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Evaluating the Role of Media during Elections: The Case of Local Elections of 31st March 2019 in Turkey

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Abstract

This article attempts to discuss the importance of pluralist perspective on the basis of the election coverage and aims to understand how elections are reported and whether election news includes policy debates in a democratic public sphere. It also assesses the political news during election times according to its democratic values and compares differences and similarities in commercial news media over the case of local elections dated 31st March 2019 in Turkey. The findings have shown that the election news coverage was not included any critical and pluralist debate on policy issues, instead, concentrated on the polling data, polemics, and campaign tactics. In conclusion, it has been seen that the digital-born news site also has similar mainstream attitudes and the commercial media has been in line with media logic by disregarding critical debates.

Keywords

Media and Democracy, Media Diversity, Media Pluralism, Political Communication, Election Coverage

1. Introduction

In media and journalism studies, the concept of plurality and diversity are used on a variety of levels, ranging from the structure and ownership of media, through the demographic diversity of the journalistic workforce, to the selection and framing of individual news stories. Pluralism and diversity are also included in the relationship of journalism to questions about cultural diversity and minority groups, political pluralism, or even broader questions about the distribution of power in journalism and society. Pluralism implies a generally positive

attitude towards diversity and considers diversity in journalism as a value (Karppinen, 2018). The term "media pluralism" is regularly used in critiques of media and in arguments for public intervention in media markets. For some, it means a plurality of media outlets. Having multiple types of media and multiple units of each media indicates this, and the existence of a range of print, broadcast, satellite, and Internet content providers can also represent pluralism. For other observers, pluralism means plurality in ownership, that is, a range of owners and different types of ownership. For others, it is indicated by the existence of public service as well as private commercial firms. The term includes fundamental concepts in liberal democratic media ideology and neo-Marxist critiques of media. It incorporates ideas of the benefits of free flow of information, ideas, and opinions, and the value of a variety in artistic and cultural expression (Valcke et al., 2015). In this sense, media pluralism is about representing different social groups and political ideologies in media.

Political pluralism in the media refers to the fair and diverse representation of and expression by (i.e. passive and active access) various political and ideological groups, including minority viewpoints and interests, in the media. This definition is thus twofold: firstly it encompasses the capacity and possibility of all social segments, with their likely diverse political/ideological views and interests 21 to address/reach the public by means of media (whether owned by, or affiliated to them, or owned by third parties), and secondly, it designates the spectrum of political and ideological viewpoints, opinions and interests covered by and represented in the media (Independent Study on Indicators for Media Pluralism, 2009).

The relationship between the media and politics in contemporary Western democracies is one of the matters that are the most discussed. Liberal-mainstream approaches accept that journalists should be "objective". Objective journalism approach is grounded that the news exists independently of media organizations and journalists. Also, journalists are expected to eliminate their subjectivity by applying routinized journalistic formulas. This mainstream model of liberal journalism believes that news stories are an accurate reflection of reality. Moreover, the origins of liberalism are a call for a free press. Further, the media are seen to check power abuses and corruption on the part of politicians and bureaucrats. In this regard, the media's role is to ensure the maximal flow of information within society to create an informed citizenry (Louw, 2005). It is important to emphasize that pluralism doesn't mean every perspective receives the same acclaim. Normative philosophies emphasize that political communication must advance democratic aims, affirm democracy's norms, and treat minority views with respect (Perloff, 2022: p. 25).

In liberal democracies, journalists have been described as a fourth estate of the realm, the eyes and ears of the people, acting in the public interest (Harcup, 2022). The media's democratic role is assessed by journalists' adherence to the professional ethic of objectivity in reporting the facts of public affairs. Objectivi-

ty implies a clear journalistic distancing from the opinions expressed in political debates, and a determination not to confuse the expression of opinion with the reporting of fact. For some, the very form of media output militates against understanding on the part of the audience, while others perceive the media as ideological institutions in societies where political power is not distributed equitably or rationally but on the basis of class and economic status. Today, in a capitalist society, the press is per-mitted to have opinions and is expected to express them. In a pluralist democracy, ideally, those opinions should reflect the structure of partisanship in the society as a whole, serving diversity and promoting rational debate, in the public interest, between distinct viewpoints (McNair, 2018: pp. 56-62).

The rise of liberal pluralism has promoted the rights of individuals to express and defend their own versions of truth. In particular, economic liberalism gives all versions of truth an equal right to enter the "market-place" of ideas. In our own time, truth in journalism has come to be primarily identified with neutral, reliable, verifiable reporting and with expert analysis and interpretation. Truth in journalism is widely identified with the practice of "objectivity", which emphasizes neutrality and balance on the part of a reporter and a limitation as far as possible to verifiable "facts" of any case. A free press should tend to give access to all who wish to communicate in public, and thus to a wide range of voices in society. Diversity has been a widely valued principle of public communication in societies that make a virtue of their pluralism (thus most contemporary democracies). Its value has been highlighted by the dangers of press concentration and monopoly (McQuail, 2013: p. 56, 65).

The liberal perspective focuses on the presence of the watchdog the function of the media. This liberal view is closely linked to a procedural-formal definition of what constitutes democracy, concentrating on elections and the rational 'informed' choice of active citizens (Carpentier & Cammaerts, 2006). Moreover, watchdog journalism refers to the fourth estate function of the news media and that journalists should carry out an investigative and watchdog role on behalf of the public. Waisbord (2000) suggests that watchdog journalism requires press freedom. Autonomy from the state is the cornerstone idea of the Western liberal tradition of the media repeated to justify media privatization and reform. The degrees of separation between press and government indicate the level of press freedom. The separation between the state and the press is certainly necessary for watchdog journalism. Also, Waisbord (2000) emphasizes that the democratic potential of the news media depends on its capacity as an institution in the public sphere to keep state and market powers at a distance.

During the 1980s, growing competition from commercial channels undermined the quality and diversity of public service television. It is argued that the multiplication of media outlets has reduced the choice of program types and this development has eroded the audience's ability to make sense of public affairs. There is a widespread concern that the displacement of public service television

by commercial channels has impoverished the public sphere (Norris, 2000). In addition, critical media studies and cultural studies criticize the institution of journalism on account of the role the media plays in legitimizing particular views of the world while marginalizing others and underlining key elements such as economic context, ideological constraints, and language. While amongst critical media theorists there is a common understanding of the twin influences of economics and ideology (and the relation between them) on cultural production, what is debated is the relative determinacy of each. Cultural studies theorists tend to argue for the primacy of the ideological, whereas the "political economists" focus on the economic aspect (Strelitz and Steenveld, 1998: pp. 102-104).

Evaluating how news media fulfill its role in modern democracies provides to question the liberal-pluralist perspective. For this, it can be analyzed the news coverage of elections to understand whether news media create a pluralist public sphere and how media serve to shape public opinion. Routine news coverage to election reporting reveals whether news media tend to build a pluralist framework in any democracy. Cushion (2012: p. 2, 206) identifies "quality" news or news of "democratic value" as news that has informative quality enhancing people's understanding of the world on issues, and suggests the democratic value of news is more likely to be enhanced when it is produced by public service rather than market-driven media. Accordingly, a healthy democratic news culture requires pluralism. Democracy relies on an informed electorate. Since the availability of news in the digital, online environment has rapidly expanded in recent years, in theory, citizens appear to have far more information and a wider range of sources to select from. But, more information does not mean more choice. It cannot be assumed that news media have become far more plural because news is far from being of "window on the world" it has set itself up to be. On the contrary, news delivers a highly partial prism. Hence, to understand the democratic value of news, and the economic imperatives shaping journalism, it should be asked whether market factors such as generating profit impacted the quality of journalism should consider and whether public and commercial media remain distinctive at a critical moment in any democracy.

Election campaigns essentially comprise the application of strategies and techniques to communicate and mobilize support for policy positions in order that candidates and parties may gain office. Media are central in the process of relaying messages to citizens. Democracy requires citizen engagement for elections to be legitimate. In order to engage, citizens need information and knowledge about politicians, political parties, and also political processes (Savigny, 2017: p. 78). Throughout the election process, it is acknowledged that journalists need to report fairly on all candidates, parties, and issues and be the voice of the voters. The people must know about their choices of who to vote for, how to vote and why it is important. The voters must have the opportunity to become well informed and interested in the election through the provision of non-partisan information (Howard, 2004). In general, mainstream news media covers an elec-

tion as a "horse race" among candidates rather than on the policy differences among them.

Election coverage deserves to be researched to discuss whether news media provide an understanding of politics and public affairs and they have encouraged citizens to participate in civic life. The election coverage mirrors the democratic value of news in the aspect of whether it is pluralistic and public interest-oriented. Therefore, this study has analyzed the Turkish local elections of 2019 were held on 31 March 2019 throughout the 81 provinces of Turkey. The governing Justice and Development Party (AK Party) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) contested the elections in many provinces under a joint "People's Alliance". Likewise, the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the İYİ Party entered some of the races under the "Nation Alliance" banner. Campaigning was founded on negative and polarized discourse.

The 2019 municipal elections have impacted on political atmosphere and the incumbent actors in Turkey. For the first time in 25 years, the ruling right wing conservative AK Party lost the municipal elections while the main opposition and center-left CHP won the major provinces and Istanbul. The loss of Istanbul and Ankara, the two largest metropolises, has been interpreted as the potential beginning of the victory of the opposition block. This municipal election has demonstrated a polarization in Turkish politics (Celep, 2019). In this study, I focused on how media follow what kind of logic when reporting election campaigns and inform citizens about their democratic choices (Cushion, 2012; Cushion & Thomas, 2018). I aimed to depict whether the news coverage of the 2019 municipal election is pluralist and reflects the needs of citizens, and categorized the news according to media logic and political logic to show the dominant frames of the news over three mainstream news websites.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Journalism has been a key ingredient of liberal, democratic capitalism ever since the bourgeois revolutions. As long as democracy is accepted as a governing principle, it is considered liberal journalism to coexist with it (McNair, 2009). In the relationship between journalism and democracy, one of the key points is that reliance on the market was seen as the basis of keeping from the government. The dependency on advertisers and newspaper financiers only reached wide attention when this system failed. Only since then has the "'free market' mythology" come under sustained scrutiny. Hence, the searches for a new paradigm so far have been carried out in a series of small steps. This can be attributed to the journalism paradigm promoting values such as equality, social harmony, and autonomy that continue to be core values (Josephi, 2012: p. 478).

The media supply the information about politics and public affairs and have a major impact on the democratic citizenship. In the deliberations on the relationship between media and politics, it is referred to the concept of mediatization to define the systemic impact the media in shaping different facets of society.

Conventional mediatization theory includes debates on the media logic and political logics and it argues that journalistic logic determines the editorial selection and construction of political news. Measures of media logic highlight journalistic acting independently of politicians in interpreting political events and issues. Specifically, horse race reporting, personalization, visualization and the increased negativity have been considered as ample evidence for mediatization as a pervasive and transformative force in politics. Media logic has superseded a political logic in election reporting by emphasizing the strategic game of politics rather than policy deliberation. Many kinds of research have shown that media less focus on policy and more on the process of politics (Cushion, 2019). However, it should be considered the other factors, in particular commercialized media environment, to understand interdependent nature between politics and media. The political impact of media is connected to hyper-commercialized media system. Therefore, we should figure out how media systems determine the news production process and the structure of political news.

Hallin & Mancini (2004: p. 11) have examined the media systems of the United States, Canada, and most of Western Europe and classified the media systems into three groups as liberal, democratic corporatist, polarized pluralist. Accordingly, "Liberal Model" prevails across the Britain, Ireland, and North America; the "Democratic Corporatist Model prevails across northern continental Europe; and the "Polarized Pluralist Model" prevails in the Mediterranean countries of southern Europe. The Liberal Model is characterized by a relative dominance of market mechanisms and of commercial media. The Democratic Corporatist Model covers a historical coexistence of commercial media and media tied to organized social and political groups, and by a relatively active but legally limited role of the state. The Polarized Pluralist Model refers to the integration of the media into party politics, weaker historical development of commercial media and a strong role of the state. This classification contains four major dimensions to compare Western Europe and North America: 1) The development of media markets, with particular emphasis on the strong or weak development of a mass circulation press; 2) Political parallelism; that is, the degree and nature of the links between the media and political parties or, more broadly, the extent to which the media system reflects the major political divisions in society; 3) The development of journalistic professionalism; 4) The degree and nature of state intervention in the media system. This analysis helps to determine the components of the pluralism in a media system. Voltmer (2008) has presented a comparative framework on the media systems of new democracies and analyzed the media systems in the former communist regimes, South America, East Asia, and African countries. According to this analysis, commercialization of the media market is often seen as the best way of securing the media's political independence. In addition, in most new democracies political parallelism leads to hatred of the political opponent and undermines democracy idea (p. 38).

Raeijmaekers & Maeseele (2015) have distinguished between different con-

ceptual and normative assumptions about media, pluralism, and democracy that demarcate the limits of analysis on media pluralism and put forward four approaches to media pluralism-affirmative/critical and diversity/pluralism. Media pluralism is interpreted as "affirmative diversity" and as "mirrors of society" and "marketplaces of ideas" in the liberal-aggregative school of democratic theory and is called a "public forum" in the deliberative school of democratic theory. Inspired by the school of critical political economy, media pluralism interpreted as "critical diversity" is illustrated by the metaphor of media as "cultural industries" and concerned about a balanced media representation of social diversity. Inspired by both cultural studies and the agonistic school of democratic theory, the critical pluralism-approach is represented by the metaphor of media as "sites of struggle" or "fields of contestation". Similar to the affirmative pluralism-approach, the critical pluralism-approach not only looks at the diversity of identities and concerns, but also at their discursive portrayal, and is therefore also concerned with the quality of the debate. The presence of counter-dominant discourses is fundamental.

Cushion & Thomas (2018) have dealt with "media logic" by referring to the kind of organizing principles behind the editorial selection and communication of news about election campaigns and analyzed the institutional, technological, and sociological characteristics of the news media. They have pointed out the rise of horserace reporting, media ownership and regulation, political news and horserace journalism, objectivity and impartiality, agenda-setting, inter-media agenda-setting, and the relationship between media and democracy more generally. As Cushion & Thomas (2018: p. 169) note, this type of election coverage does little to enhance people's understanding of policy issues and maintains the ideological status quo, with the horserace narrative largely focused on the party or candidate "ahead" in the polls.

Waisbord (2020) points out the analytical value of media systems for examining cross-national political communication processes. This view captures essential aspects of national media environments in distinctive categories and facilitates cross-national comparisons. Accordingly, polarized mediated politics are prevalent in different media systems. Mediatization and the blending of traditional and digital media have completely transformed politics, regardless of historical particularities. Journalistic cultures are increasingly hybrid around the world and found in countries with historically strong and weak public media, strong and weak traditions of "professional" journalism, strong and weak political/media parallelism. The media system approach focuses on news content and organizations as central aspects of national media in terms of press legislation, the professional values of journalism, and the relationship between news organizations and political power. Similarities and differences among national media systems are grounded in distinctive institutional characteristics such as ownership, funding, culture, policies, and number of actors.

Schudson draws attention to political institutions, legal institutions, and po-

litical conflicts in the process of news production and highlights four perspectives on news making. The first two relate the outcome of the news process to the structures of the economy and the state respectively. The third comes from the social construction of ideology and tries to understand how journalists' on the job are constrained by organizational demands. Fourth, a "cultural" approach emphasizes the constraining force of broad cultural traditions and symbolic systems, regardless of the structure of the economic organization and politics. The economic organization of news is based on the relationship between the state, market, and society. Economic perspective has been insensitive to political ad legal determinants of news production. The government directly runs public broadcasting. Within market societies, there are various political forms and constitutional regimes for the press. Different variations create a distinct politics of media. There is a serious ideological contestation in liberal democracies and just how it takes place differs depending on the political institutions (Schudson, 2019: p. 145). In this context, the turn to neoliberalism has produced a structural transformation in media industries. Neoliberalism is connected to deregulation and the increased penetration of market logic, so it impacts the structures of mass media. Specifically, since the 1980s the media has become a key site of ideological struggle to win public consent for neoliberal policies. Media deregulation has brought the value of the free market to the forefront. Hence, the media is the site of ideological struggle for legitimating and strengthening neoliberalism (Berry, 2019).

Josephi (2012) suggests that journalism should be viewed not in terms of media systems but instead using journalism practice as the mainframe of reference. The journalism paradigm should include values such as equality, social harmony, and autonomy. Therefore, taking journalists and journalistic practice and not media systems as the defining element of journalism allows for an appreciation of journalism as exercised beyond the confines of western democratic countries. Curran & Park (2000) have contributed to the broadening of media theory and understanding in a way that takes account of the experience of countries outside the Anglo-American system and they have offered a greater difference and variability called "de-Westernizing media studies". This perspective acknowledges the values of liberty, equality, and solidarity as a universal validity.

In sum, the liberal model of media roles provides a basis for contemporary media policy and refers to "watchdog" role. One another discussion is are on deliberative role of the media, emphasizes rational debate and public sphere issues and promotes participatory culture. On the other hand, critical approaches influenced by Marxist theory, the critical political economy and cultural studies, focus on the structural dynamics preventing media to fulfill public responsibility such as media ownership, commercialized media, dominant ideology and the reproduction of power relations. In addition, mediatization, which is a theoretical approach examining a profound influence of media on government and political actors, points out media logic concept associated with formats and con-

tents arranged to market conditions.

3. Methodology and Analysis

The election campaign itself has become a more newsworthy topic. Political reporting has become more candidate-centered and focused on the characteristics of individual candidates; this leads to a personalization of election coverage. To classify the characteristics of election reporting, two main perspectives allow for distinguishing the "game frame" from "strategy frame". While the game frame refers to news stories that portray politics as a game and are centered around: who is winning or losing elections, the strategy frame refers to news stories that are centered around interpretations of candidates' or parties' motives for actions and positions (Cushion, 2012: pp. 94-95).

In this study, I have conducted a quantitative web content analysis on collected all articles published on election topics in the defined time frame from the websites of the media organizations constituting the sampling units. In order to reveal the characteristics of coverage of election campaigns in the Turkish case, I have benefited from a standard set of coding categories to explore the quantitative character of news coverage and choose the media organizations that represent the mainstream and commercial news media. Accordingly, I have included Hürriyet and Habertürk for being both the giant media corporations and represent the center-right political line and Ensonhaber is a digital-born and one of the most clicked news sites in the analysis.

This research has covered a five-month period from 1st November 2018 to 30th March 2019 and total 402 online news reports. All news has been gathered from the websites of the market-driven media organizations and the digital-born news website. Since Hürriyet (https://www.hurriyet.com.tr) and Habertürk (https://www.haberturk.com) represent traditional news media and transform their conventional journalism to online version, they have been chosen for the research. Moreover, Ensonhaber (https://www.ensonhaber.com) as a commercial, digital-born, one of the most clicked news sites has been added to the sample unit.

This content analysis aims to explore how the market-driven and digital-born news media reported the local elections held on 31st March 2019 in Turkey. As Cushion (2012: p. 96) notes, the news of democratic value has been evaluated to whether election news contains policy information that helps citizens make an informed decision about the political parties or a particular politician. Table 1 shows how election coverage is primarily framed and provides an overview of the political news over the campaign period.

In recent years, a more "horse race", candidate-focused, and media-centric approach to election news coverage has been adopted around the world (Cushion, 2012). When evaluating market-driven reporting, in particular, it is seen that corporate news media include similar news patterns. It has been observed that media logic dominates the coverage of elections and intensifies on certain

Table 1. Characteristics of news coverage at election time (1st November 2018-30th March 2019).

News coverage	Habertürk	Hürriyet	Ensonhaber	Total
Horse race (polls)	3	-	10	13
Candidate image (more prominence than issues)	135	81	15	231
The balance (between issues and political game frame)	3	7	1	11
Substantive issues (more prominence than a game frame)	-	-	-	-
Polemics	33	29	2	64
Policy debates	3	1	-	4
Strategy/tactics	33	15	31	79
Private life/family life of the political actors	-	-	-	
The balanced mix of viewpoints	-	-	-	-
The diversity of voices	-	-	-	-
Policy advocacy	-	-	-	-
Total	210	133	59	402

(Adapted from (Cushion, 2012)).

themes respectively candidate image, strategy/tactics, polemics, horse race (polls), political game frame, and policy debates. In addition, it is seen the policy and issue-based perspectives have been less coverage, and the mainstream news media have not contained any policy information giving an opinion to citizens. Cushion et al. (2016: p. 474) point out that media logic triumphs over political logic because campaign and horse-race perspectives are reported above policy issues because journalists speak over politicians and interpret their behavior and actions, or because coverage is personalized and candidate-centered. The media logic generally refers to the degree to which coverage subscribes to the values and conventions of news media rather than a political logic.

The dominant themes in coverage have shown that mainstream/corporate media give prioritizing more candidate information; secondly the strategic aspects of the political campaign have been at the center of narratives. While the polemics have been covered thirdly, the issues focused and policies of competing political parties have been disregarded and it has been limited reference to the policy issues. Another prevailing trend is "horse race (polls)" coverage. As noted Cushion (2012: p. 113), the higher proportion of online horse race stories can perhaps be explained by the greater emphasis this type of journalism places on breaking news, with the latest polls immediately uploaded and their significance debated. Commercial news media have increased the strategy, polemics, and horse race stories reporting. On the other hand, the policy debates have under-

represented.

The growing influence of the media within the political domain in many countries has increased concerns about the approach of the "media-driven republic." Mediatization means that political institutions are both increasingly dependent on the mass media and are shaped by the mass media. The media logic is seen as the "engine" of the processes of mediatization. Mediatization is then the result of the influence of mass communication on society, where many societal institutions, politics especially (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999). The first aspect of media logic is the absence of policy issues. This is in line with the "horse race coverage" is viewed as an aspect of media logic. As horse race coverage is defined as media stories about the competition between candidates or parties and emphasis on opinion polls, it belongs to democracy's politics dimension. Another aspect of media logic is negativity. Media tend to select rather negative than positive events (Haßler et al., 2014: pp. 328-329). Accordingly, the findings have reflected the characteristics of media logic, so the polemics news has highly coverage.

Furthermore, contextualization and diversity are two main criteria of news media quality as well. Contextualization refers to news media should go beyond mere reporting of single events and embed events in longer-term developments and contexts, that is, provide the audience with sufficient background information. Content diversity is related to distribution of topic and actor (Bachmann et al., 2022). When it is evaluated the news media quality, it is possible to say the findings has not met these criteria because it is not exist diversity of the content and contextualization as well.

4. Conclusion

This study has aimed to assess the political news during election times according to its democratic values, compare differences and similarities in commercial news media, understand how elections are reported and whether election news includes policy debates in a democratic public sphere over the case of local elections dated 31st March 2019 in Turkey. Examining election coverage is important to think about a democratic public sphere allowing citizens to debate on policy issues. When it is analyzed how media frame the election news, it is observed that election coverage focused on primarily the campaign process than the issues and policies of the parties and candidates. These patterns are closely related to the national political culture, media system, and structure. Cushion & Thomas (2018: pp. 168-171) have pointed out that commercial editorial decision-making and horserace reporting are fuelled by market-driven media logic, however, suggested that media logic alone cannot account for the rise in campaign-process coverage. Therefore, they have argued that a public logic needs to trace because election coverage was largely devoid of policy or reflective of the voters' issue preferences, and highlighted media need to free themselves from the campaign logic of the main political parties. This opinion that depends on

pursuing a more independently informed public agenda represents a radical but important departure from the logic that has typically underpinned campaign coverage.

Journalism fulfills key roles for society related to the collection and public distribution of information in the widest sense. The age of democracy has also been an age of journalism and the two have always supported each other. Journalism provides essential information on issues of the day to citizens that enable them to make informed choices and judgements concerning policies and politicians. It also meets the needs of politicians and other agencies to communicate extensively with citizens. It plays a vital role in the formation and dissemination of opinion (McQuail, 2013). The notion of the public sphere has been determinative to generate a discussion about why journalism is important in a democratic society. But, the realities of newsroom culture and the capitalist structure have shaped journalism. As the classic liberal approach has suggested, citizens should access a range of news media to understand what is happening in the world. From the critical perspective, today's journalism has moved far away from the, admittedly, idealized concept of the public sphere. Freedman (2014: p. 12) emphasizes that concentrated media power is anti-democratic both because it hands definitional, analytical, and interpretive power to unelected organizations and because it undermines the ability of citizens to acquire and exchange the range of information and ideas necessary to make informed decisions about public life.

The findings have shown that the election news coverage has not included any critical and pluralist debate on policy issues, instead, it has concentrated on the polling data, polemics, and campaign tactics. In conclusion, two actors of the mainstream news media have focused on the candidates' names, the strategy/tactics of the political parties for winning the election, and the polemics of the leaders instead of policy debates and citizens' needs. In addition, it is seen that the digital-born news site also has similar mainstream attitudes and the political logic based on opinions and public debates has been ignored. The commercial media has been in line with media logic by disregarding critical debates. It exists many dynamics promoting this tendency. Waisbord (2020) points out the contextual factors such as the state of public media, the relations between media corporations and political power, and journalistic cultures to make a comparative analysis. In addition, the presence of charismatic leadership, the strength of populist movements and political parties, and the particularities of autocratic and hybrid democratic regimes are equally important as contextual factors.

It is acknowledged that the press is supposed to enhance democracy both by stimulating the citizenry's political interest and by providing the accurate information they need to hold the government accountable, but this argument is a dilemma for journalism because of the problems stemming from the economic market. In the market-driven media system, news organizations compete for the audiences and advertising revenues necessary to maintain profitability and stay

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in business. Therefore, the media regime under capitalism based on competition prevents to fulfill journalism's public responsibility. What we need is to promote a pluralist media regime contributing to the democratic public sphere and considering cultural dynamics in addition to economic dynamics. News media is one of the main actors in the public sphere to construct informed citizens on political issues. However, as Katz (2018) notes, social media has become a major tool to disseminate information, opinions, and news, used for political campaigning and offering new opportunities for individuals and politicians alike. The use of social media has the potential to accomplish political goals, including high involvement of the public and motivating high rates of interaction, and interest among followers.

This research is limited by the sampling units focused on commercial and mainstream online news media and has not claimed to induce a generalization beyond its own findings. For future research, it can be suggested to expand the scope of the research by way of covering alternative, independent news media, and their social media links. Thus, it can be analyzed whether the pluralist perspective in a wide range of news and compared the different media groups in terms of media logic and political logic. In the digital age, the democratic value of news should be evaluated in the social media context as well.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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