

## **A RESEARCH ON EFFECTS OF MEDIA OWNERSHIP BY BUSINESSMEN IN THE SAMPLE OF TURKEY**

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### **Abstract**

In the last thirty years of the Turkish media, investments in the press sector have varied and have changed the patronage structure of press businesses. Decrees of 24 January 1980, which was enacted before September 12, 1980 and created a radical change in the structure of the Turkish economy, initiated the process of conglomerating in the Turkish press. After this process, media businesses have attracted the attention of businessmen, and businessmen invested in the media market. With the interest of businessmen in the media industry, press businesses existing in the 90s were replaced by media holdings, and then media businesses expanded vertically and horizontally, and cross-media ownership increased in Turkish media. In this study, the subject of cross-media ownership in the last thirty years of Turkish media was thoroughly examined, and the negative effects of cross-media ownership on Turkish media economy were addressed. As a result of the development of cross-media ownership in Turkish media, the sector became under the control of a small number of media holdings that grew in this direction. Within the scope of the research, interviews were conducted with 36 people selected as random. In these interviews, opinions about the concept of media ownership and the ownership of the media by businessmen were questioned. As a result of the study, it was emphasized that the media ownership among businessmen damaged media democracy and media economy, and it destroyed plurivocality in the media and paved way to politicization of the press. It was emphasized that law drafts to prevent media ownership by businessmen should be applied, and it was addressed that media ownership laws should be reorganized for media to gain its independence.

**Keywords:** Cross-Media, Media Ownership, Turkish Media

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This diversity and integration in the media has increased the appetite of capital owners investing in the media. Investors chose to make their media-related investments in a vertical direction in a way to cover sub-sectors rather than one-way. Investors who wanted to take advantage of all the integration of the media and make production in all channels of the medium shown a cross-direction growth by investing in multiple medias. Cross-media ownership increased the synergy of the media together with the technology and culture industry and brought different advantages to the capital owner. While the cross-media owner achieved economic advantages using the media all around, this situation created disadvantages for the community. Management of the media by a few capital owners destroyed plurivocality in the media and increased the barriers to market entry.

The media has a very important mission in both shaping consumption habits of individuals and announcing political propaganda and ideology. This mission has made the control of the media attractive. This control

impulse has created a variety of media ownership along with the growth in commercial media. Media transformation in Turkey occurred in two stages. In the first stage, the bosses who came from the family root journalism were replaced by businessmen, and the control and ownership of the media was first obtained by businessmen. In the second phase, businessmen who invested in the media conglomerated the media and invested in the sub-sections of the culture industry along with all media channels and paved the way for cross-media ownership.

## **2. THE MEDIA CONCEPT**

Media is the plural of the word medium in English and is defined as medium, vehicles, tools, television stations, press bodies, mass communication tools (Danesi, 2002, p.55). In other words, the media contains both communication media and communication tools. Therefore, the media also covers phone, audio cassette and CD, tape and stereo, cameras, gramophone and record, VCD and DVD, as well as radio as an auditory instrument radio, TV, video, film and music industry as an audio-visual tool, and the Internet as an interactive media (İşman, 2005, p.19).

The meaning of the media is derived from the plural form of the word 'medium' translated as "medium, environment, vehicle, atmosphere" in Latin. The word media is nowadays used more for mass media tools. When examined in general, media refers to tools, organizations, technologies and products related to mass media (Çakır, 2010,p.85).

The media, aside from its lexical meaning, emerges as a concept that indicates tools for mass media and economic activities associated with the use of these tools. According to Söylemez (1998, p.59), tools such as newspapers, television, radio, video, books, records, tapes, movies and Internet, posters, wall panel or theater games are included in a wide range that can be accepted as media.

Media, in definition, is the common name that covers all of media organs such as radio, television, newspapers and magazines. Media in the sense of communication is the transmission of news, ideas, messages or information to the masses through various tools. Media tools can be printed or based on visual presentation. When these tools are presented to the masses in printed media such as newspapers and magazines, then they are called printed press. When news, ideas and information publishing is carried out with all mass communication tools such as radio, television and the Internet in addition to newspapers and magazines, it is called publishing in a broader sense, in other words, the media. When the term, press and publication, is used together and with the meaning of mass communication, it covers all communication tools such as radio and television together with newspapers, magazines and books.

The first clear example of the most effective use of media in history is the French Revolution. In France where economy was deteriorated, while high-level officials lived in extreme luxury, the public was in misery, and this led to start the media movement. The press closely followed the economy and warned the public about that subject and directed attention to the luxury lifestyle that senior executives should not have.

The movement of the media in this direction was a necessity and consequence of democracy. Because the media is the power that makes the public aware of the functions of the higher level. This is an integral part of the capitalist society. The media, with its this aspect, also observes other power sources for the public interest, but this may be possible by keeping media institutions out of ownership and market relations.

The first time the media began to be seen in Turkey was around 1730s, and its center was Istanbul. Until then, it is seen that a total of 1.5 million books were published in western countries. In London, newspaper printing in 1753 was around 20,000. Turkish commercial printers were greatly influenced by the western countries, which were primarily a source of printing. This led to many reforms in the Ottoman Empire, such as revolution. In the face of this change, the French writer, Rabelais, expressed his amazement in 1530, saying, "Such that, everyone is reading, they include robbers, prisoners, punks, and even the substrates of the people" (Onursoy, 2012, p. 94)

First writings in the Ottoman Empire became visible after 1820s. At this time, Bulak Matbaası was established by the Egyptian Governor, Mehmet Ali Pasha, and the first printing works emerged in 1822. In these writings, most press works were in Turkish, and the rest was Arabic. On November 20, 1828, the first domestic newspaper in Cairo was published in Arabic, half of which was Turkish. Then, in 1831, Takvim-i Vekayi belonging to Mahmut II was released in Istanbul. Firstly, writings mainly included newspapers, but there was not enough equipment for books. This situation reveals that newspapers were read more in the Ottoman Empire compared to books. On the other hand, the Ottoman community had a quick and fast information traffic habit. Newspapers explained information quickly and clearly, and the distribution could be quick (Onursoy, 2012, p. 75).

### **3. THE CONCEPT OF MEDIA OWNERSHIP and its HISTORY in TURKEY**

According to ownership structures, media businesses are divided into three groups. Accordingly, public enterprises are defined as businesses with all or a large part of their capital owned by public entities; private businesses are defined as those with all or a large part of their capital owned by private persons; and mixed businesses are defined as those with a part of their capital owned by public entities and a part of their capital owned by private persons (Atilgan, 1999 , p. 34).

Public media businesses are based on the necessity of the State to provide public service in the field of infrastructure and communication. During the Cold War period, the state monopoly of broadcasting vehicles, especially radio and television, gained importance in terms of protecting the political regime and directing the internal public. There are three different ways of functioning in the public broadcasting policies created in this way. In the first method, the business operates directly in connection with governments. In the second one, it operates in the form of government-affiliated autonomous structures to protect public enterprises from political pressures. The third and last method is that the independent regulatory authorities of the state control private radio and television organizations on behalf of the public service (Geray, 2003, p. 120).

Written media ownership is generally released in all democratic regimes and protected by constitutional guarantees. Therefore, there is a limitation of the publication of newspapers or magazines or the ownership of the organizations that publish them. In Europe, considering the development of press sector predominantly owned by families, this sector was prone to oligopolistic development. The concentration in the press sector, which began during the interwar period in Western Europe, seemed to increase especially after the World War II. In this concentration process, several large newspaper chains took on a large portion of the market as a result of horizontal and vertical integration (Humphreys, 1996, p. 81). Despite the freedom of the press sector, two different structures emerged in the field of radio and television broadcasting. While television and radio broadcasting were carried out by private enterprises in the United States, it was fulfilled by the State through public monopolies in Western Europe until 1983. According to a recent study by the European Institute, there are a total of 36 public television channels in 17 countries in Western Europe. Together with 1980s, a mixed structure was established in which public television and radio sector were included in publication process in Western Europe (Humphreys, 1996, p.24).

The subject of media ownership was mentioned for the first time in a study prepared by Unesco at the end of the 1970s and conducted by MacBride Commission called by the name of MacBride who was the president of this commission and other scientists in the field of communication from other countries (Kara, 2008, p. 89).

It was stated that the property structure could hinder the media's diversity and pluralism in the following way: "It can be said that one of the fundamental criteria of information freedom lies in the pluralism of resources. Regardless of the political system, gathering of these resources in the hands of dominant groups leads to the distortion of freedom. It is necessary to have a large diversity of information and opinion sources so that individuals can fit their preferences on public matters into solid foundations. However, two points should be considered here; first, even if it makes a conscious distortion difficult, the diversity of resources cannot guarantee the validity of information. Secondly, diversity is not always synonymous with pluralism-especially the pluralism of views. Communication networks and broadcasting tools must also be as diverse as resources and independent from each other. Otherwise, diversity remains solely as a view." (MacBride, 1993, p. 110).

The media monopoly was formed in 1963 with the establishment of TRT in Turkey. Since 1990, this was the case until the private-owned commercial televisions were allowed in that year. When the article 133 of the Constitution related to publishing by private capital was amended, a new process began in media ownership. Gaps in the law prevented the free movement in the sector, the delay of publishing law was not fully enlightened (Özduđu, 2011, p. 87)

Until the 1980s, the most remarkable feature in the ownership control of Turkish media was that, until that day, the press-release ownership, which was dominated by major family companies in Turkey, was suddenly controlled by businessmen outside these families. These entrepreneurs took the role of pioneering in the formation of the media by bringing new rules along with these movements, and they led to the destruction of the old traditional understanding (Kara, 2008, p. 130).

With the military intervention of September 12, 1980, the voice of the social opposition was cut, and this depoliticization process was also reflected on the media. In the period after 1980, it became important to maintain the sovereignty of the capital also in ideological sense by means of media. Neoliberal policies found a great "reputation" in press release organs.

The first participation to press from outside the profession before 1980s was realized by the purchase of Yeni Sabah Newspaper by Sefa Kılıçoğlu in 1948. Attempts towards press outside the profession were not long-term during this period, and the media companies continued to exist in the form of family businesses that grew up from journalism until the end of the 1970s (Topuz, 2003, p. 68). The sale of 25% shares of Milliyet Yayinlari belonging to Karacan family to Aydın Doğan who was a businessman at that time and had no connections with the media in 1979 was the second important participation outside the profession in the media.

As a result of economic policies implemented in the 1980s, the “traditional” structuring in the media sector undergone a change. With the decision taken on January 24, 1980 and the abolition of subsidies given to newspaper by state, enterprises operating in the press sector faced enormous costs at the rates they had not encountered until that day. These economic decisions, which the State took during transition from the social economy to the liberal economy, were reflected in the media, and an elimination process began in the press industry, especially after that date. At the end of this process, those who were financially strong and able to obtain advertising and advertisement income, stayed in the market, and other left their places to businessmen with financial power.

The media industry was enlarged with investments since 1980, and small businesses have lost for reasons such as joining to bigger companies or not holding in the sector. In addition, the dominance of large companies took over the sub-sectors of the media. These power groups made many commercial activities in many fields especially in publishing, such as newspaper publishing, news agency, books and magazines, printing and distribution, advertising-advertisement agency, television and radio broadcasting, film-making. On the other hand, the same powers became captains also in fields of banking, economy, marketing, insurance, tourism and health (Sevginer, 2012, p. 159)

Non-media capital's entry into media sector shows that capital is not just an ownership issue but also a control problem. This requires focusing on the structure of ownership and results of private companies gaining weight. In a survey conducted by Picard on seven public press operators, it was determined that the primary owners of these companies were institutional investors with investments also made in the field of commercial banking and state hedge funds. In this study in which the decision-making processes of these companies for short-term profits were also examined, another danger was found remarkable that decisions taken by managers of these companies were mostly parallel to the interests of investors. Again, in another study conducted towards whether there was a meaningful relationship between financial dependence and the composition of the board of directors at seventeen public press companies, it was found out that companies with financiers in their boards of directors had less external economic dependence, on the other hand, companies with advertisers in their boards of directors earned more advertisement income (An and Seung, 2004, p. 98).

#### **4. MEDIA OWNERSHIP IN TURKEY DURING 1950-1980**

The 1950s was one of the milestones of Turkish political life. With the introduction of multi-party life, the dynamics of the period started to transform in all areas of society. The Democratic Party came to power and initiated a process of change from statist economic policies to private sector priority economic policies. In the early 1950s, Turkey became a member of NATO, developed good relations with its neighbors and made alliances in the Middle East and Balkans. However, the Cold War between the world continued to be decisive in international relations during that period. During the first period of the Democratic Party, good relations were developed with the press, and the majority of newspapers supported the Democratic Party. In the early days of the Democratic Party's reign, the press sector increased in terms of both circulation and the number of magazines and newspapers.

During this period, many right-wing magazines and newspapers began to be published. The most effective publication of the period is Necip Fazıl Kısakürek's Great Eastern journal (İnuğur, 1992, p. 63). During this period, the Cyprus issue was raised, and the press played a key role in the agenda of the Cyprus issue and the shaping of Cypriot policies. With the efforts of the Hurriyet newspaper owner, Sedat Simavi, the Cyprus issue found an important place on the agenda. The Democratic Party, which was re-ruling in the 1957 elections, began to implement oppressive policies in resolving these problems in Turkey, which increasingly increased economic problems and gradually increased pressure on the press. On May 27, 1960, the armed forces seized the administration. This coup process, which was a junta operation, continued with the Yassıada Courts. At the end of that period, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, Foreign Minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu and Finance Minister Hasan Polatkan were executed (Ateş, 1999, p. 85). During the last period of the Democratic Party, while the press did not dare to confront coup plotters and had increasing pressure on them, they supported the National Unity Committee established after the coup. The National Unity

Committee, which wanted to get media's support, gave priority to resolving the problems of the press. However, after a short period of time, they went to restrictions on the libertarian laws they had enacted and received reaction of the press.

The Press Announcement Institution, founded in 1960, was initially seen as governments' efforts to dominate the press and was met with reaction by the newspaper owners. In the end of the 1960s, the newspapers began offset printing with colorful and illustrated pages. Newspaper circulation increased, the number of left-wing newspapers increased (İnuğur, 1992, p. 52). In the 1970s, the events of social opposition began to increase. Youth movements motivated by the 68 generation in the world showed itself in a short period of time in Turkey as well. With the impact of economic problems as of the mid-1970s, conflicts of different views accelerated. The press sector received its share of this polarization. The newspaper read became part of the political identity of the people.

In terms of property structure of the media, this period is when majority of newspapers were owned by journalists. However, investments were made from non-press sectors. In this period, it can be seen that people from different sectors entered the press sector because of the reputation of owning a newspaper, the advantages provided in power relations and the power it could add to the political career targets.

## **5. MEDIA OWNERSHIP IN TURKEY DURING 1980-1990**

This period is the beginning of major changes in both economic life and social life in Turkey. With the decisions of January 24, the framework of the liberalization model was drawn, and the transformation started. It is undoubtedly possible that such a transformation can be extended by various societal resistances. However, in the society, terror events that manifested itself in the form of the right-left conflicts created an anxiety environment. However, the September 12 coup eliminated opposition reactions. Thus, an extremely suitable ground for the implementation of these decisions emerged. The 1982 Constitution prepared the basis for many anti-democratic arrangements and changed many laws that gave direction to Turkey's political social and economic life (Ateş, 1999, p. 19).

In this period, as in many sectors in the world where the free market economy was in effect, the condensation process began in the media sector as well. The ownership structure of the media sector with the 1980s also evolved in a way that great wealth entered the sector outside the media. The number of media businesses growing in different sectors increased by adding to the holdings. Although the prediction of Turgut Özal "2.5 newspapers will remain in Turkey" was not realized, the process gained the process gained momentum in which a few groups owned the majority of advertisement and sale shares. With the new economic policies implemented since the 1980s, the increase in input costs, such as newspaper paper and printing ink resulted in the investment in the press sector only achieved by the large capital. For example, in the early 1980s, the newsprint paper received 300% increase (Kuyucu, 2014, p. 58). In addition, the press had taken an important role and function in the implementation of new policies and the provision of social consent. New major media businesses invested in expensive import press technologies from the mid-1980s and abandoned their working styles that dragged them to idle capacity use (Adaklı, 2017). To take advantage of scale economies, content preparation from a single point began for many press vehicles under the same ownership. Especially when large capital groups entered the press area and their use of the press as a weapon to carry out the work of the other companies of these groups, the press began to support the political groups that did their works and to block up those that did not fulfill their demands (Taşdemir, 2005, p. 88).

## **6. MEDIA OWNERSHIP IN TURKEY DURING 1990-2000**

Since the 1990s, differentiation in property structures, competitive environment, technologies used and convergence policies, the media industry concept was replaced by a concept of the press sector covering much broader communication environments. In the 1980s, the press sector dominated by businessmen with investments in different sectors was mentioned earlier in the study. With the monopoly of television broadcasting abolished in the 1990s, these shareholders spread to almost every area of the media (Sözeri, 2015, p. 63). The media sector also did its part in creating the media-capital-power junction, which was required by the new stage, called Globalization, with the new proprietary forms and structures formed. The result of this task was that the fourth force, now owned by giant corporations, took the function of supervising society on behalf of the ruling owners, instead of controlling the power on behalf of the community (Kaya, 2009, p. 33). For the media sector in Turkey, the 1990s were years when activities in the financial sector determined conditions of the period. In the 1990s, every major media organization also owned the bank. In this period, only the owners of Sabah Group among the dominant media groups of the sector were of journalistic origin. Other media groups were investor groups from different sectors, and they all had banks. In

order to avoid losing advantage in this competitive environment, the Sabah Group also acquired Etibank in a short period of time.

In the 1990s, the former media owners who had previously gathered power between the military and coalition governments could not establish the same kind of relations with the new government, and the decline of military domination led these media owners to search for good relations with the government (Sözeri, 2015, p. 102).

The other important development of the period was the start of the broadcast life of private television channels. The ability of television channels to reach more people compared to the written press also increased the attractiveness of investment in this area. In addition, high-cost new technology investments in the media industry, monopolization in the field of distribution made it difficult to cling to the sector among small-scale media enterprises.

Another issue that should be mentioned is that the newspaper owners did not want to work with union members during that period and forced the workers to resign from the union with the intimidation of layoffs. For example, in 1992, journalists of Milliyet Newspaper owned by Aydın Doğan were resigned through notary and their ties with the Union were severed (Demir, 2013, p. 26). Although press workers had the right to unite with the law no. 5953, which was released in 1952, since they had no rights to collective bargaining and strike, journalists obtained these rights in 1963. Journalists obtained right to collective bargaining with the law no. 274 enacted in 1963 and right to strike with the law no. 275 (Özsever, 2004, p. 75). March 12, 1971 Memorandum brought restrictions on the freedom of the press, union and social rights of workers of the media sector were tightened with the Union Law no. 2821 and Collective Labor Contract, Strike and Lockout Law no. 2822 enacted in 1984 (Adaklı, 2006, p. 54). The same process was experienced in Hürriyet after the Doğan Group purchased the Hürriyet newspaper in 1994. In order to avoid the obligation to fulfill the rights that are recognized by the law, the journalists work as interns for a long time without a staff and uninsured. The survivors of the internship are hired under the terms of the contract signing according to the provisions of law no. 1475 instead of 212, which gives 'white-collar worker' status. Another common practice is to give payments from another company's payroll by means of 'subcontracted' method. Thus, journalists were legally accepted to charge for a non-journalist status, so they had to work in an environment lacking in job assurance and unification, and they lost their white-collar worker status.

In short, the most prominent characteristics of the media sector in terms of property structures during 1990s included taking advantage of scale economy with the liberalization of private televisions, increase in media investments to gain power over political will, effects of the 1994 crisis and the process of deunionization in terms of media workers.

## **7. MEDIA OWNERSHIP IN TURKEY DURING 2000s**

The first milestone in the Turkish press in terms of property and control relations was the acceleration of non-press capital entrance in the sector in the 1980s; the second milestone was transformation of the press into the media and its conglomeration; the third milestone was confiscation of banks through Saving Deposit Insurance Fund (SDIF) to media extensions as of the end of 1990s. SDIF has begun to sell the media groups confiscated since 2005, and the ownership composition of the media sector was reformed. After the acquisition of İktisat Bank owned by Erol Aksoy by the Fund, Cine 5 channel was out of the sector; after the acquisition of banks owned by Kamuran Çörtlük and Süzer, BRT and Kent TV were out of the sector; and CTV channel was out of the sector after the acquisition of Bank Kapital owned by Ceylan Group. The confiscate of İhlas Finans also created a concussion in Turkey Group. After the banks of the Çukurova Group were seized by SDIF, they chose reinforcements and took steps to organize new transfers, new TV channels and new distribution (Demir, 2013, p. 138).

In 2001, the abolition of media owners' barriers to public tenders also increased the attractiveness of media investments and paved the way for large groups operating in the media sector to benefit from state tenders. Almost all of the major media groups in the period had large investments in the field of energy, mining, finance and construction.

The economic crisis in 2001 was effective in redesigning the media ownership environment. Economic, political problems and solution practices of the 1990s resulted in the economic crisis of 2001. In the 2001 crisis, which was one of the most important crises in the history of the Republic, the stock market had historical decline of 18.1%, while the nightly interest rates increased up to 7500%. Inflation reached up to 70%. Especially in short-term foreign capital investments, large outflows occurred. Such a profound economic crisis affected the media sector as well as all sectors.

During the economic crisis, businesses primarily shorten their advertising expenses. This leads to a decrease in the media's advertising revenues. After the 2001 crisis, the media's advertising revenues in Turkey decreased by more than 50%. There was a 52% reduction in media investments (Bulunmaz, 2010, p. 45).

With all these developments, the appreciation of the dollar also increased the import entry costs. The media sector looked for solutions out of the crisis by firing journalists. According to TJU's statements, 5000 journalists were unemployed in 2001. Deunionization process as of 1900s worked for media owners in the 2001 crisis and facilitated layoffs. The only reason why the media sector was so affected by the 2001 crisis was only increases in costs. Especially in the 1990s, the damage suffered by the banks of the companies that gathered their growing media and finance groups on a single roof also influenced media investments. Up to the 2001 crisis, media businesses increased their investments in media using the financial advantages of owning a bank, and thus they thought they would strengthen their hands in politics. By means of the media, they aimed to grow by taking public tenders in privatization applications with the pressure force they would build on politics. The conditions that had prepared the 2001 economic crisis, the later arrangements and the political turmoil in the whole process have redesigned both the political map and the media sector in Turkey. After the crisis, SDIF began to confiscate the banks that it considered to be financially problematic and the media businesses of these holdings that these banks were affiliated with. 10 of the banks confiscated after the crisis belonged to the media holdings.

During the first years of the AK Party ruling, there was a memorandum of understanding in the search for media and politics, but the AK Party did not forget the struggle of media owners to be involved in the shaping of politics in the 1990s, and the party participated in search for reshaping process of the Turkish media sector. The party took an attitude that encouraged new groups to enter the media sector in the sale of confiscated media companies and opening the front of foreign capital. Restrictions on foreign capital share in the media sector were reduced, and foreign capital could invest in media industry.

In later periods, consortia established with the partnership of more than one company began to purchase the media companies that were sold by tender. These consortia, seen as pro-power, changed the competition portfolio in the media. As the AKP government increased its political power in the elections with increasing vote rates, this situation also increased its effectiveness in the face of opposition groups in the media sector. In this competition environment, while some media owners tried to create a pro-power stance, others sought to establish balance politics. The number of media owners who broadcast dissidents was quite small. The main argument of pro-power broadcasts was based on the rhetoric of supporting the government in the face of strategies of external forces for weakening the government and state sovereignty. The media organs with balance politics occasionally received critical attitudes, taking a step back at the stress points of their relations with the power, and they formed a strategy by employing journalists who had close relations with the power and who were apparently pro-power. A small number of dissident media businesses produced broadcast policies criticizing the government for allegations of any kind of policy that exerted pressure on the media, silencing and/or digesting the opposition.

## **8. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF MEDIA OWNERSHIP**

There are also negative aspects of media ownership as much as its positive aspects. The advantages of controlling the capital of a media business can be compiled into six substances, while the disadvantages can be compiled into four substances.

Advantages of Media Ownership:

- Status or social superiority difference emerging with the fact that the sector is owned by the elite (the upper class of society), which is not accessible to other sectors,
- Public service (public use),
- Capital owner with media ownership having the function of influencing, orienting and managing public opinion,
- To be strong in investments in business areas other than the media, to seize the competitive advantage largely by others,
- To bring and reflect extreme ideas and knowledge to society, to provide annuity through popular culture and to monetize popular culture,
- To establish ideologies, to develop and to build the desired ideological infrastructure.

According to Sönmez (2013), there are other benefits and revenues offered by this sector to the capital operating outside the media sector although this sector is not profitable. These revenues include the ability to

reach the masses, to give them the desired message, to influence, thus to use and share a power, and to use this as a defense or offense tool against its competitors and political virtue.

Negative Aspects of Media Ownership:

- Staying under criticism
- Inability to present opinions objectively
- To stay under pressure politically
- Keep the company up to date and protect it from attacks

Considering at the ownership structure of Turkish media in 2018, it is seen that almost all major media businesses and holdings are managed by patronage with businesses outside the media. The owners of these media businesses are working in non-media business branches such as energy-construction-finance. Largest media groups such as Doğuş Group, Demirören Group, Ciner Group and Turkuvaz Group called as the big four of the media have also revenues from different business branches with activities outside the media.

The number of media businesses without commercial activity outside of the media is quite small. Owners of media businesses such as Cumhuriyet Newspaper, directed by Cumhuriyet Foundation, Sözcü and Korkusuz newspaper, Aydınlık Newspaper & Ulusal Channel, Halk TV, Tele 1 TV and Number One Media Group do not operate in the business branches outside the media.

## 9. THE AIM AND METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This research was conducted to question the role of the media owner businessmen in the structure of media ownership in Turkey. With a desire to get a rant from the media in recent years when the media is the fourth force, purpose of using the media as the fourth force have encouraged these people to invest in the media sector. Today, all major media holdings in the Turkish media are in control and ownership of businessmen operating in different professions. The study was designed to seek answers to the question "What are the advantages and disadvantages of businessmen having the media?".

The question, "What are the advantages and disadvantages of the media consisting of media holding owners in terms of the media industry?" was asked to participants of the survey conducted with qualitative research methods, and answers of 36 participant were examined.

### 9.1 Findings of the Research: Assessment of Media Patronage by Businessmen

Accordingly, the majority of the participants stated that the media holdings consisting of businessmen had brought and would bring drawbacks. In addition, one of the most widely mentioned views was that monopolization gained momentum with entrance of businessmen bosses to the press as adverse effects previously experienced. Besides, the problem of monopolization in media is one of the most important issues facing the media sector today. Accordingly, participants expressed that this situation damaged the pluralism principle, prevented the competition, strengthened the hand of capital against the organization of media workers, and that only a few major capital groups directed the media.

One of the participants, participant A, indicated that media patronage by businessmen was positive in terms of promotional activities, however, it was disadvantageous since businessmen might apply censorship to the news against them. Participant K described the biggest advantage of businessmen as media holdings owners as supporting the media holding in times of financial distress.

Regarding the advantages of media holdings constituting of businessmen in Turkey, one of the participants outlined topics such as benefit from other capital branches in terms of standing powerful, ability to avoid government pressure partially, ability to do more creative and useful jobs and being effective in advertising and marketing at the same time. In relation to the disadvantages of this situation, the same participant pointed out subjects such as decline of objectivity, disproportionate profit distribution, high salary difference among employees, unfair competition in element/employee selection, losing importance of the role of media information/training, and censorship in the case of denial of service rejection against the dominant ideology.

One of the participants of the research argued that businessmen as media bosses were not an advantage, but a completely disadvantaged situation. Accordingly, the participant D summarized his views as follows:

*"Businessmen are always interacting with the power, and because they are constantly interacting in the media sector, the principle of neutral publishing is disregarded. Because the principle of neutral publishing is disregarded, people who follow the agenda from the media can be misguided, which may lead to misguided people who follow the agenda from the media in*



*the future. This could lead to much bigger problems in the future. From a private sector standpoint, the efforts of media workers working in this sector to be able to enter or work in the position or increase their place in these organizations and efforts to show the power as good continuously all abuse public's trust in the media. This environment, which creates a dilemma among the public, can lead to the separation among people from the same nation. Considering in terms of advertisers, while an unbiased organization can reach target masses in a healthier environment, there is a danger of not reaching the audience if they work with organizations broadcasting under government pressure."*

The media has changed the way the bosses look at the media within the framework of new economic understanding by means of creating a great force in the face of public and government. In addition to a lot of things, bosses have begun to see being a media boss as part of the game of competition and power. Participant E indicated with the following words about the disadvantages of businessmen as the media bosses:

*"Most media owners in our country operate in sectors such as energy, automotive, transportation and construction. This can give birth to political alliances. When we look at the TV channels, the biggest TV company owners have a political connection to the ruling party. Neutrality policy is being overlooked. The company's businessmen are hiring their families or their immediate surroundings. The problem of unemployment, discrimination and influential contracts are major threats to the newly graduated communicators. State intervention and state censorship are clear in the media. A pro-power media group emerges. Both censorship and close relations with power are dragging us into monologism in Turkey's media. The events that are manipulated to people through a single thought led people to the idea that there is one truth and it is the one told to them in the media."*

Another participant also stated that businessmen as media owners may have certain advantages. Accordingly:

*"There are not many substances I can count as an advantage. Only a small number of organizations can make their voices heard. A different voice in Newspapers, TV and radio channels, different opposition opinions are also allowed with possibility of making comparisons. Groups like Doğan Medya can bring a critical opinion, which is now differentiated by its sale. Despite interference and obstacles, opposition channels can be established even though the advertising revenues are minimal. Holding companies can also be established with the right of correct news forwarding, thinking and questioning."*

One of the participants pointed out the different advantages and emphasized that businessmen as media bosses led to increase in capital opportunities in the press, the technology was better applied, the distribution was better regulated, and the purchasing power became cheaper.

The Participants C described politics side of the subject and presented his views as follows:

*"Businessmen in Turkey are largely involved in politics. There may be several reasons for this, and one of the consequences might be that the boss wants to use the media organizations he owns for the interests of this political establishment because of the political formation that he or she is sympathetic. Especially in recent years, production companies have been a major place in the media industry. Production companies may agree with the media companies that their rights are based on political or business relationship with their series and/or TV programs. There may also be an advantage to be a businessman in this network of relationships, and there are situations where it is disadvantaged to take on the same parties politically to get the rights to publish the productions."*

Another participant who expressed their views on the subject listed the disadvantageous situations on the subject as monopoly of the richest, managing of the media by those who did not know the media and possibility of bankruptcy among businessmen.

Another participant who posed his detailed ideas about the business identity of the media bosses reported his views as follows:

*"The management of media holdings by businessmen can be advantageous in terms of content and publicity. The first private television in Turkey, Cem Uzan's Star TV did great works, and the media was modernized. The world-wide celebrities brought to the country contributed greatly to the branding of both the channel and the country. Actually, Cem Uzan was the Turkish person*

*who achieved this with the best quality. One of the main reasons why Cem Uzan moved Star TV to such heights was the concept of time. Because there were no channels other than TRT in our country, a concept of frequency fee had not yet emerged. In fact, a businessman like Cem Uzan achieved a great opportunity by evaluating that period very well. But nowadays, businessmen are more of a construction owner, or they're pretending to be media bosses to make their own commercials or to get money laundering. Businessmen who set out for such purposes are both lowering the quality of the channel, and the frequency shortage takes place in time. We cannot put Aydın Doğan in this category because he had grown directly in the media, but it is necessary to open a separate bracket to Demirören Holding who purchased Doğan Group. Doğan Group, which was purchased by 890 million dollars by Demirören who is pro-power and with the help of the ruling party, is shown as the largest organization determining the pulse of the public in Turkey until this time. It is also obvious why this sale is not made over TRT. Demirören Holding will publish news, announcements, propaganda that is close to power in order to protect its own interests so that the power does not touch itself and this reign shall go on. You can remember that Doğan Holding, who had done the opposite news, paid a historical tax penalty. So, the public will no longer hear anything but the voice of the Government, and they will not see the right or the wrong, and the opposing views correctly."*

Participant N stated these advantages, arguing that the media bosses may have the advantage of being a businessman:

*"Media organization could be established with large capitals. Large-capital media organizations have a wide technical infrastructure and they can present their publications in a better-quality way to their viewers, listeners or readers. Businessmen can maintain a better healthy continuity of media organizations. The convenience of financing money from other sectors can help people working in the media organization continue their business life in a relaxed environment."*

Participant M indicated that businessmen in the media sector are a positive situation in the economic sense, but the problem would arise when the neutrality was lost, and the participant expressed his opinions with the following words:

*"I don't think there is a problem to have neutral businessmen in the field. It is appropriate to have people with financial power to continue the development of the media sector. I do not think positive results will be taken if the media is in the hands of businessmen close to power..."*

Participant N argues that this situation will bring a disadvantage as a media structure while creating an economic advantage.

*"The first disadvantage is that businessmen will like to operate the media organization like the holdings of their businesses. For example, issues such as salaries, working hours, start-up and end-of-work are finishing media in terms of creativity and freedom needed in the media."*

## **CONCLUSION**

One of the most important consequences of investing in the media industry by businessmen accelerating after 1980s in Turkey was cross-media ownership. Cross-media ownership is to invest in more than one branch of media at the same time and operate in many media channels. Considering the European media industry, company integrations by these companies operating in different fields led to concentration in the media industry, there has occurred a cross-media ownership in Turkey as a result of combining different non-media industries such as energy and finance.

Cross-media ownership has reduced the number of businesses operating in the media, and the industry is controlled by several media holdings and the result of oligopolization. The cross-media ownership of the Turkish media began in the nineties, began to be felt well in the 2000s and causing this industry to intensify.

Media Holdings operating under the media ownership of businessmen have caused increased concentration and have raised the barriers to the market entry. High concentration has also blocked media entrepreneurs, while a media investor who wants to enter the market faces very high costs. Another economic consequence of the media ownership of businessmen is that media businesses broadcasting on a local and regional basis face a threat of economic survival. Media businesses that want to broadcast locally and regionally are in the shade of a number of media holdings that broadcast nationwide and take on the strong capital of businessmen, who dominate the sector, and they especially cannot benefit from their advertising spending. The bosses of media holdings who broadcast on a national scale and have cross-media ownership, can also put their power on top of the country's interests in some cases and rise against to the ruling party in the

country. As seen in this research once again, media viewers oppose to the media under control of businessmen since media and interests are collected together. Although it is interpreted as an advantage in terms of transferring capital to the media, media viewers indicated in the study that businessmen control over media ownership will bring along limitations to free media and this will lead to monologism in the media.

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