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**The Mediation of Cultural Identities:**  
Changing Practices and Policies in Contemporary Turkey

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**City University London**  
Department of Sociology

**June 2008**

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## **Declaration**

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## **Abstract**

The growing complexity of European societies continues to raise questions in a number of policy areas of how to accommodate ethnic and linguistic diversity. In the realm of media, current research indicates that the implementation of new practices and policies in culturally diverse societies are implicated in questions of rights and citizenship – features of ‘national’ identity that are themselves increasingly being challenged and shaped by global and transnational processes.

This study investigates these issues in the context of Turkey. It focuses on the ways in which Turkey’s regime for mediating cultural identities has been transformed since its acceptance as a candidate state to the European Union in 1999. Between 2001 and 2004, as part of its ‘Harmonisation’ with the political requirements of EU membership, Turkey underwent a significant and comprehensive series of democratisation reforms, and officially entered membership negotiations in October 2005.

In terms of media, the introduction of broadcasting in languages other than Turkish has been one of the more radical reforms. This is because, despite the existence of a traditional media regime catering for officially recognised non-Muslim minorities, the recognition of cultural rights in the media for other ethnically or linguistically different groups, such as the Kurds, has been amongst the most disputed topics in contemporary Turkey.

Therefore, this research reviews the origins of the ‘old’ minority media regime for non-Muslim communities, and explores the external and internal dynamics that have transformed media policy and practice during the Europeanisation period. The main finding of the research is that the mediation of cultural identities has indeed been democratised over the last decade, with the Europeanisation process acting as a significant leverage for change. However, this thesis also reveals how Turkey’s national framework has acted selectively in its compliance and resistance to transnational challenges, especially when they have encroached on the core sensitivities in Turkish political culture.

## List of Abbreviations

<b>ABGS</b>	Secretariat General of European Union Affairs
<b>AKP</b>	Justice and Development Party
<b>ANAP</b>	Motherland Party
<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>CHP</b>	Republican People Party
<b>CoE</b>	Council of Europe
<b>DSP</b>	Democratic Left Party
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>ITU</b>	International Telecommunications Union
<b>MGK</b>	National Security Council
<b>MHP</b>	Nationalistic Movement Party
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>PKK</b>	Kurdistan Worker's Party
<b>RTÜK</b>	Supreme Council of Radio and Television
<b>TBMM</b>	Turkish Grand National Assembly
<b>TRT</b>	Turkish Radio and Television
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>WB</b>	World Bank

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### **What is this study about?**

This study is concerned with the ways in which relationships between media and cultural identities correspond to changing notions of rights and citizenship, notions that are increasingly being shaped by global processes beyond the reach of the traditional arbiter of national identity – the nation state.

Focusing on the period of Europeanisation reforms that followed Turkey's candidacy to the European Union in 1999, this thesis traces the changes in the mediation of cultural identities in Turkey. In doing so, the aim is to unpack the complex of local and global processes acting upon the 'particularistic' media that cater for non-Muslim minorities and other groups such as the Kurds, whose mother tongue might be different than Turkish.

The small, non-Muslim communities – primarily Armenians, Rum (Greek) and Jews – constitute the officially recognised minority groups. Yet, despite being the second largest ethnic group in Turkey<sup>1</sup>, the question of minority rights and protection for Kurds remains contentious<sup>2</sup>. However, on the international stage, the situation of the Kurds in Turkey is frequently cited as an example of the need for international human rights instruments and conventions that deal with minority rights and protection (Oran, 2007; O'Neil, 2007, Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997).

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Andrews (1989) has enumerated 47 distinct ethnic groups in Turkey. The Kurdish population is estimated to be around 11 million, comprising 15% of the total population in Turkey. Non-Muslim minorities make up 0.1 % of the overall population (Milliyet, 22 March 2007).

<sup>2</sup> As Yıldız (2005) explains, some Kurds do not accept being regarded as a minority because they believe that they are one of the 'constituent elements' of Turkey. The authorities also do not recognize Kurds as minorities because official minorities are classified as such on the basis of their religion. Furthermore, whilst some Kurds are integrated within the political system, some perceive themselves as a 'politicised ethnic group' (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997:24). According to Kaya and Tarhanlı (2005), Kurds can be sociologically defined as a minority.

In terms of citizenship, all these communities are defined as ‘Turkish’, but, until recently, they have had different rights in terms of their access to education and media in their own particular languages. Non-Muslims’ entitlements to cultural rights have been a part of the international legal framework for minority protection since the 1920s, enabling them to keep and develop their long tradition of minority media. However, because the official recognition of a separate Kurdish identity has been such a controversial issue, expressions of Kurdish cultural identity in media have been deliberately limited and constrained. The ban on the Kurdish language was lifted in 1991, but its use in broadcasting was only allowed in 2002 during the Europeanisation reform period. Previously unthinkable, in 2004 this ‘multicultural’ policy measure resulted in the launch of daily broadcasts in what has been officially stipulated as ‘different languages and dialects used by Turkish citizens in their daily life’ on the public service broadcaster – Turkish Radio and Television (TRT). Kurdish broadcasts on local commercial television and radio stations became possible in the summer of 2006 in two cities in South-eastern Turkey.

In the post-1999 period in Turkey, a marked expansion of citizenship rights and recognition of diversity has been observed. As scholars have argued, during this period, the premises upon which Turkish cultural identity are based have fundamentally changed from previous 20<sup>th</sup> century conceptualisations (Kasaba and Bozdoğan, 2000). The Europeanisation process has exerted a transformative influence in shifting Turkish modernisation from an ‘authoritarian’ and ‘*dirigiste*’ (Sofos, 2001), ‘state-led’ modern project based on cultural and national unity (Keyder, 1997), into a more ‘multicultural’ enterprise (Keyman, 2004).

The Europeanisation reforms<sup>3</sup> were introduced by the Turkish authorities between 2001 and 2004; codified in one constitutional amendment and eight separate ‘harmonisation packages’. These reforms ushered in a period of intense legal and political change in order to bring Turkey’s legislative framework into line with EU’s Copenhagen political criteria. Constituting the ‘minimal political principals’

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix for a chronology of key events in this period.

underpinning the EU's Eastern European enlargement (Beck and Grande, 2007), these criteria, among others, require every member and candidate state to uphold the rule of democracy, respect for minority cultures and human rights (European Council, 1993).

The reform period in Turkey has been crucial for its compliance with the Copenhagen criteria and has created an atmosphere in which the official understandings of cultural and national identity have been revisited and debated. It has also opened Pandora's box for many taboo subjects. It has revealed the tensions and discrepancies between the national and European perspectives on issues of cultural and human rights and the protection of minorities, and has crystallised some of the basic contradictions in the state's strategies for dealing with diversity.

Consequently, this period, when most of the recent comprehensive democratisation reforms took place, threw into sharp relief some of the fundamental dilemmas that face Turkey with regard to national citizenship and the sociological acceptance of cultural and ethnic diversity within the national culture. One of the most visible controversies in this regard has been the introduction of broadcasting in different languages because, in the eyes of the EU, granting cultural rights to the Kurdish population would offer an opportunity to resolve the Kurdish problem (EU Commission, 1998; 1999). Hence, the introduction and implementation of new practices in this realm has exemplified a central contemporary dilemma facing the nation-state, which is its capacity to exercise sovereignty over national culture and citizenship in the face of global challenges.

This study aims to explore and unpack these dynamics by taking the changes within the media as a point of departure. This is because 'mediated communication must be understood as both producer and product of hierarchy, and as such fundamentally implicated in the exercise of, and resistance to, power in modern societies' (Silverstone, 2005: 190-191).

Therefore, this study considers the changes within the mediation of cultural identities<sup>4</sup> as a fruitful starting point for thinking about issues of inclusion and exclusion in the national culture, rights, democracy, and citizenship in the Turkish context<sup>5</sup>.

Citizenship has been broadly defined as a legal status in terms of the rights and obligations members of a polity upheld in the context of the nation state (Turner, 1993). However, certain dynamics since the end of the Second World War have broadened its scope to include economic, social and cultural arenas, and have ultimately had implications for exclusion, inclusion, belonging as well as democracy in a given social and political setting. Due to global forces that have challenged the single authority of the nation state on citizenship and democracy, the development of supranational bodies such as the EU, and the ascendance of international human rights instruments, citizenship is increasingly being conceived as a ‘transnational matter’ (Isin and Turner, 2002). In fact, these transnational challenges to the state’s privileged position have allowed citizens to look outside its borders for their rights, and into the internationally defined human rights instruments, which, as Turner (1993: 178) has explained, could ‘counteract [the state’s] repressive capacity’.

Media are implicated in the exercise and formation of citizenship in a number of ways. As Murdock (1992: 21) has explained, firstly, citizens must have access to information, advice and analysis in order to exercise full citizenship rights. Secondly, they not only must have access to the broadest possible range of information, but they also must be able to use the communications infrastructure to disseminate their viewpoints. Thirdly, they must be able to recognize themselves and their aspirations within media representations and they also must be able to develop and extend them. As similar functions have been expected of the media in terms of its contribution to

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<sup>4</sup> Hall (1990:223-225) considers two different ways of conceptualising cultural identity. The first is about a shared culture, history and ‘unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning’. The other refers to the changes, disruptions and differences that occur due to historical dynamics. The latter in this sense is both a matter of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’.

<sup>5</sup> For an analysis of the relationship between practices of mediation and democracy see Barnett (2003).

democracy (Randall, 1998), the democratisation of communication is deemed to be inherently linked to the general democratic environment and democratisation of society itself (Splichal, 1993).

Although the definitions of democracy and democratisation are contested because they refer to 'open ended' and 'long term' processes of social construction that can be applicable in different ways in different contexts (Whitehead, 2002), it is still possible to identify some main principals that pertain particularly to liberal democracies like Turkey (Potter, 1997). These are the existence of fair and free elections, as a result of which the elected representatives and their decisions are made accountable to the electorate. In order to maintain the relationship between the voters and the elected representatives, media assume a central role in the institutionalisation of democracy for the general population (Gunther and Mughan, 2000; Barnett, 2003).

If the general media is implicated in the formation of a universal national identity and culture, it can be argued that minority media practices represent a disruption or an interruption to this process because they reflect particularistic interests and audiences and usually a language that is separate to the mainstream or national one. However, minority media are also sources of self-esteem and self-affirmation for a community (Horboken, 2004), as well as an active citizenship process (Rodriguez, 2001) for minorities, and they are implicated in participatory democracy (Deuze, 2006).

In fact establishing media as a sphere within which all cultural identities are represented, the 'right to communicate' emerges as a significant aspect of democratisation (White, 1995; Splichal, 1993). This is because it not only incorporates 'traditional freedoms', such as freedom of thought and expression, but also involves the 'right to participate in the management of the mass media and communication organizations' (Splichal, 1993: 11). In this respect, 'democratisation suggests that communication systems should be reorganised to permit all sectors of a population to contribute to the pool of information that provides the basis for local

and national decision-making and the basis for the allocation of resources in society' (White, 1995: 96).

In Turkey, the acknowledgment of cultural identities and expressions of cultural diversity in the media have become more assertive and more visible since the mid-1980s (Çatalbaş, 2000). But a more significant 'opening' occurred after the mid-1990s in terms of the acceptance of cultural plurality, which can be construed as a 'normalisation' and 'relaxation' of the way issues of cultural and ethnic identities were manifested, debated and mediated. The beginning of broadcasting in Kurdish has been the clearest signifier of these transformations, which had already been slowly taking place within the neglected and small non-Muslim media prior to the Europeanisation reform period.

In this light, the main research questions that inform this thesis can be summarised as follows:

-How and why has the mediation of cultural identities changed in the Turkish media setting? In which ways have these changes been reflected in the practices of the general and particularistic media?

-Which social, political or cultural factors prompt change and transformation, if any, in the mediation of cultural identities in these media? In which ways do they shape, limit or help to enhance the ways in which cultural identities are mediated? To what extent do these factors stem from internal or external dynamics or challenges?

-What are the implications of the transformation within the mediation of cultural identities for the democracy and citizenship regime in Turkey? For instance, to what extent does the transformation within particularistic media practices indicate or offer a potential for wider recognition and acknowledgment of cultural diversity in the public realm or more inclusive and democratic citizenship?

One way of looking at the relationship between media, democracy and citizenship is maintaining plurality or ‘demonopolisation’ of the media sources and outlets, which is most relevant to minority or underprivileged social and cultural groups, especially in culturally diverse societies (Rozumlowicz, 2002). Diversity within the media systems is crucial in terms of their capacity to reflect the different forms of cultural diversity in a given society. At times, media systems in culturally diverse societies are expected to perform contradictory roles. On the one hand, the media systems are expected to express and maintain ‘national cultural identity’, while, on the other hand, expressing and maintaining ‘sub-national and cultural identities based on religion, language or other attributes’ (McQuail, 2001: 74). This has especially been the role attributed to public service media in Europe but, as Murdock (1992) has suggested, there has existed a problem of ‘representation’. This is because these systems failed to capture and represent the societal complexity, leading to questions regarding the inclusion and exclusion of different cultural identities within the symbolic and cultural space created by the national media. This is also pivotal for understanding the emergence and transformation of particularistic media practices.

In the European context, the different ways in which cultural diversity are configured in the national setting have led to different formations of particularistic media. The first examples pertain to the emergence of sub-national movements in Europe that challenged ‘the traditional definitions of national culture’ because of a lack of sufficient representation of cultural identities in the general public media structures (Murdock, 1992: 34). In the British Isles such movements emerged in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. However, as Murdock has explained, this trend influenced all the countries in Europe and compelled them to seek new ways of accommodating diversity to provide a ‘full range of resources for citizenship’. The growing complexity of European societies due to contemporary flows of immigration also made issues of representation and visibility of ethnic minorities within media systems a matter of concern; in turn, this has raised new questions about the function of media diversity within a multicultural Europe (Silverstone and Georgiou, 2005).

In the setting of the Cold War, the capacity to represent different cultural identities and minorities within European media systems has become a fundamental signifier of the level of democracy in a given national setting. This was because, as Turner (2001: 18) has expressed, the cultural aspects of citizenship and democracy were ‘treated in terms of the right of ethnic minorities and their rights to cultural autonomy’. This has been especially significant in relation to historical minorities in Eastern and Central European contexts, and is also highly pertinent to Turkey and its response to the international instruments created for the protection of national minorities.

In fact, the groups under discussion in this thesis remain within a web of complex relationships. Officially, only non-Muslims are considered to be national minorities, and these groups are also a part of wider diasporic cultures, so they are subject to changes and transformations both at the local and the transnational level.

This thesis explores the changes within two different examples of particularistic media systems in the Turkish context. The first one relates to the changes within the old minority regime, i.e. the non-Muslim community newspapers. The latter considers the new developments in broadcasting policy and practice during Turkey’s harmonisation with EU legislation and focuses on the introduction of Kurdish language broadcasts. In this light, one of the central aims of this study is to review and identify the key issues and debates that are relevant to minority/diasporic media and locate the Turkish case in this growing research field. The other key aims that inform this thesis can be summarised as follows: examining the internal and external factors that shaped the development of particularistic media in Turkey, and analysing the impact of Europeanisation on this process; assessing the significance of particularistic media for the minority communities themselves, and for their visibility and recognition in the public realm in general; and investigating the implications of changing particularistic media practices for a more democratic and inclusive understanding of Turkish citizenship.

In Turkey, expressions of cultural identities in the public realm are highly politicised and tensions over their mediation have been closely related to the prevalent framework of Republican ideology, which is based on principles of ethnic homogeneity, secularism, single identity and single language. These established discourses on citizenship also have a bearing on who is included in the symbolic environment and under which conditions. Therefore, in this thesis, the differences between old and new practices in particularistic media are considered to emanate from wider dilemmas and tensions about the configuration of national identity and citizenship in Turkey.

However, these established notions have been challenged by local and global actors as part of wider democratisation processes affecting Turkey over the last decade, and they have manifested themselves in the transformation of particularistic media. This has especially been the case for the start of broadcasting in Kurdish, which is a positive step towards the normalisation of the controversial Kurdish issue in Turkey. In this process, the prospect of EU accession has acted as a significant form of leverage. For the non-Muslim minority media, the transformation needs to be seen against the backdrop of broader local and international challenges rather than solely in terms of the EU's impact. Hence, this thesis compels the use of a framework that considers the influence of Europeanisation in conjunction with domestic and global forces, and the various responses and negotiations that emerge as a result of their interaction.

The main premise of this thesis is that the transformation of particularistic media reveals increasing efforts to maintain external diversity in the media structure and an improvement in the recognition of cultural diversity in the public domain, and as such indicates further democratisation in Turkey. However, the data that inform this thesis also reveal the continuing strength of the national framework in the mediation of cultural identities. As far as nationally sensitive issues, taboos and historically embedded tensions are concerned, the national framework shapes the boundaries of mediation and, as the following chapters demonstrate, its impact cross cuts both particularistic and mainstream media practices. The resilience of the national

framework in the mediation of cultural identities emerges at both the *symbolic* and *legislative* levels and their dynamic relationship with local, national and transnational currents. The discussion in the following chapters attempts to unpack the complex of these relationships.

### **What is my interest in this study and why is it significant?**

The motivation for this study has been a result of personal observations and academic activities. Since the late 1990s, differences in the mediation of cultural identities in Turkey have offered conflicting visions of cultural diversity and revealed the ambiguity of the ‘multicultural’ situation in Turkey. On the one hand, the mainstream print media was celebrating a growing middle-class urban interest in the multicultural heritage of Ottoman Empire, and displaying nostalgia for the food, music and literature of the declining non-Muslim minority communities. In sharp contrast with this celebration, it remained taboo to debate the causes for the physical and symbolic decline of these communities.

Meanwhile, the presence of the second largest ethnic group in Turkey, the Kurds, in this ‘multicultural’ picture was not still resolved. Although Kurdish music albums were widely played in metropolitan cities, and large rural or urban Kurdish families served as the protagonists of popular dramas, their cultural rights in terms of access to media in their own language remained disputed. This only changed when access to broadcasting in different languages was finally made legal in 2004 as a result of Europeanisation reforms.

Additionally, an international workshop targeting Turkish and Greek media studies students and scholars back in May 2002 bolstered these initial observations and interest for this thesis. The workshop aimed to generate a critical understanding of the role the media has played in relation to resolving long-lasting conflicts, such as the dispute between Greece and Turkey over the situation of respective minorities in

both countries. Turks in Greece and the Rum (Greek)<sup>6</sup> in Turkey had been granted similar cultural rights but they also had been subject to similar pressures, even though Greece is a member of the EU and Turkey is an accession state. The question of the role played by the media motivated me to conduct further research into the issues in relation to minorities and cultural rights in a European context and I eventually focussed my attention on particularistic media practices.

There are a number of issues that make this investigation on Turkey significant. The forces of globalisation and changing geo-politics continue to justify Turkey's appeal as a case study, especially in terms of its relation to different regional dynamics and also wider global concerns over how to accommodate increasing ethnic and cultural diversification within social structures. The place of Turkey in world geo-politics has always been a contested one; it is considered to oscillate between Middle Eastern and European regional categories and is arguably being pushed towards different regionalisms (Featherstone and Kazamias, 2001; Mohammadi-Sreberny, 1998). On the one hand, in the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> era, Turkey's salience as a modern and secular state is increasing and, as Arat (2007) has maintained, such developments make Turkey significant as a 'model' to other Muslim countries. This is because it is considered to be an exceptional case that has been able to establish a secular democratic state and grants its citizens more freedom and rights compared to other examples found in the Middle East.

On the other hand, its prospective membership of the EU continues to have implications for the boundaries of Europe in general, and the EU in particular (Morley and Robins, 1995; Beck and Grande, 2007). Despite the controversies, experts continue to proclaim the benefits of the Europeanisation process in Turkey as a 'leverage for democratisation', which was similarly instrumental for the

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<sup>6</sup> Örs (2006:80) explains the Rum cultural identity as follows: 'In Turkey, they are officially categorised as a non-Muslim minority group called Istanbulu Rum, the Christian Orthodox residents of Istanbul; in Greece, as Constantinopolitan Greeks (Konstantinoupolites/Polites). The multiplicity of names in designating the Rum Polites is indicative of the difficulties in their categorisation, or the inaptness of conventional categories to characterise this community.'

Southern European countries such as Greece, Spain and Portugal during their accession to the EU (LSE Public debate, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2007).

Europeanisation as a term has recently become a new conceptual tool to broadly refer to European integration, focusing mainly on issues of policy making in the European context (Delanty and Rumford, 2005). In general, it refers to ‘the emergence and development at the European level of distinct structures of governance on the domestic structures of the member states’ (Cowles, Caporaso and Risse, 2001: 1). A comparative analysis of the impact of Europeanisation in the South-Eastern European countries indicates that on the ‘periphery’ of Europe, the process is related to ‘modernisation’, which has been conceptualised since the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the process of adapting to Western norms (Featherstone and Kazamias, 2001: 4). In Turkey, modernisation was similarly equated with Westernisation, i.e. ‘taking a place in the civilisation of Europe’ or to be a part of Western European modernity (Keyder, 1997: 37). As Joseph (2006: 2) maintains, in Turkey ‘today the challenge of Westernisation is taking the form of Europeanisation’.

Recent studies focusing on Turkey’s Europeanisation process continue to see it as a political process of ‘macro-political transformation’ and ‘democratisation’ (Thomas Diez et al., 2005: 7). However, this study also explores its challenges and impact in relation to cultural and social processes that, as Delanty and Rumford argue (2005), are ‘missing’ in its current theorisations. This study considers the challenges of the Europeanisation process as a part of Turkey’s responses to transnational and global processes and follows on from views that have considered Europeanisation within the sociology of globalisation (Rumford 2003; Schlesinger, 2001).

In fact, as Featherstone and Kazamias (2001) suggest, due to transnational or global pressures such as the human rights regime and issues around conditions of citizenship, as well as conditions of ethnic minorities or migrants, some forms of Europeanisation are only loosely connected to the EU itself. This study also takes into account the transnational and global effects that are not directly linked to the EU structure and considers their influence as part of the wider cultural challenges in democratisation.

The second aspect that makes Turkey an interesting case in relation to both Middle East and Europe is the heritage of the Ottoman Empire, which, through the application of its *millet*<sup>7</sup> system introduced the earliest examples of legal practices for the accommodation of diversity and minority protection in Europe (Preece, 1997: 75).

The idea of minority rights in a European context did not emerge until after the Congress of Westphalia (1648), which introduced the notion of territorial sovereignty. Minority rights in this framework were accepted in the international community only in the form of religious rights. In fact, the protection of minorities and its implications for citizenship were not problematised until the end of the Cold war (Preece, 1997; Kastoryano, 2002). But the rising ethnic strife and growing nationalisms in Eastern Europe in the 1990s challenged European governments to re-think and re-evaluate their approach to the accommodation of cultural diversity, a process that also ‘revitalised’ the interest in issues of citizenship (Isin and Wood, 1999; Beiner, 1995; Meehan, 1993).

Turner (1993) noted in this context that problems of contemporary conflicts surrounding nationality and citizenship ‘mirrored’ earlier problems found in the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires. Indeed, these problems in a Turkish context were crystallised in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Empire slowly fragmented along minority nationalist lines and some of these issues became entrenched in the collective memory as ‘sensitive’ and ‘taboo’ subjects about who belongs and who does not belong to the nation. This thesis demonstrates that such historical taboos are still relevant for understanding the controversies and dilemmas of ethnic and cultural diversity in Turkey.

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<sup>7</sup> The term ‘millet’ literally means nation, but does not have the political connotation in the modern sense. It is a legal organisation of religious communities such as Greeks, Armenians and Jews but this distinction was based on religion rather than ethnicity. As Zürcher (1998:59) has explained ‘Christian and Jewish groups were incorporated into the society by giving them a dhimmi (protected) status. In exchange for tax, they were allowed to live within the Muslim state’. The Millet system became the constitutive legislation of the Ottoman state in the 15<sup>th</sup> century after the conquest of Istanbul and millet members were not treated as full Ottoman citizens until the 1850s, after the Tanzimat reforms (Karpas 1982:145-162).

In this light, the third aspect that makes this study significant is its focus on such concerns and problems in a non-Western European context. In Western Europe, post-war immigration is considered to be one of the most significant contemporary phenomena that led to the diversification of established nation states, and which compelled them to introduce new policies broadly termed as ‘multiculturalism’ (Rex, 1996). Immigration complicated the relationship between conventional understandings of national identity, loyalty and sovereignty and the states had to ‘negotiate’ identities in order to ensure that the immigrants could be integrated into the political community (Kastoryano, 2002). It created new debates about the extent of the rights to which they are entitled, debates that continue as a dilemma in the sociological and political theorisation of citizenship practices (Turner, 1993; Soysal, 1996; Isin and Wood, 1999). As previously stated, after 1945, a number of interrelated developments acted as catalysts for broadening of the scope of citizenship. These contemporary challenges to citizenship were identified as ‘migration’, ‘economic globalisation’, ‘cultural denationalisation’ the growing global salience of ‘transnational institutions and human rights’, and were labelled as ‘post-national’ challenges to modern citizenship (Tambini, 2001).

Apart from migration, these challenges also pertain to the Turkish case, which is diverse not as a result of post-war migration, but due to historical presence of national minorities<sup>8</sup>, a condition still prevalent in Eastern Europe. In this sense, Turkey is considered to be an example of ‘weak multiculturalism’, which protects individual rights but also respects group rights for officially recognised minorities (Yumul, 2005)<sup>9</sup>. However, the controversial issue of collective or groups rights in relation to the Kurds in Turkey has been one of the most disputed issues within the Europeanisation reform process (Tocci, 2006). These rights, as the following

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<sup>8</sup> Kymlicka has argued that there is a need to address different patterns of cultural diversity and distinguish ‘national minorities’, which are ‘distinct and potentially self-governing societies’, ‘from ‘ethnic groups’, which are ‘immigrants who have left their national community to enter another society’ (Kymlicka 1995:19).

<sup>9</sup> The term itself is used in Scahar (2000). Yumul utilised the concept in relation to official non-Muslim minorities.

example of broadcasting in different languages reveals, has accentuated post-national or ‘denationalising’ (Sassen, 2002)<sup>10</sup> challenges to the national framework.

According to Price (2002: 36-39), most nation states strive to protect their media systems - or as he put it, the ‘market for loyalties’ - against the forces of globalisation. In his view, the drive to protect the market for loyalties, that is ‘the rules about who can speak, who can shape media structures or what messages course within the society’, was acutely observed in Turkey ‘in the name of national identity’. This relates to the process of ‘cultural denationalisation’ (Tambini, 2001), referring to an accelerating decline in the nation state’s capacity to control the representations of linguistic and cultural differences in the realm of national communications, especially in public service broadcasting. Two interrelated processes can be posited to have contributed to the process of cultural denationalisation. The first is the advance of new technologies and their widespread usage, and the second is regionalism. The use of new technologies has challenged the notion of a national ‘communicative space’ that was limited to the boundaries of the nation state. They have also facilitated new ways and venues of exchanges and identifications and painted a ‘communications landscape’ that was different from previous conceptions (Wang, Servaes and Goonasekera, 2000). Regionalism, as mentioned above, was exemplified in the emergence of sub-national or regional media systems in the UK and elsewhere as a result of historical groups’ attempts to assert claims for a regional identity and cultural autonomy (Spa Moragas, 1995; Cormack, 2007).

According to Soysal (1996: 24-25), these developments led to the recognition and accommodation of cultural and linguistic diversity within nation states, but it also revealed the paradox of the ‘two normative principles of the global system: national

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<sup>10</sup> In Sassen’s (2002) assessment, post-national citizenship pertains to those developments within the ‘components of citizenship’ that are located outside the nation state. Denationalisation, on the other hand, focuses on the transformation of the national. Although they represent different routes, they are considered to be mutually exclusive.

sovereignty and universal human rights’, which will be dealt with in more detail in the following chapters of the thesis.

The fourth and final aspect that makes this study significant is its potential contribution to the research on diasporic and minority media in a European context. In this field two broad major strands of research can be identified. The first one focuses on the examples of aboriginal media in Northern America and Australia, and sub-national or regional media in Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Spain (Riggins, 1992; Cormack, 2007). The second strand looks at the media consumption and production of immigrants, as well as the influence of new technologies in the maintenance and negotiation of cultural identities (Gillespie, 1995; Milikowski, 2000; Dayan, 1998; Aksoy & Robins 2000; Cottle, 2000; Robins, 2003).

It has been suggested that there is a need for more comparative analysis in the European context in this field, which also covers traditional media such as newspapers, radio and the production process, as well as inquiries into new media and the media consumption behaviour of minorities (Sreberny, 2002). In fact, recent studies conducted by the Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Commission’s ‘Euromosaic’ project in the wake of the last major wave of European enlargement (2004), have documented and inventoried the minority media broadcasting practices and legislation in a number of European countries (McGonagle, Noll and Price, 2003; EU Commission, 2006). These inventories offer a succinct documentation of legislation and emerging practices, but remain limited in their scope in terms of providing sociological perspectives in order to understand the motives behind the legislation or the challenges against it. In this light, this study aims to complement these inventories and also contribute to the accumulation of data in the growing literature on ethnic minorities, multiculturalism and media in a European context.

## **The structure of the thesis**

The discussion above has set out the general issues, debates and dilemmas inherent in the mediation of cultural identities. The proceeding chapters unpack these issues in order to analyse their implications for the changes in the mediation of cultural identities in Turkey.

Chapter 2 offers an overview of the literature relevant to the mediation of cultural diversity and cultural identities in Europe, in order to identify the models and debates that relate to our analysis of the Turkish case. The chapter aims to capture the relationship between nation and communicative space and the factors that led to its transformation, especially in relation to challenges posed by post-national forms of membership in national polities.

For the purposes of this thesis, the emphasis is placed upon research that deals with Europeanisation/globalisation, sub-national and regional developments, and ethnic, immigrant and diasporic media. The choice is due to the complexity of Turkish setting. As the following data analysis chapters reveal, the non-Muslim media can be included under ‘ethnic’ or ‘community’ media categories, but these communities are also considered to be a part of classic diasporas. Therefore, in analysing their media we need to consider the diasporic connections that have a bearing on their conditions of existence. The provisions that allowed the use of so called ‘traditionally used languages’ were first introduced on TRT and eventually on local channels. Hence, there is a need to consider them in relation to transformations within the private and public service broadcasting systems at a local and national level<sup>11</sup>.

The chapter frames these transformations against the development and extension of human rights instruments, which have gained significance since the 1990s in terms of protecting minority cultures and the cultural rights of diverse groups in Europe. The review of literature in this chapter reveals that the way in which the media

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<sup>11</sup> In this thesis I use the concepts ‘minority media’ and ‘particularistic media’ interchangeably as analytical categories. A detailed discussion of various terms used in the definition of minority media is introduced in the next chapter.

operates in a given national context is intimately connected to its political culture, citizenship and rights regime. This is especially the case for the development of particularistic media as they accentuate such dilemmas about the strategies of the state in dealing with its diversity and the symbolic place of minorities within the national formation.

Therefore, Chapter 3 considers the basic tenets of Turkish modernisation, the place of minorities and other ethnic groups in its formation, and how the framework for Turkish national identity and its citizenship regime have been configured. It begins with an historical account of the transition from the multicultural Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey in order to explain the differences in citizenship practices. This chapter argues that the recognition of cultural identities and diversity in Turkey had been too costly to be accommodated in the national ethos. Therefore, the factors that pushed towards the transformation of the bases of national membership, especially human rights instruments, were not welcomed straightforwardly, but signs of change began to emerge after the 1980s as a result of local and transnational pressures.

Chapter 4 explores the implications of the above dilemmas for the media in general. It provides the backdrop against which the transformation of particularistic media needs to be contextualised in the chapters that follow. It addresses the special role of the print and broadcast media in Turkey's modernisation, and examines how they have been transformed by the impact of globalisation, de-regulation, conglomeration and new technologies since the 1990s. It also reveals that the official understanding of national identity and citizenship remains hegemonic in the mainstream media and it determines the conditions for the mediation of cultural identities.

In Chapter 5 and 6, the focus shifts from general to particularistic media and considers the similarities and differences between divergent practices in two different case studies. Chapter 5 considers a neglected and under-researched aspect of media studies in Turkey - non-Muslim minority media. It reveals their unique characteristics and situates them within the literature on minority/diasporic media in

the European context. This chapter demonstrates that the historical minority media tradition in Turkey has been much dependent on the national and international political climate, and the contradictions surrounding non-Muslims' sociological acceptance as Turkish citizens, and have been shaped by the conditions that led to their vilification and discrimination in recent history.

However, the chapter also argues that these media have been revitalised by the effects of globalisation and advances in new technologies, and illustrates their double role in the maintenance of cultural identity by facilitating the survival of a diminishing language and by opening up their communities to general public life. In contrast with Kurdish broadcasting, which is covered in the following chapter, this chapter reveals that the transformation of non-Muslim media has not been simply a consequence of EU process in Turkey, but reflects the general influence of the wider factors that have enabled further democratisation in Turkey over the last decade.

In Chapter 6, the processes that led to the introduction and implementation of Kurdish broadcasting are analysed. This analysis clearly lays bare the dilemma between the will of the nation state to control the flow of information and symbols within its borders and the challenges it is facing due to the advent of technologies, changes in human rights regimes, and the pressure for freedom of speech and expression (Price, 2002).

This chapter addresses these dynamics and looks at the new legislative and regulatory measures to permit new practices that were introduced in TRT, as well as in local television and radio, in 2004 and 2006 respectively. The beginning of so-called 'broadcasting in languages that are used by Turkish citizens in their daily life' has been the most visible impact of the Europeanisation reforms in Turkey. This chapter reveals that the beginning of Kurdish broadcasting would not have been possible in the short term without the influence of the Europeanisation process because the public institutions have been reluctant to deliver the necessary changes that were needed for its implementation.

This reluctance has been very clear in the wording of the new legislation allowing the use of Kurdish language in broadcast media, and thereby enhancing cultural rights especially for the Kurds. In effect, the new legislation refers to the use of ‘ethnic languages’ in broadcasting, but this aspect has been downplayed by formulating the process as ‘broadcasts on languages and dialects traditionally used in daily lives’ (Timisi, 2005). The ambiguous wording used in the formulation of the regulatory framework has acutely revealed the dilemmas obstructing the official recognition of ethnic and cultural diversity in the Turkish setting. Furthermore, it has revealed that the issue of granting cultural rights to groups not recognised by the Lausanne regime is treated by Turkish authorities in terms of its risks to national security and unity; and is not informed by the general framework of human rights and a pluralistic understanding of citizenship. In this light, the implementation of new practices has exposed the tensions between national, local and global, and transnational pressures and has highlighted the state’s response to them.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion of this thesis within which the main findings and their implications for further research are discussed in the light of the complex relationship between national, global and transnational dynamics.

## **Methodology**

This is a qualitative research project that adopts a ‘case study’ approach in its design. Case studies have been widely used in social inquiry since the 1920s and received renewed attention in the 1980s in sociology due to the revival of interest in qualitative methods in general (Blaikie, 2000).

The case study is a research strategy rather than a method and focuses on the ‘natural setting’ of the phenomenon in question. It is a form of empirical research within which multiple methods of data collection can be utilised in order to investigate ‘a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context’ (Stark and Torrance, 2005; Robson, 1993; Yin, 2003: 13; Denscomber, 2003). The ‘greatest

strength' of the case study method is considered to be its 'flexibility' (Robson, 1993), which allows the researcher to adapt research to emergent situations.

Indeed, such flexibility has been vital to this project because, when I enrolled as a PhD student in 2003, the process of harmonisation with the EU's Copenhagen criteria was ongoing and the future of broadcasting in different languages was still uncertain. Furthermore, the first initiatives to establish a local Armenian radio station in Istanbul has also been in the planning stage. The changes in legislation for national and local broadcasting in different languages were implemented gradually for TRT from June 2004, and for local broadcasters from 2006. At the time of writing, local Armenian radio has not yet been established. Nonetheless, the case study design has enabled this research to capture new practices, initiatives and developments.

In addition to allowing an in-depth perspective on contemporary phenomenon, one of the 'distinctive' characteristics of the case study is considered to be its ability to 'focus on relationships and processes' (Denscomber, 2003: 31) or the 'contextual conditions' (Yin, 2003: 13) that help illuminate the phenomenon under investigation.

This characteristic of the case study becomes more pertinent if, as Halloran (1998: 19-32) suggests, we consider the media not in isolation from the wider social system but acknowledge the 'relevance of the context' as well as the 'the interactions between the media and other institutions in the society'. Indeed, in this thesis, the case study strategy has been useful for unpacking the complexity of local and global processes acting upon the presence of cultural identities in the media in Turkey.

The process of deciding the case studies in a research project requires the researchers to choose from a number of 'possible' events, people or organizations. (Denscomber, 2003). A case can be selected because it possesses the 'typical' attributes within which the findings can be generalised or because it is an 'extreme

instance' which contradicts the existing norms therefore it is novel or unique (Yin, 2003; Denscomber, 2003: 34)<sup>12</sup>.

In this research, I chose to focus on the 'typical' and 'extreme' – or novel – instances of minority media in Turkey. One of the cases involved the old minority media of non-Muslims because it represented the norm, or typical instance for minority media in Turkey. The other case focussed on the start of broadcasting in different languages, first on TRT and later on local television, which represented, at the time, a contrast with the norm. Therefore it constituted a novel and emergent situation. The focus on these different cases has helped to capture the complexity of the situation surrounding particularistic media in Turkey.

#### ***Constructing the body of data: The use of in-depth interviews and documents***

The data that inform this thesis, or its 'corpus'<sup>13</sup>, have been drawn from a number of in-depth, informal interviews, and formal documents such as reports, newspaper articles and international conventions or treaties, which are among the major sources that provide 'evidence' for case studies (Yin, 2003). These analyses thus make up the overall 'text' of the research (Bauer, Gaskel and Allum 2000).

The collection of formal documents has been conducted largely by utilising online sources and databases. These consisted of selected newspaper articles, international conventions, treaties, and the European Commissions' annual progress reports on Turkey. My research data also incorporates internal documents provided by contacts established in the European Union General Secretariat (ABGS), Supreme Council of Radio and Television High Council for Radio and Television (RTÜK) and the Delegation of the EU Commission in Ankara. Data from these documents have been used in conjunction with interview data in order to 'corroborate and augment the evidence from other sources' so that it can be used for the purposes of 'data

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<sup>12</sup> The case study can also be used for theory testing or theory building.

<sup>13</sup> Corpus or the body of the research not only refers to collection of texts but also any material with 'symbolic' function (Bauer and Aarts, 2000:23).

triangulation’, which is also one of the strengths of the case study approach (Yin 2003, 87 and 99).

Although ‘documents can be treated as data in their own right’, researchers are cautioned not to accept them on ‘face value’ and to ‘evaluate’ them carefully on the basis of their ‘authenticity’, ‘credibility’ or accuracy, ‘representativeness’, and clarity of their ‘meaning’ (Denscomber, 2003: 214). The documents used as part of the data corpus here are therefore retrieved either from official websites or acquired in person from trusted and official sources/respondents.

The formal media texts that are used in this research are selected from mainstream broadsheets such as *Hürriyet*, *Radikal*, *Sabah* and *Milliyet* as well as national and international news portals such as the *BBC* (British Broadcasting Corporation) and *CNNTurk*. However, the majority of texts have been sourced from *Hürriyet* newspaper, which was the biggest selling broadsheet in Turkey at the beginning of this research project and had a circulation of 464,264 according to figures published by the General Secretariat of Press and Information (BYEM, 2003). I was however aware of the potential risk of ‘reporting bias’ (Yin, 2003) that might occur in newspaper data, especially because it belongs to one of the biggest media conglomerates, *Doğan Holding*, and is generally considered to reflect establishment views (Adaklı, 2006: 127).

But I still chose *Hürriyet* as the main source in order to capture the central debates in the public realm because, although the paper reflects the views of the establishment, it also accommodates experienced journalists and experts who offer alternative views in their columns. Furthermore, in order to balance *Hürriyet* and to capture the breadth of public debates and coverage, texts from other newspapers which belong to different media groups and various news portals have also been incorporated into the body of data (see the table in the appendix for the major players in the Turkish media industry).

The total number of news items or articles used in the analysis is 110; including 78 retrieved from a selection of *Hürriyet*’s news archives. The online data collection on

*Hürriyet*'s archives spanned from 1999, when Turkey became a candidate country to the EU, to 2004, when the broadcasting in different languages began on the TRT. The sporadic collection of newspaper texts before and during the fieldwork were streamlined during the online search by using key words such as 'Kurdish broadcasting', 'broadcasting in the mother tongue' and 'broadcasting in different languages'. The online search in the archives generated a total of 464 items that pertained to the introduction of broadcasting in different languages. I initially selected 70 of these articles and included eight more in order to cover the key events between 2004-2008. The remaining 32 news items were retrieved from various newspapers, magazines and online news portals.

The articles are not analysed in a traditional 'content analysis' of media texts<sup>14</sup>. They have been incorporated into the analysis in order to triangulate the data that have been obtained in the interviews and other formal documents. This is because the data gathered from newspapers, magazine articles or clippings are considered to provide a valuable source of information as they offer 'up to date', 'broad' and 'exact' coverage of events. Furthermore, journalists' speciality areas can help to find 'insider' information from newspapers on certain issues (Denscomber, 2003; Yin, 2003: 86).

The collection of informal texts has been achieved through in-depth interviews conducted with key 'opinion makers' and officials connected with media production in Turkey. The interviews have been conducted in various stages starting with pilot work in June-July 2004 in Istanbul, Turkey. The majority of interviews were conducted during the major data collection stage from 4<sup>th</sup> January to 6<sup>th</sup> April 2005 in Istanbul. Gaps and clarifications from interviews were completed during various

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<sup>14</sup> Content analysis is a quantitative method which allows a systematic analysis and 'quantification' of media content but it does not help the researcher to interpret the 'wider social significance of the quantitative indicators (Hansen et al, 1998).

short visits to Ankara in July 2006 and January 2007. Furthermore, speeches and presentations delivered at conferences<sup>15</sup> have also been added to the corpus of data.

As Gaskel (2000: 41) maintains, it is difficult to find ‘one method for selecting respondents for qualitative inquiries’ because the selection of respondents of qualitative research do not conform to the rules that apply in quantitative research. This is because ‘the real purpose of the qualitative research is not counting opinions or people but rather exploring the range of opinions, the different representations of the issue’. A useful approach in gathering possible range of views in non-probability qualitative sampling can be found in what is known as ‘judgemental’ or ‘purposive sampling’, which allows the selection of ‘a variety of types of cases for in-depth investigation’. Another common method is to use ‘theoretical sampling’ within which the researcher continues to add cases ‘until no further insights are obtained’ and there is saturation in the information that is gathered (Blaikie,2000: 205-206)

During my fieldwork I have established contact with 50 respondents and conducted 47 formal interviews. These have included journalists and editors in both mainstream and minority media, community leaders and intellectuals in minority communities, TV producers and editors from both the public service broadcaster (TRT) and the local Kurdish television stations, officials from TRT and the Supreme Council of Radio and Television (RTÜK), and experts from the Delegation of the European Commission in Ankara (see the appendix for list of interviews).

The participants of interviews were mainly chosen via ‘judgemental selection’ because their knowledge about a particular social setting and special interests offered the researcher a broader understanding of the social phenomena in question (Burgess, 1990). But the guidelines of the ‘theoretical sampling’ method has also

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<sup>15</sup> In addition to the international workshop ‘Community Broadcasting Policy in Europe’ at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary (17-18<sup>th</sup> May 2007), I also attended two conferences in Istanbul.: LMV- KEMO Conference - ‘On the way to citizenship in Western Thrace, Istanbul and Aegean’, Istanbul, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2005; and ‘Media in Turkey’ Conference, Marmara University Istanbul, 14-15<sup>th</sup> March 2005. Attending these conferences has also been useful in establishing new contacts and meeting potential informants.

been helpful. In selecting professional journalists I aimed to include those who specialise or have a special interest in minority issues. Secondly, I aimed to reflect the diversity of opinions that exist in the mainstream media. Therefore, in the sample I have tried to include journalists or writers who come from different professional as well as ideological backgrounds. The interviews conducted with professional journalists and column writers have been especially useful in corroborating the discussion in Chapter 4 regarding the transformation of the media structure in Turkey. Given the scarcity of research output in Turkey pertaining to media, minorities and cultural identities, and given the dominance of content analysis as a technique in existing research (see Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion), the in-depth interview technique was selected as a way of eliciting new data and first-hand experience from media professionals.

I have included all the minority media editors/journalists and all the key persons involved in the introduction of broadcasting in different languages (from RTÜK experts to local television editors) in the interviewee list due to their knowledge and expertise in this field. Interviews with editors, TV producers and officials in TRT and RTÜK similarly enabled the retrieval of first-hand experiences of the beginning of Kurdish broadcasting. These interviews informed the discussion in Chapter 5 and 6 in the thesis.

In addition to the interviews conducted with non-Muslim minority journalists, editors, and writers, Chapter 5 has also included interviews with various community members. The interviews conducted with such respondents, although some of them are not included in the actual data analysis chapters, enabled me to have a better grasp of community dynamics and relations. Some of these respondents also acted as key contacts to acquire access to other interviewees.

### ***The process of data collection: issues of access and trust in in-depth interviews***

It has been suggested that researchers encounter two fundamental problems in the field that have ‘no patent recipes’. The first issue pertains to *access*, that is the ways in which ‘researchers succeed in making contact’ and ‘stimulating the informants to cooperate’. The second issue is about the *position* of the researchers in the field, which involves the question of how to ‘secure the factual, temporal and social conditions’ to conduct the research (Wolff, 2004: 196). In feminist approaches to qualitative research, the position of the researcher – or her ‘positionality’ – also involves power relations that are considered to ‘reflect inequality between her and her subjects’ (Wolf, 1996: 10).

During my fieldwork, before each interview, a standard letter introducing myself, my research topic and some of the key research questions was delivered to each participant as part of the ‘field procedures of protocol’ (Yin, 2003: 73), either by e-mail, fax or in person. I initially targeted media professionals and writers, either from mainstream or minority media, who were already visible in the public sphere due to their interest in the issues that pertained to my research. These interviewees, as I had expected, responded swiftly and positively to my letters. Access to the other interviewees was mainly made possible by using the ‘snowball’ technique, through this first group of contacts who also become ‘informants’. They not only took part in interviews, but also provided access to other respondents or provided ‘corroboratory’ or ‘contrary’ evidence (Yin, 2003: 89). Furthermore, my previous work-experience at *İstanbul Bilgi University* has been an enabling factor that has helped me to bypass some of the problems of *gatekeeping* because of its good institutional reputation. However, these two advantages did not eliminate altogether the difficulties that a researcher might encounter during the data collection.

The interview in its conventional form is seen ‘as a pipeline for transporting knowledge’ within which the respondents are seen as ‘vessels of answers’, provided that the researcher asks the correct questions in the correct form. However, the growing ‘sensitivity to representational issues’ have put the premises of this conventional approach under scrutiny (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004: 141)

Consequently, one of the central issues in qualitative methods, has been ‘how interviewees respond to us based on who we are... as well as the social categories to which we belong, such as age, gender, class and race’ (Miller and Glassner, 2004: 126).

The influence of ‘ascribed status’ of the researchers, that is his/her race, gender and ethnicity have led scholars to focus on ‘the insider and outsider dilemmas investigators experience in the research process’. The main premise of the ‘insider/outsider’ debate is that ‘the autobiographies, cultures and historical contexts of researchers matter; these determine what the researchers see and do not see, as well as their ability to analyze data and disseminate knowledge adequately’ (Stanfield, 1998: 34). An intriguing point in this context is made by Burgess (1990: 22) as to ‘whether the field researcher working in their own society experience advantages and disadvantages that are less likely for a researcher working in cultural settings other than their own’.

This debate has also been a pivotal focus within feminist scholarship, especially in relation to qualitative research on women who come from marginalised or disadvantaged backgrounds, who speak different languages, Third World women and women of colour in Western societies. The issue is still fervently debated among scholars as to whether insider or outsider researchers can achieve greater neutrality, objectivity or a balanced view of the ‘life worlds’ that they are investigating (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002; Archibald and Crnkovich, 1995; Miller and Glassner, 2004; Stanfield, 1998; Wolf, 1996).

Although my research does not solely involve minority group participants or women, I have also experienced some of the difficulties that research students working with groups outside their membership encounter (Egharevba, 2001). However, my position as an outsider has been an ambiguous one during the fieldwork. Gaining access and conducting interviews with mainstream media professionals was relatively easy compared to minority interviewees. This might have been due to both the respectability and credibility of my contacts, and due to the fact that I am a

member of the ‘dominant’ group, that is educated, middle class, urban and ethnically Turkish, which also corresponds to the profile of media professionals in general.

Gaining initial access to minority respondents as a member of the ‘dominant’ group has been comparatively more complex. I had little or no interaction with these groups before this project and, even though I used snowball sampling, gaining trust was still an issue. For instance, there was an incident where I had been informed that a certain community was investigating my presence as a researcher, and I underwent a ‘security check’ without even noticing it after the respondents had informed the community about me and my research. Furthermore, some of my respondents from the minority groups were reluctant to officially participate in the interviews. In such cases I still conducted the interview but did not include them in my final list of interviewees. Some minority respondents felt at times the need to talk ‘off-the-record’ and in one extreme incident, my respondent first answered all my questions off-the-record, then allowed me to switch the recorder back on and let me to re-do the same interview.

Such experiences may be indicative of the implicit consensus that ‘minority issues’ are still quite sensitive in the Turkish context. Until recently, as these interviews have revealed, most non-Muslim minorities have remained introverted groups sensitive to the motives and attitudes of ‘outsiders’. Therefore, in most interviews with minority group respondents, I had to establish trust either by being introduced by a key contact that they knew already, or by making my first visit an unofficial chat about my project in order to establish some rapport before actually conducting the interview. My position as a member of the ‘dominant’ group and lack of language skills may have in some cases prevented me from gaining further insight and knowledge in the interviews. I have tried to keep such effects to a minimum by working with good key informants who were also willing to provide background or insider information about their communities.

While I was conducting my field work, I also noted that my position as a researcher differed from one interview to the other, creating in each situation a different set of

inequality or insider/outsider dilemmas. This has especially been evident in relation to my gender, which aggravated the ambiguity of my insider/outsider status. This ambiguity surfaced regardless of the fact that my respondent came from a minority or majority background. Being a young female researcher had been an asset and a difficulty in the field. For instance, there were incidents where I felt I lost all control over the interview and was questioned by my informant who was older and in most cases, male. In other instances, regardless of their gender and ethnicity, some informants preferred a more informal and friendly rapport with me possibly because they considered talking to a young female research student to be far less intimidating<sup>16</sup>.

These experiences in my fieldwork have led me to realise that the insider/outsider status that is implicated in power relations is not fixed. In fact, my experiences reinforced the widely acknowledged view that ‘common and shared positions due to race, class, gender or nationality do not always, or do not necessarily, lead to common understandings’ and that it is not productive ‘to argue that there are indeed any pure insiders as opposed to outsiders’ (Wolf, 1996: 14-16).

In this regard, the choice to conduct face-to-face interviews in this study has proved appropriate because, as Gaskell (2000: 48) confirms, this technique is more advantageous if the topic of research concerns ‘issues of particular sensitivity which might provoke anxiety’ or when the interviewees are ‘difficult to recruit’ such as ‘ethnic minorities’ or ‘elite or high status respondents’. Indeed, in practice this technique seemed to reduce the anxiety of ethnic minority respondents, giving them enough time to think about the questions, and providing the comfort of using both verbal and non-verbal communication.

Nonetheless, the interview technique can also have some weaknesses. For instance, one of the obstacles that a researcher can encounter is an out-spoken informant and

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<sup>16</sup> Wolff (2004:196) mentions that from the view point of the respondents, researchers have many demands such as ‘partially giving up control of physical space’ and ‘accepting questioning’ which might pose problems in gaining access and convincing the respondents to co-operate.

their cliché answers to certain questions. This can be seen as ‘bias’, which is understood to be one of the major weaknesses of this technique (Yin, 2003). As Yin has expressed, bias can occur in response to ‘poorly constructed questions’, and as a result of ‘reflexivity’ – referring to a situation in which the ‘interviewee gives what the interviewer wants to hear’ (Yin, 2003: 88-89). In this research, I attempted to minimise these problems by re-formulating the questions and asking them again in different ways. On the whole, the interview technique has proven beneficial for this research because it has allowed a simultaneous interaction between the researcher and the respondent and has helped to generate new ideas in the process.

### ***Technologies of storing and analysing data***

The interviews that were conducted during data collection have been digitally recorded and fully transcribed. Although it may seem time consuming to make complete transcriptions of the interviews, this has proven very useful in the later stages of my research because it provided a textual resource that I could re-visit and easily retrieve when necessary. The strategy of fully transcribing the interviews also generated a good, overall understanding of the data, helped to identify common issues and missing information, and also allowed me to track the emergent themes and debates. Indeed, as Hassen has stated, ‘qualitative data analysis is very much a matter of discovering what occurs where, in which context, discussed in which terms using which vocabulary or terminologies and it is a matter of discovering relationships and differences.’ (1998: 312-313). In this view, a large part of the ‘task’ for the researcher is ‘keeping track’ of where things are in the body of the data, which can also be achieved using specialised software programs.

The use of computer-assisted analysis involves three major steps (Hansen et al, 1998: 316). Firstly, the ‘raw data’ in its original form is transcribed to a digital format; secondly, the data is organised into files and folders; and thirdly, software is used to help visualise and structure the analysis stage. The software package NVivo has been used in this research in order to archive, organise and code the interviews. In this research, NVivo was useful for the first two steps of the data analysis, but the

actual analysis process was slowed down due to the time spent in learning to use the software effectively. Indeed, although software packages such as Nvivo can provide the advantage of increased ‘efficiency’ and ‘speed’ in dealing with big data sets (Silverman, 2005), Gaskell (2000: 56) argues that software packages cannot replace the ‘skills and sensitivities of the researcher’ and ‘they also carry the danger that researchers get absorbed in the technology and lose sight of the text’. In the end, although the reports and summaries generated by NVivo have been useful as a guide in establishing relationships between different sets of data, traditional manual techniques, such as ‘cutting and pasting’, highlighting and taking notes, have been equally effective during the analysis of this data.

To conclude, despite the weaknesses and problems encountered during data collection and analysis, the ‘case study’ method and the use of formal and informal texts have, on the whole, been productive for this research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Research on Cultural Diversity, Minorities and the Media in a European Context**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter offers a review of the literature pertaining to research on media, minorities and cultural diversity in the European context and intends to provide a general framework for the following chapters. This relates to one of the aims that were outlined in the introductory chapter. That is, to identify the key issues and analyses emerging from the European context and to locate Turkish minority and diasporic media practices in this wider literature. In light of the literature, the major challenges regarding the mediation of minorities can be summarised as regionalisation, the increasing impact of the human rights regime and global governance on the nation state and the ethnic diversification of societies. The relevance of these particular factors is due to the complexity of the Turkish setting. As the following chapters will reveal in more detail, the non-Muslim minority media can be considered under both the ‘ethnic’ and ‘community’ media categories, but such communities are also considered to be a part of classic diasporas. Therefore, in analysing their media we need to consider the diasporic connections that have a bearing on their characteristics and activities. In a similar vein, new media provisions that allow the use of different languages such as Kurdish in local media outlets can be considered as a ‘community’ media because of their local nature. However, these provisions were first introduced on the national public service broadcasting system in 2004, followed by local channels in 2006. Therefore, there is a need to consider their transformation in relation to the changes within the national local media provisions.

Furthermore, Turkey’s responses to international human rights documents addressing the protection of minorities are central for understanding the difference between European and Turkish approaches to the mediation of cultural identities. Especially as these issues continue to generate major disputes between Turkey and

the European Union<sup>17</sup>. As will become clear in the following sections of the thesis, there is a discrepancy between the official definition of minorities in Turkey and European definitions as stipulated in international conventions, guidelines, and recommendations produced by organisations such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

Despite being an established member of the Council of Europe, and a candidate to the European Union, Turkey's response to these documents has been one of non-involvement or involvement with reservations. Hence, Turkey's preference for a selective exposure to and implementation of these instruments has acutely exemplified the dilemmas that nation states encounter in the face of challenges from global governance and post-national pressures on citizenship. The reasons behind Turkey's selective response to such documents and human rights instruments will be further examined in the next chapter against the backdrop of citizenship practices and their implications for media systems in Turkey.

In this light, this chapter argues that in the Turkish setting, the continuities between national and local media systems should be analysed as well as the interface and relationship between historical minorities' media and diasporic media<sup>18</sup>.

## **An Overview of the Field**

A general overview of the relevant literature seems to suggest two major strands of research within which the relationship between media and cultural diversity in general, and the situations of minorities in particular can be examined. The first strand is related to the research on historical forms of diversity, such as that focusing on aboriginal media in Northern America and Australia, and work dealing with sub-

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<sup>17</sup> EU Commission's regular Progress Reports on Turkey's accession process in 2004 and 2005 discussed the situation of the Kurds in terms of minority rights.

<sup>18</sup> Hourigan (2007) also mentioned this aspect and indicated the scarcity of research looking at this relationship.

national or regional media in Wales, Scotland, Ireland or Spain (Riggins, 1992; Cormack, 2007).

The second strand addresses the relationship between media and minorities in the context of newer forms of cultural diversity reflecting a growing interest in the links between migration and media (King and Wood, 2001). Such works look at the media consumption and production of immigrants, as well as the influence of new technologies in the maintenance and negotiation of cultural identities (Gillespie, 1995; Milikowski, 2000; Dayan, 1998; Aksoy & Robins, 2000; Cottle, 2000; Robins, 2003).

Inquiries into the media practices and media consumption of minority groups have until recently remained as an under-researched field within media studies (Cottle, 2002; Rigoni, 2005; Cormack, 1998 and 2007; Moring, 2002). Scholars have utilised a range of different concepts such as 'ethnic community media' (Tsagarousianou, 2002), 'ethnic minority media' (Husband, 1994), 'diasporic media' (Georgiou, 2005), 'citizens' media' (Rodriguez, 2001), 'immigrant', 'indigenous' or 'ethnic minority' media (Riggins, 1992), 'particularistic media' (Dayan, 1998) or 'minority language' media (Cormack, 1998). These terminologies are sometimes used interchangeably to refer to similar processes and formations.

Minority or minority language media can be considered as the first strand of this research that has begun to emerge as a research field in its own right. It pertains to the process of 'regionalisation' in Western Europe that involves the revival of the language and cultural identity of national minorities or indigenous groups (Cormack, 1998; 2007, Moring, 2002). 'Ethnic minority media' is similarly used to address the media of national or indigenous minorities as well as the media of immigrant groups (Riggins, 1992; Moring, 2002).

In addition, the term 'minority media' has similarly been used to refer to immigrant groups' own media production. But it was also used in the context of media provisions provided by states in order to target, or to assimilate and integrate immigrant groups (Teerink-Bovenkerk, 1994; Ananthakrishnan, 1994).

Despite such a variety of conceptualisation, these terms all refer to various instances of ‘community media’ that emerge in different social, economic and geographical contexts. Community media groups, either print or broadcast, are limited to a geographical region such as a city, town or a neighbourhood, and aim to provide news and information for the community. They are usually non-profit organisations owned by the community organisations or members who work as volunteers. Community media produce locally oriented output and generally target the audiences in the locality (Jankowski, 2002: 7-8).

The use of community media principally relates to the democratisation of communication and the facilitation of citizens’ further involvement in the process. It has emerged as a result of the efforts of various community organisations and activists aiming to counter-balance the effects of national or transnational dominant media outlets and to empower or give voice to ethnic minority and immigrant groups. These initiatives emerged in Western Europe during the 1980s, but the use of ethnic minority or community media has also been supported in the developing world by organisations such as UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisations) and the Council of Europe due to similar concerns (Husband, 1994; Rodriguez, 2001)<sup>19</sup>.

In this context, Rodriguez (2001: 20) proposes the use of the term ‘citizens’ media’ in order to address various types of local, community or grassroots media that pose the potential to ‘empower’ communities and that could lead to a positive change in established social codes because these communities can actively ‘enact’ their citizenship and ‘intervene’ in the general mediascape. In a similar vein, it has been argued that the media of ethnic and minority groups need to be considered within a larger trend that accentuates ‘participatory culture’, a trend that is being increasingly

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<sup>19</sup> The democratisation of communication and information flows was supported by The New Information and Communication Order (NWICO) project of UNESCO in the 1980s in the developing world. For details see Chakravarty and Sarikakis (2006) and Reeves (1993).

observed in the global proliferation of community, oppositional or alternative media practices (Deuze, 2006).

Indeed, the most exemplary and effective forms of community media are to be found in the ethnic minority media of immigrant groups, which are increasingly transforming into 'diasporic' media (Tsragarosianou, 2002). The field of diasporic media research considers the media production and consumption of dispersed groups within the 'new' media landscape that emerged after the de-regulation of media systems and the emergence of satellite technology in the 1990s. The change in terminology from 'ethnic community' or 'ethnic minority' media to 'diasporic' media is part of the shift - or 're-wording' - within the field on issues of ethnicity and minorities. The older sociological categories of ethnic minorities, immigrants or minority culture are being replaced by the term 'diaspora' because of its increasing centrality in the theorisation of the relationship between identity and immigration (Sreberny, 2000; Sreberny, 2001; Cottle, 2000). This is because ethnicity as a concept was seen as insufficient to convey the 'complexity' of diasporic experiences and relationships, factors that are increasingly subject to transnational dynamics of social and cultural interaction (Tsagarousianou, 2004: 64).

One of the earlier treatments of diasporic media is found in Dayan's (1998: 105) analysis of 'particularistic media', which is considered instrumental in the process of 'transmitting memory and filiation' for especially fragile communities like minority groups, immigrants, exiles and diasporas<sup>20</sup>. Dayan utilises the concept in special reference to communities such as Armenians, Jews and the Kurds. Dayan also differentiates between media produced 'by the minorities' and 'for the minorities', which can help to simplify the language used to examine these diverse practices. It can be argued that the transformation of 'media by and for minorities' implicates both the national political culture and how it deals with minority protection as well

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<sup>20</sup> Sreberny (2002:221) suggested approaching collective identities through their 'gaze' rather than trying to identify a core essence. Therefore, a focus on ethnicity was about looking inward to the new national host culture. A focus on exile is a 'nostalgic gaze' looking back to the political homeland, but diasporas are 'looking all around'.

as the general rules and regulations that organise the national media space and its practices. This is because minority media not only emerge as venues to preserve the communality, identity and the language of a group. They also emerge as a reaction by minority groups seeking self-esteem, prestige and recognition to limited or hostile representations within the mainstream media (Horboken, 2004; Husband, 2005).

Despite the conceptual differences, non-profit, voluntary, bottom-up media production characterises ethnic or community media and issues. They are implicated in the debates about media and national culture and how the nation-state, as Turner (2001) expressed, attempts to retain its cultural monopoly against global and local pressures from ‘above and below’. Consequently, these research areas share common questions and concerns about the effects of globalisation on the mediation of cultural identities, the response of states and communities to these dynamics, and the ways in which these challenges are contested or negotiated.

Furthermore, some of the key texts in minority media research suggest a combined focus on external, internal, political and economic variables as well as the ‘specific contexts’ in which minority media are situated (Cormack, 1998; Riggins, 1992). For Riggins (1992: 16-17), the ‘characteristics of the ethnic minority population’, the ‘political structure’ and the ‘international context’ within which minority media operate were all significant. The ‘characteristics’ of the ethnic minority population not only includes the number of members in the community in question, but the ‘degree of homogeneity, organisation and integration’ it has achieved and the ‘degree of persecution or repression it has experienced.’

Additionally, the ‘prevailing ideology of the state’ - its ability to tolerate diversity within its own political structure - was considered as a crucial parameter influencing the emergence and survival of minority media. The impact of the international context and the extent to which it helped and empowered the minorities was also instrumental in their performance. Finally, the number of speakers and the symbolic status of the language, the existence of a mass campaign, the political culture of the

state and interactions with regional trends also impacted on the emergence and performance of minority media (Cormack, 1998: 39-42).

In order to establish why the mediation of ethnic or linguistic differences continues to be a source of concern and controversy within national cultures, this chapter first considers debates that capture the relationship between nation, media and the national communicative space. It then moves on to explore the various practices and challenges in the mediation of cultural identities in the European context. The chapter considers examples within traditional forms of cultural diversity and also pays attention to the development of regional media in areas such as Wales, the Basque country and Catalonia. The following part discusses the impact of changes within the human rights regime on the status of those minority media that cater for national minorities. The last section of this chapter addresses the issues relating to particularistic media that emerged as a result of migration and it seeks to examine the interface between ethnic and diasporic media.

### **Nation, Media and Communicative space**

In Western Europe, the main form of collective or cultural identity for the last two hundred years has been primarily structured within the nation state. However, this form of cultural identity was put under scrutiny in late modernity, especially due to an increasing concern within the social sciences over the putative decentralising, dislocating and fragmenting effects of globalisation in this era (Louw, 2005: 95; Hall, 1992). Hall puts the argument as follows:

The old identities which stabilised the social world for so long are in decline, giving rise to new identities and fragmenting the modern individual as a unified subject. This so called 'crisis of identity' is seen as a part of a wider process of change which is dislocating the central structures and processes of modern societies and undermining the frameworks which gave individuals stable anchorage in the social world (Hall, 1992: 274).

In the light of this fragmentation and instability, Hall questioned what might be the impact of these processes on one modern form of cultural identity, namely the 'national identity', which facilitated the transition from a traditional to a modern society. In this transition, a standardised education and pervasive mass media, especially in the common dominant language, held a significant role in the creation of national consciousness.

Mass media were considered to be an integral part of the rise of the modern societies, because they had the power to form 'a common symbolic environment' and 'new ways of social interaction' among people (Thompson, 1995: 3). The nation-state, which became the principal venue for the exercise of citizenship and defined people's legal status, also sought to establish a common and homogeneous cultural ground (Turner, 2001). As Hall (1992: 292) put it, nation not only functioned as a political form but as 'an entity which produces meanings - a system of cultural representation'.

The emphasis on the symbolic and cultural formation of national identity highlighted the necessity of creating shared sentiments, sense of belonging and traditions among citizens. For some, these traditions were invented at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the nation building process was taking off in Europe. The symbols, flags, ceremonies and national anthems were all part of the *invented traditions* in political and social realms that made social cohesion and new bonds of loyalty possible within the nation that was being created (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1992). The media was considered to be central to the process of forging the emergent national identity because, as Anderson's (1983) seminal work expressed, it helped people to 'imagine' themselves as part of the collective entity and also 'persuaded' them to accept the traditions, myths and ceremonies that would demarcate them as a nation from others (Louw, 2005). As Solomos (2001: 203-4) expressed, the production of national identity through a collective, and highly selective, memory and tradition, is a process that involves the 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' of other groups, and the demarcation of 'us' and 'others'. The media in effect were considered as the prime venues in which such processes took place (Morley and Robins, 1995).

In this light, the role of communication systems was significant not only in the creation of national consciousness but also in the transition to modernity<sup>21</sup>. Others, like Gellner (1983: 127), also emphasised the style of messages and their transmission as the crucial factors that determine who is to be included in the national culture because, as he maintained, only those who understand the message conveyed can be included in the moral and economic community.

The point suggested by Gellner is crucial in understanding the cultural monopoly that was granted to national media systems. The proper reception and comprehension of media messages on a national level necessitated a pervasive and standardised language. This crucial aspect was emphasised by Anderson (1983: 15) who assigned particular importance to the emergence of print languages. It was the standardisation of a print language that enabled the nation to be conceived as an ‘imagined community’.

Although Anderson’s groundbreaking contribution became instrumental in the analysis of the role of the media in national formation, it was limited to the significance of the print media and did not address how citizens partake in the national consciousness or to what extent they might be able to communicate their own views. These issues can be considered as part of the relationship between citizenship and media, which is intrinsically linked to democracy. Thus the concept of the ‘public sphere’, which was introduced by Habermas in the 1960s, is also relevant to this discussion.

As Mughan and Gunther (2000: 9-10) expressed, print and broadcast media were treated differently from the onset. Freedom of expression and press freedom were considered to be principal aspects of democracy and required minimal regulation or

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<sup>21</sup> As Curran (2002:167-168) stated, this view was propagated in Daniel Lerner’s *Passing of Traditional Society* (1964) as part of modernization theories. Lerner’s theory of modernization was specifically relevant to Turkey and the Middle East. As Karpat stated (1973:22) the main interpretation in these theories was that these ‘traditional’ societies were passing away ‘by adopting new modes of communicating ideas and attitudes through the mass use of tabloids, radios and movies’.

interference from the authorities. However, governments had to regulate the broadcasting domain due to the scarcity of airwave frequencies. The regulatory principals that were applied under public service broadcasting systems became a predominant form in the European context. In this light, the concept of public sphere was generally invoked in relation to public service broadcasting and its universalistic values which, since the media were deemed to be the 'fourth estate of the realm' (Curran, 1991: 29), putatively coincided with democracy and the 'public good' (Garnham, 1990; Scannel, 1989). Habermas (1974: 49) introduced the concept as follows:

By the public sphere we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching a public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body...citizens behave as public body when they confer an unrestricted fashion - that is the guarantee of freedom assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions - about matters of general interest. In a large public this kind of communication requires specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who believe it. Today newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere.

Habermas was introducing an 'ideal' category of the public sphere which was present in 18<sup>th</sup> century France, Germany and England and in which ideal speech, and face to face communication was possible in the formation of public opinion. This form of public sphere eventually disintegrated due to the growth of mass democracy and literacy, urbanisation, and the popular press. However, it remained a central concept for the analysis of relationships between the nation and the media (Robins and Cornford, 1994). It continued to be associated with democracy and citizenship, although it has been criticised among others for ignoring issues of gender, patriarchy and alternative public spheres (Webster, 2006; Calhoun, 1992; Curran, 1991; Dahlgren, 1995; Dahlgren and Sparks, 1991; Keane, 1991).

In the British context the BBC embodied and defined the ideals of public service and was considered to be an 'agent of national'. Its ability to link people regardless of their location and background through a variety of programs was also deemed to be

‘democratising culture and politics’ (Cardiff and Scannel, 1987). Furthermore, its capacity to introduce a wide range of services was considered an ‘important citizenship right in mass democratic societies’ (Scannell, 1989: 142)<sup>22</sup>. Whilst figures like Garnham and Scannell propagated the idea that public service broadcasting guarantees the survival of the public good in capitalist social formation, others pointed out the insufficiencies of this system. These argued that such systems were unable to represent and grasp the multitude of needs and demands in contemporary societies and expressed the need to re-evaluate the concept in the face of transformations which challenge the boundaries and the correspondence between national polity and culture (Keane, 1995; Keane, 1998, pp.160-1; Tracey, 1998; Morley, 2000).

For instance, Dahlgren (1991) distinguished the ‘crisis of the nation state’, the ‘segmentation of audiences’, the ‘rise of new political social movements’ and the ‘emerging new computerised technologies’ as new categories that shape the contemporary public sphere. Others like Curran (2000) addressed cross border media flows, new technologies and the globalisation of the public sphere, also highlighting the contributions from fictional material like soap operas that bring certain issues to the attention of the public.

Given the emphasis and focus of this thesis, two issues come to the fore as the most significant concerns implicated in the above revisions of the term public sphere. These are the growing ethnic and cultural diversity in societies and the transnational or global challenges on the ‘communicative space’ or realm, which was previously considered to be congruent with the national borders (Schlesinger, 2000) within which citizenship was defined and exercised. A significant factor that cuts across these issues is the exclusionary membership practices in a given national context. For instance, in his analysis of the relationship between public service broadcasting

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<sup>22</sup> The BBC system had its drawbacks. Its centralised, monopolistic and elitist outlook was balanced with the introduction of other outlets such as ITV and Channel 4 to meet the demands of regional and minority audiences (Williams, 1998).

and the public sphere, David Morley (2000: 105) makes an analogy between ‘home’ and media. If, as he asked, the public service broadcasting creates an atmosphere in which all members of the nation ‘can talk to each other like a family sitting and chatting around the domestic hearth’<sup>23</sup>, how could the ones who are excluded from this symbolic membership ‘participate in the idea of nation as represented in its mediated culture’? Morley (2000: 118) explores this question as follows:

If the national media constitute the public sphere, which is most central in the mediation of the nation-state to the general public, then whatever is excluded from those media is in effect excluded from the symbolic culture of the nation. When the culture of that public sphere (and thus the nation) is in effect “racialised” by the naturalisation of one (largely unmarked and undeclared) form of ethnicity, then only some citizens of the nation find it a homely and welcoming place. The imagined community is, in fact usually constructed in the language of some particular ethnos, membership of which then effectively becomes a prerequisite for the enjoyment of a political citizenship within the nation state.

Morley’s comments emphasize the problems with expressions of diversity within the national culture and how they relate to the exercise of citizenship. Although citizenship is mainly viewed as a form of political membership, identity politics, which looks at the ways in which sub-ordinate groups try to legitimise their social identities (Solomos, 2001: 201-202), is generating a critique of the boundaries of dominant narratives and definitions of national culture and collective identities. Furthermore, the cultural expansion of citizenship, or the growing significance of cultural dynamics, seems to be forcing citizenship to become broader and more inclusive. According to Stevenson (2001: 3-4), having access to cultural citizenship in this respect entails questions about mass media and making an ‘intervention’ in the public sphere at the local, national and global level. In fact, this may be related to understanding the public sphere as layered or multiple as Keane has suggested in various works (1991; 1995; 1998).

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<sup>23</sup> Morley refers to Nikos Papastergiadis’ (1998) work, *Dialogues in the Diaspora*, where he mentions that the symbols and narratives of home can only resonate if they are admitted to the chamber of home.

Keane (1995: 8) has argued that ‘the old dominance of state structured and territorially bounded public life mediated by radio, television and newspapers and books is coming to an end’ because new communication networks that are not bound territorially seem to have the capacity to ‘fragment’ the notion of a single public sphere within nation state. According to Keane, the idea of a unified public sphere has now become ‘obsolete’ and what is emerging in its place seems to be ‘overlapping’ or ‘interconnected’ public spheres that demand a re-evaluation of the notion of ‘public life and its “partner” terms such as public opinion, the public good, and the public/private distinction.’

In this revision, the micro-public sphere refers to a number of disputants acting at sub-state level usually in voluntary networks that have a local character. Accordingly, as Keane (1995: 9-13) suggested, the micro-public sphere is a vital element in social movements, acting like ‘laboratories’ in which the dominant codes of everyday life are questioned and tested. This could be possible in spheres like a publishing house, a church and even a political chat over a drink with friends. The meso-public sphere is the most familiar one, and refers to the level of territorial nation-state in which the mediation is maintained by national TV channels and newspapers. Finally, the macro-public sphere refers to supranational, global or regional (EU) growth and the contributions from global media enterprises and satellite technology in stretching the boundaries of the nation state. It can be argued that the emergence of minority media both in sub-national and ethnic/diasporic forms can be construed as an attempt to make an intervention in the public sphere in its multiple forms by those groups who seek to legitimise their culture, language and identity.

The nation-state, as the main ‘communicative space’, was considered to be a good tool to evaluate the ‘old era’ in which communications and media systems stayed within the national borders. The classic interpretation of the public sphere assumed congruence between the media and the national culture, but a number of dynamics continue to de-stabilise this connection. One of them is the advance of new technologies and their widening use in communication, but the growing influence of

a global governance and human rights regime also poses a challenge for the interventions of the nation-state in the cultural domain.

For instance, the European Union has incorporated democratic governance and adherence to human rights regimes as a prerequisite for its relationship with aspiring member states since the mid-1990s and began applying these conditions as determining criteria for its further enlargement (Arikan, 2003). Hence, as Schlesinger suggested, national policies can no longer be thought of separately from regional and supranational processes such as Europeanisation, a situation that brings into question the ‘tight fit between nation and communication’ (Schlesinger, 2000;2002). In exploring this European context, the following sections will examine the impact of such supranational and regional challenges, as well as changes in the human rights regime, on the mediation of cultural identities.

### **Challenges to the Mediation of Cultural Identities in the European Context**

It is possible to identify a number of factors that have challenged and changed the mediation of cultural identities in Europe on the regional, national, and local levels. These factors include regionalisation, the growing diversification of societies, a return to old identity formations as a result of ethnic strife at the end of the Cold War, and changes in the human rights regime to address the problems of national minorities. In addition to these developments, the European Union’s efforts to establish itself as both a political and cultural entity since the 1980s can be considered among the factors that disturbed the old relationship between nation and culture.

As Collins (2002: 25-26) explained, the television systems in Europe were traditionally comprised of monopolistic public service broadcasters charged with the duty to reflect national culture, and to ‘legitimise the political system’. But they were also charged with the responsibility to accommodate and reflect cultural diversity through regulations, quota systems and policy measures. Such regulatory measures were not applied to the press sector which is historically attributed

freedom from government intervention in order to perform its watchdog duty (Deirdre, *et al*, 2004).

After the 1980s, public service broadcasting ideals became ‘unfashionable’ (Seaton, 1997: 303) in Europe due to a number of developments such as de-regulation, privatisation and the impact of satellite technology (Iosifidis, 2005). Moreover, such ideals were transformed by the transfer of authority over communications systems to supranational, namely European, levels and through decentralisation to regional, autonomous and local levels (Spa Moragas and Garitaonandia, 1995: 6).

These developments also coincided with the period when the EU was trying to establish itself as a political and cultural entity as well as an economic union. Consequently, the audio-visual sector was considered to be one of the most significant areas in which a sense of European cultural identity could be created (Morley and Robins, 1997: 3).

The European Union’s broadcasting policies were based on both the Commission’s directives and the legislation and recommendations stipulated by the Council of Europe. Issues that relate to media, especially the use of satellite technology, became a part of the Council of Europe’s Human Rights Directorate when a special committee was established in 1982. The EU also considered satellite communications to be instrumental for encouraging a common European identity and culture ‘in pursuit of the goal of ever closer Union.’(Collins, 2002: 29)<sup>24</sup>.

However, the aim of creating a culturally and politically closer union through the promotion of ‘unity in diversity’ proved difficult to realise. Europe’s cultural policies, of which the media regulations were a part, were forced to deal with the economic pressures of a ‘single market’ and the preservation of a collective identity in the face of globalisation and Americanisation (Wheeler, 2004; Iosifids, 2005). These dilemmas manifested themselves in disputes between parties who advocated

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<sup>24</sup> As Collins (1992) stated, the coming of satellite technology was welcomed under the human rights framework, as it was deemed to augment Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

further liberalisation and those who supported intervention in the audio-visual market. Whilst countries like Britain supported liberalisation in order to compete with American products in the global markets, countries like France and Spain called for a more interventionist position that could protect their collective cultural identities (Wheeler, 2004: 350; Iosifidis, 2005: 97)<sup>25</sup>.

France's reaction towards the dominance of Americanisation was explained by its own history of nation building, which differed significantly from the experience of the United Kingdom. In the UK, as Collins (2002) argued, state building was based on the recognition of difference, whereas in France a strong bond between culture and politics was assumed. The similarity between France and Turkey in terms of their civic and political organisation as republics is of particular relevance in understanding their responses to processes of Europeanisation and globalisation. This aspect will be elaborated in the next chapter where nation state formation and citizenship practice in Turkey are discussed.

In addition to the dilemmas of diversity within media policy, the resurgence of ethnic, religious and national identities in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of 1980s has also shaken the ideals of 'unity in diversity' in Europe, and has prompted international organisations like the OSCE and Council of Europe to introduce new provisions for minority protection. Furthermore, a growing tendency towards regionalism, particularly in historic regions such as Wales and Catalonia, has further complicated the issues of collective identity. These developments necessitated a re-evaluation of the old relationship between nation, communication and cultural identity and the acknowledgement of important changes at supranational, nation

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<sup>25</sup> There were efforts to harmonise these different motives within European policies. The European Community completed its pan-European broadcasting regulations between 1982 and 1992 and introduced a Television without Frontiers Directive in 1989 as well as MEDIA I (1991-1996), MEDIA II (1996-2000) and MEDIA Plus (2001-2006) programs in order to support the development of a common European broadcasting space and market (Collins, 2002; Wheeler, 2004; Iosifidis, 2005). When the Television Without Frontiers Directive was first introduced, as Iosifidis (2005:98) maintained, it 'abolished the sovereignty of EU Member States over their national systems, thereby facilitating the free movement of television broadcasting service across frontiers within the Union.'

state and sub-nation state levels (Schlesinger, 1997). The following sections will pay attention to those developments in the European context that have shaped and transformed minority media.

### ***The Emergence of Sub-National, Regional and Ethnic Minority Media in Europe***

The issue of regionalism in Europe is not only a matter of geography, but as Spa Moragas and Gartionandia (1995: 5) expressed, it is embedded in ‘long historical processes which have created a profound and important diversity of culture and language in the continent’. The emergence of regional media usually coincided with political demands based on distinct traditions, religion or language. Indeed, the most significant examples were manifested in the creation of *TV3* in Catalonia (1983), *Euskal Telebista* in the Basque Country (1983), *S4C* in Wales (1982), and *TnG* in Ireland (1996). The regionalisation of television and its relation to language and identity have been well documented and inventoried, especially in the 1990s when many studies looked at the neglected media spaces of regions, and small cultural and political and linguistic communities (Hourigan, 2001; Spa Moragas and Gartionandia, 1995; Riggins, 1992; Cormack, 1998).

Spa Moragas and Gartionandia (1995) stated that minority or regional programming and broadcasting started in Europe from the late 1960s and developed in two stages<sup>26</sup>. Firstly, there were some trials on national public service networks where short programmes for specific audiences were produced. In the initial stages, social movements were also involved in the support of regional broadcasting because they were concerned with ‘broadening’ citizen’s access and participation in the media. This aspect of regional media is similar to the growth of community media which also emerged in response to a lack of relevant programming in national media and was mainly initiated by civil society groups in order to create a ‘bottom-up approach’ to communication (Jankowski and Prehn, 2002; Louw, 2005: 53). The emergence of broadcasting by what Hourigan (2001) has called ‘indigenous

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<sup>26</sup> ITV in UK and ARD in Germany are considered to be exceptions in regional broadcasting.

minorities', meaning non-immigrant populations, was not a significant issue until the 1970s when they were stimulated by social movements.

The second stage, exemplified in the emergence of regional television in Ireland, Wales, Catalonia and Basque Country, is related to ideas of 'autonomy' and 'decentralisation'. These were driven by strong claims to political, cultural or linguistic identities because television was considered to be 'a vital means of propagating a distinctive identity and ensuring its survival.' (Spa Moragas and Gartionandia, 1995: 8) Indeed, when we look at these 1980s pioneers of minority language and regional media in Europe, we can see that their emergence is related to recognition of their distinctiveness from the dominant language and ethnic group. They were also instrumental in 'normalising' the language and culture of these indigenous minorities.

In his analysis of the revival of the Celtic language and culture in Wales and Ireland, Howell Jr (1992: 218-219) highlighted the 'prestige factor' that broadcasting in minority languages bestows such communities. In this context, he argued that when these languages are used on air they acquire an added 'legitimacy' and 'credibility' among minority audiences. In this way, broadcast media can add status and prestige to a minority culture and also act in the defence of minority languages.

Broadcasting in Welsh constitutes one of the first examples of regional and minority language broadcasting in Europe. Wales was recognised as a region within the BBC system from the late 1930s, national broadcasting councils for Wales and Scotland were established in 1952 and BBC Wales began in 1964. After the Welsh Language act of 1987, the language gained equal status with English within Wales, and this eventually led to the intensification of campaigns for independent Welsh language radio stations. The Welsh campaign was backed by a strong student movement and, after lengthy campaigns, *Radio Wales* and *Radio Cymru* were created in 1977. The Broadcasting act of 1980 was instrumental in the creation of TV channel *S4C*, (Sianel Pedwra Cymru) which began its transmissions in 1982 with around 30 hours of programs in Welsh (Ellis, 2000; Howell Jr, 1992; Cormack, 1995).

In Wales and Ireland pressure groups have been powerful in stimulating broadcasting in these languages (Ellis, 2000). The campaign for Irish television was initiated by activist groups in 1975 and ultimately led to the founding of *TnaG* which, in 1996, began broadcasting exclusively in Gaelic (Hourigan, 2001: 85). The use of Irish language in broadcasting in Ireland went back to the early days of radio in the late 1920s, and it has significance for wider debates on ‘modernisation’ and nation building (Watson, 2002: 739-745). In this period, the national radio station *Radio Eirann* transmitted some minority language (Gaelic) programmes within its predominantly English structure. Towards the end of 1950s, Irish governments deepened their interest in language issues, and when the Irish Broadcasting Organisation was formed in 1966, it aimed to dedicate 10% of its programming to Gaelic (Howell Jr, 1992). The first separate Irish language radio station *RnaG* was created in 1972 (Watson, 2002).

These early examples of regional minority media need to be contextualised within the pluralist nature of the UK political system, which led to the devolution process in the late 1990s and granted some degree of autonomy in these specific regions<sup>27</sup>.

Spain is another example of this type of political structure where the autonomy of different communities is acknowledged. After the collapse of General Franco’s dictatorship in Spain, the 1978 constitution arranged the country into 17 autonomous communities, and those communities that are considered ‘historical nationalities’ were endowed with the maximum levels of autonomy in the new structure. These communities are Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia (Lopez and Corominas, 1995: 173)<sup>28</sup>. The formation of regional broadcasting in Spain is based on the acknowledgment that the language of each autonomous community is considered as an official language in that region, and is therefore additional, and equal, to the official language of the state (Castilian). There are two layers in the regional structure where the communities are served both with ‘window’ programs of

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<sup>27</sup> The Welsh assembly does not hold power to execute policies in broadcasting.

<sup>28</sup> Andalusia is also included in these autonomous communities.

regional news on the national public broadcasting system (TVE), as well as with independent stations that have a regional coverage. The Basque television station *Euskal Telebista* (ETB) was the first to broadcast in 1983 followed in the same year by *TV3*. In 1989, Catalonia started its second channel *Canal 33*, and Galicia created its own community television in 1985. According to the authors, the general effect of these television and radio channels has been to ‘normalise’ minority language and culture, especially Basque and Catalan (Lopez and Corominas, 1995: 186-187).

The Basque country is an interesting example as the region is divided between France and Spain<sup>29</sup>. Unlike the Spanish practices, French Basque minority media was underdeveloped due to a different approach to national formation that did not acknowledge cultural differences, and repressed minority languages for the purposes of centralisation (Boucaud and Stubbs, 1994: 85)<sup>30</sup>. Boucaud argued that this was due to a citizenship tradition in France that is not based on ethnicity. Therefore, ‘the state has resisted constructing a bureaucratic infrastructure to facilitate recognition of and provision for ethnic minorities within France’<sup>31</sup>.

In the early 1980s, when the Spanish Basque country pioneered regional television, the French Basque regional channel *FR3* was transmitting only 6 hours in the Basque language. The situation in France only began to develop after the state monopoly over broadcasting was dissolved and the pirate, illegal radios in such regions had become legal (Cheval, 1992).

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<sup>29</sup> At the beginning of the 1990s, the French Basque population was less than three hundred thousand people, and was mainly a rural population. On the Spanish side however, it was a young, industrialised population reaching about 3 million people (Chival, 1992).

<sup>30</sup> This was also highlighted by Agus Hernan from radio Gure Irratia in the French Basque region at an international workshop at the Central European University which was organised by the Center for Media and Communication Studies (CMCS), Budapest, Hungary. 17<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

<sup>31</sup> However, there is an old tradition of ethnic minority press in France. These publications are subject to different laws than the French press, and they are either publications published abroad for the immigrants living in France, or published in France for minority readership like the Armenian or Yiddish newspapers (Boucaud and Stubbs, 1994:86-87).

These examples of regional media and the struggle for cultural rights in Spain and France are illuminating for the Turkish case as well. For example, in the mid-1990s Basque's autonomy was proposed by some politicians and businessmen in Turkey as a model for solving the 'Kurdish problem'. Although these suggestions reflected a will to recognize the problem, they were widely considered to be empty and superficial.<sup>32</sup> This aspect will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 which explores the policy-making process behind the introduction of broadcasting in different languages.

Nevertheless, the pioneering examples of regional media in Europe reveal that the emergence of minority language media is closely linked to the dominant political structure of the state and the extent to which this structure is willing and able to accommodate ethnic and linguistic differences. But these cases also highlight questions about nationalism in the regions. Cormack (2000), in his comparison of cases in Britain and Ireland, argued that the existence of minority language media might turn 'hot' nationalism into a less radical, 'banal' one and that the issues related to language might move away from the political. Again, this will be a significant point to consider during the following data analysis chapters where the development of Kurdish broadcasting is discussed<sup>33</sup>.

As stated above, the significance of minority language media increased in the 1990s in Europe and their campaigns began to be successful. According to Hourigan (2001: 96), one of the most significant factors that contributed to their success had been the

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<sup>32</sup> Hasan Cemal (2006) of *Milliyet* argued that this was one of the examples where the politicians made futile comments for the recognition and the solution of the Kurdish problem that did not have a concrete policy change.

<sup>33</sup> In relation to the Basque debate in terms of the Kurdish problem in Turkey, a veteran journalist Can Dündar (1995) drew attention to the fact that support for the Basque nationalist organisation ETA which was also involved in armed struggle against central Spanish administration had decreased since the autonomy model was established in the Basque region. This was because people believed that they had achieved the necessary rights in the new model and political parties that supported peaceful co-habitation with the Spaniards came into power. In a similar vein, Hernan expressed in the Community media workshop in Budapest that community media in the Basque language was dealing with general issues in the Basque language, so it was not only dealing with ethnic issues. Furthermore, he gave examples of community media organizations making calls for a peaceful solution to the armed struggle in the Basque country in various conferences.

active support of the European Union on regionalisation. This manifested itself in European initiatives like EBLUL<sup>34</sup>, Mercator<sup>35</sup>, and the European Charter of Minority Languages (1992), which defined the ‘legitimacy of demands made by European indigenous linguistic minorities since the 1980s.’ Hourigan argued that the growing interest and attention in Europe towards minority issues, especially in language use and media provisions, was also affected by the sobering developments in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s.

As Paterson (1993) maintained, the issue of ‘nations-without-states’ like Scotland and Catalonia has always been a part of the political agenda, but the resurgence of ethnic and nationalistic overtones to the developments in Eastern Europe displayed a return to ‘older identity formations’ in public life, and were a surprise to Europe<sup>36</sup>. As a response to these upheavals, new international organisations specialising in minority issues, like the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) within the OSCE<sup>37</sup>, were created and efforts to draft legal international standards were increased.

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<sup>34</sup> European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages is an NGO promoting languages and linguistic diversity. It has been established as a result of the so called Arfe Resolution by the European Parliament in 1981. The parliament opted to treat the protection of minority and regional languages from linguistic and cultural rights perspective rather than minority rights. [www.eblul.org](http://www.eblul.org)

<sup>35</sup> It is a network of research and documentation centres specialising in the minority languages of the European Union that are spoken by 40 million citizens. It was founded in 1987 as an initiative of the EU Commission. The Mercator media centre is based at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Information is available on <http://www.mercator-central.org/> and <http://www.aber.ac.uk/~merwww/>

<sup>36</sup> Hobsbawm (1992) distinguished between 19<sup>th</sup> century epic nation building and later 20<sup>th</sup> century ‘separatist’ nationalism that was a result of such exclusionary nationalisms observed in the Balkans at the end of the Cold war.

<sup>37</sup> ‘The post of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities was established in 1992 to identify and seek early resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace, stability or friendly relations between OSCE participating States.’ <http://www.osce.org/hcnm/>. The High Commissioner has a number of recommendations on education, language, participation in public life, and broadcasting in terms of minority protection and linguistic rights. In 2003 OSCE recommended guidelines for minority language broadcasting which is available at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/hcnm/2003/10/2242\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/hcnm/2003/10/2242_en.pdf)

### ***European Provisions in Minority Protection and Cultural Rights***

Human rights became a matter of international concern in the aftermath of the Second World War. The human rights agenda highlights questions and dilemmas about the future of citizenship in post-industrial and post-modern societies because citizens, whose rights have traditionally been defined within the nation-state, could turn to 'Brussels' as sub-national and regional pressures gain ground (Turner, 1993: 178). Indeed, since the 1960s, classic political and civil human rights instruments have expanded to include social, cultural and economic rights. A number of essential rights such as the right to culture, the protection of cultural identity, the need to conserve, develop and diffuse culture, the protection of property rights, the recognition of linguistic diversity and access to science and technology were defined as 'cultural rights' and it was argued that they continue to pose complex dilemmas and unresolved questions about social cohesion, cultural diversity and identity (Hamelink, 2004: 103-105).

In the UN system, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICER, 1966) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966), are the most significant declarations. In relation to minority media, the most binding principal of the human rights regime is stated in Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities should not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession in 1966 and entered *on* 23 March 1976. Available at [ [http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a\\_ccpr.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm) ]

Turkey placed reservations on Article 27  
[ [http://untreaty.un.org/humanrightsconvs/Chapt\\_IV\\_4/reservations/Turkey.pdf](http://untreaty.un.org/humanrightsconvs/Chapt_IV_4/reservations/Turkey.pdf) ] Accessed 19.12.2007

For a list of all ratifications and signatures, as of June 2004 see:  
[ <http://www.unhchr.ch/pdf/report.pdf> ] Accessed 19.12.2007

Human rights were also codified in regional instruments such as the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) (Hamelink, 2004). Since the 1980s, the EU has placed a growing emphasis on the quality of democratisation and human rights, and the protection of minorities. These principals were mentioned explicitly in the 1993 ‘Treaty on the European Union’ and the 1999 ‘Treaty of Amsterdam’. After 1995, human rights became an essential element in relations with non-member countries (Arıkan, 2003).

This was due to the turbulent events that took place in Eastern and Central Europe at the end of the 1990s and the quality of democracy in these areas was measured in relation to the protection and welfare of their national minorities (Kastoryano, 2002). Indeed, after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, minority rights were considered as a method of ‘pacifying’ populations and decreasing the possibility of clashes over ethnic problems (Çavuşoğlu, 2005: 241). However, these international instruments had refrained from giving a standard definition of a national ‘minority’ and implicitly allowed flexibility for states to provide their own definitions and understanding of the concept. Hence, states tend to consider cultural rights as ‘individual rights’ due to fears of cultural autonomy that might jeopardize social cohesion and lead to self-determination. Therefore, although these rights do manifest a collective dimension, they are worded as rights that belong to ‘individuals who belong to minorities’ and place an emphasis on ‘territorial integrity.’ (Çavuşoğlu, 2005; Hamelink, 2004).

In the field of cultural rights, two basic documents, the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (hereafter the Charter) and *Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities* (FCNM)<sup>39</sup>, provide the basis for European standards. These documents, the Charter in particular, deal with the issue of

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<sup>39</sup> The charter was adopted in 1992 and entered into force in 1998. It is available at [ <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/148.htm> ]

The Convention was opened for signature in 1995. For the convention and list of ratifications please refer to [ [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human\\_Rights/Minorities](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Minorities) ]

At the time of writing was ratified by 39 member countries.

linguistic rights and linguistic diversity, which is now being considered within the broad area of cultural diversity pertain to aspects of media, education, names, public service and relationship with judicial authorities (Özerman, 2003).

In use since 1998, FCNM is the first legally binding multilateral instrument and emphasises that a plural and democratic society should respect the ‘ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each person belonging to a minority, but also create appropriate conditions enabling them to express, preserve and develop this identity’. However, as with the other instruments, it does not contain a definition of national minority. It is stated in the objectives for the framework that such a ‘pragmatic approach’ was adopted because it was impossible to agree on a definition that would satisfy all the member states.

The only countries which neither signed, nor ratified the Convention are France, Andorra, Monaco and Turkey<sup>40</sup>. Article 9 of the convention is the most relevant to the issue of minority language media. It stipulates that persons belonging to national minorities are not discriminated against in terms of their access to media and obtaining licensing in radio, television and cinema enterprises. The article also charges parties to the convention with the duty to provide *adequate measures* to allow persons belonging to national minorities to have access to media. In terms of language protection in areas of justice, education, administration, and media the Charter constitutes the basic principals. The Charter, which entered into force in 1998, offers a definition of a minority language and aims to preserve the historical regional minority languages in Europe. In an international conference in 2001, European Year of Languages, representatives of intergovernmental bodies such as the CoE and OSCE repeatedly emphasised the pertinence of the Charter in relation to an alarming ‘resurgence’ of xenophobia, racism, and nationalism in Europe and stated that:

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<sup>40</sup> [ <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ChercheSig.asp?NT=157&CM=8&DF=4/4/2008&CL=ENG> ] [Accessed 25th March 2008].

‘The charter embraces difference rather than fears it...The charter is therefore a major instrument, the most comprehensive and precise treaty in the world which deals with the management of diversity’ (De Varennes, 2001: 17).

Article 11 of the Charter is specifically concerned with media provisions that stipulate the establishment of one radio station, one TV channel and one newspaper in the minority or regional languages. These media outlets would either be run directly by the public authorities or through their facilitation and support. Although the Charter and similar instruments attempt to offer guidelines for minority culture provisions and their protection, the fundamental difficulty in these documents is the lack of a consensual definition of a ‘minority’ and their failure to quantify relevant provisions and minimum acceptable standards. International initiatives and documents use concepts such as ‘lesser used languages’ or ‘regional languages’ in order to ‘avoid the term minority’ which would not be approved by European member states that did not recognise minorities among their citizens (Grin, 2003 in Cormack 2007: 1).

The lack of ‘quantification’ of minimum standards was also addressed by Cormack (2005) who argued that there was an ambiguity over the minimum number of hours on radio and TV that would provide a satisfactory standard. The ambiguities over the term ‘minority’ and the ‘minimum standards’ for minority media provisions have been of particular importance during the Europeanisation period in Turkey. These issues continue to be a source of major dispute between Turkey and the European Union, as the following chapters will reveal in more detail.

Nevertheless, suffice it to mention here that, Turkey is neither a party to the Charter nor the Framework Convention, and has placed a reservation on Article 27 of the ICCPR. Therefore, it displays a selective response to the implementation of the key treaties that relate to minority protection. The reasons for its selective approach are to be found in the ways in which national minorities are defined in Turkey, which will be explored further in the next chapter.

So far this chapter has discussed the role and function attributed to media of mass communication in the formation of identity and culture both on a national and sub-national or regional level. This discussion has demonstrated that a standard language and a communicative space that was in line with the boundaries of the territorial state were necessary components of modern social formation and social cohesion. In the case of 'historical nationalities' or regions in Europe, access to media in the minority language facilitated recognition of cultural diversity and the normalisation of historically embedded tensions between the regions and central administrations. The developments in Eastern Europe disrupted the Cold War consensus on minorities and paved the way for setting international standards.

Another significant phenomenon that contributed to diversity in Europe can be considered a contemporary form resulting from skilled and non-skilled migration and the collapse of colonial and imperial systems. These developments created new questions about nation, belonging, inclusion and exclusion, and their implications for minority media is discussed in the next section.

### ***From Ethnic Minorities and Migrants to Diasporas***

As mentioned earlier, in line with the growing diversification of Western societies due to post-War immigration, the term 'diaspora' became a crucial concept for the theorisation of immigration, ethnicity and identity and communication media (Sreberny, 2000: 179). Whilst the concept of 'minority' implied 'identity re-formation' or 'acculturation' in the host society, the concept of diaspora was utilised in order to refer to emerging 'bi-national cultural spaces'. Thus, diasporic audiences actively respond to the media in both their country of origin and country of residence and negotiate their media consumption in both cultural spaces (Sreberny, 2001: 155; Aksoy and Robins, 2000).

The development of new communication technologies enabled immigrant communities to establish new contacts with their country of origin, and the de-

regulation within national media systems allowed them to set up their own community media outlets<sup>41</sup>. Therefore, research on diasporic media has mainly focused on the implications of immigrant groups' media consumption and production in the mediation, maintenance and negotiation of cultural identities (King and Wood, 2001; Karim, 1998, 2003; Sreberny, 2000, 2002; Silverstone, 2002; Milikowski, 2000; Rigoni, 2005; Ogan, 2001; Cottle, 2000; Gillespie, 1995).

In thinking about the diasporas and the media, research indicated close relationships between diaspora and *imagined community*, diaspora and *public sphere* and diaspora and *minority*, which had similarities to the older approaches that were utilised in the analysis of media and national communicative space.

A central concern which prompted scholarly interest in diasporic groups and their media use was the influence of satellite television in the daily life of the diasporas. The development of satellite technology allowed diasporic groups to have access to transnational television<sup>42</sup> which provided various representations, images and narrations of a group identity. Here the key concern was to explore the influences of particularising media practices that differed from the universalising national media culture. One of the first examples of this kind of research in the UK was conducted by Marie Gillespie, which inquired into the form of imagined community that might be created or eroded through satellite TV among the South Asian diaspora in London (Gillespie, 1995; 2000). The use of media by ethnic groups has since become a growing research interest where the relationship between ethnic media and identity formation can be analysed. However, there seemed to be a lack of hard evidence for the impact of the media on the identity formation of a particular group. Rather, such research more often revealed generational and gender differences in media consumption (Hargreaves and Mahdjoub, 1997; Gillespie, 1995).

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<sup>41</sup> Tsagarousianou (2002) suggests that the appropriation of community media by ethnic groups, circulating and producing their own media through minority press and local radio, has been one of the most effective ways of using community media.

<sup>42</sup> See Chalaby (2005; 2002) for the emergence of transnational television in Europe and its different examples worldwide.

The availability of transnational television channels that target immigrant populations and dispersed groups also had implications for multicultural strategies and policies within various European countries. The use of transnational television from the country of origin has created new questions and moral panic about 'cultural ghettoisation' and the integration and acculturation of minorities. This is because the capacity of national media systems to bind the citizens around common ideals was regarded to be eroding in the face of emerging particularistic media practices (Milikowski, 2000; Aksoy and Robins, 2000).

For instance, when national broadcasters like the Turkish Radio Television (TRT) began to target the migrant Turkish population in Germany, Belgium, Holland and Denmark via the TRT INT channel in 1990, it created mixed reactions and responses within these countries in relation to their policies for immigrants (Aksoy and Robins, 2000: 347).

In Holland, there had existed some provisions to cater for the needs of migrant population since the 1980s (Teerink-Bovenkerk, 1994: 41). These were an extension of general minority policies which eventually rendered the official recognition of Holland as a multicultural society. Media in this context was considered to be instrumental in both making immigrants into 'citizens of Dutch society' as well as 'facilitating the development of their own cultures'. But, as the author emphasised, state sponsored general minority policies, did not emerge as a result of social justice concerns, but rather as the result of a 'concern for political containment.'

On the other hand, as Aksoy and Robins (2000: 344) expressed, German authorities initially welcomed transnational channels because they 'compensated' for the lack of minority media provisions in Germany. However, they eventually provoked panic about the 'new Turkish media space' across Europe as new concerns arose as to whether they would lead to a failure of integration policies by reminding the migrants of their 'cultural boundaries'. In the Dutch context, Milikowski (2000: 444) also responded to similar concerns about the impact of transnational television on the 'ethnicisation' of Dutch society, and argued that instead of adding to the

enclosure and isolation of immigrant groups, transnational television has in fact contributed to a process of 'de-ethnicisation'. Ogan (2001) similarly expressed that these media practices opened up new questions about the boundaries of group identities in Holland.

In addition to the various narratives of 'imagined community' that were brought into focus by the new media order, another form of relationship that was put under scrutiny in this field of research was that between the public sphere and diasporas/minorities.

If, as mentioned above, the national media facilitated a national public sphere, then the questions posed in this context should address the feasibility and quality of a public sphere for dispersed groups. For instance, Gitlin (1998) argued that the notion of public sphere was shattering into little 'sphericules'. Cunningham (2001: 133) utilised this concept in order to explore its applicability for the diasporic experience and regarded the emergent 'minoritarian' public spheres or sphericules as positive, vibrant and globalised, but very specific to self/community-making and identity<sup>43</sup>.

The question of public spheres for minority/diasporic groups was also pertinent to the growing proliferation of minority media outlets produced by the migrant or diasporic communities in Europe. Minority media production not only furthered discussions on identity formation, but it also created new questions about culture, participation and democracy that were central to the debates on the public sphere. For instance, Tsagarousianou (2002: 211) focused on this dynamic and inquired whether 'ethnic community media in their current forms can promote public enlightenment, participation, debate and identity enhancement in the community they address or whether they might contribute to further ghettoisation of the communities in question.' Tsagarousianou, in her evaluation of the Asian and Cypriot community media in the UK, maintained that ethnic community media, which was chiefly concerned with meeting the informational needs of the local community, was increasingly transforming into diasporic media, thereby taking on a

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<sup>43</sup> See Robins and Aksoy (2003; 2005) for its critique.

‘double role’ in the ‘definition’ and ‘redefinition’ of the community. This ‘double role’ of the minority/diasporic media, especially in terms of media production, is a key relationship that highlights the dynamics between local and the global, or particularistic and the universal.

As Georgiou (2005: 482-483) similarly remarked, the study of diasporic media is a key arena in which to uncover the relationship between the ‘recognition of particularity’ and ‘respect for universalistic values of democracy and communication across Europe’. In this respect, she expressed the need to examine the ‘continuities and interdependencies between diasporic, national and local cultures and minority and majority media’ because, as she put it, they addressed their audiences both in their particularity and universality.

Indeed, diasporic/minority media have traditionally been placed in the category of particularistic media, which attempt to keep a balance between universalistic appeals on one side and community based expectations on the other. Reflections on the dilemma between the universal and the particular, and the double role of minority media, were also invoked by Daniel Dayan in earlier treatments of diasporic media. Dayan (1999) identified two problems with the role and function of the minoritarian or particularistic media. The first problem relates to identity formation and maintenance because these groups are exposed to messages and images that are produced by a generalist media, and therefore reflect the experiences and interests of the majorities.

The second problem is related to choosing between different versions of identity that are offered by the particularistic media. According to Dayan, particularistic media offered ‘competing’ versions of a group’s identity that may emanate differently in different national contexts and may or may not be reactionary to universalism. Consequently, Dayan suggested that in considering the particularising impact of the minority media vis-à-vis the national public sphere, ‘continuities between the majority and the minority media’ should be taken into account, as these might indicate a permeable relationship between the minority public sphere and the larger

public sphere. Dayan's remarks resonate with the concerns that have been raised about cultural ghettoisation and the acculturation of minorities. However, his reflections are particularly pertinent to this research project, because in referring to particularistic media and 'fragile' communities, Dayan makes a special reference to groups like the Jewish, Armenian and Kurdish diasporas. He argues that studying particularistic media in such fragile communities becomes particularly important because such media not only link dispersed groups but they also act as 'instruments of survival for endangered cultures'. This aspect of minority media will be taken up in the following chapters in relation to the transformation of the non-Muslim minority media in Turkey.

The survival of fragile group language and identity via particularistic media not only relates to the number of speakers and the population as suggested by Cormack (1998), but is also tied in with the 'multicultural strategies of the state' (Riggins, 1992). Therefore, as Husband (2005: 467) has suggested, any assessment of the conditions of existence for minority media must also address the conditions that relate to the specific condition of the minority itself, as well as its place in the 'socio-political fabric of the larger society' and how they related to power relations in the social context.

Although the needs of national minorities and immigrant groups within the dominant culture and national communicative space might differ from each other, it is possible to suggest that they share similar concerns in terms of their efforts for recognition and the survival of their cultural identity. Hence, both of these efforts as reflected in particularistic media can be seen as an intervention in the public sphere and part of a participatory democracy. The efforts of national or historical minorities in Wales and Catalonia for recognition of their identities were embedded in historical struggles, which in the 1990s were supported by the European Union. However, as Hourigan (2007: 251-52) expressed, it has not been possible to observe the same level of support for immigrant minority languages in education and media in European policies. The reasons of this can be found in the different approaches to integration

and social cohesion and multicultural policies implemented in various European countries.

In this regard, as we argued at the beginning of this chapter, analysis of minority media practices should consider key dilemmas about national culture and identity that cut across both sub-national and historical minorities as well as diasporic groups. Indeed, such an approach is of particular importance for the analysis of the media that cater for the groups under discussion in this thesis. Non-Muslims are officially recognised as national minorities yet defining Kurdish cultural identity is more complex. Furthermore, both non-Muslims and the Kurds are also considered to be a part of diasporic groups (Dayan, 1998; O'Neil, 2007). Therefore, in considering the minority media in Turkey, I refer to the literature in both diasporic and national minority media as useful starting points for thinking about the complexities of minority media and the mediation of cultural identities. As stated previously in this thesis the term 'minority media' and 'particularistic media' are used interchangeably as analytical categories. Minority media as a general category encompasses media such as 'alternative', 'ethnic' or 'religious' that also fall outside the 'mainstream' (Rigoni, 2005). Under this definition, non-Muslim minority media is a prime example of 'minority media'. The local Kurdish media that falls outside the mainstream national media can also be seen as displaying similarities with ethnic or minority media in its generic formulation. However, programs in Kurdish have first been introduced on TRT as window programs within the national media system. Furthermore, the dispute over the definition of Kurdish identity continues to complicate the issue. Although, as mentioned previously, sociologically Kurds can be considered as an ethnic minority, this is deemed to be controversial both in terms of Kurds' self identification and for the official definition of 'minorities'. In this light the use of the term particularistic media might be useful because firstly, it refers to media that target a particular ethnic or language group; secondly, it has been used in special reference to traditional diasporic communities such as Armenians, Kurds and the Jews; and finally, it allows us to explain the complexities of the Turkish case and helps to address the controversy over terminologies that pertain to minorities.

As the data analysis chapters will show in more detail, the national framework in Turkey is significantly influential in the performance of these media outlets. In this respect, the ‘prevailing ideology of the state’ (Riggins, 1992) and the political culture in Turkey also emerge as points of departure to consider the mediation of cultural identities through different media outlets. In this light, the media structure in a given country, as well as the relationship, continuities and discontinuities between majority and minority media cultures becomes central to the analysis of minority media practices.

## **Conclusion**

At the beginning of the chapter the relationship between media and nation was discussed in relation to print media and broadcasting, which was instrumental in the creation of a sense of belonging and cohesion among citizens. National public service broadcasting systems were attributed a special role in the creation of a robust political and cultural identity for citizens as well as providing them with equal access to the formation of the public opinion. This capacity was highlighted via the concept of the public sphere and public service broadcasting was considered to be the most appropriate system for its realisation. Such systems were able to ‘democratise’ communication for citizens that were divided along the lines of class or their location (Scannel, 1989). However, as Morley’s (2000) remarks suggested, the idea of a common public sphere also stimulated new questions about its capacity to reflect the diversity within a national symbolic space.

As the rest of the chapter demonstrated, the old relationship between media and nation, as implicated in the notion of a single common public sphere, was contested by a number of factors such as immigration, regionalisation, advances in new technologies and the growing impact of supra-national elements such as the EU within global governance. It was therefore suggested that, especially in relation to migrants, minority media experiences should be viewed outside of the national framework (Robins and Aksoy, 2005, 2003). This view is of use, but it might not be applicable to the entire diversity of minority media performance, especially in

contexts such as Turkey, where the discursive and legislative frameworks in relation to cultural diversity change slowly and the dominance of a national framework is still prevalent. In this regard, the Turkish example also brings forth another central dilemma in media studies, between those views which suggest the need to transcend the national framework, as put forward by Robins and Aksoy above, and those that continue to emphasize the significance of the national framework (Curran and Park, 2000) which is still deemed to be as principle organizing feature in the domain of media and culture. Therefore, in terms of minority media in Turkey, the national framework is still of relevance as a departure point for analysis.

A general conclusion that can be drawn from the review of literature in this chapter is that minority or diasporic/ethnic media practices are relevant for understanding issues of exclusion, inclusion, democracy, participation, and survival, as well as the wider dilemmas about accommodating diversity within the national culture and efforts to prevent its dissolution at the same time.

Hence, one fruitful way to explore these dilemmas especially in contexts such as Turkey, would be to conceptualise them in terms of the relationship between media and citizenship. Therefore, the next chapter considers the citizenship practices in Turkey in order to grasp the dynamics at work in the recognition of diversity in Turkey.

## Chapter 3

# National Identity Formation Minorities and Citizenship Practices in Turkey

### Introduction

In the previous chapter the global dynamics and pressures that disturbed the ‘old’ relationship between nation and mediated communication were discussed and the developments in regional, minority and/or diasporic media that operate in Europe were reviewed. It demonstrated that the mediation of cultural identities and the performance of minority/diasporic media pertained to wider dilemmas about the citizenship regime in a given society and its ability to accommodate<sup>44</sup> and acknowledge diversity in the national culture. These dilemmas were accentuated by processes of economic and cultural globalisation, the significance of human rights regimes and the increasing influence of new forms of supranational governance such as the European Union, and were labelled as post-national challenges to citizenship. The main premise of this chapter is that these processes are also central to understanding the changing citizenship regime in Turkey and are implicated in the transformation of the particularistic media.

The media that belonged to different ethnic or minority groups in Turkey can be traced back to the late Ottoman period within which publications in different languages of the various millets were possible in the multi-lingual setting. They especially flourished along with the Turkish newspapers during what is known as the Tanzimat Reform (1839-1876) period. This period saw the influence of European institutions and ideas such as secularism, liberalism and nationalism, leading to the transformation of the state apparatus as well as the social structure (Zürcher, 1998).

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<sup>44</sup> Shachar (2000:65) states that, ‘[I]n the multicultural context, ‘accommodation’ refers to a wide range of state measures designed to facilitate identity groups’ practices and norms.’

In this regard, the Tanzimat reforms of the Ottoman period are considered to be the first attempt at modernisation in Turkey and, as mentioned in Chapter 1, were in line with similar developments in South-Eastern Europe, where modernisation was associated with adapting Western norms, or Western Europeanisation (Featherstone and Kazamias, 2001).

The modernisation efforts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century sought to preserve the diverse, multi-faith and multi-lingual structure of the Empire by granting equal rights to all its elements, but could not prevent its dissolution at the end of the First World War. When the Republic of Turkey emerged in 1923 in its place, it continued with the modernisation project in a more controlled, strict 'authoritarian' and 'dirigiste' way (Sofos, 2001). The reasons for this more dirigiste form of modernisation need to be contextualised in terms of the traumatic transition from a multi-faith, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Empire into a secular and putatively ethnically homogeneous nation state, because the traces of this traumatic experience continue to shape the collective memory and perceptions of cultural differences and minorities in Turkey.

Hence, this chapter accounts for how national identity and citizenship practices have been formed, contested and re-defined in Turkey in order to shed light on the factors that have shaped the expression of cultural identities in the public realm and media. In doing so, this chapter addresses some of the key research questions as outlined in Chapter 1 which aim to explore the internal and external dynamics and factors that influence the mediation of cultural identities. This chapter argues that the recognition of diversity in Turkey has often been too costly to be accommodated in the national ethos. Consequently, the relationship between the state and minorities has reflected an uneasy tension that has changed according to the domestic as well as international political climate. These dynamics in turn have been seminal in shaping the limits of expressions of cultural identities in the public realm in general, and through media in particular. In order to account for these processes, this chapter first briefly looks at early attempts at modernisation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and then moves on to examine events that shaped the citizenship regime and minority relations in Republican Turkey.

## **Turkish Modernisation/Westernisation: an Overview**

The Ottoman Empire constituted one of ‘the most advanced examples of pre-modernity and pre-industrialised empires’ within which the transformative effects of modernity on its complex structure have been slow and long-lasting processes (Tekeli, 2002). The Turkish modernity which has been taking shape over three centuries has been full of ‘divergences, dilemmas and tensions’ (Kaliber, 2002: 107) and continues to be relevant not only for questions of ‘identity’ in Turkey but also for questions of identity in Europe in general.

Westernisation, the ‘approach that aims to reach the societal and ideological composition of Western Europe’ (Mardin, 1991: 9), constitutes the conceptual and ideological framework within which modernity is experienced in Turkey. It has first emerged as a practice in Ottoman and Russian empires in the early 18<sup>th</sup> and late 17<sup>th</sup> centuries respectively (Belge, 2002). In the Turkish context the concept has been used synonymously with modernisation (Kocabaşoğlu, 2002) or more specifically is considered to be the ‘constitutive element of modernity’ (Kahraman, 2002: 125).

In terms of Turkey’s modernisation/westernisation, scholars distinguished different periods, but there exists a general consensus that it began with the Tanzimat reforms which were introduced in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Kocabaşoğlu, 2002; Tunaya, 2004; Mardin 1991; Kahraman, 2002; 2005 and 2007; Tekeli, 2002).

A useful periodisation of Westernisation is found in Kahraman’s (2005: 84) analysis, which discerns three broad time frames that are relevant to our discussion here. Accordingly, the first period dates back to the late Ottoman era while the second period marked the transition to a nation-state. The final stage constitutes the period after the 1990s, within which Westernisation is understood as ‘Europeanisation’. This pertains to the following discussions of rights and citizenship in this chapter because it is in this final stage that the term ‘is referred [to] as a source for the process of democratisation’.

In the first period of Westernisation the emphasis was laid upon the introduction of Western military institutions in the Empire in order to modernise and enhance its

military power. Although the Ottoman Empire has always been in contact with so-called 'Western Civilisation', following the West as a 'model' had not initially been a concern because, especially during its high era, the Empire was seen to be 'superior' to the West. However, the decline that began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century led to a change in this perception (Mardin, 1991: 9-10). In this period modernisation did not involve a change in the social structure (Mardin, 1991; Tekeli, 2002). Even in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century it neither included sentiments of 'national awakening' of Turkishness nor any particular political interest in achieving national sovereignty<sup>45</sup>. Western ideologies began to infiltrate the society after 1876 when the first constitution was promulgated (Mardin, 1991; Tekeli, 2002).

During the second stage, which began in 1908 with the Young Turk period, there emerged a more systematic attempt to engage with the notion of Westernisation and ideologies such as nationalism. In fact, for some scholars who study Turkish modernisation, this affirms the 'continuity' between the Young Turk and Republican era, which is in contrast with the general tendency to consider the latter as a complete 'break' from the old regime<sup>46</sup>. The ideology of 'nationalism' was examined by the main social scientist of the Young Turks, Ziya Gökalp, who attempted to offer a solution for the dilemmas represented by Westernisation by suggesting a 'mid way or synthesis between Westernism and Turkism' (Sofos and Özkırımlı, 2008; Kahraman, 2005: 74-75)<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> In the Ottoman Empire, religion, rather than ethnicity and language constituted the principle 'marker' of identity. Therefore the emergence of Turkish nationalism was a 'late comer' ideology in the Empire, which was contrary to growing national consciousness in the Balkans in this period (Sofos and Özkırımlı, 2008:16).

<sup>46</sup> The classic text that argues that the foundation of the Republic represents a break with the old regime belongs to Bernard Lewis. The continuation thesis is strongly propagated by Eric Jan Zürcher who extends the Young Turk era from 1908 until 1950. Kahraman (2007) takes this a step further and argues that the second state of westernisation begins in 1908, continues through 1923 and ends in 1980. The post-1990 period represents the final and third stage of Westernisation.

<sup>47</sup> Gökalp's understanding of nation was not based on ethnicity, race or geography. It rather was seen 'as a group composed of men and women who had gone through the same education, who received the same acquisitions in language, religion, morality and aesthetics' (Sofos and Özkırımlı, 2008:34-35).

Gökalp distinguished ‘West as technology’ from ‘West as ideology’. The former did not present problems because it was considered to be universal (Kahraman, 2005). In terms of the latter, Gökalp distinguished between its universal and national aspects, which were incorporated into his terminology as nuances between ‘civilisation’ (medeniyet) and ‘culture’ (hars) respectively. According to Gökalp, the technology of the West could be acquired without losing the moral values that were provided by religion and national culture (Sofos and Özkırmı, 2008).

Gökalp’s thinking was later influential in the emerging nationalist ideology. As Kahraman (2005: 75) states, in Kemalist thinking the West has been conceived both as ‘a technological source to be used’ and as an ‘ideal civilisation’ to be reached. Hence, in the post-1923 period, the meaning of Westernisation shifted from ‘saving the state against the West’ to ‘becoming the primary ideology of the new state which foresees modernisation as part of becoming a member of the Western family’ (Kaliber, 2002: 107).

Earlier attempts to understand experiences of modernity on non-Western milieus came under modernisation theories which were concerned with establishing a model for the successful transition of states from a traditional to a modern society and their integration into the international order with an ‘acceptable national society formation’ (Robertson, 1992). This understanding of modernity ‘unproblematically’ associated the modern with the West (King, 1995) because modernity was deemed to result from a set of Western social formations and institutions with the state as the major driving force behind it (Giddens, 1990). Such a predominant understanding of modernisation<sup>48</sup> has also been applied in the analyses of social change in the Middle East and Turkey (Kandiyoti, 2002)<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> Following the end of the Second World War the term ‘Westernisation’ was replaced with the term modernisation (Kocabaşoğlu, 2002).

<sup>49</sup> There are three dominant paradigms that have problematised Turkish modernisation: political or the state-bureaucracy centric model; economic or political-economy centric and the sociological or identity centric explanations of modernisation (Kaliber, 2002; Keyman, 2001). Despite

Turkey's emergence in the international order in 1923 as a modern, secular republic among the predominantly Muslim states was also interpreted through the *modernisation* theories in the 1950s and 1960s. In the works of Bernard Lewis and David Lerner, Turkish modernisation was celebrated as a 'Western inspired', 'elite led' and 'consensus based' form of successful modernisation (Kasaba and Bozdoğan, 1997: 2). Hence, Turkey was considered as an exemplary model of universally defined modernisation and it was believed to signify that 'modernity as a project' would be possible even in Muslim countries.

In the period that followed the de-colonisation of former British, Dutch or French Empires modernisation theories were re-visited under the premise of post-colonial studies or approaches which focused on the 'formative colonial encounters in the shaping of national cultures and nation-states' (Kandiyoti, 2002: 3). Post-colonial approaches initially took issue with the nation building process and the role of state in development in the Third World countries. Although they offered a critique of earlier modernisation theories, they still shared similar concerns such as eliminating 'cultural backwardness' and 'institutionalising the universalising practices of rationalistic modernity' in the new nation states (Robotham, 2000)<sup>50</sup>.

In the 1980s the post-colonial critique took a different perspective. Although the 'centrality of the colonial experience' was still emphasised, the 'psychological and cultural dimensions of colonialism' were also brought into debate and the focus shifted from the economic/political dimension towards cultural and personal experiences (Dirlik, 2002: 431,442). The new understanding of the term post-

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their differences, they affirm the 'basic parameters of modernisation paradigm and attribute a privileged status to the state and bureaucratic institutions.

<sup>50</sup> Robotham (2000:90-91) here refers to the so-called 'post-colonial dilemma' that is the ways in which, in their attempt to overcome colonialism, developing countries were 'trapped' in the Western discourses and notions such as citizenship, nationhood, democracy. As Robotham states, the 'inability to escape Westernisation even at the moment of deepest critique lay at the heart of the post-colonial dilemma'.

colonial also reflected more ‘epistemological’ rather than ‘sociological’ concerns (Robotham, 2000: 90).

One of the key texts that inspired post-colonial studies was Edward Said’s *Orientalism* in which Said (1978: 2) defined the concept as ‘an intellectual attitude revolving around an epistemological and ontological dichotomy between the orient (the East) and the occident (the West)’. However, approaching Ottoman and/or Turkish experience of modernisation through Orientalism or post-colonial inquiry has remained insufficient and ambivalent both in Turkey and within the wider literature (Ahiska, 2005).

Firstly, as Keyder (2005: 12) explains, contrary to the ‘anti-colonial’ sentiments that shaped Third World nationalisms, Turkish nationalism ‘did not exhibit an anti-Western nativism’ and aimed to ‘locate’ the Turkish experience in the already established parameters of Western modernity, rather than challenging it. Therefore, modernisation theories were acceptable for the Turkish reformers who ‘saw their society as backward, but not essentially different’. Furthermore, the modernisation paradigm continued to be dominant and treated Turkey as a ‘unique’ experience or formation in terms of its ‘religion, state formation, pattern of nationalism and diverse style of modernity’ both in the Muslim world at large and Eastern Europe (Gellner, 1997: 123). Also, although some references have been made to 19<sup>th</sup> century westernisation and modernisation, ‘orientalism’ in Turkey has not been acknowledged as a problem and the debates on Turkish experience from this perspective have remained ‘ambivalent’ (Mutman, 2002: 194). Ahiska (2005) for instance draws attention to the way in which Said has ignored the Ottoman period in *Orientalism* precisely because it does not ‘suit’ the binary oppositions between the ‘Orient and the ‘Occident’<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> Ahiska (2003:353) utilises ‘Occidentalism’ as a useful term to understand the problems of the ‘boundary of East-West divide’ and argues that in theorising Turkish modernity ‘we can neither unproblematically herald the Western model nor dismiss the fantasy of the “the West”’. Acknowledging that the post-colonial critics have not really been interested in the Turkish example, Ahiska still maintains that new approaches to the Turkish experience can benefit from a critical

Although questions of colonialism might still be relevant to the struggles and marginalisation of peoples such as the Kurds and Palestinians<sup>52</sup>, the colonial legacy is ‘no longer a major force shaping the world’ (Dirlik, 2003: 439). Post-colonial approaches have also been criticised for ignoring the political economy of social change in the developing world, for ‘looking back’ and not being able to address the contemporary transformations that are taking place as a result of global capitalism (Dirlik, 2003; Robotham, 2000).

Nonetheless, the critique of modernisation in non-Western contexts that was inspired by post-colonial approaches was later evidenced in countries such as Turkey and Iran, which historically have not been colonised (Kandiyoti, 2002). For some, this has lifted the ‘burden’ of colonialism on discussions of modernity and opened possibilities of inquiry for such countries (Ahıska, 2003: 360).

Furthermore, in the post-cold War period the terminology in debates and analysis of modernity and social change shifted from modernisation to ‘globalisation’ (Kocabaşoğlu, 2002: 15) and new perspectives and terminologies such as ‘non-Western’ or ‘alternative’ modernities emerged in discussions of globalisation (Keyman, 2001: 9-11).

In fact, the so-called ‘crisis’<sup>53</sup> of Turkish modernisation that began in the 1980s and accelerated in the 1990s has been instrumental in bringing forth discussions of ‘non-Western’ or ‘alternative’ experiences of modernity in the Turkish context (Göle, 1999, Öniş, 2006; Keyman, 2007).

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engagement with post-colonial readings as well as notions of Orientalism and Occidentalism. In an attempt to utilise this conceptual framework Ahıska (2005) develops this line of thinking in a detailed study of the early years of radio in Turkey.

<sup>52</sup> For a very rare and recent example which utilises post-colonial and feminist theories to analyse the economic development in South-Eastern Turkey see Harris (2008).

<sup>53</sup> Keyman (2002:92) argues that the so-called ‘crisis of modernity’ that began in the 1980s and crystallised in the 1990s refers to ‘the crisis of representation and governance of the state tradition on Turkey. The term ‘crisis’ is used to refer to the questioning of ‘the process of modernisation in Turkey in light of contemporary problems that pertain to human rights, citizenship, economic inequality, rising ethno-nationalism and religious fundamentalism in Turkey (Keyman, 2001:11).

Non-Western and/or alternative modernities have emphasized both the ‘specificity of local experiences and inescapability of global modernity’ and proposed a ‘context’ or ‘site-specific’ reading which could capture the ‘multi-directional path’ of global modernity, that is ‘both globalising and localising’ (Göle, 1999: 143; Gaonkar, 1999)<sup>54</sup>.

On a broader comparative level, Turkey has been considered as an ‘interesting example’ in terms of ‘alternative modernity’ because its model of modernisation facilitated the co-existence of principals of democracy and secularism in a predominantly Muslim population. Furthermore, this has reinforced the long-existing claims that Turkey can act as a ‘bridge’ between the East and the West, gaining exceptional significance in the post September 11 period (Keyman, 2007; Öniş, 2006). However, as Öniş (2006: 21) explains, Turkey’s ‘value for alternative modernity’ was limited due to criticisms coming from both the East and the West. Whilst, as he states, Turkey’s ‘European’ values have been criticised due to its lack of progress in areas of human rights vis-à-vis European standards, the authoritarian regimes in the Islamic world also kept their distance from Turkey.

In the domestic level, alternative modernity as a notion referred to the ways in which ‘state-centric’ and hegemonic model of modernisation have been critiqued (Keyman, 2002). In fact, the questioning of Turkish experience of modernity in the 1990s has also coincided with what is now seen as the third and final stage of Turkish westernisation (Kahraman, 2005). Here, ‘Westernisation’ is considered to have ‘re-emerged’ as a crucial concept in terms of Turkey’s increasing integration with the European Union and its responses to contemporary globalisation (Kahraman, 2002; Ahıska, 2002). Whilst the first and second period of Westernisation did not include ‘democracy’ as part of modernisation, in its current stage Westernisation is taken to mean ‘European integration’ and offers the potential to make Turkey more democratic, free and humane (Çiğdem, 2002: 81; Kahraman, 2005). In terms of this thesis, as the following discussion will reveal in more detail, the significance of

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<sup>54</sup> Göle provides ‘excess’ secularism in Turkey as well as the Islamic experiences of modernity as good examples of non-Western experiences of modernity.

current stage of Europeanisation or Westernisation lies in its role giving ‘legitimacy to the recent politics of difference, identity and recognition’ (Kahraman, 2005: 85).

This chapter focuses on the formation and transformation of citizenship in Turkey and sets the ground for proceeding discussions with respect to its implications for the mediation of cultural identities. The notion of alternative modernity could constitute a fruitful starting point for discussion because of its emphasis on a site-based reading of the relationship between local and the global transformations. But a broader context is nonetheless provided by globalisation because, as Keyman (2002) states, the debates on alternative models within Turkish modernity have also emerged in this context. Therefore, this chapter takes the view that focussing on globalisation in the following sections can offer a much more dynamic understanding compared to the previously discussed mainstream modernisation theories, Orientalism or post-colonial approaches.

The debates on modernity became more acute after the relationships between social actors in the modern world began to change, eroding the ‘old logic of identity’ - i.e. the principles which had previously organised the collective social identities of class, race, nation, gender (Hall, 1991). The changes in these relationships were accentuated by the processes of globalisation that, as King (1996: 22) has argued, brought the ‘notion of a national formation, of a national economy which could be represented through a national cultural identity under considerable pressure’. Indeed, the belief in the notion of the nation state as the ‘normative basis of human organisation’ and national culture as ‘humanity’s final goal and attribute’ was destroyed after the developments following the Second World War (Smith, 1990).

This relationship between globalisation and modernity is also pertinent to the understanding of Turkish modernisation because, as Kandiyoti (2002: 4) maintains, these complexities emerged as a result of the trans-border circulation of peoples, ideas and communications. Such factors induced the displacement of the ‘modern/traditional binary framework’ in favour of a ‘global/local’ discourse with globalisation as a central analytical category.

There is a vast literature on globalisation and the concept is usually used to refer to the intensification of interconnectedness and the stretching of social relations across national borders through the increasing flow of images, ideas, people, and networks. For instance, Held (2004: 15) identifies regionalisation, intensification of flows, increasing penetration of different cultures, impact of transnational organisations like the UN, WTO and the spread of information technologies as key phenomena signifying the impact of globalisation. The rich literature on globalisation includes many different perspectives on its causes and consequences and its impact on the nation state (Giddens, 1990; Robertson, 1992, Held et al., 1999; Featherstone, 1990; Tomlinson, 1999).

For Robertson, (1992) the national society formation established between 1870-1920 was challenged at the end of the Cold war period due to the prominence global civil society and transnational organisations had gained in the interstate system. This was also the period in which conflicting ideologies such as nationalism, cosmopolitanism, human rights and fundamentalism made their presence felt in the global structure (Rantanen, 2005: 21)<sup>55</sup>. Modern globalisation lasted from 1850 to 1945 (Held et al, 1999).

Turkey's involvement in the modern globalizing processes of Held's time-frame, can be traced from the 1800s to the late Ottoman period. In this period, countries like Turkey and Japan, which escaped direct colonisation, had to modernise in order to gain entry into the international system due to the European domination (Held et al., 1999).

Contemporary globalisation refers to the developments after 1945 that are qualitatively different from earlier epochs due to the confluence of globalisation in other realms such as politics, culture, migration, economics and innovations in communication technologies. For Held, the paradox of the contemporary era lies in the growing globalisation of networks that exist along with the 'sovereign territorial

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<sup>55</sup> Rantanen (2005) names this period as the 'antagonism' period of globalisation.

state' as the universal form of human political organisation (Held et al, 1999: 425). In recent discussions of contemporary forms of globalisation the importance of 'place', 'meaning' and 'scale' of the national have been highlighted because the interaction between the global and the national is deemed to create a set of new negotiations and responses between the two dynamics (Sassen, 2007).

In the Turkish context, the state was the major force behind the modernisation process during the early Republican period (1923-1950) and implemented a number of cultural, economic and sometimes coercive measures to facilitate the social integration. Following the post-1945 transition to a multi-party political system - due to the rise of Leftist ideologies and increasing social democratic demands (Derviş et al 2004) - the basic tenets of state-led modernisation began to be seriously scrutinised and questioned.

This was also the period when Turkey became a part of the emerging 'global governance' (Nash, 2000: 54-55) regime after World War II. This regime was institutionalised by the creation of a number of international organisations such as the UN, Council of Europe, CSCE (later OSCE), and the IMF in order to maintain stability and economic and political co-operation between nation states. As Held (1995: 83-84) maintains, the new order put the Westphalian order, which legitimised the nation state's sovereignty, under scrutiny in three interrelated areas. Firstly, single persons and groups became subjects of international law in documents such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), the *European Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (1950) and the *Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966). Secondly, the scope of international law expanded to cover economic, social and environmental matters as manifested in the establishment of organisations such as the IMF and World Bank. Lastly, the doctrine that emphasised the consent of the state as the source of international law was challenged. In this way, many sources of international law sought for recognition in the forms of different treaties, conventions as well as the 'will of the international community'

The transition to the UN system did not totally displace the old order, but as Held argues elsewhere, it signified a shift from a territorially based political community to an ‘internationalization and transnationalization of politics, the deterritorialization of aspects of political decision making pertinent to states, the development of regional and global law and a multilayered system of global governance’ (Held et al, 1999: 77).

Turkey’s responses to such transformation are still ambivalent. Turkey is considered to be open to economic aspects of globalisation, but a certain degree of reluctance towards the cultural aspects have been observed (Kasaba and Bozdoğan, 1997). In the process of building a modern nation state after 1923, the elements of the diverse Ottoman heritage, such as the Kurds and non-Muslims, were seen as the misfits or the ‘other’ by the modernisation project (Özbudun, 1998; Şahin, 2005; Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997) The state-led modernisation project did not lead to the development of the individual autonomy of legal rights (Keyder, 1997) and Turkey’s responses to developments in global governance, especially in the areas of human rights and protection of minorities, have stayed within the limited interpretations of the provisions of its founding Lausanne Treaty of 1923.

At the beginning of the 1980s the transition to a liberal market economy started to take place and Turkey’s integration with world markets accelerated. This period is considered to represent a ‘turning point’ in state-society relations in Turkey because, as Göle (1994: 221) expresses, westernisation - i.e. ‘the state induced modernizing movement’ which began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century - ‘virtually came to an end’ as the dominant political paradigm. The public assertions of particularistic ethnic and religious identities, which were previously confined to the private realm as a result of modernisation, also coincided with this period. That is why, as some argued at the beginning of 1980s, Turkey was a ground on which ‘old and new’, ‘Turk and Kurd’, ‘Islamist and secular’, ‘rural and urban’ were in constant struggle and turmoil (Kasaba and Bozdoğan, 1997: 13).

The negotiation and contestation of cultural identities in Turkey became more

visible, comprehensive and 'radical' in the 1990s when various social actors, from liberals to Muslim intellectuals, openly contested the Republican doctrines as 'top-down', 'anti-democratic' and 'patriarchal' (Kasaba and Bozdoğan, 1997: 2-3) Such claims, as many scholars have observed, destabilised established notions of citizenship and national identity and the 'modernity' that was being propagated by the Republic. For some, therefore, it indicated a 'representation and legitimacy crisis' for Turkish modernisation (Keyman, 2005; Baban, 2005; Kahraman, 2005). Even after Turkey's candidacy to the European Union, disputes between the pro-European liberal elites and traditional Republican elites in relation to further democratisation and pluralism raised similar concerns as to whether Turkey was 'resisting globalisation' (Rumford, 2003). Tensions over the visibility and expression of cultural identities in the public realm have become more acute during the Europeanisation reform period, which began following the 1999 Helsinki summit when Turkey became a candidate to the European Union.

As stated previously the current efforts of European integration is significant for the ways in which it is offering 'legitimacy' to politics of identity. Whilst the following chapters attempt to discuss its potential to transform the mediation of cultural identities in Turkey, this chapter aims to offer an account of the historical development of the events that shaped the citizenship regime and minority relations in both Ottoman and Republican periods. Therefore, it first considers late Ottoman and early Republican periods and the latter sections of the chapter discuss post-Cold War developments and the impact of Europeanisation reforms on the protection of minorities.

### **Late Ottoman Period and Changing Structure of Ottoman Membership**

Turkey's 'entry to modernity' was due to pressures of modernity that were felt as a 'sudden external threat' that emerged in the form of 'imposed and externally induced modernization' (Therborn, 1990: 132). The process of modernisation began in 1839 with the Tanzimat Reforms (Reformation, 1839-1876), gained ground with the

constitutional movements of 1876 and 1908, and culminated in the establishment of the Republic in 1923.

The Tanzimat Reforms of the first wave of Westernisation/modernisation were significant in terms of two major developments within the political and social structure, both of which are relevant to this analysis. Firstly, new innovations emerged in communication systems and educational standards, and secondly, Ottoman membership was re-configured in order to establish equality among all subjects. It was in this period that mass media, the postal system and modern higher education institutions, such as military and medicine schools, emerged. Furthermore, the first Turkish embassies were formed in Europe and students were sent abroad for further education. Consequently, new elite- comprised of bureaucrats, army officers, and journalists - emerged in the social structure that later had a growing influence on the modernisation of the state (Lewis, 1961).

Secondly, the minority media produced by various millets in the Empire also flourished in the Tanzimat period. For example, the first Armenian newspaper was a version of the official gazette *Takvim-i Vekayi* (1831), published under the name *Liro Kir* in Istanbul, and the first Kurdish newspaper, *Kürdistan*, emerged in 1898 in Cairo (Topuz, 2003). At a later stage, the new medium of newspaper was used in the dissemination of new concepts and ideologies among the Turkish millet. For instance, a group of civil servants, the Young Ottomans, initiated their own newspapers in the early 1860s where they introduced new concepts like ‘public opinion’, ‘freedom’, ‘fatherland’, ‘Turk’, ‘community’, and ‘nation’, terms which became influential in the creation of the first constitutional order (Mardin, 1962: 326-327)<sup>56</sup> The first wave of modernization had two aims: achieving a constitutional monarchy and granting equal rights to non-Muslims under the premises of Ottomanism.

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<sup>56</sup> Anderson (1983) maintains that the seeds of Turkish nationalism were emanating from these pioneering newspapers.

In relation to Ottoman membership, four basic reforms particularly related to the non-Muslim millet in the Empire. These introduced security of life, honour and property of the subject, the abolition of tax farming, regular orderly recruitment to the armed forces, fair and public trial, and the equality of all people of all religions in the application of these laws (Lewis, 1961; Zürcher, 1998).

This particular reform, which considers all subjects - Muslims and non-Muslims - as equal citizens in law, signified a pivotal shift from the *millet system* as the basis of political and social organisation for the multi-ethnic empire. In an attempt to establish equality while maintaining the official ideology of Ottomanism, which aimed to keep all the diverse elements under a common identity, the first legal regulation regarding Ottoman membership<sup>57</sup> was introduced in 1869 and regarded those born to Ottoman parents, as ‘Ottomans’ (İçduygu et al, 1999: 193). However, granting equal rights to all subjects was met with resentment<sup>58</sup> and the changes were perceived to be ‘external interference’ by the Christian West in the world of Islam. Furthermore, it also did not prevent the proliferation of nationalistic ideas among different *millets* across the Empire that eventually led to its dissolution (Zürcher, 1998; Zürcher, 1984)

The first constitution, introduced in 1876, was short lived. The new organisation of Ottoman membership could not offer a remedy to the diffusion of nationalism in the Western provinces and the accelerating tensions were settled at the 1878 Berlin Congress<sup>59</sup>, through which the Empire lost one third of its territory and 20% of its

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<sup>57</sup> The regulation did not employ the concept of citizenship, but something more like an Ottoman subject. Ottomanism was one of the three competing ideologies – also including Turkism and Islamism – that were taken up by the political elite in their quest to prevent the decline of the Empire (Lewis, 1961; Ahmad, 1993; Özkırımlı and Sofos, 2008).

<sup>58</sup> According to Lewis, changing the millet system was the most radical infringement of the Islamic tradition because tradition and Islamic law allowed tolerance and protection for non-Muslims residing in a Muslim state. However, this tolerance was based on the assumption that the ‘tolerated communities were separate and inferior, and were moreover clearly marked as such’ (Lewis 1961:105).

<sup>59</sup> Preece (1997) argued that the Berlin Congress was one of the most significant international attempts in minority protection before the end of First World War, but it also signified the beginning

population, especially in the European provinces<sup>60</sup> (Zürcher, 1998). In the aftermath of the Congress the constitution was suspended and an absolutist monarchy was declared. Although the constitutional regime was reinstated in 1908 due to the efforts of a group of civil and military bureaucratic elite - the Young Turks - the loss of the lands at the end of Balkan War in 1913 traumatised the ideal of an *Ottoman* identity (Ahmad, 1993: 39). Furthermore, as Berkes (1961) has expressed, a similar awakening among the non-Turkish Muslim elements dismantled the belief in the 'unity' of the Muslim nation, and made it evident that Ottomanism could no longer provide a base for belonging (Berkes, 1961). Hence the last attempt to maintain the 'multi-national unity' of the Ottoman Empire failed. The failure of reforms has been instrumental in the birth of idea of a nation states based on Turkish identity (Özkırımlı and Sofos, 2008).

### **The Formation of the Republic:**

#### The definition of minority rights and protection

In the turbulent final years of the Ottoman Empire the demographic make-up of the Empire changed dramatically. Following the aftermath of the 1878 Congress and the Balkan wars (1912-1913) the boundaries in the Balkans shifted continuously, creating a flux of Muslim refugees from these areas to Anatolia. In 1913 the ratio of Christian population in what is now the geographical area of Turkey was one in every five persons. This number dropped to one in forty at the end of 1923 (Keyder, 2005)<sup>61</sup>.

As Zürcher (1998) states, the consequences of demographic change were mostly felt in the cultural composition of society. As he explains, Anatolia was 80% Muslim

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of Western powers' involvement in the issues of minorities in the international treaties that preceded it.

<sup>60</sup> It included the lands in Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Thessalia, parts of Anatolia and Cyprus.

<sup>61</sup> For a detailed study on the minorities in the demographical censuses in Turkey see (Dündar, 1999).

before the wars and became 98% Muslim after them. The Armenian community<sup>62</sup> had shrunk to about 65,000 and the Greek community was down from around 2 million to 120,000. Apart from smaller groups - such as Greek, Armenian, and Syriac speaking Christians, Spanish speaking Jews, Circassian, Laz and Arabic-speaking Muslims - linguistically the only two large groups left were the Turks and the Kurds. The Ottoman Empire was defeated in the First World War and the empire collapsed in 1918 at the end of the war. In 1919, a national independence movement was initiated by officers in the army under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal.

In the aftermath of the First World War, when new nation states emerged out of the Ottoman, Habsburg and German empires, the League of Nations<sup>63</sup> formulated a series of minority treaties such as *Sevres* (1920) and *Lausanne* (1923) due to the diverse nature of the new states (Preece, 1997: 80-83). In this new setting, minority rights were expanded to include language rights and a minimal degree of cultural autonomy. Turkey was also a signatory to both these treaties.

The Treaty of Serves (1920) never came into force, but it is still associated with being divided and labelled as the *Sevres Syndrome* in the collective memory. According to Sevres, the Empire would shrink into a small state with Istanbul as capital, an independent Armenia and the creation of an autonomous Kurdistan in eastern Anatolia. Italy and Greece would have acquired lands in coastal areas with Britain and France allowed to establish colonies in Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and modern Iraq (Zürcher, 1998). The treaty had a traumatic effect on the Turks and led to the perception of minority issues as an instrument of ‘ethnic dismemberment’ and ‘a pretext for external interference’, rather than emerging from principles of freedom

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<sup>62</sup> The mass deportation and killings of Armenians took place in 1915. Turkish and Armenian scholars as well as state officials hotly dispute the scale of events and the terms to employ in their description. For the Turkish part the official discourse defines the events as ‘mass deportation’ as a result of civil unrest. For the Armenian part the events amount to ‘genocide’. It is beyond the scope of this study to analyse the nature of the events that took place in 1915.

<sup>63</sup> The League of Nations was established at the Versailles Treaty at the end of the First World War. It had 63 members and aimed at the preservation of peace and security as well as encouraging social and economic cooperation (Held, 2004:85).

and equality (Soner, 2005: 292-293). As Soner rightly points out, failure to prevent the dissolution of Empire despite granting equal citizenship rights to its elements led to a general distrust, suspicion and hatred of minority claims in Turkey. This legacy was transferred to the Republican period. Indeed, Oran (2007: 50) considered 'Sevres syndrome' as one of the factors that affected the 'collective psyche' of the country by causing Turkey to be resistant to change, in spite of being party to other human rights mechanisms since its foundation.

Sevres was amended in the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, which became the founding treaty for the Turkish Republic. Although the League of Nations system does not exist today, Lausanne is a part of Turkey's national law, a part of its international political responsibility and it has at least the same force as the Constitution (Oran, 2007). It is also the principle organising text for the official definition of minorities, and Articles 37-45 are dedicated to minority protection (Kurban, 2004).

The treaty only recognised non-Muslims as official minorities and it gave Orthodox Greeks, Gregorian and Protestant Armenians and Jews positive measures in areas of education, religious practices and charitable foundations. However, it left the people in the Muslim millet, such as Kurds, Circasians, Bosnians, Roma and the Alevis (a heterodox sect of Islam), outside minority provisions and they were totalised 'under an imagined unity of national category' (Soner, 2005: 294).

The League of Nations system, of which Lausanne is a part, was deemed an early attempt to challenge state monopoly over sovereignty within international law, a question which is still at core of the debates around globalisation and its impact on the nation state (Holton, 1998: 86-88). It was replaced by the UN system after the Second World War due to its inefficiencies. However, as Preece (1997: 83-85) has argued, the League of Nations system was not applied equally for all the defeated powers such as Germany and remained limited to the Eastern European states. Furthermore, although it stayed in effect until 1934, it did not prevent the minority problems, and ensuing Second World War. The most dramatic impact of the League system for Greece and Turkey was the implementation of an Exchange of

Populations<sup>64</sup>, designed according to the Lausanne Peace Treaty. It changed the demographic make-up, in effect homogenising the population, in both countries. Although today it may qualify as forced migration, at the time the population exchange was not seen as against the basic tenets of human rights in this system. Indeed, as long as the borders in Europe did not change, the international society did not review the minority regime and there were no new minority rights provisions until the 1940s (Preece, 1997). Therefore, in the European context, whatever states did with their minorities and citizens until the end of the Second World War was considered to be a domestic matter.

In fact the principles of minority protection continued unchanged<sup>65</sup> throughout the Cold War, and were dramatically altered only after the 1990s. In this light, Oran (2007: 36) has maintained that the minority protection system in Turkey as stipulated by the Lausanne Treaty is ‘out of date’ and ‘out of sync’ with the rest of the world, yet it continues to shape the national framework for minority protection because Turkey’s involvement in other more contemporary human rights instruments (e.g. ICPPR, European Charter for Minority Languages) has been cautious and reluctant. The Lausanne Treaty, and the way its provisions were interpreted by the authorities, was put under scrutiny during the Europeanisation reforms when a Human Rights sub-committee under the Prime Ministry prepared a report, and it will be discussed in detail at the end of this chapter.

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<sup>64</sup> The exchange was provisioned by the Lausanne Treaty and, except for Greeks in Istanbul (Rum) and Turks in Western Thrace, the almost 900,000 Greek Orthodox of Anatolia were exchanged with about 400,000 Muslims from Greece. For a detailed political, social and cultural analysis of the Exchange see, among others, Hirschon (2002) and Clark (2006).

<sup>65</sup> As Preece (1997:88) has remarked, the only exception was the 1966 covenant on Civil and Political Rights that included a specific minority clause. However this provision still granted states the freedom to determine who would constitute a minority in their territories. Preece also maintains that the 1950 Convention on human rights did not contain a specific mention of minority rights either.

## **The Formation of National Identity and Citizenship: Turkey during the Early Republican Years**

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the state-led modernisation after the foundation of Republic was more radical compared to the efforts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Republican period was considered to be a ‘revolution of values’ (Mardin, 1971).

In the early Republican period when the new regime was trying to consolidate its power and hegemony, one of the most difficult tasks was to create a common, unified identity upon the diverse, albeit diminished, heritage that was inherited from the Empire. As Baban has maintained, the old millet system was seen as the source of the backwardness of society and the reason for the Empire’s decline, and therefore posed an obstacle for building a modern society. The principle of universal citizenship was seen as a panacea to overcome the ‘chaos of loyalties’ and facilitate social integration (Baban, 2005: 54-55). Therefore, the authorities assumed a strong relationship between national identity and citizenship (İçduygu and Keyman, 1998) and ignored sub-national differences, thus ‘marginalising’ traditional, Islamic, local and cultural symbols to the realm of the private sphere (Baban 2005; İçduygu et al, 1999).

The notion of modern citizenship is one of the elements of a ‘Western’ or ‘civic’ conception of ‘national identity’ along with the nation as a clearly defined territorial entity, incorporating a common culture and civic ideology which bind people together. In this model nations are considered to be ‘culture communities’ whose members are united around certain traditions, myths and symbols, even if they are not a homogenous group (Smith, 1991). According to Smith, the ‘ethnic component’ became a dominant factor in nations that emerged in Eastern Europe and Asia. In this non-western or ‘ethnic’ understanding of the nation, the emphasis was placed on a native culture and characteristics that are gained from birth. This basic difference in modern citizenship has been exemplified with reference to the German and the French models (Brubaker, 1992), whilst the former highlighted blood ties, the latter was based on a civic understanding of membership of the polity.

References to both ethnic and civil aspects have been noted in analyses of the evolution of the citizenship regime in Turkey (İçduygu and Keyman, 1998; İçduygu et al, 2000). As Yeğen (2005) observes, in these evaluations there seems to be a consensus on considering Turkish citizenship as ‘passive’, ‘republican’ and one that ‘colonizes the private sphere’. However, the consensus seems less consolidated on the ethnic/political divide.

The first constitution of the Republic (1924) stipulated citizenship for the first time and defined it thus: ‘without regard for their religious or ethnic origins, people living in Turkey were to be considered Turks regarding citizenship.’ (İçduygu et al., 1999: 193). However, the subsequent legislative measures indicated that non-Muslims whose status had been assured by the heritage of the millet system were considered to be the ‘other’ in nation building. According to Özbudun, the terms of the first constitution implied that ‘the non- Muslim minorities were granted the equal citizenship rights, but sociologically they were not considered as Turks’ (Özbudun, 1998: 154).

For instance, in analysing the legislations passed in Turkey in 1920s and 1930s, Çağaptay (2003: 614) identifies the emergence of religion as a strong component in determining who belonged to the polity. As he puts it:

Turkey granted citizenship not only to ethnic Turks, but also to Ottoman Muslims who immigrated to the country. Ankara even naturalised converted East-Central European Christians and Jews, Hellenic Greeks as well as Christian and Jewish White Russians. In these cases, race and ethnicity seemed unimportant. Nationality-through-religion emerged as the most common way of gaining Turkish citizenship. The government processed citizenship as a category exclusive to the former Muslim millet. This explains why, although Ankara naturalised non-Ottoman Christians who converted and joined this millet, it blocked off Christian ex-Ottomans, most notably the Armenians, from citizenship. Due to the legacy of the millet system Ankara saw these as a separate ethno-religious community outside the body of the Turkish nation. Hence, the heritage of the Ottoman Empire, and not race, determined whether these could acquire citizenship.

Amongst the Muslim components of the millet system, integration of the Kurdish communities has been the most complex process. As Bora (1996) has argued, the

war conditions did not allow a comprehensive democratic solution to the question of Muslim millets and the official ideology was rather nebulous in the formative years of the Republic. Indeed, in this period, official documents such as the *National Pact* (Milli Misak) refrained from using terms like ‘Turkishness’ (Türklük), ‘Turkish nation’, and ‘Turkish’. The emphasis was rather placed on the ‘ties of brotherhood’, ‘reciprocal respect and self-sacrifice’ and ‘the will to share the same destiny’ for all those elements of Islam that indicated a message of ‘unity in diversity’ in terms of cultural identities (Özbudun, 1998: 152-153). In the 1930s it was still believed that Kurds were ‘assimilable’ due to the commonality of religion and the legacy of the millet system. In fact, as long as Kurds conformed to the Turkish culture they were considered as ‘Turks’ (Gülalp, 2006: 3; Çağaptay, 2006). This is a crucial point in understanding the complexity of the Kurdish problem in Turkey.

As part of the Republican cultural revolution, the institution of the Caliphate, and its leadership of the Islamic world, was abolished in 1924. This was a binding religious symbol between the Muslim millet and its abolishment worsened the relationship between Turks and Kurds, marking the beginning of a series of successive rebellions against the state (Zürcher, 1998). Taking place between 1925-1938, these revolts were heavily suppressed by the state, and by 1939 the Turkish government had consolidated its power in the Kurdish populated areas. As Kirişçi and Winrow (1997) have explained, in the decade that followed, most of the Kurdish elite were eliminated or incorporated into the new regime. Consequently, no separate Kurdish movement emerged until the end of the 1960s when the effects of modernisation were felt in urban as well as rural areas.

The 1930s was the decade when ethnic terms of citizenship began to gain ground and the regime began to consolidate its hegemony with the official ideology of Kemalism (Özbudun, 1998)<sup>66</sup>. The consolidation of national ideology involved the

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<sup>66</sup> The word is coined by western authors, and used by various scholars to mean a collection of fundamental principles or ideals that relate to the emergence of Turkey. It is also referred to as Atatürkçülük in Turkish (Karal, 1981:11)

contradictory processes of ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ or ‘minoritisation’ of the diverse elements of the Empire. These unfolded in a series of strategies of ‘coercion, conversion, expulsion or elimination’ of those that did not fit in with the emerging nationalist project, namely the Kurds and the non-Muslims in Turkey (Özkırmı and Sofos, 2008). Such policies were observed in other states that emerged out of the Ottoman Empire. This symbolic and material homogenisation or ‘Turkification’<sup>67</sup> began in the late Ottoman period (Ergil, 2000; Oran, 2005; Bali, 2003; Özkırmı and Sofos, 2008). Öktem (2004) labelled such administrative, cultural as well symbolic strategies as the ‘ethno-nationalist incorporation of time and space’ of the ‘ethnic other’. These strategies were implemented because the new ‘present’ of the nation-state was in ‘disjunction’ with the ‘varied history of locality’ that needed to be ‘purified’<sup>68</sup>.

It is possible to discern three broad integrationist or assimilationist policy areas in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods that are relevant to our discussion here. The first relates to the compulsory use of Turkish language in education and everyday public life. As Özkırmı and Sofos (2008) explain, Turkish became the ‘official language’ in the first constitutional period in 1876 and was made the compulsory medium of education during the Young Turk period from 1908. Language and education played a significant role in the Turkification of non-Muslims and the Kurds until the 1950s. Appointing Turkish vice-headmasters and Turkish teachers for certain modules in non-Muslim schools is a current practice that dates back to 1938. The Turkification of the Kurds via language and education gained more prominence after the 1925 Kurdish uprising via the activities of Turkish Hearths (Türk Ocakları) and Public Houses (Halk Evleri), the cultural centres of the Republican People’s Party (Çapar, 2005). The linguistic Turkification continued with the adoption of the Latin alphabet in 1928 and, as we will see in the following

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<sup>67</sup> Turkification is usually used to refer to policies that involved non-Muslims, but Şahin (2005) also used this term in relation to the Kurds.

<sup>68</sup> Öktem in this context mainly refers to the events that had an impact on the livelihood of the Kurdish and Armenian and other non-Muslims such as the Syrians in the South-East of Turkey in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

section, it also involved the introduction of campaigns advocating the use of Turkish in public spaces. In addition to coercive measures, scientific studies and interpretations emerged in the 1930s which claimed to prove the origins of Turkish language and culture. The ‘Sun Language and History Theories’ were the most significant scientific efforts in this period and attempted to imagine Kurds as ‘mountain Turks’ who had lost their culture and language (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997: 103).

Symbolic or cultural homogenisation strategies have also been inextricably linked to material administrative measures of ‘purification’ or homogenisation. The common practice of ‘population engineering’ (Zürcher, 2005) – that is, expulsion, exchange or re-location of peoples – has been complemented by cultural strategies of changing names of places previously inhabited by groups such as the Armenians.

The re-location of peoples was aggravated especially in the final stages of the Empire during and after the First World War. This was due to an influx of Muslim but not necessarily ethnically Turkish refugees to Anatolia. The integration of these groups with the other Muslim elements such as the Kurds was one of the central concerns of the emerging nation state (Çağaptay, 2002, Özkırmımlı and Sofos, 2008; Öktem, 2004). These policies are significant for two interrelated measures: ‘homogenisation of the population’ and ‘dispossession’ or the ‘transfer of capital’ from one group to the other. For instance, the new settlement law of 1934 (Law no. 2510) divided the country into three areas and re-settled people according to their acceptance of Turkish language and culture in order to facilitate their assimilation (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997).

The transfer of capital from one group to the other is also related to these policies of expulsion and/or re-location. The events of 1915 marked the beginning of a series of events that facilitated the ‘transfer of capital’ from non-Muslims to Muslims (Öktem, 2004)<sup>69</sup>. According to Oran (2005) this process was complemented by events such as

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<sup>69</sup> Öktem (2004:566-68) refers to the Armenian pogrom of 1895, the 1915 events and massacres and the destruction of houses and churches as spatial strategies aimed at eliminating others’ ‘material and

the 1923 population exchange between Greece and Turkey, the re-location of Jews as a result of the 1934 pogroms in Thrace, the Capital Levy in 1942 as a war-time measure; the pogrom of 6-7<sup>th</sup> September 1955; and finally the deportation of Greeks who held Greek passports in 1964 due to the tensions over the Cyprus dispute (also see: Akar and Demir, 1999; Aktar, 2004; Bali, 2003; Çağaptay, 2003; Okutan, 2004). In the following sections, in an attempt to highlight the dilemmas of Turkish citizenship in the formative years of the Republic, we will focus on a number of assimilation and integration<sup>70</sup> policies adopted in the single-party period (1923-1950) to integrate Kurds as well as non-Muslims into the nation state. Some of these events still remain in the collective memory as sensitive and taboo subjects that shape expressions of cultural difference as well as the mediation of cultural identities in general.

### **The Economic and Cultural Assimilation of Non-Muslims: 'Turkification' Policies in the Single Party Period (1923-1950)**

According to Bali (2003), in the aftermath of the Great War, non-Muslims in Turkey were faced with a two-fold challenge. Firstly, the authorities expected them to leave the privileged situation they had in the Imperial order and to 'Turkify' immediately in order to be involved in the nation building process as citizens. Secondly, the support minorities gave to the allied forces during the Independence war left deep marks in the collective memory (Bali, 2003). It was during this period that economic

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historical entity'. As he further explains, the possessions that were left behind by these communities were immediately appropriated by the state in order to distribute to the refugees coming from the Balkans and the local Kurdish tribes. The change of names of evacuated villages was also put immediately in practice during the 1915 events.

<sup>70</sup> See Grillo (2005) for a discussion of integration, assimilation and multiculturalism. Grillo (2005:3-4) put the argument in relation to immigration as follows:

[f]or much of the 19th and 20th centuries the principal, official way of dealing with ethnic diversity was to abolish it. Nation-states sought to 'nationalise' their regions, and from the late 19th century onwards, to 'assimilate' immigrants... By the mid-to-late 20th century, however, programmes of assimilation of the classic kind were increasingly hard to sustain (Grillo, 1998). Attention turned, therefore, to policies of what were called in Europe 'integration' (though other terms were also used), and in the USA (and later in Europe) 'cultural pluralism' or more usually 'multiculturalism.'

and cultural *Turkification* policies were implemented in order to integrate non-Muslims into society.

Economic Turkification started as early as 1926 when the Law of Public employment conditioned public employment on being a ‘Turk’ and not on being a ‘Turkish citizen’. Non-Muslim minorities were therefore excluded from working in the state sector (Soner, 2005: 298)<sup>71</sup>. In the area of cultural Turkification, the ‘Citizen! Speak Turkish!’ campaign in the late 1920s was amongst the most powerful tools.<sup>72</sup> This campaign aimed to ensure that minorities in Istanbul and the rest of the country spoke Turkish in public places (Bali, 2003; Okutan, 2004). The campaign and its resonance continued until the end of the 1930s<sup>73</sup>.

In terms of the economic well-being of the non-Muslim minority communities in this period two events or practices must be mentioned. Firstly, a new legislation passed in 1935 (Law no. 2672) on foundations (vakıf) marked another stage in the transfer of wealth and capital from one group to another. This law was put into practice in 1936 and all the foundations were asked to submit a list of all the properties they possessed and have them registered. In 1974 the General Directorate of Foundations only recognised the properties of the foundations that were listed in the 1936 documentation and cancelled the right of ownership for those properties acquired after this date. The properties acquired in the post-1936 period were transferred to the treasury and for a long period the communities did not have the right to appeal against this legislation. The right to acquire and use properties was the most critical element in the financial stability and strength of the communities in question. Yet these non-Muslim foundations, which are a legacy of the millet system, also constituted a vital element of the maintenance of non-Muslims’ culture and

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<sup>71</sup> In 1932 certain professions such as a pilot, chemist, veterinary, were forbidden for practice by those who were considered as foreigners (Özkırımlı and Sofos, 2008: 166).

<sup>72</sup> Given the lack of congruence between religion, ethnicity and language among the peoples of the Ottoman Empire, the nation state’s emphasis on linguistic Turkification becomes more significant. As Özkırımlı and Sofos (2008:167) maintain ‘linguistic homogeneity’ would constitute the ‘most demonstrable aspects of national homogeneity’.

<sup>73</sup> The campaign also targeted the Kurds and it was forbidden to speak Kurdish in public spaces.

heritage (Oran, 2005; Mahçupyan, 2004). The long legal dispute between the state and minority communities was finally settled during the Europeanisation reform period<sup>74</sup>.

The other event in the transfer of capital through dispossession took place in the midst of the hardening economic situation during the Second World War, and economic Turkification policies were further extended in the form of a one-off emergency wealth tax (*Varlık Vergisi*)<sup>75</sup> on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1942. As Lewis (1961) has explained, the levy was designed to target big farmers who were mainly Muslim Turks, and some non-Muslim merchants who benefited from war conditions. However, it later emerged that taxpayers were classified according to their religion and nationality<sup>76</sup> - non-Muslims paid up to ten times as much as the Muslims. It was not possible to appeal against the tax and defaulters had their names listed in the newspapers and were deported to the Aşkale work camp to break stones for road construction. Having gathered roughly £28 million in tax at the exchange rate of the time, the law was finally abolished in March 1944, some outstanding tax was excused, and detainees were sent back home.

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<sup>74</sup> The first attempt at a legal solution to this problem took place in 2002 when a European harmonisation package introduced a new regulation allowing foundations to acquire properties (*Hürriyet*, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2002). According to figures provided by General Directorate of Foundations, there are 161 community foundations in Turkey. According to these figures, the Rum community possesses 75, the Armenian community has 58, the Jewish community has 18, and the rest belongs to other minority groups (Yılmaz, 2004). The first decision taken by the European Court of Human Rights in terms of the legal cases for minority foundations took place in 2007, when the Court decided that Turkey had violated the property rights of minority foundations. The Turkish government, in its defence, referred to recent legal improvements in this area. The court case is seen as establishing a precedent for all the other foundations that have appealed to the Court (*Hürriyet*, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2007). The new law (no. 5737) was passed by parliament on 20<sup>st</sup> February 2008, and included new arrangements to allow assets registered under saints and other religious figures to be transferred to minority foundations. This concession was intended to prevent subsequent cases going to the European Court of Human Rights (*Hürriyet*, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2008).

<sup>75</sup> For an eye witness account see the memoirs of Ökte (1987) who was a tax collector during this period. This is a reprint and translation of Ökte's book published in 1951.

<sup>76</sup> During the single party period, a strict distinction between the possession of 'Turkish nationality' (*milliyet*) and Turkish citizenship (*tabiiyet*) was preserved. This dual understanding of citizenship had been apparent especially in the status of non-Muslim minorities as citizens (Soner, 2005).

According to Aktar (2004), the tax had serious consequences not only in economic life but also for the cultural and social make-up of (mainly) Istanbul, triggering a wave of migration to other countries. It eliminated the big non-Muslim businessmen from economic life and also acted as a catalyst to transfer wealth from non-Muslim to Muslim taxpayers. Aktar argues that the execution of the tax heavily affected the ‘integration’ of the minorities into Turkish society and deepened feelings of despair and distrust. It also endorsed the perceived position of minorities as being ‘half citizens, guests and Turks only in the Civic Code’ in the eyes of the minority population (Aktar, 2004: 206-208). The tax has remained as one of the taboos in the recent history of Turkey<sup>77</sup>. As Chapter 5 will address, it led to the beginning of the continuous migration of minorities that eventually had a detrimental impact on their community institutions in general and their media in particular.

### **The Cold War: The transition to a Multi Party System and the worsening relationship between the state and minorities (1950-1980s)**

As previously mentioned, Turkey became a part of ‘global governance’ in the aftermath of the Second World War by joining the United Nations in 1945 and the Council of Europe in 1949. In 1950 the single party regime in Turkey ended after the Democrat Party (DP) gained a landslide victory in the first democratic elections. This period is also considered to be the beginning of the Second Turkish Republic, which lasted from 1950 until 1980 (Zürcher, 1998).

The most significant event that strained relations between the state and non-Muslim minorities in this period took place in 1955, and is known as the 6-7<sup>th</sup> September events, or pogroms. Although DP’s attitude to non-Muslims was liberal, worsening economic conditions and the heightening of the Cyprus problem in foreign policy had a negative impact on minority living conditions and their acceptance as equal citizens (Güven, 2005). As Güven explains, on the evening of 6-7<sup>th</sup> September,

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<sup>77</sup> My respondents without exception mentioned the tax as the main source of mistrust and a trigger for the worsening of relations between minorities and the state. The first attempt to tackle this taboo was a film called *The Diamonds of Ms Salkım* in 1999.

crowds coordinated by official and semi-official officers and organisations vandalised shops, houses and churches of non-Muslims. The events were triggered by a radio broadcast which reported that the house of Atatürk in Salonica, Greece had been bombed. An evening newspaper, (*Istanbul Ekspres*), was used to agitate and mobilise the crowds and more than four thousand houses, one thousand shops, offices, and seventy-three churches were attacked by the angry mobs. The total loss was estimated to be fifty-four million American dollars and the Democrat Party, as the government of the day, paid a quarter of the damage in compensation to the non-Muslims<sup>78</sup>.

The attacks seemed to target the Greek (Rum) of Istanbul due to the Cyprus problem, but they encompassed all non-Muslims and triggered another wave of mass migration of Armenians, Jews and Greeks who saw the events as a symbol of their discrimination as citizens in Turkey. According to Güven, the pogrom was a continuation of economic and cultural Turkification policies of the 1930s and 1940s (Güven, 2005).

During the 1960s, the impact of international political tensions and problems over Rum (Greeks) and Armenians continued. The accelerating Cyprus crisis dismantled the gentlemanly agreements between Greece and Turkey. The crisis in 1964 led to the deportation of twelve thousand Greeks with Greek nationality. However, some Greek nationals were married to Greeks in Istanbul, therefore the number of people who had to leave amounted to forty thousand (Akar, 1999). According to Alexandris the Greek community was 'used as a national scapegoat' for the Cyprus crisis (Alexandris, 2003: 119). The Greek community's victimisation due to international

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<sup>78</sup> The most detailed archive of the events was made public for the first time in 2005 in an exhibition by the History Foundation on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the events. This was comprised of documents and photos that were kept in the personal archives of the Admiral Fahri Çoker, the judge in the investigation of the pogrom. An embargo against publication of the material was lifted after he passed away. As a twist of history, the opening of the exhibition was hijacked and exhibits vandalised by a group of people who identified themselves as members of ultra-nationalist organizations. The researcher was present to observe the event.

tensions culminated in the closing down of the theological school of Halki in 1970<sup>79</sup>. Furthermore, the presence of the Armenian community in Turkey became fragile due to attacks by the ASALA<sup>80</sup> against Turkish diplomats and institutions (Soner, 2005).

Hence, during the Cold War, Turkey's official minorities faced difficulties from both domestic and international conflicts. The economic and cultural Turkification policies were instrumental in establishing non-Muslims as 'aliens' and 'foreigners' and deepened the lack of trust between non-Muslims and Turks. Furthermore, international political conflicts worsened the situation of minority groups and led to their accelerating immigration. The Cold War minority policies remained a taboo in public life until the late 1990s, but the culture of the diminishing non-Muslim communities became a matter of special interest in the public sphere after the mid-1980s in order to highlight the 'multicultural' character of Turkey. This will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter.

The situation for the Kurds however was different. As noted previously, no separate Kurdish movement emerged until the 1960s, but the most significant impact of modernisation in Turkey was observed in the growing awareness of Kurdishness throughout this period. The re-discovery and revival of Kurdish identity was possible as a result of rural-urban migration, especially when the students who went to big cities for their university education became involved in student and cultural organisations created under the liberal provisions of the 1961 constitution (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997; Şahin, 2005). Leftwing ideologies began to permeate and transform political culture, making their influence felt in student organisations and elsewhere. Indeed, as Şahin (2005: 133) has stated, the atmosphere created by the

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<sup>79</sup> The school is still closed, making it very difficult for the Patriarchate to educate the future generations of religious personnel.

<sup>80</sup> The Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia. See Gunter (1990) for a discussion of the declaration of collaboration between the ASALA and PKK in the 1980s although Kurds and Armenians historically represent groups inimical to each other because of their mutually incompatible irredentist claims for territory.

new Constitution in 1961, which was prepared in a framework supported by the European Convention of Human rights, saw the emergence of new political claims that ‘challenged the ideological dominance of hegemonic Turkish nationalism’.

In the liberal regime of the 1961 constitution there emerged a number of publications in both Turkish and Kurdish, but they were frequently prohibited after a few editions (O’Neil, 2007). Furthermore, claims for cultural rights, especially regarding Kurdish language education, broadcasting and press, also emerged in this period and are reported to date back to 1967 (Şahin, 2005). As Kirişçi and Winrow (1997: 109) have stated, the recognition of cultural rights was also brought forward by the first legal Kurdish organisations such as The Revolutionary Cultural Society of the East (DDKO, established in 1969), but other organisations such as Revolutionary Youth (Dev-Genç) used violence and resorted to more ‘radical and secessionist rhetoric’. The origins of the Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan - PKK) are argued to trace back to a meeting that took place in the mid-1970s during a Revolutionary Youth branch meeting in Diyarbakır (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997). The PKK was officially established in 1978 and is considered to be the most ‘violent’, ‘radical’ and ‘successful’ Kurdish movement to emerge in Turkey (Gunter, 1990: 57). Indeed, at the end of the 1970s, Kurdish leftist movements broke off from the Turkish organisations and propagated the right to self-determination. It defined its aim as the establishment of a Marxist-Leninist Kurdistan and supported the use of violence to reach this aim (Şahin, 2005). According to Ahmad, the PKK was sheltered and supported by Syria, Greece and Iran (2003).

The break-up of the left movement along ethnic lines had a sobering impact amongst Turkish leftists<sup>81</sup> and the escalating violence between radical rightwing and leftwing groups led to serious instability in Turkey. The clashes between groups cost 4,500

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<sup>81</sup> According to Kirisci and Winrow (1997:109), the solidarity and congruence that existed among the Turkish and Kurdish leftist groups eventually diminished after the mid-1970s. This point was confirmed by some of the professional journalists interviewed, such as Ridvan Akar and Emre Akoz.

lives and, as a result, the army gained control on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980, staying in power until 1983 (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997; Jung and Piccoli, 2001).

### **Post-Cold War Developments: The rise of identity politics and the crisis of modernisation (1980s-1990s)**

One of the factors that led to the 1980s coup was due to the conviction among military circles that radical leftwing views and religious fundamentalism were the major problems in society. Therefore, the army cracked down on leftist groups, promoted a state controlled vision of Islam and attempted to control the rise of Kurdish demands for cultural autonomy and equality (Zürcher, 2001; Ahmad, 1993)<sup>82</sup>.

In 1983, after the coup, Turgut Özal formed a civil government under the Motherland Party (ANAP) that united a combination of elements from ultra-nationalists, Islamists and liberals. This government introduced liberal economic policies and triggered Turkey's integration with the global economy. The changes that began to take place after the coup are considered to represent a 'turning point' in state-society relations because, as Göle (1994) has explained, they marked the end of the dominance of the state induced modernizing movement. Although the Özal years (1983-1989) are celebrated as the most liberalising period in Turkish history in terms of the economy, there was no democratisation in this period and the legislative measures implemented under the military regime remained in place (Ahmad, 2003).

In 1984, the Kurdish nationalist movement began a military struggle under the leadership of the PKK's Abdullah Öcalan. In terms of the Kurdish question there was a two-fold challenge. The founding Lausanne Treaty, which defined the status of 'official minorities', did not leave room for the recognition of other Muslim ethnic groups as minorities. As mentioned previously, the official ideology denied

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<sup>82</sup> For Hale (1994), the Turkish army is a 'modernizing' and 'moderating' institution in Turkish politics. For instance, the 1980 coup (like the previous ones) is seen as a 'moderating coup' in which the return to civilian rule was swift.

the existence of Muslim minorities and, until the 1980s, exercised an ‘assimilationist melting pot ideology’ (Somer, 2005: 596).

Furthermore, the ‘Kurdish problem’ was identified as a tribal, backward movement, or only to be related to terrorism. As Yeğen has rightly pointed out, state discourse in Turkey for a long period (from 1920 until 1980) avoided the ‘Kurdishness of the Kurdish question’, and assumed that there was ‘no Kurdish element’ on Turkish territory. The issue of the Kurds was rather uttered as ‘an issue of either political action, a tribal resistance or regional backwardness but never as an ethno-political question’ (Yeğen, 1999: 555).

After the military coup, expressions of Kurdish identity were prohibited. The use of Kurdish language was banned in 1983 based by Law No.2932, which also declared Turkish as the mother-tongue of all Turkish citizens. In addition to publishing in the Kurdish language, naming places and children in any language other than Turkish was also banned (O’Neil, 2007). The restrictions under Article 26 and 28 of the 1982 constitution, which banned the use of certain languages, and were prepared under the military regime, were lifted during the Europeanisation period. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 in relation to the emergence of Kurdish broadcasting.

The 1990s were turbulent years in which the Turkish political scene was dominated by short-lived coalition governments, and eleven governments and nine coalitions came into power (Nachmani, 2003). Against this background of political instability and clashes between the army and PKK, it was human rights protection in Turkey that suffered (Taşpınar, 2004; Sugden, 2005).

In 1991, a centre left (SHP) and centre right (DYP) coalition openly declared that there is a need to ‘recognize the Kurdish problem’ and lifted the ban on the use of

Kurdish language<sup>83</sup>. However, as Taşpınar (2004: 105) has argued, the recognition of the ‘cultural dimension of the problem did not translate into concrete action’. During the 1990s, Kurdish problems continued to be seen as a national security problem by the authorities. The failure of official discourse to recognise the social, political and historical aspects of the problem was strengthened by the unwillingness of the Kurdish parties to publicly denounce violence and distance themselves from the impact of PKK (Ergil, 2001). However, as Ergil (2001) has expressed, the sensitivity of the state apparatus towards different identity claims is not only limited to the Kurds or other ethnic groups. For him this represents a general tendency to reject pluralism in Turkish political culture:

It would be a mistake to think that only the Kurds or any expressions of Kurdishness at the political level are officially demonized. It was the Liberals and Communists that were repressed in the 1930s and 1940s. Socialists followed suit in the 1960s and 1970s. Kurds and Islamists have been targets of oppression and ostracism since the inception of the Republic, which increased to unbearable degrees in the 1980s. So what Turkey suffers from is state repression of cultural diversity and political pluralism.

Another issue that dominated politics during the 1990s was the rise of political Islam. In 1995, a centre right and Islamist coalition was formed between the Welfare Party (RP) and True Path Party (DYP), and the leader of RP, Mr Erbakan, became the first Islamist politician to be elected prime minister. This, however, accentuated tensions between the secular democratic establishment and the political Islamists. The short-lived coalition ended in June 1997 after the National Security Council (NSC)<sup>84</sup> declared on 28<sup>th</sup> February that political Islam was more dangerous than Kurdish

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<sup>83</sup> According to Müftüleri-Baç (1997), this was possible because Turkey signed the Paris Charter in 1990, along with the other members of the CSCE (now OSCE), which obliged Turkey to respect minority cultures, languages and religion.

<sup>84</sup> The NSC was established in 1961 and Article 118 of the 1982 constitution stipulated it as a body comprised of the prime minister, ministers of defence, departments of the interior and foreign affairs, the chief of general staff and four commanders of the army and gendarmeries. The NSC holds regular meetings that are also attended by the director of national intelligence and the NSC general secretary (Jung and Piccoli, 2001:95). As Arıkan (2003) states, although its decisions are only supposed to be recommendations, the army’s interventions in civil politics have been a serious concern for the EU commission. In 2004, a civilian bureaucrat was made NSC chairman for the first time and the monthly regular meetings were re-scheduled to take place every two months (EU Commission, 2005).

nationalism (Ahmad, 2003). The so called 28<sup>th</sup> February process was dubbed a ‘post-modern coup’ and was considered to be the result of secular resistance both from military and civic circles backed by the mainstream media. Özcan (2002: 56) argues that this was because the capitalist classes and the media developed a ‘discourse of secularism’ which appealed fears middle and upper-middle classes had about the Islamist threat to their lifestyles. After 28<sup>th</sup> February, the state began to crack down on radical Islamist groups and policies, and the military began giving frequent ‘briefings’ in which it informed society about security issues such as PKK terror, drug trafficking and Sharia Law (Sevinç, 2000).

In the midst of combating Kurdish nationalism and political Islam - the two major threats to the modernisation process - Turkey was also pursuing its EU membership, a process that began in the 1960s. However, human rights violations were high on the agenda between Europe and Turkey.

At the Luxembourg Summit (1997) of the European Union it was declared that the accession prospects of Turkey had been put on indefinite hold due to its human rights problems. Relations with the European Union took a different turn two years later at the Helsinki Summit and, throughout 1999, there were a number of different events leading to crucial changes in Turkey’s international relations and domestic politics. First, the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, was captured and arrested and the PKK responded by calling a ceasefire in the long running armed struggle in South East Turkey (Sugden, 2005). In the summer, a major earthquake transformed relations between Turkey and Greece as both countries were hit by the disasters and provided help to each other. Dubbed as ‘earthquake diplomacy’, this cooperation later eased tensions between the two countries.

Finally, following the general elections, a three party coalition government between the centre-left Democratic Left Party (DSP), centre-right Motherland Party (ANAP) and the extreme rightwing Nationalist Action Party (MHP) was formed and it was pushed to take more concrete steps towards European Union membership.

## **Turkey and the European Union: Post-Helsinki (1999) developments**

Turkey's relationship with the European Union can be traced back to the end of the 1950s but becoming a member has been 'interpreted as a necessary counterpart of the westernisation and modernisation drive, which itself has been proclaimed as official state ideology' since the 1960s (Öniş 2003: 17)<sup>85</sup>. Having applied for full membership in 1987 of the then European Economic Community (EEC), it was not until the Helsinki Summit in December 1999 that Turkey's application as a full member was accepted. This is why the Helsinki Summit is viewed as a 'turning point' in EU-Turkey relations, as it created a major arena of change in the contemporary Turkish context, both in the economic and the political realms.

The EU has emphasised the 'quality of democratisation', 'human rights' and the 'protection of minorities' since the 1980s and 1990s (Öniş 2003: 9), and adopted the famous Copenhagen political criteria for its dealings with candidate countries. As Arıkan (2003) has remarked, the enlargement strategy which was set up at the EU's 1993 Copenhagen Summit identified stability as its major component and enlargement was considered as a factor that could serve as a catalyst to solve the ethnic and nationalist conflicts in Eastern Europe. The Treaty on European Union (in force from 1993) and the Amsterdam Treaty (in force from 1999) made explicit references to principles of democracy and respect for human rights, which became 'an increasing determinant feature in the EU's external relations in general and its enlargement policy in particular' (Arıkan, 2003: 105). According to Smith, the conditionality of the Copenhagen criteria in economic and political realms equipped the EU with 'a powerful instrument' for shaping the transition, especially in East and Central Europe (Smith, 2003: 3-4). The attachment of such conditionality to the opening of membership negotiations was reinforced at the Luxembourg Summit of 1997 when Turkey's accession was frozen due to human rights abuses.

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<sup>85</sup> Also see Erdemli (2003) for a synopsis of Turkey-EU relations.

When Turkey's status as a candidate country was accepted at the 1999 Helsinki Summit, it was considered by the EU to display 'serious shortcomings in terms of human rights and protection of minorities' although it possessed the basic features of a democratic system (EU, 2004: 165). Although various governments in Turkey have introduced 'democratisation packages' since 1991 (Müftüler-Baç, 1998), the scale of reforms that were undertaken after Helsinki summit was unprecedented.

The National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA) was adopted on 19 March 2001, and identified the scale of reforms to be introduced. In October 2001, 34 amendments were made in the constitution in order to comply with the Copenhagen criteria. At the beginning of January 2002 a new Civil Code was adopted and an EU adaptation law on human rights was passed in the parliament in August. This law also allowed the use of traditional languages in broadcasting (namely Kurdish), the abolition of the death penalty and advanced the possibility for the use of minority languages in education (Erdemli, 2003). These attempts were completed before the EU's Copenhagen summit in December 2002. This suggested that if the EU council in December 2004 came to a decision that Turkey had met the Copenhagen criteria, then the EU would start negotiations without further delay.

Despite the conditions attached to the 2004 date, as Aydın and Keyman (2004) have maintained, it created a 'sense of certainty' in Turkey-EU relations. Following the summit, four comprehensive sets of democratic reforms entered into force in 2003 that related to freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of association. Significant amongst the various reforms of 2003 were the changes in the Political Parties law and the lifting of restrictions on the acquisition of property by non-Muslim community foundations. The last package of reforms, entered into force in July 2003, emphasised the 'civilian control of the military', as well as consolidating the fight against torture and the exercise of fundamental rights. Another important measure was taken in 2004 with a set of constitutional amendments that included judiciary reforms, the civilianisation of armed forces and freedom of press (Aydın and Keyman, 2004).

In this light, the so called 'harmonisation' or reform packages that were introduced up until 2004 were considered to signify 'a rapid evolution of mentalities'(EU, 2004: 4) in Turkey. Furthermore, it was argued that the Copenhagen political criteria operated 'like a leverage to make the Turkish modernisation and democratisation more plural, multi-cultural and consolidated' (Aydın and Keyman, 2004; Öniş, 2003). On the 17th of December 2004, the EU agreed to start negotiations with Turkey in October 2005.

The reform period was divided between two governments, the DSP-ANAP-MHP coalition and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government that won the general elections in November 2002. The conservative and Islamic-based single-party AKP government ended the period of coalitions in Turkey, and is considered to be a strong symbol of political stability. According to Öniş (2003) this was because, before the Helsinki summit, none of the political parties on the left or right had initiated the reforms needed for EU membership. Furthermore, 'none of the major political parties were able or willing to challenge the fundamental precepts of state ideology on key issues of concern such as "cultural rights" or the "Cyprus problem"- issues which appeared to lie beyond the parameters of the normal political debate' (Öniş, 2003: 17).

The AKP's ability to deliver some of the most controversial reforms is firstly due to its powerful presence as a single party government within the parliament, and secondly because of its fundamentally different outlook on the established parameters of state ideology. However, it also has to be mentioned here that the AKP, which won the general elections in 2007 and is now serving a second term in power, has lost its enthusiasm for Europeanisation reforms. The EU Commissioner for enlargement, Ollie Rehn, noted on the first anniversary of the start of full membership negotiations, that there had been a slow down in the reform process since 2006. He remarked that a 9<sup>th</sup> harmonisation package might be needed for

further reforms in areas such as freedom of expression<sup>86</sup> and labour rights (Milliyet, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2006).

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the official definition of minorities that was stipulated in the Lausanne Treaty, and its subsequent interpretation, continues to obstruct the development and betterment of human rights in some areas, and has generated another area of dispute within EU-Turkey relations. For instance, the annual progress reports produced by the European Commission continue to refer to problems that are faced by Kurdish or Alevi communities in Turkey under the section of 'human rights and protection of minorities' even though they are not officially recognised as such. These problems include access to places or worship (Cem evi) for Alevis and education and broadcasting in Kurdish (EU Commission reports, 2005 and 2006). The description of Kurds and Alevis as minorities has been a source of major dispute between the EU and Turkey during the Europeanisation reform period because Turkey bases its minority protection on the provisions of the Lausanne Treaty, which only recognises non-Muslim communities.

According to Oran (2007: 43) the Lausanne Treaty is one of the earliest human rights documents, as it contains some articles that extend certain rights to everyone living in Turkey. However, as he expressed, Turkey has been implementing a 'narrow definition of minority and using it to limit the applicability of rights in Lausanne and the subsequent human rights treaties'. The principles of Lausanne and

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<sup>86</sup> One of the most significant problems in this realm is Article 301 of the Penal code, which addresses the offences committed in 'insulting Turkishness'. This article replaced the former Article 159 of the penal code in 2005, and it continues to create an impasse in Turkey-EU relations (Berkan, 2006). As Amnesty International (2006) has stated, the article has been widely used to prosecute journalists, writers such as Nobel Prize winner Orhan Pamuk, the former editor in chief of Armenian Agos newspaper - Hrant Dink, and other well known intellectuals such as İsmet Berkan, Murat Belge and Haluk Şahin. Amnesty also maintains that it 'poses a direct threat to the fundamental rights to freedom of expression' which contravenes Article 10 of the ECHR and Article 19 of ICCPR, of which Turkey is a party. The EU officers have expressed their concerns about its impact on the future of membership negotiations and have demanded that all the Articles of the penal code in Turkey should be brought in line with EU regulations (Hürriyet, 25<sup>th</sup> September 2006). According to the Ministry of Justice, in 2006 there were 835 court cases under Article 301, in which 314 people have appeared in court, and within the first three months of 2007 there was a total of 744 cases in which 189 people stood trial (Hürriyet, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008).

the way Turkish national identity and citizenship is configured were re-evaluated during the Europeanisation reform period by a subcommittee of the Human Rights Consultation under the office of Primer Minister. The subcommittee included Professor Baskin Oran, and published its Minority and Cultural Rights Report in October 2004.

The report argued that the Sevres syndrome should be eliminated and the provisions of Lausanne Treaty implemented correctly and fully. It also recommended the replacement of a monocultural Turkish identity (Türklük, or ‘Turkishness’) with a supracultural identity (Türkiyelilik, of/from Turkey) that could encompass all the other sub-identities in Turkey. The report also suggested that Turkey was violating certain articles of the Treaty and that Turkey’s restrictive attitudes to minorities did not coincide with the contemporary international trends<sup>87</sup>. The most significant aspect of this discussion about the limited implementation of the Lausanne Peace Treaty covers the use of Kurdish language in media outlets. The use of Kurdish language in broadcasting has been made possible by a new set of legal and administrative measures that were introduced for broadcasters in the so-called harmonisation packages. However, as Baskın Oran (2007) and O’Neil (2007) have indicated, Turkey already has obligations under the Lausanne Treaty not to restrict the use of any languages for any Turkish national, which is stated in Article 39/4 thus: ‘No restrictions shall be imposed in the free use by any Turkish national of any languages in private intercourse, in commerce, religion, in the press, or in publications of any kind or at public meetings’ (Oran, 2007: 43)<sup>88</sup>.

According to Oran, the interpretation of this clause highlights three important issues.

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<sup>87</sup> Professor Baskin Oran was a member and Professor Ibrahim Kaboğlu was the head of the committee. They were charged under Articles 216 and 301 of the Penal code, which stipulates offences ‘inciting the public to commit crimes’ and ‘denigrating Turkishness’ respectively. Both Professors were acquitted of the charges in May 2006 (Bianet, 2005; CnnTurk, 2006). It also has to be mentioned that the government did not give its support to the report and, although the sub-committee functioned under the Prime Ministry, its legitimacy was questioned. The sub-committee was closed down quietly.

<sup>88</sup> The full text of the treaty is available at [http://untreaty.un.org/unts/60001\\_120000/14/30/00027480.pdf](http://untreaty.un.org/unts/60001_120000/14/30/00027480.pdf)

Firstly, all Turkish nationals are free to use any language they choose in public and private spaces; secondly, the expression ‘press’ can be extended to include radio and television because neither media existed in the 1920s; and thirdly, this clause is relevant to those nationals whose mother-tongue is not Turkish (Oran, 2007). However, at the time of preparations for a new legislative framework that could allow Kurdish broadcasting, these aspects of the Treaty did not appear to have been taken into account. As Chapter 6 will demonstrate, authorities opted for other legislative measures through which broadcasting in different languages could be made possible. This choice can be understood in terms of a general dilemma within the area of minority rights, and Turkey’s particular sensitivity towards recognising national minorities other than non-Muslims.

As the previous chapter demonstrated, human rights instruments such as FCNM and ICCPR grant states a degree of flexibility and room for manoeuvre in terms of defining their national minorities. This is because reaching a consensus on what is considered to be a minority group in different political contexts has not been possible.

However, as Çavuşoğlu explains (2005) there still exists a degree of anxiety over granting ‘collective rights’ to minorities because states fear that it may lead to secessionist claims. This is why international human rights instruments refer to the ‘rights of persons belonging to minorities’ in specific, and it has been made clear in these instruments that minority rights can be enjoyed by members of minority communities but are not construed as collective rights. Furthermore, the emphasis on the notion of ‘protection of territorial integrity’ in all the international human rights instruments endorses the principle that ‘self determination’ is not a part of minority rights.

In this light, in Turkey the notion of ‘territorial integrity’ is of acute importance in formulating minority rights and protection and may explain the reasons behind Turkey’s non-participation in several major international conventions that deal with

minority rights (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997)<sup>89</sup>. As Kirişçi and Winrow (1997: 45) have explained, behind the resistance to recognising national minorities other than non-Muslims lies the notion of protecting ‘the integrity and the indivisibility of the state with its nation’. This notion, as they further explain, is also mentioned in Article 3 of the Constitution (one of the non-changeable articles), and is of utmost importance for the Turkish authorities. Ironically, it also adds weight to the media focus of this thesis because, as Oran (2007: 46) has pointed out, the notion of ‘the integrity and the indivisibility of the state with its nation’ is part of Article 5/A of the Law on Turkish Radio and Television (No.2954); and Article 4 of the Law in the Establishment and Broadcasting of Radio Stations and Television Channels (No.3984)<sup>90</sup>.

Kirişçi and Winrow (1997: 45) further explain that the sensitivity of the principle of ‘the integrity and the indivisibility of the state with its nation’ might be due to the fact that ‘granting certain rights to an acknowledged ethnic or national minority’ might lead to further demands, including ‘calls for secession in the name of self determination’. According to them, Turkish authorities fear that granting cultural rights to one group, such as the Kurds, could incite awareness of a distinct identity among other groups such as the Laz and Circassians. Kirişçi and Winrow’s accounts reflected the situation in 1990s yet, as the discussion in Chapter 6 will demonstrate, this notion and its key position in the way cultural diversity is expressed in the media continued to resonate during the Europeanisation period and left its mark on the way new legislative measures were formulated.

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<sup>89</sup> However, since Kirişçi and Winrow’s book, Turkey joined several human rights systems due to its increasing integration with the European Union. Yet, as Oran (2007) has maintained, it has been reluctant to change.

<sup>90</sup> It is also found in the law on associations, law on political parties and the law on the duties and authority of the police.

## Conclusion

This chapter has offered a historical overview of Turkish modernisation since the early attempts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has focused on the place of minorities in the formation of Turkey's national identity and citizenship regime. This has shed light on the factors that prompt, limit or enhance expressions of cultural identities in the public realm and media. In doing so, the discussion has accounted for the reasons behind current problems and difficulties in Turkey's minority relations and the general political and social context within which cultural diversity is experienced in Turkey.

The Chapter has demonstrated that suspicions towards expressions of different identities in Turkey are historically embedded and stem from the turbulent events that dismantled the Empire, as well as from Turkey's failure to sustain its multi-cultural character. The collapse of the empire left a legacy of traumatic experiences, such as the impact of nationalistic movements among various millets, the loss of non-Muslim populations due to conflict, deportation or international agreements, and the *Turkification* policies of the Republican period. These experiences were entrenched as 'taboos' in the collective memory and, until recently, allowed little room for discussion in public culture. On the other hand, identification of the Kurdish issue as a security and 'national unity' concern rendered it difficult to offer an open-minded approach to understanding the social, cultural and economic aspects of the problem.

This chapter has also showed that Turkey's minority undertakings were in line with the wider practices in the European context during the Cold War, when minority issues were still considered to be a matter of domestic politics. However, post-Cold War developments turned this understanding upside down and, as the institutions of 'global governance' and human rights instruments gained more ground, minority protection gained a privileged place in international politics and became a transnational concern.

In the contemporary setting, minority rights and protection in Turkey - as stipulated in the Lausanne Treaty - clearly belongs to an old international framework, namely the League of Nations system. Although Turkey became a member of various international organisations after the Second World War and was a signatory in major international agreements, the founding Lausanne Treaty signed under the League system still forms the basis of its citizenship and minority protection regime. It also continues to shape Turkey's responses to contemporary human and minority rights instruments.

The changes after the end of the Cold War necessitated a re-evaluation of the older approaches to minority protection in Europe. Despite the lack of consensus over its definition and a clear hesitancy to provide a universal framework, respect for minorities and their rights have become the norm for a democratic European country. The growing presence of the EU and its transformation into a political and cultural union not only strengthened this norm, but it also set it as a condition for aspiring candidate states. The official reconfiguration of citizenship regimes to these developments has not been so straightforward. Hence, it is against this background that we need to understand the dilemma of modernisation and minorities in Turkey during the Europeanisation process.

The nation building period in Turkey depended on the strict rejection of old religious or ethnic loyalties and aimed to construct a unified, modern, secular nation under a universal citizenship model. Also, due to the legacy of the millet system, Turkey attempted to assimilate the non-Turkish or non-Sunni Muslim elements into the national category. Therefore, recognition of minority rights for those groups not covered by Lausanne has not been welcomed straightforwardly. As this chapter has demonstrated, accommodating cultural diversity within the imagined nation proved too costly and controversial and changes in domestic and international politics influenced the relationship between the state and minorities. It is for these reasons that the factors driving the transformation of national membership, especially the significance of human rights instruments in global governance, have been met with a certain level of resistance. Hence, official definitions of citizenship and historical

taboos have been seminal in shaping the limits of cultural diversity and its expressions.

The reforms that have been introduced since 2001 have highlighted Europeanisation as the major driving force behind the acceptance of cultural diversity, the advent of democratisation and the betterment of human rights. This could be construed as a global trend associated with the post-national citizenship model. However, changes since the 1980s also indicate that these transformations have been entangled with domestic pressures and claims emanating from ethnic or religious group loyalties.

In the previous chapter, the survey of the literature on media and cultural diversity demonstrated that the ways in which media structures accommodate diversity depend on the national political environment as well as global transformations and pressures. Hence, representations of diversity within a given social formation are inherently linked to political, economic and technological changes at a global and national level.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Mediation of cultural identities in the Turkish mainstream media structure: Limitations and openings in the ‘market for loyalties’**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter has discussed the place of minorities in the formation and transformation of the Turkish modernisation programme and citizenship regime. It has highlighted the significance of historical tensions that later became embedded as taboo and sensitive subjects in the national imagination. It has also demonstrated that these sensitivities have limited the acknowledgment of diversity and expressions of different cultural identities in the public realm.

In this chapter, the aim is to explore the implications of the dilemmas and taboos within the citizenship and rights regime for the general media scene or, as explained earlier, ‘the market for loyalties’ (Price, 2002) in Turkey. The main premise of this chapter is that minority media does not exist in a vacuum and its emergence and transformation cannot be isolated from the conditions that shape the national media structure and the way these allow or limit expressions of cultural diversity. Hence, in order to understand the subsequent case study chapters analysing minority media practices in Turkey, we need to consider the general context within which media operate. In order to explain changes within non-Muslim minority media, in Kurdish language broadcasting and in the regulatory framework for local and private channels, the researcher must first examine the historical, legislative and discursive processes that have constructed and reconstructed the general media structure in Turkey.

Therefore, in this chapter I address some of the key research questions of this thesis by considering the factors that have shaped the mediation of cultural identities in the national media, in order to explore the similarities and differences in the ways in which mainstream and particularistic media operate.

As mentioned earlier, media expressions of cultural diversity are related to the diversity of the media structure itself. Pluralistic mass media can ‘contribute to diversity in three main ways: by reflecting difference in the society, by giving access to different points of view and by offering a wide range of choice’<sup>91</sup> (McQuail, 1992: 144). In addition to reflection, access and choice, ‘external’ and ‘internal’ diversity are also significant to understand how media diversity relates to social and cultural diversity.

According to McQuail, (1992: 145-146) external diversity describes the level of access in any given media structure. It raises the question of whether the full range of political, social-cultural difference in society corresponds to ‘an equivalent range of separate and autonomous media channels, each catering exclusively for its own group or interest’<sup>92</sup>. Internal diversity, on the other hand, refers to a single channel or sector in which a wide range of contents or points of view are offered. According to McQuail these principles can be observed in pluralistic systems and in the practices of public service broadcasting. External and internal diversity are also referred to as ‘diversity of ownership’ in media outlets and ‘diversity of content’ or output respectively, which are also indicators of media pluralism in a given context (Deidre, 2004).

In Turkey, external diversity became more visible after the 1980s due to the general neoliberal transformation of the economy and its impact on the media structure. Until the end of the Cold War, TRT remained as a state monopoly and family enterprises continued to dominate newspaper ownership. The mediation of different cultural identities was limited and stayed within the parameters of the hegemonic ideology. For instance, the Kurdish issue was mainly represented in the context of

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<sup>91</sup> In the European context, four main dimensions of diversity were identified: a) of formats and issues (entertainment, information and education); b) of contents (in relation to opinion and news); c) of persons and groups (access and representation); and d) of geographical coverage and relevance (Hoffman-Riem, 1987 cited in McQuail, 1992).

<sup>92</sup> For McQuail, such media systems may not exist now, but some partisan usages of media, or a system like that in the Netherlands, can be considered as the closest examples.

national security concerns, and non-Muslim minorities were not even on the agenda. Even if they were mentioned, it was only in relation to the terrorist activities of certain Kurdish or Armenian groups. Therefore, security concerns and taboo subjects dominated the civil discourse both in print and broadcast media.

It has become a truism to regard the 1980 coup as a turning point in social and political analysis in Turkey, and the analysis of Turkey's media structure is no exception (Aksoy and Robins, 1997; Tılıç, 1998; Kejanlıoğlu, 2004; Adaklı, 2006).

The neo-liberal economic policies that were introduced after the coup transformed the political economy of the media. These changes were a part and parcel of the changing communication policies which have begun to re-structure the global media systems globally due to their emphasis on further liberalisation, de-regulation and adjusting to the new rules of international trade have already been re-structuring the media systems globally (Price, 2002; Chakravartty and Sarikakis, 2006). They had two major consequences for internal and external diversity in Turkish media. Firstly, the break-up of the state monopoly in broadcasting in 1990 allowed the opening of new outlets for the expression of cultural identities and, for some commentators, contributed to the democratisation of the public sphere. Secondly, the organisational structure of the media changed with journalists and column writers emerging as the 'new elite' or 'intellectual icons' (Alpay, 1993; Bali, 2002). The new elite became advocates of the liberal economic transformation, and the new lifestyle that it promoted created a particular interest in minority cultures. Such interest was manifest in the books, music and films that flourished in this period. These celebrated memories of co-habitation in the multicultural past as well as the culinary practices, music and language of minorities, and became a part of the new urban culture in big cities. However, the mediation of cultural identities in different media outlets was shaped by different conditions. For instance, the acknowledgment of diversity was more acceptable for non-news or fictional products than for news items.

In this chapter, three interlinked events that have taken place since the 1980s which have shaped the visibility and expression of cultural identities and diversity in the media are identified. These are the impact of military interventions, the emergence of Kurdish insurgency and the eventual transition to conglomeration in media ownership.

In accounting for these dynamics within the general media structure in Turkey, three broad periods that have shaped the mainstream broadcast and print media are distinguished. These are first the significance of mass media in Turkish modernisation and the ways in which the 1960 and 1971 military interventions shaped the ‘market for loyalties’. Secondly, the impact of the 1980s coup, and subsequent transition to a neoliberal economy, on print and broadcast media and lastly, the developments that have taken place after 1990 following the break-up of the state monopoly over broadcasting.

The data that are used in this chapter come from secondary sources as well as from interviews that were conducted with key columnists and journalists from a variety of national newspapers. The general argument that this chapter develops is that economic liberalisation, which transformed the domestic media structure, did not necessarily equate to cultural liberalisation. In practice, the privileged place of statist ideology on the ‘market for loyalties’ remained strong and influential until the end of the 1990s, and continued to shape, limit and constrain the mediation of cultural identities and diversity.

### **Mass Media in Turkey before the 1980s:**

Newspapers and Radio as agents of modernisation and disseminators of national ideology and culture

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the emergence of mass media in Turkey goes back to the Tanzimat Period when newspapers both in Ottoman Turkish and in the languages of other *millet*s sprung up and flourished. Professional journalism also emerged in this period and, from the inception of the profession, journalists were considered as part of the modernising ‘bureaucratic elite’ (Zürcher, 1998: 74). This traditional image of

the media and media professionals ensued when the Republic was established, and journalists were charged with the duty to defend and propagate the new regime and the new ideology (Gürkan, 1998). Although the first constitution of 1924 included ‘freedom of expression’ in its principles, the press in the single-party period operated almost as an organ of the government and the party (Groc, 1994). For instance, during the abolition of the caliphate, Atatürk was reported to urge journalists in February 1924 to ‘form a steel castle around the Republic’ (Gürkan, 1998: 38). This tight control over the press endured until the end of the 1930s, due primarily to the impact of the first major Kurdish revolt in 1925 that took place after the caliphate - the binding symbol between the Turks and the Kurds - was abolished<sup>93</sup>.

A similar duty was expected of radio, which became a state monopoly in the 1930s as part of a general trend in Western Europe during the inter-war years. Radio was expected to be ‘the mouth of the government and ear of the nation’ (Kocabaşoğlu, 1985 cited in Kejanlıoğlu, 2004). When the single-party regime ended in 1950, a ‘seemingly democratic’ environment emerged in which free speech in the media was promoted. The autonomy of the press was strengthened and popular journalism began with the establishment of *Hürriyet* (1948) and *Milliyet* (1950) newspapers. However, the DP later used radio as a propaganda tool. Furthermore, it controlled media owners by harnessing state advertising only in certain newspapers that were sympathetic to their government (Topuz, 2003; Adaklı, 2006).

The DP government fell after the first military intervention in 1960. Its leaders, who were indicted for abusing radio for propaganda purposes, were later executed. The constitution of 1961, which is viewed as the strongest on political and cultural rights,

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<sup>93</sup> The aim was to establish an independent Kurdish state and restore the caliphate. In 1925, the law of Maintenance of Order (Takrir-i Sükun) was promulgated, which gave the government the power to ban any organization or publication that might be considered to disturb the social order.

[http://www.ata.boun.edu.tr/Faculty/Zafer%20Toprak/ATA\\_522\\_PART2\\_fall2007.ppt#621](http://www.ata.boun.edu.tr/Faculty/Zafer%20Toprak/ATA_522_PART2_fall2007.ppt#621), 14Even when the new press law came into force in 1931, it still contained strict rules over the press and retained the right to ban publications that were considered to be against the national political orthodoxy (Topuz, 2003:159).

included the use of communication media as part of basic rights and freedoms, and stipulated the organisation of radio and television stations as ‘autonomous’ public institutions (Kejanlioğlu, 2004). For some commentators, it was the partisan use of radio during DP governments that prompted administrators to adopt an autonomous broadcasting model similar to the BBC (Şahin, 1981). A new law for Turkish Radio and Television (No. 359) came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1964 and TRT was officially established.

TRT held the monopoly on broadcasting until 1990 and its efforts to propagate national culture and national identity have been widely analysed and critiqued by scholars. The so-called ‘TRT era’ has been identified with paternalistic, culturally elitist attitudes and the imposition of top-down policies that did not connect with the needs of audiences. According to Mutlu (1999: 26), TRT adopted the model of ‘paternalist’ public service broadcasting not only because it wanted to emulate the BBC style, but because it fitted in well with the new ‘particularities of Turkish politics’.

Indeed’ the second military intervention on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1971 had a particular consequence for the media in Turkey. The autonomy of TRT was repealed and its governing legislation was amended in order to give additional powers to the general director, who was appointed by the government. According to Mutlu (1992: 26), these changes replaced the notion of public service with a notion of ‘state broadcasting’. Hence, from its inception, broadcast media was under the ‘direct supervision of the political elite’ and was ‘shaped by the military interventions’ (Kejanlioğlu, 2004: 187). TRT’s lack of autonomy and its dependency on the state will emerge as a pivotal factor in our discussion of Kurdish broadcasting in Chapter 6.

### **The Impact of the 1980 Military Intervention: Restrictions on freedom of expression, diversification of media, and media ownership**

In the 1980s two developments were influential in shaping the mediation of cultural identities in the media: the political and economic policies introduced after the

military coup and the emergence of the Kurdish nationalist movement in southeast Turkey.

The military coup of 12<sup>th</sup> September 1980 puts limits on all forms of political and cultural expression and held print and broadcasting media under tight control. The military government stayed in power until 1983 and designated what could be printed and transmitted via the media, by proscribing taboo subjects (Kejanlıoğlu, 2001; Tılıç, 2001). Although the press was viewed as the only outlet for ‘public opinion’, as Groc (1994) has argued, its outputs were framed by the military’s general ‘de-politicisation’ policy.

One of my respondents recalled the practices of journalism in that period as follows:

We need to consider the road we have come. In 1982, when I started my career as a journalist, we used to call Armenians *kansız* (bloodless) and Kurds *bölücü* (one who stirs up divisions, separatist). Because it was the period of Armenian and Kurdish terrorism and they would make the news only with terror events... one day we were making a story about a Kurdish family who lived in Germany. They wanted to send their daughter to school and they received help from the German authorities. It was a simple, ordinary story. But what were we supposed to say, a separatist family living in Germany? Because we could not say ‘Kurdish’. Therefore, the minorities were not on our agenda, they would make the news only with terrorist acts. It was the period in which the existence of Kurds was denied. Kurd as a word was not uttered. It was the period when it was said there are no Kurds, they are Turks. The Greeks, Armenians and Jews preferred silence. They began to change their names into Turkish.’ (Ferai Tınç, Interview, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2005)

Tınç’s experience is indicative of the atmosphere of this period in which all forms of social and cultural expression were repressed. Although the transition to civilian rule took place in 1983, when Turgut Özal’s Motherland Party (ANAP) came into power, the restrictions on the press persisted. As some commentators have expressed, ANAP introduced economic liberalisation policies but made no attempts at democratisation during its administration (Ahmad, 2003; Groc, 1994)<sup>94</sup>.

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<sup>94</sup> As Topuz (2003) expressed, from 1980 until 1990 there were more than 2000 court cases against the press, in which 3000 journalists were tried. There were 850 bans on publications.

In this period, financial pressures on the press also had major consequences for the media structure in Turkey. As Groc (1994) has explained, the government used its monopoly over paper sales as leverage to force family enterprises in print media to accept its policies. The authorities increased the sale prices of paper as a tactic to weaken the financial situation of traditional owners so that investors could enter the sector by buying out failing newspapers. Indeed, business elites, with investments in finance, tourism, construction, banking, steel, or the automotive industry, began taking over media outlets in order to gain intellectual and political prestige and power (Topuz, 2003; Adaklı, 2006). The entrance of business elites into the print media sector eventually turned journalism into a ‘solely commercial venture’ (Groc, 1994: 203)<sup>95</sup>. Due to financial pressures and the harsh restrictions on political expression, the press had to re-adjust itself to the emergent situation in the mid-1980s. As a result, it shifted its focus and style of reporting from politics towards entertainment, culture and lifestyle (Groc, 1994; Uğur, 2002). New layout styles and printing technology were introduced in the newspapers. Weekly magazines broadened their thematic output, covering issues that related to women, youth, and environment. And the external diversification of the press increased with the emergence of particularistic Islamist newspapers such as *Zaman* and *Türkiye* as well as weekly current affairs magazines such as *Nokta* and *Aktüel* (Uğur, 1996; 2002)<sup>96</sup>.

The second factor that shaped media performance in the 1980s was the start of the PKK’s armed struggle against the military in 1984. The coverage of military operations was supervised by the armed forces. The declaration of a ‘state of emergency’ in 1987 in the south eastern cities also provided the pretext for further legal restrictions on the press<sup>97</sup>. As veteran journalist Hasan Cemal (2003, in Somer

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<sup>95</sup> See the table in the appendix for the cross-media ownership and major players in the media in Turkey.

<sup>96</sup> See the table in the appendix for the ideological affiliation of major newspapers in Turkey.

<sup>97</sup> After 1984, publications that were considered a threat to the security of the state were to be seen in a special court, known as Devlet Güvenlik Mahkemesi (DGM, State Security Courts). DGM used its power particularly for political journals (Topuz, 2003, pp273-274). DGM courts were abolished in 2004 as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> harmonisation package in the Europeanisation reforms (Müftüler- Baç, 2006).

2005) reported, the military held official and semi-official meetings with media professionals where the ‘proper’ form of coverage and use of terminology was determined.

One of the very few content analyses on the way the Kurdish issue is represented in the press employs a longitudinal analysis of *Hürriyet* newspaper in which Somer (2005: 591), who sampled all the news items and commentaries from the beginning of the PKK insurgency in 1984 until 1998, makes the following observations:

In 1984 and 1985 the mainstream daily *Hürriyet* published only 35 articles that were fully or particularly related to country’s ethnic Kurds. Only 3 of these articles used the word Kurd in reference to a person, group, concept or place. In those days media rarely covered issues related to Kurds, and when they did, they did not use the word Kurd.

These findings endorse the comments made above by Ferai Tınç who explained the reasons behind the use of such terminology in the so-called ‘terror’ years. However, Somer (2005) identifies a fourfold rise in the number of articles about Kurds in the post-1990 period and relates this change to the efforts made by the political elite for the recognition of Kurdish cultural identity<sup>98</sup>.

However, at the beginning of the 1990s an ‘open’ discussion of the problem and the use of the word Kurd were still problematic because journalists and politicians faced the possible threat of being ‘stigmatised’ as separatists (Somer, 2005). One of my respondents, Şahin Alpay, who is an academic at Bahçeşehir University and a columnist at the Islamist daily *Zaman*, conducted a study with established journalists in the early 1990s. This study confirmed that ‘many aspects of religion and sexuality, the cult of Atatürk, the Kurdish and Armenian questions, and questions pertaining to

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<sup>98</sup> As Somer observes (2005:599 and 613), in 1987 former PM Bulent Ecevit stated ‘let us not fear the word Kurd’ and in another occasion referred to ‘Turks who do not speak Turkish’. In 1988, Erdal Inonu, who became deputy prime minister in the SHP-DYP coalition, referred to the need to recognise ‘people’s mother tongue’. In 1989, President Özal declared that he was partly Kurdish. In 1991, in a visit to the major Kurdish town of Diyarbakir, leaders of SHP-DYP argued for the first time that the ‘Kurdish reality’ should be acknowledged.

the military' constituted sensitive or taboo subjects that journalists treated with caution or, if possible, avoided altogether (Alpay, 1993: 83).

In addition to self-imposed restrictions, the freedom of the press in this decade was also severely curbed by legislative measures (Topuz, 2005; Tılıç, 1998). For instance, certain articles of the 1991 penal code and the 1990 anti-terror law gave the Ministry of Interior powers 'to ban publications and close down printing houses indefinitely' if these publications were considered to be harmful to 'public order' in the south eastern region. These restrictions were included as part of the programme to combat the separatist Kurdish movement (Alpay, 1993: 83).

Paradoxically, the Kurdish insurgency brought about a general awareness regarding cultural diversity and generated debate and deliberation in the public realm. It also underscored the differences between what Somer (2005) calls 'moderate' and 'hardliner' beliefs among the political and bureaucratic elite in relation to cultural and linguistic differences and identity claims in Turkey<sup>99</sup>.

For instance, Rıdvan Akar, a journalist and TV producer who has written extensively about non-Muslim minorities, identified a shift from 'universalistic' claims to more 'particularistic identity claims' within Leftist movements. Akar argues that this shift became visible with the emergence of the PKK and, for these movements, the process 'messed up what they memorised' (Interview, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2004). Emre Aköz, who is a columnist from the *Sabah* newspaper, similarly argued that 'Despite being such a grave situation [the PKK phenomenon] placed the idea of difference into the minds of the Turks' (Interview, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2005).

As Umur Talu, a veteran journalist also from *Sabah* newspaper, has expressed, during the interim periods between military interventions in the 1960s and 1970s

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<sup>99</sup> Somer (2005:602-604) has argued that the social political and military elite in Turkey is not monolithic, and it is comprised of 'moderate' and 'hardliner' approaches that can be observed both in centre-right and centre-left politics. In his view, hardliner views associate identity based claims with claims for a separate territory, and highlight security concerns over the assertion of ethnic identities. Moderate views on the other hand argue to 'de-link' identity and security issues and ask for the acknowledgment of Kurdish identity and linguistic rights.

there existed many publications and debates about social issues, but this suddenly stopped after the 1980 coup. In this context Talu has referred to the impact of the ‘Kurdish terror’ as follows:

Since 1984 during the terror and intense combat with terror it was not possible to debate [these issues], meaning that it [has become] possible in the last 3-5 years. In a rather strange way, and I really do not want this to be misinterpreted, I am not saying that terror is a good thing, but a problem that resulted from terror activities also brought debate and discussion. This should be considered natural. Now if we want to roughly make an estimation, this incident left behind thirty-thousand dead people, about ten-thousand civil population and twenty-thousand terrorists. If a country produced twenty-thousand dead terrorists this is a serious problem. Therefore, it was understood that these problems should be debated in different ways (Interview, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2005).

However, as the personal experiences of Oral Çalışlar from *Cumhuriyet* reveal, an open debate and the expression of moderate views in the media has been difficult:

At the beginning those who advocated the cultural and religious differences were in the minority. And they would get themselves into trouble. I was in prison for many years because I used the word ‘Kurd’. Because I interviewed Öcalan, I was under constant threat of imprisonment for a very long time. My case continued for 8 years until there was a special law that prevented me from imprisonment (Interview, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005).

As Ferai Tınç of *Hürriyet* commented, the difficulties in the ‘terror era’ were slowly overcome when more journalists began to voice the democratic demands of the Kurds:

Among the journalists in the press there were those who believed that combating terrorism should be distinguished from democratic demands. Meaning, one way of combating terrorism was also seen as listening to these demands and bringing them into the realm of politics, finding ways of compromise. Therefore, it was then possible to openly utter the word Kurd. However, in the terror years Jews, Rum and Armenians were not on the agenda yet (Interview, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2005).

In addition to the emergence of moderate attitudes, changes in international politics also began to transform the way the Kurdish problem was debated and mediated. According to Ersin Kalkan of the *Hürriyet* newspaper, who specialises in minority

issues, Turkey's opening up to the outside world at the end of the Cold War was a factor which 'encouraged a critical engagement with the domestic issues' because, as he explained, 'during the Cold War Turkey was a closed society, which had no mirror to gage itself' and 'the Kurdish problem was the most crucial problem, the knot, on which all political problems were entangled and solved at the same time.' (Interview, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2005). Ferai Tınç further explained the impact of post-Cold War developments as follows:

Turkey noticed her East for the first time after the cold war had ended. It noticed the Turkic republics, Caucuses and the existence of the Turkish element in the Balkans. After this period Turkish minorities in neighbouring countries became influential in determining Turkish foreign policy. Previously Turkey did not have an interest in the Turkish minorities in its neighbouring countries. This was due to the understanding of the National pact [the irredentist foreign policy of Turkey] and only the extreme nationalist party [MHP] was interested in them. Following the changes in Northern Iraq and Kurdish demands for independence accelerated, Turkey had a tendency to be involved in the politics of the region in order to protect the Turkmen [in Northern Iraq) ...As for the [non-Muslim] minorities in Turkey, Turkey did not discover them by herself. These minorities have made their voices heard in the new democratization environment that emerged as a result of Turkey's EU process (Interview, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2005).

In fact, Nadire Mater, an editor in the independent online news provider *Bianet*, recalled in the first Gulf War in 1990 that journalists were faced with a dilemma over how to address the situation in Northern Iraq where Kurdish tribal leaders had gained relative autonomy. As shown above, the use of the word Kurd in relation to a group of people in Turkey had long been a sensitive issue, and negative words such as 'segregators' were often used in civil discourse. However, Mater argued that addressing Kurdish leaders and political parties in Northern Iraq in this way would be impossible (Interview, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2005). Inevitably, this international development led media professionals to eventually utter the word Kurd. Furthermore, the ban on the use of Kurdish in daily life was lifted in April 1991, which also facilitated 'a broader discussion of Turkey's own Kurdish problem' (Alpay, 1993: 83).

In the 1980s, the influence of taboo and sensitive issues placed similar constraints on broadcasting as those experienced by the print media. For instance, as Kejanlıoğlu (2004: 249) has reported, TRT was still under government control, there were no positive developments in terms of freedom of expression during ANAP governments<sup>100</sup> in this period, and military officials were reported to directly intervene in broadcasts related to ‘Armenian terror’ or the ‘Cyprus problem’. Despite its centrality in the production of national culture and identity, TRT was able to deliver global as well as ‘foreign’ media products such as Dallas to its audiences (Öncü, 2000). This contradiction, as Öncü (2000: 301) maintains, stemmed from the ‘political sensitivity’ of ‘national news, domestic educational programs and local current affairs’.

It is possible to identify a set of internal and external factors that changed the way media represented cultural diversity in Turkey during the 1980s and 1990s. The internal factors include the impact of military interventions, and the rise of the Kurdish nationalist movement. The external factors in this period include the end of the Cold War, international conflicts such as the Gulf War and, as Alpay (1993) has noted, the importance of a democracy and human rights discourse, which created an awareness of these issues among media professionals. The other significant external factor on a more general level has been the influence of globalisation of mass media and communication policies on the Turkish media landscape.

### **The Impact of the Globalisation of Media Policies on National Policies**

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century global actors have increased their influence on national media policies. The earliest examples were the establishment of multilateral organisations such as the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), which set the technical

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<sup>100</sup> In this period there were three ANAP governments were formed with three different prime ministers. Özal became the President in 1989.

standards for the communications realm<sup>101</sup>. However, under the UN system other issues have also acquired importance. For instance, since the 1960s specialised UN bodies such as UNESCO have addressed the implications of mass media for development and modernisation<sup>102</sup>.

In Turkey, UNESCO's influence was most visible in the initiatives in the 1960s that led to the foundation of the first schools of media and communications in higher education (Kejanlioğlu, 2004). Furthermore, the foundation of the TRT at the end of 1960s not only involved a 'transfer of ideology' but also a 'transfer of technology' (Şahin, 1979). The TRT was established with financial and technical support from the West and adopted Western notions of public service broadcasting (Kejanlioğlu, 2004: 188).

The economic policy which is known as 'Fordism' involved greater state intervention and prevailed globally prior to the 1980s. However their crisis eventually led to emergence of neoliberal economic approaches. In the early 1980s, the World Bank and the IMF acquired more power in the design and implementation of development policies, including those relating to media and communications. This has created increasing pressure to 'liberalise, deregulate and privatize the domestic communication and media industries' (Chakravartty and Sarikakis, 2006: 34)

These liberalising pressures created a global media environment within which nation states' relative autonomy in regulating the media declined and came under increasing pressure from 'public international agencies', 'multinational corporations', 'human rights organisations' as well as 'supranational' or 'regional governance'

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<sup>101</sup> ITU's activities involve the standardisation of world wide telecommunications and frequency allocations. It was established in 1865 by 20 European countries, one of which was the Ottoman Empire. It continues to operate under UN provisions. The ITU has an emphasis on the global information society and economy which can be maintained through free trade in telecommunications and information services (Wang, 2002).

<sup>102</sup> The most significant debate on media, modernisation and cultural sovereignty revolved around UNESCO's call for a NWICO (New World Information and Communications Order). For details see Chakravartty and Sarikakis (2006) and Reeves (1993).

bodies such as the IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the EU (Price, 2002: 4; Chakravartty and Sarikakis, 2006).

The Turkish economy opened up to the outside world with the implementation of the 24<sup>th</sup> January 1980 economic decisions, an economic plan of liberalisation, which was formed according to the demands of the IMF, World Bank, and foreign (as well as domestic) capital holders (Kejanlioğlu, 2004: 192).

As Kejanlioğlu explains, in the 1980s broadcasting in Turkey was not considered as a 'prioritized policy area' but 'emerged and developed in the context of global capitalism' because even though the military intervention of 1980 had major implications for the limitation of freedom and liberties, it has not suspended Turkey's relationship with the IMF or the World Bank<sup>103</sup> (Kejanlioğlu, 2004: 201).

From 1980 until the stipulation of the new Broadcast Act in 1994, a number of external and internal actors have influenced broadcast media policy and practices in Turkey. Turkey signed the European Convention on Transfrontier Television<sup>104</sup> (1989) in 1992, which was ratified by parliament in 1993. This convention had significance for the new broadcast regulation. As Kejanlioğlu explains, in this period the EU had an emphasis on economic growth, cooperation, and integration with European culture. The ITU expected Turkey to achieve and comply with technical standards<sup>105</sup>. The expectations of the IMF and the World Bank involved the sustainability of international economic stability. Finally, international commercial

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<sup>103</sup> Since 1961 Turkey has signed 19 stand-by agreements with the IMF for the re-structuring of the economy.

<sup>104</sup> Along with the Television Without Frontiers Directive, this document make up the two legal documents that make up the basis of communication policy in the European Union. It aims to set standards for the transfrontier transmission and re-transmission of the television programmes (Available at <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/132.htm>).

<sup>105</sup> Turkey's relationship with ITU is governed by Telecommunications Authority (Telekomünikasyon Kurumu) in Turkey. ([http://www.tk.gov.tr/Uluslararası\\_iliskiler/uki/itu.htm](http://www.tk.gov.tr/Uluslararası_iliskiler/uki/itu.htm)). It was established in 2000 in order to regulate and supervise the telecommunications sector. (Çaplı and Tuncel, 2005).

media actors such as Time Warner and Canal Plus expected to enter the broadcast sector, but were unsuccessful (Kejanlıoğlu, 2004: 198-199).

The changes that are currently expected to take place in the media sector in Turkey continue to involve issues of trade, ownership and competition, which are general issues pertaining to global media policies that now mainly come as part of Turkey's negotiations with the European Union.

Since 1998, the EU has been monitoring the compatibility of Turkish audio-visual policies with those of the Union and found Turkey's alignment with the EU legislation 'limited' (EU Commission, 2002: 107), especially in terms of the 'Television Without Frontiers Directive' that defines the EU's framework for media liberalisation. The EU has not been able to set up a general framework for media regulation and media ownership issues are regulated under general competition rules (Pekman, 2005). The last bilateral meeting between Turkey and the European Commission on information society and media policies took place in 2006<sup>106</sup>. This meeting focussed on issues, among others, of Turkey's alignment with the Television Without Frontiers Directive, limitations on the ownership of television and radio stations, and Turkey's international commitments like those to the WTO<sup>107</sup> that might influence audio-visual policies.

In Turkey, media ownership and competition is regulated by Article 29 of the Broadcast Act. It has restricted 'horizontal and cross concentration and foreign capital, and prevented the development of economic relations between media capital and the state'<sup>108</sup>. This was the first kind of regulation in this field. However, as

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<sup>106</sup> Available at:  
[www.abgs.gov.tr/files/tarama/tarama\\_files/10/sorular%20ve%20cevaplar\\_files/SC10\\_Cevaplar.pdf](http://www.abgs.gov.tr/files/tarama/tarama_files/10/sorular%20ve%20cevaplar_files/SC10_Cevaplar.pdf)

<sup>107</sup> As a response to a question in the meeting with regards to Turkey's commitments such as to the WTO, it is stated that 'there is no Most Favoured Nation clause for any foreign audiovisual products' and therefore Turkey has no commitments in this area.

<sup>108</sup> The sanctions can be summarised as follows: an organisation can own only one radio or television station. Newspaper owners are not allowed to hold more than 20 percent of the shares in a given radio or television outlet. 'The total share of share holders in radio or television organisations cannot

commentators explain, its implementation since its adoption has not been successful due to complex relationships between the media, state and finance sector<sup>109</sup>.

The article was amended in May 2002 and no constraints were set on the number and variety of media holdings, but the market domination is limited by 20 percent in each sector<sup>110</sup>. The upper limit of foreign capital in domestic media enterprises was raised from 20 percent to 25 percent (Pekman, 2005: 281)<sup>111</sup>. In the eyes of the EU the Broadcast Law is still considered to contain problems that await solution (EU Commission, 2008) but, as we discuss in the next section, what makes the emergence of commercial broadcasting so significant in social and political life in Turkey is its relation to cultural liberalisation.

### **The Situation of the Broadcast Media in the 1980s and Early 1990s**

The first attempts to integrate with the emerging global media structure began during the first ANAP government (1983-1987) when steps were taken to gain access to emerging satellite technologies. Such steps became necessary because the new communications technologies were a significant aspect of the global neo-liberal economic transformation. They also helped to strengthen ties with Europe's

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exceed 20 percent; the share of foreign capital is restricted to 20 percent, and it is possible to be a share holder in only one radio and television organisation (Pekman, 2005:266).

<sup>109</sup> Media holdings participated in public tenders in the 1990s despite the rule that persons who have more than 10 percent of the shares in a private radio or television were prevented from doing so. Some media companies bought banks and used them to access unlimited credits and eventually these banks were transferred to the Savings Deposit Bank (Tasarruf Mevduatı Sigorta Fonu) as part of a banking reform along with their media companies. The Deposit Bank took over Media Group in 2000, Aksoy Group in 2001 and the Uzan Group in 2003 (Pekman, 2005; Çaplı and Tuncel, 2005:1575).

<sup>110</sup> See Çaplı and Tuncel (2005) for details.

<sup>111</sup> Global media players have begun to enter the Turkish media sector since 2005 after the Savings Deposit Bank allowed the sales of shares of media outlets under its acquisition. Canwest acquired four radio stations that previously belonged to Uzan media group. News Corporation acquired shares in the former TGRT channel of İhlas Holding in 2006 (Sümer, 2007).

communications infrastructure, which became imperative after 1987 when Turkey applied to the then European Community (Kejanlıoğlu, 2004)<sup>112</sup>.

During the second ANAP administration (1987-1991), TRT began to expand its reach to the rural inhabitants of the underprivileged, and densely populated, Kurdish regions of southeast Turkey, by opening the TRT-GAP (South-eastern Anatolian Project)<sup>113</sup> channel. As Kejanlıoğlu (2004) further explains, TRT also began to adapt a transnational outlook after the end of the Cold War with the inauguration of TRT INT and TRT Avrasya channels, targeting the Turkish diaspora in Europe and Turkic peoples in the nascent post-Soviet states.

The most significant external factor that changed the mediation of cultural identities in Turkey resulted from the introduction of satellite technology, which, as previously mentioned, inevitably de-coupled the relationship between communication and territorial boundaries. On 1<sup>st</sup> March 1990, the so called *Magic Box* company, which belonged to Rumeli Holding (Uzan Group), began its transmissions from Germany to Turkey on the Star 1 satellite channel and, *de facto*, broke TRT's monopoly over broadcasting (Kejanlıoğlu, 2001; Mutlu, 1999). This created an illegal and chaotic

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<sup>112</sup> The effects of neo-liberal transformation of the global economy were evident in the liberalisation and de-regulation of the European media systems since early 1980s. Europeanization of national media policies began to take place as the EU member states implemented the Television Without Frontiers Directive (Harcourt, 2002).

<sup>113</sup> GAP is the acronym for the Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi –(South-eastern Anatolian Project), which was established in 1989 in order to maintain the development of the region by providing new energy and irrigation projects for farming, as well as industrial, economic, social and medical development. <http://www.dpt.gov.tr/bgyu/bkp/GAP2003.pdf> TRT GAP television was established in 1989 and it transmits on TRT-3 channel. <http://www.trt.net.tr/wwwtrt/tarihce.aspx?Yil=1989>.

The TRT General Broadcasting Plan of 2005 identified the role and function of TRT-GAP as 'maintaining the social, cultural and psychological environment in order to establish a rational basis for the GAP project, raising the economic and educational level of the region, to respond to the needs to those who live in the East and South-East Anatolian region, to show the achievement of GAP and its contribution to the region as well as the country to the general audience, and to help sustain national unity and integrity.' (TRT, 2005:13).

situation that persisted for three years, during which time there existed 250 local and national TV channels and 1250 radio stations (Kejanlioğlu, 2004)<sup>114</sup>.

In order to end the chaotic situation, Article 133 of the constitution was amended on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1993 and Law No. 3984 Broadcasting Act was enacted in April 1994 (Mutlu, 1999). The law lifted TRT's monopoly over broadcasting, allowed the foundation of commercial radio and television and established the Radio and Television Supreme Council, (RTÜK), as the regulator for commercial TV and radio outlets. RTÜK is charged with the duty of allocating frequencies<sup>115</sup>, monitoring transmissions, maintaining compliance with broadcasting standards and regulations and also issuing licences for broadcasters (Çaplı and Tuncel, 2005).

This dramatic change in broadcasting became possible under the Social Democratic People's Party (SHP) and centre-right True Path Party (DYP) coalition, which was formed after the general elections in 1991. It promoted a more politically liberal stance on human rights issues, relations with Europe, and a national identity that would accommodate differences (Kejanlioğlu, 2004). While the new broadcasting law being debated, one of the most pressing issues on the agenda was the debate over Kurdish broadcasting. President Turgut Özal and ANAP, which was then in opposition, supported the start of Kurdish broadcasts and the use of TRT's GAP channels for this purpose, but these measures were never adopted (Kejanlioğlu, 2004).

In 1993, before the new law came into effect, there was a period in which all television and radio broadcasts except for those that were transmitted on satellite

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<sup>114</sup> These numbers fell to 16 national, 15 regional and 230 local television stations at the end of the decade (Mutlu, 1999). According to the figures supplied by Çaplı and Tuncel (2005), in Turkey there are 14 national, 13 regional and 203 local TV stations; as well as 33 national, 89 regional and 873 local radio stations. In addition, TRT has 4 national, 1 regional and 2 international TV channels; as well as 4 national, 9 regional radio stations.

<sup>115</sup> Currently, all TV and radio channels broadcast without licenses. The allocation of frequencies has not yet been completed due to a deadlock involving institutions such as the NSC, the regulator for the telecommunication sector (Telecommunications Authority, TK) and RTÜK. In order to settle the dispute, in 2005 HKY (Haberleşme Yüksek Kurulu, the Communications High Council) a digital switchover was agreed that replaced the frequency allocation plans (Çaplı and Tuncel, 2005)

were suspended by a decree from the Ministry of Interior and Transportation (Çatalbaş, 2000; Kejanlıoğlu, 2001). Kejanlıoğlu (2001: 99) has reported that there were a number of ‘official’ reasons’ to suspend broadcasts, such as technical problems resulting from an overload of the electromagnetic spectrum and intellectual copyright problems to be resolved with the music industry.

However, the most convincing reason behind the suspension of broadcasts seems to be the concern voiced by the National Security Council with regards to new ethnic and religious radio stations, which could threaten the ‘unity and integrity of Turkey’. Indeed, as mentioned previously, this concern was addressed in Article 4 of the new Broadcast Law (Oran 2007: 46). This, as Kejanlıoğlu (2004) has succinctly argued, indicates that problems in domestic politics - namely the rise of Islam, the Kurdish conflict and their expression within the media system - posed a bigger concern for the authorities than the rapid deregulation and commercialisation of the broadcast media system.

Nevertheless, the new media environment that emerged with the foundation of commercial television ushered in a new era in Turkey. In fact, as we discuss in the next section, what makes the *de facto* deregulation and the emergence of commercial broadcasting so significant in social and political life in Turkey is their relation to cultural liberalisation.

### **‘Speaking Turkey!’: Increasing media diversity and its consequences for expressions of cultural diversity in the 1990s**

At the beginning of the 1990s, two factors led to increasing media diversity in the Turkish media structure: the sudden breach of the state’s broadcasting monopoly and changes within media ownership mechanisms. These both had further implications for the expression of cultural diversity and identities.

Indeed, these developments relate to the rise of identity politics in Turkey. We have already discussed the diversification of print media in the 1980s that enabled the broadening of newspaper content, and the emergence of identity based media outlets,

such Islamist leaning newspapers. The launch of commercial television channels in Turkey is seen as the second factor that helped those who were excluded from the symbolic space to gain access and visibility in the public realm. Hence, many studies in the early 1990s celebrated the mushrooming commercial TV and radio channels as venues of 'popular' expression that contrasted with the paternalistic, top-down, official ideology/culture imposing practices of state television. The media was considered to be a venue for Turkey's 'others', who were banned from the screens of official television stations. The emergent media outlets were deemed to fulfil their chief function, which is maintaining a 'democratic public sphere'. The consensus in these works was that media had a growing impact on the manifestation of cultural diversity in Turkey (Aksoy and Robins, 1997; Aksoy and Şahin, 1993; Uğur, 1996).

The new commercial television stations were iconoclasts. They introduced new types of programs that were absent from TRT screens, such as discussion programs, erotica, and morning shows. They promoted themselves as young and dynamic. Their news and current affairs programs and live studio debates created a media environment that transcended the limits of official discourse that had constrained TRT and, as Aksoy and Şahin (1993: 5) have maintained, led to 'taboo bashing' of official dogmas regarding national and cultural identity. They described the emergent situation as follows:

The new global media were effective in bringing the other into Turkey much more convincingly than the ever-official, ideology laden programming of the TRT, or the print media, whose reach always remained limited due to sociological and economic constraints. The new media were instrumental in bringing to the fore the defining tensions of the Turkish identity, such as ethnic origin, religion, language and group admimations. The global stations operating outside the constraints of the official ideology helped to turn Turkey into a shooting gallery of taboos by bringing the Kurdish problem, Kemalism, secularism, religious sects, gender roles, sex etc. into the realm of public discussion. Official "untouchables", like the leaders of the pro-Soviet Communist party, leaders of the Kurdish rebellion, fundamentalist preachers, transvestites, homosexuals, radical feminists, and former secret service agents paraded through news magazines and talk shows.

In this context, Uğur (1996: 58) has argued that media ‘played a leading role in the emergent self-awareness of Turkish society’, and contributed to its ‘search for self-definition’. In fact, in order to highlight the influence of talk shows and discussion programs in publicizing formerly taboo subjects, the term ‘*speaking Turkey*’ was coined as a popular expression to symbolise this period (Çatalbaş, 2000). Morning shows used phone-ins that interacted with the audience, addressing them by their first name or with colloquial words that reflected familiarity like *teyze* (auntie), making television seem like your friend, rather than your teacher<sup>116</sup>.

As Öncü (2003: 303) has expressed, the channels also contributed to the visibility of the ‘repressed’ in mainstream culture, which was missing on the TRT screens:

National television spoke for the nation, and to the nation, in “proper” Turkish simultaneously dominant and privileged....conspicuously absent were emergent “hybrid” speech forms, cinematic and musical genres which proliferated at the urban fringes of larger cities, grounded in the experience of migration and daily life on the margins of increasingly globalized metropolitan cities.

The lack of representation of the ‘margins’ on state television was a major criticism directed at TRT, especially in the second half of the 1980s, when certain types of music, words or performers were banned from TRT screens<sup>117</sup>. Kevin Robins has argued that the denial of ‘the actuality of popular culture and popular expressions’ was due to their putative misfit with the ‘modernizing rationalisation’ in Turkey (Robins, 1996: 70). The central concern addressed by Robins here can be summarised as the tension between *centre* and *periphery*<sup>118</sup>.

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<sup>116</sup> Aydın Uğur (1996) has referred to TRT’s style of interaction with its audience as a ‘teacher-pupil’ relationship.

<sup>117</sup> See Stokes (1992) for the debate on so-called ‘arabesque’ music.

<sup>118</sup> This dichotomy is traditionally used in order to refer to tensions and struggles between the Republican secular, urban elite - the centre - that aimed to create a Western, modern and secular nation state, and the groups and communities which had to be transformed according to the modernisation process - the periphery. For a centre-periphery debate see Mardin (1973).

For Aksoy and Robins (1997), the centre-periphery problem reflects the tension between the *official culture* and the *real culture* of Turkey. But this understanding is problematic because it envisages one, complete ‘real culture’ of the people on the one hand, and a totally dominant, official culture on the other. It reifies and totalises both cultures and neglects the overlaps of these two with each other. Furthermore, it neglects the growing influence of the logic of commercialisation and its implications. Moreover, if official culture is to be understood as ideology and nationalism propagated by the Kemalist elite, it is imperative to remember, as mentioned above, that Turkey’s ‘state/bureaucratic elite is not a monolithic bloc’ (Somer, 2005) imposing one kind of Turkishness, as there are different competing ‘nationalisms’ (Bora, 1994)<sup>119</sup>.

This is not to underestimate the fact that the emergence of commercial television facilitated ‘external diversity’ in terms of the channels that were available, and perhaps an ‘internal diversity’ in terms of the issues debated within the mainstream national media culture.<sup>120</sup> However, the analyses that have focused on the early years of commercial broadcasting and the diversification of newspapers are somewhat optimistic observations that neglected certain significant factors.

Firstly, these observations have not thoroughly questioned the commercialisation of the media and growing concentration of media ownership, which could pose a threat to ‘diversity’ and pluralism in the media and the public sphere. Secondly, they have ignored one of the most significant problems of the decade, the violation of freedom

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<sup>119</sup> As Appadurai (1990) has expressed, the dilemmas that emerge in the cultural domain through globalisation can no longer be captured in terms of centre-periphery models. Hence, grounding the local/global nexus within global complexity (Robertson, 1992) might offer a more fruitful approach than traditional centre-periphery models.

<sup>120</sup> The mid-1990s is also a period in which particularistic media that reflected ethnic and religious identity issues proliferated in Turkey. For instance, the pro-Kurdish daily newspaper *Özgür Gündem* (Free Agenda) began in 1993. ‘Kurdish broadcasting’ began in 1995 with the satellite TV channel MED-TV (Tan, 2007). For Med TV also see Hassanpour (1995). In terms of the ‘revitalisation of identity’ for the Alevi community and the role of media networks, see Çaha (2004).

of expression<sup>121</sup>. Thirdly, these analyses have fallen short of explaining the contradictory representation of diversity in Turkey. Although the new commercial channels opened up new venues for ‘oppressed voices’ and contributed to an expansion of the public sphere, especially in terms of the ways in which the Kurdish problem was debated, the flexibility of discussion programs did not translate into similar practices in newscasts. For instance, Çatalbaş (2000: 137-140), analysed news bulletins on seven national TV channels including TRT, and found that ‘as far as the reporting of controversial political issues were concerned, the news programmes of private broadcasters did not always challenge official definitions...in relation to the Kurdish problem newscasts on private television were not very different from those on TRT’. As she has maintained, this was due to the influence of ‘corporate attitudes and political dispositions’.

Furthermore, the media coverage of non-Muslim minorities was also contradictory. Whilst the mainstream print media exhibited an interest in the food, music and culture of minorities, accompanied by a nostalgic discourse about a multi-cultural past, there was a growing resentment towards non-Muslims in the Islamic leaning and far right press. This, as Demir (1995: 181) has argued, even provoked violent attacks against the property of minorities. Meanwhile, the left leaning liberal press, which would be ‘expected to be more sensitive’ to these issues mostly remained silent on the ‘violations of rights of minorities’.

As later studies have suggested, it is necessary therefore to consider the impacts of commercialisation and conglomeration in the media and their impact on the public

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<sup>121</sup> As Tılıç (2001) has expressed, Turkey was on the black list of international professional organisations in the 1990s due to the assassination and imprisonment of journalists not only from marginal leftwing or oppositional Kurdish press, but also mainstream leftwing, social democrat and Kemalist journalists. Unfortunately, most of the killings were recorded as ‘murders by unknown perpetrator’ (faili meçhul cinayet), although claims were made by radical leftwing and radical Islamist groups. The Pro-Kurdish daily *Özgür Gündem* was bombed in 1994 and, in 1996, Turkey ranked first in the world with the highest number of journalists in jail. International bodies, such as the Committee to Protect Journalists, repeatedly mentioned Turkey as having one of the worst records in the world in terms of freedom of expression.

sphere, professionals and freedom of expression. (Tılıç, 2001; Bek-Gencil, 2004; Christensen, 2007).

### **The Impact of the Consolidation of Media Ownership on Expressions of Diversity**

The consolidation of ownership created a ‘clientelistic’<sup>122</sup> relationship and a mutual ‘dependency’ between the state and the media (Tılıç, 1998). As Tılıç has explained, journalistic values were jeopardised by media conglomeration as the media owners became dependent on state credits and benefits. Overall, despite occasional critical stances against government, they essentially supported the *status quo*. Tılıç has illustrated this with the carrot/stick analogy. Governments provided ‘carrots’ to media groups in the form of subsidies, or credits from state banks. While anti-democratic regulations, imprisonment or the withholding of state credits were used as the ‘stick’ (Tılıç, 1998; 2001).

The growing impact of neoliberal policies on the media structure also influenced the way media outlets were organised. Firstly, journalists were forcefully stripped of their unions and collective bargaining rights, which made them vulnerable against the new owners and dismantled professional solidarity (Tılıç, 1998). Secondly, some journalists, especially chief editors, emerged as the *new elite* (Alpay, 1993) and column writers became the ‘new aristocracy’ (Bali, 2002).

According to Tunç (2004: 310-312), chief editors became the ‘chosen’ ones of the new media system and began to serve the conglomerate media bosses - ‘losing their independent journalistic judgement, enjoying their upper middle class lifestyles with astronomical salaries and concurrently guarding the financial interests of their bosses and acting as spokespersons on their behalf.’ Tunç has described columns as a

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<sup>122</sup> Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002:184-185) use this concept in their analysis of media systems in Southern Europe and Latin America. The concept, as they put it, refers to ‘a social organization within which access to social resources is controlled by patrons and delivered to clients in exchange for deference and various kind of support.’ In their view, this phenomenon is prevalent in Southern Europe due to the late development of democracy.

‘unique format’ in the Turkish press and estimated that, in the 17 dailies that have a circulation of more than 40 thousand, there are about 408 columnists.

Adaklı (2006: 295), on the other hand, argues that column writers were needed in the newspapers because they could provide the intellectual justification for realising the neoliberal ‘vision’ that was emerging after the 1980s. The employment of a variety of column writers, senior editors, analysts, experts, academics and minority intellectuals was used as a tactic for maintaining internal diversity, a ‘plurality of voices’ within the seemingly externally diverse media structure (Can, 2001: 33)<sup>123</sup>. The most significant example of such attempts occurred in the mid-1990s, when two rival media groups founded newspapers targeting young, urban, educated middle-classes<sup>124</sup>. Two factors emerge as the pretext behind such changes. Firstly, the media groups’ adherence to market economy dogma led them to consciously construct the readers, especially the emergent urban middle class, as ‘clients’ or ‘consumers’ (Feraî Tınç, Interview, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2005). Secondly, topics such as the ‘1915 Armenian incidents’ and the ‘Kurdish issue’ were of growing interest within public culture in the 1990s, and it was in this context that urban intellectuals ‘discovered’ non-Muslim minorities as a part of Turkey’s multicultural heritage (Rıfat Bali, Interview, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2005).

This change in the organisational structure of the media has a particular importance because, as discussed in the next chapter, it pertains to the changing representations

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<sup>123</sup> Can (2001) categorises the opinion leader columnists under six sub-categories according to the different functions that they serve. The first are the ‘barons’ who are the top editors or directors of the media institutions they work in, and they are the ‘mentors’ of their bosses, the political power as well as the society. The second group are the ‘spokespersons.’ This group is known to have connections with political actors or pressure groups and is able to get direct interviews with certain groups so as to reflect their opinions in his/her column. The third and fourth are analysts and experts who come from specific areas such as diplomacy, economics and education. The fifth category is the most traditional of all, the anecdotal columnists. The sixth and the final category refers to ‘variety’. This maintains the ‘plurality of voices’, but this plurality is in some cases ‘engineered’ and is exempt from the overall ‘opinion orbit’ of the newspaper.

<sup>124</sup> *Yeni Yüzyıl* (New Century) founded by the Dinç Bilgin Group in 1994, and *Radikal* (Radical) by Dogan Group in 1996. Hrant Dink, the late general director of the Armenian newspaper *Agos*, had a column in *Yeni Yüzyıl*, and the current director, Etyen Mahçupyan, used to write for *Radikal*.

of cultural identities in the mainstream media, especially regarding non-Muslim minorities and the (re)discovery of Turkey's multicultural past.

### **The Discovery of a 'Multicultural' Past in Popular Cultural Products**

The role of fictional or popular cultural products in the expansion of the public sphere was mentioned earlier in the previous chapter (see Curran, 2000). The first signs of a similar development began to show in the late 1980s when a growing interest, a yearning and nostalgia for the 'multicultural past' manifested itself in the public realm, not only in print media but in music, film and television. The foundation of the *Kalan* music company and *Belge* Publishing House in the 1990s was one of the most significant examples of this trend. In fact, Iğsız (2001: 156-157) views the way these two outlets archived music and memoirs of the multicultural past as attempts at 'civic cultural policy' production that brought together the different 'colours' of Anatolia in the public sphere.<sup>125</sup> This trend, which began with music and books, led to a boom in TV series that highlighted ethnic and social tensions or longed for the good old days of community life in the old neighbourhoods of Istanbul (Yanardağoğlu, 1999). Such examples might be considered as novel developments in the way cultural diversity was acknowledged and mediated. However, as mentioned above, there were contradictions in the new situation, which are elaborated in the following sections.

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<sup>125</sup> *Kalan*, which means (those) who/which remain, was established in 1991 by Hasan Saltık, who was half-Kurd and half-Zaza. It now holds a collection of 340 CDs and, with the help of ethnomusicologists, it archives old, forgotten, classic Turkish music, Ottoman army marches, and Anatolian folk music. The albums it produced, which covered Armenian, Rum, Kurdish, Laz, Georgian, Gypsy, Syriac and Yezidi music, became a world-wide phenomenon and received international awards for their 'contribution to multiculturalism' (E.Kalkan, *Hürriyet Pazar*, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2004). The *Belge* Publishing House began publishing a series called 'Mare Nostrum', (referring to Romans' definition of the Mediterranean) in 1991, and it produced more than 60 books and translated more than 300 from other languages. These books, as their introductory texts have highlighted, reminded its readers of the 'multiculturalism' of Anatolia and tried to persuade them that 'it was possible to live together' (Iğsız, 2001:164).

According to Bali (2002: 144), the ‘nostalgia’ over ‘good old’ Istanbul was accompanied with an emerging ‘urbanite consciousness’ among the intelligentsia as the demographics of Istanbul began to change through rural-urban migration. For Bali, ‘multiculturalism’ became one of the most popular subjects in the 1990s, especially since the urban elite, of which the journalists are a part, saw ‘themselves as minorities’ against the ‘peasants’ who had ‘invaded’ Istanbul.

The rediscovery of a ‘multicultural’ past in the mainstream media was fuelled by two major, and interrelated, factors. Firstly, the rise of the Islamist movement in politics created ‘panic’ among the secular urban classes, especially after Erdoğan became the mayor of Istanbul in 1994 (Bali, 2002). Secondly, rural-urban migration, primarily from the Kurdish populated areas to the metropolitan cities, disturbed the urban lifestyle. These fears bolstered what Bora (1994) has called a new type of nationalism, or ‘Western’ nationalism, which emerged as a result of the neoliberal transformation that began after the 1980s coup. In this setting, as Bora argued, the urban capitalist classes and media professionals became the bearers of this type of nationalism as they saw the national interest in participating with globalisation and adopting a modern lifestyle<sup>126</sup>.

Rıfat Bali addressed these secular and modern ‘lifestyle’ concerns in his book *Tarz-ı Hayat’tan Lifestyle’a* (from ‘style of life’, written in old Turkish (Tarz-ı Hayat), to ‘lifestyle’). His observations are also central for understanding the changes in the visibility of minority cultures in the public realm. As he explained in our interview:

As I mentioned in my book, Turkey has changed after 1980...and professionals, including those who worked in the press, began to earn good money, which was not the case before that. But they did not know their past. After the Tarlabası Street in the Beyoğlu district was opened and with the emergence of a new consciousness in society, they began to wonder about

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<sup>126</sup> As Bali (2002:324-337) has explained, in the 1990s there emerged a debate about ‘White Turks’, or ‘Euro Turks’, and ‘Black Turks’ in the media. Black Turks was used in reference to whoever was repressed (regardless of religion and ethnicity) and who usually lived in the fringes of urban settings. White Turk as a concept was used interchangeably with Euro Turk to denote members of the urban, educated, secular elite who adopted Western values.

the old residents of these neighborhood. It was in those days that culture walks, trips to synagogues and churches became a 'racon' [must follow attitude] and fashion. There were lots of articles and books written on this matter. For some people this was a 100% genuine interest, for others it was away of making money, other used it to have fame. Aside from that, there was a democratization process in Turkey. It was becoming more multi-vocal. [There was] a rise in civic opposition as well as an interest in the academia to approach history outside the official definitions. All of these led to a boom of books and publications (Interview, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

The so-called *Mare Nostrum* series published by *Belge* books constitutes an example of the proliferation of such publications about the multicultural past. Ragıp Zarakolu is the owner of *Belge* Publishing House and also a columnist in pro-Kurdish daily *Özgür Gündem*. He considers the *Mare Nostrum* series as 'part of the democratisation process' in Turkey and believes that the 'power of literature' is stronger in exposing certain realities than that of academic and scientific works.

We have tried to publicise the literature of the groups that have been considered as non-existent in Turkish social history. We aimed for these communities to be better understood through a feeling of empathy that is communicated through literature. This was not only important for those communities who lived in Turkey but also for the neighbouring countries with whom we share a history. Because Turkey was cut off from its history and its region because of the official ideologies, we believe that it is important that Turkey makes peace with her history and with the societies that it lived together in the past. ...When we started the series we have received very positive reactions and we created a new wave. We have been able to break down the barriers with the Greeks. When we published the Greek author Sotiriou's book [Send my greetings to Anatolia] in 1988, she was received like a saint here in Turkey. But it is more difficult with the Armenians. Even though these two societies lived together for 1000 years there is a wall between them for 80 years that keep them apart. This is so sad. We have difficulty in translating Greek and Armenian books, as we need to do it through another language such as French or English. But our previous society was multi-lingual. Our grandfathers were able understand each other in these different languages (Interview, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005).

Zarakolu's comments on the contribution of fictional media products to 'democratisation' endorse Curran's (2000) argument that was previously put forward in relation to the transformation and expansion of the public sphere. Curran

argued that fictional media output such as soaps were also instrumental in bringing ‘sensitive’ issues into the domain of public debate.

The TV series which, from 2000, began to depict the stories of big Kurdish families and non-Muslim minorities for the first time can also be seen as a factor that enriched public debate. In fact, as the scenario writer of TV series *Yabancı Damat* (‘Foreign Groom’) Sulhi Dölek maintained, due to the low figures in books sales, television can act as much more powerful instrument in reaching people than literary works. For Dölek, the challenge of dealing with such sensitive themes for the first time was to establish a balance between representations of the two sides of any issues that came up within the story. According to Dölek, this challenge was successfully met and in the end managed to ‘touch a nerve’ in both Greece and Turkey, helping to create ‘tolerance’ and ‘winds of peace’ between the two peoples (Interview via e-mail, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2005).<sup>127</sup>

Despite the power of popular fictional media products in normalizing public debate and promoting an opening in the public sphere towards issues of cultural diversity, non-fictional media output, including investigative journalism pieces, were not always welcomed so straightforwardly.

For instance, as Zarakolu has explained, whilst the *Mare Nostrum* series did not face any particular pressures because they were literary works. *Belge*’s other research-based books, such as the ones that support the recognition of the existence of ‘Armenian genocide’, were subject to pressures and constraints when they were published.

In a similar vein, one of my respondents Yahya Koçoğlu published two books (*Azınlık Gençleri Anlatıyor/Minority Youth Speaks* and *Hatırlıyorum/I Remember*) within the so-called ‘Black-White’ series of *Metis* publications, which supports

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<sup>127</sup> The series, which for the first time depicted a love story between a Turkish girl from a very traditional family from South Eastern Turkey and a Greek boy from Athens whose parents were Istanbulite Rum, became a big hit in Turkey and Greece.

investigative reporting and independent journalism by publishing journalistic works on subjects absent from the mainstream media. The interviews, which informed the first book on minority youth, began as a reportage series for a national newspaper in 1999 but were never published, and Koçoğlu alleges that the data unexpectedly ‘disappeared’ from his computer at the offices of the newspaper (Interview, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2005).

During the 1990s, as the interviews demonstrated, representations of cultural identities and diversity in popular culture faced a significantly different level of restrictions and limitations to investigative projects and journalistic endeavours.

### **Dilemmas of External and Internal Diversity in the Turkish Media: Discrepancies in news and non-news formats and top-down pressures**

The discrepancy between the ‘multiculturalism’ reflected in fictional and non-fictional media output can be explained by the notion of ‘boutique multiculturalism’ (Yumul, 2005) or by distinguishing between ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ multiculturalism, where the former refers to the recognition of multiculturalism in the private sphere and the latter refers to its recognition in the public sphere and public policies (Grillio, 2004: 6; also see Grillo, 1998). According to Sefa Kaplan of *Hürriyet* newspaper, the differences of approach towards cultural diversity in the media resulted from a lack of professional codes and guidelines for journalists, as well as from an acknowledgment of multiculturalism in the public realm. As he explained,

Now let’s make some things clear. What you sociologically mean by cultural diversity is not exactly what I or my colleagues make of it... some people see it as the existence of different restaurants or the diversity in clothes. If you see it as a sociological category, as an understanding of different identities, then I am not sure there is concrete definition for that in the press. The nationalistic reflexes are very dominant in the press, so cultural diversity can actually be considered as a threat... For instance, the Jewish music group *Sefarad* made an album and this was considered to be cultural diversity and everyone supported it. Or when the Armenian folk dance groups perform in various venues nobody contested that. On the contrary they liked it. Now Kurdish albums can be made, which was banned in the past... But if these people say, look what you did in 6-7<sup>th</sup> September events, or during the

Capital levy and that is why we have left, then people get disturbed (Interview, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2005).

Kaplan's comments indicate certain reluctance in the media to deal with the taboo events of Turkey's recent history. It also reveals how cultural diversity, especially that of non-Muslims, has been treated as 'boutique multiculturalism', exemplified by the interest in ethnic restaurants, festivals, music and literature. This approach, as Yumul (2005) explains, tends to establish a 'cosmetic' or superficial relationship with different cultures.

There is an extraordinary scarcity of available research on the media representation of non-Muslim minorities in media studies in Turkey<sup>128</sup>. Analyses of the mediation of Kurdish identity within mainstream media are also rare. However, what is available endorses the argument that there is a contradiction between the mediation of cultural identities in news and non-news media content.

Earlier in this chapter a longitudinal content analysis looking at the transformation of the use of 'Kurd' in domestic public discourse has been discussed. This research identifies a decline in 'hardliner' views after 1998 due to the effects of 'democratisation', the increasing 'dialogue with Europe' and a 'decline' in the PKK threat (Somer, 2005). However, Sezgin and Wall (2005: 795) found 'no significant changes' in the coverage of the Kurds in *Hürriyet* from 1997-2002, which covered the period just before and after Turkey became a candidate to the European Union. Instead, they have argued that the Kurds were kept silent in media coverage, discussion was 'about' them not 'with' them, and they were mostly associated with terrorism (the PKK) and portrayed as 'divisive and as putting forth unreasonable demands.'

I also previously referred to a study (Çatalbaş, 2000) that observed major differences between discussion programs on TRT and commercial channels, but saw no

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<sup>128</sup> The only available media monitoring works are Demir (1995) and a report series 'Balkan Neighbours', to which I refer in the next chapter. There is also an unpublished media monitor compiled by *Agos* newspaper that was given to me during my fieldwork.

substantial differences in the coverage of 'sensitive issues' within the news and current affairs output of public and private broadcasters.

The different findings of these studies relate to their respective sampling strategies, a fact that endorses our discussion of the discrepancies between internal and external diversity in the media. Somer (2005), who included both news and opinion columns in his study, observed a transformation in the way the word Kurd was used to refer to Kurdish cultural identity and argues that greater democratisation in Turkey has changed the way it is mediated and debated. However, studies conducted by Bek-Gencil (2001) and Wall and Sezgin (2005) focused only on news articles and therefore concluded that the different identities in society were not reflected in all their diversity. In this light, as my respondent Oral Çalışlar also maintained (Interview, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005), a diversity of opinions exists among individual columnists but it does not necessarily reflect an institutionally sanctioned internal diversity.

In fact, despite a dearth of research in this field, existing studies highlight nationalistic tendencies in the media in general (Yumul and Özkırımlı, 2000; Bek-Gencil, 2001)<sup>129</sup>. For instance, Bek-Gencil (2001) analysed the press coverage of the pivotal Helsinki Summit and found that the republican principles of 'secularism' and 'nationalism' still prevailed in the media, having retained 'the official definition of Turkish identity, rather than acknowledging multiple identities'. As Bek-Gencil (2001: 140-141) explains:

The economic and political dimensions of Turkey's EU candidacy are emphasised in the news more than cultural identity issues, which are mostly sensationalised... Speaking in the name of Turkey rather than the Turkish people with all their differences becomes more obvious in the stories on political issues... The military on the other hand is not considered an obstacle

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<sup>129</sup> Similar problems were also reported to exist in the Greek media, within which coverage of sensitive 'national taboos' continues to undermine professional codes such as objectivity and balance and inhibits journalistic freedom by paving the way for self-censorship (Özgüneş and Terzis, 2000; Tılıç, 1998).

and is not at all criticised in the news. The liberal media in an economic sense is statist in politics and considers the 'other' as threats.

As the earlier sections of this chapter have demonstrated the acknowledgment of Kurdish identity was entangled with national security concerns on the one hand, and the rights discourse and recognition of plurality on the other. As the following comments reveal, the recognition of non-Muslim identities in a format that differed from boutique multiculturalism or nostalgia necessitated a serious reckoning with historical taboos.

Umur Talu of *Sabah* identified a historical delay in the discussion of non-Muslims' problems:

When I say historical delay I mean that these discussions could not be made when those minorities were still here. In the past co-habitation in the society was welcomed in a mature manner. But due to developments about Cyprus, and later on, when the Armenian issues emerged on the agenda in a bloody way with ASALA, all these discussions were suppressed. Now, when Turkey discovered such a discussion, Turkey does not have that many minorities any longer (Interview, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2005).

Ersin Kalkan of *Hürriyet*, similarly argued that there was no longer a valid pretext to justify the suppression of these issues because, just as establishing a communist party was permitted after the collapse of communism, non-Muslims only became 'worthy' participants in national culture after the demography of the country had changed and many minorities had already left (Interview, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2005).

Kürşat Bumin, who teaches journalism and produces a media monitor page for the reformed Islamist leaning daily *Zaman*, also claimed that Turkey's history was not put under scrutiny until recently. However, he also drew attention to another significant problem, the influence of the military and politics in public life, an opinion confirmed by the findings of Bek-Gencel (2001) that were mentioned previously. As he further explained:

In the Turkish press, be it Islamist or secular, there is a common tendency. Ideologically they have a very statist outlook on things. This is especially the case when it is related to the country, for instance on issues like the

Armenian issue. They all have the same reflex, with the exception of a few newspapers. The common trend in all of them is to speak with the terminology of the state...They still have not adopted their own language and terminology. They say ‘pseudo’ Armenian genocide, which is the language of the state...They say citizens of Armenian origin. What origins? These people are Armenians...That is why they are not liberal. They support the liberal economy but politically one can never say that they have a liberal outlook. They are very statist, they are very close to certain powers in the state, especially the army...we can say that this media have not been civilised [civic]. They still have not come to terms with militarism (Interview, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2005).

There are a number of factors that might explain the reproduction of the statist outlook within the media. Firstly, the discussion at the beginning of this chapter has shown that, from its inception, mass media was regarded as a driving force behind modernisation, and journalists were seen as part of the bureaucratic elite or the ‘propagators of official ideology’ (Frey, 1965, cited in Gürkan 2003: 153). In this light, Gürkan (2003: 156) has argued that the press in particular managed to retain its central position throughout the top-down modernisation process in Turkey and has always rallied behind the military interventions that have shaped Turkish politics.

For instance, in the so-called 28<sup>th</sup> February process the eventual resignation of the Welfare party from the coalition government resulted from public pressure that was not only fuelled by the military but also by the active support of mainstream newspapers such as *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, and *Sabah* (Bali, 2002). The media’s adherence to established discourses of secularism, which are kept under the guardianship of the military<sup>130</sup>, can also be explained by the fear felt by middle and upper-middle classes that their lifestyles were under threat (Özcan, 2000: 56).

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<sup>130</sup> Over the duration of this project, the rift between the so-called secular establishment and Islamists has widened acutely in the AKP government, especially in the period leading to the early general elections on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2007, which resulted in AKP’s victory and won them a second term in office. The election came after a turbulent period during which the first round of votes to elect the President was rejected on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2007 due to a dispute over the quorum needed in the general assembly. On that night, the army published a statement on its website and expressed their overt disapproval for a non-secular candidate becoming president. Abdullah Gül was elected president on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 2007 after the AKP secured a majority in the parliament for a second term.

The second factor explaining the persistence of statist or hegemonic discourses in the media can be found in the impact of media conglomeration and the liberal economic transformation since the 1980s. As Oral Çalışlar explained:

Due to concerns about their circulation, the press likes to tickle the primitive tendencies that exist in public opinion and likes to internalise the general ideas that primitive readers [support]. Let's say there is a problem with Cyprus. Due to circulation [concerns] they can be more aggressive and nationalistic than anybody else' (Interview, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005).

Umur Talu, on the other hand, referred to other influences of the changing economic logic of media systems that have led professional journalists into 'repression' and 'internalisation', processes which might lead to 'overt' and 'covert censorship' in the media. As he put it:

Some issues are not covered in the media because many people due to their mentality and lifestyle do not consider [these] problems...for example, social issues are less debated in the media compared to the past. This is because the media is generally the big [conglomerate] media, and because media groups are actors that have transactions in the market, and the executives have a mentality and lifestyle that is very market economy based (Interview, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2005).

Etyen Mahçupyan, an ethnic Armenian writer who in 2007 became the general director of the Armenian *Agos* newspaper, also agreed that the biggest taboo in Turkey is its history. His experiences support Talu's comments on the more subtle processes of constraint - such as self-censorship - that impact upon the mediation of differences:

In all the newspapers that I worked for some of my work was not published. Had I not been Armenian maybe they would be...Sometimes what you write creates discomfort, and it is usually related to history. But it is not only about 1915 [referring to the Armenian deportations and massacres], generally about history itself. People who live abroad think that the Armenian problem in Turkey is due to the genocide. But it is only a small fraction of the problem...There is a kind of history that was given to people in Turkey and it becomes difficult to say something outside it. And when you do, the newspaper gets afraid of the retaliations that might be directed against it...and they then tell you not to publish it... It may be that the administration of the newspaper agrees with what you are saying but they are worried about

the attacks that might come from the state or from other places (Interview, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2005).

According to Mahçupyan, in terms of the mediation of cultural identities and differences, the problem does not lie in the nationalistic newspapers, which have a small circulation of five or ten thousand and whose only ‘tendency is to curse and use abusive language’ [for the minorities] but in the ‘centre’ media, the big six or seven newspapers and how they deal with these issues. As he explained,

In the last period they [big newspapers] try to review their outlook and style on these issues. But the rupture point is that, if an issue is at the level of state policy, they do not want to express anything that might offend it. This is especially the case with newspapers such as *Hürriyet* and *Sabah*.

According to Oral Çalışlar there are number of factors that engender difficult relations between the state and conglomerate media which limit the freedom of the press in general:

First of all, the capital [conglomerate media] is very fragile and the governments are very powerful. The governments can easily say ‘if you criticise me you know what will happen’. In return, the bosses [media owners] turn to journalists and ask them not to be too sharp in the language they are using. This creates pressures on journalists on what can be written. Secondly, following 28<sup>th</sup> February some reports produced by the government – which later turned out to be engineered – were published in newspapers. They targeted some journalists as collaborators of the PKK. These journalists later on lost their jobs and even the media published reports that targeted their own colleagues... Thirdly, the same goes for the Kurdish problem. Newspapers again published some reports that were produced by the state bureaucracy (Conference speech, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2005).

Obviously, the processes of news production, and the economic, cultural and organisational constraints on media professionals and journalists (see Tumber, 1999; 2000; 2007), are extensive enough to be the subject of research in their own right. Indeed, they have already been addressed extensively in the Turkish context (see Adaklı, 2006; Tılıç, 1998; 2001). Nevertheless, within the remit of this thesis, the above mentioned comments accurately reveal the contradictory dynamics of external and internal diversity within the Turkish media system. They also challenge the

classical liberal approach to media, which, as Garnham (1990: 105) has maintained, propagates the idea that the ‘market can ensure the necessary freedom from state control and coercion.’

These findings also accentuate some of the ‘top-down’ pressures exerted upon the media system. Among the pressures identified by Curran (1996: 139-142), ‘corporate ownership’, ‘media concentration’ and the ‘ambivalence of state power’ seem to emerge as the most relevant for our discussion. Curran (1996: 139) has argued that these pressures ‘pull the media towards the orbit of powerful groups in society’ and ‘undermine - or potentially undermine - their claim to independence and neutrality, their disinterested mediation of the collective discourses of society.’

Hence, although the direct state control and monopoly over the ‘market for loyalties’ was loosened during the course of commercialisation, the neoliberal transformation of the media does not seem to have achieved an equivalent cultural and political liberalisation within Turkey’s media structure.

### **The Impact of Europeanisation on the Mediation of Cultural Diversity**

In light of the above discussion, media conglomeration, and its precarious relationship with the state bureaucracy, can be identified as a key factor affecting the mediation of cultural diversity in Turkey in the 1990s. This relationship became more complex when identity claims associated with religious and ethnic belongings were heightened during the 1990s and gained more attention in the public realm.

For Oral Çalışlar, the Kurdish issue was the primary internal factor that brought about changes in the acknowledgment of cultural differences. Other internal factors included the rise of Islamic identity politics and the Alevi community’s demands for recognition. As he put it:

These three big dynamics have marked the last twenty years and placed “multiculturalism” on the top of the agenda in Turkey. The external factor is the European Union. The EU has important rules about the cultural rights of minorities. This was reflected as an external factor in Turkey and met

resistance in two aspects: the *status quo* reacted because it was not used to it until now. They said ‘you want to divide us’. The second reaction however argued that ‘we need to accept these changes’ (Interview, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005).

The impact of the Europeanisation process is viewed as one of the most significant factors behind the normalisation of cultural diversity and the ways in which it is recognised, debated and mediated. As Sefa Kaplan of *Hürriyet* similarly argued:

After 2000 the EU has become a real thing. The pressure from the EU and the ceasefire in the southeast have created an atmosphere in which [cultural diversity] can be discussed. Previously, people used to say that if we discuss these issues the country will be divided and segregated. It did not divide. On the contrary, people have become more enlightened about these issues (Interview, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2005).

Oktay Ekşi, a veteran journalist and head column writer at *Hürriyet*, also emphasised the importance of the Europeanisation process. As he put it:

The European harmonisation laws [packages] created a Turkey within which... the freedom of communication has been widened. There are now more democratic provisions in the penal code, press code -although it has some problems- and other laws... We can say this - the European Union harmonisation laws, Copenhagen criteria and, to put it more concretely, [harmonisation] with Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights, brought about changes in that these issues can be debated (Interview, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2005).

Ahmet Taşgetiren, from the Islamist leaning *Yeni Şafak* newspaper, similarly highlighted the importance of international human rights instruments and the EU process:

I personally do not get very excited about the European Union. However, the steps taken in Turkey in areas of human rights would not have been possible without the impact of the EU, I know that. The EU-Turkey relations in that sense have been useful, and Turkey has become a more democratic country. I feel freer as a writer (Interview, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2005).

According to Etyen Mahçupyan, minority issues have become a subject of interest for professional journalists in recent years, but not for all the media outlets. He also

observes the changes in media attitudes towards official minorities since the late 1990s, especially due to the Europeanisation process.

Before 1997-98, no media organization would dare this [covering minorities], or if they did this would be marginal media outlets. Before the EU process, the media outlets which dared this would receive pressure from the state...Minority issues are covered if there is a problem. These issues would not be covered had the EU not mentioned them...For instance, the practice to confiscate non-Muslim foundations has a history of 30 years, but it appeared on the agenda of the media only in the last two years. These events have been taking place but they never acquired news value in the eyes of the press, because it was a state policy against the non-Muslims. And it was not costly to ignore these issues. But now there is a cost. Pushing non-Muslims out of the societal structure is a citizenship matter now and this is on the agenda due to the European Union (Interview, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2005).

There are those however who believe that Europeanisation alone cannot explain the transformation within the media in terms of its dealings with cultural diversity. For instance, Ferai Tınç has emphasised the significance minority rights issues gained globally and has maintained that these changes in Turkey would have taken place regardless of the EU process. As she put it,

They will take place because [things] reached that stage. Everything pushes each other. There is a two-fold process. On the one hand there is growing racism and xenophobia, and on the other minority rights gain more significance. The minority rights are expanding in the world and it is impossible for such a period not to influence Turkey (Interview, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2005).

In line with this view, Emre Aköz from *Sabah* newspaper argued that, although Europeanisation has been a very important factor, it must be viewed as another aspect of the general globalisation process affecting Turkey (Interview, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2005). Kürşat Bumin of *Zaman* also claimed that the EU was a significant agent of leverage that transformed the way that minority rights and problems are debated and acknowledged in Turkey, yet he also emphasised the global dynamics impacting on this transformation. As he stated, ‘We should not ask whether this process would have taken place without the [impact of] the EU. Some things will happen in Turkey

but perhaps not so fast. Nowhere in the world is it possible now to sustain a closed society.’ (Interview, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2005).

Oral Çalışlar, who also acknowledges the significance of Turkey’s developing relations with the European Union, believes Turkey could not adopt all these EU reforms without its own complementary internal dynamics. As he explained further:

The Kurdish issue was discussed on television screens even before 1999. There was no mention of Copenhagen criteria or Acquis. The Kurdish problem was debated for days and months on the screens until the early hours of the day. I am one of those who attended at least 20-30 TV programs and joined the debate. So, the EU has coincided with this situation.... One cannot say Turkey is a monolithic country in which nobody can make their voices heard. No. Turkey resembles neither Iraq, nor Syria nor Egypt. Kurd can speak, Alevi can speak, Armenian can speak and, by taking certain things into consideration, Islamist can speak. They can voice their opinions. They may get some threats for voicing the opinions but they cannot be eliminated (Interview, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005).

Perhaps the most illuminating comments regarding the ambiguity of Turkey’s democratic transformation, and its reflection in the media were again expressed by Oral Çalışlar who argued that, ‘it is difficult to understand Turkey from the West. It is neither authoritarian nor theocratic, nor a democratic country in the Western standards, it is somewhere in the middle’ (Interview, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2005).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the factors and conditions that shaped the mediation of cultural identities until the end of the 1990s, and has also considered the impact of Europeanisation reforms on the expression of cultural diversity in Turkey. In light of interviews and other data, this chapter has identified the internal and external factors that were influential in shaping the mediation of diversity. The internal factors pertained to the ‘ruptures’ in Turkish politics over the last twenty<sup>131</sup> years, namely

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<sup>131</sup> Umur Talu referred to ethnic and religious cleavages over the last twenty years as ‘ruptures’ (Interview, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2005).

the emergence of ethnic-based Kurdish nationalism and its armed campaign, as well as the rise of Islam in politics. When considering the post-1980 situation in Turkey, there emerges three currents which influences the ways in which social and political contestation has been framed: economic liberalisation, the Kurdish 'issue'(which started in 1984), and the rise of political Islam in the 1990s. These all had an impact on the media and on expressions of diversity.

A general tendency to subscribe to nationalistic and state ideology has been observed in the Turkish media. This tendency can be traced to the Republican origins of the media system, and has been reinforced by the strong influence of the civil and military bureaucracy in the public realm. Indeed, the military coup in 1980 eliminated all forms of oppositional ideas and pushed for the depoliticisation of society. However, as the data in this chapter demonstrate, it also led to the realisation of differences and catalysed a re-evaluation of the principles of Turkish modernisation and democracy. In this process, the Kurdish insurgency has been particularly instrumental. Nevertheless, other ways of representing Turkey's diverse cultural demography, which includes non-Muslim minorities, were not on the agenda until the end of the Cold War. Their eventual discovery was due to the growing commercialisation of the media, reflecting the lifestyle and consumer culture of the emerging urban middle-classes. It also emerged in response to the increasing power of political Islam.

Although greater democratisation was taking place in Turkey from the mid-1990s, the emergence of a new conglomerate media environment, which followed the break-up of the state monopoly on broadcasting, created contradictory consequences for expressions of diversity and freedom of expression. The neoliberal transformation of the media system opened up new venues of expression for those who were previously excluded from the public sphere. But it also bolstered media conglomeration and failed to prevent nationalistic tendencies in the media. The discrepancy between the capacities of news programming and popular cultural products to reflect diversity, has demonstrated that representations of cultural

diversity, especially of non-Muslims, have mostly remained at the level of nostalgia or 'boutique' multiculturalism.

The recognition and representation of diversity in the media, Kurdish cultural identity in particular, has been placed under sustained pressure from the state in order to maintain official ideology, with its discourses of national security and unity. 'Big' media's economic dependency on state benefits has functioned to contain the media within the parameters of official political culture.

The comments of professional journalists have revealed the constraining influence of national taboos on the performance of the media in general. History emerged as one of the biggest taboos in the national communicative space, and historically embedded tensions shaped, limited and defined the parameters of expression of diversity. The discussion of taboos in individual newspaper columns, TV debates and fictional or popular cultural products was tolerated in the new neoliberal setting. However, research-based or journalistic endeavours could still encounter resistance or difficulties. As previously mentioned, this situation became acute as journalists, writers and intellectuals were prosecuted under Article 301 of the penal code, which remains as one of the most significant obstacles to the enhancement of freedom of expression in Turkey.

External factors that challenge and transform the mediation of cultural diversity and identities can be identified as the changing international political climate at the end of the Cold War, the impact of globalisation and Europeanisation, and the influence of human rights instruments.

The general argument presented at the beginning of this chapter –has been that the economic liberalisation of the media structure did not necessarily correspond to cultural liberalisation. Indeed, as the data demonstrate, the privileged position of the state in the 'market for loyalties' remained strong, and it continued to shape, limit and constrain the mediation of cultural identities and diversity until the early 1990s. The developments after the mid-1990s can be explained by changes in Turkey's 'internal dynamics', as well as the greater influence of globalisation and human

rights discourses in the Turkish political and social setting. As the interviews have revealed, Europeanisation, at least in the sense of the EU's direct impact, has been a significant catalyst accelerating this process, but it was not considered as the only harbinger of transformation.

## **Chapter 5**

### **The Old Minority Media Regime: non-Muslim minorities and their media**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the ‘old’ minority media regime in Turkey that mediated the role of the officially accepted non-Muslim minority communities. As the previous chapter has demonstrated, historical taboos relating to national minorities and Kurds were among the factors that conditioned the mediation of cultural identities within the general media structure in Turkey until the end of the 1990s. This situation began to change during the Europeanisation reform period, which acted as a catalyst in transforming Turkey’s ‘mediascape’ (Appadurai, 1990). The next chapter examines these developments, particularly the shift in favour of the Kurds that occurred when broadcasting in the Kurdish language began in 2004. However, such changes within the official minority media environment have been neglected and under-researched within academia. This chapter brings attention to this aspect in the mediation of cultural identities by focusing on the media produced ‘by and for minorities’ (Dayan, 1998).

In specific, this chapter looks at transformations within Armenian, Rum (Greek) and Jewish newspapers, publishing houses and other media developments in such communities. It aims to address some of the goals of this thesis by examining the significance of different minority media practices, both for the maintenance of cultural identity in the respective communities and their implications for wider debates on citizenship, democracy and cultural diversity in Turkey. Furthermore, this chapter explores the factors behind changes (if any) in the minority mediascape, and their relation to the transformative influence of Europeanisation reforms.

Chapter 3 highlighted the historical obstacles to the sociological acceptance of non-Muslims as equal citizens, despite their definition as Turkish citizens within official discourse. These historical taboos and tensions were entrenched in Turkey’s

collective memory, and continue to problematise the citizenship status of particular minorities. As the previous chapter has demonstrated, these problems also found expression in the public realm, and non-Muslim minorities did not enter the national media agenda until the end of the Cold war.

However, the developments discussed in the previous chapter, namely the growing interest in a multicultural past, have challenged the official understanding of Turkishness. The impact of the Kurdish issue on the revival of identity politics in general seems to have been instrumental in the way non-Muslim minority institutions have participated in the public realm and have sought visibility through their activities. Indeed, as the following comments of minority intellectuals demonstrate, such minorities began to have a say in the exercise and configuration of citizenship through the activities of their media institutions.

As Yumul (2005: 118) puts the argument:

[Since the 1990s], non-Muslims also got articulated in citizenship and multiculturalism discourses with “identity politics”. [They become] a part of the trend of promoting the communities and performed some activities to publicise their culture, music and food. They put forward their demands for the acknowledgment and protection of these cultures. Identity politics also comprises voicing injustices and oppression. In this period, non-Muslims [instead of staying as the “silent other”] adopted the position as citizens who demand recognition and equality instead of tolerance; they began to discuss loudly the discriminatory practices that they face.

Rifat Bali also held a similar view about the transformations that have taken place in minority communities since the 1990s:

It was especially the case for Greeks and Armenians. Not the Jews, because Jews were married to the state, and they never flirted with the opposition. This is why nobody looked at them and nobody flirted with them, because Jews were considered to be statist. So, people began to talk to those, *en quote*, who had a ‘problem’ with the state. Those who had problems with the state were Greeks and Armenians who, especially after 1996, began to talk (Interview, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

In fact, as we shall see in more detail in following sections, the emergence of *Aras* Publishing House in 1993 and *Agos* newspaper in 1996 are major examples and indications of the changes within the ‘minoritarian’ micro public sphere. Although non-Muslim minority media historically emerged to provide community communications, developments in the last decade have compelled them to be more active, open and visible. In this light, the emergence of the new practices and venues discussed in this chapter must be understood in terms of such communities’ active involvement and participation in public life.

As previous chapters have demonstrated, non-Muslim minorities in Turkey have faced problems stemming from international conflicts, domestic politics and state bureaucracy, as well as from prejudices and negative associations in the public sphere as a result of historical or political tensions. For instance, the continuous and accelerating emigration of non-Muslims, which began in the late 1940s as a result of *Turkification* policies and international political tensions, had a detrimental impact on the survival and existence of these communities and their media.

Therefore, this chapter acknowledges that the old minority media tradition in Turkey has been dependent on the national and international political climate, and addresses the contradictions over the sociological acceptance of non-Muslims as Turkish citizens. However, it is argued here that minority media have been awakened and revitalised through the effects of globalisation and the advance of new technologies, as well as by the wider democratisation process in Turkey.

### **Non-Muslim Minority Media in Turkey: An overview**

Chapter 2 has discussed the various factors that have impacted on the performance of minority media, factors generally related to the place of minorities within society at large. Those identified by scholars include the level of persecution faced by minority groups, the degree of homogeneity within such groups, and the number of speakers of the minority language, as well as the dominant ideology within the state and developments in international and domestic politics (Riggins, 1992; Cormack,

1998). These factors are linked, as they all relate to how minority media outlets fulfil their double role in the maintenance of cultural identity.

In contrast to diasporic media practices, which emerged in Europe as a result of contemporary skilled and non-skilled labour migration, the non-Muslim minority media has a longer and very different history. However as previously discussed, these communities are also part of classic diasporas and understanding them and their media through this concept can shed light on the complexity of these communities, because it can reveal their ‘internal diversity’ and the ‘internal conflict of power as well as conflicts with others’ (Georgiou, 2006).

The non-Muslim minority media mainly flourished in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, making it one of the oldest examples in Europe. In fact, its history can be traced back to the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Sephardic Jews, after being expelled from Spain, introduced the first printing press into the Ottoman Empire. The first printing house was established in Istanbul in 1493 by Jewish immigrants, and mainly published religious texts as well as books in Spanish, Latin and Greek (Topuz, 2003). The first printing press in Armenian was established in 1567, followed by the first Greek press in 1627 in Istanbul (Seropyan in Karakaşlı, 2001). Although the printing press was put into use by the Ottoman Turks in 1726, modern newspapers in the Empire emerged in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, at a later stage in the modernisation period.

The first Turkish newspaper and the official gazette of the Empire, *Takvim-i Vekayi*, emerged in 1831 and was published in languages spoken by the various communities, including Greek, Arabic, Armenian and Persian (Topuz, 2003). Today’s non-Muslim minority media can therefore be seen as a legacy of the ancient imperial *millet* system, within which each community had the right to produce community publications and newsletters. This tradition continued in Republican Turkey as the Lausanne Treaty granted non-Muslim communities the right to retain their community organisations and institutions.

The ‘secular’ or ‘modern’ ideologies such as nationalism have also influenced the non-Muslims in the Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Yumul and Bali, 2001). It would perhaps be useful to refer briefly to some of the main cleavages or ideologies that have shaped these communities in their recent history in order to shed light on the contemporary situation in terms of diversity of actors, voices and opinions that can be found within the community and their media.

For the Jews the main nationalistic ideology or activity that was also allowed legally in the Ottoman Empire was ‘Zionism’. It mainly aimed to indoctrinate Jewish culture and the Hebrew language and there were a number of publications affiliated with it. However, this ideology ‘contradicted’ the Republican ideals of creating a unified national identity and the leaders of the Jewish community encouraged the community members to follow the so-called ‘Alliance’<sup>132</sup> ideology that advised ‘assimilation’ into the host country. In the Republican period the most significant tensions between these two ideologies were felt during 1947 and 1948 when Israel was founded as an independent state. During this period, ‘Zionist’ ideology was fervently propagated via the flourishing Jewish press of the time. As the writers further maintain, the influence of Zionism was not felt as strongly after 1949 when almost half the Jewish population in Turkey immigrated to Israel (Bali, Yumul and Benlisoy, 2002: 919-920; Yumul and Bali, 2001: 366)

In fact Şalom newspaper is now considered to be the ‘official’ publication organ of a community that continues to support integration. The alternative or oppositional voices are hard to be found, at least publicly, in the Jewish community, perhaps apart from intellectuals such as Rifat Bali and Roni Margulies (2005: 47), because as Margulies suggested, the community prefers to either remain ‘silent’ or to speak ‘positively’ of the Turkish ‘policies’, ‘authorities’ and the ‘state’ in the hope that ‘[they] will not live again the things that [they] lived in the past’. This situation was

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<sup>132</sup> Alliance Universalle Israelite schools were formed in various cities in Turkey and other Near Eastern countries in order to educate the Jews in certain crafts, French language and encourage them to become good citizens in their country of residence.

also validated by the comments of some of my respondents, such as Lizi Behmoaras, Karen Şarhon and Tilda Levi, which appear in more detail in the following sections. Yet, as Margulies (2005: 48) remarks, being an Armenian or a Rum minority is more difficult in Turkey than being Jewish because the Jews did not have any independence claims or get involved in armed conflict with the state.

Indeed, when we consider the recent history of the Armenian and the Rum community in Turkey, their well-being and survival is more closely linked to domestic as well as international politics, pressures and disputes. As commentators maintain, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, three major political parties propagated Armenian nationalism in the diaspora, especially after the establishment of the Armenian Soviet Republic and similarly continued their activities through their newspapers, magazines and social clubs. These political parties' approaches to nationalism were based on 'opposing Turkey' and 'acknowledging the 1915 events as genocide'. According to the scholars, the Armenians in Turkey have not been able to take part in this type of 'diaspora politics'. As they further argue, the community leaders in Turkey have only been active in 'Armenian politics' when the rights that were granted to the Armenians in Lausanne Treaty were 'breached'. It was only after the 'visibility of the Armenians in the media increased, they have begun to voice their search for rights more loudly' (Bali, Yumul and Benlisoy, 2002: 921). This is why, as we will discuss in more detail in the following pages, *Agos* (which emerged in mid-1990s) represents a transformation within the community, because it has become a public venue for the expression of different opinions and approaches to Armenian 'culture' and 'identity'. The differences between the three newspapers in the ways in which they approach community institutions, the role and function of the media and language are also documented in more detail in the following sections.

The internal diversity and complexity within the contemporary Rum community appears to be more difficult to pin down, but it has historically included communities which differed in their ethnicity, class or even language and politics (Benlisoy and Benlisoy, 2001). Although the nationalists and Patriarchate have propagated unification with Greece in early 20<sup>th</sup> century, after the Greek-Turkish

War and the exchange of populations in early 1920s, the Greek community is believed to have lost most of its political weight in Greek politics. Since the foundation of the Republic, the fate of the Rum community has become ‘dependent on the Greek-Turkish relations’ (Bali, Yumul and Benlisoy, 2002: 922). Indeed, as my respondents have also confirmed, when bilateral relations are unstable, it becomes potentially harmful for the well-being of the community. Although the general tendency within non-Muslim communities has been to remain ‘silent’, as the discussion in the following sections will reveal, there is an ‘openness’ within these communities that tends to reflect the diversity within intra-community perspectives on issues of identity and culture. Nevertheless, such diversity is generally difficult to pin down publicly but the differences within and across communities can be seen in various notes and comments in the following pages. Agos newspaper is a more visible and public example of such diversity of opinion, but in the remaining examples it manifests in more subtle ways.

In the following sections of this chapter, after introducing the officially sanctioned minority media environment, the focus is firstly on the internal dynamics that reinforce or challenge the ways in which media helps to maintain cultural identity; dynamics such as the synergy and co-operation between community institutions, as well as the economic and intellectual resources possessed by minority communities. Secondly, external dynamics, such as domestic or international politics, and their impact on the performance of minority media are evaluated in the Turkish context. In the final section of this chapter, the transformation within official minority media is discussed in light of the challenges resulting from these internal and external dynamics.

### ***The Armenian Community and its Media***

The first Armenian newspaper was a version of the first official gazette, *Takvim-Vekayi*, and was published under the name *LiroKir* in 1832 (Tuğlacı, 1994). This newspaper was financially supported by the Ottoman state and, after a change of title, continued to be published until 1850. In the same token, the second semi-official

gazette, *Ceride-i Havadis*, was also published in Armenian. The first newspaper published by the Armenian community itself was launched in Smyrna (İzmir) in 1839 (Karakaşlı, 2001).

As Karakaşlı (2001) has explained, the Armenian press under the Empire included a variety of publications ranging from children's magazines, comedy and music magazines, to magazines on religious education and medicine as well as encyclopaedia annals and a pioneer feminist magazine. This lively tradition of media also continued in the Republican period. As Topuz (2003) has stated, until today a total of 601 titles have been published in Armenian<sup>133</sup>. Today, the Armenian community has only three newspapers<sup>134</sup> catering for a population estimated to be around 60,000: *Jamanak*, *Marmara* and *Agos*. All three newspapers are delivered to the densely populated Armenian neighbourhoods in Istanbul, and are also posted to subscribers all around the world (Karakaşlı, 2001).

*Jamanak* was established in 1908, shortly after the second constitutional period of the Ottoman Empire. *Jamanak*'s general director is Ara Koçunyan, and is the part of the third generation to manage the newspaper. As he confirmed, it is the oldest publication in Turkey and the oldest newspaper in the world to be published in Armenian without interruption. The paper is published everyday except Sunday, has four pages and now has a circulation of 1,500, which has declined from 15,000 in its early years. *Jamanak* uses news agencies, the Internet and the other mass

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<sup>133</sup> This number is also cited by Ebuzyiyya (1985) but should be interpreted only as an approximate figure for all the publications in Armenian language or in Armenian script, as sources refer to different estimates. For instance, Tuğlacı (1994:39) maintains that, within the borders of Ottoman Turkey, a total of 887 newspapers and magazines were written in Armenian or in Armenian script between 1839-1922. He further states that the number of publications in the Republican period was about 75. Karakaşlı (2001:69) also says that in Istanbul alone, which is the centre of Armenian press, about 450 newspapers, magazines or annals were published between 1832 and 2001.

<sup>134</sup> There are also periodical publications of high school alumni organizations, namely Nor San, Hobina [with interruptions], Meğu, and Tarlakyuğ. Furthermore, Getronagan High School students publish Lusadu, and Surp Haç Church School publishes the Punç student magazine. Soğagat is the official publication for the Armenian Patriarchate in Turkey and the Turkish Armenian Minority School Teachers Solidarity Foundation publishes the only Armenian childrens' magazine, Jibid (Karakaşlı, 2001:68). There is also an online portal that brings together information for Istanbul Armenians (<http://www.bolsohays.com/index.asp>).

communication media as its sources and mainly focuses on Turkish foreign policy and diplomacy.

*Marmara* was established in 1940. It has four black and white pages and is published in Armenian everyday except Sundays and holidays. As its general director and head column writer since 1967, Rober Haddeler explained that it has a circulation of 1,500 and six years ago became the first newspaper to go online solely in Armenian language. The Internet version receives 400 visitors everyday and the extended family members of the Istanbul Armenians receive copies of the newspaper, which are then circulated among each other (though it is difficult to estimate how many readers it reaches in the diaspora). It has been publishing a supplement in Turkish every Friday since 2000 in order to reach those who can speak but cannot read Armenian. Haddeler believes that what distinguishes *Marmara* from the other Armenian newspapers in Istanbul is the platform that it gives to ‘Armenian language and literature’. *Marmara* also covers stories related to Armenians in Turkey and abroad, and issues surrounding the betterment the relations between Turkey and Armenia are highly prioritised (Interview, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2005).

*Agos* is the youngest of the community newspapers and was established in 1996. Nine pages out of twelve are in Turkish and three pages are published in Armenian. It displays a more ‘oppositional’ character compared to the other community newspapers (Karakaşlı, 2001). As stated on the newspaper’s website<sup>135</sup>, it aims to help those members of the community who cannot read and write in Armenian to take an ‘active role in the community life’. It also aims to help the Armenian community, which had previously been ‘introvert’ and ‘closed’, to introduce its language, history and culture to the wider society in which it lives. Another important issue for *Agos* is to inform public opinion about the problems and unfair treatment faced by the Armenian community. *Agos* has become a point of reference for all issues related to the Armenian community (Ermenilik), acting as a defender of

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<sup>135</sup> [www.agos.com.tr/agoshakkinda.htm](http://www.agos.com.tr/agoshakkinda.htm)

their rights. As chief editor and columnist at *Agos*, Hrant Dink<sup>136</sup> assumed the role of ‘opinion leader’, making it possible for the Turkish public to know the Armenian community (Interviews with Rober Koptaş, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005 and Ari Hergel, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2005).

*Aras Publishing House* was founded in 1993 in Istanbul, and produces books in both Turkish and Armenian. As its editors explained, the first steps towards its founding were taken when a literature teacher, Mıgırdiç Margosyan, started publishing stories about Diyarbakır, his home town, in the *Marmara* newspaper. Aras published 70 books in a decade, mainly as a result of voluntary efforts. The house started as a hobby and took about six years to establish itself, especially in the eyes of community schools and institutions (Interviews with Payline Tovmasyan, Takuhi Tovmasyan, Rober Koptaş, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005).

### ***The Jewish Community and its Media***

As mentioned above, the first printing machine was brought to the Ottoman Empire in 1493 by Sephardic Jews expelled from Spain in 1492, but the Jewish press also flourished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century during Tanzimat Reform period. The first Jewish newspapers, *La Buena Esperansa* and *La Puerta del Oriente*, were published in Symryna (Izmir) in 1843 and *Or Israel* newspaper was launched in 1853 in Istanbul. The only newspaper of the Jewish community published today is *Şalom*, which was established in 1947 and used the Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) language until 1984. Since this date, *Şalom* has been published weekly in Turkish with only one page in Ladino, ‘in order to keep the ties with the past, to keep the language alive and also to inform the other believers in other countries.’<sup>137</sup>

*Şalom* is the only official publication of the Turkish-Jewish community, produced by *Gözlem* Publishing House since 1984. Since 1992, *Gözlem* Publishing House has

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<sup>136</sup> Hrant Dink was killed on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2007. The data used here are part of my interviews conducted in 2004 and in 2005.

<sup>137</sup> <http://www.muze500.com/anasayfatr.htm>

also been producing books and music albums that reflect the Jewish heritage. Its output includes novels, research books, poetry, and art books in Turkish, English, French and Judeo-Spanish languages<sup>138</sup>.

Today *Şalom* publishes 4,000 copies and around a quarter of these are mailed abroad. As its chief editor Tilda Levi explained, there are two types of readers in the diaspora: those who have emigrated and would like to keep up-to-date with events in Turkey, and academics who are interested in the historical Judeo-Spanish language. It is the only newspaper in the world that publishes (one page) every week in the language of Sephardic Jews and this is considered to be its most important mission. *Şalom* has grown from four to twenty pages over the last decade and now accommodates a staff of 40 people, though more than half of these are voluntary writers (Interview, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2005).

### ***The Rum (Greek) Community and its Media***

The Rum press similarly flourished throughout the Tanzimat period, which began in 1839, but dwindled in the 1920s due to the Greek-Turkish wars, which resulted in the creation of Greece and Turkey as nation states (Türker, 2003). As Türker (2003: 4-8) has explained, when the demographic make up of Turkey changed following the exchange of populations, the Rum press adjusted to the new situation and began serving the remaining Greek speaking community in Istanbul, the Rum, who were exempt from the exchange. According to the first census in 1927, there was a total of 126,633 Rum in Turkey, of which only 100,202 were Turkish citizens. During the Republican years there were 30 Rum newspapers in Istanbul, now there are only two newspapers left to cater for this diminishing community.

*Apoyevmatini* was established in May 1925 is the oldest functioning Rum newspaper from the Republican era<sup>139</sup>, and is published everyday apart from weekends. As its

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<sup>138</sup> <http://www.gozlemkitap.com/index.php?contentId=1>

<sup>139</sup> The other one is the centre-left *Cumhuriyet* newspaper that, in 1924, replaced the semi-official organ of the Ankara government, *Yeni Gün*, published during the war of independence (Topuz, 2003).

editor-in-chief Mihail Vassiliadis explained, when *Apoyevmatini* was founded the Rum community of Istanbul comprised 10% of the city's population, which gave the newspaper a relatively high circulation and readership. However, the situation started to deteriorate in the 1930s due to the rise of nationalistic and fascist governments in Europe and their attempts to assimilate minorities (Interview, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2005). As Baslangıç (2005) has reported, the history and survival of *Apoyevmatini* is considered to parallel that of the Rum population of Istanbul, which has shrunk from 100,000s to around 2,000. Since the end of the Second World War, *Apoyevmatini's* quality and readership declined, a process that was further accelerated by the emigration waves following the 6-7<sup>th</sup> September pogroms in 1955 and the 1964 deportations triggered by the accelerating Cyprus problem. According to Mr. Vassiliadis, *Apoyevmatini* today operates as a 'one-man-show' driven solely by his efforts. Its technology is only 'slightly better than that of Gutenberg' but the paper still serves as a focal point for the community. Around 500 copies are published everyday and the biggest challenge for the newspaper is to encourage the young generation to use the language.

The second Rum newspaper, *Iho*, was established in 1977 following the events of 1964 and 1974. As its general director, Andreas Rombopulos, explained, it was created because, at the time, *Apoyevmatini* was not able to fulfil its role as the community newspaper due to poor management. Mr. Rombopulos is part of the second generation to manage the newspaper and has been involved in all aspects of newspaper publishing since a young age. He is also the Istanbul correspondent for the Greek *Mega Television* channel. He is the only journalist left at *Iho* after the others emigrated. The most important concerns for the newspaper are the problems and news relevant to the Rum community, but in the last decade they have begun to gain a wider coverage. As Mr Rombopulos further explained, the paper survives on the revenue gathered from official publicity materials issued by churches, such as announcements about masses and other events, because the income from private advertising has declined with the population. The Greek community, which is estimated to be 2,000 people in Istanbul, still constitute a large proportion of *Iho's* readership. It is an afternoon newspaper and has a circulation of 400 copies a day.

The staff consists of less than five people who either work voluntary or part-time due to the financial constraints (Interview, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005).

In light of this overview, the non-Muslim minority media regime in Turkey seems to display a hybrid character when framed by the literature on community, diasporic media or ethnic minority media. As previously discussed, various concepts within the field, such as minority media, ethnic media, diasporic media and immigrant media, have been used interchangeably to refer to issues related to minorities and their media consumption or production. Currently, non-Muslim minority media operate primarily as community media. As Jankowski (2002: 7-8) has explained, community media are based on voluntary efforts, have locally oriented and produced content, and aim to reach both local and geographically dispersed audiences.

Indeed, non-Muslims in Turkey are often placed in the category of traditional diasporas (Dayan, 1998). However, they consider themselves to be autochthonous and have an uneasy relationship with the wider diaspora of Jews, Greeks and Armenians. After the Lausanne Treaty was promulgated, these communities became national minorities and retained their partially self-governing group characteristics and institutions<sup>140</sup>.

Despite the fact that Lausanne only recognised the ‘religious character’ of non-Muslims and neglected the problem of their ‘ethno-national’ identity (Alexandris, 2003), their media must be distinguished from the religiously oriented community media in Western Europe. For instance, they must be treated as distinct from the Muslim media in France and Britain (Rigoni, 2005) because, as we shall see, their religious belonging is not the only determinant of their media content. Furthermore, despite their uneasy relationship with wider diasporic groups, they do have an

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<sup>140</sup> A general conclusion of my interviews with Greek and Armenian respondents is that they consider themselves ‘more local’ than the Turks and view themselves as different from the Greeks of Greece and the wider Armenian diaspora in general. In her analysis of the Muslim and Turkish minority in Greece (which were formed as a result of the same Treaty), Madinaou (2005) used the concept ‘beached diaspora’ in relation to these groups. As she explained, these groups were not formed as a result of immigration - they did not cross the borders to arrive in Greece - but rather the borders of the new nation state were delineated around them.

immanent relationship to the diaspora culture which is increasingly evident in the media content. This is because they cater for the needs of their communities both by informing them about local minority community issues and by reporting on their ‘diasporic connections’<sup>141</sup>. Therefore, the notion of ‘minority media’<sup>142</sup>, in the widest usage of the term, is more suitable to define them.

### **The ‘Double Role’ of Minority Media in the Maintenance of Cultural Identity: Constraints, openings and possibilities**

In Chapter 2 it was revealed that the most successful appropriation of community media have been by ethnic minorities, which posed new questions about the relationship between ethnic media and identity formation, and the maintenance of a democratic public sphere (Tsagarousianou, 2002; Dayan, 1998). Furthermore, minority media institutions were deemed to be instrumental for the transmission of memory and traditions and the survival of language and culture against the homogenising effects of the national or global culture (Dayan, 1998). This was of particular relevance to ‘fragile’ diasporic communities, which also constitute the focus of this chapter.

In this light, scholars generally draw attention to the ‘double role’ played by particularistic media. On the one hand, they contribute to the maintenance of cultural identity, traditions and language, empower the minority groups and open up linkages to diasporic connections and affiliations (Dayan, 1998; Riggins, 1992; Tsagarousianou, 2002; Georgiou, 2005). On the other hand, as Dayan (1998) has also highlighted, they offer ‘competing versions of a group identity’, they establish linkages between the mainstream media, and contribute to the emergence of different levels of the public sphere. In the following sections, the focus is on those

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<sup>141</sup> See Sreberny (2005) for the ‘mixedness’ of minority media that inform communities about their country of origin, country of residence and the diasporas. See Georgiou (2005) for the situation of diasporic media at the conjunction of local, national and the transnational spaces.

<sup>142</sup> Rigoni (2005) has argued that minority media encompasses ‘alternative’, ‘ethnic’ or ‘religious’ media that fall outside the mainstream.

factors that shape, limit or enhance the ‘double role’ of minority media in the Turkish context.

***Community Institutions, Resources and Media’s Contribution in the Preservation of Language, Traditions and Heritage***

Although media is a significant element contributing to the survival of language and traditions, as Riggins (1992) has stated, the maintenance of cultural identity is not solely dependent on media. It can also be fostered by other institutions, such as church groups and school organisations, which also form a particularistic public sphere (Dayan, 1998). Non-Muslim minorities in Turkey have a long and lively history of community organisations such as church groups, schools and alumni associations, foundations, choirs, and music and theatre activities. The minority media, in the case of all three communities under discussion here, have a natural link to other chief institutions in the community, such as schools and religious organisations. Hence, the first role of minority media in the maintenance of cultural diversity is located at the intersection of community institutions and the human and financial resources that these institutions possess.

For the Armenian community the protection of the language, their schools and churches are considered to be the most important signifiers of the survival and livelihood of Armenian cultural identity. Minority media in this context assumes an auxiliary role in the maintenance of social cohesion and acts as a support mechanism for community institutions.

Ara Koçunyan, the editor-in-chief of the oldest Armenian newspaper, *Jamanak*, explains this process as follows:

[*Jamanak*] is a publication catering for the Armenian community in Turkey which has three important characteristics in its identity: They are Turkish in terms of citizenship... in terms of origin they are Armenian, and 95% belong to the Armenian Apostolic church. The agenda of the newspaper is parallel to these components of identity: the agenda of Turkey, the agenda of the Armenian community [which includes] the events in the community institutions, their traditional celebrations, the relations with the state, and the

problems of the community and the creation of a healthy platform for the discussion of these problems (Interview, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2005).

According to Koçunyan, the support *Jamanak* and other newspapers provide for school activities and other community institutions is crucial for the maintenance of cultural identity and heritage. As he put it:

Our community have 20 schools, and they all survive by the resources of the community. They have annual campaigns for these schools and you have to give support to them [as a newspaper] so that the kids in the new generations know our culture. Although some of these schools are not fulfilling this role, it is of utmost importance to maintain the participation of people in community life... The [aim] is to bring as many people as possible into community life so there is a synergy and the sensitivities of the community are felt by many people (Interview, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2005).

Payline Tovmasyan is a retired teacher and is now an editor in *Aras* publishing house. Through her experience as a teacher in community schools for 25 years, she has been able to observe a significant decline in the quality of education in the schools, especially in children's capacity to use the language. For her, this is due to two factors: the emigration of the well-read population and the reluctance of most Armenians to send their kids to community schools. A decline in the general population, but especially the well-educated section, also led to a decline in the human capital available in the community to transfer the culture to the next generations. As she explained in our interview:

The Armenian community is struggling to stand on its feet. If you go to the church on Sundays, you will see that it is full. I am not religious myself, if I lived in Armenia I would probably not think about it, but here it is the case because we want to preserve our church and our culture. So I go on holy days and kiss the hand of the Patriarch. I [made] my children attend the choirs of the community... I can say that there are only about 2,000 people who are trying to keep the community on its feet. It is getting weaker day by day, in terms of language, in terms of people [human capital], our schools cannot teach good Armenian anymore. But this is because of oppression, migration and the impact of television ... The bourgeois, the educated elite in Istanbul, have left. So that is why education is worsening... We have 33 churches and 15 schools and we have to protect them. I am really angry with those who have left, because they keep on whingeing from out there [asking us] why we still live here. I tell them that they do not have the right to criticise, they left

all these schools and churches and I stayed to protect them (Interview, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005).

Her comments about both the Armenians in the diaspora and those who are in Turkey but who have been integrated into the ‘majority’ way of life, seem to reflect resentment and frustration. However, they also seem to indicate that the maintenance of cultural identity in small and ‘fragile’ communities, such as the non-Muslims in Turkey, can become almost a *duty of conscience* even though it does not always reflect personal choices about religion or other aspects of community life. In the eyes of what might be considered as the elites of the community, the educational role of the media in the survival of language and tradition becomes a significant concern. For instance, according to Rober Haddeler, the chief editor and columnist of *Marmara* newspaper, community media must take its place among the chief community institutions because it helps to preserve and maintain language use, which is as important as education for the transmission of culture and traditions. As he explained in our interview:

[In our schools] students receive 12 years of education. If these students are 3,500 only 35 of them will read the language in the proper way as we expect them to do. In our community, the intelligentsia and the Patriarchate always mention the church and the schools as the most the important institutions. However, I have been campaigning for years to include the press among these, like the three holy values of God. If there is no press then it is very difficult to speak of a culture in a place...Our language is getting weaker, that is why the press has to claim that responsibility. If I do not exist [as a newspaper] my readers can follow news from elsewhere but my aim is to give them the pleasure of reading the same news as the big media in the Armenian language. We always put the Turkish meaning of a less used Armenian word in parenthesis in the newspaper. Of course there is an educational aspect of it as well (Interview, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2005).

Although they publish in both Turkish and Armenian, *Aras* also seems to be establishing itself as a key institution in the survival of Armenian language and identity. However, as its editors agreed, the fact that it took *Aras* six years to gain credibility and prestige among the community schools helps to elucidate the decline of intellectual capital within the Armenian community (Interviews with Payline Tovmasyan, Takuhi Tovmasyan, Rober Koptaş, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005).

Notwithstanding the problem of literacy within the Armenian community, this is not the most imminent concern for Istanbulite Rum. For them the most immediate threat is the rapid decline of their population, which, according to church estimates, is now 1,244 people (Kalkan, 2005). In line with the comments put forward by Armenian editors, the Rum community media also attempts to retain its central position in the mediation of community affairs within the micro public sphere of the community.

As the chief editor of *Iho*, Andrea Rombopulos, explained:

There is big change in the community. In 1979 our newspapers conducted a survey because migration was still going on. It was estimated that the Rum community would completely vanish by 2020. There is 15 years to go now and the estimates are still correct. The majority of young people who graduate from high schools are leaving because they can automatically get Greek citizenship...The migration in the last two decades is mainly due to economic reasons...Our community is scattered all over Istanbul but because we are so small half of the population know each other. But the newspapers are a very important medium of communication [to publicise] church activities to other social organisations. We have a lot of associations, and had a very strong social structure compared to the other communities. We have 67 foundations that date back to the Ottoman times. We had dozens of sport clubs and associations, now there is only two sports clubs left. Because our community has had a very lively social life these newspapers have been very important. The activities of all these organisations, dinners, parties, conferences and theatres still continue, and their mediation occurs via the newspapers. This is also another reason why we have such a big readership (Interview, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005).

Indeed, considering the small size of the Rum population, producing two newspapers for the community should be understood as a very significant effort to sustain the lively tradition of community life. As Mr. Rombopulos further explained, improving diplomatic relations between Greece and Turkey offers an opportunity for the community to prevent itself from completely disappearing, as the growing economic and trade relations in this new improved political setting are opening up new job opportunities for young people who can speak the Greek language. Nevertheless, the lack of human capital still seems to be condemning community institutions to difficult conditions. For instance, as mentioned earlier, all aspects of

production of the oldest community newspaper, *Apoyevmatini*, are dependent on the sole efforts of its only editor. As Mr Vassiliadis explained in the interview:

*Apoyevmatini* reflects what I think because there is nobody else. Therefore the target of the newspaper is limited by my target and I only deal with things that I can do and will be able to do. What I can do is to publish a newspaper in Rumca [Istanbul Greek] and use the language properly (Interview, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2005).

As Mr. Rombopulos explained, although the Rum community ‘do not have a literacy problem’, there is still a noticeable decline in language skills. This is because, since the 1990s, community schools have compensated for the diminishing number of ethnic Rum students by recruiting Greek Orthodox ethnic Arabs<sup>143</sup>. In order to counteract the erosion of language skills, *Iho* newspaper adopted new measures. As Mr. Rombopulos explained:

We do not have a literacy problem in our community, but it has declined since 1990, and the remedy is in making the youths to read newspapers because they mainly speak Turkish. That is why we have started a new conduct. We made agreements with the high schools and now we send them the newspaper, so that the youngster will be the person who will take the newspaper home. In this way they acquire the habit of buying [community] newspaper (Interview, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2005).

These new measures can be seen as the continuation of a long tradition in *Iho*. Its founder, Mr. Rombopulos’ father, was a head-teacher in a community school and, from its inception, *Iho* bestowed particular importance to the interface between minority media and minority educational institutions. For instance, since the beginning, *Iho* organised essay writing competitions, quizzes and debates among school children in order to engage them in community life.

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<sup>143</sup> This is a practice that was introduced as a counter measure to the decline of the community, but it is not official policy in the schools. For a student to be enrolled in a community school their religious orientation needs to be identified on their ID cards, hence the system is still covertly based on religious belonging rather than ethnicity. As Mr. Rombopulos explained, some ethnic groups - particularly Yugoslavs, who were considered to be a part of the Greek Orthodox community - were prevented from enrolling in Greek community schools in the 1970s because their ID card or a passport did not state their exact religious affiliation. These people eventually emigrated. The current situation has become even more complex due to inter-marriage between Greeks and Armenians.

Ladino, also known as Judeo-Spanish, is not the teaching language in Jewish educational institutions<sup>144</sup>. After the Republic was established, policies on the Unity of Education (Tevhid-i Tedrisat) were introduced in order to centralise and homogenise education, and Ladino fell from use. Furthermore, the Jewish press in Turkey was not very active between 1923 and the foundation of Israel in 1947. However, after this date, about seven new publications emerged, some of which positively supported migration to the newly founded state. After the migration wave ended, the ‘brave sounds’ in the Jewish press again fell silent (*Hürriyet*, 24<sup>th</sup> October 1998)<sup>145</sup>.

As previously mentioned, some interviewees have argued that the Jewish minority differs from other groups in terms of its integration and acceptance of the *status quo* in Turkey. Rıfat Bali stated that ‘Jews were married to the state’, and has commented elsewhere that the Jewish press is part of a system of ‘closed circuit communication’ because it primarily aims to sustain communication within the community - it has no oppositional identity. Bali argued that:

An opposition towards the political power is not possible due to the nature of the minorities. Because the interests of the community are prioritised, the Jewish press did not provide a living space for the oppositional views. Those issues that [fall outside community] are not welcomed after a point when it does not correspond with the strategies of the community (*Hürriyet*, 24<sup>th</sup> October 1998)

Another Jewish writer, Lizi Behmoaras, who used to work as an editor at *Şalom* in the 1990s, also holds a similar view about the newspaper. For her, working at *Şalom* was ‘dancing’ in a confined place. As she explained in the interview:

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<sup>144</sup> There is one educational complex in Istanbul that comprises of elementary and secondary education. The language of education is Turkish but students also study one hour of Hebrew in addition to English language classes (<http://www.muze500.com/tarihce.htm>).

<sup>145</sup> As Rıfat Bali stated in this article, although Jewish shops and synagogues were also ruined during the 6-7<sup>th</sup> September Pogrom, the Jewish press did not cover these issues in depth so as to avoid further incitement of the angry mobs.

*Şalom* is both reflector and leader of public opinion (in the community). Its attitude is this: to be pro-government, not to oppose anyone, and refrain from doing anything that would challenge the *status quo*. This is due to a natural selection. Since Israel was founded in 1948 there was a big wave of migration. There were economic reasons, the will to live under better conditions and the hope to be treated equally. The people who (had) hope were the fighters, so when they were gone the passive people who do not like change stayed...[the community] is, with one word, passive, it is ambivalent and does not take a stand in any subject. I do not say these in a bad way, but this is how I see it. It is devoid of an ideology and an ideal; it complies with the bourgeoisie in Turkey and in the world (Interview, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005).

According to its editor in-chief, Tilda Levi, its position as the only newspaper representing the community imposes certain limitations on *Şalom*'s content, and she admits that they refrain from making political statements in general. However, as she further explained, this role also charges them with responsibilities. For instance, the mission to protect the language falls on *Şalom*, and a one-page supplement is published every week in Ladino<sup>146</sup>. *Şalom* also tries to reflect the memory, traditions and customs of the community through specialised pages about Judaism, traditions and festivities. As is the case with Armenian and Rum community media, *Şalom* also places a particular importance on encouraging the interest of younger generations in the Jewish language and culture. As Tilda Levi further expressed:

Our most important mission is to make the young generations read the newspaper and to include them in the future administrative cadres of the newspaper. Therefore, we have been trying to keep a balance in the issues covered in the newspaper so that it is interesting for the youth. We have pages that teach and remind the traditions and religious festivities. But we also have art and sport pages in order to attract young people (Interview, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005).

As the above comments from various minority journalists demonstrate, minority media play a central role in maintaining the communication channels between various minority institutions and the community members. Although schools and

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<sup>146</sup> She further explained that Ladino for a long time was transmitted orally within the family and only recently acquired an educational grammatical structure, because the Sephardic Jews who were dispersed around the Mediterranean also incorporated the local languages into Ladino.

religious organisations are considered to be the chief institutions for sustaining traditions and cultural identity, community media emerge as a significant counterpart in this capacity.

The decline in literacy skills, especially among younger generations, is observed in all the minority communities. Such pressures led *Şalom* to switch to an almost entirely Turkish output in 1984, *Marmara* publishes bi-lingual supplements on Fridays and the *Agos* newspaper is completely bi-lingual. As stated above, the decline in literacy skills in the Greek language is still relatively low compared to other communities and this might explain the reason for keeping the mono -lingual output of Rum newspapers. However, it should also be remembered that the Armenian and Jewish communities have a larger population that gives their media greater access to human resources compared to the Rum community newspapers, which are each dependent on the sole efforts of their respective editors. On the one hand, bi-lingual output helps to preserve language and is instrumental in maintaining communication channels with the estranged or assimilated members of the community. It is also a way of reaching out to the bigger public sphere to make community voices heard.

This is one of the double roles played by minority media and will be discussed in the following sections. Yet, before moving on to the openings and changes within minority media over the last decade, it is necessary to consider the political and social context of the 1990s in relation to the representation and mediation of minorities in the public realm.

### ***Taboos, Vilification and Prejudice: the impact of domestic and international politics on minority media***

It is often argued that one of the reasons behind the emergence of minority media is the impact of the stereotyping, vilification, or misrepresentation of minorities in the public sphere. In these situations, minority media emerge as a reaction to such negative and all encompassing representations (Gross, 1998; Husband, 2005). The founding of *Agos* newspaper and *Aras* publishing house can be considered among

the most visible contemporary examples of this process, yet they do not constitute the only efforts or activities through which minority communities attempt to deal with negative associations in the public realm.

In the Turkish context, it should be remembered that the vilification and misrepresentation of minorities stems mainly from historically sensitive issues, taboos and conflicts within political culture. Indeed, as the previous chapter demonstrated, these issues have been influential in shaping media representations of non-Muslim minorities. Whilst cultural diversity was becoming visible in popular media forms, Islamist and far-right media were provoking attacks and assaults on minority properties. Furthermore, the stance of the mainstream media towards minorities was ambiguous. They celebrated non-Muslim cultures in a nostalgic way yet, when it came to nationally taboo and sensitive issues such as the Cyprus conflict with Greece or the Armenian problem, they mainly complied with the official political standpoint. As Oral Çalışlar of *Cumhuriyet* stated, '[the media] can even act more aggressively in order to tickle the nationalist feelings further so as to increase their circulation.' (Interview, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005). Indeed, 'banal nationalism', and the rhetorical emphasis on 'external and internal threats' and 'enemies', was also observed in the Turkish press during this period (Yumul and Özkırımlı, 2000).

For instance, the chief editor of *Marmara* newspaper made the following comments in this regard:

If you asked me 10 years ago about the way national media dealt with Armenians I would say it was horrible, horrible. One would wonder how it was possible for an Armenian to live in Turkey, if they only looked at the media. Because from the biggest, most popular newspaper to the small ones, all of them were full of fire-breathing comments about non-Muslims in general and Armenians in particular. Thank God, it has changed a lot since 10-15 years, and the biggest national newspapers are defending the rights of minorities, more than the minorities themselves... Really, the Armenian issue is a sensitive issue, and if someone is writing about the Armenians they have to take into account many things' (Interview, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2005).

Indeed, in the mid-1990s minorities were under considerable pressure because of international conflicts such as the future of Cyprus, the dispute over sea and air

space between Greece and Turkey, and the campaigns for international recognition of the 1915 events as ‘genocide’. During the 1990s it was particularly the Greek and Armenian communities that came under increasing pressure.

The dispute between Greece and Turkey over a tiny islet (Imia/Kardak) in the Aegean almost brought the two countries to the brink of war in 1996 because of hostile and exaggerated media coverage. Terzis and Özgüneş (2000: 409) have argued that, in this conflict, the media managed to ‘manufacture’ consent for the nationalist positions of the incumbent governments in both countries. On an international level, the difficult relationship between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus and the Aegean continued throughout the period in question. Meanwhile, in the domestic arena, extreme Islamist groups threatened or attacked the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul.

International tensions, such as the intractable Cyprus problem, have been impacting on the way minority media performed since the 1960s. The chief editor of Rum newspaper *Apoyevmatini*, Mihail Vassiliadis, has been a journalist for 50 years. In 1960, as he put it, he was accused of ‘propagating Greekness [Rumluk propagandası] in a fashion to debase the national unity’ when he worked for the Rum newspaper *Elefterophoni*. He recalled the difficulties faced by the newspapers in light of the growing international conflict over Cyprus as follows<sup>147</sup>:

They summoned us to the 1<sup>st</sup> office<sup>148</sup> [the office in the police that used to deal with minorities] a couple of times. It was forbidden to use the name Tatavla for here [this is the old name for the Kurtuluş neighbourhood of Istanbul where we made the interview], we could not use Pera for Beyoğlu, only Beyoğlu. We could not say Galata for Galata, we had to say Karaköy, otherwise we would be in trouble. At some stage, I wrote a piece and mentioned Ephesus [a touristic Hellenic ancient city near Izmir, Turkey].

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<sup>147</sup> Mr Vassiliadis continued the legal battle for 10 years, and was acquitted after the 3<sup>rd</sup> appeal in 1975. He joined the majority of Greeks who were leaving Istanbul, only to return in 2003 to take over *Apoyevmatini*.

<sup>148</sup> A commission entitled ‘Minorities Subordinate Commission’ have been created with a secret circular in 1962 in order to monitor minorities’ doings against national security. It has been again secretly abolished in 2004 under Europeanisation reforms (*Hürriyet*, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2004).

They called me to the office to enquire where I found this name. I told the guy that I read it on the brochures of the Ministry of Culture. He then told me to stop being so cunning and not to do it again. There is still a great deal of auto-censorship. For instance, in the news that comes from Europe, they use the name –“The President of Cyprus, Papadopoulos” but we have to say the ”leader of the Greek Administration” (Interview, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2005).

The worsening Greek-Turkish relations had a big impact on the livelihood of the Rum community. The editor of *Iho* also maintained that minorities have always ‘paid the price’ for international and domestic political tensions. As he put it, ‘Rum in particular and non-Muslims in general have seriously been considered as the enemy, throughout Republican history’ (Interview, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005)<sup>149</sup>. The future of Cyprus remains one of the major sensitive topics in Turkish politics, but Greek and Turkish relations did improve after 1999 when both countries were hit by an earthquake. The humanitarian support provided by each country eased diplomatic relations and was labelled ‘seismic diplomacy.’

However, perhaps one of the most pressing problems and persistent taboos in public political culture is the long-lasting and unresolved Armenian issue. As Kentel and Erol (1997a) have reported, the Armenian community came under increasing pressure during the 1990s due to comparisons made with the Kurdish problem in domestic politics and international pressures to recognise the 1915 events as ‘genocide’. In this period, the differences between minority groups in the way they relate to official ideology and policies became more distinctive, especially in the way these differences were utilised in order to combat increasing international lobby activities.

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<sup>149</sup> Dimitri Frangoplo is the retired headmaster of Zografion high school in Istanbul, and a very well respected member of the community. Due to his age and position at the school he has been witness to the changes that the Greek community has undergone throughout the years, the reasons for the waves of emigration and their effect on the community - especially after 1955. He told me: ‘I am telling you, due to this Cyprus [problem], when I got in a cab with my daughters when they were little, I used to close their mouths with my hand so [if they spoke], nobody would understand we were Greek’. According to him, the impact of the deportation of 12,000 Greek nationals (which amounted to around 40,000 people including all the family members) as a counter measure to the escalating Cyprus problem, was stronger than the impact of the 6-7<sup>th</sup> September events in 1955. The emigration of the Rum community began slowly after 1955, but in his view, ‘the real blow’ to the survival and livelihood of the community happened after the 1960s (Interview, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2005).

As Rifat Bali explained:

From 1989 to 1992, during the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary [of Jewish presence in Turkey], celebrations of the Jewish community were used as a benchmark in order to countervail the Armenian lobby in America, which was pressing for a resolution to be accepted that would recognise the genocide. The argument was this: If Jews were being treated properly then the other groups cannot be maltreated (Interview, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

In March 1997, the incumbent interior minister, Meral Akşener, labelled Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, as ‘Armenian seed’ (Ermeni dölü). Though she later declared that ‘she did not mean the Armenians living under the Turkish flag’, her comments, according to Kentel and Erol (1997a: 79), exemplify how ‘Armenians remained as a scapegoat’ within the official and nationalist discourse in Turkey<sup>150</sup>.

The use of minorities for political means, or as ‘tools for the indoctrination of public opinion’ and ‘the construction of the other’ (Kentel and Hastaş, 1997b), has been particularly well documented and observed in relation to Turkish minorities in Greece and the Greek speaking population of Turkey (Özgüneş and Terzis, 2000; LMV and KEMO Conference, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2005)<sup>151</sup>.

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<sup>150</sup> In 1998, the Armenian issue became extremely sensitive after the lower house of the French parliament resolved to acknowledge the events of 1915 as ‘genocide’ (Kentel and Hastaş, 1998b:83). In 2006, the French General Assembly passed a resolution that stipulated the offence ‘denial of Armenian genocide’ (CnnTurk, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2006).

<sup>151</sup> The notion that is invoked in relation to the Turkish and Rum minority in Greece and Turkey respectively is called ‘reciprocity’, which in fact is a diplomatic notion to refer to the relationship between the state and foreigner nationals living in a polity (Macar, 2005). Since Lausanne, this notion has been inappropriately applied to the Rum in Turkey and the Turkish minority in Greece, who are in fact citizens of their host countries. As Macar has explained, one of the victims of this practice has been the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, whose disputatious status was defined as a ‘domestic’ issue in response to external criticisms. However, in practice, authorities treated it as a ‘Greek institution’. According to Macar, this label has been applied informally since 1955 but was officially declared during the Cyprus crisis in 1964-1965. As Macar has argued, since the end of the Cold War it has been mentioned in military academy papers that the Patriarchate and the Theological School of Halki (Heybeliada) should be used as a ‘trump card’ in the solution of political conflicts with Greece. According to Macar, since the Europeanisation period began, the anti-European camp in Turkey have ‘made the issue of minorities and the Patriarchate to become a target for aggression’ in order to pursue their policies challenging Turkey’s EU integration.

However, as the above events reveal, other groups in Turkey have also been used in this way.

According to Rifat Bali, minorities are used strategically as a card in international politics because of their importance to the positive image Turkey is trying to establish. As he put it:

Turkey has an image problem. Because the presence of radical Islam is known in Turkey and because Turkey has an ambition to enter the European Union as a Muslim country, these cards - tolerance, mosaic, multiplicity of identities - are being used. The second reason is the European candidacy of Turkey. I repeat, even though [non-Muslim minorities] do not have any prominence quantitatively, they are being used as a card, as a display. I read in the news the other day that when [President] Bush visits Turkey he will be meeting the religious leaders of Jewish, Armenian and Greek communities. Can you imagine? The President of the United States? I understand if he meets the head of Religious Affairs but the leaders of 15,000 Jews, 60,000 Armenians and 2,500 Rum? This only has one meaning, to give a message against conflicts between religions. (Interview, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2005)

Hrant Dink, former editor-in-chief of *Agos*, similarly believed that non-Muslims were being used as a 'card' in domestic and international politics in order to display Turkey's cultural diversity. However, for Dink, diversity is a principle neither acknowledged in official politics nor in daily life. As he explained:

To maintain multiculturalism inside [domestically] would mean that there is 24 hour radio in Kurdish, education in Kurdish, and things in Armenian. Multiculturalism does not mean that cultural differences 'exist', it means that they should also be able to live and flourish. Turkey would never allow this, because it perceives its development as a reaction to the unitary structure of the country. It allows a seeming multiculturalism because it is a political medium... For instance, there is a big reluctance to allow both Rum and Armenians to open their theology schools. But, they take the representatives of communities with them to attend dinner parties with foreign heads of state. Everything is about display. For me multiculturalism in Turkey is a means Turkey uses in its foreign policy. It is not something it would otherwise recognise and accept as a way of life. If that was the case, minorities would not face problems, and their needs would be met. What exists is just a sweet talk and I believe this stems from obligations. Now [the EU] is pressuring for Copenhagen criteria and inquiring about cultural diversity. Multiculturalism can only be a part of our life if our negotiations with the EU continue (Interview, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2004).

By referring to ‘seeming multiculturalism’ in Turkey, Dink’s comments seem to be highlighting differences between the application and acceptance of ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ multicultural policies at the state level. Whilst the former policies refer to accepting cultural diversity in the realm of the private sphere, the latter refer to its acceptance and exercise in the public sphere and in public policy. Notwithstanding, the public acceptance of diversity can also be considered as a two-way process that can be enhanced through the active efforts of minority groups to combat prejudices, negative representations and vilification. In fact, as the following discussion reveals, the revitalisation of minority media outlets and the emergence of new institutions indicate an active involvement of this kind.

### **The Transformation of the Old minority Media System in Turkey: Combating prejudices, opening up and reaching out to different levels of public spheres**

As Rifat Bali’s comments highlighted earlier, since the second half of the 1990s ‘those who had a problem with the state’ began to make their voices heard more in the public realm.

The editor of the *Jamanak* newspaper, Ara Koçunyan, explained this process as follows:

When Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] was labelled as ‘Armenian seed’ the community reacted to it, the Patriarch at the time called for a press conference. There was a need to shake off the death soil, to get rid of the victim mentality [in the community]. But we also need to acknowledge the other factors. Since the mid-1990s there is a search for democracy in Turkish society that is getting stronger. Especially the intelligentsia made efforts to understand, be close to and help the voices of those who were repressed and maltreated in the society to be heard... In analysing the change in Turkey it would be wrong to consider this in relation to the Armenian issue, because Turkish society is changing faster than its approach to the Armenian problem. The general outlook on the Armenian issue is much slower than the general change. It is perhaps the biggest exception. It is also necessary to highlight the fact that the period in which this change has been taking place is also the period the Armenian community has begun opening itself to the bigger society. It was the period in which it intensified its efforts to explain itself to the bigger society (Interview, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2005).

Indeed, the most visible efforts came from the Armenian community, which, by establishing *Aras* (1993) and *Agos* (1996), began to participate in the public sphere and to combat social prejudices.

In fact, the Armenian minority media is diverse and includes both similar and rival elements in its media environment. The emergence of *Aras* publishing house in 1993 and *Agos* newspaper in 1996 can be seen as steps towards establishing new links between the different levels of public sphere, communal and national. It also reflects the transformation within the Armenian community in terms of the way it engaged with the ‘big society’<sup>152</sup>.

As one of the editors, Payline Tovmasyan, maintained, the foundation of *Aras* ‘fitted well with the political conjecture’ of the mid-1990s, when there was an accelerating Kurdish insurgency on the one hand, but a growing interest in the co-habitation of the heritage of different cultures on the other. As she further explained in our interview:

We were late in opening up this publishing house; but it was never thought of because such a thing would not even be imaginable... There was a shyness, we in our own shell as a society, and I think we (felt) repressed due to the oppressions... When (*Aras*) was first founded, there was the PKK, Kurdish events and especially Margosyan’s book [referring to the first book they published called *The Gaivur District in Diyarbakir*], these fitted well with the conjecture. You know when at the time they said “what kind of a mosaic?”<sup>153</sup>, the book was about that mosaic in Anatolia and that is why people had a great interest (Interview, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005).

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<sup>152</sup> ‘Big society’ (büyük toplum) is how they describe Turkish society in general.

<sup>153</sup> The term *cultural mosaic* became a buzzword in the 1990s to symbolise the diversity of cultures within Turkey. Although it was not welcomed by the far right political parties when it was first coined, it has been widely used in media and popular discourse in order to emphasise dialogue between the different elements. In 2007 a book by Atilla Durak published by Metis project (Ebru: Kulturel Cesitlilik uzerine Yansimalar- Ebru: Reflections on Cultural Diversity) preferred to symbolise diversity by using a new concept, Ebru (marbled paper), a traditional art in Turkey. The book was introduced on the publisher’s website as follows:

Over seven years in the making, *Ebru* is a sweeping and poignant photographic journey that illuminates, through the faces of its people, the rich cultural diversity of Turkey.

The English translation of “ebru” is “marbled paper,” which refers to the fluidity of paint

*Aras* was initially founded to distribute translations of the Türkiyeli Armenian<sup>154</sup> writers, and this remains as its founding principle and its identity. However, due to a lack of human resources, it has become very difficult to find people to make accomplished translations from Armenian into Turkish. *Aras* has published 70 books in a decade, and it is still is more like a voluntary or family business and can only provide financial support for some of the editors, all of whom work there for ‘love’ and ‘to keep their culture alive’ (Interviews with Rober Koptaş and Payline Tovmasyan, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005).

Takuhi Tovmasyan, another editor at *Aras*, believed that ‘the things that could not be articulated in the 1980s could now be pronounced now in newspapers and books’. As she further explained: ‘For instance, none of our books have been confiscated. The Armenians who live abroad, who have the old mentality, are getting surprised when they read our books, and they ask us how are we able to write such things. They can observe a change.’ Therefore for her, the launch of *Aras* in 1993 and *Agos* in 1996 signify two ‘rupture’ points in the lives of Armenian community that helped to construct ‘a bridge between the Turkish and Armenian societies’ (Interview, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005).

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and water on paper. With its creative combination of water and paper, “ebru” inspires the possibility of conceptualizing historical flow and “passing solidity” at the same time. As such, it is a metaphor that offers a promising alternative to others like “the mosaic” or “the quilt” for thinking through the new and old dilemmas of cultural politics at the turn of the century. Attila Durak’s visual portraits are rendered even more dramatic through John Berger’s foreword and interpretive essays from some of Turkey’s most discerning contemporary writers. Because of this exceptional artistic pairing, *Ebru* provides rare insight into the vibrant color, complexity, as well as political nuance, of a country defined and sustained by its multicultural past and present.  
(<http://www.metiskitap.com/Scripts/Catalog/MetisBooks/1997.asp>).

<sup>154</sup> It is very difficult to use the term ‘Turkish-Armenian’ as easily as it is used in Western Europe and America, in the sense of, for instance, ‘Italian-American’ or ‘British-Cypriot’. In my interviews, I specifically asked my respondents about this issue, reminding them that I will be translating Türkiyeli Ermeni (Armenian of/from Turkey) and asked them whether it would be possible to say Turkish-Armenian. They reject this hyphenated version strictly, saying that they are not Turkish, because it still reminds them an ethnic connotation. They see themselves as Turkish only in terms of citizenship. This was also the case in my interviews with the Greek (Rum) respondents. The Jewish community, because of their situation as the most integrated, pro-state community, use Türk Yahudileri (Turkish Jews) or Türkiyeli Yahudiler (Jews of/from Turkey) and told me that they would introduce themselves as Turks when they are abroad. This seems to be a very good example of the differences between communities, and sensitivities around the notion of citizenship and national identity.

*Agos* has indeed become a pivotal point of reference for issues related to the Armenian community. Hrant Dink completely distinguished *Agos* from the rest of the community newspapers, which in his view have ‘historically inscribed themselves with the aim to preserve the Armenian culture only by preserving the language and never had any political mission to defend their rights’. For Dink, the emergence of *Agos* symbolises ‘an uprising’ both against the state and against what he calls ‘community bureaucracy’.

[*Agos*] emerged by saying that we can express intellectual our side by using our Turkish, that we live in the big society in the best way possible... It struggled with the state, by bringing to public attention the problems created by the state, fought against the negativities found in the public opinion and in the media, and defended its rights. Secondly, *Agos* completely opened its community to the big society and struggled with the community bureaucracy, which still wants to see this community only as a *cemaat*, as a religious community. It struggled against the centralist understanding of the Patriarchate. It also wanted civil society in this community to take action. It also managed to stay economically independent. If you exist by the revenues obtained by advertisements given by community institutions then you would have to produce a paper that they would like.’ (Interview, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2005)

Hrant Dink believed that *Agos* helped the Armenian community to embrace its identity not only by celebrating ‘its language and its church’, but by ‘owning’ its history as well.

In establishing good links with the mainstream media and intellectuals, *Agos* seems to be exercising the second function in the double role of minority media. Furthermore, by challenging the established norms of community media, it seems to be aiming to provide an ‘alternative’ or ‘citizens’ media. A consensus on the notion of alternative media is as contested as for community media (Rodriguez, 2001). The concept is usually used in relation to the ‘democratisation of communication’, which prioritises citizens groups and grassroots efforts instead of the national mainstream or big conglomerate media. Instead of alternative media, the term ‘citizens’ media’ was suggested by Rodriguez, which might help to explain the place of *Agos* within mainstream and community media practices. Indeed, as Dink also maintained in our interview, the news selection criteria for *Agos* prioritises developments that relate to the ‘democratisation process in Turkey’.

During the course of my fieldwork there were attempts to establish a local Armenian radio station. Although the Armenian community had the right to establish broadcast media, the initiative began after the use of Kurdish language was granted for private local radio and television stations. This may be construed as a tangible positive impact of the Europeanisation process on the performance of non-Muslim minority media in Turkey. In fact, the first attempts have begun when Ari Hergel, a young Armenian university student, and Hayko Bağdat, a young half-Greek, half-Armenian man, started making radio programs on minorities for a local station in Istanbul. The birth of this program, which is aired by *Yaşam* Radio in Istanbul, coincided with the beginning of the Europeanisation reform period. The show has been running for two years (at the time of the interview) on a voluntary basis, and so does not provide them with any income. This show is unique because, despite earlier attempts by other Istanbul radio stations to publicise minority music and culture, this was the first established programme to be produced by minority members themselves. Hence, it can be considered as a strong signifier of the ‘normalisation’ of minority issues, and a result of the positive atmosphere created during the Europeanisation period. As Ari explained in our interview:

Our programme started as a minority programme that can encompass all the minorities, but unfortunately it is now carrying on as an Armenian one. But this has not been our choice. The other minorities, the Jews, Syrians, Greeks, they have a small population so there are very few people to participate in the show. We did one or two Greek shows. The Jews are not very demanding to be honest with you, because they do not consider themselves as a minority like us or the other groups. They remain a bit on the outside (Interview, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2005).

As mentioned previously, Jews are the most integrated community and do not usually like to be considered as a minority group, which explains their reluctance to get involved in such endeavours to bring minority cultures into the public realm. *Şalom* perpetuates this general understanding in society by arguing that it is possible to be both Jewish and Turkish (Barokas, *Şalom*, 26<sup>th</sup> December 2007). Nevertheless, in recent years, the most significant change for the Jewish community media has been the contacts they have established with mainstream media organisations. In this

way, it was possible for *Şalom* to be a point of reference for the community and it created continuity between mainstream and minority media performance. The efforts to establish links with the mainstream, and to increase the visibility of the community in public culture, have also been made possible by other activities organised by the cultural institutions of the Jewish community.

Tilda Levi, its editor-in-chief, admits that *Şalom* is not as political as *Agos*. But she also draws attention to a change in the attitude of the Jewish community in order to combat prejudices in public life. For instance, she explained to me that *Şalom* campaigned for many years to use the word ‘Jewish’ (Yahudi) in Turkish as opposed to Musevi (‘of Moses’ religion’), which is usually used in a politically correct way to refer to Jews in Turkey, because ‘Yahudi’ had negative connotations. She also maintained that the newspaper has become more proactive over the past couple of years. It has established links with the mainstream media and organised activities to help raise awareness of Jewish issues in the wider society. As Levi explained:

A couple of years back, we for the first time organised art events on a Jewish day. Why did we feel the need for this? If you do not introduce yourself, people either do not know you, or they know you partially. That is why we have been attending the book-fairs for more than a decade. At the beginning they were looking at us as if we were monkeys in a circus. The man on the street does not know the difference between an Armenian, Greek or Jew. For them, whoever is not Muslim is *gavur* [‘infidel’]... But who explained them what? People [referring to minorities and possibly the Jewish minority in specific] lived in fear, like a ghetto life, after the Varlık [Capital levy], with the instinct to protect themselves, so there will be no problems and they can live in peace. In this way, they did not even want to express themselves. But in time this has changed. As a result of our social activities we have established good relations with the wider press. I think this is a relaxation for both parties. We also made a gentleman’s agreement with *Agos* when they were first established, so we send *Şalom* to them and receive *Agos*. We also know that if we need any information we know that there will be someone at the other end of the line to answer to deal with our inquiries in the

mainstream media... We used to beg them to get pictures or information in the past, but now this has changed.’ (Interview, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2005)<sup>155</sup>.

The activities organised by *Şalom* and other initiatives, like the establishment of the Jewish museum and a cultural centre, also contributed to the community’s active participation in public culture. The Jewish community established a cultural centre for Sephardic Jewish studies in 2004, and transformed a synagogue into a Jewish museum in 2001. Karen Gerson Şarhon is the head of the cultural centre, and has been managing an oral history research project on the Jews of Turkey. Although she wanted to launch the cultural centre back in the 1980s (during the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations) she believes that it was not given the green light because the ‘time was not right’ (Interview, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2005). Although she has not articulated openly in the interview herself, she seems to have referred to the community leadership. The research centre is now involved in an international oral history project, and for her this is of utmost importance for the Jewish heritage in Europe in general, because Turkey’s non-involvement in Second World War created an ‘uninterrupted’ Jewish presence in Turkey compared to other parts of Europe.

In the case of Rum media, Mr. Rombopulos, the editor-in-chief of *Iho*, explained that was a change in the content of his newspaper as a result of improvements in Turkey’s foreign relations, with Greece in particular and the European Union in general.

We give summaries of the Turkish morning papers everyday. In the last couple of years we also started giving summaries of the Greek morning newspapers that can interest the Greek community. Besides, the Greek-Turkish relations occupy a very important place. As you know, our community has been affected by this throughout history, in fact paid for it... News from the Balkans and Middle East and, in the last 10-15 years, the

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<sup>155</sup> Non-Muslim minorities are themselves are historical rivals to each other in the way that they relate to state bureaucracy and official discourses. During my fieldwork, *Beyoğlu* newspaper, a local paper that was funded by a European project, organised a meeting with various minority journalists under the title of ‘Cultures gaze at each other’. Some minority journalists such as Rober Haddeler admitted that this was the first time they had met other minority journalists and editors.

news from the European Union and world news, is of great importance and occupies a space in the newspaper. (Interview, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005).

Mr Rombopulos maintained that the community could not establish a radio channel because of financial difficulties, yet they had the right to do so as a result of Lausanne provisions. For him, the Rum minority now does not need the Lausanne Treaty anymore, provided that the legal changes introduced in the Europeanisation reforms are implemented fully. This is because, in his view, the provisions offered by the Europeanisation reforms are much higher than those in Lausanne and the problems of minorities would be automatically resolved if the rights of all Turkish citizens were addressed in general.

## **Conclusion**

The relationship between media and ethnic minorities has been characterised by ‘continuity’, ‘conflict’ and ‘change’ (Horboken, 2004), and this also applies to the media of officially accepted minorities in Turkey. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, media can never be *solely* an index of identity, yet it is a significant component in the maintenance of cultural identity through its double role and function. This double function is evident in its ability to mediate community life, culture and traditions in the micro public sphere of the community, and in its efforts to become a point of reference and a communication channel that can reach out to mainstream media and the ‘bigger’ public sphere. Notwithstanding, it can be argued that the extent to which it performs this double role depends, as Riggins (1992) has stated, on a ‘system of variables’ consisting of issues such as the particular characteristic of minority communities, their persecution or repression in public culture and their relations to the international context. The analysis in this chapter validates the significance of these variables in the Turkish setting.

The minority communities that have been discussed here have experienced persecution and vilification due to a number of domestic and international tensions throughout Turkish history, which usually led to their migration. The negative effects of migration can be detected in both physical and symbolic decline in the

reproduction of community life. The diminishing minority population renders it difficult to physically sustain community institutions such as associations, foundations and schools. It also leads to a reduction in the human resources of the community. In this regard, media outlets can assume an indispensable role and function by compensating and providing support for community schools. These two important institutions of cultural transmission are sustained through their mutual support for each other. The lack of educated human capital creates a challenge for these communities to transmit their cultural identity and heritage through the preservation of their languages. Despite their low population, the Rum community is by far the most successful example of best practice in this aspect.

Media in minority languages provide ‘self-esteem’, ‘self-affirmation’ and a ‘common symbolic space’ within which the distinguishing characteristics of community life can be preserved (Horboken, 2004). However, as mentioned earlier, they can also generate competing versions of a group identity (Dayan, 1998). For instance, the Armenian newspapers differ from each other in the way they relate to community politics and the maintenance of identity. Whilst the traditional papers, such as *Jamanak* and *Marmara*, place more emphasis on the use of language and community communication, *Agos* has assumed a more alternative, confrontational role in order to combat the difficulties within both community and state bureaucracies. Hence it symbolises an active effort on the part of minorities to open themselves up to the public realm and to claim their positions as active citizens.

Indeed, major attempts at ‘opening up’ and gaining visibility in the public realm can be observed in both the Jewish and the Armenian communities through the active appropriation of media and other community institutions. These two communities historically have contradictory relationships to the state bureaucracy and official discourses, and *Şalom* clearly differs from *Agos* in the ways in which they deal with the *status quo* on a community and national level. Yet they are both actively using community institutions to create awareness about their cultural heritage and identity.

Despite representing one of the oldest minority media practices in Europe, and despite the limited scope of their audience, non-Muslim minority media in Turkey are far from vanishing. In fact, non-Muslim minority media are adapting to contemporary contexts, transforming their content, and enhancing their accessibility and visibility. This transformation within the old minority media practices in Turkey reflects the improvements in the ways in which minority issues and problems have been acknowledged in Turkey. Therefore, the changes observed in minority media outlets should be viewed within the wider globalisation and democratisation processes affecting Turkey, rather than solely as a consequence of Europeanisation reforms<sup>156</sup>. This study has found that the Europeanisation reforms did not have a direct impact on the performance of minority media outlets, but minority media professionals still consider these as a positive impetus in the democratisation of Turkey over recent years. Therefore, the transformation of the old minority media regime in Turkey reflects the cumulative impact of democratisation processes in Turkey, which, as discussed in the previous chapter, have accelerated since the mid-1990s. These transformations not only involved the active participation of the communities themselves, but also their responses to wider processes of globalisation.

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<sup>156</sup> One exception is the legal changes that were introduced during the Europeanisation reforms with regards to the bureaucratic problems minorities used to face about their foundations. The foundations were not able to possess their own assets due to the legislation that was passed in 1935. The new law was passed by parliament on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2008 but it has not eliminated the legal disputes and difficulties. Oran (2008) has identified 4 main problem areas which are still left unresolved in the new legislation. Firstly, those properties which were confiscated by the state since the 1960s can only be returned after an application process at the European Court of Human Rights. Secondly, those properties which were sold to third parties can not be returned to the foundations. Thirdly, the law does not find a solution to the foundations which were acquired by the Foundations General Directorate. Finally, the law only allows the non-Muslim foundations to establish foreign relations as long as this is stated in their vakifname. This is a document that proves their establishment and the ways in which they can buy or sell properties. However, most non-Muslim foundations do not possess this type of documentation because historically most of them were established by a decree publicised by the Sultan.

## Chapter 6

### Europeanisation reforms and new practices for broadcasting in different languages

#### Introduction

The previous chapter investigated recent changes in Turkey's official minority media regime and concluded that they were driven by a wider set of democratisation processes, both global and endogenous, than simply those under the impetus of the European Union. In contrast, however, this chapter focuses on precisely those legislative and regulatory frameworks that have been introduced during the Europeanisation reform period. The following discussion considers these to be the most significant leverage on Turkey's regulatory frameworks during this time, especially those dealing with Kurdish cultural rights and the public acknowledgement of Kurdish identity.

Hence, this chapter examines the processes and events between 2000 and 2006 that led to the launch of Kurdish broadcasting on public and private television and radio. This reform process has required major changes in legislation that have been completed in three different stages. Firstly, constitutional amendments were introduced in 2001 to lift the ban on the use of non-Turkish languages in the media. Secondly, new laws - namely *Law No. 4771* (stipulated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Europeanisation package in 2002) and *Law No. 4928* (from the 6<sup>th</sup> harmonisation package enacted in 2003) - revised certain articles of the 3984 Broadcasting Act to allow the use of ethnic languages in broadcasting. Finally, these legislative changes were put into practice via two new directives from the Supreme Council of Broadcasting and Television (RTÜK), which were intended to regulate the so called 'broadcasts in the different languages and dialects used traditionally by Turkish citizens in their daily lives'. As a result of these legislative measures, broadcasting in Kurdish first began nationally on TRT in June 2004, followed in March 2006 on local private TV and radio channels in South-eastern cities - where the majority of population is Kurdish.

The main premise of this chapter is that the start of Kurdish language broadcasting represents a dramatic transformation of the ‘market for loyalties’, as well as a ‘normalisation’ and a ‘shift’ in the way that Kurdish cultural identity is acknowledged and accommodated in public life. Although there are no official multicultural strategies in Turkey, apart from the provisions found in the Lausanne Treaty that granted certain rights to non-Muslim communities, allowing broadcasting in different languages can be seen as a step forward in the development of a new engagement with cultural diversity.

However, this chapter also reveals that these regulatory frameworks have largely resulted from a reluctant deference to external forces by the authorities and have been executed via a series of legislative *faits accomplis*. The major external force during this period has been the European Union. The conditions attached by the EU to the start of membership negotiations, i.e. compliance with the Copenhagen Criteria, have acted as a strong reform incentive for Turkey. Among its bureaucratic elite, the application of these criteria has been portrayed as evidence either of the EU’s ‘enforcement’ of its agenda or of ‘giving concessions to the EU’. Both perspectives see the EU as interfering with Turkey’s business, rather than promoting human rights<sup>157</sup>.

This chapter goes beyond the rhetorical reactions to European influence to examine the ways in which the tide of Europeanisation has been met by the specific obstacles and opportunities of the Turkish context. Firstly, the military has been an active counterpart in the preparation of the legislative reforms and their concern for national security and the integrity of the state has left its mark on the new policies. Secondly, public institutions have been caught up in the ensuing battle between different political concerns and agendas, and the lack of autonomy in these institutions (such as TRT and the broadcasting regulator RTÜK) has delayed the

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<sup>157</sup> See Bek-Gencil (2001) for an analysis of the media coverage of Helsinki Summit. The dilemmas in the public domain as reflected in this article have been dominant throughout the Europeanisation period.

process of reform. Thirdly, the lack of a standard approach to ‘minority issues’ within the European Union, and the lack of standard practices in terms of ‘minority broadcasting’, has allowed policies to be tailored to the specific circumstances in Turkey, but has not necessarily eliminated disputes between Turkish authorities, local television stations and the EU commission. In its analysis of these issues, this chapter therefore reveals the ways in which Turkey’s national framework has been proactive in its responses to transnational challenges, especially when they have encroached on the core sensitivities in Turkish political culture.

### **The Kurdish Taboo and the First Debates on Kurdish Broadcasting**

Previous chapters have discussed the ways in which the various forms of minority media practice in Europe relate to local issues of exclusion, inclusion, the maintenance of cultural identity and processes of democratisation within national political cultures. Seen in this light, one of the most controversial areas of struggle between the Republican state and the Kurds has been the use of Kurdish language in media and education. As previously mentioned, the multilingual setting of the Empire allowed the development of mass media in different languages. In fact, as was the case with Armenians, Jews and Greeks, the origins of the Kurdish press also goes back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first newspaper, *Kurdistan*, was founded in Cairo in 1898. As Tan (2007) comments, ‘media has had a primary role in Kurdish enlightenment’ because, since its inception, it has been an instrument of the ‘struggle’ and a medium for ‘crying out to the world their existence’. Consequently, through the need to make their voices heard in the public realm, the Kurdish press has always been multilingual.

The Turkish Republic, however, was established on the principles of a single ethnic identity and single language, and the first constitution of 1924 stipulated Turkish as its official language. Kurdish uprisings (discussed in Chapter 3) were heavily suppressed and the media activities of the Kurds remained limited (Tan, 2007). Although the 1960 constitution allowed a number of publications both in Kurdish and Turkish they were frequently banned and their publishers and editors arrested

(O'Neil, 2007). The revitalisation of the Kurdish press can be correlated with the development of leftist movements in the 1970s but, in the aftermath of the 1980 military intervention, these publications either went underground or were published abroad. Whilst the tradition of daily newspapers began in 1993, followed by the foundation of *Özgür Gündem* and *Azadiya Welat* in 1996, the use of new technologies such as satellite communications and the Internet have contributed to the development of dozens of websites and online radio stations. The most significant and controversial development in broadcasting was the launch of Med TV in 1995, which was broadcast by satellite for the Kurdish diaspora (Topuz, 2003; Tan, 2007)<sup>158</sup>.

However, the start of Kurdish broadcasting on terrestrial television and radio in Turkey has been the most controversial issue because allowing such transmissions was seen as equivalent to recognising the Kurdish identity as a separate ethnic and language group within Turkey. Also, as the following discussion demonstrates, for some sections of the bureaucratic elite permitting the use of Kurdish language in broadcasting was seen as an initiative that might pave the way for other demands, such as autonomy, which could lead to the eventual disintegration of the state. Although the first debates over Kurdish broadcasting took place in the 1990s (as discussed in Chapter 4), it became a political 'hot potato' at the end of the decade because the EU had become an active participant in these debates as part of Turkey's pre-accession strategy.

Kurdish broadcasting was not allowed in the early 1990s because of national security concerns. But the use of other languages in the media and education has

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<sup>158</sup> The establishment of MED TV for Kurds meant the 'realization of their dream of sovereignty, albeit in the sky' (Hassanpour, 1995). MED TV started broadcasting in Britain in 1995 after obtaining a 10-year license. The Turkish authorities have exerted pressure on foreign regulators to stop the broadcast of MED TV because it is considered to have connections with the PKK. In Britain, the ITC has issued warnings to Med TV on several occasions for breaches of rules on impartiality and its license was revoked in 1999 (Feuilherade, 1999). Its successor, Roj TV, is now operating in Denmark and Turkish authorities are lobbying to shut it down on the grounds that it is the mouthpiece of PPK (Schleifer, 2006). The number of Kurdish satellite channels has increased to six since MED TV was launched (<http://www.worldlanguagestv.co.uk/ku-Kurdish/>). For more on MED TV see Price (2002) and Karim (1998).

since assumed a privileged place on the political agenda as Turkey's accession process to the EU has gained momentum. In the eyes of the EU, granting a 'certain form of cultural rights' to the Kurds of Turkey was seen as one of the measures that could offer a 'civil' solution to the Kurdish problem and was emphasised in the first official EU Commission Annual Report on Turkey (EU Commission, 1998: 20). The Annual Report of 1999 signalled for the first time that allowing broadcasting in Kurdish could be one of the stepping-stones in this direction (EU Commission, 1999). However, the turning point was the Helsinki Summit in 1999, which thrust the issues more forcefully onto Turkey's political agenda.

After the summit, Foreign Affairs Minister İsmail Cem and Deputy Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz both, on separate occasions, openly voiced the possibility, and even necessity, of allowing the use of Kurdish language in education and TV and radio broadcasts within the framework of cultural rights (see *Hürriyet*, 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> December 1999). The EU commission welcomed these comments as the 'first interesting signal of the desire for reforms' (EU Commission, cited in *Hürriyet*, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1999). However, they also marked the beginning of a long debate that revealed the major cleavages between the pro-European and pro-change actors and the Euro-sceptics within the establishment as well as within the delicately formed coalition government itself. This became evident when Prime Minister Ecevit, on a visit to Şırnak (a major Kurdish town where the PKK began its offensive against the Turkish army back in 1984), stated that the government did not have a 'proper plan' for Kurdish broadcasting because 'it was not desired by some'. The ambiguity of this comment raised questions about 'who holds political will in Turkey' (F. Tınç, *Hürriyet*, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2000).

From the onset of this debate, it was clear that the issue of Kurdish language broadcasting did not only hinge on the consensus between the three-party coalition of centre-left DSP, centre-right ANAP and extreme-nationalist MHP, but it also involved the Turkish military bureaucracy as an active stakeholder.

The first bureaucratic ‘signal’ demonstrating that the reform process might be long and controversial came from the General Secretary of the National Security Council (NSC), army commander General Cumhuri Asparuk. In February 2000, in an interview with the Financial Times, the general was reported as saying that allowing Kurdish broadcasters to use the Kurdish language would not happen in the short-term and that giving permission for education in the Kurdish language would ‘destroy the mosaic of Turkish society’ (*Hürriyet*, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2000).

The army’s well-known position on Kurdish broadcasts pertained to their concerns about the unitary structure of the state. As Major General Aslan Güner, the Secretary of the Chief of Staff put it:

It has been debated whether this [Kurdish broadcasts] could degenerate the unified structure...The only concern of the TAF [Turkish Armed Forces] is the unity of state and national unity. This is the basis of our existence. It is not possible for us to be divided. We cannot let this happen as long as we are alive. (Cited in *Hürriyet*, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2000)

The popularity of Kurdish satellite television channels in the densely populated Kurdish regions of southeast Turkey continued to fuel security concerns. In Europe, satellite television targeting diasporic groups had heightened anxieties about the cultural ghettoisation of migrant communities (Aksoy and Robins, 2000). In the Turkish case, however, the concerns were related to the possibility that the PKK could utilise satellite media for propaganda purposes (*Hürriyet*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000).

The leader of ANAP, Mesut Yılmaz, who was also the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for coordinating EU affairs at the time, addressed this question as follows:

A majority of our citizens are watching the broadcasting organ of the divisive organisation. If we as the state are happy about it, let us carry on. If we are not, then we should meet the needs of [those] who are not segregationist, divisive but they simply cannot follow the world because they do not know Turkish. As the state you need to use your logic. You must produce those broadcast policies in order to attract those citizens so you can keep your unity and your values. You have no other choice...if those people living in Şırnak do not speak Turkish and it makes them a target for those trying to

spread their poison, then the cure is... to embrace and protect those people. (G. Mengi, *Hürriyet*, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2000)

Whilst ANAP represented the more liberal and pro-European wing within the coalition, its extreme nationalist counterpart, MHP, regarded demands for Kurdish TV in Turkey as ‘nothing else but treason’ (*Hürriyet*, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2000). The MHP leader and Deputy Prime Minister, Devlet Bahçeli, described Kurdish TV as a demand for ‘minority rights’, and the minister of transportation, Enis Öksüz, argued that the ‘[Kurds] will ask for TV now and the next day they will ask for an independent state’ (C. Dündar, *Sabah*, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2000).

Can Dündar, a veteran investigative journalist, described MHP’s outlook as ‘ostrich politics’ that does not understand the realities of the southeast region. Dündar not only addressed the problems in the southeast but he also criticised the predominant perception among the public and the bureaucratic elite that the implementation of such reforms was ‘giving in’ to Europe. As he put it in his column:

If they look at the region closely they will understand that the policies implemented now are actually bread and butter for those who want a separate state. Because 80% of the region’s population is illiterate and a majority of them exercise their right to watch broadcasts in their language - something that the state does not recognise - from trans-frontier broadcasts. These broadcasts usually bear the signature of the PKK or Barzani... For a while in Turkey it was forbidden to even discuss such issues. Özal received a lot of reaction when he first mentioned Kurdish TV. But if we could have discussed these things on time, maybe today it would not be perceived as if ‘we are compromising to Europe or to terror’. Now ‘the right to broadcast’ comes on the agenda in the framework of EU membership and the AP (Accession Partnership) and that is how they are being discussed. MHP has to understand that these prohibiting policies help only the propaganda by the PKK... (C. Dündar, *Sabah*, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2000).

What might be considered a ‘visa’ for Kurdish broadcasting came at the end of 2000 when the head of the Constitutional court announced that local/regional Kurdish broadcasts might not be against the constitution, and possibilities for a limited broadcast on limited outlets might be considered so that ‘[Kurds] can experience their own culture’ (*Hürriyet*, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2000).

In 2001, the EU Commission prepared an Accession Partnership document as part of the pre-accession procedures. The document was formally adopted by the Commission on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2001 and envisaged *short-term* and *medium term* legislative, structural and political changes. Short-term objectives were expected to be delivered before the end of 2001 and included issues like strengthening freedom of expression and bringing it into line with *Article 10* of the European convention of human rights, fighting against torture, legal arrangements towards the abolishment of the death penalty, and removing ‘any legal provisions forbidding the use by Turkish citizens of their mother tongue in TV/radio broadcasts’ (European Council, 2001).

In response to this document, Turkish government adopted its 1000 page National Programme for the Adoption of the EU *acquis*<sup>159</sup>, on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2001. Dubbed as the ‘road map of Turkey’ towards the European Union, Foreign Minister İsmail Cem hailed the program as the ‘the most comprehensive and ambitious democratisation program in the history of the Republic of Turkey’. The National program envisaged, over the next five years, a total of 94 changes in existing legislation, and the enactment of 89 new laws. According to the program this could mean a total number of 4,000 changes in the administrative structure of the Turkish state (M. Demir, *Hürriyet*, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2001).

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<sup>159</sup> Formally known as *Acquis communautaire*, the ‘*acquis*’ is defined with the following features on the website of the Delegation of the EU Commission in Turkey: ‘[It] includes all the EU's treaties and laws, declarations and resolutions, international agreements on EU affairs and the judgments given by the Court of Justice. It also includes action that EU governments take together in the area of "justice and home affairs" and on the Common Foreign and Security Policy. "Accepting the *acquis*" therefore, means taking the EU as you find it. Candidate countries have to accept the "*acquis*" before they can join the EU, and make EU law part of their own national legislation’ ([http://www.avrupa.info.tr/Bilgi\\_Kaynaklari/Terimler\\_Sozlugu.html](http://www.avrupa.info.tr/Bilgi_Kaynaklari/Terimler_Sozlugu.html))

### **Short-Term Reform Measures:** Constitutional amendments and new laws in the first harmonisation package

For the bureaucrats, the most challenging objectives to be met in the National Program in the short-term were the issues of education and broadcasting in the Kurdish language (*Hürriyet*, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2001). For the short-term objectives to be achieved by March 2002, constitutional amendments were required. The Constitution Commission of the General Assembly drafted a proposal that was comprised of amendments to be made in 37 articles of the 1982 constitution. It included areas such as the expansion of individual rights and liberties, freedom of thought, and limitations on capital punishment as well as civilianising the National Security Council (NSC) and scrapping its authoritative power over the decisions taken by national governments. The proposed amendments were considered to be Turkey's 'first civil constitution' (S. Korkmaz, *Hürriyet*, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2001).

The first obstacle for 'Kurdish broadcasting' was in *Article 26* and *Article 28* of the constitution, which pertained to 'freedom of expression and dissemination of thought' and 'press freedom' respectively. *Article 26* stipulated that 'No language prohibited by law shall be used in the expression and dissemination of thought'. Additionally, *Article 28* stated that 'Publications shall not be made in any language prohibited by law'. These two statements have been deleted from the text of the constitution in the relevant articles in order to bring it into line with *Article 9* and *Article 10* of the ECHR, which stipulated 'freedom of thought' and 'freedom of expression' (ABGS, 2001: 5). These amendments were accepted under the name *Law No. 4709, Law on Amending Certain Articles of the Constitution of the Turkish Republic* on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2001 by the General Assembly (TBMM, 2001) as a part of the first reforms in the Europeanisation period.

These amendments lifted the ban on Kurdish and constituted Turkey's first steps towards the introduction of broadcasts in different languages, and were welcomed by the European Commission. However, as its annual regular report has highlighted, there existed some discrepancies between the constitution and the *No. 3984* broadcasting law. This law, which is also known as the RTÜK law, stated that TV

and Radio broadcasts will be in Turkish ‘with an exception for languages that will contribute to the development of a universal culture and science’ (EU Commission, 2001: 28). As Sedat Ergin pointed out in his column, ‘because Kurdish is not considered as a language which contributes to universal culture and science, according to RTÜK law it is still prohibited’, also arguing that a failure to amend certain articles in this law might cause a serious blockage in EU-Turkish relations (*Hürriyet*, 25<sup>th</sup> December 2001). Therefore, the next challenge in the introduction of Kurdish broadcasts was to make the RTÜK law congruent with the Constitutional changes.

### **Medium-Term Reform Measures: 3<sup>rd</sup> harmonisations package and preparations for regulatory framework**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> harmonisation package for European integration included some of the most critical *medium term* measures, including abolishing the death penalty<sup>160</sup> and allowing education and broadcasting in Kurdish. These amendments had to be completed by December 2002, as Turkey needed to show its progress in these areas before a crucial EU summit in Copenhagen at which the European Council would decide whether or not to proceed towards negotiations. For some, the ‘Kurdish file’ on education and broadcasting (as well as the lifting of the death penalty) was the most critical decision in terms of its effect on ‘the foundational essence of the unitary structure of the state in Turkey’ (S. Ergin, *Hürriyet*, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2002). During the period leading up to the enactment of the new law on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2002, which allowed broadcasting in different languages, the three-party coalition government was driven by tensions and there were concerns about the attitude and potential response of the military. The National Security Council’s powers still remained intact and monthly regular meetings continued between top generals and the president’s cabinet.

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<sup>160</sup> The hesitations over lifting the death penalty, which had not been exercised since 1984, centred around Abdullah Ocalan’s case. Ocalan, the leader of PKK, had been in prison since 1999 when he was given the death sentence. The worries revolved around whether lifting the penalty might mean that Ocalan would be free after serving 10 years in prison.

Following the regular NSC meeting at the end of March 2002, the military declared that it would not object to ‘controlled and limited’ broadcasts. Although the army did not agree with education in the Kurdish language, this move was considered to be a ‘green light for Kurdish’ from the armed forces (K. Yurteri, *Hürriyet*, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2002). In the eyes of veteran journalist Mehmet Ali Birand, this statement was an ‘indication that Turkey had crossed another important psychological threshold’:

In this way, the Turkish Republic has shown that it has got rid of its complexes about Kurdish and that its self-confidence has risen. Until today we could not accept Kurdish. We could not decide whether Kurdish speakers would be friend or foe if the broadcasts were permitted. We were divided into two. Some would get scared whenever they would see the word ‘Kurdish’ and perceive it as a threat to the unity of the country. Others viewed being Kurdish and speaking Kurdish as natural rights and believed that, if the prohibitions continued, we would be facing more reactions in the long run. Society was confused, people were perplexed... In the period of 12<sup>th</sup> September [1980], being Kurdish was almost a crime. Children could not be named, Kurdish songs could not be heard, the names of villages had to be changed. What happened? The Kurdish problem did not stop. On the contrary, it accelerated. In the Özal period, Kurdish speaking and listening to music was allowed. What happened? The Kurdish problem did not get bigger. Now you will see Kurdish broadcasts will be permitted and Turkey will not be divided.’ (M.A. Birand, *Hürriyet*, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2002)

As was discussed previously, similar questions over the relationship between nationalism and minority media have been raised by Cormack (2000) regarding Britain and Ireland. Cormack has argued that the existence of minority language media may turn ‘hot’ nationalism into less radical, ‘banal’, forms, and depoliticise the issue of language. Birand’s comments reinforce this argument, although the concerns in Turkey relate not only to minority nationalism, but the division of the country.

Despite the army’s ‘green light’, the deteriorating health of Prime Minister Ecevit, and the deadlock within the coalition parties, prevented the government from taking effective steps to implement the *medium term* measures. The deadlock over the enactment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> harmonisation package was resolved as a result of a number of ‘leaders summits’ organised by President Sezer in order to ensure a consensus

among the parties. The government decided to take the issues of broadcasting and education in Kurdish and the death penalty to the next NSC meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2002. The meeting took place without the presence of the PM and Deputy PM Devlet Bahçeli and concluded that ‘for the well being of the country’ the necessary laws should be enacted before the General Assembly went into vacation. It was therefore agreed that there could be limited TV broadcasts on TRT in Kurdish (*Sabah*, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2002).

The months leading up to the agreements over the 3rd harmonisation package were quite tense periods within the government. As a result of the leaders’ summits, a consensus on Kurdish broadcasting and lifting the death penalty was secured between coalition partners DSP, ANAP and the opposition parties AKP and SP, despite MHP’s threats to leave the government (T. Yılmaz, *Hürriyet*, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2002). Additionally, RTÜK organised ‘state coordination meetings’ with bureaucrats from various state departments in order to reach a consensus on the Kurdish broadcasting bill. At the beginning of July, MHP declared that the party would not vote in favour of the package but, if enough votes were secured in the General Assembly, it would not block the process (*Hürriyet*, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2002)

The General Assembly met on the 2nd of August and, despite strict opposition from MHP, the Parliament passed the 3<sup>rd</sup> harmonisation package the following morning after a marathon of 22 hours in session. The package lifted the death penalty and allowed the use of one’s ‘mother-tongue’, thus paving the way for broadcasting in Kurdish (see *Hürriyet* 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2002 and N. Babacan and S. Korkmaz, *Hürriyet*, 4<sup>th</sup> August 2002). The new law, *No. 4771*, was in use by the 8<sup>th</sup> of August and it included amendments in many laws including *Article 4* of *Law No. 3984* on radio and television institutions in order to allow broadcasting in ‘different languages and dialects that are used by Turkish citizens in their daily lives’ (TBMM, 2002). The legislative changes were completed before the EU Commission’s regular report on Turkey’s progression in October and the crucial Copenhagen Summit in December 2002. RTÜK began to prepare a directive immediately after the reform package was implemented.

In November 2002, just before the Copenhagen Summit, national elections were held in Turkey. The outcome was a strong single-party government, the AKP (Justice and Development Party), which was associated with an Islamist policy agenda through an organic link between its members and those of its predecessors – the RP and FP. The new structure eliminated some of the major old centre-right parties such as ANAP, DYP and the nationalist MHP from the political scene, and practically ended an era of coalition governments. As Kemal Kirişçi (2003) stated at the Copenhagen Summit, the AKP was committed to European membership and, after coming into power, its members began a series of trips to the USA and major cities in Europe, lobbying and trying to establish support for Turkey's aim to secure a date to commence negotiations with the European Union.

### **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Harmonisation Package and the First Regulatory Practice:** *'Directive on the Language of Radio and Television Broadcasts'*

The RTÜK was under pressure to announce a directive before the December 2002 EU summit in order to demonstrate Turkey's commitment to EU membership as well as its progress towards meeting the Copenhagen political criteria. The first directive to allow the use of languages other than Turkish in broadcasting was completed on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2002 and came into force on 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2002 (RTÜK, 2002). The directive was prepared after consultations with various state institutions such as ministries, the NSC and the Secretariat General of EU Affairs (ABGS). The directive only allowed these broadcasts to be aired on the public service broadcaster, TRT. It stipulated that 'broadcasting in different languages' could include news, music and cultural broadcasts for adults, but the teaching of these languages would not be possible. It also set the time limits. Accordingly, non-Turkish language television broadcasts could not exceed 30 minutes per day and two hours in total in any given week, while radio broadcasts could not exceed 45 minutes per day and four hours per week. It stipulated the obligatory use of subtitles in TV broadcasts, and an exact translation to Turkish for radio transmissions. The new directive also charged RTÜK with the duty to determine which dialects and

languages could be used in these broadcasts and demanded the completion of an audience survey to identify the most extensively used dialects and languages.

The configuration of the directive reflected the ways in which the use of languages other than Turkish in broadcast media is seen as risky, ideological and controversial by the authorities. As Zakir Avşar, the then deputy director of RTÜK (who was one of the key figures in the preparation of the directive), explained:

I personally objected to these broadcasts from the beginning but if we had to find a solution it had to be within the framework of public service broadcasting... It is not because I am against liberties, but this has become an ideological issue, an ingredient of terrorism. That is why I argued that it was wrong for Turkey to initiate it without thinking it through and without establishing the rules (Interview, 10<sup>th</sup> January 2007).

Indeed, concerns over terrorism, which highlight issues of ‘national security’, were incorporated into *Article 8*, which organised the sanctions as follows:

Broadcasts cannot be against the rule of law, general rules of the constitution, basic rights and liberties, national security, general morals, the basic principals of the Republic as stated in the constitution, indivisibility of the state with its country and people, 3984 law and its directives, responsibilities envisaged by the High Council and they must be done according to the requirements of public service broadcasting’ (RTÜK, 2002).

Considering the lack of autonomy of TRT as a public service broadcaster (see the discussion in Chapter 4), its selection as the only outlet allowed to deliver such transmissions seems to reflect the Turkish authorities’ efforts to maintain some sort of control over the style and the content of broadcasting<sup>161</sup>. However, singling out

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<sup>161</sup> As previously discussed, until the break up of monopoly over broadcasting, TRT remained as the principal facilitator of national identity. After the military intervention in 1971, TRT was not only linked to the government financially and administratively but also by a new set of principals and duties defined in the constitution. As Kejanlıoğlu (2004:184) has indicated, the new duties included assisting in education and culture and required upholding the following general principles in news

TRT as the only outlet for broadcasts in ‘different languages’ has led to a legal battle and impasse between RTÜK and TRT over TRT’s legal role. In February 2003, TRT secretly opened a court case against RTÜK in order to suspend the implementation of the new directive on the grounds that it conflicted with its autonomy. The conflict stemmed from the different laws regulating TRT and the Supreme Council (See *Radikal*, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2003 and 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2003). Although RTÜK is the principal regulatory body for the broadcasting realm, it is not authorised to regulate TRT transmissions.

Latif Okul, who is the head of the TRT Regulation Committee, explained the reasons behind TRT’s reluctance to accept its new broadcasting mission as follows:

TRT objected to it because we did not want a ‘wardship’. Kurdish broadcasting could have been on public and private channels, but RTÜK insisted that it would be aired by TRT. We actually have been expecting that this would happen to TRT as a public broadcaster. We reprimanded the first directive and the high court decided that we were right. In the second directive RTÜK added an article which allowed *public and private* channels. Of course none of the national private ones applied. So it had to be TRT’s job to start them (Interview, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2006).

For some journalists, the dilemma between the two top public institutions responsible for implementing the new legislative measures seemed to be more than a legal dispute, it reflected their genuine objection to the introduction of broadcasting in Kurdish (*Hürriyet*, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2004). Although the directors of these institutions have dismissed these claims, some officers in RTÜK believe that the dispute over the finalisation of the directives might have been used as a ‘tactic to delay’ the initiation of broadcasting in Kurdish. Because, as Bora Sönmez points out, even the

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and other programs: ‘Commitment to the unity of the State; to the national democratic, secular and social Republic which is based on respect for human rights; to general moral values; and to accuracy in news provision.’ Since then, these still remain as part of TRT’s general principals, exemplifying the pressures from the general political culture on the realm of broadcasting.

provisions in the first directive would have been sufficient to allow private media outlets to make transmissions (Interview, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007). The conflict between RTÜK and TRT was only resolved after a second directive was put into practice in July 2003, as is discussed in the next section.

The most important motive behind the preparation of the legislative and regulatory framework has been to meet the deadline for delivering the ‘short and medium term measures’, which were the prerequisites for obtaining a positive decision to open EU membership negotiations. Indeed the most pressing short and medium term priorities were completed in 2002 before the publication of the EU’s annual report and the crucial Copenhagen summit of the European Council on 12-13<sup>th</sup> December 2002. In its report, the EU Commission welcomed the ‘noticeable progress towards meeting political criteria’ but concluded that Turkey ‘does not fully meet the Copenhagen Criteria’ (EU Commission, 2002: 46-47).

Furthermore, the much awaited Copenhagen summit - where the trajectory of Turkey’s accession to European Union was to be decided - ended with an uncertain note about the future. The European Council concluded that ‘If the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission, decides that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, the European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay.’<sup>162</sup> (EU Commission, 2003: 6). This uncertainty has created a certain amount of disappointment among the Turkish authorities, but it has also, in a way, consolidated efforts to pursue wider reforms. Indeed, the AKP government then initiated a new move to complete the legal requirements by the end of 2004, so that negotiation process could begin in early 2005. In order to meet the Copenhagen criteria, the government needed to complete all the legal amendments by July 2003, so that the implementation could take place from October 2003 until October 2004. If, as some suggested at the time, the planned implementations were to fail, the ‘EU file will be closed down and shelved for another 10-15 years’ (M.A. Birand, *Hürriyet*, 14<sup>th</sup> May

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<sup>162</sup> See Kirişçi (2003) for an analysis of the 12-13<sup>th</sup> December 2002 Copenhagen summit..

2003). Contrary to these concerns, Turkey has been able to meet the Copenhagen criteria and has officially begun membership talks in October 2005, however as the following discussion demonstrate this has been a very lengthy process and the ways in which new legislative measures are implemented continue to be a matter of dispute between Turkey and the European Union.

***6<sup>th</sup> Harmonisation Package and Second Regulatory Practice: 'Directive on Radio and Television Broadcasts to be Made in Different Languages and Dialects Traditionally Used by Turkish Citizens in their Daily Lives'***

Following the Copenhagen summit, there were still areas that required improvement in human rights. These involved amending the *No. 3984 RTÜK* law in order to allow Kurdish broadcasting on private television and radio channels, as well as addressing other areas in a 6<sup>th</sup> harmonisation package (*Hürriyet*, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2003 and 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003).

However, the enactment of the 6<sup>th</sup> harmonisation package has revealed the contradicting approaches of the government and the military to the issue of cultural rights in general, and access to media in particular. The Chief of Staff, General Hilmi Özkök, 'informed' Prime Minister Erdoğan about the military's 'reservations' with regards to the amendments in Kurdish broadcasting and identified TRT as their 'preferred media outlet'. Prime Minister Erdoğan's response was to 'further discuss' the issue at an NSC meeting at the end of May 2003 (Y. Doğan, *Hürriyet*, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003). However, the government took a bold stance over its plans to enact the 6<sup>th</sup> harmonisation package and sent it to the General Assembly before the monthly regular NSC meeting, which was scheduled for the 26th of June (T. Yılmaz, *Hürriyet*, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2003). This move was radically different from previous procedures in which the content of harmonisation laws was first discussed in the NSC in order for the military and civil bureaucracy to reach a consensus before it was debated in the General Assembly. However, the 6<sup>th</sup> harmonisation package was

already included in the Government's plans before June's NSC meeting (Y. Doğan, *Hürriyet*, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2003)<sup>163</sup>.

Before the meeting, the General Secretariat of the NSC stated in an official letter that it objected to three articles in the proposed package, one of which permitted Kurdish broadcasting on commercial media outlets. For some commentators this signalled 'an army veto to the EU' because, unless the legislative amendments in this package were delivered, it would not be possible to secure a date from the EU for the start of negotiations (Y. Doğan, *Hürriyet*, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2003). Furthermore, the military's reservations about the 6<sup>th</sup> package raised concerns as to whether this would mean a 'total rejection' of the European project as a whole (A.M. Birand, *Hürriyet*, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2003).

The reaction of the military to the use of Kurdish on private channels reflects the two predominant attitudes towards Europeanisation in this period: a general reluctance found in bureaucratic institutions and the perception held by Turkish authorities that the harmonisation reforms amounted to 'giving concessions' to the European Union. Murat Yetkin, an established political journalist, has addressed this attitude in his column by referring to a statement made by an army general serving as second secretary of the Chief of Staff. The general was quoted as saying the following:

Look at the Accession Partnership document with the EU. It does not mention private radio and television. Why do we have the tendency to deliver more [to the EU] when our security concerns are still there?... Let us do what is necessary, but why should we volunteer for situations which might put us in trouble? (M. Yetkin, *Radikal*, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2003)<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Veteran journalist Mehmet Ali Birand observed that the 6<sup>th</sup> harmonisation package had almost turned into a 'wrestling match' between the army and the government because, if the government did not accept the changes in the package, it would be regarded as a 'submission' to the 'superiority of the army over civilian rule' both domestically and in the eyes of the European Union (M. A. Birand, *Hürriyet*, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2003).

<sup>164</sup> The comments of the general are significant considering the ambiguity over the minimum standards for minority media provisions applying to European Union member states. In chapter 2, where I considered different approaches to the study of the minority media, I have highlighted the

According to Yetkin, this did not mean the army was ‘dismissing’ the EU project altogether, but they were ‘reluctant’. This reluctance stemmed from the concern that it would be difficult to effectively regulate those transmissions that might include divisive and separatist propaganda (S. Ergin, *Hürriyet*, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2003).

Nonetheless, the package was sent to the General Assembly before the NSC meeting and was accepted by the Assembly on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June<sup>165</sup>. The package was enacted just before an EU summit in Salonica on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, where a new draft proposal of the new National Program was to be revised. The newly revised National Program, which was announced later on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July, pledged to fulfil all the political criteria before the end of 2004 and the economic criteria before the end of 2005.

The new harmonisation laws amended the disputed *Article 4* of the *No. 3894* broadcast law and allowed both private and public radio and television stations to undertake broadcasts ‘in languages and dialects used by Turkish citizens traditionally in their daily lives’. The amendment also required a new directive to be prepared by RTÜK within four months. The legal conflict between RTÜK and TRT was resolved within two weeks of the enactment of the 6<sup>th</sup> harmonisation package. The 2<sup>nd</sup> directive was completed within the 4-month period after consultations with state institutions such as the General Staff’s office, the NSC General Secretariat and the General Directorate for Security. According to the head of RTÜK, Fatih Karaca, the new directive was designed in such a way that that it has provided ‘liberties that can not be found in European Union countries’ (*Hürriyet*, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2003).

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problems arising from the ambiguity within the *European Charter Regional and Minority Languages*, which attempts to offer guidelines for minority culture provisions and their protection yet does not quantify minimum requirements (Cormack, 2005). As previously mentioned, *Article 11* of the Charter stipulates the establishment of one radio station, one TV channel and one newspaper in the minority of regional languages by the public authorities, or the facilitation and support of these media outlets where possible. Although Turkey has not signed the Charter and is not bound by its stipulations, the lack of standards and the existence of diverse practices in Europe reinforced the military’s reluctant approach to addressing the issue of cultural rights.

<sup>165</sup> The powers and the structure of the NSC were revised in the 7<sup>th</sup> Harmonisation package in July 2003. In August 2004, a civilian secretary was appointed to the Council. As Bac-Muftuler has stated, although these revisions transformed NSC into a consultancy body, the power of the military in Turkish politics not only stems from institutions but also from the fact that it remains the most respected and trusted body in Turkey (Müftüler-Baç, 2005).

It came into effect on 24th January 2004 under the title of *Directive on Radio and Television Broadcasts to be Made in Different Languages and Dialects Traditionally Used by Turkish citizens in their Daily Lives*<sup>166</sup> (RTÜK, 2004). The directive initially allowed only national public and private broadcasts and left the local stations outside of its provisions in a temporary article. Accordingly, until an audience profile was completed, minority languages were only broadcast on national private and public stations. The directive provisioned the council to prepare the audience profile. It allowed news and music programs, and programs that introduce the local culture, as long as these programs target the adult population. It prohibited educational broadcasts, and the transmission of cartoon programs for children in these languages. The regulations on subtitles and the scheduling of the programs remained unchanged and it has charged RTÜK with the sole authority to grant licenses to broadcasting outlets in different languages. It also reinforced the 1<sup>st</sup> directive which stipulated that broadcasts in traditionally used languages cannot be against the rule of law, national security, general morals, the qualities of the Republic as set in the constitution, the indivisibility of the state with its country and nation, the 3984 RTÜK act, and the directives based on this act (*Hürriyet*, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2004).

The military's concerns over monitoring and regulating these broadcasts have also been relevant to RTÜK as it is the main regulatory and monitoring body. Aside from the over arching 'national security' concerns in the state bureaucracy, the problems with RTÜK's technical infrastructure could explain the ways in which the directives are configured and may explain the constraints on RTÜK to deliver this function. As RTÜK expert Bora Sönmez explained, RTÜK audits and records the broadcasts of all the 25 national and 15 regional channels. There are around 230 local channels

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<sup>166</sup> Before its approval two more amendments have been made in the directive. Firstly its title was changed from 'The Directive on the Language of Broadcasts', to 'The Directive on Radio and Television Broadcasts to be made in Different Languages and Dialects Traditionally Used by Turkish Citizens in their Daily Lives'. Secondly the clause 'broadcasting organisations are obliged not to use any symbol, sign and voice in the studio design and the audio effects, except the ones that have been symbols of the Turkish Republic' was replaced with the statement '[they] are obliged not to include symbols that consist of a criminal element'

and it is impossible to audit and record all these outlets within the current system (Interview, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007).

Another technical problem emanated from the lack of personnel who could speak the traditional languages and whose expertise in these languages can be objectively validated. Zakir Avşar, the former Deputy Head of RTÜK, explained that, although Arabic language departments exist in higher education institutions in Turkey, there are none to cater for the Kurdish language. Furthermore, dialect differences in Kurdish have also been a challenge for RTÜK's attempts to find a standard Kurdish to be used on public television (Interview, 10<sup>th</sup> January 2007). RTÜK still lacks personnel in its regional branches, especially in densely Kurdish populated areas such as Diyarbakır and Van. Avşar claims that despite earlier attempts to employ new staff this had not been possible.

The lack of Kurdish speaking personnel has been redressed by making the use of subtitles and translations compulsory in transmissions. Bora Sönmez, who had been involved in the preparations from the beginning, explained the process as follows:

When we started to prepare the directive we screened the whole literature and practices in Europe, as well as the European Charter for Local languages. We looked at different models in England, France and Greece. But the model in Turkey is a mixed (hybrid) model. We adopted some practices in Europe by considering the needs of Turkey. For example, the obligatory subtitles are implemented in Greece. There are the limitations on time and content in the French model in Corsican, Breton and Alsace language.' (Interview, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007)<sup>167</sup>

There is a general consensus among the Turkish authorities that the current framework represents one of the best practices in Europe. However, this needs to be set against the previous discussion on the lack of standard provisions for minority media in Europe. The weak sanctioning power of international instruments seems to

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<sup>167</sup> This issue of subtitles still continues to be a source of conflict between the Supreme Council, European Commission and the local televisions. The policy makers in the international relations office of RTÜK disagree with the criticisms. They hold the view that what they delivered in the directives was one of the most liberal policies on the use of different languages amongst all the other European Union member states.

allow national authorities to deliver basic implementations in order to meet the minimum requirements. However, this dilemma is also related to the ‘prevailing ideology of the state’ and its ‘multicultural strategies’ (Riggins, 1992).

The changing jargon during the preparation of the directives in this regard is worthy of close attention. In a survey of the newspaper articles in *Hürriyet* newspaper until the 3<sup>rd</sup> harmonisation package in 2002, ‘Kurdish broadcasting’ was the only terminology used to describe the possible policies in the initial stages of the debates. Other terms, such as ‘broadcasts in mother tongue’ ‘broadcasts in traditional languages’, ‘broadcasts in different languages’ were used interchangeably by the bureaucrats, until the directive was finally given the title of ‘different languages and dialects used traditionally by Turkish citizens in daily life’ in 2004.

As Timisi (2005: 467-468) maintains, the international regulations and practices of other member states that were examined by RTÜK during the preparation of the Directive use a range of terminology for these issues. What are referred to under the term ‘broadcasting in different languages and dialects’ in the Turkish context are variously defined as ‘regional languages’, ‘minority languages’, ‘ethnic languages’, ‘local languages’ and ‘community languages’<sup>168</sup>. However, as she points out, the expression ‘mother tongue’, which gained some currency in political and daily life in Turkey, is not used by the European Commission to refer to different languages and dialects in those texts. According to Timisi, the use of the concept of ‘mother tongue’ in Turkey has ‘reformist characteristics’ because it ‘implies the recognition of ethnic differences among Turkish citizens’. However, the shift in the wording of titles from ‘Languages of Broadcasts in Radio and Television’ in the first directive to ‘Languages and dialects used traditionally in daily lives’ in the second one ‘overshadows such a reformist approach’ because this semantic difference of ‘daily life’ allows authorities to be ambiguous on its implications. Therefore, as Timisi accurately observes ‘in fact the regulation means “ethnic languages”, but it was replaced with the expression “the languages used traditionally” and made obscure by

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<sup>168</sup> For a detailed discussion see Cormack (2007) as previously addressed in Chapter 2.

broadening their meaning.’ (2005: 469). Hence, it can be argued that the wording of both directives reflected a prevailing set of attitudes that did not consider these issues as important steps towards expanding cultural rights or the genuine recognition of different ethnicities and languages. Rather, the acknowledgement of these differences was downplayed through the ambiguous tone and terminology of the texts.

### **TRT ‘Speaks’ Kurdish:**

#### **The implementation of new legislative measures for National Media**

Although RTÜK began to receive applications from local channels, there were no attempts from national televisions to begin the broadcasts in different languages (*Hürriyet*, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2004). In order to speed up the process, pressure was put on TRT to begin the programs as soon as possible (Y. Ataç, *Hürriyet*, 29<sup>th</sup> February 2004).

In May 2004, the government announced that the provisions in the TRT law did not constitute an obstacle to implementation and permitted TRT to begin the broadcasts (U. Ergun, *Hürriyet*, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2004; *Hürriyet*, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2004). Following this announcement the obstacles in the TRT law were finally eliminated at a meeting of the executive board, where a unanimous agreement was reached to proceed with broadcasting in different languages.

The obligatory audience survey has never been completed and TRT reluctantly undertook the responsibility to start broadcasts six months after the 2<sup>nd</sup> directive was put into effect. The reluctance of TRT and its fears to be misunderstood were evident in the comments of its general director when he announced the executive decision in a press conference:

For all of us who take pride in being Turkish - the supra-identity - our common language is the official language Turkish. Undoubtedly, all the people of this country desire to develop the peaceful and tolerant environment to strengthen our democracy and protect our national unity and integrity. As TRT we have this consciousness. Our uncompromising loyalty to the nation state is not against the plural democracy and it will never be. In

our executive meeting today, we have reached an agreement to start preparing the infrastructure in order to begin broadcasts that reflect the languages and dialects of our sub-cultures' (*Hürriyet*, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2004)

Overall, the process that began with the first constitutional changes in 2001 has taken three years to implement. Transmitting broadcasts in ethnic languages has been a 'burden' for TRT in the eyes of Latif Okul, who is the head of the auditing section in TRT. But, as he stated, this burden was nevertheless laid on the shoulders of TRT because the government wanted to give a strong message to the EU about its commitment to implement the reforms before the end of 2004. Furthermore, the pre-existing internal auditing and regulation mechanism of TRT was a factor behind the selection of TRT as the 'safe' broadcaster. It provided a temporary solution to the problems of monitoring due to the existing limitations of RTÜK's infrastructure.

Experts in RTÜK identified the reasons for delay in the implementation process as follows:

The delay was due to a number of reasons. First of all, a group of officers within the High Council reacted to this process. Also, the usual institutions in the country were reactionary [*read 'the army' - my emphasis*]. These concerns were due to divisive broadcasts. But we explained to all the institutions in the state bureaucracy that the political criteria was the *sine qua non* condition of the European Union... With regards to the audience profile, to be perfectly honest with you it was shelved without implementation. This was required by some institutions and it was only put forward to delay the process and it did, and saved time for a couple of years.' (Interview, Bora Sönmez, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007)

Broadcasts in different languages were scheduled to begin on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> of June on Radio 1 between 6.10am and 6.45am, and on TRT-3 from 10.30am to 11am. The programs, had been entitled 'Our Cultural Richness' and, were scheduled to begin with Bosnian on Monday, followed by Arabic on Tuesday, the Kırmançi dialect of Kurdish on Wednesday, Circassian on Thursday and the Zaza dialect of Kurdish on Friday (*Hürriyet*, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

Despite the fact that the directive came into effect six months prior to the start of broadcasts, due to its reluctance, TRT was technically unprepared for making these

transmissions. TRT had been forced to take on the responsibility by bureaucratic pressure to fulfil the EU's political criteria. The producer of the programs 'Our Cultural Richness' has explained that he was asked to take on this role and responsibility on the afternoon of Friday 4<sup>th</sup> of June, less than three days before the proscribed transmission time, because it was under the 'enforcement' of the European Union. As he put it:

I accepted this role because I had previous experience working in Anatolia. When I was given the instructions on that Friday we did not even have concept for the program...TRT have broadcasts in about 50 different languages in the Radio Voice of Turkey. The only languages we did not have were Kırmançi and Zaza. We already had transmission in Bosnian and Arabic. So we began with these two languages in order to gain some time. (Sadık İkinci, Interview, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006).

The first broadcast started with Bosnian on Monday the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2004 and included a news summary called 'From the country and the world', followed by songs in Bosnian, sports news, and two short documentaries called 'From Blue to Green' and 'Beauties of Anatolia' (*Hürriyet*, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2004). Kurdish, the most controversial of the broadcasts, was aired for the first time on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June in the *Kırmançi* dialect, which also coincided with the release of four former DEP (Democratic People's Party) deputies who had been in prison for 10 years (*Hürriyet*, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2004). The following day, newspaper columns were filled with reflections about the shift from 'denial' of the Kurdish language, and Kurds as a group, to the 'acknowledgment' of this identity on public television (H. Uluengin, *Hürriyet*, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

The pro-Kurdish political party DEHAP and the Kurdish Institute of Istanbul welcomed the Kurdish broadcast on the state television. DEHAP which also made a plea to PKK/Kongragel for a ceasefire after the release of former DEP MPs,

suggested that the broadcasts ‘signalled a change in the more than a century of denial [of Kurdish identity] policy (*Hürriyet*, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2004)<sup>169</sup>.

Broadcasts attracted a mixture of reactions from political parties, civil society, journalists and other ethnic groups. Journalists generally criticised TRT’s bureaucracy for delaying the process even though the law had allowed broadcasts since 2002. Ethnic communities, such as Bosnians in various part of Istanbul, voiced their disappointment about being considered as a ‘minority’. The leaders of the opposition party resembled the broadcasts to a ‘school play’ and resented the fact that broadcasting in the mother-tongue was being conducted by the state (O. Ekşi, *Hürriyet*, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2004; *Hürriyet*, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

TRT’s broadcasts were seen as reluctantly ‘pretending to be doing something’. Many observed that the inclusion of languages other than Kurdish had been used as a tactic to prevent Kurdish from ‘sticking out’, and not because TRT was concerned about Kurdish issues. Instead, they delivered the broadcasts because they were ‘told’ by the EU to do so. Criticism was also raised over the lack of other minority languages such as Laz, Greek, Armenian, and Georgian, and was explained by the fear and reluctance of TRT to call these ‘minority language broadcasts’ (C. Ülsever, *Hürriyet*, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2004; S. Devrim, *Hürriyet* 8<sup>th</sup> June 2004; E. Çölaşan, *Hürriyet*, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2004).

Nevertheless, the first broadcast in Kurdish on TRT was an important symbol that transmissions in these languages would not ‘divide’ Turkey and, as many observed, it represented a ‘historical era’ in which Turkey’s approach to Kurdish problem was changing. As Mehmet Ali Birand explained:

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<sup>169</sup> The repeated announcements by PKK/Kongragel in late May and early June 2004 to end cease-fire which was in place since 1999 fuelled the concerns on the true intentions of the of the organisation to transform itself from an armed guerrilla movement into a political party. For instance, Birand (*Hürriyet*, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2004) and Berberoğlu (*Hürriyet*, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2004) cautioned for the detrimental effects of a renewed armed struggle on the reform process in Turkey which, for the last three years have taken significant steps in the recognition and salvage of the Kurdish problem.

We need to know that this change in Turkey is not coincidental. We came to this point after a long process and after important transformations in the society and domestic and external dynamics. If today education in Kurdish has begun, the DEP MPs can be tried without being held under custody, we can discuss all the aspects of the Kurdish problem on the television screens, this due to the fact that Turkey made a strategic change in its approach to the Kurdish problem... We can understand how revolutionary this is for Turkey (M. A. Birand, *Hürriyet*, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2004)

Even though the limited broadcasts were welcomed as an unprecedented shift in the recognition of Kurdish identity, the content and quality of the programs has been a matter of criticism. In the first week, the news bulletins were been updated from Monday to Friday; the same news was merely translated into different dialects. Furthermore, the content of the documentary section in the most controversial language, Kurdish, perplexed some journalists because it was a documentary about a botanist who lived in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As Atkaya stated:

On Wednesday, citizens who watched the Kırmançi transmission found out that the first botanist to classify the plants in a common system was a certain Karl von Linne who lived between 1707-1778. Is it not great!... In the year 2004, when it is possible to attach a pot lid on the balconies to receive the [satellite] transmissions in Kurdish, who would care about Von Linne? Is it not funny? Don't you think the citizens would say 'is it what the state television would say to us in its first broadcast? Was Von Linne our biggest problem? (K. Atkaya, *Hürriyet*, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2004)

The limited content of the programs in the first week can be explained by the fact that the TRT authorities were forced to start these transmissions within three days and they lacked the necessary infrastructure, especially with regards to the content of the programs in Kurdish. As its producer explained, these programs are created with a small team that comprises himself as the only producer for television, two producers for radio, and staff responsible for translations. However, as the completion of the directives was in the making for two years, the TRT authorities had ample time to take the necessary steps to recruit relevant personnel and start preparations. The reasons for this delay can again be understood in the light of TRT's autonomy. As Latif Okul expressed, government influence over TRT

unfortunately indicates the problems that still exist in Turkey's audio-visual policies.

As he explained further:

There are still problems in the RTÜK law, some arrangements are still against the constitution and we have not reached the EU standards. The issue of autonomy and impartiality of public institutions within the structure of the audio-visual media environment is still not resolved. TRT has always been considered as the back yard of the governments. I hope our successors will be able to change it and it can be possible to establish a TRT which is autonomous, independent and impartial' (Interview, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2006).

These comments highlight a significant problem within the broadcasting realm but nonetheless it does not diminish the fact that TRT has been 'digging its heels' throughout the implementation process. Despite being a consequence of bureaucratic pressures to meet EU's conditionality, one of the most controversial *medium term* priorities was delivered before the end of 2004. The first broadcasts fell short of meeting expectations, but they have nevertheless been successful in giving a positive message to the European Union in terms of Turkey's 'readiness' to take the integration process further. The EU summit of December 2004 was the most critical turning point in this respect because the decision whether to start negotiations was to be decided in this summit. The European Council's usual annual progress report, and the accompanying recommendations that were published in October 2004, provided guidance on its decision. In its recommendations for the coming Council summit, it was suggested that 'the Commission considers that Turkey sufficiently fulfils the political criteria and recommends that accession negotiations be opened.' (EU Commission, 2004: 3). This was the moment Turkey had been waiting for since it started its harmonisation process with the European Union following the Helsinki summit in 1999. However, in terms of Kurdish broadcasting the next difficult step was to extend it to local channels and allow local private channels to start transmissions.

## **The Implementation of New Legislative Measures in Local Private TV and Radio Broadcasts**

Even though the directive had allowed private and public stations to broadcast traditionally used languages since January 2004, and 11 license applications had been made to RTÜK, the local transmissions only began in March 2006 in three local media outlets.

The two-year gap between the period when the directive came into use until the actual start of broadcasts was caused by bureaucratic obstacles, such as the obligation to complete an audience profile survey, and the completion of necessary documents. In the temporary article of the directive, it was stated that the broadcasts would remain on national private and public channels until this audience profile was completed. The chosen methodology for determining the characteristics of the audience was far below professional standards. As was the case with TRT's audience profile analysis, instead of conducting professional research to consider the application of three local channels in the city of Diyarbakır, RTÜK simply inquired at the local Prefecture and Dicle University about the intensively spoken dialects in the city (*Akşam*, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2004). The prefecture of Diyarbakır informed RTÜK that Kırmançi and Zaza were the intensively spoken dialects in the city and, in September 2004, RTÜK invited the local channels to complete the paperwork and make a formal application for a license.

One of the three local channels that transmit in the Kurdish Kırmançi dialect of Kurdish is Gun TV from Diyarbakır. The channel made its application on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2004 and began regular broadcasts of the cultural program *Derguşa Çande* (*Cradle of Civilization*) on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2006. The delay in granting licences was due to the conflict between RTÜK and the local television channels over the completion of all the necessary documents for license applications (*Hürriyet*, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2004). According to RTÜK experts, the lack of necessary information in the documentation that has been provided by the remaining eight stations is the only reason why more licenses are not granted.

According to Cemal Doğan of Gün TV, which is one of the three stations with a license, the official response to their application came after Prime Minister Erdoğan delivered a bold speech in Diyarbakır in August 2005, in which he declared that he recognised the existence of the ‘Kurdish problem’ (*Hürriyet*, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2005). Indeed, following the Prime Minister’s speech, the General Secretariat for EU affairs tried to step up the process for Kurdish broadcasting in private channels. In a communication to the High Council, the Secretariat demanded that these broadcasts should begin before the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, the date on which the formal negotiations were scheduled to begin with the European Union (Y. Ataç, *Hürriyet*, 27<sup>th</sup> August 2005). Following the RTÜK’s decision in November 2005 to lift the temporary article prohibiting local and regional broadcasts in different languages, the institutions that had completed their paperwork were invited to apply for licences at the end of December 2005 (*Hürriyet*, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2005).

The channels, Gün TV and Söz TV of Diyarbakır and Medya FM of Şanlıurfa, finally acquired a license to broadcast in ethnic languages in March 2006. After signing a declaration, the license envisaged that broadcast could begin on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March with a half-hour program on Söz TV called *Our traditions and customs*, a five-minute news bulletin in the Kırmançi dialect on Medya FM, and Gün TV’s 45-minute cultural program - *Cradle of Culture* (*Hürriyet*, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2006 and 17<sup>th</sup> March 2006). On its first day, Medya FM transmitted a 15-minute news bulletin, followed by 15 minutes of folk songs and religious hymns, with the last part of the transmission dedicated to the publicity of Şanlıurfa. (*Hürriyet*, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2006). Gün TV began its transmissions of the weekly cultural program *Derguşa Çande* on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2006 in Diyarbakır. Cemal Doğan, the general director of broadcasting explained the nature of the program and the difficulties they are experiencing as follows:

*Derguşa Çande* is a chat show about the region’s cultural and historical texture. Sometimes we invite a poet, a writer or an expert in a subject. Sometimes we go out on the streets introducing historical and cultural places. It is going well but because of the problem with subtitles, we can’t make live transmissions. The technical process to edit, translate and put the Kurdish subtitles takes about two days. Under normal circumstances editing and

preparing a 45-minute program should not take more 2-3 hours. But in our case it takes about 2-3 days for us. We are still waiting for the result of our appeal to the high court to repeal the limitations on content, timing and subtitles (Cemal Doğan, Gün TV, phone interview, July 2006).

For RTÜK experts, the use of subtitles and limitations on time are practices that are used in other member states, but the local stations ‘complain’ about these obligations to the European Commission and the ‘EU is buying into their game’. The reactionary response of RTÜK to both local channels and the Commission on these issues is explained as follows:

The EU wants them to make transmission as long as they want. But we say that if we do not put a time limit then they will not be able to learn Turkish. They need to learn this language; they are not a separate state! If they do not, they will have problems with integrating into the society. This concern is shared by all European countries. Because we were inspired by their implementations we can comfortably ask them why they [EU members] are implementing similar kind of limitations... In the last report [2006] the EU criticised the limitations on time and subtitles. We do not concur (Bora Sönmez, Interview, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007).

The comments by RTÜK experts highlight two dilemmas with regards to ethnic, diasporic or minority media. First, it reinforces a European-wide concern expressed by officials over the ‘integration’ of different cultures, as previously discussed in various examples such as Germany and Holland (Aksoy and Robins 2000; Ogan, 2001; Milikowski, 2000). The second dilemma that emerged strongly in RTÜK’s approach relates to the quantification of ‘minimum standards’ for minority media within the European context. This issue was also touched upon earlier.

The officers in the Delegation of the EU Commission acknowledge the lack of European standards on this issue and explain the dilemmas as follows:

It is possible to analyse Kurdish demands under minority rights. But because there are no standards in the EU with regards to this matter, the Commission is not in a position to tell Turkey what to do. The EU is really very cautious

in this matter because it is aware of the sensitivities of Turkey about this issue. So it does not state it openly. As you know, Kurds also get angry with this and they claim that they are minorities but principal elements [of Turkey]. The EU is leaving this debate to Turkey itself, but what Kurds are demanding are minority rights. It is an altogether different question whether they become minorities or establish a separate state. But what the EU is considering is these rights as individual rights. Therefore it does not impose on Turkey collective rights. It is considering language rights, freedom of religion, freedom to publish [broadcast] and in what ways there are limitations, problems or prohibitions in these areas (Sema Kılıçer, Interview, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007).

The EU Commission therefore considers the developments or limitations within broadcasts in Kurdish from the perspective of individual rights. And, although the broadcasts are considered to be limited and insufficient, they are still seen as very significant because, as Kılıçer stated, ‘10 years ago it would not even be possible to imagine that Kurdish transmissions could begin in Turkey’. Despite the problematic minority definition in the EU structure and a lack of standards surrounding broadcasts in different languages, what concerns the EU is the ‘lifting of limitations and restrictions’ in the implementation stage.

For instance, experts at the EU Commission’s delegation in Ankara expressed concerns about the regulation of the local channels because, in cities like Diyarbakır and Urfa, the local channels have reported their discomfort about the practice of using the local police to conduct the monitoring of broadcasts. RTÜK officers explained the reasons behind this conduct as follows:

At the moment there are 25 national TV channels and 15 regional channels and we record all the broadcasts by the outlets. The local channels are around 230 and it is not possible for us to record all the local broadcasts. In a tentative agreement with the ministry of interior, these local televisions are regulated by the local police in the cities. This is because our regional structure has not fully developed. The policemen who audit these transmissions have been trained, but of course they do their auditing from their viewpoint, which is security concerns. If they detect a breach they send a report to our experts here in Ankara. Of course, it is the experts in Ankara who audit the report from the perspective of broadcasting principals (Bora Sönmez, Interview, 11<sup>th</sup> January 2007).

The lack of necessary infrastructure on the part of RTÜK is significant. Although the Council wanted to employ new personnel, especially in the languages other than Turkish, this has so far not been possible. At the moment, they compensate for this lack with the mandatory provision of subtitles and direct translations in each program. Hence, the obligation of subtitles is argued to be the most effective way of regulating and auditing the transmissions, particularly in Kurdish. However, this is not an effective way of conducting local broadcasting.

Gün TV's manager is not content with the restrictions to their transmissions but, as he stated, he does not measure their significance in terms of 'media production techniques' or 'broadcasting principals'. As the process we have depicted so far has indicated, broadcasting in different languages means more than achieving internal and external diversity in the media. Particularly as regards the Kurdish broadcasts, it highlights more inherent tensions and conflicts, and a possible change in the understanding of Kurdish identity. As director of Gün TV stated:

From the onset, we considered these developments outside the principals of broadcasting, but as an aspect of Turkey's recent history. A 45-minute broadcast is very small and almost funny. But if you see it in relation to Turkey's recent history and its relation to the Kurdish problem, you will see that these broadcasts, which seem insignificant, are actually very important for Turkey. This is how we see it. Until 2000, Kurdish was not accepted in Turkey, but the debates accelerated after 2000. ...I think the change is due to some political conjectures, such as the political and strategic changes in PKK, as well as a discussion of the Kurdish problem within the framework of European Union. In the last six years different debates over the Kurdish problem took place that recognized Kurdish problem as a historical, cultural and social problem that can not be resolved with violence. It meant more than a struggle between the armed forces, but a problem that has a social background as well. After Öcalan was brought to Turkey in 1999, these debates revolved around the issue of language and cultural rights debates began on the Kurdish issue...The Kurdish problem has many aspects; international politics, politics, economic, historical, cultural, language and cultural rights. From this point in time, we should not only consider this from a broadcasting perspective. These broadcasts have a prominent role in the development of mutual understanding and tolerance, as well as the prejudices which stemmed from a lasting conflicted environment...The first 10 days when we began our transmission there was a lot of discussion, but we expected things to get normalised. It is normal now, and there is an

understanding and acknowledgment of (our) existence (Cemal Doğan, Interview, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2007)

In 2005 Gün TV applied to the high court for the invalidation of three articles of the directive on the grounds that it was against certain articles of the constitution which stipulated a social and democratic state, freedom of expression and equality. The high court rejected the application on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2006 and Gün TV is now waiting for the result of their appeal, and is considering taking the case to the European Court of Human Rights. Nevertheless, as Cemal Doğan also highlighted in our interview, the beginning of Kurdish broadcasting on local television, even though limited, is an indication of a ‘mentality shift’ in Turkey regarding the Kurdish problem. He believes these broadcasts were instrumental in the elimination of ‘phobia’ and ‘prejudices’ around the Kurdish problem. In his view, what needs to be done next is to amend the directive and lift the restrictions on time and content. As he further explained:

The big national media outlets are thinking in terms of the shares they can get in advertising, and they are also structured around the axis of politics and industry. Because these organizations have not taken any steps so far [for Kurdish broadcasts] these transmissions can be done on non-profit oriented TRT on a wider time slot. Most importantly, at a time when Turkey have taken steps for a more democratic and peaceful solution to the Kurdish problem, the organizations which transmit broadcasts in other countries can be provided the legal structure to make transmissions in Turkey (C. Doğan, conference speech, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2006, obtained in e-mail correspondence).

Whether his calls to make satellite channels like Roj TV (previously Med TV) legal will be answered remains to be seen, as this still constitutes an international dispute between Turkey and Denmark. Turkey has in the past taken bilateral measures to prevent broadcasts of MED TV from United Kingdom.

Doğan’s suggestions for extending the time limitations are interesting to contextualise against the European examples that were discussed in the previous chapters. In the European context, the different ‘multicultural strategies’ of states (Riggins, 1992) have produced different examples of local, regional and national media practices, catering for various ethnic and language groups.

Because of their shared principles of secularism and Republicanism, France and Turkey display similar tendencies in terms of their approaches to multiculturalism and diversity. In France, broadcasting in the regional languages, such as Breton and Provençal, began in the 1970s on the public service broadcaster. The total number of hours available for the six regional languages totalled up to 265 hours per year, with Alsace and Breton leading the figures by 68 and 66 hours per year respectively (Guyot, 2002, in Cormack, 2007).

Under the current regulations, Kurdish broadcasting can be transmitted for a maximum of four hours per week on television, which amounts to 208 hours per year. The same licensing criteria for radio stations amount to 104 hours of programming per year on the air. The same rules apply for languages such as Bosnian, Zaza, Circassian and Arabic. Additionally, some of the most successful practices of media in different languages can be found in the regional media in contexts such as Wales and Catalonia. Due to the different governing practices in the UK and Spain, these practices differ significantly from Turkey.

Seen in this light, the proposed amendments to remove the limitations on time and content within the current framework seem difficult to achieve. Furthermore, RTÜK experts, both in the old administration and in the new one, are convinced that they have delivered one of the best practices amongst the European Union member states. The lack of a standard EU definition of a ‘minority’ and ‘minority rights’, as well as standards for the implementation of broadcasts in ‘minority languages’ is helping Turkey’s case.

The issue is further complicated because, as the EU delegation officer in Ankara maintained, Kurds are in fact asking for ‘minority rights’ despite being simultaneously opposed to being seen as ‘minorities in Turkey’, and argue that they should be seen as one of the ‘primary elements’ of Turkey. In my view, this might have serious implications for all the other groups living in Turkey who, following this logic might be considered as ‘secondary elements’ that might lead to further tensions. This ambiguity does not permit a quick resolution. Nevertheless, policy

makers, EU experts and local television producers all seem to agree that Turkey's long journey to the European Union, and its efforts to harmonise with EU legislation, was one of the major factors that accelerated the process of allowing Kurdish broadcasting. In the eyes of some of my informants, were it not for the EU integration process, this process could take another two to three decades in Turkey.

## **Conclusion**

The beginning of broadcasting in ethnic languages or languages other than Turkish has been one of the most controversial topics within the colossal structural changes that took place in Turkey at the beginning of the 2000s. The analysis of the introduction and implementation of the new legislative measures that allowed this change reveals a great deal about the central dilemmas of cultural and minority rights within the European Union and Turkey. Furthermore, it also reveals how the national context responds to global and transnational forces, and tries to negotiate their impact.

Introducing and implementing the new regulations has been a long process that has been divided between two different governments. The DSP-ANAP-MHP coalition government has been internally divided on the issue of cultural rights. Although the new AKP government secured a majority position in the parliament and was thus able to process the legislation relatively easily, the implementation of the process was slow, and reflected a general reluctance on the part of the authorities.

Firstly, pressures from the military on the grounds of national security and integrity left their mark on the regulatory framework. Secondly, the taboo over the use of Kurdish language in broadcasting created a highly reluctant attitude to change within public institutions. Both TRT and the regulator RTÜK have considered the introduction of the broadcasts either as a risk or as a burden for their institutions. Despite its public service credentials, TRT has not considered the implementation of broadcasts in terms of enhancing its internal diversity. It simply did not want to be the only institution responsible for these controversial broadcasts. However, due to

losing its autonomy in the face of political pressures from government and other state institutions, it eventually had to comply unwillingly.

What is striking in TRT's case is that there has been no re-evaluation of public service ideals in broadcasting during the implementation of the framework. And the obligatory requirements, such as the audience profiles, have not been completed in a professional manner capable of reflecting the existing characteristics of their target audience. RTÜK, on the other hand, had more concrete concerns in terms of its technical infrastructure. In addition to the lack of relevant personnel, the existence of certain radical and unregulated radio stations openly inviting young people to join the PKK's armed movement added to their concerns over the difficult task of monitoring and auditing these broadcasts. Both of these public institutions, despite their central role and function in the delivery of this process, have become entangled in the web of bureaucratic or political pressures.

Thirdly, the lack of a standard approach to 'minority issues' within the European Union, and the lack of standard practices in terms of 'minority broadcasting', allowed the policies to be tailored to the needs of Turkey, but did not necessarily eliminate disputes between Turkish authorities, local television stations and the EU Commission. Nonetheless, these dilemmas do not diminish the significance of the Kurdish problem in Turkey; on the contrary, they accentuate it.

Hence, it is imperative to recognise the more inherent, deeply embedded problems over the definition of citizenship and rights in Turkey. The most important component that was missing in the implementation and introduction of these programs was the actual citizens/audience. The audience profile has never been completed, either for TRT or for the local channels, and none of the outlets or authorities actually consulted the viewers about their needs, desires and wants from these broadcasts. The actual stakeholders in this process have been absent from the debate and the new policies have been delivered in a *fait accompli* fashion in order to secure a date to begin negotiations with the European Union.

Therefore, the motivations behind the introduction of ethnic or different languages have not been formulated in terms of creating external and internal diversity in the media that could reflect the plurality of identities in the Turkish context. The implementation process has been rather constrained by concerns about propaganda, terrorism and national security. In this regard, although the European Union has been the major external force behind the transformation of the broadcasting realm in terms of introducing Kurdish language programs, the analysis in this chapter once again confirms the strength of the national framework in Turkey<sup>170</sup>.

However, this process has nevertheless indicated a ‘mentality shift’ in Turkey regarding the Kurdish problem and therefore needs to be acknowledged as a positive step towards the recognition of plurality and diversity in the national context. Notwithstanding the historical and contemporary dilemmas around the recognition of the distinctiveness of the Kurdish language, culture and identity, the new measures signal a move towards the ‘normalisation’ of the politically charged Kurdish question in Turkey.

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<sup>170</sup> A contemporary study which looked at the process of Kurdish broadcasting from the perspective of policy Europeanisation also supports this conclusion and argues that although compliance with the democratic conditionality principle of the EU has been influential in the change of policies, Europeanisation did *not* bring forth a transformation which offers a ‘paradigmatic change’ (Sümer, 2007:203).

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

As shown at the beginning of this thesis, the ways in which the media operate in a given national context are linked to its political culture and the boundaries of its citizenship and rights regime. The maintenance of external and internal diversity in the media depends on how these rights are institutionalised and exercised, as well as the extent to which legislative conditions and symbolic boundaries can be transformed. Hence, the mediation of cultural identities ultimately hinges on wider questions and power struggles about rights and citizenship, as well as the capacity and willingness of nation states to accommodate and acknowledge ethnic or linguistic diversity. This broader debate also holds true for the emergence, development and transformation of minority or particularistic media.

In fact, variations in domestic political culture and different configurations of cultural diversity in Europe have produced many different forms of minority media. The examples that have been discussed previously include regional media outlets in ‘stateless nations’, such as Wales and Catalonia, ‘window’ services for immigrant groups in public service broadcasting in the Netherlands and France, and ethnic or diasporic community media outlets in the UK. Despite their differences, however, some cross cutting issues are evident.

Firstly, current particularistic/minority media systems and practices in Europe are implicated in issues of democracy and participation, as well as in the relative exclusion or inclusion of minorities within national public spheres, and continue to raise questions of integration and cultural ghettoisation. Secondly, particularistic/minority media systems and practices are indispensable for the survival, credibility, maintenance and recognition of minority groups’ cultural identity. To put it simply, the performance and transformation of particularistic media depends on the ‘multicultural strategies’ of the state (Riggins, 1992) and the

special position, whether physical or symbolic, of minorities within the polity (Cormack, 2007).

Although such dilemmas and power struggles appear to be located within the nation state, they are, in fact, connected to wider global and transnational processes, such as: economic and cultural globalisation; the rise of the human rights regime; and the increasing influence of new forms of supranational governance, such as the European Union. Therefore, as the global is 'partially embedded' in the national, this creates the need to examine more closely the specific locations and responses that these processes produce, because they engender a set of new 'negotiations' between the global and the national (Sassen, 2007).

In Turkey, there have been no officially accepted multicultural strategies or policies relating to diversity, apart from the provisions of the founding Lausanne Treaty. Part of an old international minority protection instrument, Lausanne granted cultural rights only to certain non-Muslim communities and neglected the linguistic, ethnic and sectarian differences between the various Muslim and non-Muslim elements. Although non-Muslims under the Lausanne regime have been granted certain rights to keep and manage their community institutions, they have also been subject to discriminatory practices that have accelerated migration and therefore had an enduring detrimental impact on the community life.

The so called economic and cultural Turkification policies that took place between the late 1920s and mid-1960s were also aggravated by international conflicts between Greece and Turkey and the climate of the Second World War. In this climate, and due to the previous suppression of Kurdish uprisings, the issue of cultural rights, especially the right to use the Kurdish language in education and media, appeared on the agenda after the 1960s. The 'Kurdish problem' has represented one of the most pressing dilemmas confronting the state, because it contravenes the Republic's founding principles. In this setting whilst the non-Muslims have been able to retain their long media tradition, the provisions allowing the use of Kurdish language in media have been more controversial.

Turkey's approach to cultural diversity has been further challenged by the transnationalisation of citizenship and rights regimes (Isin and Turner, 2002; Turner, 1993), especially during its so-called Europeanisation process, which began in 2001. One of the preconditions for possible Turkish entry into the EU was for the country to comply with the Copenhagen Criteria, the principals that guide the EU's Eastern enlargement. Harmonisation with these criteria required rapid and definite policy changes and implementation in the disputed realms of human rights and democratisation. The reform process between 2001 and 2004 dramatised some of the most fundamental difficulties in the strategies employed by the state to deal with diversity. One challenge was the issue of Kurdish cultural rights, or more specifically, access to media in the Kurdish language.

Hence, this thesis has situated the interplay of these broader factors within Turkey's national context by examining the transformations that have occurred in the mediation of cultural identities by capturing the changes in two different particularistic media systems. The first case has analysed the changes within the old minority regime by focussing on the non-Muslim community newspapers. The second case has considered the recent, and previously unthinkable, developments in broadcasting policy and practice during the process of harmonising Turkey's national laws with the legislative criteria of EU membership. Controversially, as part of these new developments, programs on the national public service broadcaster and other private local television and radio channels have been allowed to use the Kurdish language since 2001; previously, the public use of the language had been banned. The first case represents an ancient minority media tradition in Europe, and the latter reflects and exemplifies contemporary post-national or de-nationalising challenges.

The findings in Chapter 5 validate the argument that the relationship between media and minority communities contains elements of 'conflict', 'change' and 'continuity' (Horboken, 2004). These findings reveal that, despite their diminishing numbers, non-Muslim minority media have been revitalised and are adapting to contemporary developments both on the national and international scene. Over the last decade,

they have become more active and open in their claims for recognition within the minority as well as the national public sphere. Example publications like *Agos*, *Aras* and *Şalom* accentuate the significance of minority media in establishing linkages with mainstream media and the so-called wider society.

The developments within the Istanbulite Rum newspapers signal the positive impact of the improving international relations between Greece and Turkey. Therefore, minority media in the Turkish context serve as a bridge to reach out to the larger public sphere to confront prejudices, fight against vilification and, at the same time, offer a much needed boost to the prestige and status of these ‘fragile communities’ (Dayan, 1998). They also offer new understanding of group identity and have staked their claim to its re-definition, as the case of *Agos* has demonstrated. Hence, they perform a double function in the maintenance of cultural identity.

However, this transformation has not simply been a direct consequence of Europeanisation reforms; but has rather reflected a response to the changing perception of minorities in the political and public realm. The transformation of non-Muslim minority media results from two paradoxical forces. On the one hand, demonisation and discrimination in the public realm and Turkification policies have led to the loss of the majority of minority populations through migration. On the other hand, these forces, combined with the increasing democratisation in Turkey since the mid-1990s, have acted as catalysts for minority communities to take a proactive approach in dealing with vilification, prejudices and discrimination. Therefore, non-Muslim minority media have been transformed through the cumulative impact of global and domestic forces, which, since the 1990s, have brought improvements in the ways in which minority issues and problems have been acknowledged in Turkey. Thus, for them, Europeanisation has been an instance, or an aspect, of the wider context that has further reinforced the processes of democratisation.

In contrast, Europeanisation reforms have proven the most significant form of leverage driving the emergence of new regulations that have allowed the use of

different languages in broadcasting. The analysis in Chapter 6 has revealed that, despite its limitations, the start of Kurdish language broadcasts represents a dramatic transformation of the ‘market for loyalties’ as well as a ‘shift’ in the way Kurdish cultural identity is recognised in Turkey. Hence, the key concepts that define the transformation can be identified as the *normalisation* of the historically and politically charged Kurdish problem, the *justification* and *recognition* of linguistic differences in Turkey, and the *attribution* of *status* and *prestige* to hitherto neglected or repressed cultural identities. The beginning of broadcasting in different languages can also be construed as a positive step for the emergence of new multicultural strategies.

Therefore, the overall conclusion that can be drawn from the findings of these two case studies is that these transformations indicate an increasing external diversity in the media structure, an improvement in the recognition of cultural diversity in the public domain, and a step forward towards a more inclusive and democratic understanding and exercise of citizenship in Turkey. Nonetheless, the differences in the configuration of media in the two case studies analysed in this thesis have also unveiled a key dilemma about the complexity of relationships between globalising forces and the national context. The ways in which Turkey has responded to these forces and negotiated them have revealed the strength and analytical significance of the national framework.

The national framework has shaped the practices and policies discussed in this thesis, and its resilience in the mediation of cultural identities is evident in a set of constraints that emerge both on the *symbolic* and *legislative* levels. The interaction of these two levels is further dramatised when various local, national or transnational currents or forces act upon them and renders a set of reactions and negotiations. The following discussion unpacks their relationship and interaction.

### ***The Strength of Historical Dilemmas and Taboo Issues***

In this thesis, history, and the historical tensions and dilemmas that have become sensitive and taboo subjects, emerge as the most significant *symbolic* force

impacting on the ways in which cultural identities are mediated. As the findings of Chapters 4, 5 and 6 indicate, this constraint cuts across both mainstream and particularistic media practices.

In Chapter 3, I have demonstrated the ways in which certain traumatic events in Turkish history during the final years of the Ottoman Empire and the early years of the Republic led to a rejection of linguistic and ethnic diversity and forged the issues of national unity, security and indivisibility into some of the most resilient taboos in Turkey's collective memory. In connection with the discussion in Chapter 3, the findings about the general media structure in Chapter 4 validate this argument as they reveal a general tendency of the Turkish media to subscribe to nationalistic and official ideologies.

Historical dilemmas, such as the Armenian issue, the Kurdish problem, and the Cyprus conflict between Turkey and Greece have underpinned the discursive and symbolic boundaries of the debates in the media over the past two decades. The suppression of press and political freedoms in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup, and the existing state monopoly over broadcasting, have both contributed to the emergence of a situation in which, as discussed in Chapter 4, issues and groups who have been excluded from the media have also been left out of the 'symbolic culture of the nation' (Morley, 2000). Despite a growing external diversity in the media since the 1980s, in practice, the privileged place of the state and official ideology in the 'market for loyalties' remained strong until the end of 1990s.

In effect therefore, the Turkification policies that led to the eventual and continuous migration of non-Muslim communities since the 1940s did not become a matter of public debate until the late 1990s. In fact, until the end of the decade, the media representation of non-Muslim minorities reflected an approach based on 'boutique multiculturalism' rather than emerging from a genuine attempt to recognise and address their problems, such as maintenance of their charitable foundations or schools. Furthermore, certain milestones in Turkification policies, such as the

Capital Level or the 6-7<sup>th</sup> September events, did not even appear on the media agenda during this decade.

On the other hand, the representation of Kurdish cultural identity, and the Kurdish minorities' claims for recognition of their cultural rights, have become confused with questions of national security and the indivisibility of the state due to the continuing armed struggle between the PKK and the military. Paradoxically, the tenets of this framework were also challenged and scrutinised during the 1990s by the modernising elite, as journalists and politicians began to recognise the cultural and social aspects of the Kurdish problem during this period.

Furthermore, a growing urban middle class interest in Turkey's multicultural past also flourished in the late 1980s. The emergence of books, music labels and films has also contributed to the expansion of the public sphere in terms of the ways in which issues that pertain to cultural diversity and cultural identities are mediated. The growing visibility and discussion of different aspects of the Kurdish problem not only altered the way in which the Kurdish problem was addressed, but also contributed to the public acknowledgment and recognition of diversity in Turkey. Nevertheless, as the comments of professionals in Chapter 4 reveal, the transformation of the news media in terms of its mediation of differences has been more difficult compared to the non-news or popular cultural products. Therefore, the strength of the national framework has continued to exert itself, particularly over the news media.

***Prevailing Ideologies of the State, Domestic Politics, Legislative and Regulatory Frameworks and their Impact on Media Practices and Policies***

The discussion in Chapter 3 has demonstrated the ways in which the nation-building period in Turkey depended on the strict rejection of religious or ethnic loyalties and the imposition of a universal model of citizenship that attempted to assimilate the non-Turkish or non-Sunni Muslim elements into the national category.

In this regard, the Lausanne regime, which transformed the previous multi-ethnic social structure into a monolingual, monocultural and mono-religious entity, continues to prevail as the overarching framework within which diversity is experienced in Turkey. This framework, which has been discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to Turkey's modernisation and the formation of the citizenship regime in Chapter 3, has defined the state's strategies of dealing with diversity and it has also shaped the limits within which minority media operate.

The Lausanne regime allowed Armenian, Jewish and Rum communities to retain their long tradition of media practices. Therefore, the conditions that shaped their transformation have not been dependent on gaining rights of access and recognition as was the case for the Kurds. These forces pertained to issues of survival as the minority communities' conditions deteriorated due to their diminishing populations.

However, this media is also governed by the same rules and regulations regarding the freedom of expression and press that organise the general media structure. As the comments of respondents in Chapter 5 have demonstrated, there are still certain forms of self-censorship when it comes to persistent taboos such as the Cyprus conflict or Armenian massacres. Freedom of expression and press freedoms are still restricted by *Article 301* of the criminal code, which has been used against journalists, writers and intellectuals mentioning sensitive topics such as the Armenian and Kurdish problems. The article penalises the offence of 'denigration of Turkishness, the republic and state organs and institutions' and stipulates six months to three years' imprisonment for 'anyone who openly denigrates the government, judicial institutions or military or police structures' (Reporters without Borders, 2007: 125). The incumbent majority AKP government has been unable to muster the political will to make the necessary legislative changes, despite the number of court cases reaching 744 in 2007 (*Radikal*, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008). In its 2007 annual progress report, the European Commission underscored the fact that, unless the article is amended or repealed, the membership negotiations would not be completed (*Radikal*, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2007).

The problems posed by this article had major consequences for the media under discussion in this thesis. Despite trying to fight prejudices and problems inherent both in minority and majority bureaucracies and public opinion, Hrant Dink, the editor of *Agos* newspaper and one of my key respondents, became a target and victim of the very xenophobia he was trying to eliminate. In the midst of disputing court cases based on *Article 301*, Hrant Dink was murdered in Istanbul on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2007. He was shot in broad daylight in front of the *Agos* offices by a 17-year-old teenager, apparently because he insulted ‘Turkishness’ in one of his essays in the newspaper. This was seen as ‘a chilling manifestation of a resurgence of xenophobic nationalism aimed at Turkey’s non-Muslim minorities and the Kurds - plus their defenders in the liberal elite’. The case is still unresolved, although some people have been charged in connection with the offence (*The Economist*, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2007).

Moreover, the fragility of the position of minorities in Turkey was again underscored when my other respondent, the editor-in-chief of the Rum *Iho* newspaper, Andreas Rombopulos, was assaulted in May 2008, threatening to damage Turkey’s bilateral relations with Greece. The attack occurred whilst the Turkish foreign minister, Ali Babacan, was paying an official visit to the city of Komotini (Gümülcine), which is a prominent town for the ethnic-Turkish minority in Greece (*Hürriyet*, 6<sup>th</sup> May 2008). These two unfortunate events have once again highlighted the importance of defending freedom of expression and communication and respect for human rights, if the existing principals of liberal democracy in Turkey are to be maintained or have any enduring significance.

The Lausanne regime remains significant; not only is it important for the non-Muslim minorities, but it also has direct implications for the Kurdish population because recognition of cultural rights for those groups who were not covered by the treaty has not been welcomed straightforwardly. Kurdish claims for the recognition of a separate identity and language within Turkey have, since the foundation of the Republic, been considered to be too costly and controversial.

The analysis in Chapter 4 and 6 has demonstrated the ways in which the representation of Kurdish language and identity in the media structure has been closely related to the legislative and regulatory frameworks that have shaped or deliberately limited their expressions. These restrictive measures were part of the legacy of the 1982 constitution that was prepared after the 1980 coup under the military regime. As stated in Chapter 3, expressions of Kurdish identity were prohibited after the military coup. The use of Kurdish language was banned in 1983 based by *Law No. 2932*, which also declared Turkish as the ‘mother-tongue’ of all Turkish citizens. In addition to prohibiting Kurdish language publishing, naming places and children in any language other than Turkish was also banned (O’Neil, 2007).

Perhaps the realm that has been most vulnerable to these restrictive measures has been broadcasting. This was especially the case until the break up of the state monopoly, through which the military interventions had left their mark on the organisation of legislative and regulatory frameworks for public institutions such as TRT (Kejanlıoğlu, 2004). The restrictions under Article 26 and 28 of the 1982 constitution, which have been the most significant obstacles to the introduction of broadcasting in different languages, are similarly legacies of the 1982 constitution. They have only been lifted as part of the constitutional amendments in 2001 during the Europeanisation reform period.

Nonetheless, concerns over national security and unity, most ardently expressed by the military, left their mark on the framing of the new regulatory framework to allow these broadcasts. This was because these principals had already been enshrined as part of media legislation. As also discussed in Chapter 3, the notion of ‘the integrity and the indivisibility of the state with its nation’ is part of *Article 5/A* of the *Law on Turkish Radio and Television (No. 2954)* of 1983; and *Article 4* of the *Law in the Establishment and Broadcasting of Radio Stations and Television Channels (No. 3984)* of 1994 (Oran 2007: 46). Furthermore, as the analysis of the implementation of broadcasting in different languages in Chapter 6 shows, RTÜK’s *Directive on Radio and Television Broadcasts to be Made in Different Languages and Dialects*

*Traditionally Used by Turkish Citizens in their Daily Lives* endorsed *Article 8* of the first directive which stipulated the sanctions about broadcasts if they contradict with general principals of the Republic, and issues of national security

The centrality of such concerns, about national unity, security and the ‘indivisibility’ of the state, within the main principals organising the broadcasting domain elucidates clearly the privileged place of *legislative* forces in the national framework. Furthermore, legislative measures also have a direct bearing on the autonomy and freedom of media institutions, especially the two major public institutions, TRT and RTÜK, which were charged with the duty to implement the new policies of broadcasting in different languages. The analysis in Chapter 6 has also shown how these institutions have become entangled in a web of bureaucratic and political pressures and have been reluctant in the implementation of their duties. The reluctance of authorities and public institutions in this process is significant because it exposes some of the fundamental dilemmas of human rights instruments and the potential responses of national frameworks to transnational or global forces.

### ***Negotiation of Transnational and Global Forces that Impact on the Mediation of Cultural Identities***

Although Turkey became a member of various international organisations after the Second World War and was a signatory in major international agreements, the pre-existing Lausanne regime still forms the basis of its citizenship and minority protection and continues to shape Turkey’s responses to contemporary human and minority rights instruments.

Turkey’s reluctant and selective response to global forces can also be seen through the lens of two interrelated and contradicting features of the ‘global system’, namely the issues of ‘national sovereignty’ and ‘universal human rights’ (Soysal, 1996: 24). The UN and EU systems represent different models of state sovereignty. Where the former still upholds the provisions of the Westphalian system, the latter seeks to apply a transnational understanding of human rights and democracy. Therefore, despite being vehicles for transnational challenges to state power, they are still

limited by whether or not the nation state in question is a signatory to the international instruments (Gülalp, 2006).

Additionally, the nature and scope of cultural rights is subject to dispute and it lacks sanctioning power. This still provides states with room for manoeuvre in defining their minorities and rights. There is no single treaty that is solely dedicated to the protection of linguistic rights within the international human rights instruments, but a number of documents exist within the Council of Europe or UN or regional systems that refer to ‘freedom of expression’ (O’Neil, 2007; Hamelink, 2004). Furthermore, although the minority protections within the EU system draw upon human rights standards that have been codified within Council of Europe and OSCE regimes, variations in criteria and application remain the norm rather than the exception within EU member states. There is a lack of all encompassing regulations or organising criteria in the area of minority or regional languages (McGonagle, Noll and Price, 2003).

The ambiguity and flexibility in Europe in this area makes it difficult to identify the minimum standards to be achieved within minority language media provisions (Cormack, 2007). In the Turkish context, as shown in the previous chapter, this explains how the authorities can claim that the new regulations governing the use of different languages in broadcasting have been sufficient to meet satisfactory standards. Given the fact that Turkey has signed neither the FCNM nor the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, as O’Neil has expressed (2007: 83), its responsibilities with regards to Kurdish linguistic rights remain as ‘non-interference’. Turkey’s only obligation under international law is therefore ‘non-discrimination and freedom of expression’.

Turkey’s noncommittal attitude towards the recognition of linguistic or ethnic groups that remain outside the Republic’s parameters is clear and consistent and the country has applied it to both European and UN instruments. For instance, although Turkey has ratified the most binding UN document on linguistic rights, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)* in 2003, it has placed

a reservation on its 27<sup>th</sup> article, which stipulates that minorities have a right to use their language. The softness of the international human rights regime allows states to negotiate their responses to these documents and abstain from applying their provisions totally or partially.

In this context, it remains to be seen whether the limitations on the duration and content of Kurdish broadcasts can be extended because, it will also depend on the changing political climate. In fact, the political picture that has emerged since the last general election of 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2007 is highly significant. There are two reasons why these elections have marked a significant turning point for Turkish politics since the Europeanisation reforms began.

Firstly, as previously stated in Chapter 4, the rift between the so-called secular establishment and the Islamists has widened acutely, especially in the period preceding the early general election, in which the AKP won re-election to a second term in office. Since this date, Turkish politics have become mired in uncertainty. The tensions between the secular establishment and AKP government heightened after new legislation controversially allowed the headscarf to be worn in educational institutions. This issue is particularly charged in the Turkish context as it challenges one of the founding principals of the secular state and can be understood as a proxy for broader cultural debates within Turkish society. In a similar proxy context, the principal prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals has recently appealed to the Constitutional Court to shut down AKP on the grounds that it has become a 'centre for anti-secular activities' (BBC Turkish, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2008).

The second major impact of the last general election was that Kurdish MPs won seats and entered parliament for the first time in 15 years, albeit as independent candidates in order to bypass the quota limitations in election regulations. They were then united under the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) banner (*Hürriyet*, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2007). During the election campaign, the pro-Kurdish, former DEP MP Leyla Zana, who has been supporting the Kurdish candidates' campaign, openly declared that 'it was time for Turkey to be divided into provinces' (*Ntvmsnbc*, 20<sup>th</sup>

July 2007). In September 2007, the leader of the DTP challenged the incumbent AKP government and the European Union's proposed solutions to the Kurdish issue. The DTP's leader maintained that the party did not concur with the EU's approach in recognising individual rather than collective rights and argued that 'cultural rights are extremely limited in the solution of the Kurds [who] at the same time have a political problem [because] they want to be a partner in the administration of the state' (İ. Berkan, *Radikal*, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2007).

On 16<sup>th</sup> November 2007 the principal prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals sent a case to the Constitutional Court to ban the DTP on the basis of 'becoming a centre for actions that contradict the indivisibility of the state with its nation.' The political and ideological affiliation between the hardliner Kurdish nationalist DTP and the PKK, and their support for Kurdish calls for a federation based on the two ethnic 'primary elements' of Turks and Kurds, has since been a matter of wide public debate and concern (C. Ülsever, *Hürriyet*, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2007; İ. Berkan, *Radikal*, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2007). The case was accepted for consideration on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2007 by the Constitutional Court. The Democratic Society Party (DTP) in its plea rejected the charges against it (*Hürriyet*, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2007; *Bianet*, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2008). Both cases to ban AKP and DTP remain pending at the time of writing as does the future evolution of Turkish politics.

These developments, which occurred after the completion of the analysis for this thesis, ironically justify its significance for the Turkish as well as the European context. Although the thesis has focussed on changes within the media system, this thesis has validated the argument that mediated communication is 'fundamentally implicated in the exercise of, and resistance to, power in modern societies' (Silverstone, 2005).

In this light, the findings in this thesis compel us to consider the influence of processes of Europeanisation and globalisation together, rather than treating them with different conceptual tool kits. Firstly, because, as Beck and Grande (2007: 6) suggest, what constitutes the 'political', 'moral' and 'spiritual' borders of Europe

and its 'institutional architecture', regardless of its conceptualisation as European Union or as a geopolitical space, is still in the making. In this view, 'Europe as such does not exist', but Europeanisation as a permanent 'thoroughgoing transformation' does, but current research lacks the 'interpretative categories' to comprehend it fully. According to this perspective, 'Europe is another word for variable geometry, variable national interests, variable involvement, variable internal and external relations, variable statehood and variable identity' (Beck and Grande, 2007: 6).

Secondly, Europeanisation is not an 'even process' across Europe, and despite its ubiquitous nature that pulls non-member states into its zone of influence, it also produces 'defensive responses' (Wallace, 2000). Hence, studies on Europeanisation continue to emphasise the significance of the 'domestic context', i.e. the politics and already available structures. As Cowles, Caporaso and Risse (2001: 2) maintain, Europeanisation cannot provide a sufficient condition for domestic change, because its forces of adaptation 'must pass through and interact with facilitating and/or obstructive factors specific to each country.'

This dynamic has been explained using the analogy of 'magnetic fields' (Wallace, 2000). In this analysis, the 'domestic', 'global' and the 'European' each constitute a different field that has varying strength. As Wallace (2000: 371) puts it, 'Politics and policy will be attracted by the magnetic field with the strongest force in relation to the issue being addressed. Which is the strongest may vary between issue areas and between countries, as well as over time.' The reluctance to introduce broadcasting in different languages, seen in this light, reveals acutely the strength of the domestic field - i.e. the Republican paradigm, being the major constitutive element of the national framework in Turkey - and its sensitivity towards accepting forms of cultural rights and recognition of differences that fall outside its boundaries.

One approach to alleviating this impasse can be found in the model of 'cosmopolitan democracy', because it addresses the question of democracy within the global order in terms of 'overlapping' relationships between regional, local and global processes. One of the ways in which cosmopolitan democracy can be achieved is by enhancing

and strengthening the capacity and accountability of constitutive features of cosmopolitan democracy, such as the UN and the EU systems (Held, 1995; 1998).

Furthermore, as Beck and Grande (2007: 14) argue, the main principle of cosmopolitanism, namely, regarding others ‘as both equal and different’, needs to become an internal component of the narratives and practices of Europeanisation, if it is to become viable both on a national and transnational level. This is especially relevant in the Turkish context where post-national challenges, accentuated by processes such as European integration, are challenging the contours of Turkishness as defined in the Lausanne regime (Clark, 2006).

In fact, the significance of a cosmopolitan understanding of democracy for Turkish democratisation is increasingly recognised and articulated in terms of its integration with the European Union (Rumford, 2003; Baban and Keyman, 2008). This interaction not only offers a potential for the EU to show that it is not ‘culturally essentialist’ but also offers an opportunity for Turkey to overcome its ‘dominant interpretation of modernity’ and consolidate its democracy (Baban and Keyman, 2008: 118). However, after the period that is analysed in this thesis, and the beginning of Kurdish broadcasting in local media outlets in March 2006, the momentum of Turkey-EU relations has slowed down (*Milliyet*, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2006). At the time of writing, it has almost reached a standstill due to the mutual problem of ‘lack of political will and trust’ in both parties (F. Keyman, *Radikal*, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2008).

### ***An Assessment of the Aims and Objectives of the Study and Future Implications for Research***

One of the central aims of this thesis has been to locate particularistic media practices in Turkey within the developing field of minority/diasporic media in Europe. By considering the transformation of non-Muslim minority media, one of the oldest examples of minority media in Europe, this thesis has accomplished one of the first original pieces of research into this area, both in Turkey and within the European context. This thesis has also been innovative in the ways in which it has

bridged the cross-cutting issues between the transformations of the old minority media regime and the new developments in Kurdish broadcasting. By considering these under the general framework of citizenship and rights, an ongoing and pressing problem in the European context, it has addressed some of the fundamental contemporary dilemmas about the ways in which nation states negotiate transnational global and local forces and dynamics. Hence, this thesis has provided an original contribution to the necessary enhancement of pan-European data (Sreberny, 2002; Wal, 2002) in the emerging field of minority/diasporic media.

By the same token, the thesis has contributed to the study of the media in Turkey by taking a fresh approach to the field that attempts to consider these developments beyond a media policy or media history approach. However, this thesis, like any other, has also had its limits and limitations. By retaining a focus on the traditional or old media, such as newspapers and terrestrial television and radio channels, it did not extend its coverage to the developments in new media such as online portals, online radio stations or satellite television in Kurdish. It also did not include the developments or the transformation of pro-Kurdish newspapers in order to capture the rapid and unprecedented contemporary changes that have been taking place in the broadcasting realm. In this regard, the aim to identify the significance of minority media for the communities in question has been partially achieved for the Kurds.

Therefore, the findings in this thesis must be tested and enhanced through new research efforts in this field. Firstly, new research needs to inquire into the ways in which old and new media play into the survival and maintenance of Kurdish identity and to what extent the media has a role in its definition and re-definition. Secondly, the findings in this research indicate that there is a pressing need within media studies and social sciences in Turkey to shift its focus to ethnographic audience research and media consumption. This is because the findings about the processes that led to the introduction of Kurdish broadcasting revealed that the voices, needs and aspirations of the Kurds themselves have been largely excluded from the processes. Neither TRT nor RTÜK has completed their obligatory audience profile

analysis, and there has been no equivalent academic research in this area. Finally, the findings for non-Muslim minority media can be tested against new research that focuses on diasporic media practices in Europe. In particular, such endeavours could produce valuable insights into the context of Central and South-eastern Europe, where the history of minority formation and protection, and experiences of the modernisation process show similarities to the Turkish context. It is hoped that the findings and questions raised by this research will be of use to future research in these areas.

To conclude, the context within which contemporary globalisation is experienced matters. In the Turkish case, this becomes even more pertinent because Turkey's connection to both European and Middle Eastern history, culture and politics offers an opportunity to trace the different shades of modernity and identify how contemporary post-national challenges are being negotiated in these varying contexts. If democratisation is an open ended and long-term process (Whitehead, 2002), Turkey's engagement with global processes of democratisation needs to be disassociated from the political pressures of the European project *per se* and, instead, internalised as part of its own political culture. It is only through doing so that Turkey's commitment to its core pluralist principles can be enhanced and developed and made compatible with both the global environment and the particular structure of its domestic context. And it is in the realm of media in general, and the mediation of cultural identities in particular, that Turkey's internalisation of these debates will be visible.

## Appendix I

### Chronology of Events During Europeanisation Reforms

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> October 2001 *1st Harmonisation Package***

34 amendments to the 1982 constitution, entered into force 19<sup>th</sup> February 2002.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> August 2002 *3rd Harmonisation Package***

Death penalty abolished, anti terror law, allowed broadcasting in languages other than Turkish. Second related law to Kurdish broadcasting, here amendments were made to Articles 4 of the Law on the Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises lifted the restrictions on broadcasting in the different languages and dialects traditionally used by Turkish citizens in their daily lives such as Kurdish. RTÜK prepared the first directive on Kurdish broadcasting.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> November 2002 *Elections; New AKP Government***

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> December 2002 *4th Harmonisation Package***

Revised penal code for torture, law on political parties, law on foundations.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> December 2002 *5th Harmonisation Package***

Provisions on re-trial and on the freedom of associations.

#### **June 2003 *6th Harmonisation Package***

Significant changes were made in expanding the freedom of expression, religious freedom, amendment to anti-terror law. The law on foundations, law on construction, state security courts etc. There were amendments on the Law on the Establishment of Broadcasts of Radio and Television Stations. Article 3 was amended to reduce the restrictions in relation to monitoring. Article 4 was amended to make it possible for private as well as public radio and television corporations to broadcast in different languages and dialects used by Turkish citizens in their daily lives.

#### **July 2003 *7th Harmonisation Package* (entered into force 7<sup>th</sup> August 2003)**

#### **24<sup>th</sup> January 2004 *Regulation on Kurdish broadcasting came into force***

Directive on Radio and Television Broadcasts to be Made in Different Languages and Dialects Traditionally Used by Turkish Citizens in their Daily Lives, Official Gazette No. 25357, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2004.

#### **23 March 2004 *Gun TV applied to RTÜK to broadcast a culture show in Kurdish.***

#### **7<sup>th</sup> May 2004 *8th Harmonisation Package***

#### **7<sup>th</sup> June 2004 *TRT began broadcasts in traditionally used languages***

Bosnian, Circassian, Arabic, Kırmançi dialect of Kurdish and Zaza dialect of Kurdish.

**24 June 2004 9th Harmonisation Package**

Eliminated the NSC's general representative on the RTÜK board, thereby decreasing its control over Turkish broadcasting.

**23 March 2006 First Local Kurdish Television broadcasts in local televisions in South-eastern Turkey**

Gün TV, Söz Tv and Medya FM in Urfa started Kurdish broadcasting for the first time in Turkey.

*Sources: Adopted from EU Commission's Regular Reports on Turkey*

## Appendix II

### Ideological Tendencies of Major Newspapers in Turkey

<b>Liberal</b>	Yeni Yüzyıl, Turkish Daily News, Hürses, Global, Posta
<b>Centre right</b>	Hürriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Son Havadis, Takvim, Tan
<b>Centre left</b>	Cumhuriyet, Radikal
<b>Extreme nationalist right</b>	Hergün, Ortadoğu, Akşam
<b>Extreme Islamist right</b>	Yeni Asya, Akit, Selam, Milli Gazete
<b>Extreme left</b>	Demokrasi, Emek
<b>Moderate Islam</b>	Yeni Şafak, Zaman, Türkiye
<b>Liberal financial</b>	Dünya, Finansal Forum
<b>Tabloids</b>	Gözcü, Ekip
<b>Sports</b>	Fanatik, Fotomaç, Spor

*Source: Adopted from Yumul and Özkırımlı (2000)*

## Appendix III

### Cross-Media Ownership in Turkey

<b>National terrestrial television</b>	Kanal D, CNN-Türk, Star	ATV	Show TV
<b>Cable/Satellite</b>	Dream, FunTV, Galaxy	Kanal1	SkyTurk (news channel), DigiTurk and Lig TV (digital packages)
<b>Radio</b>	Hür FM, Radyo CNN-Türk, Radyo D	Radio City	Alem FM
<b>Newspaper</b>	Hürriyet, Milliyet, Posta, Radikal, Referans, Turkish Daily News, Fanatik	Sabah, Yeni Asır, Takvim, Pasfotomaç, Cumhuriyet (Partial)	Akşam, Güneş, Tercüman
<b>Publishing</b>	Online publishing, magazine publishing, book publishing, print distribution, music publishing, music and books retail, printing	Online publishing, magazine publishing, book publishing, print distribution, printing	Online publishing, magazine publishing (Alem, Platin), book publishing, printing
<b>Other media</b>	Production, DHA News Agency, media marketing	Production, Merkez News Agency, media marketing	Eksen facility provider, media marketing (MEPAS)
<b>ICT</b>	ISP, telecoms, cable operator		GSM operator Turkcell, telecoms, ISP (Superonline), cable operator (Topaz)
<b>Non-media</b>	Energy, automotive, health, trade, manufacturing	Energy, construction, hospitality	Trade, automotive, steel, manufacturing, hospitality, maritime and air freight

*Source: Adapted from Çaplı and Tuncel (2005)*

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