

**HEGEMONY MEDIATED:  
The Roots of Militaristic Media Discourse in Turkey**

**By Hilmi Serhan Kazaz**

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**Supervisor: Miklos Sukosd**

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## Abstract

The major lines of sociological critique take the view that the tight bind of media to the market displaces the logic of and contents of the field of politics itself, and the dominance of one social actor or group within the media discourse depends on their economic power in the system. In this thesis I argue that explaining the dominance within the media discourse on merely economic or political grounds is reductionism because such approach ignores the cultural components and non-class social actors. The military as a non-class social actor and militarist discourse as a component of national foundational myth in Turkey suggests a ground for examining the role of these two variables at the same time. Thereby, using the idea of *hegemony*, as it is proposed by Antonio Gramsci, I investigate the roots of militarist media discourse in Turkey in cultural and political sense, and how the militaristic discourse is maintained within the sphere of media economics. My main argument is that militaristic discourse is an inherent aspect of Turkish mass media structure, be it commercialized or not, because of its connotations to the national unity and solidarity, and the militaristic discourse that is popularized by the Turkish mass media.

Keywords: hegemony, militarism, discourse, media ownership, Turkey

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## Introduction

We are witnessing an ‘epistemological shift’ using Foucault’s words, in the social communication processes. The 21<sup>st</sup> century brings a new context for new technology of thinking and communicating through new tools and devices. Information flows faster than it ever has, new languages and mental maps are created independent of any geographical concerns. That is to say, we are witnessing new ‘media’ for communication. Media can no longer be perceived as a mere intermediary between knowledge and the audiences; it not only transmits but also produces hierarchies for social information through strategies such as agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw 1994) and framing (Entman 1993). Media texts possess commodity value, meaning that these textual products operate in the market, free from their technological features. The media sector, as the economic framework for these interactions, is mostly controlled by conglomerates with tendency to monopolize.

Politically, media is thought to be the 4<sup>th</sup> Estate, the power that is positioned side by side with legislation, executive and judiciary functions in a modern political system. It is obvious that development of new communicative technologies solidifies the power of mass media in shaping social perceptions and thus the political arena itself. Vedat Demir (2007, 209) indicates that especially in political systems with a weak democratic traditions, the media sector becomes a lucrative business that legitimizes every mean in order to achieve economic ends.

Major lines of sociological critique take the view that the tight bind of media to the market displaces the logic of and contents of the field of politics itself (Bourdieu 1997). The relationship between the media economics and its effects on social processes has been addressed by mainly the critical political economy approach, a paradigm in order to understand the anatomy of media structure using the Marxist tools, and more specifically through the premises such as class conflict and domination (Bagdikian 1983, Herman and Chomsky 1988, McChesney 2000). The critical political economy thesis indicates that economic structures of dominance in the media and communications industry limit the diversity of ideas and opinions that circulate in the media. Basic tenets of this approach can be summarized as the following: the critical political economists understand the media as a holistic domain which characterized by the relationship between politics and economics, focusing on long term changes and historical developments in media structures and their relationship with political, economic and cultural domains. They are also concerned with the balance and tension between private enterprise and public intervention, and looking beyond the question of technical issues of efficiency in order to engage in moral questions of justice, equality and public good.

It would be pertinent to assert that, in terms of the instruments and perspectives used, critical political economy suggests a sturdy framework, especially when it comes to exploring the mode of production within which the social relations, and thereby the media discourses in specific are produced and maintained (Curran 2002). However I argue that, one weakness of this theoretical framework is that, it lacks analytical tools for explaining the role of “non-class” actors such as the military, while investigating the economic realm of media structures. The critical political economy school mainly focuses on the domination relationship between the dominant and subordinate classes that are prescribed in the economic system. Thus it is argued that economic

domination translates itself into the domination within each and every aspect of social life, including the media. Yet, as I will assert, such domination does not necessarily have economic roots considering the non-class actors and their strength in terms of being effective in social processes. I will propose an alternative Marxist perspective, Antonio Gramsci's idea of Hegemony, which expands the theoretical discussion of domination to the cultural realm in order to better comprehend the anatomy of media as a political sphere, and I will examine the roots of militaristic discourse in Turkish mass media as an example of the military as a non-class actor influencing the media discourse.

Militarism is not analytically a new concept. Historian Volker Berghahn (1982) notes that the idea of militarism was first popularized by Pierre Proudhon in 1860s. Berghahn provides certain defining features of the concept since its emergence: the introduction of compulsory conscription as a modern practice in 19<sup>th</sup> century, the impact of two world wars, Japanese and German militarism models, confrontation between Marxist and liberal critiques of militarism, civil-military relations in Third World countries. It is possible to reflect on three different understandings of militarism which is widespread in the academic literature: military as a social institution; militarism as an ideology; and militarization as a social process (Cock 1991, Chenoy 1998). Chenoy (1998, 101) defines militarism as “the set of ideas and structures that glorify practices and norms associated with militaries”. Moreover, “militarization is a step-by-step process by which a person or a thing gradually comes to be controlled by the military or comes to depend for its well-being, on militaristic ideals” (Enloe 2003, 3). Altınay (2004, 2) stresses that “militarization is successful if it achieves a discourse of ‘normalcy’ in public discussions surrounding the power of the military in civilian life, politics, economics, and people's self-understandings”.

Military as an important component of modern politics, commands an immense power due to its “vanguard” role in any society. Then, what makes Turkish military peculiar to the analysis of military and media relationship? Halberstam (2001, 34) draws attention to the relationship between media structure and the military in the US, claiming that there are certain shifts in retrospect, in the media discourse when it comes to positioning the military before the American society. Halberstam exemplifies that the mass media, which was almost pro-war during the initial years of Vietnam War, shifted into a more critical perspective of the military operations in the forthcoming years. Following Halberstam’s argument it can be asserted that the stance of media towards military in the US can be understood depending on the context. Political and social context determines the approach of media towards military operations and activities. However as I will argue, the position of media in Turkey towards military does not depend on the political or social context: militaristic discourse is an inherent feature of Turkish mass media. Ragip Duran (2003, 75-76) stresses that Turkish mass media, is historically militaristic and he draws attention to the positive attitude of Turkish press towards the idea of war in cases of Korean War, Algerian War, Cyprus War, Gulf Wars 1991 and 2003, Somali War, Kosova War, and the on-going war in South-eastern Turkey against Kurdish separatists. Therefore the peculiarity of Turkey, as I will posit, comes from the fact that, militaristic media discourse is an *embedded* property of media structure, not always salient but inherently apparent, and it follows a unilinear pattern for mediation of militaristic discourse, unlike other examples in the world, due to the hegemonic position of military in the Turkish cultural and political context. Thus the purpose of the thesis is to look for the roots of militaristic discourse in the Turkish media in terms of cultural, political and historical perspectives.

My analysis will consist of five parts: a case study of Turkish transfrontier military operation to Northern Iraq in February 21<sup>st</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> 2008, and four chapters dealing with different aspects of the relationship between the Turkish mass media and the militaristic discourse. The aim of the first chapter is to shed light on the Gramsci's *hegemony* as the general theoretical framework. Accordingly I will discuss the Marxist theories on the role and functions of military, Gramsci's contribution to Marxist analysis through expanding the concept of domination to the cultural realm, and idea of hegemony within the framework of media studies. This chapter will provide a conceptual background for examining the ideological and cultural dominance of military in the Turkish context.

In the second chapter I will present the *case study*. Here three highest circulation newspapers (*Zaman*, *Sabah* and *Hurriyet*) will be examined in terms of the representation of military operation to Northern Iraq. The core of analysis lies at the use of language and linguistic strategies when it comes to excavating the discursive and ideological predispositions of a certain text. Thus I will deal with the presentation of the operation in discursive terms, and I suggest that militaristic discourse is a common denominator of Turkish mass media, regardless of the political orientations of the media outlets. Such linguistic analysis will serve as the empirical basis for the forthcoming articulations in the thesis. It would be pertinent to remark that the aim of the thesis is to look for the roots of militaristic discursive hegemony in mass media as a whole —not only in print press but also in TV, radio and etc. Yet, due to scarcity of time and resources the discursive analysis will be limited to print press. It should be underlined that the discursive strategies that are implemented by newspapers are shared by the radio and TV networks operating under the same corporate body with those dailies. Thus focusing on the linguistic means of mediation will overcome the methodological discrepancies which may occur while examining different media.



The third and fourth chapters are designed so that they can provide cultural and historical frameworks for understanding the peculiarity of militarism as a phenomenon in Turkish politics. Furthermore there appears a need for contextualization for better understanding the relationship between mass media and an ideological concept. The third chapter will focus on the birth of militarism as a foundational myth and cultural component of Turkish national identity. Here I will portray the cultural ingredients of the roots of militaristic discourse in the very beginning of the republican era. Following the idea of *Myth of the Military Nation* as it is suggested by Ayse Gul Altinay (2004), I will argue that militarism appears as a hegemonic ideology within the cultural realm of Turkish national identity. In the fourth chapter I will observe how the cultural hegemony of the military is translated into the political realm. Thereby this section will consist of the presentation of the role of military in Turkish political history after 1950s, with the emergence of two-party system for the first time. These two chapters are complementary in a sense that, they will sketch out how the idea of military and militarism gains normalcy in the public discourse, on the part of audiences.

The economic structure paving way for the popularization of militaristic discourse and how the militaristic discourse is maintained in the mass media using policy instruments on part of the state will be the concerns of the fifth chapter. It should be underlined that the economic structure and policy instruments are not directly related to the idea of hegemony since they pertain to a certain kind of “obvious” political pressure. Yet an analysis of the roots of militaristic hegemony in media discourse will be incomplete without taking a) consumer/audience oriented media economy and b) the policy measures for monitoring the *deviances* from the hegemonic ideology in the media discourse, into consideration. Thus I will portray a brief anatomy of Turkish media

structure, putting accent on the commercialization processes following 1980s. The inquiry of the anatomy of media economy will be followed by the examination of the Radyo Televizyon Ust Kurulu (RTUK) as the managerial board monitoring and regulating broadcasting policy. How the militaristic discourse is protected by the RTUK when it comes to monitoring provided media content will be the core of inquiry. This chapter is significant in the sense that it will combine the cultural and political aspects of militaristic discourse into the policy sphere and will bridge the historical and cultural analysis with the media realm.

My general hypothesis is that, military as a non-class economic and political actor has a hegemonic status for the media industry in Turkey. The weight of militaristic discourse can be only assessed by bringing cultural, historical and political aspects together. Until 1990s, military had direct control over policy mechanisms regulating and monitoring the media sphere. However with the emergence of commercialization such direct control dissolved itself into a mode of hegemonic status based on consent of the audiences and media outlets within the media discourse, appropriated by the editors, and journalists. Thereby the dominance of the hegemonic militaristic ideology does not come from the political authority, but from *cultural* one. Commercialized media develop possibilities for a more democratic debate and expand the realm of ideas to be discussed. Here what I stress is that, although they expand the horizons for the democratic ideal in a society, in certain cases they are constrained by the hegemony of certain social actors. Media structures can only generate democratic discussion and pluralism in a space that is left out by these hegemonic actors due to both commercial and ideational factors. Commercial factor is basically the dependence of such media structures on the hegemonic political status of the social actors, or status quo in general. Therefore touching upon the hegemonic social actors, such as the military in the Turkey, in a negative way and questioning

them would be detrimental for economic benefits of the media corporations. Ideationally the hegemony of these actors are produced and reproduced by the media itself on daily basis, presenting a mental map to audiences and generating collectivity, or more specifically national solidarity.

In Turkish case, the military and militaristic discourse is the essential component of the national foundational myth. Militaristic discourse is internalized by the audiences through education system and the media. When it comes to issues regarding to military, Turkish mass media inherently presents a positive attitude towards militaristic ideal. In other words, as I will argue, Turkish media popularizes the hegemonic militaristic discourse. The popularization of the militaristic discourse by the media outlets, in economic terms, depends on the characteristics of consumers in the market, namely the *audiences*. Since the militaristic values are internalized by the audiences as the fundamental part of their identities, any other discourse challenging the militaristic one would confront the mass media outlets with audiences, which eventually, would be detrimental for the circulation numbers, thus the economic and political benefits of controlling a large social *portefeuille*.

What I will propose in the thesis is that there can be alternative approaches to deal with the media and the power relationships operating within the discursive framework of media. As Turkish case suggests, the ability to control media discourse does not necessarily belong to the social actors which are strong in economic sense, but also to the culturally strong ones like the military in Turkey. Instead of trying to explain the power conflicts for attaining a position within the media discourse merely in economic terms and using the idea of class conflict, cultural elements have to be included in order to better comprehend the commercialization of media in a certain context

with its relation to the contextual social dynamics. Therefore I will propose a multi-layered analysis dealing with the cultural and political aspects of the militaristic hegemony, and its relationship with the Turkish media sphere in order to crystallize the roots of militaristic media discourse in Turkey.

## I. Hegemony

Marx himself never penetrated into the discussion of military and state in theoretical perspective in a comprehensive manner but evaluated these concepts through empirical analyses as he did in 18<sup>th</sup> of Brumaire, when talking about Bonapartism and its functionalities. Following Marx, functions of the military power within the organizational and institutional scheme of a capitalistic state, and its role in addressing social class relations has been a concern for the Marxist state theoreticians. Roughly speaking the Marxist approach towards military can be epitomized in Althusser (1989, 23), who utters that military —altogether with government, administrative bureaucracy, police, courts and penitentiaries— is an oppressive appendage of state apparatus , and it is, in the final analysis, is a supplementary oppressive force which directly intervenes. Military has been conceptualized in the realm of the instrumentalist approach as a neutral instrument to be utilized by social classes for the sake of their class interests (Nun 1967, Halpern 1963); it has been conceptualized in the form of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism (O'Donnell, 1979) in terms of combining the industrial development and militarist authoritarianism; it has been addressed within the framework of political structuralism of Mouzelis (1986) as an agency promoting the *mode of domination* brought by the capitalist system; and not but not least the military power has been examined by Antonio Gramsci using the idea of *hegemony*.

### 1.1. Gramsci and Hegemony

Gramsci deserves more attention for the sake of the general argument of the thesis. Gramsci was concerned about analyzing the political power relations. However, unlike his predecessors, his

originality comes from the fact that he rejected “economist conceptualizations capitalism and politicist conceptualizations of the political” (Akca 2006, 116). Gramsci asserts that two errors are inevitable if one follows the existing philosophical pattern in trying to explain power relations: excess of economism portraying mechanical causes and excess of ideologism portraying individual causes (Gramsci 1999b, 202). Buci-Glucksmann (1979, 222) notes that his main aim was to formulate “a historical block in terms of actual unity of infrastructure and superstructure”. Gramsci proposed the idea of hegemony in order to sustain the theoretical unity of the economic, the political and the ideological in analyzing capitalist modes of production. According to Gramsci (1999a, 170) political effectiveness of a certain group over others in a society can be observed through the lenses of two possible scenarios: having direct control over political power and having control over cultural and intellectual realm. Here, idea of *hegemony* denotes to the latent level within which the social consent for the power is produced, instead of using direct force and oppression for the maintenance of such power.

Gramsci emphasizes the significance of political analysis, complementary to economic relations, mainly because hegemonic political actors are the ones that constitute and maintain class relations. “Philosophy of praxis not exclude ethico-political history, but indeed, in its most recent stage of development, it consists in asserting the moments of hegemony essential to its conception of the state and to the accrediting of the...*cultural front* as necessary alongside the merely political and economic ones” (Gramsci 1999b, 194, italics by S.K.). Thus what Gramsci desires to achieve is putting cultural ingredients into political analysis and combine it with the economic inquiry of a certain moment of certain structure. Using hegemony as an analytical tool, he tries to excavate different techniques of the *bourgeoisie* rule. Gramsci comes up with the idea of “relations of force” which shows itself in three phases in a capitalistic society: the level of

development of the material forces and emergence of social classes; the level of emergence of political forces and evaluation of self-awareness and organization achieved by each class; and the level that military appears as a force within the system (Gramsci 1999a, 180-184). The second level of his analysis, emergence of political forces, is also addressed by Gramsci through three sub-phases: “economic corporate level” enabling a certain collectivity of professional groups, formation of political identity of a certain group, and transfer of interests of one class toward subordinate groups, being internalized and shared by these groups, too.

Having addressed the relations of force as techniques of power, Gramsci presents the concepts such as hegemony, coercion and consent for assessing class power relations. Yet as it acknowledged by certain scholars (Anderson 1977, Buci-Glucksmann 1980), the treatment of Gramsci toward these concepts varied over time. In the initial writings of Gramsci, the contrast between state (political society) and civil society is conspicuous, and not surprisingly, coercion and consent are assigned to the state and the civil society respectively (Gramsci 1999a, 263-267). As a result of such differentiation the state is conceptualized in a narrow sense of the governmental-coercive apparatus (Akca 2006, 118). Later on Gramsci expanded such narrow definition of state to the one which he coins “the integral/ ethical state”. In Gramsci’s state theory, the state appears as the combination of dictatorship and hegemony (Gramsci 1999a, 239). Gramsci keeps the distinction between civil society and the state, as two different institutional sites producing class rule and having differential impact on social struggles” (Akca 2006, 119). However he points out that civil society and state are organically tied, otherwise the relationship between those two can not be established theoretically: “it would be wrong to think that this unity simply juridical and political...the fundamental historical unity, concretely, results from the organic relations between state and civil society” (Gramsci 1999a, 52). Moreover he posits that

“hegemony and dictatorship are indistinguishable, force and consent are simply equivalent; thus, one cannot distinguish state from civil society” (Gramsci 1999b, 271).

There is a dichotomy in Gramsci’s theory on state-society relations. On the one hand he differentiated state and civil society, but on the other hand, he denotes that they are always intertwined. Jessop (1982, 149), reflecting on the idea of hegemony, stresses that “hegemony is the use of a coercive apparatus to bring the mass of people into conformity and compliance with the requirements of a specific mode of production...hegemony involves the successful mobilization and reproduction of the active consent of dominated groups by the ruling class through their exercise of intellectual, moral, and political leadership”. However “from the moment hegemony becomes simply the backing for violence, or even worse, is only obtained by violence...this hegemony is in fact no longer assured” (Buci-Glucksmann 1980, 56). Therefore crudely speaking, as a power technique, hegemony works when it is internalized by the dominated group.

Let us now turn to the question of military in the analyses of Gramsci. Anderson (1977, 49) posits that “where Machiavelli had effectively collapsed consent into coercion, in Gramsci, coercion was progressively eclipsed by consent”. Gramsci’s growing emphasis on the idea of consent is not surprising given that he represents a “shift in Marxist theory away from seeing the state as an essentially repressive/ coercive apparatus towards focusing on other modern techniques of power used to establish class rule” (Akca 2006, 123). Gramsci (1999a, 263) stresses that as the elements of regulated society make their appearance, coercive elements of the state most probably will wither away; it was in the periods of “hegemonic crises” outright police measures and *coup d’etat* replaces “spontaneity” of hegemony.



Akca (2006, 124) addresses three important contributions of Gramsci to Marxist analysis of state and militarism: the key role of hegemony for carrying the political analysis beyond the economic realm; due to his focus on the relations of force, appearance of non-class forces such as military within the analytical framework; and the instruments provided by the theory in order to analyze military as a technique of power legitimized through hegemonic practices. Especially the third contribution of Gramsci is very significant for the purpose of the present thesis because it makes the analysis of militarism as a technique of power which is legitimized through hegemonic practices possible.

## ***1.2. Hegemony and Media***

Especially with 1970s, with the Neo-Marxist analyses focusing on the cultural sphere, media appeared as a focal point for many scholars. Raymond Williams' breaking of the Orthodox Marxist dichotomy between the base and the superstructure, which can also be assessed as breaking the linear causality between material base or mode of production and the ideological superstructure, is an important stepping stone for media analysis centered on hegemony. Williams (1973, 5) argues that hegemony constitutes a "sense of reality" for the most people in society rather than being a mere ideological framework. Following the same spine of logic, Gitlin (1980, 10) underlines the importance of Gramsci's "analytical baggage" with reference to its ability to reveal "the unity of persuasion from above and consent from below". Gitlin criticizes the general Marxist premise claiming that the material base prevails culture, yet, he takes the Gramsci's analysis on the power relations granted, and agrees with him on the idea that "those who rule the dominant institutions secure their power in large measure directly and indirectly, by

impressing their definitions of the situation upon those they rule, and if not usurping the whole of ideological space, still significantly limiting what is thought throughout the society” (Gitlin 1980, 10).

Media is the most prominent and dynamic part of organization and defense of the ideological front (Gramsci 1999b, 380). Media claims to be reflective of “reality” and fulfill the needs of the public opinion, yet, at the same time such needs are created and maintained by the media itself. Gitlin (1980, 256) bestows that “the hegemonic ideology of bourgeois culture is extremely complex and absorptive: only by absorbing and domesticating conflicting values, definitions of reality, and demands on it, in fact does it remain hegemonic”. Since media operates within the realm of such values, definitions and demands, mass communication becomes an area to be examined to ascertain power relations within a society (Golding and Murdoch, 1979).

Herbert Gans (1979) draws attention to numerous studies which investigate the news media using different perspectives such as journalist centered theories, organizational theories, event-centered theories and theories dealing with institutions and organizations operating outside the news organization. Having evaluated them in depth, Gans argues that all these theories have solid analytical tools for explaining the media organizations, yet they *together* constitute a holistic approach. Hegemony as an analytical tool draws scholarly attention of all these theoretical frameworks. Altheide (1984, 476) puts forward the basic assumptions of media hegemony as “the socialization and ideology of journalists, tendency of journalists and their reports to preserve status quo, and negative character of foreign news coverage”. The first assumption denotes to the fact that journalist’ work hours, routines, and procedures are totally compatible with the dominant ideology. Stuart Hall (1979, 342) brings forth that journalists’ work routines are claimed to

include the linguistic codes and rules that are operating within the discourse of hegemony. The second assumption deals with the idea that the news that are presented in mass media tend to be conservative and pro-status quo, informing the public through the lenses of status quo (Golding 1981, 81). Last but not least, in the third assumption it is accustomed that news presentation in mass media incorporates national biases and negative stereotypes of foreign countries (Dahlgren 1982).

Altheide (1984, 479) asserts that as an attribute of late capitalism, hegemony tries to explain each and every actuality as a “product of the ideological and economic conditions from which it emerged”. Therefore all news reports possess hegemonic codes and tendencies, even if they would be critical of the powerful economic actors (Gitlin 1980). However, he continues, it should be emphasized that three basic assumptions of media hegemony addresses journalists, elites etc. as monolithic bodies with one-dimensional common interests. Here, what Altheide calls “failure of perspective”, comes into being.

Altheide proclaims these three assumptions having drawbacks in themselves. Firstly, depending on the various researches on the journalist attitude and procedures of news presentation, he indicates that journalistic practices and codes are different among media organizations, and *within* the organization depending on the ideological tendencies of journalists (Altheide 1984, 480-481). For instance, it is highly possible to see different ideological positions about an issue within the same media complex. On second assumption Altheide relies on Elihu Katz, who draws attention to the difficulties of defining concepts such as status quo and social change. Katz (1981, 268) conveys that media hegemony position presents the empirically difficult question of measuring the causalities between powerful media and social change. For the last assumption,

Altheide proposes a dilemma. Dahlgren (1982, 62) stresses that the media coverage of certain issue or concept, in this case foreign politics, is related to the hegemony itself. Following Dahlgren's point, Altheide (1984, 485) presents the example of rise in the coverage of international news in the US media especially since 1970s, not always following a negative stereotypical patterns.

“Despite the empirical shortcomings of the notion of media hegemony, there remains the critical task of placing newswork and reports in a broader context, of understanding domination and direction” (Altheide 1984, 487). Altheide suggests pertinent criticisms for the perspectives, considered as the basic premises of media hegemony. However it should be noticed that root of criticism is toward the essentialization of class structures and their understanding as homogenous entities. First of all, in terms of level of analysis, raw news report and columns/ opinion pieces should be differentiated. I believe that the first media hegemony assumption should be observed in the realm of news in depth. Moreover, more significant for my purpose, what about not-class-based and not-economic-interest based social actors such as military, and its cultural hegemony over the media structures which also have nationalist connotations?

In this chapter I briefly discussed the theoretical roots of Gramsci's hegemony and its influences and implications within the realm of media theory. Now in order to answer the question I posed above, I will present a case study and examine the roots of Turkish militaristic discourse in the media both in cultural and political/ historical sense.

## **II. Case Study: The Representation of the Turkish Transfrontier Military Operation to Northern Iraq in the Turkish Press**

“The concept of discourse points at the fact that mediated language practices not simply relay or talk about a reality that occurs out there, but that they actually constitute this reality, in the process of communication” (Chouliaraki 2000, 295). The scope of political communication is characterized by the struggle to achieve the ability to control the sphere, within which political issues, events, messages and actors produce and reproduce such realities through the discourses. Sheaffer (2001, 712) defines the ability to control as the advantage of access to the scarce resources. “Media, in this sense, forming, manipulating and framing meanings, appears as one of these scarce resources” (Wolfsfeld, 1997). Not only in Turkey, but also in many other countries, mass media is intertwined with the economic and political interest groups, and the political authority itself. Due to the privileged power positions of these groups in terms of representation in media and determining discursive frameworks, vis-à-vis other segments of the society, assigns immense strength to institutions such as military that is directly linked to the political authority. Especially under extraordinary circumstances such as crisis, armed conflict and war, representation in the media and determining discursive frameworks becomes very crucial to attain public support (Cangoz, 2003, 38).

The study of media sources takes us to the heart of the question; where do media stand vis-à-vis the powerful social groups and how its relations with wider structures and systems of power determine media’s position itself. Therefore how we conceptualize and theorize the relationship between the news media, their sources and wider society and how we understand the mechanisms and meanings that surround and inform processes and patterns of news representation and entry is

of extreme importance. In order to formulate these difficult sets of relationships, however, we have to look at the frames and forms within which these processes and patterns presented. Here, most salient instrument for constructing such frames is the “language”. To begin with, language is not powerful *per se* (Wodak 1989: XV). Language only gains power in the hands of the powerful. Chouliaraki (2000, 295) underlines that “the empirical study of mediatized political discourse is primarily the study of practices of language in their institutional context”. Especially the actors operating within the realm of hegemonic ideology assert their prerogatives, positions and attitudes on issues, in most cases, through linguistic means of expression. Thereby, “the responsibility for any damage that might have been done by using certain means of expression still lies with the users, those who, not be able to alter reality trying to change its reception and recognition by their interlocutors” (Sornig 1989: 96).

In this chapter I will analyze the representation of Turkish military operation to Northern Iraq (February 21<sup>st</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> 2008) in three high circulation mainstream daily newspapers: *Zaman*, *Hurriyet* and *Sabah*. These dailies are owned by different media groups and all three together constitute almost half of the whole daily newspaper market in terms of circulation numbers. Considering their strong position within the media market, in parallel with that, they reach high numbers of audiences, and thus, they possess immense power over mental maps and ideological frameworks. Case study will consist of evaluation of these three newspapers using critical discourse analysis as a methodology. Understanding the power relations of a particular kind in a particular time that a mediation process embodies is the general aim of this analysis. Later in the thesis, this particularity will be generalized using historical and cultural/ political perspectives.

It may be argued that such analysis would be under-developed without taking TV coverage into the consideration, merely focusing on the print press. I should posit that TV is a huge theoretical realm in itself. TV encapsulates a mode of multi-modality, vis-à-vis printed news reports, which means that it combines audio-visual elements together, most of the time accompanied by texts and highlights on the screen (Chouliaraki 2006, 153). Analysis of TV as a medium for any discursive statement is theoretically and empirically more demanding and time consuming. Thus, I will keep my analysis limited to the printed press. I believe that such arguments favoring TV as a “must” for such analyses can be alleviated by showing the commonalities of the use of language between the news reports in the printed press and news reports in TV. All these newspapers operate within huge media corporations having numerous TV channels and networks. In order to shed light on the similarities/ commonalities between the discourse in newspaper and discourse in TV, I will discuss TV representations of Turkish military entry to Iraq and a heated debate which took place in a pop idol show on the military operation; however it should be asserted again, in a brief and humble manner.

## **2.1. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1.1. Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis**

As a reaction to the stamp which American behaviorism and Popper’s positivism, a heated discussion had arisen regarding the subject and fundamental methodological problems in the social sciences. Habermas in particular criticized the dangers of a purely positivistic science and

its proneness to ruling ideologies. A science which limits itself to the description and “objective” representation of facts neglects an important aspect, namely the aspect that science is practiced by scientists, that is to say by people with opinions, concepts, interests and ideologies of their own. Habermas outlines a scientific theoretical framework within which one can pursue critical social sciences and also critical linguistics (Habermas 1973). He develops a model which compared with Popper’s framework includes two essential new dimensions: a critical science, should it want to legitimize itself must first of all be *self-reflective* and secondly it must consider the *historical life context* in which linguistic and social interactions take place. By self-reflection Habermas means an attitude: the scholar must consider the social importance of his own actions. Scientific research is not value free; it is shaped by interests and also by scholar’s own interests (Habermas 1973, 244). Moreover critical science must be conscious of the fact that the social rules and the social context which it analyzes are historically grown and not given by nature. “They are derived from a life context and must be interpreted within their historical development” (Barthes 1964, 229). The task of “critical linguistics” is, therefore, revealing the underlying system of beliefs, “the structure of faith” (Wodak 1986). If this succeeds a given text may be shown to serve or reflect the interests of a group of people or a social class.

Steiner develops a linguistic theory of action which is based on rhetoric and which includes psychological and sociological parameters and categories. Concern of critical linguistics is to relate language to its users and to seek some principled way of bringing out the ideologies inherent in their communications” (Steiner 1985, 218). At this point the models of Habermas and Steiner complement one another perfectly: “Habermas starts out from a theory of universal pragmatics and tries to embed linguistics in a general social theory of action while Steiner does vice versa” (Menz 1989, 230). Critical linguistics helps us to pursue two important goals in our



textual analysis: first to find out by which means an influential newspapers try to achieve certain aims (in our case political) and secondly which unconscious motivations of the editors may additionally merge with these consciously applied strategies of ideological linguistic use, goals and motivations which are contrary to the aims of foreground. Critical discourse analysis, at this point, comes to the picture as a particular method to reflect the scholarly objectives of critical linguistics.

What makes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) central for my analysis is that, CDA is an explicitly *normative* analysis of how texts and discourses work in ideological interests with powerful political consequences (Luke 2002). “CDA’s qualitative approach is that language, and more generally semiotic modalities and social processes, are deeply implicated with one another, and that the language organized into text provides a way into the constitution in meaning of social processes and relations” (Chouliaraki 2000, 297). Looking at texts using CDA techniques provides an account of intricate relationships between text, talk, social cognition, power, society and culture (Van Dijk 1993). An important goal of CDA is, thus, to uncover the implicit arguments and meanings in texts which tend to marginalize dominant groups while justifying the values, beliefs, and ideologies of dominant groups. Because it is impossible to study all texts produced in a social context which could have some bearing on the construction of a national narrative, one must consider those sites which intersect with and influence the greatest number of people.

### **2.1.2. The Author Function**

“The ephemerality which generally characterizes daily newspapers imposes specific procedures upon the author as well as the reader: as part of a newspaper edition, a text assumes a specific

position in a '*syntagma*'" (Sauer 1989: 5). This syntagma has both predecessors namely previous editions of the same paper, and successors namely the future editions. At the same time, however actual newspaper article also functions as a "*paradigma*", since it represents a specific position in the concert of all similar articles to be found in comparable newspapers of the same date (Sauer 1989: 5). The exact position depends of course on the strategy of the propaganda institution, the line followed by the newspapers, and the individual capabilities of the "author". "The author, as the unifying principle in a particular group of writings or statements, lies at the seat of their coherence" (Foucault 1971: 221). What he sketches, all this interplay of differences prescribed by the "*author-function*". "The author function creates identities and measures, which forms individuality" (Foucault 1971, 222). In writing, the author is also reacting to those general texts and in reading the reader constructs this reaction of the author and at the same time produces a position of his own. The author also knows this kind of a positioning and articulates according to this imagined position, position of the "*model reader*". To make his text communicative, the author has to assume that the ensemble of codes he relies upon is the same as that shared by his possible reader. "Thus author has to foresee a model of the possible reader supposedly able to deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them" (Eco 1984: 7).

As far as the texts themselves are concerned, it may be asserted that the linguistic means of which they consist converge to form total-meaning. The way in which meaning is formed and communicated is based upon processes that transcend the confines of individual text. The linguistic forms, as bearers of meaning, are socio-historically determined; therefore each text functions as a reconstruction or variation of the socio-historical determinants (Sauer 1989: 6). The author function in media analysis, consequently, refers to the editorial or journalistic

decisions on “how” to present a news report. Editors and journalists have certain common cultural knowledge, be it as common sensual as it is, when they are mediating stories. They formulate imaginary reader models and shape the stories so that these stories can fit into this perceived reader image. The militaristic discourse is planted within news coverage by the editors and journalists, keeping in mind the model Turkish reader with sympathy towards the militaristic ideal.

## **2.2. Methodology**

Having discussed the theoretical components of the critical linguistics as the main framework, now I turn to the methods for analyzing linguistic strategies. Davis (1985, 46) notes that the meaning in the media discourse is embedded in the ground rules of the interpretation, thus, the meaning itself can not be merely revealed by the first sight, but in a sense it should be discovered. Davis suggests three types of questions in order to analyze this embedded meaning:

Who’s talking? (The actor)

What are they saying? (Denotations and connotations)

What these words mean (The context)

van Dijk (1991) indicates that, like in all other forms of texts, news texts possess a form/structure, combining different instruments and/or elements within the body of the text. van Dijk assumes this structure is an abstract scheme for organizing news themes and designates it as the “superstructure”. Moreover stories and arguments follow a hierarchical order within this imaginary scheme which possesses categories such as headline, introduction, event, context, date,

verbal reactions and comments ( van Dijk, 1985). According to van Dijk, the categories of this scheme bifurcate into two: micro and macro structures. Macro structures consist of headlines, subtitles, visuals and leads in a news text. Micro structures, on the other hand, are composed of lexical preferences and syntax. Inal (1995, 118) asserts that local coherence (the relationships between consecutive sentences) and rhetoric also can be placed within the micro structures.

To sum up, van Dijk's discourse semantics consists of elements such as lexicalization, topic propositional structures, presupposition, level of description and degree of completeness and implication (van Dijk 1995, 259). In order to make the chapter more readable for the reader, I will elaborate the methodological elements of discourse semantics and implement them to the media texts in each sub-division.

### ***2.3. The Case: Turkish Military Entry to Northern Iraq***

Turkish armed forces initiated a military operation against the PKK<sup>1</sup> camps within the Iraqi territory in February 21<sup>st</sup> 2008 which lasted a week. The official discourses of the Turkish government and the military pointed out that the reason for such action was to terminate PKK activity in Turkey, because it was known for a long time that PKK had established logistic headquarters in Northern Iraq, supporting the activities taking place within Turkish borders. This operation was not, however, the first transfrontier involvement of Turkish military in the region. It was reported in the Zaman Daily that Turkish armed forces had almost 30 transfrontier

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<sup>1</sup> PKK (Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan) Workers' Party of Kurdistan is a separatist organization which initiated its political activity in 1978

operations in Northern Iraq since 1992<sup>2</sup>. Yet, unlike most of these operations which were deliberately held secret by the military during the activity and were only revealed after the operations were over, what made the last activity peculiar is that, it was “relatively” open to public curiosity because of its scale and expectations for such a military action on part of the opinion leaders beforehand, and drew attention of all mass media during a whole week, being the prime issue.

Use of the word “relative” is not arbitrary. A very striking fact about the mediation of operation in the Turkish mass media is that, such curiosity is fulfilled mainly by the reports provided by military channels. In almost all daily newspapers, chief-in-command appears as the number one information supplier for the mass media. Thus it should be underlined that provided information has a normative value in itself. Such normative value is clearly addressed by the chief-in-command, stressing that any kind of information about the operation, which is not provided by the military sources, should not be accredited due to counter propaganda reasons<sup>3</sup>. Thus, when it comes to facts and figures about the operation, Turkish mass media totally relied on the information provided by military.

A potential partiality not only depends on the actors and selective objectivity for a certain piece of news, but it also depends on the way how the comments and opinions on the issue are portrayed and presented (van Dijk 1991). The value that is attributed to the powerful actors within a society to be represented in a certain news piece contributes to the reproduction of existing power hierarchies. Not surprisingly, the chief-in-command and the military personnel

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<sup>2</sup> Zaman, February 22, 2008

<sup>3</sup> Sabah and Hurriyet February 22, 2008

appear as the most popular actors for the media texts reporting the operation. Other popular actors are Justice and Development Party (JDP) government, Republican Peoples Party (RPP), Nationalistic Action Party (NAP) and Democratic Peoples Party (DPP). The RPP and the NAP are the strongest opposition within the parliament<sup>4</sup>. The relevance of the DPP as an actor stems from the fact that the party is ideologically pro-Kurdish and they are the only political initiative that condemns military activity, declaring it “war”. The opinions of the military experts are again far more popular in these three newspapers. Except certain anti-militaristic columnists, the portrayal of the activity revolves around the military strategies and logistics in general. In parallel with my general argument, the newspapers are totally captured by the militaristic discourse, marginalizing any other discourse on the operation other than the militaristic one. In order to elaborate on this assumption, now I will evaluate texts from these three newspapers using the analytical tools of discourse semantics.

### 2.3.1. Lexicalization and Topic

Most essential instrument of the hegemonic ideology for controlling the discursive meaning is the selection of word meaning through *lexicalization* (van Dijk 1995, 259). Well known examples for ideological use of word selection are the use of the “terrorists” instead of “freedom fighters”, or vice-versa, for a group of people because of ideological and political stance of the speaker, and the idea of martyrdom.

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<sup>4</sup> Even though it is difficult to make a clear cut classification of ideological tendencies, roughly put, the JDP is pro-Islamic liberal, the RPP is secular leftist, the NAP is extreme right wing and the DPP is pro-Kurdish leftist.

PKK is seen as a terrorist organization by Turkish state and military officials, and by a large segment of the Turkish population. Such attribution is reflected in all newspapers, to the extent that it appears “surprising” for the Turkish media that Chinese newspapers used the word *rebels* instead of *terrorists* when they are reporting about operation against the PKK<sup>5</sup>. Another example of lexicalization is the use of word “Mehmetcik”<sup>6</sup> which is a historically rooted term for privates among the Turkish military personnel. The word has some emotional connotations that build intimacy between the Turkish soldiers and the readers. In the first day of the operation *Zaman* reports that “*Mehmetciks* are seeking for the terrorists in the highlands”<sup>7</sup>. Next day in *Sabah*, it is denoted that “the motivation of the *Mehmetciks*’ is very high”<sup>8</sup>, and in *Hurriyet* it is asserted that “*Mehmetciks* are hunting *traitors* down”<sup>9</sup>.

Topic is an important venue for the use of lexicalization, simply because it is the most salient and striking part of the media text. van Dijk (1991) argues that topic is a distinctive element of a news piece due to its intriguing physical appearance. Topic is mostly a subjective definition of a certain event by the editorial board (Cangoz 2003, 41). Moreover, in the consumption process, the topic manipulates the interpretation of the readers. Thus, it pertains to an ideological functionality as well.

A commonality among these three newspapers, and supposedly others, is that the number of dead terrorists is a very popular topic for the reports. The number of terrorists that are neutralized by the Turkish armed forces increases toward the end of the week which is reflected on the headlines

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<sup>5</sup> Zaman February 22, 2008

<sup>6</sup> Mehmet is a very common male name. Thus Mehmetcik as a wording refers to an anonymous soldier

<sup>7</sup> Zaman February 21, 2008

<sup>8</sup> Sabah February 22, 2008

<sup>9</sup> Hurriyet February 23, 2008 italics are mine

in general. In *Sabah* it is indicated in the headlines that the number of terrorists killed are 79, 112, and 159, respectively on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of February. The number of dead terrorists is a popular topic for *Hurriyet* and *Zaman* as well. Both newspapers hold the daily accounts of the number of terrorists which are killed. A striking observation would be the number of “martyrs” on the side of Turkish armed forces in these topics. Number of dead terrorists is accompanied by number of martyrs in these newspapers. However in terms of fonts number of dead terrorists is bigger and it is reported just before the number of martyrs. *Sabah* informs that “79 terrorists were killed, 2 Turkish soldiers became martyrs”<sup>10</sup>. In *Zaman* the topic goes as “153 terrorists were killed in total”<sup>11</sup> and the number of dead Turkish soldiers are only mentioned within the body of the text. Last day of the operation, *Hurriyet* indicates that “the total number of dead terrorists is 230; total number of martyrs on the part of the Turkish military is 24”<sup>12</sup>. In the report, the font used for 230 is almost the triple size of the 24. In all three newspapers the priority is given to the numbers of terrorists killed instead of dead soldiers, which is gripping. This may be interpreted as the militaristic premise of pacifying the opponent through physical force, taking sacrifice as a legitimate and acceptable component of such endeavor.

Another ideological use of the title shows itself in the form of manipulation, in *Hurriyet* and *Sabah* dailies on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Both newspapers, in the headlines, declared that the Turkish operation is supported internationally: “Total support from the whole world”<sup>13</sup>. However when the body of the text is observed, what we see is the critical approaches of different political actors to the issue. The US and the EU authorities underline the fact that civilian security is the primary

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<sup>10</sup> *Sabah* February 22, 2008

<sup>11</sup> *Zaman* February 24, 2008

<sup>12</sup> *Hurriyet* February 28, 2008

<sup>13</sup> *Hurriyet* February 23, 2008



concern in the region and Turkish intervention was not “great news”. In the same piece, the words of German Secretary of Foreign Ministry Martin Jaeger take place, stressing that operation may bring huge instability to the region. In spite of all critical comments within the body of the text, ironically enough, the topic is loaded with positive connotations pointing out to the unanimity of support on the part of international actors.

Another topic concerning the manipulative use of the discourse is in all three newspapers in different wordings about the debate if there was any negotiation between Turkish and the US armies on Turkish entry to Northern Iraq: “Turkish army does not ask for permission”<sup>14</sup>, “American General Ham: Turkish Army never asks for permission of the US army”<sup>15</sup>. However in the text of news General Ham reflects on the polemic, saying that Turkish army does not ask for permission and the US does not give permission because these two countries have no patronage relationship, yet they negotiated about the extent of the operation. Newspapers translated only the first part of the words of American general using strong expressions such as *does not* and *never*. This creates a feeling of strength and charisma on the side of Turkish military and militaristic discourse.

### 2.3.2. Propositional Structures and Presupposition

Propositional structures refer to the ideological stereotypification of certain groups as “being responsible agent of negative action” (van Dijk 1995, 261), such as terrorism and separatism as in the case of Kurdish people in Turkey. Creation of propositional structure is dependent on the

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<sup>14</sup> Hurriyet and Zaman February 22, 2008

<sup>15</sup> Sabah February 22, 2008

perception of agent. van Dijk (1995, 261) notes that “our positive actions are usually associated with our being in a responsible, Agent role, and when our negative actions are being de-emphasized by assigning Us to a more passive, less responsible role”. Therefore agent requires a circumstantial reason for involving in action; s/he is forced to do what s/he does.

In the first day on the operation, in the statements of chief and command and the government which took place in all these three newspapers, it is bestowed that Turkish military *obliged* to intervene in Northern Iraqi territory in order to give an end to Kurdish separatist movement (italics are mine). Furthermore the DPP becomes the other of militaristic discourse within the political sphere. Certain anti-militarist and anti-operation protests organized by the DPP draws attention of mass media during the entry. In *Sabah* it is indicated that “the DPP protest in the city of Diyarbakir led to incidents, protestors attacked the buildings with stones”<sup>16</sup>. *Hurriyet* reminds the DTP deputies’ negotiations with the PKK for the captured Turkish soldiers in October 2007<sup>17</sup>, addressing their proximity to the PKK. In *Zaman* it is reported that “the DPP uses imams and Quran in their party meetings and demonstrations”<sup>18</sup>. All these texts concerning the DPP, put emphasis on the notions such as anti-establishmentarianism and use of religious symbols, which are the normative others of the state and military ideology. Therefore in the latent level, the DPP is portrayed as being collaborators of the separatist movement.

Presupposition, in cognitive terms, denote to “the set of tacit cultural knowledge that makes discourse meaningful” (van Dijk 1995, 273). Van Dijk argues that “presupposition pertains to knowledge or other beliefs that are not asserted, but simply assumed to be true by the speaker;

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<sup>16</sup> Sabah February 26, 2008

<sup>17</sup> Hurriyet February 24, 2008

<sup>18</sup> Zaman February 28, 2008

they are able to introduce ideological propositions whose truth is not uncontroversial at all". Most salient example of presupposition is the perception of military having the capability to prevail separatist movement by physical force. So the strategies pursued by military become uncontroversial and internalized by the society through the mediation process: "Turkish armed forces will finish the operation as soon as the objectives are achieved"<sup>19</sup>, "We will clean the area up and leave"<sup>20</sup>, "President Gul: The operation will contribute to the stability of Iraq"<sup>21</sup>. In all these texts it is assumed that military operation is needed and manageable to give an end to a separatist movement. Use of words such as *objectives*, and *stability* are dubious in a sense that their definitions have normative implications which, in this case, are determined by the militaristic ideology. Thereby, it is believed that the cultural and historical background of the Turkish military enables the institution to terminate a separatist movement which has roots in economic and social inequalities within the country towards the region, Eastern Turkey, where it emerged.

### 2.3.3. Level of Description

van Dijk (1995, 275) notes that persons, places and events are described in more or less complete detail at different levels of abstraction, and "as soon as people or events become more relevant and important, they tend to be described in more detail and at more specific (less abstract) level". Thus level of description refers to the level of detail which is portrayed when a story is being told. Since the details are important, and subjective, elements of the discourse, they also point out to the hegemonic ideology within a text. Level of description can be evaluated within two processes: different levels *within* a text and different levels *among* texts. I will focus mostly on

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<sup>19</sup> Sabah February 22, 2008

<sup>20</sup> Hurriyet February 21, 2008

<sup>21</sup> Zaman February 24, 2008

the latter aspect; the stories about martyrs in newspapers are the most salient candidates for examining the discursive shift from presenting an *abstract* soldier to presenting a *concrete* martyr.

It is important to see that, in all these three newspapers, martyr reports are being told as if they are human interest stories: their geographic origins, statements of their family members, their professions before they involved in military service, their marriages and children if they exist are presented in detail. Thus martyrs become personified, instead of possessing abstract notion of soldiery, before the eyes of audiences.

Household of martyr Private Ibrahim Gedik burst into tears

Household of martyr Private Ibrahim Gedik (21) in city of Trabzon, burst into tears after receiving the news about their son's demise in the armed conflict in Northern Iraq. The news reached the household, Toplu Neighborhood Cennet Street, around 00.30 am...Father Abdurrahman Gedik purports that all of his three sons served military in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey. Gedik continued that he is in grief due to loss of his son; however he is proud of him because he served his homeland with honor. Gedik added that if there is a need, he and his two sons would participate in war voluntarily against the terrorists...Martyr's brother Emin Gedik stated that the last contact between the martyr and his family was conducted over a phone call two days before the operation...Emin Gedik also indicated that they are from city of Erzurum in origin, later migrated to city of Trabzon, and his celibate brother Ibrahim was working in a glassware store<sup>22</sup>.

This pattern of reporting martyrs is almost common in all newspapers. Level of description is relatively high and presented account is very detailed. Another significant fact about these texts is the involvement of emotional themes and vocabulary in the topics, when they are being reported:

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<sup>22</sup> Sabah February 23, 2008 (translation is mine)

words of martyr's family regarding their deceased son, "He did not get married, he loved only his homeland"<sup>23</sup>; spouse of a martyr regarding their children, "My son is going to be soldier as well"<sup>24</sup>; father of a martyr regarding his sons: "I have five kids all of which shall be sacrificed to the homeland"<sup>25</sup>. Another example of high level of description is the portrayal of martyrs' hopes and dreams in a story telling manner: "When he stepped on the land mine, he was married for three and a half months"<sup>26</sup>; "He couldn't see his new born baby"<sup>27</sup>.

The reports about martyrs have high emotional characteristics especially due to the word selection and presentation of the detailed accounts of martyrs. Very personal features such as backgrounds, hopes and dreams create an effective aura for *empathy* on the part of readers. Discursively, the presentation of martyrs in an emotional way supports militaristic discourse and naturalizing their sacrifice for the sake of the idea of homeland, which is also prescribed by the militaristic discourse itself.

#### 2.3.4. Implication

Implication is a well known strategy in the theory of discourse semantics. Accordingly meanings are not directly expressed but semantically implied (van Dijk 1995, 268). van Dijk suggests that recipients have to have certain basic inferences from culturally shared knowledge or language meanings in order to place implication on a cognitive basis.

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<sup>23</sup> Hurriyet February 24, 2008

<sup>24</sup> Sabah February 25, 2008

<sup>25</sup> Zaman February 26, 2008

<sup>26</sup> Hurriyet February 24, 2008

<sup>27</sup> Sabah February 25, 2008

The news report that took place on *Hurriyet* and *Sabah* regarding to the approval of the constitutional amendment about the permission to put on headscarves in universities by the president is an example of implication: “Approval on the day of operation”<sup>28</sup>. In the text it is implied that the government and president Gul, who comes from JDP origins and Islamic background, acted in an opportunist manner by approving the amendment which created huge public debate. The implication encapsulates the idea of secularism which is an inseparable ingredient of Turkish militarist discourse, versus the issue of legalization of headscarf. Because of the connotations of headscarf amendment and public criticism on the side of actors and segments of society with secularist susceptibilities, the issue is easily translated into a discourse of opportunism in the sense that, it is “disrespectful and insincere”<sup>29</sup>. Other examples of implication can be observed in the representations of martyr funerals. *Hurriyet*, when reporting a martyr funeral, uses the topic: “We all attended”<sup>30</sup>. Use of pronoun “we” is important in terms of its implicative power of national unity. It is implied in the topic that all Turkish society attends the funeral not in physical but emotional manner transcending any geographical difference, showing their gratitude and blessings for the deceased soldier.

### 2.3.5. Mediating Militarism through Television

The role of television in mediating discourses is a very broad and comprehensive academic interest area, which deserves an in-depth analysis and theoretical framework. However as it was mentioned above, examination of TV as a mode of mediation would be far out of the extent of this thesis in general and this chapter in specific. What I would like to present here is the

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<sup>28</sup> Hurriyet February 23, 2008

<sup>29</sup> Sabah February 23, 2008

<sup>30</sup> Hurriyet February 23, 2008

discursive commonalities between the newspapers and TV, which will enable us to examine the media structure as a whole in the forthcoming chapters.

First I should stress that, in terms of the sources from which the information is received, TV news coverage follows almost the same pattern with newspapers: Chief in Command appears as the prominent information and footage supplier. These footages basically consist of highly equipped soldiers wandering around the mountains, aircrafts leaving the headquarters etc. All national TV networks present the reports on the operation using the visuals distributed by the military sources<sup>31</sup>. Secondly, the patterns about the lexicalization, topic, and presupposition and so on, are totally shared by the TV networks. In TV networks, the number of terrorists killed is emphasized, and pronounced before the number of deceased soldiers: CNN Turk indicates that “77 terrorists more were neutralized<sup>32</sup>; Kanal D, Atv and NTV reports the number of dead Turkish soldiers only after the number of dead terrorists<sup>33</sup>. Another commonality lies in the fact that, the funerals of martyrs are mediated through the TV, of course more effective than the printed press due to use of audiovisuals, in a ritualistic and symbolical manner. NTV broadcasts the funeral of a martyr live, as breaking news, almost for ten minutes without any editing<sup>34</sup>. In certain networks use of soundtracks, especially emotional folk songs, is very common when it comes to the mediation of martyr news, making it really hard to endure the news report and footage because of the psychological effect it creates.

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFnX3YCnc20&feature=related> TRT news report  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BdIoC8TJ6w&feature=related> NTV news report

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWMibBjbEZM&feature=related>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKLy7trz7OI&feature=related>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GN-tp0N0jDU>



Picture 1



Picture 2

Martyr funerals are huge public events in Turkey. Picture in the left (picture 1) we see Chief in Command Yasar Buyukanit and the President Abdullah Gul praying side by side for the deceased soldier. Picture 2 shows the protest against the PKK during a martyr funeral, with the coffin of the martyr in the front and crowds marching behind it. Use of flags is in extreme importance in funeral ceremonies as the symbol of national unity.

Lastly the case of famous Turkish singer Bulent Ersoy can be discussed in terms of mediation of militaristic discourse through media during and after the military operation. Ersoy, in the pop-idol program, in which she works as a member of the jury, drew attention to the meaninglessness of war and deaths, and asserted that if she have had any son, she would not let him do his military service, because young boys are dying for “nothing”<sup>35</sup>. In the same program, another jury member and famous singer, Ebru Gundes, responded Ersoy claiming that the duty for homeland is sacred; these boys are not dying for nothing, they are dying for their countries. Gundes added

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rc\\_EyrvRiWc&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rc_EyrvRiWc&feature=related)



that she would voluntarily sacrifice her son if homeland is at the stake. After the show, the debate is carried on to the public sphere and huge discussions. Ersoy is accused for being a “traitor”. The RTUK gave a warning to the TV show and the Star TV network, arguing that Ersoy’s speech may cause detrimental effects for the motivation of military and it may hurt the “cultural and historical dignity” of Turkish armed forces<sup>36</sup>. This event was followed by a press conference of Ersoy, where she declared that she just wants peace and no more deaths. All in all, the case brings forth an important aspect of the TV mediation: ideological attitude of the managerial board. As a state agency responsible for regulating the media environment, the RTUK’s main concern in the case was protecting the “cultural and historical dignity” of Turkish military. The issue of RTUK will be dealt with in the fifth chapter.

In this chapter I examined three highest circulated newspapers in Turkey: *Hurriyet*, *Zaman* and *Sabah* in order to examine any commonalities or contrasts in the language when it comes to mediating hegemonic militaristic discourse. Following van Dijk’s discourse semantics theory, I examined the texts using semantic techniques such as lexicalization, presupposition and implication. I conclude that in terms of mediating an armed conflict all three newspapers are mediating militaristic discourses to the audiences, to the extent that, they use same wording and expressions sometimes. All linguistic strategies used by the newspapers, denote to the fact that they are overshadowed by militaristic connotations.

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMbVkNfYU6o&feature=related>

Another important finding is that, any other discourse than the militaristic one, is bypassed and ignored by these three newspapers. Discourse of human rights, discourse of right to life, discourse of peace and so on is excluded from the main referential frames. Military, with regard to a central premise of militarism, appears as a problem-solving mechanism, and the method it utilizes is not questioned within this textual sphere. Thus these three newspapers, owned by different media groups with different ideological backgrounds, share a common feature when it comes to mediating armed conflict: they totally internalize the hegemony of militaristic discourse, produce and reproduce it. Gokce (2008) notes that media made society believe that separatist terror in Turkey which has huge economic and social dimensions, can be solved by a mere military operation. During the operation, the normalcy of militarism as an ideological premise is maintained through media representation. At this point we should focus on the cultural and historical roots of militarist discourse not only in media but as a social phenomenon. In the following chapters, I will deal with the cultural and historical aspects of the hegemonic structure of the militarist ideology in Turkey.

### III. Cultural Aspect: Roots of Militaristic Discourse in Turkish Society

...in passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them simplicity of essences, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible; it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, it establishes a blissful clarity” (Barthes 1972, 143)

In this chapter I will examine the roots of militarist ideology and its hegemonic position in Turkey with reference to the nation building processes in 1920s. Following the First World War, the Central Powers signed treaties with the Entente Powers, deciding on new territorializations in the European scheme. Being a partner of the Central Powers, the Ottoman Empire faced with the “Sevres Treaty” which divides the Anatolian region, leaving territories to French, Armenians, Greeks and Italians (Zurcher 2004). This treaty was declared null and void by local resistance led by Mustafa Kemal and Turkish Independence War was initiated in 1919. In 1922 resistance prevailed over occupant powers and in 1923 republic was established. Turkey was the only state among the Central Powers that fought its way and succeeded in breaking the conditions of the peace treaty as it is proposed by occupant powers after the First World War. New state and the republic were formed through armed resistance. Therefore in the initial years of republic, the military had a natural legitimacy over politics due to fragile nature of the newly born structure and republican ideal. In following years the military had important incentive in Turkish politics due to mainly national security concerns becoming visible in Cyprus, Armenia and most significantly internal separatist movement, the PKK. These concerns translated into what is called Sevres Syndrome in 1990’s, a large scale social scale paranoia based on a perception of country encountered with historical enemies from every angle.

The Sevres Syndrome can be explained as a form of cultural trauma. Alexander (2004, 1) notes that “cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways”. Alexander stresses that cultural trauma is a “socially mediated attribution” and in this mediation process the most important role belongs to the carrier groups. Alexander defines a carrier group as such:

Carrier groups have both ideal and material interests, they are situated in particular places in the social structure, and they have *particular discursive talents* for articulating their claims in the public sphere...carrier groups may be elites, but they may also be denigrated and marginalized classes...a carrier group can be generational, representing the perspectives and the interests of a younger generation against an older one. It can be national, putting one’s own nation against a *putative* enemy. It can be institutional, representing one particular social sector or organization against others in a fragmented or polarized social order (Alexander 2004, 11, italics are mine).

Based on this definition, it would be over simplistic to say that military acts as a permanent carrier group in the cultural trauma of the republican era. However militaristic discourse contributes to the creation of putative enemies with regard to national security concerns and places itself in a crucial place within this huge social paranoia. In the Turkish context, since this cultural trauma had been overcome with military power and initiative, military as an institution, and moreover as a political actor, is celebrated as being “sacred”.

Altınay (2004) draws attention to one widely used term connoting a negative appearance of military power: *darbe* (literally blow, *coup d’etat*). Darbe refers to direct political intervention of Turkish armed forces to the political system. In 85 years of republican history, we may talk about two direct and two indirect interventions respectively: May 27<sup>th</sup> 1960 and September 12<sup>th</sup> 1980;

March 12<sup>th</sup> 1971 and February 28<sup>th</sup> 1997. The National Security Council, since its establishment in 1960s, is a direct actor in Turkish political arena. Michel Foucault argues that modern power works through ‘productive’ mechanisms as through negative ones. Here, the military can be seen as the source of legitimate coercion, but also as the source of national pride and production. Altınay (2004, 3) points out that “militarism as an ideology is intertwined with nationalism, as well as militarization as a process that shapes culture, politics and identities in Turkey”. In this chapter I would like to focus on how military achieved such discursive power that enables the militaristic discourse reign over public discourse.

Mazici (1989, 211) argues that sympathy towards military in Turkey is historical and gives the example of the military officers, being seen as the most prominent candidates for marriage within the social structure in Ottoman Empire. Moreover Mazici portrays that all national heroes in Turkish historiography have military backgrounds. Last but not least Mazici notes that, due to such social respect towards military, the ones who have not involved in military service are seen “un-acceptable”. On the other hand, rituals such as ceremonies for those who are about to go to military service epitomizes the social importance and respect towards military in Turkey. Aysegul Altınay (2004) who uses the concept “the myth of military nation” argues that the idea of military nation is an invention of political apparatus of 1930’s.

In order to excavate the roots of militarism as a discourse, I will examine the period between 1920 and 1940, the time span, as I will argue, when this militaristic discourse was produced and maintained officially as the very fabric of the national identity. Firstly I will look for the historical roots of militarism as a concept in Ottoman Empire and the first years of Turkish republic. Then I will briefly discuss the idea of Turkish nationalism both in the political and

cultural sense and try to shed light on the militaristic understanding which is very strong, still in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, among the majority of the population and which is seen as a distinct and primordial feature of Turkish nationalism.

### **3.1. The Myth of the Military Nation and the Birth of Turkish Nationalism**

Utterances of Turkey's legendary leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and leading elites of the republic in the initial years of republican era, stress that Turkish nation is a military nation (*ordu-millet*) positioning the military character of the nation as the foundational myth. Schopflin (1997, 33) notes that every social group and political activity has to make a start and qualify this initiation phase with some mythic features, which are the foundational myths. "The popular saying, 'Her Türk asker doğar' (every Turk is born a soldier) is repeated in daily conversations, school textbooks, the speeches of public officials and intellectuals, and is used as a drill slogan during military service" (Altınay 2004, 13). In this section I will examine the roots of this foundational myth.

Altınay (2004) notes that first reference to term "military-nation" in the English language is an 1803 book titled *The French Considered as a Military Nation since the Commencement of Their Revolution* published in Britain, as a critique of French idea of conscript army and its detrimental effects for the future political context. The term military-nation appeared in Ottoman language in 1860s (Koloğlu 1999, 344). Koloğlu indicates that on January 21<sup>st</sup> 1864, the newspaper *Tasvir-i Efkar* informed readers about the new publication called *Ceride-i Askeriye* (Military Journal) and referred to the Ottoman nation as a combatant nation. The emergence of such attribution is also related to the political context of the empire. The Ottoman Empire was going through a

transformation with the *Tanzimat*<sup>37</sup> (1838) and *Islahat* (1856) Decrees officially recognizing the equality of all subjects regardless of their ethnic or religious orientation. Therefore the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century portrayed a debate over citizenship and nationhood in the Ottoman political sphere. Combined with the on-going warfare in the peripheral territories of Ottoman Empire against imperialist powers such as Britain, France and Russia, such debates may be an indicator for why military nation as an idea appeared so appealing for the Ottoman elite.

In 1884, the influential work of Prussian military expert Baron von der Goltz, *Das Volk in Waffel* (Nation in Arms) was translated into Ottoman from German, its original language. “Goltz’s ideas were first appropriated by the Ottoman nationalist discourses, then by the Turkish nationalist discourses until they finally were appropriated by the official ideology in early 1930s” (Altınay 2004). Reflecting on this surprising continuity historian Hasan Ünder (1999, 48) bestows that “Atatürk and most of the other founders of the Turkish republic were soldiers and had received their education in military schools whose curricula had been designed by German military experts. Most of their teachers were German or, if they were Ottoman, they had been trained in Germany”. Goltz’s book was a major source for the new textbooks written by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his adopted daughter Afet Inan in early 1930s (Altınay 2004, 14). Best known for her contributions to Turkish History Thesis, historian and anthropologist Afet Inan, was also celebrated for her contributions to series of textbooks titled *Vatandaş İçin Medeni Bilgiler* (Civilized Knowledge for the Citizen). In her memoirs Inan (1988, 7) reveals that: “I see it as my responsibility to set the historical record straight. Although these books have come out under my

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<sup>37</sup> Tanzimat literally means re-ordering. Tanzimat is a process in Ottoman History started with Tanzimat Act (1839) bringing western conceptions of limitations against the sole power of a monarch. Citizenship as a concept emerged in ottoman conjuncture with Tanzimat movement. It can be seen as the ‘Ottoman’ Magna Carta

name, they have been written based on Atatürk's ideas and criticisms and the narrative style belongs solely to him". Hein and Selden suggest (1998, 3) "textbooks provide one of the most important ways in which nation, citizenship, the idealized past, and the promised future are articulated and disseminated in contemporary societies". Thus Civilized Knowledge for Citizen is important in the sense that it reflects the official discourse of the ruling elite over the social engineering and nation building processes.

*Askerlik Vazifesi* (Military Duty) was the name of one of the textbooks that are compiled under the volume. "First published in 1930, the aim of this textbook was to provide material for the military courses in first and second schools" (Altınay 2004, 15). Hasan Ünder (1999) points out that narrative was concise and well written in the textbook, sometimes complemented with direct quotations and translations from Goltz's work. However, Ünder notes that without any reference to Goltz or concept of nation in arms, the textbook emphasized the need for every citizen to participate in the country's defense through military service. Altınay posits that although Goltz's piece is the major source for *Askerlik Vazifesi*, future prospects of these two texts were different: while Goltz claimed that in the future the concept of war will disappear with the new forms of customs and opinions, Atatürk and İnönü believed that disappearance of armies and warfare is nothing but an optimistic utopian and humanistic dream. *Askerlik Vazifesi* is important when thought within the context of two important developments brought forward by the official ideology 1930s on: the writing of a national history based on Central Asian descent and emergence of racial understanding of nation with the Turkish History Thesis; and interpretation of military service as a cultural/ racial/ national characteristic instead of a mere defensive necessity. These developments contributed to the military-nation myth as an essence for the Turkish nationalist discourse.



Turkish nationalism was a late comer as an ideology when compared to others blossomed within the Ottoman territory. “Ottoman state through reform in the legal system, the military and political structure, was taking measures towards becoming a nation state with a centralized administrative structure, a modern education system, a new conception of rights and duties for its subjects, and a citizen army” (Altınay 2004, 16). As I mentioned above idea of citizenship, especially in a multi-national and multi-cultural context becomes a huge debate, in accordance with the intellectual debate on how to save Ottoman Empire.

Yusuf Akçura was one of the most prominent intellectuals reflecting on the tension between empire and the nation state in Ottoman Empire. In his influential essay, Akçura (1904) suggested that three kinds of politics exist for the future of Ottoman state: Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism. Accordingly Ottomanism was experimented but failed, Islamism was hard to implement but Turkism was brand new and inevitable. Akçura stressed that it was not the will but the race that made up the nation. Despite its theoretical inconsistencies, Eric Jan Zürcher (2004, 134) sees Akçura’s piece as the “Communist Manifesto of Turkism”. Zürcher brings forth that “by the end of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), Ottomanism was a dead letter, and Turkish nationalism was gaining prominence and turning into a program, mainly through the organization *Türk Ocakları*, (Turkish Hearths) and its journal *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Homeland)”. Another prominent ideologue of the era was Ziya Gökalp, who contributed in the journal Turkish Homeland and also proposed a theory on the relationship between nationhood, culture, race and ethnicity. Gökalp (1916) claimed that nation is not a racial, ethnic, geographical, political or voluntary group or association but it is a group composed of men and women who have gone through the same education, who have received the same acquisitions in language, religion, morality and aesthetics. Gökalp

synthesized Islam and Turkish nationalism emphasizing the need for modernization. “His volumes in Turkish nationalism, partly inspired by Durkheimian sociology, became foundational sources for the nationalism of first the ruling of Union and Progress Party (1908-1920) and later of Mustafa Kemal and the People’s Party” (Altınay 2004, 18). However divergences between the republican understanding and Gökalp’s theories occurred as well in terms of racialization of nationalism with 1930s. However before jumping to this era we should evaluate the Turkish Independence War that paved the way for the formation of the republic.

### **3.2. The War of Independence**

The war of Independence was not fought in the name of Turkish nation as later historiography suggests, it was fought in the name of Anatolian and Rumeli Muslim people (Zurcher 2004). After the World War 1, local self defense organizations (*Mudafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyetleri*) were formed all over the Anatolia and with the incentive of Mustafa Kemal, a joint struggle was negotiated in Erzurum and Sivas Congresses in 1919. Following the congresses, Grand National Assembly was established in Ankara in 1920 as an alternative to Istanbul government. Mustafa Kemal, in one of his speeches on the definition of Turkish nation indicates that:

Gentlemen...what we mean here, the people whom this assembly represents are not only Turks, are not only Cerkes, are not only Kurds, and are not only Laz. But it is an intimate collective of all Muslim elements... The nation that we are here to preserve and defend is, of course, not only comprised if one element. It is composed of various Muslim elements...We have repeated and confirmed and altogether accepted with sincerity, that each and every element that has created this collective are citizens who respect each other and each other’s racial, social, geographic rights. Therefore we share the same interests. The unity that we seek to achieve is not only of

Turks and Cerkas, but of Muslim elements that include all of these...(Ataturk 1920, trns. by Altınay 2004).

The national resistance that is epitomized by such discourse encapsulating different ethnic elements under the umbrella of Islam can hardly be thought of as a 'Turkish' Independence War. After the establishment of republic, however, all these distinct identities and Muslim elements had been silenced and suppressed by the official ideology, using historiography as an ideological appendage in terms of celebrating Turkish identity over anything else (Parla 1992). Such discursive shift in 1920's required a definition of what is Turk, put roughly. Turkish government, since the Law of Maintenance of Order's coming into force, was an authoritarian one-party regime (Zurcher 2004, 187). Possessing all political and social instruments, the state looked for ways in order to legitimize the 'Turkishness' as an essential element of new structure. By the late 1930's Turkey was constructed in a way that it was a 'Turkish' state. "The production of the Turkish History Thesis marks an important stage in the making of a hegemonic Turkish nationalism based on ideas of race and ethnicity" (Altınay 2004, 20).

### **3.3. The Turkish History Thesis**

Taking Charles Tilly's (1992) differentiation between *state-led* and *state-seeking* nationalisms into consideration, it can be suggested that starting with the establishment of the republic (1923) Turkish nationalism appeared as a state-led nationalism. State aimed to suppress all differences within its territory and tried to assimilate these different identities under the idea Turkishness. Historiography, obviously, was the most important mean for historicizing such ideal starting with the endeavors of rewriting Ottoman and Turkish history in 1930s. In accordance with such

project *Türk Tarih Kurumu* (Turkish Historical Society, est. 1931) and *Türk Dil Kurumu* (Turkish Linguistic Society, est. 1932) were founded by Atatürk in order to excavate historical and linguistic origins of Turkish society. These two institutions were the sole bodies for intellectual production of Turkish nation and nationalism in 1930s (Altınay 2004). Historian Etienne Copeaux (1998, 40) notes that this period denotes to the “centralization and absolute control of all intellectual life in Turkey, and ideologization of history”. These two institutions were meant to propose and prepare an official history for the Turkish Republic which came into being in 1936.

Turkish History Thesis briefly argued that (Gunaltay 1938):

- The original homeland of Turks is Turkistan
- Turks are members of the ‘white race’, not the ‘yellow race’
- Neolithic civilization was first created in Central Asia by Turks
- Due to climatic changes, Turks migrated and introduced Neolithic civilization to Asia, Europe and America
- The Turks developed the early civilizations in Mesopotamia and Egypt
- Turkish language is the oldest language of high culture and is the origin of Sumerian and Hittite languages
- The Turks have formed many states in history (Sumerians, Huns, Seljuks, Timurids, Mogul Empire, Ottoman Empire etc. and finally Turkish republic)

Etienne Copeaux (1998, 32) draws attention to three main issues about the thesis: development of ethnic and racial understanding of culture, glorification of Turkish race as the basis of civilization and high culture, formation of dual geographic framework whereby Central Asia is the main homeland while simultaneously the current location of Turkey (Anatolia) is claimed to have

Turkish origins. “The emphasis on Central Asian origin aimed the marginalization of Islamic and Ottoman influences, and arguments over Anatolia served to counter the Armenian and Greek land claims over Turkey” (Copeaux 1998, 32). “Conceptualization of Turkish history as a history of state-making not only contributes to the overall theme of high civilization among the Turks, but also provides an organic unity between history and contemporary politics”(Berktaş 1990, 64). Having established numerous states in history; Turkish identity was praised by the thesis through its historical militarist character. Altınay (2004) argues that “narrative of Turkish nation and state-making neutralized military service as a cultural institution operating as a foundational myth, rather than a modern state institution”.

### ***3.4. Inventing the Tradition***

Not surprisingly, the first conscription law of the republic was coincided with the first census in 1927. Lucassen and Zürcher (1999, 10) posit that “a reliable census is one of the prerequisites for the successful introduction of a conscript army”. The recruitment practices for army changed with the new law coming into force. “It has been estimated as late as 1932 size of the Turkish army was little greater than that existing in 1922 (78.000) men. It was not until 1939 and 1940 that the Turkish army mobilized a substantially greater force, possibly something around 800.000” (Lerner and Robinson 1960, 27). Such 900 % rise in the military personnel denotes to a tremendous change in the recruitment practices.

When we look at the 1910s and 1920s, the time of intense warfare within the Ottoman territories, the number of army deserters was very high and attitude towards the military service was close to negative. “The poor conditions in the army (lack of proper clothing, food and means of

transportation) combined with war conditions brought the high rate of desertion to unmanageable proportions” (Zurcher 1999, 234). Zurcher also reflects on the lyrics of the songs of World War I in order to carve out the pessimism loaded in them: “the prevailing sentiment in the lyrics of the songs is...nearly always that those who went on campaign had no chance of returning and that they would die in some far off desert” (Zurcher 1999, 236). When first conscription law came into force, military service has the connotations of being sacrificed, war and loss; and thus, “the discourses that were produced in the 1930s would slowly divorce military service from the recent wars and the Ottoman past, and relocate it in the terrain of culture/nation/race” (Altınay 2004, 28). Mustafa Kemal Atatürk marks that:

Contemporary armies are not comprised solely of those who join the military on their own will, but all members of the nation are obliged to perform military service. Those who do not want to join, along with those who do, are, and should be, obliged to perform their duty to their ‘homeland’ (Atatürk, ideas on military 1959, trns. by Altınay 2004)

Altınay (2004) reminds us that “the evolutionary, universalistic history that explained the emergence of military service in the theatres of war, was eventually replaced with a nationalist history based on mythical construction of Turkish culture starting in Central Asia” and having cultural/national/racial features peculiar to Turkish nation. In Turkish History Thesis it is indicated that:

Military training can be given in a matter of years, whereas military spirit is an ore that is born from the hammering of the abilities and capabilities of humankind throughout the centuries on the anvils of experience, and transformation into steel in the fire of life that has been fanned with raging storms. This is why the Turkish nation is the nation with the most developed military spirit...A nation with highly military spirit is a nation with a history of civilization; one that embodies deep and far-reaching knowledge. It is natural that the Turkish race, which has been the ancestor of all major civilizations since the first days of humanity, perfected this spirit (Turkish History Thesis).

What is striking here is the sawing of military service in the cultural realm, thus defining civilization with reference to the militarist potential of a certain society. Especially with the Turkish History Thesis and education policies, the military was stripped from its role as a necessity and turned into a cultural practice, to put roughly. Such cultural inscription can be assessed as an “invented tradition” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Altınay (2004, 30) suggests that there are four important consequences of such discursive shift in the realm of military, from a necessity to invented tradition: distancing of military service from wars, making military service immune to historical change, making military service immune to political debate, leaving little place for civilian sphere in national politics and cultural practice.

Bakhtin (1994, 342) notes that “the ‘authoritative word’ is located in distanced zone, organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher. Its authority was already acknowledged in the past”. The myth of military nation is an authoritative word as Bakhtin defines in the contemporary context. Military character of the nation appears as a cultural taboo and questioning of such foundational myth would be akin to taboo. The authoritative word also translates itself to the authoritative practice: military service. Since 1927, for at least three generations, barracks have been a major site for the imagining the nation and national identity (Altınay 2004, 31).

In chapter 3, I sketched how the cultural hegemony of militaristic discourse was created by the state apparatus and official discourse in order to fulfill the needs of a new regime in Turkey. Maybe a crucial question would be how this hegemony is translated into political realm. Turkish armed forces were and are always an active participant of political discussions and system. This participation reveals itself in the negotiation processes (as it is in the National Security Council, or issues regarding to foundational ideational pillars of the republic such as secularism and national security) as well as the direct involvement and intervention in the political realm (i.e. the coups). The armed forces always had a self-assigned legitimacy when it comes to defining and defending the “essence” of the republic. Consequently the institutional structure of the military makes itself immune to social resistance and criticism through the cultural connotations it possesses.



#### **IV. Political Aspect: Military and Turkish Politics in a Historical Perspective**

Having elaborated on the roots of militaristic discourse in cultural sense, now we should excavate the political history and the active role of military within Turkish politics. Such endeavor would be in extreme importance for understanding how media structures appropriated hegemonic discourse, simply because “evolution of media sector can not be thought independent of political developments” (Kejanlioğlu 2004, 46). Considering the significance of the complementary nature of cultural and political hegemony, examining the relationship between the military and the media in Turkey requires a brief evaluation of the republican history. Taking the commercialization and democratization arguments favoring media pluralism into consideration, this chapter will focus on the democratic —at least in discursive and legal terms— political process of Turkey that took off in 1946. Turkish case suggests a peculiarity stemming from the quality and nature of democracy as it is reflected in policy and decision making processes. Zurcher (2004, 5) notes that Turkish democracy is a troubled one. Salt (1999) emphasizes the role of military in Turkish political scene and points out that Turkey is a “military democracy” in a nutshell. Taking all these points into the core of question, looking for the anatomy of Turkish mass military brings forward the question of state in historical sense into the picture.

Periodically, this historical venture consists of three basic venues. First one is the rule of Democrat Party (1950-60) characterized by the “political and military integration of Turkey into the Western alliance; rapid economic development, growing financial dependence on the United States, and a downgrading of secularist tendencies of previous governments” (Zurcher 2004, 5).

This period also can be addressed in the sense that for the first time “partisan media” and propaganda based democracy came into being in Turkey. Second period is what is called “Second Republic”, the period started with the coup d’état of 1961 by a segment of high ranked military officers. Introduction of a new constitution in 1961 allowed the emergence of movements and parties which veered much farther from the political center. At the same time this constitution legalized and legitimized the interference of the army in political matters. In economics, this period which lasted until late 1970’s, was the process in which a heavily protected import substitution industry was built up, and both capitalists and trade unions gained importance. Also millions of Turkish citizens migrated to Europe as industrial workers or their relatives. In the 1970’s the world economic crisis led to social instability and political extremism. “The period of repression after the military coup by memorandum of 1971 was brutal, but did not alter the course of events fundamentally” (Zurcher 2004, 5).

Following the military coup of 1980, the power of the armed forces was used to “suppress all existing political and trades union formations, and to introduce a new economic policy, aimed at export-led growth and a free internal market, cutting wages and subsidies” (Zurcher 2004, 5). Even after the gradual liberalization from 1983 onwards, political life had to take place within the limits of the very restrictive constitution of 1982. From 1991, the patterns of pre-1980 politics re-established themselves and the structures built up after the 1980 coup were gradually dismantled, but the main socio-economic trends were not changed. Likewise certain social and political conceptualizations like secularism, Westernization, nationalism and so on are dragged into public discourse which also reflected itself in the mainstream media discourse.

There are certain significant themes that deserve attention for understanding the nature of the relationship between military and the political system in Turkey. State as a concept in its physical being and as a mental map in Turkish case has been discussed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter. Historical evaluation of military power in republican era is another important theme, which is to be discussed here. A brief conclusion will follow.

#### **4.1. The State**

Conceptualization of “state” in retrospect should be discussed in order to understand the nature of political authority in Turkey. Turkey, in terms of the structure that its state possesses and maintains, suggests a peculiar case. Mahçupyan (1996, 133) indicates that peculiarity of Turkey stems from the mitigation of an imperial social heritage with Western political and administrative mechanisms. This social heritage consists of patriarchal and religious themes which are shared by the state and the society (Mahçupyan 1996, 29). However state is always seen at the top of all hierarchies, out of reach for the society. There is literature emphasizing the resemblance between Ottoman state structure and Platonic ideal of state (Mardin 1985, Köker 1992). Plato claims that real knowledge lies in the world of ideas and only chosen ones possessing natural skills and wisdom can achieve such knowledge. Therefore Plato’s projection of ideal state proposes a social stratification based on meritocracy: Philosopher King and Guardians, Military/Auxiliary Class and Producer/ Worker Class. Same stratification can be reflected upon Ottoman society. Sultan corresponding to the philosopher king rests on a strong military class. Sultan, his entourage and military class were always segregated from the rest of the society (Saybaşıllı 1992, 122). Saybaşıllı (1992, 135-136) posits that most important components of Ottoman state administration are *military* and *finance*. In the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century *Tanzimat*, ideologically tore this Platonic

state ideal down. Modern state tradition came into being with the formation of the republic in 1923. Saybaşı (1992, 149) stresses that what is modern about this new conception of state is basically acknowledgement of capitalist economy and reference to public sovereignty. These reflections of Platonic ideal on Ottoman state structure have certain reductionisms such as overemphasizing the importance of individualism in state apparatus and disregarding any other factor which affects policy making. However they are important in the sense that they draw attention to totalitarian nature of the state mechanism and how it is legitimized before the society. “This totalitarian state evolved into an authoritarian one with the republican era due to legitimacy problems of the new regime that has been built by military officers” (Kejanlıoğlu 2004, 160). In chapter 3, I discussed the legitimacy problems which military-state has faced, and how it overcame the difficulties using myths.

There are some studies on the part of the Marxist approaches in order to explain the class character of the state can be summarized under three headings: the structural approach equating the political level with the state (relative autonomy); approaches that see the state as an appendage of ruling class (*bourgeoisie*); and regulation approach that perceives state as the framework organization regulating the relationships between different classes (Ongen 1999). As Ongen asserts, the intersection point of these three understandings is “the state as the political form of class domination”. According to Marx, the state not only regulates the economic realm but it is a gigantic instrument regulating whole social formation (Jessop 1982, 222). In other words the state not only operates in the level of capitalistic relations and class conflict, but it also encompasses the social relations not necessarily pertaining to class conflict. Thus reducing state to the role of controlling apparatus of the dominating class would be pretty simplistic.

The definition of state in Turkish republican context is really a difficult question. Until the democratic era the Republican People's Party (the RPP) established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was the sole authority in the one party regime. Especially in 1930s the boundaries between the party and the state is ambiguous. Party imposed the six pillars of Kemalism<sup>38</sup> in each and every single particle of state bureaucratic mechanism. The point that had to be kept in mind for the purpose of this chapter is that, the armed forces, a non-class political actor, with its physical and psychological stance, is very important in understanding state apparatus in the republican era. The army is seen as the founder of the republic and state. For the sake of granted ideals of Turkish republic such as national integrity, secularism, republicanism and so on, the military never hesitated in intervening to the political system, and not surprisingly all the constitutions in republican history were prepared under the surveillance of military regimes. Suat Ilhan, the director of *The Atatürk High Council for Culture, Language and History*, notes that "characteristics related to the military are bound to make a great contribution to the shaping of the culture of a society so unified with its military as ours: the fact that the military has all the cultural characteristics of the society, that it manifests these characteristics, and that it serves as a center of education for most of these cultural values is an inevitable, in fact, necessary consequence" (Ilhan1989, 361). Ilhan (1989, 363) also asserts that if Turkey takes military out of the cultural realm, unity and integrity of the nation would be eventually abolished.

## **4.2. History of Democracy**

In this section I will portray the historical venture of military mainly through the precious descriptions and findings of Eric Jan Zürcher and Faroz Ahmad on Turkish political history. Yet

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<sup>38</sup> These six pillars are republicanism, statism, nationalism, secularism, populism and revolutionism. The emblem of the RPP consists of six arrows symbolizing each pillar.

in order to present a more comprehensive and genuine account, I will support these descriptive accounts with more normative evaluations.

#### **4.2.1. Democracy in Town: 1950-1960**

“There is a widespread consensus among historians that the Democratic Party’s (hereafter DP) landslide election victory in May 1950 is a watershed in modern Turkish political history” (Zurcher 2004, 221). The character both of the new assembly, in which the DP held an overwhelming majority and of the new government, was very different from the one party system. The most striking difference of the DP, vis-à-vis previous RPP regime, was the virtual absence of representatives from bureaucratic and/or military background. This signaled the appearance of a “different kind of elite in Turkish politics” (Frey 1965, 356). Under the RPP the state apparatus and the party machine had been merged to the extent that one could say that the party was just “one of the instruments through which the state controlled the society” (Zurcher 2004, 221). When the DP came to power the link between party and the state was broken. Zurcher (2004, 222) notes that “the democrats mistrusted the bureaucracy and the military they inherited from the old regime, and devoted a great effort in order to get them under control”. Therefore “the most significant difference from the Kemalist era was that this time party dominated bureaucracy, not the other way around” (Ahmad 1977, 37).

The DP saw itself as the representative of the popular will with a mission to transform the society. This perception can also be epitomized in the populist strategies implemented by the party. Such self-justified purpose has shown itself in the absolute power that the DP achieved through majority in assembly. Under 1924 constitution, there were no checks such as Supreme

Court or a second chamber to counterbalance the power of assembly and especially after 1954, “the government used this situation to make life hard for the opposition” (Zurcher 2004, 222). Insecurity of the DP in government was also unearthed through the adoption of number of amendments that increased government control of the press and the universities in 1953.

1954 elections ended up with an increased DP majority in the parliament, securing the party’s position even more than 1950 elections. The economic success brought by liberalist tendencies of the party guaranteed the support of mass population, especially in the countryside. “Ironically enough, while the DP was tightening the pressure over universities and press on the one hand, on the other, the party permanently criticized the authoritarian nature of previous RPP governments” (Ahmad 1977, 45). However populist politics it implemented became detrimental in long run for the party. “In economic terms the massive investments of initial years lessened due to use of short-sighted subsidies and cheap credit facilities in order to jump-start the economy quickly, ignorance of economic planning and politically inspired investment decisions in order to increase vote potential” (Zurcher 2004, 225-226). In social terms, religious discourse was a fundamental element for the DP strategy. The number of preacher schools was increased and the prayer call in Arabic was made legal again<sup>39</sup>. But this strategy turned against the DP when combined with economic difficulties and crises starting from 1957. An opposition consisting of ex-bureaucrats, military officers, universities came into being against the party’s anti secular<sup>40</sup> policies. The answer of the DP to the worsening political situation revealed itself in the form of authoritarianism and oppression.

<sup>39</sup> The prayer was in Arabic during all Ottoman era. After the foundation of republic, and with the leverage of Ataturk for a more secularist political structure, the prayer was translated into Turkish in 1932.

<sup>40</sup> To understand the argument we have to remember what the Kemalist concept of secularism had been. The Kemalists were the executors of a modernization strategy based on a positivist world vision, in which religion was seen as a hindrance to progress in the modernization of state and the society.

The year 1958 saw the first signs of the aggression between the army and the government when nine army officers were arrested for plotting against the government. “The accusations against the nine officers involved, were investigated by a military tribunal, but did not probe very deeply— the army was not prepared to wash its dirty linen in public” (Zurcher 2004, 239). The officers were acquitted and only the informer was convicted. Nevertheless the government was alarmed. This complicated picture ended up with the military intervention of Turkish Armed Forces in May 27<sup>th</sup> 1960.

#### **4.2.2. The Second Republic: 1960-1979**

In the declaration of the military officers that involved in coup, it was announced that the Turkish armed forces “had taken over the administration of the country to prevent “fratricide” and to extricate the parties from “irreconcilable” situation into which they have fallen” (Zurcher 2004, 240). “The declaration emphasized the non partisan character of the coup” (Weiker 1963, 17). The military takeover was greeted with public joy in Ankara and Istanbul, notably among the large student population in both cities and in generally among intelligentsia (Zurcher 2004, 241). The military announced that power was now in the hands of National Union Committee (hereafter NUC). On June 12<sup>th</sup> 1961, the NUC assisted by a team of professors, issued a provisional constitution, which gave a legal basis both to the coup and to the existence of the NUC. The cabinet of technocrats, which the military had installed after the coup, was a purely executive organ: “All important policy decisions were made by the NUC itself” (Zurcher 2004, 242).



The text that resulted from these deliberations was notably different from the 1924 constitution. The main aim of the authors of the new constitution was to prevent a power monopoly such as the DP (and the RPP before it) had held, by counterbalancing the national assembly with other institutions. A second chamber was created and all legislation would have to pass both chambers. An independent supreme court was established, which could throw out the legislation which was regarded as unconstitutional and the judiciary, the universities and the mass media were guaranteed full autonomy. A full bill of civil liberties was added into the constitution. In 1962, the military was given a constitutional role for the first time through the establishment of a National Security Council (hereafter NSC) mentioned in the constitution. Chaired by the president, the council advised the government in internal and external security. “In the two decades that followed its establishment, the NSC gradually extended its influence over government policy and became a powerful watchdog, sometimes replacing the cabinet as the center of real power and decision making” (Zurcher 2004, 245).

In 1962, with military stepping back from direct executive role and emergence of new parties, transition to democracy in structural terms was accomplished. After a 3 year RPP government, Justice Party (JP) —successor of the DP— came into power in 1965. Rule of Justice Party led by Süleyman Demirel had difficult times with the radicalization of politics, a trend that could be observed almost in everywhere in the world. “By early 1971, Demirel’s government, weakened by defections, seemed to have become paralyzed. It was powerless to act to curb the violence on campuses and in the streets” (Zurcher 2004, 258). On March 12<sup>th</sup> 1971, the Chief of General Staff handed the prime minister a memorandum, an ultimatum by the armed forces. It demanded that “a strong and credible government be formed that would be able to end the “anarchy” and carry

out reforms “in a ‘Kemalist spirit’” (Zurcher 2004, 258). If the demands were not met, the army would exercise its “constitutional duty”.

Leftist wing, at first, greeted ultimatum with hope, interpreting it as a 1960 type coup against the right wing government. This soon proved to be wrong. It was a coup by the high command that was mesmerized by the specter of a communist threat (Zurcher 2004,, 259). Following the ultimatum, Demirel abolished its government and a new government led by Nihat Erim, supported by the high command came into power. Erim’s cabinet proposed a number of amendments to the constitution, aimed at making it less liberal which national assembly adopted with the support of the parties of the right. 44 articles were changed. The autonomy of universities and of radio and television was ended; freedom of the press was limited as were the powers of the Supreme Court. By contrast, “powers of the NSC were increased to include giving unsolicited advice to the cabinet, advice that was binding” (Zurcher 2004, 261).

The political system gradually became paralyzed because the two major parties, the JP and the RPP, were unable to cooperate after the restoration of democracy in 1973, therefore giving small extremist groups disproportionate influence (Dodd 1983, 24). The polarization of the big parties was due partly to ideological factors (both were more “ideological” than the DP and the RPP in 1950s) and partly to personal rivalry between the leaders. This paralysis meant that no government was able to take effective measures to combat the two overwhelming problems Turkey faced in the 1970s: the political violence and the economic crisis.

#### 4.2.3. The Third Republic and Liberalization: 1980-2007

On September 12<sup>th</sup> 1980, the armed forces took over the political power declaring that the state organs had stopped functioning<sup>41</sup>. It is also bestowed that the parliament has been dissolved, that the cabinet had been deposed and that the immunity of the members of the national assembly had been lifted. All political parties and the two radical trade union confederations (leftist DISK and ultra nationalist MISK) were suspended. The political party leaders were arrested. A state of emergency was declared throughout the country and no one was allowed to leave the boundaries. “The generals saw their task as saving democracy from the politicians and as purging the political system: All power was concentrated in the hands of the military, more specifically in the hands of the NSC” (Zurcher 2004, 279).

In terms of reconstructing political life, 1980 junta regime followed almost the same procedures with its 1960 predecessor (Dodd 1983, 45). First draft of a new constitution came into being on July 17<sup>th</sup> 1982. The new constitution concentrated power in the hands of executive and increased the powers of the president and the NSC. It also limited freedom of press, the freedom of trade unions and the rights and liberties of individuals. “The usual rights and liberties such as freedom of speech were included in the constitution, but it was stipulated that they could be annulled, suspended or limited on the grounds of a whole series of considerations, including the national interest, public order, national security, danger to the republican order and public health” (Zurcher 2004, 281).

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<sup>41</sup> In its Proclamation Number One, the Junta legitimized its action by referring to the duty the armed forces had under the law on Internal Service to protect the republic. The key term in proclamation is “national unity and cohesion” which was to remain the army’s key political concept in the 1980s and 1990s (Zurcher 2004, 353).

With the restoration of democracy in 1983, most of the tension was alleviated. Economically Turkey was directed towards the export drive instead of import substitution. Exports were encouraged through a set of specific measures: subsidies for exporters, simplification of complex bureaucratic measures and abolition of customs duties on imported inputs for export oriented industries (Boratav 1995, 22)). Consequently the winners of economic game in 1980s were the big family holdings (Zurcher 2004, 287). Özal government (1983-1991) publicly declared its intention to privatize the public sector industries, but its privatization program progressed very slowly (Hale 1981, 87). Most of the state industries were so old fashioned that investors were not interested in them. More effective was the abolition of a number of government monopolies in the sectors such as airway companies and media outlets. In both sectors members of the Özal family was among the pioneers. The position of the commercial radio and television channels were really rather extraordinary. The first commercial TV network *Star-1* was broadcasted from Germany and could be received in Turkey via satellite dishes. Soon all the major holdings and especially the large newspaper publishers had their own TV channels. This was tolerated, although the article in the constitution that gave a broadcasting monopoly to the state was only changed in 1993.

Politically 1980s and 1990s are the years that brought Turkish ruling elite certain problems such as Kurdish Issue, the PKK activity and rise of the Islamism in politics. PKK engaged in guerilla warfare against Turkish armed forces in 1984 for the first time in eastern provinces of Turkey. Gradually the scale of PKK actions increased. In these two decades, the manpower employed in the struggle by the Turkish army kept on increasing —from 150.000 in 1991 to 250.000 in 1994— but the number of casualties rose even faster. Between 1984 and 1990, according to official figures, 2500 people had died, by 1994 number was 7000 and by the end of 1996 the official

number was around 17.000 (Zurcher 2004). By the time when the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, was captured by a co-operation of MIT (National Intelligence Agency) and CIA 1999, it was generally around 30.000. The war in the East cost Turkey almost 100 billion US Dollars. In the international scene 1990's was the process the Turkish identity came into a self-questioning mode with the European Union agenda coming into picture. Also problematic relations with geographical neighbors (with Greece and Armenia on historical grounds, with Syria and Iraq on water problem and Kurdish terror, and with Iran on nuclear weapons and Islamic fanaticism) drew a difficult political picture for Turkey.

Ironically, islamist policies were first pumped by the military rule in 1980s in order to weaken the left (Hale 1996, 162). Islamist discourse in politics gained a significant amount of leverage in policy making, so that the Islamic oriented Welfare Party (WP) came into power in coalition with Party of True Path (PTP- successor of the DP and the JP tradition) in 1995. After six months the coalition seemed quite strong and stable: "it was tolerated rather than supported by the business community; suffered grudgingly by the military; and constantly attacked by the mass circulation press, which in Turkey is dominated by two conglomerates in 1990s (The Doğan group publishing *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet*, and the Bilgin group publishing *Sabah* which will be bought by the Doğan Group in 2002) which hold 66 percent of the market and own important television channels as well" (Zurcher 2004, 294). The coalition government was abolished due to a military ultimatum in February 28<sup>th</sup> 1997 (so called post modern coup) due to its Islamic resonance and potential threat to the regime.

Justice and Development Party's (JDP) — moderate Pro-Islamic, pro-liberal— coming into power in 2000 without a need for coalition, brought about different concerns and questions about

Turkey. In the first decade of 2000, most of these economic and political difficulties are bound to change in a reconciliatory way. More stabilized economy and democracy are pursued by state administrative mechanisms. However historical psychology circumscribed with nationalistic and xenophobic flavors, Islam and secularism question and Kurdish issues are still effective on the policy making level and on the dynamics for creating a democratic culture, making it difficult to implement the democratic ideals due to strengthening of the national security discourse and the military in politics.

To conclude chapter 4, the most salient observation would be that the cultural hegemony of the military over society operated and to certain extent still operates within the political realm, making military a legitimate actor in every aspect of social life and politics. It can be argued that, military as an organizational actor with human resources, technology, and defensive concerns, is a legitimate political actor all over the world. Thomas Barnett (2004) asserts that the foreign policy of the US is determined by, more or less, the Pentagon. Yildiz (2007, xiii-xiv) portrays that, the US military overlooks even the movie scripts in Hollywood, British Chief-in Command discusses the political issues on TV including Iraqi issue. So what makes Turkish military involvement in politics peculiar? Roughly speaking, the peculiarity of Turkish military's involvement comes from the inter-textuality of cultural and political aspects of its hegemony. In other words the political area within which Turkish military operates ideologically, is far more expanded when it is compared to its counterparts. The active role of the military in the politics stems from its cultural hegemony which translates itself into the *consent* on part of the society. Military has its own definitions of national security in Turkey; therefore, as it is in the 1980s

intervention which legitimized itself by claiming that left-right conflict was almost dividing the country apart, it is a self-legitimized political actor. I posit that such self-legitimization can be seen as a symptom of hegemony having roots in massive cultural traumas such as independence war, domestic political conflicts etc in retrospect. In other words, the militaristic discourse which is normalized within the social discourse proposes that use of military force is a way to solve political and social tensions, be them domestic or international. Going back to my initial argument, mass media in Turkey provides such normalcy of the militaristic discourse within the public domain. Erol Simavi, founder of a high-circulation mainstream *Hurriyet* daily, claims that it is the media that made coups and military interventions possible in Turkey by making them real in terms of carrying out their stories like theatrical performances to the social and political discourse (Aksoy 1994, 7).

Another important aspect of military strength in the political realm is not directly related to idea of hegemony but it is more about the general regulations on civil liberties: especially the constitutions. All constitutions in republican era, except 1921 and 1924<sup>42</sup>, appeared as a component of the political tensions and concerns about the regime, and were established right after military interventions. Considering that a variety of different spheres in social and economic life, including media, is regulated by constitutional premises and ideals, the interpretations of these ideals with regard to the exercise of political authority becomes a crucial question. Thus, in the following chapter, I will divert a bit from the hegemony principle and focus on the media structure in Turkey and especially on the regulatory institution RTUK in order to portray how the

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<sup>42</sup> 1921 constitution was prepared during the independence war in order to define the organizational scheme of the resistance. Thus it did not include any provisions on the regulation of social life. 1924 constitution was prepared right after the establishment of the republic, yet it was too rudimentary and broad in terms of constitutionalist premises. On the other hand 1961 and 1982 constitutions had strong claims toward the regulation of social structure.

militaristic discourse is maintained in the media realm by the incentive of the state apparatus, and with the ideological perspectives of the RTUK as an institution. Cultural and political domains provide us the roots of hegemonic status of the militaristic discourse. In chapter 5, however, I will look for the policy instruments on part of the state, for monitoring and fine-tuning media discourse.

It is important to note that the past 60 years make it clear that the court of last resort in Turkish politics is not the ballot box but the military. Military seen as the defender of national interest and having direct leverage for solving traumas or any problem concerning the nation, as I argue, is a direct reflection of militaristic ideology reflected on the society in a massive scale. Unlike a branch of Marxist thought positing military as an oppressive appendage of state, in Turkish case, this causality is turned upside down. The supra status of the Turkish military comes from the fact that it has placed itself above the restrictions, scrutiny, and the public criticism that apply to all other sectors of society, placing it virtually above the state (Salt 1999, 77).



## V. Sustaining Hegemony: Media economics and media control

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> chapters, I have dealt with the historical and cultural roots of militaristic media discourse in Turkish society as an ideological premise. In this chapter I will be concerned about how the militaristic discourse is maintained and sustained within the economic structure of media and by the policy instruments. This chapter is not directly related to my initial theoretical framework of hegemony because hegemony as an idea is based on the consent of the audiences, without any direct intervention on the part of the dominant actors. Yet I believe that understanding the commercialization of the media sphere and the media policy means regulating the media realm is complementary for pointing out to the context within which hegemony is mediated without any difficulty, and sketching the embeddedness of the militaristic discourse in the media industry.

Turkish media structure in retrospect can be discussed with regard to four periods: commercial radio, state monopoly, TRT<sup>43</sup> monopoly and commercial media (Kejanlioğlu 2004, 170). First period is between 1927 and 1936. In this decade, two studios were arranged in Istanbul and Ankara and regular emissions were initiated. Second period is state monopoly over media that lasted from 1936 until 1964. Such policy shift first appeared with the nationalization of radio in 1936 (Kocabaşoğlu 1980, 114). Second World War brought dynamism to radio programming. Administrative and technological novelties combined with subsidies from the state ended up in a more improved quality of radio emission. However the radio, in this period acted as an

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<sup>43</sup> TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Foundation) was established in 1968 as the public broadcaster. Until the emergence of commercial TV networks in 1990s, TRT had the broadcasting monopoly.

appendage of bureaucratic mechanism, seen as “government’s mouth and nation’s ear” by the ruling elite (Kocabaşoğlu 1985, 2735).

Transition to two-party system is an important milestone in radio broadcasting. In 1949, a legal act allowed opposition parties to use radio for election campaigning. This trend changed in 1954, and ban on opposition parties’ use of radio in elections took place. From 1954 on, radio was used as a partisan component of Democratic Party until military intervention of 1960 (Aksoy 1960). In 1950s, Democratic Party used radio to promulgate its more populist Islamic discourse against strict secularism of the RPP (Kejanlıoğlu 2004, 182). Religious programs took place in radio emissions for the first time. However, Democratic Party also put emphasis on the good relations with the US and Western capitalist societies against the Eastern Bloc, which reflected on the radio policy and content of the programs of the time. The DP government used any means of media in order to maintain its power in the political field. However opposition party, the RPP, used the same strategy as well. *Ulus* daily, the official publication of the RPP, criticized the DP government, its policies and even its leading cadres on the grounds of their personal deficiencies (Demir 2007, 164). Following the logic of previous one party regime about the mass media, the DP took on harsh measures against the media by censoring in political terms and by putting state monopoly on paper production in economic terms. On the other hand, Demir (2007, 165) posits that the attitude of the opposition press in terms of using “ad hominem” strategies against the government and misuse of journalist ethics turned the mass communication sphere into an arena of tension between two important institutions of modern democracy: the government and the mass media. This contest between the radio controlled by government and opposition press is the first example of “partisanization of media” in Turkish political history in a two-party system.

After military intervention, it is decided that administration of radio and television stations shall be regulated by an autonomous public actor. The period between military intervention of 1960 and establishment of the Turkish Radio and Television Foundation (TRT) in 1964 reflects two important developments. First one is the inclusion of anti-communist discursive material that is provided by the US in Turkish mass media (Kejanlioğlu 2004, 183). Second development is the establishment of city radios following the military intervention in order to avoid unofficial “detrimental” radio emissions (Kocabaşoğlu 1980, 417-419). Establishment of the TRT in 1964 serves as the transition to third period. TRT hold monopoly over radio and TV broadcasting and became very powerful due the increase in technical and administrative staff and economic support coming from the state. However hierarchical organization and lack of objectivity affected these improvements negatively (Ongoren 1985, 2748). An important note about radio policy is that, even though the TRT has the monopoly over emissions, radios independent of the TRT *de facto* existed. During the 1970’s school, police and meteorology radios and certain American radios —due to treaties between Turkey and the US— operated (Kocabaşoğlu 1985, 2736). Most importantly in 1968, Turkey-wide TV broadcasting by TRT took place for the first time.

Regardless of its legal autonomy, the TRT was highly pressured by the state between 1964 and 1971 (Kejanlioğlu 2004, 175). Budgetary issues and subsidies, illegal auditing of accounts and appointment of personnel made the TRT dependent on state authority (Topuz et al. 1990, 95-98). During 1960s direct military control over media was undisputed. The army banned any material coming from the Eastern Bloc to be exposed on Turkish media including radio and press (Gülizar 1994, 144). After the establishment of the TRT —especially on television broadcasting— national, religious and educative foreign programs lived in a symbiotic relationship with changing weights under different political circumstances (Kejanlioğlu 2004, 187). Moreover, in order to avoid

partisanization of radio by the government, 1961 constitution proposed the principles of autonomy and impartiality for the radio (Alemdar 1981, 3). In essence, the reason for the establishment of the TRT was providing such autonomy and impartiality. Demir (2007, 177) notes that the institutionalization of press freedom by the constitution provided both entrance of new entrepreneurs in the media sector and thus emergence of a pluralist media environment. However such notions of freedom, autonomy and impartiality were tailored by the constitutional amendments in 1971, following the coup by memorandum.

After 1971 coup memorandum, ability of state to intervene in the TRT gained legal basis. Article 121 of the constitution was amended in 1971 and autonomy of the TRT was abolished, and it was referred as an “impartial” public institution. Authority of the TRT General Assembly was constrained and most of the decision making power was transferred into the Chief Executive who was to be appointed directly by the Council of Ministers (Şahin 1974, 225). Politically, with such amendments, change in the governments and policies were translated into media policy and practices directly. Opposition parties were ignored by TRT and the TRT was accused of propagating governments.

Turkish press had different ideological responses to the coup by memorandum. While *Ulus* Daily stood against the coup, dailies such as *Milliyet*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Akşam* and *Devrim* clearly supported the memorandum (Demir 2007, 174). In 1972, article 121<sup>44</sup> of the constitution was amended in order to deliver a new framework for the essentials of news programming to back up cultural and social unity: “Inseparable unity of the state and its society; national, social, secular and

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<sup>44</sup> Article 121 indicated that radio and television stations can only be established by state agencies and made TRT bounded up with state initiative. This law is maintained to larger extent in 1982 constitution as well.

democratic republic based on human rights; in the light of national security and general ethics; calling for an honest news media”. However certain concepts in this statement such as human rights and democracy which are directly related to media sphere represent the rhetoric maneuver of a regime that is fine-tuned by its own military. Late 1970s brought forward neo-liberal economic trend that is proposed by governments (be them leftist or rightist) all around the world. Turkey pursued this path of economic policy like many other Western countries but with a peculiar structural difference: “fragile nature of democracy” (Kejanlioğlu 2004, 193).

After 1990’s, the economic structure of media completely changed. A new environment that is dominated by holdings and companies which have tendency to monopolize, came into being (Demir 2007, 193). Marketing strategies were canalized through domestic market, increased quality of press technology and improvements in communication infrastructures created an area of economic confrontation inside the media sphere. Since state lost its direct power over media organizations except public broadcasting which became marginalized in time, it is difficult to talk about deliberate political intervention in the mass media. Moreover it is also difficult to talk about deliberate and clear media policy that is pursued by the state. I will argue that although the economic and political structure of the media industry has changed after 1980s in terms of commercialization and detachment from direct political control of the state apparatus, the militaristic discourse as a hegemonic ideal still exists to a large extent in Turkish mass media. I will also posit that the military as a non-class actor maintains its hegemonic ideological influence not through the economic superiority within the media realm, but through its cultural capital. As I will argue later in this chapter the militaristic discourse is not directly imposed on any media outlet. But the *deviations* from the hegemonic discourse is monitored and controlled. Thereby I will briefly discuss the new ownership patterns and commercial media structures, Turkish media

policy in general and the RTUK in specific as the media control body. This analysis will provide a) the framework within which hegemonic discourse is popularized on daily basis, in terms of use of militaristic discourse as an aspect of media economics, especially with regard to commercialization processes and b) how the top down control over the media discourse is done using media policy instruments.

### ***5.1. Media Economics after 1980: Commercialization and the New Media Ownership***

Turkish media industry witnessed a shift in ownership practices especially 1980s onwards. Dogan Tilic (1999, 245) notes that traditional media owner was coming from a journalist background, interested merely in the journalistic practices and media industry. On the other hand, Tilic continues, the new media owners are mostly perfect strangers to the media sector. They represent a new class having huge industrial enterprises in the areas other than the media, injecting and investing their capital into the media sector. The fundamental reason why they involve in the media industry is simple: for personal political and economic interests (Tilic 1999, 246). Hakan Tuncel carves up the problematic voiced by Tilic in a deeper manner. Inquiring the reasons for the rise of investments in the media sector in Turkey especially with the 1990s, Tuncel comes up with three interrelated groups of reasons on the part of entrepreneurs having investments in the media sector: a) creating/ maintaining reputation among political elites, b) reducing the risk of the capital that is being operationalized in the initial sectors of the owner through transferring capital to the media industry, and c) establishing TV and radio stations as a marketing strategy, through the media ownership, bypassing advertisement expenditures (Tuncel 1994).

Adakli (2000, 155) emphasizes that the reasons proposed by Tuncel are both associated with the working mechanism of media industry and are valid for all media holdings. Media institutions achieve infrastructure services such as telecommunications and electricity and technical equipments such as paper, ink and broadcasting technology with tax reductions or sometimes tax-free thanks to the political elites (Kejanlioglu 2004). Almost all the conglomerates in the Turkish media sector possess investments in the sub-sectors of media industry. These groups own various commercial investments including newspapers, news agencies, publishing houses, distribution networks, advertisement bureaus, TV networks, radios and TV production studios. At the same time these conglomerates have footholds in other sectors such as banking and finance, marketing, automotive, tourism, health, insurance, construction, telecommunication, energy, sports and so on.

By 1998, 80% of the Turkish media market was under the control of five media groups: Dogan, Sabah, Uzan, Ihlas and Aksoy (Adakli 2000, 154). These groups all possessed the vertical and horizontal relationships within their corporate bodies as I mentioned above. The real profit areas of these media groups consisted of banking, finance, energy, construction and tourism sectors.

### **5.1.1. The Ownership Structure**

Media industries increased their market share dramatically in the global scale, especially due to the developments in communication technologies in the United States and the functioning of neo-liberal policies as a global trend since 1980s. Similar kind of transformation can be observed in the Turkish media industry as well. Immense transformation also brought forth the deregulation policies and competitive market approaches on the part of the state. “The economic stability

package” as it has come into force in January 24<sup>th</sup> 1980 signifies a cornerstone for such tremendous change in the industry. Having roots in the neo-liberal understanding of the economy, the package affected each and every aspect of daily life in Turkey including the media sector. Adakli (2000, 157) notes that the most salient examples of this new deal for the media industry are the tripling of paper prices and abolition of subsidies for the press in general, right after the package has been started to be implemented. Such structural changes in the economic policy paved the way for a new understanding of media industry. In order to balance the increased paper prices, newspapers have headed towards commercials and advertisement more than ever. Commercialization of the era translated itself into different marketing strategies for the media industries’ self-sustainment. Between 1985-89 media industry possessed the 10% of all advertisement expenditures (Adakli 2000, 148). In 1990s the media outlets, all together, increased their TV advertisement expenditures, almost 25% of these expenditures belonged to *Hurriyet Daily* owned by Dogan Group (Adakli 2000).

Establishment of commercial TV networks served as the new stepping stone for the expansion of the media industries. Soylemez (1998, 55) indicates that the ultimate result is the emergence of handful of monopolistic media groups, replacing the state monopoly of broadcasting with “private monopolies”. Such conjuncture can be evaluated in the light of two different perspectives. Whilst the liberal approach posits that such structure leads to democratization and international cultural exchange, critical political economy asserts that such processes hinders cultural diversity and representations. As a matter of fact the broadcasting policy of the TRT, overshadowed by bureaucratic concerns, is challenged by the commercial broadcasting promising content diversity and democratic alternatives in 1990s.



An important cornerstone of the Turkish commercial radio and TV broadcasting is the establishment of Star 1 channel in 1991, owned by Ahmet Ozal (son of the president of the time Turgut Ozal) and Cem Uzan via satellite from Federal Germany<sup>45</sup>. Star 1 constituted the first example of the political functionality of a network in Turkey. About the forthcoming elections in 1991, network bluntly stressed that they are off for any political discourse which is critical of Ozal family. The process of commercialization, led by Star 1, paved the way for the emergence of new networks. Erol Aksoy, the owner of the Iktisat Bank, penetrated into the sector with Show TV network. Show TV was followed by the HBB (owned by Has Holding); Kanal 6 (owned by Ahmet Ozal after he resigned from Star 1) in 1992; Cine 5 (owned by Erol Aksoy); TGRT (owned by Enver Oren); ATV (owned by Dinc Bilgin) and Kanal D (owned by Aydin Dogan) in 1993. Diversification of the media environment with the entrance of commercial actors into the market portrayed a new kind of visual culture possibilities. Yet it should be noted that the legal framework could not catch up with these developments. Legal structure for this new environment could only be structured in 1994, through the article 3984 dealing with Radio and Television Establishment and Broadcasting rights. This legal act gave birth to the RTUK (managerial board) and empowered this institution through instruments such as frequency distribution, licensing and ability to cease broadcasting temporarily as a punishment for inappropriate content.

The monopoly of these five conglomerates (Dogan, Bilgin, Aksoy, Ihlas, Uzan) in the media sector was challenged with the breakup of Aksoy and Uzan Groups and involvement of Cukurova Group and Dogus Holding in the industry. The competition among these actors in sectors other than media was directly translated into media discourse and power politics. Thus, it is substantial

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<sup>45</sup> Star 1 used satellite because the broadcasting within the Turkish territory was in the monopoly of TRT. In order to bypass legal restrictions Ozal and Uzan initiated broadcasting from Germany.

to look at the general situation of the new media owners' investments both in the media and the non-media sectors<sup>46</sup>.

### **DOGAN GROUP (Aydin Dogan)**

#### *Media Sector*

TV Networks	Kanal D, CNN Turk, Star TV, Bravo, Galaxy, Ultra Cable
International Br.	Euro D
Radio	Hur FM, Radio Foreks, Radio D
Magazines	DBR Group (25 weekly and monthlies), Dogan Egmont
Internet	E-Kolay
Newspapers <sup>47</sup>	Hurriyet, Milliyet, Turkish Daily News, Radikal, Posta, Finansal Forum, Gozcu, Fanatik, Haftasonu
TV Production	Hurriyet TV Production, D Production
Press	Dogan Offset, Dogan Printing Center
Book Publishing	Dogan Publishing House
News Agency	DHA

*Other Sectors:* Electricity, POAS (oil consortium), Banking, Automotive, Health, Insurance, Tourism, Energy, Silk Industry etc.

### **CUKUROVA GROUP (Mehmet Emin Karamahmet)**

#### *Media Sector*

TV Networks	Show TV, Cine 5, Playboy TV, Supersport, Maxi TV, SATEL
Radio	Alem FM, Show Radio, Radyo 5, Radyo Viva
Newspapers	Aksam, Gunes, Alem, Takip
Book Publishing	Yapi Kredi Yayinlari
Digital Broadcasting	Digiturk

<sup>46</sup> The data is taken from the websites of each group.

<sup>47</sup> Hurriyet and Posta are among the three highest circulated dailies in Turkey, respectively around 540.000 and 680.000 (<http://www.dorduncukuvvetmedya.com/categories.php?op=newindex&catid=26>). Considering other dailies Dogan group possesses as well, it appeals to almost 2 million readers a day.

Telecommunication	Turkcell <sup>48</sup> (GSM), KVK, A-tel, Superonline, Show TV Net, Mobicom
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*Other Sectors:* Banking (6 banks), Chemistry industry, Mining, Insurance, Steel, Construction, Paper, Durables, Automotive, Tourism, Air Transportation etc.

### **TURKUVAZ MEDIA GROUP (Ahmet Calik)**

#### *Media Sector*

TV Networks	ATV
Radio	Kiss FM
Newspapers	Sabah, Takvim, Fotomac, Yeni Asir
Press, Publishing	Sabah-D'agostini, Sabah Kitapcilik, Binyil Yayıncılık

*Other Sectors:* Construction, Textile, Energy, Finance

### **DOGUS GROUP (Ayhan Sahenk)**

#### *Media Sector*

TV Networks	NTV, CNBC-E, Kanal D (20%)
Internet	Ixir, Zeplin
Magazine	NTV Mag
News Portal	NTVMSNBC

*Other Sectors:* Banking and Finance (5 banks), Insurance, Leasing, Security, Food Industry, Tourism, Automotive, Franchising, Energy etc.

### **IHLAS GROUP (Enver Oren)**

#### *Media Sector*

TV Networks	TGRT
Radio	TGRT FM

<sup>48</sup> Turkcell has the largest share in Turkish GSM sector also expanding towards other countries' markets. By 2008 Turkcell had around 20 million subscriptions.

Newspapers	Turkiye, Textile Exports, Automotive Exports
Magazine	PC World, Computer World, Ihlas Otospor, Turkiye Cocuk
News Agency	IHA

*Other Sectors:* Automotive, Health, Energy, Marketing, Beverages, Education etc.

### **5.1.2. Media Holdings**

The oligopolistic and monopolistic tendencies that are designated by the concentration in the media sector make it crucial for my purpose to deconstruct the corporate bodies of media holdings. Kejanliolgu (2004) stresses that the profit margins are not that high for the conglomerates within the media industry, when compared to the other sectors they are operating in. Dalbudak (1997), pertinently, remarks that one of the most important financial features of press and broadcasting industry is the relatively low degrees of profit margins. Thus it can be concluded that the concentration in the media industry is related to the concerns about securing the relatively high profit sectors besides media within which these groups operate (Sonmez 1995).

It is pretty difficult to portray the anatomy of the media ownership practices in Turkey, because of the political and economic connotations. Main reasons for this complication are related to the relatively easy takeovers of networks and other media, corporate marriages, use of subcontractors as a strategy, and lack of transparency in all these procedures. Moreover it is empirically impossible to get statistical data on real ownership due to bypassed legal restrictions on ownership patterns.

2000s followed a similar pattern of structural organization in the media sector when compared to 1990s. Especially with the acceleration of European Union harmonization procedure, however, the general framework of ownership is changed to a larger extent. Establishment of Bankacilik Denetleme ve Duzenleme Kurulu (regulatory institution for banking-BDDK hereafter), a body that is formed in order to make Turkish banking system reach European standards, is a cornerstone for this reformation. The BDDK, using the authority that is assigned by the state itself, took over certain banks that are corrupt, including those of some media holdings such as Bilgin's Etibank and Aksoy's Iktisat Bank, then taking control of all enterprises of these groups. Thanks to the BDDK's involvement in the banking sector, the state became the most prominent *media patron* (Demir 2007, 227). By 2001 the state was the sole owner of Birlesik Basin Dagitim (distribution), Kiss FM, Radio Sport, Gala TV (cable), Viva TV (cable), CINE 5, Multicanal, Playboy TV, Super Sport, Maxi TV, Radyo 5, Radyo Viva, Kablonet, MEPAS, CTV (cable), C News Agency, Kent TV and BRT Press (Council Report 2001). Following the re-establishment of the banking and media sector all in one hand, an important change within the media sector took place with the collapse of Uzan Group in 2004. In 2004, 219 companies owned by Uzan Group were taken over by the state. By 2007 Dogan Group owns almost 60 percent market share, having a tendency to monopolize.

Consequently, the mass media industry suggests volatility in terms of the ownership practices. Owners of such outlets also operate within large scale economic activities encompassing interest being operationalized in other sectors. The fragility of the economic structure within which mass media operates brings forth the media's dependence on the very political context (Gureli 1997). Moreover the fundamental reason for the owners to be active in the media realm is to possess a social *portefeuille* of audiences and sustain political power. The new media owners, unlike their

predecessors who were journalists, reign over a larger economic territory including the media sector. Considering the volatile political and economic environment, they pursue populist media narratives in order to attract audiences and achieve self-sustainability. Thus explicitly questioning the foundational myth of militarism which is a strict component of national identity would be detrimental for these outlets, mainly because they may lose the sympathy on the part of the state, but more importantly on the part of the audiences.

## **5.2. Media Policy**

Role of television, radio and press is a crucial element for creating social, cultural and political identities in modern nation states. Evaluating British media policy, Stuart Hall argues that BBC created the audience it appealed to, and maintained the audience through different modes of cultural representation (Morley and Robbins 1997, 260). The BBC as the public service broadcasting network, solidified itself as an institution through its relative autonomy from state apparatus since 1927 when it was first established. The BBC managed to represent British society via putting emphasis on what “exists” in the social sphere and legitimizing such existing social forms (Kejanlıoğlu 2004, 186). On contrary, having a similar evaluation for Turkish case is difficult. Koçak and Sökmen (1996, 90) claim that Turkish media policy always depended on supposed cultural values and missed “what is” while pursuing “what should be”.

It is possible to formulate certain remarks about the transition process in Turkish media sphere late 1980s on. First one is the appearance of two-fold system with the introduction of commercial broadcasting in the network market. Secondly media policy sphere has a lot to do with regulating “old” and “new” media. Above, it is indicated that Turkey lacked a deliberate media policy after commercialization of mass media. However lack of policy can be thought as a policy in itself as

well. Kejanlioğlu (2004, 200) argues that media policy is correlated with regulative policies on telecommunications and information technologies in Turkey, therefore directly tied to state economic imperatives. Thirdly position of public in such media policy making process is worth to explore. Mass media, as a public communication model plays an important role for definition and activation of citizenship (Hobbs 1997, 68). Inclusion of people who are seen as target audience to the policy making processes is crucial in liberal democracies. However Kejanlioğlu (2004, 201) points out that public is always out of such picture in Turkish case. Participation of public to media policy process is just maintained through indirect representation, justifying “elitist” democracy. Lack of public participation paves the way for one dimensional or democratically mediocre media policies to be implemented. Media policy never was a primary concern for state apparatus; it was rather an instrument for political and the social manipulation of the public in general (Demir 2007, 211). Media sector of 1990’s in Turkey is a component of a consumption culture with nationalist and Islamic flavors on the one hand and is a sphere to be controlled due to national security concerns on the other.

Commercialization of media sector in Turkey brought some structural anomalies to the economics of mediation. Entrance of holdings and conglomerates from different sectors into the media industry created complex webs of interactions between the media and politics stemming from the positions of the owners in the system. Demirkent (1998) points out that while the differentiation between financial and editorial wings of the newspapers were very obvious before 1980s; this differentiation was blurred in the aftermath of 1980 coup. Following the international pattern of merging with side industries, the media-holdings-banks triangle came into the picture in Turkish media economy (Demir 2007, 197). Such commercialization started with the coming together of newspaper, magazine, news agency, advertisement and marketing industries and then

their unification in a conglomerate body which did not operate in media sector initially. Sönmez (1995, 79) argues that there are certain reasons for the monopolization process of media that has took off in late 1980s: demand for media support in political arena, growth with promotion, transition to commercial radio and televisions, fast economic growth between 1989 and 1993, cartel agreements in distribution and advertisements and anti-syndicalism in media sector.

The appearance of the EU harmonization agenda in 2000s in the political scene aided improvement of especially freedom of expression and democratization in the individual and institutional levels. But the main change can be identified in the breaking of media-holdings-banks triangles with the economic crises of 2000 and 2001. Because of the bankrupt banks due to such crises in general scheme, state taking over the financial procedures of the failed banks, became the greatest media patron (Demir 2007, 227). First decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century is the period when the economic structure of media that came into being in 1980s and 1990s dissolved. The holdings and the banks that were crushed by the economic crises are begun to be controlled by state economic agencies which ended up in a policy change in the media sector as a whole.

An evidence of such policy shift is the Communication Council that took place in Ankara, on February 20<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> 2003, with the participation of the affiliated ministers and policy makers. Minister Beşir Atalay indicated that “the common will of the council rested on a communication system that is more plural, democratic, egalitarian and responsible” (İletişim Surası 2003, 3). In 2004, certain amendments on press law took place in constitutional level. Moreover in 2004, the law that allows broadcasting in different dialects and verbatim such as Bosnian, Zaza and Kurmanji Kurdish, Cerkese and Arabic came on force. Today the main dynamic of media policy is run by the EU harmonization process and based on the policies that are proposed by information



society paradigm that is proposed by the Commission to the extent that they do not collide with the ideas of national security and national integrity. Consequently the ideas of national security and integrity, in terms of their definition and maintenance, have connections with the militaristic discourse as a foundational myth. Thus in the media policy sphere, the militaristic discourse is held immune from any criticism and questioning because of its hegemonic position. Now let's take a look at how such immunity is conducted by the hands of policy instruments such as the RTUK.

### **5.3. Media Control: The RTUK**

The first regulatory body for the broadcasting, the RTYK<sup>49</sup> was established in 1983 which, as an institution, was inserted to the newly prepared constitution with the incentive of the military regime. The main aim of the RTYK was to maintain state authority and “national politics” against partisan uses of the broadcasting technologies (Kejanlioglu et al. 2000, 111). Until mid-1990s, all legal procedures concerning the media control and regulation are proposed and implemented by the incentive of military power. Thus, the RTYK appears as a salient example of military authority over media sphere, especially in 1980s. In 1993, based on the constitutional amendment of article 133, the RTYK is abolished, and replaced by an autonomous body for regulating the media sphere: The RTUK. The members of RTUK consist of 9 members in total (5 members chosen out of 10 candidates proposed by the government party or parties, 4 members chosen out 8 candidates proposed by opposition parties), and the elections for the members are held in the National Assembly (Kejanlioglu et al. 2000, 113). Members of the RTUK serve on 6

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<sup>49</sup> Radyo Televizyon Yuksek Kurulu (The High Council for Radio and Television)

years basis and they are forbidden to get involved in any private initiative<sup>50</sup> that is related to a media outlet during their service.

In article 8 of Law 3984, duties of the RTUK are determined as: defining and implementing the legal premises dealing with the broadcasting; monitoring the content and sanctioning; ruling distribution of frequencies and licensing procedures; and lastly arranging public surveys and representing Turkey on the level of international managerial boards. There are numerous problems about each and every one of these duties in terms of legal implementations and conceptual legitimacy problems (Kejanlioglu et al 2000). Dealing with all these problems would be excessive for the aim of this chapter. Instead I will focus on the second pillar, monitoring the content and sanctioning, in order to excavate, modestly, the ideological stance of the institution *vis-a-vis* provided content.

The RTUK monitors all local and national broadcasts and sanctions them with various reasons<sup>51</sup>. The broadcasts of national networks are investigated simultaneously with the time of broadcast; broadcasts of local or regional networks are examined with a certain amount of delay. The RTUK applies to the cooperation of local police forces, for monitoring the broadcasts of networks which are geographically far away to the center. Between 1994 and 1999 the RTUK sanctioned the national, regional and local radio and TV networks with 671 warnings and 374 suspensions, almost half of which is received by local networks (Kejanlioglu et al 2000, 127).

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<sup>50</sup> In the law emphasis is put on the relationship between the members and the commercial media. Yet it is also indicated that they can not serve in public broadcasting companies

<sup>51</sup> Sanctions include warnings, temporary cease of broadcasts etc.

The RTUK, whilst monitoring the content broadcasted, is mainly concerned about the principles such as national and *moral values* of the society, ethics and Turkish family values, hate speech, and protection of minors<sup>52</sup>. Here, the vagueness of the concepts such as national and moral values in terms of definition is a framework for media regulation in terms of maintaining militaristic discourse. Kejanlioglu et al. (2000) provide the example of RTUK sanctioning CNN Turk in 2000. In January 13<sup>th</sup> 2000, the main discussion topic of the *32.Gun* program was the recently-captured PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan. During the discussion, the host of the program and a veteran journalist Mehmed Ali Birand sarcastically used the Nelson Mandela analogy at some point in order to ridicule the situation. After monitoring the program, the RTUK sanctioned CNN Turk network with 1 day suspension based on article 4 of law no 3984 and legitimized the decision on the grounds that TV and radio broadcasting shall be in line with the public service concerns; thus any network shall take the political and cultural traumas into consideration while presenting certain events and issues<sup>53</sup>. A salient and more recent example of militaristic concerns of the RTUK was the warning given to Pop Idol TV show due to the anti-militaristic statements of one of the juries about Turkish military operations in Northern Iraq on February 2008. Bulent Ersoy, famous singer and jury of the show, briefly argued that young boys are killing each other not because of the sake of the nation, but because of the political decisions (see also chapter 2).

The RTUK, as the control body of media content, maintains and protects the militaristic discourse with reference to the law 3984. The leverage of National Security Council on the media policy is bridging the cultural hegemony with the apparent protection of militaristic ideology in

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<sup>52</sup> These principles are determined by the law no.3984, regulation on broadcasting, article 4, recitals b, d and j.

<sup>53</sup> RTUK meeting 2000/9 Decision-5 Unanimously

the policy realm. Even following the EU harmonization procedures on media regulation, role of the National Security Council was re-defined, though not questioned at all (Demir 2007, 229).

Democracy as a policy measure in Turkey has certain discursive constraints that are stemming from the political discourse of mainly the national security and national ideals. The discourse of the democracy —and of media— is limited to the extent that questioning the militarist ideals and Kemalism as an ideological appendage framework for militarist discourse. How national security is defined and so on is totally “out of question”. Media discursively mediates the nation and its values not in the way that they exist but as they defined by the political authority through education policies and everyday reproductions of mental maps. The lack of direct political control over the media after 1980s was discussed above. However it should be underlined that 1980s on; such limitation of discourse is done by the media itself, in a mode of self-censorship when it comes to questioning foundational myths and therefore the military. The deviations from such hegemonic discourse (individual statements of journalists, columns or TV programs) are, on the other hand, monitored/ sanctioned by state using the policy instruments and legalities. Thus the policy measures does not appear as a direct reason for the existence of hegemonic discourse, but as a mean to maintain it when the hegemonic discourse is being contested by any alternative idea in the media sphere. The fragile structure of Turkish media industry that is operated around holding-centered structure makes it inevitable for conglomerates to keep up with the hegemonic discourses and foundational myths that are presumed by the state, in order to protect their own investments in media and other sectors. Moreover questioning the foundational myths or

proposing alternative readings of events would confront the outlets with audiences. Thereby, as an aspect of these hegemonic discourses, militaristic discourse is also celebrated by mass media outlets in order to draw audiences.

Sonmez (1995) notes that the evolution of the media sector is more important vis-à-vis other sectors because media is a producer of a specific commodity. Bourdieu (1977) notes that homogenization of the cultural “commodity” in mass media pertains to the question of cultural hegemony. Since media sector requires huge investments and technology, the groups who does not have economic means to participate in the media sphere are marginalized and left out of the “market of ideas”. Actors within the sector, on the other hand, rein a huge economic territory encapsulating multiple sectors and interests with one condition: complying with the hegemony. Contesting the hegemony means, crudely, contesting the national unity and well-being. In Turkey the established military discourse is embedded in the economic structure of the media outlets because of the importance of circulation numbers and audiences for media economics. Since mass media can not propose alternatives to the ideological premises of the militarism, in the final analysis, it normalizes and popularizes the militaristic discourse.

## Conclusion

In this thesis I asserted that militaristic discourse is one of the hegemonic aspects of national identity as it prescribed by the official discourse which is repeated by popular mass media discourses in Turkey. Militarism as a feature of national identity is a product of the elites of a new regime, the republic as it was established in 1923, who are mostly coming from military background. The education policy was shaped taking the concerns of the new regime and cultural traumas into consideration. Thereby generations of Turkish republic were taught that militarism is a sacred component and primordial property of Turkish national self-being. The self-proposed and widely accepted legitimacy of military in Turkish politics shows itself in the modes of interventions beginning from 1960. In all these interventions, military claimed that their intervention in the political system stems from the fact that they are vanguards of the republican values, and they have right to intervene in domestic political issues when those republican values are in danger. Here, the catch lies in the power of military as an actor when it comes to defining the essences of republic and national good. The cultural and political legitimacy of the military in the mental maps of the Turkish people brings forth the militarism as hegemonic ideology, not always visible but embedded within the each and every aspect of social discourse, including the media.

The Turkish mass media, since its very beginning, was expected to support the modernization project and help the state in their political venture against threats such as religious fundamentalism, communism and separatist movements. Until 1980s because of the direct

control of state over the media, this expectation is fulfilled to a large extent. Yet, interesting enough, after 1980s the commercialized mass media continued to turn a blind eye against authoritarian policies of the state in dealing with above mentioned threats, and therefore did not reflect the concerns on democracy and freedoms. Keyder (1993, 139) indicates that since the idea of democracy is synonymous with confronting the hegemonic official ideology and its social legitimacy that is reinforced by the institutions such as education and the media, media elite in Turkey never championed democratic ideal in Turkey. Instead militaristic discourse praising the military as a problem-solving mechanism in times of domestic and international conflicts is internalized by media outlets. On the one hand since the hegemonic discourse is also internalized by the audiences, alternative readings of certain conflict are marginalized. In the economic realm the media outlets comply with the hegemonic discourse, first in order to appeal to larger audiences, and secondly because of their investments' dependence on the existing power relations within the political sphere. On the other hand, media discourse is monitored and, in times of need, "fine-tuned" by the policy instruments of the state apparatus. Within the close circuit of cultural, political, and policy measures, militaristic discourse operates undisputedly in the textual world.

Today with the forthcoming EU agenda, the policy attitude towards media has changed. Structural changes such as freedom of expression, pluralism etc. are reflected in policy proposals such as broadcasting in different verbatim or media literacy studies. However the problem here arises not merely from the obstacles stemming from implementing certain policy strategies for the democratization of media. Masterman (1985) notes that even in countries where media strategies for critical media reading implemented successfully when opinion leaders use newspapers and TV news, they do encourage citizens to be critical of the issues and events

depicted, but tend to treat media's depiction of those issues and events as unproblematic. Thus the hegemony, as it is carried by the media discourse appears undisputed and normal in the public discourse.

As Umberto Eco (1979, 15) notes "a democratic civilization will save itself only if it makes the language of the image into a stimulus for critical reflection, not an invitation to hypnosis." Images that are presented in media sphere have direct connotations with political power. In Turkey such images are not directly determined, but "limited", by the psychological perceptions asserted by militaristic and nationalist discourse. The positioning of democracy, media and military in Turkey presents us a complicated web of relationships and interactions among these concepts. Yet it is apparent that the hegemonic discourse is not necessarily related to the economic dominance of one social actor. In Turkish case, the cultural dominance, or in Gramsci's words "hegemony", of the military poses a dominant discourse and affects power relationships accordingly. Yet the extent of this hegemony *vis-a-vis* other forms of discursive domination having roots in economic superiority, shall be clearer with further sociological and political inquiries.



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