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Dış Politika Yapım Sürecinde Medyanın Rolü

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Öz

Son yıllarda iletişim ve haberleşme teknolojilerinde meydana gelen gelişmeler, özellikle dış politika yapım sürecinde, karar alıcılar ile kamuoyu arasında karşılıklı bir mutabakatın oluşturulması zorunluluğunun ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuştur. Bu zorunluluk, karar vericilerin, dış politik stratejileri belirlerken radyo, televizyon, gazete, dergi, internet gibi medya araçları vasıtasıyla elde ettikleri kamuoyunun fikirlerini dikkate almak ve gerektiğinde bu araçları kullanarak kamuoyunun gözünde, ifade edilen stratejilere meşruiyet kazandırma çabası içerisine girmek mecburiyetinde kalmaları sonucunu beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında günümüz dünyasında medya ile dış politika yapım süreci arasında güçlü, dinamik ve süreklilik arz eden bir ilişkinin bulunduğu söylenebilir. Bu çalışma, medya ile dış politika yapım süreci arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dış Politika, Medya, Liberal Demokrasi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler.

Role of National Media in Foreign Policy Formulation

Abstract

To have a consensus has become an obligation between the decision makers and public opinion especially during the processes of foreign policy making with the developments occurred lately in communication technologies. This obligation also necessitated to strive to legitimize the strategies stated in public benefiting from the media means when it becomes necessary for decision makers to consider the public opinions obtained from the media instruments such as the radio, television, newspaper, the internet while determining foreign policy strategies. With this point of view a powerful, dynamic, and continuous relation may be said to exist between media and foreign policy making process in today's world. This study aims to analyze the relation between media and foreign policy making process.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Media, Liberal Democracy, International Relations.

Introduction

To have a consensus has become an obligation between the decision makers and public opinion especially during the processes of foreign policy making with the developments occurred lately in communication technologies. This obligation also necessitated to strive to legitimize the strategies stated in public benefiting from the media means when it becomes necessary for decision makers to consider the public opinions obtained from the media tools such as the radio, television, newspaper, the internet while determining foreign policy strategies.

With this point of view a powerful, dynamic, and continuous relation may be said to exist between media and foreign policy making process in today's world. This study aims to analyze the relation between media and foreign policy making process. In the study the answer to the question whether media has an effect on foreign policy making procedure is being detected. The hypothesis of the study has been formulated as 'Media has an effect on foreign policy making procedure in the countries where liberal democracy prevails.'

The way to be followed in order to find the answer to the mentioned question will be as defined below. Firstly we will have a brief look on the duties of media in liberal democracies to make it easy to analyze the subject. Then to make the evaluations more understandable, the basic factors effecting foreign policy making procedure will be defined in general without touching on conceptual discussions. Later on the effect of media on foreign policy making procedure will be analyzed in detail under the stated international system. Ultimately, the data obtained will be displayed systematically.

In the formation of the study literature review has been widely used. With this aim we tried to reach primary sources dealing with the topic deeply. However, it couldn't be possible to reach all primary resources for certain subjects. This study has been designed as a research to fill the gap in the field because in current literature, the number of the work evaluating the effect of media on foreign policy making process is not enough.

1. The Functions of The Media in Liberal Democracies

The media which means mass communication means in Turkish (Cerci ve Özdemir, 2015: 3), can be in general sense defined as the whole of visual and audial means such as the radio, television, newspaper, magazine and the internet, which enable people to exchange emotions, opinions, behavior, and information.¹ Being both a transmitting and conveying system, the media, (Baytekin & Ergülşen, 2016: 40-41) which has an effect on directing behaviors and attitudes of individuals and societies, and on shaping their opinions

¹ The word media refers to "establishing non organizational remote communication in small communities where the recipient has poor responding capability to the sender, which is different from the communication between individuals, in other words without a significant possibility of interaction between the sender and the recipient." (Maigret, 2016: 41).



and convictions, has become the most basic means in establishing a healthy and sustainable dialogue between the rulers and the ruled as the result of the developments in mass communication technologies (Şahin, 2012: 11).

However, the level of effect created by media in establishing process of such a dialogue is not the same in all management systems. Since there is an absolute sovereignty of political authority over the communication and communication means in authoritarian and totalitarian systems (Işık, 2005: 116 ; Cerci, 2013: 3-6), media cannot contribute sufficiently to the process of establishing such a dialogue. On the contrary, media can contribute sufficiently to the process of establishing such a dialogue since freedom of communication and communication systems are among the fundamental rights in liberal democracies (Işık, 2005: 116).

In this respect media has an important function which is to establish a healthy and sustainable communication between the rulers and the ruled in liberal democracies (Şahin, 2012: 1) which clearly show how the decisions that determine the attitudes and behaviors of all individuals who are the members of society will be taken, how and who will make those decisions, and what the scope and limits of the political authority that takes and enforces decisions will be. In liberal democracies system does not work properly when the ruled do not have information about what the context and result of the decisions, plans, programs (Şahin, 2012: 2) of the rulers representing them are, and when the rulers do not learn what exactly the ruled ones think about these dynamics.

Also in liberal democracies (Kodaman, 2011: 1), which regard the individuals as the smallest unit of the society and place them at the center of the economic, social and political order, media has a fundamental function as to oversee the decisions and actions of the political authority and all depending institutions and organizations, and to criticize those decisions and actions when necessary (Sezgin, 2006: 166 ; Işık, 2005: 116). Thus, it is not possible for the system to function properly without an independent mechanism on governmental structure (Akarcalı, 1989: 267-268) carried out by the experts in liberal democracies.

In addition, media has a very important function² of establishing an environment of convergence on issues concerning the large part of the society (Işık, 2005: 116), and bringing a social consensus when needed (Sezgin, 2002: 35) in liberal democracies, which are based on existence of human rights and freedom, and try to establish individual equality and freedom, and advocate the necessity of social and political institutionalization (Tunç, 2008: 1120). In fact, in liberal democracies it is not possible for the system to work efficient-

² In this direction, it can be said that the media is a direct agent of political education (Heywood, 2016: 235).



ly without openly discussing the problems interesting the large part of the society (Işık, 2005: 116), and without a social consensus on the correctness of the strategies claimed to resolve these problems.³

No government having the ruling power of the state can impose its decisions on the people using force alone or, in other words, violence. Even in the countries where authoritarian regimes exist, dictators has the obligation to infuse their thoughts on the issues that shape the future of the society into public (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2014: 201). Otherwise they cannot legitimize their thoughts and put them into practice. That's why no matter what the management system is, governments want to dominate the media and exert effort to do so. As a matter of fact in most of the countries having different governing systems, governments either have audiovisual media providing information to the citizens, or control the vast majority of these instruments directly or indirectly (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2014: 201),⁴ which significantly impedes the effective fulfillment of the above mentioned functions of the media.

However, in countries ruled by liberal democracy⁵ it is not possible for the governments to control all the media operating within the country borders effectively⁶. Because the structure and the functioning of the liberal democratic system prevents the governments from exerting absolute dominance over the media. In addition, wide spread use of the new mass communication Technologies and informatics and correspondingly increasing effectiveness of media organs operating in different platforms (Uluç, 2008: 14-35) remarkably weakened the ability and will of the governments to control the media organs in countries where liberal democracy prevails.⁷ Therefore to a great extent media can fulfill previously mentioned functioning in countries ruled under liberal democracies.⁸

As a result, in countries where liberal democracy exists the media can be said to be an extremely important actor influencing the decisions of the po-

³ In addition to the mentioned ones, the media have different functions, such as entertaining, educating, socializing and motivating individuals.

⁴ The state-controlled media is kept in a certain alignment by the "powerful forces with the ability of dominating the state and a cultural leaders structure who cannot go beyond the boundaries determined by these forces" (Chomsky, 2012: 33).

⁵ According to Chomsky: In the world, there are two different concepts of democracy in general. In the first concept of democracy, "democratic society is a topic that has a real right to speak in the management of the issues that are of interest to the people, the ways of getting information in this society are free and open." In the second concept of democracy, "the people are totally isolated from the administration, the information is strictly and absolutely controlled". The latter is unfortunately the understanding of democracy prevailing in today's world (Chomsky, 2016: s.VII).

⁶ Global media organizations having the ability to operate on an international scale and social media organizations should not be ignored.

⁷ For example, the emergence of the social media which remarkably increased communication and interaction between people, (Yeşiltuna, 2015: 212), shook the privileged position of the political authority in dominating the media instruments (Ünür, 2016: 154).

⁸ At least this is ideal one, or in another words what it should be.



litical authority. The media's being regarded as the fourth power element after the legislation, execution, jurisdiction (Mora, 2008: 3) clearly proves this discourse.

2. Main Factors Affecting Foreign Policy Making Process

Foreign policy⁹ is the whole of the strategies, instruments and movements determined by the state in order to realize its national interests for beyond borders. (Ateş, 2014: 35 ; Güleç, 2018: 80). Foreign policy, which is complicated, and which is formed in a field boundaries of which is difficult to be determined (Efegil, 2012: 14), and which is constantly subject to change by nature (Uzuner, 2012: 355), is the whole of the activities developed by the countries in international system in order to change the attitudes and behaviors of other member states in the in system or to adapt their attitudes and behaviors to the international environment. (Efegil, 2012: 14).

Foreign policy emerging as a result of competitive themes, competition in the interests of the country and competitive government units is generally framed by decision-makers in the governments of states (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2014: 185-208). All foreign political attitudes and actions of the states are therefore the result of the decisions taken by the individuals at the position of decision making.

A great many of the states' decisions related to foreign policy are taken as a result of a quite laborious and dangerous process. Decisions are taken under the influence of a number of both internal and external factors in a duration which requires considering different structures and dynamics in an absolute manner, and which may cause arising of undesirable consequences¹⁰ if the best possible options is not preferred.

Internal and external factors affecting the stated process can be separated into four different groups (Snyder, Bruck and Sapin, 2002: 21-152, Efegil, 2012: 107-109, Çakmak, 2007: 175-188 ; Sönmezoğlu, 2014: 314-324): The first of these is the psychological factors. The foreign political strategies of states are determined by the people at the position of decision making, which

⁹ Foreign policy is so wide-ranging fact that it cannot be confined to the limits of the central proposals of a single approach to explain the events and developments taking place among international political actors (Ereker, 2013: 47).

¹⁰ There is an important point to be addressed here. It is not possible to predict in advance what consequences foreign policy decisions may bring out as they have to be taken in an atmosphere in which the actors involved are in constant interaction with each other and the internal and external conditions faced can change instantaneously. Often, taking these decisions considering the current conditions can lead to unpredictable results. As a matter of fact, a foreign policy decision regarded to be right can lead to unexpected negative consequences, whereas a foreign policy decision taken waveringly can give much better results than desired. From this point of view, foreign policy making process has a structure with uncertainties about the outcome (Efegil, 2012: 4; 111-112).



leads the foreign policy making process to be affected by the personality traits and mental structure of the decision makers. Indeed, the decision-makers' emotional and intellectual status, worldviews, beliefs, prejudices, fear and anxieties, expectations and predictions, self-confidence levels risk taking tendencies, information processing skills and capacities may determine the nature of the decisions taken by influencing the decision-making process.¹¹ The second one is the sociological factors. The foreign political follow-ups of states are undoubtedly formed within a social structure, which brings out the result of foreign policy making process being affected by the societies' internal dynamics and the basic features distinguishing them from other societies. The culture, traditions, beliefs, values and identities, historical trauma and achievements, social roles and norms and the forms of socialization of individuals and groups can be determinant on the rationality of the decisions taken in the field of foreign policy by affecting the process. The third one is the intra-state factors. States are the focus of the foreign policy making process. This situation causes the political and organizational characteristics of states and the internal elements that have the ability to influence the functioning of public institutions and organizations to affect the process of taking foreign political decisions. The internal factors such as the forms of government of the states, the structure of the bureaucratic institutions, the level of specialization and institutionalization, the state of communication and power distribution between them, the relations between bureaucrats, the behavior of civil society organizations, can be decisive on the accuracy of foreign policy decisions by affecting the stated process. The fourth one is the factor originating from the international environment. Foreign policy decisions of the states are meaningful within the international system which has an anarchic structure. This situation causes the events and developments taking place in the system affect the decision-making process. Thus external factors such as the state of the distribution of power in the system, whether or not the major states are willing to direct international politics, the actions of global and regional powers, the positions and activities of transnational institutions, the effectiveness of international law rules, the attitudes and behavior of international public opinion, can be decisive on the success of decisions by affecting the stated process.

3. The Effects of the Media on Foreign Policy Making Process in the Liberal Democracies

In countries where the liberal democratic system prevails, the media influences the foreign policy making process in two different ways; by either directly affecting decision-makers or indirectly creating public opinion (Bay-

¹¹ Decision-making process in the field of foreign policy consist of four phase; decision-makers comprehending the data about the subject to be decided, defining the case, forming the options, and applying after option preference. For detailed information, see (Sönmezöğlü, 2014: 307-314).



ram, 2011: 71). While the influence of the media on the foreign policy making process directly affecting the decision-makers is a rare occurrence, indirectly creating public opinion is frequently seen (Bayram, 2011: 71). From this point of view, in the analysis of the effect of the media on the foreign policy making process in liberal democratic systems, the main point to focus on is public opinion.¹²

The effect of the public opinion on the foreign policy making process, which can be defined as the attitudes of the members of the same social group to any event (Özkan, 2011: 123), must be showing the margins of the decisions the decision makers need to make about a particular issue rather than showing them the decisions (Gönlübol, 1968: 95). As a matter of fact, "learning and understanding way" of public opinion may have the decision makers confront a number of prohibitions by pushing all the practical choices planned to be realized in foreign policy making process (Gönlübol, 1968: 95).¹³ Of course, for this, public opinion needs to have healthy and reliable information about the foreign political issue to be decided on.¹⁴

In countries where the liberal democratic system is in force, the influence of the public opinion and accordingly the media which has the power of creating and directing public opinion on the foreign policy making process is generally less than the one on the domestic policy making process (Miller, 2007, 192; Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2014: 201).¹⁵ This results in the decision makers' having the opportunity to act more comfortably when taking decisions on foreign policy than domestic policy. (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2014: 201). On the basis of this, there are various reasons such as foreign policy issues attracting less public attention than domestic political issues (Kappe, 2013, 645-646), the necessity for the states to act as an integrative actor in the international system, and foreign politics' having some specific instruments (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2014: 202).¹⁶ However, the opposite is true for a number of foreign policy issues that are susceptible to public interest.

¹² "Indeed all countries operating in international field are under panoptic observation of public opinion" (Özdemir, 2008: 140).

¹³ For example, during the Vietnam War, the American government lost support from the public because events in the battlefield were transmitted through the media, and as a result, it had to withdraw from the territory of this country (Yalçınkaya, 2008: 35).

¹⁴ The most important instrument that enables the public to acquire healthy and reliable information about a foreign policy to be decided on is media. However, in liberal democratic systems, media impartiality is a highly controversial issue. For more information, see (Chomsky, 1993: 11-42; Evans, 1990: 189-201).

¹⁵ Although some international relations thinkers have claimed that the distinction between domestic and foreign policy has remarkably got lost (Heywood, 2011: 167-168), the writer of this study considers that there are still significant differences between the two types of politics.

¹⁶ Diplomacy, privacy etc. tools.



Indeed, public opinion is highly sensitive to foreign political issues that are likely to affect society's beliefs, culture, identity, national morale, prosperity, history and all other sensitive values. This sensitivity prompts the public to follow the relevant external political events and developments carefully, and to make sure that decision-makers have a considerable effort to compensate expectation of these anticipated events and developments.¹⁷ This attitude of public opinion makes it very difficult for decision-makers to make and implement radical decisions in foreign policy issues on which society is sensitive.

For this reason, decision-makers want to control media instruments that have the ability and power to create and direct public opinion. But in countries where the liberal democratic system prevails, the possession of media instruments by private individuals, institutions and organizations undermines the ability of decision-makers to control these instruments effectively. Despite this, decision-makers do not give up their intention to dominate the media instruments, and press on those having these instruments. Sometimes their effort can give some positive results, and sometimes they cannot get the results they expect.

In countries ruled under the liberal democratic system, some private individuals, institutions and organizations possessing media instruments for the fear of deterioration of relations with decision-makers may not inform the public about the reasons and the nature of various foreign political events and developments (Gönlübol, 1968: 96-97) or they may act to market or legitimize strategies that have been implemented or planned to be implemented for a number of foreign political events and developments due to the reason stated above.¹⁸

But in these countries private institutions and organizations or individuals that are opposed to decision-makers may also have media instruments. And in some cases they can share, the foreign political events and developments that are taking place, and the facts about the strategies that are being implemented or planned to be implemented with the public through the media organs they own.¹⁹ In such a case, a very serious public opinion may arise against the strategies developed by decision-makers; due to the negative

¹⁷ In countries where the liberal democratic system is in practice, decision-makers face a great deal of reaction if they do not consider the attitudes and behavior of the public. And as a result of this reaction, they cannot pass on the strategies they have planned to implement. For example, during the relocation of Süleyman Shah Tomb, Turkish decision-makers informed the public with the event after the transportation of the tomb for the fear that such a reaction might occur. For detailed information on the transfer of the tomb see (Kaya & Özalp, 2015: 146-151).

¹⁸ Such activities, which are expressed in the literature as "Manufacturing Consent", can be explained as trying to have public consciously accept the decisions of the decision-makers about the foreign policy via the media instruments in a legitimate language and style. Of course this is a negative aspect of the effect of media in foreign policy making process (Denk, 2007: 147-148).

¹⁹ Political authorities do not give any information to media organs in situations that could jeopardize the security and vital interests of the state, they either give purposeful or unsubstantiated news, or they do not allow them to broadcast the information they have (Gönlübol, 1968: 97).



public opinion, decision makers may have to revise their strategies or abandon them.²⁰

Moreover, in countries where liberal democracy prevails, individuals can easily reach the publications of international media organs, which have considerably increased their influence with the advent of developments in communication and communication technologies. This may lead individuals to be able to obtain the information about their countries' foreign political strategy and practices given by the organs and take a common attitude against by questioning these strategies and practices.²¹ The spreading of this common attitude among the people and becoming a serious public opinion can even cause decision makers to have to revise their decisions about foreign policy.

Besides, in countries where liberal democracy is in force, citizens can easily use social media instruments that greatly enhance communication and interaction. The easy use of these instruments by individuals allows them to access the information published about their foreign political attitudes and behaviors in an effortless and rapid manner, and to share this information with other citizens when they want.²² Such an exchange of information, which begins with the use of social media instruments, may oblige decision-makers to reform their respective decisions if it brings about a serious public opinion against foreign policy decisions.²³

Considering these arguments, it can be said that, in the countries where the liberal democratic system prevails, despite the intervention of the decision-makers, media instruments such as radio, television, newspaper, internet etc. largely fulfill the previously mentioned basic functions and thus affect the foreign policy making process. In other words, in countries where liberal democracy prevails, instruments in question, despite their efforts to have control on decision makers, can be said to affect foreign policy making process by creating a sound and sustainable dialogue between the rulers and the ruled, and having decisions and actions of the political authority and

²⁰ This case, which is called "CNN Impact" in the literature, can be explained as media organs' releasing the negative consequences of decision-makers' decisions on foreign policy to the public. That media organs make state policies approved on the conscience of public and come to end when necessary by releasing wrong decisions and implementations related to foreign policy is the positive effect of the media on the foreign policy-making process. (Denk, 2007: 147-148).

²¹ Individuals absolutely need to question the accuracy of the information they obtain from global social media organs operating on an international scale. Because the media organs in question can manipulate genuine information in order to serve the foreign political interests of the countries to which they are affiliated.

²² Individuals absolutely need to question the accuracy of the information they obtain social media organs because the structure and operating systems of these organs enable individuals to produce false and insubstantial information and share them when they want.

²³ As in Arab awakening period.



institutions inspected, and having these decisions and actions criticized when needed, and creating a debate atmosphere about the problems concerning the majority of the society and public opinion when needed.

Conclusion

Media instruments, significance of which has remarkably increased with the advent of communication technologies, has a number of functions to fulfill in the countries ruled under liberal democracy. One of the most important of these functions is undoubtedly affecting the decision making process by creating public opinion on foreign political issues that are likely to lead the future of the society and by effectively guiding the public opinion on behalf of the public interests when necessary. However; in the countries where the system in question is in practice is a very strong obstacle against fulfillment of this media function. This hurdle is the attitudes and behavior of decision makers who have the power to make decisions on behalf of states. As a matter of fact, decision makers do not want media instruments to affect the process of foreign policy decision system by creating a social consensus and they try to dominate these instruments to prevent this.

But the specific structure and functioning of the liberal democratic system do not allow decision-makers to exercise absolute control over the media. Particularly, the fact that this management system gives the private institutions and organizations, and individuals who are opposed to decision makers the opportunity to have media instruments causes this tendency of decision makers to be rubbed. In addition, the fact that the system gives individuals the opportunity to learn about the foreign policy strategies of their countries from internationally active media organizations weakens the will and the ability of decision-makers to control systems in question. In addition to this, the facilitation of exchange of information about states' foreign political decisions and practices, which greatly enhances interpersonal communication and interaction, shakes the privileged position of decision makers over the media instruments. Therefore, in countries where the liberal democratic system prevails, media instruments operating on different platforms do not go into the collective guidance of decision-makers. In other words, decision-makers cannot precisely prevent media tools from affecting the foreign policy making process by creating and directing public opinion.

Considering this situation, it can be argued that in countries where liberal democracy prevails media instruments such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines and the internet have potential to affect the process of foreign policy making and sometimes do so.



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