

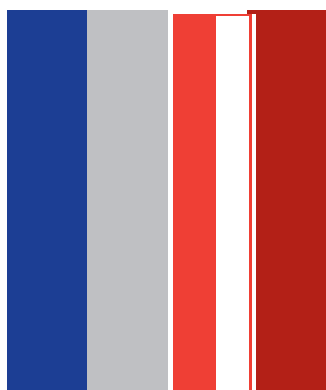
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Frontline of Journalism in Turkey:
An Analysis of How Socio-Political Events Impacted Journalism
with the Influence of Social Media after the Gezi Park Protests in
2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016

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Resumo

Este estudo tem como objetivo analisar o valor do jornalismo na sociedade turca contemporânea, particularmente no contexto da pressão política vivida durante eventos como o Protesto de Gezi Parkı e a tentativa de Golpe Militar. Explora a relação entre os valores jornalísticos tradicionais e as circunstâncias sociais atuais, e compara as perspectivas dos meios de comunicação digitais e tradicionais no discurso político.

A análise da literatura destaca a diversidade do panorama mediático da Turquia, que inclui meios de comunicação social estatais e privados. No entanto, a propriedade dos meios de comunicação social está altamente concentrada e o Governo tem sido criticado por exercer uma pressão indevida sobre a imprensa, o que conduziu a uma erosão significativa da liberdade de imprensa e da liberdade de expressão. Estas mudanças estão associadas a um crescente autoritarismo e à repressão da dissidência.

O estudo utiliza uma conceção de investigação qualitativa, incorporando diversas opiniões de jornalistas e académicos. Esta abordagem permite uma compreensão global da complexa interação entre o jornalismo e o ambiente político na Turquia. As perceções dos participantes nas entrevistas, que permanecem confidenciais para sua proteção, revelam que o jornalismo é crucial para abordar o clima político, particularmente em relação ao Protesto de Gezi Parkı e à tentativa de golpe militar.

As conclusões indicam que o valor do jornalismo reside na sua capacidade de transmitir pormenores factuais e de promover um discurso político construtivo. O controlo dos meios de comunicação social, a informação equilibrada e a independência são essenciais

para operações jornalísticas eficazes. A confiança do público no jornalismo é identificada como um fator-chave para a manutenção de um ambiente político saudável.

O estudo recomenda a promoção dos meios de comunicação digitais para aumentar a consciencialização do público e sugere que a transparência digital é vital para melhorar o jornalismo na Turquia. As normas éticas na informação dos meios de comunicação social são cruciais para mitigar os riscos associados à influência dos meios de comunicação social na consciencialização política. Recomenda-se igualmente o envolvimento do público através de plataformas em linha para reforçar a confiança, a credibilidade e a qualidade geral das empresas de comunicação social.

Em conclusão, o estudo sublinha a importância do jornalismo no apoio aos valores democráticos e realça a necessidade de práticas éticas, transparentes e independentes por parte dos meios de comunicação social para fazer face às pressões políticas na Turquia.

Palavras-chave: Jornalismo , Liberdade de imprensa , Pressão política , Media Digitais , Protesto no Parque Gezi e Golpe de Estado militar

Abstract

This study analyzes the value of journalism in contemporary Turkish society, focusing on the relationship between traditional journalistic values and current social circumstances amidst increasing political pressure. The research examines the impact of significant political events, specifically the Gezi Parkı Protest and the Military Coup attempt, on journalistic practices. It also compares the perspectives of digital and traditional media within this political context. Using a qualitative research design, the study gathers insights from journalists and academics to explore these dynamics. The findings highlight the essential role of journalism in addressing the political climate in Turkey, emphasizing the importance of media control and balanced, independent reporting. Public confidence in journalism is identified as crucial for fostering a constructive political environment. The study recommends promoting digital media to enhance public awareness and applying ethical standards to reduce the risks associated with media influence. Strengthening public engagement through online platforms is suggested to improve trust, credibility, and the overall quality of media reporting. These measures are deemed vital for maintaining journalistic integrity and supporting democratic values in Turkey.

Keywords: Journalism , Press freedom , Digital Media

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Media censorship in Turkey can be explained in large part by the political and economic environments in which journalists work. The Turkish media has a long tradition of strong political opposition. However, after the military takeover of 1980, when the troops exerted tight grip over the print community and broadcast stations were the only satellite options, the media underwent a significant transition (Yanatma, 2021). Since the shift to a liberalized economic system in the 1990s, the mainstream media sector has been marked by a substantial percentage of cross-ownership and cronyism. In order to obtain political clout and acquire investment in other significant "non-media" industries like telecom, financial institutions, infrastructure, and energy, broadcast media is primarily seen as a tactic and negotiation card (Finkel 2015). Additionally, it encourages media power abuse and pressures politicians to support their profitable economic arrangements.

After the unrest in Gezi Park in 2013 and the aborted military takeover attempt on July 15, 2016, media and news outlets in Turkey entered a new phase (House, 2017). The Gezi Park protests resulted in a period of intense pressure for Turkish reporters and journalists because the state, security services, press state regulators, and corporate media supervisors banded together against those expressing sympathy for or even just trying to inform on the millions of people taking to the country's highways. As a result, journalists' freedom of expression rights under international law were trampled upon. Reporters were frequently assaulted during the Gezi Park demonstrations, which violated both their statutory right to free expression and their obligation to inform the public of notable events (House, 2017). Far from defending their right to record events,

the police sought to strike journalists with the same unfettered brutality that had been used against street protestors. Security officers frequently used excessive force against journalists who were on the job, even when it was obvious they were licensed correspondents.

Furthermore, the government has benefited enormously from legal persecution by deterring and criminalizing journalists in order to gain more control over an increasingly authoritarian bureaucracy (Özbudun, 2015) since the unsuccessful attempted coup. 4000 attorneys and judges were fired by the ruling coalition, and their positions were filled by obedient but untrained novices (Yanatma, 2021). Numerous journalists have been accused of distributing false information in support of terrorist groups, compromising national security, and trying to topple the government. Major instruments in this capture include tightening control over the web and social media filtering out content online, exercising self-censorship, and appointing pro-government reporters to replace experienced journalists.

Turkey currently has a great number of news platforms, but according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), in 2020, 90% of them will be owned or run by organizations that support the government. Satellite broadcasters numbered 196 in 2018 (Yanatma, 2021). In 2019, there were additionally 177 news outlets and 2337 local media, although only 20 of them had a regular audience of more over 10,000. In 2020, there were about 9500 independent media news websites operating, although the majority of these are tiny regional outlets whose material is 85% directly duplicated, primarily from news organizations. The only state-affiliated organizations that publicly serve as the government's mouthpiece are Turkish Radio Television (TRT), a state broadcaster, and Anadolu Agency, a government-run news organization (Irak, 2016). Although there is currently no government-run newspaper, local publications rely significantly on government sponsorship. Officially, most media outlets are private. However, loans from state banks have been crucial in changing ownership. Companies such as the Demironen Group have shown a strong commitment to the AKP (Justice and Development Party) and have emerged as the most significant corporations to enter the media industry in the past ten years (Yanatma, 2021).

Throughout this new journalism, the way people felt about politics began to have a political impact on the way the media and journalists did their jobs. Technological advancements that have streamlined the usage of mass media have aided journalism's move into the digital age. Due to the benefits that modern technology provides, media organizations and journalists have quickly adapted to the digital arena. As a result, the vast majority of Turkey's journalists are now establishing themselves on YouTube, internet sites, podcasting, and other sources of digital media (Murat, 2018). Political authority in Turkey now labels as "fake" and "terrorist" journalism any resistance or information that exists outside its own journalism of action, influence, or viewpoint on events (Seckinelgin, 2016). While political pressure mounts in Turkey, digital journalism and social media have provided journalists with a safe environment to pursue their activity. This is particularly important, as many have lost their employment and several conventional media houses have been acquired by the political authorities (Bulut, 2016).

Owing to the Internet's instantaneous communication features, a very efficient means of mass communication has emerged. Impact and governmental authority limitations have risen to prominence as a result of the digitalisation of media and journalism. Presently, journalists and the profession they work in face political pressure and punishment for disclosing information with which the journalism want to maintain confidentiality or national defense (Nefes, 2017). This brings up the subject of nations that institute such controls in the interests of national security and the preservation of country's sovereignty. The largest number of journalists are threatened, fined, or detained in China, Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia (Karakatsanis, 2019). These nations utilise equally strong and dictatorial tactics of controlling the flow of information across public as a component of exercising political power.

1.2 Problem Statement

For the first time in four years, according to this year's census(CPJ) , Turkey is not the world's worst prosecutor. However, Turkish media report that the decline in prison populations does not signify an improvement in conditions (Nefes, 2017).This

year's census marks the first time in four years that Turkey has not been the world's worst jailer, but the reduced number of prisoners does not signal an improved situation for the Turkish media. Rather, the fall to 47 journalists in jail from 68 last year reflects the successful efforts by the government of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to stamp out independent reporting and criticism by closing down more than 100 news outlets and lodging terror-related charges against many of their staff. With the industry gutted by government shutdowns and takeovers, and scores of journalists in exile, jobless, or cowed into self-censorship, authorities on October 24 enacted a legislative package that granted new appeals on convictions for certain offenses — including “propaganda for a terrorist organization,” a favorite charge of prosecutors — and shortened some pretrial detention period (<https://cpj.org/reports/2019/12/>) . Dozens of other journalists in Turkey are on bails, awaiting trial or appeal; some have been arrested in pretrial detention and face imprisonment if they resurface. Press reports claim that following the failed revolution in 2016, hundreds of Turkish military officials, policemen, MPs, magistrates, prosecutions, and even journalists have been convicted of crimes (Seckinelgin, 2016). The Internet's capacity for instantaneous communication has given rise to a very efficient means of broadcasting information to large groups of people. Impact and governmental control limitations have emerged in the spotlight as a result of the rise of digital media and journalism. Journalists and the field they work in are increasingly at risk of political interference and punishment for disclosing sensitive journalism information or matters of national security (Bulut, 2016). This raises the problem of other nations' similar prohibitions for reasons of national security and interest protection. Such nations' governments use equally political-handed and authoritarian strategies to control the flow of information in society as part of their exercise of power.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to provide an analysis of the value of journalism in present-day Turkish society. It intends to understand the relationship between the traditional journalistic values and the current social circumstances, in view of the

increasing pressure exercised by political power. It is particularly focused on the context of the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016. A further aim of this study is to see the differences, between digital and traditional media, in terms of journalistic perspectives on the political discussion context.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- To understand the value of journalism under specific conditions in the Turkish contemporary society.
- To analyze the public's right to reach information in a controlled democratic society.
- To identify the social and political background of the relationship because of the public's right to reach information in a democratic society.
- To assess the importance of digital journalism practices for Turkish society and the world at large.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What lessons of general import can we get from understanding the value of journalism in Turkish contemporary society?
2. What are the relations between life in a democratic society and the public's right to reach information?
3. What are the social and political underpinnings of this connection between democracy and the right to information?
4. How important is the practice of digital journalism for Turkish society and the world at large?

1.6 Research Rationale

It is important to analyze the impact of socio-political events on journalism in Turkey, particularly after the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military

coup in 2016 , which is the main aim of this study. It is one of the main reasons of this research to examine these effects because of the increased role that social media plays in modern day journalism, and how certain political events may have an effect on journalists' decisions and practices. This study seeks to investigate the influence of media platforms in shaping the public perception of journalism in the country since 2016. Moreover, sufficient literature is not present on the topic of media and journalism constraints and regulations within Turkey which makes it a crucial topic to study and explore (Somer, 2016). Through an examination of the relevant literature, interviews with journalists and government representatives, surveys and case studies in consideration of the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016. This research hopes to provide a comprehensive picture of how politics and media interact within contemporary Turkey. By doing so, it aims to shed light on the power dynamics between press freedom and state authority in today's digital landscape.

1.7 Significance of the study

The significance of this study lies most of all in an understanding of journalism within the real life conditions of present day Turkish society. Turkey has become a country in which engaging in the practice of journalism carries with it the danger of imprisonment (Öztürk and Gözaydın, 2017). It is thus important to ascertain the specific ways in which political pressure shapes the media. On the other hand flexibility brought about by the development of the Internet and digital media tools carry their own potential of resistance to such forces. It is important to make clear the general difference and benefit of that platform for audiences. However there is a censorship mechanism on the traditional media and this mechanism employs political power to use on the society through mass media tools (Murat, 2018). Therefore it is really significant to comprehend the opportunity to use social media and digital platforms to reach the public when everything falls under political pressure.

1. 8 Structure of the dissertation

This is the first chapter of the study, known as the introduction, identifies the research problem and suggests the aim and objectives of the study. It also draws rationale to conduct this research from the research problem and formulates research questions that will be addressed in the study.

The second chapter, literature overview, discusses literature from previous studies and provides an extensive review of literature concerning the journalism development in Turkey. It also provides a theoretical basis for the research topic and ends with a literature gap in the literature review.

The third chapter, research methodology, provides justification for the chosen research design, philosophy, approach, and data analysis techniques used within the study.

The fourth chapter is identified as findings where data analysis is conducted to explore the issue of journalism and media constraints and the role of political and demographic powers in controlling the flow of information among the public within Turkey and evaluate social attitudes, values, and beliefs towards this practice.

The fifth chapter conclusion and recommendations for the future research .

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore literary work to explain the importance of journalism in contemporary Turkish society. Besides this, this chapter aims to highlight the history of journalism in turkey and how it changed after the Gezi park protest and military coup. It is important to note that the history of journalism and the rising

concept of censorship in Turkish journalism has also been highlighted. The use of social media has changed the way journalism operates in Turkish society and for that reason, this chapter has included sufficient detail from the literary studies.

2.2 Traditional Journalistic Views and Current Social circumstances

Turkey has a diverse and dynamic media landscape, with both state-run and privately-owned outlets. However, media ownership is highly concentrated, and the government has been criticized for exerting pressure on the press and limiting freedom of the press (Peña Fernández et al., 2021). In recent years, there have been concerns about the erosion of press freedom and the restriction of free speech in Turkey. This is due in part to the political and social changes that have taken place in the country, including increased authoritarianism and a crackdown on dissent. Additionally, the ongoing conflict in Syria and the resulting influx of refugees have also added to the political and social tension in the country (Aşık, 2019). According to Şen, (2021), the traditional journalistic views in Turkey have been impacted by the current social circumstances and the press is facing many challenges to maintaining the freedom of expression and independent reporting (Şen, 2021). One of the major challenges facing journalists in Turkey today is the increasing pressure and restriction on freedom of the press by the government. In recent years, there have been numerous cases of journalists being arrested, harassed, or intimidated for their reporting, particularly on sensitive political and social issues. Additionally, the government has been known to use legal action, financial pressure, and other tactics to silence critical voices in the media (Aslan Ozgul & Veneti, 2021). This has led to a climate of self-censorship among journalists, and a lack of critical reporting on sensitive political and social issues.

Another major challenge facing journalists in Turkey today is the ongoing conflict in Syria and the resulting influx of refugees (House, 2017). This has added to the political and social tension in the country and has made reporting on the refugee crisis and related issues increasingly difficult for journalists. Additionally, the rise of social media and the internet has led to an increase in fake news and disinformation,

which has further complicated the media landscape in Turkey (Davis, 2022). Overall, the current social circumstances in Turkey have had a significant impact on journalism, with increasing pressure and restriction on freedom of the press by the government, the ongoing conflict in Syria and the resulting influx of refugees, and the rise of social media and the internet. These challenges have made it difficult for journalists to report freely and independently on sensitive political and social issues (Bakiner, 2018). Traditional journalistic views in Turkey have been influenced by the country's history and political climate.

2.3 Value of Journalism in Contemporary Turkish Society

Journalism plays a crucial role in contemporary Turkish society, serving as a cornerstone of democracy, providing information, fostering accountability, and promoting public discourse. Journalism in contemporary Turkish society is indispensable for upholding democracy, informing the public, fostering debate, monitoring power, protecting human rights, and reflecting cultural values. Despite challenges and limitations, the work of journalists continues to be essential for the advancement of Turkish society and the well-being of its citizens. In a democratic society, the press serves as a watchdog for the government and other powerful institutions, holding them accountable for their actions and decisions (Aydin, 2022). A free and independent press is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability, and for keeping citizens informed about issues that affect their lives.

According to Saka, (2019), journalism plays an important role in developing public engagement by providing a platform for diverse voices and perspectives. In Turkey, where media ownership is highly concentrated and the government exerts pressure on the press, the importance of independent journalism is particularly crucial to ensure that citizens have access to various and accurate information, and can make informed decisions about their lives and the country's direction (Saka, 2019). However, the current social circumstances and the challenges facing journalists in Turkey have made it increasingly difficult for journalists to report freely and independently on sensitive political and social issues. This has led to a lack of diversity in news coverage,

and a lack of critical and independent reporting which undermines the value of journalism in contemporary Turkish society (Ataman & Çoban, 2019). It has been explained by Öniş, (2019) that despite the challenges, the value of journalism in contemporary Turkish society is still vital.

According to Oder (2019), by giving a voice to marginalized groups, critical journalism can help to promote social justice and equality and to challenge dominant narratives and ideologies (Fadnes et al., 2019). Additionally, with the ongoing conflict in Syria and the resulting influx of refugees, journalism plays an important role in covering the refugee crisis and related issues, providing important information and insight into the impact of the crisis on the country, and on the lives of the refugees themselves.

2.3.1 Democracy and Right to Journalism in Turkey

"Democracy and the rights of journalism are closely linked in Turkey (Girdap, 2020). In a democratic society, journalism, often referred to as the 'fourth estate,' plays a crucial role in holding those in power accountable and advancing the public interest by delivering accurate and objective information. However, in recent years, the connection between journalism and democracy in Turkey has deteriorated. A decline in the country's press freedom rankings may be attributed to government-imposed restrictions on the media. When journalists address controversial topics or criticize the government, they face censorship, threats, harassment, and even incarceration (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019). Consequently, there's been a lack of diversity in news coverage and a dearth of critical and independent reporting.

The Turkish government has faced criticism for pressuring the media and limiting freedom of the press. Tactics such as legal action, financial pressure, and other means have been used to silence critical voices, fostering a climate of self-censorship among

journalists (Över, 2021). Additionally, anti-terror laws and other legislation have been employed to restrict free speech and silence dissenting voices.

Erkmen (2020) highlights that one of the major challenges facing journalists in Turkey today is the government's restriction of their ability to report on sensitive topics.

Furthermore, the government utilizes its control over advertising to influence media outlets to align with its agenda. These factors collectively undermine the state of democracy in Turkey and infringe upon journalists' rights.

The restriction of press freedom and the absence of diverse and critical reporting pose threats to the democratic process and the public's right to access accurate information. Civil society, foreign human rights organizations, and the international community must collaborate to advocate for press freedom, support independent journalism, and urge the Turkish government to uphold democratic principles and safeguard journalists' rights (Kirişçi & Sloat, 2019)."

2.3.2 History of censorship in Turkish Journalism

The history of censorship in Turkish journalism can be traced back to the early days of the Turkish Republic when the government closely controlled the press and used it as a tool to promote government policies and ideologies (Carlsson & Pöyhtäri, 2017). During the early years of the Republic, the government established strict laws and regulations to control the content that was published in the media, leading to a lack of diversity in news coverage and a lack of critical and independent reporting (Girdap, 2020). In the 1950s and 1960s, the government's control over the press began to loosen, and a more diverse and critical press emerged. However, the government continued to exert pressure on the press and silence dissenting voices through legal action and other tactics. In the 1970s and 1980s, Turkey experienced a period of political turmoil, and

the government again tightened its control over the press (Mills, 2019). In the 1990s and 2000s, Turkey underwent a process of democratization, and the press began to become more diverse and independent (Yeşil, 2018). However, the government continued to exert pressure on the press, particularly on sensitive political and social issues (Coşkun, 2020).

According to Aşık, (2019), there has been a resurgence of government control over the press and a crackdown on dissent, with numerous cases of journalists being arrested or intimidated for their reporting. This has led to a climate of self-censorship among journalists, and a lack of critical reporting on sensitive political and social issues. Overall, the history of censorship in Turkish journalism is marked by a pattern of government control and suppression of dissenting voices, with periods of loosening control followed by tightening control (Aşık, 2019). Despite the democratization process, censorship continues to be a major challenge facing journalists in Turkey today.

2.3.3 Frontline journalism in turkey

It has been highlighted by Aydin et al. (2023) that the government's increasing control over traditional media outlets in Turkey, leading to self-censorship and terminating the contracts of critical journalists. This has been particularly pronounced following the Gezi Park protests of 2013 and the failed military coup attempt of 2016. The rise of social media has been seen as an alternative platform for the dissemination of news and information, providing an outlet for independent and opposition voices (Aydin and Sarilar, 2023). However, the government has also increased its efforts to control and censor social media, leading to internet blackouts, website blocks, and the arrest of social media users. Other studies have also confirmed that in the past, the social media activities in Turkey has been heavily regulated by the government, with strict laws and regulations in place to control the content that is published (Tokyol, 2020). Additionally, the government has been known to use legal action, financial pressure, and other tactics to silence critical voices in the media.

Turkish journalism is experiencing a shift towards greater independence and critical reporting, driven by the ongoing democratization process and the proliferation of digital media. The advent of the internet and social media has expanded citizens' access to diverse news sources and alternative viewpoints, fostering a more critical and engaged citizenry (Çelik, 2020). Many studies have shown that the government's crackdown on the press and freedom of expression has led to a decline in the diversity of news and information available to the public, with the majority of media outlets now being pro-government (Akkoyunlu, 2017). It has also been highlighted that in some cases journalists have experienced physical violence because of reporting the truth (Pukallus et al., 2020). Some studies have also discussed the role of international organizations like the United Nations in protecting press freedom in Turkey and the impact of these efforts (Erkmen et al., 2022). It is noteworthy that front line journalism in Turkey has shown that the government's increasing control over traditional media outlets, coupled with censorship and control of social media, has led to a decline in press freedom and diversity of news and information available to the public (Paksoy, 2020).

2.4 Increasing impact of Social media on Journalism in Turkey

Social media has had a significant impact on Turkish journalism, both in terms of the way news is reported and the way it is consumed (Gross, 2017). On the one hand, social media platforms have provided journalists with new tools for sourcing and disseminating information, and have given citizens greater access to diverse perspectives and news sources. On the other hand, social media has also led to the spread of misinformation and the erosion of traditional news outlets, as well as increased government censorship and surveillance (Marcella, 2022). Additionally, social media has led to a decline in traditional advertising revenue for news organizations, creating economic challenges for the industry. Overall, the influence of social media on Turkish journalism is complex and multifaceted.

According to (Atanesyan, 2020), social media platforms have made it easier for journalists to source information and for citizens to access news from a variety of sources. He further added that the economic impact of social media on the Turkish journalism industry is vast. Many news organizations have seen a decline in traditional advertising revenue as a result of the rise of social media, which has led to financial challenges for the industry (Atanesyan, 2020). It has been explained by (Tutgun-Ünal, 2020), social media is having a significant impact on Turkish journalism positively. According to him, social media has expanded the reach of independent and alternative media outlets, which has helped to promote diversity and critical reporting in Turkey. Social media platforms have enabled journalists to bypass traditional gatekeepers and reach audiences directly, which has made it easier for them to report on sensitive and undercovered issues. Besides this, the use of social media has also helped to increase citizen engagement and participation in the media, as people are able to share their own stories and perspectives (Tutgun-Ünal, 2020). The usage of social media has made restrictions towards press freedom and censorship mitigating. The Turkish government has used social media to crack down on dissent and opposition voices, and has arrested journalists and closed news outlets. However, such actions have failed to suppress the opposition and dissent. In the aftermath of the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016, impact on the journalism industry in Turkey remained significant, leading to increased government control and censorship of the media (Sweeney, 2022).

2.5 Impact of Social and political Situations on Turkish Journalism

Turkey has a long history of press censorship and media control, which has been exacerbated in recent years by the government's crackdown on dissent following the Gezi Park protests of 2013 and the failed military coup attempt of 2016. After the Gezi Park protests, the government increased its control over traditional media outlets, leading to widespread self-censorship and the firing of critical journalists (Gregory, 2021). The rise of social media, however, provided an alternative platform for the

dissemination of news and information. The government responded to this by increasing its efforts to control and censor social media, including through the use of internet blackouts, website blocks, and the arrest of social media users (Andı et al., 2020). Despite these efforts, social media has continued to play a significant role in the dissemination of news and information, particularly in relation to human rights abuses and corruption. The failed military coup attempt of 2016 further escalated the government's crackdown on the press and freedom of expression. Many journalists and media outlets were accused of supporting the coup and subsequently arrested or shut down. This has led to a significant decline in the diversity of news and information available to the public, with the majority of media outlets now being pro-government (Kirişçi and Sloat, 2019).

Social media has continued to be an important source of news and information, particularly for independent and opposition voices, but it has also become a target of government censorship and control. Social media platforms have been blocked, and users have been arrested for expressing critical views (Onay-Coker, 2019). It is important to note that the socio-political events in Turkey have had a significant impact on journalism, with traditional media outlets becoming increasingly controlled and censored, while social media has provided an alternative platform for the dissemination of news and information, but also targeted by government censorship and control. The political situation in Turkey has had a significant impact on journalism in the country (Narlı et al., 2020). The government of Turkey, led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has been criticized for restricting press freedom and cracking down on critical voices in the media. This has led to the closure of many independent news outlets and the arrest of journalists who report on sensitive topics or criticize the government. The situation has also led to self-censorship among journalists, as they fear reprisals for reporting on certain topics (Kasapoglu and Akbal, 2020). As a result, the media landscape in Turkey has become heavily centralized and controlled by the government, making it difficult for citizens to access diverse and independent sources of information.

2.5.1 Impact of Gezi park protest on Turkish Journalism

An activist sit-in was organized in Istanbul's Gezi Park in May 2013 to oppose plans by the Turkish government to raze the park and replace it with a copy of the Taksim Military Barracks from the time of the Ottoman Empire, complete with a retail complex. An unanticipated wave of large-scale protests was provoked by the forcible removal of protestors from the park and the indiscriminate use of police force. Over the course of three weeks, almost 3 million people demonstrated in Turkey in support of various causes (Mert, 2019).

The overuse of police force, extensive media restrictions, and retaliations against reporters and netizens served as clear examples of Turkish democracy's flaws, including its dearth of pluralism and contempt for fundamental liberties. Television networks with the audacity to broadcast live coverage of events were subject to severe fines for breaking broadcast laws. The Journalists Union of Turkey reports that 845 journalists lost their jobs as a result of the demonstrations (YAMAN, 2014). With the government, security agencies, media regulatory bodies, and corporate media superiors closing ranks against those voicing support for, or even simply attempting to notify on, the millions of individuals taking to the country's roads, the Gezi Park protests brought on a period of fierce pressure for Turkish journalists and media. As a result, the international law-protected rights to free speech of journalists was violated.

During the Gezi Park protests, there was a pervasive use of assault against reporters, which constituted an unconstitutional infringement with their right to freedom of speech and their responsibility to notify the public of noteworthy occurrences (House, 2017). The police attempted to attack journalists with the same unrestrained force that was used on street protests, far from protecting their right to cover events. Even when they were clearly identified as licensed reporters, law enforcement agents frequently used unreasonable force on journalists while they were on the job. According to data compiled by Bianet, by September 30, 2013, there were 153 journalists had been harmed by security personnel during the rallies (Över & Taraktaş, 2017).

The OSCE Guidebook exhorts OSCE member states, including Turkey, to view aggression towards reporters as a direct assault on the right to free speech and to... [promote] safe and unhindered circumstances for journalists to carry out their jobs by giving media independence their full political clout (Galbreath, 2007). According to the OSCE Special Report, law enforcers are forbidden by the constitution from obstructing or preventing the media from covering public rallies. Police officers must treat journalists fairly and with restraint. Senior officials in charge of police behavior have a responsibility to see to it that police personnel receive proper training regarding the function and role of journalists, especially during demonstrations. Whether or not the rallies were authorized, the issue of police misconduct against the media should be addressed separately in the case that the police reacted harshly (YAMAN, 2014).

In early June 2013, anti-government protests were raging in Istanbul and across several cities in Turkey. On mainstream media, however, there was a total blackout— an outcome of the political economic alliances between media conglomerates and the ruling AKP (Justice and Development Party). As major news channels (NTV, CNNTurk, HaberTurk) chose to ignore the protests and the police violence, they came to be labeled “penguin media,” in reference to a penguin documentary CNNTurk was broadcasting on the night of intense clashes in central Istanbul. In the meantime, pro-government outlets were engaged in a heavy disinformation campaign that portrayed protestors as minions in a foreign conspiracy.

(Yeşil,2014 <https://mediacommons.org/imr/2014/02/24/>)

A redesigned framework is required that adheres to the rights of demonstrators and reporters during nonviolent protests and includes stronger protection for liberty of speech in the constitution and in regulatory policy.

2.6 Digital Journalism in Turkey

Protests began in 2013 as an environmental sit-in to stop the removal of trees from Istanbul's Gezi Park, but they quickly evolved into a widespread uprising against

the AKP government (Atak & Della Porta, 2016). Not only did the protests have an impact on political structure, They also became the voice of marginalized groups.. In order to avoid oppressive government monitoring, well-known reporters in Turkey have started alternative media ventures using online news sources. The phrase "alternative media" refers to media initiatives that challenge the influence of established media conglomerates and present "alternative viewpoints to dominant policies, agendas, and opinions" (Aslan Ozgul & Veneti, 2021). The rise in alternative media outlets began in the first half of the 2010s, despite the fact that Bianet, Turkey's first web-based alternative media, was established and began operations after 2000. There were two different kinds of alternative media that came into existence: one was started by people who were fed up with how the news was monopolized and suppressed, and the other was started by journalists who worked for established news organizations but were not able to update through them during the 'Gezi Parki' protests and then after. Those who endeavored to publish stories that disagreed with the AKP's propaganda, which supported the prevailing ideals of the home, the government, the nation, and Islam, were frequently fired right away or coerced into silence with intimidation (Aslan Ozgul & Veneti, 2021). There are numerous online alternative media sites that are still free to operate and offer alternative viewpoints today, but there have been relatively few studies that look at their organizational structures.

Dogan Akin, a well-known reporter, launched T24 in 2009; it is one of Turkey's earliest and most reputable autonomous online journals (Saka, 2019). Advertising is how they make money. Rusen Cakir, another renowned journalist, created the multimedia digital news portal Medyascope.tv in 2015. Six different languages are used to run it. Advertising, Patreon (client support payments), and foreign organizations provide the funding. With semi-professional studios, Periscope, Youtube, and Vimeo are just a few of the social media networks that T24 and Medyascope.tv use to deliver their live broadcasts to mobile devices (Aslan Ozgul & Veneti, 2021). Arti media was created more recently than the others, in 2017, yet it is still a small company. Arti was formed in Germany since the project's two financiers did not intend to venture in Turkish media. It comprises a TV channel called Arti TV and an online newspaper called Arti Gercek.

Celal Baslangic, the executive editor of *Arti Gercek*, is a qualified journalist (Bek, 2020).

Journalism is transforming as a result of emerging digital conventions, practices, and communication methods. In this commercialized environment, both journalists and activists are launching alternative reputable media ventures run at cheaper prices. Online journalism is also necessary for variety in the media industry's free market, particularly in Turkey (Kaymas, 2017).

2.7 Power Dynamics Between Press Freedom and State Authority in the digital landscape

The Turkish media environment offers several examples of how the ruling elites manipulate the informational landscape in the digital age for anti-democratic ends, despite the widespread perception that democracy is intrinsically defined by the internet (Coskuntuncel, 2018). In Turkey, the media's function as a foundational element of democracy has been diminishing, especially over the past decade with the rise of authoritarian regimes. Such a scenario has been heavily criticized of the nation's democratic reputation from both internal and international quarters. In Turkey, the media's capacity to serve as a platform, critic, and rallying force that applies pressure to political forces from has gradually diminished over time over time (Ataman & Çoban, 2018). The transition from family-owned media companies to media moguls in the 1980s resulted in a significant alteration of the news industry.

In Turkey, the media environment is very divided, and management is volatile and frequently changes hands. Secularists, Gülenists, pro-government organizations, and minority groups are only a few examples of the wide range of political ideologies that are represented in Turkish media (Yuksel-Pecen, 2018). The Turkish media, which is dominated by large conglomerates with associated businesses in a variety of industries, including energy and architecture, has grown susceptible to government pressure and subject to being used as a tool by the state. The independence of the press and the public's right to information are both gravely harmed by the Turkish media ecosystem as it has been captured. On the other hand, the media environment is becoming more

digital in this day and age. Digital platforms were far more frequently used to share news and data and/or communicate critical viewpoints during the countrywide Gezi rallies (Yanardağoglu, 2017). The majority of the critical reporting was located in a few anti-government publications and on alternative websites that disseminated user-generated material, such as films and pictures from the rally sites, while the news outlets stayed silent. After the AKP's contentious internet law was adopted in September 2014 and large number of websites were blacklisted, Turkey gained notoriety when its government two times cut off access to Twitter and YouTube in 2014 and 2015 while also outscoring information expulsion applications from Twitter world wide in the first quarter of 2015 (Arvas, 2019).

Academic communities are not the only ones who regard the internet as one of today's most fetishized technologies. Most popular views consider democratization as being intrinsically determined within the web itself, rather than studying how new technologies give up endless opportunities for it. According to Marx's perspective, technology is not "some free-floating deus ex machina" that decides certain social outcomes; rather, all of these factors are interwoven "in the building and renewal of the social structure" (Coskuntuncel, 2018).

2.8 Theoretical Framework

In order to comprehend journalistic activities, research on journalism frequently applies sociological theories as well as theories from other fields. In recent years, Pierre Bourdieu's field theory has become incredibly popular. In 1996, Bourdieu first employed the notion of field as a research instrument in media studies, in order to demonstrate how journalistic .The field presents the public with a distinct image of the political landscape, shaped by the structure of journalism. domain and the particular tastes formed within it.This Bourdieusian field theory states that examining the functioning of these entities as a potential factor influencing the field's outcome is necessary in order to account for both cross-national diversity among various media

systems and within-country diversity across news organizations (Yavcan & Ongur, 2016). The theory aims to counteract the media's tendency to serve those in power by introducing new data and research, while also addressing the underlying motivations for aligning with authority. Additionally, the evolution of new communication methods has brought about some adjustments and modifications in the field of journalism. While these modifications to journalism methods improved the industry, they also created certain issues. The emphasis on speed in the news paved the way for elements that would harm the journalism industry, including a decline in news quality, a decline in reliability, and privacy violations (Çifçi & Ayhan, 2023). All of this has resulted in the development of a fresh form of journalism known as McJournalism. Efficiency, meticulousness, dependability, and control—aspects that Ritzer proposed in his McDonaldisation thesis and addressed in relation to the fast-food industry—have started to influence the journalistic industry. According to Ritzer's McDonaldisation theory, practically every area of social life has been impacted by the McDonald's business model outside of the setting of restaurants. McDonaldisation is still pervasive in a wide range of global commercial sectors. As a result, the dimensions of McDonaldisation—efficiency, accuracy, dependability, command, and absurdity of rational thinking present in Turkish digital journalism. The McDonaldisation idea has been underlined as having the ability to explain the issues with digital journalism in Turkey, including the decline in news quality, the standardization of news websites, and the disengagement of newspaper editors from their own offerings (Çifçi & Ayhan, 2023).

2.9 Literature Gap

Numerous studies have been conducted on the evolution of Turkish journalism. Numerous socio-political upheavals have a significant impact on how journalism operates. The Gezi demonstrations and military coups in Turkey have exacerbated tensions between press freedom and government control, particularly in the context of

the modern digital environment. Despite the fact that there is relevant literature available on how journalism was undermined during the Gezi protests and military coup, there is still a dearth of critical analysis and research concentrating on the importance of social media for the freedom of opinion and the influence of social media governance on the changing political circumstances and the practise of journalism in Turkey (Coşkun, 2020).

2.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an extensive review of literature concerning the journalism development in Turkey. The literature review provided an account of traditional journalistic views and current social circumstances and value of journalism in contemporary Turkish society. It also discussed the impact of socio-political turmoil, including the Gezi protests and military coup on the Turkish journalism and how the digital landscape have influenced the power dynamics between press freedom and State authority.



<https://turkeybooktalk.com/2013/06/07/the-gezi-park-protests-not-the-turkish-medias-finest-hour/>

CNN International shows live coverage of the demonstrations in Taksim Square, while CNN Turk airs a penguin documentary.



<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36822858>

Hours after the attempted coup began, Turkey's defiant president appealed to supporters to take to the streets and confront the rebels.

But when President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addressed the nation as events unfolded on Friday, he did not do it from the back of a tank, but from a smartphone held up to the camera of broadcaster CNN Turk.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research methodologies and procedures utilized to accomplish the study objectives are presented in this chapter. It begins with the research philosophy and research approach. The chapter further includes the research design, which explains the methodology utilized for the study and why it is appropriate. It also describes the method's shortcomings or constraints. The chapter also provides a summary of the main data collection tool used in the study, describing the tool and providing information on why it was chosen. It also explains why the sample was taken into consideration and provides a summary of the sampling method and sample size utilized in the study. It

also describes the methods utilized to analyze the data that was gathered. Also, the ethical concerns related to the research are further explained.

3.2 Research philosophy

As noted by Hamlin (2015), there are three major paradigms in research philosophy, namely positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. Positivism is commonly employed in scientific and quantitative research, emphasizing the use of empirical observations to generate findings (Hair et al., 2019). On the other hand, pragmatism asserts that there is no single method for conducting research and that multiple methods can be utilized (Alharahsheh et al., 2020). In contrast, this research study has utilized an interpretivist paradigm, which posits that knowledge about the world is best attained through interpreting the findings. The philosophy of the study on journalism in Turkey was based on interpretivism, which aims to analyze the value of the media and the public's right to information. This research was conducted through a more nuanced analysis of the political and social background of the country concerning the discussion of the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016 . The research philosophy of this study emphasizes the need to understand the political and social context of journalism in order to gain a deeper understanding of its value.

3.3 Research approach

There are two main types of research approaches: deductive and inductive, which are respectively top-down and bottom-up. Deductive research involves creating a hypothesis or theory based on data gathered and analyzed (Park et al., 2020). On the other hand, inductive research involves coming up with a hypothesis or theory after examining explicit data sets. An inductive approach is more appropriate for a research study since it involves gathering data without a preconceived notion (Casula et al., 2021). The inductive approach was suitable for this research as it allows for the exploration and discovery of new themes and patterns in the data. By using an inductive approach, the researcher allowed the data to guide the analysis and interpretation, rather

than imposing preconceived notions or hypotheses on the data. This was especially relevant when assessing the importance of digital journalism practices for Turkish society and the world at large in consideration of the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016, as these practices are still evolving and new patterns and themes may emerge from the data.

3.4 Research design

There are three types of research design, qualitative, quantitative and mixed (qualitative and quantitative) research design. The study has chosen the qualitative research design to conduct the study. Qualitative research is a type of research that focuses on understanding and exploring the experiences, perspectives, and meanings of individuals or groups (Lewis, 2015). Whereas quantitative research emphasizes quantifying the data assortment and analysis of information through statistical measures. The goal of the current study was to evaluate the Frontline of journalism, particularly in Turkey, and analyze how socio-political events impacted journalism with the influence of social media after the Gezi park protest and a military coup attempt. It can be signified that qualitative research design utmost relevant selection for this research. Moreover, qualitative research provides the answers to the objectives and research questions that are mentioned in the chapter of the dissertation by incorporating subjective phenomena and diverse opinions and phenomena of journalists and academics (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). To further explain this, qualitative research design enables to obtain the subjective evidence like the perspectives and opinions of journals and academics. In addition to that the viewpoints of the mentioned parties regarding the journalism role under the current political situation in Turkey and the reason behind the increased importance of digital journalism in the current years, specifically in the Turkish social context such as the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016..

Moreover, the study of Tenny et al., (2017) states that qualitative research is flexible and can be adapted to suit the needs of the study. Qualitative research allows

changing the research design or methods during the study if needed. For instance, the participants may not agree to the interviews, so the researcher can change the methodology to quantitative. However, all the selected participants for the current study agreed to the interviews. This flexibility allows researchers to adjust the research methods to best suit the participants and the research question. Furthermore, qualitative research generates new theories and hypotheses. While the quantitative approach is not suitable as that is based on objective phenomena. The implication of the quantitative approach cannot examine the opinions and perceptions of journalists and academics regarding the role of journalism under the current political situation in Turkey such as Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016, qualitative works it allows the identification of new and unexpected findings regarding the changes and developments undergone by journalism through recent events in Turkey and understands how the profession of journalism is under threat in Turkey for the social function on the society that can lead to the development of new theories or hypotheses (Hammarberg et al, 2016). Flexibility of Qualitative Research: Qualitative research methods offer flexibility, enabling researchers to tailor their approach to fit the specific needs of the participants and research questions. This adaptability is crucial in studying complex social phenomena like journalism in Turkey, where the context may vary widely.

1-Generation of New Theories and Hypotheses: Qualitative research is known for its capacity to generate new theories and hypotheses. Unlike quantitative methods, which focus on objective data, qualitative research explores subjective experiences, opinions, and perceptions, leading to the development of fresh insights and understandings.

2-Limitations of Quantitative Approach: The passage points out that the quantitative approach may not be suitable for examining the opinions and perceptions of journalists and academics regarding the role of journalism in

Turkey's current political situation. Quantitative methods, which prioritize numerical data, may struggle to capture the nuanced perspectives and complexities of individual experiences.

3-Exploratory Nature of Qualitative Research: Qualitative research is characterized as exploratory, allowing researchers to uncover new and unexpected findings about changes and developments in journalism, particularly in response to recent events in Turkey. This approach facilitates a deeper understanding of how journalism is evolving and adapting to societal challenges and threats.

4-Development of New Theories or Hypotheses: Qualitative research on journalism in Turkey has the potential to contribute to the development of new theories or hypotheses. By exploring the social function of journalism and its impact on society, qualitative research can advance theoretical understanding in the field.

the advantages of qualitative research methods in studying the role of journalism in Turkey, emphasizing their flexibility, capacity for generating new insights, and ability to explore complex social dynamics.

3.5 Data collection method

There are two methods of data collection, one is the primary data collection method and the other is the secondary data collection method. Primary data is first-hand information and can be collected through interviews, survey questionnaires and experiments. Secondary information can be collected from the journals and companies websites (Ruggiano & Perry, 2019). A primary data-collecting strategy has been taken into consideration to achieve accurate and dependable study outcomes. This assumption has been supported by the study of Moser & Korstjens (2018), who claimed that as the

data was received from primary sources, it was accurate and credible. The direct collaboration in the primary investigation is the key motive that makes it an appropriate method for the data assortment regarding the Journalism activities and media organizations in Turkey and therefore the present study considers this method. In contrast, data from current sources or previously released data are taken into consideration when collecting secondary data. Because the data is outdated and not recent, it cannot give current information on political pressure in Turkey considering the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016t, and digital journalism as well as social media. This raises additional concerns about the data's legitimacy and dependability (Saunders & Lewis, 2017).

The interviews were conducted to analyze how socio-political events impacted journalism with the influence of social media after the Gezi park protest and a military coup attempt. Interviews were selected to gather the information to attain a comprehensive understanding of the role of journalism and the importance of digital journalism particularly in the Turkish social context (Doody & Doody, 2015).

3.6 Sampling size and technique

The two different types of sampling procedures that are frequently used in research are non-probability and probability sampling (Etikan & Bala, 2017). When a sample was created using a random assortment, researchers will often use probability sampling as a sampling technique. The randomization of this technique makes it challenging to identify the journalists and academicians as a sample. Additionally, the process is time-consuming and frequently requires larger samples, which are not always readily accessible (Sharma, 2017). Non-probability sampling, in comparison, bases the sample on the researcher's convenience. It is mainly taken into account in the study due to its simplicity and ease of accessibility for the researcher. This sampling technique is suitable for the current study as it enables the conduct of interviews with journalists and academicians that the researcher has reached to save time. Moreover, the study of Vehovar et al. (2016) states that one advantage of non-probability sampling techniques

is that they are cost-effective and efficient. Thus, convenience sampling is used in the current research. The sample size of the current includes the 10 journalists and 10 academicians from whom the interviews were conducted.

3.7 Data analysis technique

The goal of this study is to collect primary data on the perceptions and experiences of individuals. Through qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups, it was able to gain a deeper understanding of how these experiences are shaped by political and social context. The collected data was then analyzed using a qualitative technique known as a thematic analysis (Busetto et al., 2020). In the case of this study, the research questions aimed to understand the value of journalism in Turkish contemporary society, the public's right to access information in a controlled democratic society, and the social and political background of this relationship, focusing on the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016. As such, thematic analysis is a suitable approach for this research because it allows for the identification and interpretation of themes and patterns within the data that are relevant to the research questions (Hair et al., 2019).

The data collected through this process were analyzed and interpreted to provide an understanding of the various aspects of journalism in Turkey. The study aimed to gain an understanding of the value of journalism in Turkish society and the relationship between journalistic values and current social circumstances, in the context of political pressure. Thematic analysis was well-suited for this study as it allows for a systematic identification and analysis of themes related to these topics, providing insight into the perceptions and experiences of participants regarding the role and importance of journalism in a democratic society (Busetto et al., 2020).

3.8 Ethical considerations

There were numerous measures that were taken to enhance the reliability of the current study. Initially, the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondent's identity is a crucial ethical issue for several scholars. In other words, the anonymity of the

respondents is thoroughly carried as a respondent's safety from any possible hurt like the loss, the cost and time or any reputational and emotional damage. To avoid facing ethical concerns, before conducting the interviews, a consent form was given to journalists and academicians to fill out to obtain access to the interview respondents. The aim and objectives of the study were explained to the respondents to avoid any conflicts. To maintain confidentiality, the personal information including names, ages and experiences in the particular was kept anonymous. Within the scope of this study, the non-disclosure of the identity or information of the participants is purely a requirement for the protection of the information and security rights of individuals, and this request has been implemented with the consent and request of the participants.

- **Ethical Considerations:**

- **Confidentiality:** Respecting the confidentiality of your participants is a fundamental ethical principle in research. Participants provide their information with the understanding that it will be kept private.
- **Trust:** Protecting participants' identities helps maintain trust between the researcher and the participants. This trust is crucial for obtaining honest and accurate responses.

- **Legal Requirements:**

- **Privacy Laws:** Many countries have laws and regulations protecting personal data (e.g., GDPR in the European Union, HIPAA in the United States). Sharing participants' identities could violate these laws and result in legal consequences.
- **Institutional Review Board (IRB) Compliance:** Research involving human subjects typically requires IRB approval, which mandates

confidentiality to protect participants. Violating this could jeopardize your research approval and future research opportunities.

- **Risk of Harm:**
 - **Personal Safety:** Revealing participants' identities could expose them to harm, especially if the research involves sensitive topics (e.g., political opinions, personal experiences).
 - **Reputation and Employment:** Participants might face negative consequences at work, in their community, or in their personal lives if their identities and responses are disclosed.
- **Data Integrity:**
 - **Bias and Reliability:** Ensuring anonymity can lead to more honest and unbiased responses. Participants are more likely to provide truthful answers if they know their identities are protected.
 - **Research Validity:** Maintaining confidentiality supports the integrity and validity of your research findings, as it minimizes the risk of bias introduced by participants' concerns over privacy.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The media landscape in Turkey has undergone significant changes in recent years, with socio-political events such as the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016 playing a significant role in shaping the frontline of journalism. This research study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of how these events impacted journalism in Turkey, with a particular focus on the influence of social media. By analyzing the experiences and perspectives of journalists working in Turkey

during these tumultuous times, this study sheds light on the challenges and opportunities facing journalists operating in a highly politicized and rapidly evolving media environment. The findings of this study are essential for understanding the role of journalism in promoting democracy and freedom of expression in Turkey and beyond.

4.2 Findings

4.2.1 Theme 01: Value of journalism during political upheaval in Turkey

The first theme produced through a constructivist approach in this research focused on assessing the general value of journalism amidst politically tumultuous times in Turkey such as the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016. To initiate the investigation, the researcher first inquired the participants regarding the role of journalism during recent political circumstances in the country (Q1 in Appendix 1). Few key determining responses are given below:

Participant 01:

"In my opinion, the fundamental function of journalism in the current political climate of Turkey is to tell the people about what is occurring in the nation, even if doing so requires taking risks and subjecting oneself to criticism from the executive. In an atmosphere where the media is extensively restricted and controlled, it is crucial for journalists to stay neutral and convey the truth."Such as the role played by the media during the Gezi Park protests in 2013."

Participant 02:

"With greater government control and pressure on the media, journalism in Turkey has recently faced unprecedented obstacles as in during the 2013 incident in Gezi

Notwithstanding these difficulties, journalism's primary duty is to inform the public in a factual and objective manner. Nonetheless, in light of the risks they confront, journalists are now expected to be more circumspect and strategic in their reporting.

Participant 05:

The fundamental role of journalism in Turkey has never been more important than it is now, given the current political climate, in which the government continues to repress dissident voices and crack down on free expression. By holding people in authority responsible and covering topics that are frequently disregarded by the mainstream media, journalists must play the role of watchdogs. In order to maintain the profession's credibility and defend democratic norms, journalists must collaborate particularly during political conflicts...

The responses from the participants highlight a number of important ideas on the function of journalism in the current political climate in Turkey. They emphasize how crucial it is for journalists to tell the public in a factual and objective manner despite growing government censorship and pressure on the media. Participants emphasize the need of journalists working as watchdogs to keep people in positions of authority responsible while also being careful and strategic in their reporting. They emphasize the dangers and difficulties encountered by journalists in a highly politicized and constantly evolving media environment, as well as the critical need of upholding the profession's integrity to safeguard democratic ideals as observed in the event of the Gezi Park protests in 2013 ..

Proceeding from the previous question, the researcher focused on how political atmosphere influences journalism in a country like Turkey (Q2 in Appendix 1). Key responses are given below:

Participant 05:

In terms of government censorship and media control, "I believe the political climate may have a big influence on journalism operations."

Participant 09:

"Reporting on sensitive topics might be more challenging when there is a climate of fear and uncertainty among journalists due to the political environment. Furthermore, it may result in greater pressure on media to support official narratives rather than present balanced and independent reporting."

Participant 10:

"The public's confidence in journalism may be impacted by the political climate, especially when media outlets are perceived as being biased or supporting certain political groups as seen in the Gezi protest. It is crucial for journalists to uphold their reputation and integrity in such circumstances by delivering accurate and objective news."

These responses demonstrate how the political climate affects journalism-related activity. Participants stress how political censorship and media control may limit journalists' ability to report and put their lives in danger. They also point out that political pressure can make journalists feel uneasy and fearful, which could result in skewed reporting. In order to increase public confidence in journalism, the participants also stress the significance of upholding credibility and integrity in the face of political polarization. The replies together imply that political climate has a significant impact on journalistic methods and results.

4.2.2 Theme 02: Public right of Access to information, and Social and Political influences on it in a Controlled Democracy

The researcher then progressed towards the next theme to examine the confluence of public right to information and political circumstances in Turkey such as

the one observed in Gezi in 2013. In this regard, the study inquired the relationship between society and journalists (Q3 in Appendix 1). Key responses are summarized below:

Participant 13:

"Journalists have an obligation to represent societal issues and goals in their reporting. Journalists may better serve their readers and provide more pertinent and powerful news by interacting with the public and learning their opinions."

Participant 11:

"Journalists and society have a nuanced and intricate interaction. The larger cultural, social, and political environment both influences and shapes journalists. As a result, it's crucial that journalists retain a critical and analytical attitude towards their profession and be conscious of the power dynamics that influence how they interact with society."

Participant 15: journalist

"Trust is the foundation of the relationship between society and media. By delivering accurate, objective, and pertinent information, journalists must strive to gain and keep the confidence of their audiences. This entails being open and honest about their sources and procedures as well as interacting with their audiences to comprehend their requirements and viewpoints."

The intricacy of the interaction between society and journalists is demonstrated by these comments. The participants emphasize the significance of keeping a critical and reflective perspective while also representing society's concerns and goals in reporting. They also stress the value of honest, accurate, and pertinent reporting in establishing and preserving public confidence. According to the replies, there is a

dynamic and growing relationship between society and journalists that calls for continual participation and effort from both parties.

In light of the above responses, the study then further focused on the relationship between democracy and journalism in a society (Q4 in Appendix 1). The responses are summarized below:

Participant 06:

Democracy and journalism go together like two peas in a pod. The democratic process would be lacking without the press. Journalism offers a forum for public debate and discussion, keeps the powerful responsible, and gives the voiceless a voice. It promotes openness, accountability, and good governance by ensuring that the public is informed and involved in the political process.

Participant 09:

Journalism and democracy work together in harmony. Journalism is essential in ensuring that the public has access to accurate and trustworthy information, which is necessary for a well-informed and actively participating public. The political and legal structures required for the free and impartial conduct of journalism are also provided by democracy.

Participant 10:

"Democratic principles and journalism are like two sides of the same coin. For them both to operate effectively, openness, responsibility, and freedom of expression are essential. Although media serves to hold the powerful responsible and ensures that the

public has access to information essential to make educated decisions, democracy provides the legal and political foundation for journalism.

Participant 14:

"A crucial element of democracy is journalism. It helps to guarantee that the public is educated and involved in the political process and serves as a crucial check on the authority of the government and other institutions. Democracy also gives journalists the legal and political safeguards they need to work freely, independently, and to hold the powerful responsible.

The aforementioned comments emphasize the critical part that media plays in fostering and maintaining democracy. Participants emphasize the significance of journalism in promoting openness and good government, giving voice to the voiceless, and holding the powerful responsible. They also stress the value of democracy in establishing the political and legal frameworks required for the free and independent practise of journalism as observed in the context of the 2013 Gezi protest in Turkey. The results indicate a symbiotic link between journalism and democracy, with both relying on the other for successful operation.

The study then attempted to investigate the political and social factors that impact public's access to information in a controlled democracy situation in Turkey (Q5 in Appendix 1). The study gathered following major responses:

Participant 02:

"Umm. I think, in a controlled democracy like Turkey, the government and its agencies have a significant influence on the media landscape. This can include censorship, propaganda, and restrictions on access to information. We also need to

consider that social factors such as economic inequality and limited educational opportunities can make it more difficult for some segments of the population to access information."

Participant 05:

"Access to information may be impacted by a variety of political and social elements in a managed democracy. Government censorship, propaganda, limits on media ownership and rivalry, and press freedom constraints are a few examples of these. It may also be more challenging for some people of society to acquire information due to societal issues including income disparity, low levels of education, and limited access to technology."

Participant 08:

"In this type of circumstance, governmental practices and regulations, including censorship, propaganda, and limitations on media ownership and competition, may have an impact on the public's access to information. However, certain people may find it more difficult to acquire information due to socioeconomic variables including economic inequality, low levels of education, and a lack of digital literacy."

Participant 12:

According to my previous academic experience, a variety of political and social issues can have an impact on access to knowledge. Government censorship, constraints on media ownership and competition, and restrictions on press freedom are a few examples of these. The public's access to knowledge may be significantly impacted by social issues including financial disparity, low levels of education, and restricted access to technology.

In conclusion, the comments above show that political variables like government censorship, propaganda, and limitations on media ownership and competition may considerably affect the general public's access to information in a managed democracy like Turkey. Moreover, socioeconomic variables like economic inequality, low levels of education, and a lack of digital literacy can have a big influence. Participants stressed the necessity for policies that support information access and digital literacy as well as the significance of free and independent media in fostering openness and accountability. According to the comments, securing information access in a tightly regulated democracy like Turkey necessitates a multifaceted strategy that takes into account both political and societal considerations.

4.2.3 Theme 03: Importance of digital journalism

This theme was particularly focused on examining the domain of digital journalism, and its role in socio-political upheavals in democratic societies. For this, the study first investigated the effectiveness of online journalism to enhance public access to information (Q6 in Appendix 1). Major responses are given below:

Participant 08:

"Internet based journalism has completely changed how news is distributed and accessed. Real-time updates, multimedia material, and a larger audience are all made possible. Yet, the caliber and dependability of the sources determine how useful it is for informing the public. Accuracy and accountability should be prioritized in ethical and responsible media given the emergence of false news and sensationalism."

Participant 13:

“Online journalism has made it easier for the public to access and engage with news content, especially for teachers like me. Its effectiveness for public information depends on the level of engagement and interaction between journalists and their audience. The use of social media and comment sections can facilitate dialogue and feedback, leading to a better understanding of public opinion and needs”.

Participant 14: journalist

As a journalist, I would argue that in the current digital era, internet journalism is essential for the public's access to information. It enables the quick dissemination of information and access to a range of viewpoints. On the other hand, it's crucial to make sure that internet media upholds the same standards of neutrality and accuracy as conventional journalism.

Participant 17:

“Umm... In my opinion, it has the ability to improve public information by giving independent and citizen journalists a forum. It's crucial to understand the drawbacks of internet journalism, such as the digital divide and the possibility of echo chambers. Online and traditional journalism should work together to give a thorough and impartial approach to public information in order to ensure its efficacy.

Online journalism has the potential to be effective for public information, but this depends on a number of factors, including the quality and reliability of sources, the audience's level of engagement and interaction, adherence to ethical and professional standards, and awareness of the risks and limitations of online journalism. The discussion's participants emphasized the critical role that responsible journalism plays in ensuring the veracity and accuracy of information as well as the necessity of combining online and traditional journalism techniques to provide the public with a thorough and well-rounded approach to information. In essence, the responses suggest that online

journalism can play a crucial role in public information, however, it requires a responsible and ethical approach that balances the potential benefits with the limitations and risks.

Within this domain, the study also investigated the actual dynamics of digital journalism in the context of Turkish society (Q7 in Appendix). Key responses are summarized and analyzed in the following paragraphs:

Participant 02:

“So, digital journalism has become important in Turkey due to the restrictions on traditional media. The government controls and censors many news outlets, but online platforms provide a space for alternative voices and uncensored information.”

Participant 20:

“In my opinion, digital journalism has become important in Turkey due to the changing media consumption habits of the younger generation. They are more likely to get their news from online sources than traditional media, and digital journalism is able to cater to this demand”.

Participant 06:

“I think it has become important in Turkey due to the ease of access and the ability to reach a wider audience. It also allows for multimedia content, such as videos and infographics, which can make news more engaging and informative.”

Participant 09:

“As an academic person, I would point out that digital journalism has become important in Turkey due to its potential for citizen journalism and social media activism. Online platforms have enabled individuals like me to share news and information, and to mobilize for social and political causes.”

These above responses suggest that digital journalism has become important in Turkey for a variety of reasons. The limitations and censorship of traditional media have led to the rise of online platforms as a space for alternative voices and uncensored information. Furthermore, the changing media consumption habits of the younger generation have made digital journalism a popular and effective way of disseminating news. The ease of access and ability to reach a wider audience, as well as the potential for multimedia content and citizen journalism, have also contributed to the importance of digital journalism in Turkey.

Proceeding from the previous question, the researcher then asked about how digital journalism becomes more applicable in recent political upheavals in Turkey such as the 2013 Gezi protest . Following responses point towards key findings:

Participant 11:

“Digital journalism allows us to reach a wider audience and provide real-time updates on breaking news. It also enables us to incorporate multimedia elements such as videos and infographics, making our reporting more engaging and interactive. In a highly politicized and rapidly changing media environment, digital journalism offers a more flexible and adaptable platform for journalists to communicate with the public.”

Participant 16:

“Digital journalism has become increasingly important for journalists, particularly under conditions such as political censorship and media control. The internet provides a more open and accessible space for journalists to report the news

and share information. Moreover, digital journalism offers a more decentralized and diverse platform for voices that may be marginalized or silenced in traditional media."

Participant 17:

"Digital journalism offers a unique opportunity to create a dialogue with our audience and engage with them in real-time. It also allows for more collaborative reporting and the ability to incorporate user-generated content into our reporting."

Participant 20:

"Digital journalism can enhance the transparency and accountability of journalism by making it more interactive and participatory. But, it is important to note that digital journalism also poses new challenges, such as misinformation and the proliferation of fake news, which journalists must be aware of and guard against."

The participants' responses highlight several key findings regarding the effectiveness of digital journalism for journalists under specific conditions. Digital journalism is seen as a valuable tool for reaching a wider audience, providing real-time updates, and incorporating multimedia elements into reporting. It also allows for more collaboration, user-generated content, and interactive reporting. Moreover, digital journalism offers an alternative platform for journalists to report the news and communicate with the public, particularly under conditions such as government censorship or media control. However, the participants also highlight the challenges posed by digital journalism, including misinformation and fake news, which require journalists to be vigilant and aware.

4.3 Discussion

The findings of the study on the frontline of journalism in Turkey align with recent literature on the impact of socio-political events on journalism. Several studies indicate that the political climate has a significant impact on journalistic practices and results. For instance, according to a study there is a growing concern about the erosion of trust in the media due to political polarization and the proliferation of disinformation (Ognyanova et al., 2020). This study highlights how journalists are facing increased pressure to report accurately, fairly and without bias, even in the face of government censorship and pressure. Similarly, a study conducted on the impact of COVID-19 on journalism, found that the pandemic has heightened political pressure on journalists, leading to increased censorship and harassment (Posetti et al., 2020). The study found that journalists are facing a range of challenges, including limited access to information, decreased funding for media organizations, and growing attacks on press freedom. In contrast, Wynnyckyj (2019) posited that journalists in Ukraine are facing increased violence and harassment, particularly in the context of the country's ongoing conflict with Russia. The study highlights the need for stronger legal protections for journalists in conflict zones. In addition to this, the protests in Gezi turned into nationwide anti-government demonstrations based on effective journalism that threw up one of the biggest challenges to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government.

The second theme of the study explored the relationship between public access to information and political circumstances in Turkey. The participants highlighted the complex interaction between society and journalists, with the latter having an obligation to represent societal issues and goals while retaining a critical and analytical attitude towards their profession. They also stressed the importance of trust, which is built through accurate, objective, and pertinent reporting and interaction with audiences. Recent literature supports the findings of the study that journalists play a crucial role in promoting openness, accountability, and good governance in a democracy (Helberger, 2019). Journalism serves as a crucial check on the authority of the government and other institutions, giving voice to the voiceless and holding the powerful responsible

(Relly, 2013). Similarly, democracy provides the legal and political safeguards needed for journalists to work freely and independently (Jones, 2017). However, the study also found that in a controlled democracy situation like Turkey, the government and its agencies have significant influence over the media landscape, which includes censorship, propaganda, and restrictions on access to information. Recent literature has also highlighted the challenges faced by journalists in countries with limited press freedom, where government censorship and propaganda are common (Aman et al., 2013). The Turkish government has used social media to crack down on dissent and opposition voices, and has arrested journalists and closed news outlets. However, such actions have failed to suppress the opposition and dissent.

Furthermore, the study found that social factors such as economic inequality and limited educational opportunities can make it more challenging for some segments of the population to access information. Recent literature of Hargittai et al. (2018) supports this finding, with studies showing that individuals with lower socioeconomic status have limited access to digital technologies and news sources, which can lead to inequalities in access to information.

Aydin et al. (2023) have noted that the government's growing influence over Turkey's conventional media outlets has resulted in self-censorship and the termination of critical journalists. This has been especially apparent in the wake of the 2013 Gezi Park demonstrations and the 2016 military coup attempt. The emergence of social media has been viewed as an alternative medium for the communication of news and information, giving independent and opposing voices a forum (Aydin and Sarilar, 2023). Yet the government has also stepped up its attempts to regulate and control social media, which has resulted in website blockages, internet blackouts, and the detention of social media users. Apart from the findings from the current research, literature indicated that Turkish journalism has changed to become more critical and independent as a result of the country's democratization process and the growth of digital media. A more critical and involved citizenry is emerging as a result of individuals having more access to a variety of news sources and opposing opinions because of the growth of the

internet and social media (Çelik, 2020). The range of news and information available to the public has decreased as a result of the government's crackdown on the press and freedom of speech, with the majority of media outlets now being pro-government, according to several studies (Akkoyunlu, 2017). The difficulties faced by journalists and media organizations, such as arrests, threats, and physical abuse, have also been emphasized.

With respect to the relationship between democratic society and the function of journalism, the current study found that the responses highlight the complex relationship between society and journalists. The participants emphasize the value of maintaining a critical and reflective viewpoint while also accurately portraying the issues and objectives of society. They also emphasize the need for credible reporting for building and maintaining public trust. The responses indicate that there is a dynamic and developing interaction between society and journalists that necessitates ongoing involvement and effort on both sides.

It is established from the study that in the modern digital age, digital journalism is playing an increasingly important role in the public's access to news. Researchers like Ireton and Posetti (2018) found that online journalism has the potential to reach wider audiences and increase engagement, however, its success depends on accuracy, accountability and adherence to professional and ethical standards. The thematic analysis in this study also explored the potential benefits and risks of digital journalism for informing the public. On one hand, digital journalism has opened up opportunities for individuals to engage and interact with news and its sources, allowing for more open and real-time dialogue. Furthermore, another study by Westlund (2015) highlighted that the ubiquity of mobile devices has further facilitated the growth and accessibility of digital journalism.

On the other hand, the study also identified that there is a risk of unethical behavior, with online media particularly vulnerable to the spread of misinformation and manipulation. Benthaus et al. (2016) also found that without appropriate measures in

place, public opinion can easily be manipulated. Moreover, it is increasingly difficult for the public to distinguish reliable news sources from those that spread sensationalism and false information. Despite the risks, it was argued in the study that digital journalism should be viewed positively. However, studies like (Rauf 2021) pointed out that the responsibility lies on all stakeholders from those creating and distributing the news to the audience receiving it to ensure that ethical and responsible media is produced and circulated. The thematic analysis also suggested that a combination of online and traditional techniques should be employed in order to obtain the most accurate and comprehensive news. It is evident from thematic analysis that digital journalism can play an essential role in public information and media literacy, as long as responsibility and ethical behavior is prioritized. Journalists must ensure the integrity of their work, while members of the public should develop their media literacy in order to be able to assess the quality and trustworthiness of the information they access online (Dubois et al., 2020).

The role of digital journalism is becoming more and more important, particularly in the current political and media landscape. It offers many advantages such as greater access and wider reach, enabling journalists to interact with a much larger audience and engage with them in real-time. It also offers an alternative platform for voices that may otherwise be marginalized or silenced in traditional media. However, the study also identified that digital journalism poses its own challenges, such as the spread of misinformation and fake news, and journalists need to be aware of these dangers in order to provide accurate and responsible reporting. According to Bastos (2016), digital journalism is a powerful tool for journalism that provides new opportunities for collaboration and reporting in a dynamic environment.

It is clear that digital journalism has immense potential to transform how news is delivered, allowing journalists to interact more directly with their audience, collaborate with other reporters, and incorporate user-generated content into their stories. However, digital journalism also comes with a number of challenges that must be addressed, such as misinformation and the spread of fake news. Therefore, it is essential for journalists

to remain vigilant and stay on top of current events and trends, in order to accurately and responsibly report the news to the public. By harnessing the power of digital journalism, we can ensure that news is delivered in an ethical and responsible manner and open up a new line of dialogue with the audience. Foust (2017) also found that it is important for journalists to utilize the advantages offered by digital journalism in order to ensure accurate and engaging news reporting.

Regarding the confluence of digital journalism and political upheavals in societies like Turkey, literature analysis indicated that Turkish journalism has been significantly impacted by social media, both in terms of how news is reported and how it is received (Gross, 2017). On the one hand, social media platforms have offered individuals more access to a variety of viewpoints and news sources while also giving journalists new tools for gathering and sharing information. Nevertheless, social media has also facilitated the dissemination of false information, contributed to the demise of conventional news sources, and boosted government control and monitoring (Marcella, 2022). The industry is facing financial difficulties as a result of social media's impact on traditional advertising revenue for news organizations. Ultimately, social media has a complicated and wide-ranging impact on Turkish journalism. Meanwhile, findings from current study showed that Online journalism has the potential to be effective for informing the public, but this depends on a number of variables, such as the caliber and dependability of the sources used, the audience's level of interaction and engagement, adherence to ethical and professional standards, and awareness of the dangers and restrictions associated with online journalism. Participants in the conversation emphasized how important responsible journalism is in guaranteeing the truth and integrity of information as well as how important it is to combine online and conventional journalism practises in order to give the public a comprehensive and well-rounded view of information. Overall, the comments indicate that internet journalism may play a significant role in the dissemination of information, but that it requires a responsible and ethical approach that weighs the advantages with the drawbacks and entailing risks.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summarized Findings:

The present study is focused to examine the social and political events that impact journalism. For instance, the influence of social media practices after the Gezi park protest and military coup attempt is examined. The researcher used the primary data collection approach and collect data using interviews. Following the primary data collection, interviews are conducted from 10 journalists and 10 academicians. The findings of the study revealed that the value of journalism is essential to address the constructive political domain in Turkey. Journalism is also important for the promotion of freedom of speech and democracy in the state. The research findings summarized that journalism is important to address the political climate of the country. The promotion of digital journalism is important to address the political and environmental features of the state. When the protest of Istanbul's Gezi Park started, environmental challenges began in the country. To mitigate the risks of political and environmental change, media tried to improve the liberty of speech within the country. This research revealed that social and political environments impact the journalism features in Turkey. Turkey has a long history of media control features because of the government crackdown at Gezi Park in 2013. The role of online and digital media is to increase awareness of political information. Online journalism also improves the key responses of the public that they want to access from public.

It is crucial for the government to address the political climate of the country to media reporters. The findings of the study depicts that journalism is essential to address the factual details of political environment. The participants of the research also revealed that government censorship and media control is important for journalism operations in the country. The role of media reporting is clear in this context, as it significantly influences the political environment.. It is also important to address a balanced and independent reporting system. For this purpose, public confidence in journalism is crucial to addressing the political climate in Turkey. The researcher collected data using primary sources and examined the current political situation based on respondents' perspectives. The findings of this research highlighted that media outlets are often viewed as important supporters of a biased system that caters to the political needs of the country. The role of political censorship is significant in understanding media control within the context of political polarization. The widespread use of social media provides access to alternative platforms for news reporting. Many journalists believe that information regarding the military coup is thoroughly explained on media platforms, which helps inform the public about the political and social aspects of the military details and coup commission in Turkey.

The study also explored the interaction between media reporting and societal aspects of journalism. It found that media awareness and online journalism play vital roles in increasing public information in Turkey. The present study also addressed the role of media in fostering aspects of social media and democracy. The findings show that journalism is significant in promoting openness and self-efficiency among individuals. Additionally, the role of the media landscape is important in addressing educational details and economic equality within educational traits.

. The study summarized that political variables like government censorship, limitations on media ownership, propaganda, and competition are the factors that considerably affect the information of the general public's access in Turkey. Moreover, various socioeconomic factors like economic inequality, limited availability of social

media, low levels of education, and low digital literacy influence the role of journalism. These factors are important to address the online information and media reporting that is essential to improve social media awareness and news among the public. For this study, the researcher chose a qualitative research design. Data were collected using primary sources to examine the current political situation from respondents' perspectives. The study's findings revealed that power dynamics and press freedom are closely linked to state authority in the digital landscape. In Turkey, media functions can be enhanced through the role of social media and the state's democratic reputation. It is also essential to address pre-government policies and political ideologies to improve public awareness of their rights and facilitate political transitions.

Moreover, the study highlighted the need for a multifaceted strategy that considers both political and societal factors to effectively promote media functions and press freedom in Turkey.

Recommendations

The present study is proposed to address the role of media and digital journalism in political awareness of the public in Turkey. It is recommended that effective strategies are necessary to address the issue of excessive media controlling and suggestions to enforce freedom of journalism within Turkey. This research used qualitative research design following the primary data. It is recommended that the researcher should collect secondary data from various literature findings. The collection of both primary and secondary data is important to follow the mix design method. It is important to provide more conclusive results. Digital journalism is important to address the socio-political concerns of the country. In Turkey, the promotion of digital media is necessary to improve public awareness. To mitigate the risks of excessive media role, it is recommended that digital transparency is important to improve journalism in Turkey. It is also important to address the political features and role of media reporting using ethical standards. For this purpose, the implications for ethical political standards are important to reduce the risks of political potential in media awareness. The engagement of the public using online media platforms also enhances trust, credibility and overall

quality of companies. It is important to address multimedia storytelling that improves video details and political details to the public. Therefore, online role of media awareness and digital awareness is recommended to mitigate the risks and issues of excessive media controlling and suggestions to enforce freedom of expression.

5.2 Future implications of research

The present research revealed important insight about the role of the media landscape in Turkey and its potential to inform the public about political information. Future studies can use different methodologies to examine the interplay of media censorship, political dynamics and press freedom in Turkey. In addition, future studies can look into the impact of online journalism on the public perception of political affairs in the country. Finally, studies can investigate the effect of economic inequality and limited access to media outlets in creating and supporting an unequal balance in news reporting and access to information. Such studies will offer important insights on how media landscapes can help to empower individuals in the face of state authorities in Turkey.

The findings of this research have major implications for future research:

Implications for Future Research

Understanding Power Dynamics and Press Freedom:

1. The findings highlight the relationship between power dynamics, press freedom, and state authority in the digital landscape. Future research can build on this to further explore how these factors interact and influence each other in various political contexts.

Role of Social Media:

2. By demonstrating the impact of social media on media functions and democratic reputation, this research suggests that future studies should investigate the evolving role of social media in political communication, public opinion formation, and its potential for promoting press freedom.

Influence of Pre-Government Policies and Political Ideologies:

3. The research underscores the importance of pre-government policies and political ideologies in shaping public awareness and political transitions. Future research could delve deeper into how these factors affect media practices and freedom in different political regimes and historical contexts.

Multifaceted Strategies:

4. The study advocates for multifaceted strategies that consider both political and societal considerations. Future research can explore what specific strategies are most effective in various environments and how they can be implemented to enhance press freedom and media functions.

Policy Recommendations:

5. The findings provide a basis for developing policy recommendations aimed at improving media freedom and public right awareness. Future research can expand on these recommendations, testing their efficacy in different contexts and refining them based on empirical evidence.

Comparative Studies:

6. This research opens the door for comparative studies between Turkey and other countries facing similar challenges. Future research can compare and contrast

the Turkish experience with those of other nations to identify common patterns and unique differences in media-state relations.

Longitudinal Studies:

7. Given the dynamic nature of political environments, future research could take a longitudinal approach to study how changes in state authority, political policies, and social media usage impact press freedom over time.

By addressing these areas, future research can build on the current findings to enhance our understanding of the complex interplay between media, politics, and society, ultimately contributing to more effective strategies for safeguarding press freedom and promoting democratic values.

The findings of the research provide an insight into the importance of media in Turkey and how the country's politics impacts journalism. In addition, this research has identified how media has been affected by the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and 15 July Attempted Military coup in 2016 .These findings could be used to inform and improve policies that relate to journalism and media regulation in the country. Furthermore, these findings can be used to guide the development of media policies that promote the development of freedom of speech and democracy in the country. Finally, this research has identified how various socioeconomic factors influence journalism in Turkey, which can be used to identify strategies to reduce inequality and increase digital literacy among citizens. This could lead to improved public information and media reporting in the future.

Limitations of This Study

This study presents valuable insights into how socio-political events and social media have impacted journalism in Turkey. However, several limitations must be acknowledged:

1. **Geographic and Temporal Scope:** This research focuses exclusively on Turkey, which may not fully represent how similar dynamics play out in other regions or in different historical periods. Additionally, the analysis is constrained to specific events within a defined timeframe, potentially limiting the applicability of the findings to other events or eras.
2. **Data and Methodological Constraints:** The study relies on available media archives and social media content, which may not comprehensively cover all relevant material. Additionally, the choice of methodology, including content analysis and interviews, introduces inherent biases and limitations in sample representation and data interpretation.
3. **Social Media Dynamics:** The rapidly evolving nature of social media platforms means that the influence of these platforms on journalism is subject to change. The findings may thus be less applicable to future technological developments or shifts in social media trends.
4. **Socio-Political Context:** The specific socio-political context of Turkey has unique features that may not be directly comparable to other countries. The findings are thus most relevant to the Turkish context and may not fully address the nuances of other political environments.
5. **Journalistic Perspectives:** The study's conclusions are influenced by the perspectives of the journalists and media outlets analyzed. A broader and more diverse sample could potentially yield different insights.

Future research could expand on these findings by exploring the impact of socio-political events on journalism in other countries, examining longer time periods, or employing alternative methodologies to address these limitations.

Achievements of This Study

This research has made several significant contributions:

- 1. Detailed Analysis of Socio-Political Impact:** The study offers an in-depth analysis of how various socio-political events in Turkey have impacted journalistic practices, providing a valuable historical and contextual understanding of media evolution.
- 2. Insights into Social Media Influence:** By examining the role of social media, the research highlights how digital platforms have transformed news dissemination and public engagement, offering a nuanced perspective on their impact on journalism.
- 3. Contribution to Journalism Studies:** This research enriches the field of journalism studies by presenting a detailed case study of Turkey, which can serve as a reference for similar studies in other contexts or countries.
- 4. Policy and Practice Recommendations:** The findings include actionable recommendations for media practitioners and policymakers, aimed at navigating the challenges posed by socio-political events and social media dynamics.
- 5. Theoretical and Methodological Contributions:** The research contributes to theoretical frameworks on media influence and offers innovative methodological approaches for analyzing media impacts, paving the way for future research in this area.

Mainstream and Alternative Media Dynamics

In the context of socio-political events in Turkey, mainstream media and alternative media play distinct but complementary roles:

- 1. Mainstream Media:** This sector has a profound influence on public perception due to its broad reach and established infrastructure. During key socio-political events, mainstream media can either reinforce prevailing narratives or offer critical perspectives, impacting the overall discourse.
- 2. Alternative Media:** Emerging as a crucial counterbalance, alternative media offer diverse viewpoints and highlight issues that may be marginalized by mainstream outlets. The synergy between alternative media and social media platforms enhances their ability to challenge dominant narratives and engage directly with audiences.
- 3. Social Media Influence:** Social media platforms have democratized information dissemination, allowing alternative media to amplify their reach and engage with broader audiences. This shift has altered the dynamics between mainstream and alternative media, providing a more fragmented but enriched media landscape.

Integrating these insights will help illustrate the complex interplay between different types of media and how they collectively shape journalistic practices and public understanding in Turkey.

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Appendix 1

Interview Questions

Theme 01: Value of journalism during political upheaval in Turkey

Q1. How we can we define the role of journalism under the recent political circumstances in Turkey?

Q2. What makes digital journalism more applicable for a journalist under specific conditions?

Q3. How does the political atmosphere impact on journalism activities?

Theme 02: Public right of access to information, and social and political influences on it in a controlled democracy

Q4. How should we see the connection between society and journalist?

Q5. What is the relation between democracy and journalism?

Q6. Which political and social factors influence public's access to information in a controlled democracy like Turkey?

Theme 03: Importance of digital journalism

Q7. How effective is online journalism for the aims of public information?

Q8. Why has digital journalism become so important in recent years, specifically in the Turkish social context?

The distinguished participants who contributed their insights and expertise through interviews, significantly enriching the depth and scope of this study. The participants come from diverse backgrounds, including journalism and academia, providing a well-rounded perspective on the value of journalism in present-day Turkish society.

Due to confidentiality agreements, specific details about the participants' involvement in this study will not be disclosed. Below is an organized list of the some interviewers , along with brief descriptions of their roles and affiliations.

1. **Ruşen Çakır**

- **Role:** Journalist
- **Affiliation:** Medyascope
- **Profile:** [Ruşen Çakır on Medyascope](#)

Ruşen Çakır is a prominent journalist with extensive experience in

Turkish media. As a contributor to Medyascope, he has provided in-depth analysis and coverage of significant political events in Turkey, including the Gezi Parkı Protest and the Military Coup attempt.

2. **Burak Tatari**

- **Role:** Journalist
- **Affiliation:** Medyascope
- **Profile:** [Burak Tatari on Medyascope](#)

Burak Tatari is a seasoned journalist affiliated with Medyascope. His work focuses on political reporting and investigative journalism, offering critical insights into the media landscape and political climate of Turkey.

3. **Ahmet Sabancı**

- **Role:** Digital Journalist
- **Profile:** [Ahmet Sabancı](#)

Ahmet Sabancı is a digital journalist known for his work on the intersections of technology, society, and media. His expertise in digital journalism provides a contemporary perspective on how digital platforms influence journalistic practices and political discourse.

4. **Burak İli**

- **Role:** Academic
- **Affiliation:** Iğdır University
- **Profile:** [Burak İli on Iğdır University](#)

Dr. Burak İli is an academic at Iğdır University. His research interests include media studies and political communication, making his academic insights valuable for understanding the theoretical underpinnings of journalism in Turkey.

5. **Vahdet Mesut Ayan**

- **Role:** Academic
- **Affiliation:** Google Scholar
- **Profile:** [Vahdet Mesut Ayan on Google Scholar](#)

Dr. Vahdet Mesut Ayan is a respected academic whose work spans

political science and media studies. His scholarly contributions provide a critical analysis of the role of media in shaping public opinion and political dynamics in Turkey.

6. **Yiğit Gürel**

- **Role:** Journalist
- **Profile:** [Yiğit Gürel on LinkedIn](#)

Yiğit Gürel is a journalist with a background in political reporting and media analysis. His experience and insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the journalistic landscape and the challenges faced by the media in Turkey.

These participants were selected for their expertise and their ability to provide diverse perspectives on the issues central to this study. Their contributions have been instrumental in understanding the complex relationship between journalism, media, and politics in Turkey. The insights gathered from these interviews are discussed in detail in the subsequent sections, offering a comprehensive view of the current state and future directions of journalism in Turkey.

The confidentiality of the interviewees has been maintained throughout the study. Out of the 20 participants, 14 requested anonymity and, accordingly, their personal information has not been disclosed to ensure their privacy and protect them from any potential repercussions related to their participation in this research. The remaining 6 participants consented to the publication of their names and biographies. Thus, the confidentiality preferences of all participants were respected.