

THE INTRODUCTION OF TELEVISION BROADCASTING IN TURKEY AND ITS REFLECTIONS IN THE PRINTED PRESS

(1968 - 1970)

Ceren Gülser İLİKAN RASİMOĞLU

Işık Üniversitesi

İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri

İstanbul

ABSTRACT

Through the analysis of two newspapers, Milliyet and Cumhuriyet, focusing on the period between 1968 and 1970, this article aims to present the image-making of the Turkish political authorities by making use of the television, the new communicative technology, with which Turkish people meet. The idea defended in the article is that the first experiences of television broadcasting in Turkey illustrated the ideals of modernization, developmentalism and consumerism of the 1960s-1970s and served to pacify and moderate the newly arising political youth movements in addition to the disorders caused by rapid urbanization.

Keywords: Television broadcasting, state television, political awakening, political image, modernization

Türkiye’de Televizyon Yayıncılığının Başlangıcı ve Yazılı Basındaki Yansımaları (1968-1970)

ÖZET

Bu makale, Milliyet ve Cumhuriyet gazetelerinin 1968 ve 1970 yılları arasındaki basımlarını dikkate alarak Türk halkının henüz tanışmakta olduğu yeni iletişim teknolojisi olan televizyon vasıtasıyla Türk siyasi otoritelerinin nasıl bir görüntü yaratma çabası içinde olduklarını incelemektedir. Makalede savunulan fikir, Türkiye’de televizyonculuğa dair ilk denemelerin modernleşme, kalkınmacılık ve 1960’lar-1970’lerin tüketimciliğinin ideallerini göstermekte olduğu ve aynı zamanda hızlı kentleşmenin yarattığı düzensizliklere ek olarak yeni ortaya çıkan gençlik hareketlerinin de yatıştırılıp ılımlı hale getirilmesi amacına da hizmet ettiğiidir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Televizyon yayıncılığı, devlet televizyonu, siyasal uyanış, siyasal görünüm, modernleşme

Introduction

When John Logie Baird televised objects in 1924, human faces in 1925 and moving objects in 1926, he initiated a series of developments that would transform media in the second half of the twentieth century. Vladimir Zworykin's collaboration with RCA in 1929 was followed by BBC's test transmissions between 1932 and 1934, and limited television services in Germany in 1935, Britain in 1936 and USA in 1939 (Gorman and McLean, 2003, pp. 126-127). Nevertheless, in the second half of the 1950s, the Third World owned only 3 % of the television sets world-wide (Bervianger, 1998, p. 188). As for Turkey, when people met the technology of television via a small room in Istanbul Technical University in 1952, it worked as a tool of the national and mobile culture. It did not reinforce the "concrete ways of life of individual neighborhoods," but the way of life of a bigger environment (Novak, 1981, p. 24); or television, claiming to be photographing the reality, indeed, served to create one (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 26).

This article defends the idea that the first experiences of television broadcasting in Turkey, which took place about ten year after the presentation of İTÜ TV, coincided with the ideals of modernization, developmentalism and consumerism of the 1960s-1970s of Turkey, in addition to a desire to pacifies and moderate the political awakening of the period and the complexity of rapid urbanization. It follows a discursive analysis of two newspapers, Milliyet and Cumhuriyet between 1968 and 1970, the years in which İTÜ TV and Ankara TV were established, with the aim of understanding the representation of television on the printed media; in other words, to answer the questions of; first, how television was subject of current debates, and second, how its introduction was presented to the readers.

The newspaper items and articles are presented in a descriptive way, in order to offer a general framework of the discussions around this communicative technology. These discussions are considered within a general setting of the 1960s- 1970s world history, mostly characterized by the problems of urbanization, rising political awakening among the youth, consumerism, and state planning. Thus, common television broadcasting is used to frame the anxieties and desired potentials of both the political milieus and the staff of the printed media.

The rise of dominating national networks, as Douglas Gomery's point of view, was the sole concentration node of earlier historians of American television. Indeed, he proposed, the new historians had to take care of the social, demographic policy and urban history, and to look at television history first at a local level to be added to a greater picture on television

history (Gomery, 2001, p. 282). In Turkey, we cannot follow his advice about focusing on locality since the focal point of this article coincides with a period at which television broadcasting was held at only national level. Still, we may consider social and political aspects, and urbanization, especially in the 1960s at which Turkey was focusing on strong urbanization and migration, which reached a potential for economic development and consumerism.

Television management in Turkey had several examples in the world which saw television as a public service medium. These countries in interwar period faced the problems of organizing, regulating, and taxation, censoring, governing and profit-making about television, according to the appertaining political ideology of the countries in question: communist, fascist, or capitalist (Smith, 2005, p. 38). Turkey had taken the example of Great Britain: With the founder Lord Reith, BBC's standards about radio, i.d., education and moral improvement, guiding the improvement of the grammar and pronunciation of the English language, in addition to the standards of dressing of the staff (Smith, 2005, pp. 48-49).¹ But, regardless of whether television is commercial or public, one should first consider that it consists of an industry in need of an organization, but also a level of professionalism and a political economy (Dahlgren, 1995, p. 26).

The Introduction of TV Broadcasting in Turkey, Experimental Television and Possible Uses of Television Broadcasting

The first TV broadcasting in Turkey was held in 9 July 1952 by the studios formed in İTÜ. In the beginning, broadcasting was done for an educative purpose, in specific days of the week, and only for the residents of İstanbul. The İTÜ TV was handled to TRT with a law that passed from the parliament in 1965 (Serim, 2007, p. 15). The presentation of this technology to common people was realized first of all through a small picture of a device indicating that it was a television machine.² Within a small period of time after this first introduction, it was estimated that, 5,000 people had the occasion to watch TV every week. What rendered the broadcasting attractive were the voluntary appearances of famous people (Serim, 2007, pp. 27-29).³

¹The establishment of broadcasting in England coincided with a new understanding of democracy with universalizing elections regardless of gender, which gave new communication technologies further importance (Scannell, 1997, p. 24). The situation was not different in Turkey, this time, with the first decades of multi-party experience.

² *Yukarıdaki resim bir televizyondur.*

³ The first discussion about TV broadcasting was a column on about its maleficial impact on children as a part of the news on international events. ("Televizyonun Çocuklar Üzerindeki Fena Tesirleri", 1952). With the same

That kind of news would be present during the first steps of broadcasting, as a proof of Turkey's close ties and co-temporality with their European counterparts in terms of technological developments. It is important to note that news columns written by reporters and evaluation columns written by newspaper writers showed great difference: while the former presented television with its beneficial and strong aspects for the country, the latter underlined its drawbacks and incompetence.

İTÜ TV was closed on May 2, 1960, almost one month before the coup d'état, but it was reopened with a military permit on October 10, 1960, mostly for the broadcasting of film and news bulletins about the military regime (Kreiser, 2008, p. 349).⁴ After very small number of place that the introduction of the experimental broadcasting occupied on print media, when we come to the year 1968, during which preparations for the introduction of TV as a mass media to Turkey were being done, we see that during the whole year, still a few columns were consecrated to the issue. The first news in Cumhuriyet was on a small column entitled on January 7, 1968, and was reflecting the general concern about possible uses of television. Therefore, already in 4 January we see a small announcement framed by Serge, TV Convertor, celebrating the New Year and the Ramadan feast of the TV owners (Milliyet, January 4, 1968).

The first expectation about the introduction of commercial TV was the amelioration of the traffic density. After a meeting of Faruk Sükan, the Minister of Internal Affairs, and Hayrettin Nakipoğlu, the General Director of Security, it was stated that TV receivers would be purchased to regulate the traffic of İstanbul in addition to the purchases of helicopters and wireless equipments. Five days later, Milliyet announced the end of the appertaining meetings had set the locations that the TV receivers would be placed ("İstanbul Trafiği Televizyonla Düzenlenecek", 1968).⁵ As a result, a few days later, the readers were informed that the traffic control through TV receiver as an experiment had been realized in Gümüşsuyu through

concern, the show Sesamese Street had begun (Postman, 2012, p. 159). These anxieties were explained by the "moral panic associated with the new arrival of each new medium," since when TV was also first introduced in the Western world, it also introduced a new form of collective togetherness of the family around the machine, with children having the main leisure activity with TV, within the process of "individualization." (Livingstone, 2009, pp. 151-163.) Another possible maleficent impact had been one doctor's claim about the positive relationship between watching television and cross-eye disorder (Cumhuriyet, April 21, 1969.) Even, while giving some ordinary news about a certain fire, the text wrote the headings in bold format by these words: "The guilt is on Television," presenting it as a dangerous device for home-use, for its explosiveness equal to a bomb. (Cumhuriyet, January 6, 1970.)

⁴ The formation of a supra-party government headed by Nihat Erim meant the reorganization of constitutional articles, which led to the Constitution of 1961, through which the independence of the radio was gained again.

⁵ The meeting was held between the agents of Philips and İstanbul Security General Directorate traffic experts, which resulted in the decisiveness about some locations like Eminönü Square, Beyazıt White Palace, Aksaray Vatan Street Crossroad, Sultanahmet Crossroad, Altiyol Square, Üsküdar Square, and Taksim Square.

devices located at Philips headquarter. From then on, it was planned that the police officers would carry cameras with them to record undesirable events (“TV ile Trafik Kontrolü Yapıldı”, 1968). About one and a half year later, the claim was that with the television control system, traffic accidents had decreased by 14 % (Milliyet, July 2, 1969).

But within two years, educative uses became to be discussed. In 1970, Hıfzı Topuz gave the example of some 800 children in Nigeria, who had been educated through television for five years. The lecture of 15 minutes in the class on television was followed by that of the class teacher. He affirmed that for developing and underdeveloped countries, the use of television for educative purposes had several advantages, including the substitution of necessary teachers, the relative cheapness of centralized education, and the strong and live effect in the eyes of the children (Topuz, 1970). Finally, another possible use of television had been found: as a response to the debates about the possible formation of night classes, the rector of İstanbul University had declared that for secondary education at university, television would serve to five classes at the same time (Milliyet, November 26, 1969).

But the situation in general in Turkey was not that inspiring. A column on the same month, in which TV was introduced as a mass medium, indicated that villages of Turkey could receive electricity only within 20 years (“Köyler Elektriğe Ancak 20 Yılda Kavuşacak”, 1968). Similarly, in Milliyet, with the photograph of his happy family with five children, it was informed that Hasan Budak, a worker in Germany, had returned to his home town Kurugül Village in Mucur with a refrigerator and TV but the town lacked electricity lines. Still, he was optimistic about the future of Turkey, in which the citizens would be ornamented with refrigerators, washing machines, TVs as integral part of the villagers’ homes with the introduction of electricity (“Buzdolabı, Televizyonu Var Ama Elektriği Yok”, 1968). At that period the SPO (State Planning Organization) claimed at that period that due to people’s inability to afford TV sets at the price of 6000 liras, the initial step had to be the formation of receiver factories to produce cheaper sets. However, those who could afford this 6000 liras also added some additional thousands for the purchase of aerials to receive broadcastings abroad (Turam, 1994, 292).

Actually, despite the fact that for the first five-year plan of 1963-1967 presented by SPO, no article was consecrated for television, it actually was initiated in 31 January 1968. Semih Tuğrul, who presided over the founding team of Ankara television commentated this sudden initiative with the final and expected-to-be-glorious act of the first Board of Directors, whose tenure was reaching to an end (Serim, 2007, 41). It is interesting that Cumhuriyet did not seem to be interested in an enthusiastic way about the introduction of TV in 1968. In

January 1968, very small number of news about TV could find a place on Cumhuriyet, and these were generally indifferent, if not hostile, to it. On 19 January 1968, on the first page, information about the incident of an electric shock in İTÜ experimental television was given to the readers. The people in question were the famous Fecri Ebcioğlu and Mario, the electro guitarist of the band Efes (Cumhuriyet, January, 19, 1968; Milliyet, January 19, 1968). Or, at a period of political turmoil, Cumhuriyet had chosen to introduce the telecasting of a small child exhibiting the small objects he built from plaster (“Televizyonda Bir Küçük”, 1969.) It is obvious that the newspaper articles that carried the potential to initiate common anxiety and hesitance among the people in response to the introduction of this new technology had been consciously chosen. It seems that people could not decide whether television technology could be used for public benefit, or not, and hence, they seemed to be anxious, rather than passionate, about it. Obviously, here, “people” mean mostly journalists, and the world of written press, who feel considerably threatened by this new communication technology.⁶

On January 2, with a detailed information about radioing line planned to be formed between İstanbul and Sofia within 2,5 years, it was announced that when the station in Yenimahalle was finished, Ankara experimental broadcasting would begin (“Televizyon Şebekesi Gelecek Yıl Kuruluyor”, 1968.) This news was followed by another one giving the good information that the experimental broadcasting would begin in Ankara in 31 January at 19.30. The programs would last 2 hours each week on Thursdays, Tuesdays and Saturdays, which would focus mainly on culture and education, but also contain entertaining programs (“Ankara’da Çarşamba Günü TV Başlıyor”, 1968).

On February 2, Mete Akyol, a famous television announcer and journalist, gave descriptive news about the first and the most exciting broadcasting of Turkey. Mahmut Tali Öngören, TRT Television Director, and the first TV news-caster, Zafer Cilasun, were portrayed with their faces on the screen. He said that this exciting waiting was filled to the atmosphere of the studio, where many professionals of the sector felt the nervousness of a school child. Mahmut Tali Öngören and Zafer Cilasun were memorizing their lines. At another part of the studio, Afet İnan, the prominent historian of the Early Republican Turkey and one of the founders of the Turkish Historical Society, was waiting for her turn, at which

⁶ Therefore, for instance, in the USA, radio and TV, even not directly displaced the printed world, but they “encroached upon it.” Even, TV magazines had been able to rule over the domain of the famous *Life* (Meadow, 1998, p. 35.) Yet, at that period in Turkey, following the example of Britain, the impact of television to journalism was discussed, even not overtly. News from London happily informed that the authorities of radio, television and press announced their compromise about the idea that television would never stuck the printed press. They affirmed that people preferred to be informed about an event by both watching on television and reading on a newspaper (Cumhuriyet, July 4, 1969.)

she would give the first of a series of lectures on Turkish History of Reform. After the introduction of Nuran Emren and the speech of Öngören, the telecast was interrupted for five minutes, but then the initial plan could be carried: İnan lectured on the National Struggle, a movie in which Atatürk was giving his speech for the 10th anniversary of the Republic was shown, the news bulletin formed of a movie about the welcoming ceremony for Sunay, who had been abroad, was given, a cartoon movie amused children, and two documentaries exhibited the forests and natural waters of Antalya. The day was finished with the celebration of the first successful TV broadcasting of Turkey (Akyol, 1968a).

Also, while the experimental broadcasting was being discussed, in January 1968 we encounter a specific column for TV called “Radyo-TV.” The technologies of radio, wireless and television had to be thought as inseparable parts of a whole. Technical inconveniences in Turkey were overcome, and the rest of the trouble was only economic in terms of technological investments. With the satellites, he said, an international understanding of “let us watch together” had appeared, which fostered countries to form broadcasting unions (*Avrupa Radyo Televizyon Birliği*) (Poyraz, 1968a).

Still, on the column Radio- TV, on February 1968, Altan Poyraz was writing that the experimental broadcasting in Ankara had begun on the night of January 31, 1968. So, he said, the lost R of TRT had begun to be settled in its right place. Poyraz underlined that this event was an important part of Turkish development plan, especially, in terms of education. The environment of Turkey, he said, except from Greece, was full of TV network, like that of a spider. The result of this was that the southern cities were under the influence of foreign broadcasts.

He warned people to be patient about some small mistakes. Everyone had to support these telecasts to fulfill their future dreams (Poyraz, 1968b). Yet, with bigger fonts, under the budget debates of the Ministry of Tourism and Information, it was indicated that the TV network would begin to be formed after 1969. The projection was that the network would contain the whole country in 1982 (*Cumhuriyet*, January 20, 1968), which meant that the expectations were not promising.

The reason for the preference of Poyraz in underlining the Turkish development was not in vain; actually, State Planning Organization (DPT) was founded in 30 September 1960, which acted politically since the final decision maker was the prime minister. The first five-year plan fostering an import-substitution policy was introduced in 1963 and ended up with the growth of production capacity in Turkey. That meant a change in the consumption patterns, which transformed the country into a big consumption society (Ahmad, 1999, pp.

159-162).⁷ Goods like automobile, refrigerator and radio were being produced in cooperation with foreign brand marks like Philips or Ford (Ahmad, 2007, 154). As an example, Mete Akyol reported on 8 September 1968 that Kiesinger, the German prime-minister, for his visit to Turkey had brought with him 520 TV's following the advices of his diplomats for "the ones who shook his hands." (Akyol, 1968). Obviously, that was an allusion to represent the deputies and the most up-to-date material to offer as a bribe seems to be a television set.

It is not difficult to guess that the introduction of television as a mass medium was expected to create a similar consumption pattern. Therefore, beginning with the late 1960s, consumer durables spread from "developed capitalist world," including radio and television, i.e. "the whites," created a considerable demand among newly-rising Turkish bourgeoisie (Boratav, 2005, p. 119). Actually, real wages almost doubled during the easy stage of the Import Substitution Industrialization, that is, between 1963 and 1977, which led large segments of the population from civil servants to agricultural producers to incorporate into the demand for consumer durables (Pamuk, 1998, p. 112).⁸

Problematic Issues about Television Broadcasting

Right after the beginning of experimental broadcasting, television served to appease the vivid atmosphere of May 1968 in Turkey via more peaceful, educative and entertaining programs. On February again, it was announced that the winner of High Schools Western Music Competition would be screened on TV. Hence, youth events would become transferred from radio on TV selectively: These were some occasions to moderate the tension of the harsh political atmosphere in which Turkish youth, as well as their counterparts abroad, was involved ("İstanbul Finalini TV Yayınlayacak", 1968). Ronald Berman argued that all kinds of television programming were indeed a form of news, which spread social information to the audiences, which also gave "a sense of community interest." (1987, p. 103). In the example of Turkey, the introduction of television broadcasting, especially through printed press, spread a form of information which may be qualified as a set of buried advices on the idealized forms that people were demanded to be shaped.

On March 1968, Milliyet was informing its readers, after the pursuit of the competition day by day, that the winner, the band of High School of Sciences, was welcomed to the radio and TV, with a picture of them with Halit Kıvanç, at the show called Tele-Spor.

⁷ Çağlar Keyder explains that the State Planning Organization occupied a privileged position in the Constitution, which was why its de facto position was over the ministries (Keyder, 1987, p. 203.)

⁸ Most standard household durables which are the washing machine and the refrigerator have been used in Turkish houses since 1959 and 1960 respectively (Buğra, 1998, p. 7).

The news also informed that the second and third bests, İstanbul High School for Boys and Galatasaray High School, were invited to the show of Fecri Ebcioğlu (Milliyet, March 16, 1968). On March 1969, still the most vivid issue was the music competition among high schools. The winner of that year, Kadıköy Commerce High School, would be screened on TV (“Kadıköy Ticaret Bugün Televizyonda”, 1969.) Also, beauty contests were also subject to TV shows like music contests. The first interview with a beauty queen was realized with Mine Kürkçüoğlu by the Ankara TV (Milliyet, November 4, 1968).

The union of a publicly appreciated figure of the world of classical Turkish music and public television was carried out through a concert given by Zeki Müren, who, it was argued, was seen by a 150 thousand of spectators. Hence, the estimation of Mahmut Tali Öngören was pushed one step forward, from 100,000 to 150,000 (“Zeki Müren’i 150 Bin Kişi İzledi”, 1969). Another important event which attracted the attention of the spectators as much as Zeki Müren’s concert was the first step on moon by Neil Armstrong and Edwin Alydrin, which was announced to be telecasted on 19 July 1969 at 21.00: people had filled coffeehouses, hotels and patisseries as well as shop windows (Serim, 2007, p. 58).⁹

On April 1968, newspapers began to instruct people about television. First of all, its pronunciation would be “ti-vi,” as did all parts of the world. Developments on iconoscope were told to inform about what a TV was, and telecasting in England and USA in the late 1920-s, 1930s, and its common use in Europe after the World War II were presented. Finally, the daily program on İTÜ TV was given in the column.¹⁰ It was also announced that TRT was asking some supervision from some chairs, but disappointed, they decided to run the İstanbul TV by their own radio staff, with the equipment sent by the Japan firm. People were informed about the fact that the municipal permit demanded for Çamlıca transmitter station was delayed. Also, the fund for 1968 year budget was 1 million liras. In addition, while Ankara begun its shows, personnel has still not been approved (“TV Yayını Radyonun İmkanlarıyla Yapılacak”, 1968).

The vital character of communication technology was accentuated by Prof. İsmet Giritli, from İstanbul University, by asserting that people were living the age of electronics, and Turkey was not an exception to that fact. After a brief summary from Marconi and Edison

⁹ However, we do not see in Cumhuriyet a word about the telecasting of the first step on moon, while the newspaper focuses on the issue for about one month.

¹⁰ The program was as following: 14.00 Uç Maymun Kabare Tiyatrosu (Aç Koynunu Ben Geldim), 15.00 Televizyonda Almanca, 16.00 Fatih Kız Koleji Folklor Grubu, 16.30 Bir Dokümenter Film, 16.40 Pendik Tiyatrosu (Bir Küçük Komedi), 17.15 Azeri Topluluğundan Danslar ve Şarkılar, 17.30 Çocuk Saati- Yüksel Sökmen, 17.50 Meteoroloji Sohbeti- Ali Esin, 18.05 Tarihten Bir Sayfa- Semih Tonsir, 18.15 Haftanın Olayları, 18.30 Büyük Geçit, 19.00 Tele-Spor- Halit Kıvanç, 19.15 Büyük Geçit 2- Şevket Yücedağ, Fatih Pasiner, Erkan Yolaç, 20.30 Kapanış. (Cumhuriyet, April 4, 1968).

to TRT, he praised the initial steps of Turkish television and quoting from Daniel Bell, wrote that the immediate future of a couple of decades would be marked by a post-industrial age (Giritli, 1968a).

Yet, the situation was not as promising as Giritli described. On 10 April 1968, two columns were announcing with big-size font's title that uninterrupted telecasting would begin on May. The subtitle of these columns was "TV and Cinema: Hostility or Partnership?" written by Atilla Dorsay. He informed that a female programmer from TRT was sent to İstanbul to the Sinematek Association (*Sinematek Derneği*) for providing movies for TV. She had faced some unexpected difficulties in her contacts. TV broadcasting was evaluated and put to the second five- year plan to introduce massive broadcasting, and this hastiness indeed put the problem of forming a feasible schedule out. Dorsay underlined that BBC from England in addition to the German experts realized and facilitated the education of necessary technical personnel, yet, these people were inexperienced, and forced to move in a higher speed than they expected. Another difficulty was that their broadcasting had to be live, since the recording apparatus AMPEX had just arrived, at the installing process (Dorsay, 1968). Only near the end of the year 1969 that Ankara TV had begun to focus on artistic themes: Art movies would begin to be screened by the collaboration of State Film Archive and Turkish Sinematek Association ("Ankara TV'si Sanat Filmleri Gösterisi Düzenliyor", 1969).

Another question was about the relationship of TV and cinema, and the answer of Dorsay was that they were two sectors which were interdependent; hence, inseparable. Therefore, the cinema section of TRT had already begun its activities. But, the patent issue constituted an obstacle: Exported movies had to warn that they were only for movie theater exhibitions. Special agreements were needed for telecasting (Dorsay, 1968).

While Atilla Dorsay was worried about the movies which would be brought by TV, Hıfzı Topuz's concern was about the relationship between advertisement, press and TV. With the TV advertisement income, he said, the income of the written press would sharply fall, which would, in the end, harm especially small newspapers. He exemplified his thesis with the case of the French TV, which harassed newspapers with the share of advertisement revenue that it extracted from them. Topuz puts the final blame of governments, who support TV at any cost (Topuz, 1968).

Prof İsmet Giritli, the TRT Chairman of the Board, answered a question posed to him and said that TV was a reality accepted both by the side of the constitution and the second five-year development plan; hence, should be kept out of discussions. He also complained about the delay of the municipal permit for the Çamlıca transmitter station and the half-

diminishment of the budget for TRT investments (Giritli, 1968b). Next month, with the meetings with the prime-minister Demirel that lasted five days, it was announced that the installation of a TV factory in 1969 was decided (“Gelecek Yıl TV Fabrikası Kurulacak”, 1968).

The debate of the administration of TRT was always at stake. Mahmut Öngören, was confessing that the 39 days’ broadcasting experience of Ankara TRT did actually not have a decisive changing effect in the quotidian life of the Ankara residents. In addition, he said, this three months’ experience did not serve as a medium of information about the possible benefits that Turkey could draw from the use of TV. Even, a local newspaper of Ankara identified this experiment as “goose step.” (Öngören, 1968).¹¹

This column gives also some information about public responses. Öngören himself confirmed that this information was not scientifically gathered, but collected from some other sources but general critics were the following ones: the insufficient number of short movies used in news bulletins as well as children’s shows, repetition of movies and entertainment shows; and hence, low capacity of program type and quality. But, he said, all these criticisms did not necessitate leading to a single reply that TV was useless to the country. Before forming a TV industry, the sole educative purpose could not be pursued, but first, the customers had to be entertained and attracted. And this audience was at the moment the highest class, who indeed demanded to be entertained (Öngören, 1968).

Yet, emphasizing that only 8 of the 106 shows were entertainment programs, he insisted that the administration did not give decisions based on this audience. Also, the 59 movies that could hardly be maintained were not chosen to satisfy the demands of the owners of TV receivers, nor those who were watching TV through the shop windows at Atatürk Boulevard. That was an only experimental period. TRT Ankara would continue his works in similar way (Öngören, 1968).

He also gave information on the potential audiences. According to a public opinion survey carried out by the juniors of SBF College of Press and Information (*Basın- Yayın Yüksek Okulu*) under the supervision of Prof Nermin Abadan in Ankara, the owners of a TV-receiver were 1 % of the capital’s population. Those who were about to buy one was 10 %,

¹¹ The broadcasting news would be repeated continuously. On December 1968, readers of Milliyet were informed that the devices would be presented to the country within fifteen days, and İstanbul TV would be active on September or November of the next year (Milliyet, December 27, 1968). On March 1969, similar news was given this time for İzmir with the initiatives of İzmir Mayor (“İzmir iki Aya Kadar Televizyona Kavuşacak”, 1969). Yet, the next month, it was announced that the German government demanded that the requests about TV had to be done by the side of the Turkish government, hence, İstanbul and İzmir TV’s would not be able to swing into action for the next year (“Almanlar Televizyon İçin Olumlu Cevap Vermedi”, 1969).

and those willing to buy one in case of a price-decrease was 60 %. Thus, the spread of TV depended on the purchasing capacity of the people, which indeed was perfectly in harmony with the developmentalist soul of the era. He said that only then, Ankara could prepare a realistic and effective time schedule (Öngören, 1968).

By the way, during the year 1969, electronic engineers, who could manage the production of TV were looked for.¹² Also, it was announced that aerials were indispensable devices for TV. Finally, by the mid- 1969, television sets had begun to be counted among the prizes that were offered to the lottery winners as well as refrigerators (Milliyet, June 9, 1969). Also, at the second half of the year 1969, construction firms used TV aerials within their advertisement texts with a picture depicting a city view ornamented with TV aerials (Milliyet, July 1, 1969).¹³ Finally at the month of May 1969, announcements for looking electronic engineers had turned into those addressing this time to the public, affirming that under the supervision of electronic engineers, the firms could pursue the montage of aerials.

The pacification of the youth through news about this new technology via its use for entertainment purposes attracted the reaction of the political, and mainly leftist, youth. A group of young people raided the İTÜ TV by claiming that the people working for that institution were entertaining the capitalists, and this raid resulted in the closing of the TV program which was on air at the moment (“Bazı Gençler Televizyon Bastılar”, 1969). The de-politization process had begun to be turned over at the end of 1969 with the introduction election debates on TV. On October 18, the representatives of JP, RPP and TP (Trust Party-Güven Partisi) came together for an open session to discuss the results of the 1969 elections under the moderation of Abdi İpekçi (“TV’de Seçim Tartışması”, 1969). A similar debate was repeated, still under the moderation of Abdi İpekçi, for secondary political parties (“Küçük Partiler TV’de Seçim Sonuçlarını Tartıştı”, 1969).

Television Broadcasting under the Debates of the Autonomy of TRT

The 1961 Constitution, with its article no. 359, gave autonomy to TRT, but this was not unrequited. Actually, TRT was expected to function responsibly, in favor of people, not profit groups and had to consecrate place to all kinds of thoughts, with their opponents; hence to serve the entire people and keep its impartiality in terms of political authorities (Cankaya, 2003, 60-61). But the political awakening of the period was also reflected in television programming, which produced the reactions of the administrative authorities. The government

¹² *Televizyon imalatını kendi başına idare edebilecek elektronik mühendisi aranyor.*

¹³ *Şehirler televizyon antenleri ile sahiller Özana Kenet Kooperatifi Tesisleri ile donanıyor.*

decided to offer a bill in 19 March 1969 to change the Article no. 359, which meant the abrogation of the autonomy of TRT.

The breaking point of the oppositional broadcasting was the documentary called “*Türkiye’nin Kalbi Ankara*,” (Ankara, the Heart of Turkey) produced by Sergey Yutkevic, in 10 November 1969 (Serim, 2007, pp. 56-57).¹⁴ Therefore, TRT lost its autonomy after the 12 March coup d’état, in 20 September 1971, with the changing of the Article No. 121 of the Constitution in addition to most of its producers, directors and programmers. Another result of this change had been the end of the problem of personnel and the introduction of advertisement on television. As for the problem of impartiality, it was solved by the allocation of separate time for every political party to be represented on television (Mutlu, 1999, 20-21).¹⁵

After a long silence in Cumhuriyet about TV, on early August 1968, it was announced that the formation of İstanbul TV would be delayed due to technical breakdowns (Cumhuriyet, August 8, 1968). Actually, despite the developmentalist economic policy, Turkey was facing hard times in the 1960s, which resulted in higher anarchy. That was also directly related to the rising urbanization.¹⁶ Between 1960 and 1970, urban population rose for 5 million and became 39 % of the total population. The migrants were living mostly in suburbs, engaged in informal activities. The period also witnessed the rise of syndicalism through this high population in urban environment which benefited from the 1961

¹⁴ Despite the investigation against Mahmut Tali Öngören, no element of crime was found (Milliyet, December 10, 1969.) Actually, the censorship was mainly perceived in the Atatürk movies, the telecasting of youth and worker events; and the realities of the War at Vietnam that appeared on the news bulletins of Ankara TV. Ecevit severely criticized this censorship by comparing the mentality of the authorities to that of an ostrich (Cumhuriyet, November 20, 1969.) The same issue came into agenda on September 1970 again, with the 10 October program, where the authorities refused the narration of Kemalist principles, as Mahmut Tali Öngören had requested (Cumhuriyet, September 7, 1970). The end result had been the deposition from his office (Cumhuriyet, October 25, 1970.)

¹⁵ The further debate of autonomy was intermingled with the debate of budget, which created intense disputes. Also, Nihat Erim insisted on the impossibility of an autonomous radio-TV organization. While the legal process continued, the General Musa Ögün became the General Director of TRT in 1971 (Turam, 1994, p. 299.) Actually, during the 10th anniversary of 27 May coup d’état, the television broadcasting had bothered some people. The impartiality of the Article no. 121, it was affirmed by the authorities of TRT, meant a distance to political parties, not to the coup d’état or the reinstatement of the Kemalist reforms. The real problem arose out of the self-visioning of the JP as the successor of the DP (Cumhuriyet, June 2, 1970). About the same issue, İlhan Selçuk said that the 27 May coup d’état had terminated the custom to use media as a weapon of the party in power, and form the real autonomous and impartial media. The real reason for the recent interest, this time in television, lied in its novelty and its individuality: A person could read only a newspaper from his own political milieu, but to watch on television whatever he was presented (Cumhuriyet, June 3, 1970.)

¹⁶ Eric Hobsbawm states that the most important phenomenon of the second half of the twentieth century was the “death of the peasantry.” “Only one peasant stronghold remained in or around the neighborhood of Europe and the Middle East- Turkey,” he says, “where the peasantry declined, but, in the mid-1980s, still remained an absolute majority.” (1994, pp. 289-291.)

Constitution: between 1963 and 1971, the union labor rose from 296,000 to 1, 2 million which meant 30 % of the wage earners (Keyder, 1998, p. 64).

Another reason for the high political activity of the 1960s which reached its zenith in 1968 was the density of university students.¹⁷ In 1967, Tariq Ali explains, there were 6 million university students, in the USA, 2,5 million in Western Europe, and 1,5 million in Japan; who were extremely critical of their parents for being unable to defeat unemployment and preventing the rise of fascism (Ali, 1998, 11). This number was 1,660 in 1927, 63,051 in 1960 and 146,299 in 1968 in Turkey (Lüküslü, 2005, 31). The most important characteristic of the high political activeness of the 1968 was its universality (Bora, 1988, 129). And this universality is maintained through a new communication network formed between mainly university cities in a globalizing age (Toprak, 1998, 154-159).

TV was still subject to discussions since March 1969, with the main authorized people of the field. Mahmut Tali Öngören again, with the title of TRT-TV program director, was discussing about censorship. The Prime Minister Demirel prevented, based on the 17th Article of the TRT Act, the screening of “Bloody Sunday” movie. But, Öngören said, TRT was still on experimental stage, and the audience was at most 100,000. Still, the possible outcomes of its existences created the feeling of horror among people (Öngören, 1969).

That was a matter of auto-censorship. Despite the radio & TV organs, TRT had not determined certain censorship rules. BBC was named for its lack of censorship but like BBC, TRT was also facing the accusations of immorality & communism. But the difference of Turkey was that behind all these accusations, laid the desire to alter the TRT Act. In England, despite the refusal of some programs of BBC was accorded to the Ministry of Poastal Services, this ministry did not use this right, and the decision-making was the matter of the BBC directors (Öngören, 1969).

The situation in France was quite different; since De Gaulle had said that the opposition owned the press and he owned the radio and TV, so the television of France had become a complete tool of the government. That was the reason why in Turkey, the law was in danger of being changed. The advocates of De Gaulle wanted to broadcast in a single dimension. As for Italy, RAI, like TRT, had the monopoly of TV broadcasting, but its immunity was ensured the Italian judicial system. Still, a parliament committee ensured that all the parties benefit from TV equally. Öngören finished his words by accentuating the

¹⁷ Hobsbawm sees the rise of occupations which required secondary and higher education as dramatic as the death of the peasantry, but even more universal (1994, p. 295.)

impartiality of the existing TRT Act and any change would harm the freedom of expression (Öngören, 1969).

The reinforcement of the existing political system based on secularism was used through TV, and the finding place of such kind of reinforcement might be considered as a proof of the political cooperation of written and visual press on the subject of secularism. İsmet İnönü gave a speech within the program “Dark Event- March the 31th- *Karanlık Olay- 31 Mart*,” which ended up with, as it was argued by the staff of Ankara TV, hundreds of celebration phone calls from the spectators (“İnönü, Televizyonda 31 Mart Gericilik Olayını Anlattı”, 1969).

İsmet Giritli, the former director of TRT Board of Directors, while discussing the efforts of the Justice Party (JP) to govern TRT, said that radio and TV were two basic technologies which could bring modernity to Turkish villages. He advised the government that before the elections, instead of dealing with TRT, they had to concentrate of the reforms that people demanded (Giritli, 1969).

The next day, İnönü declared that this new bill, instead of keeping the freedom of TRT, aimed at rendering into an obvious election tool of JP (“İnönü: TRT Kanunu 10 Yıl Geri Götürür”, 1969). At the same day, Hıfzı Topuz also criticized the bill in question by comparing Turkey with France. Two months after May 68, a general strike among the radio and TV workers had endangered the ORTF.¹⁸ Still, even the ORTF, the opposition could find a place within programming. But if the bill would pass from the parliament, TRT would become a simple tool (Topuz, 1969). Turgut Özakman admitted that since the existence of the defects at the existing act, dating 1964, and the need of some amendments, the bill in question did not respond to those defects; by contrast, it was against the constitutional premise of freedom of press, speech and expression based on the article no. 121 (Özakman, 1969).

By contrast, the TRT bill did not occupy a considerable place in Cumhuriyet, as it did in Milliyet. The debate was first presented in a small column at seventh page, with only two sentences (“Bakanlar Kurulu TRT Tasarısını Kabul Etti”, 1969). But one day later, the opinions of Muammer Aksoy and Nuri Esen, the professors of constitutional law, were given in favor of the opponents of the law (“Bilim Adamları TRT Tasarısını Anayasa’ya Aykırı Buluyor”, 1969). Actually, Cumhuriyet mainly showed the debate of TRT from the side of the opposing views in the parliament while Milliyet featured the authorities of TRT. Cumhuriyet considered the bill as one of the most powerful moves, composed of about 20 bills, of the

¹⁸ ORTF: Office de Radiodiffusion et Television Française.

party in power. However, their feasibility did not seem realistic due to the workload they constituted (“Tasarı Yağmuru”, 1969). Teachers also sided against the bill, still pronouncing the radio, not television yet (“Öğretmenler de TRT Tasarısına Karşı Çıktılar”, 1969.) However, Demirel was insisting that the bill be passed from the parliament, and if necessary, they could make some changes (Cumhuriyet, April 9, 1969). As a result, it was accepted on the JP group by claiming that under the influence of political activities in Turkey, the autonomy of TRT had passed beyond impartiality (Cumhuriyet, April 16, 1969). Still, Nihat Erim, the RPP group vice chairman, argued that the temporary commission of JP would certainly be pregnant with difficult consequences (Cumhuriyet, April 18, 1969). While Bülent Ecevit, the Republican People’s Party’s general secretary, demanded the retrieval of the bill, it was in vain (Cumhuriyet, April 19, 1969), the bill was transferred to temporary commission, which resulted the resignation of 28 RPP members from several commissions (Cumhuriyet, April 22, 1969). From then on, critics became even more drastic, such as that of İnönü.¹⁹

Muammer Sun, a member of the Board of Directors of TRT, as well as a composer, underlined that TRT had to be advocate of the constitution, impartial in response to political parties, and maintain its freedom. He also based his words on the article no. 12 of the Constitution about the impartiality of all radio and TV broadcasting: “*Her tür radyo ve televizyon yayınları, tarafsızlık esaslarına göre yapılır.*” (Sun, 1969). About the same issue, Altemur Kılıç was claiming that instead of becoming better in terms of communication technologies, Turkey was still dealing with this “unreasonable” bill. By referring to McLuhan about the coming of the new technological age, he expressed his astonishment that Turkey did not support “the communication revolution” in question, pioneered by the rise of television as a mass medium. The legal basis of communication of Turkey was lying over the Wireless Act, which gave the monopoly of communication technologies to state authority (Kılıç, 1969a). Altemur Kılıç repeated his words about the new era of communication and the late-development of Turkey after the telecasting of Apollo 11 (Kılıç, 1969b). Meanwhile, it was also informed that the authorities of Philips visited antiques theaters at the Aegean shores for being inspired in their workings on radio and TV sound systems (Milliyet, June 2, 1969).

All the leftists and the opportunists, Burhan Felek, who wrote about 30 years in Cumhuriyet, and then who wrote in Milliyet until his death in 1982, said, attacked two

¹⁹ İnönü claimed that the bill would push the country sixty years backward (Cumhuriyet, April 24, 1969.) Demirel’a answer to him had been that they did not have the intention to submit the institution to the service of their own party (Cumhuriyet, April 25, 1969.) Yet, the debates were still concentrated on the possible uses of radio for elections, not the future of the television, while the TRT members writing in Milliyet focused on the ladder. Also in Cumhuriyet, Adnan Öztrak, the director general of TRT, underlined that their primary mission was to keep their impartiality (Cumhuriyet, April 27, 1969.)

debatable developments in Turkey: the introduction of TV and the construction of the bridge. The bridge was already about to be constructed. As for the television, while Ankara was benefiting from broadcasting in more than one day a week, İstanbul had to be satisfied by the one-day-per-week broadcasting of İTÜ despite highest aerials decorating the hills, which mainly served to receive the waves of Bulgarian and Romanian televisions, but they actually had not been successful in this effort due the incapacity of the receivers. So, it was the state's duty to present an experimental station to İstanbul like the one in Ankara, or illuminate people about the impossibility to receive the signals sent from abroad. From his words, we learn that a common curiosity to television broadcasting had begun to rise among the residents of İstanbul finally near the year 1970 (Felek, 1969).

Conclusion

Mark Mazower, while describing its “Dark Continent,” that is, the 20th century Europe, underlined the decades following the World War II were marked by a period of welfare, reinforced by advertisement techniques on new communication technologies, including television, which proliferate a new “way of life.” Welfare had begun at home: refrigerator, washing machine, television and other furniture were the proof of this new way of life (Mazower, 2010, p. 313). This was not different in Turkey, either. Commodification of communication technologies that resulted in a desired consumption level for the developmentalist economic aspirations of political authorities in addition to the rising desire of common people to have access to the welfare level of the upper classes were entangled with the desire to moderate the harsh political atmosphere and appease the concerns of the members of the existing communication technologies, especially the printed press and the radio. Thus, when we take a rapid glance at the moment of the appearance of television as mass medium in Turkey from the side of the printed press, what we encounter is a general abstention.

This article focused on the period of tentative broadcasting of television in Turkey, between the years 1968-1970, through two newspapers, Cumhuriyet and Milliyet. It argued that the introduction of this new mass medium was in total harmony with the effort to pacify a gradually politicizing country, to commercialize a gradually developing country and to support a gradually modernizing country. It first focused as the intermediary efforts to find a totally new medium of communication. Second, it dealt with the problematic issues in the context of developmentalism. Third, it problematized the pacification of the youth within an atmosphere of movements through a constructed entertainment and cultural television

programming. Finally the article focused on the most vivid debate about television, that of autonomy, which unframed the structure of the post-1970 television in Turkey under TRT.

As a consequence, it can be argued that the introduction of television broadcasting was presented through the printed press first as a tool of public services, as in the case of controlling the traffic (public transport) or of dealing with children and university students (public education), which constituted enormous problems in the new urban life. However, the realities of the country, especially in terms of infrastructure, did not coincide with the desired beneficial outcomes of this new technology. In addition, it may be thought that the staff of the printed press approached with a tendency to underestimate television because of conflicting interest. Since the initial plan to present the television technology as a “public servant” offered by the political authorities did not succeed, its future potential to serve for the public began to be accentuated, which also served to create alternative social agendas at a critical time in which worldwide youth movements affected the minds of the Turkish youth. Instead, through the public-imaging activities of the printed press, more peaceful gathering occasions such as concerts or contests were offered by creating an enthusiastic atmosphere for consuming. Meanwhile, all political orientations revolving around television were directed towards the autonomy of the state television. So, all political discussions had been transferred to a more pacified level.

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