees and limit their freedom, as critical theories emphasize.

Therefore, digital transformation of media technologies has also been interpreted as an opportunity for liberation and democratization of news making and journalism. This “progressive” perspective was motivated by three different logics. The first is a logic of autonomy that aims to ensure that professional journalists who have something to say about public issues can express themselves freely without having to filter through a media outlet. Second, a logic of transparency aims to shed a light on the behind-the-scenes of the knowledge production process. Third, a logic of participation

that seeks to mobilize an audience that would otherwise be passive or inactive (Matheson, 2004).

However, from the perspective of critical theories, digitalisation of news media not only offer opportunities to journalists but also hinder them as they work in an environment colonized by giant technology companies such as Microsoft, Google and others. In the Web 2.0 era working increasingly turns into a digital, mobile and decentralized process, immaterialising labour. Some argue that digitalisation of labour entails the danger of the journalist's labour being perceived as just another node on the internet (Bardoel and Deuze, 2001: 91-103). Moreover, as Vincent Mosco and Christian Fuchs (2014: 62) point out, digitalization can transform journalistic labour from being paid to unpaid. In an article published in 2000 Tiziana Terranova defines unpaid or free labour by playing with the double meanings of the English word "free", "libre" and "gratuitous". Thus, free means voluntary and unpaid, appreciated and exploited (Broca, 2015: 7). The crucial point of Terranova's analysis, which forms the basis of digital labour critique, is to emphasize that these "free" activities create value for certain social media platforms or technology companies rather than for the digital worker and/or labourer (Broca, 2015: 8).

Web 2.0 technologies turn any kind of intellectual activity (including many aspects of Internet users' daily life, and the contents that are created) into data, and then monetize them (Cukier and Mayer-Schöenberger, 2013: 28-40; Smyrniaios, 2016: 61). The business models of social media platforms depend on the "barter" model (van Dijck 2014: 200; Yeung 2018: 514; Cohen, 2019: 16). According to van Dijck (2014: 200), in the barter model, individual users provide personal information to companies or in other words platforms such as Google, Facebook and etc., and then receive services in return while platforms receive advertising revenues. The defined model is considered as the essence of the contemporary digital capitalism (Jeon, 2010: 89).

As far as news media are concerned the largest share of digital advertising revenues created through journalistic content are not being transferred to news sites, but to the platforms that mediate or distribute that content. Digital news organizations receive a much lower share of advertising revenues than global platforms do (Çevikel, 2020: 37). Global platforms are conditioned to generate advertising revenue by

exploiting the content produced by newly established journalism start-ups and they do not pay them enough to ensure their survival. On the other hand, these low-budget journalism start-ups must use these platforms for free to reach a wide audience as a part of their commercial strategies. This unequal relationship means that independent and/or entrepreneurial journalists have difficulties in generating and sustaining their income.

Due to low level of digital advertising revenues news sites founded by professional journalists usually need to reduce labour costs by implementing efficiency and rationalization strategies. Some of them rely on robot reporters and algorithms. They can also resort to freelancing and outsourcing while reducing the size of permanent employees (Cohen, 2015). Or, they can simply shutdown the media outlets if there is no way to sustain them. Therefore, professional journalists who ventured into entrepreneurship realize that their job is an increasingly precarious one. Therefore, a sustainable business model for digital-born news organizations which will allow a healthy balance between journalistic values and economic interests is needed to open a new era for the liberation of journalists and journalism, especially in oppressed media environments.

In Turkey, the press has always struggled with political and economic constraints (Sözeri, 2015a: 6 cited in Avadar, 2019: 44). However, since 2002 the concentration of political power solely on the Justice and Development Party's (JDP) governments increased the oppression of mainly oppositional media outlets and critical journalists. The JDP governments, using their popular support and economic power, have taken steps to bring especially mainstream media under pressure and to control news content (Sözeri and Güney, 2011:7).

Sözeri (2015a: 6 cited in Avadar, 2019: 44) argued that although JDP was supported by the media owners in their first period of office, the relations were troubled after the second electoral victory of JDP in the municipal elections of 2004. Since then the JDP adopted a dual strategy to eliminate opposition from the media. First, it implemented heavy tax fines for businessmen/media owners with oppositional political views. Then it reconfigured the media system by selling the media outlets seized by the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (Tasarruf Mevduatı Sigorta Fonu,

TMSF) to businessmen who hold favourable opinions of their policies. The JDP has also supported friendly-media owners through public tenders as part of their investment strategy in the economy. Therefore, most of the mainstream news organizations which have business interests in other fields try to please the government on every possible occasion. The political, economic, and legal pressures worsened the balance between journalistic values and commercial interests even more in favour of the increased self-censorship.

As a result of JDP's pressure on media owners, many journalists and columnists lost their jobs due to their critical views and news reports about government policies (Sözeri, 2015a: 6). According to the Media Monitoring Reports of Independent Communication Network (BİA), in 2014 339 journalists, columnists and cartoonists lost their jobs due to political pressures. Moreover, 22 journalists and 10 publishers were imprisoned in 2015. 21 out of 22 imprisoned journalists and all imprisoned publishers were arrested for reasons related to "illegal organizations" according to the Turkish Penal Code (Türk Ceza Kanunu, TCK) and the Anti-Terror Act (Terörle Mücadele Kanunu, TMK). Another journalist was imprisoned for "resisting the police". Thirteen journalists, one columnist, and one cartoonist are still standing trial on the grounds of insulting President Erdoğan (Önderoğlu 2015; cited in Sözeri 2015a, 6-7).

Tutuklu Gazetecilerle Dayanışma Platformu (The Solidarity Platform with Detained/Imprisoned Journalists) stated that at least 116 journalists were in prison on October 23, 2016. The Journalists Union of Turkey announced that 10,000 (almost one-third) have lost their jobs since 2013. Among them, 3,000 became unemployed after the coup attempt on 15 July 2016 (*Tutuklu Gazetecilerle Dayanışma Platformu*, 2016).

The failed coup of July 2016 increased political pressures on the media. On 20 July, President Erdoğan declared a three-month state of emergency and partially suspended the European Convention on Human Rights. Since then, the Turkish government has been able to rule by decree and can pass bills that have the force of law. In the aftermath of the coup 16 television channels, 23 radio stations, three news agencies, 45 daily newspapers, 15 magazines, and 29 publishing houses with links to

the Gülen movement³ were ordered to shut down. By the end of September, 12 television channels and 11 radio stations - most of them pro-Kurdish - were shut down by decree no.668, which allowed for closure without a court order on the grounds of being related to terrorist organisations or being a threat to national security (White 2017, 46).

In addition to political and legal pressures, journalists in Turkey have had to work under increasing threats to their rights as workers since the 1990s. The anti-unionism that has dominated the Turkish media landscape since the 1990s weakened professional organizations, solidarity among journalists and self-regulation mechanisms of news media. Under these circumstances, journalists had to work without the protection of unions and under insecure conditions (Sözeri 2015b, 23).

According to the data published by the Ministry of Work and Social Security, 95.442 people worked in the media sector in July 2014. It was estimated that 30.000 of them were journalists. There are presently three labour unions in which journalists organize. Among these, unions such as, Medya-İş has 1.273 members, TGS has 1.033 members, and Pak Medya-İş has 47 members. These numbers suggest that the majority of journalists in Turkey are not a member of a union and are forced to work under insecure conditions (Sözeri 2015b, 23).

In Turkey, the broadcasting Law no. 5953 stipulates that journalists working for visual media are also eligible for a press card a short time after starting to work. However, according to the data obtained from the “Presidency of Republic of Türkiye Directorate of Communications”, possession of press card among employees of the media sector in Turkey is considerably low (Sözeri and Güney 2011, 33-34). Holding no press card has results such as, not being accredited for meetings organized by state associations, being blocked during news gathering, being attacked, being arrested, and, thus, not being considered a journalist (Medyatava 2015; cited in Sözeri 2015b, 23).

In addition, the majority of high-profile journalists and editors in Turkey are male. A woman journalist Nurcan Akad (2016), the former editor-in-chief of *Akşam*

³ An Islamist fraternal movement led by Fethullah Gülen. A Muslim preacher living in the United States since 1999.

newspaper said “Male journalists do not want to share their power with the female journalists in the sector”. The media in Turkey adopts a macho attitude towards women journalists in general, and women journalists with even slightly dissident views in particular. A patriarchal tone towards women journalists is in the process of becoming the norm rather than the exception. Women journalists are regularly told to “know their place” by state officials, newspaper editors, and opinion leaders who are domination the decision making in the political establishment and the media. It is as if, with every incident, a strong message is being sent to women: Leave the field of politics to those who know how to handle it with the care it deserves. In other words, leave it to your male colleagues (Genç 2014, 88 cited in Avadar, 2019: 45).

Since 2007⁴, several professional journalists frustrated by the restricted media environment, and the violation of their labour rights in mainstream media began to look for new ways of practising their profession via the Internet. Social media networks played a vital role in the formation of new digital media outlets. Journalists began to use these platforms to gather information for their news stories, check breaking news, find new ideas and look for additional information and sources. Staying in touch with their target audience was another goal (Weaver, Willnat, Wilhoit, 2018: 119-120).

Thus, many professional journalists in Turkey who were forced to leave or willingly left the mainstream media used their economic and cultural capital (i.e. their knowledge and skills, the ownership of cultural goods, recognized authority or expertise) to establish their own news sites. They created their own news media at very

⁴ According to Eylem Yanardağoglu (2015, 259), in 2007, the ruling JDP's oppression and intervention on journalists and media became observable. In this period the main “agent in limiting the freedom of expression was the state” especially through implementing Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code. Despite several amendments during Europeanization reforms, Article 301 of the Penal code, which addresses the offences committed to ‘insulting Turkishness’ was widely used to prosecute journalists, writers such as Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk, Hrant Dink the former editor-in-chief of Turkish-Armenian newspaper, Agos, and other well-known intellectuals such as İsmet Berkan, Murat Belge and Haluk Şahin. On the 13th of February, Hrant Dink wrote an article on Agos and suggested that Armenians should be able to get rid of their “obsession” with the Turks for their identity to be emancipated. A private citizen opened a lawsuit against Hrant Dink invoking an article of the 301 Penal code. Dink was charged with six months jail sentence, but it was suspended. Hrant Dink decided to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights. Agos and Hrant Dink had been a target and victims of the very xenophobia they were trying to eliminate. Hrant Dink was shot dead in Istanbul in January 2007 in broad daylight in front of his newspaper offices by a 17-year-old teenager because he insulted “Turkishness” in one of his essays in the newspaper (The Economist 2007; cited in Yanardağoglu 2013: 95).

low costs without necessarily specializing on digital technology, thanks to new communication tools with easy access offered by the Internet and social media.

As of 2022, the news sites that have been founded by professional journalists who were excluded from mainstream media in Turkey by resignations and/or dismissals were, in chronological order: *Oda TV* (2007) by Soner Yalçın, *T24* (2009) by Doğan Akın, *Zete* (2011-closed) by Nurcan Akad, *Diken* (2014) by Harun Simavi, *ABC Gazetesi* (2015) by Merdan Yanardağ, *Medyascope.tv* (2015) by Ruşen Çakır, *GazeteRed* (2016) by Hakan Gülseven, *Artı Gerçek* (2017) and *Artı TV* (2017) by Celal Başlangıç and *Özgürüz* (2017) by Can Dündar. Some of these news sites founded by professional journalists adopted an entrepreneurial logic while others presented the characteristics of non-profit, and/or alternative media.

The main reasons for professional journalists to start new own journalistic ventures in Turkey were mainly the considerable decline of jobs in conventional media companies and the growing dissatisfaction they felt with the current state of journalism. Several journalists perceived the opportunities provided by the internet and social media as a means to continue their profession freely and independently.

However, these news sites soon began to experience the similar political and economic constraints as the legacy media organizations especially, after the attempted coup on 15 July 2016. The day after the attempted coup, more than a dozen news sites including *Gazeteport*, *ABC Gazetesi*, *Dokuz8Haber* and *Medyascope.tv* were blocked by the Turkish telecommunications regulator (TİB). Following the complaints filed to the authorities *Gazeteport*, *ABC Gazetesi*, and *Medyascope.tv* were able to continue their broadcasts after a while (T24 2016). Another news site that was subjected to a broadcast ban was *GazeteRed*. In September 2016, Energy and Natural Sources Minister Berat Albayrak's e-mail accounts were hacked and the content was published by a communist computer hacker group called RedHack which was founded in 1997. *GazeteRed*, which published these e-mails, was banned with the accusation of being related to RedHack. Hakan Gülseven, an executive committee member of the United June Movement⁵, and the founder of *GazeteRed* news site was detained (BirGün

⁵ The United June Movement is a political coalition bringing together left-wing, communist, and socialist parties, Marxist-Leninist political organizations, independent individuals, and various left-wing non-governmental organizations in Turkey (Interviewee 25, *GazeteRed*, in depth interview, 21.04.2018).

2016). Gülseven was set free on 17th October 2016, however, the ban on the site continued until the first months of 2017. Journalist Tunca Öğreten, one of the former editors of *Diken* news site was also detained on December 25, 2016. Tunca Öğreten's house was raided at 03:00 a.m. by the police. The police conducted a search in the house for three hours and detained the journalist on the account of "membership for a terrorist organization" (Cumhuriyet 2016).

Despite political constraints and economic difficulties some of these digital-born news sites founded by professional journalists such as *T24*, *Diken*, and *Medyascope.tv* managed to thrive and create sizeable followers but some others did not prove to be steady businesses for a variety of reasons. For instance, *Zete* founded by Nurcan Akad was closed in 2016 because of economic reasons.

Consequently, although digital-born news sites are growing innovative start-up organizations that may contribute to liberalisation and democratisation of news media in Turkey it is not yet certain how sustainable they would be in the long run. It is also not yet certain how resistant these ventures would be against the current tendency in the direction of the precarity in journalism.

Research Aims, Hypotheses, and the Research Questions

This thesis sets out to explore digital-born news sites founded by professional journalists in Turkey in the 2000s in an ethnographic framework. It aims to provide in-depth accounts of their organizational structures, day-to-day operations, editorial policies, ideological stance, formats, business models, and new ways of practising journalism to ascertain their strengths and weaknesses in terms of providing sustainable alternatives to liberate journalists and journalism in Turkey. By doing so, it also hopes to shed light on how the digital-born news sites have an impact on labour relations in journalism in the newly emerging digital media ecosystem in Turkey.

The thesis aims to test two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Digital-born news sites founded by professional journalists hold potential for liberating journalists and journalism in Turkey; however, their greatest obstacle is sustainability due to instability of their business models.

Hypothesis 2: Sustainability of the journalists-owned news outlets and growing precariousness of journalism as a form of digital labour threaten independence of these news sites and may create an imbalance between journalistic values and commercial interests.

In order to test these hypotheses, the thesis seeks to provide answers to the main research questions stated below:

Research Question 1: What are the main reasons and motivations that prompted professional journalists in Turkey to found and work for born-digital news sites?

Research Question 2: What is the importance of the digital-born news sites for professional journalists and the transformation of journalism in Turkey?

Research Question 3: What kind of impact do the digital-born news sites have on journalism and news production?

Research Question 4: What are the main business models and revenue sources of these news sites?

Research Question 5: What obstacles and opportunities do news sites face with respect to their business models?

Research Question 6: What plans do journalists-owned news sites have to assure their sustainability?

Research Question 7: How are their organizational structures, working conditions, and labour relations?

Research Question 8: How does news production take place on journalists-owned news sites?

Research Question 9: What is the impact of social media platforms on news production and news content?

Research Question 10: How do journalist-owned news sites define their editorial policies and standards?

Research Question 11: What is their position in relation to freedom of expression and professional autonomy?

Research Question 12: To what extent are digital-born news sites able to remain as independent news organizations where journalistic decisions take priority over commercial ones?

Research Question 13: Are digital-born news sites able to present a counter-voice against political oppressions?

Research Question 14: What are the main obstacles and opportunities facing digital-born news sites founded by professional journalists concerning their business models and digitalisation of labour in journalism in the Web 2.0 era?

Theoretical Framework: Redefining Journalism as a Profession and Ideology in the Web 2.0 Era

In the light of the writings of Karl Marx and his followers, this thesis considers the traditional news media as part of a domination and control mechanism. In relation to its position to other social institutions, news media can be considered as both base and superstructure. When considered as part of the base structure, they are like other capitalist institutions that aim to generate revenues for themselves and other capitalist corporations. When they are considered as a part of superstructure, however, they are seen to operate as cultural and ideological structures shaped by the commercial interests of ruling elites (Marx and Engels, 1992).

David Harvey argues that the dominant groups which hold the ownership of the means of production seek hegemonic control and power on the terrain of culture (Harvey, 2015: 330). The concept of hegemony emphasizes how ruling elites reinforce their power, wealth and status by using journalism, and how they are used to spread their own philosophy, culture, and morals. Hegemony as described by Gramsci is an elaborate but incompletely developed political theory. Gramsci attempted to define hegemony as:

“The spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is historically caused by the prestige (and

consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production” (Gramsci, 1971: 12 cited in Evans, 2002: 312).

In this perspective hegemony is a constant struggle that can be won and lost. Gramsci sees “ideology” as instrumental in the establishment and sustainability of hegemony while “intellectual” plays a role in the formation and transmission of ideology to the rest of society. Gramsci identifies intellectuals as “experts in legitimization” who implement the political and economic thinking of the dominant groups in society. Intellectuals as a whole, produce theories on the conditions of existence of complete social order, suggest policies and their justifications, and even participate in their application (Robinson, 1996: 42).

Gramsci’s conceptualisation of the intellectual can be applied to journalists who work for capitalist businesses whose main goal is to create profit, which even journalists must accept and conform to (Tönnies, 1992: 179-180 cited in Splichal and Dahlgren, 2016: 8). Economic conditions of capitalism force commercial media to conform to the logic of large capitalist organisations. “The powers of capital are intent not only to bring about a favourable opinion concerning their products ... but also to promote a generalized public opinion which is designed to serve their political and business interests” (Tönnies, 1923: 88 cited in Splichal and Dahlgren, 2016: 8). Therefore, at the beginning of the 20th-century Bücher, Tönnies, and many critical theorists were concerned with the appropriate form of public regulation of the journalism, “to ensure news and information about public affairs which sustains and nurtures citizen information, understanding and engagement and thereby a democratic polity” (Cushion and Franklin, 2015: 75 cited in Splichal and Dahlgren, 2016: 8).

The rise of professionalism in the liberal model of journalism is considered as a response to the loss of political independence of the commercial media. Thus, the professionalism of journalism is associated with concepts such as objectivity, independence, and autonomy. Liberal ethics and working principles of journalism prioritize public interest, freedom, independence, self-esteem, honesty/personal conscience, respect of privacy and honour/ equality, and keeping the news

comprehensive and proportional. However, critical theories argue that once journalists are defined as workers, their independence and control over their jobs are lost. From this point of view, as long as employed, a professional cannot be independent (Freidson, 1986: 111 cited in Pasti, 2007: 32; Pasti, 2007: 32).

The occupational ideology of journalism, as Pierre Bourdieu explains, is the result of a “double determination”, on the one side supporting the benefits of the capitalist economy, ruling elites, and media owners; on the other side defending five ideal-typical traits or values (İnal, 1996: 86- 88). Deuze (2005: 447), Golding and Elliott (1979), Merritt (1995), and more recently Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) describe these values as:

- Public service: journalists provide a public service (as watchdogs or ‘newshounds’, active collectors and disseminators of information);
- Objectivity: journalists are impartial, neutral, objective, fair, and (thus) credible;
- Autonomy: journalists must be autonomous, free, and independent in their work;
- Immediacy: journalists have a sense of immediacy, actuality, and speed (inherent in the concept of ‘news’);
- Ethics: journalists have a sense of ethics, validity, and legitimacy.

However, the ideology of journalism is also seen as an (intellectual) process over time, through which it is shaped as the sum of ideas and views - notably on social and political issues - of a particular group but also as a process by which other ideas and views are excluded or marginalized (Stevenson, 1995: 37-41; Van Ginneken, 1997: 73 cited in Deuze, 2005:445). The professional journalist today remains to be an intellectual who determines what the public should see, hear and read about the world (Fulton, 1996; Singer, 1998 cited in Deuze, 2005:451), even though he/she is under the influence of the capitalist media system. There are strong concerns over the democratic role and responsibilities of journalism on matters of public regulation issues in many media environments (Coyer, Downmunt, and Fountain, 2007 cited in Sözeri, 2015a:4), especially in oppressed ones, where journalistic values become inefficient, if not, useless.

Since the 2000s the internet and emerging new media technologies challenge the hold of large commercial interests in journalism. In the Web 2.0 era, a combination of new newsgathering and storytelling techniques become possible in all media formats. The integration of digital network technologies with a rethinking of the news producer-consumer relationship and easy access to the means of production and distribution mechanisms tends to be seen as one of the biggest opportunities for those looking for new ways of practising journalism (Bardoel and Deuze 2001; Pavlik et al. 2001; Teoh Kheng Yau and Al-Hawamdeh 2001; cited in Deuze 2005, 451); which had been restricted by the hegemonic capitalist interest of media conglomerates. Today, journalists can continue to practise their profession on digital-born news sites that they own and share their stories and thoughts on social media networks. Journalists use these platforms to report whatever they want with the agenda that they themselves set (Charles, 2013: 390 cited in Sözeri, 2015a:5).

While some news sites founded by journalists emerge as not-for-profit and charitable enterprises which carry out a character of alternative spheres, the others are founded with an entrepreneurial logic. The new entrepreneurial form of labour involves journalists establishing their own small and medium-sized enterprises to produce content and establishing their distribution mechanisms through websites and social media services (Rottwilim, 2014: 4). Those independent news sites have alternative forms of ownership and organization (Olsson and Viscovi, 2013 cited in Picard, 2014:278).

However, when it comes to generating income whether entrepreneurial, not-for-profit, alternative or independent all news enterprises seem just as obliged to economic imperatives as commercial news firms. The new forms of news providers also require start-up and working capital, all of which carry implications for their operations (Picard and Van Weezel, 2008 cited in Picard, 2014:275); they incur costs that must be met with revenue; and they require reinvestment to sustain their operations (Picard, 2014: 275). This indicates how important it is for the new forms of journalism in the Web 2.0 period to have sustainable business models.

The SuBMoJour project, realized in 2012, maps out sustainable business models in journalism in the Web 2.0 era. According to the findings of the research, sustainable

business models are divided into two main categories: storytelling-oriented and service-oriented models. In storytelling-oriented business models, news sites focus on making money by producing original content, news and stories for their audience. The difference of the mass media model is that the target audience is smaller in the digital world. In this niche journalism, there is a close relationship between journalistic content and the products advertised (Sirkkunen and Cook, 2012:5 cited in Avadar, 2019: 43).

The other group consists of service-oriented business models, news sites that do not try to monetize their journalistic content. Citizen journalism sites, for example, are more like platforms that curate and moderate citizen-oriented content, or news aggregators compile stories from other sources. Some news sites have specialized in selling technology, information, training, or diversifying to redefine what it means to make news (Sirkkunen and Cook, 2012:5 cited in Avadar, 2019: 43).

The project was also able to identify various sources of income used. For example, in advertising, the display was the most widely used source including cost per view, cost per click as well as weekly rates, ad networks, and sponsorship. Paywalls, subscriptions, and freemium models are proven methods of charging for content. Sources of income such as affiliate marketing, donations, selling data or services, organizing events, freelancing, and training or selling merchandise were less common (Sirkkunen and Cook, 2012: 5-6).

The project revealed that although it is difficult to find entirely new sources of income it is possible to find new ways in which revenue sources are combined or reconfigured. This means there is potential innovation in new business models by combining sources of revenue in interesting ways to make news sites profitable in the long run (Sirkkunen and Cook, 2012: 5-6). Thus, it is clear that revenue development, audience focus, a mission of inclusion and the technology to support that mission are key components of a sustainable news initiative that has the potential to usher in a new era to liberate journalists and journalism.

Methodology, Sample, and Data Collection

This thesis adopts a qualitative approach to analysis. It uses a combination of methods including case study, critical ethnographic field research (traditional and digital), and the literature survey of secondary sources (i.e. articles, social media accounts, videos). For the fieldwork of this thesis, ethnographic research methods both conventional and digital, mainly semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant observation (both online and offline) are used to study news sites founded by professional journalists.

In an ethnographic study, the researcher goes into the field and returns to report on the interactions of people in everyday settings with specific attention to the participant's meaning-making process (Anderson-Levitt, 2006). This shared culture of how humans interact and learn from each other in a community has traditionally been the focus of ethnographers (Gobo, 2008). From another perspective, John W. Creswell (2009: 13) describes ethnography as “a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting observational and interview data.”

As a new field of anthropological practice, digital ethnography is particularly concerned with the cultural constructions and reconstructions on which new technologies are based and which in turn help shape them (Escobar et al., 1994: 211). The departure point of this inquiry is the belief that any technology represents a cultural invention, in the sense that it brings forth a world; it emerges out of particular cultural conditions and in turn, helps to create new ones (Budka, 2011: 3).

Digital ethnography differs from traditional ethnography in that data gathering is conducted through the use of computer-mediated communication or digital technology (Murthy, 2011). The digital ethnographer will often use a set of tools for understanding and recording the digital space (Hemmi, Bayne and Land, 2009; Kozinets, 2010), which may include screen capture software, website archiving tools, content management systems, e-mails, instant messaging services, social media platforms, mobile live streaming applications, and more.

For fieldwork, both traditional and digital ethnographic research methods, predominantly semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant observation (online and offline) are used. For online ethnography Periscope, a mobile live streaming service, is used to conduct in-depth interviews. For example, on May 15, 2016, the researcher asked participants questions in an interview using the instant messaging feature on Periscope.

In its early years, especially the founders of Medyascope.tv and Özgürüz organized chats to interact with their audiences over Periscope. On May 18, 2016 the researcher participated in one of these conversations as a spectator by concealing her identity. This provided the researcher a space of freedom. However, journalists left some of the researcher's questions unanswered. It became clear that journalists preferred to talk about the topics that they prepared beforehand instead of answering the questions from the audience. For this reason, this method is found insufficient to meet the expectations of the research and decided to be supported by traditional methods and by other digital methods.

The sample of the fieldwork of this thesis consists of ten news sites that have been founded by professional journalists. These are in chronological order: *Oda TV* (2007) by Soner Yalçın; *T24* (2009) by Doğan Akın; *Diken* (2014) by Harun Simavi; *ABC Gazetesi* (2015) and *Tele 1* (2018) by Merdan Yanardağ, *Medyascope.tv* (2015) by Ruşen Çakır; *GazeteRed* (2016) by Hakan Gülseven; *Artı Gerçek* (2017) and *Artı TV* (2017) by Celal Başlangıç; and *Özgürüz* (2017) by Can Dünder. Apart from the listed news sites, there were also sites, but they were closed down over time due to economic problems.

The data informing the analysis is derived from offline and online observations and face-to-face as well as online in-depth interviews with a total of 32 journalists from *Oda TV*, *Diken*, *Medyascope.tv*, *Özgürüz*, *GazeteRed*, *T24*, *ABC Gazetesi/Tele 1* and *Artı Gerçek/Artı TV* in two phases, between 12th March - 30th April 2018, as well as between 5th May - 12th July 2019,. Six of the interviewees were founders of the news sites while 26 were editors/reporters. The researcher continued to interview journalists until a saturation of data was reached regarding the main questions of this thesis. Thus, the researcher stopped when the interview results

became redundant to better answer the research questions. The sample of the thesis largely reflects the overall composition of news professionals who have found a journalistic start-up in Turkey.

Among the interviewed journalists, 22 were men and 10 were women. The majority of journalists between the ages of 23-57 were graduates of journalism or similar branches of universities while some of them were pursuing a master's degree. Moreover, 38% of the interviewed journalists have been working as journalist for over ten years, while 33% for five to ten years (See Figure 1).

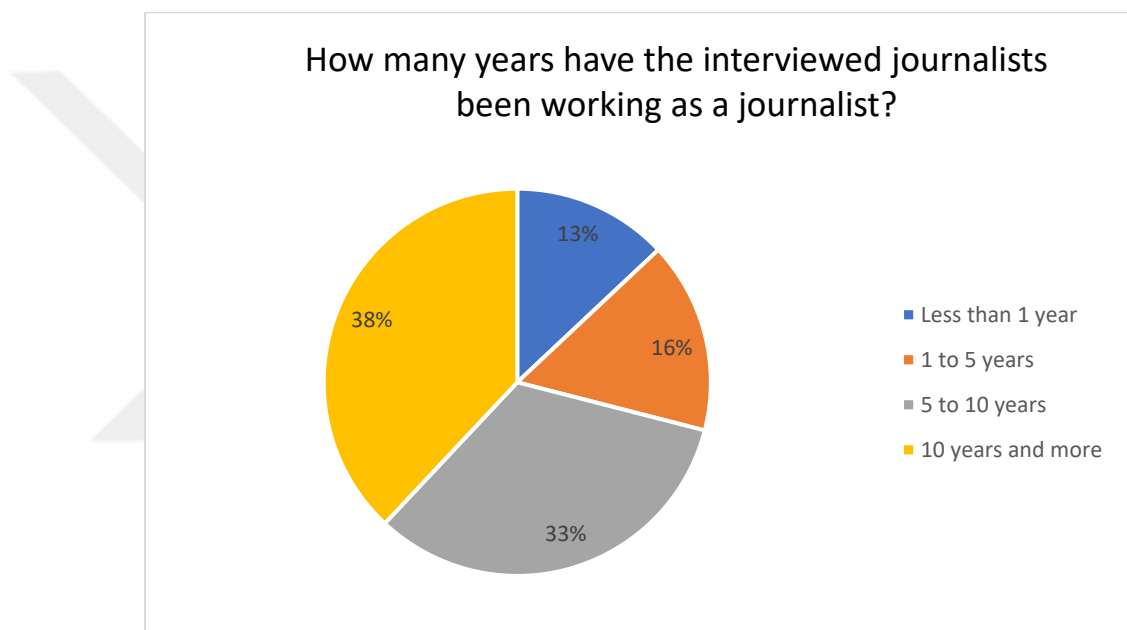


Figure 1: Length of professional experience of the interviewed journalists

Before starting to work for the news site under investigation, half of the journalists interviewed had worked at a mainstream news media outlet. The institutions that they had worked in have been newspapers (print and digital versions), news agencies and news channels. 45% of journalists interviewed had worked for oppositional newspapers, television channels and news sites. The ones who did not work for mainstream media have worked in advertising/production and public relations agencies (See Figure 2).

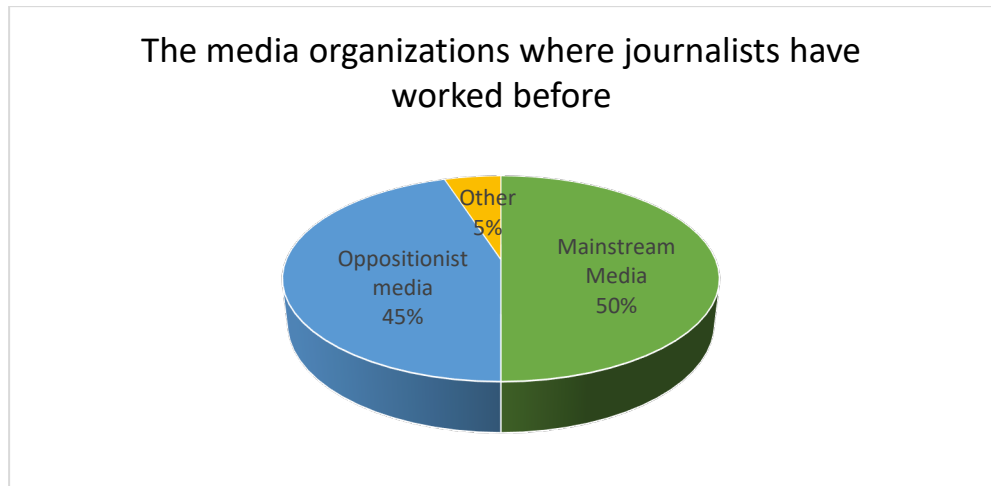


Figure 2: Type of media institutions that interviewed journalists had worked before

The main reason why journalists left their previous jobs was financial insufficiencies. Termination of the project that they work on, the dismissals/detentions, resignations and completion of the internship also surfaced among other reasons (Figure 3).

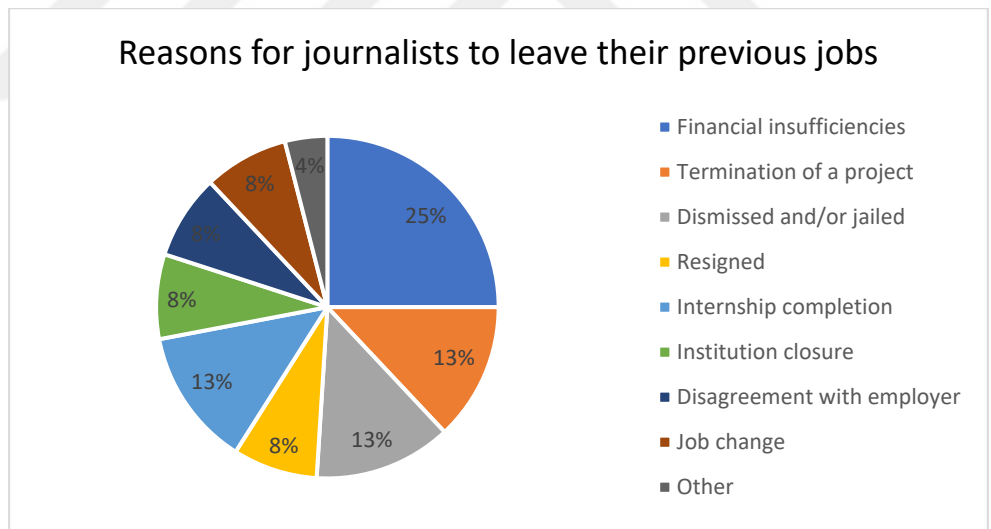


Figure 3: Reasons why the interviewed journalists left their prior employment

The interviewed journalists were chosen randomly. Journalists were reached through their Istanbul-based institutions. Either the organizations were called by phone, e-mailed, or the journalists were contacted via their Twitter accounts. It was not easy to reach journalists due to their intense work schedules. Sometimes the

researcher's friend circle, who knew these journalists well, stepped in. In most cases, this was the only way to get an appointment.

Journalists also stated that they did not meet with every person who wanted to do research. This is because they fear that their words will be distorted. For this reason, it is very important for them that the researcher to whom they will express their opinion is reliable. Still, some journalists had their doubts. Many journalists participating in this research wanted to remain anonymous.

Journalists who agreed to participate in the research directed the researcher to their colleagues so that a larger sample could be obtained with the snowball method. About a week was spent on all 10 news sites under investigation. Journalists were observed during their working hours in their offices, accompanied during coffee and lunch breaks, and their online (especially via Twitter and Periscope) and offline activities were also observed while making news.

Except two interviews made at a coffee house at Kadıköy/Istanbul, all the interviews were held at the offices of the news sites. Each interview took approximately 50 minutes. All interviews were registered via a voice recorder embedded in the smartphone of the researcher. An interview guide was developed, consisting of semi-structured questions on:

- Career paths and/or professional backgrounds of journalists
- The practices and skills involved in creating and working at a news site
- Organization and management of the work and the news production process
- The material context of the news site as workspace, software, technological tools, platforms, and etc
- Financing models
- Professional identity and values
- Distribution strategies and editorial priorities

Thesis Plan

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter attempts to provide a theoretical basis for the discussions on the transformation of journalism as a profession and professional ideology in the web 2.0 era. It examines journalism throughout its history in Europe and the United States (US). The nature, role, and social functions of journalism are investigated from the perspective of liberal and critical theories. Liberal theories argue that journalists are autonomous and pursue their profession in line with their own identity and professional ideology. Critical theories, on the other hand, claim that once employed, journalists are required to work within the limits set by capitalist media institutions and, thus, can never be totally free from the commercial and political pressures.

Based on a critical examination of the potentials of journalism from both liberal and critical theories, the chapter lays the groundwork for discussions on how journalists can create their own media and continue their professions freely outside the boundaries of corporate media organizations.

In chapter two, the historical development of the internet and Web 2.0, as well as social media are examined to understand the new digital media ecosystem which affect journalism today. New information and media technologies are examined with regard to their working principles and economies by emphasizing the role of the technology companies that develop them. This chapter which discusses concepts such as media convergence, interactivity, participation, and user-generated content from a critical perspective argues that such concepts have a major influence on the emerging forms of journalism. In addition, the digitalization of journalism in the Web 2.0 era is also explored by focusing on contemporary developments such as computer-assisted reporting, digital/online journalism, mobile journalism, data journalism, automation, bots and algorithms, alternative journalism, and citizen journalism.

Discussions developed in this chapter are needed to grasp new newsgathering and storytelling techniques as well as to changing producer-consumer relationships in news media. This chapter asserts that the integration between producers and consumers allows the withdrawal of journalism from large media companies,, and provides a

possibility for journalists and even ordinary people to practice journalism on the internet and spread news stories on social media networks without any cost. However, it must be remembered that digital media ecosystem that enable journalism profession to be reorganized outside the traditional media institutions via blogs or web sites is itself shaped and colonized by giant technology companies.

The third chapter argues that the rise of informational capitalism in the Web 2.0 era results in a situation in which labour and work take up more immaterial and decentralised forms. This transformation challenges and changes the employment relationships in the media sectors as well. Today, the affordances of social media technologies enable journalists to establish their own born-digital journalistic start-ups in more independent and flexible ways. However, the same digital media environment may also put them into an increasingly precarious position as digital labourers. Here the chapter emphasises the importance of a sustainable business model for digital-born news outlets, which will allow a healthy balance between journalistic values and economic interests. Moreover, the chapter outlines that a sustainable business model may potentially to open a new era for the liberation of journalists from financial concerns.

Therefore, the third chapter first focuses on changing employment relationships in the news media by defining self-employment, freelancing, and self-branding in journalism, as well as, entrepreneurial journalism. And then it moves on to new business models and revenue sources such as, advertisement based and other profit-oriented revenue sources like subscription, crowdfunding, and co-operative model. The chapter investigates digital labour and precariat to determine the potential and the limits of digital journalism to break down old hierarchies discussed in the context of previous chapters.

The fourth chapter starts with a brief history of journalism in Turkey since the the Ottoman period until the end of 1990s in order to understand both the factors that paved the way for a new media order and the conditions under which this new order emerged. The section follows a chronological order that conveys political developments that affect journalism and introduces technological developments such as the founding of printing press, telegraph agencies, radio, and television stations.

Later the fourth chapter explains the transformation of the media system in Turkey since the early 2000s up to present day by focusing on 2000 and 2001 economic crises, conglomeration of the media, and the emergence of partisan media after the JDP government came to power. The conflicts between especially oppositional journalists and the JDP governments are also examined through legal regulations and certain symbolic events such as Gezi Park protests that resulted in restrictions over journalists' rights.

Chapter four draws attention that the digitalisation of news media in Turkey began with the digital transformation of conventional news outlets, and continued with the emergence of born-digital news sites founded by journalists as a response to restricted media environment in Turkey. Here, the independent media that emerged during and after Gezi Park protests are especially worth to mention. Chapter four argues that the decentralised and alternative characteristics of Gezi Park media has become the catalyst of the start-ups that are established by the journalists. They can also be considered as the first examples of news outlets that work within the logic of Web 2.0, as they produce and distribute interactive content from anywhere, at any time by also using social media networks. At the end of this section, examples of journalists who continue their careers on social media networks as freelancers are also given attention.

The remaining sections of the fourth chapter investigates the structural problems of journalism in Turkey in relation to both political factors such as the freedom of the press, judicial pressures that journalists confront, the bans of the internet and social media platforms as well as economic problems like journalists' employment at the minimum wage limit, and/or their not being employed as journalists, de-unionization policies of the traditional media outlets, the problems faced during press card issuance, and the scarcity of journalists with press cards. And, the chapter deals with diminishing employment opportunities in conventional media outlets for professional journalists aiming to reveal the conditions which forced journalists to found and employ their own born-digital start-ups in Turkey.

The fifth chapter contains the fieldwork of the thesis. Having introduced research aims and methodology, this chapter reveals in detail the main findings and their analyses. This chapter explores the strengths and weaknesses of journalism profession in the digital age, by focusing on the sustainability of news sites founded by professional journalists in Turkey. Based on an ethnographic field research it tries to shed light on the demographics of journalists, organisational structures, values, business models, as well as the working conditions and labour relations of the news sites founded by professional journalists in Turkey. The fifth chapter reveals that although journalists' start-ups hold the potential to liberate journalism from commercial interests and direct political pressures, especially in oppressed media environments where censorship and self-censorship mechanisms are well-established, their limited resources and insecure business models threaten their sustainability in the long run, largely restraining their contribution to the journalistic labour force and development of independent journalism.

Despite the efforts of journalists to balance journalistic values and economic requirements by using news business models such as online advertising and crowdfunding in a hybrid way the journalists owned news outlets with the motto of "independence" could not completely free from economic pressures. Similarly, the emergence of precariat among digital journalists limits their income, economic stability and labour rights.

In journalist owned news sites the content produced with a small team as their means are limited. These sites are dependent on social media platforms in news making and generating revenues. As most of their digital labour is spent on social media feeds to produce news and on online advertising and funds and donations to generate revenue they have very little, if any, time go out to the field to gather information and conduct face-to-face interviews.

Most of these news sites rely on outsourcing within the framework of the possibilities offered by social media platforms. They cannot use other technological tools such as digital newsroom software for storytelling and data collection, and for user engagement since they do not have adequate finances. Benefiting from social media during news making requires more organic labour. Alongside their editorial

workload, journalists keep the social network accounts of the news sites open on their smartphones and desktops, and create value with endless clicks like searching, uploading, sharing, and commenting. Thus, a good part of their digital labour spent on social media.

Moreover, because independent journalists earn little, they become economically and legally vulnerable. Since they cannot advertise on Google and Facebook, their content remains at the margins of the internet. Therefore, they cannot reach wider audiences. Also they do not have the economic means to oppose the lawsuits filed against them because of a news story, thus, they try not to attract too much attention at the expense of the freedom of press.

Economic and political restrictions explicitly affect the editorial freedom and working conditions of journalists. Under the circumstances journalists cannot even foresee whether they will be in business in the next five years. All these leave journalists with a lot uncertainty, which results in a precarious regulation of journalistic work and an uncertain future for journalistic values against commercial interests. For a more democratic and sustainable news media order, direct income and/or financial support from the audience is seen a must rather than an option.

The conclusion section not only summarises the main arguments of the thesis but also provides some suggestions for born-digital journalistic start-ups in relation to new business models, digitalisation of labour and the precarization of journalists.

CHAPTER 1: THEORIES OF JOURNALISM AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION, VOCATION AND A PROFESSIONAL IDEOLOGY

1.1. Introduction

To provide a theoretical basis on the transformation of journalism in the Web 2.0 era, especially from a corporate to a more independent and autonomous profession, the first chapter examines journalism as a profession and professional ideology throughout its history and development in Europe and the US. The nature, role, and social functions of journalism are investigated from the perspectives of liberal and critical theories of the journalism and the media systems. In addition to liberal concepts such as press freedom and the fourth estate, critical concepts such as power and hegemony are also explained.

This chapter examines professional organizations, codes of ethics, working principles, and professional identity and ideology of journalism to seek the answers to such questions: How ideal-typical values of journalism can help to free journalists from the hegemonic capitalistic interests of media corporations? Can journalism convert into an occupation solely performed by journalists? By taking into consideration the fact that the information disseminated by the media is produced by journalists (Charon and Mercier, 2003: 23), the chapter also weighs on an old discussion: Who the power belongs to? To journalists or the corporate media?

Critical theories argue that once journalists are defined as workers, their independence and control over their jobs are lost (Freidson, 1986: 111 cited in Pasti, 2007: 32; Pasti, 2007: 32). From this point of view, as long as a professional is employed cannot be independent (Freidson, 1986: 111 cited in Pasti, 2007: 32; Pasti, 2007: 32). However, liberal theories of press and the ideology of professionalism bestows journalism with qualities such as objectivity, independence, and autonomy.

Today, Web 2.0 technologies are seen as opportunities to re-establish journalism as a “one-man-band” occupation of the early 19th century when journalists were not only reporters and pamphleteers, but at the same time, owners, editors, and distributors of the news (Splichal and Dahlgren, 2016: 6). It is considered that the Internet and new digital media technologies provide journalism a chance for growth and reconfiguration outside the established media conglomerates.

The main aim of this chapter is to examine the strength and weaknesses of journalism as a profession and professional ideology from the point of view of both critical and liberal theories. The chapter opens with a brief history of journalism and then moves on to a discussion of liberal and critical theories of press. The last segments of the chapter is devoted to the examination of professional identity and ideology of journalism.

1.2. History and Development of Journalism

Journalism as a profession and a business refers to the modern news media's system of supplying and disseminating their content through a variety of media such as print, broadcast, and digital (Wilke, 2013). Michael Schudson (2003 cited in Deuze and Witschge, 2018: 167) defines journalism as the work or practice of producing and disseminating information about current events of general public interest and importance. Schudson (2008 cited in Deuze and Witschge, 2018: 167) defines the aims of journalism as informing, researching, analysing, mobilizing, providing multiple perspectives and a public forum, and promoting representative democracy. From these contexts, the origins of journalism lie in the natural human desire to learn more about what is going on in the world and to influence the political process in the public sphere (Starkey, 2008: 2; Champman and Kinsey, 2009: 11).

The history of journalism in Europe begins with the pre-journalistic phase. It was then understood that the core essence of journalism was a piece of information that satisfies social and public interest (Wilke, 2013; Conboy, 2004: 7). The verbal activity of sharing information existed even before the technological tools that formalized the communication in newsletters, newsbooks, and finally newspapers (Conboy, 2004: 7; Wilke, 2013).

According to the works of James W. Carey (2007: 7) producing a newspaper required at least three conditions: Widespread literacy, easy and cheap availability of paper and other writing instruments, and the importance of information obtained. Accordingly, the critical prerequisite for the development of journalism in Europe was the invention of the moveable printing press in the mid-15th century by Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz (Wilke, 2013). Only then did the opportunity arise to generate, reproduce and disseminate a large amount of information. Although the names of the printed periodical were different, they were quite similar in content and format. For example, in Germany, they were called “neue zeytungen”, in the Netherlands “courantes”, in France “canards”, in England “corantos”, “diurnalls”, or “news books”, in Spain “relaciones” and in Portugal “relações”. In Venice, they were printed under the name “gazette”. These one-page print periodicals often report on disasters and scandals as well as on political, military, and social events (Wilke, 2013).

In these early newspapers, news was supplied to the printing press by correspondents (pre-journalists) located where important events were taking place or where information could be obtained from elsewhere. These reporters thus carried out a journalistic function that justified the use of the term “correspondence journalism”, which is actually a stage of modern journalism practices. There were three main groups of active correspondents in this type of journalism: first, officials and ambassadors residing or travelling on diplomatic missions; secondly, representatives for trading companies located in different cities; and, third, humanist scholars, members of the universities and monasteries. These three groups were able to provide political, economic, cultural, and sensational news (Wilke, 2013).

In correspondence journalism, reporters want to inform readers so they can develop their own ideas. In essence, they saw themselves as impartial and objective rapporteurs. Therefore, newspapers were primarily aimed at an educated audience who could be assumed to have the knowledge necessary to understanding their news. Moreover, their circulation was still relatively low. This reluctance, however, was also due to the official press control, which sought to suppress unwanted information and opinions (Wilke, 2013).

In the 18th century, for various reasons, the role of journalism began to change in Europe, especially in the United Kingdom (UK). For all intents and purposes, freedom of press reigned in United Kingdom, as the British Parliament failed to renew the Printing Act in 1695. In the absence of censorship, newspapers were able to function as organs of public opinion. This was emboldened by the fact that the UK already has a Parliament with intense debate. Parliamentary reporting, continued to be issued until 1772 (Wilke, 2013).

As a result, the reporter was still in charge of the news, whereas the authors oversaw the article section and various other contributions (Harris, 1987 cited in Wilke, 2013). Not only did they have to limit themselves to writing sober reports, they could also publish critical articles and voice their own opinions. The bipolar party system already existed in England, which led to the establishment of opposition newspapers. However, journalism was rarely autonomous. On the contrary, many newspapers often engaged in propaganda, as they were subsidized by the government, political parties, or individual politicians (Wilke, 2013).

In France the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 led to the founding of many newspapers and the birth of opinion journalism (Freedman, 2014: 321). Many prominent and radical revolutionaries were active as journalists, such as Camille Desmoulins (1760-1794), Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793), and Jacques-René Hébert (1757-1794) (Freedman, 2014: 321). Thanks to the efforts of all these journalists, thus, the pamphlets' impact on the French Revolution bestowed journalism not only as a constitutional force, but also a founding force (Freedman, 2014: 321). During the French Revolution, news was also incorporated into broad narratives or sweeping arguments called "literary journalism" (Wilke, 2013).

With the Enlightenment in the late 18th century, a new role was given to journalism in the Kingdom of Prussia, which regarded the journalist simply as a "public spy" who wrote news or published critical articles and expressed his views through the media. Henceforth, journalists would also warn the public against misunderstandings. However, journalism in Europe at the beginning of the 19th century suffered from censorship and it was very difficult to fulfil all these roles (Wilke, 2013).

The press also did not have much room to manoeuvre due to financial constraints. Initially, political newspapers had to finance themselves almost entirely at retail prices. Revenues were often meagre, leading to reliance on donors and corruption among journalists. In the 18th century, advertisements were run almost exclusively on their own media, such as advertisers in England, “intelligenzblätter” in Kingdom of Prussia, and “affiches” in France. The press became fully commercialized only after the state monopoly on advertising was relaxed and the advertising tax was abolished (e.g. in England in 1855, in Kingdom of Prussia in 1874). Thus, this situation gave newspapers and journalists the ability to act (Wilke, 2013).

In the US publishers had already created the massively popular newspaper called the “penny press”, which emerged in the 1830s with a completely different source of funding and content (Wilke, 2013). Before the 1820s and 1830s, newspapers were limited to a small segment of population: the wealthy white man (Hallin, 1988: 128). Accordingly, Daniel C. Hallin (1988: 128) writes that the penny press of the 1830s (the forerunner of today’s commercial mass media), newspapers first came into the hands of the masses on a regular basis. Therefore, with the support of advertising revenues, prices were also lowered. As Hallin (1988: 128) emphasizes, this transformation of the American press was paradoxical: it democratized the newspaper market on the one hand, and centralized the means of political communication in the hands of large corporations, on the other. This eroded the mobilization and advocacy roles that the newspapers and journalism previously fulfilled.

Moreover, the penny papers and their successors were more commercial ventures than political ones. As a result, advertising became the solid economic foundation of the new mass-circulation newspapers, and the newspaper became a major business venture that required significant capital investment and promising profits. These profits from the mass circulation of the newspapers also had important political consequences, for example, they did not need political subsidies to survive. In fact, the advertising economy not only enabled the newspaper to rid itself of political upheavals, but also probably created significant incentives for abandonment of politically committed journalism, particularly the partisan kind (Hallin, 1988:128).

On the subject, Robert Waterman McChesney (2003: 300) also emphasizes that the purpose of journalism in US in the first two or three generations of the Republic was to persuade as well as inform. The press, on the other hand, tended to be highly partisan institution, with each newspaper representing the politics of its owner, closely linked to political parties. In what was called the Partisan Era, the government was effectively removing the ability of opposition parties or movements to mobilize popular support by banning or limiting newspapers (McChesney, 2003: 300).

Thus, in the 19th century, the logic of newspaper publishing changed from primarily political to commercial. The press system in the US remained openly partisan, but increasingly became the engine of huge profits as costs fell, population grew, and advertising industry (which had emerged as a major source of income) developed (McChesney, 2003: 300). As newspapers turned to sensationalism to sell, commercialism also fed corruption (Baldasty, 1992: 1999 cited in McChesney, 2003: 300).

With *La Presse* initiated by Emile de Girardin, a revolution in journalism also took place in Continental Europe and in the UK when the cheap press first appeared in France in 1836. For example, the cheap press in UK succeeded in bringing the news to a wide audience. Newspaper, which until then were more concerned with principles and polemics than with actual news, changed their character and became organs of information. However, it was clear that no newspaper in Continental Europe or the UK had the financial and technical means to gather and convey the news their readers needed. It should be noted that the curiosity of the readers was increasing as their educational level (Unesco, 1953: 9-11). Thus, the birth of the major news organs of the press became a factor in the development of news agencies following the invention of the telegraph, the first of the electronic media (Unesco, 1953: 9; Starkey and Crisell, 2009).

At first glance, these news agencies were commercial enterprises. The first was the Havas Agency, founded by Charles Havas in France in 1835, and it used the semaphore telegraph, the first successful telegraph system patented in 1837. Following the establishment of Havas Agency, in 1848 Bernard Wolf was created Wolf Agency in Germany, in 1851 Julius Reuter was created the Reuters Agency in United

Kingdom, and in 1857 in the U.S. New York Associated Press was established as a co-operative organization owned by newspaper groups (Unesco, 1953: 9-11).

News agencies were selling the news collected by their reporters to an increasing number of customers, including diplomats, traders and financiers, and newspapers. They were able to inform quickly and less expensive as the telegraph facilities of the period allowed (Unesco, 1953: 9-11). None of these agencies were subject to political influence. They were independent of governments, but they also published news spread by Ministries. Since 1879, with the establishment of national agencies and the development of communication technologies, news agencies settled all over the world in a short time and allowed the news to be transmitted from capital to capital and then from continent to continent (Unesco, 1953: 14).

While the importance of news agencies has increased in the world, starting from highly industrialized countries, they have also helped to establish the institutional and organizational framework of journalism. News agencies have not only helped to create a transnational news network, but have contributed to a development by allowing journalism to providing both the facts and opinions, by also contributing to public debate and voicing public opinion in the political as well as in the cultural sphere (Örnebring, 2013: 400-401).

Thus, journalism was being restructured as an institution and as a distinct professional group with its own value system and standards of practice, based on a public service ideology, and with considerable autonomy (Hallin and Manchini, 2004: 217; Örnebring, 2013: 401). However, at the same time, it was turning into a sector that created an imbalance in journalism practices by diverting the attention of newspaper workers from journalism primarily to activities related to the commercial interests of the press organizations they worked for (Picard, 2004: 54).

During this period, journalism, which became a profession and also a sector, brought up the issue of protecting the labour rights of journalists working in press organizations. Thus, one after another, journalist unions began to be established, for example the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) was established in 1907 in the UK and Ireland (NUJ, 2022). On the other hand, the International Federation of Journalists

(IFJ), founded in Paris, in 1926, is the organisation that speaks for journalists within the United Nations system and the international trade union movement. IFJ guarantees the rights and labour relations journalists as follows (IFJ, 2022),

- It organizes collective action to support journalist unions in their fight to defend fair wages, decent working conditions and workers' rights.
- It encourages international action to defend press freedom and social justice through strong, free and independent unions of journalists.
- It fights for gender equality in all its structures, policies and programmes.
- It opposes all forms of discrimination and condemns the use of the media as propaganda or to incite intolerance and conflict.
- It believes in freedom of political and cultural expression.

In this contexts, journalism continued to be shaped by the rapid development of technology (Khattak, Nasir and Sultan, 2012: 258). For example, the cinema newsreel, first created by Pathé's "Animated Gazette" in 1910, offered audiences new experiences in the form of moving images to accompany text and eventually a verbal narration (Starkey, 2007: 115-116 cited in Starkey and Crisell, 2009). Warwick Bioscope Chronicle, and Gaumont Graphic appeared later in 1910 (Hiley and McKernan, 2001: 187). Movies were about five minutes long and usually showed four or five stories that featured the week's news (Hiley and McKernan, 2001: 187).

The films were silent, with short headlines promoting each element, and by 1912 newsreels were arranged in two issues per week. During the First World War, newsreels were taken over by the War Office and used as a propaganda method for official war films. Its name was changed to the War Office Official Topical Budget, and later to Pictorial News. The cinema newsreels became popular in the 1920s and competed with newspapers to feed the public's news appetite (Hiley and McKernan, 2001: 187). However, they could not be up-to-date because they needed a production (Starkey, 2007: 115-116 cited in Starkey and Crisell, 2009).

Thanks to the invention and development of the radio (especially the transistor radio), it became possible to distribute the news in mass from a more flexible and

instantaneous medium (Starkey and Crisell, 2009; Champan and Kinsey, 2009: 9). Guy Starkey and Andrew Crisell (2009) write that with the advent of wireless technology, radio messages, from the moment they are formed, became accessible literally anyone, anywhere, with a suitable receiver.

Originally, journalism which practiced on radio was a clone of print journalism (Chapman and Kinsey, 2009: 9). Even when the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) began broadcasting its General News Bulletins on December 23, 1922, there were no journalists within the organization (Chapman and Kinsey, 2009: 9). They were dependent on the Reuters News Agency. The BBC was able to transmit radio news only after the morning and evening newspapers came out. Text-based information needed to be converted to a radio-friendly style, but it was not yet up-to-date (Chapman and Kinsey, 2009: 9).

The 1930s and 1940s were the golden age of radio (Starkey, 2009:6). In the 1930s, some developments were particularly noticeable in the production of radio news (Starkey, 2009:6). For example, bulletins were written in less literary and more sound-like language. Magnetic - hence instant - recording technology arrived, and radio gradually freed itself from some of the restrictions imposed by the government and the newspaper industry. Some great stories revealed that radio could broadcast in a more contemporary and lively way than the press (Starkey, 2009: 6).

Radio blossomed during the Second World War due to a shortage of newspaper print at a time when news was so important (Chapman and Kinsey, 2009: 10). With the existence of state public radio broadcasts, it has also come to the fore as an information and entertainment tool (Starkey and Crisell, 2009; Chapman and Kinsey, 2009: 9; Alonso et al, 2010: 304). The idea was that audiences would enjoy the full spectrum of programming, from classical music to drama and news. Audiences were not separated or differentiated. This coexistence involved gradual adaptations towards more entertaining news presentation styles (Chapman and Kinsey, 2009: 9).

In the early 1960s, television began to replace the radio and the press as the main news source (Chapman, 2009: 12). Originally practiced on television, journalism imitated the practices of radio. For example, the presenters were off-screen, voice only and anonymous, the news was in the form of bulletin and was often accompanied by a

photograph (Champman, 2009:12). And, with the exception of some internal experiments, such as making newsreels for television, nearly all content came from radio (Conway, 2007: 468 cited in Socolow: 684). Despite this, television managed to attract the attention of the audience with the images of guns on the decks of cargo ships during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. As a result, the 1962 Cuban missile crisis was accepted as the story that would establish the dominance of television as a news medium (Hood and O’Leary 1990: 35-36 cited in Starkey, 2008: 8).

The introduction of video in the 1970s also changed the storytelling of the news (Powell, 1993 cited in Pavlic, 2000: 231). Research by Adam Clayton Powell (1993 cited in Pavlic, 2000: 231) for the Freedom Forum Media Studies Centre showed before video was used, television news reports contained longer footage, less editing, slower-paced narration. On the other hand, with the arrival of the video, the editing accelerated, the shots were shortened and the narration became much faster (Powell, 1993 cited in Pavlic, 2000: 231).

The described transformation has also manifested itself in the news produced for cable news channels such as Cable News Network (CNN). With the development of live broadcasting technologies since the 1980s, the demand for shooting international events has increased dramatically. This led to the restructuring of the international video market in line with the requirements of private radio and television channels. Reuters Television, Associated Press Television News, *l’Union Européenne de Radio Télévision* began to market images of international events to all countries of the world. They also helped promote the 24-hour news cycle (Tutal-Cheviron, 2014: 161).

The cycle means 24-hour news review and reporting simultaneously with fast-paced lifestyles, especially with the emergence of cable television news channels bringing much faster news production (Silvia, 2001: 45). With the developments observed in 24-hour news channels, the increasing competition for the attention of audiences and advertisers, the phenomenon of television journalism has turned into a more profit-oriented stage than public service (Weaver et al, 2006: 226).

However, “On Television”, Pierre Bourdieu (1999: 14) wrote “we are dealing with an instrument that theoretically offers access to all”. Therefore, television has a

great promise as a tool for the democratic dissemination of information. The power attributed to television can be summarized in the following words of Edward R. Murrow (cited in Barnett, 2011: XV), one of the pioneers of broadcast journalism: "... This instrument can teach, it can illuminate; yes, and it can even inspire. But it can do so only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those end. Otherwise it is merely wires and lights in a box. There is a great and perhaps decisive battle to be fought against ignorance, intolerance and indifference. This weapon of television could be useful."

As Peter Dahlgren (1995: 22 cited in Barnett, 2011: 18) wrote, the emergence of television in the post-war years was shaped by the principles of public service. Indeed, European television was, until relatively recently, represented by national public service monopolies. The main purpose of television's public service model was not to use the medium to generate income in a commercial market, but rather to use it as a resource for the public good. Regulated by states that issue broadcast licences under certain conditions (Budge, McKay, Bartle, Newton, 2007: 316):

- Content should appeal to a wide spectrum of tastes, the majority and the minority; news programmes must be balanced, accurate and unbiased; political advertising and editorials are not allowed.
- Content must be accountable to the public; not to the market shareholders or the government. The media should be controlled and regulated by their own organs to avoid the dangers of government interference. Broadcasting should serve the entire nation, including remote areas, and not just a particular region or part of the population.
- Broadcasting should be financed mainly from public funds, not from commercial sources. Public funds may be in the form of general subsidies from the government or licence fees, or some combination of the two.

In 1990s, before and during the rise of the internet, it became clear that commercial news outlets had abandoned the public service mission of journalism especially with the concentration of media (Scott, 2005: 90). Media concentration has occurred both vertically (i.e. by integrating previously independent economic entities of different production levels into a single company) and horizontally (i.e. by merging

companies at the same production level). On the one hand, concentration leads to a reduction of independent players in a given market sector, while at the same time it allows larger economic units that are better equipped financially and structurally to deal with the risks of a more globalized economy (von Dohnanyi and Möller, 2003: 28).

Therefore, uncontrolled concentration will reduce the number of competitors in a given market sector to a small group of dominant oligopolies, or, at the extreme, to the monopolistic dominance of the only remaining supplier. Concentration also has a political dimension. For example, structural censorship of the media market poses a direct threat to press freedom. Regulations such as surcharges on paper for newspapers and magazines, or non-transparent allocation procedures of frequencies or licences for electronic media are nothing more than a means of government authorities to tightly control the media and access to the media market for few competitors (von Dohnanyi and Möller, 2003: 29).

Vertical media concentration, where all print facilities and distribution channels are in the hands of one or a few companies, creates almost insurmountable barrier to market access to smaller media outlets (von Dohnanyi and Möller, 2003: 29). And this unfortunately means chaining the quality of a news organization to the wealth of the stock market, almost inevitably sacrificing long-term reliability for short-term returns (Scott, 2005: 90).

At first glance, in the described conditions, the internet was seen as an opportunity to replace journalism with the role of public servant (Scott, 2005: 90). Ben Scott (2005: 92) describes the ideal attributed to the internet with these words:

“In theory, the internet does hold the potential to change the way information is produced and consumed. With an instantaneous, unlimited supply of easily accessible information on every topic under the sun, each citizen may essentially become a self-employed gatekeeper. What’s more, low production costs have inspired millions to self-publish and millions more to read alternative content outside the mainstream. The monopoly on public knowledge long held by elite media outlets could, over time, possibly destabilize and empower individuals and their communities. The public may

finally be able to use journalism as it was intended, as a set of guidelines and talking points that convene a discussion among a democratic citizenry”.

Despite its promise, the first journalistic contents on the internet were often copies of major daily newspapers (Scott, 2005: 94). Nevertheless, in digital versions of major newspapers, editors were able to quickly execute a twenty four hour news cycle and publish breaking news instantly (Scott, 2005: 94). Web boards and chat rooms were unique opportunities for audiences to interact directly with journalists (Scott, 2005: 94).

On the other hand, traditional news media faced competition from new and unfamiliar places, such as news portals (e.g., Yahoo and Aol, etc.). These news portals did not produce journalistic content themselves, but functioned as content aggregators. They gather links and leads from other news sources and filter them by current categories (e.g., headlines, sports, entertainment, politics, etc.), and finally they serve them on the homepages of the highest traffic sites on the web (Scott, 2005: 94).

However, the most heralded source of competition for traditional news media has come from the start-ups. These digital-born news organizations caught the attention of many journalists as well as audiences and advertisers, and kept them out of traditional media business, promising a bright future in the new digital news industry. There were numerous non-profit news organizations created on the internet, as well as organizations specializing in public and citizen journalism, such as IndyMedia. Blogs run by professional journalists and amateurs also contributed free of charge to political, social and cultural issues on the internet (Scott, 2005: 95-96).

Thus, as a space of change and transition over time, the internet continued to produce new forms of news production and distribution. It not only offered new tools for newsgathering and dissemination, but also introduced new business models for journalism within a new economy. And, it still holds promise for balancing journalistic roles, values and commercial interests in digital media with the potential to liberate the profession.

1.3. Liberal Theories of Journalism

According to the liberal understanding, journalism is primarily associated with democracy (McNair, 2000 cited in Lamoureux, 2021). In this sense, journalism is a constitutive agent of political society that aims to prolong public debate (George, 2013; Gingras, 2012 cited in Lamoureux, 2021). On the other hand, the media represents a deliberative public space, or in other words, a discussion space between the state and civil society where ideas must be disseminated (Habermas, 1978; Dahlgren, 2009 cited in Lamoureux, 2021). The Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries contributed to the acceptance and spread of the liberal principles cited (Siebert et al., 1981: 43).

Liberal philosophy mainly opposed the dominance of ideas of divine power to support rationality and the power of reason (Al-Ahmed, 1987: 12). Liberalism is similar to the doctrines of early Christianity. In early Christianity, the power to reasoning was given by God, just as the knowledge of good and evil was given by God. With such a legacy from his creator, man could become conscious of the world around him by his own efforts (Siebert et al. 1981: 41). As Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm (1981: 43) noted in their book, “The Four Theories of the Press”, liberals claim that man is a rational animal and has a purpose in himself. Man can use his God-given power of reason to solve human problems. Accordingly, the main aim of liberalism was to free man from all external constraints on his capacity to use his reason to solve religious, political, and social problems.

On this basis, Siebert et al. (1981) introduced authoritarian, libertarian and social responsibility theories of the press, and Soviet Communist concepts to define what the press should be and do. Thus, a liberal press theory emerged from one of the four theories of classical liberalism (Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng and White, 2009: 4). Traditionally, in classical liberalism, civil society constitutes a kind of stage where free exchange of ideas can take place based on the use of people’s individual talents. According to classical liberalism, everyone can form and express an opinion on issues of general interest circulating in a public space and should try to persuade others to accept them freely in conditions of the free exercise of reason (Rüdiger, 2015: 295). In accordance with Four Theories and classical liberalism, it

assume that people have freedom of the press if they are free to discuss political issues in writing, without government pressure (Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng and White, 2009:4-5).

The liberal theory of the press also assumes that when presented with sufficient information in a market of ideas, people are utilitarian in nature, capable of making a rational decision independent of government influence and state intervention (Siebert et al., 1956 cited in Nee, 2014: 328). According to liberal ideas, journalism and the media is no longer an instrument of government, but a partner in the search for truth (Siebert, et.al, 1963:3 cited in Bernard, 2005: 9). Here the free market of ideas presented by the theory to support democracy is closely linked to *laissez-faire*⁶economy (Benson, 2008: 2593).

Thus, the liberal theory of the press is built against the authoritarian theory. In authoritarian theory, which opposes the autonomy of individuals in thought and action, the media is also solely owned and controlled by the government, with the effective suppression of inappropriate opinions and unpleasant news. For this reason, there is a censorship of the press where only the voices of groups in solidarity with the existing can be heard (Nordenstreng, 1997: 99; Färdigh, 2010:4; Piontek, 2016: 50). The “Soviet communist” model is nothing but a radicalization of the authoritarian system. The press is for the communist countries only a propaganda tool of the central Party. The role of journalists in this model is to convince citizens of the merits of communism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. For the authors, no press in history has been so controlled as the propaganda sheets of communist countries (Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm, 1956: 5 cited in Lamoureux, 2021).

However, in liberal press theory, individuals have the right to own the media and to operate and distribute media products without any government control (Nordenstreng, 1997: 99; Piontek, 2016: 50). The only constraint limiting this right is the operating cost, which excludes groups that do not have the necessary capital base for successful entry, as Graham Murdock and Peter Golding (1977: 37) point out. As

⁶ The French phrase *laissez faire* meaning “let do” or “permit to act” was generally used to indicate a doctrine which maintains that private initiative and production should be free from economic interventionism and taxation by the State beyond the minimum requirement to maintain internal administration, security of private property and protection against foreign invasion. In this way the term became synonymous with ‘free-market economy’ and became a slogan of the liberals (Basu, 2008: 82).

a result, communication becomes a commodity within the liberal press theory, and its producers compete in a market dominated by the forces controlling the free market as a whole. Thus, individuals with sufficient financial resources can establish their own media outlets and the business continues depending on its ability to generate sufficient profits (Al-Ahmed, 1987:13).

The theory also sees the government as the primary, not the only, threat to press freedom. The best-known example of the ideal is the First Amendment to the US Constitution. This article states: Congress will not make any law that restricts freedom of speech, or of the press. This formulation refers to freedom of the press, free from government interference by allowing any material to be published or broadcast without fear or grace (Benson, 2008: 2593). In theory, journalists have the right to collect any information without hindrance from any source within or outside the national borders. There should be no restrictions on the distribution of this product, which is claimed to meet the wishes, needs and expectations of the audience and to offer those choices (Al-Ahmed, 1987: 13). In this way, the media will represent diverse voices and hold government accountable, but will also pursue their own economic interests (Benson, 2008: 2593).

On the other hand, liberal theory therefore believes that the media always takes the form and colour of the social and political structures in which it operates. Accordingly, Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini (2004: 198) present various media systems in their book *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*, such as: The Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model, The North/Central European or Democratic Corporatist Model and Anglo-American model of the mass media called the North Atlantic or liberal model of media and politics.

The classification of Western media systems by Hallin and Mancini (2004 cited in Petterson, 2007: 329) is based on four main dimensions:

- The degree and nature of state involvement in the media;
- The degree of political parallelism, which means the extent to which the media is formally or informally linked to parties and other political institutions;

- The degree of professionalism in journalism, as measured by the independence of journalists and their adherence to articulated standards of practice, including a commitment to public service;
- The degree of mass dissemination of news content.

For example, “The Polarized Pluralist Model” is found in Mediterranean countries. Here the mass-circulation newspaper has no solid foundation, the state is interventionist, political parallelism is high, and journalistic professionalism is not deeply rooted. Journalists in these countries are more dependent on the political elite (Patterson, 2007: 330). On the other hand, “The ‘Democratic Corporatist Model’” describes the media systems of northern and central European democracies. Here historical, cultural, political, and market forces come together to produce a powerful commercially and politically connected media. In this model, state intervention allows for the development of a high degree of journalistic professionalism (Patterson, 2007: 330).

And the “Liberal model”, which includes the media systems of Britain, Canada and Ireland, with important internal differences, is adopted as the purest example of the liberal mass media system (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 198). The defining features of the “Liberal Model” are “a vibrant commercial news market, a limited amount of state intervention, a high degree of journalistic professionalism, and a weak political parallelism” (Patterson, 2007: 330).

However, the initially sensationalist, commercialist and monopolistic tendencies of the US media, combined with political imbalances, eliminated the individual and social benefits of the liberal model (McQuail, 2010: 170; Nee, 2014: 328). Accordingly, observers and activists thought that pure market orientation did not necessarily support democracy and argued that at least the press should have a social responsibility (McQuail, 2010: 170; Nee, 2014: 328). Social responsibility theory was formulated in 1947 in the US with the report of the “Commission on the Freedom of the Press” chaired by Robert M. Hutchins. The report was as an attempt to find a solution to the situation created by the liberal system (McQuail, 2010: 170).

The report explained the concepts of social responsibility and listed the basic journalistic standards that the media/press should apply. Above all, a responsible press must present the events of the day fully, accurately, comprehensively and intelligently in a context that gives them meaning. Secondly, the press should function as a forum for the exchange of comments and criticism and be the common carrier of public expression. And the press should give a representative picture of the groups that make up the society, as well as present and clarify the aims and values of the society (McQuail, 2010: 170).

As seen in the report, the main responsibilities of the press were defined as the accuracy of the facts, the promotion of open debate, the representation of divergent views, and the protection of individual rights by serving as a *watchdog* against government abuses of power (Benson, 2008). However, as Pickard (2010 cited in Nee, 2014: 328) argues, the report was not well received by many businessmen, who perceived the idea of any government intervention as socialism. The newspaper industry also disliked the report, fearing that its social responsibility mandate would entail rape in the form of government censorship (Siebert et al., 1956 cited in Nee, 2014: 328). These concerns were compounded by Supreme Court rulings that led newspapers to voluntarily remove obvious political bias from news pages and add more diversity to their editorial staffs (Blanchard, 1977; Nerone, 1995 cited in Nee, 2014: 328).

The social responsibility theory has been extended by Siebert et al. (1956 cited in Nee, 2014: 328-329) in their work titled “Four Theories of the Press”. Within liberal model, they defined social responsibility as requiring the press to put three public service tasks ahead of more profit-oriented goals: “serving the political system, enlightening the public, and serving as a government watchdog” (Siebert et al., 1956 cited in Nee, 2014: 328-329). Thus, social responsibility theory developed journalistic autonomy with professionalization and supported the liberal journalistic ideal of objectivity and political neutrality, which emphasized investigative reporting on views, including the views of both journalists and owners, balancing opposing viewpoints, and maintaining a neutral observer role for the journalist (Schudson, 2001; Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 41). As Hallin and Mancini (2004: 219) note the ideal of

objectivity has become dominant globally, even among journalists in countries where highly polarized political cultures have made it difficult to implement.

Over time, social responsibility aspect of liberal theories has also took a different path and found expression in the celebration of alternative visions such as emancipatory theory and communitarianism (McQuail, 2010: 182). Emancipatory theory deals with the emancipatory power of media usage and its social consequences (Ebersbach and Glaser, 2004:3). For example, Bertold Brecht (1983: 169 cited in Vatikiotis, 2005: 5) emphasized the democratic potential of radio broadcasting by pointing to the possibility of the practice of two-way communication, while also re-employing the listener as a producer. And based on the idea of Walter Benjamin (1968: 232 cited in Vatikiotis, 2005: 5), the author as producer questions the distinction between producer and consumer; Hans Magnus Enzensberger (1970 cited in McQuail, 2010: 183; Vatikiotis, 2005: 5) points out that the anarchist and individualist rather than communist counterculture ideas of the 1960s supported the democratic use potential of new electronic media. And for the first time in the history, news production and distribution technologies are putting the emancipatory potential of communication in the hands of individuals, not media monopolies. Communitarian theory, on the other hand, emphasizes the social ties that bind people together (Macintyre, 1981; Sandel, 1982; Rorty, 1989; Taylor, 1989 cited in McQuail, 2010: 183). In some ways, “the call is to return to a more organic social form in which the press plays an integrative, expressive and articulating role”. Here, partnership is seen as “the way forward” (McQuail, 2010: 183).

In addition, Denis McQuail proposed a new type of theory based on Enzensberger’s work on the emancipatory power of media usage, and the democratic participant theory emerged (Vatikiotis, 2005: 6). In the democratic participant theory, journalism is called upon to actively promote the political involvement of citizens (McQuail, 1983; Ferree et., al. 2002 cited in Benson, 2008: 2592). The theory emphasizes principles such as popular inclusion, empowerment and full expression through a range of communication styles in the context of both developed and developing societies, while replacing the top-down form of communication by the mass media with vertical and horizontal forms (McQuail, 1983; Ferree et. Al. 2002 cited in Benson, 2008: 2592; Vatikiotis, 2005: 6). Participation in democratic

participant theory implies a higher level of public involvement in communication systems. It includes the participation of the public in the production process as well as in the management and planning of communication systems (Servaes, 1999: 85 cited in Carpentier, 2007: 109). The empirical manifestations of such a pattern are many and varied, including underground or alternative press, pirate radio, community cable television, samizdat publication, micro-media in rural settings, neighbourhood media, wall posters, and media for women and ethnic minorities (McQuail 1994, 132 cited in Vatikiotis, 2005: 6).

In this theory, individual citizens and minority groups have the right to access the media (the right to communicate) and to receive services from the media according to their needs. The organisation and content of the media should not be subject to central political or state bureaucratic control (McQuail, 1983: 97). Democratic participant theory also advocates the idea that media should exist primarily for their audiences, not for media organisations, professionals or the media's customers. This is why all groups, organisations and local communities need to have their own media according to the theory (McQuail, 1983 cited in Robinson-Beachboard, 2007: 368). Thus, the participatory model emphasizes the importance of democratization and cultural identity of local communities and participation at all levels, international, national, local, and individual (Servaes, 1999: 88).

1.3.1. Freedom of the Press

The western civilizations have associated freedom of the press especially with the liberal theory (Gunaratne, 2002: 345; Burrowes, 2011: 4). Later, as the democratic form of government spread all over the world, the concept of freedom of speech and press was accepted as an integral part of liberal doctrine (Siebert et al., 1956: 67 cited in Gunaratne, 2002: 345). Thus, the purpose of a liberal press (or media) is "to inform, entertain, and sell but mainly to help discover the truth and control the government (Siebert et al., 1956:7). The Commission on Freedom of the Press and William Ernest Hocking in the late 1940s also defined the concept of freedom of the press as follows:

"A free press is free from compulsions from whatever source, governmental or social, external or internal. From compulsions, not from pressures: for no press can be free from pressures except in a moribund society empty of contending

forces and beliefs. These pressures, however, if they are persistent and distorting – as financial, clerical, popular, institutional pressures may become – approach compulsions; and something is then lost from effective freedom, which the press and its public must unite to restore.

A free press is free for the expression of opinion in all its phases. It is free for the achievement of those goals of press service on which its own ideals and the requirements of the community combine and which existing techniques make possible. For these ends it must have full command of technical resources, financial strength, reasonable access to sources of information at home and abroad, and the necessary facilities for bringing information to the national market. The press must grow to the measure of this market.

For the press there is a third aspect of freedom. The free press must be free to all who have something worth saying to the public, since the essential object for which a free press is valued is that ideas deserving a public hearing shall have a public hearing” (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947: 128-129; Hocking, 1947: 228 cited in Gunaratne, 2002: 347).

For M. L. Stein (1966: 11 cited in Gunaratne, 2002: 345), freedom of press means the action of the press as a market place where ideas, opinions and theories are presented to citizens for their acceptance or rejection without government censorship. Lucas A. Powe (1991: 285 cited in Gunaratne, 2002: 345) adds that editorial autonomy from the government and the government’s inability to dictate censorship enable the press to fulfil its fourth estate role. This is a role that gives the public the right to know (Powe, 1991: 285 cited in Gunaratne, 2002: 345). Clement E. Asante (1997 cited in Gunaratne, 2002: 345) also draws attention to the following definitions of press freedom in the academic literature: the relative absence of government restrictions; prevalence of autonomy; and its ability to serve as the fourth estate controlling the three official branches of the government: legislature, executive and judiciary.

In this context, above all, a free press functions as a reliable source of information for citizens and provides open access to facts and debates on social, political, and economic issues (Schudson, 2003 cited in Nisbet and Stoycheff, 2011: 722). Therefore, in democracies, a free press is a key factor that shapes citizen knowledge, perceptions and behaviours, which are the foundations of citizens’ demand for democracy.

Second, a free press must act as an institution of accountability to the public, acting as a watchdog on the actions of public officials and the bureaucratic process (Siegle, Weinstein and Halperin, 2004 cited in Nisbet and Stoycheff, 2011: 722). The watchdog role leads to greater political stability and less violence, reduces political corruption, and increases the independence of the judiciary system and government efficiency, which helps hold elected leaders accountable to their constituents (Chowdhury, 2004; Norris and Inglehart, 2004, 2010 cited in Nisbet and Stoycheff, 2011: 722). In this sense, a free press is a resource for citizens to evaluate the democracy supply in their country and form an opinion on how satisfied they are with their government (Mattes and Bratton, 2007; Schmitt-Beck and Voltmer, 2007 cited in Nisbet and Stoycheff, 2011: 722).

Third, a free press fosters citizens' demand for democracy by socializing citizens according to their norms, values and practices, and by creating spaces for open political deliberation (Hoffman, 2002; Lynch, 2005; Mattes and Bratton, 2007; Nisbet, 2008; Schmitt-Beck and Voltmer, 2007 cited in Nisbet and Stoycheff, 2011: 722).

The Commission on Freedom of the Press report (1947: 12 cited in Gunaratne, 2002: 349) underlines that freedom of the press is not a fixed and isolated value that is always the same in every society. It is a function within a society and must vary according to the social context. Hocking (1947: 194 cited in Gunaratne, 2002: 349) also stated in his writings that the concept of free press cannot always mean the same in every society. Accordingly, the various aspects of the concept also require an accurate measurement that covers not only individual states but also the world in general (Gunaratne, 2002: 349).

Freedom House, for example, has conducted worldwide surveys to measure press freedom since 1979, classify the media as free, partly free, and not free depending on the degree to which each country allows the free flow of information. Freedom House claims that its survey uses sovereign individuals as the universal criterion (Sussman, 2000: 9 cited in Gunaratne, 2002: 349; Burrowes, 1989: 46-49; Nerone, 1995: 24-26; Carey, 1987: 9-10 cited in Burrowes, 2011: 6).

Freedom House also claims that it applies the fundamental thrust of the Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (that is, everyone has the right to freedom of thought and expression) when assessing freedom of the press. Freedom House reports that even in 2016, only 13 % of the world's population had access to a free press. Forty-one percent of the world's population has a partly free press, forty six percent of them live in non-free media environments. Bangladesh, Turkey, Burundi, France, Serbia, Yemen, Egypt, Macedonia, and Zimbabwe were among the countries that experienced the highest declines in 2015 (Freedom House, 2016).

Freedom House also reports that the overall level of press freedom worldwide has been falling steadily since 2002, particularly among emerging democracies (Freedom House, 2016). This decline is accompanied by a lack of democratic consolidation among third-wave democracies. Many of these countries are stuck in long, transitory periods, advocating democracy only in name (Diamond, 2008 cited in Nisbet and Stoycheff, 2011:723). According to the study of Erik C. Nisbet and Elizabeth Stoycheff (2011: 723) these trends are not accidental and there is an important relationship between press freedom and democratic consolidation.

1.3.2. The Fourth Estate

Freedom of the press is typically seen as crucial to democracy and its development. From this point of view, the basic idea is that an independent news media will facilitate free and fair elections and shed light on corruption cases, thus acting as the Fourth Estate (Hutchison et al., 2016: 165). In representative democracies, different branches of government (an executive separate from the legislature and the judiciary) are established to maintain checks and balances. The news media, while performing its research and reporting function, mainly spies on the government and the elected officials. For this reason, they were often labelled the "Fourth Estate", a term first used by Edmund Burke as noted by historian Thomas Carlyle (Schultz, 1998: 14 cited in Felle, 2016: 17; Balle, 2014: 94; Jensen, 2010: 617; Sedel, 2021: 47).

"Burke said that, there were Three Estates in Parliament (the Lords Spiritual, the Lords Temporal and the Commons); hence, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all. It is ... a literal fact ... [that] Literature is our Parliament too. Printing ... is equivalent to Democracy... Whoever can speak, speaking now

to the whole nation, becomes a power, a branch of government, with inalienable weight in law-making, in all acts of authority.... The nation is governed by all that has tongue in the nation” (Carlyle, 1888 [1841]: 349-50 cited in Jensen, 2010: 617).

On the other hand, for Carlyle (1899: 139 cited in Jensen, 2010: 617), the Fourth Estate was not a metaphor or a literary reality. According to Carlyle (1899: 139 cited in Jensen, 2010: 617), printing was equivalent to democracy, and the right of the people to elect their leaders was greatly influenced by what was said in the press or what was written in the newspapers. Therefore, in France, in 1840, Honoré de Balzac already wrote that the press is the fourth power of the state in France. According to Balzac, the press can attack anything, but no one can attack the press (Sedel, 2021: 47).

Thus, the idea that the news media can act as a shield against excessive state power has long been supported by political philosophers and journalists who have assigned the news media a pivotal role in politics as a critical independent advocate of the public interest (Donohue et al., 1995 cited in Jensen, 2010: 617). The status of the Fourth Estate has been attributed to the press and to the news media more generally by many political philosophers, from John Milton to Jeremy Bentham to Nicolas de Condorcet, and more recently Jürgen Habermas (1989 cited in Jensen, 2010: 617).

The press has long been conceived as an independent pole of symbolic power in modern society, often outside the direct control of church and state (Thompson, 1995: 53 cited in Jensen, 2010: 617). For example, John Stuart Mill (1859: 22 cited in Jensen, 2010: 617) praised the press as one of the safeguards against corrupt or tyrannical government. Similarly, Milton (2006 [1644]: 27 cited in Jensen, 2010: 617), opposing parliamentary support for press censorship, declared that the freedom of the printing and the press should be restored. Such philosophical visions of a powerful and autonomous press as a critical counterforce capable of challenging overwhelming state power have clear repercussions in contemporary theories of the public sphere, such as Habermas’s (1989 cited in Jensen, 2010: 617).

In the ideal of the *public sphere*, Habermas (1989 cited in Benson, 2009: 177) combines concerns for the quality (reasoned, critical debate) with the quality (board representation and participation) of discourse mediated by journalists (Caalhoun 1992 cited in Benson, 2009: 177). The theory of public sphere as a discursive or republican ideal also highlighted the dramatic industrialization and population growth of European and North American societies. As a result, the scale and scope of social and political communication has changed dramatically. First of all, they were organized not around face-to-face and small-scale communication, but through increasingly commercialized print and audio-visual systems (Ferree et al. 2002 cited in Benson, 2009: 177; Baker 2002 cited in Benson, 2009: 177).

In today's media landscape, the very concept of the Fourth Estate has been challenged, since it is not given that societal and political power is so clearly defined around the estates. The contemporary public spheres are global in reach and as such exceed the politically defined jurisdictions. At the same time, they also close themselves around smaller and more exclusive communities, where it is not given that the estates themselves must be challenged. The theory also places the greatest emphasis on quality. In the search for social consensus, the press should create an environment of non-domination where better arguments can prevail, so that the public sphere from this point of view should be independent of state and the market (Benson, 2009: 177).

On the other hand, Julianne Schultz (1998: 3) argues that, the meaning of the Fourth Estate changes depending on the political and economic conditions. For example, in its first manifestation, the press was considered another elite that could convey the opinions of other elites to the public to help garner public support. However, the definition of the Fourth Estate changed at the end of the 19th century. It retained the main idea of reporting on those in positions of power and influence, and using its own voice in commentary and analysis, but also moved towards embodying a more activist role of scrutinising the consequences of actions and decisions on ordinary people and consciously representing their interests. As the Fourth Estate became less of an agency of the other elites, the belief emerged that the role of the press was to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted (Schultz 1998: 3).

However, the nature of this independence was debatable. Therefore, in some cases, independence of news media has been established with reference to the logic of the media embedded in the commercial logic of the liberal market, as opposed to the logic of politically and legally binding administrative powers. In other cases, independence is expressed as the pursuit of neutrality or objectivity. Finally, independence has been expressed as a pursuit of opposition – the ideal of neutrality being replaced by an ideal of plurality or opposition (Fairclough 1992, chapter 3; Schultz 1998, 43-44 cited in Hansen, 2018: 1073). Following the changes, in the 20th century, the press evolved into diversified news media, and commercial success became a more fundamental goal than in the days when press freedom debates were first voiced in small-scale journals (Schultz 1998: 3).

As Schultz (1998: 3) writes, for much of the 20th century, the idealised Fourth Estate was viewed with some contempt as a misplaced form of knightly vagrants that contradicted the commercial priorities of the news media. If it were just another business, the media not only jeopardised its political influence, but also risked regulatory intervention. In the last decades of the century, then, the commercial and political advantages to be gained from advocating the public service helped to revive the ideal. News organisations were content to claim the political immunity offered by corporate status and use the power it confers. Thus, social responsibility became an important word in journalism, and maintaining the Fourth Estate's watchdog role after the 1970s became central to the mission of many news organisations. This ideal was enthusiastically embraced by journalists, who saw the possibility of harder work, greater professional self-esteem, and higher status in public life.

However, despite all the balance and control mechanisms established in representative democracies such as elections, parliaments and independent judiciary, it has been the only news media whose success can be measured commercially. For example, this gave the press a unique position, it could speak directly to the public/audiences who paid for it and guaranteed its independence from the government. On the other hand, it also depended on commercial viability, and owners wishing to maximise their profits and pursue personal gain could easily dispose of expensive Fourth Estate responsibilities (Schultz, 1998: 3).

As Schultz (1998: 5) points out, commercial nature of news media is both a source of strength and weakness: The strength of the news media comes from the independence that only profit can buy. Profitable news media have more autonomy, their managers can say no to those who want to buy its patronage. Financial success can insulate a news organisation from the demands of politicians, lobbyists, advertisers and traders. However greed can erode this autonomy, and the pursuit of profit can obscure the news media's fourth estate role (Schultz, 1998: 5).

1.4. Critical Theories of Journalism

Criticisms of journalism and the news media as social, political and economic actors can be brought together under the term "critical theories" that dialectically examine society as a whole, drawing on the works of Karl Marx and the materialist tradition that he inspired. Critical theories analyse political economy, domination, exploitation, and ideologies (Ahluwalia and Nurse-Bray, 1997; Shome and Hegde, 2002; Young, 2003 cited in Ward, 2008: 302; Fuchs, 2016: 9). These approaches reject the idealism of liberalism and place great emphasis on the study of social relations, particularly property, in the historical development of various capitalist and pre-capitalist societies (Malmi 2018 cited in Lamoureux, 2021).

According to Marx, the capitalist stage of production consists of two main classes: the bourgeoisie, the capitalists who own the means of production, and the proletariat (working class) who have to sell their own labour power. For the capitalist model of accumulation, a capitalist buys, for example, the means of production, raw materials and factory equipment, and the labour-power of workers. These workers then transform and use the means of production to produce new commodities. These goods then enter the sphere of circulation where value is realised as money profit, which can then be reinvested to purchase goods or labour and thus re-enter the production process. As a result, commodities are sold at prices higher than their investment costs, the capitalist's cost to purchase labour-power, raw materials, and other fixed costs of production and circulation (Jarrett, 2016: 78).

At this point, David Harvey (2015: 330) states that although the main component of production and accumulation is labour-power, dominant groups that own the means of production in terms of capitalist style also control the society and power mechanism. Accordingly, the purpose of critical theory is to first identify and then destroy all conditions that turn people into degraded, enslaved and neglected beings (Marx, 1997: 257-258 cited in Fuchs, 2016: 9). Critical theory also wants to show that domination, exploitation as well as ideologies prevent humans from reaching an equal society (Fuchs, 2016: 9).

For example, in critical theory of information, in the collective functioning of journalistic organizations and the news media in many ways, it has tended to be seen as a control mechanism, a stabilising tool, to keep things stable, as Zygmunt Bauman (2002: 27 cited in McNair, 2006: 21) puts it. In the Marxist understanding, news media is functional not only for social order, but also for maintaining elite domination and social control amid systemic inequality, injustice and exploitation (McNair, 2006: 21). This is why Louis Althusser regarded churches, educational systems, the media, and the nuclear family as ideological devices that enable domination (McNair, 2006: 23). According to Peter Murdock and Graham Golding (1974: 4 cited in Fuchs, 2012), the media in general, and the news media in particular, are not only organizations that produce and distribute commodities, but also play an ideological role by disseminating ideas about economic and political structures that are created by capital owners.

Scott Lash (2002: 67 cited in McNair, 2006: 22) in his book “Critique of Information” summarizes the ideological function of journalism and mass media as follows: the media are the weapons of bourgeois ideology by which the ruling class can impose a system. A system that has the authority to consolidate the dominance of dominant classes over the subordinate social classes. Simon Cottle (2003: 5 cited in McNair, 2006: 22) defines the domination and the control paradigm in these words: The news media routinely accesses and privileges elite “definitions of reality”. They serve dominant hegemonic interests, legitimize social inequality and/or hinder access to participatory democracy. John Fiske (1996: 5 cited in McNair, 2006: 22) also argues that the dominant discourses that occupy the mainstream serve the dominant social interests.

The paradigm of control is combined with a view that accepts the audience as a passive, manipulable mass or as Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman (1979: 72) describe, in the propaganda modes as the victims of brainwashing under freedom. The model explains how propaganda and systemic biases, which are conceptual model in political economy, work in mass media as well as in journalism. Therefore, in propaganda model, Brain McNair (2006: 22) argues that the audience is vulnerable to the ideological effects of the propaganda of the ruling class or national security state that wants to control the masses.

On the other hand, some scholars argue that there is a hierarchy of access embedded in dominant news values. Looking at the way people are represented in news media, they conclude that citizens are passive observers of a world constructed and defined by those more powerful than themselves. While they are allowed to express basic feelings about the world, these representations leave no room for citizens to express their political views and propose solutions to problems (Lewis, Wahl-Jorgensen and Inthorn, 2004 cited in McNair, 2006: 22).

For example, Frankfurt School theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (1972) address the problem identified within the culture industry (or industrialization of cultural production) in their book *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, first published in 1942. According to the work of Horkheimer and Adorno (1972), the culture industry was the result of technology and industrial production logic, where media industries produced standardized products for standardized people also producing “one-dimensional man”. This system also sees individuals as passive organisms open to exploitation.

Although at first glance, the concept questions commercial radio and the film industry, as Eric Louw (2001: 37) writes, “...this communicative phenomenon had its roots in nineteenth-century newspaper production”. Therefore, the penny press developed primitive large-scale organizational forms that became the basis of practice within the culture industry. Organizational hierarchies were based on specialist division of labour and produced packaged meanings for mass middle-class audiences. In this industry, in order to appeal to the widest possible audience, partisan

attitudes, in which the means of industrial production set the pace, were avoided (Demers, 1996: 36- 41 cited in Louw, 2001: 37).

The cultural products also had the function of allowing the dominant economic system to replicate itself for further expansion in the mechanism of production and consumption (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1972). According to Adorno and Horkheimer (1972), mechanically produced and reproduced cultural products did not make consumers question the idea that the products offered to them had an ideological purpose. Consumers adapt their needs to these cultural products that may or may not reflect their social, political or economic interests. Thus, the culture industry works in such a way that those who were under its influence do not even realize that they are being manipulated (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1972).

Feminist theory⁷, on the other hand, focuses on gender, another mechanism of domination. Within the help of semiotics and discourse/content analysis, studies were conducted first on journalistic texts and then on genres in the division of labour. Studies on journalistic texts are mainly based on the absence of women's images in the texts. These studies also define news as masculine texts (Janus, 1977; Perkins, 1979; Rakow, 1986; van Zoonen, 1994 cited in Ruoho and Torkkola, 2018: 69).

Cultural studies examines journalism as a culture⁸ as a collection of approaches such as Marxism, semiotics, linguistics, and critical theory (Löffenholtz, 2004; 2008 cited in Erjavec and Zajc, 2011: 22). In terms of journalism, according to Karmen Erjavec and Jožica Zajc (2011: 22), cultural studies focus on the subjectivity of mass media readers and audiences to examine the ideological, political and economic impact

⁷ “What is referred to as feminism or feminist theory is a complex political, social, cultural, and intellectual movement that emerged in the last third of the twentieth century within Western culture (United States and Europe) to then spread, in various forms, to all regions of the world. Feminism theoretically and politically questions the relationship between the sexes that secularly secures “male domination” as Pierre Bourdieu writes (Universalis, 2019 <https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/feminisme-les-theories/>).

⁸ In cultural studies, Raymond Williams (1966 cited in Gallagher, 1992: 82) investigated the relationship between “‘Culture’ with a capital ‘C’ (the arts) and ‘culture’ with a small ‘c’ in the anthropological sense of a whole way of life. He purposely chose the ambiguity in the term in order to avoid both false polarity and the one-way determinism that might result from choosing some other term, such as “society”, to designate the social totality”. According to Williams (1966 cited in Gallagher, 1992: 82): “It was certainly an error to suppose that values or art-works could be adequately studied without reference to the particular society within which they were expressed, but it is equally an error to suppose that the social explanation is determining, or that the values and works are mere by-products”.

of the news. Cultural studies also explores the textual relationship between the producers (media companies and government agencies) and the recipients (audience).

For example, Roland Barthes (1972 cited in Berrio-Zapata, Mosso Moreira and Gonçalves Sant'Ana, 2015: 161) expands Ferdinand Saussure's signifier as "denotation, connotation and myth" and examines the interaction between power, discourse and representation. Denotation refers to literal meaning of a sign similar to the definition given in a dictionary. Connotation indicates the socio-cultural and personal associations (ideological, emotional, etc.) of the sign. And these are typically based on the interpreter's class, age, gender and ethnicity (Chandler, 2007 cited in Zhang, 2017: 211).

Myth shows the dominant ideology of the age by focusing on the mass media culture that Barthes discovered (Zhang, 2017: 211). In the field of everyday culture, myths functions as a site for the reproduction of meanings, emotions and implications of the dominant ideology, separated from the image circulation, for example, in advertisements and/or journalistic texts in the mass media (Erjavec and Zajc, 2011: 22).

As seen for critical theories, the media are not a priori linked to democracy and different political regimes, but rather to the institutional forms of capitalism and their regimes of capital accumulation (Thompson, 2013; Davis, 2007; Graham, 2002 cited in Lamoureux, 2021). The primary role of the media and journalism in this vision is not the disseminate ideas or prolong public debate, as the liberal approach explains, but to produce informal goods that are dependent and constitutive of different capitalisms (Lamoureux, 2021).

1.4.1. Media, Journalism and Power

The common understanding of power is that wealthy individuals, large corporations, governments or international institutions exert power over others (Reuss, 2020: 3). For example, Max Weber (1978: 53 cited in Warren, 1992: 19) defined power as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to

carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests". Thus, this definition figures out "a potentially conflictual relationship between dominant and subordinate individuals" (Oppenheim, 1981: 29-31 cited in Warren, 1992: 19). Therefore, "the first element is an understanding of power as an expression of the wills and capacities of individuals. The second is a distinction between relations of power and other social relationships in terms of a conflict of interest between individuals" (Warren, 1992: 19). From the perspective of media and journalism studies, it is also assumed that there is a relationship between media, journalism and power, where media companies, journalistic institutions, and the texts produced become elements in the exercise of political and economic power (Picard, 2016: 1743).

The dominant argument is that the forces of the political-economic structure will dominate the media and journalism. According to Marx's (1977: 389) base/superstructure metaphor: "The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general". In this case, the media as a whole can be examined as both base and superstructure. When taken as base, the media are considered as corporations aiming to generate income. When taken as superstructure, the media are studied as cultural or ideological institutions whose functions are determined by the commercial interests of the ruling elite (Marx, 1977: 389).

Departing from Marx's (1977: 389) definition it is clear that power is the most fundamental process in society, since society is defined around values and institutions, and what is valued and institutionalized defined by power relationships. For example, Manuel Castells (2013: 10) defines power as "the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actor(s) in ways that favour the empowered actor's will, interests and values".

According to Castells (2013: 10), power is exercised through coercion (or the possibility of it) and/or the construction of meaning on the basis of discourses that social actors guide their actions in. On the other hand, power relationships are framed through domination embedded in society's institutions. Thus, the relational capacity

of power is conditioned, but not determined, by the structural capacity of domination. Institutions can enter into power relations that dominate their subjects.

Thus, up to now, the relationship between media, journalism and power has been defined as a social relationship between groups or institutions that involves the control of the actions and mind of a less powerful group by a powerful group or institution. This type of power often presupposes privileged access to socially valued resources such as force, wealth, income, knowledge or status (Van Dijk, 1996: 10). These socially valued resources, on the other hand, make journalism a matter of power that mobilizes and organizes public opinion. Hence, following Bernard Cohen's (1963) idea that the press is often not good at telling people what to think, but surprisingly good at telling their readers what to think about.

As Risto Kunelius and Esa Reunanen (2016: 370) write on the one hand, journalistic institutions transferred information and arguments from those in power to the anonymous individuals (audiences). On the other hand, these institutions constructed public representations of this audience's views and desires, both for powerholders and audiences for to sustain the dominant ideology. According to early studies that questioned the effects of news media, the press and broadcast gave the media a persuasive power that served to change audience attitudes and even influence behaviour (Curran and Seaton, 1990: 228). This approach is also compatible with the work of Michel Foucault (1991), who thinks that power is diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge and truth regimes.

For example, agenda-setting studies seek to explore the power of news media and journalism in determining audience priorities and attitudes. Agenda-setting is concerned with how much press, radio, and television coverage can change the sense of what events are important (Curran and Seaton, 1990: 233). According to a study conducted during the 1972 US presidential campaign by Lee Becker and Maxwell McCombs (1972 cited in McLeod, Becker, Byrnes, 1974: 131), the influence of the media on audiences was large but gradual. They also drew attention to the difference between the effects of the press and television. They wrote that the newspaper effect was a delayed reaction. On television, the effect was immediate. At the end of the

study, they found that television had become the most important determinant of voters' opinions (Curran and Seaton, 1990: 233-234).

Another way to understand the relationship between power and journalism is to look at how news is produced. The news production process helps to understand what pressures shape the commodity presented to the public (Curran and Seaton, 1990: 234). For example, Gaye Tuchman (1978 cited in Cantor, 1980: 503) defines news as a framework in which the public learns, produces, collects and disseminates its relationship with the outside world by professional workers doing their jobs in complex organizations (Robinson and Sahin, 1981: 1341). Accordingly, decisions about what to offer consumers are made in an environment where norms evolve and editors, publishers and reporters actively interact to give the whole process an institutionalized and routinized character (Cantor, 1989: 503).

According to Tuchman (1978 cited in Cantor, 1989: 503), news organizations circulate and shape ideology in the form of information. Therefore, the main power of the media is its role in setting political agendas. Thus, Tuchman sees news in the Althusserian sense as a reproducer of the status quo. Tuchman also explains that news organizations influence the distribution of power in society by only disseminating certain types of information at the intersections of business activities and organizational needs of news work (Robinson and Sahin, 1981: 1341).

1.4.2. Media, Journalism and Hegemony

The definition of hegemony is rooted in Marxist views that the ruling classes, which control economic structures, institutions, and society, also control its political and primary ideological institutions (Marx and Engels, 1960 cited in Miliband, 1976:163). In other words, hegemony is an understanding that encompasses the domination of socio-economic relations, the political aspect of the state and its apparatus, and the orientation of intellectual and moral culture (Tosel, 2005: 59-60).

Hegemony is the power or dominance that a social group has over others. It may refer to the asymmetrical interdependence of political, economic and cultural relations

between nation-states or to the differences between social classes within a nation (Straubhaar, 1991 cited in Lull, 1995: 33). For example, Stuart Hall (1985 cited in Lull, 1995:33) defines hegemony as domination and subordination in the field of relations structured by power. On the other hand, James Lull (1995: 33) considers hegemony to be more than social power itself; it is a method of acquiring and maintaining power exercised between dominant and subordinate groups. Thus, the role of the media, especially journalism, is great in the effort to achieve and maintain this power.

For example, Antonio Gramsci, founder of the Italian Communist Party and one of the first Marxist philosophers of the 20th century, emphasizes the role of cultural organizations such as news organizations as a platform for constructing and disseminating discourses aimed at gaining consent (Block, 2013: 266; Tosel, 2005:55). By expanding the materialist theory to the field of ideology Gramsci, emphasized the struggle of institutions that produce ideology, such as the news media, over meaning and power (Gramsci, 1971; 1973; 1978; Boggs, 1976; Sassoon, 1980; and Simon, 1982 cited in Lull, 1995: 33). Therefore, in the theory of hegemony, news media and journalism in particular are generally accepted as one of the tools that the ruling elites use to maintain their power, wealth and status in their philosophy, culture and morals (Boggs, 1976: 39 cited in Lull, 1995: 33). Similarly, Mitch Diamantopoulos (2000: 12-13) emphasizes that the press, in other words daily newspapers and magazines, should be seen as a decisive device of hegemony. Therefore, the cultural power of many institutions such as political parties, parliament, and the news media, which can affect the public opinion⁹, is seen as the key to mental preparation.

For Lull (1995: 35), however, hegemony is fragile. It requires endless renewal and change through the reintroduction of power. Stuart Hall (1977:333 cited in Lull, 1995: 35) also argues that hegemony is not a given and permanent state, but must be

⁹ The function of the daily press of opinion is to ensure this organic and polymorphous representation by producing a political, moral and intellectual shaping of issues and lively questions. Major newspapers overflow the party form which has their favour and which has an indirect link to fundamental social forces. They integrate the interests, the concerns of the backward or minority social forces, neutralize or filter class interests of modern subordinates who are in struggle for hegemony, and well sure, fight their claims incompatible with the dominant world's conception. Thus they form public opinion. "Public opinion is the political content of the public will that could be discordant: that is why there is a struggle for the monopoly of the organs of public opinion: newspapers, parties, parliament, so that a the only force shapes opinion and therefore the national political will and disseminates disagreements in an individual and inorganic dust" (cahier 7, §83:915 cited in Tosel, 2005: 62).

actively gained and secured, otherwise it can be lost. Hall (1985 cited in Lull, 1995: 35) who thinks that ideology consists of non-closed texts, also states that ideological counter-tendencies occur regularly in dominant forms and may not be noticed. Therefore, from the news media to popular television shows and popular music, even to graffiti scribbled on the surfaces of public spaces or the dress code, all mediated communications contain messages that challenge central political and cultural assumptions (Lull, 1995:35).

Also, how the ruling elite may lose their hegemony in journalism can be found in Hall's work. Hall (1973) proposes a four-stage theory of communication: production, circulation, consumption and reproduction, particularly in "Encoding and Decoding in television discourse" with reference to television journalism. According to Hall (1973), each stage is relatively independent of the others. This means that each stage has its own defining limits and possibilities. For example, the professional code operating within the hegemony of the dominant code is also relatively independent or autonomous from the dominant code (Hall, 1973).

Thus, hegemonic interpretations of content are mainly produced by the ruling or political and military elite, while modes of presentation, footage and staging of debates are selected and combined through the operation of the professional code (Hall, 1973). Here Hall (1973) demonstrates how journalists (as the media professionals) are able to work with their own relatively autonomous code while being subject to reproducing the hegemonic meanings of events. This professional autonomy gives journalists the freedom to break the hegemony of the ruling elites, although they are subject to producing hegemony.

1.5. Journalism as a Vocation

Professions refer to the category of knowledge-based occupations. They usually follow a period of higher education, vocational training and experience (Evetts, 2003:397). For example, professionalism in sociology requires certain occupational groups to have some special power and prestige (Larson, 1977 cited in Singer, 2007:81). On the other hand, professional logic is a way of controlling the work, that

is, an ideal type of occupation, enforced by rules and standards defined by professionals themselves¹⁰. In order to form a profession, members of the profession must be able to control their own work and have autonomy in their practice¹¹. Many sociologists have identified a number of means that allow professionals to exercise this control (Selander, 1989; Freidson, 2001 cited in Witschge and Nygren, 2009: 39):

- Monopoly of knowledge: No one outside the profession has the knowledge and the ability to do the work of the profession
- A clear division of labour and the power exclude others from the profession
- Strong professional education and research
- Strong professional organizations with ethical rules and standards
- An ideology that asserts a commitment to doing good work rather than economic gain, and to quality rather than economic efficiency

Accordingly, advances in newsgathering and distribution technologies, combined with rising levels of literacy, and a new revenue stream from advertising, transformed journalism into a large-scale and profitable industry (Chalaby 1998; Lee 1976; Schudson 1978; Smith 1978 cited in Aldridge and Evetts, 2003: 549). With this change, employment opportunities have emerged with certain responsibilities and roles for journalists (Aldridge and Evetts, 2003: 549).

Therefore, it can be said that the development of professionalism in journalism is a reaction to its commercialization and lack of political independence, especially in Anglo-American or Liberal model that dominates journalism worldwide (McQuail, 2010: 172; Neveu, 2013: 3). “Liberal Media Model” is typically taken as a norm

¹⁰ Magali Sarfatti Larson (1977, xi cited in Pasti, 2007: 25-26) in her book “The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis” writes the general dimensions of the ideal-type of the profession as follows: “the cognitive dimension is centred on the body of knowledge and techniques which the professionals apply in their work, and on the training necessary to master such knowledge and skills. The normative-dimension covers the service orientation of professionals, and their distinctive ethics, which justify the privilege of self-regulation granted them by society. The evaluative dimension implicitly compares professions to other occupations, underscoring the professions’ singular characteristics of autonomy and prestige. The distinctiveness of the professions appears to be found on the combination of these general dimensions. These uncommon occupations tend to become ‘real’ communities, whose members share a relatively permanent affiliation, an identity, personal commitment, specific interests, and general loyalties”.

against other media systems such as “Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model” and “The North/Central European or Democratic Corporalist Model”. However, the idea of professionalization is essentially synonymous with objectivity and political neutrality appears as the intersection of these three models (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 38). Therefore, depending on the “Liberal Model” journalists should act as impartial information providers and avoid identifying with certain points of view. This is accompanied by equal access and the promotion of citizens’ participation in public debate (Pasti, 2007: 30). This comments also detailed the conditions for the establishment of professional unions, associations, press councils, the creation of ethical codes, the principles of the work, and the self-organization of journalism within a professional ideology (Barret, 1975: 54; Hallin and Manchini, 2004: 38; McQuail, 2005: 173).

On the other hand, there are writers inspired by critical-Marxist theory such as Martin Oppenheimer (1973 cited in Pasti, 2007: 32), Magali Sarfatti Larson (1977; 1979 cited in Pasti, 2007: 32), and Milton Derber (1982 cited in Pasti, 2007: 32). They focused on the position of the professional in the capitalist economies and their relationship with the owners of the means of production. They perceive professionals as workers and focus on the changing position of the professionals in the 20th century, when their independence and ability to control their work was lost (Pasti, 2007: 32).

On this foundation, Eliot Freidson (1986: 111 cited in Pasti, 2007: 32) writes that “on becoming employed, the professional cannot be independent, free to choose what work to do and how to do it. And when employed in a bureaucracy, the professional becomes subject to strict control that routines and, [...] deskilling professional work”. Thus, in bureaucratic logic, the rules are defined by the state or organizations, and in market logic, all power is in the hands of the consumers (advertisers) and most of the journalistic work is controlled by a combination of these (Freidson, 2001 cited in Witschge and Nygren, 2009:39).

With the report of the “Commission on the Freedom of the Press” in 1947, a movement to adopt a professional system emerged in the US (McQuail, 2005: 173). The process was motivated by the media industry’s desire to protect itself from criticism and particularly the outside interference and reduced autonomy (McQuail,

2005: 173). Depending on the report, journalism as an institution and as separate professional group should primarily be autonomous towards the state, political parties, and the market, or all three (Schudson, 2005; Hampton, 2010; Nerone, 2015 cited in Örnebring et al, 2016: 307).

And it must be governed by certain “rules” or “principles of action”, producing a certain degree of internal homogeneity (Bourdieu, 1998a: 39 cited in Benson, 2006: 188). During this period, publishers also contributed to the establishment of journalism schools to train professional editors and reporters (McChesney, 2003: 302). The argument was that trained editors and reporters were given autonomy to make decisions by the owners (McChesney, 2003: 302).

However, autonomy has been considered a key factor in maintaining journalistic credibility, as it presuppose journalists’ independence from outside pressures and full loyalty to the public (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001; Larson, 1977 cited in Lauk and Harro-Loit, 2016: 1960). Armin Scholl and Siegfried Weischenberg (1999 cited in Lauk and Harro-Loit, 2016: 1960) distinguished three levels of journalistic professional autonomy: individual, organizational (newsrooms), and media systems’ (society) levels.

At the individual level, journalists should be free to choose information and report; at the organizational level, newsrooms should be free from commercial and political constraints; at the level of media systems, these systems should guarantee freedom of the press and the absence of censorship (Lauk and Harro-Loit, 2016: 1960; McChesney, 2003: 302). In theory, these levels were based on professional judgment, not the politics of the media owners and advertisers, or their business interests to maximize profits (McChesney, 2003: 302).

However, considering that in practice professional system has been taken over by large media companies, this suggestion emerges as an assumption (McChesney, 2003: 302). It has become clear over time that the professional system in journalism, which became clear with the claim that it is possible to provide neutral and objective news, is suspicious, if not completely fake (McChesney, 2003: 302).

For example, Robert Waterman (McChesney, 2003: 302), explains this dubious situation with decision-making process based on the political tendencies and commercial interests of media owners and advertisers rather than the professional judgment of journalists labelled as employees. As argued by McChesney (2003:303), this means that “journalism cannot actually be neutral or objective, and it is impossible to detect the values that determine what news is and what is not unless media owners or advertisers accept it.

As a result, just as McChesney (2003: 304) points out, professionalization of journalism creates confusion between theory and practice. This also creates a great dilemma for journalism and democracy (McChesney, 2003: 304). In this case, it is well understood that democracy needs journalism. What is less understood is that journalism also needs democracy (McChesney, 2003: 304). Therefore, the paradox of professional journalism can be restated as follows: Journalism cannot live without a viable democracy. This implies that journalism should aggressively and openly criticize the anti-democratic status quo and embrace the old adage of upsetting the comfortable and comforting the victims (McChesney, 2003: 304).

1.5.1. Professional Identity and Ideology of Journalists

Identity, a largely *polysemic* concept, covers particular and distinct realities that are at the crossroads of multiple disciplinary fields with strong conceptual differences (management, sociology, psychology, information and communication). First, it subsumes an individual field and then a collective field (Pignard-Cheynel and Sebbah, 2013). Therefore, the professional identity approach derives from “Social Identity Theory” and “Self-categorization Theory” (Hornsey, 2008: 205-207). According to these theories identity consists of two different parts, personal identity and social identities. And, social identities often manifest themselves in professions (Barley 1989; Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep 2006; Trice 1993 cited in Grubenmann and Meckel, 2017: 733).

An individual’s profession is accepted as the most important area of social identity. Accordingly, the characteristics of a social group are associated with the

individual's self, and distinctive group norms serve as a guideline for an individual's behaviour (Ellemers, Gilder, and Haslam, 2004 cited in Grubenmann and Meckel, 2017: 733). For example, Tajfel (1972: 292 cited in Grubenmann and Meckel, 2017: 733) defined social identity as an individual's knowledge of belonging to a social group, as well as the emotional and value significance of that group membership for him or her.

On the other hand, journalists' social identity is based on a set of social and economic factors that create the context in which journalists define themselves as certain types of people and others perceive and portray them (Kreiss, 2019: 27). Traditionally, the job of a journalist has been to present facts, divergent views, and interpretations of facts in news format as objectively as possible. Thus, it is only through these roles that they can differentiate themselves from a fiction writer, activist, or blogger (Rizvi, 2022).

A journalist's role, from a traditional perspective, is to be an editorial or reportorial employee, who receives or has received income for newsgathering (Ugland and Henderson, 2007 cited in Rizvi, 2022). A journalist's identity is formed by understanding and accepting a range of competing and contradictory values, behaviours, and attitudes but also supports the fourth estate style within the constraints of most newsrooms' competing corporate values (Samuel and Stephens, 2000 cited in Rizvi, 2022).

Journalists are gatekeepers who line up multiple sources of information, discarding most of them, and allowing some to slip into pages or screens. Just gathering information is not enough, but understanding the situation and then interpreting the event in their own words is also an important asset of a journalist. A journalist can identify possible solutions to problems, give examples of such solutions, and tell audiences where to go for more news or how to get involved. However, while writing or reporting news a journalist cannot impose his/her opinion, he/she leaves it to the audience. Therefore, journalists solely responsible for keeping their audiences informed on a wide variety of issues of public interest (Rizvi, 2022).

For example, to take a Western perspective or a normative approach, there is a considerable consensus in society about the basic tasks of journalism: observation and information; participation in public life through comment, advice and advocacy; and also providing access to various voices. Journalists are responsible for four main roles (Christians et al., 2009 cited in Hanitzsch, 2017):

- The monitoring role includes collecting, publishing and distributing information of interest to audiences.
- The facilitating role promotes dialogue between different stakeholders in society and inspires the public to participate actively in political life.
- The radical role is about providing a platform for opinions and voices critical of authority in support of change and reform.
- The collaborative role calls for journalists to support the authorities in defending social order against crime, conflict and natural emergencies.

As can be seen, such a perspective emphasizes individual liberties and freedom, while other societies may prioritize collective needs and social cohesion. On the other hand, journalists are often expected as nation-builders, government partners and empowerment agents as developing and transitional societies face a unique set of challenges related to political, economic and social development (Romano, 2005 cited in Hanitzsch, 2017).

However, despite the existence of such identifications, according to Florence Le Cam (2005: 10 cited in Pignard-Cheynel and Sebbah, 2013), the group of journalists survives by constantly defining and constructing its identity, discourses, and definition of journalism. In other words, to maintain the professions continuity journalists learn to survive against the changes they face.

For example, Jane Singer (1997-98) and Mark Deuze (1998-99) were among the first to research the changing roles of journalism due to technological innovation, especially since the 1990s (Grubenmann and Meckel, 2017: 734). Singer sought a renewal of the concept the “gatekeeper”, which she saw as contradictory to the interaction of digital media. Singer’s call was also a chance to redefine the profession by referring to four major challenges in the field: a declining audience for and

reputation of the profession, the profession's loss of identity, and market pressures (Donsbach, 2010 cited in Grubenmann and Meckel, 2017: 734).

On the other hand, Deuze (2005: 447) refers to ideology as the supreme concept in journalism and the foundation of both news workers' perceptions of professional identity and their practices. Referring Golding and Elliott (1979), Merritt (1995), and more recently Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001), Deuze (2005: 447) describes occupational values of journalism as follows, public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, and ethics.

According to Deuze (2005: 455), journalism ideology has the potential to serve as the social cement for the group of professional journalists holding together journalism in an increasingly complex and volatile environment by referring to digital media. Therefore, ideology, refers to representation of the rational world of actors according to their positions and interests. As François-Bernard Huyghe (2016) points out, there is no one type of ideology, but there are ideologies, polemical systems of ideas that translate assessments and passions and aim at tangible effects.

These ideologies often get together with cognitive role orientations which can be defined as the institutional values, attitudes and beliefs that journalists adopt as a result of their professional socialization. In this process journalists learn about institutional norms, values and roles through professional socialization that can take place within the news organization or during vocational education and training (Gravengaard and Rimestad, 2014; Singer, 2004; Tandoc and Takahashi, 2014 cited in Hanitzsch, 2017). Here, professional socializations is also about maintaining an "institutional mythology" (Schudson, 2001; Singer, 2004 cited in Hanitzsch, 2017).

For example, Bernard Cecil Cohen (1963 cited in Hanitzsch, 2017) is generally credited with proposing the first systematic classification of journalists' cognitive roles, distinguishing between the "neutral" and the "participant" role. Morris Janowitz (1975 cited in Hanitzsch, 2017) defined two similar role concepts a few years later: "gatekeeper" and "advocate". The first large-scale empirical study on the subject was done by Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman (1972 cited in Hanitzsch, 2017), who surveyed 1,313 journalists in the US. According to the results, journalists tended to

adopt a participatory role rather than a neutral role. However, despite the opposing nature of two value sets, most journalists also had belief patterns that combined elements from each of the two perspectives (Hanitzsch, 2017).

On the other hand, Jean Baudrillard (1970) argues that Marx defined the ideology of capitalist society as a mode of sanctification, fascination and psychological submission in which individuals internalize the generalized exchange value system. The concrete social values of work and exchange, rejected, isolated and alienated by the capitalist system, establish themselves as transcendent ideological values and moral authority. At the same time, they regulate all alienated behaviours that succeed, such as archaic fetishism and religious mystification.

Therefore, it is important for Deuze (2005:444) to conceptualize journalism as an ideology rather than a profession, industry, literary genre, culture or a complex social system. Deuze (2005: 445) also points out how the professional ideology of journalism is perceived by academics with the help of an overview of journalism studies. Thus, depending on Deuze's works, the study of journalistic ideology comes from two main directions: critical-Marxist theories and sociological research.

Critical Marxist theories try to reveal how news media, as social institutions, protect and maintain the status-quo or subliminal values and interpretations of the dominant ideology (Berkowitz, 1997: 397 cited in Sjøvaag, 2011: 13). Sociological research looks at the professional ideology of journalism as a common culture, how journalists learn about their profession and how this ideology is perpetuated (Sjøvaag, 2011: 13). In this context, Deuze (2005: 445-446) argues that ideology is viewed as a system of beliefs that is characteristic of a particular group, which includes - but is not limited to - the general process of production of meanings and ideas (within this group).

Starting from the perspectives presented on journalistic ideology, sociologist Thomas F. Gieryn (1983 cited in Sjøvaag, 2011: 14) outlines two branches of ideology research in sociology; one is related to Talcott Parson's strain theory, and the other to Marx's theory of interest. According to strain theory, ideology functions as an evaluative integration in situations of tension, such as when faced with conflicting

demands, competing expectations and the inevitable instabilities of social life (Gieryn, 1983: 782 cited in Sjøvaag, 2011: 14). On the other hand, according to the interest theory, ideologies are social levers or weapons used by groups to advance their political or economic interests among universal struggles for power and advantage (Gieryn, 1983: 782 cited in Sjøvaag, 2011: 14).

Accordingly, both strain and interest theories characterize ideologies as symbolic representations in which ideas, beliefs, values, worldviews, and consciousness selectively distort social reality (Sjøvaag, 2011: 14). According to Gieryn (1983: 792 cited in Sjøvaag, 2011: 14), Marxist theories of interest are therefore particularly suitable for the study of journalists' professional ideologies because of their ability to reveal how professionals struggle to obtain authority, power and resources.

Academic studies based on interest theories focus heavily on ideology in terms of news production and news selection. Here is seen that journalism work processes support the dominant ideology and that the dominant ideology supports news work and protects journalism from criticism (Sjøvaag, 2011: 14). For example, Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (1973: cited in Sjøvaag, 2011: 14) find that, the reporter actively compresses events into categories appropriate to the smooth functioning of the media bureaucracy and is ideologically important in promoting a particular worldview.

Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester (1974: 111) treat news as a structured reality that reflects the practices of those who have the power to determine the experience of others. Golding and Elliott (1979: 208 cited in Sjøvaag, 2011: 15) in their study "Making the News" attribute the emergence of news to the service-function for elite groups. While the news remains elite, it also seeks to reach a wide audience; therefore it draws on the most widely accepted assumptions and values.

Thus, news is ideology to the extent that it both provides a coherent worldview and supports the interests of powerful social groups. So much so that the economic conditions of capitalism forced the commercial media to conform to the logic of big capitalist organisations (Splichal and Dahlgren, 2016: 8). Therefore, according to

Tönnies (1923: 88 cited in Splichal and Dahlgren, 2016: 8), capital's mandates are aimed not only at forming a favourable opinion of its products, but also at promoting a general public opinion designed to serve its political and commercial interests.

On the other hand, the professional ideology of journalism, explained by Bourdieu (1977 cited in Garnham and Williams, 1980: 210) with the concept of “double determination”, aims to provide news and information to the public, while supporting the interests of the capitalist economy, the ruling elite and the media owners. Therefore, the ideology in journalism feeds the needs of the people such as obtaining information and democratic management (İnal, 1996: 86-88; Cushion and Franklin, 2015: 75 cited in Splichal and Dahlgren, 2016:8; Holton, Coddington and Gil de Zuniga, 2013:723).

Bourdieu (1977 cited in Garnham and Williams, 1980: 210), with his work on the double determination of ideology, points out that ideology dialectically replaces the partial and oppositional positions explained in the theory of interest. Bourdieu (1977 cited in Garnham and Williams, 1980: 210) develops a theory of ideology or symbolic power, accompanied by empirical evidence, historical roots, and economic and class determinants of the relative autonomy of intellectual practice. According to Bourdieu (1977 cited in Garnham and Williams, 1980: 210), ideologies owe their structure and most specific functions to the social conditions of their production and circulation, that is, to the functions they perform.

Given that ideologies are always double-determined, they owe their most salient features not only to the interests of the classes and class fractions they express, but also to the specific interests of those who produced them (Garnham and Williams, 1980: 210). This is also called the ideology of creation and creator (Garnham and Williams, 1980: 210). Bourdieu (1977 cited in Garnham and Williams, 1980: 210) also underlines the possibility of escaping from deterministic characteristics of ideological products without falling into the idealist illusion of treating ideological productions as self-sufficient and self-generating totalities.

Therefore, Michael Meyen and Claudia Riesmeyer (2012, 387 cited in Grubenmann and Meckel, 2017: 735) contribute by showing how journalists' role

perceptions relate to their position in journalism and their personal capital. Building on Bourdieu's (1984) field theory¹², Meyen and Riesmeyer's extensive qualitative study produces eight types of empirical perceptions of the journalistic role that determine journalists' positions in the field of journalism and the extent of autonomy these positions provide: service providers, sentinels, detectives, teachers, artists, lobbyists, traders, and promoters. According to the study individual role perceptions are better shaped by the symbolic capital of the issues that journalists work on (Grubenmann and Meckel, 2017: 735).

So much so that economic capital (money or assets that can be turned into money) can be defined as circulation, advertising revenues and audience ratings, and symbolic capital (educational credentials, technical expertise, general knowledge, verbal abilities and artistic sensibilities) can be defined as successful journalistic activity: "...intelligent commentary, in-depth reporting, and the like - the kind of journalistic practices rewarded each year by the US Pulitzer Prizes" (Benson and Neveu, 2005: 4).

According to Bourdieu (1993: 115), journalists are more autonomous in the production process, just like artists and intellectuals who produce symbolic products. Journalists have the ability to escape both economic and social pressures. However, this freedom is relative. Art dealers, sales figures, and theatre owners' preferences govern this market of symbolic products. The production of symbolic products takes two forms.

- Small-scale or restricted production: the mechanisms for the production and possession of cultural goods are determined objectively for producers in this field. Covers artists and a production style which adopts art for art's sake concept. It is a kind of "production for producers" (Hesmondhalgh, 2006: 213).

¹² The "Field Theory" of Bourdieu, defines modernity as a process of differentiation into semi-autonomous and increasingly specialized spheres of action (or institutions) such as fields of politics, economics, religion and cultural production (Benson, 2006: 188). Regardless of the power dynamics among spheres, Bourdieu (1998a: 39 cited in Benson, 2006: 188) emphasizes that these spheres/institutions must have some autonomy from external pressures.

- Large-scale production: the area where cultural products are produced for non-producers of cultural goods, i.e. the public. Covers vaudevilles, serials, and journalism (Hesmondhalgh, 2006: 213).

Thus, the restricted area of cultural production is more autonomous. It is less affected by external pressures such as the censorship mechanism. However, large-scale cultural production is under the influence of external demands. In large-scale cultural production, journalists no longer see themselves as intellectuals and are separated from the traditional culture producer. For this reason, Bourdieu draws attention to the fact that the producers of culture operating in the field of journalism have turned into an intellectual proletariat. This transformation is a tension factor between journalists' political positions and their production processes (Bourdieu, 1993: 130).

According to David Swartz (2013: 303), Bourdieu's role of intellectuals and Gramsci's writings on the role intellectuals play in forming group identity are very close to each other. Remembering, the role that Gramsci (1971: 334 cited in Swartz, 2013: 303) assigns to intellectuals is relatively positive. As Swartz (2013: 303) writes, according to Gramsci, the intellectuals are a community of experts who organize the masses with their conceptual and philosophical judgment. For Bourdieu, on the other hand, the position attributed to intellectuals is a kind of symbolic capital. Therefore, Bourdieu does not set a forced mission for intellectuals and develops a more objective perspective. The intellectual field is not homogeneous, it contains certain tensions and even conflicts. There is a contrast between independent intellectuals and experts working for dominant sectors. Thus, in journalism, ideology can be seen as an intellectual process shaped by a particular group in conflict with the holders of capital and the requirements of the profession (Stevenson, 1995: 37-41; Van Ginneken, 1997: 73 cited in Deuze, 2005:445).

Although journalism is subject to the control of politics and economy, it has also become a force influencing these fields. The symbolic capital of media organizations determines the place of these organizations in the field of journalism. However, this ideological power in the hands of the journalists results in the politics and economy's efforts to dominate journalism (Benson, 1999: 469). Therefore, although journalists

have the potential to be autonomous intellectuals in line with their identities and ideologies, their autonomy can be suppressed by political as well as economic factors.

1.5.2. Journalistic Autonomy

In journalism news is perceived as the product of an institution. On the other hand, journalists tend to describe news as a product of professional judgement (Gitlin, 1980: 249 cited in Sjøvaag, 2013: 155). In one version the news is the result of the structure that the journalistic institution belongs on the other the result of the practices of journalists. Thus, according to Helle Sjøvaag (2013: 155), this inconsistency invites inquiries into the nature of journalistic autonomy as a professional trait.

Considering that journalism is done within the boundaries of an institution, professional autonomy is negotiated in an institutional context. Autonomy in an institutional context requires independence from other socio-political institutions, in particular the state and the market (Örnebring 2013: 39 cited in Sjøvaag, 2013: 155). At the practice level, autonomy refers to the freedom a practitioner has while performing his/her occupational duties (Reich and Hanitzsch 2013: 135 cited in Sjøvaag, 2013: 155). Therefore, it can be said that the autonomy of journalism is based on freedom of expression and publication, and freedom from any kind of interference in this activity in order for journalism to fulfil its democratic function (Carpentier, 2005 cited in Sjøvaag, 2013: 155; Weaver and Willnat, 2012: 534 cited in Örnebring et al, 2016: 307).

Academic literature focuses on two main types of autonomy: The first concerns political autonomy and emphasizes the extent to which journalists are protected from external coercive forces arising from the political system, including government, political parties, censorship, legislation and regulations (Picard and Van Weezel, 2008 cited in Reich and Hanitzsch, 2013: 135). The second is less clear and probably less studied: It highlights the extent to which journalists can make decisions independent of pressures from management and business factors (Gans, 1979; Soloski, 1989; Tuchman, 1978 Reich and Hanitzsch, 2013: 135). The second aspect of professional

autonomy concerns decision-making structures within the editorial hierarchy (Reich and Hanitzsch, 2013: 136).

A study of Reich and Hanitzsch has explored and validated a dimensional structure that underpins these perceptions. The findings indicated six distinct domains of perceived influence (Hanitzsch et al., 2010 cited in Reich and Hanitzsch, 2013: 137):

- Political influences (e.g., government, politicians, censorship, etc.),
- Economic influences (e.g., profit expectations, advertising, market pressures and audience research),
- Organizational influences (e.g., ownership, management, editorial decision making),
- Procedural influences (e.g., news routines, deadlines, editorial resources),
- Professional influences (e.g., professional conventions, newsroom policies, media laws),
- Reference groups (e.g., competitors, colleagues in other media, audiences, friends and family).

According to Zvi Reich and Thomas Hanitzsch (2013: 137), there is a considerable consensus in the literature that political and economic influences, or at least the way they are perceived by journalists, limit journalistic autonomy through censorship, press bans, or interference by owners or indirectly by means of intimidation, profit expectations, and advertising considerations (Bagdikian, 2000; Hallin and Mancini, 2004; Preston and Metykova, 2009; Weaver, 1998; Whitney, Sumpter and McQuail, 2004; Zhu et al., 1997 cited in Reich and Hanitzsch, 2013: 137).

For example, the study of Henrik Örnebring et al., (2016: 308) suggests that many qualitative studies on journalism and journalistic work show that commercial pressures, particularly in the last few decades, have increased and journalists view this as an infringement on their professional autonomy (for example, Boczkowski 2010; Fenton 2010; McManus 2009 cited in Örnebring et al., 2016: 308).

On the other hand, organizational and procedural influences are believed to have a significant impact on news production, particularly through ownership, editorial control, decision-making and management routines, news routines, and allocation of time and editorial resources. As such, the newsroom environment strongly conditions news work (Altheide, 1976; Breed, 1954; Fishman, 1980; Gans, 1979; Schlesinger, 1978; Weaver et al., 2007 cited in Reich and Hanitzsch, 2013: 137).

However, surprisingly, according to Örnebring et al., (2016: 308) in most quantitative studies conducted in Sweden (Löfgren Nilsson 2007, 67-70 cited in Örnebring et al., 2016: 308), in Germany (Weischenberg, Malik, and Scholl 2006, 145-148 cited in Örnebring et al., 2016: 308), and in other studies that are cross-national (Weaver, 1998: 461; Weaver and Willnat, 2012: 532-534 cited in Örnebring et al., 2016: 308) journalists state that they have a high level of professional autonomy and that they are essentially free to make their own decisions about what and how to report. Journalists also say that they are not too affected by commercial constraints.

Örnebring et al., (2016: 308) describe this as a kind of third-person effect. It is closely linked to how autonomy is perceived at work and in workplaces. Therefore, according to Örnebring et al., (2016: 308), journalists perceive autonomy at the workplace level and do not see their autonomy as threatened unless someone explicitly tells them to make a story more relevant to advertisers.

Similarly, one of Örnebring's (2013 cited in Örnebring et al., 2016: 308) recent studies reveals that journalists rarely associate their perceived autonomy with overarching institutional factors and concerns. However, in fact, many important institutional-level changes in journalism are driven by management and organization rather than directly impacting journalists (e.g. increased importance of real-time audience metrics, increased competition). Thus, the workplace level acts mediator between the effects on the institutional and individual levels. The workplace can be said to be the place where autonomy is negotiated on a daily basis through organization, working conditions and the journalistic environment.

1.5.3. Organization, Working Conditions and Environment of Journalism

The concept of organization combines a wide variety of empirical objects, such as factories, administrative services, hospitals or other institutions, just like the news media (Bagla, 2003: 4). The primary function of all organizations is to coordinate and motivate their members' work and duties in an environment where organizational roles are shaped by power relations (Altmeyden, 2011: 133; Shoemaker and Reese, 2014: 154). The value of an organization depends on its ability to pay staff, allocate facilities and equipment, and meet the needs of stockholders (media owners) and stakeholders (the public) (Altmeyden, 2011: 133; Limor and Himelboim, 2006: 266).

The definition of an organization is also based on some criteria, for example, orientation towards a goal, choice of means, and coordination of activities within a deliberate structure (Bagla, 2003: 4). Based on these criteria and the dual nature of journalistic organizations, their primary objective appears to be protect and maintain freedom of expression and democracy, as well as to make profits (Allern, 2002: 137). However, the shift from autonomous, individually owned and managed media outlets, where the publisher is usually editor, reporter, and printer, to the concentration of the media industry in the hands of a few powerful media conglomerates, has brought about some changes (Demers, 1998: 21; Limor and Himelboim, 2006: 270).

This change strengthened the industry's profit orientations, including a chain ownership, a professional management style, an enhanced division of labour and role specialization, an emphasis on rules and procedures, and a hierarchy of authority (Demers, 1998: 21; Limor and Himelboim, 2006: 270). David Demers (1998: 19-20) argues that most academics and media professionals believe that as journalism becomes more institutionalized, it places more emphasis on profit and less on non-profit goals such as quality and diversity of information (Bagdikian, 1987; Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947; Herman, 1985; Kellner, 1990; Krieg, 1987; Kwitney, 1990; McChesney, 1997; Murdock and Golding, 1977; Squires, 1993; Soloski, 1979; Underwood, 1993 cited in Demers, 1998: 19-20).

Academics and media professionals also argue that company structure reduces diversity in the market for ideas, as companies are more concerned with making money than serving the information needs of society or producing a high-quality product (Bagdikian, 1987; Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947; Herman, 1985; Kellner, 1990; Kreig, 1987; Kwitney, 1990; McChesney, 1997; Murdock and Golding, 1977; Squires, 1993; Soloski, 1979; Underwood, 1993 cited in Demers, 1998: 20). Therefore, in this system, media personal, including journalists, serve the economic interests of media owners rather than preserving the public role of journalism as watchdogs and interpreters of public issues and events (Herman and Chomsky, 1988; McChesney, 1999; Mosco, 1996 cited in Limor and Himelboim, 2006: 269-270; Altmeyden, 2011: 136).

In contrast, Demers (1998: 20) argues that news organizations operating in a company, place less emphasis on profits and more on product quality because they have a greater division of labour and role specialization. They are more stable and secure financially, which means they can focus on goals such as quality news production other than profits. These news organizations are run by highly skilled and trained managers who put a premium on professionalism and the public good rather than making money. This specialization sets them apart from media owners.

Thus, journalistic organizations create a structure by coordinating their activities and existing in order to survive for a long time, and also by defining various departments and their roles in the management of the organization (Altmeyden, 2011: 133). In a journalism organization, besides the editorial team, there are several departments, such as the production manager, circulation manager, and advertising manager who do market analysis, product planning, promotion, production and distribution, organize the budget and labour. And in the newsroom, the managing editor is the executive editor, supervising reporters and producers, writers and critics, photographers, graphic artists, etc., supervising management also heads other editors such as online or photo editor (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996: 145 cited in Altmeyden, 2011: 133-134).

During the 20th century, the newsroom was the dominant form of employment and work organization in journalism (Deuze and Witschge, 2018: 169). The

involvement of journalists in the construction of discursive journalism was managed through employment in a newsroom (Deuze and Witschge, 2018: 169). This arrangement also stabilized the industry by separating newsrooms from the business side of media companies, but in practice newsrooms are run by business executives, not journalists (Underwood, 1993 cited in Limor and Himelboim, 2006: 269-270; Nazhmidinova and Russ-Mohl, 2012; Deuze and Witschge, 2018: 169). Thus, the suggestion that newsrooms should be free of commercial and political constraints poses a paradox (Lauk and Harro-Loit, 2016: 1960; McChesney, 2003: 302).

Power relations between managers, editors, reporters, as well as stockholders and stakeholders determine the organizational structure of a newsroom. The organizational structure, which is influenced by the management, also affects the way news is produced, as it affects the decision-making process of the newsrooms (Altmeppen, 2011: 134). On this basis, Simon Cottle (2000a cited in Van Hout and Jacobs, 2008: 61) questions the validity of six theoretical foundations of news production: the routinization of news production, professional objectivity in journalism, social hierarchies of news access, the role of the audience, information transfer models and homogenization of news production.

Raymond W. K. Lau (2004: 693) proposes a categorization that takes into account internal and external factors affecting the news production and decision-making process at the organizational level. Therefore, factors such as ownership, government regulations, technical and logistical factors, news outlet's size and the like make up external factors. Factors such as professional journalism practices, ideologies and values held by journalists constitute internal factors that originate from journalists themselves. External factors act as constraints on journalists, while internal factors exert their influence within journalistic autonomy. The autonomy of course, is not an unpredictable quality, it is precisely shaped by internal factors (Lau, 2004: 694-695).

Accordingly, news as products of journalism organizations has a two-sided orientation just like the journalism organization itself: with its strong economic connotations, news has to keep the media's business alive while fulfilling the social functions of journalism (Lau, 2004: 693; Russ-Mohl, 2006: 195; Altmeppen, 2008: 56). Therefore, one of the functions of journalism is to select, organize and disseminate

informative topics suitable for selected target groups (Löffelholz, 2003: 42 cited in Altmeyden, 2008: 56). And, depending on normative thinking, the newsroom should act as an organizational background for the public role of journalists who disseminate or comment on issues and events, or as watchdogs that reputedly observe events below the surface of politico-economic systems. All this takes place in accordance with some norms and rules of journalistic environment (Altmeyden, 2008: 56; Shoemaker and Reese, 2014: 165).

1.5.4. Ethical Rules and Principles of Journalism

Professional ethics refers to the code of conduct related to the practice of a profession, and more specifically to the rules that professionals set for themselves. Expressing a sense of responsibility and a desire to provide quality service to the public ensures the development and application of ethical rules and principles, which are a condition and a guarantee of their autonomy and freedom for professionals (Derieux, 1996: 21). Ethics in journalism is a normative activity that questions how to act while practicing the profession (Black, Steele and Barney, 1999 cited in Ward, 2009: 296). The origins of ethics in journalism can be traced back to the beginnings of modern journalism in Continental Europe and its development can be studied in several stages (Ward, 2009: 295).

For example, according to research by Stephen J. A. Ward (2009: 297), Gutenberg's printing gave birth to printer-editors in the mid-fifteenth century, who periodically created a news press of newsheets and newsbooks under state control. Despite the primitive nature of their newsgathering and the partisan nature of their time, the editors assured readers that they were publishing unbiased truth based on fact.

Moreover, in the 17th and 18th centuries, journalists claimed to be tribune of the people, protecting their freedom against government. They advocated reform and ultimately revolution (Ward, 2009: 297). At the end of the 18th century, the press was seen one of the institutions that governed society, with forces to be praised or feared, on the basis of the Fourth Estate ideal (Ward, 2005a: 89-173 cited in Ward, 2009: 297).

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the idea developed within liberal press theory that a free and independent press was necessary to protect freedom of expression and promote liberal reform. At this stage the liberal doctrine was developed and criticized: the developers were journalists and ethicists who created the ethical codes of an objective journalism supported by the theory of social responsibility (Siebert et al, 1956 cited in Ward, 2009: 297). Their aim was to create a journalism free of political and commercial interests (Baldasty, 1992; Campbell, 2001 cited in Ward, 2009: 297). The critics were also journalists. They were against the restriction of professional and objective reporting. The development of liberal doctrine also enabled them to apply journalism in a more interpretive way. Thus investigative and activist or advocacy journalism were born (Ward, 2009: 297).

Therefore, the outlined stages have developed ethical codes in journalism (Bernier, 2003: 5). Accordingly, Marc François Bernier (2003: 5) writes that in a democratic and pluralistic society where the rule of law is imposed, the ethical codes of journalism make it possible to fight a news media disrespectful to the rights and freedoms of citizens with some success. It can also fight against “the enslavement of journalism by the political and economic power”. From another perspective, ethical rules and sense of responsibility, which are the conditions and guarantees of professional freedom, should be sufficient to justify its existence and create support (Derieux, 1996: 21). Thus, the ethical rules that every journalist must abide by are announced as a standard of professional behaviour principles, which should vary from country to country or from culture to culture (Herrscher, 2002: 280-281; The International Centre for Journalists, 2009: 12):

Truth

Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel (2001b:9) argue in “The Elements of Journalism” that the first obligation of journalism is truth. Therefore, the suggestion that the information must be accurate is fundamental, as news is useful and reliable material that people use to learn and think about the world beyond them. However, a fundamental problem with truth-telling in professional journalism practice is that journalists and audiences do not need to share a common and irreducible understanding of what truth means (Forde, 2012: 1).

For example, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001b:9) explain journalist's obligation to the truth in these words, journalistic truth is more than mere accuracy. It is a process of differentiation that develops between the first story and the interaction between the public and journalists over time. Thus, there is no end debate between those who defend the possibility and desirability of objectivity and those who argue that objectivity is unattainable (Tuchman, 1972 cited in Herrscher, 2002: 280).

On the other hand, many writers who draw attention to journalists working with facts state that some events are real and some are not (Cockerell, Hennesy and Walker, 1984: 233 cited in Bernier, 2003: 9). For this reason, Thomas Haskell (1998: 157 cited in Forde, 2012: 2) says that facts are low-level interpretative entities that are to be discussed for the moment. To put it another way, journalistic facts are statements about the world that most people accept as true at a given time in a particular community.

In the meaning-making process, it may be impossible to establish the accuracy of a relevant fact due to conflicting evidence. Some facts can be hidden from view. In some cases it is unclear whether a statement about the world should be treated as a corroborative or as an exempt value. In other words, there are degrees of reality. Some facts are more truth-like than others (Forde, 2012: 2). Therefore, above all, journalists must be able to show the public their degree of truth while investigating the truth from different angles (Cockerell, Hennesy and Walker, 1984: 233 cited in Bernier, 2003: 9).

Public Interest/Commitment to Citizens/ Obligation of Providing a Forum for Public Criticism and Compromise

As Bernier (2003: 7-8) defines, the information disseminated by journalists should be useful for their public to get to know the society better. For example, the information received should help the public know how to manage their budget or vote, as well as how they can make judgements about people and the things that have an impact on their lives. Journalistic information should also encourage participation in democratic life, for example by focusing on the use of public funds in reporting or the functioning of social institutions (Bernier, 2003: 7-8). Unlike the information circulated by advertising or public relations departments, journalistic information

should consider the well-being of the entire society or as many individuals as possible (Bernier, 2003: 7-8).

This is why Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001b: 12) define the second principle of journalism as loyalty to the citizens. The idea that journalists reporting the news are not prevented from telling the truth – even at the expense of the other financial interests of the owners – is a prerequisite for telling the news in a way that is not only accurate but persuasive. This is basis for citizens to believe in a news organization. It is the source of credibility. It is the franchise entity of the news company and its employees.

As Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001b:12) point out, “journalists are not like employees of other companies”. They have a social obligation that can effectively override their employer’s immediate interests, and yet this obligation is the source of their employer’s financial success. This commitment to citizens is what Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001b:12) call “journalistic independence”. At this point, journalists, while trying to honour and protect their independence, which they diligently won from political and commercial pressures, sometimes seek independence for their own interests. It should be not forgotten that an absolute break from external pressure can lead journalists to a break from the community (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001b:12). Rather than selling content to customers, journalists build a relationship with their audience based on their values as well as judgment, authority, courage, professionalism, and community commitment. This also creates a bond with the public, which the news organization then hires to the advertiser (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001b:12).

The business relationships of journalism forming a triangle are different from traditional consumer marketing and in some ways more complex. In this triangle, the target audience is not the customer who buys goods and services, but the advertiser. However, the customer/advertiser must be subject to the third figure in this triangle, the citizen (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001b:12). From such a perspective, the expected behaviours from news providers are (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001b:12),

1. The owner/company must commit to citizens first
2. Recruits business executives who also put citizens first

3. Sets and communicates clear standards to the public
4. Journalists have the last word on news

Another journalistic principle under this heading focuses on the obligation to provide a forum for public criticism and reconciliation (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001a). The news media are recognized as the common carriers of public debate, and this responsibility underlines the special privileges that news and information providers receive in democratic societies. These privileges may include subsidies for distribution or research and development (lower postal rates for print, use of public spectrum by broadcasters, development and management of the internet) to laws that protect content and freedom of expression (copyright, libel, and protection laws). However, these privileges are not predetermined or permanent. Rather, they are given because of the need for abundant sources of information. They are based on the assumption that journalism - because of its principles and practices - will provide a steady stream of high-quality content that citizens and government can use to make better decisions (American Press Association, 2017).

Traditionally, this contract has been between news organizations and the government. However, new forms of digital media imposes a responsibility on anyone who publishes content in the public domain, whether for profit or for personal satisfaction. The raw material poured into the marketplace of ideas perpetuates civic dialogue and serves society best when it consists of verified information rather than mere bias and assumption. Journalism should also seek to fairly represent the various viewpoints and interests in society and place them in context rather than simply highlighting conflicting areas of discussion. Accuracy and truthfulness also require that public debate not neglect common ground situations in which problems are not only identified but also resolved. Journalism, then, is more than providing an outlet for discussion or adding one's voice to the conversation. Journalism has a responsibility to improve the quality of discussion by providing verified information and intellectual rigor. Journalism that ignores facts fails rather than improves the quality and effectiveness of citizens' decision-making (American Press Association, 2017).

Completeness/ Keeping the News Significant, Interesting and Relevant

No story is complete if journalists know they can gather more information that is important, interesting, relevant or necessary for understanding a particular situation (Herrscher, 2002: 280). Therefore, the half-truth is a lie: journalists can select arguments, quotes, and material that fit their hypothesis, while ignoring those that don't. However, the information should be complete and each case should be analysed separately (Herrscher, 2002: 280).

According to American Press Association (2017), journalism is also storytelling with a purpose and must do more than gather an audience or catalogue what matters. It should balance what the audience wants to know with what they cannot predict but need, and provide information that grabs their attention. Here, the quality of the news is also measured by how much it interacts and enlightens its audience. This means that journalists must constantly ask what information is most value to citizens (American Press Association, 2017).

Conflict of Interests/ Discipline of Verification

Journalists may not have personal interests in businesses or political parties, and a news organization should not cover the activities of its owner, affiliates, allies or competitors as news (Herrscher, 2002: 280). It should not be forgotten while practicing the profession that the duty of the journalist is to inform the public, not to persuade. The information function of the news media should stay away from propaganda and persuasion (Bernier, 2003: 12).

Thus, as defined by Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001b:15), the discipline of verification separates journalism from entertainment, propaganda, fiction or art. At this point, the discipline of verification can be seen as part of the concept of objectivity. As the concept of objectivity evolves, journalists are asked to develop a consistent method for testing information - a transparent approach to evidence - so that personal and cultural biases do not undermine the accuracy of their work. In other words, the method used by journalists is objective (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001b:15).

Neutral voice, the familiar, supposedly neurotic style of writing news used by many news outlets, is not a fundamental tenet of journalism. It is a tool that news organizations often use to emphasize that they are trying to produce something that is achieved through objective means. Journalists select sources to express what their point of view really is, and then present it as objective in a neutral tone. If this becomes a form of deception, it damages the credibility of the entire profession by appearing unscrupulous, dishonest and biased (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001b:15).

Thus, as defined by Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001b:15), a set of core concepts that form the basis of the verification discipline are as follows:

1. Never add anything that isn't there.
2. Never deceive the audience.
3. Be transparent about the journalistic methods and aims.
4. Rely on the original reporting.
5. Show humility.

Freedom, Independence, and Self-Esteem

A journalist has a clear duty to create a different voice than an advertiser and public relations officer. Accordingly, journalists establish relationships in which the interests of the public are taken into account, with honesty, independence and professional criteria in obtaining impartial news (Herrscher, 2002: 280).

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001a) state that independence is an essential requirement at the foundation of journalism and a cornerstone of its credibility. For example, in a media outlet, while editorials and commentators may not be impartial, their credibility derives not from their commitment to a particular group or outcome, but rather their accuracy, intellectual fairness and informational ability. To maintain their independence, journalists should avoid any tendency to deviate into arrogance, elitism, isolation or nihilism (American Press Association, 2017). Therefore, the critical condition for pursuing truth and informing citizens is independence, not impartiality. Journalism should serve as an “independent monitor of power” (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001b: 21).

Because of this principle, journalism has the capacity to be a watchdog over those whose power and position affect the citizens most. It can also offer voice to the voiceless. To be an independent watcher of power means following the powerful few in society on behalf of the majority to guard against tyranny (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001a). Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001a) find that the watchdog role, which means disturbing the comfortable is often misunderstood, even by journalists. It thus redefines the role of the journalist from a passive stenographer to a more curious observer who researches and discovers the news (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001a).

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001a) also write that the watchdog role of journalists means more than just watching the government. The purpose of the watchdog role goes beyond simply making the management and execution of power transparent, ensuring that the effects of that power are known and understood. It includes reporting on successes and failures. Journalists have an obligation to maintain their watchdog role by not causing a serious loss of dignity or exploiting it for commercial gain (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001a).

Honesty/ Personal Conscience

In the communication process, honesty rises as a value in the relationship between journalists and the public. The public has the right to know how the information was collected and why the media or journalist in question considers it important and relevant where the absence of that information leaves the story incomplete (Herrscher, 2002: 281).

For this reason, journalists should have a personal obligation of conscience. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001b: 33) write that every journalist from the newsroom to the boardroom, must have a personal sense of ethics and responsibility - a moral compass. Furthermore, they have a responsibility to speak out their personal conscience and allow others to do so. While numerous issues make it difficult to produce accurate, fair, balanced, civic-oriented, independent-minded and courageous news, journalists need to feel free and even encouraged to speak up about the decision made by the editorial desk. Only in a newsroom can different perspectives can give a

chance to anticipate and reflect on the different perspectives and needs of a society (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001b:33).

Keeping the News Comprehensive and Proportional

Journalism is the cartography of the modern world, it creates a map for citizens to guide the whole society, and its value depends on completeness and proportionality of the news. Keeping news proportionate is the cornerstone of accuracy. Inflating events for sensationalism, neglecting others, stereotyping, or being disproportionately negative makes the news less credible. The most comprehensive news includes all affected communities, not just those with attractive demographics. The most complete stories are those that take into account different backgrounds and perspectives (American Press Institute, 2017).

Respect of Privacy and Honour/ Equality

Journalists have no right to publish/broadcast an event just because it happened. People have a right to demand and obtain privacy, and even public figures have a more limited right to privacy. Private acts should not be published/broadcasted if they do not affect the public interest and those concerned demand that they remain private (Herrscher, 2002: 281). Different ethnic groups, genders, minorities, religious belief and sexual preferences should be equal. This pillar of journalism orders journalists to treat people with dignity, respect and fairness. Within the scope of journalism, everyone should be equal, not only the victims of prejudice and discrimination (Herrscher, 2002: 280; Bernier, 2003: 10-12).

1.6. Conclusion

This chapter examined and discussed journalism as a profession and a professional ideology from the perspectives of liberal and critical theories. The history and development of journalism in the Western liberal countries led to the conceptualisation of journalism directly associated with democracy aimed at prolonging and widening of public debate (McNair, 2000 cited in Lamoureux, 2021). The liberal theories emphasize the rights of individuals to own and operate a media outlet without any control (Nordenstreng, 1997: 99; Piontek, 2016: 50). From the point

of view of liberal press theory, the only constraint limiting this right are costs such as operating cost, which excludes some groups that do not have the necessary capital from entering the media (Murdock and Golding, 1977: 37). Moreover, in liberal theories, media content is considered as a commodity while its producers compete in a market dominated by the forces controlling the free market as a whole (Al-Ahmed, 1987: 13). Thus, individuals with sufficient financial resources can set up their own media and continue the business depending on their ability to generate sufficient income.

On the other hand, from the perspective of critical theories, the media in general and the news media in particular are not only organizations that produce and distribute commodities, but are also ideological institutions that disseminate the ideas of the controlling elites about economy and politics (Murdock and Golding, 1974: 4 cited in Fuchs, 2012). Therefore the news media work to consolidate the dominance of ruling classes over the secondary social classes (Lash, 2002: 67 cited in McNair, 2006: 22).

The professionalization of journalism emerges at the intersection of the critical and liberal theories (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 38). Liberal theories perceive journalists as unbiased information providers that encourage of citizens' participation in public discussions (Pasti, 2007: 30). This point of view is detailed in the ethical codes, the principles of the work, and the self-organization of journalism as a professional identity and ideology (Barret, 1975: 54; Hallin and Manchini, 2004: 38; McQuail, 2005: 173).

On the other hand, critical theories question the position of the professional in capitalist economies and their relations with the owners of the means of production. They perceive journalists as intellectual workers with limited independence in and control over their work. (Pasti, 2007: 32). From this point of view by being employed a journalist loses their independence (Freidson, 1986: 111 cited in Pasti, 2007: 32). It can be argued, in the light of critical theories that within the confines of capitalism, the rules of journalism are defined by the state, capitalist media institutions, and the market logic. Journalists' work is controlled by a combination of these factors (Freidson, 2001 cited in Witschge and Nygren, 2009:39).

CHAPTER 2: TRANSFORMATION OF JOURNALISM IN THE DIGITAL AGE

2.1. Introduction

In the second chapter, the historical development of the Internet as well as Web 1.0, Web 2.0 and social media technologies are examined to better explain the nature of the digital media ecosystem which affected journalism in recent years. These technologies are investigated not just through their histories and working principles but through their political economy which enables the four largest companies, namely GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook, and Amazon), to achieve a global dominance over information and communication sectors. Focusing on GAFA's crucial role in the daily lives of corporate and individual users, and by illustrating contemporary businesses' dependency on these digital and global networks the second chapter suggests that those four US-based technology companies explicitly rule the digital market.

This chapter also discusses the concepts such as media convergence, participation, and user-generated content, which are believed to have a major role in the newly emerging forms of journalism, from a critical perspective. In addition, the transformation of journalism in the Web 2.0 era is also explored in relation to contemporary studies on computer-assisted reporting, digital/online journalism, mobile journalism, data journalism, automation, bots and algorithms, citizen journalism and alternative journalism.

In this way, this chapter will provide a basis for the discussions over changing new newsgathering and storytelling techniques of digital journalism as well as on the changing producer-consumer relationships in the news media. It can be argued that digital media technologies enable journalists and the news consumers to be in a direct relationship, thus, disassociating news making from the media companies. This

promises a possibility for journalists and even ordinary people to practice journalism by spreading their news stories on the internet and/or social media networks with very low costs. However, digital media which allow journalists to pursue their work independently of traditional media institutions, are themselves shaped according to the commercial interests of giant technology firms.

2.2. History and Development of the Internet

Civilizations have experienced two revolutions in communication and media technologies, such as the transition from oral to written and then from written to printed. Thirdly, like all the previous ones, the transition from electronic to digital media with the existence of computers, internet and mobile devices which are children of post-industrial age brings political, economic, social and cognitive transformations (Ryan, 2010:7; Serres, 2012). Today, the digitalization process embodies new media, which represents the convergence of two separate historical trajectories: computing and media technologies. Thus, all existing media are transformed into digital data that can be accessed through digital devices (Jenkins, 2006:11).

The result is graphics, motion pictures, sounds, shapes, spaces, and texts that become computable (Hassan and Thomas, 2006: 6). The revolutionary effect of computer-mediated production in modern society and culture is the use of digital media as a means of production, distribution and communication (Hassan and Thomas, 2006: 6-7). However, the new technologies are not usually the invention of the media industries themselves. It is often the technological pressure of military-based innovations that provides the opportunity for later civilian applications (Hassan and Thomas, 2006:6).

For example, the first computer, created in 1943 as a calculator, is an important object in modern computer history. It was introduced in the US by the Moore School for the calculation of ballistic tables of the Second World War. It was called Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer (ENIAC). The internet was also originally created for military purposes, specifically to find a robust form of communication that could not be neutralized by Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles. Thus, it can be said that the Second World War was the catalyst event in which modern computers

emerged and the Cold War was the context in which it developed to take its current form (Gere, 2008: 49).

The Internet was developed from a project run by the US Department of Defense's Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA). The network was created by ARPA, and is called ARPANET. It was the technical ancestor of the current internet (Ceruzzi, 2012: 15). In time, the network separated from the military network and entered the university networks, then became today's internet with the spread of the network. On the other hand, ARPANET has had an impact especially in the development of the personal computers or PCs (Cardon, 2012: 66).

Whereas, early users used PCs not for communication, despite their network-joining potential, but for games, later as spreadsheets and word processors. It was made possible by the efforts of visionaries like Apple's Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak who turned personal computers into usable machines in their California garages and made internet connectivity a reality for users outside the privileged world of the military and universities (Cohen-Almagor, 2011: 5; Ceruzzi, 2012: 17-18).

According to Dominique Cardon (2012: 66), the internet was born first and foremost from the encounter between the American counterculture¹³ and the meritocratic spirit of the research world. However, the point was not to change or attack the central political system, it was about to try something more personal and/or local, such as moving it, setting an example elsewhere, founding a new way of life or society. This new way of life was more connected and collaborative (Cardon, 2012: 66).

Within the framework of this aim, the number of internet hosts in the US increased to 5,000 towards the mid-1980s. By 1987, the number of hosts had reached 10,000, and thus the internet passed to the commercial stage. To reduce the traffic load

¹³ In Californian youth movements which was associated with the democratisation of the Internet, there were two different ideals: the protest branch wanted to change politics (it was demonstrating against the war in Vietnam, for the rights of blacks and women); the other branch imagined to change the political system by creating other forms of life, which gave rise to the wave of hippie communities. Their idea was to remake society locally, experimentally, because if alienated individuals came to take power, they could never install anything but another alienating system (Cardon and Smyrnelis, 2012: 66).

on the existing networks, many private networks, NSFnet, IBM, Merit Network, Inc., and Microsoft, etc., started to establish new interconnections under IT organizations (Cohen-Almagor, 2011: 52). For example, Steve Case, who joined Control Video Corporation, founded by William von Meister, with his PC in 1985, also founded Quantum Computer Services, which was renamed as America Online (AOL). In the late 1990s, AOL connected more people (up to 30 million people) to the internet than any other service (Cohen-Almagor, 2011: 52).

In 1984, a company called Prodigy was founded with the support of IBM. Prodigy introduced the use of graphical interfaces at a time when computers were running in text-only mode. Graphics not only made the service more attractive, but also gave advertisers the ability to place ads in front of Prodigy subscribers, thus covering most of the costs. Prodigy therefore envisioned the operating principles and business model of the World Wide Web (WWW) or Web 1.0, rich in digital images and advertisements (Cohen-Almagor, 2011: 52).

For the mass of users, the internet is almost synonymous with Web 1.0, a program that was implemented on the web by Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau in 1991 with the framework of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) (Ceruzzi, 2012: 25). Thus, the goal of the pioneers who developed Web 1.0 was to connect researchers and their computers so they could more effectively pursue their research in distributed locations (Allan, 2013: 268).

Despite the idea, Web 1.0 has been used for many years not only as an information service, but also a solid way of doing business. It carried a large amount of interconnected information about resources, particularly credit card numbers secured by encoding the data stream, as well as providing e-mail services and discussion forums (Yurtsever, 2010:3; Ceruzzi, 2012: 18-26).

Web 1.0 was essentially a read-only connection. It was static and unidirectional. Businesses were uploading catalogues or brochures on their websites to promote their products. People could read them and communicate with businesses. In fact, these catalogues and brochures were static advertisements, as in newspapers and magazines.

Their websites consisted of static HTML pages that were rarely updated (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh and Farsani, 2012: 1-2).

Working within the logic of Web 1.0, the main purpose of websites was to publish information and create an online presence for anyone at any time. Moreover, the websites were not interactive. People could only visit the websites without any influence or contribution, and the linking structure was very weak (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh and Farsani, 2012: 1-2). Over time, all these inadequacies and increasing needs caused Web 1.0 to evolve into Web 2.0. Web 2.0, with its interactive and user-friendly features, has inspired innovations such as digital photography, digital video and mobile technologies, as well as the phenomenon of social media.

2.3. Web 2.0 and Social Media

Web 2.0 was created by Tim O'Reilly as a millennial vision. It is a popular term for advanced internet technologies and applications (Lai and Turban, 2008; Scholz, 2008 cited in Grabner-Kräuter, 2009: 505). O'Reilly (2006) defines Web 2.0 in these words:

“Web 2.0 is the business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the internet as platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform. Chief among those rules is this: Build applications that harness network effects to get better the more people use them. (This is what I’ve elsewhere called “harnessing collective intelligence.”)”

Web 2.0, also called the smart web, is human-centred and participatory. It makes the traditional internet interactive and collaborative. It increases social interaction and leverages collective intelligence, thus providing opportunities for its users to be creative (Murrugasan, 2007: 34-41 cited in Avadar, 2013: 21).

According to San Murrugasan (2007: 34-41) Web 2.0:

- Facilitates flexible web design, creative reuse and updates

- Provides a rich, responsive user interface
- Facilitates collaborative content creation and modification
- Enables the creation of new applications by reusing and combining different applications on the web or by combining data and information from different sources
- Establishes social networks of people with common interests
- Supports collaboration

Web 2.0 is about user-generated content, peer-to-peer communication across networks, and collaboration between users. Web 2.0 is the basic term to describe a variety of applications and websites that allow users to create and share information or material online, such as text, images, audio and video, at any time. A key element of this technology is that it allows people to create, share, collaborate and communicate at the same time (Thomson, 2008: 1).

With Web 2.0 technologies, websites are turning into platforms. Producing on these platforms does not require any design or publishing skills. This makes it easy for people to create, publish or spread their work around the world. Web 2.0, by its very nature, makes it easy and popular to communicate technology and information to a select group of people or to a much wider audience (Thomson, 2008: 1). In the context of establishing and maintaining connections, the use of these platforms affects daily and commercial life. Some users of these platforms, also called social media, develop business relationships and follow industry trends. Others form social relationships in an online environment (Paquette, 2015: 192).

José Van Dijck (2013 cited in Paquette, 2015: 193) in his book, “The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media” divides different types of social media into the following categories:

1. Crowdsourcing and web/content hosting services (e.g. Google)
2. Trading and marketing sites (e.g. Amazon)
3. Social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Google +)
4. Digital play and gaming industry (e.g. Facebook games)

Social media, which is the fruit of Web 2.0 technologies, offers humanity a platformed environment open to all kinds of creativity with its different goals and business models (Lai and Turban, 2008; Scholz, 2008 cited in Grabner-Kräuter, 2009: 505; Avadar, 2013: 21). It is also clear that in the process of platformization, the infiltration of economic, administrative and infrastructural extensions of digital platforms into web and application ecosystems fundamentally affects the operations of the cultural industries (Nieborg and Poell, 2018: 4276).

For example, Google was founded in 1998 as a search engine company by Sergey Brin and Larry Page. It offered many internet services and products, from e-mail and online document creation to software for mobile phones and tablets. These also include ads, apps and an app store called Google Play, books, maps, a mobile operating system called Android, a web hosting service called WordPress, a video sharing site YouTube. Google also has a longevity research company called Calico and a household products company called Nest. Finally, a semi-secret research and development facility and organization called X Company has been added to the list of companies owned by Google, which is experienced in artificial intelligence and machine learning, internet-based agricultural technologies, self-driving cars, everyday robots (Hosch and Hall, 2020; X Company, 2020).

The business model used by Google's search engine, on the other hand, started with the idea of making meaning from the mass of data created by users and accumulated on the internet, called crowdsourcing, and selling this meaningful whole to the advertiser. As such, the company's financial success relies on commodifying and selling all audience movements to advertisers through the heavy use of oversight, outsourcing, and subcontracting of so-called user-generated content (Kang and McAllister, 2011: 142 cited in Nixon, 2016: 214; Smyrniaios, 2019: 444).

To explain the related phenomenon, Pasquinelli (2009 cited in Nixon, 2016: 214) focuses on Google's "PageRank" algorithm, which is the patented software code of a mathematical procedure that produces results in Google's search engine. Pasquinelli (2009: 2-8 as cited in Nixon, 2016: 214), who departed from the tradition of autonomist Marxism, defines Google as the first systemic global rentier of common sense, because the company uses its hegemonic power to determine Google's value. This power is

created by its own algorithm and creates a monopolistic position on the internet for Google's advertising channels to generate cognitive rent.

It can be said that the expansion and dominance of Google in web services started with online advertising. The next step was Google Video. In January 2005, Google launched Google Video, which allows individuals to search for subtitled text in television broadcasts. A few months later, Google started accepting user-submitted videos. Downloading and viewing these videos was paid. In January 2006, the Google Video Store opened, offering paid television shows and movies from traditional media companies such as CBS Corporation and Sony Corporation. In June 2006, Google started offering this premium content free of charge but with ads. Despite all its marketing advantages, Google has not been able to surpass YouTube, a US-based online video sharing platform. Thus, in 2006, Google bought YouTube for \$1.65 billion and continued its operation as a separate entity. In 2012, Google shut down Google Video and moved the videos to YouTube (Hosch and Hall, 2020).

In 2006, Google introduced Google Workspace, consisting of Gmail, Contacts, Calendar, Meet, and Chat (Workspace was renamed G Suite in 2016). To use these free programs, users viewed ads and stored their data on Google's equipment. The availability of both data and programs on the internet is called cloud computing (Hosch and Hall, 2020).

In 2008, Google released Chrome, a web browser. In 2009 it announced Chrome OS based on the open source Chromium project. The first devices to use Chrome OS were released in 2011. These were netbooks called Chromebooks. Running on a Linux kernel, Chrome OS required less system resources than most operating systems because it used cloud computing technologies. The only software running on a Chrome OS device was the Chrome browser. All software applications were provided by Google Apps. In 2012, Chrome overtook Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE) to become the most popular Web browser. As of 2020, Chrome continued to lead Microsoft's IE and Edge (a backup to IE), Mozilla Corporation's Firefox, and Apple Inc.'s Safari (Rouse, 2013; Hosch and Hall, 2020).

In 2005, Google also entered the mobile operating system market with Android Inc. In 2007, Google announced the formation of a consortium of technology and mobile phone companies (Intel Corporation, Motorola, Inc., NVIDIA Corporation, Texas Instruments Incorporated, LG Electronics, Inc., Samsung Electronics, Sprint Nextel Corporation, and T-Mobile). The consortium was created to develop and promote Android, a free open source operating system based on Linux. The first phone with this new operating system is the T-Mobile G1, which was released in October 2008. All these developments also led to the development of third generation (3G) wireless networks. On the other hand, Google launched new applications such as one-touch Google searches, Google Docs, Google Earth and Google Street View (Hosch and Hall, 2020).

In 2010, Google introduced the Nexus One smartphone, nicknamed the “Google Phone”. The phone was running the latest version of Android. It had a large vivid screen, an aesthetically pleasing design, and a voice-to-text messaging system based on advanced voice recognition software. However, the lack of native support for multi-touch, a typing and navigation feature pioneered by Apple that gives users flexibility in interacting with touchscreens, was seen at a disadvantage compared to other devices in its class. Despite its drawbacks, at the end of 2011 Android led the mobile phone industry with a 52 percent global market share, more than three times that of Apple iOS (Hosch and Hall, 2020). Based on the Android operating system, Google’s hardware partners also started producing tablet computers in 2010. The first product was criticized for poor performance. But late 2011, Android-based tablets made the Apple iPad popular. Of the 68 million tablets produced that year, 39 percent ran Android, while about 60 percent was IOS (Hosch and Hall, 2020).

In 2008, Google launched “Android Market”, a digital distribution service. It served as the official app store for certified devices running on the Android operating system, allowing users to browse and download paid or free apps via Google. Google Play was launched in 2012. At the time of the release of Google Play, there were 450,000 Android apps and games available for download in the store. The new app store combined the previously separate Android Market, Google Play Newsstand, Google Play Music, Google Play Games, Google Play Movies, TV and Google eBook Store into one (Callaham, 2017). In 2020, Google Play Music was renamed YouTube

Music and Google Podcasts, with a paid version added. Google Play Movies & TV was also renamed and rebranded as Google TV, turning the platform into a paid content streaming service (Bohn, 2020).

Amazon.com, a technology company, also plays an important role in the platformization process of Web 2.0. Founded in 1994 by Jeff Bezos (an internet entrepreneur), Amazon.com is an internet-based marketing company that sells, directly or as an intermediary books, music, movies, household goods, electronics, toys, and many other products (Hall, 2020). In 2007, the company started producing “Kindle” e-readers, which helped revive the e-book market (Hall, 2020). From 2007, the introduction of e-readers by the company led to dramatic growth in the e-book publishing industry, making Amazon.com a major disruptor in the book-publishing market. In 2011, the company launched a new low-cost tablet computer called the “Kindle Fire”, and by 2012, the Kindle Fire was estimated to account for 50 % of tablets sold using Google’s Android mobile operating system (Hall, 2020). In 2012, Amazon.com announced that Kindle e-books outsold all print books (Hall, 2012).

The company also produces and manages data storage and computing resources called “cloud computing” (Hall, 2020). For example, in 2005 Amazon.com introduced Amazon Mechanical Turk, a crowdsourcing marketplace designed for small tasks such as tagging the content of an image with its descriptions (Ipeirotis, 2010: 16). In this platform, employers make online users do tasks such as labelling and sorting that cannot be performed by computers in return for small payments (Ipeirotis, 2010: 16).

Amazon Mechanical Turk has also increased the artificial intelligence algorithms capabilities of Amazon Alexa, which was launched in 2014 (Rouse, 2018). Alexa is a virtual personal assistant and cloud-based voice service that works with artificial intelligence technologies (Rouse, 2018). Alexa is one of the pioneers of smart home technologies that can control many devices such as lights, sockets, locks, cameras, thermostats, speakers, televisions, garage doors, Wi-Fi and fan systems (Rouse, 2018; Amazon, 2020a).

On the other hand, Amazon.com also established a grocery chain called “Amazon Go” in the USA in 2018 (Perez, 2020). Amazon Go is an automated

marketplace that offers customers “Just Walk Out Shopping-come in” experiments (Amazon, 2020b). With an Amazon account and an Amazon Go app installed on a smartphone, customers can shop without waiting in the checkout queue through an app store (Amazon, 2020b). The no-pay shopping experience is made possible by technologies such as computer vision, sensor fusion, and deep learning used in driverless cars (Amazon, 2020b). This technology automatically detects when products are picked up and returned from shelves and tracks all movements in a virtual basket (Amazon, 2020b). When customers are done shopping, they can leave the store without taking any action. Payment is taken from the credit card through the application downloaded to the person’s smartphone, Amazon.com sends a receipt after shopping (Amazon, 2020b).

Another fruit of this period, which became evident with automation and artificial intelligence, is social networks. Social networks are generally defined as mobile or web-based social platforms created and designed to enable users to communicate, collaborate and share content among individuals and communities for social and/or commercial purposes (Gwena et al., 2018: 2). For example, Facebook, one of the pioneers of the social networks, was founded by Marc Zuckerberg in 2004 under the name “thefacebook”. Facebook had a profile page where users could upload a photo, share interests, and connect with other people. It also presented a network visualization of users’ connections. Initially, it was available to people with a Harvard University email address. At the end of 2004, membership was open to nearly all universities in the USA and Canada (Boyd, 2019).

In 2006, “the” was dropped, making the platform available to anyone with a valid email address. In 2007, Facebook went beyond connecting people and launched “Marketplace”, which allows users to post ads to sell products and services. In addition, the “Facebook Application Developer” platform was introduced, which opened the doors for developers to create their own applications and games integrated with Facebook. By the end of 2007, more than 100,000 companies signed up for Facebook and Facebook started generating advertising revenue by making its network accessible to small businesses and/or organizations at affordable prices (Philipps, 2007; Boyd, 2019).

In 2008 Facebook doubled the number of users by launching “People You May Know”, “Facebook Wall” and “Facebook Connect”. In the following years, the platform also launched “Facebook Messenger” as a standalone application for live broadcasting, chat, video and audio calls, as well as capabilities such as like buttons and photo tagging in comments. All of this has set Facebook up for an initial public offering (IPO), the company was valued at \$104 billion in 2012 (Boyd, 2019). In 2012, Facebook bought the photo-sharing app “Instagram” for about \$1 billion. Facebook allowed interconnection between platforms by running Instagram as a standalone service on Apple’s IOS and Google’s Android. Facebook bought a product and company with millions of users for the first time (Rusli, 2012).

Thanks to the newly developed application in 2014, access to Facebook was provided from all mobile devices. One billion users logged into the platform that year using only its mobile app (Boyd, 2019). That same year, Facebook bought the messaging service WhatsApp for \$19 billion. The purchase price was staggering for an app that makes little money and is hugely popular outside of the United States (Warzel and Mac, 2018). In this way, Facebook, with its 2.38 billion users today, has become a huge community-based platform and a public company.

In 2019, Facebook also announced a cryptocurrency called “Libra” coin. Libra launched in 2020. The new cryptocurrency allows users to buy things or send money to people with almost zero fees. Users will be able to purchase or cash out Libra online or under a pseudonym at local exchanges such as convenience stores. All transactions will be carried out with their wallet called “Calibra”, which will be located in Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp (Constine, 2019).

In 2021, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg introduced Meta as a social technology company, which brings together applications and technologies of Facebook under a new company brand. Meta’s focus is to bring the meta-universe to life and help people connect, find communities and grow businesses. Metaverse is conceived as a hybrid of today’s online social media experiences. It encompasses the expansion of all experiences into the third dimension and their projection into the physical world (Meta, 2021).

Twitter, as a very popular social network with 100 million daily active users and 500 million daily tweets sent, was founded in 2006 as a microblogging and a massaging tool by Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, Evan Williams and Noah Glass. It has an advertising-based economy. However, its ads differ from Facebook's because it's focused on raising awareness. Its purpose is to rapidly disseminate information and allow its registered users to share their thoughts while connecting with politicians, professionals, news outlets, journalists, celebrities and/or friends. Twitter usually allows its users to discover breaking news and various stories. Users can follow people or companies on this platform and share short status updates under 280 characters called "Tweet". It also allows Twitter users to communicate with their friends via direct messaging. Users can also share videos, images and links via their tweets (Forsey, 2019; Twitter Business, 2022).

Twitter is also a platform open to user-oriented innovations. For example, initially, there was no way for users to reply to each other on Twitter. Some users have added an @ symbol in front of a username to identify another user within a Tweet. This has become a common way to approve another user. The Twitter team, on the other hand, made this functionality a natural add-on to the Twitter platform. The same has happened with hashtags, which are an integral part of the Twitter ecosystem. This symbol, placed in front of a word or phrase by users, helped to categorize instant information and deliver it to the masses. These user-oriented functionalities are also the source of retweets. Users looked for a way to recirculate a message from a Twitter user, referring to the user who tweeted it first. So users added RT at the beginning of the message. In August 2010, this functionality was officially added to the platform (MacArthur, 2019).

In 2015, Twitter added Periscope to its universe, designed as a live streaming app for IOS (Apple) and Android (Google) based mobile devices. Periscope was founded in 2014 by Kayvon Beykpour and Joe Bernstein. Beykpour and co-founder Bernstein developed the idea for Periscope while on a trip in 2013. Beykpour was in Istanbul when the protests started in Taksim Gezi Park. He took to Twitter to keep up with what was going on there. Although he could read the developments about the protests, he could not see what was happening. This has inspired a live streaming app that can be easily used during real-time protests (Shontell, 2015).

Periscope allows users to navigate a world map or view a list of live videos. Although the focus is on participatory live video, Periscope allows video to be viewed around the clock by archiving it via a URL link or on the app. Viewers can interact with broadcasters in real time via text chat. Broadcasters, on the other hand, can respond to viewers in writing or verbally via video streaming. Both streamers and viewers can share streams on Twitter, allowing their content to be shown more widely as it is disseminated via a URL in a tweet. Periscope also provides the ability to search Twitter to find specific streams, especially if users edit the tweet to add relevant keywords or hashtags that make it easily discoverable in a Twitter feed (Fichet et al. 2016 cited in Avadar, 2019: 49).

Viewers can also tap the screen to give the broadcaster a heart or hearts if they like the broadcast. Hearts are seen as a way for users to share their support and enthusiasm with a broadcaster and other viewers (Periscope, 2018). Super hearts, on the other hand, allow viewers to support their favourite broadcasters by donating. Super hearts can be purchased with coins purchased from app stores. When a viewer gives the broadcaster a super heart, the broadcaster earns a star balance. Through Periscopes Super Broadcaster Program, selected broadcasters can cash out their star balances (Periscope, 2018).

On the other hand, Google was late in recognizing the popularity and advertising potential of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. The company rolled out Google+ in June 2011, first to a limited audience and then to everyone. The social networking service had attracted more than 170 million users within a year of its inception. In contrast, Facebook took five years to reach 150 million users. Regardless, Google+ had to contend with Facebook, which had nearly 900 million users in mid-2012 (Hosch and Hall, 2020).

For example, in 2012, Facebook did not allow Google's Web indexing software to access its servers. Therefore, Google could not include Facebook in the search results. Thus, it has lost valuable commercializable data it could have obtained from one of the most traded networks on the internet. In response to all this, Google has developed innovative features such as a games area and Hangouts (free video

conferencing for up to 10 people) to attract users' attention. Added Google+ pages for businesses to the market. However the products launched never matched Facebook's success, and the service was shut down in 2019 (Hosch and Hall, 2020).

In Web 2.0 era, digital game industry has also faced changes such as where, by whom, and on which devices the games are played, and has become "social" (Nieborg, 2020: 7). For example, high priced, physically distributed PC and console games sold in Japan, Western Europe, and North America in digital game industry were the main sources of revenue two decades ago. Today freemium games created and played in the Asia Pacific region account for the majority of global gaming revenue (Statista, 2019 cited in Nieborg, 2020: 7).

As David B. Nieborg and Thomas Poell (2018 cited in Nieborg, 2020: 7) point out, companies such as Google, Apple, Amazon, and Facebook today are responsible for every aspect of the production, distribution, marketing and consumption of cultural assets. This is also important for understanding the political economy of gaming apps: For example, the rise and subsequent collapse of Facebook as a gaming platform demonstrates the fast pace of industry innovation, the power of network effects, and the company's ability to commodify every aspect of digital gaming (Nieborg, 2020: 7).

As David B. Nieborg (2020: 7) highlights in his article *Apps of Empire: Global Capitalism and the App Economy*, skill-free social games have instantly integrated millions of new users into the connecting logic of platform capitalism. Therefore, Facebook is not a game machine that can be turned off like PlayStation and Xbox (video game consoles). Logging out of Facebook is also not very effective for avoiding the company's data collection efforts (Nieborg, 2020: 7). First of all, Facebook is positioned as a social infrastructure (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 2 cited in Nieborg, 2020: 7).

Facebook's ad-driven business model focused on retaining developers and gamers. In this way, the digital game became a part of daily visits to the social media platform, in other words, a "digital ritual" (Burroughs, 2014: 152 cited in Nieborg, 2020: 7-8). Therefore, Facebook has benefited a lot from social games to improve its business model. First of all, the games encouraged users to join the platform. Then,

players who returned to the platform for the game several times a day made it a habit to use Facebook (Nieborg, 2020: 8).

As can be seen, in the Web 2.0 era, with the encouragement of technology giants, user activities, goods and cultural products have become more and more “platform dependent” (Nieborg and Poell, 2018, Nieborg, 2020: 3). Today, platform addiction can also be considered as the vital centre of contemporary capitalist culture (Nieborg and Poell, 2018 cited in Nieborg, 2020: 3).

However, in the early 2000s, academics and business people claimed that Web 2.0 would be an example of a more open, liberating and democratized web culture than before. It would provide the opportunity for Web 2.0 users to participate in peer-to-peer and collective production (van Dijck and Nieborg, 2009 cited in Nieborg, 2020: 4). In this wave of discursive optimism, cultural production focused on user-generated content as well as media convergence, interaction and participatory culture. But no one could have predicted at the beginning that all these activities could be clearly controlled by a few technology monopolies (Jenkins, 2006: 131-168 cited in Nieborg, 2020: 4).

2.3.1. Media Convergence and Participation

The disappearance of the previously separate borders between media, telecommunications and information technologies and the digitization of all media content signify media convergence. The result is a more connected media industry (Storsul and Stuedahl, 2007 cited in Lehtisaari et al, 2012: 5). According to Nikos Smyrnaio (2016: 64), media convergence, theorized by Nicholas Negroponte, founder of the MIT Media Lab, and many other scholars, is nothing more than the technological basis of an ideological and political assumption of neoliberalism.

Media convergence not only affects executives’ practices and companies’ strategies, but also affects regulators’ vision. This theory can be discussed at various levels, including technologies, industries, media contents, and the intersection between media producer and media consumer (Jenkins, 2009 cited in Wasson, 2009: 84; Smyrnaio, 2016: 64).

For example, convergence has created possibilities for creating content that combines different multimedia elements (text, photography, sound, video, graphics, social networks, etc.) and distributing these products across different media platforms. Many of these new forms of media production also challenge traditional notions of one-way communication and create new modes of audience engagement and participation in peer-to-peer logic (PEJ, 2011 cited in Lehtisaari et al, 2012: 5). This is defined by Henry Jenkins (2009 cited in Wasson, 2009: 84) with the concept of participatory culture.

Thus, Jenkins (2008: 331 cited in Fuchs, 2014) defines participatory culture as a type of culture where humans and machines intersect, where fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new a content, especially on social media platforms. This culture also includes participants interacting with each other through social media, which creates new forms of cooperation (Jenkins, 2008: 3-256 cited by Fuchs, 2014).

Jenkins (2008: 4 cited by Fuchs, 2014) also points out that participatory culture reveals collective intelligence as an alternative source of power, relying on Pierre Lévy (1997). According to Levy (2001: 12 cited in Avadar, 2013: 29), collective intelligence means that information created or recorded by a person in one place and time is available to others in other places and times. And universal access to this information, while diverse and dispersed, is far beyond people's individual capacity to collect data.

From Jenkins' point of view, participation, which emerges as part of collective intelligence, especially in social media networks, is a term that describes the participation of users, or in other words, viewers, consumers, and fans in content production on the internet (Fuchs, 2014). Therefore, participation can be summarized as follows: downloading a game from Google Play, visiting a website, co-editing an article on Wikipedia, uploading and tagging images on Instagram, writing and commenting on a topic on Facebook, uploading videos on YouTube, creating text messages for Twitter, etc., (Fuchs, 2014).

However, deriving from the social media platforms, other studies mainly highlight two different aspects of participation:

- Capacity to make culture and society more democratic in terms of participation in content production and circulation with equal access to production tools, by reducing broadcasting costs (Carpentier, 2011: 69; Petersen, 2008).
- Exploitation and commodification of content for capital accumulation as a result of an economic policy adopted by internet-dominated technology companies (Carpentier, 2011: 69; Petersen, 2008).

On the subject, Niko Carpentier's (2011 cited in Spyridou, 2019: 828-829) "AIP model" proposes three levels for user agency "access-interaction-participation". Carpentier (2011 cited in Spyridou, 2019: 828-829) makes a distinction between participation through the media and participation in the media. In the first case, the media functions as a space that allows citizens to participate in public debates and exercise their discursive power by expressing their views. In the second case, the concept of joint decision is central and participation is realized through professional and managerial decisions (Spyridou, 2019: 828-829).

Accordingly, when the internet was first introduced to the public, it was argued that this technology could lead to more interactive forms of communication and thus offer citizens more opportunities to make their voices heard in the political arena (Rheingold 1993 cited in Oser et al., 2013: 92). Three major causal mechanisms have also been identified for the potential of the internet to mobilize disconnected groups into forms of political activity, both offline and online (Oser et al., 2013: 92):

1. The internet reduces the costs of collecting political information and communicating about politics, thus potentially leading to increased participation of the disadvantaged (Tolbert and McNeal 2003 cited in Oser et al., 2013: 92).
2. The internet is an interactive environment and therefore has the potential to strengthen the relationship between previously

disconnected citizens, intermediary organizations and the world of politics (Shah, Kwak, and Holbert 2001 cited in Oser et al., 2013: 92).

3. Internet skills have been found to have an independent effect on political participation, unlike socioeconomic advantage levels, suggesting that the population's overall increased internet skills may mobilize previously disconnected groups (Krueger 2002 cited in Oser et al., 2013: 92).

As can be seen, the internet and Web 2.0 technologies that fuel social media offer many opportunities for political participation, such as creating a networked environment where, in theory, people can consume political news, interact with traditional news media and news content produced by regular users, and exchange information (Oser et al., 2013: 92; Chan, 2016; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012; Kim and Chen, 2016 cited in Yamamoto et al., 2020: 1886).

Some studies on the subject show that the use of social media encourages active political participation (Boulianne, 2019). However, according to the research conducted by Juliet E. Carlisle and Robert C. Patton, which analyzed Facebook and the 2008 US Presidential Elections, it was determined that participation in Facebook was not sufficient in terms of individual political activity (Carlisle and Patton, 2013: 891).

On the other hand, many scholars consider the internet and social media as a space dominated by technology companies. Participation in this space is carried out only in line with the professional and managerial decisions to be taken by the companies. Therefore, cultural expressions on the internet are not an expression of democratic participation, but of exploitation and commodification (Fuchs, 2014).

For example, as Masahiro Yamamoto, Seungahn Nah, and Soo Young Bae (2020: 1886) point out, during participation, users not only consume unique data and content, but also generate them for social media companies. During this process, there is constant interaction between users' digital footprints and machine learning algorithms, this interaction shapes their preferences and behaviour patterns.

According to Fuchs (2014), from a data-centric perspective, the exploitation and commodification of users reveals the reterritorialization of unpaid labour within a capitalist profit-oriented structure, by offering customized proposals to users rather than political participation of citizens. The latest approach adopted by scholars also has its roots in user-generated content (Petersen, 2008).

2.3.2. User-generated Content

Based on the works of Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (2010), and Brian Solis (2011), Web 2.0 can be defined as a comprehensive term for web-based applications that allow users to create and exchange information, views and experiences. In the context of internet research, the concept of user-generated content refers to various forms of media content available to the public and created by end users. This content is available on various platforms such as journalism sites and video sharing sites, including social networking sites (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, 61; van Dijck 2009; Manosevitch and Tenenboim, 2016).

User-generated content is also considered one of the defining features of Web 2.0 and social media platforms; here the internet is seen as a platform where users actively participate in the creation and dissemination of content that blurs the traditional lines between content producers and consumers (Anderson, 2007).

Axel Bruns (2006: 276-277) calls this phenomenon as *produsage* and users *producers* and explains this transformation as:

“The core object of produsage is to involve users as producers, and these user-producers often take the lead in the development of new content and ideas. Whether instigated by the operators of produsage sites, or out of their own motivation, users create content. In many cases (including the Wikipedia or various open news sites), the sites themselves act as tools for content production; in several others (especially where content produsage for computer game environments is concerned), the sites provide or point to useful tools and offer hints, guidelines, and frameworks for effective produsage”.

However, commercial exploitation of intellectual property produced through producers cannot be ignored, as the companies that dominate the internet are economically formulated around an open source software development model (Bruns, 2006: 278). At the heart of this discussion, user-generated content is the main meta (Proffitt, Ekbias and McDowell, 2015: 2).

Jennifer M. Proffitt, Hamid R. Ekbias and Stephen D. McDowell, (2015: 2) describe how user-generated content makes money for companies:

Users who participate in social networks and platforms interact in certain ways: creating profiles with demographic information, sending location notifications, posting notes, pictures, videos and comments to groups. Users can compose media messages or recreate them or add affinity value to them by liking or reposting them. This user-generated content, and the interest shown by other users, creates the audience product that is valuable to advertisers. All user activity is tracked by companies and they sell information to advertisers about specific or segmented audience groups (Proffitt, Ekbias and McDowell, 2015: 2).

Thus, user-generated content turns into a product of “observation, analysis, and integration” of the internet (Proffitt, Ekbias and McDowell, 2015: 2). In this context, for example, Tapscott and Williams (2008) discuss the concept of user-generated content as a new economic model based on the co-production of content that users contribute voluntarily without any direct payment. Similarly, Adam Arvidsson and Elanor Colleoni (2012: 135) defined user-generated content as an effective investment tool for social media platforms as they do not pay for producer activities.

On the other hand, Fuchs (2010; 2012a; 2012b cited in Zajc, 2015: 61) defined the production of user-generated content as a form of labour. Arvidsson and Colleoni (2012: 135) also consider online content production to be a form of labour. They support the idea that internet users, whether they are Facebook users or citizen journalists, are exploited by technology companies for the content they produce.

According to Fuchs (2010 cited by Arvidsson and Colleoni, 2012: 136), producer platforms such as Facebook use audience participation to evaluate the advertising

space they sell to advertisers. But since they don't pay users for their participation, producing consumers (prosumers) are endlessly exploited and harmed. In this respect, Fuchs (2010: 191 cited by Arvidsson and Colleoni, 2012: 136) argues that social media users or anyone who produces content on the internet, along with other knowledge workers, are in an exploited class, whether permanently employed or insecure.

As can be seen, the discussion of user-generated content can be viewed from different angles. One branch of the relevant literature examines user-generated content from an economic perspective. The other discusses the effects of user-generated content on users' orientation towards democracy and citizenship. For example, Jenkins (2006 as cited in Manosevitch and Tenenboim, 2017: 732) suggested that networked technologies can empower citizens by disseminating their ideas, as they redefine the role of the citizen in a participatory culture. Idit Manosevitch and Ori Tenenboim (2017: 732) evaluated user-generated content with empirical data documenting both online and offline political participation in relation to it. Thus, they argued that those who contribute to content production serve to facilitate civic engagement.

One of the powerful forms of user-generated content is citizen journalism, which has had a significant impact on journalism and civic engagement (Leung, 2009: 1328). Citizen journalism is the action of a citizen or citizen group that plays an active role in the collection, reporting, analysis and dissemination of news and information, especially on social media; eyewitness accounts, users' survival stories, are completed with photos and videos (Gillmore, 2006 cited in Leung, 2009: 1328). The purpose of this participation is to provide the independent, reliable, accurate, comprehensive and relevant information required by a democracy (Leung, 2009: 1328).

With citizen journalism, the traditional boundary between senders and receivers of information has been abolished and gatekeeping eliminated however "gatewatching" has emerged (Hall, 2001; Poster, 1995 cited in Leung, 2009: 1328). This means that the gates are now located with information providers (anyone who publishes a website with potentially newsworthy information) and the end user (who constantly acts as a gatekeeper when browsing the web) rather than traditional media companies (Bruns, 2003: 32).

Thus, user-generated content resulting from mediated content blurring the traditional lines between producers and consumers enables democratization while reinforcing exploitation due to the business models of technology companies (Anderson 2007; Wahl-Jorgensen 2015 cited in Manosevitch and Tenenboim, 2017: 732).

2.4. Understanding New Forms of Journalism in the Web 2.0 era

Journalism in the Web 2.0 era is defined by Franck Rebillard and Annelise Touboul (2010) with the term “Journalism 2.0” as a professional and academic field in which an internet-based revolution is envisioned with the interactive, participatory and networked nature of Web 2.0 technologies (Gillmor, 2004 cited in Rebillard and Touboul, 2010: 323). Today, especially social media platforms are perceived as powerful tools of journalism mediation. They are disrupting the traditional information ecosystem and the dominant and oligopolistic position of legacy news organizations in access the public space. The digital age gives many actors the role of gatekeepers besides professional journalists (Compagno, et al. 2017: 94-95).

These destabilized features of Web 2.0 affect the monopoly of news production and distribution channels, and even the control of the circulation of news content. Now, the internet is a potentially huge space for individuals to spread the word (Compagno, et al., 2017: 94-95). With social media platforms, the technological opportunities for journalists to create their own media and to respect transparency in journalism have also increased (Humprecht and Esser, 2018: 501).

This can be considered as an important development, especially for political reporting, as this type of journalism must transparently and comprehensively liberate news from the hegemony of corporate media organizations in order to serve democracy and assist informed decisions (Franklin and Carlson, 2010; McQuail, 2013 cited in Humprecht and Esser, 2018: 501).

The unlimited space in web 2.0 makes it possible for journalists to integrate different types of sources and information in their work and present them in more accessible ways; through blogs, news sites and/or social media networks such as

Facebook and twitter (Phillips, 2010 cited in Humprecht and Esser, 2018: 501). In this direction, the transformation described on the basis of the transformation of journalism in the Web 2.0 period will be illuminated by researches on the subject.

For example, early work on digital journalism focuses on newsroom convergence and changing newsroom practices. Such as the changing conditions of the profession with digitalization, and the role of users as content producers (Siapera and Veglis, 2012: 7; Mercier and Pignard-Cheynel, 2014). With the rise of the internet since the 2000s, traditional media companies, especially the press, lost their circulation and advertising revenues due to the change in the quality of news consumption (Durkin, Glaisyer, and Hadge, 2010; Smyrnaio and Bousquet, 2011 cited in Powers and Zambrano, 2016, 858; Larrondo et al., 2016: 278). On this basis, for the first time in history, traditional media companies and journalists realized that cross-platform collaboration between traditional and contemporary is possible (Verweij, 2009: 76).

Thus, media convergence brought together various media such as print, broadcast and online, enabling content to flow over the internet (Singer, 2008: 1). All this was more than a shift, but a hope that a new digital ecosystem could be built on traditional journalistic values and methods, where a financial model supports and even innovates around the core accountability and civic functions of a free press (Bell et al., 2017: 16).

Nevertheless, this transition has had significant effects, structural changes and consequences, above all on the working conditions and roles of journalists (Verweij, 2009: 76; Siapera and Veglis, 2012: 4; Peiland and Sparviero, 2017: 8). For example, in a converged newsroom, journalists from different disciplines share the same open-plan workspace: editors from different media attend the same meetings and plan news coverage together (Larrondo et al., 2016: 278).

Journalist's job also includes the use of multiple tools and techniques to produce multiple types of content for multiple distribution platforms (Singer 2011: 217 cited in Bowd, 2016:131; Avile et al., 2009: 297 cited in Wallace, 2013: 100). They write copy, shoot videos and still images or create podcasts, visualize data, write for blogs or update status on social media platforms; and in some ways all done on a mobile device

such as smartphones and tablets, to better engage the news in an environment where technology is changing the behaviour of consumers (Deuze, 2004: 140; Blankenship, 2015: 1055; Karhunen, 2017: 5-6).

Multiskilling have also had some negative effects on journalistic work. According to Thorsten Quandt (2008 cited in Siapera and Veglis, 2012: 7), the increasing time pressure has made journalism dependent on news agencies and the repetition of the same material. As a result of the workload in a convergent newsroom, Eric Klinenberg (2004: 6) found that there were attacks on the professional techniques and professional values of reporters.

From a business perspective, cross-platform collaboration and multi-skills that simplify the production process help save money by primarily reducing personnel and overhead. It then enables the produced content to be reused in many different ways (Domingo et al., 2007; Verweij, 2009: 7; Singer, 2004 cited in Wallace, 2013: 100; Picard, 2011: 2). The most obvious example of this is transmedia storytelling (TS).

Transmedia storytelling, which rose with the phenomenon of media convergence, was not about repeating content but expanding it where mobility, liquidity, and interactivity played important roles in engaging the receiver in the participatory interpretation of the message (Renó, 2014 cited in Gambarato and Tárca, 2017: 1383).

Thus, social media networks, one of the main actors of TS, have brought some changes to journalism by inviting the audience to the journalism production process through the interpretation and sharing of news (Bossio and Bebawi, 2016: 148). Initially, Web 2.0 for news organizations meant embracing the wider web where communication, collaboration, interaction and user-generated content were paramount. Thus, one of the main ways for a news organization to expand its content and engage its audience was perceived as giving them a space to comment (Grabowicz, 2014).

News organizations have historically already allowed the public to comment on the news in letters to the editor columns. Chat boards, forums, e-mails are also historic

spaces on the internet where audiences can comment on news and chat with reporters, editors or other people (Grabowicz, 2014). Deuze (1999: 378) argues that such direct contact actually results in more story ideas, faster correction of factual errors, and sometimes access to story resources. On the other hand, online comments are not just the audience's reactions to a reporter's story, but also their way of communicating and interacting with one another (Grabowicz, 2014). Thus, reporting is not just about engaging people in a conversation about the news and publishing a story, but rather is a way of recognizing that the news is a starting point for generating comments and contributions by the public (Grabowicz, 2014).

The "blog" format, which has been adopted all over the world since the beginning of the 2000s, has taken participation one step further. In particular, it provided a space for citizens to participate in democracy and exchange political views. On the one hand, blogs helped define the concept of Web 2.0 with the logic of participation, and on the other hand, they were included in the decision-making mechanisms in journalism (Cardon and Delaunay-Tétel, 2006 cited in Fraysse, 2016; Thurman and Walters, 2013: 82).

Blogs have been defined as a new form of communication that shifts mainstream control of information to the target audience. Emerging technology allows bloggers to express their views and blog readers to engage in meaningful conversations, thus empowering news audiences to be providers of information (Chung, Kim, Trammell and Porter, 2007: 305-306). This change also tends to make accessible and to democratize a practice that today is primarily regarded as the work of a professional elite with a strong social and symbolic capital: journalists (Jeanne-Perrier, Le Cam and Pélissier, 2004: 17).

This situation, created by the existence of blogs, has also witnessed a symbolic competition between non-journalists and journalists over the cultural authority, legitimacy and credibility of journalism (Carlson, 2007: 265-266). As noted by Jay Rosen (2005), blogs in journalism were perceived as a loss of sovereignty. This meant that the influence of journalistic organizations on the public sphere was no longer singular. Loss of control meant the shrinking of journalism's public sphere of influence. The journalist was no longer alone. Considering the amount of content

produced by bloggers outside of the ethical behaviour of professional journalism, the reliability of blogs should also be questioned (Mitchell and Steele, 2005: 65).

Despite the ongoing debate, news organizations have integrated blogs into their websites. In this way, the audience had the opportunity to create the website together with professional journalists. Amateur and professional content began to be presented side by side. The audience had the opportunity to comment and/or vote for both authors. On the basis of this change, which brought together amateur bloggers and professional journalists, the vision that defined the audience/readers as “users” had a great impact (Nielsen, 2012: 960).

Moreover, this approach to blogging is supported by the idea that it will generate more web traffic and help news organizations gain a high position in a highly competitive media market (Nielsen, 2012: 960). For this reason, media companies and advertisers have encouraged consumer participation in news as a way to increase profits (Thurman and Walters, 2013: 82; Karlsson, Bergström, Clerwall, Fast, 2015: 297).

Over time, social media platforms have also changed the nature of public participation in news production. Within the confines of contemporary journalism, the audience has become more and more involved in the process of creating, shaping and sharing information about the events they witness (Hermida, 2014 cited in Bossio and Sacco, 2016: 149). In this process, which can be called collaborative or participatory, the audience has become users and co-producers (Bruns, 2005; Harrison and Brea, 2009; Heinonen, 2011 cited in Bossio and Sacco, 2016: 149).

Since the early years of the 2000s, journalism scholars such as Mark Deuze (2003 cited in Bossio and Bebawi, 2016: 148) and Alfred Hermida (2010 cited in Bossio and Bebawi, 2016: 148) have documented the shift away from classical journalism. These studies, which focus on the potential of social media networks, which are thought to give journalists the opportunity to create a wide global network and disseminate information, also destroy the one-way communication model (Bossio and Bebawi, 2016: 148). However, it should be noted that this started first with blogs

that offered journalists the ability to operate independently outside the confines of big media companies (Siapera and Veglis, 2012: 4).

Journalists are now able to continue their profession outside of their corporate media structures, and they continue to share their stories and thoughts on social media platforms and digital news sites they have established through their personal accounts. The new digital media ecosystem, with its convergent space, participatory nature and easy access to production and distribution tools, is recognized as one of the greatest opportunities for new forms of practice of journalism that have long been under the control of large commercial enterprises (Bardoel and Deuze, 2001; Pavlik et al., 2001; Teoh Kheng Yau and Al-Hawamdeh, 2001 cited in Deuze, 2005: 451).

More recently, today, there is no news organization and journalist who does not have an account on a social media network site such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram or Snapchat (Siapera and Veglis, 2012: 1). And it is not at all strange that 1.40 billion people log into Facebook every day, and the “Like” and “Share” buttons are viewed on about 10 million websites a day. The number of tweets sent in a day has exceeded 500 million. Every day, approximately 5 billion videos are watched on YouTube and 300 hours of video are uploaded per minute. The number of photos shared on Instagram to date is 40 billion (Zephoria, 2018; Internet Live Stats, 2018; Fourtunelords, 2018; Omnicore, 2018).

These exemplified tools are used by news organizations and journalists to post links, collect news, distribute and archive content, and generate audience participation (Jeanne-Perrier, Smyrniaios and Noci, 2015: 8; Adornato, 2017: XI). Journalists also use them to find news topics and ideas, access sources, promote their work, and communicate with their audiences and colleagues (Jeanne-Perrier, Smyrniaios and Noci, 2015: 8).

In keeping with this shift, contemporary news organizations, both legacy and born digital, are now looking for competent employees who can perform in a digital newsroom. Today, it is not enough for journalists to have verbal and written communication skills. They should also be effective in using a range of web-based platforms, such as social media networks, to report news (Bor, 2014: 243). For

example, according to the Pew Research Center's 2013 "State of the News Media" report, social media networks have become part of the news experience. In 2012, only 184 news organizations in the US started to employ social media editors (Bor, 2014: 244). Along with this development, the overall percentage of American adults who receive news from social networking sites more than doubled from 2010 to 2012. Pew also stated that Facebook is the most important site for news sharing (Bor, 2014: 244).

However, in the beginning, Twitter was perceived as a more professional tool and studies on the impact of social media networks on journalism focused mainly on Twitter (Smyrnaio and Rieder, 2011 cited in Jeanne-Perrier, Smyrnaio and Noci, 2015: 9). As Alfred Hermida (2010: 299) mentions, very early studies found that individuals use Twitter at least for four reasons: daily chat, conversation, information sharing and news reporting (Java et al. 2007 cited in Hermida, 2010: 299).

Journalists and news organizations use Twitter to send quick updates on breaking news stories or simply to provide a more general link feed to news stories. Social media networks such as Twitter are also evaluated in the context of participatory or citizen journalism, in which individuals provide the first images or videos of an event with instant text messages (Ingram, 2008 cited in Hermida, 2010: 299). As Deuze describes, it constitutes a transition from individualistic, top-down monomedia journalism to team-based, participatory multimedia journalism (Deuze, 2005).

On the other hand, journalists have begun to change the way they present news and their storytelling strategies using social media platforms. For example, in addition to professional news stories, journalists began to use more personal opinions and humorous stories from their personal lives to grab the attention of audiences, especially on Twitter and/or Facebook (Lee, 2015 cited in Bossio and Bebawi, 2016: 148). In additions, legacy media institutions, as well as born digital media outlets, use social media platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat to present their journalistic content in a highly visual way (Minsberg, 2017). In Snapchat, for example, stories are compilations of videos and photos put together over a 24-hour period. And each frame expires exactly 24 hours after it was sent. The result is a visual sketchy narrative (Minsberg, 2017; Hawker and Carah, 2020).

In an age where smartphones encourage cross-platform creativity and digital innovation, journalists today are also becoming increasingly mobile and autonomous. Thus, mobile journalism appears to be a form of digital storytelling, where the primary device used to create and edit images, audio and video is a smartphone (Mobile Journalism Manual, 2020). Smartphone-owning journalists can now create and edit photos, video, audio and graphics and upload them to newsroom servers and social platforms directly from the device, without the expense of costly technical equipment. They can go online using the live streaming apps of YouTube, Facebook, and Periscope. Journalists can also respond to audience questions and contacts via chat apps, social messaging and email (Mobile Journalism Manual, 2020).

More recently, podcasting has been used by journalists as a nonfiction audio storytelling format. Podcasting started as a free service that allowed Internet users to create and download audio files, usually in MP3 format, from a web player for listening on their computers, smartphones or personal digital music players. The term “Podcasting” is a combination of the words iPod (a personal digital music player made by Apple) and broadcasting (Watson, 2005). Since the 2010s, podcasting has evolved into a commercial productive practice and a medium for mass consumption. In 2012, the first business models were launched to support the independent production and consumption of audio content distributed via podcasting (Bonini, 2015: 23).

Today, podcasting as a cultural practice of producing and consuming digital audio content raises both the income of journalists and the number of viewers as noted by Tiziano Bonini (2015: 23). Podcasts provide a new platform for journalists, especially investigative journalists. As journalist Meg Dalton wrote on podcasting in the Columbia Journalism Review, podcasts provide the intimacy and exchange of emotions that documentaries fail to deliver (GIJN Staff, 2020).

Thus, according to Deuze and Witsche (2018: 170), in the light of all these developments and transformations, a number of “actors and actants” who are not journalists or journalism organizations are deeply embedded in the journalism production of today. These actors have a tremendous impact on the conditions in which news is created and its circulation. Therefore, in the era of Web 2.0, the journalism ecosystem includes not only journalists, bloggers or social media users, but also

multinational social media platforms and technology companies that compete with each other in e-commerce, software and online services segments such as Microsoft, Apple, Google, Facebook, Yahoo and Amazon (Smyrnaio, 2012: 4; Anderson, 2013: 3 cited in Cohen, 2018: 5).

Over time, these platforms and companies have moved beyond their distribution channel roles by creating and selling news apps, social media management tools, and analytics services, and have begun to control user data as well as advertising strategies (Cohen, 2018: 5). In other words, they began to control what audiences saw and who was paid for their attention, and even what format and type of journalism flourished (Bell et al., 2017: 9).

Accordingly, initially the main promises of social media platforms in journalism were to allow greater interaction with audiences, the easier and innovative dissemination of information, and even strengthening of freedom of speech by enabling citizen participation (Bossio and Bebawi, 2016: 149). However, over time, the online news industry has become dependent on technology companies that undertake the “infomediatio” function (Smyrnaio, 2012: 15).

For example, today Google controls approximately 40 percent of the digital advertising market in the United States and 44 percent worldwide, while Facebook controls about 20 percent of the US market and 18 percent worldwide. Furthermore, the economic perspectives of social media platforms and tech companies have the potential to turn news into tools for ugly politics (e-Marketer, 2017; Marketing Charts, 2017 cited in Mosco, 2018: 181). According to Vincent Mosco (2018: 181), Google and Facebook have a profound influence on key elements of political life, including public opinion and elections. As Mosco highlights:

“For all of their shortcomings, newspapers historically balanced commercial requirements against a set of news values that aspired to objectivity, fairness, and service to communities, along with ethical standards for reporters and editors. The fact that newspapers often fell short of maintaining this balance is not in question. However, the two leading social media companies – now the primary sources of information

for much of the world's population – have no incentive to limit the drive for profit. As a result, Google search rankings and Facebook's 'newsfeed' are filled with material that bears little relationship to accuracy and truth, including racist, sexist, and other extremist content”.

For example, after the Brexit victory in the UK and even before the election of businessman Donald Trump to the presidency of the US, both took place in 2016, the British magazine “the Economist” announced that a period called the “post truth” had arrived. Especially the proliferation of fake news in social media networks, is an obvious prediction of this phenomenon (Casilli, 2018: 91). According to Antonio A. Casilli (2018: 91), information that is false in origin and nature is circulating on the internet. This will threaten both the democratic life and the future of journalism.

There is great concern that unfounded rumours and fake or misleading news can spread rapidly on social media platforms such as Facebook due to the platforms' confirmation bias. The use of the “like” and “share” buttons reinforces this concern. These apps leverage an element of human psychology that makes social media users more likely to accept information that fits their current worldview. This process is also encouraged by the financial model used by Facebook and other social media platforms (White, 2017: 16):

“The financial model of social media is based on the advertising policies of Google's AdSense and AdWords or Facebook's Audience Network, which collect and exploit the personal information of its users. Browsing history, friend lists, geolocations, videos watched or 'likes' on photos are celebrity data that will monetize GAFAM (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft). As social media is concerned with retaining subscribers for as long as possible in order to collect more personal data, economic incentives eventually emerge that encourage sensational content. In the jargon of advertisers, outrageous lies are more compelling. So the content, the more fictional, will move and polarize ideas to provide an opportunity to share on social media, gain attention and engage with friends. This attention to internet users is such that it may

push online news producers to abandon the ethical standards and self-regulatory methods that characterize journalism” (Casilli, 2018: 92-93).

According to Nicole S. Cohen (2018: 5-6), technology companies and social media platforms whose interests, values and ethics are not compatible with those of journalists and whose aim is to create a loyal and returning audience are conditioned to make money, not inform the public. Therefore, it affects the production and circulation of journalism by creating algorithmic programs, content distribution platforms, content management systems for broadcasting that collect data on news circulation and consumption.

New technologies embodied in the profession of journalism have changed the basic journalism business processes and brought new forms of news content production and consumption by integrating with the business models of journalism (Giomelakis and Veglis, 2015: 22). According to a study on search engine optimization (SEO) by Dimitrios Giomelakis and Andreas Veglis (2015: 22), ranking high on search engine results pages is more important than informing the public for many publishers. This pattern will continue as long as the major search engines continue to drive traffic to news sites.

Accordingly, SEO in journalism is appears to be one of the promising strategies aimed increasing the visibility and traffic a web site gets from organic search engine results, which is highly correlated with the goal of increasing revenues (Potts, 2007; Ledford, 2009 cited in Giomelakis and Veglis, 2015: 23). The definition of the practice is as follows (Giomelakis and Veglis, 2015: 23):

“In general, the higher and more frequently a site appears in the search engine results Page (SERP), the more visitors it will receive from the search engine’s users. In other words, a process that takes into account the evaluation criteria of search engines through different strategies. SEO constitutes a part of Search Engine Marketing (SEM) which defines the steps taken to organically grow a site’s relevancy by building links, writing strong content or submitting to search sites (Potts, 2007). Furthermore, it is one of the leading and most influential activities in the field of online marketing (Nigro, et al., 2012)”.

For example, over the past decade, digital news platforms, such as BuzzFeed¹⁴ and HuffPost¹⁵ have generated new news production, distribution and monetization strategies based on the defined characteristics of social media platforms and technology companies (Nieborg and Poell, 2018: 4276). According to David B. Nieborg and Thomas Poell (2018: 4276), BuzzFeed and HuffPost produce content by identifying trending social media topics and popular search terms, as well as calculating the production costs, traffic, and advertising or sponsorship revenue potential of a topic and format (text or video).

After the content is produced, users are “aggregated” by posting, promoting and advertising content on or through a wide variety of social platforms. These social media circulation efforts, in turn, generate data on user engagement and user retention in the form of social referrals, comments, search rankings, and page views. Such metrics are used to calculate whether it is profitable to further edit and optimize content and invest in paid promotion or stop the engagement-optimization-retention-acquisition cycle (Van Dijck et al., in press cited in Nieborg and Poell, 2018: 4276).

Recalling the work routines and traditional values of professional journalism, the role of the journalist is to provide a critical account of the daily events collected, selected, edited and disseminated by a professional organization (Schudson, 2003; Tuchman, 2002 cited in Hermida, 2010: 300). However, today, social media platforms and technology companies openly challenge individual expert systems or a news culture based on teamwork, knowledge sharing and groupthink, with their collaborative and automated structures (Singer, 2004 as cited in Hermida, 2010: 300).

During this period, C.W. Anderson, Emily Bell and Clay Shirky (2012 cited in Deuze, 2017: 10) claim that journalism has also evolved towards a post-industrial model in order to adapt to all these social, cultural, technological and economic changes. In proposed post-industrial model, news production includes the official or

¹⁴ BuzzFeed is an U.S. based independent digital media company founded in 2006. The company focuses on tracking viral content by data mining (BuzzFeed, 2021).

¹⁵ The HuffPost is an U.S based news aggregator and blog, with localized and international editions. The site was launched in 2005 and offers news, satire, blogs. It also covers politics, business, entertainment, environment, technology, popular media, lifestyle, culture, comedy, healthy living, women's interests and local news (HuffPost, 2021).

informal cooperation of social media platforms and technology companies as well as the public (Beckett, 2010; Russell, 2015 cited in Deuze, 2017: 11).

Also, according to Deuze and Witschge (2018: 170), while this period acknowledges the permanence of meaningful structures such as the newsroom, they think of journalism as a networked practice involving various actors (including audiences and news-producing robots). Accordingly, a networked journalist is a professional driven by a networked practice, some of which are constantly connected to resources, comments and feedbacks that are accessible digitally (Van Der Haak, Parks and Castells, 2012 cited in Deuze, 2017: 11). Surprisingly, by many scholars, this new role of journalists is perceived not as a threat to independence as well as to the quality of professional journalism, but as the liberation of journalism from the control of the old media companies (Van Der Haak, Parks and Castells, 2012 cited in Deuze, 2017: 11).

Therefore, “journalism exists in many places” today (Anderson, Shirky and Bell, 2012: 76 cited in Deuze, 2017: 11). From legacy media organizations to social media platforms. From citizen journalism to digital-born journalism start-ups with a mix of advertising-based and subscription-based and not-for-profit business models (Bell et al., 2017: 23). Some of these start-ups are news aggregators, some are social curators who provide services that can add context or review social media content for news, some offer platforms for news content, others are simply digital editorial companies (Usher, 2017: 1118-1119). Despite all the identified changes, challenges and consequences of social media platforms and technology companies, it is clear that the new journalism ecosystem promises a journalism that goes beyond the confines of the old media systems.

2.4.1. Digital/Online Journalism and the Changing News Work

Digital/online journalism as a field of study has historically been based on the developments of the internet and communication technologies and their effects on journalism. According to Deuze (1999 cited in Deuze, 2001) digital/online journalism can be discussed in two ways: “the inroads it has made into newsrooms and on desktops of journalists working for all media types in terms of Computer-Assisted

Reporting (CAR); and how it has created its own professional type of news work: online journalism”. For example, in early and mid-1980s, mainstream use of computers for news gathering became common in newsrooms, with the invention of the smaller, cheaper, and user-friendly personal computers. Simultaneously, online information services began to emerge and expand. It has also been found that computer-based information retrieval is less costly than acquiring the information in person which led the newsrooms to adapt to this new technologies (Garrison, 2001: 66).

In the early 1990s, traditional face-to-face and library archive research began to give way to computer-based reporting. In the late 1990s, newsrooms were considered to be the midst of a revolution in terms of digital transformation (Garrison, 2001: 66). Digital tools for news gathering, communication, editing and production have become portable, inexpensive, and powerful, giving journalists the same capability wherever they are as in a full-fledged newsroom (Pavlik, 2001: 47). Thus, computer-assisted reporting, which has been fully integrated into newsrooms around the world since the 2000s, has become a part of journalism practices, especially by downloading databases that provide context and depth to daily stories and making data analysis (Houston, 2015: 6).

However, the effects of the new technological devices and the internet (especially Web 2.0) on journalism cannot be limited to research processes such as news gathering and outsourcing, it has some transformative effects on the practices of profession (Kopper et al., 2000; Garrison, 1998; Deuze and Paulussen, 2002 cited in Acosta, 2004: 36-37). For example, in early 2000s, Kevin Kawamoto (2003: 4) defines digital/online journalism as the use of digital technologies to research, produce and communicate (or make available) news and information to an increasingly computer literate audience. Kawamoto’s definition captures, on the one hand, the function of journalism to inform and enlighten the public in a relatively democratic setting, and on the other hand, the changing nature of information-processing practices of journalists in digital media.

He defines typical features of information processing or news making in digital/online journalism as follows (Kawamoto, 2003: 4):

- Hypertextuality: the linking and “layering” of digital information through a nonlinear hierarchical structure.
- Interactivity: the process of engaging active human or machine participation in the process of information seeking and information sharing.
- Nonlinearity: a flexible ordering system of information that does not necessarily adhere to traditional, chronological, or conventionally logical patterns of storytelling.
- Multimedia: the use of more than one type of media in a single product.
- Convergence: the melding or blurring of historically discrete technologies and service.
- Customization and personalization: the ability to shape the nature of the content and service to individual needs and desires.

Accordingly, in digital/online journalism, hypertextuality or the ability to link pages, different websites and documents stands out as one of the main features that distinguishes online news from news produced by print or electronic media (De Maeyer, 2012: 692). According to Juliette De Maeyer (2012: 693), hypertextuality deeply affects news and has some special features that can be summarized as follows, links enhances the news by creating more interaction, credibility, transparency and diversity.

First of all, links create interactivity by suggesting to browse the internet in line with their interests (Peng et al., 1999; Picard, 2008, p. 159 cited in De Maeyer, 2012: 693). It also disperses the basic linearity associated with traditional media and especially print media (Dalhgren, 1996; Oblak, 2005 cited in De Maeyer, 2012: 693). On the other hand, hyperlinking allows people to control their own agenda and allows them to find their own way in a media experience. It allows them to choose their own path, focus on what interests them, and ultimately consume the media at their own pace and on their own terms (Picard, 2008: 159 cited in De Maeyer, 2012: 693).

The second consequence of adding links to news stories is credibility, hypertext makes news stories more credible by directing the audience to more background information, more context, facts and sources (De Meayer, 2012: 693). Links allow

browsing reports, archives, official documents, and full transcripts of interviews and statements (Deuze, 1999: 383).

It is also believed that links increase transparency, by allowing the audience to follow the reporting and news gathering process (Deuze, 1999: 383 cited in De Maeyer, 2012: 693). Newsgathering practices such as finding and selecting valuable sources with hypertextuality are no longer completely obscured. For this reason, a link is the simplest, most comprehensive and most transparent citation method when it comes to making sources clear (Stray, 2010b cited in De Maeyer, 2012: 693).

On the other hand, according to De Maeyer (2012: 693), connections can constitute the mechanism of online gatekeeping. When journalists select notable links and present them to audience, there is a change in the way they act as gatekeepers, as the interaction involved presenting material to the user. Thus, the news is no longer the voice of the producer and turns into an open source of information.

Source diversity is assumed to be the last promise of hypertextuality. Thanks to hypertexts, journalists can report every alternative point of view in a single text without restriction. This opportunity is also at the heart of journalistic credibility. So much so that the basic condition of a fair discussion is to convey the opposing point of view correctly (Fry, 2010 cited in De Maeyer, 2012: 694).

Interactivity, on the other hand, first entered journalism through information seeking and information sharing processes. Interaction also refers to the purposeful actions of humans and machines interacting with information retrieval (IR) systems and many information seeking systems, including the Web 1.0 and then Web 2.0 (Kawamoto, 2003: 4; Savolainen, 2019: 519). Then, it turned into a power attributed to the user, with abilities such as changing the message sent by the producer and even controlling the flow of communication (Downes and McMillan, 2000 cited in Domingo, 2008: 685).

Interactivity in journalism can also be identified with the phenomenon of “disintermediation” (Hall, 2001:53 cited in Domingo, 2008: 685). Disintermediation is closely related to the horizontally distributed technology of the internet, which

provides audience participation in news production, in an age where everyone has become a content producer (Punie et al., 2001:7 cited in Domingo, 2008: 685). Therefore, three levels of interaction can be defined in digital/online journalism: “user-to-user, user-to-document, and user-to-system” (McMillan, 2006 cited in Domingo, 2008: 685).

From an interaction perspective, digital/online journalism deals with exemplary aspects ranging from the customization of content to users’ feedback, reporters and users’ discussion of current events, and citizens’ direct participation in news production processes (Domingo, 2008: 685). Thus, as David Domingo (2008: 685) emphasizes, the wide range of options referred to under the interaction label actually makes the concept a bit too flexible.

The flexibility of the concept also affects journalists’ storytelling and news writing techniques. For example, in digital/online journalism, the linear inverted pyramid turns into a non-linear inverted pyramid (Canavilhas, 2006: 3). The inverted pyramid technique consists of writing the news starting from the most relevant information (Canavilhas, 2006: 3). The answer to the what, who, where, how, when, and why questions are followed by additional information organized in blocks of decreasing relevance (Canavilhas, 2006: 3). On the other hand, in the non-linear inverted pyramid, journalists can provide flexible and instant reading opportunities by easily creating links between, for example, short texts and other multimedia components (videos, sounds, photos, animations, etc.) (Canavilhas, 2006: 3-6). Thus, the unlimited space of the internet makes it possible to use more than one type of media in a single news (Canavilhas, 2006: 6).

The non-linearity in journalism also facilitates the transition to multimedia journalism. According to Deuze (2004: 140), there are two ways to define multimedia journalism. The first of these is oral and written. On a website, news is presented along with words, music, motion and still images, interactive and hypertextual elements, including graphic animations. The second involves the horizontal integration of the media and news is delivered in more traditional forms such as radio, television, newspapers and magazines, as well as email and text messages.

As Deuze (2004: 140) writes, both definitions are typical of the ideal in contemporary journalism and should be understood as possible endpoints on a continuum leading to full convergence. Convergence as defined by Deuze (2004: 140) affects different parts of the news production process of all media outlets such as content production, marketing, cross-promotion, sales, distribution and public relations. According to Deuze (2004: 140), the convergence model developed from multimedia journalism is not expected to be a linear process. Some parts of the organization may be untouched, so convergence needs a consensus among stakeholders and media practitioners (Deuze, 2004: 140).

When a consensus is reached, it is necessary to understand that convergence is not just a specific way of producing and distributing news (Menke et al., 2018: 882). It is the result of cultural restructuring in newsrooms based on strategies that facilitate or hinder their implementation (Menke et al., 2018: 882). For this reason, approaches and models that try to integrate various dimensions of convergence and their relations with newsroom cultures have been proposed since the mid-2000s (Menke et al., 2018: 883). For Manuel Menke et al. (2018: 883) “convergence continuity” model is one of the prominent examples. The model reinforces the collaborative character of convergence in the newsroom by exploring the collaborative work routines of journalists.

In this model, the degree of convergence varies between cross-promotion and full convergence, depending on how strategically the staff of different media outlets cooperate in exchanging information and producing content (Menke et al., 2018: 883). The merging of different newsroom cultures is also the main idea of this model (Menke et al., 2018: 883). The study also highlights the importance of investigating the interrelations of multiple dimensions involved in reshaping of newsroom cultures (Menke et al., 2018: 883).

The approach that Domingo et al. (2007 cited in Menke et al., 2018: 883) and Gago et al. (2009 cited in Menke et al., 2018: 883) developed within the “Infotendencias Group” in a project on convergence in Spanish newsrooms, is another example (Menke et al., 2018: 883). In the newsrooms, the study identified four dimensions of convergence:

1. Integrated production
2. Multi-platform delivery
3. Multi-skilled professionals
4. Active audience

In the study, Domingo et al. (2007: 2 cited in Menke et al., 2018: 883) focused especially on the first three dimensions. The main problem of the study is to find out whether independent and single-media newsrooms cooperate. Because the general belief today is that content is produced by a single shared multimedia newsroom. Therefore, the study used different types of media, professional culture, priorities and individual attitudes of journalists as criteria of success or failure of convergence projects.

The “matrix model”, on the other hand, takes a different approach. The model distinguishes between three dimensions such as full integration, cross-media and coordination of isolated platforms. The model detects convergence in newsrooms and categorizes their dimensions, with reference to clear changes in newsroom management, journalism practices, and work organization (García-Avilés et al., 2009: 294 cited in Menke et al., 2018: 883).

Thorsten Quandt and Jane B. Singer (2009: 130 cited in Menke et al., 2018: 884) identified similar dimensions such as convergent news production, work routines, cross-distribution, journalistic roles, and transmedia storytelling. Proving the existence of the influence of convergence culture on newsroom cultures was one of the results of the study. Journalism organizations have been restructured as multimedia companies, forcing journalists to integrate new formats into their professions, according to the study. Therefore, journalists are reinventing their profession with different patterns of gathering and disseminating information in a networked environment.

In addition, by following Ester Appelgren (2004: 245 as cited in Menke et al., 2018: 884), it can be said that the convergence process can be planned strategically and the effects of the convergence process are visible, measurable and detectable. In

this direction, determining how convergence strategies are implemented in news organizations depends on a good analysis of newsroom culture.

As Thomas Hanitzsch (2007: 369 cited in Menke et al., 2018: 884) has argued, newsroom culture can often be referred to as a set of ideas (values, attitudes and beliefs), practices (cultural production) and artefacts (cultural products, texts). For Hanitzsch (2007: 369 cited in Menke et al., 2018: 884) there are three levels of analysis in the content production chain of the convergent newsrooms: (1) the cognitive level as the basis for the perception and interpretation of the news work, (2) the evaluative level of journalistic roles and professional worldviews, and, (3) the performative level of journalistic practices.

For example, a description of the three proposed levels can be found in the works of Tai Neilson (2020: 2), who idealizes the digital reporter. A digital reporter is a journalist who never sets foot in a physical newsroom, never interviews in person, and only publishes stories on a website and/or social media. This new reporter's job is to watch the web for trending topics and interesting stories. The digital reporter use automated tools in the newsroom to search for potential stories that combine with the reporter's own understanding of the news.

A reporter's goal is to produce eye-catching, clickable content. The content the digital reporter creates does not conform to the known formal features of the news. The news positions somewhere between a blog and a social media post. The stories are portrayed with striking headlines and compelling visuals. Digital maps, data visualization and interactive applications are used in abundance. Despite the almost unlimited space powered by the web, this news is short. Making longer stories slows down the journalist. Researching original stories and fact-checking means a lot of work for journalists who are expected to produce five or more stories each day. Short stories are also encouraged by readership and engagement metrics. Producing the news quickly and broadcasting it immediately is better for the reporter to capture the high numbers that news organizations desire. People will click, read, share and comment on the article. All this will raise the metrics. Submissions and rewards are instant in this new journalistic environment (Neilson, 2020: 2).

The digital reporter disseminates their stories through their personal social network accounts and maintains their online presence in different profiles. It's a viral strategy they use to stay in employment or find other opportunities in a precarious news industry. Posts are pre-scheduled, so the journalist always circulates new content during peak hours of the day and night. He contributes in some way to almost all social media events as a journalist, even if the journalist's posts about hobbies and topics that have nothing to do with the stories they are working on. The new reporter is also in constant interaction with the audience (Neilson, 2020: 2).

As seen, the rise of digital reporter as well as reporting resulted in reorganization of newsrooms and workflows. It can be said that the organization of a newsroom is turned into an assemblage of people, digital devices, and news content drawn together by networked software (Neilson, 2020: 2-3). Thus, all transmitted aspects of digital reporter and digital newsroom are somehow integrated into the newsroom convergence. As such, the culture of convergence is usually more concerned with the level of ideas and practices. It is less interested in cultural artefacts that emerge during news production. This is explained by the need to research the newsroom and journalists and describe the newsroom culture (Menke et al., 2018: 884).

Secondly, the emphasis is placed on the evaluative and performative levels of journalistic culture within the framework of convergence in journalism. Accordingly, it describes how convergence affects editorial routines and practices, and its impact on journalistic roles and professional worldviews. However, as can be seen, there is less focus on cognitive changes, such as journalists referencing news values or framing events (Menke et al., 2018: 884).

Today, especially news organizations that emulate social media platforms such as Google and Facebook, consider offering personalized content and services a good editorial and business strategy (Lafrance, 2017). In the contemporary era, digital technologies allow news readers to reveal their interests, preferences, values, locations, and other individual characteristics of news consumption. For example, news organizations can now present news on multiple platforms in real-time, on-demand and tailored to the interests of the audience (Bodo, 2019: 1054).

Accordingly, Neil Thurman and Steve Schifferes (2012: 776) define personalization as:

“A form of user-to-system interactivity that uses a set of technological features to adapt the content, delivery, and arrangement of a communication to individual users’ explicitly registered and/or implicitly determined preferences”.

Thurman and Schifferes (2012: 776) also make an important distinction between “explicit” and “implicit” personalization in their article. Explicit personalization uses direct user input; implicit personalization extracts preferences from data collected, for example, through a registration process or the use of software that monitors user activity.

Explicit personalization dates back to the early 2000s. It can also be called the first generation of personalization. At this time, personalized news services asked users to clearly express their preferences regarding news consumption (Bodo, 2019: 1055). According to Thurman and Schifferes (2012 cited in Bodo, 2019: 1055), early news products based on open customization included customizable newsletters, RSS feeds, different geo-location homepages, widgets, and customizable “My News” sections. As written by Balazs Bodo (2019: 1055), despite the widespread use of such overt customization options, many of these first-generation personalized news services have remained marginal and largely unsuccessful. The main reason for this was that users were reluctant to spend time and energy on explicit personalisation (Sørensen 2013 cited in Bodo, 2019: 1055).

Implicit personalization is the second generation of news personalization and has been available to users since the 2010s. This approach creates digital profiles from indirect user signals such as clicks, third-party user information, and transaction history and uses them as input for algorithmic agents that provide personalized recommendations. According to Bodo (2019: 1055), such intermediaries were first developed and successfully implemented by Amazon for e-commerce, by Google in the search and digital advertising industries, and by YouTube and Facebook in various commercial areas. These services also brought a breath of fresh air to the news industry

by proving that it is possible to algorithmically match users with the content they like (Bodo, 2019: 1055).

As Bodo (2019: 1055) emphasizes, implicit personalization technologies in the news industry have also raised some doubts about how commercial personalization logics developed by platforms can be applied in the newsroom. Therefore, personalization embodies and brings together a number of different developments affecting the news production and distribution business (Bodo, 2019: 1055). Bodo (2019: 1055) answers this transformation in five steps, also referring to the ups and downs of digital technologies:

1. Personalization relies on the quantification of audiences, connecting personalization with decades of debate about how newsrooms should reconcile readers' demands with editors' journalistic mission and editorial judgment (Turow 2005; Zamith 2018 cited in Bodo, 2019: 1055).
2. Algorithms require that editorial decisions regarding news and entertainment value, chance, diversity, social relevance, and importance be formalized in specific algorithmic arrangements. How to conceptualize this dynamic, subjective and often intentionally poorly defined thoughts in computer science language poses challenges (Helberger, Karppinen, and D'Acunto 2018; Reviglio 2019 cited in Bodo, 2019: 1055).
3. The same technologies and data used to personalize news are used to serve online advertising. Thus, news personalization and free ad-funded news production are intrinsically linked. Issues with personalized digital advertising, such as users' resistance to commercial surveillance, can affect news personalization, and the ability to use the same traffic data and user profiles to personalize both ads and news can lead to conflicts between business and editorial considerations (Bodo et al. 2019 cited in Bodo, 2019: 1055).
4. It is believed that the algorithms that personalize the information have their own agency through filter bubbles, echo chambers, and

polarization generation capabilities when not controlled (Borgesius et al. 2016 cited in Bodo, 2019: 1055).

5. Personalization technologies are also used by online platforms, albeit for very different purposes. Platforms are involved in the logic of news production, distribution and consumption in more than one way. These platforms compete with news organizations for advertising revenue, their ability to control access also affects the delivery of news and can become an agenda setter (Bodo, 2019: 1055).

Thus, according to John Pavlic (2000: 229), all defined characteristics of digital/online journalism naturally leads journalistic work to some changes in:

“(1) the way journalists do their job; (2) the nature of news content; (3) the structure and organization of the newsroom and the news industry; and (4) the nature of the relationships between and among news organizations, journalists and their many publics, including audiences, competitors, news sources, sponsors and those who seek to regulate or control the press”.

Pavlic (2000: 229) refers to the changing techniques of newsgathering by journalists in the digital age, with the way journalists do their jobs. In digital, more and more journalists are spending less time in the field, stopping directly observing the events and processes they report on. According to Pavlic (2000: 229), reporters now effectively use online tools to gather news and information, check facts and even find sources outside the Web.

The nature of news content, on the other hand, refers to the increasing speed of the news flow and the changing nature of storytelling and the presentation of news (Pavlic, 2000: 231-232). According to Pavlic (2000: 232), in the online news world, the pyramid style of news writing is outdated. It is replaced by immersive and interactive multimedia news reports, which can give the audience a sense of presence at news events (Pavlic, 2000: 232).

Pavlic (2000: 333) draws attention to a flexible journalism that breaks down the centralization and hierarchical character of the newsroom in the structure and

organization of the newsroom and the news industry. Pavlic (2000: 333) also highlights that the changing economy and technology of online news is reshaping the traditional separation of editorial and commercial functions. Finally, Pavlic (2000: 235) refers to the dialogue between the press and the public in the relationship between news organizations and their audiences.

As Pavlic (2000: 236) emphasizes, all these changes have the capacity to raise various research questions for researching and understanding journalism in the twenty-first century. Therefore, almost two decades after Pavlic (2000), and given the changing nature of digital media and digitalization now well embodied in journalism, it is inevitable to revisit definitions of digital journalism to find possible new research questions and areas (Duffy and Ang, 2019: 378 cited in Perreault and Ferrucci, 2020: 1299).

For example, Steen Steensen, Anna M. Grondahl Larsen, Ynqve Benestad Hagvar, and Birgitte Kjos Fonn (2019: 338 cited in Steensen and Westlund, 2021: 17) write that digital journalism is the transformative social practice of selecting, interpreting, editing and distributing content. It contains factual information on perceived public interest to various types of audiences in specific but varying genres and formats. As such, digital journalism is shaped by new technologies and platforms. The new generation of journalism, which increasingly establishes a symbiotic relationship with the audience, has included actors involved in social practice.

As written by Sue Robinson, Seth C. Lewis and Matt Carlson (2019: 369-370 cited in Steensen and Westlund, 2021: 17-18), digital/online journalism use technologies such as, social media, platforms, mobile devices, data analytics, algorithms. Therefore, the digital dynamics of journalism are based on how it interacts with and changes the authorities and forces acting with these changes and configurations.

Andrew Duffy and Ang Peng Hwa (2019: 382 cited in Steensen and Westlund, 2021: 17-18) define journalism as a way of embodying the philosophies, norms, practices, values and attitudes of digitalization in society. This embodiment includes control, storage, accessibility and data transmission. As Silvio Waisbord (2019: 352

cited in Steensen and Westlund, 2021: 17) points out, digital journalism is the networked production and consumption of news and information. It is characterized by network settings and applications.

And finally, as Barbie Zelizer (2019: 349 cited in Steensen and Westlund, 2021: 17-18) points out, digital journalism takes its meaning from both practice and rhetoric. Practice includes a set of expectations, practices, abilities, and limitations and reflects a difference of degree rather than type. Rhetoric heralds hopes and anxieties about making the journalistic enterprise worthwhile. With digital laying the groundwork for journalism, digital journalism creates a conduit that allows imagining the optimum link between journalism and the public over time.

Through the index of definitions, it can be said that digital/online journalism emerges from the technologies, platforms, devices and audience relationships that constitute the central objects of journalism in the 21st century. Therefore, as written by Laura Ahva and Steen Steensen (2017 cited in Steensen and Westlund, 2021: 2), digital journalism first starts from a discourse of deconstruction of traditional journalism and then spreads to more innovative models that transform journalism and the journalistic practices.

2.4.2. Data Journalism

Combining data analysis and data visualization techniques, data journalism is one of the growing forms of storytelling in journalism in an age where internet users generate data with every login to the web (Nygren, Appelgren, and Hüttenrauch 2012 cited in Applegren and Nygren, 2014: 394). According to Charon (2013 cited in Gray et al. 2013: 10), data journalism, which combines traditional dimensions of journalism applying to the particular territory of data, and skills specific to computing and graphic processing, is not necessarily the future of journalism but certainly one of its dimensions. Data journalism can be defined as a broad genre that includes three different journalism approaches: computer-assisted reporting (CAR), data journalism, and computational journalism (Coddington, 2015 cited in Young et al. 2018: 116).

Starting with the use of computers especially in investigative journalism, computer-assisted reporting dating back to the 1950s forms the basis of modern data journalism and computational journalism approaches (Cox, 2000; Gynnild, 2014 cited in Coddington, 2015: 333). Philip Meyer (1973 cited in Coddington, 2015: 333-334) summarized the CAR as a new form of journalism called “precision journalism” in his book “Precision Journalism: A Reporter’s Introduction to Social Science Methods”. Precision journalism is modelled after the research methods of the social sciences, using empirical methods (surveys and content analysis) and statistical analysis with the aid of computers to obtain more precise answers to journalistic questions (Coddington, 2015: 333).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, precision journalism, reformulated as computer-assisted reporting and linked to investigative journalism, became an important tool for professional journalism in terms of data validation (Houston 1996 cited in Coddington, 2015: 334). Since the early 2000s, digital technologies have spread widely to newsrooms. Computer-assisted reporting embodied two sets of information-gathering practices that have become fundamental to journalistic work: data collection and statistical analysis. These applications drew on Meyer’s precision journalism and focused on computer-based information gathering skills such as online archival research and even online interviews (Miller 1998; Yarnall et al. 2008 cited in Coddington, 2015: 334). Today, computer-assisted reporting continues to be applied in journalism as a historical method of quantitative journalism rather than a contemporary practice (Coddington, 2015: 334).

On the other hand, data journalism is a hybrid type of journalism based on data curation and analysis, which encompasses the presentation of such analysis through various computer-mediated visualization techniques and tools (Appelgren and Nygren 2014, cited in Coddington, 2015: 334; Bell, 2012; Bradshaw, 2010; Thibodeaux, 2011 cited in Coddington, 2015: 334). Data journalism is closely related to the use and proliferation of open data and open-source tools for storytelling (Gynnild, 2014 cited in Coddington, 2015: 334-335). It is also highly linked to “Big Data”. The term “Big Data” refers to the heterogeneous mass of digital data produced by companies and individuals (Riahi and Riahi, 2018: 524). According to Ester Appelgren and Gunnar Nygren (2014: 394), in the age of big data, data journalism stories are often based on

large publicly available data sets or data collected with the help of the general public, in other words, crowdsourcing.

In addition, following the professional use of Web 2.0 and social networks, today, many services have emerged to deal with the ever-increasing mass of online information. Parallel to this, deeper changes have become widespread: the introduction of norms and standards that facilitate the processing of public and private datasets; easy access to third-party services via programming interfaces (APIs); semantic enrichment of content through metadata, which makes it possible to perform more precise queries: The increasing use of algorithmic methods such as automatic language processing, automatic categorization, graph theory, network analysis also characterizes data journalism (Cotte et al. 2013: 52).

Most of the time, an internet user or a company using web 2.0 services leaves traces that are available to others. Therefore, it can be beneficial for a journalist to monitor an account's new connections or status change on services like LinkedIn, Google, or Twitter. Information published online is increasingly accompanied by metadata. In most cases, this data can be retrieved via APIs: geolocation data from tweets on Twitter, "analytical" data from YouTube so that it can be used as a method of investigative journalism. For example, Google's Trends compares the evolution of global search term trends (Cotte et al. 2013: 54).

This application, which takes place around the fields that can also be defined as open data, data network, cloud computing, internet of things, contributes to the usability of huge data sets. On the other hand, the Common Crawl project which stores on Amazon Web Services' public data sets and on multiple academic cloud platforms across the world aimed to provide free access to an archive of the Web (more than five billion pages) that can be used for analysis. It is this dataset that Data Publica used to map French-speaking open data providers in 2012 (Cotte et al. 2013: 54).

Accordingly, computational journalism, encompass computer-assisted reporting and data journalism, is defined by James Hamilton and Fred Turner (2009: 2 cited in Coddington, 2015: 335) as a combination of algorithms, data, and knowledge from the social sciences to complete the accountability function of journalism (Hamilton and

Turner, 2009: 2 cited in Coddington, 2015: 335). Following Nicholas Diakopoulos (2011), Coddington (2015: 335) defines computational journalism as a technologically oriented branch of journalism that focuses on the application of computing and computational thinking to information gathering, making sense, and presenting information.

For example, WikiLeaks, created by Julian Assange, is a website that publishes presentation and leaks of government, corporate, organizational, and/or religious documents while attempting to preserve the anonymity of contributors (Datahub, 2013). The website is also perceived as a reason for newsrooms to adopt data journalism (Rogers, 2011). In 2010, WikiLeaks released the “Collateral Murder” video that was downloaded and decrypted from US military servers. The footage showed US soldiers shooting at unarmed Iraqi civilians from an Apache helicopter. This video put WikiLeaks in the advocacy journalism camp because the organization had taken a clear moral position about the events the video depicted (Lynch, 2013: 314-315).

Another feature of WikiLeaks, which includes various data such as 92,000 field reports from Afghanistan, 400,000 field reports from Iraq, 251,287 US diplomatic correspondence from the USA, and 700 case reports on prisoners in Guantanamo, is considered as a news source by other newsrooms (Lynch, 2013: 315). Investigative newsrooms benefiting from the leaks published by WikiLeaks have produced many news using this data (Lynch, 2013: 314). For example, The Guardian agreed with Julian Assange to publish data on military incidents in Afghanistan and Iraq. The data was in the form of a huge excel file. Some of the 92,201 rows of data were either none or badly formatted. Thus, The Guardian’s data journalists began filtering their data to tell one of the key stories of the war, such as the rise in IED (improvised explosive device) attacks (Rogers, 2011).

According to Simon Rogers (2011), the dataset was huge but easy to manage. As The Guardian’s data journalists decrypted the data, they also had the opportunity to see how the attacks were affecting the troops on the front. According to data from WikiLeaks, British and Canadian troops were present in the worst affected areas. The

information obtained also backed-up what The Guardian's reporters who had covered the war knew (Rogers, 2011).

Alongside WikiLeaks, one of the famous examples of journalism according to Mark Coddington (2015: 335) is The Guardian's, "The Government Spending by Department Project, 2009-10". The project relied on reporting of UK Members of Parliament's requests. Between 2009 and 2010, The Guardian published 460,000 pages of expense reports online, asking their readers to review them and flag questionable claims (Coddington, 2015: 335). The project resulted in investigative reports. The data visualizations used have led many members of Parliament to re-examine some of the allegations. This project is a good example of the data journalism model in that it makes data public and uses methods such as data analysis, visualization and reporting (Gray, Bounegru, and Chambers, 2012 cited in Coddington, 2015: 335).

Sylvain Parasie and Eric Dagiral (2012: 853) worked with data journalists in newsrooms. Their research is based on an empirical study in Chicago. They argued that integrating programmers into newsrooms could be seen as a technology-driven innovation. Parasie and Dagiral (2012: 853) revealed that the technological works of programmers hold great promise for both news organizations and democracy. According to Parasie and Dagiral (2012: 853; Appelgren and Nygren, 2014: 395), as part of the hacker culture, programmers come with political values about open source and open government, which brings a new culture to newsrooms.

For Appelgren and Nygren (2014: 395), access to open data and engagement of activists is one of the crucial factors for continued innovation in data journalism. Astrid Gynnild (2013 cited in Appelgren and Nygren, 2014: 395) analysed journalism blogs such as The Guardian in the UK and the New York Times in the US to find other important factors for the development of data journalism. Gynnild (2014: 713) emphasizes that computational discoveries lead not only to innovative uses of technology, but also to innovative ways for journalists to think and act. So much so that journalism innovation leads to innovation journalism. According to Appelgren and Nygren (2014: 395), the drive of particularly committed individuals is one of the key factors in the initial phase of innovation. Another important factor in the next phase is news media organizations' focused investments in human resources.

On the other hand, The New York Times is a pioneering example of how innovative data journalism tools can be created in an editorial department in collaboration with other organizations. The “Document Cloud” tool, which uses cloud technology, was developed in collaboration between the New York Times and the non-profit news organization ProPublica (Cohen et al. 2011 cited in Appelgren and Nygren, 2014: 395).

Its purpose is to help journalists process and publish documents containing unstructured data. The collaborative approach to tool development is about ideas at the heart of computer science (Appelgren and Nygren, 2014: 395). As it turns out, data journalism opens up new possibilities for telling a story with a set of digital information that can be found online and using software. The use of data in journalism, not only helps the journalist to tell a complex story through infographics, but also serves as both a news source and an innovative tool (Bradshaw, 2020).

2.4.3. Automation, Bots and Algorithms

Innovations in information and communication technologies have made possible the process of making computer-generated news in journalism (Oremus, 2015 cited in Túñez-Lopez, et al, 2019: 1414). In journalism, automation is called robot journalism, algorithm journalism, and machine-written journalism (Dörr and Hollnbuchner, 2017: 404). However, producing news and performing journalistic tasks such as reporting, curating and even data analysis and visualization is also always defined as a technological solution (Gao et al., 2014; Shearer, Basile and Geiger, 2014; Broussard 2015; Carlson 2015; Young and Hermida 2015 cited in Túñez-Lopez, et, al, 2019: 1414).

Today, machines have become autonomous forces in the production and improvement of news and stories rather than performing assigned tasks. In other words, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in journalism allows for the complete elimination of direct human intervention during news production. Automation in digital journalism supports news production by replacing journalists with bots and algorithms. In this direction, journalism without human journalists is also possible (Túñez-Lopez, et al, 2019: 1412).

The origins of automation as well as AI in news production go back to the intersection between journalism and big data, which is closely linked to data journalism and the semantic web (Gynnild, 2014 cited in Túñez-Lopez, et, al, 2019: 1413). The transition from an analysis algorithm to an algorithm for writing is supported by the semantic web and AI applications used for storing and processing data. The focus of data and data-driven journalism is finding stories in datasets. Algorithmic journalism, on the other hand, combines journalism values with coded tools, methods and calculations. (Stavelin 2014, 86 cited in Túñez-Lopez, et, al, 2019: 1413).

Accordingly, the use of algorithms allows machines to autonomously create textual and graphic journalistic products from private or public databases. Algorithmic journalism can be defined as:

“The (semi)-automated process of natural language generation by the selection of electronic data from private or public databases (input), the assignment of relevance of pre-selected or non-selected data characteristics, the processing and structuring of the relevant data sets to a semantic structure (throughput), and the publishing of the final text on an online or offline platform with a certain reach (output) (Dörr and Hollnbuchner, 2017: 410).”

Once the described system is developed, it can create unlimited news stories for a particular topic. The entire process will be fast, inexpensive, and potentially with fewer errors (Graefe, 2016, 5 cited in Túñez-Lopez, et, al, 2019: 1413). In a small-scale pilot study, Christer Clerwall (2014 cited in Carlson, 2015: 418) even found that news audiences could not distinguish between automated and human journalism.

As can be seen, editorial structures and journalism routines are changing significantly, with algorithms becoming a part of professional news production, distribution and consumption (Broussard 2014; van Dalen 2012; Napoli 2014; Pavlik 2013 cited in Dörr and Hollnbuchner, 2017: 404). According to Matt Carlson (2015: 422), the ability of automated journalism to create news without human intervention raises concerns about the future of journalistic labour and job security. At this point, attention is drawn to the replacement of professional knowledge producers with

automation. Accordingly, the debate continues with the question of whether AI will help or replace human workers (Carlson, 2015: 423).

While automated journalism raises concerns about journalistic labour and job security, AI does not abolish completely the journalism profession, with the presence of human and non-human actors turning it into a hybrid profession, given online publishers looking to save costs. However, it brings web developers and hackers into journalism by inventing new positions such as “meta journalist” (Carlson, 2015: 417-423).

Accordingly, a meta-journalist is a professional who helps to facilitate automated news stories by extracting information from big data and then encoding them according to different rules and routines specific to the media outlet (Carlson, 2015: 423; Dörr, 2016: 710). Carlson (2015: 423) also explains the working principle of a meta-journalist with the example of Narrative Science (a data-driven storytelling start-up company):

Narrative Science’s technology can automate sports stories after pre-programming them with possible frameworks and appropriate descriptive language. After this initial programming, automated journalism requires continuous data management. Thus, automated journalism goes beyond the newsroom and redefines journalistic roles for data management. For example, in Little League, a popular app from Narrative Science, automatic recounts of baseball games rely on voluntary data entry.

On the other hand, Clay Shirkey (2009 cited in Kuntz, 2009) who first defined the concept of “algorithmic authority”¹⁶, believes that the use of algorithms in

¹⁶ In his blog post, “Clay Shirky (2009) described algorithmic authority as the decision to regard as authoritative an unmanaged process of extracting value from diverse, untrustworthy sources, without any human standing beside the result saying ‘Trust this because you trust me.’”. Shirky uses Google’s PageRank algorithm, Twitscoop’s zeitgeist measurement, and Wikipedia’s post hoc peer review as an example of how information can be generated automatically and trusted by most people as “legitimate” (Lusting and Nardi, 2015: 744). Thus, “Algorithmic authority refers to the power of algorithms to manage human actions and influence what information is accessible to users” (Lusting et al., 2016: 1057).

journalism erodes the “institutional monopoly” of trust and credibility of authorized news sources. Therefore, quality journalism is not just about writing like a human being. It is to enlighten the society, to find the truth, to criticize the ruler, to take a stand and to help create public opinion (Carlson, 2015: 427; Dörr and Hollnbuchner, 2017: 407).

On the other hand, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007 cited in Dörr and Hollnbuchner, 2017: 408) state that traditional verification journalism has given way to unprofessional journalism with its meticulous fact-checking. According to this understanding, algorithms produce content by scanning various online resources (news agencies, websites, blogs, and PR agencies) without checking for accuracy, proving the credibility of the sources, or paying for the content. Values such as reliability and accuracy, which are essential to journalism, are affected, and moral rules such as you will not steal are gradually deteriorating (Debatin 2015 cited in Dörr and Hollnbuchner, 2017: 408).

In addition to all these, social media platforms and search engines such as Google and Facebook are assigned as reporters for popular searches or news based on likes and shares, along with search engine optimization, click-stream logic and search engine-based reporting (Dick 2011; Karlsson and Clerwall 2013 cited in Clerwall, 2014: 519). As Clerwall (2014: 520) emphasizes, this type of algorithmic news is not concerned with what the public needs to know to make informed decisions and act as citizens in a democracy, but rather how the public sees events at a given moment. Therefore, media organizations producing this type of news see the audience they report as consumers rather than citizens.

Therefore, the pressure of algorithms on editorial decision making is inevitable, as it allows journalists to produce more stories, sometimes better, but rarely both (Diakopoulos, 2019). It is also clear that news production remains a for-profit business and publishers are trying to keep costs down (Kiefer 2001, 33; Stavelin 2013, 27). However, Nicholas Diakopoulos (2019) writes that at the moment, the risk of displacement of journalists is minimal. Algorithms are yet at the fingertips of journalists and broadcasters. News organizations have broken out of tradition and can tell their stories in different ways, but journalistic values remain the driving force

behind news. Thus, today's journalism emerges as the human-algorithm hybrid, the latest embodiment of the age-old tension between commercial imperatives and journalism principles.

2.4.4. Mobile Journalism

The mobile phones equipped with internet access, camera functionality and messaging services heralded the increase in the use of mobile devices for information seeking and news reporting anytime and anywhere. The use of smartphones with IOS and Android hardware newer technological developments such as 4G and 5G technologies and live streaming applications have significantly improved these possibilities (Westlund, 2013:14). In journalism today, smartphones serve as a low-cost complete production unit for collecting, editing and disseminating news (Salzmann et al, 2020: 1).

Thus, the accessible features of smartphones have increased the possibilities for journalists to work and report from the field in real time. Internet connectivity and advanced search functionality, along with numerous smart and easily accessible applications, gave journalists powerful new tools for news reporting news (Westlund, 2013: 14). Mobile journalism is considered by many academics to be one of the fastest growing areas of broadcast journalism. And this field is characterized by the close relationship between journalism and technology (Salzmann et al., 2020: 1). Mobile journalism can be defined as a journalistic process that destroys newsrooms. It is a holistic form of multimedia storytelling where professional journalist, writes shoots, edits and broadcasts news on a fully mobile, networked, handheld multimedia device (Salzmann et al. 2020: 3).

Adopting the presence of mojos in news organizations is attractive for several reasons: Mojoes are flexible and reduce the cost of content production for news organizations. In addition, these journalists can produce video, audio and multimedia content for multiple platforms. Mojoes can operate at full capacity for a 24/7 news production cycle, especially during accidents and crisis events. Also, mojos work closely with social media platforms and enable new forms of storytelling to emerge. With the use of social media platforms and new forms of visual interaction, mojos also

attract the attention of younger audiences (Westlund, 2013: 16; Salzmann et al. 2020:2).

Newsgathering when doing mobile journalism often starts with searching for keywords related to a region or story on social media platforms. Journalists can use Twitter lists to easily navigate through potentially newsworthy items. Following the social media pages of groups, organizations, and other sources can also be useful, especially for accessing photos or videos of an event. At this stage, crowdsourcing may be another option that assists journalists when seeking information about a story a journalist is working on (Adornato, 2017: 98).

News distribution usually begins with the sharing of real-time photos and videos from the field using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Sending live tweets from news events using hashtags and starting a conversation by tweeting excerpts from interviews are among the effective strategies. Journalists can also start a live broadcast using live broadcast applications such as Periscope, Facebook Live, YouTube and Instagram (Adornato, 2017: 98).

Live Q&A with the audience is essential to build audience engagement (Adornato, 2017: 98). During a live Q&A, audiences ask reporters questions and they answer them in real time. Thus, journalists can personalize their experience by getting to know the audience and letting the audience know more about the journalist (Atchison, 2019). For example, news channels established on WhatsApp strengthen the communication between journalists and viewers. In these channels, journalists have the opportunity to discuss their work, while audiences can express their views on the news or make additions to the subject (Boczek and Koppers, 2020: 126-127). Adornato (2017: 98) lists other tips for building audience engagement as follows:

- Sharing published stories with social media groups focused on the topic of the report (e.g. Facebook group for new mothers).
- Retweeting knowledgeable sources.
- Crowdsourcing: Searching for information about a story a journalist is working on. Asking/encouraging the audience to comment on a published story. For example, using a survey.

- Thanking followers, following them, and responding to questions as quickly as possible.

As can be seen, in mobile journalism, the importance of social media platforms becomes more evident, as well as the integration of mobile and smart devices into journalism. However, as John Ellis (2015 cited in Guribye and Nyre, 2017:1219) argues, mobile journalism should be considered as a process in which an expertly formed hardware group is transformed into a productive mechanism. First of all, this process exists between person, machine and the network.

2.4.5. Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism is the distribution of news content in the form of text, video and/or audio recordings, produced by ordinary people, in other words, by non-media professionals, from their personal life environments or wherever they are in the world, with the help of digital technologies (Allan et al., 2007: 376; Matheson, 2011; Wall, 2015: 798). Citizen journalism is closely linked to the use of websites, blogs, forums, wikis, social media platforms, as well as computers, tablets and smartphones (Allan et al., 2007: 376; Matheson, 2011; Wall, 2015: 798).

Content produced with the help of digital photographs, video images or sound clips produced by non-professionals fulfils the duty of eyewitness, especially in times of crisis (Allan et al., 2007: 376; Matheson, 2011; Wall, 2015: 798). For example, Mark Glaser (2011, 578) writes that the idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional journalism training create their own media, either on their own or in collaboration, using the tools of modern technology and the Internet. Therefore, citizen journalism has functions such as commenting on events or checking facts, in addition to eyewitness testimony.

Manuel Castells (2007 cited in Allan, 2007: 2) defines the phenomenon of citizen journalism with the rise of “mass self-communication”. Castells (2007, 246 cited in Allan, 2007: 2) writes that the spread of the internet, mobile communication, digital media, and various social software tools has fostered the development of horizontal interactive communication networks that connect local and global, in chosen time.

As can be seen, the top-down, one-way message distribution associated with mass media today has effectively become plural. With the emergence of new technological tools and forms, ordinary people are now building their own networked communities and producing their own content that is characterized by its participatory and unfiltered, rapid and subjective form not found in professional news media (Castells, 2000; Allan and Matheson, 2004 cited in Allan, 2007: 2; Barnes, 2012: 18).

On the subject, it is worth remembering Bruns (2010) who discusses how the boundaries between the audience and the producer have been blurred with the spread of digital tools. Bruns (2008: 5) has proposed a term called “produser”, which defines passive audience as active users and content producers who can create an alternative public sphere rather than that created by traditional news media. Accordingly, produser will narrow the gap in participatory equality between dominant and dependent groups (Fraser, 1990: 66 cited in Haas and Steiner, 2001: 131; Bruns, 2008: 5; Wall, 2015: 804).

The existence of the produser allows marginalized groups, which are systematically ignored by the mainstream media, to reach audiences without restrictions such as time, place or ideology (Harlow, 2013). For example, Dan Gillmor (2004: XII) writes that this new type of journalism has abolished the monopoly of the mass media on news. This also means a transition from a hierarchical media structure to a more grassroots and democratic new structure.

Therefore, citizen journalism, which also adopts the concept of produser, is a type of journalism that reminds the concept of Harry Boyte (2013:2 cited in Konieczna, Hatcher and Moore, 2018: 5), who reconceptualises the concept of citizenship as working in the public sphere and for public purposes. In other words, it is journalism that puts citizens in the position of co-creators of the world they live in.

Thus, the concept goes beyond an attempt to engage audiences and produce more meaningful journalism. Rather, it refers to the type of journalism needed to build a citizen-centred democracy; that is, it represents journalism that sees citizens not only as members of society, but also as players who invest in protecting the public good,

not only consuming information but contributing and tackling social challenges (Konieczna, Hatcher and Moore, 2018: 5).

Citizen journalism begun to be used frequently, reminding the importance of journalism in countries where the media is restricted by governments (Cammaerts and Carpentier 2006; Kim and Hamilton 2006; Hanska-Ahy and Shapour 2013; Moyo 2009 cited in Mortensen, 2016: 361). For example, during the 2009/2010 protests in Iran and the 2011 protests in North Africa and the Middle East, ordinary people tweeted, blogged or uploaded to YouTube, relayed and organized events after telling their stories through text messages, photo shoots and videos (Hanska-Ahy and Shapour 2013 cited in Mortensen, 2016: 361).

The worldwide Occupy movement against social and economic inequality, which started with both Spanish Indignados in Madrid and the Occupy Wall Street protest, took place in 2011 also quickly spread all over the world (Spangenberg and Heise, 2014: 766). Social media platforms have once again been the driving force for the organization of events as well as communication between ordinary people, activists and journalists (Spangenberg and Heise, 2014: 766).

As an extension of the Occupy movements, the Gezi Park protests began in the summer of 2013 as a bottom-up reaction to the government and Istanbul municipality's plans to build a shopping mall on the site of the park. After this point of departure, the Gezi Park protests quickly turned into a nationwide resistance movement against the government's ultra-developmental environmental and urbanism policies and the authoritarian tendencies of Prime Minister (current President) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Mert, 2016: 1).

The first days of the Gezi Park Protests in 2013 were not covered in the Turkish mainstream media, which drew attention to the restrictions on freedom of expression in Turkey. For this reason, Gezi Park protesters undertook to report issues that were not covered in the Turkish mainstream media or that they thought were not handled properly, using social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter and live broadcast platforms such as Ustream (Hostettler, 2016: 4).

Journalists who were expelled from the mainstream media and/or forced to resign during the protests, especially in connection with the protests, also used the aforementioned social media platforms effectively as a news gathering and reporting tool. The journalism that emerged on social media platforms was an excellent collaboration between professional journalists and citizens or non-professionals. And the slogan used to support the civic journalism genre was: “There is no media. We are all journalists” (Tunç, n.d. cited in Hostettler, 2016: 4).

On the other hand, some of the citizen journalism literature focuses on how citizen journalism interacts with traditional news media. Citizen or user engagement in traditional news media has been defined in a typology, such as commenting on stories or participating in message boards and polls provided by media outlets (Deuze, Bruns, and Neuberger 2007; Thurman 2008 cited in Wall, 2015: 798).

According to Melissa Wall (2015: 798), early studies of these interactions described amateur content as a “clash of cultures” fuelled by a growing participatory ethos. So much so that many traditional news organizations were not enthusiastic about adding this type of content. These contents posed a threat to the authorities of professional journalists (Hermida and Thurman 2008, 343 cited in Wall, 2015: 798). All these developments have led to the questioning of the gatekeeper function of journalists and news organizations. As a result, it was not just a select few who decided what was to be brought forward for the public good or what for commercial reasons (Spangenberg and Heise, 2014: 765).

Citizen journalism products seen by traditional news media as sources for professional stories (Wardle and Williams 2010 cited in Wall, 2015: 798-799). Indeed, many mainstream news outlets initially chose to keep participation at low levels by not incorporating citizen-produced content into professional journalistic structures or sharing their authority with outsiders, due to concerns about quality, impartiality, reputation, trust, and legal issues (Lewis 2012; Robinson 2009; Singer and Ashman 2009 cited in Wall, 2015: 798; Hermida and Thurman, 2008 cited in Noor, 2017: 61). However, unlike in its early days, traditional media organizations today are increasingly attracted to non-professional content and are increasingly using social media platforms to search for citizen-generated content. This type of content is

especially preferred by news organizations to reduce news production costs (Allan 2013, 302; Kim and Lowrey 2015 cited in Mortensen et al., 2016: 359).

2.4.6. Alternative Journalism in Digital Spaces and the Role of Participation for Alternativeness

Alternative media is a broad concept consisting of different media forms such as print, electronic and more recently digital, as well as perspectives such as single-person zines, large-scale working-class newspapers, radical community newspapers, magazines of sexual politics, anarchist samizdat's (Atton, 2001: 15). Alternative is therefore a general term that encompasses a broad spectrum of social change publishing (Atton, 2001: 9). For Atton (2001: 4) alternative media is about offering democratic means of communication to people who are normally excluded from media production.

On the subject, Olga Bailey, Bart Cammaerts and Nico Carpentier (2007) have created a typology of alternative media theories as follows:

- Alternative media at the service of a community
- Alternative media as an alternative to mainstream media
- Alternative media linked to civil society
- Alternative media as rhizome

For example, the community media approach argues that the participation of members of a community in content production and media organization is central to alternative media (Fuchs, 2010: 176-177). Alternative media, which is an alternative to mainstream media, is a type of media in which small-scale, independent, non-hierarchical and non-dominant discourses are produced instead of large-scale, state-owned or commercial, hierarchical and dominant discourses (Fuchs, 2010: 176-177). Linking alternative media to civil society approach uses the concept of counter-hegemonic media, which is a part of civil society and creates a third voice between state media and commercial media (Fuchs, 2010: 176-177). Rhizomatic media refers to linking different protest groups and movements. The concept also connects the local

and the global and establishes different kinds of relationships with the market and/or the state than existing ones (Fuchs, 2010: 176-177).

The concept of rhizome is derived from the juxtaposition of rhizomatic and arborescent thinking styles. Arborescent thinking refers to a linear and hierarchical structure that can be depicted as a tree like structure whose branches are divided into sub and smaller categories (Wray, 1998: 3 cited in Görgülü, 2015: 91). Rhizomatic thinking, on the other hand, refers to a non-linear and anarchic way of thinking that differs from tree-like structures in that it consists of connections between irregular points (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 19 cited in Görgülü, 2016: 91).

Starting from the rhizomatic ways of thinking, the transformation of news ecosystems from a hierarchical structure to a nonlinear one in the digital age can be emphasized. So much so that new concepts such as participatory journalism-active audience, media activism and advocacy journalism have been added to the journalism universe and journalism has diversified. This may help accelerate the establishment of a journalistic anti-system on digital media (Borger et al, 2016: 709). Journalism today erodes established sender-receiver relationships. And it also has the capacity to break the monopoly of the well-established functions of professional journalism: agenda-setting, gatekeeping, and framing (Goode, 2009; Peters and Witte, 2014).

Accordingly, participatory journalism is organized from the bottom up and rejects any hierarchical structure (Görgülü, 2016: 96). In participatory journalism, there is little or no editorial intervention dictated by the editorial staff. In this sense, participatory journalism has its own editorial traditions that may depend on the editorial preferences of different organizations. For example, while a certain participant media prefers the “publish, then filter” model, the other participant may prefer to filter media information before it is published (Bowman and Willis, 2003: 21 cited in Görgülü, 2016: 97).

On the other hand, the idea of mediated participation is based on the civic power paradigm, which is based on the promise of increased participation and participation that highlights the opportunities for new ideas and negotiation (Dahlgren, 2013 cited in Spyridou, 2018: 828). According to Idit Manosevitch and Ori Tenenboim (2017

cited in Spyridou, 2018: 828), participatory journalism expands the role of the media beyond the traditional emphasis on informing citizens to providing an accessible public space for public discussion. More recently, participatory journalism “has been heralded by some journalists, entrepreneurs and non-profit foundations as a promising strategy to increase trust in journalism, create new revenue streams, and foster community-building” (Das, 2017; Green-Barber and McKinley, 2019; Knight Commission on Trust Media and Democracy, 2019 cited in Schmidt et al., 2020: 2). A network of adherents, practitioners, and academics believes that journalists should work with their audiences throughout the news production process, soliciting their ideas, experiences, questions, and opinions (Schmidt et al., 2020: 2). As a result, the same network creates a reform agenda by blending elements of a past journalism movement (public journalism) and current technological capabilities of interaction (Schmidt et al., 2020: 2).

Indymedia is one of the historical examples of the phenomenon described. Indymedia is set up as a radically decentralized alternative to corporate publishing systems (Downing, 2002; Atton, 2004 cited in Garcelon, 2006: 56). The history of Indymedia is also a clear example of how groups of computer scientists and non-professionals working as proxy for professional journalists organized together a functional alternative to corporate mass media on the internet (Garcelon, 2006: 56).

Two main themes emerge in Indymedia, the intersection of media technologies and social movements, and the anarchic political radicalism seen on Indymedia sites. For example, in the first issue of the publication, the Internet challenged both broadcast media and centralized control of news, while also offering a more comprehensive form of public access than any previous technology in the modern era (Garcelon, 2006: 56). In its second issue, Indymedia activated the Internet as a new distributed information system in mass societies. Thus, the internet aroused intense interest among radical groups with anarchic tendencies (Vaidyanathan, 2004, cited in Garcelon, 2006: 56).

Over time, Indymedia and social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have created radical social circles for the circulation of alternative news and information. These networks have helped mobilize many protesters around the world.

Therefore, it can be said that media activism and digital networking are the most important features of contemporary social movements (Juris, 2005: 191).

A number of social media networks used for news and information are also emerging as an important venue for political debate and sometimes a space for engaging in civic movement-related activity. For example, social media networks played a role in the emergence of the “#MeToo” and “Black Lives Matter” movements aimed at raising awareness about sexual harassment and assault, as well as racism against blacks (Anderson, Toor, Rainie and Smith, 2018).

Both movements brought activism to the newsroom. This has led some journalists to question where journalism ends and activism begins. However, journalism has for a long time left the understanding of impartial reporting aside and has tended to shed light on injustices in society. For example, critical theory concludes that journalistic texts cannot be neutral or objective. Since news organizations are socially, economically and politically located, all news is always reported from a certain angle (Fowler 1991, 10 cited in Laws and Chojnicka, 2020: 1263; Blanding, 2020).

In 1975, the advocacy model of journalism was described in the US media by Morris Janowitz (1975: 621 as cited in Steel, 2018: 6). Janowitz underlined the shift towards a clearly biased form of journalism during the student protest movements of the 1960s. On the other hand, Silvio R. Waisbord (2009 cited in Steel, 2018: 7), proposes two advocacy journalism models. The first is the journalist model, which expresses the political interests of journalists and tends to reflect the ideological, often right-wing, prejudices of company owners. The second is the civic model, which represents the advocacy efforts of civic groups promoting social change.

Today, this defined commitment of journalism has become increasingly evident in the current polarized political moment (Blanding, 2020). Polarized political environments have also made it possible to distinguish advocacy journalism between status quo advocacy and progressive (and/or reactionary) advocacy. For example, while defending the status quo, a far-right media may question the current status quo and advocate abandoning liberal and democratic values, denouncing the separation of

powers, checks and balances, and judicial review. Or it may support a charismatic management (Laws and Chojnicka, 2020: 1267).

In progressive advocacy, a media outlet can support a grassroots movement, and for example, fight against racist, homophobic and sexist rhetoric within the current socio-economic framework, or advocate for world peace, freedom of expression and/or journalism itself (Laws and Chojnicka, 2020: 1268). Thus, the lines between accuracy, activism and advocacy may differ depending on which side of the political divide the journalist stands on (Blanding, 2020).

Being a part of a purpose in the digital age is also faced with some changes. For example, Upworthy, a US-based news platform, curates engaging videos and content. However, the main purpose of the platform is to inspire users to participate in actions by encouraging them to share content on social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in order to go viral and influence political decision-making processes. Just as advocacy journalism is split between status quo advocacy and progressive advocacy, viral news is split between positive action and fake news (Harcup, 2005: 363; Gyldensted, 2014).

Thus, positive action blurs the roles between journalist and source, and between journalist and audience, while being the voice of groups that have no voice in a given society. Accordingly, positive action can be defined as anything produced by its potential audience within the boundaries of alternative media understanding (Harcup, 2005: 363). On the other hand, fake news also stems from the viral content phenomenon, as the algorithms of social media platforms increase the reach of the posts that are most likely to provoke a reaction. While the algorithm rewards positive news, it also tends to encourage fake news stories or misinformation that mimics the news media and possibly elicits a backlash (Roberts, 2020).

For example, a study conducted in 2018 states that stories that are falsely declared by multiple fact-checking organizations spread farther, faster, and deeper than any other news content. Most importantly, they argue, such stories are on the rise, not primarily because of bot activity, but because people engaged in participatory activities on the platforms bear a large part of the responsibility for the spread of fake news and

misinformation. Thus, research into the psychological (and/or emotional) foundations of belief in fake news and its social impact is revealing the role of partisan identities and people's cognitive styles in the circulation of such news (van der Linden et al., 2020: 461).

Based on the work of Sander van der Linden et al. (2020: 462), alternative contents mentioned in positive and negative examples are associated with the term "news". And this perception results in a significantly reduced trust in the media, regardless of whether the news media is on the hierarchical or alternative wing. As a result, contemporary alternative journalism in digital media, which is compatible with rhizomatic ways of thinking, stands out from hegemonic journalism with its participatory feature by establishing connections between irregular points of the internet. However, this time functions under the mandate of digital technologies and tech companies.

2.5. Conclusion

Today, as discussed chapter two, it is entirely possible to assume that the internet has become privatized, where intellectual information resources are concentrated in the hands of technology companies. Journalism, which took a converged, networked and participatory form in the Web 2.0 era, continues to function within this concentrated structure. In particular, social media platforms are perceived as powerful mediation tools in journalism. While these formations disrupt traditional information ecosystems, they also disrupt the dominant position of legacy media organizations, especially in access to the public space.

These features of the Web 2.0 era have also affected the monopoly of news production and distribution channels, making the internet a potentially huge space for individuals (for example, journalists and ordinary citizens) to spread their word (Compagno, et al., 2017: 94). In this age of increasing technological possibilities, journalists' chances of creating their own media and respecting the transparency of news have also increased. In this chapter, especially the liberation of political journalism from the hegemony of corporate media organizations is considered as an opportunity to serve democracy and help citizens make conscious decisions (Franklin and Carlson, 2010; McQuail, 2013, cited in Humprecht and Esser, 2018: 501).

Besides the separation of journalism from the legacy media organizations, the second chapter argued that the unlimited scope of Web 2.0 made it possible for journalists to integrate different types of opportunities and obstacles into their professional practice (Phillips, 2010 cited in Humprecht and Esser, 2018: 501). This chapter, therefore, focused on newsroom convergence and changing newsroom practices, defined by multiskilling, cross-platform collaboration and transmedia storytelling, which are believed to have profoundly impacted processes such as news making and agenda setting with the integration of technology companies. The transformation of journalism from work routines to roles has been also critically studied with particular attention to data journalism, automation, bots and algorithms, mobile journalism, citizen journalism and alternative journalism. In the focus of all these, in the third chapter, the transformation of work and labour in journalism profession will be examined.

CHAPTER 3: CHANGING LABOUR RELATIONS IN THE NEWS MEDIA AND NEW BUSINESS MODELS FOR JOURNALISM

3.1. Introduction

In the Web 2.0 era, the rise of informational capitalism headed by social media technologies and GAFA, transform work into a decentralized process by immaterialising labour. Web 2.0 technologies turn any kind of intellectual activity (including many aspects of Internet users' daily lives, and the contents that are created) into data, and then monetize them (Cukier and Mayer-Schöenberger, 2013: 28-40; Smyrnaio, 2016: 61). The business models of the social media platforms depend on the "barter" model (van Dijck 2014: 200; Yeung 2018: 514; Cohen, 2019: 16). According to van Dijck (2014: 200), in the barter model, individual users provide personal information to platforms such as Google, Facebook and etc. in return for free services they use while platforms collect the ad revenues generated through user generated content. This model is considered as the essence of the contemporary capitalist system (Jeon, 2010: 89).

In informational capitalism, peer-to-peer (P2P) economy tends to promote platform arranged production in a number of areas such as (Pasquale, 2016: 309; Jesnes, 2019: 48): "Promoting labour competition, and improving quality; Reducing transaction costs; and Creating more opportunities for companies, and for individuals to provide services". Thus, peer-to-peer economy allows a system of "flexible, on-demand, and transient" work arrangements such as, "micro-entrepreneurship, self-employment, and computer-mediated peer-like exchanges" (Friedman, 2014; Sundararajan, 2015; Gillespie and O'Brien, 2015; Manyika et al., 2016 cited in Sutherland and Jarrahi, 2017: 3).

The transformation of work and labour in the era of informational capitalism brings about two important results for workers and organizations. On the one hand, “the impermanence of these work relations enables (or demands) a great deal of independence, flexibility, and entrepreneurialism” for workers (Friedman, 2014; Greenwood, Burtch and Carnahan, 2017 cited in Sutherland and Jarrahi, 2017: 3). On the other hand, organizations would prefer to hire large numbers of short-term workers for specific projects while diminishing the size of permanent employees (Sutherland and Jarrahi, 2017: 3).

The third chapter argues that the affordances of social media technologies, the digitalisation of labour enables journalists to work on their born-digital journalistic start-ups in more independent and flexible ways. However, the same transformation results in a danger of expropriation of the journalistic content by especially the platforms (Bardoel and Deuze, 2001: 91-103). Today, more and more digital publishers are looking for new ways to attract visitors from search engines, and social media to receive ad revenues (Çevikel, 2020: 41). For this purpose, they not only apply techniques of search engine optimization, but also try to increase their traffic by creating accounts on social media networks and sharing their content there (Çevikel, 2020: 37).

As Mosko and Fuchs (2014:62) pointed out that these may turn journalistic labour from paid into an unpaid one. The barter model used by the social media platforms raises concerns over prosumerism. The prosumer is defined as “a subject who assists in the production process of commodities that s/he consumes, born into an economic system that values ‘participation’”. (Pybus, 2013: 147); Jennifer Pybus (2013: 147) Participatory activities especially those of the social media platform users including journalists are not considered as work. However, the same activities are perceived as a new mode of extracting surplus-value by the social media platforms which enable capital accumulation for free in a system where their economies are mainly based on selling advertisement spaces (Pybus, 2013: 147; Fuchs, 2015: 26-38).

Therefore, the largest share of digital advertising revenues generated goes not to digital news outlets but to platforms that mediate or distribute the content that they produce (Çevikel, 2020: 37). Digital news organizations receive a much smaller share

of digital advertising revenues than global platforms do (Çevikel, 2020: 37). Moreover, as Cohen (2015) states, in an ecosystem where peer to peer economy inspires all businesses, born-digital news media with declining incomes are also forced to use strategies of efficiency and rationalization such as, robot reporters, algorithms, outsourcing, and crowdsourcing, while reducing the size of their permanent employees.

The third chapter argues that that in the context of changing employment relationships as well as diminishing ad revenues of news media, professional journalists may find their work in an increasingly precarious position while seeking the new ways of continuing their profession independently and autonomously. Nevertheless, a sustainable business model for digital news outlets, which will allow a healthy balance between journalistic values and economic interests, may hold a potential to open a new era for the liberation of journalists and journalism from any the economical and/or political restrictions

During the course of the third chapter, first changing employment relationships in the news media is examined with reference to self-employment, freelancing and self-branding as well as entrepreneurial journalism (the liberal approach for contemporary journalism). Second, new business models and revenue sources such as, advertisement and other profit-oriented revenue sources like subscription and crowdfunding, and non-profit models such as co-operative model will be explored. The chapter also discusses employment relations in relation to digital labour and precariat to assess the potentials and the limits of digital journalism to break down old hierarchies discussed in the context of previous chapters, between the borders of informational capitalism.

3.2. Informational Capitalism and Transformation of Labour Relations in the 21st Century

Since the early 2000s, the introduction of networked information and communication technologies have changed the economy by influencing the mode of production¹⁷, industrial/employment relations, and the labour itself (Jeon, 2010: 89). In informational capitalism, also called cognitive, platform, hyper, prosumer, network, surveillance, etc., the production is mainly based on the accumulation of immaterial capital, by the value that is generated usually from immaterial labour of the internet users which enables the creation and the dissemination of immaterial resources within the networked digital media technologies and infrastructures (Paulré, 2004; Vercellone, 2005: 6; Negri, 2008: 64; Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010: 13; Molier-Boutang, 2011: 50; Betancourt, 2015: ii; Cohen, 2019: 5).

For many scholars, in informational capitalism, information becomes a source of value that drives economic growth (Srnicek 2016, O'Donovan 2020a cited in Srnicek, 2016: 38; Srnicek, 2016: 38). As Nick Srnicek (2016: 43) argues, digital media technologies create new economic opportunities for businesses to accumulate and control the flow of information within the borders of new economy. These assets are usually platform-based digital infrastructures which enable two or more groups to interact (Srnicek 2016: 43).

Working with the highest levels of Web 2.0 technologies, these businesses are set to transform any kind of interactive intellectual activity (many aspects of internet users' daily life, and content created) into data and then monetize it (Cukier and Mayer-Schöenberger, 2013: 28-40; Cohen, 2019: 16). On digital media, suggested data can be found in many forms, such as software, statistics, expertise, consultancy, advertisements, media content, films, music, messaging services, the personal information of the internet users (browsing history, friend lists, geographic locations, videos watched, and/or likes on photos are also included), and etc., (Fuchs, 2011: 99; Casilli, 2018: 92-93).

¹⁷ The capitalist mode of production can be understood as the private accumulation of the capital which serves as the primary motivation for the production of commodities, products produced not for their use-value, but for the exchange-value they yield when sold on the market (Fish, 2010: 130). On the other hand, capital is the wealth and a process of valorisation rather than a medium which aims to mediate the exchange of commodities (Marx, 1976: 293-306 cited in Fish, 2010: 130-131).

Distinguishing between data and metadata (data information), and paying particular attention to technology companies, for example, those, operating social media platforms, van Dijck (2014: 200-201) also argues that these companies successfully transform individual user data into metadata (a kind of invisible asset that is often processed separately from its original context and outside of people's awareness). Therefore, these companies make money by repackaging metadata and selling it to advertisers or data companies (van Dijck, 2014: 200-201).

In contemporary capitalism, the emergence of platform-based business world, which puts so much power in the hands of a few technology companies, is thought to encourage described process which comes to fore with data generation, collection, and sharing (Cukier and Mayer-Schöenberger, 2013: 28; van Dijck, Poell and de Waal, 2018:12). The epicentre of this new ecosystem dominating digital media market is owned and operated by five US-based technology companies such as Google, Facebook, Apple, Amazon, and Microsoft; These include more recently, Uber, Airbnb, Netflix¹⁸, and Spotify¹⁹ (van Dijck, Poell and de Waal, 2018:12). They are considered as social media oligopoly today, especially since they successfully monetize the data obtained from their users by transforming that data into metadata²⁰ (Casilli, 2018: 92-93).

The working principles of such companies, associated with Web 2.0 technologies or social media networks, are clearly dependant on capturing and monetizing user activities (Yeritsian, 2018: 704). In this context, the Web 2.0 management ideology frames user activity on these platforms as participatory (Gill and Pratt, 2008 cited in Yeritsian, 2018: 704). Supporting the proposed idea, José van Dijck, Thomas Poell, and Martijn de Waal (2018: 12) write that these companies have successfully placed themselves at “the gateways of digital sociability” as they control

¹⁸ Netflix, Inc., which was founded in 1997, it is a media streaming platform and a production company headquartered in U.S., (Fernandez, 2021).

¹⁹ Spotify was founded in 2008, it is a music streaming service that gives access to millions of songs, podcasts and videos from artists all over the world. The company is headquartered in Sweden (Willings, 2021).

²⁰ The term metadata refers to “structured data about data” (e.g., Duval et al. 2002; Woodley et al. 2003 cited in Greenberg, 2005: 20). Metadata can be viewed as “structured data about an object that supports functions associated with the designated object” with an object being “any entity, form, or mode for which contextual data can be recorded” (Greenberg, 2003 cited in Greenberg, 2005: 20).

key communication services. Above all, they are designed as mechanisms for the extraction and use of user data: by providing infrastructure and mediation between different groups, platforms put themselves in a position to monitor and extract all interactions between these groups (Srnicek, 2017: 254).

For example, Google and Facebook connect advertisers, businesses, and everyday users; Uber connects riders and drivers; Amazon on the other hand, builds and leases the platform infrastructures that form the basis of the contemporary economy (Smyrnaio, 2016: 61-62; Srnicek, 2017: 254-255). Therefore, providing connectivity can be considered as one of the dominant sources of the economic and political power of these platforms, since their business models depend on the barter model (van Dijck 2014: 200; Smyrnaio, 2016: 62; Srnicek, 2017: 255; Yeung 2018: 514; Cohen, 2019: 16).

According to van Dijck (2014: 200), the barter model proposes that users (individuals) provide personal information to technology companies (platforms) and receive services such as free usage of platforms in return. The defined model is accepted as the essence of the contemporary capitalist system (Jeon, 2010: 89).

On the subject, Shoshana Zuboff (2019 cited in Mills, 2020:3) argues that individual users often provide data with the expectation of receiving various services for free (for the original context, see van Dijck, 2014: 200-201 cited in Mills, 2020: 3). Therefore, once platforms have provided these services and the users achieved the minimum standard of functionality, platforms can start to collect data and turn that data into metadata for further profitable activities. These activities consist of selling the insights collected from the metadata to corporate users, for example, in the form of targeted advertising services (Mills, 2020: 3).

Thus, in the digital economy, platforms take advantage of charging a fee from one or more users they connect with (van Dijck et al. 2018 cited in Mills, 2020: 2). Accordingly, online advertising is considered as an important part of the platforms' business models (Mills, 2020:2). For the platforms, advertising make up a significant proportion of their revenue (Mills, 2020: 2). For example, in 2019, 70% of global

digital ad spend was went to Facebook, Google, and Amazon (Zuboff 2019 cited in Mills, 2020: 2; Sterling, 2019).

On the other hand, within informational capitalism, a neoliberal economic account which consists of “gig economy” and/or “sharing economy” also tends to praise many technology companies such as Amazon, Uber, Airbnb, Blablacar, etc. for new forms of participative labour via platform-arranged production (Pasquale, 2016: 309; Jesnes, 2019: 48). The new order that these technology companies provide, breaks down old hierarchies, and offers many opportunities and obstacles to organizations, as well as workers (Pasquale, 2016: 312). For example, according to entrepreneurs and thought leaders of Silicon Valley, the peer economy of global platforms, encourages labour competition and improves workforce, while reducing transaction costs and creating more opportunities for individuals and firms to compete to provide services (Pasquale, 2016: 309; Jesnes, 2019: 48).

As Will Sutherland and Mohammad Hossein Jarrahi (2017: 3) writes, in the new capitalist order, the organizations prefer to hire large numbers of short-term workers for specific projects while diminishing the size of permanent employees. On the other hand, from the perspective of the worker, it is considered that the impermanence of these work relations enables a great deal of independence, flexibility, and entrepreneurialism (Friedman, 2014; Greenwood, Burtch and Carnahan, 2017 cited in Sutherland and Jarrahi, 2017: 3).

Therefore, the term, gig-economy, describes a system of flexible, on-demand, and temporary work arrangements that embrace micro-entrepreneurship, self-employment, and computer-mediated, peer-like exchanges (Friedman, 2014; Sundararajan, 2015; Gillespie and O’Brien, 2015; Manyika et al., 2016 cited in Sutherland and Jarrahi, 2017: 3). Gig-economy usually includes three forms of work: crowdwork, work on-demand via apps, and online freelancing (Cardon and Casilli, 2015; Kessler, 2015a; Said 2015; Smith and Leberstein, 2015 cited in De Stefano, 2016: 1; Sutherland et al., 2020: 461).

The term crowd-work refers to work activities that imply completing a set of tasks through online platforms (Bergvall- Kåreborn and Howcroft, 2014; Cherry,

2011; Eurofound, 2015; Felstiner, 2011; Howe, 2006 cited in De Stefano, 2016: 1; Jesnes, 2019: 49). Platforms typically function to communicate with an unlimited number of organisations and individuals over the internet, potentially allowing customers and workers to connect on a global basis (De Stefano, 2016: 1). According to Dominique Cardon and Antonio A. Casilli (2015) this feature transforms platforms into a factory and a marketplace at the same time.

On-demand work through applications is a form of work in which traditional work activities such as transport, hosting, cleaning, and running errands are carried out. Some forms of clerical work are also managed through the applications of firms that interfere with the setting of minimum service quality standards and management of the workforce (Aloisi, 2015; Dagnino, 2015; Greenhouse, 2015; Rogers, 2015b cited in De Stefano, 2016:1; Jesnes, 2019:49).

Online freelancing is based on the curation of skilled knowledge work through a platform (Sutherland et al., 2020: 461). Platforms like Upwork, for example, connect businesses to freelancers, independent professionals, and agencies for all their recruiting needs. The platform makes it easy to find workers and employers in engineering, marketing, web development, industrial design, law, translation, data analytics, and many other fields (Sutherland et al., 2020: 461; Upwork, 2021).

However, work at platforms such as Upwork also requires the worker to deal with abstractions and constantly improve their skills. In addition, projects in these areas are conditional and situational rather than stereotyped. Workers must deal with uncertainty, have some creative representation in the project, and have repetitive communication with clients (Sutherland et al., 2020: 461).

Therefore, it is clear that entrepreneurship discourse of global platforms romanticizes autonomy, flexibility, and risk-taking amongst individuals (Doody et al., 2016 cited in Mishra and Bathini, 2020: 395-396). Entrepreneurial culture, greatly influenced by the innovation and dynamism of Silicon Valley, has clearly spread to the sectors that were once traditionally characterized by stability and job security, and destroyed their order (Doody et al., 2016, p. 859 cited in Mishra and Bathini, 2020: 396).

For example, Amazon's Mechanical Turk, one of the leading crowdworking platforms, has allowed buyers of human intelligence tasks to pay almost nothing for the labour that they receive. This resulted in much lower compensation than the US minimum wage. It should be noted that in third world countries the payments are much lower (Pasquale, 2016: 313). On the other hand, the employment status of drivers in the ridesharing platform Uber²¹ is also quite similar to the workers in Amazon (De Stefano, 2016: 15). While the Uber platform is often valorised with autonomy and flexibility, its drivers face undervalued working conditions (Pasquale, 2016: 313; Mishra and Bathini, 2020: 396).

By calling its drivers micro-entrepreneurs and classifying them as self-employed, independent contractors, it can be said that Uber is moving away from the concept of the employer-employee relationship and its accompanying employer obligations, just like any other platform (Mishra and Bathini, 2020: 396). Thus, it is clear that platforms try to disclaim responsibility for labour laws or other regulations (Cherry, 2011 cited in Pasquale, 2016: 313; Scholz, 2014 cited in Pasquale, 2016: 313).

For example, Kristin Jesnes (2019:49) writes in her research conducted in Norway and other Scandinavian countries that self-employed workers and freelancers are not covered by the Labour Law and do not benefit from the same social insurance as employees (health, pension, and etc.). In addition, the self-employed workers do not have access to collective bargaining, which is central to the industrial relations system in Norway (Dølvik, Jesnes, 2017 cited in Jesnes, 2019:49).

It is clear that deregulated labour, currently under control of platforms, even under the yoke of algorithmic management, can be destructive (Berg, 2016; Prassl, 2018 cited in Jesnes, 2019: 49-50; Lee et al., 2015 cited in Jesnes, 2019: 50). For example, it is undeniable that a programmer may treat workers hidden in technology

²¹ Founded in 2009, Uber a transportation company that officially owns no cars and has no employees with its entrepreneurial characteristic has expanded rapidly across the world (Jesnes, 2019: 53; Uber, 2021). Uber services include ride-hailing, food delivery, couriers, package delivery, and freight transportation through a partnership with "Lime", an electric bicycle and motorized scooter rental service (Uber, 2021). In accordance, by June 2017 Uber was operated in more than 600 cities worldwide across more than 70 countries (Mishra and Bathini, 2020: 395). And, in 2019 its revenue was 14.15 billion U.S. Dollars (Statistica, 2021).

like pieces of code and continue to see themselves as builders, not managers who abolish workers' rights (Irani, 2015 cited in Pasquale, 2016: 313).

Therefore, on the subject, Trebor Scholz and Nathan Schneider (2016 cited in Pasquale, 2016: 314) write that, a deregulated gig economy is a slipway to precarity, it tends to confine workers to insecure and low-wage conditions. Thus, starting from the paradoxes that are explained, contemporary economic system, which welcomes new forms of organization, new types of employment, new types of production, new markets, and new modes of exploitation so that the accumulation of capital can continue, has clearly struck the deepest blow to work and labour issues (Srnicek, 2018: 41 cited in Boutillier, 2020).

3.2.1. Digital Labour

Contemporary capitalism finds its origins in the increased importance of immaterial commodity production by the expansion of immaterialized labour within digital media. Therefore, digital work is the organization of human experiences to create new products with the help of digital media. And, digital labour is the valorisation dimension of that digital work (Fuchs and Seignani, 2013: 237).

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2004: 108 cited in Fuchs, 2011: 83) also define digital labour as a form of productive labour “that creates immaterial products, such as knowledge, information, communication, a relationship, or an emotional response”. Here, workers do not produce material goods, but mediate immaterial exchange and produce immaterial commodities such as culture, creativity, and information (Del Gandino, 2011: 122; Gill, 2014: 7).

Similarly, Maurizio Lazzarato (1996: 133 cited in Fuchs, 2011: 83) defines digital labour as a form of labour that produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity. Therefore, digital labour refers to the production of symbolic goods and experiences on digital media (Vercellone, 2005: 6; Peters, 2011). In the political economy of the internet, it is also argued that digital labour which produces knowledge, cooperation, and communication is becoming the hegemonic form of

labour (Jeon, 2010: 90; Burston, Dyer-Witheford and Hearn 2010; Fuchs and Dyer-Witheford 2013; Scholz 2012 cited in Fuchs, 2013: 237).

Thus, from György Lukács to Theodor W. Adorno, a common thesis on labour stands out that the more that capitalist production develops, the more the capitalist form of production encompasses all the other areas of society and occupies the network of social relations (Chanson and Monferrand, 2018: 1308). It is also argued that with the rise of digital labour, the Marxist category of productive labour has spread to all social practices that bring together the factory and society by defining the situation as “post-workerism” (Chanson and Monferrand, 2018: 1308). Departing from this point of view, the literature on the new type of labour considers that digital labour is both empowering and open to exploitation (Jenkins, 2006; Tapscott and Williams, 2006 cited in Kuehn and Corrigan, 2013).

Therefore, digital labour is mainly about capital accumulation by expropriating the informational or cultural contents produced in the communication process of users located on digital information flows (Lazzarato, 1996: 133). The basis of this argument is that “the dominant capital accumulation model of contemporary corporate internet platforms is based on the exploitation of users’ unpaid labour” (Fuchs and Sevignani, 2013: 237).

Remembering, in the industrial capitalist system, work is understood as a physical or creative effort that produces a deliverable product or performs a task (Steinfeld, 2009). Labour, which is also conceptualised as wage labour, is the delivery of services/work by an individual in return for payment (Steinfeld, 2009). However, with the emergence of new types of work in informational capitalism, labour can be categorized as both “paid” and “unpaid” (Mosco and Fuchs, 2014: 333). For example, Casilli (2019: 91) writes about the work positioned under the category of prosumerism especially in social media networks to define unpaid labour.

The term prosumer describes the integration of consumer and producer. The prosumer can also be defined as a subject born into an economic system that values participation and assists the production process of the commodities they consume (Pybus, 2013: 147). As Jennifer Pybus (2013: 147) states, the participatory activities

of social media users are not perceived as work by the users. However, the same activities are perceived as a new way of extracting surplus-value²² by these platform-based businesses that provide free capital accumulation in a system where their economy is predominantly based on selling advertising spaces (Pybus, 2013: 147; Fuchs, 2015: 26-38).

Therefore, the new mode of extracting surplus value for capital accumulation involves extracting data from users' activities and selling that data to advertisers (Casilli, 2019: 91). To describe this new mode of capturing surplus value, Clay Shirky (2010: 10) has already proposed the term "cognitive surplus". According to Shirky (2010: 10), "'cognitive surplus' is a result of a shift, no matter how small, in the way we distribute our time from consuming media (e.g., watching TV) to producing it (e.g., editing Wikipedia pages)". Therefore, the common point of these platforms is to encourage users to produce data (Casilli, 2019: 91).

For example, the work on social media platforms is based on the participation of users to the platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, etc., (Casilli, 2019: 163). Creating profiles, messaging, gaming, recording podcasts, writing blogs, etc., all done through networks. Such tasks are often identified with leisure, creativity, and sociability (Casilli, 2019: 163-165). Moreover, the relational dimension of content production and its sharing within communities of "friends" help to reverse the relevant parts of pleasure and difficulty, autonomy and subordination, and choice and control (Casilli, 2019: 163).

Pointing to the activities of social media users, Trebor Scholz (2012: 12) writes that "it doesn't feel, look, or smell like labor at all". Scholz also combines the new form of labour with less visible traditional unpaid female labour such as childcare, housework, and surrogacy (Scholz, 2012: 12). Therefore, for Scholz (2013: 12 cited in Lacey, 2014: 159), "people enjoy socializing on Facebook, they are eager digital labourers; however, the large majority of users are probably unaware of the exploitation that occurs from their seemingly harmless 'liking' and 'sharing'".

²² Surplus-value is "the difference between the amount a worker is paid and the value the worker adds to the goods or services produced: In Marxist theory, the capitalist, after paying wages, becomes the owner of the surplus value created by the workers" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021).

On the other hand, referring to users of social media platforms, George Ritzer and Nathan Jurgenson (2010: 21) further write: “The idea that the prosumer is exploited is contradicted, among other things, the fact that prosumers seem to enjoy, even love, what they are doing and are willing to devote long hours to it for no pay”. According to McKenzie Wark (2012: 144) users do things for free on social media as they want to do it. As playbor, for entertainment, not as labour offered reluctantly in exchange for wages or other incentives. Thus, social media platforms turn into playgrounds as well as factories by blurring the lines between work and leisure, which extract labour in the form of play (Wark, 2012: 145; Casilli, 2016: 3).

Prosumerism debates also combine digital labour with hope labour. Kathleen Kuehn and Thomas F. Corrigan (2013 cited in Hayes and Silke, 2018: 1021) define hope labour as unpaid or underpaid work performed in the hope that future employment opportunities may come. For example, it is perceived that all unpaid productive activities of video game modders, software coders, designers, bloggers, vloggers, DIY stylists, artists, journalists, etc., on digital media are mostly carried out by a desire to better position oneself for future employment and/or entrepreneurial opportunities (Brabham, 2008; Deuze, 2007; Kücklich, 2005; Murdock, 2011; Postigo, 2007; Ross, 2013; Tapscott and Williams, 2006 cited in Kuehn and Corrigan, 2013).

Therefore, as Terranova (2000 cited in Kuehn and Corrigan, 2013) conceptualizes digital labour as free labour, “free labor is unpaid, but it is also free from the total control of capitalists who struggle to valorise relatively autonomous production processes”. Thus, Terranova (2000 cited in Kuehn and Corrigan, 2013) emphasizes the potential of “independent work”, which defines the empowering features of digital labour, with her contribution to the subject. On the other hand, independent work is backed by the highly respected ideal of getting paid to do what you love, is often characterized by “self-branding” (Duffy, 2017: 5).

Self-branding is the pursuit of self-realization in a context that embodies entrepreneurialism²³ (Hearn, 2008 cited in Gandini, 2016: 123). Social media

²³ Entrepreneurialism and/or entrepreneurship is the activity of setting up a business by taking on financial risks in the hope of profit (Oxford Languages, 2021). Since the 2000s the Internet, digital technologies and social media networks have created new ways for communication, new business

platforms which turn into working tools that serve the curation of a professional image and the management of social relations for the purposes of professional success and career development, make the process relatively easy (Cappelli and Keller, 2013 cited in Gandini, 2016: 124).

In the Web 2.0 era, especially with the help of platforms, it is clear that user empowerment undermines the authority of traditional hierarchies (Jenkins, 2008; Deuze, 2008 cited in Profers, 2016). On the subject, however, Terranova (2000 cited in Profers, 2016) also writes that users rarely have control over the information flows, and they generally do not share the deserved portion of the profits generated from their labour. This reality covers even platform-based labour forms such as on-demand and/or microwork which offer a “little jobs economy” and consist of to perform manual tasks in real-time (Casilli, 2019: 95).

Extracting data, on both on-demand and microworking platforms require physical efforts of the workers (Casilli, 2019: 95). Here, workers and/or users perform manual tasks in real-time to provide tasks such as, transport, accommodation, delivery, and personal assistance in return a commission (Casilli, 2019: 95). On the other hand, microwork consists of carrying out small chores such as annotating videos, sorting tweets, transcribing scanned documents, responding to online questionnaires, correcting values in a database, establishing contacts, the linking of two similar products in an online sales catalogue, and etc, (Casilli, 2019: 119).

Those who work on the platforms perform standardized and low-skill activities (Casilli, 2019: 119). Users receive a fee for their activities, ranging from a few euros or at least one cent per task (Casilli, 2019: 119). Platforms also charge commissions on any transaction in this economy, although unpaid forms of such labour are also common (Casilli, 2019: 119). Therefore, physical efforts such as driving, picking-up,

models, and remodelled many industries (Porter, 2001 cited in Dutot and Van Horne, 2015: 81); thus, digital entrepreneurship as the subcategory of entrepreneurship is defined as in which some or all of what would be physical in a traditional organization, has been digitized (Hull et al., 2007; Esmaeeli, 2011 cited in Dutot and Van Horne, 2015: 81). Digital entrepreneurship activities are also associated with producing digital goods or services, or with other forms of digital productive activity (Dutot and Van Horne, 2015: 81).

taking care of a delivery, and etc., together with the presence of elements such as sociability, are activities that can easily be confused with leisure (Casilli, 2019: 95).

Thus, in informational capitalism, immaterialisation of productive labour can be seen as the primary expression of acute labour deregulation (Venco, 2018: 7; De Stefano and Aloisi, 2018: 8). In addition, labour deregulation is tightly associated with concerns such as underemployment and unemployment²⁴ (Graham et al., 2017: 136). As long as the platforms choose to categorize workers/users as self-employed, and/or freelancers (ILO, 2018: XV). Classification of workers/users as self-employed and/or freelancer has effects such as depriving workers of job security, and social security law (ILO, 2018: XV). On the other hand, some platforms, classify them as participants in research projects who receive rewards rather than payments for work done (ILO, 2018: 13).

Thus, informational capitalism immaterialises productive labour in many ways, but also encourages every internet user to work for platforms in different ways. Immaterialisation of the productive labour has the power to transform easily paid labour into unpaid labour by violating workers' rights and emptying the meaning of work and worker, its empowering properties remain limited. The attempt to immaterialize productive labour is not new, but its devastating effects on the social order are relatively new. Therefore, digital labour can be associated with precarious conditions, while those conditions can be associated with an extremely wide range of people (Standing, 2009 cited in Alberti et al, 2018: 448).

3.2.2. Precariat

The terms, precariousness, precarious work, precarity, and precariat are usually identified with high levels of labour insecurity (Standing, 2011; Vosko, 2010; Vosko et al., 2009 cited in Campbell and Price, 315). Joseph Wrezinski (1987 cited in Labbé

²⁴ Underemployment takes place when “a person does not work full time or takes a job that does not reflect their actual training and financial needs” (CFI, 2021). It also means that the job does not use all the skills and education of the worker, or provides less than full time work (CFI, 2021). Underemployment is not the same as unemployment, which in the first place “refers to people who are not currently employed at all” (CFI, 2021).

et al., 2007: 5) defined precariousness as a state of social instability characterized by the absence of employment security, which avoids assuming professional obligations, and social rights. Departing from the 1970s, the term precarious work was gained importance, especially by leftist movements in continental Europe, as a means of bringing together young workers who were excluded from stable jobs (Alberti et al., 2018: 448).

On the other hand, the term precarity (*précarité*) was used by Pierre Bourdieu (1963 cited in Alberti et al., 2018: 448), in a study conducted in Algeria to distinguish between workers with permanent jobs, and those with temporary jobs (Alberti et al., 2018: 448). More recently, in 2001, the Italian Collective Chain Workers used the term precariat to describe the new proletariat in the urban service sector (ChainCrew, 2001; Foti, 2017 cited in Alberti et al., 2018: 448). In the same period, the cultural workers of France were using the same word to mobilize opposition to the reduction of social protections (ChainCrew, 2001; Foti, 2017 cited in Alberti et al., 2018: 448).

Based on definitions, Iain Campbell and Robert Price (2016: 315) write that precariousness encompasses different levels of social life. For example, at its most basic level, precariousness is accepted as a multidimensional concept that refers to high employment insecurity such as low levels of regulatory protection, low wages, and a low level of employee control over wages, hours and working conditions (Vosko, 2010: 2; Vosko et al., 2009: 7 cited in Campbell and Price, 2016: 315).

At the second level, precarious work is understood as paid work which exhibits various dimensions of precariousness (Standing, 2011 cited in Campbell and Price, 2016: 315). Such jobs are usually non-standard jobs (Vosko et al., 2009: 7-9 cited in Campbell and Price, 2016: 315). At this level, multiple dimensions of precarity appear to be clustered in specific jobs, so a relative increase in precarious jobs is seen as contributing to employment polarisation in advanced capitalist societies (Hurley et al., 2013; Kalleberg, 2011 cited in Campbell and Price, 2016: 315).

The third level concerns precarious workers, who are generally understood as those who not only engage in precarious work but also suffer the necessary consequences of precariousness (Anderson, 2010: 303-304 cited in Campbell and

Price, 2016: 315). For example, the concept of a precarious generation was developed by scholars focusing on youth (Kretsos, 2010 cited in Campbell and Price, 2016: 315). At this level, precariousness spreads insecurity to workers' lives by affecting their income and living standards (Campbell and Price, 2016: 315; Choonara, 2020: 427).

The fourth level is precarity. Originally used by European social movements and later by academics, the term refers to a generalised set of social conditions and an associated sense of insecurity experienced by precarious workers but which also spreads to other areas of social life such as housing, welfare provision, and personal relationships (Anderson, 2010; Arnold and Bongiovi, 2013 cited in Campbell and Price, 2016: 315-316).

The fifth level is the precariat level. As Berardi (2009: 31 cited in Choonara, 2020: 430) writes, "the word 'precariat' generally stands for the area of work that is no longer definable by fixed rules relative to the labour relation, to salary and to the length of the working day". Today, precariousness is the general form of a networked and recombinant labour relationship in a productive, digitalized space. According to many scholars, precarious work is associated with autonomy, and appears to be a marginal and temporary situation that has become a common form of work and labour relations (Choonara, 2020: 430).

In this level, similar to 19th-century concept of the proletariat, the precariat is defined as a class emerging from the ranks of precarious workers (Standing, 2011 cited in Campbell and Price, 2016: 315). Therefore, according to Guy Standing (2011: 21), in a world where inequalities are increasing, class did not disappear while moving towards a flexible labour market with the contribution of digital transformation and praised autonomy. On the contrary, it has evolved the precariat into a global class, if not yet a class-for-itself, in the Marxian sense of that term (Standing, 2011: 7). According to Standing (2011: 107), people are included in the precariat therefore they are suited to the circumstances of the moment. This is why, Standing (2011: 107) argues that the precariat potentially includes everyone.

As Standing (2013: 6) writes, this new approach to contemporary capitalism stems from a neo-liberal claim made in 1980s, based on labour market flexibility.

According to Standing (2011: 6), flexibility had many dimensions such as, “wage flexibility meant speeding up adjustments to changes in demand, particularly downwards; employment flexibility meant easy and costless ability of firms to change employment levels, particularly downwards, implying a reduction in employment security and protection; job flexibility meant being able to move employees around inside the firm and to change job structures with minimal opposition or cost; skill flexibility meant being able to adjust workers’ skills easily”.

On the other hand, the working principle of labour market flexibility is as follows, in case of an increase in labour costs, companies transfer their production and investments to places where costs are lower, and financial capital will be invested in these places (developing countries) rather than where companies locate (developed countries) (Standing, 2011: 6). As globalisation proceeded with the help of digital technologies (Standing writes that this was not technologically determined. Therefore the needs of governments and firms determined the digital technology) governments and corporations made their labour relations more flexible by using defined formula, as a result the number of people in insecure forms of labour multiplied (Standing, 2011: 6).

As of 1990s, more and more people, not just in developing countries, found themselves in a status that economists and anthropologists called “informal” (Standing, 2013: 6). In 2008, the economic crises has also increased the forms of insecure even unpaid work by calling them free work, volunteer work or leisure pursuits. After all, precarity had connotations such as “beautiful precarity”, an escape from the authority of capital and the state, and a claim to the right to free people from their control (Shukaitis, 2012 cited in Choonara, 2020: 430). As Hannah Arendth (1958 cited in Standing, 2015: 198) writes, employees had employment security but this was seen as pathetic in ancient Greece, for example, because only the precarious persons were free.

For example, in US, in the time of President Obama, thousands of people were signed up for a platform called volunteernyc.org to work voluntarily. According to Standing (2011: 270), this action which combines work and leisure time was a manifestation of people’s desire to do socially valuable work. People were probably

inspired by events like WTO, G8, World Bank, or International Monetary Fund in Seattle; there, for example, a group of people acted as volunteer translators to spread the events around the world (Choonara, 2020: 430). In this context, according to Standing (2011: 270-271), from the perspective of flexible worker, and new labour forms, precarity turns into a two-way experience that is both liberating and restrictive. The implications of this situation lead business relations to form different employment status such as self-employment, entrepreneurialism, and etc., in the new capitalism.

3.3 Changing Employment Relationships in the News Media

One of the most radical changes in journalism of the 21st century is the rise of digitalization. The internet has become a major source of news and information, including different technological devices, websites, algorithms, software, robot reporters, social media networks, massaging services, and etc., (Strauss, 2021). The organization of newsrooms has evolved into a community of people, digital technologies, and news content brought together by networked software (Neilson, 2020). Thus, the technological and social changes have completely changed the conditions of production in the media industry (Banks, 2017; Conor et al., 2015; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013; McRobbie, 2016).

In addition to many studies focusing on the digitalization of journalism practices and newsrooms by taking into account exemplified changes in journalism ranged between technological infrastructures to production process, there are also some studies that shed a light on the changing work and labour conditions of journalists. For example, in this period, workplaces are reorganized, workflows are managed, and the work become more flexible, non-standard, and informal (Neilson, 2020). The result is speeded-up and intensified workloads, declining autonomy, and precarious work (Cohen and de Peuter, 2020: xiii).

This period of so-called “change and uncertainty” has had other consequences for journalism, especially given the declines and job losses in traditional newsroom employment from 2008 to 2019²⁵ (Grieco, 2020; Cohen and de Peuter, 2020: xiii):

²⁵ According to the data gathered from Pew Research Center: “From 2008 to 2019, overall newsroom employment in the U.S. dropped by 23%, according to the new analysis. In 2008, there were about

- A changing political economic climate
- General uncertainty as for-profit media rapidly adjust their business models and strategies in reaction to digital technologies
- Shrinking newsrooms and consequent decline in quality journalism
- Control and influence of technology giants such as Facebook and Google on journalism, especially in terms of content and business models

All these transformations have made the news economy increasingly attention-centred, de-linearizing the news media landscape and allowing it to rise in new business models as well as new employment relationships such as self-employment and entrepreneurship (Norbäck, 2019: 2; Singer and Broersma, 2020 cited in Neilson, 2020).

The defined shift has two characteristics, for example, for many scholars self-employment and entrepreneurialism in journalism is a “liberating way of self-realization” (Pink, 2001 and Slim, 2009 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2). However, from a critical point of view, they are often labelled as “precarious” (Fleming, 2017; Mumby et al., 2017 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2).

These new types of work also shift risk from the company to the individual worker and thus society (Fleming, 2017; Mumby et al., 2017 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2). Unless journalists labelled as the portfolio-worker, the flexitarian, or the gig-worker, take on the risks and responsibility of work shortages, professional training, and social protection (Banks, 2019: 543; Kallinikos, 2003 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2), what Fleming (2017: 691 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2) calls a radical responsibility of the workforce.

114,000 newsroom employees – reporters, editors, photographers and videographers – in five industries that produce news: newspaper, radio, broadcast television, cable and “other information services” (the best match for digital-native news publishers). By 2019, that number had declined to about 88,000, a loss of about 27,000 jobs” (Grieco, 2020).

Therefore, the possible results of radical responsibility in the workforce are defined by Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt (2008: 14 cited in Banks, 2019: 543) from the perspective of cultural work²⁶ as,

“... a preponderance of temporary, intermittent and precarious jobs; long hours and bulimic patterns of working; the collapse or erasure of the boundaries between work and play; poor pay; high levels of mobility; passionate attachment to the work and to the identity of creative labourer (e.g. web designer, artist, fashion designer); an attitudinal mind-set that is a blend of bohemianism and entrepreneurialism; informal work environments and distinctive forms of sociality; and profound experiences of insecurity and anxiety about finding work, earning enough money and ‘keeping up’ in rapidly changing fields.”

Remembering that unemployment has become a permanent feature in the gig economy, incomes are often low as the business is run by the self-employed agents with no collective bargaining power or minimum wage protection (Stanford, 2017 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2; Friedman, 2014 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2). In the new economic conditions, professional work naturally becomes risky as the economic value it generates is not shared by professionals, as measured, for example, in terms of real wage growth, social security benefits, stable and long-term employment contracts (Styhre, 2017: 22 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2).

In the digital age, non-corporate journalistic work is a good example of how precarious professional work can emerge (Deuze and Witschge, 2018 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2). For example, freelance journalism has job insecurity due to its discontinuous nature (Cohen, 2016 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2). Journalists’ insecurity stems from the ability of freelancers to access repetitive work, which is characterised by the ability to exercise control over the overall labour process of journalists. However it has also been characterised by reduced ability to access social protection, and low wage levels (Vosko, 2010: 2 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2). Except for a few stars, freelance journalists work in markets with intense competition and job scarcity (Banks and Hesmondhalgh, 2009; Cohen, 2015; Deuze and Fortunati, 2011 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2).

²⁶ Cultural work refers to “activities of artistic, creative, or aesthetic production that take place in the contexts of the cultural (or ‘creative’), arts, and media industries” (Banks, 2007; Beck, 2004; Cohen, 2012; Gill and Pratt, 2008; Scharff, 2017 cited in Banks, 2019: 543).

As Norbäck (2019: 2) writes, job competition combined with the economic crisis in the media industries has reduced the economic wage by lowering rates of self-employment. A study examining changes in organizational structures, logics, and employment practices in the media industries, showed that under conditions of fierce competition, freelancers internalize entrepreneurial ideas to the extent that economic and entrepreneurial rational becomes the guiding principle of the business (Storey et al., 2005: 1033; Storey et al., 2005 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2). Likewise, Cohen (2015: 517 cited in Norbäck, 2019: 2) stated that in this period, journalists are reshaped as entrepreneurs who can adapt to market needs, engage in self-commodification, and constantly rush for work. Therefore, business relations in digitalized news media will be evaluated in this section in terms of self-employment and entrepreneurship.

3.3.1. Self-Employment in Journalism: Freelancing and Self-Branding

In informational capitalism, with the rise of digital work and labour, and especially self-employment opportunities, a flexible productive workforce is becoming visible. From a business perspective, more and more firms today are turning to self-employed workers to increase business flexibility and agility because these workers enable them to quickly and efficiently scale up and down human resources to meet market changes and a dynamic global economy (Fleming, 2017 cited in Sutherland et al., 2020: 458).

On the other hand from the perspective of workers, self-employed workers often offer their services and products to clients on a fixed-term or project basis. They are also independent of the control area of any organizations and are often associated with local independence (Kuhn and Maleki, 2017 cited in Sutherland et al., 2020: 458; Sutherland et al., 2020: 458). The appeal of free agency and control over time and work reinforce the sense that the quality and flexibility of work life is higher outside of the traditional work environment (Wood et al., 2018 cited in Sutherland et al., 2020: 458).

According to Alessandro Gandini (2016 cited in Sutherland et al., 2020: 468), this has resulted in a marked increase in the number of workers, especially from the

younger generations entering the workforce. Workers are now embracing micro-tasking, on-demand and online freelancing, and linking work with flexibility, diversity, freedom from corporate politics, and sometimes higher pay (Gandini, 2016 cited in Sutherland et al., 2020: 458).

Despite the defined characteristics of non-standard employment self-employed workers have to deal with some social risks, including the lack of social security, lack of collective bargaining rights, lack of access to unions, risk of poverty in old age, and the risk of unemployment (Connen and Schippers, 2019). There are also other risks such as (ICF and Radar Europe, 2018: 18),

- Limited protection of workers in non-standard contracts and access to social security systems
- High risk of permanence in temporary employment and involuntary forms of flexible working
- High-risk in-work poverty and long-term poverty *vis-à-vis* standard forms of employment
- Little access to training and career progression opportunities

Thus, despite the exemplified risks, an increasing trend towards atypical employment in labour markets also affects traditional journalistic workforce, by imposing self-employment on journalists and working on a piece-rate basis instead of working on a regular salary basis (Deuze, 2007; Nies and Pedersini 2003; Walters et al., 2006 cited in Edstrom and Ladendorf, 2012: 711; Hayes and Silke, 2018:1018-1019). In this situation that has emerged, the economic contraction that has been experienced by the media sector since the 2000s also has a hand.

For example, freelance journalists today are considered a flexible workforce in media industries. And the number of freelance journalists is increasing all around the world. In fact, in Western labour markets, freelance work is the main form of work in journalism and the label atypical is no longer appropriate (Beck, 1992, 2000; Giddens, 1998; Sennett, 1998, 2004; see also Stanworth and Stanworth, 1995 cited in Edstrom and Ladendorf, 2012: 711; Hayes and Silke, 2018:1018-1019; Cock and Smaele, 2016: 251).

However, a study on freelance magazine workers found that these journalists were affected by the interplay between opportunity and insecurity (Ekinsmyth, 1999 cited in Edstrom and Ladendorf, 2012: 713). For example, Ekinsmyth (1999 cited in Edstrom and Ladendorf, 2012: 713) defines the opportunities of freelancing in journalism with the concepts of autonomy, freedom, and flexibility. Freelance journalists can set their working hours and the news stories they will cover. They can choose their tools and methods (Graphicdesigndegreehub, 2020). In other words, freelance journalism is a bit of “being your own boss” (Stanworth and Stanworth, 1995 cited in Edstrom and Ladendorf, 2012: 713).

When it comes to insecurity, freelance journalism faces ethical issues and the precariat. Such that reducing the quality of a news sometimes even means financial survival for the journalist. For example, Martina Ladendorf (2012 cited in Edstrom and Ladendorf, 2012: 713), working on freelance journalists in the Norrbotten region of Sweden, concludes:

“The freelancers in Norrbotten conduct themselves according to journalistic ideals and make ethical considerations, but most of them sometimes do work that is not traditional journalism. The informants say that it is impossible to survive as a freelancer otherwise. Some informants assert that jobs which are on the border between journalism and information are not inferior, but in fact superior to many journalistic assignments, such as journalism for local dailies. The interviewees recognize that there have been many changes in the media landscape, such as commercialization, which have lowered the quality of journalism, but it is of course difficult to know whether these changes are more perceived than actual. The blurring of the borders between journalism and information was evident in the material (13 life-story interviews), but at the same time, it seemed crucial for the journalists to maintain these borders. The purpose was to guard the integrity, impartiality and trustworthiness of the journalist and maintain a coherent life-story and self-identity”.

On the other hand, some of the literature on the subject focuses on the working conditions of freelance journalists. For Nicole Cohen (2016 cited in Hayes and Silke, 2018: 1019), freelance journalism is getting more and more intense and precarious. Freelancers witness a decline in both income and control. Mirijam Gollmitzer (2014 cited in Hayes and Silke, 2018: 1020) and Cohen (2016 cited in Hayes and Silke, 2018: 1020) also declare that the benefits of autonomy in freelance jobs are often undermined, given that freelancers are not compensated for the time spent researching stories, as media outlets only pay for the finished product. They also point to “increasingly aggressive copyright regimes” where freelancers are not paid for multiple uses of their work when distributed across different platforms or titles.

In a marketplace which is highly competitive, freelance journalists also need to brand themselves on social media platforms to maintain their sustainability and increase their “market value” (Brems et al., 2017: 443- 444). Personal and/or self-branding refers to the presentation of a journalist as a brand on social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter, and offers journalists the opportunity to capture the attention of the audiences and become the centre of news and opinion on social media platforms (Brems et al., 2017: 445).

For news organizations, reporters building their own brand can strengthen the reputation of media brands. On the other hand, self-branding offers opportunities for freelance journalists to advertise their skills and stay in the eyes of potential media customers (Brems et al., 2017: 445). However, building their own brands on social media platforms has forced journalists, freelance journalists in general, to be more transparent in their work, more interactive with users, and more open to blending their professional and personal lives in the public sphere; which means an extra workload for them (Hedman, 2016; Lee, 2015; Olausson, 2016 cited in (Molyneux et al., 2018: 1389-1390). On the subject, Logan Molyneux et al., (2018: 1389-1390) also argue that this trend towards transparency has led journalists to allow audiences to observe their professional and sometimes personal activities. This is an effort to appear more authentic and credible (HellmuellerVos and Poepsel, 2013; Phillips, 2010; Revers, 2014 cited in Molyneux et al., 2018: 1389-1390).

Despite such efforts, however, the nature of self-employment, emphasised by flexibility, autonomy, and freedom from the physical office, and strict working hours, as described in the hurdles of work, freelance journalists suffer serious injuries when undertaking such work (Cock and Smaele, 2016: 251; Popiel, 2017: 220-221). Unsteady employment, copyright regimes, and competition for visibility on social media platforms, all place freelance journalists in precariousness (Cock and Smaele, 2016: 251; Popiel, 2017: 220-221). And there is no doubt that the journalism profession today is becoming more and more uncertain, insecure, and intense (Cock and Smaele, 2016: 251; Popiel, 2017: 220-221).

3.3.2. Entrepreneurial Journalism

The networked and precarious working conditions of journalists and media workers, the existence of independent online businesses, and solo-entrepreneurship, which are highly correlated with the latest trends in the labour market, help to grow the concept of entrepreneurial journalism (Deuze, 2017: 174). The phenomenon will be interpreted with the sharing economy and technological innovations that carry the traditional normative business model of journalism to a more democratic environment that encourages public participation (Gomes, 2017).

With the rise of the internet and online advertising since the 2000s, traditional news outlets (print and broadcasting) have seen massive budget cuts, reorganizations and significant downsizing. Innovations in news media and changing audience behaviours have also changed the production practices of journalists (Witschge, 2012a, 2012b cited in Deuze, 2017: 174). Therefore, for many journalists, the relationship between media production and media distribution have become a whole (Gomes, 2017). As a result, in such a media environment, managers and employers began to emphasize the importance of “enterprise” as an individual rather than organizational or company-based qualifications, forcing entrepreneurialism on employees and freelancers alike (Du Gay, 1996 cited in Deuze, 2017: 174; Oakley, 2014 cited in Deuze, 2017: 174).

Entrepreneurship has become more and more important over time, especially for journalists who practice their profession in media under pressure. In an ecosystem

where many legacy media outlets do not provide optimal working conditions - low payment and restrictions on editorial freedom are common. Self-employment, in the context of entrepreneurialism, on the internet has also become attractive to many journalists (Zlateva, 2014).

Therefore, an increasing number of journalists have been advocating entrepreneurship as an alternative to work seen at legacy media organizations in recent years (Briggs 2012 cited in Gomes, 2017; Ward, 2012; Nazhmidinova and Russ-Mohl, 2012). As employment contacts in the media industry declined, journalists wore an increasing number of editorial hats to promote themselves, such as blogging, and being on social media platforms (Briggs 2012 cited in Gomes, 2017; Ward, 2012; Nazhmidinova and Russ-Mohl, 2012).

Accordingly, entrepreneurship in journalism is different from freelance journalism, where journalists sell their labour to multiple news organisations rather than employment (Rottwilm, 2014: 4). In entrepreneurial journalism, journalists, technologists, and entrepreneurs work together to establish their own small and medium-sized companies to produce content, to establish their own distribution mechanisms through websites and social media platforms, and to distribute their content to other companies (Rottwilm, 2014: 4). Entrepreneurship in journalism also relies on the establishment of small-scale journalism businesses that support a small journalist cooperative or allow local communities to report on or specific topics, the start-ups can be content-based or aggregation-based (Rottwilm, 2014: 4).

The emergence of a start-up culture is global: since the early years of the 21st century, new independent (and often small-scale and online-only) journalism companies have sprung up around the world (Bruno and Kleis Nielsen, 2012; Coates Nee, 2014; Küng, 2015; Simons, 2013 cited in Deuze, 2017: 175). Thus, the future of journalism is envisioned as “journalists” who alone or collaboratively, can monetize content in innovative ways, connect with the public in the new interactive formats, seize opportunities, and respond to shape their environment (Briggs, 2012 cited in Deuze, 2017: 175).

The phenomenon of entrepreneurial journalism is also seen as the complete demolition of the wall between the commercial and editorial aspects of news organizations (Deuze, 2017: 174-175). The shift of the “enterprise” concept from company to individual is one of the results (Deuze, 2017: 174-175). However, remembering the fact that entrepreneurial journalists must have sufficient business knowledge to run a business, some scholars focus on discussions such as the commodification of a commercialized media workplace where content decisions are increasingly dominated by market pressures. This weakens the connotations of the concept of “enterprise” defined by efficiency, productivity, empowerment, and professional autonomy (Von Rimscha, 2015 cited in Deuze, 2017: 174-175).

On the other hand, the same shift has the ability of journalists to self-structure their work as being more independent, adaptable, flexible, and willing to move between activities and tasks and take responsibility for their own actions, successes and failures (Storey et al., 2005: 1036 cited in Deuze, 2017: 175). Accordingly, entrepreneurial journalism through practices such as self-branding and self-employment, should include self-discipline, confidence, the ability to deal with rejection, and the possibility of financial insecurity (Ward, 2012; Cohen, 2015: 513).

Thus, the new ecosystem forces journalists to be innovative, by keeping them away from traditional media, and to become entrepreneurs. It also invites journalists to avoid the illusion of independence, and not ignore adapting to the market for sustainable projects. Therefore, in a report, Nicola Bruno and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen (2012), from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University, identify two major challenges for journalistic start-ups, and self-employment:

1. The market for online news continues to be dominated by legacy media
2. The market for online advertising is dominated by a few very large technology companies

It is clear that journalism, whether traditional whether entrepreneurial, is still market driven, and self-employed journalists need to generate profits to make a living (Bridenbaugh, 2012; Duman 1979; Heinz et Laumann, 1982 cited in Rottwilm, 2014: 10). Although the argument for entrepreneurial journalism focuses on the degree of

freedom, independence, and capacity to control one's business, it has yet to be empirically proven (Freidson, 1988 cited in Rottwilm, 2014: 10).

On the subject, Jerome E. Carlin (1962: 184) called this phenomenon the illusion of independence in his book, "Lawyers on Their Own: A Study of Individual Practitioners in Chicago". Accordingly, in a market economy, one's labour is a commodity, whether it is sold to an employer or to a customer. However, it is rare for a person's labour or property to be so valuable to consumers and thus guarantee one's independence (Rottwilm, 2014: 10). Hence, self-employed journalists are limited by constraints such as income and financial needs (due to the lack of a regular income), the general economy and demand, taxation, and state regulations. For this reason, entrepreneurial journalism needs to seek sustainability in the market in the long run, without ignoring both the editorial and commercial aspects of journalism (Rottwilm, 2014: 10).

For self-sustaining journalism initiatives, whether for-profit and/or not-for-profit, many leading universities offer entrepreneurial journalism programs, such as The School of Journalism at SciencesPo, City University of London, and Cardiff School of Journalism. The courses focus on data journalism and community management, as well as, media management and business administration that would guide mid-career professionals or graduate journalists to create and sustain their projects without ignoring the commercial side of the journalistic work (Nazhmidinova and Russ-Mohl, 2012).

In the absence of a viable income model, entrepreneurial journalists will switch to outsourcing such as freelance work to keep start-ups afloat, or use user-generated content and robots as information sources to reduce spending (Rottwilm, 2014: 4). However, this only places precarious labour forms in journalistic organizations, and makes journalism more data-driven and automated (Rottwilm, 2014: 4). As can be seen, the entrepreneurial journalism ecosystem clearly changes the nature, norms, and practices of journalistic work, in need of financial support (Rottwilm, 2014: 4).

3.4. New Business Models and Revenue Sources of Journalism

Business models of journalism whether print and broadcast were traditionally relied on two major sources of revenue: payment by the readers, and advertising (Kawashima, 2020: 72). Historically, journalism's most important source of revenue has been advertising, which has subsidized news production for more than a century (Picard, 2010 cited in Wang and Sparks, 2019: 1302). However, since the beginning of the 2000s, for example, departing from 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath the revenues of newspapers (paper only), especially from sales and advertisements, have decreased all over the world (Cagé, 2016: 40).

This situation was also closely linked to the digital transformation of the media industry. Therefore, despite the decrease in traditional (print and/or broadcast) advertising revenues, digital advertising revenues were increasing (Çevikel, 2020: 23). These revenues were at the level of \$7.2 billion in 2012. In 2021, it has increased by more than 50% (WAN-IFRA, 2021). Despite this growth, the digital advertising revenues of media organizations, especially newspapers, occupy a small place in total digital advertising expenditures (Çevikel, 2020: 23). For example, global digital advertising spending was \$85.5 billion in 2012. Despite this, media organizations' total revenue from digital advertising was only \$7.2 billion (Çevikel, 2020: 23-24).

Although there has been some increase in revenue levels, it is clear that media companies have not yet been able to replace the revenues they lost from conventional business models (payment by the readers, and advertising) in digital. The first reason for this is that the platforms that control the internet also take the largest share of advertising revenues. The second reason is that consumers are willing to pay for services that provide content, not for the content itself. This is the main reason why consumers pay for platforms like Netflix for video streaming, and Spotify for music streaming, but not to journalism organizations that go digital (Kawashima, 2020: 70).

In this period of transformations, it is clear that the news media industry is struggling for survival and sustainability. The new period, also force journalistic organizations both for-profit and not-for-profit to adapt to changing business models. Despite strengths and weaknesses, as well as business risks, today, the news media

industry work with different business models such as advertising-based, subscription-based, crowdfunding, co-operative model, and many other innovative models.

Nevertheless, besides mainstream business models ranged between online advertising and crowdfunding according to the rapport of Innovation Media Consulting Group (2019), innovative business models including earn after reading, Blockchain-based journalistic start-ups, use of influencers, emotional advertising, and etc., may offer journalists a potential for success in the digital media industry.

Earn after reading model

News media companies can adopt “earn after reading” model to retain existing audiences or acquire new audiences and generate a steady stream of advertising revenue (Innovation Media Consulting Group, 2019). The model includes different strategies such as playing digital games. For these games audiences earn digital coins that are then translated into real money (Innovation Media Consulting Group, 2019). For example, in China, news app Qutoutiao Inc. has attracted 20 million daily audiences with the help of this model, according to a Reuters report published in late 2018. And the highest earning user received more than 50,000 USD equivalent commission from digital games (Innovation Media Consulting Group, 2019). On the other hand, in India, Times Internet Limited rewards audiences with “Timepoints” (a kind of digital coins) for their efforts such as reading articles, watching videos, commenting and sharing posts. One of the risks of this model is the possible loss of value of the content (Innovation Media Consulting Group, 2019).

Blockchain model

In blockchain-based journalism initiatives maintained by a global community of contributors, users can engage in different actions such as community management, supporting journalists or sponsoring the launch of newsrooms through the use of digital coins and tokens (Innovation Media Consulting Group, 2019). One of the best-known examples of blockchain journalism start-ups was Civil. It was built on an active and participatory network to finance quality journalism globally (Innovation Media Consulting Group, 2019).

Civil Media Company was introduced in 2018 as a media platform and journalistic network jointly owned and operated by journalists and citizens. Its technology was powered by blockchain. It brought together dozens of independent newsrooms, its model was utopian, completely liberating journalism from advertisers and politics (Bromwich, 2018). Readers were able to purchase Civil with a Civil-exclusive crypto token, which liberated journalists and led them to enjoy self-governance and sustainability. Civil's funding model has had the power to disable advertisers, click baiters, and any other actor that influences journalism (Bromwich, 2018).

Civil launched the currency for a month. The media company eventually fell below the minimum number of tokens it hoped to sell for more than \$6 million. About 80 percent of the roughly \$1.4 million tokens the company has sold have been purchased by blockchain software company ConsenSys, which took on Civil in the first place (Bromwich, 2018). As result, Civil had to refund investors the funds it did raise (De, 2020). Thus, the model failed. Civil Media Company ended its venture in 2020. Civil's website, which features stories from more than 100 member organizations, was not sustainable (Edmonds, 2020).

Use of influencers

Some media companies use influencers (social media stars) with a large following as a part of their business strategy. Companies pay these influencers to promote their brands or service on social media platforms to reach people who might otherwise be hard to reach (Innovation Media Consulting Group, 2019). Influencers give a media company instant scale in reaching audiences through their personal relationships. Also an influencer can give a new face to a campaign or initiative (Innovation Media Consulting Group, 2019).

Emotional advertising

News companies such as The New York Times and The Times focused on emotional advertising. More recently, The New York Times has sold premium ads based on the emotions that articles evoke (Innovation Media Consulting Group, 2019).

The New York Times' project "Feels" had 50 campaigns, more than 30 million impressions and strong revenue results, in 2018 (Edmonds, 2019).

The Times' project, called "perspective targeting" also worked with a data science team (Edmonds, 2019). In 2018, the team surveyed more than 1,200 readers who voluntarily participated to create the first dataset (Edmonds, 2019). The team also asked participants how they felt while reading a series of articles, choosing from a number of different emotion categories. The list of emotions is as follows (Edmonds, 2019),

optimistic, inspired, self-confident, amused, adventurous, in the mood to spend, love, sadness, boredom, interest, fear, hate, hope, happiness, nostalgic, indulgent, competitive, and informed.

Based on the analysis of the resulting dataset, the team created a set of models that predicted the emotions the articles would evoke in readers (Innovation Media Consulting Group, 2019). The team also showed that ads performed significantly better on articles that ranked high in emotional categories such as love, sadness, and fear, compared to those that didn't (Innovation Media Consulting Group, 2019). In the next step, the data analysts let advertisers choose by which emotions they want their ads to be defined (Innovation Media Consulting Group, 2019). As reported by Rick Edmonds (2019), in this model some ads have generated up to 80% more impressions than normal behavioural targeting, with an average increase of 4%, which was promising.

3.4.1. Advertising-Based Revenue Sources

Since the 2000s, the internet, Web 1.0, and Web 2.0 technologies have created countless advertising opportunities for both news organizations and online advertisers (Hanekom and Scriven, 2002: 52). For example, the early style of online advertising was very similar to the advertising model used in print publications. Due to the relationship entered directly with advertisers, it is viewed as part of an online media strategy that includes clear goals, objectives, and target markets (Chapman, 1998 cited in Hanekom and Scriven, 2002: 53). Therefore, Janette Hanekom and Charmaine Scriven (2002: 53) emphasized that the early stages of online advertising offer an

opportunity to create global and national awareness and interest through instant information.

According to Hanekom and Scriven (2002: 53), online advertising for a strong profit provides an opportunity to create an image that will align a brand and engage customers through a cycle of experimentation such as purchase and direct response. The oldest forms of online advertising, especially used on news sites, work with the logic of Web 1.0 as follows (Chapman 1998 cited in Hanekom and Scriven, 2002: 53):

- Standard banners: The oldest and most popular type of online advertising, which includes strip advertisements placed around the edges of large photos or advertisements on popular advertising-supported websites.
- Pop-up windows: It automatically opens above the main web page when a site is accessed and is often used for subscription sales.
- Dual advertisements: Online advertisements appearing on the website.
- Sponsorships: Includes naming rights to sites, general look and feel, and editorial sponsorships.

Over time, the convergence and homogenization processes of digital technologies have transformed online advertising (Christin, 2018). For example, according to William D. Wells et al. (2000:366 cited in Hanekom and Scriven, 2002: 54), the second generation of online advertising was a shift from banner ads to the internet broadcasting model. The new generation has made online advertising similar to television advertising with a visual impact and interaction (Hanekom and Scriven, 2002: 54).

However, as argued by Louis E. Boone and David L. Kurtz (1999:614 cited in Hanekom and Scriven, 2002: 54), this trend came to an end due to increased competition with television advertisements. For example, in this period, advertisers preferred to create and promote their own interactive websites instead of placing online advertisements on other websites (Hanekom and Scriven, 2002: 54). Advertisers have also experimented with new forms of online advertising, such as games and interactive product displays, with new forms such as pop-ups and side frames (Hanekom and

Scriven, 2002: 54). However, combined with the global recession since 2008, the attempts of advertisers have caused loss of income in many sectors, including the news media (Franklin, 2014: 481).

Following the economic crisis, platforms have become the rising values of the internet. In this period, search engines such as Google and social media platforms such as Facebook, which own data commodification tools and advertising distribution networks, have expanded the options traditionally offered to advertisers (Witte, 2018; Neilson, 2021: 75). They also have become strong contenders for the advertising revenues of the global news industry (Neilson, 2021: 76). As Neilson (2021: 76) writes, these digital platforms clearly facilitate a process of reification: that is, they decompose news items, make them calculable, and subject them to market forces.

By mediating between journalists, news organizations, audiences and advertisers, and hosting third-party or user-generated content, including news articles and posts by journalists, these platforms have also become indispensable for the digital news industry for news circulation and measurement (Neilson, 2021: 76). For example, from the point of view of news circulation, according to the Pew Research Centre, 68% of American adults get at least some of their news from social media (Neilson, 2021: 76).

More recently, in a study conducted in both US and France, Angèle Christin (2018) said that digital data and audience metrics are transforming journalism as well as advertising-based revenue models. With the availability of real-time measurement technologies, journalists and editors can now track how many people read each article, how long the readers stayed on a page, and how they found the story, using tools offered by technology companies (Christin, 2018). According to Christin (2018), previously incomparable articles can be compared using a single metric called clicks. This transforms the internal dynamic of newsrooms.

For most news sites, such metrics are an important factor for online advertising revenue (Witte, 2018). Therefore, “the more unique visitors a website attracts and the more page views an article gets, the more money it can earn from advertisers” (Witte, 2018). According to Neilson (2021: 76), more traffic is directed from Google and

Facebook to the websites of news organizations than any other source. The described process drives high-traffic stories to the public rather than high-quality stories. It is also called clickbait journalism (Witte, 2018). This new method described allows journalists to earn money while reducing the quality of news content.

However, platforms like Google and Facebook are far from fully covering the cost of producing news content (Neilson, 2021: 76). For example, in the US alone, as of 2018, Google and Facebook held 60% of digital advertising revenue (Lipman, 2019). With a market share of around 90% across in 2020, Google was responsible for almost 90% of global desktop search traffic (Statista, 2021). According to a study by the News Media Alliance (2018), which represents 2,000 publishers of predominantly local newspapers in the US, Google earned \$4.7 billion from news content. However, the company paid little to the news industry (Lipman, 2019).

In response, an Indian Newspaper Society (INS), representing print media outlets, asked Google to increase its share of publishers' advertising revenue by at least 85% in 2021 (Press Trust of India, 2021). It also asked the tech giant to provide more transparency in the revenue reports available to publishers (Press Trust of India, 2021).

Despite such disadvantages, online advertising is still the primary source of revenue for many for-profit news media outlets today (Holcomb and Mitchell, 2014). However, its sustainability under certain conditions is questionable. For example, existing in this ecosystem powered by digital devices, software applications, and algorithms is relatively easy for global news media outlets with high click rates rather than the local and alternative ones (Jenkins, 2020; Neilson, 2021: 127).

To get rid of the economic uncertainty imposed by tech companies, the digital journalism industry is looking for alternatives to the advertiser model. Some examples include (Nicholls et al., 2016: 22):

- Affiliate marketing and e-commerce partnerships
- Syndication of content
- Creating information services
- Publishing hard copies of content with a long shelf life

Others include paywalls, crowdfunding, and collective ownership or co-operatives (Aitamurto 2013 cited in Franklin, 2014: 483; Myllylahti, 2014; Pickard and Williams 2014 cited in Franklin, 2014: 483).

3.4.2. Subscription-Based Revenue Sources

The subscription-based business model, previously dominated by traditional newspapers, magazines, and telecommunications companies, has also entered digital journalism. In the subscription-based business model, customers and/or audiences pay a recurring fee at regular intervals to access a product or service from their respective businesses. For businesses using the subscription model, the primary source of cash flows is customers (McCarthy et al, 2017: 17).

In recent years, the transition from advertising to reader revenue as a source finance for journalism, is seen as one of the important developments in the media sector (Nechushtai and Zalmanson, 2019: 2). According to Efrat Nechushta and Lior Zalmanson (2019: 2) considering the lack of effective monetization of digital news through advertising, today news organizations are trying to generate more revenue directly from readers as a sustainable way (Shafer, 2016 cited in Nechushtai and Zalmanson, 2019: 2).

There are different payment models such as freemium, metered paywalls, and hard paywalls. The freemium model on a news site operates on the principle of offering some content for free while keeping the premium material only available to paying users. The freemium model is followed by metered paywalls which “allow free access to a limited number of articles each month before requiring payment” (Nielsen et al, 2017). On the other hand, “a hard paywall prohibits visitors from viewing any content without a subscription” (Yeon, 2019).

In Europe, the French news site *Mediapart* is the pioneer of subscription-based news media focusing on the freemium model. In 2016, 96% of its revenue came from subscriptions. As of the end of 2016, Mediapart has approximately 123,000 individual subscribers or net active payers. As written in the “Digital-Born News Media in

Europe” report: With an additional 5,000 aggregated subscribers (companies, government organisations, etc.), there are around 130,000 paid subscribers in total. Thus, the news site reaches a significant subscriber base (Nicholls, Shabbir and Nielsen, 2017: 19).

Mediapart co-founder and managing director Marie-Hélène Smiejan (2017 cited in Nicholls, Shabbir and Nielsen, 2017: 19), explains the news sites’s successful strategy: “There are 360,000 people who have paid for Mediapart at least once’ - but also continues to attract new paying readers. ‘There is not a single day where we haven’t recruited new subscribers; we always have done, every day – 100, or 300, 600, or 1800.’ Mediapart argues that their investigative scoops have been key to attracting subscribers. ‘Yesterday we published a huge scoop on Sarkozy, and got 300 new subscriptions,’ says François Bonnet. ‘After the story was repeated on evening television, we saw a new peak in subscriptions. I’m obsessed with checking subscriptions. You see an immediate impact.” (Nicholls, Shabbir and Nielsen, 2017: 19).

Another example from Europe is the Spanish news site *El Español*, which operates on a freemium model. *El Español* gives its readers access to 25 free articles a month. The news site then activates its paywall at €11/month or €6/month if readers sign up for an annual subscription. *El Español* subscribers also have access to a subscriber zone called La Edición, which has deals with Amazon to purchase e-books and other products. Despite the possibilities offered by this model, *El Español*’s deputy editor says the “Spanish people are spoilt. They do not pay for news. We have no problem with our audience numbers, so our problem is to convince our audience” (Nicholls, Shabbir and Nielsen, 2017: 19).

The French news site *Les Jours* is another example. The news site is focused on producing original content and functional website design for a good user experience. All done to encourage audiences to subscribe (Nicholls, Shabbir and Nielsen, 2017: 20). Raphaël Garrigos (2017 cited in Nicholls, Shabbir and Nielsen, 2017: 20) co-founder of *Les Jours* explains why the news site used the specified strategies: “We’re in an era where people pay for news but also music, TV shows. We were inspired by

Netflix, Deezer, and Spotify when we were creating our website, rather than other news websites”.

On the other hand, in Germany *Krautreporter* is building a subscription base in a less commercial sense. Sebastian Esser (2017 cited in Nicholls, Shabbir and Nielsen, 2017: 20), co-founder of *Krautreporter* explains how the news organization works:

“We’re not selling content. We’re building a relationship and then asking them for money, which also means that not all of them will pay. ... We tell our colleagues that usually just 5% of your community will pay if you ask them right, but it’s a completely different business model from the usual paywalls where you think that your content is so unique and so great that you can charge money for it”.

However, according to Nechushtai and Zalmanson (2019: 2), despite the growing popularity of subscription-based business model among digital news media, “access to digital news remains essentially free”. For example, a US study by Alex T. Williams (2016 cited in Nechushtai and Zalmanson, 2019: 2), shows that most of the publications have a freemium model and only 3% have a solid paywall.

According to a Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (RISJ) factsheet titled “Pay Models in European News” based on a sample of 171 top news outlets in Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, and the United Kingdom; 97% of digital-born news media in Europe provide free access to their news. This includes local digital-born sites such as t-online.de in Germany or Fanpage in Italy, and US-based international players such as BuzzFeed and Huffington Post (Nielsen, et al., 2017).

Since the popularity of the subscription-based business model, particularly in digital journalism, scholars have examined many aspects of the growth in digital subscriptions and their growing importance for news funding. Some studies have focused on factors that affect audiences’ willingness to pay for digital news (Chyi, 2012; Chyi and Lee, 2013; Fletcher and Nielsen, 2017; Goyanes, 2014; Li and Cheng, 2014). Others studies have compared “free and paywalled” content to understand how news organizations design the editorial value of subscriptions (Bapna et al., 2018; Herbert and Thurman, 2007; Sjøvaag, 2016; Zalmanson and Oestreicher-Singer,

2016). However, relatively little attention has been paid to the marketing strategies that news organizations use to increase their audiences' willingness to pay (Bentley, 2014; Cook and Attari, 2012).

First of all, most of the audiences still reinforce the status of news as a public good. On the other hand the distinction between subscribers and non-subscribers becomes a literal distinction for digital news media between insiders and outsiders (Nechushtai and Zalmanson, 2019: 14). And framing non-paying audiences as people who have no interest in the private community formed around the news organization, causes news organizations to pay disproportionate attention to the preferences, interests, and information needs of a relatively high income and educated elite (Benson, 2019b: 146 cited in Nechushtai and Zalmanson, 2019: 14). This has a similar effect as Rodney Benson's (2018 cited in Nechushtai and Zalmanson, 2019: 14) designation of charitable funds.

3.4.3. Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is one of the main trends of the contemporary economy to finance original projects and products (Onnée and Renault, 2014). Crowdfunding (in its current form) is defined as an open call, mostly via the internet, to obtain financial resources to support an initiative for the realization of projects (Belleflamme, Lambert and Schwienbacher, 2012 cited in Boutigny and Leroux-Sostènes, 2021: 4). Crowdfunding consists of using the services of crowdfunding platforms to propose a project to a community of funders and/or supporters (Onnée and Renault, 2014). In other words, crowdfunding is the process of persuading a large group of people to contribute small sums to a particular project, often via the internet. It also helps to redefine the fundraising environment (GIJN, 2021).

Crowdfunding offers an alternative to traditional financing through the mobilization of internet users who are likely to support projects of their interests (Onnée and Renault, 2014). Internet users grouped around a particular project also form a virtual community (Onnée and Renault, 2014). As Michel Gensollen (2004 cited in Onnée and Renault, 2014) describes, crowdfunding platforms function as a virtual meeting place based on some official rules. The crowdfunding platforms that

bring together several projects that are funded or in the process of being funded then become a social network that brings together a range of actors and relationships, promoting the gathering and meeting of various support communities (Wasserman, Faust, 1994 cited in Onnée and Renault, 2014).

Tanja Aitamurto (2011: 432) also compares the nature of crowdfunding to collaborative production and open source software projects such as the Linux operating system as well as the Apache Web server software. According to Aitamurto (2011: 432), the common point of crowdfunding and commons-based production is its nature that does not rely on markets or management hierarchies to organize production (Benkler, 2002 cited in Aitamurto, 2011: 432). Thus, crowdfunding, where stories are funded by voluntary donations through a public call for donations is a way for self-employed journalists, and journalism start-ups to fund their projects by directly asking the public for money (Aitamurto, 2011: 429; Jian and Shin, 2014 cited in Hunter, 2014: 273; Goasdoué, 2016: 290). As Tanja Aitamurto (2011: 432) writes, crowdfunding is becoming more common in journalism.

According to Andrea Hunter (2014: 273), self-employed journalists and independent news media outlets and/or journalistic start-ups in journalism now use crowdfunding to finance different aspects of their work, for example from asking for funds to supporting online and print publications, to covering travel expenses for freelance work, to purchasing or replacing equipment such as computers. As Guillaume Goasdoué (2016: 291) emphasizes, the crowdfunding process generally works on “all or nothing” principle. It also includes making presentations on crowdfunding describing the type of journalism they want to produce, what they need to achieve their goals (travel money, equipment, etc.) and the monetary goal they want to reach (Hunter, 2014: 273).

On some platforms, such as Kickstarter and Ulule, journalists only receive their money if the collection rate reaches or exceeds the predetermined target, and within this allotted period, on average, 40 days (Goasdoué, 2016: 291). Otherwise, if the collection rate is below 100%, all contributors are reimbursed (Goasdoué, 2016: 291). In contrast, some platforms such as Indiegogo offer a flexible financing option, where journalists get what they raise (Hunter, 2014: 273).

Although they are not designed to finance journalism projects, the most used platforms are Indiegogo, Kickstarter, Patreon, and Ulule (Hunter, 2014: 273). For example, Indiegogo founded in 2008, is primarily designed to finance innovations and support entrepreneurs (Indiegogo, 2021). Kickstarter, launched in 2009, is a public benefit organization, with a global crowdfunding platform focused mainly on creativity and the arts (Kickstarter, 2021). Founded in 2013, Patreon funds individual projects, associations, and start-up businesses (Patreon, 2021). Patreon operates on a subscription-based payment model (Patreon, 2021). Fans pay their favourite creators a chosen monthly amount in exchange for exclusive access, extra content, and a closer look at their creations (Patreon, 2021).

On the other hand, Ulule, founded in 2010, is one of the leading crowdfunding sites in Europe with more than two million members (Lyubareva et al, 2020: 3). In 2018, Ulule's success rate was 63% and 24,000 projects were funded (Lyubareva et al, 2020: 3). Projects published on the platform include video, music, art, education, technology, and etc., (Lyubareva et al, 2020: 3). The maximum period for which collection can be made is 90 days, and donations can start from 5 euros (Lyubareva et al, 2020: 3). The platform accepts projects regardless of the status of their owners: individuals, organizations, traders or associations (Lyubareva et al, 2020: 3).

Crowdfunding platforms also combine different practices due to their features such as (Onnée and Renault, 2013; Khelladi et al., 2018 cited in Boutigny and Leroux-Sostènes, 2021: 4):

- Equity crowdfunding (crowd-investing or crowd-equity), can be defined as a traditional investment in company's equity capital (Hornuf and Schwienbacher, 2014).
- Credit model (crowdlending).
- Donations: in this case, internet users and associations finance projects freely.
- The donation with counterpart: Internet users get a return on their financial shares. The rewards are integrated into the presentation of the project on the platform. The variety of awards depends on the

imagination of the project leader, who will present a motivational step by step award to encourage the crowd to fund their project.

From April 28, 2009, to September 15, 2015, 658 journalism-related projects were proposed on Kickstarter alone. About \$6.3 million was given to journalists on the platform (Vogt and Mitchell, 2016). Despite successful campaigns, crowdfunding in journalism offers some opportunities and obstacles. From a positive perspective, crowdfunded journalism projects allow for the democratization of media production and diversification of the market through greater competition (Chiesa and Müller, 2020: 68). According to Carolina Dalla Chiesa and Mariana Scalabrin Müller (2020: 68), this simply means that more people get a chance to distribute news and finance operations with minimal, although the majority of them do not seem to act professionally in the field of journalism.

This also strengthens the argument that digital journalism is done through multiple revenue streams and content is paid with little amounts obtained from the masses (Franklin, 2014 cited in Chiesa and Müller, 2020: 68). For example, in 2013 Dutch journalism site *De Correspondent* raised \$1.3 million through crowdfunding. The German journalism site *Krautreporter* was just as successful as *De Correspondent*. As a result, both news sites instilled journalism into paying audiences for the news stories. They had published anything but promises before financial contributions arrived (Schmidt, 2019).

On the other hand, obstacles such as the constant inability of funders to donate naturally link the arguments regarding crowdfunding to labour relations, financial sustainability of content production, and distribution mechanisms (Salamon, 2019 cited in Chiesa and Müller, 2020: 68). For example, in 2019, *De Correspondent* raised \$2.6 million to open an office in USA. Despite the success, the news site employed only one full-time journalist based in the US, four in Italy, Nigeria, India, and London with an emphasis on outsourcing (Owen, 2019). And from January 1st 2021, *The Correspondent* (the English speaking version of *De Correspondent*) stopped its operations due to financial disruptions (*The Correspondent*, 2021).

3.4.4. Co-operative Model

Historically, co-operative is a status attributed to press agencies. Agencies such as the Associated Press, the German agency Deutsche Presse-Agentur, or Reuters until their IPO in 1984 had co-operative status. Traditionally, the logic of the co-operative is based on a democratic operation, where one employee equals one vote at a general meeting, regardless of the share of capital owned (Porro, 2018).

Inspired by history, many well-established, reader-owned, community news co-operatives (some not-for-profit and some for-profit) exist in Europe, the US, Mexico, Canada and Uruguay (Stites, 2021). These print or digital news outlets occupy a place between two models of “credit unions and food co-ops” (Kennedy, 2013). To ensure their independence and transparency, these news outlets mainly generate revenue from subscriptions and crowdfunding campaigns (Kennedy, 2013). With their unique nature, they also resist a media environment owned by rich families or issued by political parties, financial investors, defence companies, etc., (Taz, 2019).

Therefore, a cooperative news source produces a solid and reliable local news (Stites, 2021). All news co-operatives have a democratic management, and each member has a vote in the election of the board of directors, which recruits and oversee the site’s editor and executive director (Stites, 2021). According to journalist Tom Stites (2021), the founder of Banyan Project (a news co-operative), in the US, depending on community size, a news co-operative can have hundreds or thousands of members; this distributes power widely in the co-op’s coverage area. This is a mechanism that can provide a distinctive bottom-up community voice.

Moreover, the news co-operatives can solicit opinions from their members and invite them to both digital and face-to-face forums on local issues of interest (Stites, 2021). They may offer training in citizen journalism, media literacy, and other civic topics, as Stites (2021) wrote. With all these features, the goal of a news co-operative is to strengthen local civic health while preserving democracy. Thus, the news organizations see this new model, which is still taking shape, as a high chance of success where existing approaches to digital sites may struggle or fail, including in many news environments under pressure (Stites, 2021).

The news co-operative model also has several aspects for components such as readers, publishers, members, local advertisers, and the community (Stites, 2021):

- For readers, news co-operatives are independent grassroots community organizations that provide easy-to-use digital forums where people can see how others are reacting to news and engage with others in their efforts to help others, while meeting their local news and information needs. As a community service, co-operatives offers all their news and other content on the web for anyone to read for free.
- The model provides a revenue stream for publishers from new memberships that provide some equity and monetization of votes in an institution that not only provides important community service but also offers members a voice and a sense of civic promise. Co-operative fees replace the money newspapers make from selling the news itself through subscriptions. Basically, what a news co-operative monetizes is its members' hopes for their community.
- Member benefits are equality and voting rights. The most fundamental value comes from knowing that their commitment helps enable an institution that lets them and everyone in their community know what's going on about important issues. Additionally, members get access to posting on digital forums and a weekly newsletter that solicits their thoughts and knowledge about issues in the news and asks them for opinions on what and how they might want to be addressed.
- For local advertisers, co-operatives may offer premium memberships with bonuses, including a listing in the co-operative's business directory and a discount when purchasing ads. Also, unlike most digital media, the medium of their advertisements will be predictable and reliable. Buying ads in a grassroots community agency not only draws attention to what the business has to offer; it also announces that the business supports the community. Therefore, the more value a news co-operative can offer advertisers, the more revenue it will generate and the stronger the news delivery can be.

- For the community, free (without a paywall) news coverage of co-operatives nurtures an informed voter. In addition, digital forums act as an online public square that enhances the impact of co-operative news by fostering a level of civic engagement that print technology cannot provide.

In Europe, *Taz* (Germany), *Il Manifesto* (Italy), and *Woz* (Switzerland) are the first examples of the news co-operative model (Stites, 2021). On the other hand, two types of co-operatives dominate both print and digital news companies in France: the participative co-operative society, the Scop, and the cooperative society of collective interest Scic, created in 2001. Publications such as *Regards*, *Sans Transition*, *Alternatives Economiques*, *Nice-Matin*, *Mag to Lyon*, etc., are all financed by co-operative ownership under Scop or Scic (Porro, 2018).

In Mexico *La Jornada*, in Canada *Le Soleil*, are examples that call on co-operatives for solidarity and sustainability of the media (Maas, 2020). In Uruguay *La Diaria*, and The Bristol Cable are other successful examples of co-operative ownership (Stites, 2021). For example, The Bristol Cable which has 2,600 members, is also creating a digital membership platform planned to facilitate direct participation of its members and to protect democracy with annual general and monthly member meetings (The Bristol Cable, 2021). In the US, the Devil Strip, an alternative monthly newspaper, is the first example of a news co-operative model (Stites, 2021). Co-operative ownership saved the publication from collapse with the help of 13 grants totalling more than a half-million dollars from the Knight Foundation and other donors (Stites, 2021).

Other examples on the subject are as follows:

- The Mendocino Voice, a news site that was founded in 2016, has also committed to co-operative ownership (Stites, 2021). It has also received great attention from the journalistic press (Stites, 2021).
- Baltimore-based Bloc by Block has launched a news co-operative to serve communities in Maryland. The founder of Bloc by Block Kevon Paynter also aims to provide news through a mobile application.

As Stites (2021) wrote, Civic Mind aims to launch an online news site called the Hartford Times, after a newspaper that run for 159 years in Hartford and closed in 1976. As quoted by Stites (2021), Civic Mind founder Thomas Clynnch is working to create a different ownership model, a non-profit membership with one-member and one-vote governance.

And finally, The Banyan Project is a non-profit journalism organization founded by journalists, academics, developers, sociologists and researchers, business, and financial strategists. The project aims to strengthen democracy by seeding community-scale digital journalism. It collaborates with and then supports underserved communities so they can thrive and best serve citizens while mobilizing their civic energies. The project is supported by the audience, mainly through crowdfunding on platforms like Kickstarter (The Banyan Project, 2021).

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter explored and discussed changing employment relationships in the news media and the new business models of journalism in the Web 2.0 era. The starting point of the research was the transformation of capitalism and labour relations in the 21st century, which is believed to be the catalyst for the business models and employment relationships of contemporary journalism. With the digitalization of labour, many voluntary (on-demand) and/or temporary work arrangements such as micro-entrepreneurship, self-employment, and computer-mediated, peer-like exchanges have emerged..

Journalists today are taking advantage of these new work arrangements to break down old structures. A good number of them either switch to flexible working arrangements or they completely cut off their ties with big media companies and prefer to continue their careers as media entrepreneurs. However, whether profit-oriented or not, journalists need to find resources and build new business models to finance their projects.

The platformization process in the Web 2.0 era created new business models for journalism while transforming existing ones such as advertising. For many years,

advertising was the main source of income for many news organizations, but today this business model, which is also digitalized and seized by tech giants, does not provide sufficient revenue streams for journalism. For this reason, many news organizations turn to audience support. However, many of them have trouble producing content that audiences would find worth paying for. Journalists face barriers such as outsourcing, insufficient staffing in newsrooms, and a decline in news quality. Nevertheless, the general consensus on this model is that those who succeed can be both economically strong and independent. Otherwise, the precarization of journalism comes to the fore.

As a result, the lessons drawn from digital-born news sites founded by professional journalists are very important to reveal the effects of digitalisation of journalistic labour and new business models. This chapter will be followed by the fourth chapter, which will investigate both transformation of the media system in Turkey since the 2000s and the structural factors that limited professional journalism.

CHAPTER 4: TRANSFORMATION OF THE MEDIA SYSTEM IN TURKEY SINCE THE 2000s: STRUCTURAL FACTORS RESTRAINING PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

4.1. Introduction

Many professional journalists disillusioned with the restricted media environment and the violation of labour rights in the mainstream media institutions in Turkey, started to look for new ways to continue their work on the Internet and social media platforms. Journalists who were forced or willingly left mainstream media outlets used their economic and cultural capital (i.e. their knowledge and skills, ownership of cultural property, recognized authority or expertise) to build their own personal social media spaces and independent news sites.

To understand the factors that paved the way for a new media order in Turkey, the fourth chapter begins with the history of journalism from the Ottoman Empire to the late 1990s. In this section, political and technological developments affecting development of journalism are conveyed in a chronological order. The aim of this historical narrative is to show the existence of oppositional and/or alternative media organizations besides commercial companies and public or state owned ones.

From the historical point of view, early journalists were both reporters and entrepreneurs and started their businesses with their own means. Before journalism was institutionalized under large newspapers it was a job done by journalists. However, with the rise of mass media in Turkey and elsewhere in the world, ownership and journalism were separated from each other. Therefore, the fourth chapter describes the role of technological developments in paving the way for reunification of ownership and journalism.

A brief history of journalism also explains that freedom of expression has always been restricted in Turkey. Journalists have always been threatened, and even murdered at extreme cases. It can be argued from the point of view of liberal theories of the press and the professional ideology of journalism that there has never been a liberal approach to journalism in Turkey.

Political history of Turkey have just a few brief periods when journalists can report freely, including the *Tanzimat* (1839-1876; Reorganization), the first and the second “Constitutional Reform” periods (1976-1908), the establishment of the Turkish Republic (1923), and the 1961 constitution prepared after the 1960 military coup. Thus, the authoritarian approach of the state and the ideological polarization fuelled by the political instability have always been a risk factor for journalists.

In addition, journalists have long been the target of the state or some political groups that see them as enemies. To say but a few, during the era of Ottoman Empire, journalist Theodor Kasap was imprisoned for publishing a newspaper containing jokes and humour. Journalist Uğur Mumcu, who was assassinated in the 1990s, was writing about the relationship between the state, politics and the mafia. A few years later, the *Susurluk* accident revealed all these facts. Similarly, 27 journalists working for *Özgür Gündem* newspaper were killed in the 1990s. The newspapers was closed and journalists were accused of making The Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) propaganda. In the 2000s, Hrant Dink was killed on the grounds that he insulted Turkishness.

The transformation of the media system since the 2000s. The 2000 and 2001 economic crises, conglomeration of the media, and the partisan media that emerged during the JDP rule have been among the major factors shaping the transformation of the media system since the 2000s. In particular, conflicts between oppositional journalists and JDP governments have caused legal repressions that restrict journalists’ rights.

Gezi Park protests have been a major turning point for independent digital news initiatives in Turkey. During and after the Gezi protests several news sites were founded by journalists in order to a overcome the obstacles caused by Turkey’s restricted media environment for independent, alternative and oppositional reporting.

Gezi Park media can be considered as the first examples of news sources that work with the logic of Web 2.0, as they produce and distribute interactive content from anywhere, anytime, using social media platforms. Today, some journalists continue to report on social media platforms as freelancers.

The last sections of the fourth chapter focus on the structural problems of journalism in Turkey. Political pressures are mainly related to freedom of the press. In addition to judicial pressures faced by journalists, the Internet, and the social media platforms have been banned a number of times with political motives. As far as economic problems are concerned the biggest troubles journalists face caused by the labour relations. A large group of especially young journalists have to work with minimum wages; they sometimes do not have contracts as professional journalists, so are not seen as eligible for press cards. The unions are weak and ineffective against the de-unionization policies of traditional media outlets. The dwindling employment opportunities in traditional media outlets is another important problem that compel journalists to set up and run their own digital-born start-ups in Turkey.

4.2. Brief History of Journalism in Turkey

There are two main periods in the history of the press and journalism in Turkey: the Ottoman Empire (especially the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) and the Turkish Republic (1923 and later) (İnuğur, 1993: 172-174). The first official printing house of the Ottoman era was established during the reign of Ahmet III. It was founded in 1727 by Sait Efendi and İbrahim Müteferrika (İnuğur, 1993: 155; Özkorkut, 2002: 71). It was closed after 17 books were printed, the first part in 1729 and the last in 1741 (Kabacalı, 1994: 6 cited in Özkorkut, 2002: 71).

However, many Jewish, Greek and Armenian printing houses have been established in Istanbul and other parts of the state since the 1500s (Yalman, 2020: 9). It can be said that the Turkish press developed late, as the situation highly dependent on the illiteracy of the people living in the imperial lands (Özkorkut, 2002: 71). In addition, due to multinational structure of the Ottoman Empire, press regulations were mainly in the form of restrictions and prohibitions to protect the empire from internal and external attacks (Özkorkut, 2002: 71).

For example, in the *Tanzimat* movement, a penal regulation for the press (obtained from France in 1858) began to be implemented with articles 138 and 139 (Özkorkut, 2002: 72). According to the penal regulation, it is forbidden to publish newspapers, books and other harmful documents against the empire in the printing houses opened with the order and license of the empire. Depending on the degree of the crime, the printing house will be temporarily or completely closed and/or fined (Özkorkut, 2002: 72). According to this regulation, those who print ridiculous, immoral, critical articles and ugly pictures are also sentenced to fines and imprisonment (Özkorkut, 2002: 72).

In such an environment, according to Ahmet Emin Yalman (2020: 18), the first newspaper of the Ottoman Empire was the *Spectateur de l'Orient*, later called *Le Courrier de Smyrne*. It was founded in 1825 by a French called Alexandre Blacque (Yalman, 2020: 18). The newspaper was reporting on the internal and external affairs of the empire (Yalman, 2020: 18). The newspaper defended the interests of the Ottoman Empire, especially during the Greek revolt (Yalman, 2020: 18). It also opposed the policies followed by Russia (Lütfi, 1974-86: 98 cited in Yalman, 2020: 18).

Blacque, who was invited to İstanbul by Sultan Mahmut II, was asked to publish an official newspaper in French, defending the interests of the empire (Yalman, 2020: 18). Thus, the first official newspaper of the Ottoman Empire *Takvim-i Vekayi* or *Moniteur Ottoman* was published in 1831 (İnuğur, 1993: 169; Yalman, 2020: 18). The newspaper was published at the same time in Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Armenian, and Persian; the official languages of the Ottoman Empire (Özkorkut, 2002: 72). The aim of the newspaper was to create a public opinion in favour of the empire (İnuğur, 1993: 175; Özkorkut, 2002: 72).

In the same period, as Ubicini and Courteille (1876: 252 cited in Yalman, 2020: 22) wrote, the Crimean War (1853-56) changed the position of the press due to the increasing need for information. Newspapers that expanded their audience became independent and self-financed. The newly formed opposition movement was also looking for a medium to express itself. Thus the emergence of independent newspapers was inevitable (Yalman, 2020: 22).

For example, the first unofficial and self-financed newspaper was published by Agah Efendi with the support of his friend İbrahim Şinasi in 1860 (İnuğur, 1993: 184; Yalman, 2020: 25). The name of the newspaper was *Tercüman-ı Ahvâl*. Şinasi was a reformist, he was educated in Paris with the opportunities provided by the Ottoman State (İnuğur, 1993: 184; Yalman, 2020: 25). When he returned to the Ottoman Empire, he saw the need for modernization of his country. A simple and common narrative style was needed to reach the masses. The aim of the newspaper was to bring the intellectual life of the country to the level of western countries and to develop opinion journalism (İnuğur, 1993: 185; Yalman, 2020: 25).

The newspaper also covered the country's economic problems, the criticized education system and the foreign policy of the empire (Özkorkut, 2002: 72). For example, the newspaper was closed for two weeks in 1861 due to an article on the problems of education system (Topuz, 1996: 11 cited in Özkorkut, 2002: 73). On the other hand, Şinasi's relationship with *Tercüman-ı Ahvâl* lasted only six months. Later, he founded another newspaper called *Tasvir-i Efkâr*. This newspaper focused on science, social issues and simplification of Turkish language instead of politics (Yalman, 2020: 25).

Nizamname (a new press law) was enacted in 1864 to regulate the newspapers (İnuğur, 1993: 202; Yalman, 2020: 27). The new press law was used between 1864-1909 (İnuğur, 1993: 202; Yalman, 2020: 27). The regulation was a copy of the French law of 1852 and reflected the French press regime of its time (İnuğur, 1993: 202). The purpose of the new law was to monitor newspapers and editorial teams to apply censorship (Yalman, 2020: 27). For example, publishing a political newspaper and magazine was subject to licensing. Newspapers that committed crimes or published articles against the Sultan and the allied states were closed temporarily or permanently by court decision. It was also forbidden to use inappropriate words about the sultan and his dynasty. On the other hand, newspapers and other publications published abroad containing articles against the state were also prohibited from entering the territory of the Ottoman Empire (Özkorkut, 2002: 73).

Thus, in 1867, some writers and critics began to feel the pressure of the Ottoman government (Yalman, 2020: 28). Warnings and suspensions were increased (Yalman,

1914 cited in Alrmizan, 2019: 12). Among the limitations, those related to humour magazines took an important place. The Ottoman Empire grasped the power of humour. Especially during the reigns of Abdülaziz and Abdülhamid II, strict measures were taken against humour magazines (Özkorkut, 2002: 75).

For example, Teodor Kasap's humour magazine, *Diyojen*, in which Namık Kemal's articles were published, was closed for many times, and in 1873, the magazine was permanently closed with a law called *Kararname-i Ali* (Kabacalı, 1994: 22-23; Varlık, 1985: 1094 cited in Özkorkut, 2002: 75). *Çingiraklı Tatar*, Kasap's another humour magazine was also closed down (Kabacalı, 1994: 25 cited in Özkorkut, 2002: 75). On August 4, 1876 it was announced that newspapers and magazines containing jokes and humour would not be published in the Ottoman lands (Varlık, 1985: 1096; Topuz, 1996: 31; İnuğur, 1993: 256 cited in Özkorkut, 2002: 75). Thus, Kasap, who was publishing the magazine *Hayal* at that time, was imprisoned for three years for violating Article 12 of the Constitution for publishing a cartoon criticizing the freedom of the press (Kudret, 2000: 29 cited in Özkorkut, 2002: 75).

In this period when the journalists became the focus of the government, some journalists were imprisoned while others were exiled, thus, the editors decided to leave Istanbul. Some went to Europe, especially to London and Paris. The editors were able to manage the *Muhbir* and *Hürriyet* newspapers, which were founded in 1864, from abroad. They regularly sent thousands of copies from London and Paris to Istanbul and other cities by foreign independent postal systems. They could not be detected because they did not use the Ottoman postal company (Yalman, 2020: 28).

The government, which saw in 1875 that the imprisonment and exile of journalists was not sufficient in terms of deterrence, tried to weaken the newspapers by placing two *para* (money) stamp duty on each copy (Keskin, 2003: 20). In order to reduce the spread of newspapers, all political publications were stamped (Yalman, 2020: 33). As Yalman (2020: 36) points out, despite such heavy measures, media consumption continued to increase. However due to censorship, all these publications provided encyclopaedic information and functioned as literary journals since political thought was abandoned (Keskin, 2003: 20).

On the other hand, telegraph offices were established in the last decade of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Telegraph Agency (1911-1914), although it was a private company, was the first official telegraph organization of the empire (Topuz, 2012: 93; Yanatma, 2020: 12). It was established jointly with England and France and received subsidies from the state. According to the agreement, the agency spread the news of Havas in Paris and Reuters in London. However, this organization was closed in 1914 on the grounds of making propaganda to the British and French governments (Topuz, 2012: 93-94). It was clearly seen as a threat to the Ottoman Empire (Yanatma, 2020: 5).

In the same year, the Ottoman National Telegraph Organization (1914-1918) was established by the Ottoman Government (Yanatma, 2020: 12). As Servet Yanatma (2020: 13) wrote, the main reason for this change was political. For example, after the Ottoman Empire signed the Ottoman-German Alliance agreement in August 1914, it became an ally of Germany and participated in the First World War (Yanatma, 2020: 13). After the defeat of Germany in the First World War, the Ottoman National Telegraph Organization stopped its activities (Topuz, 2012: 94).

After the Ottoman National Telegraph Agency ceased its activities, probably in late 1918, la Turquie Havas Reuters agency started to operate in Istanbul. It was co-founded by Havas and Reuters representatives Mathu and Ferguson. An official from the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also on the board of directors (Yanatma, 2020: 13). The agency stopped its activities after the declaration of National Independence in 1923 and the establishment of the Turkish Republic (Topuz, 2012: 94).

Starting from the First World War and after the declaration of National Independence and the establishment of the Turkish Republic, journalism faced many transformations. After the opening of the Grand National Assembly in 1920, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk published a newspaper called *Hakimiyet-i Milliye* to inform the nation about the purpose of the War of Independence and the decisions of the Anatolian and Rumelian Defense of Rights Association (Özkaya, 1997: 201-202; Kurtoğlu, 2018: 533-557).

Anadolu Agency was established on April 6, 1920 against the propaganda efforts of Havas-Reuters-Turkish Agency (Uçan, 2019: 126). Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, criticized Ajans la Turquie Havas Reuters for sending false reports about peace talks between the Ottoman Empire and the allied forces (Koloğlu 1994: 33 cited in Yanatma, 2020: 13). For this reason, Atatürk personally ordered the establishment of a news agency called Anadolu during the Turkish War of Independence in 1920 and examined the posts in its early days (Bengi, 2012: 302-303 cited in Yanatma, 2020: 13). In the same year, by the order of Atatürk, Directorate General of Press and Information was established to regulate the information flow and the press within the country (Demirbulak, 1995: 173).

On September 9, 1923, the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi [CHP]) was founded by Atatürk and a one-party system was adopted (CHP, 2021). However, in the same period, after the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate, sharia supporters from the Zaza and Kurdish tribes revolted in the eastern regions of Turkey (Topuz, 1959: 48; Topuz, 2012: 145). The rebellion was called the Sheikh Said rebellion (Topuz, 1959: 48; Topuz, 2012: 145). In order to suppress the uprisings, the Law of Peace (Takrir-i Sükûn Kanunu) was enacted in 1925 (Topuz, 2012: 147). The law provided the Turkish government with a legal basis to control and censor the press, and as a result, many journalists were arrested (Odyakmaz, 2003: 122).

Despite the ongoing conflicts, this period also witnessed the introduction of the radio service in 1927 (Cankaya, 2003: 23). The first radio house was established in Istanbul, then in Ankara (Cankaya, 2003: 23). Radio was first used for the adoption of the republican revolutions by the society. This was followed by journalism activities (Cankaya, 2003: 17). Another development that gave a new identity to journalistic activities was the alphabet reform that came into effect in Turkey on 1 November 1928. While this reform made it easier to read and write in Turkish than the system based on Arabic letters, it also created the new face of early Republican modernization, which defined its political discourse through political rhetoric. This situation was also evaluated as a break with the Ottoman Empire (Niyazioğlu, 2021). According to Sinan Niyazioğlu (2021), as a result of all these, the press regime prepared by the Presidency of the General Directorate of Press in 1934 played a key role in the formation of the national press culture in the country.

The First Press Congress was held on May 25-27, 1935. The Congress represents the official beginning of the press and politics relationship in the Republican era. The transition of journalism from quantitative journalism to quality journalism was also discussed at the meeting. Quality journalism has been defined as protecting the interests of the state and the nation, announcing the revolution and the country's goal to the public, listening to the needs of the people, staying away from sensationalism and propaganda, conveying the events in the world in an accurate and beneficial way, and making positive suggestions to the youth (Atatürk Encyclopedia, 2021).

From 1945 onwards, the press in Turkey began to polarize between communism and Islamism. On the one hand, there were the newspapers advocating the communist ideology, on the other, the far-right newspapers with Islamist tendencies. During the Second World War, the *Tan* newspaper was the country's best-selling newspaper and was influential in forming public opinion. *Tan* was Soviet friendly and against fascism, and its articles condemned racism (Vural, 2008: 381).

As Efe Sıvış (2020: 198-199) wrote, signs of Russia's intention to change the Montreux Regime appeared in March 1945. Whereas, the 1936 Montreux Convention gave Ankara full peacetime sovereignty over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits, which had been administered by an international commission since the 1923 Lausanne Conference, and the right to militarize them. After the Second World War, the Soviet Union began to pressure Turkey to share its sovereign rights. However, Ankara argued that this was an international issue, knowing that the US and Britain would object to the Soviets' gaining this privilege if an international agreement was reached. On the other hand, in 1944 Britain was moderate in allowing free passage of Russian warships through the Straits. However, the Kremlin's demands included having bases in the region and defending the Straits with Turkey.

The *Tan* newspaper, which conveyed all these from a Soviet point of view, became the target of pan-turanist²⁷ movements (Vural, 2008: 381). *Tan* Raid is generally seen as an important touchstone in Turkish political history, which played a role in shaping the position of the republic in international relations after the Second

²⁷ Also called Pan-turanianism, is a "late 19th- and early 20th-century movement to unite politically and culturally all the Turkic, Tatar, and Uralic peoples living in Turkey and across Eurasia from Hungary to the Pacific" (Britannica, 2021b).

World War (Sıvıř, 2020: 198). According to Sürıř (2020: 198), the incident that took place in Istanbul at the end of 1945 resulted from protests targeting the newspaper *Tan* and a few apparently left-leaning bookstores. University students who damaged *Tan*'s bookstores and printing house chanted slogans attacking *Tan*'s owner Zekeriya Sertel and his wife Sabiha Sertel, who is a columnist for the newspaper. Communism was also the target of the slogans, along with the two journalists who followed a pro-Soviet line.

Although there is no written evidence, the testimonies of some journalists working for the *Tan* newspaper, such as Emin Karakuř, show that the protests were organized by the ruling Republican People's Party (CHP), or at least ignored by it. The event coincided with a critical period in Turkish diplomacy when relations with the Soviet Union deteriorated (Sıvıř, 2020: 198; Öztekin, 2016: 405-406). After the incident, the newspaper *Tan* was closed, and the newspaper was relaunched as *Milliyet* on May 3, 1950, but the working life of the Sertel couple came to an end (Öztekin, 2016: 405).

CHP ruled the country for more than twenty years (Aydođan and Slapın, 2015: 616). In 1946, the CHP government decided to allow multi-party competition as a prerequisite for NATO membership (Aydođan and Slapın, 2015: 616). During the transition period, the Association of Turkish Journalists (TGG) was founded in 1946 by journalists Sedat Simavi (journalist and cartoonist, first president of TGC), Sadun Galip Savcı, Cihat Baban, Hayri Alpar and Sait Kesler. In addition to journalistic ethics, the society is also obliged to protect the rights of journalists (TGC, 2021). In the same period, that is, in 1948, the first journalism school was opened by Müderris Yahya Fehmi Tuna in Istanbul Şehzadebaşı under the name of "Istanbul Journalism School" as a secondary education institution that pioneered the establishment of today's communication faculties (Marmara University Faculty of Communication, 2013).

The newly established right-wing Democratic Party (DP) won the 1950, 1954 and 1957 elections and ruled the country for ten years until the 1960 military coup (Aydođan and Slapın, 2015: 616). Initially, the new government enacted liberal laws and gave a social status to journalists (Duman and Pekman, 2014: 201 cited in

Alrmizan, 2019: 24-25). For example, the Journalists' Union of Turkey (TGS) was established in Istanbul in 1952 to protect the economic and social rights of journalists and to fight for the promotion of press freedom (TGS, 2021). Following the transition to the multi-party era, many different types of newspapers and magazines such as conservatives *Selamet* and *Sebilürreşad*, liberals *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* began to emerge and grow (Duman and Pekman, 2014: 145 cited in Alrmizan, 2019: 24).

Of these, *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* chose to be mainstream and not affiliated with any political party (Duman and Pekman, 2014: 145 cited in Alrmizan, 2019: 24). The developments in printing technologies, the increase in the number of people who are interested in the press, international news and the internal political developments of the republic have also increased the circulation of the newspapers. In the 1950s, newspapers began to be printed and published in 100,000 copies. In the 1960s, *Hürriyet* was the first newspaper to reach 1 million printed issues (Duman and Pekman, 2014: 151 cited in Alrmizan, 2019: 24).

However, despite the liberal environment, the DP government at the same time was preparing to make legislative changes to gain control over the press. Between 1950 and 1960, many restrictions were imposed on the press, and lawsuits and harassment, especially against opposition newspapers and journalists, increased. In this period, the Press Law was also updated and introduced many new restrictions for journalists, especially for dissidents. The aim of the DP was to establish a partisan press (Duman and Pekman, 2014: 201 cited by Alrmizan, 2019: 25).

Thereupon, *Ulus* newspaper, which supports CHP policy, was shut down and columnist Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın was arrested (Duman and Pekman, 2014: 201 cited by Alrmizan, 2019: 25). On the other hand, *Cumhuriyet* newspaper was closed many times along with *Akis* magazine (Duman and Pekman, 2014: 154 cited in Alrmizan, 2019: 26). DP also used radio broadcasting as a propaganda tool and gave official advertising revenue to the partisan press (Sözeri, 2019: 157).

On 6-7 September 1955, a series of riots took place against the Greek-Orthodox minority in Istanbul (de Zayas, 2007: 137). As Dilek Güven (2011: 10) wrote, according to the reports of the German and British Consulate Generals in Istanbul, at

least President Celal Bayar, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, Interior Minister Namık Gedik, Foreign Minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu and Istanbul Governor Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, from the government wing, were involved in the preparations for the attack. Their aim was to put pressure on the London Conference and to divert attention from domestic political issues. However, foreign observers also agreed that the government was surprised by the extent of the damage caused by the events.

As a result of the determined political instability, the military coup of May 27, 1960 took place. The coup ended with the arrest and execution of ministers, and a new constitution was drafted in 1961 (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasa Mahkemesi, 2021). The 1961 new constitution was democratic in terms of rights and freedoms (Cankaya, 2003: 57). It aimed to create a pluralistic social order for a free society (Cankaya, 2003: 57). It brought with it many new laws, especially to protect the freedom of the press (Altan, 2021). For example, in this period *Basın İlan Kurumu* (Advisory Board for the Press, BİK) was established. It monitored the advertising, financial policies, and, resources of the press institutions, and organizations (Özgen, 2004: 83).

Radio, and, television broadcastings which will begin later, were also created according to the democratic structure introduced by the 1961 constitution (Cankaya, 2003: 57). For example, article 121 of the constitution stipulates that the institution that will conduct the radio and television broadcasts should be “autonomous” and “unbiased”; however, the policies of radio and television broadcasting changed in time along with the positioning of the governments (Cankaya, 2003: 58). Thus, on May 1, 1964, the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) was founded by the order of state (TRT, 2021). On January 31, 1968, the first television broadcast took place, in Ankara (Cankaya, 2003: 75). In its establishment phase, TRT television took the BBC as an example (Cankaya, 2003: 124). The television broadcast, which appealed to a wide audience, aimed to enlighten, educate, and inform the audience while entertaining them (Cankaya, 2003: 102).

However, in the 1970s, Turkey once again faced unstable social and political conditions, which led to the polarization of left-right ideologies in many different fields, including the press. A military memorandum was issued on 12 March 1971 to restore order. The memorandum was broadcast on TRT television channel at 13.00.

(Daily Sabah, 2016). During this period, the 1961 Constitution was amended twice, once in 1971 and the other in 1973. These changes have reduced individual rights and the power of the judiciary, and increased the power of the executive and the army (Kaya, 2011:1; Topuz, 2012: 250).

The political situation of the country as well as that of the press and the media was in crisis. Conflicts between liberals, nationalists, conservatives, and communist groups also increased (Özgen, 2004: 83). In a report published in 1972, The Journalists' Union of Turkey, stated that 14 journalists were detained under martial law. For example, İlhan Selçuk was arrested together with Editor-in-Chief Oktay Kurtböke for an article titled "Welcome to Tanzimat Mind" published on April 27, 1971, and *Cumhuriyet* newspaper was closed for 10 days (Topuz, 2012: 251). Despite the ongoing crises, there were also positive developments. For example ANKA, an independent news agency, was founded in 1972 by journalist Altan Öymen in Ankara (Topuz, 2012: 268).

On November 12, 1976, Istanbul University was closed due to student conflicts. In April 1977, the bus of politician Bülent Ecevit, used for election campaign, was attacked. On May 1, 1977, in the rally organized by Disk (Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Turkey) in Taksim (Istanbul), 34 people were killed and hundreds were injured by a fire opened (Topuz, 2012: 253). As a result of heightened polarization of the left-right ideologies in the country, on February 1, 1979, Abdi İpekçi editor-in-chief of *Milliyet* newspaper was assassinated in Nişantaşı/İstanbul by Mehmet Ali Ağca and Oral Çelik. Members of *Boz Kurtlar* (The Grey Wolves), one of the Turkish right-wing groups (Özgen, 2004: 83).

A new military coup took place on September 12, 1980, which came with a new government and another constitution that was applied in 1982 (Özgen, 2004: 465). Following the coup, press law was changed, fines and prison sentences were increased, as well as the control of every publication became legal (Topuz, 2012: 262-263). Moreover *Demokrat*, *Aydınlık* and *Hergün* newspapers were closed. The Secretary General of the Ankara Branch of the Journalists' Union of Turkey Mehmet Genç was detained for two days. The branch was closed until December 9, 1980. On September 25, 1980, *Bursa'nın Sesi* newspaper was closed down. The editor-in-chief and the page

manager were arrested. An investigation was launched against journalists Oktay Ekşi and Bedii Faik from the *Hürriyet* newspaper, Rauf Tamer from the *Tercüman* newspaper, and the responsible editors of the newspapers (Topuz, 2012: 257).

The number of investigations, prosecutions and lawsuits that are filed against journalists as follows (Topuz, 2012: 259):

“*Cumhuriyet* 28, *Tercüman*, 27, *Hürriyet* 14, *Milliyet* 14, *Milli Gazete* 4, *Dünya* 4, *Akşam* 3, *Son Havadis* 3, *Hergün* 2, *Arayış* 2, *Hayat* 2, *Nokta* 2, *Yankı* 1, *Demokrat* 1, *Politika* 1, *Adalet* 1, other publications 75”.

And also, as Hızı Topuz (2012: 259) wrote, the total prison sentences given to journalists, writers, translators and artists were 316 years, 4 months and 20 days. On the other hand, after the 1980 military intervention, a significant liberalization was experienced in both economic and social areas, with the policies of first Prime Minister and then President Turgut Özal (Burak, 2011: 60). As Begüm Burak (2011: 60) explains, a newly-emerging Islamic society and economic class blossomed during this period:

“In the context of new Islamic economic and societal forces, the role of the liberal economic policies in the post-1980 period cannot be underestimated. Different non-governmental organizations and human rights associations have been established. Moreover, the media has emanated from the official authority and the state-run monopolies have been broken up. In line with these developments, a new class of intellectuals who supported Turkey’s becoming integrated into the Western world also emerged” (Burak, 2011: 60).

During Özal’s prime ministry and presidency (1983-1993), private radio and television broadcasting began (Kasım, 2009: 120). For example, Star 1 television channel was established with the cooperation of Turgut Özal’s son Ahmet Özal and businessman Cem Uzan (Özlü Çevik, 2014). As a result, TRT’s monopoly in radio and television broadcasting came to an end (Kasım, 2009: 120). Özal had good relations with journalists, often inviting them to his office. However, these journalists were supporters of Özal’s policies. Journalists who opposed Özal’s policies were put on trial or killed. In 1990, Turan Dursun, Muammer Aksoy and Çetin Emeç were killed. In

1992, İzzet Keser and Musa Anter were killed. Uğur Mumcu was killed in 1993. Hundreds of journalists were sued, countless newspapers and magazines were banned (Topuz, 2012: 271).

In the 1990s, the tradition of media outlets run by family companies has come to an end (Kuyucu, 2013: 151). For example, until the 1980s, mainstream newspapers such as *Milliyet* and *Hürriyet* belonged to the Karacan and Simavi families (Özkır, 2013: 47; Erdem, 2016: 305). It has been observed that media outlets have been bought by holdings and other industrial enterprises operating in the banking sector since the 1980s (Kuyucu, 2013: 151). This break in media ownership begins in 1979 when Aydın Doğan (former owner of Doğan Holding and Doğan Media Group) bought *Milliyet* newspaper from Ercüment Karacan (T24, 2018). Doğan also bought *Hürriyet* newspaper from businessman Erol Aksoy in 1994 (T24, 2018). According to Hakan Tuncel (1994: 37 cited in Kuyucu, 2013: 151), media consolidation resulted from the growth action inherent in capital.

On April 17, 1993, Özal died of a heart attack in Ankara, and the leader of *Doğru Yol Partisi* (The True Path Party) Süleyman Demirel became the new president, as well as a coalition government is established. Same year, 37 poets, writers, and artists who participated “The Pir Sultan Abdal Festival” in Sivas were burned to death in the hotel where they stayed, by the supporters of sharia (Topuz, 2012: 296). Following the massacre, and the general elections of 1995, the authority to form a government was given to Islamist Necmettin Erbakan, the founder of *Refah Partisi* (Welfare Party) who also founded *Milli Görüş* (The National Outlook or Vision- is a religious and political movement) (Topuz, 2012: 302). Thus, a coalition government was established between *Refah Partisi* and *Doğru Yol Partisi* (Topuz, 2012: 296).

However, as a result of the ongoing “RefahYol-military confrontation”, the army again issued a memorandum against the government on February 28, 1997 (Aslan, 2016: 361). Erbakan and Prime Minister Tansu Çiller had to resign (Aslan, 2016: 361). The coup also spread to the media. In 1997, 49 newspapers, 29 magazines and 23 books were confiscated. 147 lawsuits were filed. There were 89 convictions in the resulting cases. 75 radio and television broadcasts were blocked (Topuz, 2012: 306). One year ago, in 1996, Metin Göktepe the photojournalist for *Evrensel* newspaper was

killed by police while on duty (Topuz, 2012: 305-306). In the same period, RTÜK (Radio and Television Supreme Council), which is the state institution responsible for supervising, regulating, and imposing sanctions on radio and television broadcasts in the country, was founded (Sözeri and Güney, 2011: 22).

According to Ömer Aslan (2016: 363), the last coup was also a turning point in Turkish politics. As Aslan (2016: 363) explains, one of the direct consequences of this is the split between “Traditionalists” and “Reformists” within the National Outlook Movement. This split later led to the establishment of the Justice and Development Party (JDP), a “conservative democratic” political party founded in 2001 by the younger, reformist wing. This paved the way for the gradual transformation of Turkish Islamism. The coup enabled the JDP to establish a one-party government in the 2002 general elections in the first place. On the other hand, the one-party government that was established has deeply affected and transformed the Turkish media system (Aslan, 2016: 363).

4.3. Transformation of the Media System in Turkey since the 2000s

In the 2000s, Turkey suffered from high energy prices and high currencies (Öniş, 2003: 12). Foreign borrowing interest rates were also high (Öniş, 2003: 12). As a result, the country experienced two major financial crises, the first in November 2000, and the second in February 2001 (Öniş, 2003: 12-13). November crisis was essentially a liquidity crisis and hit the private banking sector (Öniş, 2003: 13). For example, *Demirbank* one of Turkey’s leading private banks, lost all its capital in just two days (Öniş, 2003: 13).

On the other hand, as Ziya Öniş (2003: 13) wrote the February 2001 crisis was caused by the imbalance in the basic components of the state-owned banking sector. The shortcomings of the domestic political system²⁸ and, to a certain extent, the

²⁸ “Coalition governments in Turkey, both in the late 1970s and the early to mid-1990s, have been associated with instability and lacked the credibility and commitment to undertake serious fiscal adjustment. The new coalition government formed after the general elections of April 1999, incorporating the left nationalist Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti-DSP) under the leadership of Bülent Ecevit, the radical-nationalist Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi-MHP) under Devlet Bahçeli, and the right-of-center Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi-ANAP) under Mesut Yılmaz, gave the impression of having significant commitment towards implementing a far-reaching program of disinflation and reform. This appeared to be a rather paradoxical development

policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were responsible for the inadequate regulation of the banking system (Öniş, 2003: 13).

As a result of the defined economic instability, the centre-right political parties could not exceed the ten percent threshold in the November 2002 general elections (Sözeri, 2019: 165). Only the moderate Islamist JDP (the political party was founded in 2001, only 15 months before the general elections) with a development plan, won 365 seats in the parliament (Coşar and Özman, 2004: 57; Sözeri, 2016: 86; Sözeri, 2019: 165-166). The economic situation of the country, which paved the way for the JDP to come to power, has also changed Turkey's media ownership structure (Kaya and Çakmur, 2011: 526).

In the early 2000s, the media sector of Turkey witnessed a rapid move to conglomeration, and, the media market was dominated by a few groups. For example, new entrepreneurs such as Aydın Doğan (Doğan Group), Ayhan Şahenk (Doğuş Group), Erdoğan Demirören (Demirören Group), Turgay Ciner (Ciner Group), Ahmet Albayrak (Albayrak Group), Cem Uzan (Uzan Group), and etc., whom had made their capital accumulation in sectors such as banking and/or construction entered into the media business. Therefore, media outlets were concentrated among these large private corporations owning newspapers, other periodicals, and, radio and television channels, later they also invested in forming internet infrastructures, and online publishing (Kaya and Çakmur, 2011: 526).

Most media organizations supported the JDP government in its first years for economic stability. In response, JDP leader and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made the statement that unlike his predecessors, we do not intend to disturb anyone's lifestyle by avoiding disturbing the Kemalist order (Yeşil 2016, 73). In the same period, studies for Turkey's membership to the European Union (EU) also accelerated. For example, some restrictions on civil rights such as freedom of expression were relaxed and many imprisoned journalists were released. In 2004, the ban on

given the wide ideological spectrum that characterized the coalition government. It was also a puzzling development in the sense that the two dominant partners of the coalition, DSP and MHP, drew their support primarily from low income segments of society or, in other words, from the losers of neo-liberal globalization. Finally, the fact that an IMF program was concluded for the first time in Turkish history without the presence or influence of a major crisis seemed to provide additional support for these optimistic assessments" (Öniş, 2003: 10).

broadcasting in languages other than Turkish was lifted. In addition, these languages have been reformulated as the languages traditionally used by Turkish citizens in their daily lives. For example, TRT established its own Kurdish channel, “TRT 6”. The name of the channel was changed to “TRT Kurdi” in 2009 (Alpay, 2010: 382 cited in Sözeri, 2019: 166).

However, the ongoing financial crises in the banking sector in the early 2000s resulted in the cancellation of more than twenty banking licenses by the Regulation and Supervision Agency (BDDK), and many businesses, including the media sector, were affected (BDDK, 2010: 23). After the JDP’s second election victory in 2007, the positive atmosphere between the government and media owners ended (Sözeri, 2019: 166). On the subject, Sözeri (2019: 166) made the following observation:

“The fallout was particularly visible in the largest media group’s (Doğan Group) opposition to the government’s reform packages. On 10 February 2008, Parliament voted in favour of a constitutional amendment to legalize wearing headscarves at universities. On the very next day, Doğan Group’s flagship daily *Hürriyet*, the biggest Turkish daily of the time, came up with the headline, ‘411 hands rose for chaos, referring to the number of parliamentarians who voted in favor of the amendment... Doğan Group also went on publishing stories about the afore-mentioned corruption at the Deniz Feneri charity organisation, which was believed to have strong ties with the government”.

The JDP government saw this conflict as an opportunity, and adopted a “dual strategy” to eliminate especially the opposition media, and to re-establish a new media system that supports JDP policies (Sözeri, 2016: 86). First of all, Erdoğan urged the public not to read such newspapers that do not support JDP policies (Yanardağoglu, 2017: 196). As a second step, the government imposed heavy tax penalties on companies that owned these media outlets, then restructured the mainstream media by selling the media outlets seized by the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund of Turkey (TMSF) (Sözeri, 2016: 86).

Thus, all of the companies such as Aksoy Group, Uzan Group and Merkez Group, which had the most popular media organizations of the period, especially

Sabah newspaper and ATV television channel, were transferred to the TMSF (Milliyet, 2002: 7; Hürriyet, 2004; Hürriyet, 2007). In addition, some corruption cases were brought to the courts by the government, especially the banks belonging to companies in the media sector such as the Doğan Group (Cumhuriyet, 2008). Doğan Media Group, which criticized the government of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 2009, was fined \$2.5 billion (Arsu and Tavernise, 2009).

Meanwhile, various rights given to journalists were taken back by the government (Topuz and Yaşar, 2020: 210). For example, in 2008, the longevity pay, which gave journalists a total of 5 years of early retirement due to worsening working conditions, was abolished on the grounds of security reform. This right was first granted to journalists in 1977 (DW, 2020).

In this environment, companies that could not make money from the media sector chose to please the government at every opportunity, and as a result, self-censorship became very common (Sözeri, 2016: 86). Since 2005, Turkish media has started to polarize as pro-government and anti-government (Duran, 2011 cited in Sözeri 2019: 166). While anti-government publications have dwindled, pro-government has become appealing to large audiences. Thus, a new pro-JDP media system, owned by pro-JDP businessmen, was established. This new media order is also defined as pool media (Yanardağoglu, 2017: 198).

For example, Albayrak Group owns two television channels, *TVNET* and *Tempo Türk TV*, as well as *Yeni Şafak* newspaper. It is known that the company has close relations with the ruling party and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The company has won numerous public contracts, many of which have been the subject of corruption investigations, from the construction of the Istanbul metro line to the manufacture of tanks for the Turkish army. While the income of the group was 150 million dollars in 2000, this figure reached 1 billion dollars in 2008 (Media Ownership Monitor Turkey, 2021b).

In 2013, the Sabah-ATV Media Group, with television channels such as ATV, A Haber, radio stations such as *A Haber Radyo*, newspapers such as *Sabah* and *Takvim*, and various online publications such as *sabah.com.tr*, and *takvim.com.tr*, was

sold to Zirve Holding, owned by the Kalyon Group, which also has strong relations with the government. Lastly, the group won a tender for the construction of Istanbul's third airport (Hürriyet Daily News, 2013a).

Empowered by this transformation, Prime Minister Erdogan called the owners and managers of media outlets in Turkey to a meeting in October 2011, asking them to use common sense when reporting on "terrorism and violence". The day after this meeting, the country's largest news agencies - Turkish News Agency (AHT), Ankara News Agency (ANKA), Cihan News Agency (CİHAN) and İhlas News Agency (İHA) - made a joint statement. News agencies would comply with the broadcasting bans of the authorities (Söylemez 2011 cited in Sözeri, 2019a: 166).

As a result of such interventions, in 2013, during Gezi Park protests in 2013, millions of people turned to Twitter instead of mainstream media to get information. Mainstream media was incapable of reporting the events under those conditions (Öz, 2016: 177). In addition to social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook and some digital born news media outlets, *Halk TV*, a nationwide television channel established in 2005 with the support of CHP, was among the few media outlets that broadcast the events live (Sokollu, 2013; Katık, 2013; Eğin, 2013: 55). Thereupon, RTÜK fined *Halk TV* for harming the physical, moral and mental development of children and youth (Hürriyet Daily News, 2013b).

As Mustafa Öz (2016: 177) wrote, the mainstream news media in Turkey had a hard time showing what happened in Taksim Square and could not shape public opinion by framing this event correctly. A Freedom House report stated that the mainstream media in Turkey is not completely free, as the Turkish government inappropriately uses its pressure on the media to limit public debate about the government's actions (Corke, 2013 cited in Öz, 2016: 178; Öz, 2016: 178).

In 2014, Erdoğan won Turkey's first direct presidential election (BBC News, 2014). Promising to increase the president's power on election day, Erdoğan promised his supporters a period of social reconciliation, saying "let's leave the old discussions in the old Turkey" (BBC News, 2014). However, according to Öz (2016: 178), Erdogan's way of doing politics and the government's intervention in the media led to

the polarization of mainstream media instead of pluralism (Erkus, 2013 cited in Öz, 2016: 178).

As a result of this polarisation, Turkey's media system started to experience more difficulties (Sözeri, 2019a: 101). For example, in 2014, print version of *Radikal* newspaper was closed following a news story published on "MIT trucks carrying weapons to Syria" (Topuz and Yaşar, 2020: 302). On March 31, 2016 online version of the newspaper was also closed (Topuz and Yaşar, 2020: 314). The newspaper was owned by the Doğan Medya Group; it was reporting on political scandals, corruptions, and violations of rights (Topuz and Yaşar, 2020: 314). On the other hand, there were dozens of journalists who resigned or were dismissed from the institutions they worked for during and after Gezi Park events (Topuz and Yaşar, 2020: 290). According to a report prepared by CHP in 2013, Turkey became the country where the highest number of journalists were arrested in the world (Topuz and Yaşar, 2020: 293).

In 2015, the JDP government also changed the press cards regulation. Professional journalism organizations were prohibited from issuing press cards and the presidency became the sole authority. In addition, the press cards of the journalists who were not supported by the government were cancelled and were not printed again (Topuz and Yaşar, 2020: 323).

In the same year, *Hürriyet* newspaper, owned by Doğan Medya Group, tweeted the following statement of President Erdoğan statement regarding the Dağlica attack²⁹: "If 400 deputies had been taken, these would not have happened" (Topuz and Yaşar, 2020: 329). Thereupon, journalists close to the government called on the public to protest against *Hürriyet*. After the call, nearly 200 people attacked the office of *Hürriyet* newspaper in Istanbul, shouting pro-Erdoğan slogans (BBC News, 2015; Topuz and Yaşar, 2020: 330). The group "accused the news organisation of misquoting Mr. Erdoğan and implying that he was trying to gain political capital from the Dağlica attack" (BBC News, 2015).

²⁹ In an attack, at least 16 Turkish soldiers were killed by the Kurdish rebels in the south-eastern province of Hakkari (BBC News, 2015).

Hürriyet also drew criticism from circles close to the government for covering the conflict between Turkish government and the PKK (BBC News, 2015). During this period, international press representatives such as the World Association of News Publishers and World Editors Forum (WAN-IFRA), International Press Institute (IPI), PEN International and 52 high-profile journalists also reacted to the pressure on the media. An open letter was also written to President Erdoğan in order to protect the freedom of the media in Turkey (Topuz and Yaşar, 2020: 332).

However, the efforts did not yield much results. On July 15, 2016, some Turkish army soldiers who supported the Gülen movement unsuccessfully tried to overthrow the government of President Erdoğan (Yanardağoglu, 2017: 197; Easton and Siverson, 2018: 222). As Malcolm R. Easton and Randolph M. Siverson (2018: 222) have emphasized, after the failed coup attempt, President Erdogan declared a state of emergency and began to systematically purge those suspected of loyalty from the regime. After the arrest of more than 3,000 military personnel, Erdoğan dismissed 2,745 judges, some of whom were detained, and 100,000 public officials, police officers and teachers for alleged involvement in the coup attempt (Easton and Siverson, 2018: 222). As Easton and Siverson (2018: 222) write, during this period more than 130 media outlets were shut down, 117 journalists were arrested and in some cases charged with terrorism.

In 2016, the pro-Gülen movement media outlets, especially newspapers such as *Zaman*, *Bugün* and *Taraf*, were raided and closed down by the police (Yanardağoglu, 2017: 196; Sözeri, 2019: 101). In addition, in 2016, these newspapers were accused of being a tool to set and manipulate the agenda by employing well-known journalists and academics (Yanardağoglu, 2017: 197). In the same period, online media such as YouTube, and Twitter were also blocked several times (Yanardağoglu, 2017: 197).

According to Yanardagoğlu (2017: 197), *Taraf*, whose editors have been imprisoned since then, had a special function in leaking documents that started an investigation, especially against the so-called secret crime network “Ergenekon”. The case lasted for 9 years, and in 2013 civil servants, journalists, lawyers, generals and academics were found guilty of being members of the network and plotting to overthrow the JDP government. According to the government, the Party’s mission

during this period was to spark major debates among media professionals about the ethics of dealing with leaked documents and the journalistic responsibility.

Thus, during the state of emergency (2016-2018), Turkey was affected by a new legal situation that greatly expanded its executive powers, which could limit or suspend constitutional freedoms, including the right to peaceful assembly and protest. Therefore, what happened in these two years represents the peak of Turkey's authoritarian transformation in the JDP period. This gradual, comprehensive and complex transformation is all aimed at suppressing dissenting voices. The concentration of executive power at unprecedented levels has led to the complete disappearance of balance and control mechanisms, and routine violations of civil and political rights (Arslanalp and Erkmen, 2020: 99).

One of the consequences of this new situation was the sale of Doğan Media Group to Demirören Group (Bianet, 2018). Thus, in 2018 newspapers such as *Hürriyet*, *Posta*, *Hürriyet Daily News* and *Fanatık*, television channels such as *CNN Türk* and *Kanal D*, Doğan News Agency (DHA), and the YAYSAT Company which was performing distribution of media and non-media products transferred to Demirören Group (Topuz and Yaşar, 2020: 379). As a result, Doğan Media Group completely withdrew from the media sector and pro-government Demirören, became the strongest pillar of the mainstream media (Bianet, 2018). After the sale, *Hürriyet* newspaper laid off 45 journalists in 2019. Dismissed journalists were members of the Journalists' Union of Turkey (Topuz and Yaşar, 2020: 397).

In this defined media system, it has become easy to create fake or alternative realities that have the power to influence socio-political life. Sözeri (2019b) claimed in an article that the ATV-Sabah Media Group published fake news to manipulate the results of the 2019 Istanbul Mayoral Elections. For example, on election night, Sabah newspaper columnist Hilal Kaplan tweeted, "YSK will recount all the votes in Istanbul", without citing a source, and then had to apologize. The Sabah newspaper also published a news report that 30 polling station officials were arrested. However, Istanbul Police Department denied the report and Sabah newspaper retracted the report (Sözeri, 2019b).

Moreover, at a time when the JDP government dominated 90 percent of the media, the mainstream media became unable to broadcast news without the permission of President Erdogan. For example, in 2020, Treasury and Finance Minister Berat Albayrak (President Erdogan's son-in-law) resigned, but he was able to announce his resignation on Instagram. This news was reported in the mainstream media days later, following President Erdogan's approval (BBC News Turkish, 2020).

Following this silence atmosphere, many journalists were fined or imprisoned (Medya Gözlem Veri Tabanı, 2021). Therefore, due to "BİA Media Monitoring Report", only in 2020, 23 journalists (Ayşegül Doğan, Can Dündar, Deniz Yücel, Sultan Çoban, Barış Pehlivan, Barış Terkoğlu, Murat Ağırel, Yılmaz Özdil, Aydın Keser, Ferhat Çelik, Hülya Kılınç, Kazım Güleçyüz etc.) were sentenced to prison for a total of 103 years and 3 days (Medya Gözlem Veri Tabanı, 2021).

On the other hand, in the same year, the Press Bulletin Authority (BİK) cut the advertising revenues of opposition newspapers such as *Sözcü*, *Evrensel*, *BirGün*, *Cumhuriyet* and *Korkusuz* for 276 days due to their critical publications. In 2020, RTÜK imposed 297 fines, 70 program suspensions and broadcast suspensions to audiovisual media, mostly television organizations. The total fine given by RTÜK to broadcasting organizations amounted to 19 million liras (Media Observation Database, 2021).

And more recently, in 2021, to combat fake news, disinformation, provocation and lynching on social networks, the government amended media law 5651 and increased its control over digital content on social media platforms. According to the new media law, Turkish courts will be able to reduce the bandwidth of social networks by up to 95%. This restriction on social networks, which are used by opposition politicians, activists and journalists to create an alternative media environment and public space, was also perceived as the complete elimination of media freedom in Turkey (Belut, 2021).

4.4. Digitalisation of News Media

The digitalization of the media in Turkey first started with the creation of digital versions of newspapers. The owners of these newspapers also held companies that

contributed to the establishment of internet infrastructures in Turkey. Then, born digital news sites were added to this new media phase. These sites have been established since the first half of 2000. While some of them produce original content, some of them do news curation. The most striking examples of these sites are the alternative news sources that emerged during the Gezi Park protests. In addition, in this section, journalists who continue their profession independently through self-founded news sites and social networks are also examined.

4.4.1. Transformation of Conventional News Outlets into Digital

The first personal computers (PCs) were introduced to the Turkish market in the mid-1980s. Founded by Ege University in 1986, TÜVEKA is considered to be the pioneer of internet access infrastructure in Turkey. Towards the end of 1991, METU (Middle East Technical University) and TUBITAK (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) started a project to establish a new network using the latest internet technologies (Saka, 2019: 4-5).

Following the conclusion of the application made to the PTT (Mail Telegraph and Telephone Company) in 1992, on April 12, 1993, with a leased line which had a 64 Kbps capacity, using the routers in the system hall of the METU IT Department, a new network was transferred to the NSFNet (National Science Foundation Network) in the U.S. Thus, Turkey's first internet connection was established over a TCP/IP protocol. Between 1993 and 1996, many universities were connected to the internet via METU. These were followed by some private institutions, and some of them later became private internet services. In this way, first a small techno elite then ordinary citizens who own a PC became able to exchange files and e-mails (Saka, 2019: 4-6).

Internet investments in Turkey have been made by media groups. A significant part of Turkey's first internet companies were also founded by these media groups. Doğan Group entered the digital media market with Doğan Online, Çukurova Group with Superonline, Bilgin Group with Turkport, Uzan Group with Webbee, Doğuş Group with Ixir, İhlas Group with İhlasNet were entered the digital media market, and started to provide various services such as news portals, in addition to the internet access (Çevikel, 2010: 47-48). According to Tolga Çevikel (2010: 48), these

companies started Turkey's first news portals as a way of making it attractive to sell internet connections to users. As part of the commercial strategy adopted, a wide variety of news content is offered to users free of charge on these portals.

As of 1995, digital journalism has also started with the attempts of media groups to transfer the printed versions of the newspapers to the internet (Çevikel, 2010: 49). For example, *Zaman* newspaper went online in 1995. This was followed by *Milliyet*, *Hürriyet* and *Sabah* (See Figure 4) (Kara, 2002: 44 cited in Çevikel, 2010: 50).

Newspaper	Date
Zaman	December 2, 1995
Turkish Daily News	May 19, 1996
Türkiye	November 9, 1996
Milliyet	November 26, 1996
Fanatık	December 25, 1996
Hürriyet	January 1, 1997
Sabah	January 1, 1997
Akşam	September 15, 1997
Yeni Yüzyıl	March 4, 1998
Güneş	April 2, 1998
Radikal	May 1, 1998
Cumhuriyet	May 7, 1998
Milli Gazete	October 3, 1998

Figure 4: The dates of newspapers that went online

Source: Hakan Kara, “İnternet, Gazetecilik, Yeni Olanaklar”, Serhan Yedig ve Haşim Akman (Ed.), *İnternet Çağında Gazetecilik içinde* (37-44), İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2002. s. 44 cited in Çevikel, 2010: 50.

As Çevikel (2010: 49) wrote, it was not difficult technically and financially for media groups that already broadcast in traditional media to get online. According to Çevikel (2010: 49), texts and visual materials of the news content have already been digitized at various stages of the traditional publishing, as well as broadcasting. It has

also been easily discovered that these materials can be published directly on the internet, without any modification. On the other hand, these media groups were already in a position to spend large sums on building digital infrastructure, employing personnel and most importantly advertising (Çevikel, 2010: 48-49).

In the early stages of digital journalism, it was not possible for small entrepreneurs to enter this field institutionally. The internet sector was new, and commercially risky (Çevikel, 2010: 48). Despite the situation described, in 1999, journalist Ufuk Güldemir founded Haberturk.com as an independent news portal with a group of journalists experienced in the mainstream media (HaberTürk, 2021). According to Güldemir, the most important feature that distinguishes haberturk.com from other news portals is that it was founded by journalists at the top of the profession. Thus, with the establishment of the printed version of the news site and the HaberTürk television channel in 2001, the news portal became the mainstream in a short time. The frequency of television channel was purchased from a bank called Bankapital, which collapsed in the 2000 and 2001 economic crisis (HaberTürk, 2006).

However, in the early 2000s, media groups could not meet their commercial performance expectations from their large-scale investments in the internet sector. Especially, after the crisis in the Turkish economy in 2000 and 2001, *Turkport* and *İxir* companies went bankrupt, while all other internet companies had to cut their expenditures and budgets. The stagnation defined in the digital media sector continued until the mid-2000s, when the volume of digital advertising began to increase with the rise of Web 2.0 technologies (Çevikel, 2010: 50).

In order to get a share from the growing digital advertising market as of 2010, many news sites belonging to major media groups such as *Milliyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Radikal*, *Sabah*, *Zaman* were redesigned in line with the needs of converged media environments. Websites that started to open with the logic of Web 2.0, allowed users to comment on, and share the content via social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Google +, etc. The news contents in text, audio, video, and live broadcasting forms were constantly updated (Harpers Bazaar, 2014). Websites have also started to develop applications for IOS and Android phones and tablets (Harpers Bazaar, 2014). In addition to advertising revenues, media groups have implemented projects such as

the *Radikal Blog*, *Hürriyet Dünyası* (Hürriyet World), and *Hürriyet Sosyal* (Hürriyet Social) to increase the interaction between audience and websites (Hürriyet, 2012).

Launched by the Doğan Group in 2012, *Radikal Blog* was one of the first examples of participatory media experiments in Turkey under the leadership of a large media group. The blog area was open to all kinds of professional and/or political content (Uzunoğlu, 2021). Similarly, the Doğan Group launched the Hürriyet World Project in 2012 (Hürriyet, 2012). According to Vuslat Doğan Sabancı, former owner of *Hürriyet* newspaper and creator of the Hürriyet Dünyası project, the interactive technology, the internet, has completely changed the news media industry by breaking down the traditional boundaries between newspapers and television. For example, with the “Hürriyet Dünyası” project, *Hürriyet* was transformed from being a newspaper to a platform that broadcasts 24 hours a day. The news was first published on the website in text, audio and video format, and the next day, readers read a more detailed version of the news in print (Hürriyet, 2012).

In 2014, Doğan Group launched “Hürriyet Social” as a new project. Hürriyet Social was Turkey’s first news website that worked with the logic of social networking. First of all, users had to register and login with a valid email to use the platform. After login, the platform allowed users to create their own pages. Users could choose topics of interest from more than 100 categories and create their own pages. Hürriyet Social also gave the opportunity to comment on all the articles in its content (Hürriyet, 2014). All these initiatives also pioneered the establishment of digital-born news sites in the next stage.

4.4.2. Digital-born News Outlets

Independently operating digital-born news sites have started to emerge in Turkey since 1996. One of them was XN, a news aggregator. XN was scanning daily newspapers, compiling important columns and breaking news and presenting them to the audience in chronological order. Netgazete, which started broadcasting in August 1998, became the first news site to produce original content (Çevikel, 2010: 51; Uzunoğlu, 2021). Bianet.org was founded in 2000 as a digital news agency. Bianet.org was supported by the IPS Communication Foundation in 2003 and funded by the

European Commission. Today, the Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA) also supports the news organisation (Görgülü, 2016: 203; Bianet, 2021).

The primary purpose of bianet.org is to support the local media, monitor violations of freedom of expression, encourage the media to represent human, women's and children's rights more frequently and comprehensively, and to establish and develop standards for journalism and professional ethics. Bianet.org is still active and provides information in Turkish, Kurdish and English on culture, economy, education, people and religion, and news on freedom of expression, work, minorities, gender and health (Görgülü, 2016: 203; Bianet, 2021).

According to Çevikel (2010: 274), political blogs also gained popularity in the early 2000s. For this reason, bloggers have the power to identify valuable information by circulating some news and columns of their own choosing on their blogs. For example, in 2004, academician Erkan Saka started a blog called Erkan's Field Diary to write the agenda of Turkey as well as Europe. Saka's blog is Turkey's first multi-author and bilingual blog. The blog, which has been following and commenting on the events from the first day it entered the Internet, is perceived as a reliable news source that is still online (Çevikel, 2010: 274; Erkan's Field Diary, 2021).

During this period, sensational/click-based and/or satirical news sites also began to emerge. For example, Ensonhaber.com, known for its sensational news, was founded in 2006 by Serkan Kalemçiler, a radio announcer and entrepreneur who owns a large amount of domain names. Zaytung.com was founded in 2010 by editor Hakan Bil as a satirical news site. The news site was heavily influenced by "The Onion", a US-based digital satirical news company (Ensonhaber, 2021; Zaytung, 2021). In 2011, Onedio.com was founded as a social content platform by entrepreneurs such as Türkü Eđinođlu and Kaan Kayabalı. Onedio.com is a social network that emerged with the same logic as Twitter and Facebook, but is based on news and entertaining content. The website bears some similarities to BuzzFeed³⁰ (Ünlü, 2020).

³⁰ BuzzFeed, Inc., "is an American Internet media, news and entertainment company with a focus on digital media" (BuzzFeed, 2021).

Since the 2010s, the use of social media networks has increased as the proportion of households with an internet connection has increased and individuals have access to the internet via smart phones. All these developments have diversified the news production. For example, some professional and semi-professional journalists (for example, citizen journalists), who were dissatisfied with the mainstream media due to violations of freedom of expression and self-censorship, started to produce news on social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter (Tunç and Atikkan, 2011: 133). On the subject, the Roboski village massacre is a dramatic example:

On 28 December 2011, 34 people, including 19 children, were bombed by the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) warplanes in Roboski village of Uludere district of Şırnak. HDP Şırnak Deputy Ferhat Encü first announced the attack on Twitter, then some journalists announced the news on their Twitter accounts. However, televisions and newspapers awaiting the announcement of the TAF were able to broadcast this news only after 12 hours (İlkehaber, 2016; Birgün, 2020).

After the massacre, participatory news platforms and live broadcasting tools using social media networks started to emerge one after another. *Naber Medya* (Hello Media) is one of the first examples. It was established in Istanbul in 2011 by a group of university students as an alternative news platform with the slogan “The Revolution will be broadcast live”. The group defined *Naber Medya* as a platform that enables citizen journalists to broadcast live from all over the world (Naber Medya, 2011; Tunç and Atikkan, 2011: 133).

The platform provided up-to-date news in live broadcast or text format, especially on Facebook pages. Since its establishment, it has announced small and large-scale movements and rebellions to the public through live broadcasts. Events that were ignored by the mainstream media, such as the occupation of the Starbucks coffee house in Boğaziçi University by students in 2011, and the 2012 and 2013 labor and solidarity day movements were brought to the national agenda by the platform using the live broadcast tools of social media (Görgülü, 2016: 224).

Similarly, 140 Journos was created on January 19, 2012 by a group of college students to stream news simultaneously on Twitter. The name “140 Journo” reflected

the community's fascination with Twitter and referred to Twitter's 140-character post limit. Operating as amateur journalists, the group covered LGBTQ movements, student cases, protests and terrorism cases via their Twitter account (@140journos) (Görgülü, 2016: 208).

In 2013, as Oray Eğin (2013: 55) wrote, the Gezi Park protests marked a turning point for independent media as well as digital news sites. According to Eğin (2013: 55), the Gezi Park events provided an excellent opportunity for independent digital news outlets to gain brand awareness, which may take years to become a real alternative. In this situation, high-profile journalists who try to maintain their profession on Twitter, especially those who have been sacked or resigned from their roles in the mainstream, have a great impact (Vela, 2013). At a time when the government listed journalists as provocateurs simply because they covered the protests, that is, during and after the Gezi Park protests, many participatory professional and semi-professional digital news media were established. These new media organizations emerged as a reaction to the institutionalized and censored structure of the Turkish media (Eğin, 2013: 55; Görgülü, 2016: 199; Koçak, 2015: 272; Bulut and Bal, 2017: 210).

For example, Capul.tv broadcast the Gezi Park events from 6 June 2013 to 15 June 2013 via Ustream. He also communicated with the protesters via Twitter. Within a year, the number of followers reached 145,000. During the Gezi Park protests, 1.5 million IPs were watching the broadcasts of Capul.tv. In addition, eight TV channels increased their reach by transferring the internet broadcast of Capul.tv to their own screens. Capul.tv opened offices in Istanbul and Ankara on October 24, 2014. Capul.tv used Periscope for live broadcasting, YouTube for archiving its videos and Twitter for content distribution (Bulut ve Bal, 2017: 210).

On May 28, 2013, musterekimize.org was founded by an anti-capitalist group. The group actively participated in the protests and shaped the internal dynamics of the Gezi Park movement. With publications in Turkish and English, the group provided the basis for theoretical discussions on insights and action plans from the park. Thus, musterekimiz.org has become not only an alternative and participatory media platform presenting news and debates largely ignored by the mainstream media, but also an

anti-capitalist collective designed to actively participate and manage the dynamics of the movement (Görgülü, 2016: 213-216).

The digital radio station Geziradyo.org (FM 101.9) started broadcasting on June 8, 2013 from a tent set up in Gezi Park with the slogan “We are all having fun”. The Geziradyo.org team was broadcasting live from the park with the help of a portable transmitter, radio antenna, mixer and laptop. During the Gezi events, the radio worked between 10:00 in the morning and 10:00 in the evening. The radio broadcast news about the protests, interviewed protesters and political collectives, and broadcast music. The collective also set up Facebook and Twitter accounts to reach wider audiences. The radio station could be heard around Gezi Park on FM 101.9 and on the worldwide radio’s website (Görgülü, 2016: 217-218).

Geziradyo.org was the only radio station established as an online participatory media during the Gezi Park movement. The radio station has managed to attract the attention of a wide public, both at the national and international level, throughout its activities (İnce, 2013; opendemocracy.net, 2013). Unfortunately, the archive of the radio is not used today, as the radio does not upload the content it broadcasts to any audio recording and streaming platform such as soundcloud.com (Görgülü, 2016: 219).

Geziparki.tv was founded on June 6, 2013 by a university student to record scenes from the field, with technical assistance from his friends. It has served as an alternative communication space where protesters can freely express their thoughts and feelings through a thematic video platform based on the Word Press blog service. The platform has also set up a YouTube channel to store videos shared via Word Press (Görgülü, 2016: 219-220).

The videoccupy.org project was launched on June 2, 2013 to create a collection of video posts recorded in the first week of the Gezi Park protests with a variety of personal communication tools, including mobile phones, video cameras and tablets. In the statement written during the movement, the aims of the collective are explained as follows: The videoccupy project aims to create the visual memory of the Gezi Park movement and to archive the scenes from the protests. Our archive contains videos

recorded via mobile devices, video cameras and tablet PCs. However, the videoccupy.org website has been inactive since 2016 (videoccupy.org, 2013; Görgülü, 2016: 222).

Everywheretaksim.net was founded by the “Occupy Travel Platform with International Solidarity”, consisting of academics, intellectuals, artists, curators, workers, scientists and students. The site aimed to archive images, articles, news and videos about the occupation movement in Turkey. The news platform was making live reports from parks or forums where opposition meetings were held to protest the government. It also presented a collection of up-to-date visual and written materials from various sources, including other alternative media platforms and activist users, through its Facebook and Twitter accounts. In August 2014, the platform’s operation ended and it joined other short-lived online participatory media of the Gezi Park movement (everywheretaksim.net, 2013; Görgülü, 2016: 223).

Gezi Post was prepared in brochure format. The first issue was distributed free of charge to the protesters in Gezi Park, residents of nearby buildings in the Beyoğlu district, and shopkeepers, especially bookstores, on 8 June 2013. With the announcement they made in the first issue of the publication, the creators of Gezi Post encouraged their readers to copy, reproduce and distribute the articles in their neighborhoods. Publishers continued to publish Gezi Post weekly until July 29, 2013 (Gezi Post Issue: 1, 2013; gazetegezipostasi.blogspot.com, 2013 cited in Görgülü, 2016: 225).

Dokuz8Haber is different from other online participatory media of Gezi in that it was founded at the end of the Gezi Park movement. Dokuz8Haber started its activities in July 2013 in order to provide accurate and reliable news first hand. Using Twitter for content distribution, the platform aims to integrate professional and amateur journalism practices. The platform, co-founded by Gökhan Biçici, a former editor of İMC TV and a member of the editorial board of www.emekdunyasi.net, aimed to serve as a news network integrating professional and semi-professional journalists (demokrathaber.net, 2014; dokuz8haber.com, 2016; Görgülü, 2016: 227).

After the Gezi Park movement, the People's Communist Party founded Ilerihaber.org in 2014 with the support of many left-wing, experienced and young journalists, politicians, academics and artists. The news site has solidified its place among opposition publications since its early days. It was seen by its viewers as a news site that would keep the spirit of Gezi Park alive. Today, the news organization is still active and uses specifically Twitter and Facebook to reach wider audiences. It also broadcasts short news videos and programs on its YouTube channel named Ileri TV (İleri Haber, 2016; İleri Haber YouTube Channel, 2021; Ekşi Sözlük, 2021).

On the other hand, in this period of rapid proliferation of digital news platforms, an internet law that gave extraordinary authority to the Telecommunications and Communication Presidency (TİB) on internet use was passed by the Parliament alone with the votes of JDP deputies. The new law, which aims to stop the spread of digital news sites in particular, consists of the following articles (Bianet, 2014):

- Those who think that their private life has been violated on the Internet will apply directly to the TİB instead of the court.
- If TİB decides to block a broadcast, it notifies the Access Providers Association (ESB) of the decision to be implemented. The ESB will implement the suspension decision within 4 hours at the latest.
- This request will be taken to the magistrate within 24 hours. In cases where delay is undesirable due to a breach of privacy, access will be blocked with the direct instruction of the TİB President. In this urgent application, a judge's decision will not be sought.
- Hosting providers are required to store the traffic of internet users for up to two years. In addition, alternative access routes to sites that have been banned by the TİB or the court will also be blocked.
- In addition to DNS and IP-based blocking, URL-based blocking methods, which are mostly implemented in China, Iran and Saudi Arabia, will be expanded.

Following the new internet law, 35 journalists were detained in April 2014. 22' journalists were sentenced to prison for being a member of a terrorist organization. 1 journalist was detained after the "Gezi Resistance" operations. During January-March 2015, three websites, two films, one book, two columns and one photograph were

censored. The Prime Ministry has imposed a temporary broadcast ban on traditional and digital news organizations that broadcast news about the hostage-taking of Prosecutor Mehmet Selim Kiraz. The court also imposed a broadcast ban on the news of the stopping and searching of vehicles belonging to MIT in Hatay and Adana (P24, 2015).

In the same period, that is, after the Charlie Hebdo massacre (January 7, 2015), 49 news stories were banned in digital media. Access to 312 Twitter messages was blocked. At least 17 digital media outlets were discriminated against in accreditation. At least eight journalists and media workers were laid off or had to leave between January and March 2015. (P24, 2015).

However, despite the restrictions in 2015 and beyond, digital news outlets continued to proliferate. For example, Journo.com.tr was established in 2015 as a media organization that aims to improve the quality of journalism in Turkey through educational activities and to defend freedom of expression by opening a space for unemployed or self-employed journalists (Journo, 2021). It was founded in 2016 by Vedat Zencir, the first Turkish conscientious objector, on Gazeteduvar.com.tr. Zencir established this news site with the aim of providing its readers with a decent online newspaper, free from political and economic concerns, with universally accepted quality journalism principles. The editorial team consists of well-known journalists who worked for Turkey's leading media outlets but were dismissed for their reports criticizing the government (Hrant Dink Foundation, 2020; EuroTopics, 2021).

4.4.3. News Sites Founded by Professional Journalists

Beginning in the 2000s, with the development of the internet, journalists were now dreaming of a career outside of traditional newsrooms, either by working in an entrepreneurial news company or by starting a company themselves. Many journalists in Turkey advocated entrepreneurship as an alternative to their old media work and started to create their own digital news media outlets. One of the pioneers of the period was the journalist Hadi Özişik (Vos and Singer, 2016: 143; Internet Haber, 2019).

In 2000, the news website internethaber.com, which produces original journalistic content, was established by Özışık. Özışık became the owner of a digital media group by establishing news sites such as Gazeteoku.com, Internetspor.com, Gazeteciler.com, Memurhaber.com, Elmaelma.com, Sporoku.com and Ekofinans.com after Internethaber.com. Özışık also established the “Internet Media Association” in 2005, which aims to determine the ethical standards of internet journalism. In 2008, Internethaber.com was awarded the “Web Site of the Year” by the Turkish Journalists Association (Internet Haber, 2019).

www.dortkuvvetmedya.com was founded in 2001 by journalists Ahmet Tezcan and Ertuğrul Acar and a group of experienced journalists as a media monitoring site and freedom of expression platform. Many news, research, interviews and reviews focusing on media freedom have been published on the website. One of the missions of the site was to provide a peaceful environment for journalists who were expelled from the mainstream media due to economic or political restrictions (Tezcan, 2001).

After a while, news sites such as Journal.net, Kuvayimedya.com, Anti-Medya.com, Medyakronik.com, Medyatava.com, Internetnews.com, Objectivenews.com, Haber-line.com, and Dokuzsutun.com were also founded by the same journalists. All sites established as news portals or online newspapers had media monitoring pages. On the other hand, sites such as Journal.net, Kuvayimedya.com and Anti-Medya.com were criticizing Turkey’s media environment, as well as the economic and political issues on the country's agenda, in terms of journalistic values. For example, Medyakronik.com, founded with the support of Bilgi University, scanned daily newspapers and detected violations of freedom of expression (Tezcan, 2001).

Since the mid-2000s, the state’s oppression and interventions against journalists and media organizations became visible. (Sözeri, 2019: 166). For example, after the transfer of media companies to the TMSF, many journalists, including senior journalists, were dismissed without paying severance pay³¹, and their press cards were

³¹ “The Severance Pay is the most important payment for workers who work under the Turkish Labor Law. Workers are entitled to severance pay upon completing 1 year under the same employer. Severance pay, as regulated in Article 14 of the Abolished Labor Law No. 1475, is calculated as monthly wage times each year worked. All the remaining months and days are also included in the severance pay calculation. The wage taken into account in this calculation is the gross wage, which includes the

canceled indefinitely. There were also those who were forced to resign (Topuz, 2019: 142). In addition, Hrant Dink, editor-in-chief of *Agos* (Turkish-Armenian newspaper), was shot dead in front of the newspaper in broad daylight in Istanbul in January 2007, by a 17-year-old teenager for insulting “Turkishness” in one of his articles (The Economist, 2007 cited in Yanardağoglu, 2013: 95).

Despite a chaotic period full of restrictions and threats, many journalists who were expelled or resigned from the mainstream media started to create their own digital news organizations, this time spreading on social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Especially Twitter was very popular among journalists and journalists attributed great importance to the platform in order to protect freedom of expression. Journalists who use Twitter for professional purposes have found a way to reach large audiences by developing new practices such as using the platform as a news gathering and reporting tool, as well as interacting with audiences through commentary (Avadar, 2013: 55-81).

However, the government’s intervention was not delayed. Through the Information Technologies and Communications Authority (BTK), which was established in 2000, the government ensured that social media networks, especially Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, were blocked by court decision. Reacting to this pressure in 2014, Twitter even announced that it would use its “Country Confidential Content” tool, which allows content to be stored in a specific area and visible to the rest of the world. This tool allowed a content to be censored on a per-country basis. The tool clearly has been used by authoritarian regimes to restrict online freedoms. Unfortunately, Twitter accounts of many journalists, academics, activists and even ordinary people were targeted because of this tool. Many people were even arrested for tweeting (Farmanfarmaian, Sonay and Akser, 2018: 118; DigWatch, 2019; Kural, 2021).

As a matter of fact, news sites established by professional journalists in such a period are as follows, in chronological order: *Oda TV* (2007) by Soner Yalçın,

additional payments as well as the main wage earned in return for the work. A ceiling amount has been determined for the gross wage, including the seniority basis wages. The Severance Pay ceiling, which is determined as the retirement bonus of the highest civil servant, is updated every year with the salary hike of civil servants twice a year” (Turkish Labor Law, 2021).

Gazeteport (2007) by Yavuz Semerci, *T24* (2009) by Doğan Akın, *Jiyan* (2010) by Sarphan Uzunoğlu, *Zete* (2011) by Nurcan Akad, *Ötekilerin Postası* (2012) by anonymous journalists, *Diken* (2014) by Harun Simavi, *ABC Gazetesi* (2015) by Merdan Yanardağ, *Medyascope.tv* (2015) by Ruşen Çakır, *GazeteRed* (2016) by Hakan Gülseven, *Özgürüz* (2017) by Can Dünder, and *Ahval* (2017) by Yavuz Baydar.

Odatv.com was founded in 2007 as a for-profit news website by journalists Soner Yalçın, Barış Pehlivan and Barış Terkoğlu. *Oda TV* is a profit-oriented venture that aims to offer an alternative to mainstream media. The news site is dedicated to providing research and exclusive news in keeping with its Kemalist leanings and oppositional vision (Interviewee 17, Oda TV, in-depth interview, 09.04.2018).

Gazeteport.com.tr was founded by journalist Yavuz Semerci upon his resignation from *Sabah* newspaper on 22 March 2007. Established with the logic of entrepreneurial journalism, *Gazeteport* continued its existence under the umbrella of *Scoop Medya*, a joint stock company. Launched as Turkey's first internet newspaper, *Gazeteport* was a constantly updated news source until it was closed on August 27, 2019 (Hürriyet, 2007).

T24.com.tr was founded by Doğan Akın in 2009 as an independent news website with a profit motive. After leaving *Milliyet* newspaper, Akın established this website as an independent news outlet with a group of young journalists to reduce ideological obsessions of the Turkish media and focus on journalistic values (Interviewee 27, T24, in depth interview, 15.07. 2019).

Jiyan.org was founded in 2010 by academician and journalist Sarphan Uzunoğlu with a group of young journalists. It was a radical media experiment. Jiyan.org stopped broadcasting before the Gezi Park protests and returned in September 2013 immediately after the protests. In total, 600 authors wrote articles. 200 were bloggers and 400 were *Jiyan's* own authors. After the arrest of jiyan.org writer Hayri Tunç in 2015, access to the jiyan.org website was blocked by TİB decision (Bianet, 2015; Interview with Sarphan Uzunoğlu, Sosyal Kafa, 2016).

In 2016, the news site employed two part-time editors. One was responsible for maintaining the news flow on social networks, and the other was responsible for maintaining the news flow within the site. The editorial team was in Istanbul, Ankara, Mersin, the Netherlands and France. The site's newsroom is organized on Telegram³². Jiyan.org ran crowdfunding campaigns on Indiegogo that were successful multiple times until it shut down (Interview with Sarphan Uzunoğlu, Sosyal Kafa, 2016).

Designed as a news website and tablet newspaper, Zete.com was founded in 2011 by Nurcan Akad and Tolga Yeniyurt after they left Milliyet Newspaper. The news site was supported by well-known intellectuals such as Aras Zarakol, Murat Karakaş, Canberk Beygova, as well as communication faculties of Istanbul Bilgi University and Galatasaray University (Medyatava, 2015).

Addressing educated youth, Zete.com was targeting an audience under the age of 35, that is, following news online (Medyatava, 2015). Therefore, it was very active on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and YouTube. In 2016, the news site announced that it was closing due to financial difficulties. In the same year, it was purchased by the businessman Ömer Erdem on behalf of the "LIFT Content Factory". However, shortly after the sale, the news site was permanently closed once again due to financial insufficiencies (Evrensel, 2016). Zete.com was the first example of a bossless, horizontal and transparent media system in Turkey (Medyatava, 2015).

Ötekilerin Postası was established on October 21, 2012 as a digital news agency under the name of Hunger Strike Post (Koçak, 2015: 272). The website was launched by two anonymous journalists calling themselves radical activists in response to the hunger strikes launched by imprisoned Kurdish citizens. In this strike, the detainees demanded the release of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, and the strike was not covered by the mainstream media (Başka Haber, 2013; Watson and Tuysuz, 2012 cited in Görgülü, 2016: 205).

Later, the *Ötekilerin Postası* community added a Facebook page (/O.Postasi), a Twitter account (@OtekilerPostasi) and an Instagram account (@otekilerpostasi) to

³² "Telegram is a freeware, cross-platform, cloud-based instant messaging system. The service also provides end-to-end encrypted video calling, VoIP, file sharing and several other features. It was launched for iOS on 14 August 2013 and Android in October 2013" (Telegram, 2021).

the initiative's website. In this way, news production was carried out with the help of citizens from all over Turkey as well as professionals. The news organization was very active, especially on Facebook. For example, the Facebook page, which was closed in 2013 for making pornographic posts, was reopened after complaints. *Ötekilerin Postası* is still active on social networks and mainly provides news on human rights violations of ethnic, religious and sexual minorities (Everywhere Taksim, 2013; Görgülü, 2016: 205).

Diken.com.tr was founded in 2014 by journalists Harun Simavi and Erdal Güven. Simavi and Güven announced that they established Diken.com.tr to realize 100% free journalism in a media environment like Turkey where journalism is not practiced properly. The news site has a participatory organizational structure and is profit-oriented (Interviewee 6, Diken, in depth interview, 10. 04. 2018; Interviewee 2, in depth interview, 10.04.2018).

Abcgazetesi.com was founded on 19 October 2015 by Merdan Yanardag after his resignation from *Yurt* newspaper. Yanardag announced that he founded Abcgazetesi.com to do independent journalism at a time of dramatic crises. On January 9, 2017, with the help of his friend, journalist Oğuz Güven, Yanardag founded a new news site called Tele 1 as well as the Tele 1 news channel (Interviewee 31, ABC Gazetesi and Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05. 2019; Bakır, 2020).

Medyascope.tv was founded on August 20, 2015, inspired by the "Periscope" mobile application. Medyascope.tv is a news platform/Web TV where journalists, writers, academics and students are organized with the need for a civil, independent and pluralistic media environment in Turkey. The founder and editor-in-chief of the news site, Ruşen Çakır, has been broadcasting live on his Periscope account since May 2015 and uploading the videos of these broadcasts to platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo. These programs consisted of daily discussions and commentaries focusing on political and social issues. Journalist Ruşen Çakır was also doing interviews with politicians. After being expelled from the Habertürk newspaper, Çakır established this site in order to create an area where journalists, columnists and people close to journalism from other professions can contribute to the preservation and later use of journalistic content (Avadar, 2019: 48-49).

GazeteRed, a left-wing news site, was founded in 2016 by journalist Hakan Gülseven with the aim of becoming a space for journalists and left-wing audiences. The news site has a profit-oriented working structure (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21. 04. 2018).

The news site Artigercek.com was founded on February 4, 2017 in Netherlands by journalist Celal Başlangıç, who is also the editor-in-chief of the news site. Artigercek.com was born as a reaction to censorship in Turkey. Its aim is to publish independent news, to become the voice of communities and religious minorities. The importance of the news site is its diversity, on the news site anticapitalist Muslims, conservative democrats, liberals, social democrats, socialists, feminists, youngsters, LGBTQ individuals, Alevis, Kurds, Armenians, and Greeks of Turkey come together and make their voices heard (Başlangıç, 2017; Eurotopics, 2020).

Ozguruz.org was founded by journalist Can Dünder in January 24, 2017 as a bilingual (Turkish and German) news platform. “Özgürüz”, in Turkish which means “we are free” is published in collaboration with Correctiv, a non-profit research organization located in Berlin, Germany. The project of Can Dünder is a manifestation that free journalism can be practiced in Turkey (DW, 2017).

Ahval.com was founded in 2017 by journalist Yavuz Baydar, who left Turkey right after the 2016 coup attempt. *Ahval* is a United Arab Emirates-funded news website and features news in Turkish, English and Arabic. The news site offers news analysis, research stories, in-depth reports and commentary, targeting worldwide audiences (The Arab Weekly Staff, 2017; Croitoru, 2018).

Kapsul.com.tr was founded in 2020 by young journalists such as Minez Bayülgen, Emrah Temizkan, Ayşegül Smith. The news site sends its subscribers daily and weekly newsletters via email, including podcasts and written material. The news site also actively uses Twitter to disseminate the journalistic content produced (Kapsul, 2021).

In addition to the news sites established by journalists, there are also self-employed journalists through social media networks. For example, Cüneyt Özdemir,

the announcer of the 5N1K program, which has been broadcast on the *CNN Türk* television channel for nearly 20 years, prepares videos on the Turkish agenda on his YouTube channel. Özdemir has 1.25 million subscribers. Özdemir, who is active on social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, has a website called *Dipnot.tv* where he archives his daily YouTube videos, documentaries and the 5N1K program he produces. Özdemir, who left Doğan Media Group in 2015, finances his journalism activities with the crowdfunding campaign he started on Patreon (T24, 2015; Cüneyt Özdemir YouTube Channel, 2021).

On the other hand, journalist Nevşin Mengü, who has been working for *Kanaltürk*, *Habertürk*, TRT Türk, CNN Türk and *Hürriyet* newspapers since 2004 after resigning due to political pressure, is currently working as a freelance reporter. She currently prepares and presents a weekly program on DW Turkish online channel and Fox TV, and writes for various digital media outlets in Turkey. Apart from this, she also has a YouTube channel where she prepares and presents a show. Mengü actively receives financial support from her followers on social media networks such as Twitter and Instagram in the form of digital currencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum (Nevşin Mengü YouTube Channel, 2021; Duvar English, 2021).

Similarly, journalist Nilay Örnek, worked for *Sabah*, *Milliyet*, *HaberTürk*, and *Akşam* newspapers starting from 2000. In 2013, Örnek was dismissed from *Akşam* newspaper following the seizure of the newspaper by the TMSF. After her dismissal, she started a website called “Nilay Örnek, Böyle de Bir Şey Var” where she gathers together her writings, as well as podcasts on different topics such as journalism, gastronomy, relationships, education, life style, and etc. After a while, she started to prepare and present a podcast series called “Nasıl Olunur?” (How to Be?) with the partnership of audiobook app, Storytel. Today, Örnek, promotes her podcasts on her YouTube channel, and on her Instagram account (OdaTV, 2013; Speaker Agency, 2021; Nilay Örnek YouTube Channel, 2021).

The last example is journalist Ünsal Ünlü, who worked for TRT, CTV, NTV and *HaberTürk* television channels, since 1990. In 2013, he resigned from mainstream media, and started to perform journalism on digital spaces. The aim of Ünlü was to be independent while performing his profession. Thus, since 2015, he is broadcasting on

social media networks. He started broadcasting simultaneously on Periscope, Facebook, and YouTube first as a contributor of Medyascope.tv, then he continued broadcasting on his own account via his personal YouTube channel. Ünlü is also active on his Twitter, and Instagram accounts. The broadcasts of Ünlü are funded by his followers via a crowdfunding campaign on Patreon (Ünsal Ünlü, 2021; Ünsal Ünlü YouTube Channel, 2021).

As can be seen, in this period, journalists resigned or were dismissed from the mainstream media mostly due to political pressures. These journalists, who chose to continue their careers in the digital universe, have caused the media environment in Turkey to face an unprecedented diversification. On the one hand, unemployed journalists found a place where they could practice their profession relatively freely in the digital media, on the other hand, they established a new news media order outside of the big media companies that have dominated Turkey's agenda for decades.

4.5. Structural Factors that Constrain Professional Journalism in Turkey

Political and economic constraints that influence professional journalism are examined as structural factors in this section. Reference constraints vary between legal regulations, market disposition, organizational routines, cultural biases, and journalists' professional values. The political and economic constraints discussed under this heading should be understood as integrative systems that impose on journalists the work order desired by the status quo. However, as Tony Harcup (2009: 19) writes, these are a set of influences that tend to affect journalists in certain ways, some stronger than others, some stronger at certain times, but often in conflict with one another. It should be noted that the restrictions faced by journalists are subject to counter pressure. They are negotiable and resistible.

4.5.1. Political Pressures on the Freedom of Media

Although the political pressures on Turkey's media system have become evident with the bans on the internet and social media platforms, the government can directly control the media with the help of the political-Islamic interpretations of the Press Law, the Internet Law, the Broadcasting Law, the Penal Code and the Anti-Terror Law, and

a highly politicized judiciary (Akser and Baybars-Hawks, 2012; Yesil, 2016 cited in Eko and Hellmueller, 2020: 85-86).

Therefore, the government easily forbids negative coverage of certain topics such as political Islam, the Kurdish issue, Turkey's military action against the Kurds in Turkey, and Turkey's military activities in the Syrian civil war. It is also alleged that the Turkish judiciary is a branch of the government that accuses media practitioners, confiscates publications, shuts down websites, and prosecutes writers, publishers and artists (Eko and Hellmueller, 2020: 86).

Similarly, in 2021, Reporters without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontières, RSF) ranked Turkey 153 out of 180 countries in their "2021 World Press Freedom Index" (RSF, 2021; Tombus, 2021). As Ertug Tombus (2021) wrote, the government in Turkey, is using everything at its disposal to eradicate pluralism in the media. Therefore, for journalists who criticize to JDP government's policies, there is always the risk of imprisonment and the fear of being subject to judicial control or having their passport taken away (Tombus, 2021). As a result, hundreds of journalists, activists and politicians seen as hostile to the government in recent years have been detained for anti-state activities as well as insults to the president and other state figures. Many journalists were fired from their jobs or forced to resign or leave the country under political pressure (Eko and Hellmueller, 2020: 86).

For example, since the first days of 2019, journalists who criticize the "Peace Spring Operation³³" or broadcast news have been arrested. The most common accusations against journalists are; being a member of a terrorist organization, making propaganda for a terrorist organization, insulting the president, insulting state officials and insulting Turkishness. In the same period, RTÜK thanked the broadcasters who contributed to the national unity and solidarity and announced in its statement that those broadcasting against the Peace Spring Operation were also silenced. Also, at the end of 2019, Turkish legal history faced some absurd cases. For example, an Istanbul criminal court ordered the retrial of the journalists, despite the Supreme Court overturning the decision about the former executives and journalists of *Cumhuriyet*

³³ Turkey's anti-terror operation along with the Syrian National Army against the PKK/YPG and Daesh terrorists in northern Syria (AA, 2019a).

newspaper. Journalists and former executives were sentenced to decades in prison as part of the lawsuit (Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2020).

In this climate of fear, 135 journalists were behind bars as of 2019 alone, with many facing criminal prosecutions, mostly based on defamation and counter-terrorism charges. According to Scott Griffen (2019: 37-38), authorities equate critical reporting with terrorism. In addition, pre-trial detention, failure to prepare coherent indictments, and violations of the right to a fair trial, denied access to the council, and denied the right to appear in person before a judge also create ideal conditions for censorship.

According to Esra Arsan (2013: 447), censorship in Turkey has become common practice in the media mainly due to weak parliamentary representations and the subsequent repressive coup periods. Yet, even though a democratically elected government currently runs the country, censorship of the press remains widespread and systematic to silence alternative views. For example, during the İstanbul's mayoral election rerun in 2019³⁴, many self-censorship cases were observed (AA, 2019b; Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2020):

- *Yeni Şafak* newspaper refused to publish an article written by its columnist Özlem Albayrak, which criticized prison sentences given to CHP politician Canan Kaftancıoğlu on the basis of her social media posts. Journalist Albayrak resigned from the newspaper following the censorship crises.
- An episode of the *CNN Türk* television channel's political talk show *Tarafsız Bölge* (Neutral Zone) took an unscheduled commercial break as Ekrem İmamoğlu (Mayor of İstanbul) started talking about alleged corruption, and extravagance at the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality. The program was also ended before its scheduled time.

³⁴ The İstanbul mayoral election was held on 23 June 2019 which had resulted with the victory of CHP's candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu (HaberTürk, 2019a). It was a repeat of the March 2019 mayoral election, which was annulled by the Supreme Electoral Council (YSK) on 6 May 2019 (HaberTürk, 2019b). The original election was resulted in a 0.2% margin of victory for opposition candidate İmamoğlu, causing the JDP to successfully petition for a re-election (HaberTürk, 2019b).

- *beIN Sports* (a television platform) censored part of the live broadcast of the Beşiktaş-Medipol Başakşehir match after the fans shouted slogans in favour of Ekrem İmamoğlu.
- Access to online game called “Mazbata Online”, starring İmamoğlu, was blocked on the Turkish Parliament’s wireless internet network.

On the other hand, a study by Lyombe Eko and Lea Hellmueller (2020) titled “One meta-media event, two forms of censorship: The Charlie Hebdo affair in the United Kingdom and Turkey” successfully reflects the political-cultural pressures in Turkey. The restricted field of journalism and the efforts of some journalists to protect freedom of expression and editorial independence despite ongoing restrictions and threats are discussed within the scope of the Charlie Hebdo incident in this study. The study mainly focuses on editorial decision making mechanisms in the UK, and in Turkey: to republish or not to republish the cartoon of Prophet Mohammed on Charlie Hebdo’s related issue.

The study reveals that the media in the UK did not appear in masse to republish cartoons or proclaim “Je Suis Charlie” (I am Charlie) in the name of Western freedom of expression values. Although they condemned the terrorist attack and supported freedom of expression, they were not comfortable approving Charlie Hebdo’s secularism and its anti-religiousness. As for the media in Turkey, it has emerged that although most of them are nationalist and Islamist, they do not criticize Charlie Hebdo or disdain its secular criticism of Islam. The study also revealed that *Cumhuriyet*, the secular face of Turkish media, and three satirical magazines such as *Leman*, *Uykusuz* and *Penguen* produced a joint cover of “Je Suis Charlie” (Eko and Hellmueller, 2020: 84-97). In addition, Utku Çakırözer, former editor-in-chief of *Cumhuriyet* newspaper, which has been the target of many terrorist attacks, wrote on Twitter, “We lost our writers in terrorist attacks. We understand the pain of the Charlie Hebdo massacre” (Al-Jazeera, 2015 cited in Eko and Hellmueller, 2020: 92).

However, the republished *Je Suis Charlie* cover did not appeal to the Turkish government and religious officials. Participating in the Republicans’ Je Suis Charlie marches in Paris with other world leaders to show his support for Charlie Hebdo and freedom of expression, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu condemned *Cumhuriyet*’s re-release of the Charlie Hebdo cover. After a while, a court in

Diyarbakir province, which stopped the distribution of the Charlie Hebdo cover in the country, ordered the country's telecommunications authorities to block websites showing the Je Suis Charlie cartoon. Immediately afterwards, many lawsuits were filed against journalists such as Ceyda Karan and Hikmet Çetinkaya for insulting religion (Eko and Hellmueller, 2020: 93).

Nevertheless, the survey reflected that journalists in Turkey boldly demonstrated their support for freedom of expression. Thus, the study showed that despite Turkey's extremely limited journalistic environment, Turkish media engage in symbolic acts of resistance to advance freedom of expression (Eko and Hellmueller, 2020: 75-93). However, in a country where freedom of expression in general and freedom of the press in particular has deteriorated markedly under an authoritarian regime, these symbolic acts of resistance, like the Charlie Hebdo case, have always come at a cost. Unfortunately, journalists often pay the price with their lives (Arsan, 2013; Çarkoglu and Yavuz, 2010; Coskuntuncel, 2018 cited in Eko and Hellmueller, 2020: 87). For example, after the murder of journalist Hrant Dink in 2007, at least 11 journalist were killed in Turkey (Topuz, 2020: 166).

In 2008, journalist Engin Çeber was detained while distributing *Yürüyüş* magazine in Istanbul Sarıyer. The journalist, who was arrested and tortured in the police station and prison, died of a cerebral haemorrhage on October 10, 2008 (Topuz, 2020: 166).

In 2009, editor-in-chief of *Yaşam* newspaper İsmail Cihan Hayırsever was killed as a result of an armed attack after publishing articles on corruption cases in Bandırma municipality (Haberler.Com, 2013; Topuz, 2020: 168).

In 2011, journalist Haydar Meriç, owner of *Rumeli 39* newspaper and a news website, was killed in Düzce. According to the news of Sabah newspaper dated June 24, 2016, Meriç was executed by Fetö (a terrorist organization) for writing a book claiming that Fetullah Gülen was gay (OdaTV, 2016; Topuz, 2020: 169-170).

Journalist Nuh Köklü was stabbed to death by a shopkeeper who hit snowballs on his window while he was playing snowballs with his friends after returning from a

protest in Kadıköy Square in 2015. After Köklü's death, the Journalists Association of Turkey stated that the reason for this murder was the hate speech produced by politicians. The Journalists Association of Turkey urged politicians to stay away from hate speech and statements that polarize public opinion (Topuz, 2020: 172).

In 2015, journalist Ünsal Zor was killed by a bomb left in front of the Istanbul Kağıthane office of the *Adımlar* magazine which he was the author. The magazine was known for its closeness to İBDA-C³⁵ (Topuz, 2020: 173).

In 2015, journalists Firaz El Hamidi and İbrahim Abdulkadir were killed in Şanlıurfa. They were working for *Ayn Vatan* newspaper published in Arabic (Topuz, 2020: 174).

In 2015, Syrian journalist Naci El Jerf was killed in Gaziantep. Journalist was producing documentaries on the massacres of ISIS (Topuz, 2020: 175).

In 2016, Syrian journalist Muhammed Zahir El Şerkat was killed in Gaziantep. Since his arrival to Turkey, he was covering news stories against ISIS (Topuz, 2020: 175).

In 2016, reporter of *Yeni Şafak* newspaper journalist Mustafa Cambaz was killed because of a fire opened by the putschists during the coup attempt of July 15, 2016, in Çengelköy, Istanbul (Topuz, 2020: 175).

³⁵ The Islamic Great Eastern Raiders-Front (IBDA-C) is a Sunni Salafist group that supports Islamic rule in Turkey and believes that Turkey's present secular leadership is "illegal." It has been known to cooperate with various opposition elements in Turkey in attempts to destabilize the country's political structure. The group supports the establishment of a "pure Islamic" state, to replace the present "corrupt" Turkish regime that is cooperating with the West. Its primary goal is the establishment of the Federative Islamic State, a goal backed by armed terrorist attacks primarily against civilian targets. It has been active since the mid-1970s. The IBDA-C has engaged in activities that minimize personal risk, such as bombings, throwing Molotov cocktails and sabotage. The group has announced its actions and targets in publications to its members, who are free to launch independent attacks. The IBDA-C typically has attacked civilian targets, including: churches, charities, minority-affiliated targets, television transmitters, newspapers, pro-secular journalists, Atatürk statues, taverns, banks, clubs, and tobacco shops. One of the IBDA-C's more renowned attacks was the killing of 37 people in a firebomb attack in July 1993 on a hotel in Sivas. IBDA-C cooperated with Islamist, reactionary and nationalist groups during this attack. The group claimed responsibility for a quadruple bomb attack in Istanbul in 2003. In 1994, the IBDA-C was tied to an attempt to assassinate a Jewish businessman and an attack on the Greek Orthodox Church in Istanbul. In 1992, the group had unconfirmed involvement in an attack on an Istanbul synagogue. Turkish police believe that the IBDA-C has also claimed responsibilities for attacks carried out by other groups to elevate its image. (FAS, 2004).

On October 2, 2018, it was revealed that journalist Jamal Khashoggi was killed in the Consulate General of Saudi Arabia in Istanbul and his body was dismembered. Khashoggi was a columnist for the Washington Post and wrote against Saudi Arabia (Topuz, 2020: 176).

4.5.2. Economic Constraints of the Media Market and the Labour Relations of Journalists

Until the 2000s, advertising revenues of traditional media organizations in Turkey were below 1 billion dollars. It rose to \$1 billion for the first time in 2000. However, the economic crisis that emerged in 2001 caused a decrease of nearly 50% in advertising revenues compared to the previous year. With the recovery that started in the first quarter of 2002, advertising revenues increased by an annual average of 20% until 2007. As of 2007, the global economic crisis also affected Turkey's media sector; for example, advertising revenues fell by 2.1% in 2008. In 2009, the crisis continued and advertising revenues decreased by 15%. As of 2010, the effects of the crisis started to decrease and advertising revenues increased by 35% in dollar terms (Sözeri and Güney, 2011: 40).

More recently, for example, newspaper advertising revenues reached \$69 million in 2020. Television's advertising revenues were 764 million dollars, radio's advertising revenues were 50 million dollars. On the other hand, digital advertising revenues reached approximately 345 million dollars in 2017 and increased to 425 million dollars in 2019 (Statistica, 2021a; Statistica, 2021b; Statistica, 2021c; Statistica, 2021d).

However, despite the growth of the media sector, especially since the first half of 2011, the concentration of the advertising revenues in the hands of a few pro-government media groups resulted in unfair distribution of income (Tunç, 2018: 150). For example, in 2016, newspapers such as *Sabah*, *Star*, *Yeni Şafak*, *Akşam*, *Güneş*, *Takvim*, *Yeni Akit*, and *Türkiye*, television channels such as *Ülke TV*, *TVNet*, *360 TV*, *24 TV*, *aHaber*, and *Beyaz TV*, which are known for their pro-JDP stance, received the most amount from public institutions through the Directorate-General of Press

Announcements, which allocates official government announcements to media organizations (Kozok, 2016; Tunç, 2018: 150).

This unequal distribution of income, on the one hand, led to the excessive growth of pro-government media outlets, and on the other hand, hindered the growth of alternative and independent media outlets. In addition, small and independent digital media outlets have never benefited from official advertising distribution. To survive, digital media outlets have resorted to unsatisfactory business models, such as subsidizing audiences for subscriptions and finding grants from international organizations (Tunç, 2018: 150; Yanatma, 2021: 797; Media Ownership Monitor Turkey, 2021).

Despite the difficulties faced by digital media organizations in particular, a new law numbered 7193 came into effect on December 7, 2019, to ensure that digital businesses pay a tax on the income they generate from the Turkish market. The new law is perceived as an attempt to reduce the revenues of digital media to prevent media vitality and pluralism. (Media Ownership Monitor Turkey, 2021). Therefore, in an environment where the government clearly controls the media, it is inevitable to observe employment imbalances among journalists. Instability is defined by low unionization rates, low wages and social insecurity (Sözeri and Güney, 2011: 46).

The rights of employees in Turkey were first regulated by the “Labor Law”, which entered into force in 1936. However, journalists classified as knowledge (or intellectual) workers were excluded from the scope of this law. For journalists, Press Association Act no. 5311 came into effect in 1938. This law was mainly based on the idea that all journalists should be gathered under one chamber and that those who are not registered in the chamber should be banned from doing journalism (Sözeri and Güney, 2011: 31; Üstün, 2013: 150-154).

On 10 July 1952 the Journalists’ Union of Istanbul was established. The union changed its name to Turkey Journalists’ Syndicate (TGS) in 1963, started to work by focusing on the following issues to protect the social rights of journalists after the new law numbered 5953 came into force in 1952: determination of minimum wage, right to collective bargaining, annual leave, payment of compensation during dismissals,

resolution of labour disputes, right to strike, and in-service training (Topuz, 2012: 360). In 1961, new regulations known as “212” were added to the law (TGS, 2021a). Thus, with the arrangements made, the new law gave journalists various rights such as unilateral termination of employment contracts for justified reasons and receiving severance pay (Yanardağ, 2004).

However, in the 90s, media bosses forced journalists to resign from their unions with the threat of direct or indirect dismissal (Öztürk, 2017: 98). In the following years, young journalists who have just entered the profession have avoided unionizing under the same threat (Soner, 2003: 1 cited in Öztürk, 2017: 98). On the other hand, although the media bosses hid behind financial difficulties in order to legitimize the de-unionization process, they had to pay high compensation to the dismissed unionized journalists (Topuz, 2012: 362).

In Turkey, today, there are several labour unions that address the journalists whether working for a media outlet, or working as a freelancer such as, *Basın İş* founded in 1963, *Disk Basın-İş* founded in 1967, and *Medya İş* founded in 1976 (Hak-İş, 2014; Basın İş, 2021; Disk Basın-İş, 2021). However, according to the data of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, in January 2021 Turkey Journalists’ Syndicate has 1282, *Basın İş* has 2315, *Disk Basın-İş* has 347, *Medya İş* has 2743 active members (Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 2021). It can be said that “the fear of unemployment” still prevents journalists from union membership (Sözeri and Güney, 2011: 32).

Following the de-unionisation process which was led by media bosses, and supported by the government, “the media sector has witnessed practices such as, employing journalists with no insurance”, and/or “employing journalists on the basis of the provisions of the Labour Law, instead of on Law no. 5953” (Sözeri and Güney, 2011: 33; Topuz, 2012: 361).

For example, according to the data of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, the total number of registered employees in the media sector was 86,505 in July 2020. However, according to January 2013 data, the number of registered employees in the media sector was 104,141. Considering the January 2013 data, it is

seen that the number of registered employees in the media sector is in a downward trend. In addition, according to the December 2020 “Sector and workplace” list announced by the ministry, the total number of journalists registered in the media sector is 22,574. In other words, the ratio of registered employees practicing journalism in the media sector to the total number of registered employees in the same sector (86,505) is approximately 26% (TGS, 2021a).

As of September 2020, the number of journalists working within the scope of Labour Law, instead of Law no. 5953 is 17,551 (TGS, 2021a). This figure clearly shows that journalism in Turkey is a low paid and insecure job. In addition, journalists in many media organizations, including the mainstream media, are paid the minimum wage, which is not enough to live in today’s conditions, that is, while Turkey is struggling with high inflation rates (Soygüder-Yıldız, 2021).

According to the mini survey conducted by “Journo”³⁶ with 44 journalists in 2020 (Soygüder-Yıldız, 2021):

- The average salary for 29 mainstream publications is 3,643 TL. Average salary for 14 local publications is 2.044TL.
- Editors earn an average of 3,623 TL in mainstream media and 2,300 TL in local media.
- For reporters earn an average of 2,700 TL in mainstream media and 2,094 TL in local media.
- Editor-reporters earn an average of 3,183 TL in mainstream media and 1,500 TL in the local media.
- Those who hold administrative editorial positions such as managers, chiefs and coordinators in services such as, foreign news, economy and magazines earn an average of 5,917 TL in the mainstream media and 2,149 TL in local media.

³⁶ “Journo.com.tr is a bipartisan media organization aiming to enhance quality of journalism practices in Turkey through educational activities and to advocate freedom of speech through opening spaces for unemployed or freelancer journalists who are looking for mediascapes to publish their Works” (Journo, 2021).

- The average salary of a social media editor in the mainstream media is 3,300 TL, an SEO editor's salary is 3,412 TL, a graphic designer's salary is 2,760 TL, and a native ad editor's salary is 5,500 TL.
- The average monthly income of freelance journalists is 3,250 TL.

As can be seen, the salaries of journalists vary between 92 and 338 euros as of December 2021. Moreover, according to TGS (2021b) data, in 2021, the collective bargaining rights of 1400 employees of five different media organizations were blocked. However, in Turkey, workers and employers have the right to conclude collective bargaining agreements to mutually regulate economic, social and working conditions (Sarmaşık, 1994: 192).

Employers violate the rights of journalists by blocking the collective bargaining rights of journalists, although it is clearly stated in the constitution. All of these also jeopardized the right of journalists to strike. For example, the first known strike during the JDP period took place in 2009 in the *Turkuvaz* Media group, to which *ATV* television channel, *Sabah* newspaper and various magazine groups are affiliated. Journalists affiliated with the *Turkuvaz* Media group were members of TGS and started a strike after the employer did not compromise their rights such as wages, social assistance, severance pay and notice pay (Petrol-İş, 2009).

All these financial insecurities and rights violations put journalists at risk for their well-deserved retirement. For example, journalist Nilay Örnek (2021b) writes on her website: "All the newspapers I work for underpaid my insurance premium. Now, in order not to receive a low pension, I have to find a lawyer and file a 'Service Detection Case' against at least four media outlets that I work with". According to TGS (2021b), all exemplified insecurities are closely related to the de-unionization policies of media organizations.

In addition, according to the press card regulation in Turkey, journalists working within the scope of Law No. 6698 are entitled to receive a press card shortly after they start working. Apart from journalists, this card is given to media organization owners and chairman of the board of directors, members of some public institutions and organizations (members of the TGNA, Provincial or Municipal Councils, RTÜK,

member or auditing member of the general assembly or board of directors of BİK, members of the board of directors of TRT, members of the board of directors of the *Anadolu Ajansı*, etc.), and academics working in the field of journalism (Sözeri and Güney, 2011: 33-34).

According to the statement made by the Presidency, as of the end of 2020, there are 15,148 press card holders in Turkey. However, it is unclear whether the press card holders are journalists or media sector employees (Cumhuriyet, 2021). As a matter of fact, as Sözeri and Güney (2011: 34) once emphasized, when the available data are calculated together with the employment data, and when other employees who are also eligible for a press card are taken into account, both the insured employee and the journalist holding a press card are quite low in Turkey.

4.5.3. Diminishing Employment Opportunities for Professional Journalists

According to TGS data, unemployment in the media sector is 30% in 2020. Only 5% of thousands of young people who graduate from communication faculties every year can find a job in the media sector. In particular, newspapers with reduced circulation, television channels that do not receive ratings, and digital publications with low click-through rates compensate journalists for their losses by dismissing them without paying severance pay (Levent, 2021; TGS, 2021).

According to Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) data, the unemployment rate in Turkey in general was 10.9% in 2016 and 2017; 11% in 2018; 13.7% in 2019. According to August 2020 data, the number of unemployed decreased by 0.8 % compared to the same period of the previous year and became 13.2%. And in January 2021 the data was announced as 12, 2%. The unemployment rate among journalism graduates was 19.2% in 2016; 19.1% in 2017; and 23.8% in 2018. According to the TURKSTAT workforce statistics announced on March 20, 2020, this rate was 21.8% in 2019 (TGS, 2021).

As in 2019, journalism graduates were the most exposed group to unemployment. Although the official unemployment rate among journalism graduates has slightly decreased compared to the previous year, it is estimated that the unemployment rate among journalists is around 25-30% with unregistered employment (Levent, 2021). The reason for this is the holdings that have entered the media sector with large capitals since the 1980s and increased the volume of the sector. Previously, this was presented to the public as an employment opportunity, and the number of communication faculties throughout the country was increased, especially with the support of media bosses. However, the number of graduates from faculties is far above the sector's needs (Özok, 2018: 166). For example, according to Council of Higher Education (YÖK) data, in 2017, solely journalism departments of the universities accepted 2569 students. That was followed by radio, television, and cinema, and public relations departments with a total of 5577 students (Özok, 2018: 169).

Thus, the labour surplus observed in the media industry first caused labour force to become cheaper, and then to an increase in unemployment and an increase in labour force competition. It is followed by the fragile structure of the media sector, which is directly affected by the global and/or local financial crisis. For example, during the 2001 global crisis, 5000 journalists were fired by media companies. Similarly, the abundance of liquidity experienced before the 2008 global economic crisis also led to an increase in advertising expenditures. Rising advertising spending has led to the expansion of media outlets. The decrease in advertising expenditures along with the economic crisis had a negative impact on the Turkish media, causing mass layoffs (Özok, 2018: 166-171).

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the transformation of the media in Turkey from the 2000s to the present and the structural problems affecting professional journalism, are discussed. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background as to why journalists left the mainstream media and under what conditions they set up their own journalistic start-ups. The first part of the fourth chapter contains a brief history of journalism from the

Ottoman Empire era to the Turkish Republic. Beginning from the establishment of the first printing houses and the first official and unofficial newspapers in the Ottoman Empire the strengths and weaknesses of the press in different periods are explored.

Until the end of the 1990s journalism in Turkey is affected by the political and social developments of the Republican era (such as the transition from the single-party period to the multi-party period and the military coups) The economic, social and political conditions such as 2000 and 2001 economic crisis that paved the way for the Islamist conservative JDP to come to power led to another chapter in the transformation in the media system from the 2000s to the present.

The main features of the media system in the JDP era were the changes in the ownership structure and conglomeration, increasing partisanship and pressures faced by oppositional media and journalists. In addition, the closure of some oppositional media outlets, imprisonment of journalists, oppositional journalists's dismissal without any compensation, and the amendment to the press card regulation brought significant pressures on professional journalists. In recent years the July 15, 2016 coup attempt increased political and legal pressures over oppositional media outlets and journalists.

The fourth chapter also examined the development of digital journalism in Turkey which first started with the digital transformation of traditional news media and continued with the emergence of digital-born news sites mostly founded by journalists. The alternative media of Gezi Park protests have been accepted as the predecessors of the news sites established by journalists within the scope of the thesis. In addition to journalists who have established their own news sites some prefer to work as freelance/self-employed and continue reporting on social networks..

The structural problems of journalism in Turkey explored in this chapter are divided into two headings: political and economic. Political problems are mostly caused by the factors affecting the freedom of the press and mostly took the form of legal pressures and bans on the internet and social media. How journalists struggled with these pressures was analysed in relation to the representation of Charlie Hebdo

massacre in the Turkish media. For oppositional media the issue turned into a symbolic act of resistance against the pressures.

In addition to political pressures journalist have to endure economic hardships as well. Though digital advertising revenues of conventional media institutions increased in recent years the problems such as the employment of journalists with minimum wages and sometimes as unregistered, de-unionization policies of media bosses, and the scarcity of journalists with press cards persisted. Therefore, the last part of the fourth chapter focused on the declining employment opportunities for professional journalists by taking into account current unemployment figures.



CHAPTER 5: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY INTO DIGITAL-BORN NEWS SITES FOUNDED BY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS IN TURKEY SINCE 2000s

5.1. Introduction

Since 2000s, with the rise of the internet and social media technologies, several well-known journalists in Turkey began to work usually in collaboration with their colleagues on self-founded digital news sites as a reaction to highly restricted and insecure media system. These journalists had either resigned or dismissed, and/or banished from mainstream news organizations because of their oppositional or critical views since, nearly all major news outlets which support the ruling JDP make an effort to skip the truth and impose news blackouts on all serious issues (Baydar, 2013).

The role of social media platforms in journalists' becoming owners of their own news sites is undeniable. From the 2000s onwards, easy access to the means of content production and distribution via social media networks enabled journalists to share independent content, advertise their skills and create a reliable self-image for potential audiences. Self-branding of journalists allowed them to build a career outside conventional media corporations and reinforced the move towards entrepreneurialism encouraging them to found and manage their own digital news outlets with affordable costs.

Today, the news sites founded by professional journalists are accepted as “the primary refuge of independent journalism”, Emre Kızılkaya and Berrak Ütücü (2021) state, in the International Press Institute's (IPI) Digital Media Report for Turkey. These news sites carry the features of small-scale news media organizations linked to individual initiatives, or of small co-operatives formed by experienced journalists.

Depending on their business models, they can be identified as “independent”, “non-profit” and/or “alternative” as well as “for-profit” start ups.

However, not all journalist owned news initiatives continued as a success story. While some of these sites had to cease their operations due to financial difficulties others barely made enough profit to thrive. Some others faced legal and political pressures as well. As of 2020 thousands of news websites and articles were blocked in Turkey by authorities,(Kızılkaya and Ütücü, 2021). Thus, journalists’ motivation to practice their profession on the web and social media with the hope that they would be more free and independent needs to be questioned in detail.

This chapter aims to explore the state of independent digital journalism in Turkey in relation to the promises and perils of news sites founded by professional journalists since the 2000s. Based on a critical ethnographic field research this chapter aims to shed light on the organisational structures, values and business models as well as the working conditions and labour relations of the news sites.

5.2. Motivations that Prompted Professional Journalists to Found News Start-ups

Journalism, by its nature, is a difficult and stressful profession. Particularly, a physical and spiritual rupture, namely burnout, is quite observed among journalists (Charon and Pigeolat, 2021). These are considered as the main reasons for quitting journalism, according to the study of Jean-Marie Charon and Adénora Pigeolat (2021) which analyse the results of a survey motivated by a surprising observation: the average length of journalists’ careers is 15 years, the number of press card holders has fallen by 10 % over the past ten years (a rate of decline that has doubled in 2020) and the omnipresence, on social networks, of discussions between journalists around the question “Why am I leaving journalism”.

Surprisingly, despite the global orientation of journalists, showed in the book “Hier, Journalistes”, this situation has moved totally in the opposite direction, in Turkey. Journalists in Turkey face a stressful workload as well as political and economic challenges. However, leaving the profession is out of the question.

For example, as a result of Turkey's slide into authoritarianism, especially oppositionist journalists detained, dismissed, or forced to resign (Baydar, 2013). Those who criticized the ruling party, as well as, disseminated news stories that claimed to attempt weaken the government, or covered up conflicts such as Turkish/Kurdish, and terrorism issues were systematically removed from the profession, and from the public space (Baydar, 2013). On the subject, a journalist also declared that due to his/her distinctive positioning, the mainstream media outlets were stopped inviting him/her to television shows. However, before the conflict, he/she was invited to the television shows nearly once a week (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

In a situation described, journalists, especially experienced ones, preferred to establish their own media instead of leaving the profession. Journalists especially moved their social capital to digital. During the establishment phase, most journalists received help from their friends and close circles. The aid the journalists accepted was mostly on technical issues.

On the other hand, this leads the research to questioning why journalists prefer to establish their own media instead of leaving the profession. And it raises the question of what their motivations are. The motivations that provided journalists to found their own news media outlets, revealed as providing an autonomous and independent space for journalists in a precarious position alike them, and sustaining the profession freely as much as possible. Which can also be defined as,

- Escaping from the oppressions of ruling party as much as possible
- Providing an autonomous space for journalists
- Performing independent journalism

A founder tells in which conditions the news site was born by making projections to the background of his/her decisions,

“I am a journalist for 35 years. I always worked for mainstream media institutions such as newspapers and news channels. While

performing my profession I was dismissed, forced to resign and jailed. I'm a headstrong person. I always opposed to the interventions of media bosses on my news stories, because I was following the truth. However, my bosses were in collaboration with politicians. They were forbidden me to write about some issues especially those which criticize the government, somehow, some way, when I wrote about them, it ended up in jail. I think there must not be these kind of interventions in journalism. I cannot bare hiding news from public. This is why I pioneered this digital project" (Interviewee 31, ABC Gazetesi and Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

Most of the founders of the news sites think that independency in journalism means, capability of arguing about politics, providing public service, and preserving the professions values. The whole act also classifies journalists as both the gatekeepers, and the advocates, in other words, as neutrals, and participants (Janowitz, 1975: 618). According to Morris Janowitz (1975: 618), in journalism, the gatekeeper role emphasizes objectivity by separating the facts from the opinions. On the other hand, the advocate role participates to the process, by being an advocate for the powerless (Janowitz, 1975: 618-619).

Here, journalists while preserving the gatekeeper role, act as advocates and participate to promote their own profession against violations such as, union rights, job insecurity, and media freedom. Therefore, as seen on a photo that transmits a scene from the makeup studio of Mediascope.tv, journalism is not a crime but a profession, and does not need to be forbidden (See Figure 5).



Figure 5: A scene from the makeup studio of Medyascope.tv “#gazetecilik suç değildir” (#journalism is not a crime)

According to the founders, performing an advocate role for contributing to the creation of an independent journalistic environment to preserve democracy is also vital. A founder clarified how advocacy notion became the priority of journalists:

“In Turkey, in the name of independent journalism, our news site had to exist. Journalism had fallen into a miserable situation. Our news site was born as a reaction. On the other hand, in recent years, more and more journalists are dismissed or jailed for practicing their professions. We founded our news site to provide a workplace for both experienced and young journalists, and to perform independent and quality journalism.” (Interviewee 6, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04. 2018).

The editor-in-chief of a news site implicitly illustrates why he/she contributed to the establishment of a news site:

“We founded our news site to perform independent journalism. Our aim was to perform our profession, in the very best way. And now, we believe that we are the future of the journalism industry in Turkey if the

legacy media organizations keep functioning as his master's voice" (Interviewee 31, ABC Gazetesi and Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05. 2019).

According to the founders of the news sites, in Turkey, solely on born-digital news start-ups, it is possible to perform independent and quality journalism. Besides, journalists, who stated that there's no lack of news in Turkey but dire straits for publishing the news, expressed they are more endurable since news sites, existing in spite of political and legal oppressions, have either null or limited relations with capital holders. Since these journalistic start-ups can be started and maintained nearly without costs contrary to print, and broadcasting:

"At least at the beginning, we started with a little capital and we maintained our work with a few-person-editorial-team in a small office or from our houses. It's easy to produce a digital project, we don't have any printing or paper cost. We don't have to obtain licenses and pay high amounts as television channels do." (Interviewee 6, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04. 2018).

Thus, the new (digital) form of labour enables journalists founding their own small and medium-sized enterprises to produce content, and establishing their own distribution mechanisms through websites, blogs, and social media services; which usually require reduced infrastructure, and resource needs (Rottwilim, 2014: 4; Casero-Ripollés et al., 2016:287). Due to affordable usage of these technologies journalists also step into media entrepreneurship which can be conceived as the guarantee of the liberation of journalists and journalism, as well as the employment opportunity. Nevertheless, at the focus of their digital projects, the founders of the news sites identified themselves mostly as journalists who own a media outlet, rather than entrepreneurs.

For the founders of the news sites, it is a return to the roots of journalism where journalists were not only reporters but editors, distributors, as well as owners of the media outlets (Splichal and Dahlgren, 2016: 6). Journalists are now responsible for both the business side, and the editorial side of the journalism. That is to say, they

need to innovate journalism by producing a different kind of journalistic content than the rest of news outlets, while adopting a viable business model.

Moreover, as a founder recounts, founders of the news sites must have skills that fulfill the tasks of a general manager, a financial manager, and a marketing manager, they also must intervene with technical issues of the news site:

“I used to publish a leftist magazine. However, political oppressions and economical shortages caused us to pause for a while. Actually, we always had a website, but it wasn’t updated. What we do now is updating this website and converting it into a news-interpretation site, where our political behaviour is emphasized; we are socialists. I know that I am one of the best journalists of Turkey but business side of journalism is highly different from the creative side. For example, before forming my editorial team, I needed to learn about technical issues of running a news site, I needed to determine the business model of the news site and learned about how to commercialize our work. I paid the bills, I ordered the meals and so on. At the beginning I was all alone and working day and night on voluntary basis. I want to add the fact that our work has not yet settled well.” (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21. 04. 2018).

As seen, the desire of being autonomous, and making independent journalism is not enough to create a dynamic news media outlet, to sustain a profession which struggles with restrictions, and precariat. The founders of the news sites, have to tolerate the ambiguity of financial issues, by using their own capital (economic, cultural, and social). To produce original and innovative content, they need to involve talented journalists, and technical staff to their projects. They need to develop the news site’s design, and also learn about issues such as, sales, and marketing strategies.

However, despite the efforts of the founders, in Turkey where the government intervenes news sites in every occasion with blockings by court decisions, or slowing down the internet connection, and/or social network services, it is not that much easy to settle down a sustainable news outlet. For example, more recently, the ruling party

put taxes into effect such as “digital services” which concerns 7.5% of advertisement revenues of the news sites, since March 1, 2020 (Sabah Daily Newspaper, 2020).

In addition, in August 2019, Turkey mandates all online content providers to obtain broadcasting licenses from RTUK (radio and television watchdog of Turkey) which will then supervise the content supplied by the providers (Reuters, 2019). Aside from streaming platforms such as Netflix, or local ones, PuhuTV, and BluTV, news sites which rely on advertising for their revenues are also subjected to this supervision, and potential fines or loss of their license (Reuters, 2019).

As a founder recounts, all these interventions aim to stop the journalists who own a journalistic start-up: *“The ruling party is trying to intervene journalists like us by slowing or blocking social networks, or our web sites by court decisions”* (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21. 04. 2018). Nevertheless, despite the efforts of government, the news sites still attract journalists, and promise hope.

5.2.1. Motivations that Drive Journalists to Work on News Sites

Despite the interventions of the government on legal basis, most of the journalist’s believe that comparing to conventional media structure of Turkey, news sites are giving more room to perform quality journalism which comes to be the dominant motivation that prompted journalists to work at a news site that founded by a journalist.

Other motivations as follows,

- Desire to work freely
- To catch up with technological developments
- Having difficulties while finding a job after graduation (young journalists)

On the other hand, journalists strictly link quality journalism to production conditions such as, “editorial independence, transparency, accountability, and public service” (Meijer, 2012: 755). And, according to journalists, accessing these production conditions should be the dream of every journalist in Turkey, and perhaps

in the world. A journalist clarifies how his/her professional path intersects with a news site at the focus of quality journalism,

“I think, the mainstream media in Turkey is not performing quality journalism. In Turkey, journalism is limited and always under control. I choose to work at a news site, because I can continue my profession with honour and perform it adequately. I used to work at Al Jazeera Turk before this news site. Al Jazeera Turk closed down and I received an offer from here. I already knew and followed here. We didn’t even talk about money. I just told that I wanted to perform journalism. They said ‘Yes, you can do it here’. I came here with this condition. The attractive side of working here is performing real journalism. I always worked at mainstream media before. I haven’t seen a news institution as free as here” (Interviewee 12, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 30. 03. 2018).

While defining quality journalism, most of the journalists used words such as, honesty, respecting the truth, diversity of opinions, as well as, intending to publish within the scope of public interest. Journalists stated that, on a news site, they can cover any story that interested country’s agenda, without organizational oppressions. They also told that the news sites gives a room to produce accurate, objective, well researched and well written news stories, and audio-visual programs that disseminated via social media networks. According to journalists, this is related to the nature of news sites that do not engage in complex relationships with advertisers, as well as politicians. This situation undoubtedly creates a space of freedom, this is why journalists stated that on a news site, they can transmit their knowledge and thoughts to the public freely without the interventions of advertisers, politicians, or the media bosses, as a journalist tells,

“Editorial independence is important. Comparing to mainstream news media, journalism really exists in the news site that I work for. We interrogate the accuracy of news much. Since there’s also not a boss pressure, we don’t make any news if we don’t believe in its accuracy. In the special news that we make on our own, all initiative belongs to us.

Editor-in-chief never interrupts.” (Interviewee 4, Diken, in depth interview, 10. 04. 2018).

Thus, one of the attraction points of the news sites is the editorial independency which provides quality news as journalists claim. However, settling down editorial independence is not such easy, for example, journalists need to deal with plenty of cases opened against them by the government or by President Erdoğan, following the stories that they covered. On the other hand, making money is always out of the agenda of journalists until they believed that performing quality journalism could solve financial obstacles in the near future. For example, when they fully attract the attention of the audiences which slightly migrated to digital.

Therefore, before starting to create a new media order on digital, the very aim of journalists can be defined as “to reinvent the way that a journalistic organization can be established by using occupational ideology of journalism as a resource for accumulation of capital” (Avadar, 2019: 56). However this approach adds some ambiguity to the profession’s sustainability with a commitment of editorial independence by directing the context to an idealistic perspective. A journalist clarifies his/her motivations by revealing the idealistic perspective referred,

“At the moment, in Turkey, traditional media is not free enough. This is why I preferred working at an independent media institution. The site I work at is independent. We are independent and free in editorial means here, also free and independent from the advertiser. For an idealist journalist like me, these are the reasons that increase the ambition to perform journalism; money would come after” (Interviewee 10, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 30.03.2018).

Without doubt, technology has long been associated with journalism, departing from telegraph to ICT’s. Naturally digital media has influenced the way how journalists work, such as the structure and organization of the newsrooms, the nature of news content, news production and distribution mechanisms, interaction with audiences, and so on. In accordance, catching up with technology comes out to be a powerful motivation for the journalists.

“In digital age, I think, working at a journalistic start-up is a destination point. Compared to traditional media, I think this sphere is more open to creative production.” (Interviewee 10, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 30.03.2018).

“Digital media has gained importance compared to traditional media at recent years. Especially, for last four or five years, news is hot through digital media, is consumed quickly and stale. Everything’s instant in digital media. For example, I have ten minutes for news production. After ten minutes, the news gets stale and has no meaning left. Digital media is something that kills reporting, because I’m always on desk top. In spite of this, I can confirm and serve some information to the reader instantly. I don’t have to wait for the newspaper to be printed or the primetime news on TV. I develop quick reflexes and I’m fast.” (Interviewee 18, Oda TV, in depth interview, 09. 04. 2018).

For young journalists especially who defined themselves as oppositionists, in Turkey, it is not easy to find a job in mainstream media organizations because of their partisan structure. Remembering, the partisan structure was established with the efforts of the ruling party to clean all critical and dissident voices from the agenda of the country, and to throw them out of the system. There are a few oppositionist media institutions, however, as a result of lack of revenues they are preferring to work with experienced journalists in small editorial teams. Thus, the news sites remain as the only way to start profession for young journalists following their graduation, a journalist clarifies,

“After my graduation, with the help of one of my professors, I started to work here. I’ve been working for nine months. I never think about applying to a mainstream media institution. I know that in mainstream, corners are all occupied by the supporters of the ruling party. In addition, I learned here much more about journalism than the university. It is a great chance working with experienced journalists. I have also opportunity to try new things here, we have no limits in the name

of creativity” (Interviewee 9, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 30. 03. 2018).

As seen, news sites are also fulfilling a mission such as mentoring to young journalists who are new in the profession. On the news sites, contrary to mainstream media which also deals with there is a strong common culture between editor-in-chiefs and other experienced journalists, they help newcomers by providing them a workplace, and teaching them subtleties of the profession by also giving the chance for practice, as a journalist explains,

“Finding a job in traditional media is hard for a new-graduate journalist with an oppositional view. In addition, in traditional media companies, because of cost reduction policies, we see a significant job loss. This is why, I adapt to changing media environment. The news site I work is independent, and it is a place where I can work with experienced journalists. Besides, we are in master-learner relationship. I am re-learning journalism, and it is better than school. We work in the mood of craftsmanship. And I believe that we are contributing in the creation of a new journalistic environment in Turkey.” (Interviewee 32, Tele 1 and ABC Gazetesi, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

As seen, young journalists stay away from the mainstream media, and prefer to work on news sites, as a result of policies such as uniformization, and cost reductions. Another important result is that journalist’s belief that they are contributing to establishing the new journalistic environment of Turkey. This belief also constitutes the main argument of the following section.

5.2.2. The Importance of the News Sites for Transformation of Journalism in Turkey; Impacts on Profession and the News Content

According to journalists, in Turkey, mainstream news media have not existed, at least for a decade. Journalists are creating a new media structure on the internet, as well as by spreading on social media platforms which could be the alternative of

mainstream media, if it was existed. Journalists believe that the presence of the news sites completely changed the news media concept of Turkey. The initial impact of the news sites, on transformation of journalism is emphasized by the founders, and the journalists as, editorial independence, and freedom (in terms of content and advertiser [due to selected business models]).

“The news site I have founded is the pride of Turkish journalism. Here, we diffuse true, honest and objective news. There are some sites that have been founded by idealist journalists like us, however, most of them have been prohibited. They’re enforced to diffuse from outside of the country. There’s no access to these sites from Turkey without VPN. I think there’s nothing left called mainstream media. Mainstream was newspapers such as Hürriyet, Sabah and Milliyet. However, they became newspapers that are directed by the ruling party’s monopoly. People seek journalists that can perform for public benefit. My news site carries an important role in democracy struggle, even in protecting the republic in Turkey. I think this shall be evaluated by historians in the future. This is a revolution. Yet, in Turkey, journalists create their own media in digital spaces. Thus, an independent and free journalism understanding is settling in Turkish media. The interest shown to us proves this.” (Interviewee 31, Tele 1 and ABC Gazetesi, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

According to the aforementioned founder and other founders who made almost the same comments, the collapse of the mainstream media and the need for independent journalism led to the emergence of a new reliable media environment focused on journalistic values. On the other hand, according to a journalist, news sites with their independent features are also saving journalism from the ruling party, which has controlled most of the legacy media outlets for decades,

“80%-90% of mainstream news media in Turkey is within the hands of ruling party. They control them directly or indirectly. The news site we founded has become almost the sole sphere where independent journalism is performed. Our news site stands on a crucial point in terms

of both journalism's development and future." (Interviewee 2, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04.2018).

For journalists, news sites are also rising as defenders of democracy, despite the presence of powerful legacy news media organizations with partisan characteristics, journalists claim that they are the agenda setters now as a founder reflects,

"In Turkey, people no more believe in mainstream news media. Therefore, interest moves towards oppositionist newspaper and news channels as well as alternative news sites like us, where journalists perform journalism in the name of themselves. Because everyone knows that on the other side of the news media, ruling party is strictly supported. Now, we set the agenda (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21.04.2018).

Founders also hardly criticize traditional media environment by asking the question: *"Is there a mainstream news media left in Turkey?"* (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04. 2018). On the other hand, there are also founders who argue that they represent the new mainstream media of Turkey,

"In Turkey, mainstream news media concept has changed especially in last 10 years. Journalism has been spoiled by censorship and self-censorship. Media has turned into a dessert. This situation has increased the popularity of independent news sites like ours. This is both a great opportunity and a responsibility. If there's still a concept as mainstream, our news site represents this concept or shall represent in the near future. Our ranking is high and our archive is robust. We produce exclusive news. We are successful. We are bound with only reality. In Turkey and the world, where there are lots of manipulations on news, we act in the way that mainstream would act." (Interviewee 19, Oda TV, in depth interview, 09.04.2018).

Moreover, for the founders, news sites are an attempt to reconstruct the mainstream news media in Turkey, as a concept which influences large numbers of people, and generally represents beliefs and opinions. On the other hand, there are also founders and journalists who believe that news sites are leading to self-construction of a new media concept out of the conventional meaning that referred.

According to journalists, in terms of content, the news sites are reflecting different interests, as well as different values of the society in cultural, demographic, and religious aspects. For example, they stopped dissemination of gender stereotypes, and discriminations while advocating right violations. They also cover the stories of minorities such as Kurds, Alevis, Armenians, and LGBTQ by getting out of masculine stance of legacy media.

“We present an alternative to audience. An alternative of existing news media. This is why our news are read, and we are followed on social networks. Especially in Turkey, mainstream news media concept functions in reverse direction that it should do. Not all voices are heard. In our news site, if we find the story beneficial for the public, we can publish any kind of news stories without hesitation. We include the views of all political parties in our news such as People’s Democracy Party (HDP) and Republican People’s Party (CHP) while traditional media don’t.” (Interviewee 30, Tele 1 and ABC Gazetesi, in depth interview, 28.05.2018).

Journalists argue that they are completely different from traditional media outlets in that they show the unseen, especially by including political diversity (voices of opposition) in journalism through the selection and framing of news:

“We transmit the details that cannot be seen on mainstream media to our audiences. Like a journalist’s hug and kiss with his wife at the moment he was released out of jail. Another day, we were following Nuriye-Semih³⁷ protests. In the protests, a performance artist in human

³⁷ On January 6, 2017, academic Nuriye Gülmen was discharged from her position through the Statutory Decree No. 679 issued under the State of Emergency. On October 29, 2016, teacher Semih Özakça was discharged from his position through the Statutory Decree No. 675 issued under the State

rights statue costume was present. At that moment, the police intervened and didn't touch the artist as they thought the artist was a statue. Later, when they discovered she wasn't a statue, she was also detained. We transmitted all these details to our audience. These style news of ours get much attention, they are also used as references by traditional media outlets. Even, President Erdoğan took our one of the broadcasts, and showed off during JDP's group meeting.” (Interviewee 23, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04.2018).

As journalists underline, despite the silence of the conventional news media, they shout as the loudest they can. Especially, they cover stories that reflect the interests of different components of the society:

“If, at the moment, news sites like ours are being clicked, the silence atmosphere that conventional news media created has contribution. People, yet, receive the news from alternative media outlets like ours, and we are aware that we reach too many people from different backgrounds” (Interviewee 1, Artı Gerçek and Artı TV, in depth interview, 16.07.2019).

On the news sites, user and/or citizen participation in news making with the news-related content such as stories, videos, photos, and comments is highly supported and used. Nevertheless, while some journalists relate this fact with the limited facilities that they have, such as small teams and financial insufficiency for news agency memberships, on the other hand, some journalists believe that these user-generated contents can play a pivotal role in prompting democratic conversation in the public sphere (Seungahn Nah et, al, 2017: 62-63). Therefore as Dan Gillmor (2004: 58-63 cited in Nah et, al., 2017: 63), stresses, citizen journalists may offer

of Emergency. On March 9, 2017 Gülmen and Özakça went on an indefinite and non-alternate hunger strike in front of the Human Rights Statute on Yüksel Street in Turkey's capital city of Ankara. They were taken into custody and later released several times during their hunger strike. Being charged with “being a member of a terrorist organization” and “opposing to the Law on Assembly and Demonstration” as well as “propagandizing for a terrorist organization”, they were arrested on May 23, 2017. On September 14, 2017 ahead of the first hearing, Sincan prison gendarmerie commandership sent an official report for Gülmen and Özakça not to be brought to court on the pretext of “security, lack of staff and health conditions”. Nuriye Gülmen was taken to Numune Hospital from the prison hospital on the 202nd day (September 26, 2017) of her hunger strike. Semih Özakça was released in the third hearing and Nuriye Gülmen was released on December 4, 2017 (Bianet, 2017).

professional journalists alternative perspectives of ordinary citizens; thus with diversity of sources, citizen journalism simultaneously competes with, and also complements professional journalism.

“We have five editors here. We make great news with a small editorial team. Some of our news set country’s agenda. We accomplish this by using social media actively, and by evaluating news reports coming from citizen journalists. Citizen journalists have become our voluntary reporters. We get plenty of e-mails everyday which contain news reports, photos, videos, and etc. Despite our small team, these contributions enhance our power. We learn about what is going on in Ankara, especially from such reports. Scandals and corruption cases always reach us at first hand. I am sure that journalists working in the mainstream media also have access to such information. However, unlike us, journalists in mainstream media have fears. They know very well that the government will punish them if they publish a story, for example on corruption cases, and cause a public debate. We do not hesitate, we certainly write, if news is accurate and beneficial for the public. Sometimes, not to get a blocking penalty, we write later, but we do write” (Interviewee 20, Oda TV, in depth interview, 12.04.2018).

Lastly, according to journalists, news sites are also contributing to news literacy, by motivating audiences to seek out news, improving their ability to find, identify, and recognize news, as well as helping them on critical evaluation (Malik et al., 2013: 8-9). This allows journalism to continue on news sites with limited resources, hence these kind of journalism is made by ready content that retrieved whether form local, and/or international mainstream media, or from online information sources such as other news sites, and/or social media networks. On the subject Adam Maksł et al., (2015: 29) write that: “For professional journalism, improving news literacy is partly a matter of economic survival, a way of sustaining demand for the type of content professional journalists provide, but also of fulfilling its role to help citizens be adequately informed to participate in democratic life”.

Similarly, as a founder tells,

“We are five editor colleagues here with limited revenues, and we don’t have a chance to go out for news, we’re not on the field. We receive most of the information from mainstream news media, social networks, as well as from reports of citizen journalists. We critically evaluate how those news stories should be read by our analysis, and commentaries. What we do is a contribution to news media literacy. For example, announcing an early election on the news site has no meaning for us; however, it’s important to tell our audience why there’s an early election: ‘There has been an early election, because the ruling party couldn’t rule the country as it is’. That’s exactly what we do. Standing tall against media manipulation, and to explain the hypocrisy of the mainstream news media to our audiences.” (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21.04. 2018).

5.3. Business Models of the News Sites and Digital Labour: Opportunities and Obstacles

Before starting a journalistic start-up most of the founders told that they were optimistic. As a founder stressed, at the beginning they were thinking that they wouldn’t face any difficulties in adapting new technologies, and they would continue this project with the contribution of many journalists, however it was never such easy,

“At first sight we couldn’t find anyone to conduct the project with. Generally, journalists told it was a good idea but preferred pursuing our operations from at a distance. Because there was neither money, nor any indicator for it to be earned. However, there was a commitment for free journalism” (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018; Avadar, 2019: 49).

Thus, in the name of free journalism founders of the news sites sought ways to create sustainable projects. Through this journey, while six out of ten news sites defined themselves as profit-oriented, the remaining four did not (See Figure 6).

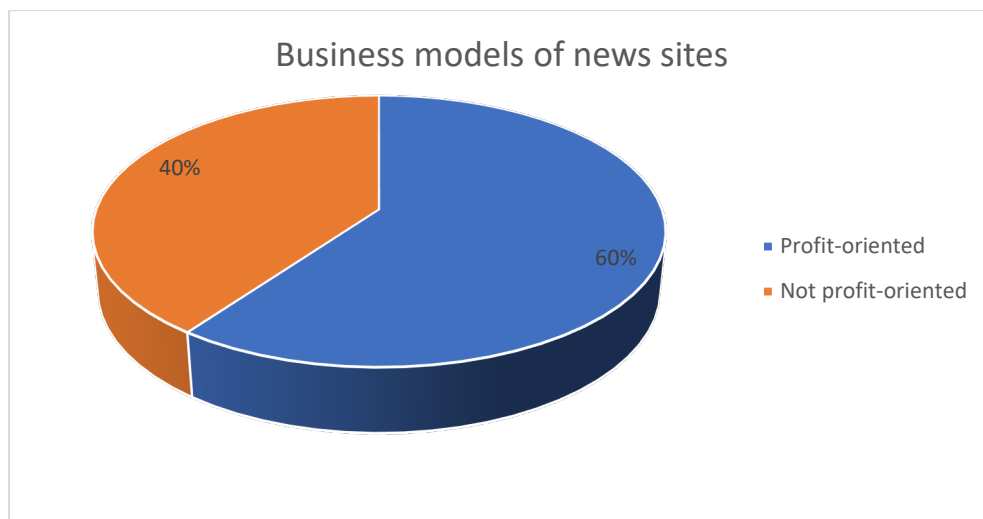


Figure 6: Business models of news sites

Initially, news sites were conditioned to generate advertising revenue, as a traditional journalistic reflex. However, as the founders underlined, capital owners generally did not want to advertise on news sites in order not to oppose the government. The ongoing conflicts between the government and journalists and the lawsuits against journalists have reinforced this situation. As a second step, the founders focused on online advertising and funding and donations to survive. Many news sites use these business models in a hybrid fashion, including models such as partnerships and selling content to non-journalistic companies (See Figure 7).

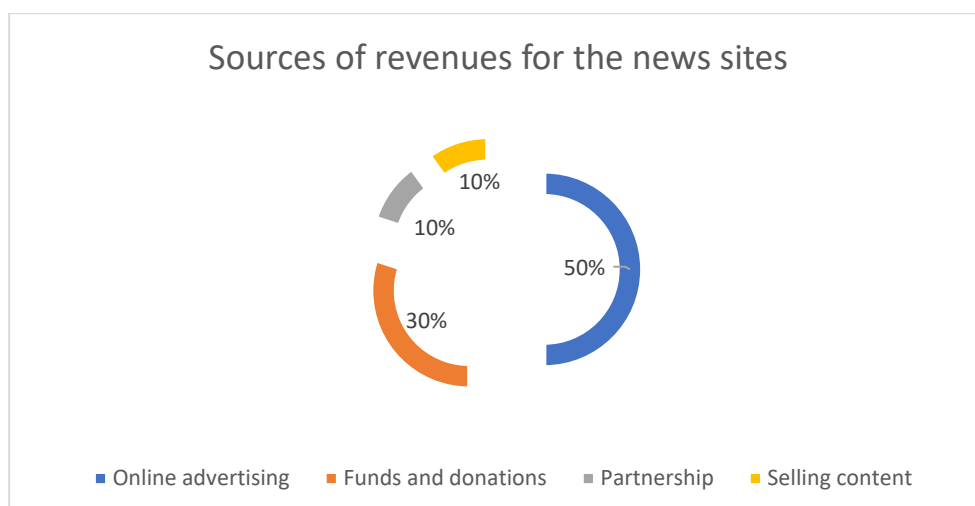


Figure 7: Revenue sources of the news sites

Thus, revenue sources of the news sites can be defined as, online advertising (revenues mainly gained from Google), funds and donations (selling products such

as books or magazines, organizing panels and concerts, as well as, organizing crowdfunding campaigns via platforms), partnership with a foundation, and selling content to non-media companies.

5.3.1. For-Profit Journalism: Online Advertising and its Relationship with Digital Labour

Among for profit news sites which use online advertising as a revenue model Oda TV, Diken, GazeteRed, ABC Gazetesi, T24, Artı Gerçek and Artı TV are examined. It is found that online advertising is the main revenue source for these profit oriented news sites. Whether it's very limited, several news sites use also banner advertising. Within this model, advertisers who want to support the news sites pay for every time their advertising is displayed on the websites. Advertisings are redirected to the news sites by advertising agencies. This model, mainly addresses news sites with big audiences, and/or important niche audiences such as Kemalists, and/or CHP supporters that advertisers want to reach. *Oda TV*, *Diken*, and *T24* are among them.

Sponsorship is another option for news sites. For example, *Artı Gerçek* and *Artı TV* in Germany are financially supported by companies belonging to the Kurdish diaspora. The news site and the website of the news channel places banners of the advertising companies and the advertising videos of these companies on their websites. Despite the existence of such examples, online advertising is generally dominated by platform-based formats controlled by Google and Facebook. This model also comes with some opportunities and obstacles as expressed by a founder,

“We were arrested many times. For example, I stayed in prison for a long time. This is why advertisers are afraid that their names would be mentioned with us despite our journalistic success. Because they can lose their business connections with the ruling party. So, we directed at Web 2.0's alternative advertising opportunities, like Google. Normally, we have difficulties in sales of our ad spaces to commercial institutions, but on the platforms, since the advertisements are distributed according to interests of the users, we receive our revenue from Google, without any

difficulties. We earn money as our news stories get clicked on social network services. This is our sole revenue model.” (Interviewee 17, Oda TV, in depth interview, 09.04.2018).

In Turkey’s conditions, according to journalists platform-based advertising is exposing a positive distinction, by freeing the news sites from capital front, since it demolishes the possible dependency on the advertiser in traditional sense. However, sometimes, it causes some disadvantages like selling ad spaces at a cheap price. A founder expresses opportunities, and obstacle of this model within these words:

“We take the advertisements of brands and firms that normally we won’t be able to reach. But we receive payments that are much lower than we’ll normally get. We try to take advertisements except Google, however, it’s hard with the existing regime. Companies generally have connections with the government. They make business together. So, they don’t want their advertisement to be seen on an independent news site like us” (Interviewee 6, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04.2018).

Similarly, there are also other founders who argue that advertising opportunities of Web 2.0 is not actually rescuing the digital journalism financially (Lee, 2015 cited in Zhang, 2019: 617). Thus, the news sites in order to survive, must either work in harmony with these platforms or spend on advertising. Such expenses can be made through Facebook Business Suit and Google Ads. According to journalists, such expenditures should ensure that the sites reach at least 100 thousand people. However, considering the low budgets of the sites, it is understood that it is quite costly. In the absence of ad spend, the platforms’ algorithms prevent news sites from reaching large audiences. This means that the news site is stuck in the most remote corners of the internet. In that case, doing quality journalism doesn’t matter at all. A founder made a declaration on the subject that how this business model can be more restrictive than life saving for journalistic start-ups:

“All my crew works on minimal wage. I don’t get a salary here, I’m retired. Since our news site considered as a social responsibility

project, we've been standing with donations and revenues coming from book sales, almost for a year. In recent months, we also weighed on increasing Google AdSense revenues of the news site. The revenue that we gain from Google AdSense increases or decreases completely according to website traffic. For now, at least with Google, website manages to exist. Otherwise, we would continuously get into losses. Google is the greatest monopoly of the Internet. It holds 50%-60% of online advertising market all over the world. For this reason, we converted our news site into WordPress (an open-source content management system) to work more compatible with Google. We started uploading videos on YouTube and receiving ad revenues there, additionally. In Turkey, prices are lower than US. Again, we can not object or interrogate. This dependence is too bad. Because, it's a business model, depending completely on performance of our editorial team on social network services. I would like to add that our editorial team just consists of six persons. When our activities decrease on social network services, our web site traffic, and, thus, our revenue decreases. Otherwise, if we have revenues that comes from selling ad spaces, I can employ 15 persons here. And we can earn good money comfortably. But we don't; hence, we remain dependent on Google. I wish we hadn't depended on Google, and we had had advertisers in the near future. However, we are bound to get advertising revenues from Google, for now" (Interviewee 31, Tele 1 and ABC Gazetesi, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

As seen, despite economical disadvantages journalists say that they had to use this model due to the political structure in Turkey. On the other hand, it is not such easy to work with this model, it needs several complex tasks to complete. First of all, news sites should produce original content, and circulate this content rapidly on social media networks. Traffic on news sites is mainly comes from social media services. News sites should encourage their audiences to share and comment on their content on social media to avoid a drop in traffic rates. Accordingly, it can be said that this model depends on participation of the users (both journalists, and audiences) in social networking services.

As noticed, “increasing traffic on websites is one of the main goals of news organizations in order to increase their share of online advertising today” (Tandoc 2014). It’s revealed that, as of 2020 news sites reach minimum 150.000, and maximum 800.000 individual visitors monthly. On the other hand, live broadcast and video-oriented news sites announced that they reached 18,000 daily visitors via Periscope as well as YouTube. According to journalists who got the data from Twitter, live broadcasts on Periscope have a maximum of 38 million and a minimum of 12 million views per month.

The visitors reach news sites via Facebook, Twitter, Periscope, YouTube, and Google’s search engine. Apart from the mentioned social networks, Instagram and *Ekşi Sözlük*³⁸ are also used by news sites to reach audiences. Although YouTube appears to be a source of income for news site that produce content in video format, in reality, journalists declare that they cannot earn advertising revenue from YouTube due to their limited number of followers and views. Among them, Facebook, and Twitter help to increase the traffic rates of news sites. Facebook and Twitter are the most active social networks of Turkey (See Figure 8).

³⁸ “*Ekşi Sözlük* is a collaborative hypertext ‘dictionary’ based on the concept of Web sites built up on user contribution. However, *Ekşi Sözlük* is not a dictionary in the strict sense; users are not required to write correct information. It is currently one of the largest online communities in Turkey with over 400,000 registered users. The number of writers is about 110.000. As an online public sphere, *Ekşi Sözlük* is not only utilized by thousands for information sharing on various topics ranging from scientific subjects to everyday life issues, but also used as a virtual socio-political community to communicate disputed political contents and to share personal views” (Wikipedia, 2020).

The name of the news site	Traffic rates monthly	Facebook page follows	Twitter account follows	Periscope account follows	YouTube channel follows
Odatv.com	800 k	1.029 m	1,2 m	No account	83,9 k
Diken.com.tr	500 k	186 k	1 m	No account	No account
Medyascope.tv	400 k	18 k	161 k	55,5 k	171 k
GazeteRed	150 k	24 k	13,7 k	No account	224
Ozguruz.org	No information	67 k	141 k	39 k	15,4 k
ABC Gazetesi/Tele 1	400 k	104 k/ 89 k	194 k/ 374 k	No account/ 24,8 k	773/ 170 k
T24	800 k	244 k	1,3 m	No account	1,3 k
Artı Gerçek/ Artı TV	250 k	53 k/ 52 k	192 k/ 170 k	No account/ 1,5 k	No account/ 45,9 k

Figure 8: Traffic rates and numbers of followers of the news sites

However, it is not enough to have a website and to be followed by a few followers on social media platforms to increase the online advertising share of news sites. While the social media accounts of news sites are kept dynamic, their news content should be optimized for search engines and social media services. News sites use some strategies to survive:

- Doing keyword research on the web before editing an article for search engines and social networks
- Presenting news stories with witty or even sensational headlines, and using previously unused photos or videos
- Tagging the photos, and videos, and, creating hashtags
- Multi-sharing of most clicked news stories via social media networks
- Targeting anyone online
- Interacting with followers

All these strategies turn journalism into a social media-oriented profession. As journalists pointed out, search engine optimization (SEO) is one of the newest and most common journalistic practices to reach a reasonable advertising income via Google. It is performed by optimizing journalistic content for search (Deniz and Özel, 2018: 78): “The aim of journalists is to turn the keywords and sentences searched by Google users into news” (Deniz and Özel, 2018: 78). Words, topics, and images all need to be reformulated in SEO standards. This application, which requires a special effort, brings the necessity of employing an editor. There is at least one journalist working as a SEO editor at T24, Diken, and Oda TV to do SEO reporting. Other news sites collectively run the activities of a SEO editor. A founder talks about their strategies and how they work:

“We work just like web analysts. We detect then turn the words searched for by Google users into news. We then share our most clicked news stories, for multiple times through different social networks that we use. We try to use pictures or videos that are not used before by other media outlets. We also write interesting analysis on comment sections of the social networks for to differentiate from other news sites. Our headlines also must be attractive. This is hard work, and we’re not specialists, but we learn” (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21.04.2018).

According to journalists, images also play a vital role in this process. Especially when converting news items into social media posts, as one journalist put it *“images have the power to make audiences better understand the articles they consume”* (Interviewee 32, Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

“We write headlines on images related to news. We tag pictures on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to identify someone or some place. A news without an image is never clicked. But, once the news stories turned into social media posts, they’re read and shared more. Because, the audiences share information on the picture to show everyone” (Interviewee 32, Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

In addition, journalists are sharing the same news over and over with different interesting headlines by creating different hashtags. According to journalists, this practice is due to the algorithms of the social networks,

“When we share a news story once, it reaches only 10% of our followers. Therefore, a news is shared for only once, that story dies. We should share the same content more than twice a day, up to five times. Because, first and last receivers of the shared content are not the same. A news never reaches the same recipients again” (Interviewee 32, Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

However, sometimes these strategies only work for tech giants. For example, on Facebook, audiences see only the headline of a story and hit the like button or share the post without opening the content. This helps increase revenues for Facebook, but not news sites. On the other hand, for example, as a founder said, inconsistency of the content with the title causes a decrease in follower loyalty,

“Some journalist colleagues do not announce the news at the headline explicitly. Because they just try to use the most searched words through engines. This increases the instant traffic, but in the long run, it causes a decrease in follower numbers” (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21.04.2018).

As another strategy for keeping news sites active, news sites need to engage their followers. Journalists stated that they comment and answer the questions of audiences, especially on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, for the continuations of

the discussions. According to journalists, the ongoing discussions on social networking services are expanding the news, even democratizing it.

Some journalists also underlined that they do not open the comments sections during live broadcasts on Periscope, YouTube or Facebook. The main reason for this is that they are exposed to provocative messages, threats, swearing and insults by some social media users and trolling groups called “AK Trolls”. According to journalists, these trolls are JDP supporters and/or people who do mansplaining on social media platforms.

On the other hand, when the target audience of news sites is questioned, it is revealed that the sites do not generally have a segmented target audience. Based on the common opinion of journalists that the concept of mainstream news media has been “emptied” or completely reduced in Turkey, the content that are produced by the news sites generally appeals to anyone online. This is also a strategy to keep website traffic rates high.

As a founder said,

“We try to reach everyone who needs news” (Interviewee 19, Oda TV, in depth interview, 09.04.2018).

As seen, journalists are paying attention to reach everyone with an internet connection, even to the supporters of the ruling party. This is described by a journalist as an effort to *“make the stories of news sites attractive to different segments of Turkish society”* (Interviewed 10, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 30.03.2018). However as learned from the journalists, audiences of the news sites are generally under the age of 40 and belong to middle and high classes (Interviewee 10, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 30.03.2018).

Even if journalists insist that the news sites represent the “new mainstream news media” of Turkey, they have not yet reached a wide target audience with the mainstream character. Audiences of news sites consist of are upper middle class man and woman. They are oppositionists, and/or democrats.

As a founder clarifies,

“In fact, our target audience is everyone, however, our followers are intellectual upper middle class man and woman; a mass that understands the world” (Interviewee 31, Tele 1 and ABC Gazetesi, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

A journalist also clarifies the characteristics of the audiences. According to journalist, especially CHP supporters follow the news site. The supporters of politician Meral Akşener and her party “İYİ” also interact a lot with the news site. On the other hand, much of the audiences click the website to hear about HDP (Peoples’ Democratic Party) which is generally ignored by the mainstream media (Interviewee 29, Tele 1 and ABC Gazetesi, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

5.3.2. Non-Profit Journalism: Funds and Donations

The news sites such as Medyascope.tv, Özgürüz, and Tele1 are classified as non-profit news organizations. Their business models are mainly based on funds and donations. These non-profit news sites are organizations that work to inform and educate citizens on issues of public interest. Investigative and explanatory journalism is at their core to bring important social issues to the fore (COF, 2019). These news sites describe themselves as defenders of freedom of media, pluralism of the media and independence of journalism. They contribute to the protection of the right to know and freedom of speech in the face of the digital revolution. They promote journalism that works in the public interest, carries humanist values, serves the equal rights, and advocates the rejection of discrimination and the injustices (Mediapart-FLP, 2019).

Medyascope.tv which has the characteristics defined, mainly finances its journalism activities with the funds it receives from foreign organizations such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Heinrich Böll Stiftung (The Green Political Foundation), European Endowment for Democracy and Chrest Foundation. The technical equipment of the news platform (personal computers, cameras, microphones, news agency subscriptions, and etc.), staff expenses (wages),

and office expenses (rents, bills) are covered with funds received from different organizations every year (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018). So why and how does Medyascope.tv get funding from such organizations? What do they have in common? The answers to these questions are sought by examining the characteristics of such foundations.

For example, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is a government agency that works on behalf of the Swedish parliament and government with a mission to reduce poverty in the world. The aim of the organization is to contribute to the implementation of “Sweden’s Policy for Global Development”. Turkey is one of the partner countries of this agency. The agency assists small and medium-sized businesses of woman and young entrepreneurs with limited access to finance; when banks and other investors often find it too risky to lend to companies that lack experience, credit history and collateral or operate in dangerous environments (Sida, 2018).

Accordingly, by issuing guarantees (a financial instrument similar to an insurance policy), Sida mobilizes capitals from banks and other investors. Sida’s guarantees can cover both large infrastructure projects and small loans from local banks. The smaller loans often go to target groups who find it extremely difficult to access finance, such as small business owners, women and youth. Thanks to the information gathered from the organization in 2018, it was learned that Sida guaranteed media sector and free information flow with 1% among other sectors such as energy 21%, health 9%, infrastructure 36%, market development 27%, agriculture 6% (Sida, 2018).

On the other hand, Heinrich Böll Stiftung (The Green Political Foundation) is a German independent political foundation founded in 1997. It is affiliated with the German Green Party. It operates in Europe, Africa, Asia, South, Central and North America. The foundation describes itself as an agency for “green visions and projects”. Its basic principles are “ecology and sustainability”. It also places a special emphasis on gender democracy: social emancipation and equal rights for women and men. It is committed to equal rights for cultural and ethnic minorities and to the social

and political participation of immigrants. It also promotes non-violent and proactive peace policies (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2020).

The foundation financially supports news platforms such as Medyascope.tv through collaborative social awareness projects. It asks news sites to write news stories, produce programs and short news videos, especially on related topics such as climate change, gender policy and LGBTQ Rights. The foundation also sponsors news stories, programs and news videos (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2020).

The European Endowment for Democracy (EED) is an independent, grant-making organisation, established in 2013 by the European Union (EU) and EU member states as an autonomous International Trust Fund to promote democracy in the European Neighbourhood (Eastern Partnership –EaP- and Middle East and North Africa - MENA), the Western Balkans, and beyond. The organization supports independent news media platforms and journalists working for a pluralistic, democratic political system with annual grants. Newly created or unregistered organisations, informal platforms, youth groups and individuals can be supported (EED, 2020).

And finally, the Chrest Foundation is a private foundation based in Irving, Texas in the United States. The foundation focuses on promoting gender equality and improving communication and dialogue through arts and culture. It currently supports non-governmental organizations and independent media organizations in Turkey with annual grants (The Chrest Foundation, 2020). As can be seen, some foundations accept Medyascope.tv as an entrepreneurship operating in dangerous environments especially for oppositionist journalists. Others assist the news platform for its contribution to restore a pluralistic and democratic media environment. At this point, another question that comes to mind is whether the funds received limit the activities of news sites.

As learned from the founders, receiving funds is not an obstacle as they do not enter into a binding relationship with any foundation (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018). Therefore, as learned from a founder the only expectation of the foundations that support the news organizations

is the sustainability of these organizations (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

“We have been doing this for two and a half years. For us the important thing is to receive the funds regularly. Generally, they’re for one year. For its renewal, the institutions should be satisfied with what we’ve done” (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

However, sustainability is not a case for the news sites now, due to political and economic instability of the country. A founder also said politicians are trying to cut their funding. According to the same founder, the government can declare journalists who receive money from abroad as “foreign agents” through a law and cut off the funds. This can make this business model a bit blurry for a country with an oppressed media environment, as seen in Russia³⁹ (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

On the other hand, there are also founders who are against receiving funds especially from European Union. The founder thinks that the organizations with imperialist characteristics may try to eliminate the leftist view that they belong to: *“After a while, I think they will guide us to nurture their own ideas”* (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21.04.2018). And for most journalists getting funding is not the solution to keeping journalism alive. The paradigm is simple, *“if money is cut they have to shut down their news sites”* (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

Accordingly, journalists are trying to establish direct links with donors. This approach drives news sites to crowdfunding through online fundraising platforms or directly via Periscope and YouTube. Periscope and YouTube have their own funding

³⁹ “In 2012, Russia passed a law to classify nongovernmental organizations that receive funding from abroad as foreign agents. In 2017, the Duma broadened this law to include media outlets. That year, the government classified nine US-funded media organizations — Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and nine RFE/RL-supported Russian- or regional-language outlets — as foreign agents. The government has threatened to add other media organizations, including DW, to the list. Groups or organizations on the government’s watch list are required to regularly file reports about their finances, goals, expenses and staff” (DW, 2019).

mechanisms. For example, on YouTube donors can support their favourite channels by paying a selected amount via join buttons. Donors also receive some gifts such as loyalty badges or special videos. On Periscope, viewers can use Super Hearts (an upgraded form of emoji response) to donate funds to a broadcaster: “Super Hearts are purchased in packages and submitted during a Periscope stream, with the creator getting 70% of the money generated, via the responses, during their streams” (Hutchinson, 2017).

However, in Turkey’s conditions, these platforms do not give journalists much autonomy to maintain their own media, as audiences do not have a donation practice. For journalists crowdfunding is a kind of hope labour that allows them to create their own brand, and grab the attention of audiences. So they can benefit from a more sustainable sources of income, such as the subscription model.

Patreon⁴⁰ is the most popular crowdfunding platform in Turkey among news sites and freelance journalists. Apart from journalistic work, the platform also supports a variety of creative works, including podcasts, music, games, writing, and art (Hair, 2021: 197). As Lee Hair (2021: 197) writes, Patreon draws inspiration from the patronage model. Creators receive donations from a large base of donors (the platform calls them patrons), who can choose from multiple pledge levels, typically ranging from \$1 to \$50 per month. Each pledge level is associated with specific rewards set by the creator (Hair, 2021: 197). For example, journalists shoot special news videos, documentaries, prepare podcasts or upload special news on this platform before spreading the content on social media networks or on the news sites. Once the contents uploaded on Patreon, they became ready for sharing on the aforementioned platforms.

Patreon is a platform that allows donors to pay journalists for their work. On the platform, journalist’s common feature is that they create regular content (Mediakix, 2020). Thus, a crowdfunding project, on Patreon, requires “a creator cultivate a community of fans willing to contribute money, with whom the creator

⁴⁰ “Patreon turns the one-of interaction between creator and crowd into a continuous relationship. It facilitates the presentation and communication of past/present/planned content and allows patrons to support creators of all kind (e.g., musicians, visual artists, podcasters, video creators, writers and journalists) with a monthly pledge. The patron can discontinue support at any time” (Regner, 2020).

regularly communicates and maintains trust” (Belleflamme, Lambert, and Schwienbacher 2014; Davidson and Poor 2015; Hui, Greenberg, and Gerber 2014 cited in Hair, 2021: 197).

Despite the platform’s popularity in Turkey, and the content that created by journalist on regular basis, the platform brings journalists a regular but not a stable income,

“Patreon is not a spectacular platform, however, there has been an upward trend following the latest sale of Doğan Media Group to Demirören Media Group. The money flow from there is not negligible, but it’s not amazing. This month, it was seen as slightly passing 3000 USD, however, it’s seen 2900 USD now” (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

According to journalists, this is highly correlated with the perception of their audiences who see digital journalism as an anti-economic activity:

“We don’t have many donors on Patreon. There’s a huge gap between fans and donors. People who follow us do not donate enough. They avoid even a small amount. I think it is closely linked to the online news culture available for free. Because people pay for platforms like Netflix. We must solve this problem and encourage them to support us. We need to tell them more clearly why it’s important to support an independent news organization” (Interviewee 7, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 29.03.2018).

There are also news sites that collect donations by selling products such as magazines or books. Tele 1 also succeeded to run an e-commerce business called “Tele 1 Kitap”, which it started to allow the sale of the books of journalists who were expelled from the mainstream media and imprisoned. This initiative has transformed the news site into a solidarity platform to support journalists. Meanwhile, according to journalists, the majority of the news site’s revenue comes from book sales.

On the other hand, the news site Ozguruz.com is in partnership with Correctiv in Germany. Correctiv is Germany’s first non-profit newsroom. Together with

Özgürüz, they investigate injustice and abuses of power. They also promote media literacy and implement educational programs (Correctiv, 2020). The business model of the two partners sharing the costs between the parties is based on donations. Correctiv collects donation through “FundraisingBox” (a crowdfunding platform), while Özgürüz collects donations through subscribers of the online magazine published in Turkish and German. A journalist explains how this revenue model works:

“We do not earn nothing from our journalistic activities as we only produce and distribute content on social media networks such as Periscope. We have a magazine, it is published quarterly online and it has subscribers. We send that magazine as a gift to subscribers, and subscribers donate for us. We have 398 donors. All high-income foreigners. In Turkey, people hesitate to donate when they hear the name of our editor-in-chief. They are afraid of being called a traitor or being accused of being a member of a terrorist organization called Fetö, just as our editor-in-chief was accused” (Interviewee 22, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04.2018).

Organizing events such as panels and concerts is another strategy of Özgürüz. The news outlet organizes panels and concerts in Berlin. Revenue comes from ticket sales. Panels usually focus on experiences and know-how of Can Dündar (editor-in-chief of Özgürüz). Sometimes marginalized figures of Turkey such as fashion designer and activist Barbaros Şansal⁴¹, are invited to a conversation. Other dissident journalists, writers, and artists are also welcome. Concerts are reserved for ethnic music (Interviewee 22, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04.2018).

Besides not-for-profit journalistic start-ups, there are also for-profit news sites that have applied for funds and donations at some point in their development. *T24* and *GazeteRed* are among them. For example, in 2013, *T24* launched a crowdfunding campaign, encouraging its audiences to support independent journalism. Their slogan was “another journalism is possible”. There was a growing reaction against

⁴¹ Turkish fashion designer Barbaros Şansal was deported from Northern Cyprus due to his tweets following Reina (a nightclub in İstanbul) terror attack of Daesh on January 1, 2017. He was subjected to lynch attempt in Turkey and then detained. Barbaros Şansal was detained following prosecution questioning on charge of “inciting people to hate and hostility” on January 4, 2017, and arrested on February 3 (Bianet, 2018b).

mainstream news media that did not cover the Gezi Park protest. This reaction also helped the success of this campaign. Therefore, *T24* was one of Turkey's reliable sources of information at that time. The campaign lasted more than a year (Interviewee 28, *T24*, in depth interview, 15.07.2019).

In 2018, the founder of *GazeteRed*, Hakan Gülseven, published a book called “Çürüme” (Decay). The purpose of the book was to pay the fines that he received following the lawsuits brought against him and the news site. The book received great attention and sold well. The audience's solidarity with the journalist saved Gülseven from thirteen years in prison (Interviewee 25, *GazeteRed*, in depth interview, 21.04.2018).

5.3.3. Selling Content to Non-Media Companies

A portion of *T24*'s revenues comes from the sale of content produced by its editorial team for non-media companies' websites. Its main products are website design, producing articles, photography, and videos on various topics. This revenue model was also used by *T24* to raise a starting capital needed to run a journalism venture. The founder's initiative also makes *T24* unique, before the news site went online it was Turkey's first self-financed news site.

5.3.4. Future Plans for Sustainability

News sites earn regular but insufficient revenue, mostly through their business models. The amount earned changes monthly. Sometimes it's high, sometimes it's low. Especially in for-profit news sites that generate revenue from Google, revenue uncertainty is directly related to decreases in website traffic. The main reason for this imbalance is that the websites as well as news stories are blocked from time to time by court decisions. Journalists underlined that news sites were maintained on a voluntary basis during these periods. This is also followed by the reopening of news sites with a new domain name. Disruption of funds or failure of crowdfunding campaigns for non-profit news sites directly impacts the operations of news sites negatively (See Figure 9).

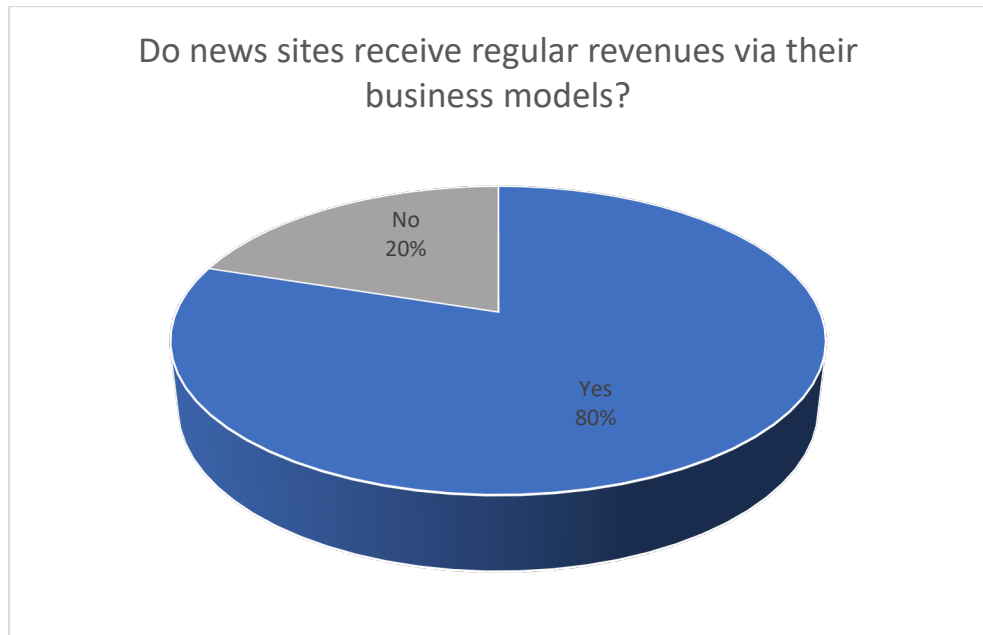


Figure 9: The regular revenue status of news sites

When journalists are asked about their future plans regarding the sustainability of news sites, regardless of whether the news sites are for-profit or not-for-profit, the answers mainly focus on advertising (when the political regime in Turkey is somewhat democratized), and the subscription model. It's not surprising that the answers are focused on advertising, over the last century, news media operated on a simple premise: building a readership by providing content and then selling the attention of that audience to advertisers (Ibrisevic, 2019). For example, one veteran journalist who connects the future of news sites to the current conjuncture of the country makes the following comment:

“Our plans are linked to the future of the country. It is not possible if the state of emergency⁴² continues. We have to continue with the funds. If Turkey normalizes, we can continue with sponsorships and advertisements. But it's not possible for us to make plans right now” (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

Thus, it is found that journalists, especially experienced in mainstream news media, support advertising and sponsorships, while young journalists experienced in

⁴² In Turkey a state of emergency declared in the aftermath of a 2016 coup bid for two years (Zorlu, 2019).

digital media or journalists experienced solely in oppositionist news media outlets, support subscription-based model. According to most of the journalists subscription model has the possibility to provide a steadier stream of income. And secondly, they will be freed from dependency on website traffic.

As Brian Moritz (2019) wrote, subscription model also “incentivizes better stories because publications don’t have to chase clicks”. For Moritz (2019), “the implicit promise of a subscription based news site is that audiences are getting something worth paying for, something they can’t get anywhere else”. Journalists believe that they will not face any difficulties when they switch to this model, hence, news sites are already producing original content and doing quality reporting. However, preparing audiences to pay remains a priority.

On the basis of sustainability, journalists also have *avant-garde* ideas such as opening a *café*, and an online archive of documentaries. For example, the founder of *GazeteRed* plans to open a *café* in the near future to support the news site. In Turkey, satirical magazines such as “*Leman*”, “*Bayan Yanı*”, and “*Ot*” have been using this strategy for decades. While *cafés* share their income with the magazines, they also turn into places where magazine readers gather and discuss Turkey’s agenda over time.

The founders of *Oda TV* also announced that they will digitalize and open to public their video archives consisting a series of documentaries. The documentary, titled “*Oradaydım*” (I was there), was produced by the owner of the news site, Soner Yalçın. It focuses on Turkey’s last 50 years of political history. It has 35 episodes.

On the basis of sustainability, it is understood that business models do not restrict the journalistic practices of news sites, even if there is not enough income, journalists continue their profession in an idealistic way. For example, the sustainability of the news sites, within online advertising, seems to be trapped by the hegemony of technology giants, and relies on digital labour. Using online advertising as a revenue model, as seen, at one side frees the news sites from being dependent to local advertisers who abstain to advertise, on the other hand, turns journalists into digital labourers, by enforcing them to be continuously active on social networks.

In Turkey's conditions, where internet censorship is always on the agenda (slowing or blocking social networks, and, the news sites, and/or the news stories by court decisions), a collapse of the connection between these two structures, "social networks and journalist's activities", it's inevitable that journalists become precarious. Nevertheless, some news sites use hybrid business models such as online advertising, funds and donations, at the same time. This doesn't diminish the risk of precarization of journalists, however, prevents it to be on primary row, for now.

5.4. Organization, Working Conditions and Labour Relations of the News Sites

News sites mostly have a participatory structure. In other words, they have a democratic style of management in which power and authority are extended down (Gaziano and Coulson, 1988: 869). Digital born newsrooms of these news outlets usually have a founder, an editor-in-chief (in most cases, the founders are also the editor-in-chief only Diken differs), a news director (optional), and editors (on the news sites, journalists are called editors), in some cases there is a SEO editor. In addition to the team of employees and founders, there are also interns who work voluntarily. On the other hand, *Medyascope.tv*, *Artı Gerçek*, *Artı TV*, and *T24* gather content from more than four hundred content providers. However there is a distinction between employed team and the content providers, who are social media users and send regular information or news programs to the news sites via several platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Twitter, Periscope, YouTube, and etc.

Alongside their journalistic work, journalists are responsible for any task such as analysis of audience data, website design and/or (if necessary) coding. Financial issues and the management of workplaces are among the duties of the editor-in-chief. Editor-in-chiefs make decisions about hiring journalists (journalists on news sites don't get fired, but quit when they get a better job offer), paying bills and salaries. They also purchase necessary technical equipment such as laptops, cameras, microphones, and etc.

News sites are mostly made up of small teams. The number of journalists employed (journalists who are paid with social security) on news sites concentrates on five to ten people (See Figure 10).

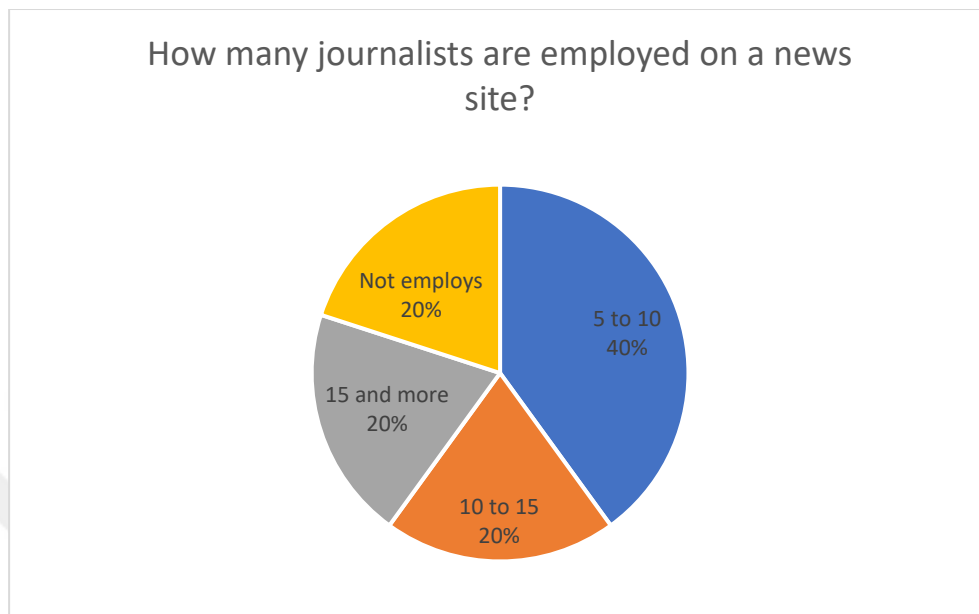


Figure 10: Number of journalists employed by the website

In addition, 40% of the news site workforce consists of women. Besides, 40% of the news site workforce is made up of women. However, there are only a few woman senior managers (See Figure 11).

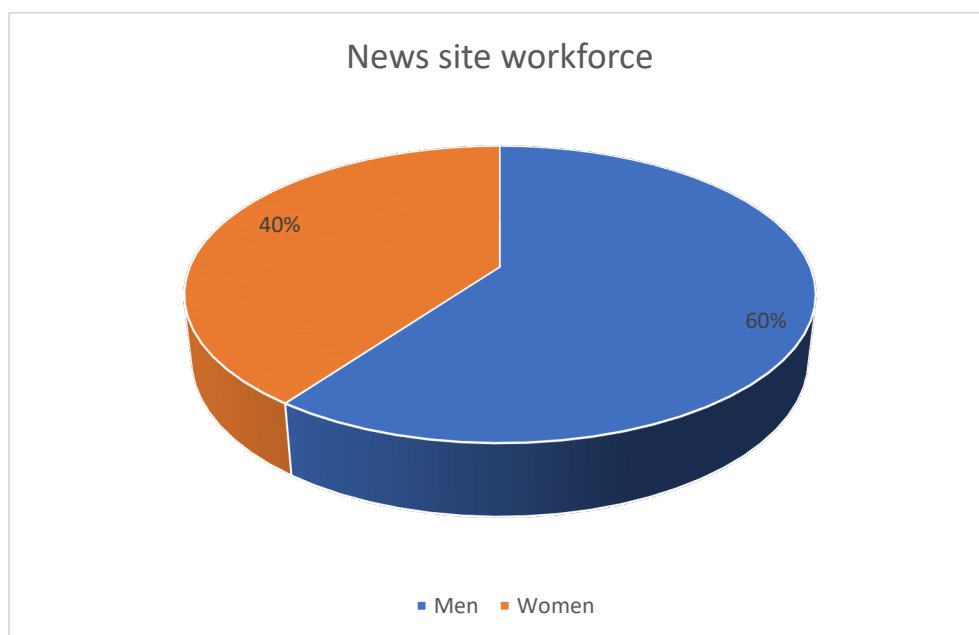


Figure 11: New site workforce

The founders stated that they would like to work with women journalists. However, according to founders, women journalists do not particularly prefer senior management positions due to flexible working hours, fear of arrest or various penalties:

“Women journalists do not prefer us. We work hard. I call my colleagues at 02:00 or 03:00 a.m. I wake them up for work. Unfortunately, woman colleagues may experience difficulties. On the other hand, a case can be filed for a news story we’re covering. All these are the reasons that prevent women colleagues from working with us.” (Interviewee 19, Oda TV, in depth interview, 09.04.2018).

Many journalists on news sites work full time (with salary and social security benefits). News sites respect to pay salaries and social security expenses on time. The aim is not to fall into a situation similar to Turkey’s traditional media environment, where journalists have been suffering from the precariat for decades.

Journalists who don’t get paid represent news site founders and interns. The founders are usually retired and receive a pension or have income from different sources. Founders stated that they are not obliged to pay the interns, but they still pay them a small amount. Another group that do not get paid represents journalists who work voluntarily when news sites or news stories are banned by court order. In such cases, journalists’ income sources are cut off, especially those whose business models depend on online advertising (See Figure 12).

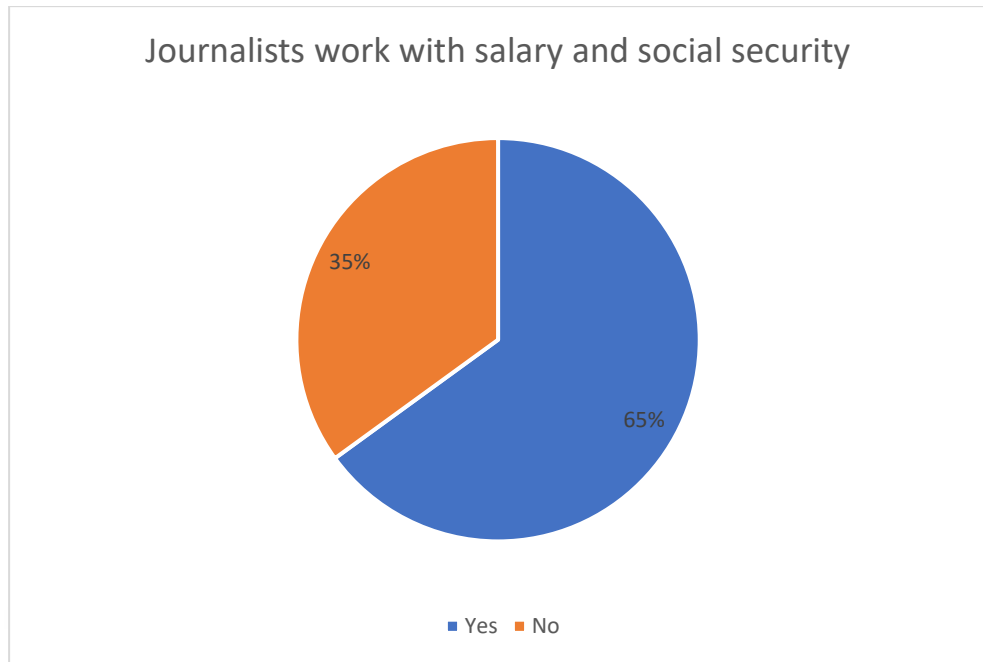


Figure 12: Percentage of interviewed journalists who have a salary and social security

In addition, 70% of the interviewed journalists stated that the money they earn from news sites is sufficient to sustain their lives (See Figure 13). The striking point is that there are young journalists between the ages of 18-24 in the editorial teams of news sites. Most of the young journalists stated that they live with their parents and that they do not have any compulsory expenses such as rent and bills. However, as a journalist said, the low earnings of the journalist is not unique to news sites. Journalists in Turkey earn less no matter which institution they work in (Interviewee 11, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

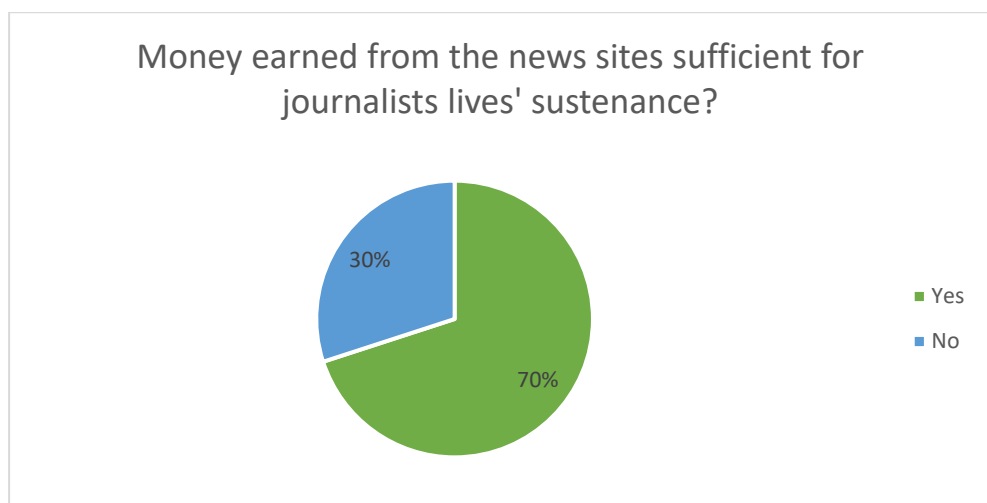


Figure 13: Percentage of interviewed journalists who are satisfied with their wages.

On the other hand, 20% of journalists are union members while 80% are not (See Figure 14).

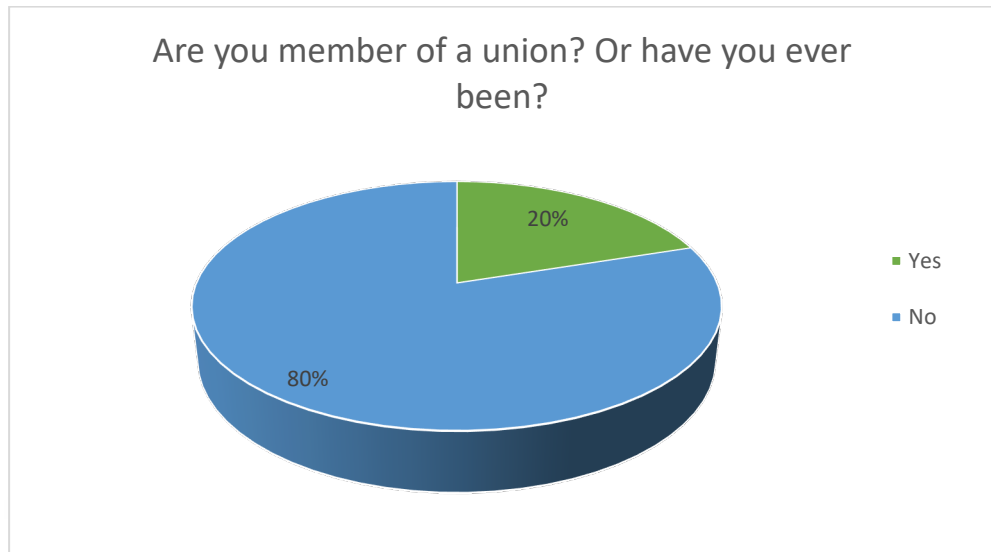


Figure 14: Percentage of interviewed journalists who are a member of journalists' union

Only 20% of journalists have a press card (See Figure 15). 20% represent experienced journalists with long-term press cards. Therefore, journalists got these cards while working in the mainstream media. On the other hand, journalists working in digital media cannot apply for a press card as they are not subject to Law No. 5953. This is why many journalists hold an International Press Card of International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). In order to have this card, it is sufficient to be a member of Turkish Journalists Association (TGC) and pay the membership fees.

However, the card of IFJ does not work in official institutions. Press cards issued by the Presidency are considered valid. These journalists, who could not benefit from the press law and were confronted with the sentences "You are not a journalist" in every bureaucratic environment they entered, state that they were kicked out of the system.

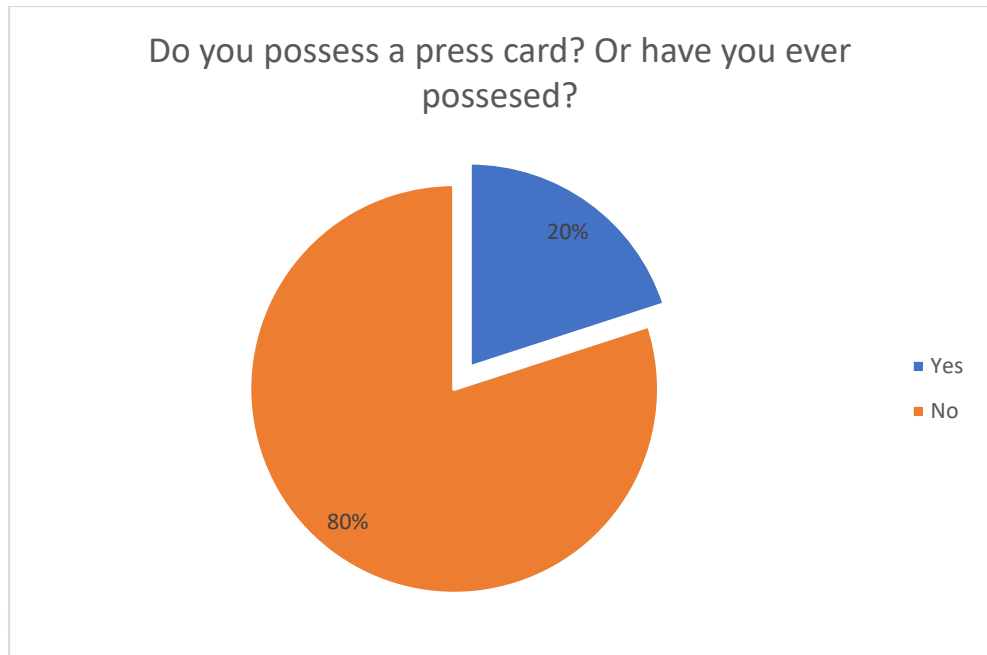


Figure 15: Percentage of journalists possessing a press card

The unions that support journalists in Turkey are the Turkey Journalists' Syndicate (TGS), DİSK/Basın-İş, Türk-İş and Hak-İş. According to journalists these unions can not represent digital journalists and news outlets. For this reason, journalists avoid being members of these unions, and there are even those who do not apply at all. The aim of the journalists is to establish their own union after the digital journalism ecosystem in Turkey is well established. However, according to journalists, the ongoing conflicts with the government must first be alleviated.

5.4.1. Workplaces and a Working Day for Journalists

All news sites except *Özgürüz* have an office in İstanbul and journalists practice their profession in these offices (See Figure 16). These offices are located in Mecidiyeköy, Beyoğlu, Sarıyer, and Kadıköy districts of İstanbul. The offices of news sites are in the form of flats in the office blocks, apart from *Medyascope.tv*, which has its own building. All offices have restrooms and kitchens, as well as a leisure area.

All the news sites have computers, servers, and accessible technical equipment such as internet connection via modems or monopods. In addition to their personal smartphones, which journalists use as a professional device while working

in digital newsrooms, there are also cameras, microphones, and programs such as Microsoft Office, Adobe, Photoshop, and Premier.

At *T24*, *Tele 1*, *ABC Gazetesi*, *Artı Gerçek* and *Artı TV* there is television studio in the middle of the offices. These news sites produce news in video format and present prime time news. *Tele 1* and *Artı TV* have also news channels broadcast by satellite.

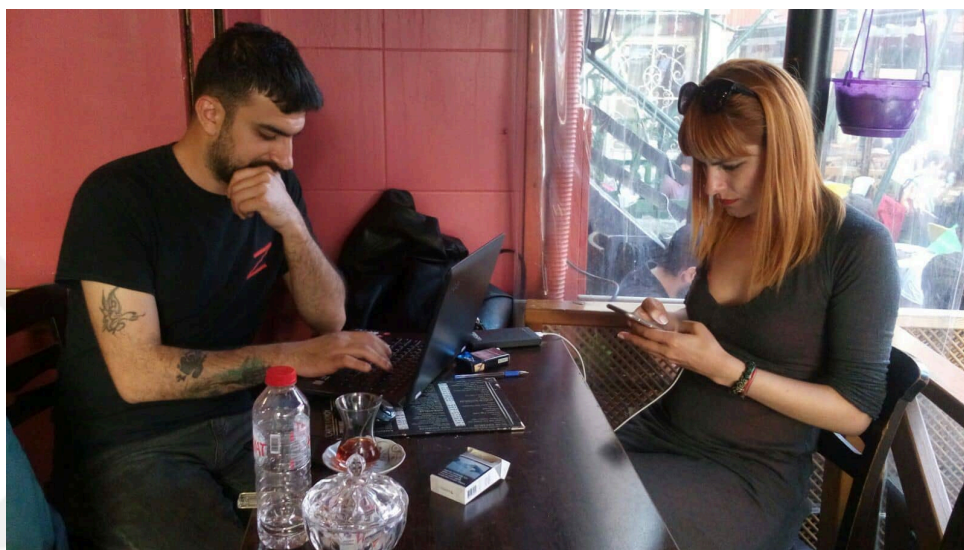


Figure 16: Journalists of Özgürüz working at a coffee shop in Kadıköy/İstanbul

Medyascope.tv's building has two floors. On the first floor, there's a television studio, newsroom, a bar for necessities such as coffee, tea and water, toilet and make-up studio. On the second floor, there is the mixing desk, the editor-in-chief's room and a room with a library (Figure 17, 18, 19, 20, 21).



Figure 17: Building of *Medyascope.tv* and the neighbourhood



Figure 18: Newsroom of *Medyascope.tv*



Figure 19: Studio of *Medyascope.tv*



Figure 20: Studio of *Medyascope.tv*



Figure 21: Mixing desk of *Medyascope.tv*

In only a few offices, rooms and/or desks of the editor-in-chief and the news director are separate from the editors. Generally, editor-in-chief, news directors, and editors work in the same room, on one or two giant desks in front of computers. Communication and contact of journalists with each other during working hours is not interrupted any way. A common feature observed in offices is the presence of a television on the wall in front of the editorial desk. There is always a mainstream news channel such as *CNN Türk* and *NTV* on. The aim here is to follow the mainstream media during news production (See Figure 22, 23, 24, 25, 26).



Figure 22: Editor-in-chief and the founder of *Diken*

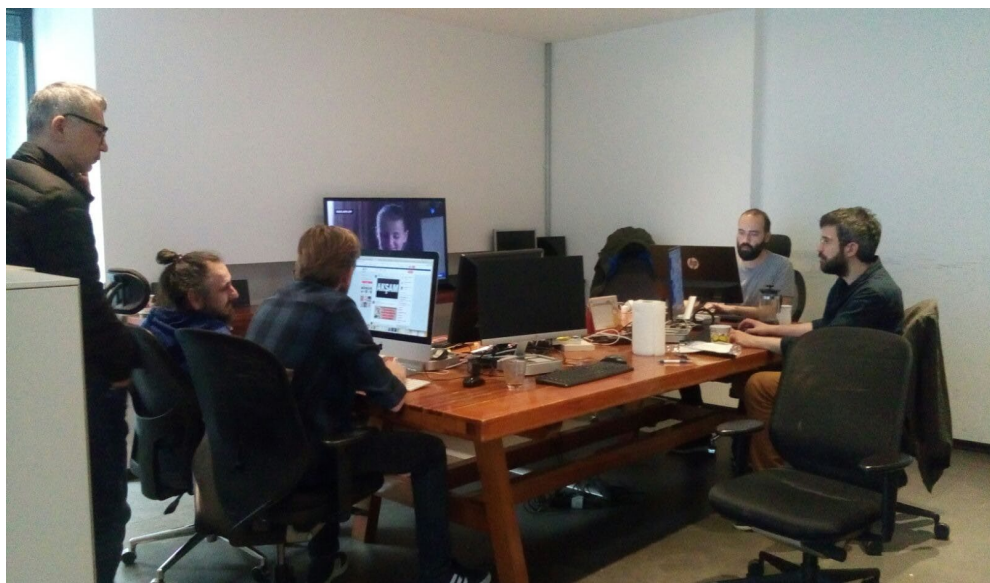


Figure 23: Newsroom of *Diken*



Figure 24: Newsroom of *Oda TV*



Figure 25: Newsroom of *Oda TV*



Figure 26: Newsroom of *GazeteRed*. Presenting the founder of the news site and a journalist.

In general, journalists work more than eight hours, six days a week, in day and night shifts. Flexible working hours represent “Özgürüz”, the only decentralized news outlet without an office that maintains its mobile live broadcasts from wherever journalists are. Therefore, start-ups are classified as centralized (desktop news production) and decentralized (mobile news production).

Thus, *Oda TV*, *T24*, *Diken*, *ABC Gazetesi*, *Tele 1*, *Medyascope.tv*, *GazeteRed*, *Artı Gerçek* and *Artı TV* are classified as centralized news outlets while *Özgürüz* is classified as decentralized news outlet. For journalists who produce news on-desk, a working day starts between 08:00 am and 09:00 am. Only at *Medyascope.tv* and *GazeteRed* journalist start working at 11:00 am.

In addition, on news sites editorial meetings are usually held every morning at 11:00 am where journalists set their agenda. The agenda is set at editorial meetings every morning based on the story ideas of journalists. In these meetings, journalists have the opportunity to discuss the agenda collectively to reach a consensus on how to reflect the vision of news sites in the news. Journalists then write the news, edit the footage, and shot the videos or podcasts. As a final step, journalists reformulate the news as social posts and share them on social media accounts of the news sites.

Most journalists with a one hour lunch break eat in the office, while some go to restaurants. Medyascope.tv's office is located in the industrial zone of Istanbul "Sanayi Mahallesi", where automobile repair shops are gathered. The news site, which has been operating in the same office since 2015, has created its own environment for lunches, dinners, and snacks. There is a cafe on the right side of the office and a bar at the left. Two formations operating since 2016 bring antagonisms to the industrial zone in terms of habits. For example, journalists organize dance nights there. It is not known whether these two facilities are partners with Medyascope.tv. However, it is observed that they provide services to journalists at lower prices (See Figure 27).



Figure 27: The coffee shop near by *Medyascope.tv*

After the lunch break, journalists continue their work until 06:00 pm. Journalists make news entries on their mobile phones and share them on social networks when they are out of the office. For this reason, having a well-developed smartphone has been emphasized as a necessity by journalists.

A Journalist from a centralized news site describes his/her daily routine,

“I come to the office at 09:00 am every morning. I research the agenda through all social networks, traditional media, and news agencies. I write down information that I think is newsworthy. I also manage the social media accounts of our news site. Because we need to keep them always active. We must be active on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram so that our site traffic does not drop. We hold news meetings at 11:00 am every day. When the editor-in-chief’s agenda is busy, I run the meeting as the news director. In the meetings, we discuss the topics we will focus. These meetings last 20 minutes. I have a one-hour of lunch break in a day. When I take a break, I eat out. But I have to work, I eat at the office. We stop working at 6:00 pm and night editors take the shift. However, if the agenda is too busy, we stay in the office with the whole team and keep working. Of course, our work is not limited to working hours. As a reflex, we continue to search, write, and discuss news especially via our smartphones wherever we are” (Interviewee 27, T24, in depth interview, 15.07.2019).

News sites such as *Oda TV*, *Diken*, *Tele 1* and *ABC Gazetesi* work in shifts such as day and night. A journalist works at night alternately every weekday. The night shift starts at 11:00 pm and continues until 07:00 am. A journalist who works on night shift tells about his/her working day,

“I work at night. I come to the office at 11:00 pm and leave the office at 07.00 am. As soon as I arrive at the office to get an idea of the agenda, I review the news my colleagues made during the day. Then, I visit Twitter (politicians’ accounts, other journalists’ accounts), Facebook, and/or Ekşi Sözlük, local and foreign conventional media, news agencies and other news sites. I turn the information that I get from these sources into news. When the agenda is too busy, sometimes we don’t have time for a late dinner or tea, but I usually take an hour break. Also, I always work at the desk. I don’t go out of the office to chase news. Sometimes, I follow the news outside of the office with the desire to do field journalism,

however, this is not necessary and is not part of my job” (Interviewee 29, Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

Journalists working in *Özgürüz* (the decentralized news site) start their day at 9:00 in the morning. In the next step after the agenda is set, the journalists determine the place where the live mobile broadcasts will take place and the event to be watched or reach the guests to be interviewed. They take breaks for lunch and dinner. However, according to a journalist sometimes everything happens spontaneously,

*“Normally, we set our agenda one day in advance. If there is an interview, we set our appointment. If necessary, we choose the place for the meeting. However, the agenda can change at any time. That’s why we need to be careful. For example, there may be a government announcement between 11:00 and 12:00 am. If we can catch up, we’ll go there even if it’s not on schedule. Or there could be a protest we have to follow in the evening. We didn’t have work until 02:00 pm yesterday, then something came up; I came home at 3 o’clock in the morning” (Interviewee 23, *Özgürüz*, in depth interview, 26.04.2018).*

On the other hand, journalists have to be active, around 24 hours a day, without exception, on all social network accounts own by news sites. It should not be forgotten that social media experts are not employed in any of the news sites. So, besides their editorial workload, journalists must accept another workload, such as managing the social network accounts of news sites or analysing habits of the target audience, for example, by determining on what social network they like to spend more time, etc. As journalists say, these activities are carried out to create a successful social media strategy.

Journalists are also responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring news site’s social media strategy to increase brand awareness and website traffic. Journalists who keep the social network accounts open on their smartphones and desktops create value with endless clicks such as searching, uploading, sharing, and commenting. Mentioned practices are necessary to keep news sites’ traffic rates high.

Therefore, a decrease in a website's traffic also means a decrease in online advertising revenues.

5.4.2. News Production: New Practices, Tasks and Skills in Journalistic Work

News production on news sites begins with information gathering. First of all, journalists reach information by researching traditional media. Local and foreign newspapers and news channels are the main information sources. On the other hand, some news sites such as *Oda TV*, *Diken*, *T24*, *Artı Gerçek*, *Artı TV*, *Tele 1*, and *ABC Gazetesi* have access to news agencies. Accessed news agencies are *Demirören Haber Ajansı (DHA)*, *Anadolu Ajansı (AA)*, *Anka Haber Ajansı (AHA)*, Reuters, Associated Press, and *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*. However, news sites such as *Özgürüz*, *GazeteRed*, and *Medyascope.tv* do not have an access due to economic reasons. The news sites that have survived for long time, such as *Oda TV* and *T24*, also benefit from their own archive records.

According to journalists, digital platforms such as Twitter, Periscope, *Ekşi Sözlük*, WhatsApp lines of news sites, and Google Search Engine are also among the main sources of information used for news production. It should be noted that none of the news sites use RSS or robot software for information gathering and news production. They prioritize the originality of news content ranging from 40 to 80 news stories per day. The number of news shared varies according to the intensity of the agenda.

A journalist explains his/her daily routine while producing news,

“Before our editorial meetings, I examine local and foreign news media, news agencies and social media, especially Twitter to set the agenda. If my proposals are accepted by our editorial team, I write my news. Then I select the images, edit them and send to my news manager. If the news is approved, I upload it to our website. Without wasting time, I turn my news into social posts and share them on the official social media accounts of the news site. I need to circulate news. I complete all these

tasks in a few minutes” (Interviewee 28, T24, in depth interview, 15.07.2019).

During news production, journalists relate the converged ecosystem of digital journalism to the nature of digital technologies and small teams of news sites. As they are all passionately engaged in managing news sites; they don’t even mention potential workload, pressures, and time constraints in an environment where news has no deadline and is always up to minute. That’s why *“I learned to be fast and make quick decisions”* says a journalist during news production (Interviewee 4, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04.2018). Another journalist clarifies the pressure to create and share information in real-time, especially as an event unfolds,

“Our team consists of eight people. Therefore, we have to perform many tasks at the same time. For example, I follow both news agencies and social media networks at the same time. In case of important information, I should never miss it. I am learning to be fast and be as perfect as possible. It is very important to make quick decisions, we share information in real time. Quick decision taking is very important, we are sharing information in real-time” (Interviewee 3, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04.2018).

During news production, journalists need to adopt some new practices and skills alongside traditional reporting skills such as research, verification, interviewing, news writing and broadcasting. For example, they need to learn how to use programs like Photoshop and Premiere Pro to capture and edit images and videos. They must learn to shoot and edit video interviews or short clips about a reported story. Creating podcasts and promoting them through several platforms also requires additional skills. In some cases journalists also need to learn how to use website building tools, and how to code. Working with web analytics tools is also part of their profession. Despite the lack of training in the relevant fields, many journalists told that they learned all these practices while working on news sites, often by trying them.

A journalist tells,

“I’m into everything from researching and writing the news story to selecting images and editing them in Photoshop. In case of video, I use video editing programs and upload the videos to the news site. It is also my job to share the news on social networks. I also monitor the visitor numbers and website traffic by acting as a web analytics specialist. I learned it all by experience. It’s not easy but I am getting used to it. Aren’t we the journalists of the 21st century?” (Interviewee 20, Oda TV, in depth interview, 12.04.2018).

Thus, it is clear that the Web 2.0 era has naturalized all the practices listed above. As Rampazzo Gambarato and Peret Teixeira Tárcea (2017: 1383) write, journalists today tell stories in a variety of formats across a variety of platforms, using digital technologies where mobility, liquidity, and interactivity play important roles in engaging and attracting the recipient to the participatory interpretation of the message.

Journalistic start-ups such as *Medyascope.tv* and *Özgürüz* are good examples as they carry out all their activities by using live broadcasting tools of platforms such as Skype, Periscope, YouTube, and Facebook as well as social media networks. These two perform tasks such as information gathering, news production, and news distribution on social networks. Their websites are only archives.

For example, *Medyascope.tv* broadcasts from its own studio on live streaming platforms. Journalists connect with guests from all over the world. They also invite guests to their studio. The news outlet produces programs with intellectual content, especially in video format, based on discussions.

Özgürüz broadcasting live from wherever the journalists are, via platforms and mobile devices. Journalists define this mobile and decentralized news production practice as “guerrilla journalism”. According to journalists, the busy agenda of Turkey has a hand in this. A journalist tells how they produce news,

“We usually set our agenda the night before. However, everything can change depending on the rhythm of the day. For example, yesterday we were at the İstanbul Justice Palace and planned to pursue Cumhuriyet Daily Newspaper’s case as we were informed Akin Atalay (Executive board head of Cumhuriyet Daily Newspaper, and lawyer) would be there. On the same day we also learned that İlkan Koyuncu (lawyer of Osman Kavala) visited Osman Kavala (businessman and philanthropist) who is still in detention and does not have a judge report. To talk about the subject, I made an appointment with Mr. Koyuncu to meet at Çağlayan Justice Palace. I saw the president of the bar courthouse. I asked him to evaluate the decisions in Cumhuriyet Case. At that moment I also broadcasted live there. Against the division of the university, there were protests in İstanbul University today. We hesitated between going and staying. I had them on the air two days ago. We were tired. Also, in order not to ignore you (pointing to the researcher) we decided to follow the İstanbul University protests tomorrow and came here. Now, we’re in a coffee house in İstanbul’s Kadikoy district. In fact, the agenda determines my working day. If there is nothing, there is nothing. But if there’s, I will definitely follow it. Naturally, I eat my lunch and dinner” (Interviewee 22, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04.2018).

On news sites, there are journalists who have gained experience in traditional media outlets (print and broadcast). However, there are also very young journalists who take their first steps into journalism through digital news outlets. These two generations told that they are combining traditional journalism practices with digital especially with mobile journalism practices during news production. Mobile journalists use live streaming apps to broadcast news as fast as possible from anytime and anywhere. Journalist often transmit news from the epicentre of events using smartphones. The reporter uses this device to shoot and edit videos, record audio, take photos.

On the subject, a journalist with television reporting experience compared traditional journalism with mobile journalism. And he/she talked about the opportunities and obstacles of this new practice,

“I didn’t know what Periscope was, but now I can write a book on how to do journalism on social media, especially using live streaming apps. At the same time, thanks to my background in television journalism, I find the answers to questions such as where the best photo was taken, what questions to ask guests, and with which announcement the news should be given. However, it is very difficult to manage guests in live broadcasts. It’s only a matter of time before a wrong word comes out of my mouth. For example, on television, if it’s not live, I can shoot an announcement for 45 times; for causes like I misspelled, my eyes were closed, my hair is bad, and etc. On mobile broadcasts I don’t have a second chance. For example, once during a live broadcast, I forgot the name of my guest, then I tried to correct the situation in front of the audiences, and then I apologized and started over. So, I learned to be agile and think fast in mobile broadcasts” (Interviewee 22, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04.2018).

News production also differs between centralized and decentralized journalists. For example, stable journalists make interviews via phone calls or repetitive e-mails (Interviewee 4, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04.2018). Or as a journalist tells, they just access information through social media:

“I am attached to my computer as I am to my smartphone. I get information through social media. I also evaluate the news reports that I receive via e-mail and/or WhatsApp lines. I reach to the images and videos also via social media. Twitter is a life saver. If I need to talk to people, I do it via e-mail or phone calls. I never go out on the field” (Interviewee 20, Oda TV, in depth interview, 12.04.2018).

It is clear that defined practice of stable journalists reduces the functionality of the journalist in terms of research in the field. In addition, when asked to compare news production practices of news sites and mainstream media in Turkey, many journalists answered “we have no difference”. This response leaves the impression that journalists in general do not go out for the news in Turkey. This fact brings to mind the idea that, despite the claims of content originality by news sites, the news

produced on a desk poses a problem such as “copy-paste”. This situation raises the suspicion that similar news are circulating both in the mainstream media and in the digital media.

Nevertheless, journalists are making statements that can demolish this idea. Journalists, for example explain that they present different viewpoints from the mainstream, even if the stories are similar. Journalists also announced that they receive information from many more sources than the mainstream media. Since there is no fear of being fired, they can freely publish this information,

“In mainstream media, journalists take any kind of information into account, but they do not use it due to the editorial policies of the media organizations they work for. While working at Cumhuriyet Daily Newspaper, I used to attend press conferences with many journalists from different newspapers. For example, during a conference a colleague from Akşam Daily Newspaper gave me a story idea. Because that news could not be published in the Akşam Newspaper. The advantage of working at an oppositionist media outlet is that I make the story of any information that carries news value. I am free. The balance has changed a lot lately. Mainstream media formed a self-closed structure and only supports ruling party. Journalists are afraid of being fired. However, opposition media companies, including the news site I work for, became independent. I have no difficulty in reporting, and I don’t think that I will be fired” (Interviewee 29, Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

Thus, unlike the mainstream media, news sites both centralized and decentralized also do not block the flow of information, and news can arise from within the news:

“It is clear where the information comes from and how it will be processed in the mainstream media. But we are different. For example, the child of a woman whose husband is imprisoned in Silivri Prison was abused at the entrance of the prison. The woman was forbidden to visit her husband on the grounds that she reacted to the abuse. This woman called

me. Because, she knew very well that if she applied to the mainstream media, she would not be able to make her voice heard. She wanted to be a guest on my show, but she would only talk about her husband's arrest, not that her child was abused. I said all right. However, during the live broadcast, she looked me into eyes for a moment and said that her child was abused. I certainly did not direct her. Even I asked why she said it after the broadcast. 'It's beneficial for no one when I don't tell' she answered" (Interviewee 22, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04.2018).

As can be seen, the journalists shed an optimistic light on the concerns that the news in Turkey is repeating itself. While this issue was being clarified, another issue that came to mind was the effects of social media platforms on news production and news content, which seem to be used a lot during news production.

5.4.3. The Impact of Social Media Platforms on News Sites: News Production and the News Content

As Nicole S. Cohen (2018) writes, contemporary journalism that is mentioned with digital is tightly bound to the content, practices, and preferences of social media platforms. Today, journalists produce articles that will be shared and circulated, or do the work of sharing and circulating other people's writing via social media (Cohen, 2018). At the news sites, journalists use social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Periscope, Instagram and YouTube other than that WhatsApp, Telegram, *Ekşi Sözlük*⁴³ and *Nabız* (a mobile application on IOS and Android where news sites are chosen by the user and most clicked news is sent as notifications) in news production and distribution, and as a part of remuneration of their labour due to business models that are chosen, in a hybrid way.

To collect information journalists use Twitter, Telegram and WhatsApp lines of the news sites (followers of news sites report news via WhatsApp lines, and send

⁴³ *Ekşi Sözlük* (Sour Dictionary) is a collaborative hypertext dictionary based on the concept of web sites built up on user contribution. *Ekşi Sözlük* is launched in February 15, 1999 and available in Turkish language. However, *Ekşi Sözlük* is not a dictionary in the strict sense; users are not required to write correct information (Wikipedia, 2019).

photos as well as videos about the issues they deal with), and *Ekşi Sözlük*. Facebook, Periscope, Instagram, YouTube, and *Nabız* are used for news distribution, since they're free. With the help of these tools, most of the journalists said they had the authority to organize their own independent and autonomous news coverage, and break news.

For example, live streaming technologies such as Periscope, which was launched by Twitter in early 2015, have allowed smartphone and tablet users to broadcast real-time videos directly to followers, closing the previous distinction between information gathering and distribution (Fichet et al., 2016 cited in Avadar, 2019: 49). With this alternative, it is claimed that journalism became more democratized, simpler, portable, and cost-effective as technology developed (Stewart and Littau, 2016: 314 cited in Avadar, 2019: 49). Therefore, the app was also inspired Medyascope.tv (Avadar, 2019: 48-49).

The founder of Medyascope.tv was started broadcasting on Periscope before the general elections in Turkey on June 7, 2015. At that time, he was working in *HaberTürk* daily newspaper, where he could not report freely. At the same time, the frequency of appearance of television programs has also decreased (Avadar, 2019: 48-49).

At such a time, he interviewed almost all candidates of political parties on Periscope. Politicians talked on many topics ranging from human rights issues to economic issues that need to be discussed in Turkey. After leaving *HaberTürk* in January 2016, he decided to create Mediascope.tv as a live-streaming based digital news platform with the help of his journalist friends, in other words, with a team of fifteen editorial and technical staff (Avadar, 2019: 48-49). So much so that social networks met many of their needs, journalists did not need large teams when they were setting up their news outlets.

It is found that especially Twitter helps journalists a lot during news production. Journalists perceive Twitter as a more professional platform for content production and reaching wider audiences than Facebook, Instagram etc. As Claudia Mellado and Amaranta Alfaro write journalists “use Twitter to develop ideas and

monitor news and information, gathering evidence for all news types and thematic beats” (Broersma and Graham 2013; Weiss 2015 cited in Mellado and Alfaro, 2020: 1261).

Various studies have revealed that journalists use this platform to gather and report news, keep the pulse of what is going on their networks, and share their opinions with other user (Saldana et al. 2017; Mourao and Harlow 2017; Brems et al. 2017 cited in Mellado and Alfaro, 2020: 1261). Promoting their work, and self-branding are among other options. In this context, Brems et al., (2017 cited in Mellado and Alfaro, 2020: 1262) argue that journalists are increasingly encouraged to develop a personal brand on social media as the platforms offer journalists the opportunity to become news and opinion hubs and increase their market value.

In order to be effective, journalists first create their professional profiles. In a typical Twitter profile, journalists tag their city, current organizations they work for, and personal websites if any. Journalists can also provide audiences with additional information on how they can financially support the organizations they work for. Verification by Twitter with a blue checkmark, on the other hand, indicates that the profile is trustworthy, which is vital for news organizations and journalists who need to build an active audience.

To receive a blue checkmark, Elizabeth Arens (2021) writes that a journalist’s account must be authentic (authenticity symbolizes verification of the user identity with a photo, and/or documentation,), notable (includes mentions from news sources or official websites), and active (requires active use of the account) (See Figure 28).



Figure 28: Twitter Profile of a founder. Retrieved on February 07, 2022

Twitter profile of a news site also has similarities, such as tagging the news site's link and getting a blue tick. Once the profile has gained trust, the number of followers increases (See Figure 29).



Figure 29: Profile of a news site (*Diken*). Retrieved from Twitter on February 07, 2022

According to the journalists interacting with the followers is the most important step of self-branding. For this reason, it is important that the profile created is reliable. It is also important for journalists to constantly update their profile. These updates are sometimes on the agenda and sometimes on the private life of the journalists. In this way, journalists exchange views with their followers about the news and interviews they made during the day or about their daily life. Journalists chat with their followers or answer their questions. Many journalists believe that they

have strengthened their position in the media sector by being visible on social media through exemplified practices.

Apart from branding strategies of journalists, on the news sites, news production starts especially with the information obtained from the Twitter. Journalists, in particular, describe Twitter as a huge news agency, and an agenda setter. As John H. Parmelee (2013: 1) writes, “journalists often find story ideas from tweets they receive (O’Connor, 2009; Parmelee and Bichard, 2012; Solis, 2009)”. Similarly, many journalists stated that Twitter is the first place they look when they do research on a topic. Moreover, according to Parmelee (2013: 5), Twitter has also “the potential to change the newsroom”. Therefore Twitter gives journalists new abilities such as,

- Crowdsourcing: “Journalists access to real-time information from many types of sources and useful marketing capabilities to increase their readership” (Ahmad, 2010 cited in Parmelee, 2013: 5).
- Being asynchronous and always-on: “The asynchronous and always-on nature of Twitter gives it an ‘ambient’ quality that offers ‘more complex ways of understanding and reporting on the subtleties of public communication’” (Hermida, 2010: 1 cited in Parmelee, 2013: 5).
- Free usage: “Twitter is popular with journalists because it is free, and economic pressures on newsrooms increasingly force journalists to look for cost-saving alternatives for newsgathering and story promotion” (Parmelee, 2013: 5).

As can be seen, Twitter offers the opportunity to journalists to access all kinds of information from many sources instantly, which enriches news content, for free. Different benefits of Twitter are also emerging in Turkey, for example, Twitter has become a network of journalists, and many dismissed journalists continue their careers individually on Twitter while using other social media networks such as Facebook, and YouTube in a hybrid way. Besides tweeting the information journalists are creating short news videos, and/or broadcasting live on referred platforms, or by using Twitter Spaces they are organizing live audio conversations

which are usually on Turkey's agenda. News sites also collect information and make news using the reports of these journalists. A journalist explains,

“Actually, we mine the news on the social media. I can name it as ‘word hunt’. Perhaps A big part of the information comes from Twitter, but in a simple and raw form. A word, a sentence inside, can hide a very important detail. We reveal these details as a team by brain storming. What actually determines the agenda is these details. Team work is very important at news sites. Actually, journalism itself is a team work. Other than that we are always online on social media networks. Here, we both share the news and gather information that carry news value. The persons we follow are important, too. We follow politicians, businesses, other media institutions and journalists, social media influencers, activists, and etc. Because of media monopolization, lots of journalists lost their jobs. For now, they can sustain their professions through only social media. These journalists share the information that they obtained on especially Twitter. We capture these and make news. Twitter, in this context, has become an intra-journalist network” (Interviewee 32, Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

However, that's not the only reason why Twitter is popular with journalists. Next comes the platform's ability to cut costs. Journalists think that news production is a very expensive activity. In order to break news, they need to employ a big editorial team, they need to cover travel expenses when the journalist is on the field, or at least they need to purchase news agency memberships. As mentioned earlier, most of the news sites cannot employ more than ten journalists, on the other hand, journalists are not active on the field or cannot become members of news agencies because they do not have enough money. Thus, resorting to crowdsourcing (via Twitter or other social media networks) is perceived by many news sites as an alternative to traditional journalistic practices to lower the costs of news production. Reducing news production costs helps to survive, especially for news sites that are in formation with a small editorial team and cannot generate sufficient revenue. All this naturally makes Twitter indispensable for newsrooms of news sites. And despite some difficulties in

verifying information received via Twitter, journalists continue to use it. As a founder said,

“Twitter is a source of information for us. However, the problem of verifying the information arises. To be honest, we’ve been trapped a few times. We had some awkwardness at the beginning, posting old videos like new. However, later on, we learned that we have a chance to confirm the information’s with the possibilities of the internet and the social media. For similar information, we first do a research on Google. Then we reach the owner of the post. As the last step, we contact local journalist friends. Over time, we created a network on Twitter that facilitated our actions among journalists” (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21.04.2018).

As seen, financial difficulties push journalists to be creative, and help journalists to invent their own confirmation methods. For example, according to journalists, contacting with the owner of the posts via direct messaging is a verification method specific to social media networks (See Figure 30). A journalist tells about his/her experience:

“Twitter is one of our main sources, for example, at recent days, in a bar, a woman claimed she was sexually abused and tweeted. Regarding the incident, we communicated with the woman via Twitter. Using message feature of Twitter, we asked her some questions and made the news” (Interviewee 24, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 07.04.2018).



Figure 30: @banalpayerdem: I’m trying to proceed in cyclist way in Üsküdar... @goncatokyol: Hello, is it possible to turn your video into story with source attribution at T24? Retrieved from Twitter on August, 17, 2019

Moreover, platforms such as Twitter and *Ekşi Sözlük* influence what journalists cover. Hence, journalists especially prefer to use trending topics to make news, and this is perceived as a guarantee that the news will be circulated among the audience and get a lot of clicks. Circulating and clicked news, on the other hand, is equivalent to generating revenue by increasing the site traffic, especially for news sites that continue to work with online advertisements. As a journalist explains:

“I’ve been working as an editor for a year. I also had press experience. In the press, the journalist follows the news on his/her own and decides whether an information is newsworthy or not. On a digital newsroom, it is social media that determines our choices. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Ekşi Sözlük, with their trending topics (TT’S), help us to choose the information that can be news or shall be read. For example, with the help of Twitter or Ekşi Sözlük, I can analyse an information whether it is sensational or not. Because my aim is to find and publish information that will increase the numbers of clicks on our news site. This definitely means a possible increase in our revenues (Interviewee 29, Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

As journalists point out, user participation plays an important role, from agenda setting to revenue raising strategies of the news sites. As the journalists define, participatory characteristics of social media networks also influenced the newsrooms deeply. Therefore, the new form of journalism makes possible convergence between professional journalistic content and that produced by amateurs. This new approach stimulates collaboration between professional journalists, citizen journalists, social media users, activists, academicians, trolls, and anti-trolling groups (Cohen, 2018; Avadar, 2019: 50).

These new components of contemporary journalism, with their qualities reporting news stories from the epicentre of an event, by using their social media accounts, blogs, and/or messenger applications also turn gatekeeping concept into gatewatching. Social media users are the keystones for circulation of the stories. Activists and academicians help journalists to create an informed discussion on the agenda that is set, they also help journalists to interpret nuances of a particular issue. Thus, collaborative news production enables journalists to build close relationships with the society since they keep the pulse of the given society, with their analyses. This new type of journalism is called as “rounded perspective journalism” by the journalists (Avadar, 2019: 52).

Yet here, journalists said that whatever their political, social or economic position, they needed to stay in balance to maintain their highly respected objectivity. In professional news outlets participation debate cannot proceed without journalistic control. Therefore, according to most of the journalists non-journalist content providers are at risk of ignoring the concept of objectivity and journalism ethics (Avadar, 2019: 50). As a founder talks about the working structure of the news sites and the role of editors, says that journalists are careful not to confuse amateur content with professional content (Avadar, 2019: 50),

“Kazım, a pharmacist from İzmir but also a good documentarist, submits Periscope broadcast or other videos he made, on his YouTube or Vimeo channels and sends us the link. If the editors find it reasonable we transmit that link to our website. Thus, audience is being directed to video owner’s personal account from our website. On Medyascope.tv, the

content has a quality which is not imposed but shared, where all content providers are free and independent at their work. Moreover, any person, journalist or not who has a program idea or has the news to share can participate in this platform from any place. For example, journalist Barbaros Devecioğlu broadcasts from England. A substitute teacher Alican Tayla broadcasts from France. A group of young scholars, broadcast a program named Son İmparatorluk (The Last Empire) from US. Emir, a student from Sweden, broadcasts in English.” (Ruşen Çakır cited in Avadar, 2019: 50).

However, it can not be ignored that the balance is disturbed when manipulators appear in front of journalists, such as trolling groups. These groups disseminate documents (usually images, videos, and texts) via social media networks made up of misinformation, and/or manipulation, and make them easily shareable (Donovan and Friedberg, 2019, 9: 37).

According to journalists such information is usually shared by Aktrolls (a trolling group waged by the ruling party) against opposition political parties, politicians, journalists, news media outlets, women, Kurds, LGBTQ, etc. They are aimed to harm these groups. In this case, by compromising objectivity, journalists collaborate with social media users, academics and activists to form counter-troll groups. The aim is to fight with the misinformation and manipulative information roaming via social media networks, and change public opinion. For example, *İsimsizler Hareketi* (The Anonymous Movement), which tries to eliminate the false information spread by the ruling party-supported troll groups on social media platforms and to change public opinion by making invisible visible, is supported by *GazeteRed* (GazeteRed, 2020).

Organized via Telegram (an end-to-end encrypted message software) and Twitter, *İsimsizler Hareketi* carried the hashtag “#sesiduyibrahimyaşasın” (#hearthevoiceletibrahimtolive) to the top of the TT’s on Twitter on May 2, 2020 (Ekşi Sözlük, 2020). İbrahim Gökçek was the guitarist of Grup Yorum, a leftist folk-rock music band, formed by university students in the mid-80s. The band was composed

songs on disasters such as, Soma, where 302 miners died due to a fire in 2014. They were also composed songs about the coup in 1980 (CNNTürk, 2018).

However, the band's concerts have been banned since 2015, and İbrahim Gökçek with singer Helin Bölek were accused as terrorists and jailed (CNNTürk, 2018). İbrahim Gökçek and Helin Bölek started a death fast in 2019. Their request was to release and to continue to their concerts. Unfortunately, musician Helin Bölek died on April 3, 2020, 288 days later. Following, due to the efforts of *İsimizler Hareketi* on Twitter, as well as, journalists reporting this TT action on news sites, the government agreed to evaluate the band's request for a concert on May 6, 2020. Same day Gökçek stopped his death fast however died the next day after 323 days (Bianet, 2020; Duvar English, 2020).

Undergraduate student Gülistan Doku disappeared on January 5, 2020 in Tunceli. Her parents suspected that the young woman was killed and thrown into the Tunceli dam. This subject did not attract much attention in the news media. After a short time, *İsimsizler Hareketi* carried the hastags “#içişlerigulistanibul” (#ministry of interior find Gülistan) and “#barajbosaltilsin” (#drain the dam) to the top of TT's on Twitter. Then digital news media outlets and a part of legacy media covered the news story. As a result, the government partially drained the dam. Unfortunately, the young woman could not be found (NTV, 2020).

Thus, all these examples are proof that a number of actors, not primarily journalists or journalistic organizations are now deeply embedded in journalistic production and have a great influence on the country's agenda as well as on the conditions for the creation and dissemination of news (Ananny and Crawford 2015: 193 cited in Cohen, 2018). This new situation also opposes the monolithic point of view of the old media by evaluating a subject from various angles (Avadar, 2019: 52). As a result, the diversity of news content deeply affects and changes the agenda of countries where -freedom issues and right violations are always on the agenda.

However, despite all progress, the moderator of the Telegram page named *İsimsizler Hareketi* Taylan Kulaçoğlu and journalist Hakan Gülseven the founder of *GazeteRed* were detained for incitement to commit a crime and praising the criminal

on May 17, 2020. Although the detainees were released after a short time, this hindered the development of the movement (Gazete Duvar, 2020). For journalists, Turkey is a country where media freedom issues are always a priority, however, *Medyascope.tv* and *Özgürüz* attract attention, because they can transmit live-broadcasting technologies to journalism.

“We’re using live broadcasting tools. These tools allow us to broadcast over the internet for free. For example, the Periscope application works on mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones. However, its main problem is the poor picture and sound quality. Thus, our technical team invented cables and adapters for additional microphones to achieve a better sound quality. We also started using a video camera for broadcasting by creating a special app for Periscope and giving everyone a microphone. We created this substructure by working hard and trying, at very low costs. Then, we established a studio, now we have a quality infrastructure that we can go live whenever we want. And it’s not costly action like mainstream news channels do. I think we are a good proof that journalism can be done without investing in technological infrastructure” (Interviewee 10, *Medyascope.tv*, in depth interview, 30.03.2018).

Thus, with the facility that live streaming technologies and video sharing applications such as Periscope and/or YouTube offer, *T24*, *Medyascope.tv*, *Tele 1*, *Artı Gerçek*, *Artı TV*, *Oda TV*, *ABC Gazetesi*, *GazeteRed* and *Özgürüz* produce live programs and video contents. Live programs are mainly based on debates on specific subjects such as economics, ecology, human rights. The programs welcomes guests such as politicians, academics, activists, artists, and etc. Video contents are in the form of short news videos of two or five minutes in length, describing the important events of the day. In these videos, there is either a voice over the visuals or a person reading the news. News sites such as *T24* and *Medyascope.tv* also offer prime time news.

While *T24* presents its prime time news everyday only in Turkish, *Medyascope.tv* presents its program on Fridays, in Kurdish, English, and Turkish. Journalists noted that their prime-time news was very efficient. According to

journalists, these programs also compete with prime time news programs presented on mainstream news channels in Turkey. Even, a prime-time newscaster told that he/she was recognized at bus stops. “*People stop and ask me, aren’t you that prime-time newscaster? And they add, we watch you every day with pleasure*” (Interviewee 10, *Medyascope.tv*, in depth interview, 30.03.2018). It should be noted that one of *Medyascope.tv*’s prime-time newscasters later transferred to *Halk TV*, Turkey’s leading oppositional news channel.

On the other hand, Facebook, Instagram, and *Nabız* are widely used by journalists for the dissemination of content. Facebook and Instagram are two of the most used social networks in Turkey. As learned from the journalists until recently Facebook was one of the social media networks that increase website traffic. However, it has recently left this feature to Instagram. Nevertheless, regardless of which social network the news originates from, journalists keep sharing the contents on both Facebook and Instagram (See Figure 31).



Figure 31: Facebook post of *ABC Gazetesi*. Retrieved from Facebook on February 10, 2022

A classical Facebook post includes the headline and photo of the story. In some cases news sites also post videos of a news. News sites also set their posts public in order to reach a wide audience. On the other hand, an Instagram post contains the

headline and photo of news as in Facebook, however Instagram posts also includes a short description of the story which helps to distinguish the post from Facebook (See Figure 32).



Figure 32: Instagram post of T24. Retrieved from Instagram on February 10,

Finally *Nabız*, a Turkey-based news application, receives news from the social media posts of the news sites such as Twitter and Facebook, and then distributes the content to its users according to their specific preferences. Users choose which news site to follow through the application. According to journalists, *Nabız* directs audiences to the news sites as much as Facebook and Instagram. Especially the breaking news from Twitter attracts a lot of attention, and continuous to circulate.

Thus, the whole process from profile creation to news circulation points to the existence of a system that journalists created by themselves through trial and error. The system, which is tried to be explained for content production and distribution, also reminds not to ignore the decisive power of social media platforms with free access for both journalists and audiences. Hence, it is clear that journalists get more service when they provide more information to platforms.

5.5. Editorial Policies and Standards of the News Sites

The mission of the news sites is defined as a set of principles written by the founders and the journalists involved in the creation of these news outlets. Principles focus on accurate, objective, independent news for public good. Avoiding conflicts of interest, respecting honesty and diversity while reporting, understanding the target audience and adopting their tastes were also not ignored.

For journalists, truth and objectivity are the cornerstones of an independent news outlet working in the public interest. A founder defines the features of the news site in terms of accuracy and objectivity, with these words:

“We do public journalism. We just write the truth. Even our readers see articles criticizing the owner of our news site” (Interviewee 19, Oda TV, in depth interview, 09.04.2018).

As Robert Hackett (1984: 232 cited in Muñoz-Torres, 2012: 569) wrote, objectivity can be separated from opinion or value judgements, and journalists can stand apart from real-world events. Therefore, it is the truth or meaning that

journalists convey to news audience through neutral language and competent reporting techniques.

A journalist, describing his/her own experience, proves that the news site's relationship with objectivity comes very close to Heckett's definition:

"I was arrested and spent a year in prison. At that time, they accused me of being a member of almost every illegal organization. Because I was reporting on every subject, regardless of any ideology. Therefore, with this bad experience, I have confirmed that we are an objective news site." (Interviewee 4, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04.2018).

On the other hand, one journalist says that to protect the public interest, news sites must disregard objectivity.

"We are leftists. We contribute to Labour Party while setting our agenda. We are against capitalism and we are absolutely not objective." (Interviewee 24, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 07.04.2018).

According to journalists, there are also limits to doing independent journalism for the public good in Turkey.

"We are completely independent and free in terms of journalism. We do not intent to please anyone. But that doesn't mean we can do whatever we want. While we can't do everything we believe, we don't report any news we don't believe in. This is the limits of free journalism in Turkey" (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

On the subject, another debate starts from the news sites duty of which is only for its audience, and to the public as a whole. Journalists avoid receiving gifts and payments, especially from the businesses or political parties. News sites have strict rules against any possible contact with government, political parties and businesses that try to influence the topics covered:

- No gifts from businesses: free trips, dinner parties, and free entry to events.
- Not accepting any payments: from the government, government-funded organizations, and political parties.

Therefore, respect for honesty is very important for news sites. According to journalists, a report cannot be honest, especially when it covers individuals or organizations that are not given the opportunity to respond to the allegations made against them by those in power.

Again, according to journalists, the formula for a news site that reports correctly is to interact with a variety of sources and have an editorial team made up of different backgrounds and life experiences. The diversity of the editorial team enables journalists to better understand and embrace the tastes of their target audiences, followed by validation of information from multiple sources.

5.5.1. Decision Making on News Sites

The decision-making mechanisms of news sites are based on three structures:

- Hierarchical/Authoritarian
- Participative
- Autonomous

Journalists in hierarchical/authoritarian structure first present the issue they want to follow for the opinion of the editorial team. If the subject is not found convincing or deficiencies are detected, it is never taken into account by the editorial team. A news prepared in a daily routine must first be approved by the news director and then by the editor-in-chief. If the subject is very dramatic, for example, with the potential to imprison journalists, the news site owner's approval is always required before the story is spread.

It should not be forgotten that the hierarchical/authoritarian structure represents *Oda TV*, which has been shut down many times or whose journalists have been imprisoned. The founder of the news site explains:

“If it’s an important piece of news that has the potential to put us all in jail, we consult the owner of the news site. On a routine day, I decide as the news director whether the news will be published or we ask the editor-in-chief. Next, the editors take on the roles. Their feedback is very important. If the editors find the news unreliable, say it has flaws, if they voice doubts about the news source, we sat that story aside for further investigation. If we reach a consensus, we don’t publish that news. For example, it was alleged that a lawyer was kidnapped and beaten. However, the information that the lawyer lied reached us from different sources. We kept our distance, we didn’t publish the news. And we were right, it was fake news” (Interviewee 17, Oda TV, in depth interview, 09.04.2018).

A journalist also said this on the subject,

“Editors find news. However, the final decision is made by our news director and editor-in-chief. A news is only uploaded to the news site when it’s approved” (Interviewee 20, Oda TV, in depth interview, 12.04.2018).

Despite the decision making mechanisms that adopted by *Oda TV*, journalists stated that on a routine day they didn’t face any pressure during their news production. Editors have the opportunity to make a choice about the news they are working on. They are free to set their own agenda and to convey the truth as it is. According to journalists, it’s almost impossible to find the content of the news sites in the mainstream media. First of all, they are original. They are prepared with journalistic values supported by journalists. They are also away from political and economic concerns, as well as, boss pressure.

On the other hand, *T24*, *Diken*, *ABC Gazetesi*, *Tele 1*, *Medyascope.tv*, *GazeteRed*, *Artı Gerçek*, and *Artı TV* represent participative decision-making style.

In the participatory structure, journalists usually orally present the topic that they want to follow to the editorial team. Working together at large tables, the editorial teams have the opportunity to verbally discuss their news ideas, their communication is never interrupted during the day. Or they transmit their ideas in written via e-mails. At editorial meetings, each editor's story ideas are presented to the editorial team. If a journalist supports the idea of news in these meetings, other journalists can also produce arguments against this idea. If the data in the hands of the journalist presenting the news idea is stronger than the antithesis, the idea is accepted and produced as news. If necessary, the final decision regarding the direction, correction or development of the idea is left to the editor-in-chief.

A journalist tells:

“If we are going to write a story, we open it up for discussion. For example, if I defend the news, another colleague offers it the antithesis. If my data is stronger than my colleagues' claims, we write the story. Usually the editor-in-chief has the last word. But if he's absent, we make our own decision” (Interviewee 4, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04.2018).

An editor-in-chief says:

“We do not need to set the agenda in Turkey. The agenda is already set. It just needs to be followed closely. We make our decisions jointly. We find the news, we discuss it for a few minutes. If we all agree, we prepare and spread the news” (Interviewee 2, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04.2018).

Another journalist said that they took joint decisions, but that the last word for corrections belongs to the editor-in-chief:

“Editor-in-chief reads the news we write. When I talk about hierarchy, I mean correcting each other” (Interviewee 15, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

Özgürüz represents the autonomous structure with its decentralised features. The news outlet offers a rhizomatic view as it has no office. The editors and editor-in-chief of the news site work in various cities of Turkey and Germany such as İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Diyarbakır, and Berlin. In an autonomous structure, journalists are free to report on any subject in the region they dominate. Journalists are also free to conduct interviews on the topic of their choice, of their own free will. In an autonomous structure, journalists make their own decisions and set their agenda in the context of their own plans. For example, via WhatsApp groups they share their daily plans with the rest of the editorial team. The duty of editor-in-chief is only to advise, the editor-in-chief never interferes with the journalists, only gives ideas.

Units such as editor-in-chief and news director are appointed as advisory bodies in the news production and decision-making process. A journalist from Özgürüz tells on autonomous decision making mechanism:

“I know the Istanbul region well. Diyarbakır editor knows Diyarbakır, İzmir editor knows İzmir. What happens in Turkey determines our agenda. Our editor in each region accepts the news in case of an event, reaches the actors of the event, and informs the whole team of the date and time of the broadcast. All editors are autonomous in news production. Editors make their own decisions. Most of all, we advise each other. Our editor-in-chief is just giving us ideas. For example, to focus on ecology in İzmir, and on the constitution in Ankara. If it fits our daily agenda, we take into account the ideas of the editor-in-chief. Otherwise, we are not questioned by the editor-in-chief, as we do not take the news he suggested on the agenda” (Interviewee 22, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04.2018).

At editorial meetings, the editor-in-chief only advises the editors; never influence the choices of journalists. The editorial teams of news sites always set the agenda collectively. A journalist explains the details:

“Our editor-in-chief does not interfere in our agenda. He feeds us with his knowledge and experience like a consultancy authority. For example, if we are pursuing a case, he usually says the following about

our work: ‘The details and observations from the court were pretty good. However after the trial, there were those who wondered who was crying, whether the applause broke out, or whether the sadness fell. These are important, give them’. For example, if there is a news story about foreign policy, our editor-in-chief gives us an idea about whom we can talk to on the subject. So he feeds us with his experiences but never interferes” (Interviewee 22, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04.2018).

As journalists explain, the power structure and policies of news sites, whether hierarchical, participatory, and autonomous, are based on journalistic values. Journalistic autonomy is also highly respected in these newsrooms. Interference with the news occurs only when the agenda is too fragile. According to journalists, intervention is essential in times of vulnerability, as news sites can easily face the penalty of being shut down.

5.5.2. Factors Influencing Journalists’ Editorial Decisions

In the context of journalism, there is no doubt that journalists have responsibilities and obligations to society. For many journalists, a journalist’s job is to involve the public in the democratic process and to serve as a voice for the silent while informing them. Considering these responsibilities and obligations, journalists guide their ethics in decision-making process with two main motivations: to carry the mission of defending democracy in Turkey, and to pursue their profession freely. Based on the statements made by the journalists, one of the aims of the journalists is also to prove that “another journalism is possible” in Turkey. That is to say, the opposite of journalism that exists in the current mainstream media.

As written by Paul S. Voakes (1997: 21), journalists’ ethics can vary depending on their intrinsic (religious upbringing, personal moral compass, or desire for career advancement), or their extrinsic traits (codes of ethics, peer pressure, or the threat of reprimand). Departing from Voakes (1997: 21) and considering the identities of journalists ranging from liberals to socialists, the factors affecting the editorial decisions of journalists are: universal journalistic values, audience, and political oppressions (the existence of political oppressions are ignored by many journalists).

On the other hand, commercial interests of the organization are never mentioned in the first place (See Figure 33).

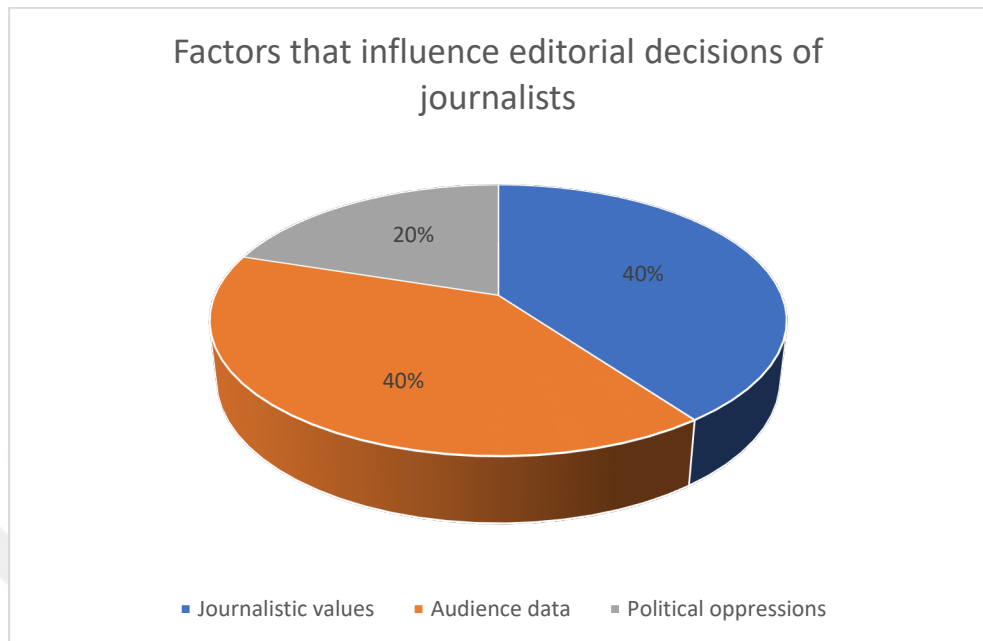


Figure 33: Factors affecting journalists' editorial decisions

The data obtained also gives an idea about the functioning of news sites. For example, according to a journalist, unlike Turkey's traditional mainstream news media, news sites respect universal journalistic values while making decisions. As a journalist said,

"We always check information before publishing it. We believe in truth. We are independent, and do not represent private, political, institutional, and cultural interests. We never cover information that may create a conflict of interest. We also respect the rights those we cover. And we balance the stories by trying to present every aspect of a story. However, when we make mistakes we correct them" (Interviewee 2, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04.2018).

Another founder also clarifies,

“All newsworthy information is published on our news site, taking into account journalistic values” (Interviewee 19, Oda TV, in depth interview, 09.04.2018).

Similarly, a journalist underlines that the main factor influencing editorial decisions is only journalistic values. In particular, the journalist associates the dominance of journalistic values in editorial decisions with the business model they use, namely funds and donations:

“We have no advertising revenue. So, we don’t worry about making the advertiser happy. We are not politically affiliated with any institution or association, and there is no one to judge us on this matter. This is our secret while emphasizing journalistic values” (Interviewee 12, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 30.03.2018).

For many journalists, a focus on journalistic values keeps news sites from succumbing defeating to economic and political pressures. Journalists say that with the help of news sites’ business models (mainly online advertising and donations), organizations have freed their business interests from the potential pressures of capital owners on news in traditional sense.

However, based on the observations, it is understood that in the news sites where the business models are based on online advertising, commercial interests are replaced by audience metrics, and transformed into the effects of user-generated. Editorial decisions are shaped according to the tendencies of the target audience, especially in news sites that generate revenue from Google due to click rates. As a journalist put it on the subject,

“We’re always on Google Analytics and examine the reports continuously. Our current business model focuses on increasing click rates of the news site. For this reason, at which news stories the readers spend their time more, which news they prefer, have become important, in terms

of agenda setting. We pay attention to give room to the most clicked stories which are compatible with the preferences of our audience profile. I think, it is a chance for us, we can easily balance economic interest of the web site with the public service mission that we adopted, by giving priority to the needs of our target audiences and making them to click on our stories” (Interviewee 27, T24, in depth interview, 15.07.2019).

Web analytics means “measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of Internet data for the purposes of understanding and optimizing web usage” (Digital Analytics Association 2008, 3 cited in Tandoc Jr. and Thomas, 2015: 243). Digital tools for analysing metrics like Google Analytics give website owners access to a wealth of information about their online audience: what titles and links they clicked on, how much time they spend on each article, where they were while accessing the website (Kaushik 2010; Napoli 2011; Weischedel, Matear, and Deans 2005 cited in Tandoc Jr. and Thomas, 2015: 243). Web analytics also serves the needs of online marketing tracking metrics that lead to conversion, often defined as an online purchase (Beri and Singh 2013 cited in Tandoc Jr. and Thomas, 2015: 243).

As stated in the definitions, web analytics is useful for news organizations not only to understand audience preferences and behaviours, but also for the economic function of news sites. Journalists describe the principles and system of web analytics and the impact of audience data on editorial choices during news production:

“Web analytics is such a system that we can see the full profile of visitors coming from Google, and we can even learn about screen brightness. While producing news, we consider the news that readers click the most. These are the news that we catch the shortcoming of the government or criticize all political parties” (Interviewee 32, Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

On the other hand, another journalist emphasized the importance of user data but also said that this data does not affect the journalists’ decisions one hundred percent. Therefore, journalists give priority to using such data if they see fit,

“We always review user activities through Google Analytics. We give priority to the data of the most clicked news stories and the longest stay. We produce our news by giving importance to these two factors. It is our priority to generate income by reporting on topics that will attract our followers. However, we are the ones who make the final decision. So, the audience does not direct us, we direct them” (Interviewee 30, Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05.2019).

In general, journalists describe the internet as a powerful medium that cannot be detected. In this context, journalists said that they could find a way to escape political pressures. This is the main reason why journalists do not want to talk about the presence of political pressures in editorial decisions, even if this affects them. However, for some journalists, political pressures for editorial decisions lead journalists to exercise self-censorship.

“Today, some rules that are not in the Turkish Penalty Law or in international law are applied in Turkey against dissident journalists in Turkey. Therefore, we cannot predict the legal outcome of any news. That’s why we pay attention. Do not take this as self-censorship. We have many stories with critical comments about government policies that can be punished. However, the first thing that comes to our mind before spreading a news is whether we will be questioned because of the perspective of the news. As a media company, we differ from mainstream media in that we have nothing to gain or lose. We do not have any relationship or income expectation from the government. We don’t think about any of these during news production we are free. We just take care not to get blocked or go to jail” (Interviewee 19, Oda TV, in depth interview, 09.04.2018).

Thus, while exercising self-censorship journalists’ aim is not to be arrested, not faced with a closure penalty, and not to pay a fine,

“Our editorial team has been jailed and released several times. We’ve all been sued. Everyone here feels the political pressures to their

bones. We are always on the alert. We also consider this during news production. If we get a strong reaction from the government, we become more pessimistic. However, there is no news that we have not published. We only soften and classify news discourse. We quote from foreign sources or write a month or two later” (Interviewee 18, Oda TV, in depth interview, 09.04.2018).

As it can be seen, although journalists continue to spread the news they believe at all costs, political pressures constantly put them under stress,

“I try not to do anything extreme. I respect journalistic values, especially impartiality and transparency. But I can’t publish a story that will attract the attention of the government. There is no downward censorship on the news site I work for. However, I practice self-censorship for the sustainability of the news site, and for continuing to practice my profession. We’re kind of on the edge. We fear being blocked or imprisoned” (Interviewee 15, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

Journalists fear of being blocked or jailed. It should be noted that these are journalists who have been arrested several times. That’s why journalists said they were secretly practicing self-censorship. In addition, the founders of the news sites reported that they developed some escape routes to avoid a blocking penalty or a lawsuit against them, such as,

- Constant change of the name of the news site
- Hosting the domain of the news site outside the country
- Not giving the names of the editorial team or their counterparts

Despite these methods, journalists continue to worry about the future of independent digital journalism in Turkey. As a journalist said,

“Given the state of the media and journalists in Turkey, I think that if we get the governments’ attention, we could be blocked or easily jailed. I have fears. For example, I don’t know if the news site I work for will live for three or four years. Or I don’t know if I will continue to be a journalist in the future” (Interviewee 11, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

Although journalists claim that they can avoid political pressures by relying on technological developments, many journalists resort to self-censorship in order not to be imprisoned or to be unemployed. On the other hand, ongoing political pressures on news sites have the potential to destabilize the profession, forcing journalists into uncertainty through shutdowns and/or lawsuits, even exile.

5.5.3. Positioning Freedom of Expression and Professional Autonomy for Journalists Working on News Sites

While the business models of news sites focus on online advertising as well as funding and donations, journalists say they are editorially free because they have no commercial concerns. This encourages journalists to be more critical of political issues than Turkey’s mainstream media. News sites do not perform market-oriented journalism, so they have succeeded in breaking down the wall between the newsroom and the marketing, helping them establish an internal autonomy for a free journalism within the confines of news sites (McManus, 2009 cited in 2015: 80). However, most of the pressure on journalists’ autonomy comes from outside, that is from political forces.

A journalist states that the opportunities offered by the digital media environment have turned into obstacles in Turkey’s conditions:

“While producing news or tweeting, I don’t think, ‘Oh, what will my editor-in-chief say, will there be any deductions from my salary?’. However, while producing news, I wonder if the police will arrest me. Yes, we’re free from commercial pressures and this leads us to write more freely, but our freedom is still limited” (Interviewee 22, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04.2018).

It should be noted that at the end of 2018, a journalist working for *Özgürüz* had to flee to Germany: “I had to leave overnight,” the journalist says. “They put my face on all the front pages of the magazines, accusing me of being part of a broadcast television network connected to the Kurdish movement. The next day, I would have woken up with the police knocking at my front door” (Suardi, 2020).

The journalist explains why he/she was targeted overnight and how he/she left Turkey,

“The Turkish government chose to target me because I’m reporting the truth about the political situation in Turkey. I talk about corruption and the lack of freedom of expression, and of course Erdogan’s party doesn’t like it. I also have friends who are Kurdish and [minority] Alevis and that’s probably why I’ve been accused of being one of them” ... “I’m still under the impact of that feeling. You basically leave your life behind with a small suitcase. It was November 2018, in one night I packed all the things I could and in the early morning I went to the airport and I took the first plane to Berlin. I feel I don’t belong in this place. Leaving your country is a problem, but settling down in another one isn’t easy either” (Suardi, 2020).

Regarding different actors such as politicians, political parties, the government, and even to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, journalists report on sanctions such as:

- Blocking penalties (for websites and news stories, until now more than 200 news stories blocked)
- Bans (social media and broadcasts)
- Intimidation via troll groups
- Getting a fine
- Targeting journalists through government-sponsored media outlets
- Lawsuits filed against news sites and journalists
- Detention of journalists
- Fear that funds and donations may be blocked

The reported sanctions force many journalists to implement partial or overt self-censorship, for “sustainable freedom” (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth

interview, 02.04.2018). In other words, autonomy and control over their work depends on balancing professional norms and values. On the other hand, the degree of public service orientation depends on their ability to adapt to the existing political system:

“I can say that the news site I work for is much more free in terms of freedom of expression than a traditional media organization. But it is still not a satisfying type of freedom. We say our word, but we are careful. For example, if our editor-in-chief chooses not to cover a news, we accept his opinion. Our editor-in-chief says: ‘This could be our last broadcast if we want to. But let’s not do that. Let’s say our word quite well, but carefully. Let’s be sustainable’. Because our goal is to rebuild the fourth estate and place the ideal of independent journalism in digital media” (Interviewee 8, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 30.03.2018).

In the name of sustainability, some journalists stated that they refrained from covering some news stories that could shake the political structures in Turkey. Some of the journalists said that they transferred their own news stories to foreign media and then made news by referring to foreign media organizations. Despite the picture revealing that journalists are not the only actors who decide media content, journalists describe themselves as free and autonomous while producing news with 87% compared to Turkey’s mainstream news media (See Figure 34).

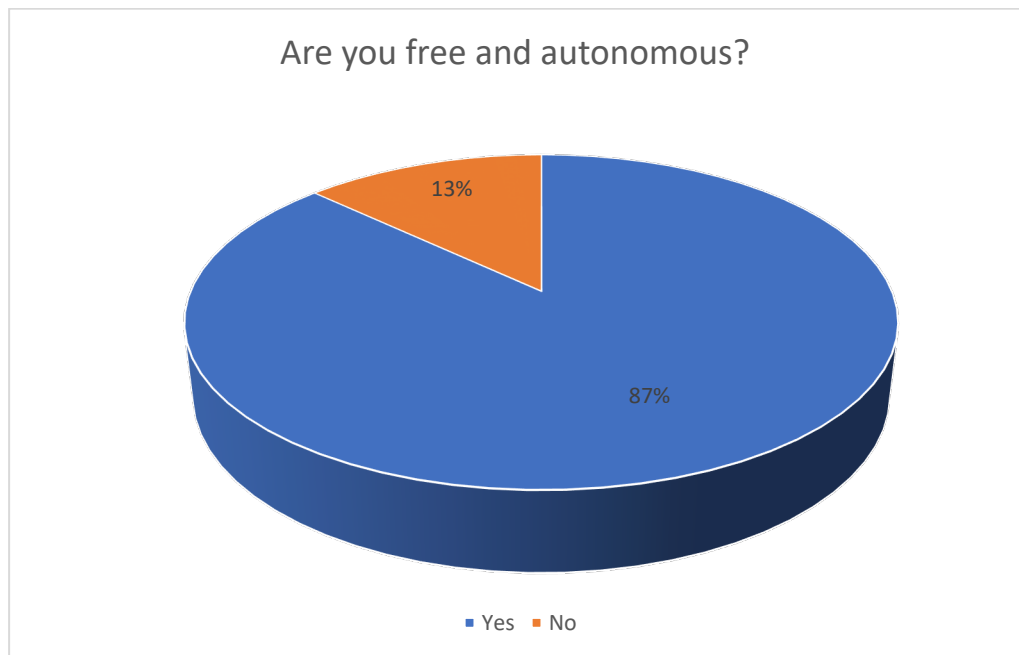


Figure 34: Views of journalists on freedom and autonomy

However, journalists believe that their impact on the news will be much stronger in the near future. According to the majority of journalists (85%), if they are supported economically by audiences, political influence will gradually decrease. Until then, journalists will support the idea of “sustainable freedom”, as a journalist said,

“We have self-control. Let’s not define this as self-censorship. We make sure we don’t get into trouble. We do not cover all the news and we are not aggressive. But we still feel the pressure. In pursuit of dramatic news that could get us in trouble, we consult each other to stay or go. If any colleague familiar with the matter says it’s better not to follow up, we don’t. In theory, we are quite autonomous in the decision-making process. But when it comes to dramatic news, we hesitate. We don’t want to go to jail” (Interviewee 22, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04.2018).

5.6. Evaluation and Discussion of the Main Findings

Today, it is envisioned that journalism has accelerated and democratized, especially with the help of various digital tools and platforms. Therefore, technological advances have allowed journalists to set up their own media without a big media company in between, and/or big costs. However, while social media platforms liberated journalists from working for traditional media companies and joining to their hegemonic structures, they also made them dependent on them. So much so that these platforms are directly involved in the processes of journalistic work such as obtaining information, distributing news and generating income.

Within the scope of this sustainability-based thesis, it is predicted that this new style of journalism with some sort of entrepreneurial features has the potential to free journalists from the handcuffs that restrict media freedom, especially in media environments under pressure like Turkey. However, findings such as the closure of news sites for political reasons, the heavy fines they paid as a result of lawsuits such as insulting the president, and the low share of news sites in digital advertising revenues emerged. Risk of cutting off funds at any time due to political conflicts. Or the dependence of crowdfunding on journalists’ constant content creation efforts (is

an extra workload on journalists) on platforms are also among findings. All of these has revealed that these news start-ups are not yet sustainable, they are just surviving. It was also understood they were dragging journalists into the precariat both economically and politically.

For example, one of the most crucial points of the thesis is a statement made by journalists “we are free, our boss does not interfere with us, but we resort to self-censorship in order not to go to jail”. Journalists use these mechanisms to avoid imprisonment or exile. Therefore, it is understood that this new media order, created by professional journalists with the motto of independence, could not completely liberate journalists due to sustainability problems (both economic and political).

Moreover, journalists continue their activities with a small team as their financial means are limited. They are addicted to social media networks. Since the efforts of journalists on social networks feed their business models, digital advertising and, in a way, funds and donations, they cannot get out of the digital universe and go to the field to gather information or have face-to-face interviews. They only take advantage of the opportunities offered by social media while making news. This is limited to practices like getting information from Twitter or other social media platforms.

Since they do not have enough money, they cannot use other technological tools used in data journalism, for example. Therefore, using social media while reporting means more organic labour. Alongside their editorial workload, journalists keep news sites’ social networking accounts open on their smartphones and desktops. They create value for these platforms with their endless click activities like searching, uploading, sharing, commenting. Therefore, the working conditions of journalists are closely related to a social media-based form of labour. However, the income of journalists in this new working environment is quite low.

Moreover, because journalists earn little, they are vulnerable to the unforeseen dangers of the media market. For example, the contents produced by news sites that cannot advertise on Google and Facebook due to their low income remain in the far corners of the internet. This situation prevents news sites from making their voices

heard by large masses. On the other hand, journalists cannot find the economic power to oppose the lawsuits brought against them because of their news. They try not to attract too much attention by either making superficial news or not writing what they know. All this results in the restriction of freedom of expression. Under the described conditions, journalists working on news sites cannot even predict whether they will be able to do journalism five years from now. All of this leaves journalists in a state of uncertainty. Even if there is not a clear imbalance between journalistic values and commercial interests in news sites, this situation leads to a precarious regulation of journalistic work.

Remembering, despite all this, news sites continue their activities with the efforts of idealist journalists who are dedicated to their profession. Therefore, providing an autonomous space for journalists and independent journalism are the primary motivations for journalists to create new news initiatives to maintain the profession. Journalists, who believe that all these efforts will be rewarded one day by the audience. For this reason, they think that the end of the tunnel is neither in the funds received from international organizations nor in digital advertising revenues, but in the increase in the financial support of the audience.

5.7. Conclusion

Within the scope of this last chapter, digital-born news organizations founded by professional journalists were examined with regard to their business models and the conditions under which journalists become digital labourers. Since 2007 several professional journalists in Turkey established their own media outlets and social media pages as a reaction to the restricted media environment and the violation of their labour rights in the traditional media organizations. Among the reasons that drive journalists to establish their own media are the dismissal of journalists from the mainstream media companies, the precariatization of the journalism and the dissatisfaction they felt with the state of news media and the quality of reporting. Some of the journalist-owned news sites are established with the logic of entrepreneurial journalism while others considered themselves as alternative and non-profit organizations.

The rise of informational capitalism in the Web 2.0 era caused decentralization of work and the digitalization of labour. The dependence of news sites on the search engines and social media platforms to reach a wider audience and raise revenues result in a situation in which the content produced by journalists are devalued as “free” and it is easily expropriated by other content providers. The instability of financial resources of the news start-ups means that at least some of journalistic labour turn into unpaid one and journalists face precarization of their jobs. For this reason, in order these news sites could create a more free news media and help prevent journalists from becoming part of the precariat they need to develop sustainable business models.

Therefore, this ethnographic study particularly focused on the sustainability of the news organizations founded by well-known professional journalists with a view to assess their potential to create an independent media environment in Turkey. With this aim, the organisational structure, the news production processes and working conditions in ten different news sites established by professional journalists were examined. The findings indicated that although these sites have provided challenges to political pressures their limited resources and insecure business models continue to threaten their long-term sustainability and limit their contribution to the size and strength of journalistic labour market.

CONCLUSION

Since the 2000s, development of Web 2.0 and social media technologies transformed the way journalists practice journalism, which had been constrained by hegemonic capitalist interests for centuries. In the era of Web 2.0, easy access to production and distribution of the content on the web and the changing producer-consumer relationship of the news came to be seen as one of the greatest opportunities for those looking for a way for independent journalism today (Bardoel and Deuze 2001; Pavlik et al. 2001; Teoh Kheng Yau and Al-Hawamdeh 2001; cited in Deuze 2005, 451).

Traditional media companies, especially those in print media, have had a very strong hold over their content and readers. For long years they have been able to control what is produced and distributed as news. Their economic and social power stemmed from their ability to draw large numbers of newsreaders and produce a large variety of content. However, this situation has radically changed in the digital era, especially with the emergence and spread of digital platforms. Journalists are now able to produce their news stories and publish their comments on self-established news sites and spread them to a larger audience with the help of social networks.

This entrepreneurial spirit that journalists recently acquired helps democratize news media, freeing journalism from the hands of media moguls. Today many independent journalists are not only reporters and editors but also owners of these small journalistic ventures. Taking this development into account this thesis primarily focused on the potentials of this new forms of journalistic endeavors to liberate journalism, and to help journalists to preserve their values, autonomies, and identities in restricted media environments, such as that of Turkey where several journalists were detained, tortured or even killed, and censorship and self-censorship mechanisms became prevalent.

Since the 2000s, in Turkey, many well-known journalists resigned or were dismissed and expelled from the mainstream media due to mainly political reasons. As a result, several journalists who were dissatisfied with the current state of affairs in the media system established their own media on the web, usually in collaboration with their fellow journalists. Since many journalists did not have the initial capital to start a media outlet, web and social media platforms were used for news gathering, distribution, and even for revenue generation as they were free to use and affordable.

However, the free and participatory nature of the web and social media both helps and limits journalists. Today under the conditions of informational capitalism the production and distribution processes of the news and the readers are not under the direct control of news media (Çevikel, 2020: 43). Large platforms, in particular those called GAFA, became an intermediary between digital news sites and their audiences since the content produced was delivered to the audience through these platforms. Çevikel (2020: 44) argued that the problem is not that digital media organizations cannot receive sufficient traffic. The real problem is that although digital media outlets have a large number of visitors, they cannot generate enough revenue to be sustainable as most of the revenue is taken by the platforms themselves. Large platforms are designed to convert all kinds of intellectual activity (including many aspects of internet users' daily life, and content created) into data and then monetize it. Although these companies control the majority of digital advertising revenues, their hands are very tight when it comes to sharing it with content creators such as news media outlets.

Therefore, in the new digital media ecosystem journalists need to develop different revenue models such as funds and donations, content sales and partnerships in order to ensure financial viability. However, apart from receiving funding from international organizations such as the EU and selling content to non-media companies, all business models are platform-based in some ways. Thus, this thesis argues that the chosen business model and its sustainability is extremely important for they might cause a disruption of the balance between journalistic values and commercial interests and limit the professional autonomy of journalists as well as freedom of the news media. Economic and organizational restrictions can also affect working conditions of journalists as digital laborers and may ultimately contribute to the precarization of journalists as intellectual workers.

In the absence of sufficient funds news sites, founded by professional journalists, can be forced to use productivity and rationalization strategies to reduce labour costs through the use of free labour such as robot reporters, and /or algorithms, and may apply to outsourcing through social media platforms (Cohen, 2015). All these elements may once again restrict journalist's professional practices and labour rights, turning journalism into an unpaid or minimum wage profession. In Turkey's current conditions, the minimum wage certainly does not cover a person's living expenses. Thus, economic concerns not only limit the freedom of expression but also reduce the quality and diversity of journalistic content. However, it must be said that these are not specific to news sites established by journalists. Journalists in the mainstream media too work under difficult economic conditions.

This thesis aimed to shed light on the organizational structures, demographics, day to day operations, editorial policies, ideological stance, professional values, formats, business models, working conditions and content production processes of the digital-born news sites founded by professional journalists in order to illuminate the potentials and weaknesses of journalists-owned news sites from a critical point of view. With this aim, online and offline in-depth interviews were conducted with 32 journalists from ten digital-born news sites including, Oda TV (2007), T24 (2009), Diken (2014), ABC Gazetesi (2015), Medyascope.tv (2015), GazeteRed (2016), Artı Gerçek (2017), Artı TV (2017), Özgürüz (2017), and Tele 1 (2018). The data informing the analysis derive from offline and online observations, as well as from secondary sources.

In the first chapter the nature, role and social functions of journalism as a profession and professional ideology were explored from the perspectives of liberal and critical theories of journalism and the media systems. Building on critical examination of journalism from both liberal and critical theories, this chapter lays the groundwork for discussions on how journalists can create their own media and freely pursue their careers outside the confines of corporate media outlets.

The second chapter focused on the digitalisation of journalism and examined new concepts such as computer-assisted journalism, digital/online journalism, mobile

journalism, data journalism, automation, bots and algorithms, alternative journalism, and citizen journalism. The second chapter argued that thanks to new digital technologies, journalists and even ordinary people can have their own blogs and websites and disseminate news freely on social media platforms. This merging of content production and distribution freed journalism from the grasp of large media organizations which dominated the field since the end of the 19th century and allowed professionals to self-organize their profession beyond the confines of traditional media. Although journalism can now be practiced without being engaged with large media institutions, the digital media ecosystem is itself colonized by the giant technology companies, both practically and economically.

The third chapter focused on the changing employment relations in journalism as well as on new business models. It argued that the affordances of social media technologies allow journalists to work on digital journalism initiatives in more independent and flexible ways. However, with the rise of informational capitalism, labour and work are becoming ever more non-material and decentralized. Digitalization of labour challenges the established employment relations in the media. Professional journalists may find themselves in an increasingly precarious position when working independently and flexibly in their own journalism start-ups. Therefore, the importance of sustainable business models for digital journalism that will provide a healthy balance between journalistic values and economic interests is undeniable. A sustainable business model can usher in a new era in journalism, as it would free journalists from political and economic distractions especially in repressive media environments such as that of Turkey.

Chapter four provided a brief history of journalism to understand the factors that paved the way for a new digital media order in Turkey and the conditions under which this new media order emerged. The digitalization of news media in Turkey began with the digitalization of traditional media, mainly newspapers and continued with the emergence of born-digital news sites founded by journalists in reaction to the limitations of the media system. The problems of the media system in Turkey have a long history and many causes but the JDP period since the year 2002 is especially important to grasp the political and economic conditions of journalists today.

The fifth chapter which included the field work of this thesis examined the opportunities and challenges for journalism in the digital age by focusing on new business models, sustainability and the organization of digital labour in the digital-born news sites established by professional journalists in Turkey. The fieldwork produced several findings most important which were as follows:

The majority of the journalists interviewed in this thesis said that ensuring editorial independence is not so easy. For example, journalists have to deal with plenty of legal cases filed against them by the government or by President Erdoğan because of the stories they covered. The government intervenes journalists on every occasion by blocking content with a court order, or slowing down the internet connection and/or social media. Despite all this, journalists who work at the news sites under investigation believe that they are contributing to establishing a new journalistic atmosphere in Turkey. The digital news sites are independent and free in terms of content and they do not have bosses. Journalists who took part in this study believe that they are also contributing to the self-construction of a new media concept that they referred to as the new mainstream of the digital media.

Providing an autonomous space for journalists and performing independent journalism are the leading motivations that prompted journalists to create news start-ups to sustain the profession. Via these journalistic start-ups, journalists act as advocates and defend their own profession against violations such as, union rights, job insecurity, and media freedom while preserving their gatekeeper role.

Interviewed journalists stated that these new media outlets are giving more room to produce quality news than the traditional or other digital media outlets that support JDP do. Surprisingly, making money is not among the priorities of journalists as they believe that performing quality journalism would solve financial obstacles in the near future when they fully attract the attention of the audiences.

With regard to content, journalists believe that the news sites are reflecting different interests, as well as different values of the society in relation to cultural, demographic, and religious matters. For example, news sites under investigation stopped disseminating gender stereotypes and discriminations while advocating

against right violations. They cover the stories about minorities such as Kurds, Alevis, Armenians, and LGBTQ by getting out of the nationalistic and patriarchal frames of legacy media. They also cover stories about all oppositional political parties. This is a deliberate strategy that news sites use to stand out in public because the current media order does not allow the opposition parties to speak as often and widely as the JDP does. Journalists also think that their news sites are contributing to news literacy by motivating audiences to seek out news, improving their ability to find, identify, and recognize news, as well as helping them on critical evaluation (Malik et al., 2013: 8-9).

For the founders of these news sites, establishing a news outlet in entrepreneurial spirit is a return to the roots of journalism where journalists were reporters, editors, distributors, and the owners of the media outlets. Journalists are now responsible for both the business and the editorial aspects of journalism. However, the desire of being autonomous, preserving journalistic values and identity of journalism is not enough to create a dynamic news media outlet because of unfavorable conditions in media sectors Turkey as a result of political restrictions and precarity of journalists for decades. Therefore, the founders of the news sites investigated here have to cope with the ambiguity in relation to financial issues.

When the business models of the news sites are questioned, it is found that at the beginning all were conditioned as a traditional journalistic reflex to gain advertising revenues. However, as underlined by the founders, generally capital holders did not want to advertise on independent news sites, not to fall in opposition to the ruling party. Ongoing conflicts between the government and the journalists, as well as, the lawsuits filed against journalists reinforced this situation.

As founders focused on two main models, online advertising and funds and donations, digital news sites began to differentiate as either for-profit or non-profit media. Oda TV, Diken, GazeteRed, ABC Gazetesi, T24, Artı Gerçek, and Artı TV were among for-profit news sites which use online advertising as a revenue model. On those news sites, online advertising is gained through platform-based formats and mainly controlled by Google and Facebook. Interviewed journalists asserted that under Turkey's conditions, platform-based advertising is considered positive as it frees the

news sites from the capitalist organizations by demolishing the dependency of traditional journalism on the advertisers. However, it also causes some disadvantages like selling ad spaces at a cheap price and dragging journalism into clickbait.

As noticed, increasing traffic to the news sites is one of the main goals of the organizations under investigation in order to increase their share of online advertising. While doing so, journalists need to produce original content which would then be circulated rapidly on social media networks. Traffic to news sites mainly comes from social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Thus, news sites also need to encourage their audiences to share and comment on their content on social media to avoid a drop in traffic rates. It can be said that this model depends on participation of the users (both journalists and audiences) in the social media.

Moreover, the news content should also be optimized for search engines and social media networks. It is found that news sites use some strategies to survive. These are:

- Doing keyword research on the web before editing an article for search engines and social networks
- Presenting news stories with simple, witty, or even sensational headlines, and previously unused photos or videos
- Tagging the photos and videos and creating hashtags
- Multi-sharing of most clicked news stories via social media networks
- Targeting anyone online
- Interacting with followers

All these strategies turn journalism into a social media-oriented profession. However, sometimes these strategies only work for tech giants. For example, on Facebook audiences only see the headline of a story and hit the like button or share the post without opening the content. This helps increase revenues for Facebook, but not for news sites.

Within our sample, Medyascope.tv, Özgürüz, and Tele1 can be classified as non-profit news organizations as their business models are mainly based on funds and donations. The founders of these news sites and some journalists who work for them do not see this model of funding as an obstacle because they do not enter into a binding

relationship with any of the organizations. The funds that they receive are usually those offered by international organizations and civil society to support and sustain independent small scale news outlets. However, due to political instability of the country sustainability can also be a problem for the news sites which receive funds. As a founder said, the government can easily cut off these funds (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 02.04.2018).

In addition the revenue model based on funding can be seen problematic by some founder journalists who fear that organizations with imperialist features such as the EU may try to affect the ideological stance of news sites, limiting their range from leftist to liberal (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21.04.2018). Thus, for most journalists getting funding is not the solution to keep independent journalism alive. This is why journalists are seeking new ways to establish direct links with donors through crowdfunding on online fundraising platforms. However, since news consumers in Turkey are not used to donating to the media, crowdfunding does not give journalists a strong basis to preserve their autonomy. For journalists crowdfunding is a kind of “hope labour” that allows them to create their own brand and seek the attention of audiences. So they can benefit from more sustainable sources of income, such as the subscription model in the near future.

Patreon is the most popular crowdfunding platform among news sites and freelance journalists under investigation. The platform brings journalists a regular but not a stable income. Interviewed journalists argue that this situation is highly correlated with the perception of their audiences who see digital journalism as an anti-economic activity. So much so that in order to reach a wide audience many news organizations and news portals in Turkey have offered their content free of charge for years. Obviously, this habit is hard to break. Meanwhile, Patreon generates revenue by taking a 5 to 12 percent share from the content creators, depending on which services of the company they use. This also significantly reduces the income of journalists.

When journalists were asked about their future plans regarding the sustainability of news sites, regardless of whether they work for for-profit or not-for-profit, their answers were advertising in its classical meaning and the subscription model. Journalists believe that they would not face difficulties when they switch to the

subscription model as they are already producing original content and doing quality reporting. However, preparing audiences to pay for the content remains a priority and also an obstacle.

The organizational structure of the news sites within our sample differ from classical news organizations. These digital news outlets have a participatory structure, in which power and authority are extended downwards. Newsrooms of these news outlets have an editor-in-chief, a news director (optional), and editors (on the news sites, journalists are called editors), and in some cases an SEO editor. Alongside their journalistic work, journalists are responsible for other tasks such as analysis of audience data, website design and/or (if necessary) coding. Financial issues and the management of workplaces are among the duties of the editor-in-chief.

News sites are mostly made up of small teams. The number of journalists employed (journalists who are paid with social security) changes between five to ten. Although they claim that they differ from the traditional mainstream media, less than half (40%) of the workforce consists of women, and there are only a few women senior managers. Many journalists on born-digital news sites work full time with salary and social security benefits. News sites are committed to pay salaries and social security expenses on time. Their aim is not to fall into a situation similar to Turkey's traditional media where journalists have been suffering from the precarisation for decades.

In addition, more than two thirds (70%) of the interviewed journalists stated that the money they earn from the news sites is sufficient to sustain their lives. However, it must be said that most of the young journalists who work for digital news sites stated that they live with their parents and that they do not have any compulsory expenses such as the rent and bills. Moreover, most of the founders are retired and do not expect a salary as they have pensions.

On the other hand, one in five (20%) of journalists are union members while four in five (80%) are not. Only a small percentage of journalists (20%) have a press card. They are usually experienced journalists with long-term press cards which they had while working in the mainstream media. Journalists working in digital news sites cannot apply for a press card as they are not considered journalists according to the

Law No. 5953 on the status and rights of journalists as professionals. This is why many journalists hold an International Press Card of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). In order to have this card, it is sufficient to be a member of Turkish Journalists Association (TGC) and pay the membership fees.

However, the cards of IFJ are not considered valid by the official institutions. Only the press cards issued by the Directorate of Communications of the Republic of Turkey are considered valid. Therefore, journalists who can not benefit from the professional status defined in the Law No. 5953 and, thus, are subjected to claims that they “are not journalists” see themselves being left out by the authorities.

The unions that support the industrial rights of journalists in Turkey are the Turkey Journalists’ Union (TGS), Basın-İş (Turkish Press, Broadcasting, Journalism, Graphic Design, Printing and Packaging Industry Workers’ Union), DİSK (Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey), Türk-İş (Confederation of Workers’ Unions of Turkey) and the conservative Hak-İş (Confederation of True Turkish Trade Unions). Journalists who took part in our research think that these unions can not represent digital journalists and digital news outlets. For this reason, journalists are not willing to become members of these unions and there are even those who do not apply for membership at all. These journalists aim to establish their own union after the digital journalism ecosystem in Turkey is well established.

All news sites except Özgürüz have an office in İstanbul and journalists work at these offices. In general, journalists work more than eight hours, six days a week, at day and night shifts. Özgürüz is the only decentralized news outlet without an office that maintains its activities via live broadcasting platforms from wherever journalists are. All the news sites in our sample have computers, servers, and accessible technical equipment such as internet connection via modems or monopods. Journalists use their personal smartphones as a professional device while working in digital newsrooms. There are also cameras, microphones, and software programs such as Microsoft Office, Adobe, Photoshop, and Premier.

Journalists interviewed name digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Periscope, Skype, YouTube, Ekşi Sözlük (Sour Dictionary), Nabız,

Telegram, WhatsApp lines of news sites and Google Search Engine among their main sources of information for news production, and at the same time for content dissemination.

Medyascope.tv and Özgürüz are good examples of the dependency of news sites on social media as they carry out all their activities by using live broadcasting tools of platforms such as Skype, Periscope, YouTube, and Facebook. These two news sites perform all their tasks from information gathering, news production to news distribution on these social media platforms. Their websites have only archived content.

For example, Medyascope.tv broadcasts from its own studio on live streaming platforms. Journalists receive guests on online platforms from all over the world. They also invite guests to their studio. The news outlet produces programs which consist of intellectual discussion and commentary especially in video format. Özgürüz broadcasts live from wherever the journalists are via online platforms and mobile devices. Journalists defined this mobile and decentralized news production practice as “guerrilla journalism” which they think the busy agenda of Turkey requires.

News production routines of centralized and decentralized news sites also differ while in the former journalists are always on the field whereas in the latter journalists work at their desks making interviews via phone calls or repetitive e-mails (Interviewee 4, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04.2018). Or, one of the interviewees said, they just access information through social media. It is clear that office-bound working reduces the functionality of journalism in terms of researching in and reporting from the field.

However, when asked to compare news production practices many journalists answered that there is “no difference” between digital news sites and mainstream media in Turkey. This confirms that news is in general produced at the newsrooms. Despite the claims of originality by the news sites, the news produced at the desk poses a problem such as “copy-paste”. It becomes very likely that the same content is circulating both in the mainstream media and in the digital news sites. However, some journalists object to this. They say that they receive information from many more

sources than their counterparts working for the mainstream media. They say that they can freely publish any information since they do not fear being fired. Unlike the mainstream media, news sites avoid blocking the flow of information, and sometimes news can arise from within the news.

Twitter in particular is found very helpful for journalists during news production as they can access interesting information. Journalists perceive Twitter as a more professional platform for content production and reaching audiences than Facebook, Instagram etc. Journalists describe Twitter as a huge news agency and an agenda setter. Many journalists stated that Twitter is the first place they look at when they do research on a topic.

Journalists who took part in our fieldwork confirms that news production is a very expensive activity. In order to break the news, news sites need to employ a big editorial team, cover travel expenses when the journalist is on the field, or at least purchase news agency memberships. However, most of the news sites founded by professional journalists cannot employ more than ten journalists. Journalists working for them are not active on the field or cannot become members of news agencies because they do not have enough money. This situation forces independent digital news sites to cut costs. Thus, resorting to outsourcing (via Twitter or other social media networks) is perceived by many news sites as an alternative to traditional journalistic practices to lower the costs of news production. Reducing news production costs helps to survive, especially for news sites that are in formation with a small editorial team, and cannot generate sufficient revenue to survive.

With regard to news production it can be argued that Twitter and Ekşi Sözlük influence what digital journalists cover. This is because journalists prefer to use trending topics to make news, and perceive that as a guarantee that the news would be circulated fast among the audience and get a lot of clicks. Circulating the most clicked news is equivalent to generating revenue by increasing the site traffic, especially for news sites that continue to work with online advertisements. However, under the current conditions in Turkey this practice has its drawbacks. For example, in 2021, the founders of Oda TV were arrested for sharing a news about the funeral of an National Intelligence Agency (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı, MİT) member on their social media

accounts, which was previously shared by different journalists and news organizations on Twitter and other social media networks (Esen, 2022).

Nevertheless, as the interviewed journalists pointed out, user participation plays an important role, from agenda setting to revenue raising strategies of the digital news sites. Journalists acknowledge that participatory characteristics of social media networks influence the newsrooms deeply. The convergence between professional journalistic content and content produced gives rise to a new form of journalism and makes collaborations between professional journalists, citizen journalists, social media users, activists, academicians, trolls, and anti-trolling groups possible (Cohen, 2018; Avadar, 2019).

These new components of contemporary journalism, with their ability to transmit news from the epicentre of an event through social media accounts, blogs, and/or messenger applications have transformed the concept of gatekeeping into gatewatching. Social media users are considered as the cornerstones for the circulation of stories. Activists and academics have helped journalists create an informed discussion about the agenda. They also help journalists interpret nuances of a particular issue. Therefore, collaborative news production enables journalists to establish close relations with the society as they keep the pulse of the society with their analyses. This new type of journalism is called “rounded perspective journalism” by journalists.

However, some journalists stated that whatever their political, social or economic position, they needed to be impartial to maintain their highly respected objectivity. In professional news outlets, user participation cannot proceed without journalistic supervision. Therefore, most journalists believe that non-journalist content providers cause a risk to the concept of objectivity and journalistic ethics (Avadar, 2019: 50). One journalist founder noted with regard to the working routines of the news site and the role of its editors that journalists should be careful not to confuse amateur content with professional content (Avadar, 2019: 50). However, verifying information received via social media networks also remains a challenge. For this reason, journalists have to invent their own verification methods. For example, contacting the owner of posts via direct messaging is a verification method unique to social media networks.

Journalistic verification becomes especially important when manipulators such as troll groups are concerned. These groups deliberately spread false information and/or manipulated documents (images, videos, and texts) over social media networks and make them easily shareable (Donovan and Friedberg, 2019, 9: 37). In Turkey, such information is often shared by AK Trolls (a troll group run by the ruling JDP) against the opposition parties, politicians, journalists, news media outlets, women, Kurds, and LGBTQ and any party opposing the position of the JDP, aiming to harm their public standing. Thus, some journalists compromise their impartiality and collaborate with social media users, academics and activists to form counter-trolling groups. The aim is to combat false and manipulative information circulating through social media networks and to influence public opinion.

Although some journalists object to it there are ample evidence that a number of non-journalistic actors are now deeply embedded in journalistic production and have a considerable influence on the news agenda as well as on the conditions for the creation and distribution of journalistic content (Ananny and Crawford 2015, 193 cited in Cohen, 2018). This new situation is in opposition to the monolithic point of view of the old media by evaluating a subject from various perspectives and making some changes in journalistic values (Avadar, 2019: 52).

In relation to content production and distribution, it is important not to ignore the power of social media platforms for both journalists and news sites. It is clear that journalists receive more service when they provide more information to the platforms. Most journalists said that with the help of these tools they were empowered to have their own independent and autonomous news coverage and break the news.

Journalists are passionate about running digital born news sites in spite of its workload, pressures and time constraints. In the digital media landscape, news has no deadline and has to always be up to the minute. Since news sites do not have enough financial resources they cannot invest in technological infrastructures, and thus, they do not use tools such as robot software or algorithms to capture news stories from the internet or personalize stories according to preferences of the audiences. Instead they prioritize manually editing content ranging from 40 to 80 news stories per day. The

number of news stories they produce and share varies depending on the intensity of the agenda.

Journalists say that they are active 24 hours a day on all social network accounts of news sites. None of the news sites under investigation employed a social media expert. Alongside their editorial duties journalists took up additional workload, such as managing the social networking accounts of news sites. Journalists who keep the social network accounts open on their smartphones and desktops create value with endless clicks by searching, uploading, sharing, and commenting. The aforementioned practices are necessary to keep the traffic rates of for-profit news sites high because a decrease in traffic also means a decrease in online advertising revenues.

In relation to the principles of the news sites it is found that they attach special importance to accurate, objective, independent news reporting that serve the public good. Other principles mentioned by journalists are avoiding conflicts of interest, respecting honesty and diversity while reporting, understanding the target audience and taking into account their tastes. Journalists also avoid receiving gifts such as free trips and dinner parties and free entry to events and payments especially from businesses, the government, government-funded organizations and political parties. News sites have strict rules concerning contacts with the government, political parties and businesses that try to influence the topics covered.

The decision-making mechanisms of news sites are based on three structures: Hierarchical/Authoritarian; Participative; and Autonomous. The hierarchical/authoritarian structure is adopted by Oda TV, which has been shut down many times or whose journalists have been jailed. Journalists in hierarchical/authoritarian structure first present the issue they want to follow for the consideration of the editorial team. If the subject is not found convincing or deficiencies are detected, it is never pursued further by the editorial team. A news story prepared in a daily routine must first be approved by the news director and then by the editor-in-chief. If the subject is very dramatic which, for example, may result in the imprisonment of journalists, the approval of the owner of the news site is always required before the story is reported.

T24, Diken, ABC Gazetesi, Tele 1, Medyascope.tv, GazeteRed, Artı Gerçek, and Artı TV, on the other hand, represent participative decision-making style. In the participatory structure, journalists usually verbally present the topic that they want to follow to the editorial team. Working together at large tables, the editorial teams have the opportunity to discuss their news ideas. Their communication is never interrupted during the day. They sometimes share their ideas in writing via e-mails. At editorial meetings, which are held every morning on all news sites without exception, each editor's story ideas are presented to the editorial team. When a journalist supports the idea in these meetings others can also produce counter arguments. If the information in the hands of the journalist presenting the news idea is stronger than the antithesis, the idea is accepted and produced as news. If necessary, the final decision regarding the direction, correction or development of the idea is left to the editor-in-chief.

The decision making mechanism of the news site Özgürüz is autonomous due to its decentralized nature. The news outlet can be considered a rhizomatic entity as it has no office. The editors and the editor-in-chief of the news site work in various cities of Turkey and Germany including İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Diyarbakır, and Berlin. In an autonomous structure, journalists are free to report on any subject in the region that they work. Journalists are also free to conduct interviews on the topic of their choice, of their own free will. In an autonomous structure, journalists make their own decisions and set their agenda in the context of their own plans. For example, via WhatsApp groups they share their daily plans with the rest of the editorial team. The duty of editor-in-chief is there only to advise and the editor-in-chief never interferes with the decisions of journalists but only gives her/his opinion.

Major factors affecting the editorial decisions of journalists are revealed as universal journalistic values, their audience, and political repression. Commercial interests of the news sites are never mentioned as a principal concern. For many journalists interviewed, focusing on journalistic values keeps news sites from succumbing to economic and political pressures. Journalists stated that business models based on mainly online advertising and donations have freed their businesses from the potential pressures of capital owners. However, based on the observations, it can be argued that in the news sites where the business models are based on online advertising, commercial interests are replaced by audience preferences. Editorial

decisions are shaped according to the tendencies of the target audience, especially in news sites that generate revenue from Google based on click rates.

In general, journalists describe the internet as a powerful medium that cannot be easily controlled. However, some journalists admit that political pressures lead them to exercise self-censorship in order not to risk being arrested, not to face a closure penalty, or pay a fine. Among the journalists interviewed there were some who have been arrested several times or have paid high amounts of fines. In addition, the founders of the news sites reported that they developed some practices to avoid a blocking penalty or a lawsuit against them. These practices were: constant change of the name of the news site; hosting the domain of the news site outside the country; and not identifying the names of the editorial team or their counterparts.

Although journalists claim that they can avoid political pressures by relying on technological developments, like using a virtual private network (VPN) in case of shutdown, many said that they apply self-censorship in order not to be imprisoned or lose their jobs. This shows that despite all precautions journalists continue to worry about the future of independent digital journalism in Turkey. Ongoing political pressures have the potential to destabilize the profession, forcing journalists into uncertainty through shutdowns and/or lawsuits, even exile. This is why most of the journalists think that the freedom independent news sites have is limited despite having no bosses and generating income through online advertising and funding and donations.

Journalists who took part in this study reported that their stories about different political actors including mainly the government and President Erdoğan might potentially cause backlashes and sanctions such as: blocking penalties (for websites and news stories, until now more than 200 news stories blocked); bans (social media and broadcasts); intimidation via troll groups; getting a fine; targeting of journalists through government-sponsored media outlets; lawsuits filed against news sites and journalists; detention of journalists; and the fear that funds and donations may be blocked by the government.

The reported sanctions force many journalists to restrict their journalistic activities, for a “sustainable freedom”. For the sake of sustainability, some journalists stated that they refrained from covering some news stories that could disturb the political actors in Turkey. Some of the journalists said that they leaked their own news stories to foreign media and then made the news with reference to foreign media outlets. This reveals that even though a lot of journalists consider themselves as free and autonomous while producing news in comparison to their counterparts working for traditional mainstream media, their autonomy and control over news content requires a careful balancing of their professional norms and values and the sanctions that they may face.

Journalists interviewed believe that the influence of independent digital news sites on the news making and the agenda of the country will grow much stronger in the near future. The majority of them (85%) argued that if these sites are supported economically by the society, political pressures on them will gradually decrease. Until then, journalists seem content with “sustainable freedom” in order for these news sites to survive.

Despite all their drawbacks, it is clear that digital born news sites established by journalists themselves promise a more independent media order than the one achieved by traditional mainstream media. The IPI Turkey Digital Media Report (Kızılkaya and Ütücü, 2021), refers to the news sites that constitute the sample of this thesis as “Turkey’s new mainstream” which seeks support from the audiences and international media. However, it should be noted that the concept of “mainstream” used to describe digital news outlets that have reached large users may change in the near future and a different concept may be used to describe them.

It can be said that journalist’s advocacy efforts can make their voices heard by the audiences, international media, and associations in the near future. Journalists argue that “journalism is not a crime” and demand local and international help to protect their rights. Since existing unions do not represent digital journalists they want to establish their own unions focused on digital journalism. Many digital journalists do not have a press card because the present legislation on the status of professional journalists does not recognize digital reporters as journalists, especially if they are

dissidents. This emerges as another reason for digital journalists to be organized around a union that knows all aspects of digital journalism.

It is clear that the predominant business models of news sites based on advertising, funds and donations are not profitable enough and, thus, prevent journalists from making long term plans. Digital journalists are either not paid or work for low wages. The situation is a stalemate, given that news production is an expensive activity. News sites survive thanks to the efforts of idealistic journalists and with the help of free services provided by social media platforms.

Major online platforms are part of digital journalism starting from news gathering to production, distribution and revenue generation. News sites that try to survive with online advertising and crowdfunding in particular are dependent on online platforms. Journalists create value on social media and crowdfunding platforms to generate income, but they do not receive a fair share in return. In fact, online platforms both exploit the labour of journalists and increase their workload.

Thus, we can argue that the present business models of digital news sites are not sustainable in the long run. Because journalists are also aware of this they aim to switch to a subscription-based business model in the near future. However, the problem here is that the audience is not used to such a system yet. In Turkey, users pay for platforms like Netflix or Spotify but they hardly realize that digital journalism platforms should also be paid. This is a habit rooted in the early years of the internet. For many years, newspapers and content creators offered their content for free in order to get traffic. Therefore, journalists who want to switch to a subscription-based business model must find ways to change this habit of audiences first.

News sites differ from traditional news outlets editorially and organizationally. Unlike traditional media they are horizontal and collective or even autonomous. The hierarchical structure has been observed in only one of the ten news sites under investigation. This news site has been blocked many times by court orders and its journalists have been arrested many times. It has been understood that they prefer a hierarchical structure to protect themselves from possible threats.

Two kinds of news production routines emerge on news sites: desk-based and on the field. On desk-based news production, journalists report by using the information they have obtained from traditional media organizations, news agencies, and social media platforms. On the other hand, on the field news production is carried out at any time, almost from anywhere by using the live broadcasting tools of social media platforms. This is how guerrilla journalism emerged. Another innovation observed concerning news production is the rounded perspective journalism, which legitimize participation of actors other than journalists in news production, and outsourcing especially through social media networks. Outsourcing is the outcome of news sites' efforts to reduce their expenses including labour costs because they earn very little and they employ a small editorial team.

One of the most concerning outcomes of this study is that journalists rely on the same sources as their colleagues working in other digital or traditional media outlets. In a country where its major news outlets make an effort to skip the truth and impose news blackouts on all serious issues, this situation renders news similar to each other, and reduces its quality and diversity. Yet sometimes, a story produced and shared on platforms such as Twitter by freelance journalists, citizen journalists, and activists can be unique and completely change the agenda of the country.

Our findings support that the political situation in the country deeply affects journalists. Almost every news site under investigation has had a shutdown penalty. There are lawsuits and news blocking orders filed for many news sites. For this reason, it has been revealed that journalists practice self-censorship, even though they claim to focus on values that guarantee their freedom, independence, and autonomy, such as public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, and ethics. In the present political atmosphere it might be a matter of time before a website is shut down and journalists are arrested due to a news story that the government did not like. In such a case, social media accounts remain as the only means for the journalists to make their voices heard by the public. Thus, applying self-censorship becomes a necessity for continuing to do journalism.

Therefore, it can be argued that the new digital media order envisioned by professional journalists with the motto of independence could not completely free

journalists due to political insecurities and economic sustainability. Despite the efforts of journalists to balance journalistic values and commercial interests by using various business models in a hybrid way, journalists face precarization due to economic and political reasons. The precarization of journalism limits professional practices, labour rights, and even personal freedom of journalists as predicted before starting the fieldwork of this thesis.

Digital news sites continue their activities with small teams as their means are limited. They are greatly dependent on social media networks. As journalists' labour on social networks feeds their online advertising revenues and helps them find some funds and donations, they cannot leave the digital universe and go to the field to gather information and conduct face-to-face interviews. They only use outsourcing within the framework of the possibilities offered by social media. They cannot use other technological tools that require large investments. Benefiting from social media during news making means more organic labour. Alongside their editorial workload, journalists keep the social network accounts of the news sites open on their smartphones and desktops, and create value with endless clicks like searching, uploading, sharing, and commenting. Thus, a good part of the working hours of journalists can be considered social media based labour.

Because digital news sites earn little, they cannot advertise on large platforms like Google and Facebook, thus, their content remains at the margins of the internet. They cannot adequately reach large audiences. Also they do not have adequate economic power to oppose the lawsuits filed against them because of a news story that they covered. Therefore, they try not to attract too much attention, resulting in self censorship and the restriction of freedom of expression.

It is more than evident that economic and political restrictions explicitly affect the freedom and working conditions of digital journalists. As a result of political pressures journalists cannot even predict whether they will be able to continue doing journalism in the next five years. All these leave journalists in uncertainty, causing a precarious regulation of journalistic jobs even if they do not choose commercial interests over journalistic values and ideals. Increasing financial support directly from

their audiences is seen as the only way of ensuring their independence, quality and sustainability.

Based on the findings of this study, the promises and pitfalls of business models based on audience revenues for the news outlets founded by journalists can be explored as a future study that would include experiences from countries with similar and different media orders. Another possible future study can include the perspectives of news consumers. Such a study can help see whether and how much the audiences are willing to support independent journalism and whether journalist's advocacy efforts are heard by the larger public. It is hoped that this study will be a stepping stone to many more studies that would involve case studies in Turkey, France or elsewhere.



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TEZ ONAY SAYFASI

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MODELS AND DIGITAL LABOUR: LESSONS DRAWN FROM DIGITAL-
BORN NEWS SITES FOUNDED BY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS IN
TURKEY SINCE 2000s

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**GALATASARAY UNIVERSITY
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December 2022

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Annex 1:

Table of the news sites founded by professional journalists

Name and Web link	Founder	Founder	Start	Ownership	Location
Oda TV URL: http://odatv4.com/	Soner Yalçın	Soner Yalçın	2007	Proje-Ct Prodüksiyon İletişim Tan. Dan. Halkla İlişkiler Ltd. Şti.	İstanbul
T24 URL: http://t24.com.tr/	Doğan Akın	Doğan Akın	2009	T24	İstanbul
Diken URL: http://www.diken.com.tr/	Harun Simavi	Harun Simavi	2014	Keskin Kalem Yayıncılık Ltd. Şti.	İstanbul
ABC Gazetesi http://www.abcgazetesi.com/	Merdan Yanardağ	Merdan Yanardağ	2015	ABC Gazetesi	İstanbul
Tele 1 URL: https://tele1.com.tr/	Merdan Yanardağ	Merdan Yanardağ	2018	Tele 1	İstanbul
Medyascope.tv URL: http://medyascope.tv/	Ruşen Çakır	Ruşen Çakır	2015	Scope Medya A.Ş.	İstanbul
GazeteRed URL: https://gazete.red/	Hakan Gülseven	Hakan Gülseven	2016	GazeteRed	İstanbul
Artı Gerçek URL: https://www.arti-gercek.com/	Celal Başlangıç	Celal Başlangıç	2017	Arti Media GmbH	Cologne / GERMANY
Artı TV URL: https://artitv.tv/	Celal Başlangıç	Celal Başlangıç	2017	Arti Media GmbH	Cologne / GERMANY
Özgürüz URL: https://ozguruz20.org/	Can Dündar (Exiled Journalist)	Can Dündar (Exiled Journalist)	2017	Correctiv	Berlin /GERMANY

Figure 1: Table of the news sites founded by professional journalists

Source: Author

Annex 2:

History and Profiles of Journalism Start-ups

Content Oriented News Site: The Case of Oda TV

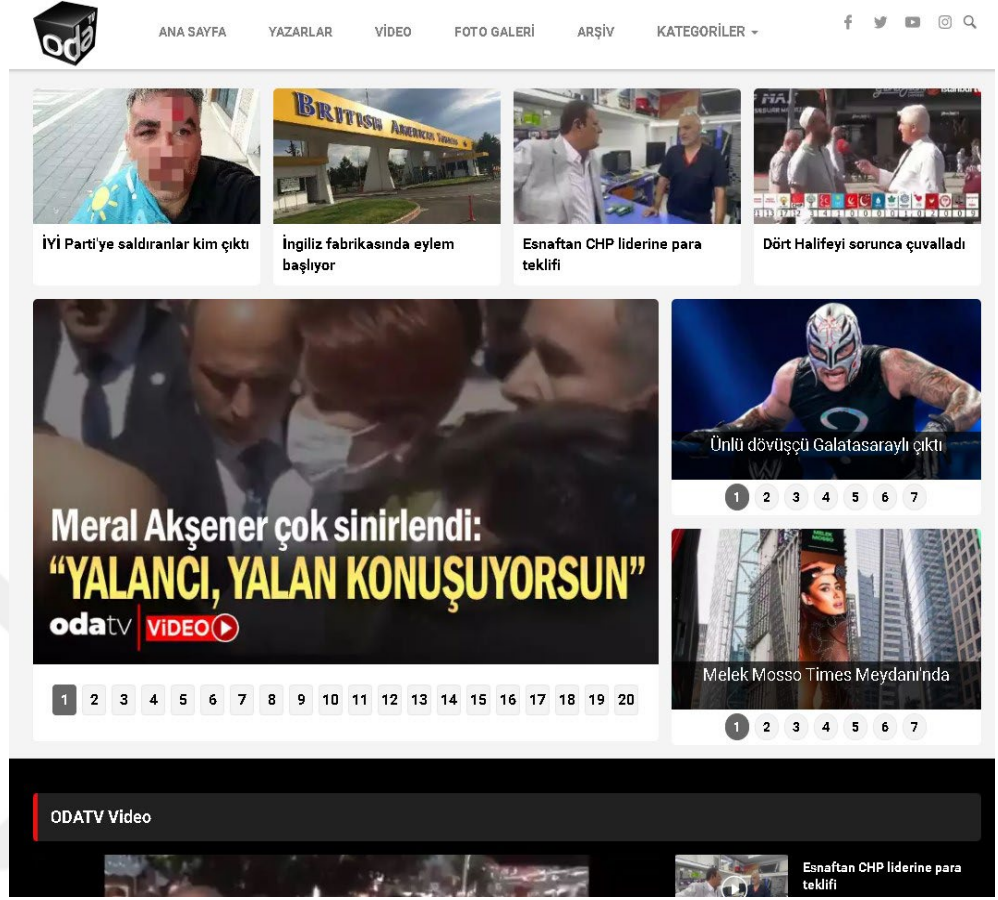


Figure 2: Screenshot of Oda TV

www.odatv.com was founded in 2007 by journalists and writers Soner Yalçın, Barış Pehlivan and Barış Terkoğlu as a profit oriented news site. Soner Yalçın, the owner of the news site, has worked in different television channels such as *Show TV*, *Star TV* and *CNN Türk TV* as director of news and producer since 1996. He was a columnist in *Hürriyet* daily newspaper until his dismissal in 2012. Soner Yalçın has written dozens of books which exposed the relationship of Islamic sects in Turkey with the political power.

Barış Pehlivan, the editor-in chief of Oda TV is a journalist and writer who investigates mainly Turkish contemporary history and politics. Barış Terkoğlu, the director of news of Oda TV who used to work for *CNN Türk* news channel, also writes about contemporary history and politics in Turkey. Recently Terkoğlu and Pehlivan published a book called “Metastaz” (Metastasis). The book which is about the efforts of Islamic cults to dominate the corporal institutions before and after 15th July coupe

attempt. Aimed to demonstrate how political power became instrument of the organizations associated with the sects and cults and for what purpose they used these structures (TMMOB, 2019).

Oda TV, is a profit oriented start-up which aimed to provide an alternative to mainstream media. The news site is dedicated to providing research and exclusive news stories in accordance with its Kemalist⁴⁴ tendencies and oppositional vision. For the journalists it is a very important obligation to give a voice to those who cannot speak in an era when Turkish media is deserted by political elites. The news website produces interviews, research files (reporters deeply investigate political corruptions and crimes) as well as breaking news in text and video formats. At first, the founders aimed to convert odatv.com into an alternative television channel, however, the idea was abandoned in the aftermath of the law suits against them and Oda TV remained as a news website (Interviewee 17, Oda TV, in-depth interview, 09.04.2018).

In 2011, journalists working for Oda TV were accused of being members of a terrorist organization, called “Ergenekon”. Although the existence of this organization was never proved. It was described as a military organization outside the Army which aimed to destroy Turkish government. The founders of Oda TV, Soner Yalçın, Barış Terkoğlu ve Barış Pehlivan were brought to trial for allegedly provoking the public to hatred and agony, attaining secret documents related with state’s security, attempting to influence legislative process, and causing political chaos via media. Odatv.com was accused of being the centre of terrorist activities and, therefore, blocked. Terkoğlu, Pehlivan and Yalçın were detained on 14 February 2011. Oda TV resumed its activities after the release of Barış Terkoğlu and Barış Pehlivan on 14th September 2012 and the release of Soner Yalçın on 27th December 2012 (Hürriyet, 2011; Cumhuriyet, 2011).

⁴⁴ The ideas and principles of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first president of the Turkish Republic, are described as Kemalism; Kemalism constitutes the official ideology of the state which endured publicly unchallenged until the 1980s. Kemalism proper is symbolized in the six points enumerated in the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, or CHP) Statutes of 1935; these were incorporated in the constitution of 1937, which remained in effect until 1961, then only to be reformulated with slight modifications. These six principles are republicanism, statism (in economic policy), populism, laicism, nationalism, and reformism. Together they represent a kind of Jacobinism, defined by Atatürk himself as a method of utilizing political despotism in order to break down the social despotism prevalent among the traditionally minded Turkish-Muslim population, for which he blamed foremost the bigotry of the ulema (men of religion; Ar., ‘ndured pu. Retrieved December 30, 2019 from <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/print/opr/t236/e0440>.

The court proceedings were not covered by the mainstream media since the then Prime Minister Erdoğan threatened journalists and media groups who had criticized the case. The result of these threats were dismissals of journalists (Hürriyet, 2015). The silence about the trial was broken by a few tweets by the journalists who attended the court. Internet access to Oda TV was restricted following their announcement that they had the images of cash-outs mentioned in the voice recordings related to allegations of JDP government's corruption. The court dismissed the case against Oda TV on March 13th, 2015 with the cause that no certain and convincing evidence was found. The officers, who conducted the operation against Oda TV were interrogated with the claim of "acting illegally" (Hürriyet, 2015).

On March 5th, 2020, OdaTV Director of News, Barış Terkoğlu and one of their editors, Hülya Kılınç, were taken into custody, following a police raid into their houses. On the same day, two journalists were detained with the accusation of "exposing the information and documents related to intelligence activity", according to the law of National Information Establishment (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı-MIT*) due to a news about the funeral of a MIT member who was martyred in Libia. The next day, Oda TV's editor-in-chief Barış Pehlivan was also detained in the context of the same interrogation. OdaTV website was blocked by Information Technologies and Communication Institution's (*Bilgi Teknolojileri ve İletişim Kurumu-BTK*) decision and their office was closed (Usta, 2020; Can, 2020)⁴⁵. Other OdaTV editors try to keep the news website running. Especially, they serve the news regarding lawsuit process on Twitter to audience. Oda TV's website can be accessed by VPN from Turkey (Oda TV, Twitter account, 07. 03. 2020).

As of August 2020, in spite of court proceedings and restrictions, odatv.com sustains activities. The news website serves written and video news content on the categories of politics, daily agenda, economy, media, sports, magazine and arts and culture. The columnists provide their views and interpretations regarding the news agenda.

⁴⁵ On September 9th, 2020 the second and final hearing of the case was held at the İstanbul 34th Heavy Penal Court. The court board has ruled that Oda TV Editor-in-Chief Barış Pehlivan and Editor Hülya Kılınç shall be released with an international travel ban, considering the time they had already spent behind bars. Oda TV New Director Barış Terkoğlu have been acquitted (Bianet English, 2020).

Editorial team of Oda TV consists of 12 persons. In 2018, the news site was making 80 news entry per-day on average. The relationship between the editor-in-chief, news manager, and editor/reporters is hierarchical. That is to say, the final decision belongs to editor-in-chief, when entering a news story to the news site. The hierarchy in news production and agenda setting intends to minimize possible law suits that can be opened against the journalists.

The site, which reaches 500 thousands individual visitors per month, is mainly financed by online advertising revenues retrieved from Google AdSense. Site's editor-in-chief and news manager emphasized that they'll continue receiving revenues from Google advertisements in the future (Interviewee 19, Oda TV, in-depth interview, 09.04.2018).

Content Oriented News Site: The Case of T24



Figure 3: Screenshot of T24

www.t24.com.tr was founded as an independent news site in 2009 by Doğan Akın after his resignation from *Milliyet* daily newspaper where he had been leading the newsroom for eight years. The reason for Doğan Akın's resignation was the JDP's

influence over mainstream news media. In addition, he thought that news in print format did not meet the requirements of the digital era in which news were consumed much faster on TV and on the Internet. This situation caused Doğan Akın to question his profession (TedXReset, 2019).

Meanwhile, Doğan Burda, one of Turkey's greatest media groups in magazine publishing was planning to found its first news site. They were seeking an experienced journalist for the job. Akın, who contacted the media group, became the leader of this project. There he learned the basics of online journalism during a yearlong in closed circuit content production. In March 2009, Tempo 24 news site went online. After just three months, Doğan Burda Media Group decided to stop all new projects due to global economic crisis. Though Doğan Akın would continue his job at the group as publishing director, his team ought to be dispersed (Radikal, 2009; TedXReset, 2019).

Therefore, Akın decided to found an independent journalistic start-up with his existing team of Tempo 24. Meanwhile, he met the directors of some companies working in non-media sectors. He made up contracts to build the web sites of the companies as well as their contents in text and video formats, at half cost of the market. Hence, T24 became the first self-financed news site of Turkey before went online. Akın in an interview stated that independent journalism attempts had been made before but necessary formulations to meet financial requirement couldn't be met. T24, which had produced over six thousand videos to earn its revenues went online on September 1st, 2009 (T24, 2019).

Later on, founding editors like the writers Oya Baydar and Aydın Engin, and Bekir Ağırđır, the General Director of a Public Opinion Research Company called KONDA, worked together with Doğan Akın to formulate the final format of the news site. Around the same time, a crisis emerged between a well-known journalist-columnist Hasan Cemal and the *Milliyet* daily newspaper that he worked for. The owners of the newspapers had been irritated when Cemal defended a headline as "İmralı Documents". T24 covered this story both news and analysis, and followed it regularly. Later on, *Milliyet* newspaper didn't want to publish Hasan Cemal's columns and requested his dismissal. Following this incident, the columns of Hasan

Cemal who had been writing for *Milliyet* for over 15 years, began to be published on T24 on his request. The transfer of Cemal to T24 attracted attention not only in media but also in political and the business circles (Söylemez, 2013).

On March 21st, 2013, Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of the PKK, an illegal armed organisation of Kurdish rebels, made a call for a cease fire. On March 22nd 2013 Hasan Cemal went to Kandil in Iraq where the PKK stationed his command centre to interview their leaders in order to learn their response to Öcalan's call. Turkey and the world learnt about PKK's reply from Hasan Cemal's interviews published on T24. Although five newspapers made job offers to Hasan Cemal, he announced that he would continue to write for T24. Cemal later wrote two books on Turkish-Kurdish conflict and, went to Rojava and Kandil once more (Söylemez, 2013). Therefore, T24, is the only news website in my sample that the Turkish Association of Journalists awarded a prize in 2010 (T24, 2011). In 2015, Hasan Cemal was also given the "Honesty and Conscience Prize" of Harvard University Nieman Journalism Foundation (T24, 2015).

The editorial team of T24 proposes that being an alternative media requires more than resembling their competitors in the sector. They say that they developed the site by emphasizing on what they do well, not on their insufficiencies. The editorial team underlines that no opinion or belief is more valuable than journalistic values. Meeting the financial requirements is important for independent journalism, but, independence also means being freed from ideological obsessions. In addition, since accuracy is a basic requirement of news making it can not be a vision for independent journalism. For this reason, T24 tries to show that journalism has an economical value and can produce its own revenues.

The main motivation of T24 is to change journalism in Turkey and show that another journalism is possible. T24 accomplishes these with the opportunities that the Internet, social media, and citizen journalists provide by preserving its independence. In contrary to traditional media proprietors who use journalism in order to advance their non-media businesses, T24 struggle to remain a platform for journalists who would like to pursue the interests of journalism profession (T24, 2019).

T24, has a horizontal and collective organizational structure. Its editorial team of 20 persons includes an editor-in-chief, a news manager, and editors. T24 is also supported with columns by several mainly critical journalists and writers. It produces content in text and video. It covers breaking news, provides space for comments, interviews and opinion columns. Primetime news is broadcasted on all week days in the context of video content. Interviews and discussion programs are categorized under the video content. The news website is also open to citizen journalism. It has a WhatsApp line and receives reports from its followers. It has a section where reader contribution is supported, by getting active on social networks like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The news site has also iOS and Android based mobile applications. The site, supported by online advertisements (Google ads) and reader funds in addition to content production for non-journalistic websites.

Content Oriented News Site: The Case of Diken

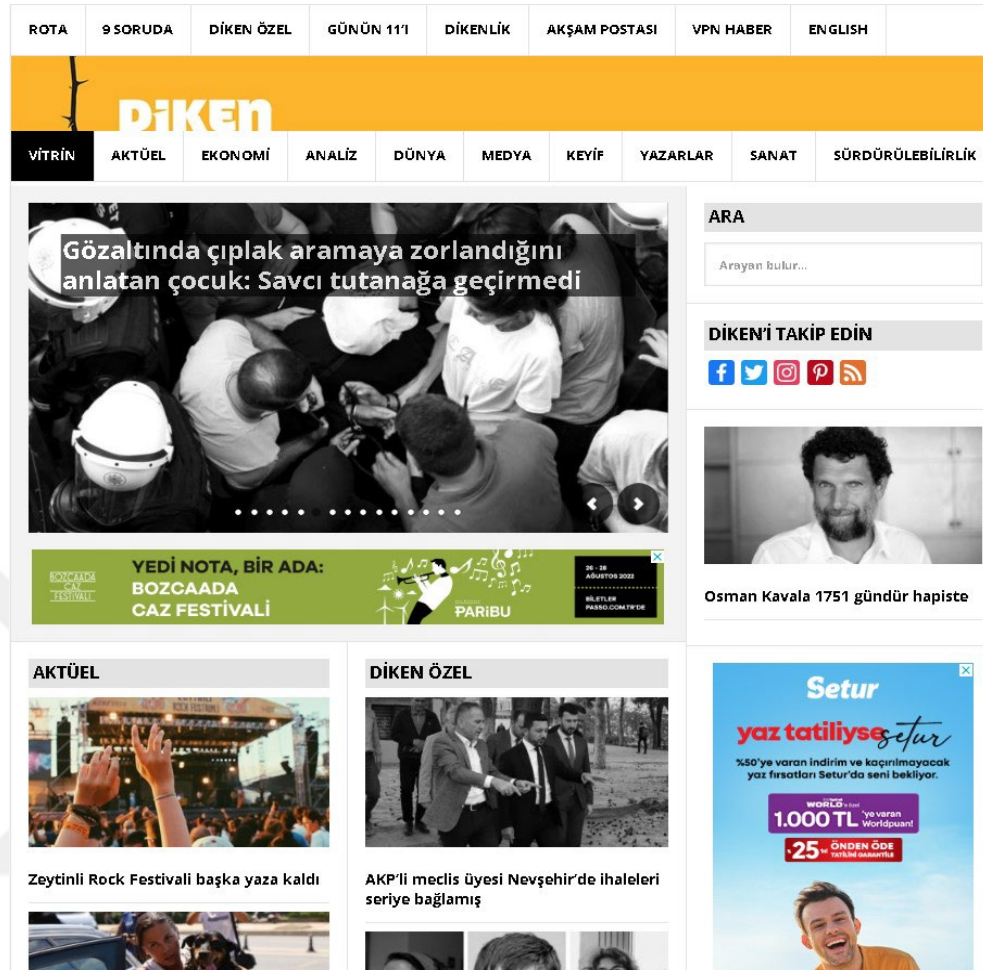


Figure 4: Screenshot of Diken

www.diken.com.tr was founded by journalists Harun Simavi and Erdal Güven in 2014. It functions under “Keskin Kalem Yayıncılık Tic. A.Ş.” trade entity. Harun Simavi is the grandson of journalist Sedat Simavi who founded *Gazeteciler Cemiyeti* (Journalists Association) in 1946 and *Hürriyet* Daily Newspaper in 1st May 1948 in Turkey (Interviewee 6, Diken, in depth interview, 10. 04. 2018).

Hürriyet was the leading newspaper of the Turkish media for many years. It is first sold to “Doğan Media Group” in 1994 then to “Demirören Media Group” in 2018, and lost its credibility. The news site Diken, which was founded on reason that journalism is not performed adequately in Turkey and with the intention to accomplish a 100% free journalism, is profit oriented. The owner identifies himself as an entrepreneur (Interviewee 6, Diken, in depth interview, 10. 04. 2018).

Harun Simavi identifies himself as fourth generation journalist of his family. He received computer programming degree in US; aftermath his return to Turkey, he participated in foundations of digital versions of *Vatan*, as well as, *Posta* Daily Newspapers and “Doğuş Media Group”’s diverse publications. Following his resignation from “Doğuş Media Group”, he gives an interval to his occupation. He makes a return to journalism with his own news site www.diken.com.tr (Interviewee 6, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04. 2018).

Diken.com.tr, which uses the name of “Diken”, the political satire magazine that was published in 1918 by Harun Simavi’s grandfather Sedat Simavi, aims to be the thorn of the media environment which is enforced to be a rose garden, by the definition of Harun Simavi. Harun Simavi declared their vision as surviving “Turkish media from the ridiculous situation that it has fallen into”. For Simavi, “It has no importance who is the ruling power or in the opposition today. Names, institutions, politicians do not have any importance. A journalist’s mission is to criticize and inform. Diken tries to accomplish these basic missions” (Interviewee 6, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04. 2018).

In contrary to the news that are served by mainstream media in a way not to insult some institutions, *Diken*, according to Harun Simavi, aims to transmit the news in the most accurate form, without distortions, interpretations. News is produced in written form. Diken.com.tr, sticking to the universal values and codes of journalism, is not assertive in breaking news reporting but is assertive in accurate reporting. The media-politics relationship that *Diken* desires is described as solely making news about a politician (Interviewed 6, in depth interview, 10.04.2018). In 2014, Diken received the “Internet Newspaper of the Year” Award in “Interactivists of the Year” nominations by “Yeşil Düşünce Derneği” (Green Idea Association), (Diken, 2019).

However, journalist Tunca Öğreten one of the editors of *Diken* news site has been detained on December 25, 2016. Tunca Öğreten’s house was raided at 03:00 a.m. by the police. The Police conducted a search at the house of the journalist for three hours and detained the journalist on the account of “membership for a terrorist organization” (Cumhuriyet, 2016). Öğreten who was wrote about hacked e-mail accounts of Turkish Energy and Natural Sources Minister Berat Albayrak by

RedHack, was evacuated on December 6, 2017 (Interviewed 4, Diken, in depth interview, 10.04.2018).

It has an office in Mecidiyeköy and journalists continue their affairs six days of the week at this office. It has an editorial team of eight persons, consisting of editor-in-chief and editors/reporters. Editor-in-chief is only a consultancy authority and no intervention is made on the news which editors/reporters wrote, except the ones as dramatic as to bring the closure of the site. Permission is taken from the owner and editor-in-chief at this type of critical news.

All the journalists at Diken stated that the news site has a participative organizational structure. The site, makes 40 news entries a day in 2018. Though the journalists working at the news site which reaches 200/300 thousands visitors monthly, expressed that they don't perform click-journalism, the site mainly chose online advertising retrieved from Google AdSense as revenue source.

Content Oriented News Sites: The Cases of ABC Gazetesi and Tele 1

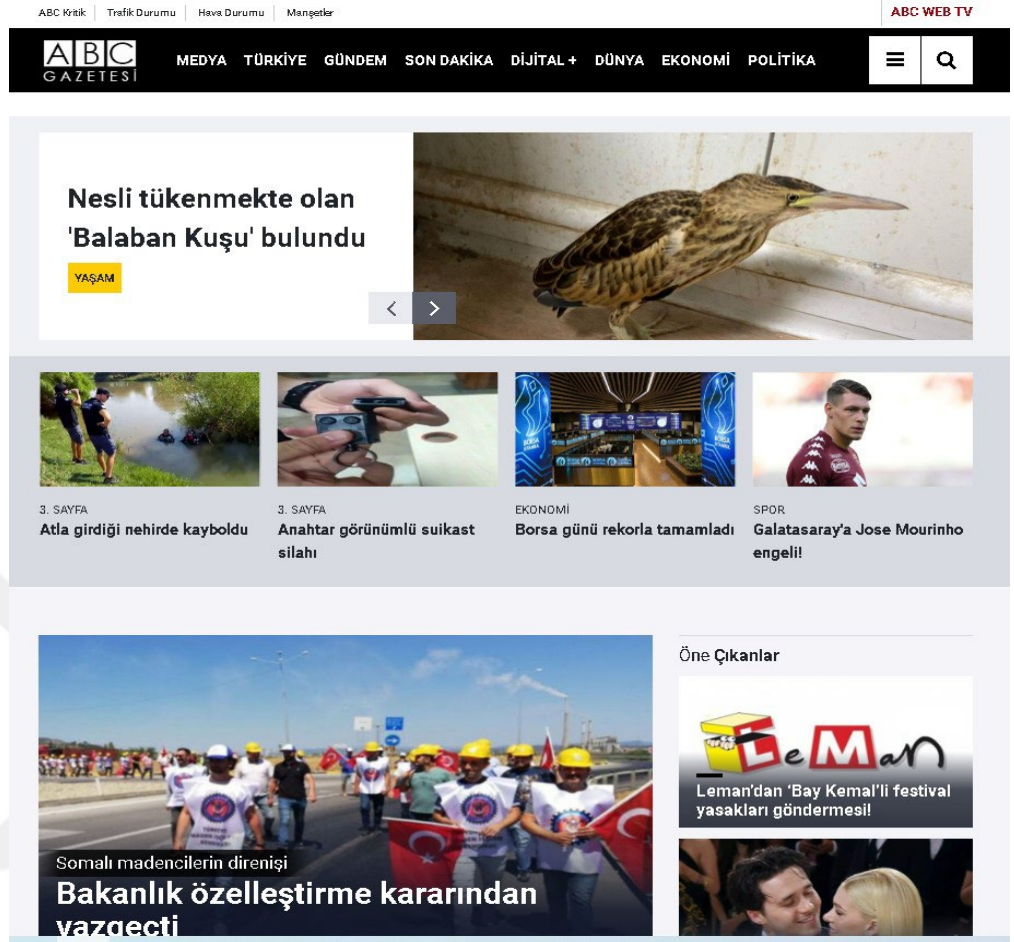


Figure 5: Screenshot of ABC Gazetesi



Figure 6: Screenshot of Tele 1

ABC Gazetesi, titled “Turkey’s digital newspaper” was founded by journalist Merdan Yanardağ on 19th October 2015 following his resignation from Yurt Daily Newspaper. Merdan Yanardağ worked as a reporter, columnist, news manager, and editor-in-chief in institutions such as *Hürriyet*, *Sabah*, *Gündem*, *Güneş*, *Aydınlık* and, *Yurt* daily newspapers since 1985. Yanardağ also founded Tele 1 news channel, as well as a new news site called Tele 1 on January 9, 2017 (Sözcü, 2020).

The owner of the both news sites is Merdan Yanardağ while journalist Oğuz Güven maintains as editor-in-chief; among the board of broadcast and authors, editorial crew who resigned from *Yurt* daily newspaper with Merdan Yanardağ. It can be observed that ABC Gazetesi and Tele 1, which hit the road with the aim for being a sphere where free and independent journalism is performed by journalists, pursued a publication policy in opposition to JDP and Gülen society (Tele 1, 2020).

Merdan Yanardağ (cited in Bakır, 2020) stated that in Turkey news media is in passing through a period when a dramatic crisis is experienced and independent journalism is collapsing. According to Yanardağ, journalism, which fell, had to be raised up. For this reason, Yanardağ tells, “We said, ‘Let’s start from ABC of journalism and remind it once more’”. According to Yanardağ, “ABC Gazetesi is a step taken to restart and reraise independent journalism understanding” (Bakır, 2020).

In an era when press is replaced by online journalism, when news is consumed through pads, smart phones and computers instantly, for Yanardağ, “It’s inevitable to found a news site. The circulation of internet versions of newspapers is much high as they can not be compared with print versions. This is the main reason that ABC Gazetesi was founded (even their slogan was “Turkey’s Electronical Newspaper”)” (Bakır, 2020).

ABC Gazetesi editorial team, who also founded Tele 1 news channel on 22 December 2016, started news site of the news channel in December 2018. Two news sites which journalist Oğuz Güven acts as editor-in-chief have an editorial team of six persons. Both news sites produce text based contents, as well as, short news videos that are retrieved from Tele 1 news channel (Interviewee 31, ABC Gazetesi and Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05. 2019).

The news sites are both non-profit organizations. With their horizontal and collective structure are receiving revenues from online advertisements and from book sales which can be defined as donations. Sites are active on Twitter and Facebook. And Tele 1 broadcasts can be watched on Periscope application besides satellite broadcast (Interviewee 31, ABC Gazetesi and Tele 1, in depth interview, 28.05. 2019).

Content Oriented News Platform: The Case of Medyascope.tv

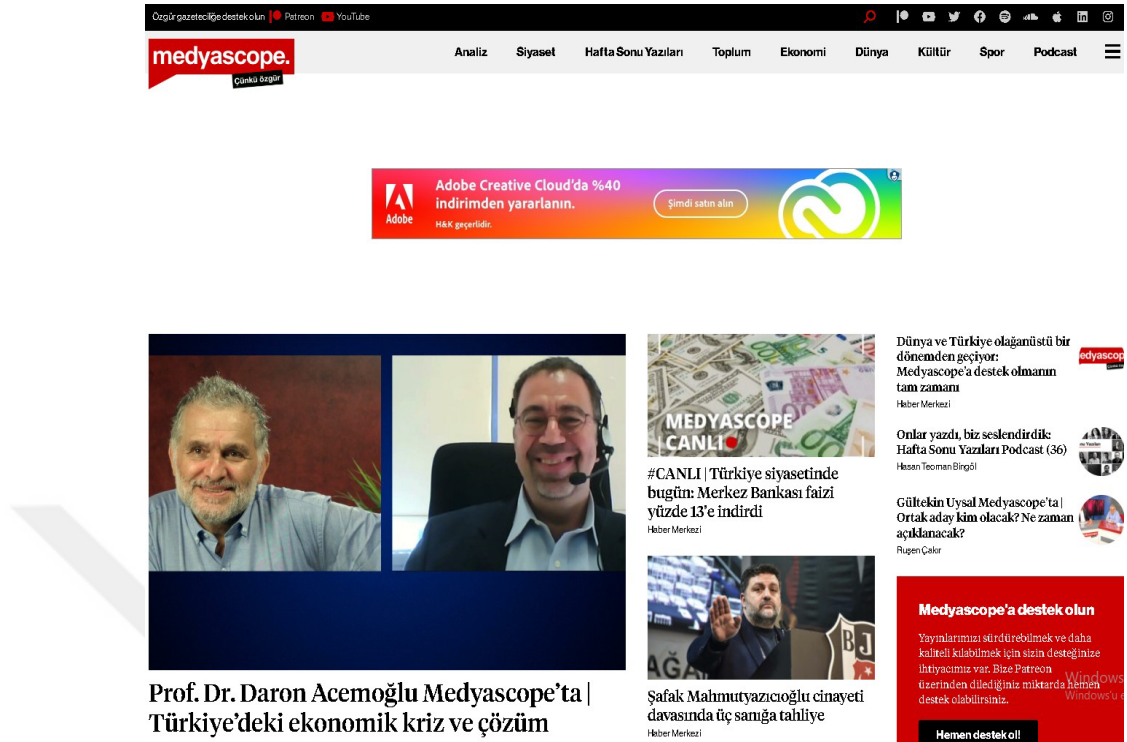


Figure 7: Screenshot of Medyascope.tv

Medyascope.tv is a news platform/Web TV where journalists, authors, academics and students, organize with a need for a civilian, independent and pluralist media environment in Turkey. Medyascope.tv was founded on August 20, 2015, inspired by the mobile application “Periscope”. The founder and the editor-in-chief of the news site is journalist Ruşen Çakır, who shares daily debates, comments or interviews on political and social issues that he broadcasts through his Periscope account, and uploading the broadcast videos to his YouTube and Vimeo channels since May 2015. After his dismissal from *Habertürk* daily newspaper, Çakır founded this site with the purpose of providing journalistic content to be stored and then to be used to form a sphere in which journalists and columnists and people from other occupations who are close to journalism can contribute (Avadar, 2019: 48-49).

Journalist Ruşen Çakır is started broadcasting on Periscope, before June 7, 2015 the day of the general elections in Turkey. At that period, he was working at *Habertürk* daily newspaper, however he couldn't write all the news he wanted. And the frequency he was invited to TV programs decreased. In such an environment where

it's impossible to express himself as a journalist, he made interviews with almost all candidates of political parties on Periscope. He broadcasted on Periscope discussing topics which are needed to be discussed in Turkey. Later, he moved his broadcasts to the office room that belongs to him at *Habertürk* daily newspaper. He invited guests with the help of his friends who were implementing camera shoots with a smartphone or a tablet, and, helping him at technical subjects like light and sound (Avadar, 2019: 48-49).

The turning point was an e-mail, sent by a media innovator and an IT professional. During a conversation the Medyascope.tv idea emerged. First, a joint-stock company with seven shareholders, named 'Scope Medya' resigned. Later they prepared a website where they could upload the broadcasts and held the website ready. Medyascope.tv's the first discussions were made with journalists Levent Gültekin and Kadri Gürsel⁴⁶ at the office room of Ruşen Çakır at *Habertürk*, thus we launched Medyascope.tv. Then, they continued to broadcasting by converting a venue into a studio belonging to one of the friends of Çakır, following his dismissal from *Habertürk* daily newspaper (Avadar, 2019: 48-49).

The news site uses live broadcasting tools of social networks like Periscope, YouTube and Facebook. It addresses a wide mass and has regularly broadcasted programs from their studio at an industrial region in Istanbul. In an interview conducted in 2016 for this thesis, Medyascope.tv's editor-in-chief stated that Medyascope.tv wanted to become mainstream media in order to bring the mainstream to a position as it should be (Interviewee 14, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 21.04. 2016).

In 2016, Medyascope.tv was nominated with Free Media Pioneer Award, by International Press Institute (IPI) (Medyascope.tv, 2016). In 2017, Medyascope.tv received Journalists without Borders and TV5-Monde Press Freedom Award (Medyascope.tv, 2017). Medyascope.tv attracts attention with genuine and original content. Medyascope.tv's special broadcasts, panels and intellectual talks can at the same time be listened via podcasts which are broadcasted on iTunes and Sound cloud.

⁴⁶ IPI Executive Board Member and *Cumhuriyet* daily newspaper Editorial Consultant, journalist and columnist Kadri Gürsel has been detained in the operation on *Cumhuriyet* on October 31, 2016 (Bianet 2016).

News site broadcasts primetime news every weekday's evening at 08.00 pm, lasting 1 hour. This is in the form of a summary of the news that are prepared by medyascope.tv all day long. And on Fridays, following the program at 08.00 pm, primetime news in Kurdish and English is broadcasted.

It has an editorial team of 30 persons in 2018. The interviewed journalists stated that medyascope.tv has a horizontal and collective structure. Editor-in-chief is a consultancy authority and decisions are taken commonly at news meetings, held every weekday. Non-profit-oriented site gains its financial compensation with national and international funds. A donation campaign is conducted on www.patreon.com. The revenue obtained from this platform reaches to 3 thousands USD monthly. Majority of the donators are academics living in USA and Europe. Site's future plan is to take advertisements directly from advertisers and/or pass to subscription model (Interviewee 7, Medyascope.tv, in depth interview, 29.03 2018).

Content Oriented News Site: The Case of GazeteRed

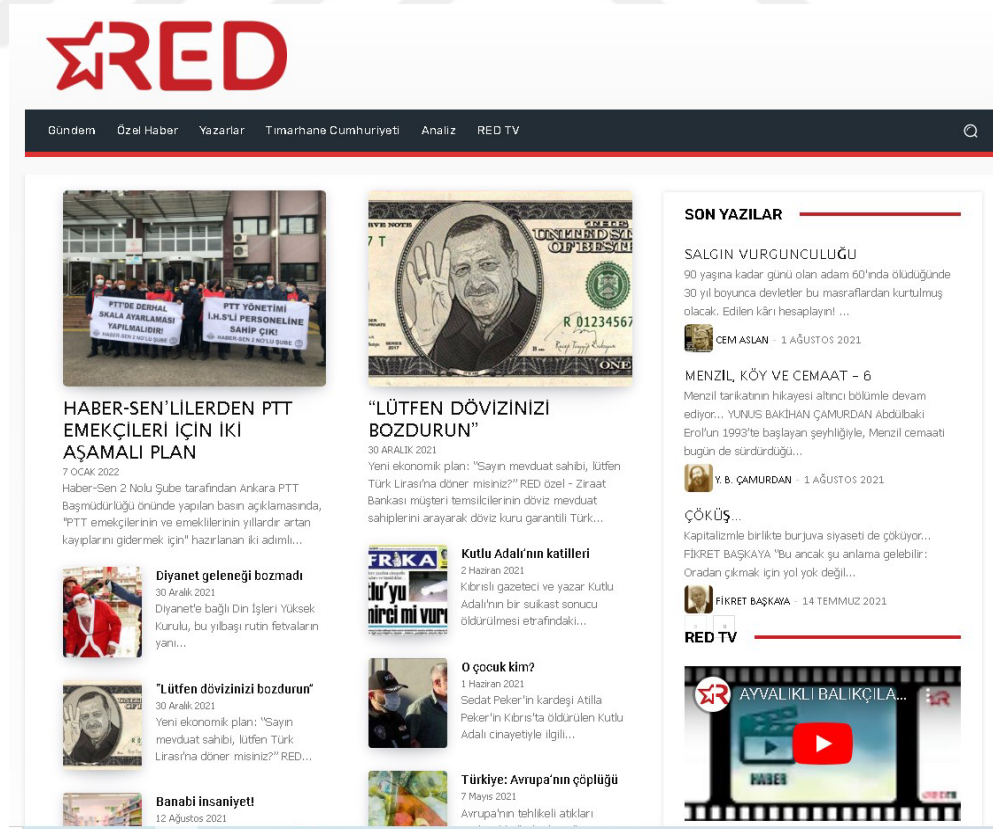


Figure 8: Screenshot of GazeteRed

GazeteRed was founded in 2016 by journalist Hakan Gülseven, with the aim to be a sphere among journalists and readers with left view, as a profit oriented structure. According to Gülseven, who identifies himself as an entrepreneur, “There’s no institution left in Turkey, where an oppositionist journalist can work” (Interviewed 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21. 04. 2018). Hakan Gülseven was arrested many times due to his conflicts with ruling party. There are 40 law suits against Gülseven at the moment. And the news site was subjected to broadcast bans for many times (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21. 04. 2018).

For example, in September 2016, Turkish Energy and Natural Sources Minister Berat Albayrak’s e-mail accounts were hacked and the content was published by communist computer hackers group RedHack that was founded in 1997. GazeteRed, at that time named as Redaktif, which journals e-mails just like many other news sites do, was banned with the suspect of correlation to RedHack. The ban came just after ruling party supporter Cem Küçük’s targeting speech on TV, with wide range accusations of terror organization membership to founding Redhack. Paper of detention was declared for “Birleşik Haziran Hareketi” (United June Movement), executive committee member and founder of GazeteRed news site, Hakan Gülseven (BirGün, 2016). Hakan Gülseven was set free following the declaration to the solicitor on 17th October 2016. However, the ban for the site continued repeatedly while the site continuously changed domain names to overthrow the restriction, with variations such as redaktif1.com, redaktif2.com, redaktif.net, hayred.com and finally GazeteRed (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21. 04. 2018).

The news site has an office in Kadıköy and journalists continue their affairs at the office six days of the week. It has an editorial team of five persons in 2018. The news site, which has a horizontal and collective structure. The site’s content consists of interpretation of the news, which marks Turkey’s agenda, is mainly in text form. The journalists declared that they are contributing in media literacy which is deficient in an era where information flows from multiple sources. They are exposing different points of views of the news other than that the ones imposed by traditional news media institutions (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21. 04. 2018). Access to news site has been blocked five times since the date it was online. The news

site gains revenue from online advertisements retrieved from Google, however, there has been dramatic falls by visitor numbers due to bans.

At the moment, site gains no revenue and journalists keep on working on the basis of volunteering. The main motivation of the news site is their political attitude. The journalists are socialists. Monthly visitor number is 150 thousands in 2018 (Interviewee 25, GazeteRed, in depth interview, 21. 04. 2018). For increasing visitor number, the news site uses strategies like creating spectacular headlines and submission of news on social media multiple times. In the future, the news site plans applying to reader donations for sustainability. The journalists who take mission on the site that addresses socialist aspects, stated that this fraction has a solidarity tradition and they will not have difficulty in finding donations, if that is a will as a revenue source.

Content Oriented News Sites: The Cases of Artı Gerçek and Artı TV



Figure 9: Screenshot of Artı Gerçek

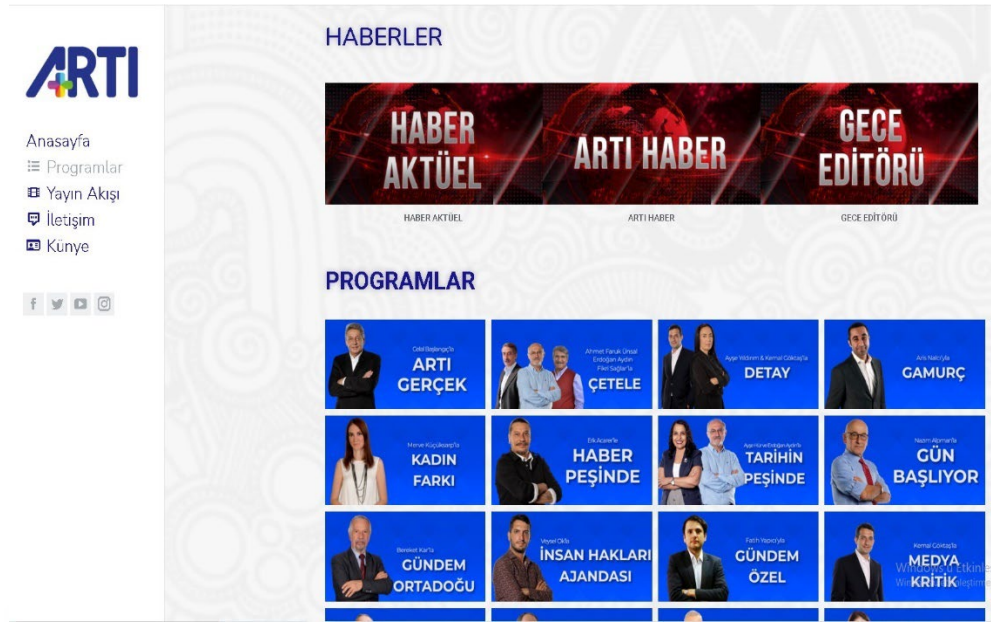


Figure 10: Screenshot of Artı TV

The news site www.artigercek.com was founded on 4th February 2017 in Netherlands by journalist Celal Başlangıç, who's at the same time the editor-in-chief of the news site (Eurotopics, 2020). Celal Başlangıç started journalism in 1975 at *Ege Ekspres* Daily Newspaper. After he worked for *Demokrat İzmir*, and *Politika* Daily Newspapers, he was respectively Adana Region Representative, Internal Politics Service Chief, and editor-in-chief at *Cumhuriyet* Daily Newspaper (1981-1994). He became the founder editor-in-chief of *Evrensel* Daily Newspaper. He worked at *Radikal* Daily Newspaper. He published *Beyoğlu* Daily newspaper with a group of journalists. He wrote for T24. He wrote eighty books, amongst which *Kanlı Bilmeceler* (Bloody Puzzle), *Korku Tapınağı/ Güçlükonak-Silopi-Lice-Tunceli* (Temple of Fear/ Güçlükonak-Silopi-Lice-Tunceli), *Hayatın Rengi Gökkuşakğı* (Life's Colour Rainbow), and *Hayata Söylenmiş Şarkılar* (Songs for Life) (İletişim Yayınları, 2020).

Başlangıç's books focus on Turkish-Kurdish conflict (1978-present). He watched the armed conflict between the Republic of Turkey and Kurdish insurgent groups, which have demanded autonomy, or separation from Turkey, as well as, human rights violations that took place in eastern Turkey closely. He made interviews with Abdullah Öcalan and other PKK directors. Celal Başlangıç, who joined the campaign "Patrol Editor-in-Chief" in solidarity for Özgür Gündem, was judge with "Promoting Crime and the Criminal", and, "Terror Organization Propaganda" claims. He was charged for 1 year 3 months of jail penalty for armed terror organization

propaganda. The court postponed the penalty with control duration of 1 year 3 months, considering his non-criminal past and behaviours at the court (Birgün, 2018).

Artı Gerçek is an oppositional news portal, went online with the slogan “More than you now”, following People’s Democratic Congress (HDK-A) foundation meeting in Bruxel (Eurotopics, 2020). Artı Gerçek was born as a reaction to censorship in Turkey. Its intention is to publish independent news, to become the voice of communities and religious minorities. The importance of the news site is its diversity; where anti-capitalist Muslims, conservative democrats, liberals, social democrats, socialists, feminists, youngsters, LGBTQ individuals, Alevis, Kurds, Armenians and Greeks of Turkey gather and make their voices heard. Artı Gerçek produces contents on text and video bases.

Editor-in-chief Celal Başlangıç tells the purpose and targets of the news site:

“Turkey’s connection with reality is broken by the ruling party. Media which expresses the reality are closed on by one. The ones that can still broadcast are intended to be muted, to be bowed on their knees by heavy fiscal and jail penalties. The lucky journalists lose their jobs, unlucky ones are jailed. Oppositionist social media users are hunted by security forces, arrested and detained. The context of press and freedom of expression is narrowing more each single day. Of course, all these have only one reason; to avoid people’s right for getting information and knowing the truth. At this landscape, we aimed a way of producing news without censorship and self-censorship” (Başlangıç, 2017).

Artı Gerçek functions as a hybrid platform with a news channel called Artı TV, founded on 18th March 2017 in Cologne, Germany. The news channel transmits its live broadcasts via live streaming applications such as Facebook, Periscope and YouTube besides satellite broadcasts. The news site has a horizontal and collective organizational structure. It has an editorial team of eight persons located in its İstanbul office in 2019. It’s also supported with columns by many journalists and authors. The news site also has editors in Germany, Ankara, Diyarbakır and London, besides İstanbul. News site and news channel, being financed by Kurdish diaspora,

meet their financial requirements by also online and conventional advertising (Eurotopics, 2020).

Content Oriented News Platform: The Case of Özgürüz

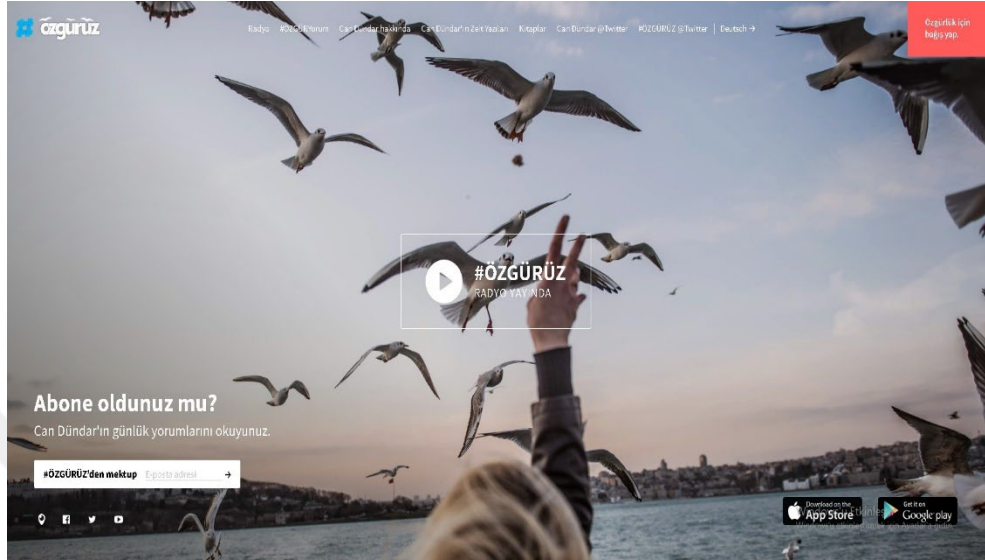


Figure 11: Screenshot of Özgürüz

www.ozguruz.org was founded by journalist Can Dündar in January 24, 2017 as a bilingual (Turkish and German) news platform. Özgürüz which means “we are free” is published in collaboration with Correctiv, an investigative non-profit organization located in Berlin, Germany. The project of Can Dündar is a manifestation that free journalism can be performed in Turkey. However, access to the news site has been blocked by Turkey’s official Information and Communications Technologies Authority (ICTA), on the day it became online: “ICTA referred to Turkish legislation enacted in 2007, designed to ban access to websites ‘suspected of inciting crimes’” (DW, 2017).

“Can Dündar had risen to international attention in 2015 after being detained for many months in Turkey following allegations of ‘divulging state secrets’ and ‘spying in aid of terrorist organizations. On May 29, 2015, as the editor-in-chief of the oppositional, left-liberal *Cumhuriyet* Daily Newspaper, Can Dündar and the newspaper’s Ankara representative, Erdem Gül published an article titled “Here are the weapons Erdoğan claims to not exist”, alleging that Turkey’s National Intelligence Organization (Millî İstihbarat Teşkilâtı-MIT) had been delivering arms

to rebels in Syria. *Cumhuriyet* also published a video and photos supporting the claim in June 2015” (DW, 2017; Global Freedom of Expression, 2016).

“Following this, President Erdoğan publicly stated that they would ‘not get away with it’ and in November 26, 2015, they were arrested and held in pre-trial detention on charges of espionage (Article 337 Turkish Penal Code), divulging state secrets (Article 329 Turkish Penal Code) and membership of terrorist organizations called FETÖ/PYD (Gülenist Terrorist Organization, and Democratic Union Party [Syria]). Dündar, before testifying to prosecutors, said: ‘We are not traitors, spies or heroes: we are journalists’” (DW, 2017; Global Freedom of Expression, 2016).

After being released from pre-trial detention, Dündar decided to leave Turkey before being handed a six-year prison sentence in absentia. In Berlin, he started working on the launch of ‘Özgürüz’ to provide uncensored news about Turkey (DW, 2017). Editorial team which consisted of editor-in-chief and a reporter when the site started, has grown to a nine person staff in 2018. Reporters are located in İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir and Diyarbakır. They don’t have an office in Turkey. Journalists produce news from anywhere and at any time via mobile live broadcasting tools such as Periscope, and YouTube (Interviewee 22, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04. 2018).

The broadcasts are archived on YouTube. The website contains Can Dündar’s articles, other than short news videos. In the news site with its horizontal and collective structure, editor-in-chief position carries solely consultancy purposes. Each journalist takes editorial decisions autonomously. The main factors at these decisions are journalism values and that the broadcasted news shall not cause the journalist to get arrested. The site is accompanied by a magazine named “Özgürüz”. The site’s financing is mainly compensated by this magazine’s posting to subscribers and collecting donations from supporters. And, by “Support Özgürüz” nights which take place in Berlin nearly every month. They arrange concerts, talks and panels with the help of artists, and academics from Turkey (Interviewee 22, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04. 2018).

In March, 6, 2019, Özgürüz decided to continue as internet radio. It broadcasts from Germany and Turkey. For the journalists, they are functioning as a kind of pirate radio for informing the public that cultivates press freedom in Turkey. For journalists, Özgürüz radio also resembles to free radios that broadcasted to Europe under invasion during World War II, and European radios such as Köln and BBC Turkish which Turkish public received news after September 12th Military Coupe, in 1980. The journalists who state that Turkey is once more in a period of prohibitions, emphasize that they can speak freely on radio (Can Dünder and Zübeyde Sarı, Periscope Talk, May 3, 2019).

For example, as journalists' state, the word "accession" is prohibited to be used in primetime news. Instructions are sent to Editor-in-chiefs not use this and alike words, by the government. The journalists of Özgürüz Radio say, "We can say 'accession' on our microphones and break the censorship" (Can Dünder and Zübeyde Sarı, Periscope Talk, May 3, 2019).

Journalist Can Dünder graduated from Radio Television Faculty in 1983. He took the first steps to journalism profession by producing programs on university radio. Özgürüz Radio reminds Can Dünder his first years in the profession. Dünder, telling that radio didn't die in spite of communication revolution, in contrary with the expectation, press is in death agony; tells that people read less, buy less newspapers and the most importantly trust them less. While in Turkey it's mostly underlined with music; European radios depend on talk, people get the news on radio, listens to programs and communicate. They tell their problems on radio. According to Dünder, spreading of podcast in Europe, is the revival of radio (Can Dünder, Periscope Talk, May 3, 2019).

The factors, directing Can Dünder to found a radio have been that he saw especially Turkish drivers in cabs listening to radio. When he asked how they got news from Turkey, they responded that they do it by radio. Drivers also stated that they don't read books or newspapers but watched TV. According to Dünder, in Turkey, the news on TV screens today is restricted and political power propaganda is made. According to Dünder, who stated that sometimes thought conflicts emerge between himself and drivers, the main reason here is lack of knowledge. Turkish

people living in Germany or elsewhere in the world can not receive accurate news from Turkey. The transmitted information by Turkish mainstream media is mainly propaganda. Dündar tells that as journalists, their common mission is to transmit the news without distortion. Dündar, stating radio is easier in means of installation than other media forms, said “Our colleague who installed the system told since the very first day that everything would be much easy, we would push a button and all would be possible. At first, I didn’t believe that but at the last point we’ve reached, we push a button and radio goes live” (Can Dündar, Periscope Talk, May 3, 2019).

According to journalists, now, with the radio they can easily reach to anyone willing to get news from the perspective of Özgürüz, and their microphones are open to anyone. The participative characteristics of Özgürüz radio allows anyone to record and send programs on any subject they want to be in country’s agenda. For journalists, Özgürüz Radio is the voice of the voiceless, and, always demands to tell the unspoken (Can Dündar and Zübeyde Sarı, Periscope Talk, May 3, 2019).

Radio broadcasts 24 hours a day. Time is filled with news, talk shows, and music (ethnic music) broadcasts. The radio focuses on in terms of content, the problems of journalists’, academics’ in exile, and speech needs of unions such as workers. People who cannot have the chance to express themselves, who seek justice, easily meet the audience. Özgürüz, which, in addition, have a WhatsApp line in the name of easy access to radio, use this line for either reporting and program suggestions. They continuously keep in communication with their audience. Actually, Özgürüz Radio survives with funds and donations (Interviewee 22, Özgürüz, in depth interview, 26.04. 2018; Can Dündar and Zübeyde Sarı, Periscope Talk, May 3, 2019).

Annex 3:
Interviews with Journalists

Interviewee 1
Journalist, Artı Gerçek/Artı TV
16.07.2019

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Four years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

BBC Türkçe, Artı TV/Artı Gerçek.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

I was a trainee, I left after the internship was over.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?
What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

ArtıTV is a news television that works in coordination with the news site www.artigercek.com. Its difference from traditional television is that it starts broadcasting from the internet by using social media tools. Recently, we also broadcast on hotbird. We provide our broadcast stream with live broadcasts, various programs or video news. First of all, I had the opportunity to work with experienced journalists and I can improve myself. I have the chance to make a promise to many people from different views and backgrounds while preparing a program or making an interview. I know that I am free here. At the same time, I am preparing special news files or entering routine news on artigercek.com. I have the chance to develop myself in both digital and television journalism.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

Here I learned how to broadcast live from social media tools such as YouTube and Periscope. I learned how to do mobile journalism. I also learned how to edit or use Photoshop here. Apart from this, it is necessary to be fast when entering news on the news site. Here I learned about the effectiveness of social media accounts in the circulation of an article or program and how to master these methods and manage the accounts.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use existing ones.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

It is almost impossible for a young dissident journalist to find a job in the mainstream today. We now know that different mechanisms come into play there. However, media outlets like this one embrace young people. Here we gain experience alongside valuable professional journalists. Another important point is that organizations like this one are shouting with all their might, despite the silence of the mainstream, doing accurate, impartial and free reporting. If televisions are watched or news sites are read like us, the atmosphere of silence created by the mainstream contributes to this. People now get the news from alternative publications and we are aware that we reach people from many different segments.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief, editors.

How many people work on the news site?

There are 9 people working as reporters/editors at Artı TV. There are also contributors. The editorial team of www.artigercek.com currently has 6 people.

Number of people employed: 9.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers, internet connection, office programs, Photoshop, cameras, mixer, our personal mobile phones.

Do you have an office?

Yes. Our news studio is in Istanbul. Another office is in Cologne, Germany.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

I work about nine hours six days a week. If the agenda is busy, it may take longer.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Yes.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

I am editor/reporter and presenter. News writing, live broadcasts, program preparation, interview and news follow-up, management of social media accounts, video editing, photo editing.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I come to the office at 9 am. I'm starting the agenda. According to the headlines of the day, I make my program: interviews or news suggestions. When I share my program with our editor-in-chief and get his approval, I start working. I have a lunch break, but I use it wherever I am. Sometimes the agenda is so busy that I forget to eat. If the program is live, I present it in the studio and host my guests. Or we shoot news videos out of the studio with my cameraman friends. Then we return to the office. My day continues in the form of editing the prepared material and uploading it to the site, and then making it circulate on social media. I also research and write news, find its images, upload them to the site immediately, and then share them on social media. I leave the office at 07:00 pm.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertisements and donations.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Advertising and donations are generally given or made from abroad. We do not have many donors or advertisers from Turkey. People are afraid that they will go against the power. Companies, academics, business people and associations from

abroad, America and Europe support us so that we can do independent journalism. The only expectation is that we continue to do journalism properly. There is no obstacle, on the contrary, knowing that we receive support motivates us. Apart from this, we earn a certain income from Google ads, but that limited number of clicks needs to be increased. We do not have this kind of publishing mentality. We also have income from YouTube.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

To continue to do proper impartial journalism. We know that we will be supported as long as we do not stray from our line.

Can you define your target audience?

Anyone who wants news.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

It should be 150/200 thousand monthly, our live broadcasts on YouTube or Periscope reach millions.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Facebook, Twitter, Periscope, YouTube and Google search engine.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We announce our programs and live broadcasts on social networks. When the broadcast is completed, we quickly complete the editing and transfer it to YouTube and again we share the link on social networks. We take care to include news that have not been mentioned before on the news site. We strive to stand out with our research.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We answer the questions that reach us through social networks.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Objective, standing at an equal distance from all power centres, not marginalizing.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Social media, especially Twitter, other media, domestic and foreign, news agencies, and of course our personal connections (journalists).

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

I don't think there is a difference.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We benefit from citizen journalism news. It is very difficult for us to be everywhere at any time, we take videos of this type of news, edit it and use it.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

In general, each editor/reporter determines his/her own headlines according to the agenda. The editor-in-chief acts as a correction or advice body.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

Definitely journalistic values are at the forefront. It is pointless to compare this with the mainstream, there is no journalism there anymore. It is nothing but reporting who said what.

Can you describe yourself as "independent" and "autonomous" in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

I use social media, other media and news agencies to better analyze the agenda. I note down the topics that I find important and do the necessary research. If the program will be in the studio, I invite my guest; if it will be outside, we will choose a place outside with my teammate and shoot our video. In the written news, the production process progresses in the form of determining the subject and researching and writing it. Finding images, editing them and then sharing them on social networks.

Interviewee 2
Founder/Editor-in-chief, Diken
10.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

25 years.

Are you a union member?

Yes.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

Yes.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Cumhuriyet (newspaper), Yeni Yüzyıl (newspaper), Radikal (newspaper) and Diken (news site).

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

I resigned.

Why did you set up a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of producing a digital project?

We founded it to be able to do independent journalism. Our aim was to do the best we know how to do it. Its appeal is that when we compare it with television, newspapers and others, it is much more affordable to set up, at least in the beginning phase. It can be installed and executed with a small staff.

Can you tell us the story of the establishment of the news site?

After leaving *Radikal* newspaper, I took a break from journalism for a while. While thinking about how I can return to my profession, Harun and I decided that it would be a good idea to be an internet journalist. Then we provided a start-up capital, we found it. We formed a team and moved on.

How would you describe yourself within the scope of the project?

Journalist.

What are the new practices, competencies and abilities that you need to acquire and/or have acquired while establishing the news site and continuing your profession in this space?

Digital journalism is different from the press, it requires intensive work. While learning to be faster, I also learned to work without sacrificing quality. It was something I hadn't experienced in the newspaper. I learned how to use social media

effectively to reach information and spread my news to the masses, besides, I learned how to use the site technically (finding images, and such technical work done on the internet). I am preparing a news from a to z by myself. Also, I work more desk-bound here. I'm not chasing the news.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use existing technologies. We try not to lag behind technology.

What is the importance of the news site you have established in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

In Turkey, 80% and 90% of the media is in the hands of the government. They are under direct or indirect control. Diken has become almost the only medium where independent journalism can be done. Of course, there are independent newspapers such as Cumhuriyet and Birgün. However, we observe that they are also increasingly giving weight to digital. Diken's place in independent journalism is critical when it comes to the change, transformation and future of journalism. We think that we have opened an area for those who want to step into the profession, whether they are reporters or writers.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective. Everyone is reporting. Decisions are taken jointly.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief, news director, editors, intern (but everyone does the same job).

How many people work on the news site?

Number of people employed: 8 (journalists working with a stable salary 5, others such as interns do not receive a stable salary).

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computer, modem, servers, site is WordPress based, office programs and Adobe programs are used for visuals and design.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

6 days 9 hours between 09:00 am / 06:00 pm.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

No (I am retired. I have a pension).

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

He does not receive a salary of his own choice.

Is your insurance paid?

He is retired.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor-in-chief.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I come at 09:00 am in the morning. Like the editorial staff of a newspaper, we compile news from other media from night to morning. We review newspapers through their sites. We examine news agencies and foreign press through their websites. We are examining social media, we are already on television (they are watching CNN Türk television channel). Then we take news that are newsworthy for us, find their images, edit them, evaluate them from our point of view, and upload them to our site. My days are hectic and tiring. The agenda is constantly changing. However, it is necessary to keep the site active. We eat our meals in the office. I don't go out and chase news. I'm at the desk.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented. While establishing it, we did not establish it so that we can profit from this business. Of course, we aim to be a profitable enterprise, even if we are not making a profit at the moment, in order to do our job better and to employ more people.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising. 80/90% Google ads, others are small built-in ads that we get from peer to peer personal links.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

A news site like Diken was established and is standing by no one in terms of revenue model at this stage. We are not affiliated with a company, a businessman, or

a political party. This is why Google ads give us our independence. Therefore, we do not worry about whether we will upset or hurt this, miss this or scare it while reporting. Therefore, if a fact is newsworthy for us, we publish it. Let me tell you with the motto of the thorn, it doesn't matter to us who it sinks into. However, this independent stance is seen as oppositional by some. I don't define it that way, but journalism comes at a price. Because we are not seen as a very attractive medium for companies that will advertise. The fact that 90% of our advertising revenue comes from Google is an indication of this. We do not receive direct advertisements. The number of our blocked news has exceeded 200.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

There are plans but they are not concrete yet. We are considering a reader support. If we can increase our revenues, we want to expand the staff and increase the number and variety of news. We believe that if we can create content areas such as culture, arts, sports, and economy that advertisers want to be seen, this will provide an extra advertising income in the medium term.

Can you define your target audience?

We do not have a specific target audience. We are independent. We take care to present the news in a properly readable form. We think that anyone who wants to read the right news, and to read the truth with an analytical eye as much as possible, is our potential audience.

Those who follow us are mostly 25-40 years old, educated, upper middle class people.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

We have 200 thousand visitors per day.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Social media Facebook and Twitter. That's why we keep social media alive. However, we have not advertised on Facebook for promotional purposes until now. There are also those who come to the site by Google search engine. There are also visitors who regularly click on the site every day.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

Not a strategy, but as a plan, we intend to expand our staff and expand our content. Due to financial difficulties, we have not been able to implement most of them.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We're trying to do a lot of work with very few journalists here. We cannot communicate with readers/users as much as we would like. We try to respond to emails. A friend of ours is dealing with it. From time to time, we receive criticism, praise, and even corrections. Sometimes readers send us news. We are evaluating them.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Independent. I am not a believer in political journalism, I am a believer in independent journalism. I think that a journalist should not have a policy in the political sense of a publication. Of course, we have a worldview that we support. We believe in pluralism, democracy, impartiality and independence, and we try to be fair. It defines many clichés, but they have ceased to be clichés in today's Turkey. Our editorial policy is based on these.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Televisions, social media, readers, citizen journalists, newspapers, agencies, open sources are mostly news sources for us.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Similar technologies.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We use it but not directly. When a reader or follower tells us there is something like this, we try to follow the information and make it news as much as possible, but this is not something we can do much. The verification phase requires staff, time and money.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

It develops instantly. We do not need to set an agenda in Turkey, the agenda is already there. You just have to follow closely. We also make decisions jointly. We find the news and talk about the news we find together for a few minutes. If we say ok, we prepare and publish it.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?
How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

The point that we pay the most attention in journalistic values is the accuracy of the news. It takes so much time. We read a lot of news, we research, and then we eliminate many news that we think we will not reflect fully. We do not publish.

Apart from that, we have a line on the axis of independence. Everything we think people should know is newsworthy to us. This may be high politics, it may be much more casual, and we also try to use content that will make people happy. Of course, without escaping the tabloid part of the job.

Commercial concerns and political pressures are out of the question for us. It is important that it is newsworthy. And of course, it is important that it appeals to the audience that follows us, as a result, we earn money from the number of hits.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

We use other media. We examine foreign sources, agencies, and social media. We take information that we think is newsworthy and rewrite it according to our criteria. Our criteria is to write the news properly. The ability of the reader to understand in one reading. If necessary, include the background of the news. To add other related news that we have published before by giving a link to the current news, to guide the readers.

Interviewee 3
Journalist, Diken
10.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Four years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Haberasagi. com, AA, Vatan, internethaber, Diken.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Illness/ special causes.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?

What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

I entered here as an intern when I was going from 3rd to 4th grade at university. If I had applied to a newspaper at that time, I would have worked there. In fact, I would continue wherever I could find a job. But if I had two options in front of me, would it be a newspaper or a news site, I would like to work in a news site. Because there are very experienced journalists at the head of news sites like Diken. It is both promising and professional.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

Since there are few employees, news production takes place from the office. Many things have to be done at the same time. I need to follow newspapers, agencies, and social media at the same time. If the news comes out, I shouldn't miss it. I'm learning to be fast and be as precise as possible. It is important to make quick decisions.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use social media platforms. Dissemination of news as notification on social media is very important. We aim to be clicked so that our number of users increases.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

The biggest difference is that it is independent. This affects the profession and the content. For example, we were able to publish the news of the sale of sugar factories. You cannot expect this kind of news from NTV, but you can expect it from Diken. Diken has nothing to lose. Demirören Company has now acquired Doğan Media. However, they have relations with the ruling party. Here's an example of Diken being more democratic than other media outlets. For example, two opposing news can come side by side on our site. In news organizations like T24 or Milliyet, every news is last minute. Or they give plenty of room to Erdogan's words. We do not have such news. We don't make news just because he said this. We present past events from a wider perspective, without succumbing to the speed of the internet. We do not make unnecessary comments on the news. Or, most news sites or newspapers publish news from other news organizations by changing the image and title. I witness that many of the news I write are used by other sites in this way.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief, news director, editors, intern.

How many people work on the news site?

8 people.

Number of people employed: 9 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computer, modem, servers, site is WordPress based, office programs and adobe programs are used for visuals and design.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

9 hours / 6 days a week between 08:00 am-05:00 pm.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Yes.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editing, special content (I rewrite the news from the agency, find an interesting phrase between the lines, put it in the headline and publish it), special news production.

Can you tell us about a working day?

We work both day and night. Three weeks I come at 08:00 am in the morning, one week I come at 03:00 pm. Working hours starting at 03:00 pm are considered night shifts. After 07:00 pm we are alone. My routine is as follows: I turn on my computer when I come to the office. I look at the showcases of AA, IHA and DHA. We only subscribe to DHA. Then, if there are news entered in the newspapers that the agencies do not go through, I examine them. I scan the front pages of newspapers on the Internet. I proceed with the question of what is special news on the first pages. I check other news sites, social media. I present the information I have accessed to the team and write what we have decided to publish jointly. I choose the image, prepare it for publication, if there is a video, I do the editing. I log into the system and publish it. Sometimes we publish 50 news a day, sometimes it is less, sometimes it does not exceed 20. We attach importance to quality. We do not want to enter a lot of news and reduce the quality. There is no lunch break, we eat at the table. This is how my day goes. If there is no extraordinary agenda at 07:00 pm, I return home.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising. Google ads.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Not known.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

Not known.

Can you define your target audience?

We are trying to appeal to everyone.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

200 thousand and more per day, instant 1534 (via Google Analytics).

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Facebook (a lot of traffic is coming), Twitter, searching from Google, when the news enters the *Ekşi Sözlük*, a lot of traffic flows from there, clicking on the site itself.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We pay attention to the quality of the news. We do not enter repeated news as last minute, we publish it by giving it a perspective or a background. We share the most clicked news on Facebook and Twitter a few more times during the day. We keep our social media accounts alive.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We respond to emails as much as we have time. Sometimes we respond to comments on Facebook if there are questions. We receive criticism or praise. Sometimes threatening and abusive emails are received. Sometimes news notification comes by e-mail. We are evaluating them.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

To report without distortion, not to lie, to notice and correct the wrong.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

News agencies (we subscribe to DHA), other media, social media, personal contacts, reader emails.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

I don't think we are that different.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

It doesn't happen very often, but we can evaluate reader reports if we have a chance to verify them. Social media is not very reliable, so we proceed by following agencies and other media.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

We find the news. We make a joint decision, one more editor reads a news we wrote before publishing, we log in to the system and publish it.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, political pressures, target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

Journalistic values, especially the accuracy of the news, are very important to us. There is political pressure, as journalists are arrested, we are afraid, and we try not to be sharp-tongued. A friend of ours was also arrested. But we are publishing this news, we have no fear of what the government will say. In order to increase our number of clicks, we pay attention to determine the news most clicked by our followers and to produce such news.

Can you describe yourself as "independent" and "autonomous" in the news production process?

Partly yes. I am resorting to self-censorship sometimes. Because I don't want my news to be blocked by a court decision. Our blocked news has exceeded 200 so far.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

I produce desk news, unfortunately I cannot find a topic and talk to its interlocutors and write my news. I reach news by examining agencies, other traditional and digital media. Instead of basing on a single source, I read the same news from 4 sources. If the news has several subjects, I include what each subject says. For example, it was claimed that elderly people were thrown out into the street in a retirement home belonging to the Esenyurt municipality. That night, we did not enter this news, but all the websites reported that the old people of the municipality were thrown out on the street. The first thing I did when I saw this news in the morning was to check the municipality's Twitter page. They tweeted that we took the elderly for health screening, the photo was taken at that time, and the elderly are in the nursing home. I gave this news from several points of view. And it got a lot of

attention. However, if I didn't have a speed problem, I would go and find those old people and talk to them and write that maybe the municipality is lying, but this is not possible with a small staff on a news site. In this way, I produce my news, edit its images and enter the news on the site. Then I share it on our social media accounts. I share from both the site's account and my personal account.

Interviewee 4

Journalist, Diken

10.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

16 years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Taraf, Diken, Daily Telegraph

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Financial difficulties.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?

What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

In the media sector, if you do your job with your conscience, if you believe in and protect the universal ethical principles of journalism, there are three or five institutions that can work in Turkey, one of them is Diken when I speak editorially. That's why I wanted to work here and I started working. My motivations are, most importantly, editorial independence. There is quality journalism in Diken. We question the accuracy of a news too much. So much so that if we do not believe that a news is true, we do not enter it. In our own special news, we have the whole initiative of that news. The editor-in-chief is absolutely not involved. The beauty of this publication being digital is that the era demands it first. Secondly, getting a news on the air is just one click away. We are able to publish in fast seconds. Then, sharing the news on social media is attractive in terms of both the visibility of the news and its instant access to large audiences. And from a journalist's point of view, the

visibility of my work is high. I can get instant feedback. This motivates me because I get the reward of my work from the reader's side through the circulation of the news on social media, the discussions on the news or the traffic flowing to the site.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I learned to be fast, to make quick decisions.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use commonplace technologies that are used everywhere: a keyboard, a monitor, an internet connection. When Diken was founded, social media was already being used actively, we did not influence it, it influenced journalism, Diken was included in it. I can say that the presence of news there is the most important factor that invites us to digital. We are currently using social media actively to increase the visibility of our news and site traffic. We do not use a new technology, nor do we use live broadcasting tools of social media, we only produce news in written form. We don't have any video news and we don't plan to do it at the moment, our team is very small.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

For Diken, the most important thing is the accuracy of a news, and while writing a news, we do not do it with the thoughts that it should not disturb or disturb this. Whatever the news, we give it. It is none of our business whether it bothers or pleases whom. Whatever you have experienced as Laura, I convey it to the reader. Since we did not resort to manipulation or provocation over the news from the very beginning, I think we set an example in other news sites, print media and televisions, as we formed and protected this attitude from the first day of Diken's broadcasting life. The presence of Diken and other news sites is a great opportunity for journalists already working in the mainstream. Since journalists know that sites like ours do independent journalism, they hope that one day they can work on this kind of media and do journalism properly. The effect on the news content is the accuracy of the news.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective. There is an editor-in-chief, of course, we get his opinion before uploading the news to the site. After all, Erdal Güven is our most experienced, but we make the decisions together. We are all of equal status. There is no such thing as an editor-in-chief like a top-down general like the mainstream does whatever he says.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Publisher, Editor-in-Chief and editors. Editors are also reporters and we also make special news.

How many people work on the news site?

8 people.

Number of people employed: 5 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers (apple), modem, site WordPress based, office programs, photoshop.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Nine hours a day, six days a week.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes fixed.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Yes.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor/reporter.

Can you tell us about a working day?

When I come in the morning, between 08:00/09:00 am, I examine the first pages of the print media. I'm doing research to see if there are any news that can be

used from there, beautifying the language, or making the news more readable. Then I check other news sites. Then I try to get news from foreign sources about the agenda. If I am not going to do a special news or interview, I spend a day writing news after doing these reviews. If I'm going to do a special news or an interview, I mostly prepare for it at home and go to the news or interview. I don't work entirely at a desk. There is no lunch break, we have our lunch at the office.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising, Google ads.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes. Transfers income to employees.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

I don't know about the opportunities, I'm not interested in the financing part of the job, the boss is Harun. If it can be seen as an obstacle, it may be an obstacle for us that Google offers ads that will not appeal to all readers or may disturb some of them. When a conservative man reads Diken, popping up an advertisement for penis enlargement drives that person away from us.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

I do not know. My own thought is to switch to subscription, but we never spoke to the team and the boss about it.

Can you define your target audience?

We do not have a clear target audience. We are trying to reach people from all walks of life (even Melih Gökçek shared our news recently), but those who follow us are generally educated university graduates between the ages of 20-40, men and women are equal.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

200/300 thousand monthly.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Social media mainly Facebook and Twitter. There are those who come with a search from Google. There are some from the *Ekşi Sözlük*. Those who click through to the site are a very small group.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We keep our social media accounts alive. We identify the most widely read and shared news and share them several times a day. Thus, we reach more readers.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

Emails and phone calls are answered. If there are reader reports, they are evaluated.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

We do not have an ideology, we have defended the understanding of true and independent news since its establishment. We are a media organ that gives and presents whatever news is. I was arrested and I was imprisoned for a year. Even though I was not a member of any group at that time, they accused me of being a member of every organization around. Because the news I wrote was not tied to an ideology, it was impartial and accurate.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

There are agencies we subscribe to, we use social media. We use open sources (other news sites, websites of newspapers and TVs, foreign media, sites that do not work through subscription, for example, *9/8 Haber* with citizen journalism), we develop and report these contents. Or we directly reach the first-hand source ourselves, confirm it and make the news.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

I don't think we are different.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We use the contents of publications that do citizen journalism, such as *9/8 Haber*. Sometimes there are images we capture on Twitter, we verify, develop and use them.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

If we intend to make a news, we open the news for discussion among ourselves. For example, if I defend the news, my other friends can present an antithesis to it. If the data I have is stronger than their claims, we make the news. The editor-in-chief has the last word, otherwise we decide ourselves.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?
How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

We don't care about anything other than journalistic values. We do not have any commercial concerns, we receive advertisements from Google. Yes, we sometimes postpone the news we will do so that the site is not shut down or our news is blocked, but in the end we write that news again. Since we do not do click journalism, the target audience cannot be very effective in our choices.

Can you describe yourself as "independent" and "autonomous" in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

I examine the traditional media, news agencies, and social media. When I find an interesting point, if I think it is information that will interest the public, I share it with my friends. We're thinking about it. If the number of defenders exceeds those who oppose, I start writing the news, otherwise I don't. We mainly write desk news. Sometimes I'm out and doing interviews.

Interviewee 5

Journalist, Diken

10.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Eight years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

32. Gün (Television Show), Taraf, Birgün, Diken.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Economic reasons.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

As soon as it was opened, Diken made a difference in terms of journalism. I was following too. I believe that internet journalism is more up-to-date and healthier. From the standpoint of independence, the appeal is: we're a small team, so we can write whatever news we want. While a news in other big media organizations is approved by many units, we can settle it among ourselves in a short time. This is a great advantage. We are free in terms of journalistic standards.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I learned to be fast. I learned to react instantly to a news. I am now very quick to determine what parts of a news are more newsworthy. These developed me. I learned to headline. Our titles are the most important element that makes our work shine. I can determine where the photograph is used and where it is not used. I learned a lot about digital journalism here. Using Photoshop, using editing programs, site design, and management of social media accounts.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use what is available. While we are making news, we reach the person who will be mentioned in the news via video chat when necessary and ask questions. We keep our social media accounts alive.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

I think Diken brought a different news language to the Turkish media. Since certain seats and corners have been fixed in the mainstream for many years, it has to pass through various filters while making the news. Certain news cannot be made objectionable due to patronage relations. Or certain news can be given in certain ways. This does not exist here, this is what allows us to be free. We can present the news we want in the form we want, independently of Diken. We have published this news, we do not think about what will come after. We don't do click reporting. A

person can understand the whole story just by reading the title. This is a feature I am very proud of. It allows us to give up here even if we have difficulties economically at times.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief, editors, intern.

How many people work on the news site?

Eight.

Number of people employed: Five.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Not answered.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

We have 07:00/08:00/10:00 am and 03:00 pm shifts, 9 hours a day, 6 days a week. We change the 03:00 pm shift every 3 weeks, that night shift. I start working at 08:00 am this week and leave at 05:00 pm.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Fixed.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

No.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

News manager.

Can you tell us about a working day?

According to the time I arrive at the office in the morning, if I am one of the earliest, I review the newspapers. If I come later, the newspapers are reviewed. I follow up the jobs that fall to the agencies or are overlooked in the morning reviews

or missed by a friend who works at night. Apart from that, I follow agencies, traditional and digital media, Twitter. I find news. I am writing, after the visual selection from the necessary controls, I upload it to the site with a striking title. We don't have a lunch break. I am eating at the desk. My work continues in this way at the desk until the evening.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising. Google ads. From time to time, we also receive advertisements directly from the advertiser.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

We are not affiliated with any institution or political party. We are free and independent. We currently have low income which prevents us from expanding our staff. If we can get high-budget ads other than advertising revenue from Google, more people will work and we can do more business.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

I am not competent in this matter.

Can you define your target audience?

We are addressing a group that is defined as the A/B group on TVs. But we do quality journalism. We are not affiliated with any political party. That's why we appeal to very different segments.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

200 thousand per day.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Facebook, Twitter (the biggest traffic comes from these two), searching from Google and clicking on the site.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

If a certain news is read a lot, share it more on Twitter and Facebook. If we have seen a news from a different angle, rewrite it and share it on social media. Our

strategy is based on social media because readers are directed to us from these channels.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We receive a lot of mail and phone calls. We try to answer all of them.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Objective and independent journalism.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

We subscribe to news agencies Reuters and DHA, other media, TV, newspapers, news sites, social media, and reader notices.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

We are not different.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We are frequently informed. We also use it if the topic is newsworthy and we can verify it from at least two or three different places.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

We find the news, we write it, if the editor-in-chief and other editors say OK, it is published during the day. In general, if even one person is suspicious of the news, we do not publish that news.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

Journalistic values are at the forefront. We do not have a commercial concern. We are not politically attached to a political view. We don't do clickbait reporting.

Can you describe yourself as "independent" and "autonomous" in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

I rewrite as much as possible the news I get from the agency or other means. Everyone here does that, it's not unique to me. We try to keep it as short as possible.

Because we know that we are doing business with an audience that does not read long stories. It is important that it can be consumed more easily. I am compelled to produce all the news on a desk, we almost never go out. We have to be fast. I also find their images, prepare them for publication, upload them to the site, and then spread them from our social media accounts so that site traffic increases.

Interviewee 6

Founder/Diken

10.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

16 years.

Are you a union member?

Yes.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

Yes.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Not answered.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Not answered.

Why did you set up a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of producing a digital project?

For the execution of independent journalism in Turkey, a medium like Diken was needed. That's why I started a news site. It's easy to produce digital projects, we don't have any printing or paper costs. We do not have to buy licenses and pay heavy fees like televisions.

Can you tell us the story of the establishment of the news site?

Journalism in Turkey was in a miserable state. I and Erdal Güven founded the Diken news site to provide opportunities for the new generation of journalists and to do independent "real" journalism, and it started broadcasting on January 27, 2014.

How would you describe yourself within the scope of the project?

Entrepreneurial journalist.

What are the new practices, competencies and abilities that you need to acquire and/or have acquired while establishing the news site and continuing your profession in this space?

As a publisher, I take care of everything from advertising to the technical infrastructure of the site, and I learn to improve my skills over time.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use existing technologies, especially social networks, because traffic to the site flows through these channels.

What is the importance of the news site you have established in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

Unlike the mainstream, we have no capital concerns. There is no political pressure on us. We have no advertising concerns, we have no interest concerns. We do not do business with the government. Therefore, we do not have concerns about tenders. Diken is independent and only interested in journalism. This is an opportunity for journalists who really want to do journalism. This is an opportunity for journalists if the aim is journalism, informing the public, and pursuing the public interest.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief, news manager, editors, intern.

How many people work on the news site?

Eight people.

Number of people employed: Five people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers, servers, office programs, adobe programs, the infrastructure of the WordPress site and our modem. Our memberships to Reuters and DHA agencies.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

9 hours a day for 5 days. 09:00 am/06:00 pm.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

No (by my own choice, I do not get paid here, I am the employer, I pay the salaries).

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Not answered.

Is your insurance paid?

Not answered.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

I am interested in the management of advertisements and the infrastructure of the site.

Can you tell us about a working day?

Not answered.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising, Google ads.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

We receive advertisements from brands and companies that we normally cannot reach through Google. However, we get paid much less than our normal tariff, so we are advertised very cheaply. We earn little income. We're trying to get built-in ads, but in today's regime these are a bit difficult. They do not want their advertisements to appear in an independent media like ours, as companies usually have a connection with the government and do business together.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

I'm thinking of publishing a weekly print publication. In the future, I plan to switch to a donation campaign and then a subscription model.

Can you define your target audience?

Anyone who wants to know the facts.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

200 thousand per day.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Facebook, Twitter, Google, Ekşi Sözlük, the site itself.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

Sharing the most clicked news on social media again with different comments.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

Editor friends respond to e-mails and phone calls. Some are thanks, some are news reports, some are swearing and threats, and some are criticism.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

To uphold universal journalistic values.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

We are members of Reuters and DHA. Other media, social media, reader notices.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

It's the same, no difference.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We use it as long as it can be verified.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

When the news is written, the editor friends are arguing with the editor-in-chief. If everyone says yes, it is broadcast. If even one person says no, it is not broadcast. As a publisher, I don't have much influence. If there is a critical decision, if the news to be published is obviously news that may require the closure of Diken at the end, we discuss the pros and cons and decide together accordingly. Until now, we have not said that we should not do any news.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?

How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

We established Diken to be able to apply universal journalistic values. We stand behind our founding principle all the way.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes, 100% independent and autonomous.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

Does not produce news.

Interviewee 7

Journalist, Medyascope.tv

29.03.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Five years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

Yes (No official press card. The journalist has a card issued by the Federation of Journalists. Independent journalists who are union members can recruit. He/she used to be a union member).

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Cumhuriyet, Yurt, Bianet, Sputnik, Kadıköy Gazetesi (Local newspaper).

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

The reason I left a few of them was money, I was making little. For example, there was a time when I did not receive any money from Yurt newspaper. It felt like a civil service in some places, so I left.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

I have been following Ruşen Çakır for a long time. Medyascope.tv project seemed like a project with a future to me. It was newly set up gave a sense of place where I could do whatever I wanted. The use of Periscope as a live broadcast tool impressed me. Journalism is heading in that direction. For example, when I was working at Sputnik or Cumhuriyet, I did not have such an opportunity, I could not say I would go live. This captivated me. Medyascope.tv is a new place, I can add a

lot of myself. You can learn more from each other. Working in digital adds a lot of value to a journalist, I shoot and edit my own video news. Facebook, Twitter, Periscope or other social media tools were in my life, but now I use them to produce and distribute news. As a journalist, I find the opportunity to interact with the audience. There is no such thing in traditional media, you write the news, and the job is finished. Here, for example, I can get instant reaction from the audience during a live broadcast.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

Editing and working in Photoshop program. Since I was there from the beginning of the project, there was no one to edit, I learned and developed editing. Or broadcasting. I learned how to make a live broadcast. How to write KJ. I learned these kinds of things. And we learned by trial and error. At the beginning we were doing all of these with an iPad. Then we changed it, bought a system, and connected the cameras to that basic system. Thanks to this, I learned a lot about broadcasting, producing programs and also technical issues.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

Making news in every way, everywhere with a smartphone. I learned that a smartphone is enough to broadcast. There is a mobile orientation as a general trend, and it is now used in journalism. Going to a news with a camera has now become an absurd situation. We use the live broadcast features of Periscope, YouTube and Facebook. Our focus is on Perscope because we started broadcasting with it. In fact, Facebook's or YouTube's video quality is better than Periscope's.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

We take great care to produce original content. This is our first rule. We have absolutely no inclination to publish news that has been published elsewhere. The way we use new technologies and our search for original content inevitably makes us more creative. This is a convenience, but I also pay attention to this, it also erodes journalism. For example, speed replaces accuracy. Right now, it is perceived as more important for journalism to be fast than to be accurate. We are particularly opposed to this. Mediascope.tv also makes the news independent of the venue.

How is the news site organized?

It has a collective nature. There are the editor-in-chief, assistants and editors. But all work is done collectively.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Visual section (photos, editing, spotlights and editing), content creators are responsible for entering the content on the site every day. The designer of the site (Nurdan is a partner). Director, program producers, translators, editors, reporters.

How many people work on the news site?

30

Number of people employed: 23.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Not answered.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Between 11:00 am and 05:00pm, 5 days a week.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

No (working in extra job).

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

I am an editor and reporter. I do live broadcasts and I enter content on the site.

Can you tell us about a working day?

We have a meeting every day at 11:00 in the morning. This is the news conference in all traditional newspapers. We're talking about what to do today. A few issues are brought up and whoever is interested in that subject starts to work, for example, I am interested in domestic politics and we are also interested in culture and art. If the idea of a cinema news is brought up, the journalist who is interested in

cinema is assigned to produce this news or program. We call the person who is going to be a guest, they talk on the phone and it goes on the air at 04:00 pm in the evening. I say that I am doing the following program at 05:00 pm with the CHP deputy. There are also fixed programs There is a culture and art program of Sevim Gözay on Wednesday at 03:00 pm. There is a city program on Monday at 04:00 pm. We fill the whole day. Around 06:00 pm, our broadcasts are over. Every evening at 07:00 pm there is a fixed main news program. The main news is a presentation that brings together the news that we focus on during the day. The summary of the day.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not profit oriented (since we receive funds, it is forbidden to be profit-oriented, we only show the return of the funds we receive with invoices).

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Funds and donations.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

We have a small income each month from Patreon. Ruşen Çakırın has a separate account there. We do not receive advertisements, but *Boyner* store, for example, gave gift certificates worth 500 TL to all employees. IKSİV advertised for a while, *Can Yayınları* sent gifts. It wasn't exactly an advertisement. It's like a donation.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Receiving funds is not a correct income model. The most must have subscription. We need to establish a direct connection with the audience. As long as we can't do this, when the funding company or organization says I'm not funding anymore, we have to close. We don't have many donors on Patreon. Everyone says Medyascope.tv is very good, but there is a gap between those who like it and those who give money. The audience in Turkey also does not prefer to donate. They refrain from giving even very small amounts.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

There is no plan as a project. We're trying Patreon. We try also the funds. But will it evolve towards subscription? It has to evolve. The Guardian and The New York Times are good examples. These are very serious examples. We now have to

create journalism independently, without the need for advertisers or funders. We do it or someone else does it, but I think someone in Turkey will do it. We may be closed after two years due to insufficient financial resources. Another news site opens. That always happens. Once upon a time there was Zete and it was closed. Advertising is the area where political pressure is felt the most. Currently, no company wants their ad to appear on Medyascope.tv.

Can you define your target audience?

Journalists, especially those who left the mainstream when they were at the top of the profession, set out to pretend to be journalism in the mainstream when starting this job. Therefore, we want JDP and CHP members to follow us. But I inevitably attract the attention of different, more marginal audiences, so we settle in an alternative position. Actually, this is a bad thing, because this is not journalism. Our name has to be associated with others.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

Not answered.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Not answered.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

Not answered.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

Not answered.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

We take care to make the news we want.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

While we are making a program, we reach the person by phone using our personal contacts as we talk to him/her. Twitter is the media we use the most when making news. We work with Doğan news agency (we have a video account, we can use their videos) and we work with Reuters.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Social media.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We use it on Twitter, for example, journalist Elif Ilgaz shoots a video from the republic case. We see it on Twitter and download it. We do not say that we should take and report an event that has been on the agenda on Twitter, unless it is of great importance. For example, if it's not an explosion. When we use it, we send a message to the owner of the video and we usually publish that person.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

Ruşen Çakır is in the center. Decisions are usually made at news conferences. He has offers. Except for the example, if I entered the meeting with an offer, it is generally accepted. As long as it doesn't happen again. The same news made by the Cumhuriyet newspaper on Saturday cannot be featured on Medyascope TV.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, political pressures. Political pressure affects us too. We practice self-censorship. There are times when I say not to write this.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

It's very effective, journalistic values are eroded and it's worse in digital media, from the headline to the use of photos. We have never chosen an intriguing title. We opposed it. Ruşen Çakır sometimes exaggerates this and writes three lines of titles. Basically, the principles of journalism are effective especially for us.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes. Personally, I can do whatever I want. I have worked for many newspapers and news sites. Here you go to Ruşen Çakır's room, he tells you something, you say something to him. I can say that because there is no hierarchical structure.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

I have an idea and I have read or written something about that idea. I think about what I wrote to raise questions. I'm looking for people who can answer the questions. I contact him and that's how I do my broadcasts. It's the same when writing news. We write file news and I meet with the addressee of the subject. However, our news is more in the form of analysis.

Interviewee 8
Journalist, Medyascope.tv
30.03.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Eight years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Kanal D, Medyascope tv.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

The project I was working on is finished.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?
What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

I wanted to do journalism. My main job is documentary filmmaking. I was meeting with Ruşen Çakır. When such a project came to the agenda, I started working. I like journalism. Other than that, it can't be said to be very attractive.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I got it. Before that, I worked on documentary and book projects. I've never worked in the newsroom. I learned to write news. Headlining, interviewing, but live.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use live broadcasting tools from Facebook, YouTube. We use Periscope. We use Skype. We use cell phones. At first, we had a very primitive directorial system, and we used all that we counted.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

Medyascope.tv is one of the organizations engaged in journalism on the internet in Turkey. However, it is one of the first news sites that makes its news in the form of live broadcast and video news. It is also one of the first places to use

Periscope for news. In this sense, Mediascope.tv has a leading role. Contribution to the profession, you are not affiliated with the agency as before. At first, we searched periscope and if the image there was appropriate, if there was no violence, we took the footage and used it a lot. During the events in Paris, when there were explosions and attacks in Turkey.

How is the news site organized?

Collective. Editor-in-chief, assistants, news director, editors, reporters.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

The main news team, director, fiction, foreign, news, domestic politics departments are different, but everyone can do anything in line with their knowledge.

How many people work on the news site?

30 people.

Number of people employed: 30 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Not answered.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

I start work at 09:30 am I leave at 04:30 pm I work 5 days a week. We have flexible working hours.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Fixed.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

No.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

I make news, I enter content on the site, I do proofreading.

Can you tell us about a working day?

Not answered.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not for profit.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising, funds and donations.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes. We have modest advertising revenue. We receive support from some funds on our site. We also collect donations from Patreon. So far, we have not had any problems with late payments or downsizing.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

We are free. However, funds have problems. An organization can give good support and good money one day, and one day it can go out of business. And we might be in trouble. The donation we collect from Patreon, but in the sense of membership. It needs to be increased to make it more sustainable. I wish there was membership or subscription, but there is no place in Turkey that can achieve this right now. However, the ideal is to receive advertisements and switch to the membership system.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

We want to switch to a model like membership and advertising. But our main purpose is to get advertisements. Currently, there are very small numbers on the site, these are some advertisements brought by individual relations, we do not have commercial advertisements.

Can you define your target audience?

People from big cities, over 30, urban and educated people who use the Internet. Until a year or two ago, there were many Kurds, and those who clicked on us from Diyarbakır and Şırnak were in the majority. Apart from Kurdish, we also broadcast in English and French. Turks living abroad are from America and England. An urban middle-aged and educated segment. This mass formed spontaneously.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

18 thousand per day.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Twitter.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

There is no motivation for this place to be clicked a lot, read a lot, and watched a lot. If they read our headlines, they would understand the news. Of course, we can increase interest with different titles and photos, but we have not made such an attempt at the moment.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We open the comment sections in the channels we broadcast. People can contact us from Youtube periscope. Of course, there are those who swear and try to troll. For them, a person took the task of blocking during the broadcast. We do some programs in the form of questions and answers. It depends a little bit on the initiative of the program creator. It progresses in the form of audience conversations on popular people or current topics. All incoming questions are answered. This interaction also increases the following. But we can't do it in every program. While discussing the situation of the dollar and the stock market in the economic program, it always proceeds in the form of questions and answers.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

We do journalism. In international standard. We are trying to do journalism that respects human rights and does not discriminate, that conforms to the definition of the mainstream media as much as possible.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Social media and news agencies. Our own contacts. We hold conversations by finding experts on the subject.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Social media.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

At first, we downloaded footage from periscope. Dependence on agencies disappeared. We started to report in a broader framework.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

There is a meeting in the morning and news suggestions are given. Editor-in-Chief's comments. He usually gives the final consent himself, but still sets him free. There is no one person above all journalists, only the editor-in-chief.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, political pressures, target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?
How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

There are political pressures. We practice self-censorship to be sustainable. We do not have a strategic approach towards the target audience, however, we care about their preferences while making news. But the core journalistic values are important. Because our revenue model is funds and donations, it does not affect commercial concern. For now, if you don't stand close to the government side by side with commercial concern and political pressure, advertisers are withdrawing.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

In part, there is self-censorship. The freedom of Kanal D and Medyascope TV, where I worked before, cannot be compared, this is a much freer but not a very satisfying freedom, I guess it is one of the three or five freest news media that can be possible under the conditions of Turkey. Since we are trying to be mainstream, we try to include all segments. We still practice self-censorship. Ruşen Çakır says let's not go into that subject too much, we follow him. Most of this is due to political pressure. It is normal for broadcasting organizations to have an ideological point of view. We are not very big, our audience is certain, so they can ignore us. For example, on the night of July 15, it was blocked for a very short time as a result of mistake. There are no investigations or restrictions about us. There are no lawsuits filed for the words spoken by the people participating in our broadcast. We say we will, but we are also careful. Ruşen Çakır says, if we want, we can make our last broadcast today. But let's not do this, let's say our word as much as possible, but let's say it carefully. Let's be sustainable.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

Not answered.

Interviewee 9
Journalist, Medyascope.tv
30.03.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Nine months.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Hayal Akademisi, Muse Network.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

I left because the internship period was over.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?

What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

My university professor directed me, I wanted to work on a news site. I have been working for 9 months. In the new media environment, I can reach and interact with more people than in the traditional.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I learned computer programs. I can use programs like Final Cut and Adobe.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use live broadcast tools of social media. And, of course, Twitter for news tracking and broadcasting.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

We make the news that the mainstream does not. Therefore, I can reach people that the mainstream cannot reach.

How is the news site organized?

Collective. Editor-in-chief, assistants, news director, editors and reporters, editors, directors, content entries alternate. The main newsletters have different teams.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editing/Content/Director/Main news team.

How many people work on the news site?

30 people.

Number of people employed: 22 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Not answered.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Three days a week from 11:00 am to 06:00 pm.

Do you work full time or part time?

Part time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Hayır.

Is your insurance paid?

Hayır.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

News production and transcription.

Can you tell us about a working day?

The meeting starts at 11:00 am in the morning. The news is distributed. We make the news that comes to us somehow. I mostly do sports news. I usually spend a day doing interviews and writing news.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Funds.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Not known.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Not known.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

Not known.

Can you define your target audience?

Not answered.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

Not known.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Not known.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

Not known.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

Not known.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Not known.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Social media, news agencies Doğan News Agency and Reuters. Then I reach the addressee of the subject. I take his opinion in the program. They are usually my teachers. I don't buy from the mainstream. I also use Twitter.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Social media.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

I do not use user-generated content.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

Not answered.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?

How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

I make sports news and choose the topics that I think the target audience will like.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes. In Medyascope.tv, generally everyone can define themselves in this way. I can report anything I want. As long as it's not overdone. Sometimes I practice self-censorship. When the agenda is tough.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

I usually choose news in digital media. Like Twitter trends, I reach people from there.

Interviewee 10

Journalist, Medyascope.tv

30.03.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Two years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Cumhuriyet Newspaper and Medyascope tv.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

I left when my internship at Cumhuriyet newspaper was completed.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?

What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

Traditional media is not free enough right now. I preferred to work primarily in an independent media organization. I think that the internet and internet journalism/media is a destination in the digital age. I think this area is more open to creative production when compared to traditional media. Medyascope.tv is first and foremost independent and bossless. The motto of Medyascope.tv is because it's free.

Here, being independent and free in terms of editorial means being independent and free from the advertiser. I think these are the reasons that increase the desire to do journalism.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I learned how to edit, I take part in the directing and I started the main news broadcast here.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use live stream, a tool that allows us to broadcast live on the internet, not a big budget mixer. Apart from this, social media tools (such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Periscope), we have established a studio here and we have a technical infrastructure where we can go live from this studio whenever we want. This is not something that is done with huge costs like in mainstream television, but it is proof that television journalism can be done with a small budget.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

One of the earliest examples of television journalism on the Internet. Of course, there are Youtube channels, but it is a first in the field of journalism. This place welcomes anyone who has something to do in the field of journalism. If you're a journalist and a recent graduate today, it's almost impossible to find a job in the mainstream. It is important that the collective production here and the inclusion of new graduates in this production regardless of the experienced difference. The effect on the language of the news is as follows, there are basic principles to stay away from a pluralist, racist, sexist and discriminating language. We are trying to do cold-blooded journalism that affects the content. When we think about the difficulties of doing journalism independent of the government in Turkey, there are subjects to be approached provocatively, and there are subjects that can create speculation, but we maintain our cool blood even in such matters. Ruşen Çakır calls this sustainable courage. We can be very brave in one place, but we can also be in a position to never report again.

How is the news site organized?

Collective, Editor-in-Chief, assistants, news director, editors, reporters.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

There are no definite units, there is a distribution of tasks according to everyone's area of interest. English, Kurdish and Turkish main news bulletins have separate teams. However, we do not only deal with the main news bulletin in English and Kurdish, we also do everything. There are those who enter content on the site, those who make fiction, and those who share social media.

How many people work on the news site?

25-30 people. The number of men and women is equal.

Number of people employed: 25-30 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Live stream, cameras, and social media tools.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Works 9 hours a day, 5 days a week, from 11:00 am to 08:00 pm. Presents the main news program every day.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes, fixed.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

No.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Main News anchor.

Can you tell us about a working day?

We have an agenda meeting at 11:00 am in the morning. We all gather around the table, discussing the important topics of the day, the guests to whom I will invite. Sometimes friends find specific news and suggest them. In general, Ruşen Çakır makes the decision about which news will be featured. Then we share the news. I dedicate an hour or two to it. Then I'm going to dinner. After returning, I read the

columnists I follow (about 10 articles), then I put on make-up and change. The glass announcers we will read in the main news come and Burak and I go to the room and go over them. Then we talk about the questions we will ask if we are going to receive guests. Then the main news broadcast begins. It takes 40-50 minutes. I'm leaving when the broadcast is over.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Funds and donations.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Not known.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Not known.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

Not known.

Can you define your target audience?

Since the concept of the mainstream has been emptied in Turkey, we make broadcasts that everyone can watch. For example, people who support the government also follow us. We are trying to reach people from all income levels and from all backgrounds. This is our target audience, but those who follow us are middle and upper class educated undergraduates and graduates.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

Not known.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Not known.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

Not known.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

Not answered.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

We are trying to create a common language and a common culture. The thing that makes this place good is that we do business without getting stuck with those patterns and concepts.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Social media, especially Twitter, on these platforms there are a lot of information that I come across and I publish them, the news agency born out of it, and Reuters.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Social media. Compared to the mainstream, people with very different networks work here. We produce quality news that you will not see in the mainstream, thanks to the experience and personal connections of our friends. The other day, a friend met someone in Tarlabası, who took his cats and dogs with him while fleeing from Syria, recorded images from there and reported the situation. This was information that our friend got from his own network.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We use not digital data, but videos or tweet images shared on twitter or periscope. We take a screenshot of the tweet and use it. I don't think that this type of content affects journalistic values either. It already passes through a journalist's filter while preparing for the broadcast.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

We usually talk to Ruşen Çakır, if he says okay, we do it.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, political pressures, target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

Here, we try to pay attention to make news reporting sustainable (sustainable courage). Political pressure is also effective, but it does not get in the way of journalistic values. Journalism about the publications that the target audience likes according to their tendencies.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

I do not define it as autonomous, political pressures and the target audience are pressing. Although we do not have commercial concerns, I am partially independent because I want to continue my work. It is difficult for me to compromise under the conditions of Turkey. Yes, we also have to apply self-censorship.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

We do commentary-based analysis journalism. If we are making routine news, we record audio from the expert and bury it in the news. I don't produce written news, I usually make programs or videos. Recently, I made an article about Nevin Yıldırım's case. Nevin Yıldırım had written a letter. Her lawyers shared this letter on Twitter. No site had reported this letter. Actually, it was important Nevin Yıldırım sent that letter the day after the trial. I took a sentence from the content of Nevin Yıldırım's letter to the title. I got the opinions of Nevin Yıldırım's lawyer as a two-minute audio recording. I also buried it under the news. It got a lot of views and retweets. Nevin Yıldırım's lawyer took a handwritten photo of the letter and shared it on Twitter. No one had made this news. It was special news for me.

Interviewee 11

Journalist, Medyascope.tv

02.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Three years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Radikal newspaper and Medyascope.tv.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

My internship is over. However, it was not satisfactory. It was the closure period of *Radikal*, and I could not get efficiency from the department I was working in.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?
What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

I am studying television journalism. I want to do this job. I had a goal of working in a media organization. After entering university, I saw this changing media order. I realized that I didn't want to work in a big organization after I had an unsuccessful *Radikal* internship. Even the Doğan group's building in Bağcılar did not really like me. The size, crowded, hierarchical order, corporate structure did not work for me. In terms of journalism, I could not see myself as active there. I discovered this place thanks to one of my professors. I have been working for two years. This place gives responsibilities that cannot be given to someone my age. That's the most satisfying part. My friends' new program has started, I designed the opening video of their program. I probably wouldn't have been given such an opportunity if I had worked at *Radikal* or any other major media organization. The most appealing part is that I am given huge responsibilities. There is also some sense of professional satisfaction.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I learned to be cool. While I approach a news from the top, I try to be calm and analyze and think and learn the background before producing the news. This place has changed the way of thinking. I developed editing and design.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We broadcast on YouTube and Periscope.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

This place is evolving towards a place that trains journalists. Although Ruşen Çakır doesn't like such things here just looks like a school. Whoever comes here adds something to him/herself and adds something from him/herself to this place. I think that's the difference from the mainstream. And here is not vertical, but horizontal.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

There are main news units in English, Kurdish and Turkish, and the design part is also separate. Other works are carried out collectively.

How many people work on the news site?

30 people.

Number of people employed: 22 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Not answered.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

From 11:00 am to 06:00 pm, five days a week.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes fixed.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

No. I get support from my family. This situation is not related solely here, working conditions in the media are difficult. I can't do this job without family support.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editing, news production and design.

Can you tell us about a working day?

We have a news conference in the morning. Then I upload important parts of previous publications to the site. If I have a news idea in mind, I discuss it with my teammates. If I get positive feedback, I make the news. There is not a very clear distribution of tasks, if there is a design or if there is video editing, I do it. Every day is not the same. This is something I enjoy.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not for profit.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Funds.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Not known.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

It depends not only on us, but also on our followers. To what extent do they want Medyascope.tv to survive? The largest sustainable resource would be audience donations. If this was a fundable workplace, we would see clearly in front of us. In this case, it is necessary to look back every year. What are we doing, where are we. Considering the situation of the media in Turkey, journalists cannot make a future. For example, I don't know what will happen after three or four years. I don't know if I will stay in the media.

Can you define your target audience?

Ruşen Çakır always says we want to be mainstream. For this reason, we make news that can appeal to all segments.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

Not known.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Not known.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

Not known.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

There are discussions or bickering on Twitter (Twitter looks like an agora). Viewers give their opinions here. In fact, there is no healthy discussion environment. I expect them to ask me such a logical question that I can tell them why and for what purpose I am doing the news. Criticism is always negative. Usually, we are asked why this person said this, but we cannot go beyond.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Approaching the news with a calm mind. Do not react immediately.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

We use resources on the internet. We read the statements of the people related to the subject. We check it from several sources and report it that way. It is a little easier to make news as we have the chance to get information directly from individuals, not from agencies as in the past. We use Twitter, Doğan News Agency and Reuters.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Twitter.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

There are a couple of examples of user-generated content on the site. We used the images shared after the explosion at Atatürk airport, taken from periscope. Except for such events, we do not use user-based content much. I don't like citizen journalism either, although we often don't have a chance to verify, or we work for a long time.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

We focus on journalistic values. We do not succumb to political pressures and commercial concerns.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

I didn't do anything radical. I just went and came. I did routine work. I did not even participate in the news production process. Here I feel like a unit on my own. One-man band.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

We have a news conference at 11:00 am in the morning. We set the agenda there. We distribute tasks. Then, the agencies examine the social media and collect the necessary information. We send the written news to the editorial team. There is a team of five or six people who enter news on the site, they check the grammatical

errors and sentence structures of the news. After the text is edited, we upload the news to the site. We share it on social networks.

Interviewee 12

Journalist, Medyascope.tv

30.03.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

22 years.

Are you a union member?

Yes.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

Yes.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Radikal, CNN Türk, NTV, El Cezire Türk.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

I had a good job offer from another organization.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

I think that there is no good and quality journalism in the mainstream in Turkey. There is a limited framework and self-controlled journalism. I am here because I think I can continue my profession freely and do it properly. The attractive part is being able to do real journalism here. I've always worked in the mainstream before. I have never seen a place as free as this one.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I use the practices and competencies I gained in the places I worked before Medyascope.tv. In Al Jazeera Turk, a lot of emphasis was placed on digital media. We got training for him. I'm equipped there, I'm putting it into practice here. The difference here is that we can try. In particular, I can try to upload videos from social media and give the news directly to the time line. This gives me a chance to step outside the practices of traditional media.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use all social media. Pinpoint searches from Google. Verification methods specific to digital media. Confirmation of news. Speed. Immediate response is very important. One of the things we do is seeing the comments from Periscope broadcasts and measuring the reaction. How loud is the broadcast? To see the number of viewers clearly. This could not be measured in TV, it can be measured here. We can evaluate how accurate and objective the work is from the comments received. We use the interaction feature. We are getting feedback.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

There is no framework that limits us. Our only principle is journalism. There are topics that are untouchable in the mainstream, even the guests are limited. It can't come out, we don't have such borders. This place is open to anyone who respects human rights and does not practice racism or sexism. Journalism values, to which we are a party, come to the fore in the news content. Human rights, democracy, freedom, not being racist, not being sexist. Apart from these, all kinds of news have a chance to be published here. In this regard, this one gets hurt, that one gets annoyed, that one gets angry. We do not think that we will disturb these segments, we do our journalism by keeping the values of journalism in the foreground. We strive to be the voice of the oppressed and the voiceless.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

There is no classical organization. A place where everyone does everything. There are volunteer and professional employees. People who work all day, even if they are low paid. There are some specialties. Economy, sports, etc. Here is a just like a pool. Everyone is trying to fill the pool with water.

How many people work on the news site?

30 people.

Number of people employed: 22 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Not answered.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

From 11:00 am to 06:30 pm, five days a week.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes, fixed.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

No, I'm spending my own savings.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Broadcasting and editorial control. Control is content control, not banning here. Going over the written news, completing if there is any missing, and removing unnecessary parts if there are any.

Can you tell us about a working day?

We are having a meeting. After the meeting, the division of labour is done. I'm mostly editing a special edition. I mostly work on domestic politics and human rights issues related to Turkey's Kurdish issue. I'm trying to make the voices heard in other media that have something to say about those issues heard. Domestic politics, alliances in domestic politics, developments within the party, what are the preparations of the parties for a possible early election towards 2019.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not for profit.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Funds and donations.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes, but sometimes there are periods when it cannot generate income. It survives with funds. There may be times when they are not stable.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

As a hindrance, companies or individuals are hesitant to help us. There are those who want their names to be heard, but there are those who don't. They also hesitate to advertise. We are different from the mainstream, we are the voice of the voiceless. This worries the advertiser. However we're an opportunity for free journalism.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

This is a question beyond me.

Can you define your target audience?

Anyone who needs news. We realize that the educated segment, who needs access to information, is watching us. It arose by itself. Our audience is mostly middle-class and middle-upper class people who are worried about the future of Turkey and want to be fed from different news sources.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

Not known.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Twitter.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

Not known.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

Not answered.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Truth and facts.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

We benefit a lot from Twitter, news agencies (Doğan-Reuters), other media and international media. We can enter news that are in the international media but are not covered in Turkey due to some concerns. We are in contact with experts on the subject.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Social media is our biggest source of technology. Our followers also send us information from where they are. For example, we used the tweets of someone who

recently covered the street protests of the Catalans in Barcelona and shared it on Twitter as a news source.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

Very rare right now. Because it is a field open to manipulations. But on the other hand, it provides diversity. It allows us to learn about the mood of people. It further democratizes broadcasting. This type of content feeds us and causes us to be renewed. We can convey an event from every aspect.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

We make a decision in consultation with the editor-in-chief.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

We don't care too much about the target audience. We don't have to worry about making anyone like us. Sometimes political pressures come into play. But there is no commercial concern because we are not making a profit.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes. Otherwise I wouldn't be working here.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

I do exclusive programs. I host those who have something to say to my program. At a time when Turkey is preparing for the 2019 elections, there are non-governmental organizations working on election security. I contact those non-governmental organizations and ask the question of what citizens should do for a safe election. I am learning from a doctor working in Batman the reactions to what is happening in the west of Turkey. I ask questions such as whether they feel themselves to be other. Therefore, I am interested in domestic politics and the state of mind of the people of Turkey. I benefit from researches and opinion polls. My performance here is to keep the pulse of domestic politics.

Interviewee 13
Journalist, Medyascope.tv
30.03.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

1.5 months (First experience).

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Not worked before.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Not worked before.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?

What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

I was unemployed, a conservatory graduate, bored of sitting at home. I was following Medyascope.tv and came to meet with Ruşen Çakır. I said I don't know what I can do but I want to work with you. He said come and start.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

Not answered.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

I use social networks, I review news on other news sites.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

Journalism has shifted towards digital. Whether mobile or desk top, people spend a lot of time on the Internet. Here is both a TV channel and broadcasting on the internet, this is a first.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Not answered.

How many people work on the news site?

30 people.

Number of people employed: 22 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

We use live stream, we have computers, cameras, microphones.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

11:00 am/05:00 pm (varies depending on the ending time of the news I wrote or the program I made during the day). Officially, I work 5 days a week, but sometimes on weekends.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

No.

Is your insurance paid?

No.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

I make news, make programs, upload content on the site.

Can you tell us about a working day?

The work begins before I come here, I get up in the morning or identify the news that can be made at night. Ideas are presented at the 11:00 am news conference. If Ruşen Çakır approves, I usually make these news by reaching the people mentioned in the news. I shoot the video by recording a voice over the phone, via Skype or in person. My first broadcast was about agriculture. Recently, I prepared a news about Çiftlik Bank and similar formations. I am a military school graduate, I made a broadcast with Ali Türkşen, who is on the executive committee of the good party. I am on a wide spectrum about the armed camps in Konya.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not for profit

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Funds.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Not answered.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

Not answered.

Can you define your target audience?

Not answered.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

Not answered.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Not answered.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

Not answered.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

Not answered.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Accuracy.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

I research the details of the topics that interest me through social media platforms. News agencies.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Social media.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We use it, but at critical moments.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

Ruşen Çakır makes the final decision at the news meetings. But we are discussing together.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?

How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

It totally shapes the news.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

After the meeting, the news is distributed. If a news came to me that day, I first research the details of the news and highlight the parts that I deem necessary. I'm shooting the video. I'm editing and publishing.

Interviewee 14

Founder, Medyascope.tv

02.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

30 years.

Are you a union member?

Yes.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

Yes.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Not answered.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

I'm fired.

Why did you set up a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of producing a digital project?

Not answered.

Can you tell us the story of the establishment of the news site?

Not answered.

How would you describe yourself within the scope of the project?

Journalist or a journalist with a digital journalism projects.

What are the new practices, competencies and abilities that you need to acquire and/or have acquired while establishing the news site and continuing your profession in this space?

We combined traditional journalism with digital. We learned this by trial and error method. We started broadcasting live on the internet. We used Periscope. I learned how to broadcast live by connecting to the live stream from Periscope with a professional camera. Previously, we were broadcasting by using an iPad.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use live broadcast tools of social media. Periscope, YouTube, Facebook. We use Twitter to distribute our broadcasts. Already, the audience reaches us via Twitter. There are not many people who go to the site and click the video or click the articles.

What is the importance of the news site you have established in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

Currently, there is no such thing as a mainstream in Turkey. We are now the mainstream. Our most important difference is that we combine new technologies with traditional journalism. The fact that we do video-based journalism. These are the technical sides. In terms of content, we are independent. We are free and impartial. We are trying to avoid the polarization in Turkey. We try not to be in a pole. Sustainable freedom and sustainable courage are very important. People in Turkey often confuse journalism with activism. In fact, there is such a trend in the world. Activist journalism is something that can happen with the power of slogans and it has to have a political counterpart. We want to do journalism and we are doing it, so it is necessary to be realistic in order to be able to do free journalism in Turkey. What I mean by being realistic is to make our journalism sustainable. It is important not to make one-shot broadcasts or coverage, but to keep it up. The most important reason why we have been able to continue our journalism on Mediascope.tv for 1.5 years is that we do journalism with cool blood.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

No sharp units. Editor-in-chief, assistants, news director, editors, reporters, director. The main news team in Turkish and Kurdish.

How many people work on the news site?

30 people.

Number of people employed: 22

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Live Stream, cameras, computers, microphones, audio recorders, social media tools, internet.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

From 11:00 am to 06:00 pm, five days a week.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

No.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Is your insurance paid?

No (retired).

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor-in-Chief. I have programs.

Can you tell us about a working day?

There is a news meeting at 11:00 am in the morning. We offer news proposal and discuss. We share the topics we have chosen among us. We write the text, invite guests and shoot the video. Being fast is paramount.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not for profit.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Funds and donations.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

There is enough money to run this place. We are not making a profit.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

We have no obstacles, we do not enter into an obligation relationship with anyone. Our funders expect us to continue our business. Apart from that, there is no reason why you did this, why did you publish it. There is one thing, as seen in Russia, etc., there may be situations where politicians prevent these funds from being given. We don't know at the moment what we will do if it disappears. But there is no pressure on us as we receive funds. The important thing is to receive these funds continuously. It usually takes one year. We have been doing this job for 2.5 years. In order for us to renew it, those people need to be satisfied with the work we do. Patreon isn't all that extraordinary, but after the sale of the last Doğan group, there has been an upward momentum. The money coming from there is not empty when compared to the expenses we make here, but it is not extraordinary. People are also afraid to donate there. It seemed like the last time it was over \$3000, but for some reason it's currently showing \$2900. Our donors have been donating regularly.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

Our plans are linked to the future of his country. If the extraordinary situation continues, it is not possible for us to generate income. We have to walk with funds. If Turkey normalizes, we will proceed through sponsorship and advertising like a normal business. We cannot plan then. We will move on to the advertising model in the future.

Can you define your target audience?

Anyone who needs news.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

Not answered.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Not answered.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

Not answered.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

Not answered.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Accurate, impartial, free principled journalism.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Not answered.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Social media tools and digital live broadcast tools, periscope, YouTube, Facebook to distribute content Twitter.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

Not answered.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

Not answered.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

The journalist is the news itself. We don't just write news and publish it on the site. We also broadcast live. When we broadcast, we try not to reduce the quality of the broadcast, the quality of the broadcasters and the quality of the guests below a certain level. Our goal is not to compromise on quality for the sake of being clicked. We are trying to do this.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

We are completely independent and completely free. Being completely free does not mean that we can do whatever we want under the conditions of Turkey. We practice some self-censorship. Although we cannot do everything we believe, we do not report anything we do not believe in. We are not concerned with making anyone happy. But that doesn't mean we can do whatever we believe. I think it is possible at this stage to draw the boundaries of free journalism in Turkey like this.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

I regularly broadcast live. I have programs. Sometimes I prepare exclusive news files.

Interviewee 15
Journalist, Medyascope.tv
02.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

One year.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Euronews.com, Sputniknews.com, Medyascope.tv.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

I was fired.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?

What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

To produce content in an area that I am interested in. I'm already interested in politics, especially in the world and Turkey's agenda.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I learned to edit. I'm learning to go live and stay calm. I learned the language of news writing better. I learned framing.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

Live stream, periscope, YouTube, Facebook, live broadcasting tools and Twitter. Twitter changed a lot about receiving and giving instant news.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

I can approach it in terms of freedom and independence. Many organizations in Turkey do not work or cannot work with the understanding here. It is not a pro-government channel. It is important on its own right now, all newspapers, TVs, internet media are also proponents. In the opposition media, those who do not defend the current power (thorn, T24, wall, traditionally the spokesperson) do not have such

a wide range of publications as ours. Both written and video and live broadcast. They produce their own news, they have their own reporters. It has original content. I also believe that it will transform, but we are in a situation where we cannot be very effective.

How is the news site organized?

Collective and horizontal. We have the freedom to take the initiative, nothing imposed from above. We produce and exchange ideas together. There is no specialization.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief, assistants, news director, editor, reporter director, editing, main news teams. Not sharply separated units. The sharpest is the mixing desk. Translators, content creators. Non-journalists are academics.

How many people work on the news site?

30 people.

Number of people employed: 22 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Live stream, cameras, computers, microphone voice recorders, internet connection. There are social media tools. Final Cut, Premier programs for editing.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Three days a week from 11:00 am to 04:00 pm.

Do you work full time or part time?

Part time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

No (the previous job was staffed, and it wasn't enough either).

Is your insurance paid?

No.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Translation, editing, content writing, sometimes live streaming. I write news and do interviews. Sometimes I voice the news.

Can you tell us about a working day?

The meeting takes place at 11:00, I do what is said, what is suggested to me, or if I suggest them. When it's finished, if there's something I want to do about myself, I research it.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not for profit.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Funds and donations.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

We are not dependent on anyone, we can do whatever we want. Funders or donors don't limit us. Our way is not clear as an obstacle. I know that the ad is not being received for the time being.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

I don't know.

Can you define your target audience?

Turkish opposition.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

Not answered.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

By clicking on YouTube, Twitter, Periscope, Facebook and the site itself.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

Attract attention by producing infographics. Making short news videos.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

I respond to comments.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

To include issues that are not discussed in the mainstream in Turkey, on the agenda.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Twitter, news agencies (Doğan and Reuters) personal connections.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Social media.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

Sometimes images are downloaded from periscope in important events such as an attack. Apart from that, we reach the person who took the image and published it on the social network, learn the details of the news and report it. No matter how anonymous the image is, it may cause copyright problems. It also lowers the quality. Professional perspective is important to us.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

We make a collective decision, the editor-in-chief has the last word. Act like an editor, there are a few friends, they are reading. In the form of correcting each other rather than hierarchy.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, political pressures, target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

I try not to do anything extreme, sometimes I practice self-censorship. Journalistic values, yes, but sometimes I can't publish something I want so much because it is off the record. I do not practice self-censorship so that censorship does not come from above, I can maintain my profession on Medyascope.tv, and Mediascope.tv continues to make the difference. We are a little on the edge, we are afraid of being shut down. Since the target audience is the middle-upper class educated, we do not make magazine news. There are funny things or topics that I want to be sarcastic about, but I don't report it. Just like Adnan Oktar's kitties. We do not see.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

I am not 100% independent and autonomous, I am not alone. I am 70% independent and autonomous. I partially practice self-censorship in order to be able to report again.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

After the meeting at 11:00 in the morning, the topics are distributed. I'm researching the subject. I reach the necessary people, I do my interview, I write the news, if it is visual, I prepare my video. If there is a translation, I do it. Editors check it, Ruşen Çakır is reading or watching, and finally I upload it to the site.

Interviewee 16

Journalist, Medyascope.tv

02.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Eight months.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Sedika.org and Bianet (internship).

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

My internship is over.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

I think it is more efficient and instructive than the mainstream. I think that I am doing free journalism in this field.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

Making live broadcasts and programs is something that I have experienced here, I am trying to improve myself in these areas. I also train myself in news editing and news follow-up.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

Social media and digital live broadcast tools.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

Freedom and independence. While we are broadcasting and writing the news, we are necessarily worried because the agenda of Turkey is mixed, but there is no pressure from the boss. Since there is no hierarchical system, you do not face pressure from the boss, naturally you are not censored. We have a chance to choose a news. The reporter chases the news. We find the news and are able to present its proposal. Suggestions are given on how to do it. We are making the news in line with those suggestions. It's an educational thing. There is no such structuring in the mainstream, even the way it is written is controlled from preferring the news. It doesn't go out of the mold. Since the political issues are not mentioned much, we see that magazine news is written. We don't do sexist news. Click journalism has absolutely no place when compared to the mainstream. We also draw attention to the title, but in no way do we use photos that commodify the sexist woman. We are ahead of the mainstream in terms of ethical values. We never do propaganda. We are free, trying not to be censored. We do not shout as dissidents, it is open to audiences and guests from all walks of life. The new program is always open to news suggestions. We are purely journalism oriented. We report on everything.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Main news team, director, editing team, editors (content contributors), reporters, Kurdish and English broadcast team.

How many people work on the news site?

30 people.

Number of people employed: 22 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Live Stream, computers, cameras, microphones, audio recorders, tripods, internet connection.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

From 11:00 am to 06:00 pm, five days a week.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

I will receive my first payment this month.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Is your insurance paid?

No.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

News tracking, news writing, programming.

Can you tell us about a working day?

The news meeting is held at 11:00 am. If a news comes across to me, I follow the news, if I am in the field, I collect the documents related to the news, return to the office and write the news, then we voice, edit and publish the video.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not for profit.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Funds and donations.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

I don't know.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

I don't know.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

Not answered.

Can you define your target audience?

We try to reach people from all walks of life as we try to be mainstream. But those who follow us are dissidents. Especially the audience who can't find anything on TV. Ruşen Çakır is a well-known journalist from all walks of life. There are Islamists, there are opposition groups, and there are leftists. The reason why the target

audience is diverse is Ruşen Çakır. It behaves like the mainstream Mediascope.tv should.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

Not answered.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Periscope, YouTube and Twitter.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We make the headline interesting without distorting the news. Writing subheadings and text legibly.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We receive comments from Twitter and Periscope, we try to answer almost all of them. The requests of the viewers also determine the shape of the news, which type of news they click on or we try to make such news if they are watched a lot. We continue our broadcasts interactively with users and viewers.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Objective. There are no sexist elements. There's no room for hate speech.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Twitter, news agencies Doğan and Reuters, personal contacts.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Live broadcast tools of social media, Periscope, YouTube, Facebook.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

It is used according to the content, especially in attacks, but it is not used without research. We think that it may affect the accuracy of the news. We pass it through our filter.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?

How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

Journalistic values are at the forefront, but we also consider the preferences of our followers. People want to receive political news and comments on political issues.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

Since I look at many things to see if they are newsworthy, I focus more on newsworthy topics that are close to me. After getting enough information about that field, I start to follow the news (taking notes, taking pictures) after researching it on the internet or making an appointment with the person I will interview. I get a video statement from the person in the news and add it to the written news. I write the news as the last, fix the spelling mistakes and make it final with my friends, I enter the site.

Interviewee 17

Founder, Oda TV

09.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Ten years.

Are you a union member?

Yes.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

Yes.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

CNN Türk Oradaydım, Bağımsız, Karşı Gazete.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

The broadcast has ended.

Why did you set up a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of producing a digital project?

I see journalism as a part of intellectual activity. Digital media has become almost the only free journalism platform at the moment. Since I had no choice but to work outside such a platform, I chose to take part in the establishment of Oda TV, a digital media platform. Currently, there is no problem in finding news in Turkey,

there is usually a problem in publishing the news. Because there are political legal obstacles in front of news broadcasting. Non-political pressure centres have obstacles. We try to create interaction on Oda TV by developing creativity as much as possible with a small team. If I'm going to choose a role other than news director, I would describe myself as a person who tries to increase creativity. I define myself as a worker.

Can you tell us the story of the establishment of the news site?

Oda TV project dates back to before 2007 when it was founded. Soner Yalçın, the owner of this place, was also involved in the establishment of Haber Türk (During the meeting, his phone rang because there was an attack on the ATO, Mr. Serkan is reporting news by phone). Haber Türk was first established as a news website. It is converted into television and sold. When Soner Yalçın was establishing Oda TV years later, he thought that if there would be a successful project like Haber Türk, it would have a website in the centre and turn it into a television in the future. When I met him, the project came to us as a project that could be developed. Our goal was to create Oda TV as an alternative project to the central media, as Ufuk Güldemir had done years ago.

How would you describe yourself within the scope of the project?

Journalist.

What are the new practices, competencies and abilities that you need to acquire and/or have acquired while establishing the news site and continuing your profession in this space?

Before I started journalism, I looked at many subjects subjectively. Journalism has given me an objective perspective. Of course, I also have a political view, but I write my news with the meticulousness of a scientist. Digital media triggers creativity. The difference from other media is the way you present the news. For example, society laughs a lot at a joke at that time. The other day, a citizen described the image of the waterfall behind him for minutes. Society has been telling this for days. If you can put a gesture in a video shared by a citizen on social media into the news, or if you can place an exclamation frequently used by the society in the news. With its digital media presentation, its visuals and sometimes its jokes, it differentiated itself from traditional media and opened new areas. Here, I had the chance to develop that side of me. I also visit and read the websites that housewives visit. What are they currently dealing with? I watch clips that young people watch. I

access platforms written by high school university students, such as Ekşi Sözlük. Both in order to find news and to learn and adopt their styles. In digital media, you are at your desk most of the time. You don't have a chance to go to coffee, wandering around these platforms gives you the opportunity to understand what people are talking about, laughing, and getting angry.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

The Internet itself is the basic technology we use. Other than that, phone apps are good for us. There is a prototype of Oda TV on iOS and Android, outside the site, what does this give us? For example, readers always return to us. We send a news to the mobile phone of the reader and we follow thousands of people at the same time. We follow the news site through Google Analytics. After sending a message, we wait for you to stand by it. You look at how the feedback will be, and tens of thousands of people are in the same news at once. We also use social media tools a lot. Especially Twitter and Facebook. We realized that a very important source of news traffic, in fact, some of the social media readers enter the site or the application while browsing on facebook and twitter. In order to increase this, we are trying to keep our facebook and twitter accounts strong, not just Oda TV. You can follow our facebook and twitter accounts as if you were following a news site, even I sometimes view Oda TV's news on Twitter. Unlike other sites, we share a news we enter on social media once. Then, at certain times of the day, the time to go to work in the morning, when the lunch break is given in the afternoon, the time of departure from work in the afternoon and the time before going to bed at night. We share the news once again during the processes when the reader reaches the peak and peaks. This allows a news to be shared 4-5 times a day via facebook and twitter. This gives us tremendous traffic. We see that as we share, thousands of readers come back to the same news. There are agencies that provide us with a live broadcast stream. On very important agendas such as DHA, there may be a May 1 rally or a very important group speech, such issues of the opposition or the government may be in a congress, we turn them into a live broadcast on room TV and use them. Or when there are live broadcasts from almost anywhere in the world on Youtube channels or other platforms, for example, we use it on Oda TV, such as the funeral of an important world leader. We don't use live streaming all the time. But we use news as an empowering element on certain agendas. I still believe that the habit of watching live broadcasts on the internet has

not developed enough in Turkey. That's why we couldn't catch an audience that said let's sit down and watch this live broadcast on Oda TV. But in an important news, it has positive contributions as a reinforcing element.

What is the importance of the news site you have established in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

We are doing an alternative business. We do not enter all the news. When I look at our counterpart websites, they enter news three times as much as we do. We enter an average of 80 news per day. We pay attention to the fact that even if it is an agency news, it is reflected by us and we are processing it as an alternative to the mainstream. For example, the president makes speeches that last for hours, you listen to them live on TVs, and internet sites transmit live data as text, and it is passed on in agencies. However, we highlight a detail where we see the potential to create a debate in the community. We focus on special news. We communicate with local media. There is a local journalist in Fethiye. There is a local journalist in Kocaeli, they are already doing journalism in local media networks, but somehow they cannot communicate with the national media and reflect the corruption news rallies in their own region and the discussions. While Oda TV keeps up with the latest news as much as possible, we try to bring the news in an alternative way, with its visual, title and content, to include special news as much as possible. Because private news is a very costly business, but society wants to read something different. For example, there has just been an attack on the ATO. I talked to the news sources there on the phone and found out who did the attack and what the situation was. To some extent, we are trying to take the event out of a routine agency activity. We are working with DHA agency and ANKA news agency.

How is the news site organized?

Hierarchical.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Owner of Oda TV, Editor-in-Chief, news director, editors (initially, visual design and news writers were separate, now we have combined them all). Me and the editor-in-chief are the ones who decide what goes in and what doesn't. There is a horizontal layout between the editors. Even our seating system is as horizontal as possible. We sit across from each other and talk to each other and do business. When this bond is broken, things get worse, not better. Now video montage programs have

become very simple. It can even be done over the phone. Anyone can make it and send it to me. But when the person who wrote the story does it, it does it much better. He knows the important parts where to get them. Apart from that, we have representations (Ankara) advertising department. We have a broadcast coordinator. We have a legal department, they are not here, they are in separate offices.

How many people work on the news site?

12 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers, internet connection, office programs, Photoshop, video montage programs, cameras used from time to time.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Six days and nine hours (Journalists don't have working hours. Sometimes we work at midnight, but mostly we limit it to 9 hours a day.)

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Yes.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

I'm the news director. I am interested in news content selection and management.

Can you tell us about a working day?

We have a division of labour, one of us always starts work at 06:00 in the morning. We leave after completing nine hours, one of us starts at 10:00 in the morning and we work until 19:00 in the evening. If I work at 06:00 in the morning, I start from home and before I come to the office, I examine all the newspapers, agencies, international publications, what is on the hot agenda, and work on it with

our editors. I'll come here after my other friend comes here at 10:00. Then we work together in the office. In this process, we follow the hot news with the editors. We reach the addressees of the subject by phone. If an important analysis is to be made, for example, the sale of Doğan media group, we write it ourselves. I spend a day managing the news and deciding which news will enter and how. There is also a division of labour between us and the editor-in-chief, which we do in turn: one of us focuses on routine news about Turkey, while one of us follows what we call extraordinary. We follow the foreign press and social media to determine a special news topic. We turn our attention to more private areas and follow the broadcasts of Agos Shalom or homosexuals. We make Oda TV and its news special by allocating time to events outside of the ordinary agenda. There is very good news out there. There is an article in Agos newspaper that analyzes the decrease in the income of the Armenian community. A very significant decrease in income was due to mixed marriages, and when mixed marriages increased, marriages in the patriarchate decreased, so incomes decreased. This is more about the sociological transformation of the country, rather than a matter of community per se. And we cannot see such news unless we follow the broadcasts outside the mainstream. For example, a military general staff who died on the same day for 33 years has now been declared a martyr. We made this news and we followed a lawyer's social media account and called him. If we do not follow social media well, we cannot find such special news. Here, me and our editor-in-chief are influential in the management part, and one of us must be here between 06:00 in the morning and 07:00 pm in the evening.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertisements. Google ads. We experienced detention and arrest and remained in prison for a long time. In such cases, advertisers in Turkey act cowardly. That's why social media has created alternative advertising sources. Let's say you teach ballet lessons like Google or other agencies. You want to advertise your ballet lesson to people who are interested in ballet. You advertise on the internet for a certain amount without even seeing Google's office. How much is your budget, 2000 lira, the more you advertise. After that, in a news about ballet on Google Oda TV, would you like to make your child take ballet lessons to the readers watching it? He places this ad at the bottom of his question. It shows 2000 times. Or showing it to 300 readers.

This is a model that brings together the interests of readers and advertisers on a news site. We are forced to buy advertisements directly from commercial businesses, but we derive our income from these as the advertisements are distributed according to the interests on the platforms. This is something we need to discuss in the surveillance society. It is a system that brings me together with those ads by coding my interests. At Oda TV, we earn money from such advertisements by working with intermediate platforms and being a site that is frequently clicked. This is our only revenue model.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Advertisements are received through intermediary agencies. Their advantages meet the interests of the reader directly. There are also obstacles. We receive complaints like the advertisement that appears to each reader is different. For example, a reader says I went to your site and there was an advertisement for an Islamic foundation. We tell him that we do not buy that ad directly. That foundation advertised to Google, the reader probably called that foundation during a research and when they open our page, they are faced with the advertisement. As a result, from time to time, the reader may encounter unwanted advertisements. But this financing model is accessible to us.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

I think traditionally and I believe in the power of good content. If you produce content that people are interested in, talking, and wondering, it will find its target no matter how you deliver it. Secondly, we are currently discussing live broadcasting in digital environment as far as possible phone applications. We are discussing how to bring journalism together in ways like this. We've put a lot of thought into changing our revenue model to subscription. Obviously, readers in Turkey are accustomed to receiving content without paying. If we didn't have a high readership and weren't getting too many clicks and income from Google ads, we would try, but it's not necessary right now.

Can you define your target audience?

Everyone. If we focus only on the elite, we cannot go beyond being a fanzine, so we bring these two segments together. Carrying news from an international relations book to a housewife. Our aim is to convey news from the life of a very educated person and a very ordinary person. For this reason, when I go to a village, Oda TV is read, and when I go to a university, I see students who also read Oda TV.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

500k daily. Over 2 million page views.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Twitter, Facebook and Google.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We pay attention to the fact that the news is strong and different. On the night of the sale of Doğan Media, there was excitement here, we were looking for the money that was the source of the sale and we found a loan from a public bank. The fact that the news is different, that you are the first to report the news, that it answers a question that comes to mind, that it is interesting and that it is published in many places by giving us the source increases the number of our readers. Catching the special is answering the questions that the society wonders, and the hospital fire is the causes of the fire. If it's murder, it's like the profile of the murderer. Second, using beautiful images. Good fun headlines, people don't want pessimism and monotony anymore, even breaking news has become monotonous, which is not wanted. There was an election in Hungary, if a nationalist candidate was elected, it's like giving the news with a joke of the state gardener, who is the equivalent in Turkey. To design a visual and title that will make the reader smile. To make you wonder. A person reads the newspaper after purchasing it, and reads the digital if he likes it. In order for them to choose us, we need to prepare the ground for them to make this choice.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We respond to emails. We do not engage in discussion on social media, we use it to inform.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Enlightened, left-wing, loyal to the founding philosophy of the Republic.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

In news sites, it is important that the news comes to the journalist as much as the journalist goes to the news. My first trial for writing news corresponds to before

the Oda TV case. The judge, the prosecutor, and the police met and had dinner together. It had photos. The photos were presented to the biggest newspapers of Turkey. The photos were not secret and were given to the judges. However, none of the newspapers published it. I received these, reported them, and was prosecuted. Making this news by taking the government in front of you found a response in the society, if we have such news, Oda TV will broadcast it. After a while, ordinary citizens who encounter such information think that they will send it to Oda TV. When this kind of news comes, we talk to the sender first. Then we talk to the people they complained about. We are trying to confirm the news. We'll post it when we're done. We have news sources created with our 10-year experience, chambers of commerce, non-governmental organizations in the centres of political parties. News agencies DHA and Anka, social media.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

It's not different, but we make better use of traditional resources. I read the e-mails sent to Oda TV every day. Because when you extract messages such as advertisements and announcements, 5% of them are information that can make news. Since we are a small boutique news site, we have the chance to contact the reader directly and report their suggestions.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

I just told you.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

We consult Soner Yalçın, the owner of Oda TV, on very important matters. If it's an issue that will take us all to jail. In the daily routine, first the editor-in-chief and then I decide. After this stage, the editors come into play. Their feedback is very important. For example, they say that they do not find the news convincing. They say they made a mistake. They express their doubts that the news source is not credible. For example, a lawyer in Turkey said that he was kidnapped and beaten. In the beginning, doubts about the person who gave the news reached us. We also remained distant. We were right.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values and target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?
How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

Journalism can be done with the things that the society is interested in. Even though I'm not interested in football, I have to write this article because the society is curious. Although I am not interested in the magazine, I should be interested in order to respond to the society. Commercial concerns are of little interest to us, the mechanism is as follows, if you read a lot in Google ads, you earn a lot.

As for political pressures, I believe that there is no freedom of the press in Turkey. I believe it is controversial all over the world. I go to the prosecutor's office to give a statement once a week and defend the news we have made there. Despite the oppression mechanism in Turkey, we continue to publish, if necessary, risking the sanctions that will be the result of this oppression. Even though I don't care most of the time, I can say that it determines me too. Because when we wake up one morning, our broadcast may be shut down by a decree having the force of law. We still are. Even though we have not had a lot of closure so far, we have been blocked from a lot of news. The current model is that we enter the news, the news source immediately goes to the court, the court decides to block the news for a few hours, they are sent to the access providers union and the broadcast is blocked without our knowledge, then they inform us to remove the news. If not removed, the entire site is in danger of being shut down. Another way of censorship has been found using the courts. That's why when I write a news, I write it by making an account so that they cannot prevent that news. I have to set up my language, visuals and choices accordingly. If necessary, I have to look at the news through the eyes of a judge. I do not mean self-censorship, but we give the news as softly as possible. It was written in the foreign press that, according to the news published in the British media, we are applying tactics such as. Because we care about being viable.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

I can identify it in the production process, it's controversial in the publishing process. There is no news that we have learned and not published. Since even very basic journalistic principles have become the subject of jurisdiction, I have to be very careful while publishing. When it is confirmed, we ask the addressee if necessary, or we can publish the news if he does not want to answer. You cannot say that we should not do the news if the prime minister says he will not respond while reporting a

corruption allegation of the prime minister. But it is such a thing that the court can block the news without the consent of the prime minister or saying that you did not include his opinion. While we are researching the news, we are independent and autonomous, but I cannot say that we are completely independent and autonomous when publishing it due to law, policy and political mechanisms.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

We usually work desk jobs. If there is an interview, we reach people either by phone or by e-mail. We examine the news of social media, agencies, and other media organizations.

Interviewee 18

Journalist, Oda TV

09.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Seven years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Yurt Gazetesi, Karşı Gazetesi, Leman Dergisi

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Disagreement with the employer.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

Digital media has gained importance in recent years compared to traditional media. Especially in the last 4/5 years, the hot news in the digital media, its rapid consumption and the presence of stale news in the traditional media are an indication that the future of journalism is digital. The reason why I work on a news site is to prepare for the future. You have 10 minutes for instant news in digital media. After 10 minutes, that stale news has no meaning anymore. Digital media is a place where reporting is killing. But since the future is in digital media, this is preparation for the future for me. I can present something that I have learned about its attractive aspects to the reader in a very warm way. I don't have to wait for the next day's newspaper to

be published or the main news on TV. I can develop very quick reflexes, I can do fast reporting, this is important.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

While examining news on social media, I learned practically to sift through which is right and which is wrong. I gained experience in benefiting from citizen journalists. Since I am more involved with new talents and technology, I continue to work on new programs and different devices. For example, for the first time in my life, I opened the Photoshop program here. It's my first time doing video editing here. This is the first time I have broadcast live online. Visual preparation, infographic preparation, I did all of these here. I also moved on to the design part. When these are missing in digital, the news is incomplete. I have to do these in order to convey the content as a whole (reporter, designer and editor distinctions have disappeared). No separate personnel is required for this. If I'm the one making the news, I'm doing it all from a to z. Inevitably, it causes me not to acquire different perspectives and to develop.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

Social media, Facebook and Twitter are important for news distribution. Periscope live broadcasts work for us, the first is free, and the second provides instant notification to people from the scene. We haven't been able to use Periscope widely yet. Actually, I don't find citizen journalism very healthy. The view of a reporter at the crime scene is different from that of an ordinary citizen. Healthy news comes from the reporter. People who do citizen journalism generally follow an action that is engaged somewhere, but their point of view is not very healthy or they are exaggerated. Sometimes what's spread isn't true and we don't have a chance to verify it.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

Oda TV does not have a boss, even if it symbolically exists. It does not have a funder. It is not affiliated with a foundation, so it is not possible for us not to see the news. We don't have any concerns like let's be afraid here, let's not touch here or something. We see the news, there is a situation in the mainstream of not seeing the

news at the moment. The news is coming, it is deliberately skipped. This is worse than self-censorship, and now the urge to report is being killed. We do not expect money from an independent place, no one supports us, if we make the news, Google ads will come and we will earn money. This is the main motivation for us, which supports journalism. In the mainstream, very different equations come into play, the personal interests of the boss, his business situation, his relationship with the government, his relationship with other political parties, his relationship with the advertiser, and sectoral links. If a media boss is in the energy sector, there cannot be much news against the energy sector. There is a beauty brought by independence in Oda TV. We have no connection to anywhere, in professional terms, we can nail anywhere. It does not affect the profession, there are not many personnel in Oda TV, so we have to have good and bad knowledge in almost every field. Every friend here is also a forensic reporter. Good or bad, most friends follow foreign news closely. Journalists working here can become well-equipped in different fields. We do not hide the mere fact that has an effect on the news content for the sake of an interest. We do not ignore some of them, anyway, we give you the news. Because we don't have any worries about being hurt or afraid. We write, especially in terms of financial convenience.

How is the news site organized?

People have titles, but they have a common and collective structure, not a full hierarchical structure. The editor-in-chief and the news director also work in the same room. The editors sit opposite them. There is no strict hierarchical structure, journalists know their position. The organizers have the last word, they have duties, there is not a very strict hierarchical structure, but it is not fully collective either.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-Chief, News Manager, Editors/Reporters, Advertising unit.

How many people work on the news site?

12 people.

Number of people employed: 12 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Powerful computers, mobile phones (camera, voice recorder, and camera) do the work of all editors and the whole team. We have a common communication network Gtalk, WhatsApp group, Photoshop for montage editing, Premier, standard office programs, and an internet connection.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Five days a week, 10 hours a day, between 08:00 am / 05:00 pm

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Evet.

Is your insurance paid?

Evet.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor/Reporter.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I come to the office at 08:00 in the morning, I am the first editor to come to the office. At first, I scan the media and examine all the news and columns in the press. I scan the hot news from the night and process these news and make the site ready for the new day. From 09:00 onwards, news from the agencies begins. Starting from 09:00, we update the site and continue by entering the news that come during the day, ready for the new day. I either eat dinner at the office, we can't take a lunch break, it's too busy.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertisement, Google ads.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Their opportunity is that the income model we use does not make us dependent on any group or sector. This is a very important thing for editorial independence. This independence does not only come from the boss. Just because our boss is the owner of any company, you cannot publish a news that will harm his business relations. We have only one boss, and Google gives us ads. There are criteria such as no pornography, no war crimes, no violence, no discrimination. As long as these criteria are followed, an income comes from there. This gives us great independence. The barriers are as follows: we cannot choose most of the ads. Hürriyet newspaper can choose the advertisement it will receive, good or bad, Google gives us automatic advertisements according to the internet history of the users, this can sometimes cause problems. Readers react to it.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

We follow the world and the developing digital media closely. When we fall behind, the reader goes elsewhere. We have created a habit among readers right now, people get the news, but they also go to the TV and look at what they are saying. It's a bit about our catching up with the times. We are now starting to prioritize video more. People started to turn to visual materials or news such as pills, write two sentences, give the video and end it. For this reason, a videographer friend started us last month, we shoot that video, make edits and publish it. In time, all editors will be able to do this.

Can you define your target audience?

Republicans, but for the last 3 years, we have made people close to the ruling party as our audience. Nationalists are among our target audience. Our editorial policy has not changed, but our reader profile has. Especially after the coup attempt of July 15, the hits of the site increased, and JDP people did not read us in the past, they were full of hatred towards us, they read us seriously, and we can feel this from the deputies. Left Kemalist section.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

500k daily.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Social Media. Facebook and Twitter. By searching the site itself in Google.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

Our strategy is based on marketing news. In Turkey, nearly all sites publish the same content, and we know that when we can add a difference, we attract the reader. There are 70 editors working in the web part of Hürriyet, we are only seven editors here, while Hürriyet enters 300 news a day, ours stays at 80. For this reason, in order for our news to be readable, we need to present the news from different angles other than the standard. We do not cover every speech of Erdogan. We attend a very striking lesson, or if we can add a comment on it, we attend. Because Erdogan's speech is on fifty internet news sites, and there is no point in entering that content as news unless we can add privilege. How can this content be only on Oda TV, we create our content by thinking why people should read it, which increases our hit count.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We answer all emails.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

We are leftists and describe ourselves as Kemalists. We are an oppositional media that respects the principles of the republic. We are not open to all opposition, there are parties and structures that we stipulate. We don't hit the AKP in the head for everything they say, we wait a little bit, especially Oda TV has a serious attitude about Syria or the decree laws. Judicial process of Cumhuriyet newspaper, July 15 cases.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Most of them are news reports that come to us. We do not have a separate reporter staff here. We can find the news by doing research on them. Twitter (but we have difficulties in verification, there is a photo, but the scene is described, but is it really the case) we do the verification like this. Wherever the subject takes place, for example, we first examine the Doğan News Agency news in Kırşehir, to see if such a news has actually taken place. If it does not pass, we look at the local websites of Kırşehir and if it does not pass, we contact the opposition deputies in Kırşehir, they are generally CHP deputies. This is how we verify, there are two agencies we use, Doğan and Anka.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

I don't think it's very different.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

Not very often I find it questionable and inconvenient for accuracy. Social media is a great advantage, data comes from many places, but we spend a lot of effort on verification.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

Editors can take initiative in most subjects. Approval of the news director and editor-in-chief is required for critical issues. Terkoğlu and Pehlivan made the final decision. If they say ok, they are informed from the angle they give. If they say no, that news is garbage.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values and political pressures.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?
How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

Almost all of the crew here went to jail. He dealt with lawsuits. Everyone feels the political pressure deeply. We are still on the alert as if anything is going to happen at any moment. We consider these pressures when reporting. For a week we worry about whether something will happen today or if I will be arrested. But there is no news that I did not write, we are softening the language. We refer to external sources or rewrite it with a similar event superimposed two months later. However, it cannot be said that I practiced self-censorship. Especially if the government's reaction to the news is very harsh, this time we start to be even more pessimistic. After I wrote it, I wished I hadn't written this. But I didn't say that I wouldn't write or see it.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

I can't exactly describe myself as independent because of political pressure, but I can say that I am autonomous. The beauty of this place is that if you can prove your news, if you have documents, there is no possibility that it will not be published. CHP mass usually follows us. We also wrote about the corruption of most CHP mayors, especially recently, we wrote a lot about Beşiktaş mayor. This is a move that is not normally expected from us because they are the group we are in close contact with. But there is nothing that connects us to them. Since there is no financial bond or funding, we can write negative things about them.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

First, I find the raw version of the news, it usually comes from the internet or as a notice, or it can be a case file, indictment case report. I either make phone calls with the actors of the news or people who may know about the news, it can be a lawyer, a consultant, a parliamentarian. When the interview is done, I add new data to its raw form. Finally, I come to the point of validation, after shaping, I read and access new information to close it if there is a place I say is open here. This is what happens in the reports. There are these, they did these, who is the interlocutor? If he says that I am learning his interlocutors and asking if it is true, then it is a lie, then I go to verify it in another way.

When the indictment was made, we know that this document went to many journalists. Speed comes into play. I must read this 500-page indictment as soon as possible and I must do that news first. When I identify important places, I research the background. He is accusing. It is said that

In our news, we usually do not have the chance to go out and follow an action, an event, a rally. We have to be in the office, we have a running agenda. I usually make special news and produce them on the basis of notice and case files.

Great luck for digital media journalists, at least they don't need big budgets to set up, there is a great opportunity to provide the necessary budget to keep them alive, and that is Google, which is dependent on the relationship we have established with the reader. is increasing. It has its downsides. Journalism is actually the pursuit of news. Unfortunately, digital media is killing journalism and reporting. Because it is necessary to give instantaneous data to people. News is not like that, and a lot of time needs to be spent on it, it's something a reporter should have. In digital media, no institution in Turkey can employ reporters at the moment. Or it is not possible for a reporter to devote too much time to the news and to elaborate it due to its structure. I have concerns about this. What happens after ten years, how much news will remain, this is a big question mark. When we look at the media in Turkey, this problem arises. When we add up the number of special news in all media three years ago, almost every newspaper made headlines with specific news. Today there are 10-15 special news per day. If a journalist cannot do research, he becomes a transmitter after a while. I have concerns that we can kill our own profession with our own hands.

Interviewee 19
Founder, Oda TV
09.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

15years.

Are you a union member?

Yes.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

Yes (the card of IEJ).

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Leman Dergisi, CNN Türk, Oda TV.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Job change.

Why did you set up a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of producing a digital project?

I took part in the establishment of Oda TV. It was a project of CT. At that time, the owners of CT Project were journalists Soner Yalçın and Cüneyt Özdemir. I can say that taking part in the project of the production company I worked for turned into a passion.

Its attractive aspects are: catching the future, being aware of it, the world where technology and journalism flow as Turkey progresses.

Can you tell us the story of the establishment of the news site?

Not answered.

How would you describe yourself within the scope of the project?

Journalist.

What are the new practices, competencies and abilities that you need to acquire and/or have acquired while establishing the news site and continuing your profession in this space?

I learned how to write news very fast. Of course, speed has disadvantages for journalism, but highlighting its positive aspects. Working from anywhere and working on the website compels us to do this. It allows me to live journalism 24 hours a day.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

Whatever needs to be used in internet journalism, we also use them. At the same time, we are a production company and we have a serious archive of Turkish history in our archive, and we are digitizing them now. When the project is completed, we plan to actively use the video content on Oda TV and to remind our readers of the history of Turkey. In a sense, we will bring together the old Turkey with the present.

What is the importance of the news site you have established in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

The concept of mainstream has changed in Turkey, especially in the last ten years. We see that the media is barren, and journalism and information are polluted by censorship and self-censorship. It has increased the awareness and popularity of media organs such as Oda TV that are trying to survive independently. It is both a great responsibility and an advantage for us. If there is such a concept as the mainstream of both today and the future, Oda TV either entered or will. It can be seen from the outside with an objective eye, and when we look at our hits and archive, it can be seen that we are a publication that lives only on news and reality. We are successful in this. We produce special news. In Turkey and in the world, where there are manipulations on information, we behave as the mainstream does what it wants to do.

How is the news site organized?

Hierarchical.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief, news director, editors, design department, advertising.

How many people work on the news site?

12 people.

Number of people employed: 12 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Powerful computers, office programs, Photoshop, Adobe Premiere Pro, internet connection.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

At least nine hours six days a week.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes. Fixed.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Yes.

Is your insurance paid?

Evet.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor-in-chief.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I get up early in the morning at 06:00 and review the news left by our editors at night. I consider what has been done throughout the night. If there is a news that needs to be improved, or there is information that needs to be corrected, or if there is a news that I have seen elsewhere and need to note why we do not have it, I work with them. I am making the site ready for the reader who wakes up later than me. Then I come to the office. Apart from our own agenda, if there are news on other news sites that Oda TV can cite, improve or give an angle, or show that that information is not true and the truth is different, I examine it. I usually have my lunch at the office. Our work throughout the day continues in the form of news selection news commentary. It doesn't end when you get home. My mind is always busy.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising, Google ads.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

It strengthens our independence. He has no handicap.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

To increase the number of hits by developing and expanding our own video archive. We are also trying to improve ourselves in producing video content. The Internet has now turned from written to visual. We're always thinking of getting a fixed ad. But our thinking of receiving is not equal to their willingness to give. For eleven years, Oda TV has been in a much more advanced position than many news sites in Turkey. We're talking about 500 thousand unique readers a day. That's a huge number for an independent news site. When we go to the advertisers we are told that our success and hits are very good. However, companies face political pressure when it comes to advertising. That's why advertisers are afraid.

Can you define your target audience?

We try to reach people from all walks of life from all political views. Anyone who needs news. We act like the mainstream.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

500k daily.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Facebook, Twitter, Google and clicking on the news site.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We circulate popular news on Facebook and Twitter several times a day. We pay attention to enter 80 news a day.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

All emails sent by readers are read. Sometimes we get 500 emails a day. We take criticisms positively and negatively into account while writing news, if the criticism is true and right for us, we write our news in this way.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Facts only. Sometimes you can see articles criticizing even the owner of Oda TV in the headlines.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

News agencies, reader e-mails, social media especially Twitter. Turkish media and foreign media organizations. There is Google as a search engine. The site of Wikileaks. Our very own Oda TV archive. A beautiful search engine in itself. We are an 11-year-old news site, we must have made a news about a topic discussed in

Turkey 5/6 years ago, and we can understand that our news has gained value after year.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

I don't think there is a difference.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

Our readers share with us an event they experienced or the footage they recorded in this event. We also use it if we can verify it. We also provide the source.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

As the editor-in-chief, I determine the news to be published with our news director. But there is a very collective work being done here. If an editor has an objection to the news that I want to enter with the following title and angle, he/she definitely gives his/her opinion. We shape our news by finding common ground.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values and political pressures.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

All newsworthy information is published on our website, taking into account journalistic values.

Political or legal pressures: Today, rules that do not exist in the Turkish penal code or in international law are applied. We, too, do not know what news might mean and what will appear before us legally, so we pay attention. Do not consider this as self-censorship, we have a lot of news that we publish with the risk of being punished, and we know the legal equivalent of this news. However, what we think about in the decision-making mechanism is whether an investigation will be opened against us from the point of view we give before publishing a news.

The difference from the mainstream: we don't have a tender. We do not expect any gain from the state or the government. The main stream's patronage relationship is different. He thinks whether the boss has a contract on a subject or not, what would be the interest of the boss in the business world if I screwed up, we do not think about these, we are free, we are only careful not to be sentenced to imprisonment or to be imprisoned.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

The subject that we have confirmed from our news sources, which we think is newsworthy, is determined, and then the person who will write the news is determined. These are done at the desk. One of our editors or I write. Hierarchically, I am no different from editors. After it is written, if it is a very critical news, it is read by someone else from the team. Then, before the news meets the reader on the management panel, news is loaded into that software, its visuals are selected, prepared, and the headline is written. When the news becomes active, it is shared on social media. If it is a very important news, a notification is sent to the application we have prepared for IOS and Android, so that the reader will be on their mobile phones at the last minute.

Additional: We have 8 male and 4 female employees. Female employees do not prefer us. We work hard. I call my friends at 03:00 at 02:00 in the night. I remove it because there is news. Unfortunately, female friends can have difficulties in this situation.

Interviewee 20

Journalist, Oda TV

12.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Nine years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Aydınlık, Yurt, Karşı, Oda TV.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Getting a new job offer.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?

What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

The journalism profession has been digitized and changed. Traditional publications have come to the point of exhaustion, both financially and editorially. Today, news sites are followed by many readers and they continue journalism by spreading to large masses. Today, there are 20-30 newspapers in Turkey and the number of news sites has reached 200, which prompted me to work on a news site. Oda TV is a free media organ, I can express what we think by writing. I don't see any pressure like boss pressure. Therefore, I can concentrate on each news without having to make a choice.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

used to work in the print media, there was a different system, I was writing the news, I was taking pictures of it, I was sending it to the news centre, there the news was ready to be printed after passing through the editor's filter and page layout. I am also involved in the editing of the visuals or the editing of the videos at Oda TV. I take care of everything from writing a news story to choosing its image, editing it in Photoshop, editing the video if there is a video, and uploading it to the site. Sharing the news on social media is also my job. I also think about how I can encourage people to click on the news site.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use existing technologies. We keep our social media accounts alive and do most of our news follow-up on Twitter. We follow people who are seen as social media phenomena.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

Oda TV has five editors. We produce big news with a small number of editors. Some of our news is moving the country's agenda. This is achieved by the effective use of social media in terms of news production, and by evaluating the reports from non-journalists and turning them into news. In this way, people become our volunteer reporters. Although we work with a small staff, such contributions increase our strength. We see that there is a perception in society that Oda TV writes.

We publish a news in the central media as an effect on the content, but for this reason, we have reservations about whether we will be subjected to pressure from the government wing. Sometimes we write late to avoid being banned.

How is the news site organized?

Hierarchical.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Our owner, editor-in-chief, news director, editors, design, advertising, Ankara representative. There are regular writers, there are also guest writers.

How many people work on the news site?

12 people.

Number of people employed: 12 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers, Office and Adobe programs, Premiere, Photoshop, internet connection, Word Press.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

From 09:00 to 18:00, six days a week.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Yes, but not quite enough.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I start work at 09:00 in the morning. As soon as I arrive, I review the daily papers. I'm scanning the news agencies DHA and Anka that we are members of. I am scanning the news coming to Oda TV mail. I scan social media. During this scan, I

also enter all the news that we have chosen, edited the text, selected the photo, and prepared the headline image. Then I share it on social media. I have my lunch at the office. I can't go out and eat on my lunch break because it's busy and the work is desk-bound. After a short lunch break, I proceed at the same pace until 06:00 pm in the evening.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising, Google ads.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Not answered.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

Not answered.

Can you define your target audience?

We act like the mainstream media. Everyone.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

500 thousand.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Facebook, Twitter, Google, by clicking the news site.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

Not answered.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

Emails are answered.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

We pay attention to the privacy of private life, protect the public interest and report only the facts.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

News agencies (DHA-ANKA), other media traditional and digital, social media, reader notices.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

We use existing technology, we do not have a different discovery.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

Reader notices make up the bulk of the content. It is communicated by verifying the report and by interviewing the interlocutors. Sometimes the tweets we see on Twitter are also reported after their accuracy is questioned.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

Even if the editors find the news, our news director and editor-in-chief make the final decision. Once approved, the news is uploaded to the site.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

Only journalistic values are effective. We do not have an advertiser, we are standing with Google ads. We do not have a commercial concern, as we do not receive money from the advertiser for our news. Politically, we are not engaged in any political party or opinion. The chairman of a party cannot call us and say to do this news like this. We are freelance journalists. Since our revenues make money on clicks, we try to produce news that the people who follow us will want to read. Yes, our target audience is everyone, but those who follow us are generally urban, educated, Kemalist people who are actively present in business life.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

I define independently. Yes, I make my own decision when reporting on autonomy, I choose my news, but I am not in a mood to publish it alone. The entire editorial team, especially the editor-in-chief and our news director, make the final decision.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

I produce the news at the desk. I study all traditional, digital media. I study news agencies. I'm reviewing reader reports. Reflecting the point of view of Oda TV, this is more left Kemalist point of view, I write my news, I choose my visual, if there is a video, I edit it. If I am going to get a confirmation or an opinion, I do this either by e-mail or by telephone with the addressee of the news. Then I upload the news to the site by taking the opinions of the editor-in-chief and the news director.

Interviewee 21

Journalist, Oda TV

12.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

11 years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

İz TV, DHA, Koliba Pr, I.Ü.H.A, Aydınlık, Yurt, Karşı, Oda TV.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Economic problems.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?
What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

It was not a choice, journalism shifted towards digital. The importance of speed in digital journalism makes it attractive to work on a news site, such as getting quick feedback on the news. This makes the profession faster, but it kills the reporter and leads us to do desk publishing.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I'm the editor here, but I don't just write news, I also use Photoshop. If necessary, I also do video editing and montages. I also manage social media accounts.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use existing technologies. Technically, we use the same technology that websites used ten years ago. The site is slowly transforming, yes, we also use YouTube channels for video news, but we don't have much different technology.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

The perception of the mainstream in Turkey has changed. Main stream is now media close to power. With the sale of Doga to Demirören, this structure was well established. While Oda TV is making news, it takes care of the public interest and appeals to all segments.

We changed the news article a little bit. There are some rules when writing news. Like a triangular, rectangular news article or spot writing. It is our abandonment of the agency language that separates us from other media, or rather, from agencies. Our headlines are striking, and we have started to see this on other news sites over time. Especially since social media is very effective in reading this news, it is very useful to follow the news there, striking and short headline specific places come to the fore.

How is the news site organized?

Hierarchical.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief, news director, editors, design, advertising, Ankara representation.

How many people work on the news site?

12 people.

Number of people employed: 12 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers, office programs, Photoshop, Adobe programs, internet connection, our personal mobile phones are now both our cameras and sound recorders.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

From 09:00 to 06:00 pm, five days a week. I work from home one day. But these are not limited to hours, we continue to work when we see news on social media on the way home. Or we do not leave the office because there is an extraordinary agenda. If we are outside, we are working from outside. It's also about the excitement of journalism.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes. Fixed.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

No.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor.

Can you tell us about a working day?

We have morning and night shifts. When I come in the morning, I examine daily newspapers, television, news sites, agencies, international press, and social media. These reviews usually help me find the news that is called the hot agenda as soon as possible. Then we examine the columnists, then I write about the notices received in our mailing group or if there are special news that we want to examine. I have my lunch at the office. I can't go out because I work at a desk. After dinner, my work continues in the same way until the evening.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising, Google ads.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Not answered.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

Not answered.

Can you define your target audience?

Everyone, we act like mainstream.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

500k per day.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Facebook, Twitter, Google, Site.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We re-share the most clicked news on our social media accounts several times a day. As soon as we get the news, we spread it on social media. The most important feedback is from there.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We respond to emails. Emails are vital. This is how we receive reader notifications. This makes up the bulk of our news content.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Working in the public interest and writing the facts.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

News agencies (DHA, ANKA), newspapers, television, websites, foreign press, social media, reader notices via e-mail.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

No difference.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We use it on the condition that we verify the reader notices we receive by mail. We use Twitter in the same way. We even have a section called guest writers.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

While the editors are writing the news, the final word in uploading it to the site belongs to the news director and editor-in-chief. However, when the editors object, if there are some gaps in the news, both the editor-in-chief and the news

director take it seriously. The news is usually suggested by the editor-in-chief and the news director. It is also recommended by the editors.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values and target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?

How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

As the fourth estate, we look after the public interest. Journalism values are at the forefront in all our news. We have no commercial concerns. We generate revenue from Google. We do not want to be punished by being shut down or blocked, not by political pressure. We pay attention to this when choosing the news language. The target audience is important because the more people click on our news, we generate revenue. That's why we publish stunning headlines, images and news that are not everywhere so that we do not lose and increase our audience.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

We have specific working hours. 06:00/08:00/09:00 and 10:00. According to these hours, the news production process of the employees also differs. I come to work at 10:00 in the morning. A time frame of 4 hours has passed. Hot news and routine news are the history obtained by scanning other media, agencies, foreign press. That's why editors on the 10:00 shift focus on special news. I start working on the e-mails sent to Oda TV by removing the news headlines that we have received before but that we could not publish due to lack of time. If we are going to go on the news, I try to get detailed information about the news from various sources and try to confirm it. The writing process is very fast. After the reporter delivers one or more of the news in the printed newspaper, his daily job ends. Here we are constantly dealing with news production, and our team is small. Like Facebook, this place should have a constant timeline as well as a news feed. Since it is consumed quickly, it should also be produced quickly. 7-8 hours while dealing with some special news considering the margin of error. The production process of a routine news takes an average of 10-15 minutes. After entering our special title (it is also called Oda TV title), our goal is to be read a lot.

Interviewee 22
Journalist, Özgürüz
26.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Nine years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No. We don't have a press card. Police and other legal institutions do not define us as journalists. While Onur and I were following the LGBTI pride parade, the police called them and asked for a press card. I said I am a journalism graduate, I have a diploma. I'm on the street, there is an institution I work for, and this is my press card, how can you not call me a journalist? This is none of our business, if the state approves, he said you are a journalist and did not let me broadcast live. For three hours, we searched for a broadcasting point around Taksim. We couldn't find it, so we went to a square. We stood in the middle of the square and broadcast.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Sabah, Akdeniz, İMC TV, BBC Türkçe, Özgürüz.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

My internship period at Sabah newspaper has come to an end. I was expelled from the Akdeniz. I resigned from İMC TV and BBC Turkish.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

In Turkey, there are no longer many institutions where the opposition can work. When I heard that Özgürüz was launched under the editor-in-chief of Can Dündar (Can Dündar is a journalist who journalists do not want to work with due to the litigation processes in Turkey), I wanted to work together. Because Can Dündar was wrongfully accused and because I know that he had to stay abroad and not be able to do journalism in Turkey, I had the chance to work here with an experienced master like him and the voice of those who have no voice (we usually say this for those who come from the grassroots, but at this point, the voice of a journalist who does not have a voice). I decided to be. I was alone when I started working. No one dared to work. When we started broadcasting on Periscope in Özgürüz, they told me

that if you want, you can not show your face. Because it was said that working with Can Dündar in Özgürüz is risky in Turkey conditions, you can only be in the middle of the events as the camera eye and you can shoot. I did not accept this, I started broadcasting alone with my selfie stick. I thought it would be an insult to my profession. I was a journalist, doing my job in hiding meant terrorizing myself and making it illegal. I went in front of the camera on the first day and almost 1.5 years have passed and I am still in front of the camera. I don't know if I'll be able to do it after this. I hope we continue to work smoothly.

Its attractive aspects, especially after the state of emergency, are currently no institution where an opposition journalist can work. There is almost no institution where I can defend the public's right to receive information. At Özgürüz, we are trying to bring the news to the public in a way that gives them a breath of fresh air. As much as we can. Of course, it is questionable whether we are enough, but we are trying to achieve this with a very small team. And while I was choosing journalism when I took the university entrance exam, I made a conscious choice because I really wanted to be a journalist, regardless of my score. I always kept this in mind while making this choice. I really wanted to be the voice of the voiceless and show the invisible. The most attractive aspect of freedom for me is that we are on the street. We are in the event. We don't go to studios. We don't have four walls, our studio is where news is for us. As soon as I see that today's media in Turkey, the mainstream and internet media are crammed into studios and offices, and consist of public relations bulletins and press releases, I realize that I am very lucky. Because we show people the street. Our broadcasts are live. There is no plot. Sometimes when I'm broadcasting, a garbage man passes by me. Or if there is construction, its noise is heard. Our viewers find this very natural, because we are the way we are, we don't have a filter. We do not put a filter between the addressee and the audience. We don't cut, we don't mow. They tell what is happening during that interview or news follow-up, or if it is a social event, they follow what is going on live. Unless, of course, the police intervene. Transparency is the attractive part. As time passes, we understand the value of the work I do and the institution I work for much better. As the media institutions closed down, the monopoly in the media already existed, and as it became more severe, I realized much more clearly what a valuable job I was doing. There are also feedbacks, you are everywhere, we see you everywhere, I'm glad you're here, we get the news from you, the more I get them, the more I appreciate them. At first, I

thought that I was doing this alone and no one was watching me. However, when we look at it monthly, the number of our viewers reaches millions. The Internet can now destroy us with the push of a button in the hands of the state. Right now, there is an internet law, it will come out, we don't know how it will affect us. Tomorrow and the next day, when our publications are subject to control and they do not give a license, we will disappear.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I am a journalism graduate and started my career in television. I was a television reporter, I was always in front of the screen. While working in BBC Turkish, I would prefer to do video news, but I would also do written news. We could not switch to written news because our website was closed before we opened with Özgürüz. I have to be on the hottest spot on the news. This strengthened my brave side. When I started, I did not know what Pericope was, now I am writing a book on how journalism is done in social media, especially in live broadcasting tools. Angle, the key to be entered, a good view can be obtained at any point, what questions should be asked to the guest in the live broadcast, etc. It's incredibly difficult to manage guests on a live broadcast. I was overfed at that point. There was a second-hand book festival recently. I was there and I bought a booksellers for publication. While chatting before the broadcast, a second-hand bookkeeper said that they call us second-hand booksellers. There is no such word, he explained it as we are a bookkeeper. Of course, we are also learning. I hold the microphone and we're talking. I asked the question "how many booksellers are there?" We came face to face with the second-hand booksellers," I said, what does second-hand booksellers mean, I tried to wrap up the event with sympathy. The second-hand bookkeeper also smiled, which was his most sensitive point. Unfortunately, society has a language, especially in LGBTI and women's news, and it is embedded in the discourses of each of us. Although we try to learn the truth over time, some words become stuck and we cannot change them. It is independent of our intention. I'm careful not to offend anyone while doing the news, it's only a matter of time before something wrong comes out of my mouth on the live broadcast.

I combined my current journalism with television journalism. I also developed new practices. For example, I could shoot an announcement 45 times on TV. My tongue was rubbed, my mouth was crooked, my eyes were closed, saying no,

my hair is broken. I don't have that chance live. I learned to get the job done. I know I don't have a second chance. For example, I said something else to Filiz Kerestecioğlu on the air, I forgot, then I apologize, Filiz Kerestecioğlu. We work very hard, I tried to pull myself together against both my guest and the audience by saying that my broadcast has no limits. Mispronouncing your guest's name is a huge minus. RSF Turkey representative Erol Önderoğlu did the same. I extended the microphone, our guest Erol It didn't come back. Then I apologized again. Speed and immediacy are at the forefront.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

Social media and live broadcast tools. Periscope.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

Since I started my career, I have always been in opposition organizations. I was the Diyarbakir correspondent of IMC TV. There were educational vocational houses of municipalities. Diyarbakir is one of the poorest neighborhoods in Bağlar, and the municipality was offered to give media literacy lessons to children. I agreed. They were groups of 9-11 years old. There were 15-20 children in the class. We were talking, chatting. I asked the children to tell a story they saw on the television that remained in their minds. One of the children got up and said: "There was a walk in our neighbourhood, I was there, I saw what happened, they said very different things on the TV in the evening." I asked how different things were: they called us terrorists, they said we were throwing stones, but we are not terrorists, we started throwing stones after we throw gas, he said why are they treating us like this. He was not ten years old. This has always existed, we see it in the geography of Kurdistan. We saw it on the tour. And people noticed this on the trip, we had what we call penguin media. What is happening here before our eyes in Istanbul, what are we watching in the evening. They began to question what was shown to us so far. A large portion realized that what was, was not what it really was.

This is exactly the change and transformation that Özgürüz has created. We give it as it is. The reporters I know working in the mainstream also pass your news to our acquaintances abroad. They say we can't be where you are. I know journalists who work in the mainstream and aspire to be in the risky position I am in. However,

they cannot leave because of their living standards. Journalism is taking risks, not thinking if they will arrest me. To defend the public's right to be informed. To be everywhere. We can do that and we are journalists. I will never be modest, yes I am brave. I notice it as the feedback comes in. In fact, this is what should happen, even though it seems like we are doing a great job because journalism can't be done in Turkey.

There is no hierarchy in Özgürüz, each reporter sets their own agenda. Most friends, there is this event here today, we suggest each other to see if it would be better if we went there. Other than that, there is no interference. Every reporter has editorial independence. The reporter in Izmir says I will do this job tomorrow. OK. I will do this in Diyarbakir. OK. I will do this in Ankara. OK. I am doing this in Istanbul. It's called ok. Nobody turns around and says you can't do it. And this is a wonderful thing for a journalist, especially in Turkey. Reporters, we are on the street of our own free will. We make the news in our own language. Nobody is saying you have to do this or that. Most suggestions. Tomorrow the CHP announces its presidential candidate. Like let's not miss it. This is a new model for Turkey. We have one correspondent in Diyarbakir, one in Izmir, two in Ankara, and four in Istanbul. We are free hope.

I contacted Periscope. I asked them what we can do better in connection with our broadcasts and whether there is an example like us in the world. They said that there is no institution in the world that broadcasts regularly and continuously from the street like you. It was said that you are a revolutionary in this sense. Before us, there was Medyascope.tv, which broadcasts on Periscope, but our biggest difference is that they are in the studio and we are on the street. I believe that Özgürüz has truly revolutionized both visually and in terms of broadcasting from Periscope. After we started broadcasting, there were many institutions broadcasting from Periscope. I was in Diyarbakır in neurosis. There is a local newspaper, I met with a reporter, and he is broadcasting on the phone. I am shocked. You also saw that, after the state of emergency, we also had a Kurdish publication, they removed it. “We started broadcasting in Kurdish from Periscope,” he said. Even though we are not watched as much as you, there is a local interest. The people of Diyarbakır follow us on Periscope to see what is going on locally, and we are free to see this and they started. In these respects, Özgürüz also has a pioneering mission.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-Chief, editor/reporters. The editor-in-chief does not interfere with our broadcasts. He feeds us with its knowledge and experience like a counselling authority. For example, he tells me that the details and impressions from the court were also very good. There are also those who wonder who cried when the decision was announced, was it applause or sadness collapsed after the decision? This is also important, he says, give them too. If there is to be a news about foreign policy, talk to this man, he is good. He says try your luck. These feed us.

How many people work on the news site?

Nine people.

Number of people employed: 9 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers, personal mobile phones, microphone, monopot for mobile internet connection, office programs, Photoshop, Premier, site base WordPress, social networks and live broadcasting tools of social networks.

Do you have an office?

No. They work in cafes from the street or wherever necessary.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time. We have days off, 1 day a week. If I don't find any news to follow the next day, I can't do anything. There are nine of us, I'm taking Saturday off. Honor trades. We are managing only one person that day. We don't have to work seven days, we make our plans the day before, if there is no agenda, we can rest that day and on Saturday we are off again. Or, we didn't work until 14:00 yesterday afternoon. We went to Silivri after 14:00. In a case where Can Dündar was also on trial for the Cumhuriyet case, we were able to return home at 03:30 at night. Our working hours are very flexible. Our working order depends on the agenda and a little bit on the reflex of the reporter. Personally, I can't stay at home if something happens. But if that day is my day off or if I didn't choose to deal with that subject, no one would ask why you weren't there. I have a responsibility, I internalize my profession and my institution and I decide, I say we are free, it should be there today. I'm going. Can Dündar also trusts us, he can say that Zübeyde has already done the planning and he will not skip the announcement of the decision. He knows this. This is how we create our working order. I do not find it right to direct a journalist like a robot with a chain

of command. Onur enters news on the news site. We sit down and write our headlines together. We found them all by trial and error method. We drew a route for ourselves. We will continue to shape.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Yes.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes. We work within Corrective. Corrective is a foundation in Germany. It needs to have a representative office in Turkey so that it can make us insured. They don't have the right to insure us at the moment, but they are sending our insurance money. Here, I forward the insurance money they pay to a fellow institution, and I am insured from there.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

When necessary, I am the editor/reporter, and when necessary, I am the cameraman.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I get up at 09:00 in the morning. I take a look at the routines, according to the agenda of that day in the media, for example, yesterday it was decided that the verdict of the Cumhuriyet trial would be announced. We made a plan the night before, we should go to the justice watch because we make our plans one day before Akın Atalay will arrive there. Osman Kavala still has no indictment and we learned that imprisoned Kemal Erteçün visited Osman Kavala. I made an appointment with Mr. Kemal, got dressed in the morning for an interview, went out to the waterfall. By the way, I saw the president of the Istanbul bar association and asked if you would evaluate the decisions in the republic case, we broadcast from there. We are here now (we are in a cafe in Kadıköy). There were protests at Istanbul University, and the division of the university was opposed. We are torn between whether to go or not. Two days ago I had them on special air. Today, we are very tired, so we put a comma there so that we do not neglect you. We came here. We will follow the events of Istanbul University tomorrow. In fact, the agenda determines my working day. If there is nothing, there is nothing, but if there is, I am definitely after it. Naturally, I also eat lunch and dinner in between.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Donations.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

No. We currently do not earn anything from the site. We do not earn anything from the content of Özgürüz. We have a magazine that comes out bimonthly and has subscribers. That magazine goes to our donors as a gift, and they donate to the magazine. We have 398 donors. Persons from abroad. People in Turkey are afraid. We are free and when we say Can Dündar, we will be traitors. Everyone is afraid of being accused of being a supporter of Fetö.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Opportunities it sets us free. It liberates us from capital front. We have no obligation to any institution or political view. When tweeting, I don't think what my editor-in-chief will say, whether it will be deducted from my salary. But when I'm writing a story, I think, will the police arrest me? We are free professionally, yes, but our freedom is limited in Turkey's conditions. One of the obstacles is people are afraid to donate. I support you a lot, but there are many democratic intellectuals who say that it would be better if I did not appear. That's why our donations are limited. I can count hundreds of people who did hesitate to donate, especially because of Can's name and the point we stand at.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

I don't know much about plans. I don't know where we will evolve to. The lack of planning is also related to the course of Turkey. They can shut us down after the internet law is passed. Pınar Gayıp from ETHA is my friend, and she was going to come to me the next day. However, I woke up in the morning and learned that she was arrested and her house was raided. I really don't know what will happen tomorrow or when I go home tonight. It's really hard to make a long-term plan. We exist today and we want to exist tomorrow. We want it to continue to be free years from now. But we are very open-ended.

Can you define your target audience?

Özgürüz was founded because we did not want be the media of anyone. We considered the principle of impartiality. Even though we try to appeal to everyone, whoever is against the government in Turkey has become our target audience. Those who follow us: NGOs, Women's organizations, LGBTI, İYİ Parti, CHP, HDP, students, politicians.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

Number of unique readers/users reached by the news site: The site has 30 thousand monthly views. Our news site was blocked on the day it was opened. We neglected it for a while. We gave all our attention to live broadcast vehicles. A month ago, RSF Germany activated our site using the mirroring system. Our site is open now. We enter our own original content. It's very rare that we hear from anywhere. Whatever our daily original content is, we turn them into written news and upload them with visuals. Can sometimes writes. We do not have content such as hot news, breaking news. Live streams on Periscope have a maximum of 38 million and a minimum of 12 million views per month, according to Twitter data.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Twitter, Facebook, Periscope, YouTube.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We use cashew (She tells in Onur's interview). Stunning titles.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We try to respond to emails and Facebook messages. We do not open the comment section on the Periscope live broadcast. We are exposed to cursing and insults.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

To be the voice of those who have no voice in the monopolized media sector. To defend the public's right to be informed. I am a reporter at Özgürüz and I can confidently say that I am free.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Journalists are already members of mailing groups. Press releases are coming. I'm looking at other media. Traditional and digital. I'm looking at the showcases of the agencies, we don't have agency membership. I'm studying social media. We don't have time to do investigative journalism. We have to go abroad. It is necessary to

remain calm to follow the subject a little. We do not have such a time for now, neither do my friends. But we are open, I believe we will do it in the future.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

In the mainstream media, it is clear where the information comes from and how it will be processed. We are uncertain. Let me give you an example. There was a woman whose child had been abused at the entrance of Silivri prison. Her husband had been beaten. A ban was imposed because the woman reacted when her child was abused. This woman called me. She knew she wouldn't be reported when she went elsewhere. While talking to me, I will tell you what happened to me, but I do not want to say that my child was abused on the air. She also said let's go over my husband. I said OK. During the live broadcast, she looked me in the eyes for a moment and said on the live broadcast that her child was abused. I have never tried to give direction or to let her know that information on the air. I said you wouldn't tell after the broadcast. "It doesn't help anyone if I don't tell you," she said.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

The notifications are coming from social media. If it is newsworthy, we contact the person immediately. We are making the news and broadcasting it live. We do not take a tweet and use a video we see on social media.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

I dominate the Istanbul region. The reporter in Diyarbakir knows that place, Izmir in Izmir. We talk like this in-between colleagues, there is this event in this region, if you agree with this person, I will broadcast at this time. We say ok. Every reporter is autonomous while reporting. The reporter makes his/her own decision. Most of all, we advise each other. Or, Can, for example, should we do some ecology news in Izmir? Or, he gives ideas as if it is possible to talk about the constitution in Ankara. If we do it, we do it, but if we can't, he doesn't say why you didn't do it.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?
How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

For example, a worker committed suicide because he was fired. He was divorced from his wife and had three children. We went to the man's wife's house in Avcılar to do an interview for this news, and Onur was there. A reporter who normally does not think about journalism values and ethics. While there he/she found those children, he turns on his/her camera and makes a wonderful broadcast over the children, look at the agitation whose fathers committed suicide. I asked the children to please send them to the kitchen and not come until the broadcast is over. During the broadcast, the children were opening the kitchen door and looking while we were talking. The children had experienced a trauma, they had lost their father. I did not want their mother to be with us or to hear about this incident. In the future, when children grow up, these images will become permanent in the internet environment, and there was no point in seeing their fathers or themselves over and over again. I don't have a chance to ice their faces on live broadcast. This is ethics, it is one of the journalism principles. No person who says he/she is a journalist will not broadcast those children, and doesn't try to get traffic.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

We have a self-control. Let's not call it self-censorship, but we are careful not to get arrested so as not to get us in trouble. We don't say what we say. We do not have such a style and policy anyway. Still, we feel some pressure on our backs and are a little cautious. When we go somewhere, we consult each other about whether we should go. We don't go as soon as our reporter friend, who knows the region, says we'd better not go. Something can happen to us by our own work and our own decision. But we are autonomous.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

I set my agenda, I determine the news that I will follow for the next day every day, I reach people by phone and e-mail for my interviews, sometimes I write messages on Twitter. We make appointments with each other. We set the venue. Sometimes it's hard to find a place. The owner or operator of the venue may not allow it. There are times when I kneel on the streets and broadcast. Before the broadcast, I usually chat with the guests. I'm cracking my questions a little. My concern in broadcasts is not to press my guests. I avoid embarrassing them on the screen and making them say things that they can't say.

Since it is a live broadcast, we may experience problems during the production phase. For example, there are people who say they can talk if you don't get a picture. Or they say they don't want to give their name. Our audience wants to see the main character of the subject on the screen.

Interviewee 23
Journalist, Özgürüz
26.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Seven years.

Are you a union member?

Yes.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

Yes. Has an international press card.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Evrensel, Birgün, Artı TV, TV10, Hayat TV, Özgürüz.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Financial problems. Cancellation of projects and resignations.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?
 What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

There are very few organizations where a dissident journalist like me can work in Turkish conditions, one of them is Özgürüz. This is the main reason I started working. I started my career in opposition newspapers and television. As such, it becomes impossible to work in other publications. As a journalist, I can't go and work in the Takvim newspaper after this time, I don't accept it and they don't want it. My motivations, I thought I could do well here. I tend to the internet and new media, I love it. Before I started Apology, there was the April 16 referendum, I wasn't working anywhere at that time, but I was broadcasting on Periscope while people were protesting. Before that, I was doing ten-minute interviews to post on my own website. I didn't have to worry about being watched, but I kept myself warm in the profession. We are broadcasting on Periscope in Özgürüz. There are no big cameras. There isn't a lot of technical stuff. Everything is practical.

The temptation is that everything is technically very easy. I also worked on television, when I compare the two, I get easier results here, technically and practically. We broadcast by phone. We can broadcast from anywhere we want with a smart phone connected to the Internet. I am independent in Özgürüz. I've been working here for over a year. When Zübeyde is not there, I work alone. Sometimes, if we both do it, Zübeyde leaves me as a reporter and she goes to the camera. We can distribute the tasks as we want, no one interferes. I just set the agenda the day before and do my news. I can do all the news I want to do here.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I'm both in front of the screen and behind the camera. I learned how to do journalism on live broadcast. I never understood using Photoshop, I learned it here. Now I edit from the phone, place the logo and upload it to the hop website.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

Social media and live streaming tools, especially Periscope. Periscope was an empty channel in Turkey. Currently this area has been explored. Ozguruz's luck was that he discovered this area while Periscope was just budding, and broadcast the news live here. For this reason, we are in the first place among other alternative media organizations in Turkey in terms of using this new technology, as they make their live broadcasts from the street almost from there.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

I think it changed the internet media. When we started this business, there was a Medyascope.tv broadcast live from Periscope. Only new mainstream television channels had started broadcasting Periscope. However, there is only Özgürüz, who has reporters who report with all their blood, sweat and tears in the news from the street outside the studio. We also developed a system called Kaje. While we were live, one of our editors at the desk takes a striking sentence from the guest we interviewed, for example, "Akın Atalay: They wanted to take over Cumhuriyet newspaper with an operation, but they couldn't," he says. The audience says, "Did Akın say that," and the broadcast is clicked again. In the live broadcast, we also enter the title. After we started doing this, other institutions started to do it gradually.

We have a corporate identity and we can transfer an event warmly. We can also transfer parts that cannot be seen in the mainstream. It's like a released journalist hugging and kissing his wife. During the Nuriye and Semih protests, a performance artist painted himself like a human rights monument and sat in the middle of the action. The police intervened after a while. We are shooting. They did not touch the artist at first. Because police thought it was a statue. When it was understood that he was human, they took him into custody. We were suffering from this intervention, but also by conveying the situation of the artist, who is thought to be a sculpture. This kind of news of ours is also used by major media organizations. Even Erdoğan showed our broadcasts during their group meetings.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief, editor/reporter, cameraman.

How many people work on the news site?

Nine people.

Number of people employed: Nine people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computer, personal mobile phones, handheld and lapel microphone, monopod, office programs, Photoshop, premiere, site base WordPress, social networks, live broadcasting tools.

Do you have an office?

No.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes. Fixed.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Yes.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

I'm a reporter when needed, a cameraman when needed. I am also the editor of the site. I write news, upload, edit video. I edit images.

Can you tell us about a working day?

We start working between 09:00 and 10:00 in the morning. We always set our agenda one day in advance. If there is an interview, we make an appointment, and if necessary, we choose the venue where the interview will take place. We make our broadcasts. However, the agenda can change at any time, so we follow up during the day. For example, we didn't have work until 02:00 pm yesterday, then we went back to our home at 03:00 in the morning.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Donations. Özgürüz magazine is sent to people as a gift. People donate.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Nothing. Our audience support us.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

Our priority is not to be hindered while doing our profession. We are already growing. But we don't know what will happen tomorrow.

Can you define your target audience?

Students, deputies, shopkeepers, victims, non-governmental organizations, Kurds. Alevis, Turks, Germans... In short, everyone.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

30 thousand per month. Live broadcasts are the highest 38 million and the lowest 12 million views per month, according to Twitter data.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Twitter, Facebook, Periscope, YouTube.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We use framing. Stunning titles.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We try to respond to emails and Facebook messages. We do not open the comment section on the Periscope live broadcast. We are exposed to cursing and

insults. My friend Zübeyde is exposed to very sexist insults as a woman. JDP's troll crew write incredible curses. It can often reach intolerable points. Or they constantly say there is no sound on the air. I think there is a problem with the broadcast and leave the broadcast. We look at the history of the broadcast on Periscope, there is actually sound. For these reasons, we also do not want our guests to be insulted when they watch the broadcast afterwards. Sometimes we can open comments in social events. Usually closed.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

We convey the facts we see, as they are, without filter. We defend the public's right to be informed.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

I do media analysis, I examine mainstream and opposition traditional publications, news sites, the front pages of news agencies (we are not a member) and social media, especially Twitter is very effective in research and finding. I look at Twitter before Google, I can reach anything I want. I can find up to very old dated Tweets. Twitter has become today's news agency. I can find anything from photos to videos to statements. Statements are now made on Twitter. The mayor of Samsun resigned recently. He made his statement directly on Twitter. Whatever it is, I'm doing the research. I reach the addressee of the subject through my personal contacts and we meet and make interviews.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

We are not different.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We are being selective. We try not to give a lot of space, but in cases where we cannot follow up, I can request images from the scene. We went to Silivri prison yesterday. We couldn't go to the Istanbul university march and press release. We asked the students we interviewed there the day before, would you take a short video of the walk and send it to us. Apart from this, we do not receive and use any content on Twitter. We must have our own original content. For example, if we got the video of a tradesman who is beaten, we never use that footage. We go and find that tradesmen and interview him.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

Every journalist makes his/her own plan, we have a group, a messaging group where we share our plan. And we follow our news. Each reporter makes his/her own decision. The editor-in-chief is Can Dündar, but he does not interfere us and gives us ideas.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

Journalism values are at the forefront, the freedom of the public to receive information is important to us. We have no commercial concerns. Of course, there are political pressures. We do not make news that we think the target audience is not ready for. We were going to meet with Hüda Par, but we said that our audience might not be ready for this. We gave up.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

There are general elections. Disk leader Kani Beko has resigned. He will be a parliamentary candidate from the CHP. We will determine this one day in advance, call Mr. Beko, make an interview offer and go for an interview if he accepts. I'm doing a media review. I find my subjects. I reach the person, we prepare our questions. We broadcast on Periscope. Written news are generally written versions of our live broadcasts. The entire production process takes place on digital media. We make full use of social media. YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Periscope. All. We are broadcasting live from both Periscope and Facebook at the same time. After about an hour, we edit it and upload it to YouTube. In the meantime, we are uploading the written news. Our site exists as a news archive.

Interviewee 24
Journalist, GazeteRed
07.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Eight years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Cumhuriyet, ABC Gazetesi, Red Dergisi.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Lack of staff, payment problems, not comfortable working environment. Working at the Cumhuriyet newspaper was like being a civil servant.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

I had to. In order to find a job, it is necessary to insert an intermediary, even in newspapers and televisions that are close to the opposition. News sites provide opportunities for young people. I am talented. I'm in charge of the agenda.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

Speed reading, quick judgment, fast writing, development of mathematical skills. Video editing photo editing Using Photoshop requires information curation in our age. There is a lot of information around us, people are not aware of which information is reliable from which point of view, or they are constantly looking for it. Information curation is what it means to take the information, open it, compare it with other information and produce the product that the reader wants. From which book of Marx should I start to read, from the problem to which news site should I follow the weather, information curation is needed, and for this, we need to be a reliable institution or journalist. We try to be reliable for the left perspective.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use existing ones. We have no contribution.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

Agitating the left perspective in a way that the average citizen can understand.

It was founded as a political project.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editors, contributing authors, technical team software and design.

How many people work on the news site?

Five people.

Number of people employed: None.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Laptops, Wordpress, Adobe tools, internet connection, our personal cell phones.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Seven days a week / 15 hours a day. The office is also used as the Kadıköy center of the leftist political movement. I have to be at the office. I'm a kind of guard, if people come, we sit and chat. I used to have night shifts at the last workplaces I worked, and I was at home during the day and we were making decisions by even talking to the editor-in-chief over the phone. For this reason, it is very good to be in the office for a long time, I was very overwhelmed because I work from home. I'm not a very social person anyway, I usually sit at home and read a book. Even if I have a girlfriend, I will offer to sit at home. I needed to get rid of this lifestyle. So I have to commute to the office. Going out and spending long hours at the office is good for me.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Not yet.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor/reporter.

Can you tell us about a working day?

We open the office at 09:00 am in the morning, close at 05:00/06:00 pm in the evening, the meal is eaten in front of the screen. The motivation is to be a political undertaking.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising, Google ads.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

A small amount but regular.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

The obstacle is that the income is still low. In the US, Google pays much more for the same number of hits. YouTube does the same in Turkey either. For a news site in Turkey to be sustainable, the amount Google pays must increase. In order not to increase it, the excuse is put forward that the advertisement we receive from Turkey is not too much. But there is no excuse for them to pay one tenth of it. Google has established an exploitation mechanism within itself.

Independent media has already disappeared in Turkey. Before the JDP, we had a Murdock type of media. The bourgeoisie had established media empires to gain political power for their own economic interests. The JDP took advantage of the rottenness of the order and seized this media, and now we are trying to move forward through the gaps. The gap we are trying to move forward is basically this: increasing the readability, creating something readable and increasing the number of hits and living with the ad revenue from Google. We haven't made much money until now, but we had some very good times. We are currently working to get well again and we believe we will. Why not, we can also get fixed advertising. But it seems a bit difficult in this environment. I have communication with all of the big bosses in this field, like T24 and Diken, they all complain about this and cannot receive advertisements. Advertising digitally in Turkey is not something that is in the hands of companies.

They give it to the internet branch of the women's magazines of the born media, but they will not give it to you because the press has an advertising monopoly. Demirören is a member of the Doğan group, and we don't get the advertisement there.

The site is banned or the news is banned. We have a friend named Tuba Özer from forward news, her Burger King news was banned. I tried to open the news to read it again, I was going to look at a couple of details, it doesn't work, the guys banned the link. I informed Tuba and he said I am using the phone. I said stop, I said it will be banned on the phone, it was banned for two hours. First banned from the on-board network, then mobile too. Then we, as the team and all opposition journalists, shared that news on Twitter. The news was thus retweeted 5000 times, more than it would be read on a normal site. This is how content is banned by court order. The judge makes a decision according to his head and the news is immediately banned.

We have been banned three times as a site. We changed the domain name in all three of them, and the last we got “HayRed”. We will now move on to the name “GazeteRed”. This time, we are changing our name as a choice, not as a result of being banned.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

The subscription model implemented by The Guardian can work in Turkey, but it has a legal loophole. When we start a continuous subscription campaign, it has very heavy accounting processes. We cannot say that we started the Kick Starter style as in England. Things like this are slow in Turkey. The state is causing a lot of trouble because it is against it. I heard someday newspaper will try it. I hope they succeed. Our next step would be to have the site read for a fee, at least certain parts of it. The reader transferred from Red magazine to RedAktif is a reader who does not hesitate to give us money. When we faced very serious financial difficulties, donations came many times. One of our writers became unemployed Gürkan Haydar Kılıçarslan did something like this: he called out to the readers, if you pay my salary for a few months, I will be able to write more comfortably in the magazine. It rained money on that man. Our readers like to cooperate with us because we have a leftist readership. But we have to use it as a single shot, the last bullet in our gun is not an option that we can use every year. We need to design well, plan well and implement it accordingly.

Can you define your target audience?

Young urban, left-leaning and labouring character.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

We see 20 thousand and 40 thousand daily. At its lowest it is four or five thousand.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Facebook 78/80%, Twitter 10%, site 3-4%.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We have a very simple strategy. For example, news is liked by people, we send an invitation to each of those who like that news on social media. We have a new project to attract readers with Gifs and short videos from Twitter. I applied this while working from the first ABC newspaper. I gave up uploading the video in the news, I just uploaded it to Twitter for a while. Just in case, I will earn from clicking the video retweet in the future in order to collect quite a lot of followers. We should give up on clickbait journalism because it bores people reading this news. Also, Facebook doesn't show your news anymore unless you give money. Twitter shows. It is said that he will go to such a strategy because Twitter is making a loss. Ads policy has passed and we think it will force us to advertise to show our content. We are a collective community, and we send invitations to our friends on social media.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We want to win people over to our political views. If possible, we want to organize for a political stance. In a way, like the French communist party l'Humanité or the Greek newspaper Patris, Leninism acts together with GazeteRed and leftist political views. It conveys the party's view to people and tries to involve those who agree with this view into the struggle. We organize through news site.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Science against superstition, internationalist, working and class agenda and definitely biased. Generally left-wing.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

We rewrite and evaluate the news circulating on the Internet, newspapers, television, and agencies from our own perspective. We also follow the news on social media. The information is somehow dispersed. DHA, Ajans HaberTürk, Cihan, AA have a constant distribution of news. If you are not working with a serious

professional team like Diken and T24, it is not possible to pay for the content. We are also unable to pay subscription fees. What we do is we receive news from agencies, social media, traditional media, interpret the news from our own perspective and publish it in this way. I don't think it's a labour theft because no one has sued anyone. There has been perhaps a case or two in the very rare news. Agencies are also aware of this because if they insist on subscription, no one will survive but themselves, which means the media is suffocating, which is why DHA was suing very little. Now it has been sold to Demirören, I don't know what they will do.

Social media is one of our main news sources, there is an agenda, for example, a woman claimed that she was harassed, a situation we encountered in a bar. We contact that woman about the incident and make an interview. We are looking for the owner of the bar, we are talking to the owner of the bar. Social media is a kind of first source of news because soldiers now share the images of torture on Twitter in the Afrin war. While only Tayyip Erdoğan is talking, we get his speech from DHA's live feed. Agencies use it to follow official statements and also to get “fait divers”.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

I can say social media, but I still think there is no difference.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We behave differently ethically. This is how it works abroad, the Independent editor asks for permission to use the video uploaded by a citizen, we mention that person, the man does not answer, then the news runs away. Sometimes not getting permission creates ethical problems.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

Editorial initiative and ideological inaccuracy. For example, the free kick that 18-year-old singer Aleyna Tilki gave to the tabloid reporters is not news for us, even immoral. We do not have news such as JDP's propaganda bulletin. Since we are opposing, we approach from the opposing point of view.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, our political view and political pressures.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?

How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

The editor needs to have an ideological point of view on how to enter the news. An editor always has to be sure when approaching the news, he has to check from different sources, the most important thing is to pay attention to the difference between people's private and public. There are also tricky issues. A gay assistant of Sedat Peker was published with a boy under 18 (head of Sivas Ülkü Ocakları). Normally, there is a problem with this private life, he is also a member of the mafia, Sedat Peker is also a supporter of the neoliberal Islamist new regime, we need to expose this somehow. Think of it like Berat Albayrak's e-mails, if he receives a sex toy and does not shake a woman's hand at a formal invitation, there is a problem. We need to expose it. Because the right has a general moral problem. They do all kinds of immorality secretly and sell morality to everyone.

Compared to the mainstream, the difference in our editorial choices is that our business model is political, class-oriented, so the editor acts with this political notion. As far as I know from my friends working in the mainstream, contacts are important. In order for an editor to be an editor somewhere, he must have contacts so that he can produce content. In the simplest terms, Mehmet Ali Şimşek's phone number should be in the economy service editor. Otherwise they won't make him an editor because he must be able to reach the man. We don't have such a thing, we are not that advanced.

After July 15, Hayat TV Imc TV was shut down. They were TVs that were not related to the coup but close to the Kurdish movement. Now they liquidated Doğan News Agency. Şirin Payzın hosted Demirtaş on her program every week and made her PR. This did not please Erdogan, and he suddenly saw that the Kurds had become an alternative. He sold it in 2019 because he couldn't afford to have Nature involved in such a game. It was said that the price of the Hürriyet newspaper on its own was 1 billion dollars, it could not be sold because it was too valuable. Now the entire media group is gone for \$1.2 billion. DHA is the admiral of Turkey, even AA follows him. Yaysat is important, if you have good money, it delivered it everywhere. Worst of all, there are regulations that allow the internet to be opened and closed as desired. They're already drowning Twitter by showing calls to the server. Twitter is not accessible in critical situations. There is talk of banning VPN. This is something that is usually done in Iran and China and is traded under the cover. You go, you buy a cd or code with VPN installed from a place like Yazıcıoğlu and use it. Banning VPN in Turkey means approaching those countries. Of course, VPN cannot be

banned, only the site it will be accessed. But the internet has come to a point where they will be shut down whenever they want. This is like trying to monopolize the flow of information in the world. Before the French Revolution, there was a period of feudal reaction. Here, too, information is being tried to be controlled somehow, but it will leak from somewhere. The income problem in the media in Turkey needs to be solved, this is changing in the world. Unfortunately, the income problem is not independent from the government, as in The Guardian model, I think that as long as the government does not change, political pressures will greatly affect our editorial choices. They will try not to breathe.

I think that with the sale of Doğan Media Group, the reader and capital will shift to publications like ours, the reader already gets the news from the internet media, those who buy freedom usually buy the barbers so that they can be found, the office owner buys it to put it on his desk. When it comes to capital, there are printed publications targeting this, like Birgün, they are doing a campaign to change your subscription to Birgün. It can make sense. Birgün and Cumhuriyet, the country's most powerful opposition newspapers, do not see 50 thousand when looking at the sales of these two newspapers. This is proof that the opposition is not reading, but is now on the Internet. For this reason, it is necessary to develop the internet model. Unless this develops, it will be dead.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

Gathering information from social media, comparing it with other news, comparing information from other news agencies, interpreting the content according to the quality of the news, sometimes with the initiative of the editor, and sometimes with the collective work of other editors. Most importantly, add comments. For example, why should sugar factories be sold, sugar factories are public assets rather than the heritage of the republic. The public property is operated under the control of the state all over the world. It is a strategic basic consumption item. When it is privatized, a man like Martin Shkreli appears, collects the market and imposes it on you at the price he wants. When nationalists say it is the heritage of the republic, we give it from the point of view of public economy.

Interviewee 25
Founder, GazeteRed
21.04.2018

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

21 years.

Are you a union member?

Yes.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No. I have never applied.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Radikal, Yurt, Dem TV, GazeteRed.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

All resign. There are no media outlets to work with. The print job is finished for us.

Why did you set up a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of producing a digital project?

Not answered.

Can you tell us the story of the establishment of the news site?

I was publishing a monthly magazine called Red from the Leman group. However, both political pressures are a left-wing journal and financial difficulties forced us to take a break from printed publications for a while. Actually, we always had a website, but it was not a website that was constantly updated, we made it updated, it became a kind of news comment site. We have an understanding that highlights the comments and analyzes on this news site. It is not a fully functional site, which operates on a voluntary basis rather than a commercial one. Therefore, it is a site where our political stance comes to the fore rather than the commercial aspect of the business (we are socialists). Their analysis should be considered as a platform where we discuss politics. Here, rather than making a doctrinal publication, we have an understanding of publication based on interpreting, analyzing and learning from daily events within the framework of our own opinion. We think that political realities are different from what they seem. We have a goal of revealing and exposing them. Therefore, we think that impartial reporting cannot be done here. It is always said that

the media should be neutral, but I and my friends do not think that such a thing can happen. In fact, many media organs that say they are impartial are also parties in the country and in the world. And yet, we are influencing the agenda of Turkey with our comments and analyzes by clearly revealing our side and stance. We are not in a position to catch up with the routine news anyway. The news that it is expected to rain in Istanbul cannot be included with us or we can give it very exceptionally. Be careful, we say something very heavy is coming. Or we can give the roads, infrastructure, why the municipality does not see, it is flooding.

How would you describe yourself within the scope of the project?

Entrepreneurial journalist. We are actually a collective team and I am a part of this team. I was the editor-in-chief at Red, and I took the lead in the establishment and development of this site. Our friends continue on a voluntary basis.

What are the new practices, competencies and abilities that you need to acquire and/or have acquired while establishing the news site and continuing your profession in this space?

I am currently able to build a website based on WordPress. How I learned Photoshop and InDesign while making the magazine before. Here I also learned WordPress.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

The use of social media in the dissemination of news.

What is the importance of the news site you have established in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

Journalism has shifted towards digital media. I see it on the street, everyone is getting news on their cell phone. Publications like GazeteRed have gained importance in Turkey. People no longer believe in mainstream news. I'm talking about the conscious nation. He is skeptical of everything. Everyone knows that there is such a ploy and that the government creates its own media. For this reason, he shifts to alternative publications like us. There are a few newspapers left in the print area, such as Evrensel and Birgün, and there are a couple of television channels. Everyone is heading there. For example, Fox TV's news is the most watched news right now. Why, because people know that there is a power accomplice on the other side. People watch TV. There is Tele 1, founded by Merdan Yanardag, and he watches there.

There is no media other than that. NTV, CNN Türk are all stories. They have no reputation. With this aspect, the Internet has become the most important channel in terms of both getting information and the chance for journalists like us to present information. Closing down social media during critical periods is done precisely in order to prevent broadcasts like ours and journalists like us.

We can also stand out with certain news at certain times. Let's say that the issue of early elections exploded and then the traffic of the site suddenly increased. Because people are wondering what they think. They say what's really going on. We broadcast until the morning of the coup night of 15 July, our traffic was very high. We do not enter news, we enter it with analysis and comments on how the news should be read. We, five editor friends, are careful to enter ten news a day. I don't think that doing a cut-and-paste journalism will help. There is no point in announcing the early election news on the website, but it is much more important for us to evaluate why the early elections are held. There is an early election, because as it stands, the government cannot rule the country.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editors. Apart from that, we have writers and contributors (voluntarily).

How many people work on the news site?

Five

Number of people employed: none.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computer, personal mobile phones, office programs, Photoshop, site infrastructure Word press.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes. Sometimes I work at home, sometimes in the office, sometimes from outside, wherever I am.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

It changes. Sometimes I come to the office at 09:00 in the morning, leave at 06:00 pm. But sometimes I don't come at all, sometimes I come in the afternoon and

leave immediately. It is changing. Our working hours are flexible. As a team, we aim to have a full staff in the office and see each other face to face.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

No.

Is your insurance paid?

I'm retired.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I coordinate the authors. During the day, I identify and write news that I can follow, interpret and analyze other media and agency showcases. Then I go to the site. I share it on social networks. Facebook is of great importance especially in terms of dissemination of news and site traffic. In the past, people used to visit the sites they were curious about directly. Now that trend has dropped to zero. If he comes across social media, he enters the site. He just reads that news and leaves. There is no tendency to enter a different page like the home page. First of all, one of our friends promoted the page on Facebook voluntarily. Other than that, we didn't advertise to show our content. Facebook is currently implementing a different policy. It regularly drops page likes. About 100 people like the page on average every week, but it has dropped by 600 in the last few months. As I understand it, this has become Facebook's method of asking for money.

Twitter has a short-term effect because it is instant, if the reader is there, if he sees the timeline immediately, he clicks on the news. Facebook was effective for a long time, the news there is more permanent, but now it shows the number of users less. It also shows little of our news. The site is mostly accessed from mobile devices. Very few people click on the site itself.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising, Google ads. Our advertiser friend gave us a video area. We get a small income from there.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes. When we get a lot of traffic, we generate income, we can pay the rent of the office and we can pay friends. Traffic becomes impossible. We are progressing voluntarily.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

We depend on Google and future traffic. We were having rosy dreams about setting up an ad unit. However, you will be a site with very high traffic so that advertising agreements can be made. However, we can ask for support. That, too, became impossible as the political environment tensed. There are very few companies that will advertise on a socialist and, when necessary, sharp-tongued site like us.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

It's about maintaining our idea of the sustainability of the news site. We're talking about a site that has been shut down four times. GazeteRed will be our fifth attempt. We build the site all the time, but we cannot make future plans at the moment due to political pressures and financial inadequacy. However, we do not receive any funding. Especially the European Union funds are pro-imperialist, mainly to end the left. After a while, I think they will direct us to feed their own ideas.

Can you define your target audience?

We try to appeal to everyone who accesses the Internet. We construct our language accordingly.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

It varies. It can be five thousand a day, it can be 100 thousand a day. At one point, we were steadily above 25 thousand per day. I think that when we complete the restructuring, it will become a site that has settled over 25 thousand again. If we are not closed. Instability makes the reader less likely to come back.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Facebook, Twitter.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We use social media actively. We use the liked news several times. We make news headlines striking. We try to use an image that is not available everywhere. We make our comments and analyzes interesting. We were doing this in Red magazine as well. In any case, the rapid adaptation of the site to these strategies depends on the development of our abilities.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We respond to Facebook comments. There is a discussion going on from there.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Not answered.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

We take the news that has appeared in the main stream, agencies and other news sites and interpret them. The other, Twitter, has badly become a news outlet. A piece of information that hasn't landed anywhere, I see, it has landed on Twitter. We take it, if there is a video of it, we put it, if there is a photo, we publish it. So Twitter is a resource for us. But the problem of verifying the information there also arises. To be honest, we made mistakes a few times. They present old images as if they are new, for example, we had some inexperience at the beginning. We gave these old images as new. But we learned later that we have a chance to verify it again with the opportunities offered by the internet.

We made a news comment. We saw Sedat Peker's right-hand man, the child molester, on Twitter in the middle of the night. Someone who was awake at night noticed that information, we talked between us immediately, we checked from several sources, we were fast and cautious (when it was entered, what happened, where it happened. We looked at the photos of the man, the photos were deleted but they are in the memory, or we saw that guy next to Sedat Peker for a while. we said ah right) and we gave it first in the morning, the site had exploded. Giving first resulted in tremendous site traffic. Posting a news first on the internet definitely increases the number of clicks.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

We are not different.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

If we find information on Twitter, we publish it after we are sure of its accuracy. I just gave it with the example of Sedat Peker.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

We have a framework, we are left-wing and we are socialists. Our editors abide by this, as we move forward on the basis of volunteerism and trust. It is autonomous. Everyone enters the news.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values. In fact, we need to put human values ahead of journalistic values.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

We base our progress on the right of the people to be informed about the news that will benefit the people of this country. The right of the public to be informed and to be aware of what is going on. Or people can't get news. Or he doesn't realize it because the news is often manipulated in the media. The closest example was the Fenerbahçe match. It was said that there was a conspiracy of foreign powers here. She was made a part of this plot because Meral Akşener had condemned it. It was terrible to have this news presented in the morning group in this way.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

The political pressures we care about the least. We get a penalty of closure, we re-establish the site. The least we care about is political pressure. We take commercial decisions and advertising from Google. We depend on the site's traffic. We lose stability when the site is shut down, but we don't really care. In the mainstream, the bosses' relationship with the government is fundamental. We have nothing to do with the government and cannot be.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

To interpret and analyze the news by putting our own perspective on the issues discussed in social media in all prominent media. We do not have a budget to be an agency member.

Interviewee 26**Journalist, T24****15.07.2019**

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Two years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Cumhuriyet.com.tr, Halk TV and T24.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

I was an intern at Cumhuriyet.com.tr, I was fired from Halk TV.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?
What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

I am a graduate of New Media department. I wanted to evaluate my education. I work with experienced journalists. We learned the theoretical part of the job at school, I put it into practice here.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I use social media very effectively, I learned to make quick decisions while analyzing news and transforming information into news. I am also a photo video editor here.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

Existing ones are used.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

The mainstream is now silent. He never had access to the critical point of view anyway. We are free and independent here. We have no reservations about news, we can research and write about any subject we want. We appeal to many different

segments, dissidents, supporters, they all get the news from us. This is a warning to us that we should be very careful, our responsibility is very heavy because almost the whole world gets Turkey news from sites such as T24, since it cannot provide mainstream news.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-Chief, news director and editors.

How many people work on the news site?

20 people.

Number of people employed: 20 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

In addition to computers, internet, Office programs, programs such as Photoshop, cameras, we also use our personal mobile phones for sound recording or image recording.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Eight hours or more for six days.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes. Fixed.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Yes.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I come to work at 9:00 in the morning. I'll review the agenda. I find news ideas. We have a news conference at 11:00 am. Everyone expresses their opinion.

We discuss it and make a decision. Then we write the news. If there is a need for an interview or an interview over the phone, we go. But it all had to be very fast.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising and funds.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Our hit count for ads from Google should always be high so that our revenues increase. For this, we have to enter 80-100 news during the day and keep our social media accounts up to date. Since we depend on the number of hits, less space is given to specific news. Our team is 20 people, not too few, but not too many, so we have to stay at the desk and write news quickly. We do not have an obligation to the funders in the funds, it does not impose any restrictions on us, but it can be cut off suddenly and we may have to search for new funds.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

I think we'll switch to subscription model. There are such plans.

Can you define your target audience?

Anyone who wants to receive accurate and unbiased news.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

500k daily.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Twitter and Facebook, Google, Instagram, the application of T24.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We share a news on multiple social networks using striking headlines. We try to share a news on social media before all other sites.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

I sometimes respond to comments on news I publish on my personal Twitter page. I don't do it very often, I don't have much time.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Unbiased and accurate news.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Twitter is the most important source, other media are local and foreign, news agencies.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

No difference.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We use Google analytics a lot. We shape our news according to which news the reader gives importance to, so that the number of hits will increase. We also include citizen news. When we come across information on Twitter, we verify it and report it. And we publish.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

In general, the whole team makes decisions together. Each editor finds the news him/herself, but all ideas are shared with the team at daily news meetings.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values and target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

We are free here, no one says to write this, we write our news by observing journalistic values. We do not have commercial concerns, we do not receive individual advertisements. However, in order for the target audience to have a high number of hits, it is very important which news the reader reads and shares. The other day, I made a news about a hairdresser with a cat, for example, the video news got incredible hits.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

First of all, I examine social media, other media and news agencies. When I reach newsworthy information, I write it with its videos or images, if any. I edit

photos and videos. I share all these during the meeting with my team, of course, there are other topics during the day, and I send them to my news manager. Then I first enter my news on the site and then I share it on social media. We work at the desk. Sometimes we go out for special news or interviews. Or we can conduct interviews over the phone.

Interviewee 27

Journalist, T24

15.07.2019

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Four years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Sol Haber Portalı, Sol Dergisi, Sol Gazetesi, Sputnik Türkiye, T24.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Job change due to economic reasons.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations?
What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

I am a Civil Engineering graduate. However, my passion for journalism was outweighed. Especially recently, digital media organizations are like a lifeline for those who have just stepped into the profession in Turkey. Finding a job in the mainstream is very difficult to establish yourself there. Corners are stuck. Digital supports young people more. We find the opportunity to both train and develop ourselves in these organizations. Of course, another reason is that we have the opportunity to work with professional journalists.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I practiced many new skills. The first of these is to be fast. Speed is very important because I have to see a news falling within seconds, write it, enter the site with its visuals, and share it on social media accounts right after. Others, I do not only

write a news, but also find its image and edit it, if there is a video, I either shoot it or edit it. Knowledge of graphic design programs. I also manage social media accounts.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

Existing technologies.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

T24 was founded in 2009 by experienced journalists such as Hasan Cemal and Doğan Akin Aydın Engin as proof that independent journalism can be practiced by opposing the ever-rising partisan media concept in Turkey. Right now, there is no media understanding of the mainstream media in Turkey, I mean pool media because they all have one voice. T24 has different editorial news than all of them, for once it is original, we can do critical journalism because there is no pressure from the boss. We have special files and we see that they create the agenda from time to time. And now we see that our news reaches millions. Especially the number of followers on our social media accounts shows this.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief, news director, editors, technical team.

How many people work on the news site?

20 people.

Number of people employed: 20 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers, internet connection, Office programs, programs such as Premiere Photoshop, cameras for live broadcasts, etc.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Eight hours, six days a week.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes. Fixed.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Yes.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

News manager.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I come to the office at 09:00 in the morning. I scan the agenda from social networks, other media or news agencies. I write down information that I think may be news and report it. We hold a news conference at 11:00 am every day. Sometimes, if our editor-in-chief cannot attend, I moderate the meeting. We discuss news recommendations from friends. We discuss the main lines on which topics we will focus on, and we discuss who will mainly work on which topics. This meeting takes 20 minutes. I have a 1 hour lunch break during the day. I either evaluate it by going out or use it in the office if the agenda is very busy. Normally, the shift ends at 06:00 pm, then the night editors take over. As I said, if the agenda is busy, the whole team stays in the office and continues with the news entry. Of course, work is not limited to overtime. At home, on the road, we continue to reflexively review and enter news to the news site or publish them from our social media accounts anywhere, anytime.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising and funds.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

There are mainly funds and Google ads. Funds were the only source of income when the site was established, we have had no obligation, we were only supported to do journalism. However, there was a problem, for example, once the funds were cut.

That's why we turned to Google ads. For this reason, we increased our hit count. We changed our infrastructure to WordPress so that we can work in sync with Google. We are making intensive news entries to increase the number of hits. We enter almost 90 news a day. We use social networks Twitter, Facebook Instagram, YouTube heavily. Readers click on news through these networks. We broadcast live on YouTube or share news videos there. We also try to reach the advertiser. We also have income from this source, but it is limited. We don't have a problem, the money from Google finances the site. However, there is something like that, we can't give place to exclusive news frequently due to situations such as sharing the news instantly on social networks in order to be fast and increase the number of hits. But we are independent. The fact that we are not 100% connected to the advertiser which liberates us.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

We want to switch to the subscription model.

Can you define your target audience?

Everyone.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

An average of 500 thousand per day.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Facebook, Twitter, Google, YouTube, Instagram, T24 App.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We use striking headlines. We keep social networks up to date. We offer readers different visuals that are not available everywhere. On Instagram, for example, we offer a summary of the day in the form of a short note under the photos, like an evaluation, in the style of what happened today. This has resulted in an increase in the number of our readers recently.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

There are comments, there are discussions, we respond to them on social networks or if we receive an e-mail, we always respond.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

We are an independent news media. We provide accurate, honest and impartial reporting.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Social media is our most important resource, especially Twitter, and we also use the accounts of news agencies, local and foreign media outlets, other journalist friends or politicians' Twitter accounts.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

I don't know, I've never worked in the mainstream.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We are constantly reviewing reports through Google analytics. At the moment, as the business model focuses on increasing the number of hits, it has become important which news the readers spend more time on and which news they prefer. In this way, we have also included news that are compatible with our reader profile so that our number of hits will increase. Citizen journalism is also important. We confirm this type of information we see on Twitter and use it with its visual.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

Decision making is usually at the discretion of the editors. However, in order to avoid an invisible place or mistake, we enter the site after going through my desk and the desk of the editor-in-chief.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

Here, all editors focus primarily on journalistic values. Then the target audience comes so that our readership does not increase or decrease so that we do not experience a decrease in our advertising revenues.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

First of all, I examine all media and news agencies. I write my news quickly, I choose its images, I edit it if there is a video. I immediately share it on social

networks, especially Facebook and Twitter, two very important sources for our news to reach readers. I usually work at a desk, but there are also times when I go out to the crime scene. For example, I personally followed Kemal Kılıçtaroğlu's 25-day march for justice. I traveled 432 kilometers from Ankara to Istanbul. During this walk, I continued to write news for T24. I also supported my news with video news and live broadcasts. I was in Hatay just last week. From the 3rd to the 5th of July. I visited the camps of the Syrians there. I was in Hassa when the missile fell on Reyhanlı.

Interviewee 28

Journalist, T24

15.07.2019

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Four years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Anchor Newspaper and T24.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

When I was studying in USA, I was working at Anchor Newspaper. After completing my education, I left and returned to Turkey.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

I realized that journalism is now being done more effectively on digital platforms all over the world. Now this profession has become online. When I returned to Turkey from the USA, I applied for a job at T24, the staff was open at that time and I started to work as an editor. I can reach the reader quickly and get instant feedback. This satisfies me. I'm in an independent media organization and my field of action is not limited in terms of journalism, but I don't worry about not being able to write this, and I work with experienced journalists.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

First of all, we need to be very active in social networks. Social media are the key platforms that enable us to reach the reader. I have to keep both my own accounts and T24's accounts alive. I have to be quick, I have to decide quickly. Speed is required when reviewing and writing newsworthy topics. Apart from that, if I am outside, taking photos and videos, if I am at a desk, finding suitable images and editing them is always my job. I didn't know how to use Photoshop, I learned it. How to login to a website from desktop and mobile. I learned which news should stand where on the screen.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

Existing ones.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

When T24 is an independent internet newspaper, it is pointless to compare it with the mainstream anyway. The state of the mainstream has turned to pro-media. Journalists are essentially restricted there. They cannot write news, they cannot fulfill the requirements of the profession. An order comes from above, everything is in order. It is always certain what kind of news they will enter from the list in front of them. Since they cannot write, news sites like T24 have gained more importance especially recently. Because now news is getting from these platforms. Readers, viewers, all saw what happened, woke up, no one follows the pro-media anymore. For example, people from all walks of life follow us, opposing left-wing, right-wing, it doesn't matter because we can report, this is the key sentence.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief, news director and editors.

How many people work on the news site?

20 people.

Number of people employed: 20 people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers, internet connection, Office programs, programs such as Photoshop, Premiere, site infrastructure also works in WordPress, we have cameras for live broadcasting.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Eight hours six days a week, sometimes more.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes. Fixed.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

Yes.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I come to the office at 09:00 in the morning. I examine all domestic and foreign media and social media to see what happened that day and what is on the agenda, especially Twitter, but also the agencies. I make news headlines, write them, find their images. I'll send it to the news director. He checks and confirms usually. We hold a news conference every day at 11:00 am, other than that, I'm outside sometimes even though I'm inside for the news most of the time. We have a 1 hour lunch break. This is how my day goes until 06:00 pm. If the agenda is very busy, I stay in the office after 06:00 pm. After all, this is a place that lives 24 hours a day, even if we go, the night editors stay.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising and funds.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

We live on Google ads and funds. Both of them do not have much of an obstacle, but for example, if our hits decrease, our income decreases or funds can be delayed or cut off from time to time. This time it is necessary to seek new funds. Apart from these, not being directly tied to the advertiser is a guarantee of our freedom.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

Subscription model.

Can you define your target audience?

Anyone who wants to receive news.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

500k daily.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Google, YouTube (our live streams and videos are always there), T24 app (for Android and IOS).

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We use striking headlines. We take a less salient but important part of the information and bring it to the fore. We try to share the news on social media by entering it before other media outlets. We report with short captions or spots on the photo, we do this more on Instagram. Apart from that, we share a news with different headlines more than once during the day. Our live broadcasts are also very popular.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

If emails arrive, we respond to them. We answer questions in the comments section. Or we participate in discussions.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Honest and impartial journalism.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

The biggest source is Twitter and news agencies, local and foreign newspapers, TVs, digital media outlets we use them all. Apart from that, we follow the personal social media accounts of celebrities or politicians and other journalists.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Nothing.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

There is data flow from Google analytics, so we can see which news the readers read more. We try to organize the news in this context so that it can be read. We also benefit from newsworthy content on Twitter. Of course, we confirm and then share a news we saw on Twitter. Otherwise, there is no way we can send reporters everywhere.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

The editors find the news, we send it to the writer news director, who, if necessary, gets the opinion of the editor-in-chief. But in general, the autonomous news never comes back negative, that is, there is no interference. There may be minor mistakes that are overlooked, they are only corrected. This is also instructive.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

Definitely journalistic values are at the forefront. Another is the target audience, and that is because we attach importance to the news that appeals to our reader profile. It is a strategy to increase the number of readers, however, no news is prepared without deviating from its journalistic values.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

I examine social media, especially Twitter. Apart from that, I examine the local and foreign press, news agencies, write my news with the information I get from these, choose their visuals, edit them, get approved for my news manager and enter

the site. Immediately after, I share the news on our social media accounts (accounts which belongs to me and to T24) and let it circulate. I usually work from a desk.

Interviewee 29

Journalist, Tele 1/ABC Gazetesi

28.05.2019

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Three years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Cumhuriyet and Yurt (web).

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Political and economic reasons.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

I started working as an economy reporter in the print media. But it was difficult to find a job and job opportunities were getting narrower, so I switched to digital. In fact, working in the print media was more attractive. I was able to go outside to catch the news. I could do research, I didn't have to be at a desk all the time. I was writing two or three news stories a day. I am constantly writing news during my working hours here. I have to catch the whole agenda and keep the agenda. Every news on the internet should be on the site, the reader should learn from us what is on the agenda when he enters the site. Missing a news causes a decrease in the number of our users. Not missing any news, being fast and punctual improved me professionally. Apart from that, I need to follow the news outside of working hours in order to understand the agenda well. Our constant production of news speeds up our work. For example, if I go back to the print media now, I can prepare the news in minutes that I worked on for hours a few years ago. I also learned photo video editing on the web. There are graphic designers who prepare the graphics in the print media, we do it ourselves here.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I have been working intensively in internet editorship for a year. In the print media, the journalist goes to the news and the journalist decides whether it can be news or not, and on the internet, social media determines it. Those who are TT, channels that set the agenda in social media, such as the sour dictionary on Twitter, give us the ability to correctly use and evaluate the data in the digital environment what will be news and what will not be read or what will not be read. I can see and analyze what is speculation and what is deception. Ethical rules are sometimes ignored. The reason for this is speed. It is very important to write and publish a news quickly. Readers follow the fastest news sites.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

Existing ones.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

We can say anything more easily here. We are working in a place where we can do journalism professionally. Of course, this place has its own policy, but this is not a policy that limit our freedom. Although they are channels that have just started broadcasting, we are not inferior to sites with larger teams with a team of seven, especially with the dedication of my Tele 1 and ABC Gazetesi colleagues.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editors and editor-in-chief.

How many people work on the news site?

Seven people.

Number of people employed: Six people, editor-in-chief is retired.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers, internet connection, office programs, Photoshop.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Eight hours. I work night shift and I am in the office from 03:00 pm to 11:00 pm. Then I continue from home. When there is a very unusual situation, I continue to work until the morning or at least until 03:00-04:00 am.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

No.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

I am an editor, I find news, write, edit photos and videos, manage social networks, and share news.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I come to the office at 15:00. I am reviewing the news made by my friends. I check what happened during the day. If I have time, I look at it before I come to work, if not, I perform these procedures here. Then it could be Twitter, Facebook, or I search all the channels where I can find news. Including traditional media and other news sites. Politicians, important names, other journalists, agencies, I'm scanning them all. I am communicating the information I have obtained from here. If the agenda is very busy, sometimes we don't even have time to eat tea, but normally I have an hour break for lunch. I always work at a desk. I can't go out and chase news. Sometimes, there are news that I follow outside of our working hours with the desire to do journalism on my own initiative, but it is not necessary. It's not part of what I normally do here.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising (Google ads) and funds.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

We do not receive advertisements from the circles that determine the direction of the economy, but the sensitivities of the advertiser are taken into account when reporting. There are times when we apply the language according to the advertiser, but we have never stopped making the news. Forgiveness is a matter of conscience. It is not done expecting a response. Those who love us do those who want us to grow. Those who like our news policy are our donors. Books are usually sold as a donation campaign. One source of value is Google ads, which is why we make news in the style of the most clicked news, so that our revenues increase.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

I will not know in terms of the business model, but studies are being carried out on how the site can be used better in terms of its appearance and plan, how it can be made visually appealing. These studies are implemented for both desktop and mobile. How can it recognize the news hierarchy better? These are, of course, approaches to monetizing Google ads. Among the personal plans, we are working to improve the exclusive news section and to reach the addressees of the news more quickly.

Can you define your target audience?

We are addressing those who oppose the current government. He is especially from the CHP, but when I measure the pulse of the news, I see that Meral Akşener's circle and the İyi Party's circle also interact a lot. There is a segment that follows HDP news from our websites. Our followers are a more democratic audience.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

200 thousand monthly.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Twitter, Facebook, Google, Ekşi Sözlük, Nabız (a mobile news tracking application).

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We organize our news content according to the reader's reaction and comments. Our goal is that more people enter the sites, read more news, click, share more on social networks, so that our advertising revenues will increase.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We definitely respond to comments, e-mails, criticisms on the whatsapp line.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

We stand by the values of journalism, we are absolutely against the pro-language. We stand with the people, only write the facts and if there is manipulation in the media, we expose it. We show news that no one has seen.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Twitter, Ekşi Sözlük, reader e-mails and notifications on WhatsApp. Press releases, perusing other media (I check how they see or receive the news), news from agencies. However, social media is now very decisive when making news.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

No difference.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We definitely consider reader reports. Or we report the videos we see on Twitter. These kinds of news are usually the ones that get the most interaction. We prepare our news by taking into account the measurements obtained through Google.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

In general, every journalist evaluates the information he has obtained. Then we discuss among ourselves before entering the sites. No one interferes with us while making news, but the reaction of the reader is important and the feedback we receive guides us while making news. For example, a lot of news has been received by the government. There are also news that we do not enter in order not to give Erdogan one after another. If there are two CHP / HDP news, we say that there should be one JDP news. We determine it ourselves. We try to strike a balance.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values and target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

In the mainstream, the journalist sees the news but cannot use it because of the policy of the publication he works for. Of course, when I was working in the republic, we used to attend press conferences with journalists from many newspapers,

and for example, a friend in the evening would give me a news idea so you can use it. He could see it himself but could not use it. I am definitely reporting a newsworthy piece of information that you consider advantageous to be in the opposing media. I am free.

The balances have changed recently. While the pro JDP-media or the pool media has closed in, struggling with bans, reporters fearing being fired, news sites like us, which we call opposition, have become independent. I don't have any problems while reporting, nor do I have fear of being kicked out if my very extreme boss cuts my salary. There is no middle ground right now. This process occurred after the Gezi Park, during the referendum process.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

We collect the news and videos that are TT on social media, especially on Twitter, or that fall into the Ekşi Sözlük, quickly during the day. That's why I'll check them out first. Then I examine other news sources. I'll make a visual for him. I set the title and spotlight. Stunning, but without being sensational, without deceiving people. We prefer a language that informs but also attracts attention. We edit the content, while doing this I get ideas from friends. We publish it and then we decide together where it will stand on the site. We do this according to the news hierarchy. First on Twitter, then on Facebook. We already use them only as a social network. From there, it spreads to large masses with the shares of the readers.

Interviewee 30

Journalist, Tele 1/ABC Gazetesi

28.05.2019

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

Two years.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Ihlas News Agency, Yurt Newspaper.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

Ihlas, political reasons disagreement. Yurt Newspaper, I did not receive my salary, due to economic reasons. Unfortunately, we are exposed to this a lot in the media sector.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

Now, the space for journalists, opposition or not, to work is very narrow. I can say this despite my experience in print media. There is no one following who buys the newspaper. Everything is running digital. We need to continue from here so that we can find a job and earn money. My political views are also influential, first of all, I am a human being, I have my feelings, my thoughts, and I do not prefer to work in a publication that is completely contrary to my political views. I can't be productive and I'm unhappy. Here, compared to other media organizations I work for, I am free, I can receive my salary.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

Producing fast news and uploading it to the site. Finding photos/videos suitable for the news, editing the photos and videos in Photoshop and other programs. I am doing both the job of a reporter and the job of a graphic designer here. Or I make social media posts. My sharing on Facebook is different from Twitter. Twitter, which is open to Facebook trolling, has more conscious users. That's why I learned to publish the news more clearly and clearly on Twitter. Apart from that, I produce titles and spots and do them in minutes. I am very fast. Here I enter at least 40 news every day.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

Existing ones. Social media. Web technologies mobile and desktop.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

We offer an alternative to people by going beyond the concept we call pool media. That's why we read. In the mainstream, not everyone's voice is heard. There is room for the voices of every segment on our sites. We can write down the mistakes

we see. We try to accommodate all parties. Other media outlets do not include HDP news, while some of the CHP's news are ignored, we publish them. Such as group meetings, speeches.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief and editors.

How many people work on the news site?

Seven people.

Number of people employed: Six people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers, internet connection, Photoshop, Office programs, technical infrastructure of the site, WordPress, this is the system that works best with Google ads.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Eight hours a day.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

I just got the job and I haven't received a salary yet.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

I will see.

Is your insurance paid?

Not yet.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I come to the office at 09:00 in the morning, turn on my computer. I check the sites on the way. What has been done, what news has been included. When I come, I check other news sites. I'm checking Twitter, reading the hot topics. I'm reviewing

agencies. I am creating a diary. I write my news and present it to my teammates. When approved, I usually choose the image that is approved. If there is a video, I edit it. I am logging in. Then I share the news several times on social networks. I have an hour lunch break. Sometimes I go out, sometimes we eat here. I also have cigarette coffee and tea breaks. Then it's 06:00 pm and I'm out of work. However, wherever I am, I reflexively continue the news review on my phone.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising (Google ads) and funds.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

We are more free, we do not have any economic expectations from the government. Donors are volunteers. If we enter something contrary to the opinions of the people who donate the disability, there is a possibility that the donation will be cut off. I think this works the same way with Google ads. We should report appropriate news to our followers.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

Increasing the number of followers in our social media accounts. Highlighting exclusive news. Becoming an even more reliable news source. Increasing our prestige.

Can you define your target audience?

Oppositional segment.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

200 thousand monthly.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Facebook, Twitter, Google, Ekşi Sözlük, Nabız App.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We use a striking headline, spot (no matter how interesting a news is, if we can't reflect it in the headline and spotlight, the news is dead). We use visuals. We

circulate the news on social networks several times. We are very active on social media.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

I respond to messages, e-mails and comments whenever I have time.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

We are moving along an oppositional line.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

We use social media a lot. We also evaluate the news of other news sites, traditional media, newspapers and televisions (domestic and foreign), news agencies, reader notices. Notifications usually come to the WhatsApp line. But we mostly follow the agenda on Twitter. The DHA agency is also helpful.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

No difference.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

User activities are important to us. We try to produce our news based on data such as which news they click on, which news they spend more time on. Citizen journalism news reaches us in the form of notice. If it is an issue that will create an agenda, we use it by reaching the addressee of the issue via Twitter or by confirming the information we obtain through other journalist friends. For example, there was a harassment scandal in the metrobus, it was videotaped, we took it and reported it.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

When the news idea is formed, we make a joint decision by discussing all our friends, including our editor-in-chief. Since we are already working at the same desk, we are in constant communication.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

There is the concept of ethics in journalism. In other words, we cannot ignore the values because we will read the news when we receive it, we pay attention to such

situations. The target audience is also effective, and we pay attention to give priority to the subjects that may be of interest to those who follow us. Of course, we also make the final decision. The target audience is not us, we are directing the target audience.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

I search for information that I think may be news from social media and other media. I'm investigating your background. If it is about a person, I also research how the news took place in the news in the past. Then I write. I choose the image. If there is a video, I prepare it. Of course, I do this by consulting my friends. Sometimes there are parts that I can't see. I'm finally uploading it to the sites. Then I share it on social media. I do this many times a day at a rapid pace. I work at a desk. When I produce special news, I can interview by phone.

Interviewee 31

Founder/Editor-in-chief, Tele 1/ABC Gazetesi

28.05.2019

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

35 years.

Are you a union member?

Yes.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

Yes. I have a permanent press card.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Günaydın Gazetesi, Yeni Yüzyıl Gazetesi, Radikal Gazetesi, Kanal D TV, TV 8, Kanal 6, Star TV, CNN Türk TV, Hürriyet.com.tr, Sözcü.com.tr, Cumhuriyet.com.tr, ABC Gazetesi, and Tele 1.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

I left some of them as an internal transfer. I was either fired or resigned because I was a little headstrong and opposed to the bosses' interference in the news. Since the bosses are intertwined with politicians, I was against their interventions such as seeing this news and seeing this news. I think there should be no room for

such interventions in journalism. I can't bear to hide news. At this point, there were very few publications where I could work with such a motivation. It does not exceed five fingers on one hand. All media organizations are now completely under the monopoly of the government. A kind of owner's voice.

Why did you set up a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of producing a digital project?

When I was in the *Günaydın* newspaper, I saw that the future was on TV. At that time, more private TVs were just being installed. I prepared a program to learn the language of television broadcasting in a production company. Then, my target was Kanal D, and when it was founded, I started to work as the first news director there. After the last intervention of Cem Uzan, the state seized the channel, and when I left Star TV, I got an offer from *hurriyet.com.tr*. There, I saw that the future is now on the Internet, and I preferred Internet publishing.

Especially after the emergence of social media and effective tools such as Facebook and Twitter, a new understanding of journalism called citizen journalism began. We had the opportunity to reach an instant news that a professional journalist could not reach in any way. He was there because he was sharing his photo, video, information instantly. If we tried to send a reporter to the scene from here, hours would pass and the incident would have ended, but someone who was there at the time of the incident and was involved in the incident immediately pulled it out and shared it on social media, and we had the opportunity to reach the news instantly. To convey our news to the four corners of the world instantly. We had the chance to transmit our videos, to transmit our television. Such a network brought Antarctica, Argentina, Brazil, Australia and Japan to our feet. We have become accessible to all people in one home world. Considering how many Turks there are in the world, this is a great advantage. We enable them to live in harmony with our country. This is a huge opportunity. We can video chat instantly. We can transmit snapshots. We can communicate in every way except touching. All borders are disappearing. The world is connected by communication networks. This is very exciting for journalism. We see that people are more interested in social media than they are in newspapers and television. In fact, people started to follow the news on social media, leaving the newspaper sites aside.

Can you tell us the story of the establishment of the news site?

Merdan Yanardag is my 32-year-old friend from Günaydın newspaper. Our relationship has never been broken. We always support each other. In this sense, I see ABC Newspaper and Tele 1 as a social responsibility project. Rather than a boss-employer relationship. In this situation where there are more countries, I first came to support ABC Newspaper. It was set up long before I came. Apart from this, there are not many alternative media organizations where journalists like me can work. I was the editor-in-chief of the Cumhuriyet newspaper's website for the last five years. I went to prison there, eight cases were filed against me. After the prison, the lawsuits did not stop, they continued. That's why Cumhuriyet newspaper sent me to Germany. Some of the cases were later overturned. I was able to return to Turkey. However, I resigned due to the change of management in Cumhuriyet newspaper. So I thought about not working for a while. Merdan Yanardag insisted, supported and said "you have a place here". I came to ABC Newspaper to support. Here, besides ABC Newspaper, we established the Tele 1 television website. Tele 1 became one of Turkey's top 500 sites in five months. Within five months, it was successful and passed ABC. It is also important to have the name of Tele 1 television in this. It has not been seated yet, it has no authors yet. We continue with a team of 7 people, but I see the progress well. I did the same thing at Cumhuriyet and Hürriyet.com.tr. I had set up sözcü.com.tr from scratch. I have been working on internet publishing for 15 years as I am a bit of an expert in this business.

I was in Cumhuriyet when ABC Gazetesi was founded. We were talking to Merdan. I didn't like the name. It's like from ABC News. But it was successful. When the central media came to power, 75% of the news sites did not report, and this increased the interest in independent sites. It has increased interest in opposing sites. It drew attention because the others didn't give the news. This is, of course, a situation unique to Turkey.

At that time, Merdan called me because there were problems in the Cumhuriyet. I continued to stay in the Cumhuriyet for a while. Our struggle continued. Our managers were in prison. Then I went to jail too. Tele 1 didn't exist yet. Merdan could have shown more interest in the site. ABC was born out of Turkey's need to provide news. It is also said on social media in order to give different words, but it is important to keep it within a media organization. What we do is very important from a historical point of view. Years later, when this period is examined, they will see that journalists oppose the current order and set up their own media with

their own means. They will see our struggle against the destruction of the secular system.

Then came Tele 1 television. It had a site, but it looked like a site with only TV shows. I thought this should be implemented as an active news site. Because it had Tele 1 television, despite having a limited broadcast network from the web and satellite (then it developed over time and passed in Digiturk, a TV platform). This should have been the site. Many guests appear on the programs during the day. I thought of it as a video site to evaluate what they said, but now we continue as both a video site and a proprietary news site. It is difficult with a small team, but that was our motivation for starting out. However, in a short time, Tele 1 achieved great success. It made a difference with his news. Its oppositional stance has been made public in the news. It started broadcasting on November 15, 2018.

I think that journalists should establish their own media in Turkey and in the world. While I was in Germany, I made projects of this. I saw an example when I was in Switzerland. As a business model, readers and journalists own the newspaper. They expect 10 people to deposit 50 Euros, but they realize that 40 thousand people have subscribed. This is something about consciousness in Turkey, Tele 1 and ABC are one of the important examples in Turkey, people support them. A lot of people whose names we do not know are small and large, so sites and TV channels can continue at the moment. I think people should embrace it more. I think the level of consciousness should improve. Everyone is talking, but they criticize when it comes to support. They don't know that I'm building two sites with three people. We make a lot of effort day and night. A normal site should not have less than 15 employees. But here we are building two sites with three people. When we hire a working journalist, it also has a burden. The effort must be rewarded.

I think that Tele 1 played a very important role with the closure of IMC TV and their support for the local elections on 24 June and 31 March. It is especially important that it appeals to Kurdish voters and social democrats. When HDP voters are declared terrorists by the government, they are not featured in any media outlets, on the contrary, HDP officials can speak their words here. Participating in panels and meetings and making their voices heard on the internet enabled us to become a media organ that appeals to the whole of Turkey. I think we have made important contributions to the democratization of Turkey.

How would you describe yourself within the scope of the project?

Journalist.

What are the new practices, competencies and abilities that you need to acquire and/or have acquired while establishing the news site and continuing your profession in this space?

If you ask me, there is only one concept in my mind, journalist, it is important to take action, it is important to establish a medium where we can do what we have in mind. There comes a day when we say we did it, the day comes, we say we were defeated, but we get up again and do it again. The main thing for me is to be devoted to the profession of journalism rather than entrepreneurship. We need to protect our Republic.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

I learned how to make videos. I learned Photoshop. I learned how to market a news on the internet and social media. We cannot give a news with a dry headline on social media. We cannot say that the minimum wage is that much. Because the news is unreadable. Readers can find many news with the same title and content everywhere. But by comparing the minimum wage with something, we give the news with the idea that for example, a minimum wage earner needs to work for so many years to buy a car. It is such a thing that while I was working at Hürriyet, it was the flagship of Turkey at that time, the news was instantly received and became available up to siir.com.tr. On sites linked by RSS. And there were news on many of the same sites. Now it has changed. Nobody visits a website for similar news and reads news. Looking for difference. It is very important where you will go about the title and where the subject will be mentioned, we do this both on the internet and on TV. We understand this from the rating on TV and from the number of retweets of the news on the Internet. Of being liked. We can see instantaneously from the number of reads from Google analytics. We can enter the home of our own readership. We see where it connects. We have come to learn with the temperature zones that there are people connecting from Russia, which news they are interested in from mouse movements. In the temperature region, we can follow where the mouse goes first. This improves our site. The information received from the user is also important. We rank the headlines, for example, we highlight them according to the intensity of the arrow. Of course, on the one hand, we need to keep the ones that are not read much but are on the agenda. That's why sites in Turkey bring headlines to the fore. I thought of tele 1

as a simple site, but it doesn't work in Turkey. Just as our newspaper's size is not small, a news website without headlines does not. We could not make a website with a simple design. We have no money and have to monetize Google ads in relation to the number of clicks. Since there is no boss mechanism to cover the damage here, we are trying to attract a lot of readers and click a lot of news. This, yes, lowers the quality of the news. This is the dilemma of news sites in Turkey. The effect on the content is as follows. I don't want to use tabloid news. Every now and then, we have to include a newspaper article. This is acceptable, actually, we are in a struggle, we are mainly political, but these are also necessary. Every journalist wants pages of analysis, full of brilliant information that is financially necessary, but employees must be recruited, they must receive salaries, and their insurance must be paid. There is a lot of exploitation of labor in the media in Turkey, this is one of the benefits of unemployment, but we are against it. There is a pollution in the competitive environment and I think this will be overcome with specific sites in the future. Just growing flowers, just sports, just like art magazine pages. I have acquired many skills, from buying a domain name to designing a website from scratch.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use existing ones.

What is the importance of the news site you have established in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

Tele 1 and ABC Newspaper are the pride of Turkish journalism. There are already a few sites established by journalists like us. There are very few who provide accurate and honest, unbiased news. Many have been banned. They have to broadcast from abroad. Unable to enter Turkey without a VPN. I think there is no such thing as mainstream media anymore. Hürriyet, Sabah and Milliyet were but now they have become the websites and newspapers that the government monopolized. People are looking for journalists who speak for themselves. In this sense, our news sites play an important role in Turkey's struggle for democracy, in the struggle to protect the republic. I think this will be evaluated by historians in the future. The news sites prove it with the attention they are getting now.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief and editors. Editors should know how to write news, shoot videos and use Photoshop. Since it is difficult to find such well-trained editors, we mostly train them. My luck is always to get them from universities and train them. My experience also comes into play in terms of shaping the news. The news may not be noticed, there may be mistakes, I intervene, but I think that when they gain experience, there will be no need for me. Here, I am more like a trainer than an editor-in-chief.

How many people work on the news site?

Seven people.

Number of people employed: six (I am retired).

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers, internet connection, Office programs, Photoshop. We get our servers from France.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Six days, nine or ten hours, but it doesn't actually end, I'm constantly uploading news to the site from the road or home, on the phone, on the computer. I communicate with my team on WhatsApp, I send the news at night, the editors edit it and upload it to the site. I get up in the morning and report news 24 hours a day, I live intertwined with the news. Sometimes I see something, I enter it myself, if friends do not see it. It can be the result of this match. If I see it at midnight, I enter again. I also work from my phone at home PC. It always explains. As you can see, we do not have a specific working hour.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes. I got paid for the first time this month.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

No.

Is your insurance paid?

No. I am retired.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor-in-chief.

Can you tell us about a working day?

Finding news, writing, bringing suggestions to my teammates' news ideas. I am active on social media accounts.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Not for profit.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising (Google ads) and funds.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

People here work for minimum wage. Since it is a social responsibility project, it is supported by donations. But we increased the advertising revenues of the sites. Google ad revenue. But there is no individual advertiser, no one wants to advertise in opposition publications out of fear of the government. They hesitate. They transfer all the advertisements to the pro-media. For fear of financial raids. Otherwise, if we had advertising revenue, I would employ 15 people here. We can earn good money very easily. Without these, we depend on Google ads, which increases or decreases depending on the number of hits and clicks. They've become self-translating sites, at least slightly increasing their Google ads. We started uploading videos to YouTube and earning advertising revenue from there. Otherwise, we were always at a loss. Google is the monopoly of the internet. It currently holds 50%/60% of the internet's advertising market, all over the world. We are also dependent on it. This time we returned to WordPress. Let's work more harmoniously with Google. I wish we weren't dependent and had advertisers. But in this case, we have to buy ads from Google. Prices in Turkey are cheaper than in the USA. We do not ask for bills. We cannot appeal. This addiction is bad. It's a revenue model that depends entirely on our performance.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

I have a Tele 1 newspaper project. It will give the summary of the day. It will be a newspaper that we will share from WhatsApp and Tele 1 application in a PDF

format. The business model will be a monthly subscription. Maybe we can put a banner on the homepage like click on the ads and support us. The Guardian did. We have a subscribe page, it is visible when the site is opened. We have plans to enter platforms like Netflix in the future. We can make video news and programs.

Can you define your target audience?

Our target audience is actually everyone. But those who follow are dissident, literate upper middle class, a mass that understands the world.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

150,000 right now.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Twitter, Facebook, Google, Nabız.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

To give more space to quality agenda, politics, sports, culture and art news.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

We respond to emails, messages, comments.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

Accurate, unbiased, reliable reporting.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

Social media and domestic and foreign media, agencies.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

No difference.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

We use it once in a while.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

We are trying to produce quality content. The news quality is poor in the current environment. All sites are trying to write the news and share it instantly on social media. What we do is tumble the news. Revealing the striking parts of the news. For example, the unemployment figure has increased to four million, but there are parts that are not visible, we reveal them. We collect the news in ten minutes and tell the hidden unemployment with the graphs of the past years. We use photos taken

from different angles. I write a striking headline and spot on the photo. This is where our difference comes in.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values, commercial interests, target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices?

How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

We control the government on behalf of the people. We reveal secrets. And we examine the background of these events. There is no mainstream, it is the voice of its owner. We cannot do exactly what we want because of economic problems. We have to include news that we think will happen even if it is not, but that will be very readable, so that we can earn enough advertising income from Google to keep us alive. We cannot overcome this on the opposition wing, in a country like Turkey yet. Even in Europe, a site over 100 thousand would easily have advertisers, but it is not possible to advertise here out of fear. In fact, since the advertiser could not advertise wherever he wanted, Cumhuriyet Newspaper, which is the same age with the history of the Republic, could not straighten its back for this reason. Since our earnings depend on Google, we are among the commercial decisions of the target audience. We have nothing else to do, we have to put in a lot of news unintentionally.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

We shape the news by using the information we get from social media, other media and agencies. We apply the mechanisms I described earlier.

Interviewee 32

Journalist, Tele 1/ABC Gazetesi

28.05.2019

How many years have you been working as a journalist?

One and a half year.

Are you a union member?

No.

Are you a press card holder? Or have you ever had?

No.

Which traditional and/or digital media organizations have you worked with?

Nebileyim.net (It was a site which mixes social media and news. It was a bit humorous, but it also gave news). Then I worked as an editor at Haber 365 for a short time. Then I started working at Tele 1 and ABC Gazetesi.

If you left the media organization you previously worked for, what are your reasons for leaving?

I left Nebileyim.net due to military service. I left Haber 365 for political reasons.

Why did you choose to work on a news site? What were your motivations? What are the attractive aspects of being involved in a digital project?

It's a tough question, but the news is now digital. Although it is very difficult to find a job in the print media, print media is losing its value now. The traditional press is over. It will be online in the future. Maybe 30 years from now it will be something else. I also keep up with the changing media environment. I can reach millions of people all of a sudden in the digital environment. I can get instant feedback.

What new practices, competencies and abilities do you need or have acquired while pursuing your career at a news site?

I learn something new every day. We actually publish the news on the Internet. I can call it word hunting. In other words, the news may come from the agencies, but in a very plain and simple way, a sentence, a word, a very important detail may be hidden from it. Here we brainstorm and find them as a team. It is the hidden news between those words that determines and changes the real agenda.

The words of the journalists we follow on Twitter or other media outlets are their social media accounts. Sometimes we reveal details that no one knows among the things that everyone can see, through brainstorming and teamwork. Teamwork is very important in news sites. Journalism is teamwork.

The news site I work for and my own social media accounts are open 24 hours a day. We also share the news we have prepared. And we get news from there. However, it is important who we follow, not how we use it. We focus on politicians, other media organizations, news sites and important journalists.

Due to the monopoly of the media, some journalists could not find a job. But they continue to do their work in the focus of social media. They share information,

they share a backstage they entered. We capture it and communicate it. This is how we follow social media in general. In this context, Twitter has turned into a network between journalists.

What are the new technologies that the news site transfers to the use of journalism and how are they used?

We use existing ones.

What is the importance of the news site you work for in terms of the change and transformation of journalism in Turkey, compared to the mainstream media? What are the effects on the profession and news content?

Yes, of course, the mainstream media has become a very common term in Turkey. We complain that there is no free media, but the main mainstream media is not free because they cannot report whatever they want. Even a mistake they say can cost them their job. Here, we are actually reporting against both the mainstream media's inability to tell and the lies of some pro-media media. In fact, we are pursuing the profession of journalism correctly. For example, no, he didn't say that, he said that the news is a montage, look, we are working as a supervisory authority for the manipulations in the media in Turkey and we are trying to regulate the environment. However, the audience we can reach is limited. For this reason, citizens follow sites like us more and share our news. Because we have a certain audience. Okay, we can reach this audience, but we can also reach more people. To exploit this potential, we need the support of readers. Mainstream media reaches what we cannot reach. With their apps and advertisements, some of them have a lot of investment and even government resources. We don't have any of these.

Let me explain its effect on journalism as follows. Every journalist wants to express their own opinion, some of them cannot. After a point, other journalists will want to return to the essence of the profession by taking the sites as an example like us and targeting the values and essence of journalism. And they will either move or establish channels that they can only do without distorting the facts and without pressure from the boss. So it seems to me that the mainstream is going to dry up. This will happen if all journalists want it, but if everyone is silent, it will not work. They are thirsty right now. Because there are economic reasons.

How is the news site organized?

Horizontal and collective. We definitely make decisions by discussing them together.

Which units are involved in the organization of the news site?

Editor-in-chief and editors.

How many people work on the news site?

Seven people.

Number of people employed: Six people.

What are your technical equipment (Computers, software, program, etc.)?

Computers, modem, internet connection as well, office programs, Photoshop.

Do you have an office?

Yes.

If yes, do you continue your work in the office?

Yes.

How many hours do you work during the day in the office?

Six days from 09:00 am to 06:00 pm. I work eight hours.

Do you work full time or part time?

Full time.

Do you have a fixed and/or permanent income?

Yes.

If you are earning an income, is it enough to live on?

No.

Is your insurance paid?

Yes.

What tasks do you perform on the news site?

Editor, I do all the work, from finding the news to writing it, editing the video if it has one, to choosing the photos. I also manage the social networks of the site. We all do the same jobs though.

Can you tell us about a working day?

I'm usually the first to arrive at the office in the morning. I've been here for seven months (he states he's a senior to his other friends). First, I review the writings of authors on other sites or in traditional media (any different information? I'll look for a backstage). If there is something special on the agenda, I follow them in the morning and take notes. I don't forget to take my coffee with me. Then my friends come. Our editor-in-chief arrives. I present the news ideas I find, we discuss, we decide on which news will enter the site and how. We have a one-hour lunch break. Sometimes we eat at the table, sometimes we go out. It can change according to the

intensity of the agenda. The news crawl lasts all day. Entering them on the site, sharing them on social media, finding their visuals. He also shared the news on Twitter. He also shares it on Facebook. We also decide and share their time arrangement between us. We manage two sites from a single desk. Everyone works at the same desk. And we are always in meetings. We're not holding a private news conference.

What type of business model is used on the news site?

Profit oriented.

What is the revenue model of the news site? Explain?

Advertising (Google ads) and funds.

Does the news site generate steady and regular income through its revenue model(s)?

Yes.

What are the opportunities and obstacles created by the revenue model used on the news site?

Donations prevent advertising from coming. For example, donors can cut donations if they contradict the advertiser. This is the biggest problem it creates. We receive Google ads on the site. However, when we want to receive a single ad, we have to disable Google ads. However, there is no obstacle to donating something done conscientiously. It is a support. However, donations are limited, which prevents us from growing our team.

Do you have any future plans for the news site to be sustainable? If yes, what are they?

Advertisements are wanted to be given more space. This is the information I got from the management.

Can you define your target audience?

All of Turkey, even anyone living outside of Turkey who has a command of Turkish.

What is the number of unique readers/users reached by the news site?

150 thousand monthly unique users, these days. We usually exceed 200 thousand. We have a systemic problem this time.

Through which platforms do readers/users access the news site?

Twitter and Facebook.

What are the strategies you use to increase the number of readers/users?

We write ideas and themes on images. It increases sharing. It is only clicked and read when there is written news, but when you see text on the image, it reflects your opinion and now it turns to social media sharing. For this reason, it is shared more and read more. Because readers share the information written on the image to show everyone.

Apart from that, we find striking headlines and share the same news on social media more than once during the day. This is due to the algorithm of social media. When we share a news, it goes to 10% of our follower count. For this reason, once the news is shared, that news dies. We need to share more than twice or even up to 5 times. Because when the news is shared for the first time, the audience that went out is not the same as the audience that was shared for the last time. The news never goes to the same audience.

To what extent do you want to communicate with your readers/users?

On social media, users make comments, sometimes there are discussions or questions are asked. We give our opinions when we have time. We answer questions. Sometimes readers reach out to us and suggest news. We're definitely considering it.

What is the publication policy of the news site?

We do dissident, accurate and impartial journalism. We are the voice of those who cannot speak.

How do you access information? What are the digital/analog channels, tools and methods you use?

We also use a lot of traditional media, news agencies, other news sites, social networks, Ekşi Sözlük. Sometimes unheard of things can be at Ekşi.

Compared to the mainstream media, what are the different technologies the news site uses to access information?

Nothing.

What is the frequency of use of user-generated content and digital data during news production? What are the effects on your profession and news?

It is such a system that we can learn the entire profile of those who visit us through Google, down to the screen brightness. Of course, we direct ourselves to repeat the news that readers prefer. Our goal is to increase our advertising revenue. Another may be an image shared on Twitter that we agree is newsworthy. There may be images sent to our WhatsApp line. Or readers reach out to us and report news. We are also considering these. We decipher the videos and communicate them. And we

publish. Citizen journalism and the information we get from there are very important, especially for sites like us, which do not have a reporter outside of Istanbul, as there is on-site notification.

How does the decision-making mechanism work when setting the agenda and turning information into news?

The whole team works at the same desk. Everyone is doing a news review. The found titles are opened for discussion. Every journalist expresses his opinion. Newsworthy ideas are communicated. The editor-in-chief also allows us to review the news we have prepared to show us the details that we cannot see, and put them on the air.

What factors influence your editorial choices?

Journalistic values and target audience.

To what extent do the specified factor or factors affect your editorial choices? How do your editorial choices differ compared to mainstream media?

There is no boss pressure on us, we have absolutely no political reservations, we are opposition and we defend it to the end. We have no fear of being shut down because any media outlet in Turkey can be shut down at any time. For this reason, we can produce news by prioritizing journalism values. A conscious audience in Turkey is curious and follows the news made by unaffiliated journalists. At the moment, we know that we are followed by every segment with our oppositional identity. People are tired of a monotonous media environment. Even the same news circulating on all news channels pushed people to look for alternatives. They realize that the news is false and distorted. People are looking at their own life, things are not going well. Television, on the other hand, is rosy. They turn to news sites like ours, saying that there is something wrong with this business. A new media order is being established by journalists outside the pool media. We are one of the pioneers of this. We see it from Google analytics. Early in the morning, people enter Tele 1 and ABC Newspaper without even entering social networks. We see these.

Can you describe yourself as “independent” and “autonomous” in the news production process?

Yes.

Can you tell us about your news production process?

We have two types of news production. One is agency news. We receive the images, news from the agencies, and the parts that are suitable for the semantic world

of the sites and report them. Apart from this, for example, an important name in social media has created an important agenda by tweeting. We'll report this Tweet. We work with absolutely no pressure from advertisers or bosses on us. We take collective decisions, but unfortunately we produce news at the desk. Our team is small, so sometimes we reach the addressee of the news on the phone for comments or interviews, but since I started working here, I have never gone out and followed the news. For example, we do not have a magazine tab, sports tabs, do we not have an audience to address? Of course there is. However, we are a small team, so we have to choose news with more political content.



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Hazırlayanın Adı Soyadı :Laura AVADAR

Tez Başlığı : JOURNALISM IN THE WEB 2.0 ERA, NEW BUSINESS
MODELS AND DIGITAL LABOUR: LESSONS DRAWN FROM DIGITAL-
BORN NEWS SITES FOUNDED BY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS IN
TURKEY SINCE 2000s

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