CHAPTER 109

FROM MONOPOLY TO OLIGOPOLY AN UPDATE ABOUT THE "MONOPOLIZATION" DISCUSSIONS IN THE TURKISH MEDIA

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Monopolization

Monopolization means the increase in the number of large enterprises that show presence in the market; reduction in the number of small enterprises, total elimination thereof, or economic dependence of them to large enterprises even if they maintain their presence. Monopolization also involves mergers, transfer or joint ventures. Monopolization can be described as concentration of the economic control in the market around the big actors and paving the way to structural changes to the extent that small players are eliminated from the market day by day (Buyukbakkal, 2010).

Monopolization may occur through merger, transfer or joint venture. In monopolization, control of a company passes to another person regardless of the selected method. Acquisition of minority shares that do not have any effect on the decision-making processes of a company or acquisition of shares by another company within the same group does not create monopolization. Monopolization can be considered as taking over of the control by a company shareholder through acquisition of other shareholder's shares or entering into joint control (Coban, 2006). If such change is about entering into control and ownership of multiple capital owners, it would not be wrong to talk about oligopolization.

In the literature of economic, monopolization and oligopolization (concentration) are used to refer to a close and even identical meaning. Monopolization of a market means that companies in that market establish dominance or increase the extent of their dominance through certain agreements. In this case, it would not be wrong to talk about an oligopolistic structure acting like a monopoly. Monopolization can emerge in a certain phase of oligopolization and integration of capital that means capital concentration or amalgamation of small capitals in a big pot of capital which means achievement of higher levels of capital accumulation within a company or group of companies (Avsar, 2004).

Innovations driven with technology, changes about information and communication and comparable products and services put in the saturated markets are the most important factors in the growth process of companies. These factors started guiding companies towards mergers, acquisitions or joint ventures. Monopolization is classified in three groups as horizontal, vertical or cross-monopolization depending on the market of enterprises, their share in the market and position in the supply chain.

In general, monopolization appears for four main reasons. These main reasons can be described as follows (Sezgin, 2010).

Natural Monopoly: Monopolies that arise automatically when other companies fail in competing with a company that is the sole controller of a raw material. A company that is the sole holder of licence for hoisting underground mines in a region is an example of natural monopoly.

Legal Monopoly: This is the monopoly that arises when right to produce and sell a product is given to a single company in accordance with the law and/or regulations. For example, in Turkey, Iddaa was granted official right to offer betting services in accordance with the law. Therefore, Iddaa is a monopoly for betting services. Legal monopolies are classified in two groups – private monopolies created for products invented by inventors and public monopolies in connection with certain products for which the public sector wants monopoly for various reasons and objectives.

Contractual Monopoly: Contractual monopoly is the monopoly created in practice by multiple organizations with dominance in the market in order to eliminate the competition between them. This type of monopoly is called cartel in Europe and trust or holding in the USA. Legal existence of companies is protected but their economic independence is eliminated in case of this type of monopoly. Effort is displayed to prevent this monopoly in almost all corners of the world.

Active or Psychological Monopolies: One of the reasons driving monopoly is the obligation of making an investment to carry out manufacturing operations that are more efficient and suitable to the size of the market. Other companies may be discouraged when there is a big company in the market, covering a significant domain that requires big capital and accumulated knowledge. Thus, the company itself becomes a monopoly. However, this monopoly is not driven by the company; in contrast, it is driven by the fear of competitors about that company. Therefore, psychological influence of the big company plays a role. Influence of the advertising sector on the formation of this monopoly is too significant to overlook. For example, other companies may hesitate about entering the smart phone market in the presence of Apple and Samsung that are two big actors in the smart phone production market.

Monopolization in the Media

As a technological and social institution, media secured its position in the social structure in the first half of the 19^{th} century. Starting from the second half of 1800s, newspaper became the platform for mass public rather than the elite segment of the society. The approach of giving news to all segments of the society brought about mass journalism and city newspapers became a part of the social life with the influence of industrialization and mechanization. However, the intent of reaching to the crowds created obligation for journalism to adapt to the technology and the requirement of high capital for journalism. In the following years, such requirement for the capital started giving rise to monopoly when the radio and television also joined the game (Tokgoz, 2015).

Monopoly in the media is simply the ownership of media held by one or multiple companies. If media has an exclusive owner, that is called monopolization. However, if the media is owned by multiple parties with the same ideology and behaviours, then it will form oligopoly. The consequences will be the same in both cases. The only difference is the holding of ownership by multiple persons instead of one person. A monopolized behavioural style appears when the oligopolistic media structure owned by multiple persons act within the framework of the same ideology and interests. Monopolization of the media can have relatively different and major effects compared with the monopolization in other markets. Monopolization of the media is a concept that has important and detrimental effects that are too high to shape the economic, political and social life of countries. This power can lead to the express breach of Article 10 under European Convention of Human Rights that regulates freedom of obtaining information (Avsar, 2004).

Monopoly and oligopoly tendency in the media varies based on the development level of each country. Media oligopolies in the developed counties usually appear when media institutions gain power in parallel with the increased profitability in the media sector and decline or acquisition of the small companies due to fierce competition created with the renewal of technologies. On the other hand, in developing counties, economic and technological dependence to foreign countries and failure in increasing the number of readers reduce the power of media organizations, causing elimination of those weak organizations from the market. In other sectors, monopolization usually creates a situation that is against the consumers in the relevant sector and monopolization in the media sector serves against the interests of the entire nation (Odakli, 2010).

Big media companies attract the attention, fear, anger and reactions in the sector. Main source of fears against monopolization of the media is the increasing control of a few companies on the media and potential influence of these companies on the general public, national agenda, democracy and global culture. Rupert Murdoch in the United Kingdom, Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, Televisa and Carlos Slim in Mexico, Globo in Brazil, Clarin in Argentina, Vivendi in France, Bonnier in Sweden, Telefonica in Spain, Disney, Time Warner, Sumner Redstone, Ruper Murdoch, Bill Gates and Google are giant actors of the media sector. These companies are also responsible for the monopolization of the media (Noam, 2016).

In Turkey pursuant to Article 37 of the Law No. 6112 on Establishment of Radio and Televisions and Media Services, some of the duties and powers of the Supreme Council are as follows "*to secure freedom of expression and obtainment of information in the media services; diversity of ideas; competitive environment and pluralism provided that duties and powers of the Competition Board are reserved; take necessary actions to prevent concentration and protect public interests*". Pursuant to the same Law "*new regulations were introduced about the ownership and shareholding ratios within media organization; it is stipulated that total annual commercial communication income of media service providers where a real or legal person holds shares directly or indirectly shall not exceed thirty percent of the total commercial communication income of the sector in order to prevent concentration; a limitation was introduced specifying that a media service provider organization can offer only one radio, one television and one on-demand media service provided that the number of media organizations with territorial broadcasting licence where a real or legal person is a direct or indirect shareholder shall not be more than four*" (RTUK, 2017).

Monopolization of the media has become, in a sense, the information era version of the struggles in the industrial era about controlling the production means. This early conflict caused revolution in some countries and socialization of key industries in other countries. For instance, United Kingdom expropriated the heavy industry sector after the World War II. The underlying idea was to control the privately-owned coal and steel companies' influence on the economy and society. Monopolization efforts and desire in the industrial domain in the pre- and post-war period are observed in the media of the modern world (Noam, 2016).

Reasons for the Emergence of Monopolization in the Media

The start of industrialization in the media sector lies in the background of monopolization of the media. Industrialization in the media, collection, distribution and dissemination of the information increased the urge to monopolization. Monopolization in the media can arise with the political pressure and reasons as well as reasons such as profitability, capital flow, opportunity to open to global market with the impact of technological developments (Dagtas, 2013).

In brief, monopolization in the media emerged with the spreading of the personal-scale varieties of the media product. Subsequently, distribution and commercialization and separation of the media product from the production process appeared as driving forces. Adaptation of the new technologies to the media sector industrialized the media product and massified the media consumption.

In that period, changes in the demand structure became one of the factors that accelerated the monopolization of the media. On the other hand, new technologies and concentration of the capital (oligopoly) are also factors that increased monopolization of the media (Ozer, 2006).

Types of Oligopolization in the Media and the Relevant Methods

Oligopolization in the media sector usually appears as horizontal, vertical and cross monopolization. Accordingly (Demirel, 2013):

- ***Horizontal Integration***: This type of monopoly occurs when companies operating in the media sector take over other companies in the sector in order to increase their shares in the sector. Although horizontal monopolization allows effective utilization of resources, it leads to the sharing of the market dominance by limited number of companies. Horizontal monopolization is the most invisible version of monopolization. Big media companies are products of substantial horizontal monopolization.
- ***Vertical Integration***: It happens when a media organization controls all phases from production to consumption of a media product or owns all actors playing a role in those phases. In addition, ownership or shareholding for the distribution of the media product forms the horizontal monopolization provided that it is related with publishing. Dogan Media Group distributes newspapers under its umbrella via YAYSAT within the same group and this sets an example for the vertical monopolization.
- ***Cross Integration***: It appears when a company in the sector takes over companies carrying our auxiliary operations or makes investment in this field for the same purpose. A newspaper carrying our operations in the magazine publishing or radio stations and television channels operating within the same structure can be shown as examples. Cross monopolization

in the media has positive effects on profitability. Particularly the contents on know-how and shared utilization of the distribution infrastructure bring economic efficiency. For instance, a content generated in an economy magazine based on expertise can be used also in the newspaper, television or radio channel within the same group. This situation is beneficial in terms of effective utilization of resources through monopolization. However, cross-monopolization can cause actors in the media sector to grow further and increase their dominance in the market (Yesil, 2015). Monopolization in the media sector appears in four different forms (Ilgaz, 2001).

Financial Integration: Media organizations may include another media organization within their organizational structure. This may be done for a certain period of time as specified in an agreement and it may also appear as monopolization due to loss of independence over time.

Mergers: In case of merger, small media organizations or media organizations of equal size come together such that the merger mostly causes reduction in the number of decision-makers of the company. Companies from various sectors such as advertising, television and cinema may enter into merger.

Acquisition: Acquisition happens when media organizations facing closure due to substantial losses are acquired by giant media holdings or a media group that also change the media policies. In addition, small-scale media organizations with a promising potential about profitability or increased profitability can also be acquired by big media companies. In this case, media policy is not always changed.

Agreements: Agreements for cooperation about news and editorial works, or advertising agreements are made in the media sector. This method is observed in the form of cooperation and joint price agreement between other actors of the sector in addition to newspapers and magazines within a group.

Adverse Effects of Monopolization and Oligopolization in the Media

Given the position of the media as a major source of power that is also the fourth power in democracies, substantial power held by media organizations in the media sector and strategic domains out of the media bring about numerous concerns. For instance, giant companies operating in strategic sectors other than the media have business relationship with existing government. In case of such a relationship, media bosses use these powers to gain unearned benefits; stay close to the political power or political power provides certain "privileges" to media bosses in order to maintain the power. In any case, both situations are unethical and appear as a threat against the democracy. Therefore, it is obvious that ethical principles will be violated increasingly as the monopolization in the media increases (Block, 2013).

Today, the number of news channels increase in Turkey, but the source and diversity of the news do not increase. The same images and news reports are used in almost all channels. Therefore, oligopolization of the media turned into a major problem. As a result of this oligopolization, media organizations acting as a propaganda instrument of the existing political power give further damages to the democracy that is already fragile. This situation creates unfair competition and economic pressure is applied upon so-called opposition channels. Therefore, media becomes a monopolized domain for one or a few media organizations

(Karlidag & Bulut, 2016).

At present, ownership of media organization became an instrument to take advantage of political relations for the economic activities of the media boss in other sectors, rather than considering it as a profitable commercial activity. Big actors of the sector choose to own a media organization because of the “positive” effects on economic activities in other sectors (even in case of loss), not because of profitability in the media sector. Owning a media organization is an extremely effective method of manipulating the crowds for the purpose of unearned benefits, they continue with the operations at the expense of recording losses. The presence of media bosses having such a mentality provides evidence about the extent of risk created through monopolization (Milutinovic, 2017).

Monopolization of the media becomes more dangerous when there are corrupt relationships between politicians and the media. This situation can damage “right to obtain information” about matters concerning the general public as specified in Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights. For instance, none of the news channels (could) cover the Gezi Occupation that happened in Turkey in 2013, for almost 3 days and CNN Turk broadcasted a penguin documentary instead of providing information to the public, and eventually it became a symbol of the political pressure on the media. In the following period, “pool media” acting in parallel with the wishes of the political power in connection with matters that directly concern the social and political life and “opposition media” suffering under the pressure of the government became examples of the damages created with the suppression of the multivocality in the media (WEB1, 2017).

The oldest and most conventional duty of the media is to observe the public. Therefore, multivocality in the media is prevented and monologism is created in the media for the sole purpose of obtaining unearned business benefits. A shadow is cast upon the impartiality and independence of the media organization due to business activities in the other sector that are carried out by the holding owning that media organization. On the other hand, media organizations are not given the opportunity to criticize the activities of their holding company that are carried in other sectors. News about political relations of holding companies with the politicians and banks can be subject to direct intervention of the media boss (Pustu, 2017).

Conglomeration ion the media leads to an oligopolization that displays behaviours of a monopoly over time. Therefore, conglomeration in the media and resultant monopolization create various problems. The following are the adverse effects of monopolization in the media (Bulunmaz, 2011):

- Monopolization in the media destroys differences in ideas. Ownership of mass communication means by one party has detrimental effects on the freedom of expression and thought. This situation can also lead to reduction in the number of media workers and creation of monotony in the media.
- As multivocality is not permitted in a monopolized media, this creates an “actual” and “tabloidized” media that keep its head down.
- Media tabloidized with the monopolization can lead to cultural degeneration.
- Monopolizations in the media are against unionism.
- Owners of the media monopolies make all kinds of concessions and supress their own employees in order to obtain benefits from the political power.

- Small and medium-scale media organizations are destroyed, and big media organizations become the dominant power.
- Media in our country was previously an instrument for putting pressure on the political powers but today, they act as a key for not criticizing the political power.
- Media monopolies are dependent on external parties due to their economic interests in various sectors.

Monopolization in the media has adverse effects on democracy as is the case in various other fields. Former President Ahmet Necdet Sezer mentioned about such adverse effects of monopolization during the speech he delivered for the opening ceremony of the 22nd Period Second Legislative Session of TBMM (Ilkiz, 2003):

Independent and free media is one of the essential elements of democracy. In democratic societies, function of the media is to make disclosures about events and matters that concern the public interests; give news and information; create public opinion through criticism and presenting judgements on values; and enlighten the society. (…) It should be considered that freedom of the media is the most important element that activates the democracy and gives life to it and constitutional rules should be taken into consideration while making the relevant legislative regulations. Freedom of the media should cast protection against the public powers as well as private powers. In this context, the media should attach importance to prevent consolidation of the media in the hand of a certain person or groups. (…) "Monopolized media reaches to a power that may create unfairness in the economic sphere, on the other hand, it may serve towards restriction of the right to obtain information and utilization of the media power for unfair advantages. Using the power of media for malicious intents shall not only damage the public interests and public order and it will have adverse effects on the democracy. (…) "Measures aimed at protecting the pluralism of the media should be taken to maintain independent and impartial media. It should be kept in mind that as a public service provider, the media getting away from the sense of responsibility due to monopolization; gaining commercial feature that serves to individual interests, empowerment of the media-politics connection; involvement of the media in commercial relations with the State will, beyond any doubt, create grounds for the corruption of the democracy and conflict with the reason of existence of the media. (…) "The media should follow professional principles and ethics, respect personal rights and value, privacy and confidentiality while performing its job. Status of the media employees should be guarantees by the law. Respecting these principles is important and compulsory for the protection of the reputation and reliability of the media."

Monopolization and Oligopolization of Global Media

Following the economic crisises of the 1970's, the decline of the media institutions with weak economic structures and the new investments of the media institutions with strong economic structures due to the technological advances in the 1980's, led to the emergence of giant media groups, particularly after the 1980's. Media giants, as a result of globalization, began to invest in media in different countries and became multinational corporations. By the midst of the 1980's, it was widespread for media giants to gain strength through horizontal / vertical mergers because of their intense competition with each other. (Bagdikian, 2014) This led to an increase in the oligopolization of global media.

While there were about 50 media institutions in the United States that could be considered as powerful in the midst of the 1980's, in the 2000's, this number became as low as 10. In the United States, media giants such as AOL / Time Warner, Disney, General Electric, News Corporation, Viacom, Vivendi, Sony, Bertelsman, AT/T and Liberty Media have been dominating the industry through the purchases of important media institutions. This process has started with the sales of the national broadcaster CBS to Westinghouse, of NBC to General Electric, of ABC to Disney and of CNN to Time-Warner, continued with the purchase of CBS by the cable broadcaster Viacom and reached its peak with the Time Warner – AOL merger. This merger brought together some criticism such as the tabloidization of the news on FOX and CNN. (Tokgöz, 2015)

As seen on Table 1, there are countries 1) with competition authorities monitoring all industries along with specialized bodies that monitor only the competition in media industry 2) with competition authorities that monitor competition in all industries including media or 3) with authorities that only regulate and monitor the competition in media industry. There are also countries where 4) there are no regulatory authorities. Finally, there are also countries 5) with their special conditions and cannot be classified under any of these groups. (Council of Europe, 2009)

In the countries of the first group, certain bodies are authorized in order to prevent the monopolization of media. For example, in Austria, in addition to the Cartel Court, the Federal Competition Authority and the Federal Cartel Prosecutor, which are in charge of preventing the monopolization in all industries, another special body – KommAustria – was established in order to work against the monopolization of media. In Germany, there is the Commission on Concentration in the Media (KEK) along with the Federal Cartel Office. In Czech Republic, while the Office for the Protection of Competition supervises all industries for the protection of competition, the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting is responsible for the prevention of media monopolization. Likewise, in Portugal the Fair Trade Authority is responsible for all the industries, and the Media Regulatory Authority is responsible only for media. In the United Kingdom there are the Competition Laws, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) and the Competition Commission besides Ofcom – the Office of Communications - which is responsible for the regulation of the media ownership. In Turkey, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) is in charge of prevention of media monopolization along with the Turkish Competition Authority.

In the second group countries of Spain, Bulgaria and Croatia, there are no special authorities for the prevention of the monopolization of media. In these countries, this duty is given to the institutions that are responsible for the protection of the competition. However, in Croatia, in addition to the above-mentioned institutions, the Council for the Electronic Media serves as an authority that aims to protect the competition in media rather than preventing the monopolization. In Spain, the Anti-monopoly Service and Anti-Monopoly Court are responsible for the prevention of monopolization in all industries. In Sweden, there is only the Competition Authority.

In Greece, Netherlands and Poland, which are in the third group, there are authorities responsible directly and only for the prevention of media monopolization. In Greece, it is the National Council for Radio and Television (NCRTV) and in Netherlands, this authority is the Media Commissariat. In Poland, the National Broadcasting Council, has recently started to work on issue of the concentration in the media.

In Denmark, the only country in the forth group, there are no authorities that are responsible neither for the protection of the competition nor the prevention of the monopolization.

Finally, the fifth group countries with their special conditions are Lithuania and Belgium. In Lithuania, the Ministry of Culture is working for the prevention of media monopolization. Along with the Ministry, there is also the Radio and Television Commission, which is responsible for providing information to the public. In Belgium, the situation is a bit more complex. Due to the multicultural and multilingual structure of the country, there are different authorities responsible for preventing media monopolization for media institutions that are broadcasting in different languages. For example, National Regulatory Authority (NRA) is responsible for the media institutions that broadcast in Flemish.

Table 1. Authorities Responsible For the Prevention of Media Monopolization Around the World

Austria	Cartel Court, Supreme Cartel Court, Federal Competition Authority, Federal Cartel Prosecutor and for the broadcasting sector the regulatory authority is “KommAustria”
Belgium	The NRA (national regulatory authority) for media in Flanders
Bulgaria	The Commission for the Protection of Competition (CPC)
Croatia	The Croatian Competition Agency (CCA) and the Council for Electronic Media
Cyprus	Cyprus Radio Television Authority (CRTA)
Czech Republic	The Office for the Protection of Competition of the Czech Republic. The Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting. The Office for the Protection of Competition of the Czech Republic is responsible for all industries. The Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting supervises the radio and television sectors.
Denmark	No responsible body
Finland	The Finnish Competition Authority
Germany	Medienbereich (KEK) (German Commission on Concentration in the Media, “KEK”), Bundeskartellamt (Federal Cartel Office).
Greece	The National Council for Radio and Television (NCRTV) is the independent regulatory authority for the issues of radio-television
Lithuania	The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania and the Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania
Netherlands	Media Authority (Media Commissariat)

Poland	There is no specific system to monitor media concentration. However, the National Broadcasting Council of Poland (regulatory authority) has recently published some reports on broadcasting landscape in Poland, which included media concentration issue in broadcasting.
Portugal	The Media Regulatory Authority (ERC – Entidade Reguladora para a Comunicação Social) and the Fair Trade Authority (Autoridade da Concorrência)
Russia	The Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications is a federal executive authority that is responsible for establishing and functioning of mass media and mass communications services.
Spain	Competition authorities (Anti-monopoly Service and Anti-monopoly Court) generally monitor all concentration operations (including media operations) and may act when appointed by a court or at the request of a party against practices that prevent free competition.
Sweden	Swedish Competition Authority
Turkey	Turkish Competition Authority and Radio and Television Supreme Council.
United Kingdom	In the United Kingdom, the media ownership rules are enforced by the media regulator Ofcom. There are also competition laws, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) and the Competition Commission.

Source: (Council of Europe, 2009)

Along with the authorities that work for preventing media monopolization, there are also other agencies and institutions responsible for ensuring media diversity. These bodies are shown on Table 2.

In Austria, KommAustria, OAK and the Press Subsidies Commission are in charge of ensuring media diversity. In Germany it is the pre-condition to contribute to media diversity in order to be granted a broadcasting licence. The Council for Electronic Media controls the content of radio and television programmes both in Bulgaria and Croatia. In Cyprus, it is among the duties of Cyprus Radio Television Authority to ensure diversity in media. The authorities responsible for media diversity in other countries are: NCRTV in Greece, the Media Commissariat in Netherlands, RTÜK in Turkey, The Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications in Russia, ERC in Portugal, SETSI in Spain and The Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting in Czech Republic. In Lithuania, media diversity is protected through the laws.

In Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, there are no authorities responsible for media diversity.

Table 2. Authorities Responsible for Media Diversity around the World (Council of Europe, 2009)

Austria	The regulatory authority "KommAustria", Austrian Circulation Control Board Österreichische Auflagenkontrolle (OAK), Press Subsidies Commission

Belgium	No responsible body
Bulgaria	The CEM (The Council for the Electronic Media) controls the content of the radio and television programmes.
Croatia	The Council for Electronic Media
Cyprus	Cyprus Radio-Television Authority
Czech Republic	The Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting which is responsible for the regulation of radio and television broadcasting in general.
Denmark	No responsible body
Finland	No responsible body
Germany	The “Landesmedienanstalten” (German State Media Authorities) grants broadcasting licences for private broadcasters at local, regional, state or national level only if the private broadcaster contributes to pluralism and diversity. Due to lack of federal competence, the Landesmedienanstalten (German State Media Authorities) at the state level of the “Bundesländer”, do not have any federal authority in Germany.
Greece	The NCRTV is in charge of monitoring media pluralism and diversity in Greece.
Lithuania	There are rules for the assessment of compliance with the principles of providing information to the public defined in Law on Provision of Information to the Public and other laws, submit proposals to state institutions in order to improve their implementation and publish every two years an analytical survey intended to establish the guidelines for the development of a democratic culture in the field of provision of information to the public.
Netherlands	Media Authority (Media Commissariat)
Poland	The National Council shall safeguard freedom of speech in radio and television broadcasting, protect the independence of broadcasters and public interests, as well as ensure the open and pluralistic nature of radio and television broadcasting.
Portugal	ERC is responsible for: Promoting and ensuring cultural pluralism and diversity of expression in media
	- Monitoring media concentration in order to protect media pluralism and diversity
	- Guaranteeing freedom of expression and making it possible to compare different school of thoughts with due regard for the principle of pluralism and the editorial independence of media.
Russia	The Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications.
Spain	In the case of national broadcasters, the authorized body is the SETSI, and in the case of local or regional broadcasters it is each Regional Community.
Sweden	No responsible body
Turkey	Radio and Television Supreme Council
United Kingdom	No responsible body

The criteria for media monopolization has been defined in certain laws or regulatory documents. These criteria is shown on Table 3. (Council of Europe, 2009) For example, in Austria and Germany, for a broadcaster that has a coverage at the state level, to hold shares rising to 25% or more, means the loss of media independence. Also, in Germany, it is forbidden for a broadcaster to own more than 30% of the shares of another media institution. In Austria, parties of the merger are obliged to have independent information sources and provide and maintain independent production of media.

In Croatia, the monopolization occurs if, a broadcaster has the 25% of broadcasts with a state level coverage or a broadcaster of a newspaper has more than 10% of shares of another newspaper with a circulation over 3000 or a broadcaster has the 30% of the shares of the media institutions with a coverage in the same are.

In Finland, mergers and purchases exceeding a certain turnover threshold should get permission from FCA - the competition authority of Finland. If it is not approved by FCA, the merger or purchase cannot take place. In Bulgaria, the position of the parties and their shares in the sector before and after the merger or the purchase is the criteria for media monopolization. Latvia has forbidden the cross concentration completely. However, in almost every country, the issues of transparency, the limit of share proportion, monitoring of accounts, limits on foreign partners, limits on the market players, press distribution, market structure and new entrants are among the main criteria observed in order to prevent monopolization of media.

Table 3. The Rules Against Media Monopolization Around the World

Austria, Germany	If the 25% of the broadcasts with a coverage at the state level are held by one person or company, this means the loss of media independence
Austria	The Austrian Cartel Act (CA), the Cartel Court obliges parties of a merger to maintain and provide independent information sources and independent production of media.
Germany	It is forbidden for a media institution to hold more than 30% of the shares of another media institution.
Croatia	According to the Electronic Media Act, the concentration of media occurs if:
	A broadcaster has the 25% of broadcasts with a state level coverage
	A broadcaster of a newspaper has more than 10% of shares of another newspaper with a circulation over 3000
	A broadcaster has the 30% of the shares of the media institutions with a coverage in the same area
Finland	Concentrations exceeding a certain turnover threshold shall be notified to FCA. FCA's permit is required for the purchase..
Bulgaria	The position of the actors in the media sector before and after the concentration
Czech Republic, Germany, Latvia	The transparency of the ownership structure of each media institution

Latvia	Cross media concentration is forbidden.
Almost all countries	Transparency and diversity based market structure in media sector
	Media ownership regulations are defined as: limits of share proportion, monitoring of accounts, limits on foreign partners, limits on the market players, limitations on press distribution, market structure and new entrants

Finally, the activities performed to support media diversity are shown on Table 4.

Table 4. Criteria to Support Media Diversity Around the World

Austria, Denmark	Increasing the quality and securing the future of the media industry.
Bulgaria	Election campaign periods are the best times for monitoring the principles of equality and objectivity.
	The presence of the organization which takes any request or petition coming from citizens or institutions into consideration and undertakes concrete steps based on its decisions; the right of reply is a fundamental principle and must be given to the affected persons
	The presence of media monitoring agencies provides the analysis of media convergence in addition to their monitoring functions.
Spain	Fulfillment of fundamental human rights (minorities, gender etc.) in the monitoring of media content.
Croatia	The promotion of producing and broadcasting programme contents of media at local and regional level, which are of public interest.
Cyprus	The principle of protecting plurality by preventing monopoly or oligopoly.
Czech Republic	An once a year control in order provide information plurality
Poland	Some actions might be taken to protect local character of local broadcasters.
Austria	Freedom of speech is the main factor.
Lithuania	Freedom of speech is the main factor.
Germany	PSB is responsible for contributing to media pluralism; also a structural approach is implemented in granting licences.
Netherlands	PBS has been given the task of broadcasting news and opinion programmes in a balanced way.

Source: (Council of Europe, 2009).

Media Ownership and Monopolization in Turkey

The history of press goes back to 1830's in Turkey. It can be said that the tendency of media monopolization has been an issue since the beginning due to the lack of a democracy culture. While it is not possible to talk about the presence of media pluralism during the single-party period, it can be claimed that pluralism started be observed with the transition to the multi-party system. Following the economic developments after the Second World War, Hürriyet and Milliyet, which are two important newspapers that are still effective today, began their publishing lives. (Sönmez, 2010).

After 1970, advanced typesetting and printing technologies led to better quality, more speed and use of more color in newspapers which led to an increase in their circulations. Hürriyet and Günaydın acquired substantial incomes. With 1970's, newspapers like Hürriyet, Günaydın, Tercüman and Milliyet began the process of expanding into conglomerates. At the beginning of the 1980's, Asil Nadir, who is a Turkish Cypriot businessman, entered the media sector by purchasing the newspaper Güneş and continued to buy other media institutions agressively. This was the first time that the monopolozation issue was discussed by the public. In 1985, Dinç Bilgin, who at the time owned a local newspaper called as Yeni Asır in İzmir, established the newspaper Sabah. This newspaper was using computer technology and it had a magazine-oriented content. All these developments changed the media landscape (Dursun, 2012).

The efforts of Turgut Özal, who became first the prime minister and then the president of the country with the transition to multi-party system again after the 12 September period, to use the media in the most efficient way led to the rediscovery of power of media, particularly in political communication. As a result, following the 1980's, monopolization was observed in Turkish media industry. Özal was both promoting and controlling media and this position of him was perceived as an opportunity of acquiring wealth and power in an easy and quick way by the bosses of media. As a result, the path leading to oligopolization of media was opened. (Kaya & Çakmur, 2010:44) The first official clue of the monopolistic oligopoly that was intended to be created was heard from Özal during one of his speeches in which he said "Soon, there will be only 2,5 newspapers".

In the 1980's, there has been almost a war between media bosses to share the media market, which triggered the monopolization process even more. Media, especially when it is used as a weapon, was a source of prestige and the bosses began to have some "benefits" in other sectors such as wining tenders, getting loans easily, receiving government promotions. With the 1990's, product diversification became a trend and giant conglomerates, which include banking and other industrial institutions in their bodies in addition to media institutions such as newspapers, books, magazines, radio and television, started to emerge. In the 1990's, following the private television channels, which started their broadcasting lives as "pirate TV's", private radio channels were established and all these developments accelerated the process of media oligopolization. (Özer, 2006).

Today, media institutions are actually divided into two groups as "partisan media – pool media" and "opposing media". Akşam, Yeni Şafak, Star, Yeni Akit, Sabah, ATV, which are owned by shareholders who have direct and organic affiliations with Turkey's current ruling party AKP, and also even TRT and Anadolu Agency are included in the pool media. In addition to that, while they don't have an organic bond with AKP, Ciner, NTV, Doğuş and Demirören groups adopt a pro-AKP journalism and operate as if they are a group. On the other hand, Doğan Group, which resists to become pro-AKP, and Sözcü, Cumhuriyet, Aydınlık, BirGün, which are the anti-AKP, opposing newspapers, constitute the opposing group and this group may behave as a media monopoly in terms of content. The group that is called as the pool media that broadcasts only in favor of the government, is damaging pluralism - the most crucial attribute of democracy – through their pro-government and uniform broadcasting policy. (Saran, 2014)

When looked at the media oligopolization in specific to Turkey, it is seen that the power of media in Turkey is far above than the level that is acceptable in democratic societies. In Turkey, media is considerably effective in both politics and economy. In today's Turkey, where media is no longer a profitable industry, media institutions are under the burden of serious debt. Nevertheless, media bosses don't want to leave the sector and give away the power that comes with the ownership of media to someone else due to their investments and business connections in other sectors. (Sayılgan, 2009)

Again, when reviewed in specific to Turkey, media sector has, so to speak, "been fed", made investments and breakthroughs thanks to the loans and governments promotions, moved to huge facilities from modest buildings and used the state of the art technology. At the same time a ruthless competition environment has thrived. The intensity of the competition led to promotion wars but, in the end, the sector has come to a dead end. As a result, media, with all the loans and promotions received, now appears to be "government dependent". The significant conveniences and opportunities provided by the government are causing result of the government directing and controlling the media. This practice, which effects the broadcasting policies negatively, cripples the most important functions of media which are providing information to the public, fulfilling the role of public watchman and having a critical look at the events and issues (Özkan, 2007).

In Turkey, the structure of media ownership has substantial effects of the content of the news. The owners of media institutions are the owners of huge capitals and "on an arm's length basis" with the current government. Therefore, media is ruled by profit oriented rich directors. This situation of media ownership is negatively effecting and restricting media sector. Editorial independence of media is damaged. Thereby, ombudsmanship, which is the traditional function of media, is becoming impossible to be performed (Pustu, 2017)

Monopolization and oligopolization of media is regulated under the Law on Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises and their Media Services. The Competition Authority is also entitled to take action against distortion of competition according to the Law on the Protection of Competition.

As stated in the media legislation; the same company can only provide one radio, one television and one on demand broadcast service. A real person or a legal entity can directly or indirectly hold shares in a maximum of four media service providers. However, in the event a real person of legal entity holds shares in more than one media service provider, the annual total commercial communication income of media service providers in which a real person or a legal entity is a direct or indirect shareholder cannot exceed 30% of the total commercial communication income of the media sector. However, there is no specific regulation on digital media and printed press. Therefore it is the direct responsibility of the Competition Authority to prevent media concentration (Reporters sans frontiéres, 2016)

In Turkey, high horizontal concentration is observed in print press and online media sectors. The same capitalists own more than one media outlet that are independent from each other. Despite the fact that there are new players who are new in the sector, the online news portals with the most audience shares are mostly the websites of major daily and national newspapers. In the television and radio sector, this ratio is around 44%. However, the share of the biggest 8 companies in media sector is almost the half within all media types.

In Turkey, media service providers who have been granted a broadcasting license are obliged to notify the Supreme Council of the information on the names and surnames of the shareholders, its shareholding structure and the vote proportions after the share transfer within a period of thirty days as of the validation date of such transfer. In addition to that, media service providers are obliged to publish the name of the company, its correspondence address, telephone and email address, its logo, its broadcasting licence and network, the name and contact information of the accountable manager on their websites.

Almost half of the media institutions in Turkey are owned by Doğan, Doğuş, Demirören, Ciner, Albayrak, Turkuvaz and İhlas Groups and Ethem Sancak. The shareholders of Doğan, Doğuş, Albayrak, Demirören and İhlas Groups are mostly family members. The media groups, except for Doğan Group, broadcast in line with the policies of the government and the ruling party.

The audience share of the politically affiliated institutions are higher than the others. Approximately 55% of online news portal audiences, 57% of print media readers and 40% of radio listeners in Turkey are following the news portals, newspapers and magazines owned by those that are politically affiliated. In this point, TRT, whose objectivity has always been questioned since the beginning, is often criticized for being the media of government.

CONCLUSION

Monopolization, in general, is the elimination of the small players in a sector and the accumulation of all power in one company or the sharing of market dominance among a few big companies. The transformation of monopolization to oligopolization, which means the domination of the whole sector by a few companies, has become one of the major problems of today's media industry. As a result of this situation, market conditions are deteriorating to the detriment of the consumers. Consumers, who normally benefit from the competition, loses in oligopolistic markets where there is no competition. This a natural result of oligopolization.

Although monopolization may occur in all sectors and has negative effects for consumers of all markets, it is apparent that the monopolization of media sector presents a danger not only for the consumers but for the whole society. The monopolization of media blocks the criticism by eliminating polyphony and causes the media function as a means of propaganda.

The oligopolization of media damages democracy because it eliminates polyphony. Media oligopolization becomes a means for media bosses to not to lose their investments in other sectors and to be able to win government tenders. This is a natural result of a polluted media-politics relationship and rent expectation.

In Turkey, Turgut Özal's, who came to power after the 1980 coup and became first the prime minister and then the president, awareness of the power of media and his desire to use this power quite often, open the pathway to media oligopolization. During the 1990's, after Özal's period, media monopolies increased their power through various illegal affiliations and monologism began to rule over media. Today, media industry is monopolized by 3-4 big media companies. As if to set an example for the unfavorableness of oligopolistic media, in 2013, the same headline (We lay our lives for democratic demands! – Demokratik taleplere can feda!) was used by 7 different newspapers. In short, oligopolization of media, along with creating similar contents, eliminates the polyphony in media and presents a very serious threat for democracy.

Today, especially in Europe, several institutions and agencies are working in order to prevent media monopolization and promote media diversity. In Turkey, there are some practices against the monopolization of media like the presence of RTÜK and limits of share proportions. However, in Turkey, most media institutions follow the same monotonic approach through the group called as the "pool media" and the opposing media institutions are suppressed. This does even more harm to the already weak concept of democracy in the country. Therefore, serious measures should be taken against the monopolization and oligopolization of media as it is done in the other countries around the world. In order to prevent the domination of media by a few companies, especially the regulations of the northern countries against this situation should be observed and, taking them as examples, new regulations and laws should be made that are specific to Turkish media industry. The continuation of current media system, will not only destroy the prestige of Turkish media industry in the world, but also will lead to damages in various subjects from the freedom of speech to media employment. It will be another important measure of prevention to establish a Ministry of Media in T.B.M.M. in order to work especially on the supervision and monitoring of media.

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